

My name is Simona Torotcoi, I am a Roma woman from Romania, and I have the honor to speak today on behalf of European Roma Grassroots Organizations Network and we are part of the Global Forum of Communities Discriminated on work and Descent.

Communities Discriminated on work and Descent represent over 270 million individuals known by various names such as Dalits and Burakumin in Asia, Bellah community in Mali, Haratin in Mauritania, Quilombola in Brazil, and Roma in Europe and beyond.

Unlike other ethnic minority groups, Roma do not have a homeland or country to identify with, and therefore Roma are vulnerable to discrimination, social exclusion, marginalization, and poor well-being.

The 12 million Roma in Europe, represent the largest minority yet not all of us are residents or citizens of their countries, because of a lack of documents.

Roma people in Europe are denied basic human rights, are victims of widespread discrimination (mainly from state institutions), racist attacks and hate speech, police violence, Roma children are victims of school segregation, Roma communities are placed at the margins of the societies in landfills and waste dumps, roma women are denied health services, etc. mainly because of their heritage and social status.

Today we are launching a regional report which sheds light on the troubling issues of discrimination faced by Roma, and the existing gap between Roma and non Roma.

In a Europe that prides itself on its commitment to diversity, equality, and human rights, the persistence of discrimination against Roma communities, based on work and descent, stands as a stark reminder of the challenges that still lie ahead.

The situation described poses key questions about the limited effectiveness of the available tools and instruments the Roma community in Europe has in order to overcome these challenges and human rights breachers.

Across the WORLD Roma and other Communities Discriminated on work and Descent are lacking a strong framework to protect their right!

Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent such as the Roma haratins, buraki, qulambola - experience severe restrictions and marginalisation, leading to social exclusion and systematic discrimination.

This exclusion denies Communities Discriminated on work and Descent the opportunity to participate in socio-economic development, pushing them to the margins of society in every aspect of their lives. These communities also share a history of slavery or forced labour, further contributing to their disadvantaged position in society.

We call upon Member States to acknowledge the existence of discrimination based on work and descent as a distinct form of discrimination and to take all necessary measures to eliminate discrimination based on work and descent in their respective states and to respect, protect, promote, retribute, implement and monitor the human rights of those facing this type of discrimination.

