



THE ROMANI INFLUENCE WHITEPAPER

**REPORT ON THE CHALLENGES AND NEEDS OF
ROMA MUSICIANS IN EUROPE 2023**



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1. Summary

The present document aims to report the findings gathered under the desk and field research conducted within the countries of Czech Republic, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden, and Belgium, and in the framework of the Erasmus+ project "Romani Influence- Support the co-creation, circulation and promotion of minorities music in Europe" (PAL SOUND) with reference number: 2022-1- CZ01-KA220-VET-000086202.

The aim of the research was to identify gaps and needs faced by today's Romani musicians, especially in terms of their inclusion to the music sector, the representation of their genre, and their skills and knowledge regarding the use of digital tools when creating music, after the digitalization movement caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The project partners conducted interviews, face-to-face or with the use of online questionnaires, with Roma and non-Roma musicians all across the countries of the partnership.

2. Introduction

One of the most significant aspects of European culture is music, which is arguably the most creative and cultural industry with the greatest community.

Besides, music and its meaning has always been inextricably linked with society. These two concepts have been mutually influenced through the centuries, as they developed accordingly. And that is because music has always been affected by social circumstances and affairs - and in turn, music has always had the power to influence society and its perception of events and developments, simply by moving people and stimulating their creativity thinking.

The above-mentioned link between music and society can be identified in the influence a specific part of our societies, Roma and their music, has had even on some of the most renowned classical composers, like Beethoven, Schubert and Brahms.

However, the music industry is daily confronted with many challenges and changes, which are due to the rapid development of technology and the new technological tools that are used in the music sector. These developments are bringing many benefits to the sector, but at the same time they also create significant obstacles that need to be overcome, such as the promotion of diversity through technical intelligence or the redistribution of revenues and fair remuneration of artists working in the digital space.

And there is one particular aspect of the above-mentioned challenges that the 'PAL SOUND' project, and the present report of course, examine. That is today's place of Roma music in the industry - because what is observed, is the predominance of cer-

tain genres in the music industry -which, as a matter of fact, constitutes one of the most dominant fields of art-, and, as a result, the exclusion of Roma musicians from their sector and the deepening of their struggle to enter the sector - a phenomenon that further extends the gaps between the Roma people's talents and professional commitment and their actual involvement in the music industry (or any other industry) - a phenomenon that further marginalizes Roma people and artists, in spite of their music's important contribution to the history of music, as mentioned above.

With that being said, the project 'PAL SOUND' aims to highlight all the challenges and difficulties still faced by Roma musicians, in terms of their enrollement in the music sector, to examine the reasons behind these challenges -whether it is a matter of discrimination only or a matter of more dimensions that concern more specific areas-, to identify the results the challenges lead to, and in turn empower Roma musicians, develop their prospects by promoting their contribution and talent, and inspire their cooperation with other musicians.

All the above are to be presented in the next few pages, within the presentation and analysis of the findings gathered under the desk and field research conducted in the framework of the project. The research aimed at interviewing people -a total of more than 100 Romani and non-Romani musicians and artists were interviewed- from the music sector, both Roma and non- Roma, in order to get their specific input and points of view regarding the subject in matter.

3. The Questionnaire

The Questionnaire which was either distributed online, or consulted for face-to-face interviews with Roma and non-Roma musicians, entitled "PAL SOUND - Field Research for Roma Musicians", consisted of 3 sections, divided in accordance with the questions it contained.

The 1st section asked for certain demographic information, so that the partners would be able to identify the number of Roma and non-Roma musicians/experts interviewed, as well as their countries of residence, again for the sake of the control over the research.

The 2nd section asked some general questions regarding the situation of the music sector in the respondents' countries, the involvement and professional life of Roma musicians, their representation within the sector, and their educational level concerning their art.

The 3rd and last section was about the identification of the respondents' educational level regarding, specifically, the use of digital tools in the process of creating music, since it constitutes a subject already developed in many countries, after the COVID-19 pandemic emerged, and stimulated a massive digitalization of arts. The section also asked whether the respondents would find trainings on such topics interesting and useful for their careers, as well as the changes they'd like to see in the music sector, especially in terms of Roma music's and musicians' inclusion in it.

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PAL SOUND - Field Research for Roma Musicians

PAL SOUND - Field Research for Roma Musicians

The Erasmus+ project "Roma Influence - Support the co-creation, circulation and promotion of minorities music in Europe" - "PAL SOUND" (2022-1-CZ01-KA220-VET-000086202) deals with the topic of social inclusion and cooperation between Romani and non-Romani musicians, aiming to support them and make them familiar with the new digital tools, so that they'll be able to cooperate with new people and professionals from the music industry, co-create new songs and music by distance, and promote those pieces of art.

To that end, the project aims to create a vocational educational curriculum for Romani and non-Romani musicians and get the Romani culture and its positive narrative promoted. This questionnaire constitutes the 'field-research' part of the project, a necessary part for the creation of the above-mentioned training curriculum; that is because, through the present research, the gaps and the needs that Romani musicians face (especially regarding digital tools) will be identified, and the project partners will be provided with the feedback needed, in order to adapt the curriculum to the musicians' needs in the best way possible. Please, take a few minutes to answer the questionnaire.

* Αποκριθείτε

10/1/23, 11:23 π.μ.

PAL SOUND - Field Research for Roma Musicians

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Are of Roma or non-Roma background? *

- ☐ Roma
- ☐ non-Roma

2. Country *

<https://forms.office.com/pages/designpagev2.aspx?lang=el-GR&origin=OfficeDotCom&route>

GENERAL QUESTIONS

5. What is your relevance to the music sector? *

6. How would you evaluate the current situation in your country, regarding the musical sector and Roma music? *

Very bad ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ Excellent

7. Please, provide us with some further explanation. *

8. Do you think Roma music is represented equally to other musical genres? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

9. If no, why do you believe is that? *

<https://forms.office.com/pages/designpagev2.aspx?lang=el-GR&origin=OfficeDotCom&route=Start&sessionId=5aaa4f3f-3770-457b-045c-5a050e...> 3/8

The specific questions asked, with the aim to receive both quantitative and qualitative information, were the following:

- 1 What is your relevance to the music sector? Is music your main profession? If no, please explain what is another profession of yours and why isn't music your main profession?
- 2 How would you evaluate the current situation in your country, regarding the musical sector and, especially, Roma musicians?
- 3 Do you think Roma music is represented equally to other musical genres? If no, why do you believe is that?
- 4 Do you think Roma musicians face the same difficulties, or have the same opportunities within the musical sector, in comparison to other musicians? If no, why do you believe is that?
- 5 Do you think Roma musicians receive appropriate education to support their careers, equally to other musicians (e.g., from other musical genres, or musicians who aren't from minority groups)?
- 6 When the COVID-19 pandemic emerged, a massive digitalization of the artworks and artistic products was reported. Regarding the musical sector, specifically, many artists (musicians, singers, etc.) transferred their art into digital venues and spaces, in order to continue their production and keep in touch with their audiences. Digital meetings helped in the production processes, while concerts were either recorded or performed live via digital meeting platforms. Do you know how to use new methodologies and innovative digital tools for the creation and promotion of your music? Do you believe Romani musicians, generally, know how to use these tools?

7 Do you believe that education and training on such tools (would) benefit you and Roma musicians in general? If yes, why? If no, why is that again?

8 What changes, in general, would you like to see in the industry regarding Roma musicians' representation?

4. The challenges of music in Europe

Music constitutes an important pillar of European culture and is the cultural and creative sector with the largest audience reach. It is an essential component of Europe's cultural diversity and has the power to bring both positive changes in society and serve as a crucial factor for people's well-being.

Music has also an important economic weight: recent studies suggest that the sector, based on small and medium businesses, employs more people than the film industry. It generated around €31 billion of revenue in 2019 and was then most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic (Ernst & Young, 2021).

Especially due to the digital shift during and after the pandemic, the music sector has been in constant adaptation with new business models and new ways of interacting with the audience. This evolution paves the way for other content industries as well. However, important challenges remain, for instance, the redistribution of revenue and the fair remuneration of artists in this new digital environment, or the promotion of diversity with artificial intelligence and algorithms' curated playlists. In addition, the music sector is adapting to other global challenges, such as the climate crisis and the need of sustainability.

Furthermore, a major challenge that remains alive is the need for a wider diversity and inclusion (ethnicity, disability, age, sexuality, mental health) that the music industry needs to follow (Music Ally, 2019).

There are a multitude of areas and issues in the field of diversity and inclusion that need attention from the industry, because it is observed that (Music Ally, 2019):

1. There is a glass ceiling for many female artists over the age of 30 and it is observed that many major record companies do not want to continue working with them, without considering their contribution over the years in the music sector.
2. There is an under-representation of multicultural music and multicultural groups in Western music labels.
3. Many artists from the LGBTQIA+ community have stated that their sexuality has been an issue in their career progression.

The COVID-19 crisis amplified all these challenges. The heavy impact of the pandemic on Europe's music sector, along its whole value chain, and the sector's recovery and resilience require a renewed thinking and also a shift in approaches and support measures.

For example, music had a significant impact on the economy. According to recent research (Rebuilding Europe), the small and medium-sized business sector employs more people than the film industry. In 2019, it made about €31 billion and during the COVID-19 pandemic was most affected. The shockwaves of the COVID-19 crisis had an impact mostly in performing arts (-90% between 2019 and 2020) and music (-76%).

During the pandemic, the music industry in Europe, which had already been severely impacted, was preparing for a further decline. In the early days of the crisis, live music stopped suddenly, and the recording industry lost money from physical sales and other sources. Revenues have been impacted because of the complete disruption to release schedules. In addition, the closure and other restrictions placed on cafes, concert halls, and other businesses that play recorded music would reduce performing rights revenues in 2020. Even if the rest of the economy begins to recover, these revenues from public perfor-

mances are typically paid to rights holders the following year, resulting in lower revenues for 2021 and beyond.

The effects of pandemic restrictions are even more important in 2021 than 2020:

- Estimated numbers show that the loss of audience visits and income for venues and clubs was even higher in 2021 than in 2020, when compared to the situation before the pandemic.
- Less artists touring and performing abroad in 2021 than in 2020.
- In 2021 an expected decline of 83% of audience visits, compared to 77% less visits in 2020.
- In 2021 an expected decline of 81% of venues and clubs' own income (income excluding subsidies), comparing to a decline of 75% own income in 2020.

Artistic Impact

Looking at 2020 and 2021 together and comparing to previous years, for the 3,253 music venues part of Live DMA research, there were expected:

- 78% less live music performances.
- 1.9 million less artist performances.
- Decline of at least € 730 million spent on programming artists.
- Lower share of international artists performing.
- Emerging artists did not meet new live audiences.
- Decline of venues and clubs' other cultural functions and artistic facilities such as rehearsing rooms or studios.

Social Impact

TOTAL AUDIENCE VISITS

Looking at 2020 and 2021 together and comparing to previous years, for the 3,253 music venues part of Live DMA, there are an expected:

- 141 million less audience visits.

- Decline of social and educational activities organised or facilitated by music venues and clubs.
- Much less participation in music venues and clubs for ten thousands of volunteers. Many volunteers left the organisations permanently.

(Un)employment

- Thousands of permanent jobs are lost at venues and clubs, and with that the knowledge and experience of these workers.
- Million hours of paid work lost for freelancers.
- Many suppliers (catering, ticketing, marketing, booking agencies) also suffer from financial problems.
- A weaker infrastructure and lack of workers will further slowdown the reopening and recovery of activities and income for music venues and clubs' scenes and artists.

All the above-mentioned impacted aspects were addressed in the survey conducted by Live DMA (a European non- governmental network) in 2021.

As the pandemic affected the whole world, it could not avoid affecting the largest minority group, Roma, who in most cases live in marginalized communities, excluded from social activities and in conditions of poverty. The following data are part of a survey carried out (ERGO NETWORK, 2020) and confirm that the Roma community in Europe was severely affected by COVID-19. This is mainly due to their devastating living conditions and exclusion, triggered by widespread anti-Gypsyism.

Regarding the labor sector during the pandemic, Roma with lower incomes or those in undeclared work were more affected by the effects of lockdown. Many Roma working in the informal sector such as arts and culture (musicians, cultural producers, artisans, etc.) lost a very high percentage of their daily income as

they were no longer able to participate in social events due to the restrictions of COVID-19.

The Roma community, during the lockdown, was more affected than other minority groups as Roma in most European countries can't receive social benefits from their state of residence and therefore, they don't receive the support they need, rendering them very vulnerable during the period of crisis. Since official reports do not count people employed in the informal economy, and the only way to identify the countries and regions with Roma most affected in the informal economy is to look at unemployment figures and ask local authorities to develop local vulnerability maps.

All the above considered, the PAL SOUND project's partners, besides conducting desk research to identify the problems in each specific country's music sector (in Czech Republic, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden and Belgium), conducted field research by interviewing relevant stakeholders, as presented below.

4.1 Czech Republic

In Czech Republic, a country with rich cultural heritage, and various ethnic groups -including Romani- that contribute to its musical landscape, the research conducted was both on bibliography level, as well as of qualitative design, with the implementation of semi-structured interviews with Romani musicians, music industry professionals, etc., in order to identify gaps and needs of the Czech's music sector and of Romani musicians in the country.

To begin with, the country's music industry has been progressively transforming due to technological advancements, with changes in music production, distribution and consumption; these changes benefited the industry to some extent, while they also led to challenges for those without access to these evolvments - especially for Romani musicians.

These developments were further accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic; due to the restrictions imposed, and the cancellation of every kind of physical music distribution, the crisis led to the adoption of the above-mentioned technological advancements for the creation and delivery of music. One area that has been evolving throughout the years, and especially throughout the pandemic, was music streaming, with various platforms gaining an ever-increasing attention, both by listeners but also from creators; besides, music softwares, online collaboration tools and other technological developments gained attention, since they enabled the production and distribution of music without the need of traditional gatekeepers.

However, the aforementioned process was not as easy for all. Romani people and musicians, even though they have a rich cultural heritage and have significantly contributed to the music

scene of the country, they have been and are still facing serious challenges when trying to pursue their art.

According to a survey conducted by the *European Roma Grassroot Organization*, the pandemic severely affected Roma people in terms of inadequate access to employment, education, healthcare, and housing, with the primary reason behind these issues being the perpetuated discrimination; lack of resources and of equal opportunities have impacted the investment to music education, to instruments' purchases, as well as have made it difficult to book venues for performances. Last but not least, Romani musicians have long struggled with their fair representation and authenticity, since many non-Roma might appropriate cultural elements of Roma music without giving proper credit and/or acknowledgement to their tradition.

Therefore, the challenges faced by Roma musicians in Czech Republic are rather multifaceted, related to discrimination, poverty, limited venues and issues regarding representation and acknowledgement. Moreover, they have long faced unequal access to rapid developments, even now when digital production and consumption of music is more predominant than ever; lack of training opportunities, deep division between urban and rural areas (a phenomenon that also places difficulties to access and connectivity), poverty and prejudice discourage Romani musicians from pursuing their art and gaining fair recognition and remuneration for their work. Addressing these issues requires efforts from the society as a whole, since prejudice and discrimination must be combated, so that adequate and equal opportunities will be provided to Romani musicians, to develop their skills in the ever-changing musical scene of the country and the world, generally.

4.2 Portugal

In Portugal, as in many other countries studied under the present Whitepaper, the ever-increasing digital developments of the 21st century have massively changed the music industry, from production, to distribution and consumption. The new digital environments emerged led also to new complexities, jeopardizing -mostly- the careers of emerging and newly established artists, regarding, for example, their chances to generate considerable revenue through streaming platforms, license agreement deals, etc.

The pandemic in many ways enhanced and deepened this impact. In the existing studies so far, the pandemic has been characterized as an accelerator for the already existing digitalization in the music sector (Oliver & Lalchev, 2022). The restrictions imposed to handle the virus' spread, forced more and more musicians to turn onto different tools that'd allow them to achieve professional results within their home settings.

This process was facilitated by the noticeable tendency amongst developers to design creative tools that wouldn't be solely intended for professionals with know-how and special equipment (BPI, 2021). Instead, the process of making music became simplified and accessible, especially as social media platforms introduced new features focused on the content creation, as well as on collaboration (Thakrar, 2021). New tools were developed so that everyone would have the opportunity to become professional creators of musical content (Oliver & Lalchev, 2022).

Noticeable examples include the 'Clubhouse' app, which actually laid the foundations for an entirely new social media category, the 'social audio', introducing a pioneering status, catching on the people's need to find new ways of connecting with one ano-

ther (Griflth & Lorenz, 2021). Huge social media platforms, like Facebook, were quickly inspired to create similar opportunities (Isaac, 2021; Perez, 2021; Rodriguez, 2021).

Specifically social media platforms provided an exciting new way to connect people from around the globe, allowing them to share experiences (Oliver & Lalchev, 2022). The pandemic transformed the so-called 'metaverse' -defined as "a virtual world that blends aspects of digital technologies" (Lanxon & Bloomberg, 2021)- into an inseparable part of the music industry. Artist's performances within such platforms attracted millions of viewers, while also gave creators a certain freedom with no-real world boundaries, opening doors for a variety of new business opportunities.

Another example constitutes the live video-streaming platform Twitch, which was previously predominantly used by gamers, but during the pandemic was utilized much more by music industry professionals (Oliver & Lalchev, 2022). Thus, the livestreaming music events became "important to help support the live music and event industry" at the tumultuous times of the pandemic (Hotson, 2021).

In terms of actual music production and creation, there has been a constant developing number of amateur musicians producing music on a semi-professional or even professional level thanks to the wide spreading and mainstreaming of home studios or music aesthetics, relying on limited hardware needs (e.g., production of electronic music), rendering them able to start building their careers at home.

It should be noted, though, that several difficulties continue leaving 'self-produced' musicians behind. The main problems concern 1) the problematic legal status, as their status is relevant to both the status of entrepreneur and artists and 2) the lack of

legal, fiscal and, in many cases, technical skills to navigate themselves into the digital environment and ensure payments of royalties and considerable revenue. Therefore, even though self-production is becoming a more and more important way to start a career, an artist can relatively quickly shift into a precarious situation without support of professional environment, or at least training opportunities that would render them capable of developing their know-how.

In Portugal, the music sector has been in a precarious state before, during and after the pandemic. The pandemic only revealed in brutal clarity problems that existed since decades in the cultural sector in Portugal.



As for the problems Roma musicians face, these cannot and should not be decoupled from the structural discrimination Roma are subjected to in the country. Roma have lived in the country for 500 years and have since experienced discrimination and exclusion. In recent years, discrimination seems to be increasing, as evidenced by the FRA reports, according to which 47% of Roma felt to be the target of discrimination in 2016, while in the latest survey in 2021 this percentage increased to about 62%.

Moreover, the percentage of Roma being victims of harassment has risen by 8% since the last survey in 2016 and, at the most recent report, stood at 28%. When searching for a job the rise in the discrimination rates is drastic (47% in 2016, 81% in 2021). Lastly, according to the studies 96% of Roma in the country live under the risk of poverty, and 59% have been found to be living under severe material deprivation. Based on all the above data, qualitative studies further suggest that many Roma try to hide their ethnicity and background when looking for housing or jobs. The aforementioned general disadvantaged state of Roma plays a severe role in their enrolment in the already precarious creative and music sectors. It has been clearly indicated that their active participation in the music industry is inevitably, negatively impacted by the structural racism against Roma.

Indeed, studies on Romani musicians in the Portuguese music industry are rare, making it unclear to define whether the music sector in principle would be more permeable for Roma musicians than other industries or not. The same applies to the lack of research on how high it is the percentage of Roma musicians that don't openly identify as such in the industry.

However, field research conducted by the Portuguese partners under the framework of this project, with relevant interviewees, provides a perspective. According to an interview led with Tiagoxy, who documented Roma music throughout the country, there exists no formal training for Roma music, making it very difficult for Roma musicians to professionalize themselves.

The Roma music scene as a whole is very secluded. There are renowned musicians within the community -spread over Youtube and gigs on festivities, like weddings- but not outside.

The aforementioned need to hide their Roma background might be another reason for why Roma musicians seem to be unpopular outside

It's been evident that there are only very few professional Roma musicians making Roma music and being known to a larger non- Roma public. The group 'Ciganos d'Ouro'/'Golden Gypsies' had been recognized to a larger public since the early 2000s but is not active any more.

Nininho Vaz Maia is another musician of Roma descentance making music influenced by Roma style, who started being successful in the past 3-4 years. From 2018-2022 the TV Show "Portugal got Talent" hosted several Roma competitors, while the current "The Voice Portugal" hosts the Roma musician Rúben Torres, who sings Portuguese Fado influenced by Flamenco.

Underrepresented are also female signers of Roma background; according to the interviewee Tiago, also a documentary film maker, he knew of some female singers, but he was not allowed to record them.

Their precariousness was of course further impacted by the pandemic, especially due to the enforced measures that prohibited them from playing at weddings. They were also not able to replace income by streaming, even though they tried to make use of the already existing digitalization (Youtube). Nininho Vaz Maia is an example of the positive impact digitalization can have on musicians -a video of him playing guitar at home, uploaded by his sister, went viral and helped him to success. Nevertheless, Portugal's studied situations also confirm the needs for further training on digital tools for music production and promotion, for emerging artists, and especially Roma artists, to become more resilient.

4.3 Slovenia

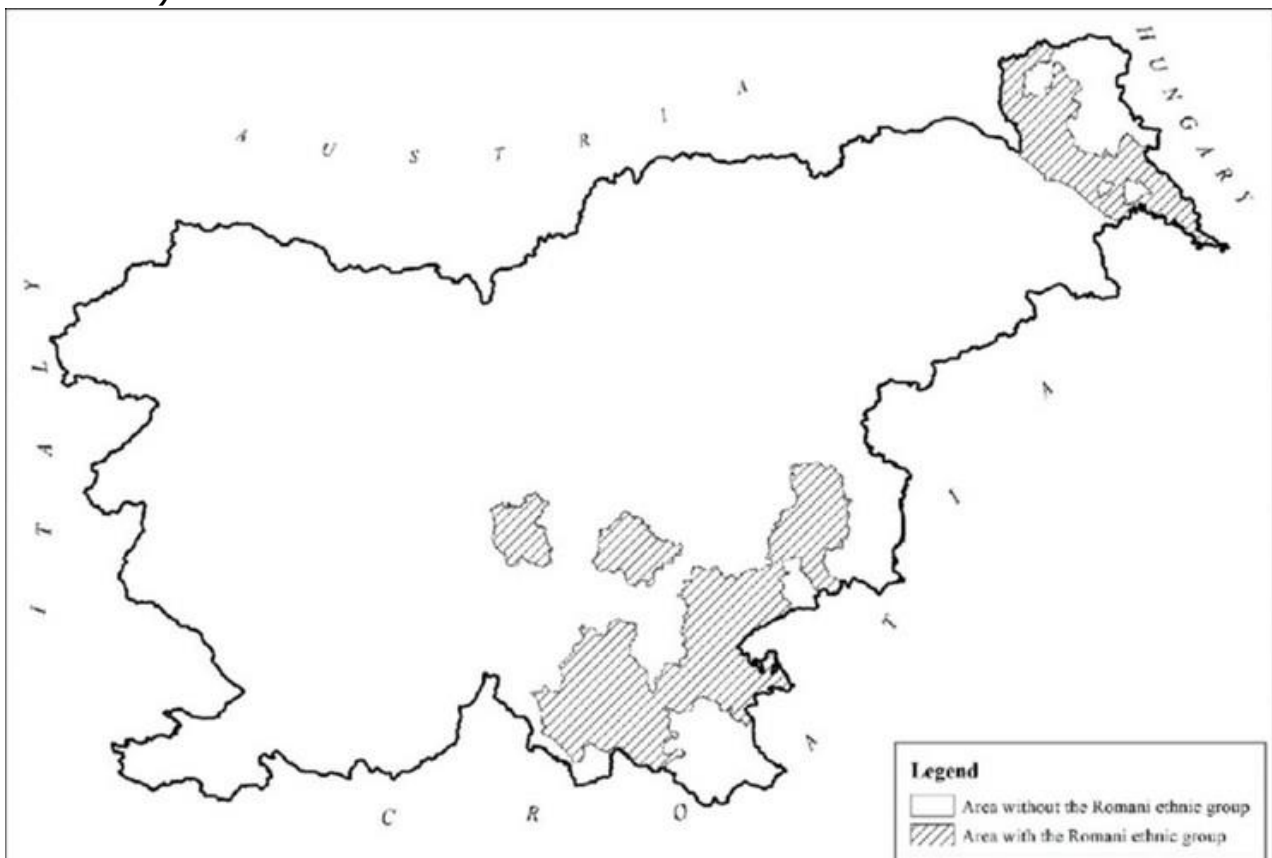
The desk and field research in Slovenia, regarding the music sector -and the ways in which it was affected during the COVID-19 pandemic-, as well as the place Roma musicians have in it identified and provided interesting findings.

Specifically, the CCS in Slovenia was among the five most affected sectors after the outbreak of the pandemic; continuous epidemiological-police curfews, being the second longest among all European countries, limitation of movements to the most necessary, etc., affected the cultural sector, and especially the sector of music by immediately suspending concert venues, music festivals and performances (Motovila, 2020). Consequently, it is reported that 90% of workers in the music industry suffered by losing more than a half of their income, with the situation being somehow managed with the Slovenian government's fifth anti-coronavirus package, which provided self-employed (including musicians) with assistance (Dernovšek, 2020). However, according to the Research - Slovenian cultural and creative worker during COVID-19 (Matjaž, E, Černič, P, Piškorič, L, 2022) the situation in the sector was worse in spring 2022 than it was in the year 2021. Of course, among those affected by the global predicament, were also Roma musicians, having also to face the perpetual problems of being discriminated and overlooked in terms of cultural contribution.

As for the digitalization of the music industry in Slovenia -and the existing knowledge on it by all musicians and cultural workers, including Roma-, it is reported that many musicians started using digital tools for music production and promotion, since the COVID-19 crisis initiated a massive digitalization of artistic practices. What is more, musicians continued to use whatever existing tools for their production and promotion.

When it comes to Roma musicians, it is generally hard to speak uniformly about the Roma community, since the 'umbrella term' encompasses diverse groups, including Roma, Sinti, Kale, Romanichels, Boyash/Rudari, Askali, Yenish, Dom, Lom, and Abdal, as well as 'traveller' populations.

Slovenia, with a population of approximately 2 million people, and no more than 12.000 Roma, shows large differences between Roma communities from the North East and the South East part of the country. The map below depicts the areas with Roma communities in Slovenia (Matjaž Geršič, from "Geographical names in the languages of official minorities in Slovenia"):



Regarding the subject in matter, several prominent Roma individuals are active in the music sector, being widely accepted, like Oto Pestner, Šukar and Amala, as well as clasically trained musicians, like Bernardo Brizani. Many bands are also active infolk music, like Del tuha; however, despite their excellent performances and authentic identity, they remain less noticed, due to less media coverage, lack of professionalism, and the small

sized Slovenian music industry.

Particular measures have been taken for Roma support and protection, like the Article 65 of the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia, regulating special rights for Roma community, the adoption of the Act on the Roma community in Slovenia by the National Assembly in 2007 (Official Gazette No. 33/07, ZromS-1) and the co-financing of cultural activities for the preservation and promotion of Roma's culture and identity by the Ministry of Culture. Moreover, on the basis of the Act on RTV Slovenia and the Act on Media, RTV SLO is co-financed by the UN on an annual basis. The one-hour program Amara drama (Our paths) is the First Program of Radio Slovenia on Monday evenings. It is intended for Romani content and is a permanent part of the program scheme.

However, obstacles are still being faced. According to Amnesty International "protests by non-Romani parents against the full integration of Roma in schools are indicative of racism and discrimination against Roma in the non-Romani population, including pupils at schools and their families. Negative stereotyping by teachers results in low expectations of Romani children and other discriminatory attitudes and behaviour" (AI 2006: pp. 69-70). While in terms of Roma musicians use of digital tools, first it should be noted that in some Roma settlements there are still basic problems with infrastructure conditions, with Roma musicians facing not only lack of knowledge regarding digital tools and IT, but also limited access to internet and connections with mentors for digital tools' learning.

All the above findings were also verified by the identification of similar problems in the interviews conducted in Slovenia as part of the PAL SOUND field research. Romano Veseli (the partners from Slovenia) interviewed 20 people (musicians, Roma musicians and representatives, and others) in the period of Nove-

mber 2022 to February 2023. The answers were then analyzed and summarized.

First, most of the interviewed people reported that being a musician wasn't their main profession; on the contrary, they have other occupations in order to support themselves, their families, and their artistic careers.

Regarding the position of Roma musicians, it was reported that Roma people need their own professional record production and TV networks, to promote Roma music and culture, while only few active Roma music collectives were identified. Moreover, the genre of Roma music was reported to be mainstream, but that didn't apply to Roma musicians themselves, too (except for the already mentioned prominent Roma musicians). As for the difficulties faced by them, the interviewed reported that the chances might be the same for everyone; yet the breakthrough of Roma musicians depends on how connected they are with the individuals controlling the industry, meaning that they generally face different problems (because their music is for specific target groups and listeners).

Their education is also controversial - that is because even though Roma children can enroll to the well-developed network of music schools, competitiveness, high expectations and Roma environments with limited access to prerequisites (internet access, etc.) make their integration to musical education more difficult.

Hence the ambiguous situation regarding their knowledge on digital tools, which by the interviewees was reported as generally adequate, with the exception of often being limited to the knowledge on using social networks for the sake of music's promotion. Therefore, education and training on the use of digital tools was deemed as beneficial in the long run, due to the gene-

ral digitalization movement. However, the Slovenian interviewees believed that these training opportunities should be compined with other changes in the industry and Roma people's support (support from the government and cultural institutions, encouragement of the community and facilitation in the use of intruments and enrollment to basic music courses).

4.4 Sweden

The desk and field research in Sweden provides important information regarding the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on the country's CCS, especially the music industry, the digitalization initiated and Sweden's place in the massive digitalization movement, as well as the place of Roma musicians in the country's musical and entertainment context.

The pandemic posed, and continues to pose, major challenges to the cultural life of Sweden. Specifically, since March 2020, opportunities to experience arts and culture have been severely limited, as a result of the restriction on public gatherings and events, so that the virus' spread could be prevented. This phenomenon had affected severely the CCS in Sweden, in terms of losses of revenue compared to previous years, and doubling of the unemployment level. In an overview, the main problems were:

- a) decrease of cultural activities and offerings,
- b) economic consequences, i.e., loss of revenues and,
- c) precariousness and uncertainty about the sector's future.

As a matter of fact, not only new problems emerged from the pandemic, but already existing ones were highlighted. Culture professionals started considering to leave the sector, and a significant number actually did.

As for the digitalization initiated due to the restrictions imposed by the global crisis, Sweden is deemed to be a digital leader in the EU and is ranked second after Finland in the EU Commission's Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI), which measures the digital competitiveness of member states. However, the shift to more cross-sectoral digitalization, especially within the cultural sector, has been modest.

Precisely, the major issue during the digitalization process is that the current discussions about the process are in a fashion that seem to indicate public sector's organizations are the ones that need be digitalized and modernized, rather than focusing on how organizations -generally- will maintain operational processes and procedures once the digitalization process is achieved (Glaumann et al., 2021).

Roma people's and communities' representation in music and enrolment to the digitalization process is also notable in Sweden. From a historical point of view, the first Roma minority settles in Sweden in 1512. In the period between 1914-1954 Roma were forbidden to immigrate to Sweden. Those who lived in Sweden during this time, were settled in tents or "gypsy camps" until the 1960s. The rights for school attendance and permanent residence were only given to Roma in Sweden in 1959, while not until 2000 did Roma become an ethnic minority group of the country (Sveriges Radio, 2015).

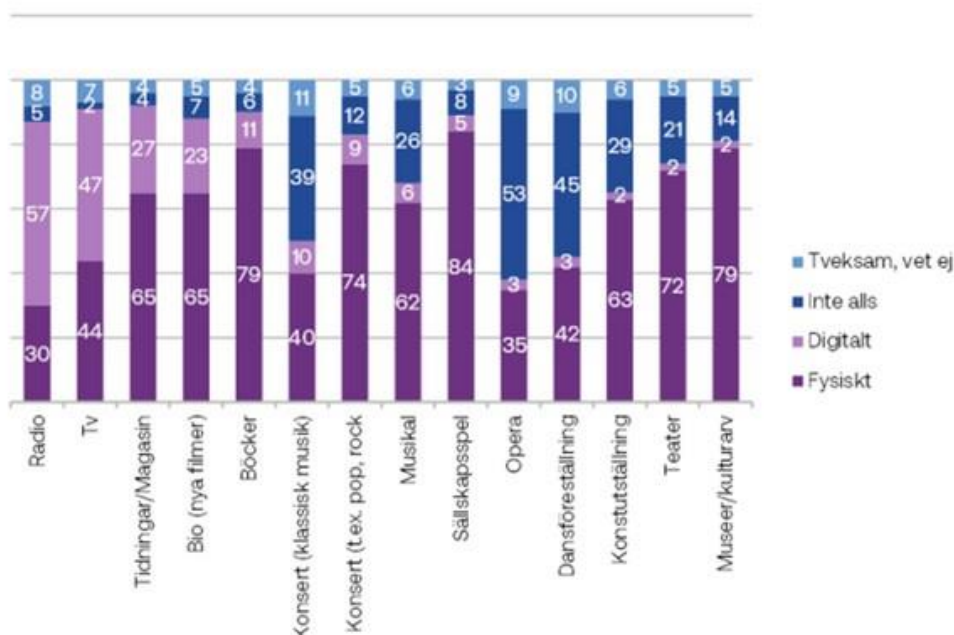
However, Roma children still don't enjoy the same educational opportunities as the majority of society, and many children dropout of school in early ages. This might come as a result, inter alia, of discrimination against Roma people, which jeopardizes their social integration, and in Sweden is called 'Antiziganism'. According to Domino Kai (head of unit at the Roma information and knowledge center, RIKC, in Gothenburg) 'antiziganism' in Sweden is increasing, which also affects the fact that Roma people's numbers are many times unknown, since many from the minority do not declare themselves as Roma.

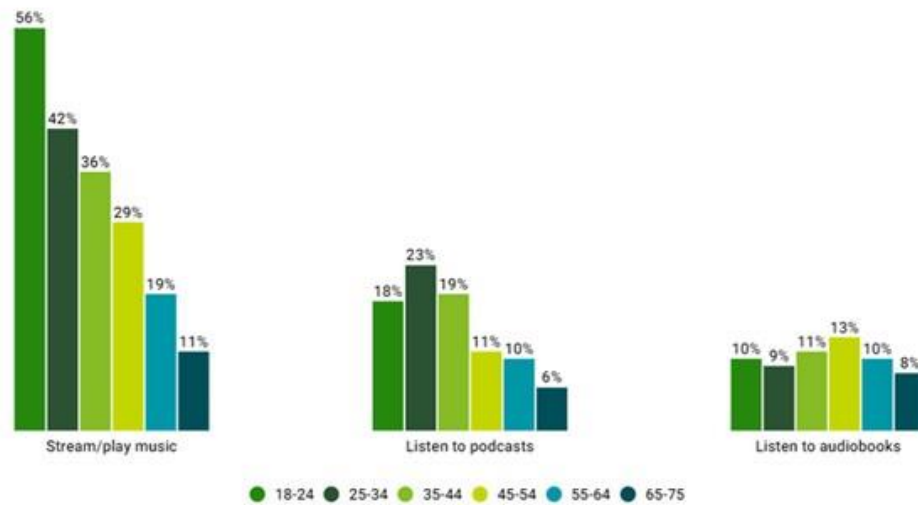
All the above affect, of course, Roma musicians as well, since they are discouraged from enjoying the same chances and opportunities within the musical scene; a phenomenon which needs be addressed in order to change the narrative of Roma music, as well. And the same applies to their enrolment in the digital transition.

As mentioned before, the digitalization process in Sweden wasn't perceived with an horizontal approach. It should also be highlighted that a new light was put on the 'digitally excluded' population in Sweden, with 6% of the population living -one way or another- in digital exclusion, rendering their keeping up with digital development rather than difficult (for example, those living in the countryside, with low or no internet connection at all, were mostly affected).

Even though the numbers regarding Roma minority's participation in the digital transition are not that clear, it is generally reported that the music industry in Sweden should be updated, since that digital acceleration has been made rather than clear. Besides, a clear problem is the fact that a large percentage of musicians in Sweden (both Roma and non-Roma) are dependent on licenses; as a result, streams and licenses have decreased leading to financial strains for the musicians.

Figur 1 Kultur- och mediekonsumtion i Sverige under våren 2020 (procent)

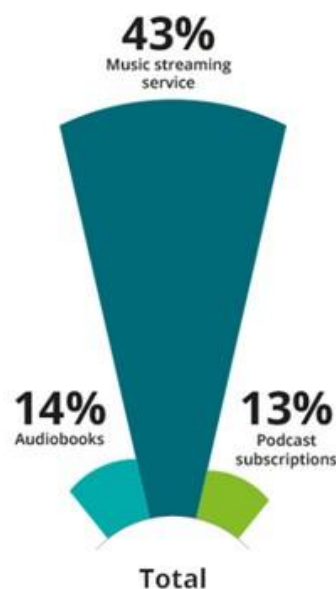




All the above numbers and tables derived from Deloitte (2021). The audience's willingness to pay for digitally produced and distributed art is something that may need to be focused on, both by actors and authorities.

Before the pandemic, only few cultural and musical actors used digital platforms to reach out to their audiences (there has been a perception that digital performing is outside of the regular business). But with the COVID-19 crisis more people saw the opportunity to offer digitalized interaction with audiences.

Access to paid audio services or subscriptions



However, the quality of online performances and digitalized interaction with audiences differs a lot from well-known, established and economically stable artists and bands, compared to upcoming, independent artists and musicians. Roma musicians were also affected since many aren't large scale artists with the same opportunity to reach out with good quality online performances and offerings to their audiences.

As a result, it is crucial for the music scene in Sweden to take into account diversity and become more inclusive towards new artists and musical expressions, as well as for the musical education to include Roma music (and its influence) to gain understanding and thereby transform Roma music's narrative and have Roma musicians become more integrated into all processes, including that of digitalization.

The interviews conducted by the partners from Sensus in Sweden, among musicians, producers, cultural managers, provide a similar point of view with the desk research. The interviewees were asked about the music sector's reality in Sweden, about Roma music's place in the industry, as well as about musicians' from Roma background integration into the industry, their knowledge on the use of digital tools for music's production and the changes that would benefit their position into the industry.

What was first noticed was the fact that among the 23 interviewed individuals, most of them reported maintaining another job position, apart from being musicians or, generally, artists, in order to be able to properly support themselves and families.

When asked about the industry's situation in Sweden, and the place Roma music and artists hold in it, the findings validate the desk research.

Specifically, the industry is reported to benefit 'good marketers' rather than musicians, meaning that the situation, generally, is rather difficult. When it comes to Roma musicians, it is even more, for reasons concerning discrimination and lack of recognition. An experienced interviewee reported the following: " [...] Roma music in Sweden is not as in demand or attractive as it is in, for example, Romania and the surrounding countries. It was different in the 1970s/80s when I, along with my musicians, could have a couple hundred concerts a year. In Sweden, folk music overall gets much less attention, for example, on radio, TV, and the big stages. It's like in other areas of society where youth culture dominates and is what counts."

The pandemic's predicament was also reported to have further jeopardized musicians' careers, including those of Roma background, due to the limitation of live performances, but also due to the acceleration of digitalization, which has been a trend that is hard to be followed.

Accordingly, the Roma music genre and culture is reported being overlooked and unrecognized. According to a musician, "Roma music is not represented equally to other musical genres. There is a lack of representation of Roma musicians in the mainstream music scene, and our musical heritage is not widely recognized. This is due, in part, to the systemic discrimination and marginalization that the Roma community faces in society, which affects all aspects of our lives." But, besides the general discriminatory attitudes towards Roma music, the wider misunderstanding and ignorance towards Roma culture leads to underrepresentation.

And, as a consequence, Sensus' interviewees had a negative perspective towards the difficulties faced by Roma musicians - specifically, all the above-mentioned phenomena, especially

ignorance, discrimination and prejudice, were reported to further marginalize musicians of Roma background and the genre, leading to them facing more difficulties and obstacles in the process of entering and establishing themselves in the industry.

What was also reported being a problem was the education of musicians with Roma background. It has been generally addressed the fact that musicians of Roma background in Sweden do not receive appropriate education and equal opportunities.

Lack of resources, segregation of their living areas and 'silencing' of the genre in the curricula, were some of the reasons identified. The following was answered by an interviewee, providing the 'big picture' of the situation: "[...] still few Roma can compete for a place in high schools and specialized schools because they carry a heritage that lacks school tradition and education. It turns out that Roma youth with parents from former Yugoslavia have much easier access to universities. This could be because many of them have parents who are educated and can therefore acquire an education to eventually establish themselves in society. Education is the key to closed rooms!

But unfortunately, there are Roma talents and skills that go to waste because they are stuck in old traditional thinking. But who said it's not possible to combine a career with living so-called traditionally?"

When it came to the use of digital tools in music's creation and promotion, mixed feelings were identified. The fact that digitalization has opened doors to musicians and artists, both in terms of facilitating the production but also their promotion and contacts communication was addressed. Some of the interviewees were found being familiar with the use of some digital tools and newly-developed technologies or media - however, these mostly concerned the promotion, rather than the actual production of music.

The role that the age plays was also identified. Specifically, even though many of the interviewees reported that Roma musicians may not be familiar with these tools (due to lack of resources, the above-mentioned inequality in education, etc.), some reported that Roma youngsters might know how to use some of the tools and media, but especially in promoting their music, because Roma youth might be more skilled and 'in touch' with the trends. But, precisely due to technology's multifaceted support in one's artistic career, it is crucial -both for the general research and for the PAL SOUND project- that all respondents believed that further training opportunities for musicians-especially from Roma background- on digital tools for the creation and marketing of music would really benefit them and support the process of their integration into the industry and, consequently, into society. Because, the changes that all respondents would like to see in the industry for the sake of musicians of Roma background, was more representation, more support and less marginalization, discrimination and misunderstanding, so that the actual cultural contribution of them can be realised and promoted. But not because of their background per se, but because of their actual talent - that was the most significant request, coming from a musician, specialized in Roma music, who's on the scene from the 1960s: "It still happens that I am referred to as the 'Roma singer' or 'Roma author'. Then I have to emphasize: My profession is not Roma".

4.5 Belgium

In a general context, music revenues in Belgium have always been high – with high music sales and recognized festivals. According to a recent CISAC Collections Report (2019), music collections in 2018 amounted €108 billion, the 16th largest worldwide. In 2019 BEA, a Belgian entertainment collections agency reported overall revenue of €78.32 million for music sales, an 8% growth on the previous year (BEA, 2020). Furthermore, what is worth mentioning about Belgium is the recent reform passed for the artists' copyright (Copyright Reform: Why is the Belgian music sector still worried?, 2022), which seeks to ensure fairer remuneration for the work that artists provide through online platforms; yet this reform caused mixed feelings, with some criticizing the law change, addressing that these rights are not compatible with EU directives, or unenforceable in practice, while others praised the reform, deeming it as a new era in the Belgian music sector.

However, as in all places across the globe, the COVID-19 pandemic had a severely negative impact on the Belgian music sector. The cancellation of all physical entertaining and cultural practices was the main reason that led to multifaceted effects. Most respondents of a survey conducted (Verhulst, 2021) faced a negative impact on their social (71%) and psychological (53%) aspects of life. When it comes to musicians and citizens of Roma background (with Belgium being one of the EU states with significant Roma population – 0.29% of the total population), those with lower income or undeclared work were among the most affected, with those working in arts and culture losing a high percentage of their daily income, while they were also negatively affected -as a minority- due to the lack of social benefits, hence necessary support.

Indeed, the restrictions gave space for some unprecedented experiences and practices; citizens tended to enjoy musical activities in a socially restricted way, for example at so-called 'balcony concerts', and initiatives such as the WHO's 'One World: Together At Home', serving as common experiences showing solidarity. However, even if these examples explain the more evenly divided opinions concerning the lockdowns' artistic impact, it is important to note that, according to the above-mentioned survey, another 30% of the respondents reported facing a negative financial impact as well.

Besides the aforementioned initiatives, new methods for music's creation and distribution were initiated by the crisis in Belgium. Live streaming constituted the most profound example, with music events (concerts, DJ performances, etc.) moving online. The new era came with the following three (3) categories of cooperation: a) physically playing together, 2) specialized online real-time communication platforms' use for playing (e.g., Zoom), and 3) alternative remote methods (e.g., musical parts being recorded and then pasted together).

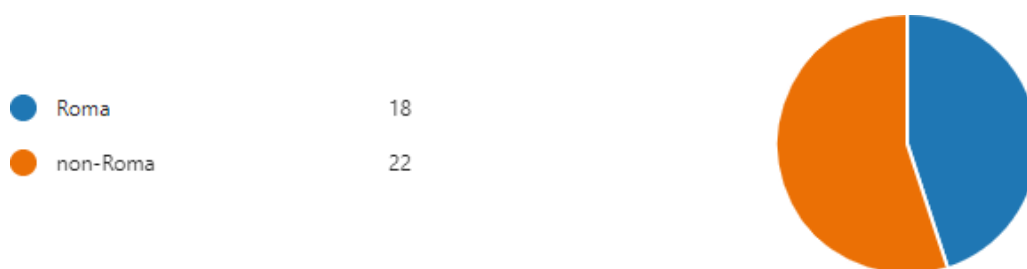
But what is more important is the fact that, according to survey, based on 234 interviewed musicians (most of them residents of Belgium), even though most artists moved online, with 13% of them providing positive comments regarding, for example, the quality of sound in the platforms, and with the pleasantness from the social connection and synchronization scoring above average, it was reported that many were still unaware of the existence of such tools and addressed issues of self-efficacy, contrasting the 'digital evolution' in music performances (e.g., live streams) and education (e.g., online teaching), disclosing a need for more adequate music training strategies for musicians, in order to keep up with the highly digitalized world.

The findings from the field research conducted, inter alia, in Belgium by the partners from ILECAD, interviewing more than 30 people - most of them residents of Belgium, with many coming from other places in Europe as well -, reported a similar situation. The partners from ILECAD, conducted their field research in Belgium, and in the general framework of the countries of the PAL Network, the first pan-European Cooperation among grassroots and civil organizations aiming to support the social progress through extended use of education and employment tools with 71 members from 23 countries, by distributing online questionnaire, and receiving useful feedback and information.

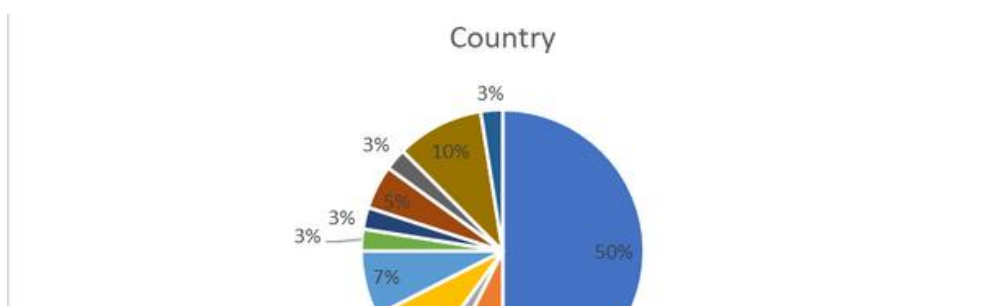
Those that responded to the interviews by filling out the Online Questionnaire were both of Roma and non-Roma background and

represented a variety of countries across Europe.

The chart below depicts the background of the respondents:



As for the countries of residence of the respondents, most of the respondents (51%) came from Belgium, but other countries were also reported, like Spain, Romania, Greece, and others, as depicted in the chart below:



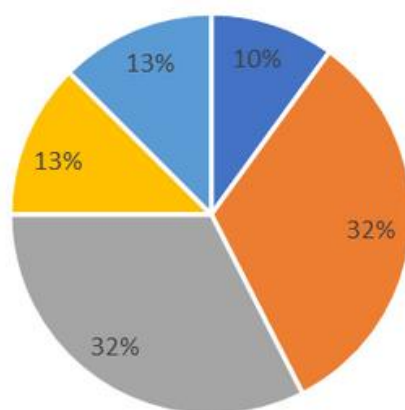
The questionnaire's respondents all represented the music sector of their countries, operating in different positions and specific fields, e.g., singers, songwriters, producers, all either amateurs or professionals.

Playing guitar
pianist
student of classical music
singer
graduated music school
vocalist
child Eurovision
musical festival
professional
Singer songwriter
composer
consumer of musical creations
music teacher

But what is the first thing that should be strongly noted in this section, is the respondents' evaluation of the current situation in their countries, regarding the musical sector and Roma music. The respondents were asked to evaluate on scale of 1 to 5 stars (with 1 star being the 'Very bad' situation and 5 stars being the 'Excellent' situation).

The results as depicted below:

How would you evaluate the current situation in your country, regarding the musical sector and Roma music?



According to the results, it is obvious that most of the respondents had neutral to negative opinions regarding the current situation of the music sector in their countries, both generally and specifically for Roma musicians.

Seeing that 32% of the interviewed people rated the questions with 2 or 3 stars, one can safely conclude that the music sector of each respective country may be facing certain difficulties and challenges, that leave the musicians dissatisfied and/or behind.

Another 10% rated the current situation in their countries with only 1 star, giving the worst possible evaluation.

What is interesting is the fact that only 13% of the respondents gave 4 or 5 stars to the question, meaning that the satisfaction the music sector provides in Europe, generally, may lie on the specific circumstances going on in the respective countries.

Yet the respondents were asked to provide further explanation to their evaluation, so that the identification of the problems could be as exact as possible.

Precisely, the negative opinions addressed the fact that Roma musicians don't get much promotion - "Roma Italian music is only for Roma people" stated a respondent from Italy, meaning that people leave Roma music to be heard only within the community. Other negative answers addressed the discrimination Roma people face generally, which also applies to their music. Society, according to a respondent, seems to not expand Roma culture, which leads to lack of awareness regarding Roma music, and consequently their exclusion. The pandemic and the inequalities brought with it were also addressed.

There were also several comments regarding efforts that were made in several countries for the protection and support of the musicians (e.g., the Belgian legislation regarding musicians' copyrights), but these efforts weren't always distributed in an equal manner.

And what is still interesting, is the fact that even those who evaluated the current situation positively, still had some second thoughts regarding Roma musicians and artists specifically - except for one respondent who

addressed the fact that Roma music is received in a friendly manner.

Some responds in the word cloud below:

Some legislations have being put into place, especially regarding our copyrights. However, we are still trying to recover
I personally have zero knowledge of Roma music culture and I think that this is something that society chooses not to expand

our music doesn't get much attention so it is difficult to have a career
Roma musicians in Bulgaria are quite musical and are people who dedicate themselves to it.
Roma music is not really recognised in Spain, only within the community itself but not outside it.
i am originally from serbia where we have in little country thousands of romani orkestar and singer But in italy is not like this. They don't have traditionally romani music.

Since COVID there has been more effort made to address this situation but it feels too little too late
I'd like to see more inclusion regarding our music and culture
the music sector is quite a niche in Italy
Its a music friendly to all public
Roma musician are a minority .

Accordingly, when asked whether the Roma music is represented equally to other musical genres, the responds were mainly negative (83%), while only 18% of the responds were positive:



The respondents provided, also, some interesting thoughts regarding the reasons behind the above-mentioned phenomenon. The social status, i.e., being a marginalized minority, as well as the general discrimination, racism, stereotypes, and the fact that it isn't a mainstream genre, are some of the most common examples.

The word cloud below depicts some of the respondents' most common thoughts:

Stereotypes
Discrimination
separated from common music
No representation

They are considered a marginalized community
not considered mainstream
No promotion
prevailing of other genres
lack of awareness
Racism
Social status

The same situation concerns the difficulties and opportunities of Roma musicians; when asked whether they believe that Roma musicians face the same difficulties, or have the same opportunities within the music sector, compared to other musicians, most of the respon-

dents (80%) answered negatively, and only 20% positively:

● Yes	8
● No	32



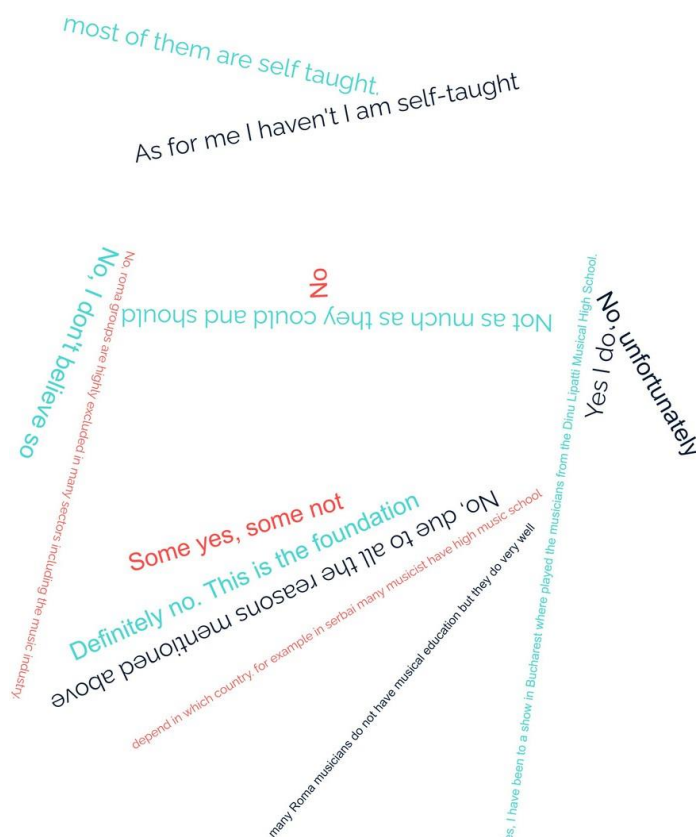
And when it came to the respondents point of view regarding the reason of their previous negative answer, that was not so much different from the previous questions: discrimination, racism, stereotypes and lack of awareness were the most mentioned factors. Also, suspicion, lack of education and lack of representation, were mentioned:

As a matter of fact, the mentioning of Roma musicians' lack of proper education, or exclusion in terms of equal educational

marginalization
We don't receive the same education
Discrimination
don't get the publicity
they are excluded, as a community in general
lack of awareness
lack of representation

(and promotional) opportunities, is quite important at this phase of the research.

That is because the next question concerned whether Roma musicians receive appropriate education to support their careers, equally to other musicians (e.g., from other musical genres, or musicians who aren't from minority groups). The respondents had some interesting input, as depicted below:



It is rather obvious that most of the answers were negative, stating again that discrimination and marginalization leave Roma musicians behind in terms of educational opportunities. Even the answers that were more positive, it seems that they refer to certain circumstances, or specific good cases that are experienced in the respondents' specific countries.

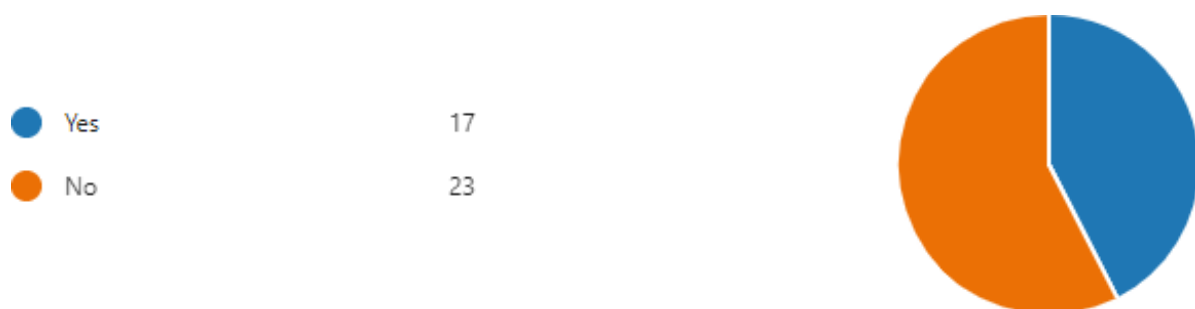
With all that being said, it is rather obvious that the interviews provided interesting thoughts regarding the general situation in the respondents' countries when it comes to music and, especially, the space Roma musicians take up in the music industries.

Most of the respondents addressed the topics of discrimination and marginalization of Roma communities and, consequently, Roma musicians; a phenomenon that leads to deep inequalities and gaps when it comes to Roma music's representation and promotion, as well as to the creatives' opportunities for professional careers in the music sector.

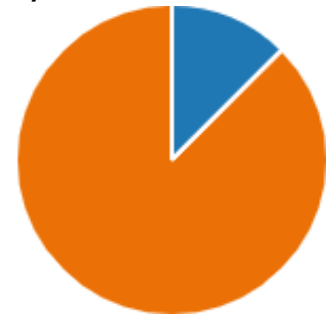
When the COVID-19 pandemic emerged, a massive digitalization of the artworks and artistic products was reported. Regarding the musical sector, specifically, many artists (musicians, singers, etc.) transferred their art into digital venues and spaces, in order to continue their production and keep in touch with their audiences. Digital meetings helped in the production processes, while concerts were either recorded or performed live via digital meeting platforms.

In this part of the survey, the respondents were asked to give their input regarding their knowledge on the use of digital tools in the process of creating music. Even more specifically, they were asked whether education opportunities on such tools and processes would be found beneficial for them and, specifically, for Roma musicians, in order to support their careers.

Accordingly, when the respondents were asked about whether they know how to use new methodologies and innovative digital tools for the creation and promotion of their music, 57% of the respondents answered negatively, and 43% answered positively, as depicted below:



However, when asked about whether they believe that Roma musicians know how to use these tools or not, the gap grows even bigger, with most of the respondents answering negatively (88%) and only a 13% answering



positively:

Yet what should be highlighted here, is the unanimous belief of all the respondents regarding whether education and training on such tools would benefit them and Roma musicians, generally, or not. And that is important because this project, under which this field research was carried on, seeks to assist its targets groups specifically in this direction, by providing them the opportunity to get trained on new, innovative tools and methodologies, that'll support their careers and provide them with those necessary skills to boost their professionalism in 21st century's music sectors.

Accordingly, all 40 respondents answered positively, as depicted in the chart below:



And when asked to explain further, the general comments addressed the beneficial aspect on Roma musicians' skills, the opportunities that will give them to boost their careers, as well as their empowerment and their representation

it does benefit everyone
career development
they will become better
be represented on the up to date quality of music.
important that Roma musicians also use new technologies and tools
will feel more empowered
important to know how to make digital music
boost the Roma musicians' skills
If they learn, possibilities will be more.
helpful
interesting to broaden my horizons
benefit us to actually launch professional music careers
boost my career as a musician
skills

The last question of the survey referred to the changes that the respondents would, generally, like to see in the music industry, regarding Roma musicians' representation; many interesting thoughts were shared by the interviewed, like equal opportunities, more confidence, further protagonism, stronger infrastructure, less racism and discrimination, etc., as depicted here:

less discrimination
more confidence
a valuable selection based on talent and hard work
stronger infrastructure
More appreciation
less stereotypical
less marginalization
better representation
less racism
More exhibition in national canal tv. More visibility in Italia.
more opportunities
combining their music with pop features, or features from other genres
Roma music can be relevant
Inclusion and diversity.
more involved and represented
more expanded music industry
more agents, tours, festivals, networks
More Roma musicians being promoted

5. Conclusions

The results presented above were gathered from the desk and field research that was conducted within the framework of the Erasmus+ project "Romani Influence-Support the co-creation, circulation and promotion of minorities music in Europe" (PAL SOUND), with the aim to interview 100 people from the music sector of the partner countries, and receive information regarding the current situation of the countries' music sector, with emphasis on the space Roma music and musicians take up in the sector.

Moreover, the research aimed at examining to what extent musicians, and especially Roma musicians, are familiar with the use of digital tools and new, innovative methodologies, in their process of creating new music and collaborating with other artists.

This research constitutes the preparatory stage, before the creation of an innovative training curriculum, that'll aim at assisting musicians and creatives, especially from the Roma community and other marginalized communities, to boost their careers and upgrade their skills in the use of new methodologies and tools when creating, in order to stay up-to-date with the ever-changing artistic environment, which has been massively digitalized, after the COVID-19 pandemic emerged.

The results, that were presented and analyzed above, were gathered from interviewing more than 100 people, all relevant to the music sector (musicians, songwriters, teachers, songwriters, producers, graduates, cultural workers and managers), from different European countries.

What can be said about the results presented, is that most of the respondents observed and addressed many difficulties and gaps

in the music sectors of their countries, and especially in regard to the Roma musicians' career and skills development.

Precisely, the respondents addressed inequalities, the perpetuated discrimination that the Roma communities are still facing, with obvious consequences to their artistic careers and their exclusion from the support and opportunities the music sectors might provide.

Most of the respondents addressed the disproportionate promotion and representation of Roma music, as a genre, as well as of Roma creators and artists. Besides, the lack of awareness to the public and the perpetuation of the stereotypes were identified as problems, which lead to further exclusion, since many societies are unaware of Roma music's origins and contribution to the musical environment, as we know it today.

When it comes to the Roma musicians' education and skills, especially on innovative methods and tools for music creation, the respondents unanimously responded that Roma musicians need further training opportunities, in order to have equal opportunities with other individuals from the sector and halt the phenomenon of them being left behind.

Last but certainly not least, the also unanimous positive view over educational opportunities and trainings (on the above-mentioned digital tools) is to be noted; that is because the core aim of this project seeks to develop training opportunities for the use and practice on such tools and methodologies for the promotion of Roma music's positive narrative - and since the need for such trainings was identified, therefore the next step would be for them to be provided.

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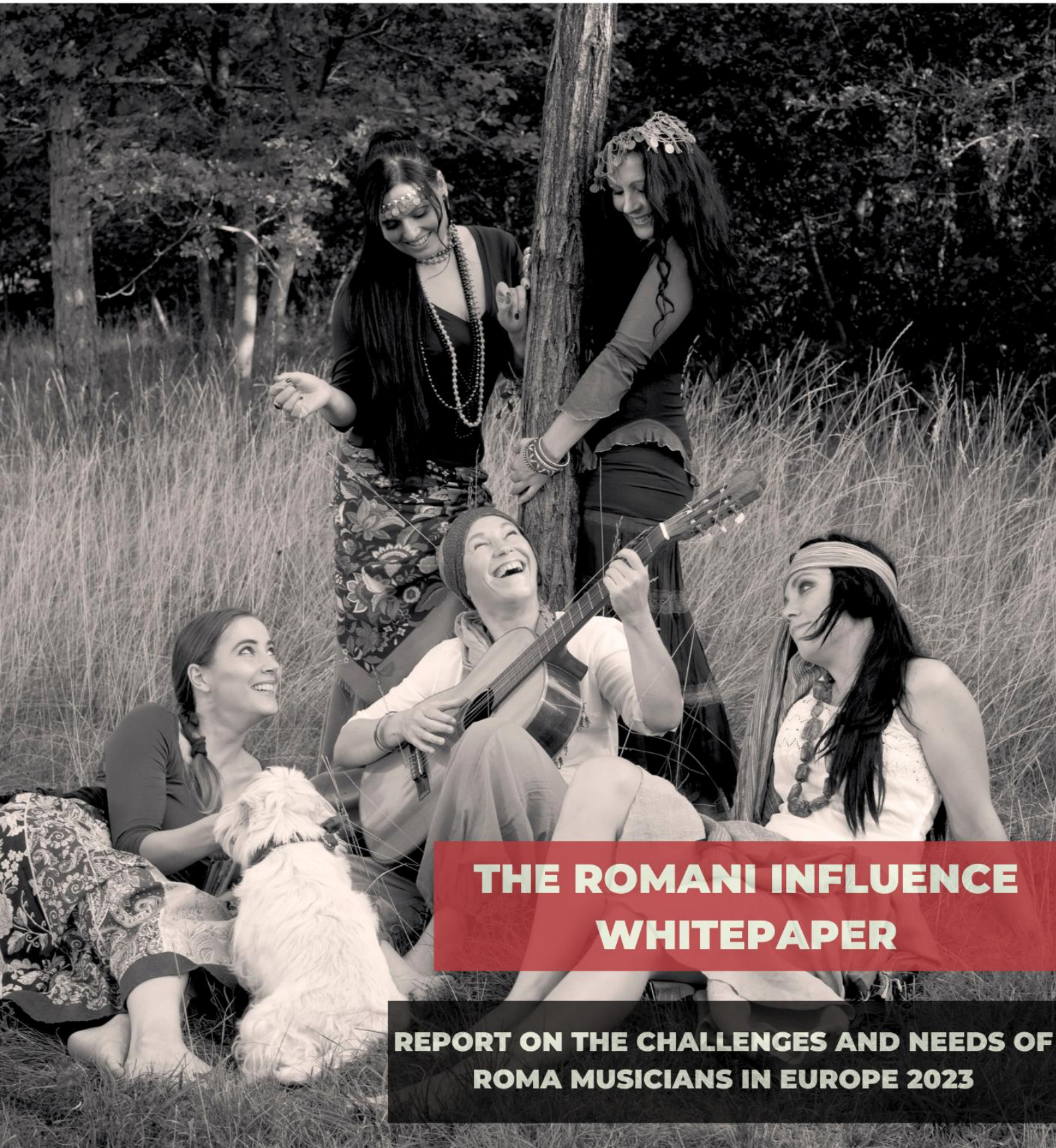
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7. The partnership





THE ROMANI INFLUENCE WHITEPAPER

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