

## I AM A EUROPEAN ROMA WOMAN

*What is the campaign main tool?*

Four minute spot, produced for International Women's Day 2009, which features flashes of the personal history of five Roma human rights activists from all over Europe along with footage from Roma settlements across the continent. In these times of crisis, as social cohesion is greatly endangered by the multiplication of acts of extreme violence against Roma in Hungary and elsewhere, the campaign exhorts the public to respect Roma in all their complexity.



### *Objectives*

Our main objective is to provide a new approach to the way Romani women are represented in order to play with the question of social identity and force the public to ask themselves questions about the artificial divisions our social perceptions are based on. We expect that changes in the perception of Romani women will have an effect of general perceptions of Roma, regardless of gender.

We wish to use the widest possible means of modern communication for the spreading of our campaign, thus making it grow exponentially beyond the traditional tools used by human rights activists to reach the kind of visibility which will enable us to build a new image of Roma in the popular subconscious.

### *The Campaign*

The campaign was initiated in reaction to rising inter-ethnic tensions in Hungary and elsewhere in Europe. With the campaign, we Roma women wish to shape attitudes towards Roma through a medium which has proved over time to be one of the most influential ones in terms of altering the public's deeply embedded perceptions: short, powerful audiovisual messages.

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In these times of economic and social crisis which is clearly leading to the rise of full-blown pogroms against Roma not only in Eastern Europe but also in Italy, it is clear that the scapegoating of those who are stuck in the lowest strata of our societies is the easiest, and most natural way to channel frustrations about the slowing economy. We cannot let the mainstream media lead the crusade to ease our societies' growing frustrations by destroying our communities.

There is worrying evidence that the role of the media acts as a tool for disseminating racist ideas and perspectives and fuelling anti-Gypsism and Romaphobia. A rise in extremism in the media is reported by ENAR's 2007 shadow report. Problem areas include distribution of anonymous, violent, anti-Roma racist messages via SMS and the internet, real-time encouragement of television viewers or internet users to participate in racist exchanges. Roma are frequently portrayed as criminals, thieves, beggars and drug users.

The „*I'm a European Roma Woman*” campaign is a direct answer to these phenomena. It is an initiative by Roma women in which we used our own personal histories, our own messages and worked on them, built a concept out of them so we could use our own faces and our own personalities to draw attention to the discriminative behavior Roma women face.

The campaign video was released less than a month ago but we already have huge feedback about it. Many of those who have seen it tell me that Roma are not like this, that we are exceptions, we are not the norm. That Roma are not educated like us, do not look like us and are not this open about their ethnic identity. We think that it is time that we are responsible for our own image, for defining how people see us Roma women. Our organization is determined to continue down this path, to keep „confusing” people with audiovisual messages which they do not expect, to make them think about who we really are. We are doing this through our documentaries shot across the world but we also have new ideas about other short video campaigns. This is the most effective way to counter those stereotypes the mainstream media keep reproducing.

The campaign was made thanks to the Mundi Romani staff, who worked on it voluntarily, as well as to those Roma activists who feature in the spot. The lyrics to the music were written especially for the campaign and the music was made in one single night using the lyrics and the video by world famous jazz band Babos Project Romani. We did not receive any financial support from anybody, including from Amnesty International Hungary, who were our partners in this initiative and whose logo appeared at the end of the video when it was released for the Hungarian public on March 7th.

#### *Who received the message?*

The full version of video was first released to the public in Hungary as a result of our partnership with Amnesty International. It appeared on public screens across Hungary, including in the Budapest metro for four days from March 7th to 11th.

After appearing on You Tube in English, Hungarian and Spanish, the video's success was clear in attracting a wide array of comments and its dissemination started growing to about 11.900 at the end of April 2009.

At the end of April the video reached about 12.000 viewers on YouTube on the three languages: English, Hungarian and Spanish.

In early March it was also presented, to great acclaim, at a Roma Women's Conference in Madrid. On 6-7 of April it was presented at a conference in Bulgaria as well.

It is now running online on many web site links across Europe. It was broadcasted on television screens on more than 5 countries, including in the US (San Francisco). Couple of press agencies transferred the campaign to their newspapers and magazines in their countries as Poland, Bulgaria, Serbia, Macedonia, Spain and France.

On April 2nd, the video was uploaded on French msn (<http://actionssolidaires.fr.msn.com/default.aspx>), thus reaching about 3 million French-speaking MSN users daily across the world. And this is only the very beginning...

INFO PROCEEDED IN	MEDIA	DETAILS
<b>WORLD NEWS AGENCIES</b>	-B92 -NEWW -REPORTERS d'ESPOIRS	-Serbian New Agency -Poland News Agency -French New Agency
<b>INTERNATIONAL</b>	DECADE OF ROMA INCLUSION AWID- ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN DEVELOPMENT	-Decade Web site -Web site
<b>HUNGARY</b>	-DUNA TV -ATV -AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL -HIRSANOK -KIVETITO	-Broadcast -Broadcast -Web site -Web site -Web site
<b>WEB SITES</b>	FACEBOOK	Social Networking
<b>MACEDONIA</b>	-NGO <i>DROM</i> -KUMANOVAC	-Web site -Kumanovo City most visited web site
<b>UNATED STATES OF AMERICA</b>	-MONTHLY REVIEW MAGAZINE -CREATIVE- I -ROMANI VOICE - California	-Web site -Web site -Conference and events
<b>SPAIN</b>	-UNICAMOR -Fundación Instituto de Cultura Gitana – International Woman Day -Spanish National TV	-Web site -Conference, Madrid, March 7-8, 2009 -Broadcast, 8 April 2009
<b>BULGARIA</b>	- "Empowerment of Romani Women in the Context of Contemporary Social Policies – Exchange of Experience and Good Practices" Center for Human Resources and Regional Initiatives -TV 2	-Conference, Sofia, April 6-7, 2009  -Broadcast
<b>POLAND</b>	THE NETWORK OF EAST-WEST WOMAN/ NEWW POLSKA	Web site
<b>FRANCE</b>	REPOSRTERS d'ESPOIR MSN	-Web site -Web site - social networking
<b>SERBIA</b>	B92	Radio and Website
<b>E-MAIL</b>	-Roma Virtual Network -Roma Daily News -Roma_forum -Info_Roma -Roma_Ex_Yugoslavia	-International Yahoo group -International Yahoo group -Macedonia Yahoo group -Macedonian Yahoo group -International Yahoo group

A 30- second Hungarian version of the spot is being screened from 6th to 10th March 2009 on hundreds of public screens across Hungary.

## SCRIPT OF THE VIDEO SPOT

### ISABELA

Isabela, philologist, sociologist, human rights activist  
IN OCTOBER 1992, POGROMS HAD ALREADY STARTED IN THE WHOLE OF ROMANIA.  
WHEN I HEARD VOICES AND THE BANGING ON THE DOOR, I THOUGHT THAT ME AND  
MY FAMILY WERE GOING TO GET KILLED. I WAS ONLY 14.  
MY NAME IS ISABELA. I'M ROMANIAN AND I'M A ROMANI WOMAN.

### VIOLETA

Violeta, journalist, human rights activist  
I WAS HUMILIATED IN SCHOOL FOR BEING A ROMA. I DON'T WANT MY CHILDREN TO  
GO THROUGH THE SAME EXPERIENCE.  
I'M VIOLETA. I'M BULGARIAN AND I'M A ROMA WOMAN.

### OSTALINDA

Ostalinda, anthropologist, lawyer, human rights activist  
IDENTITY...IT'S A VERY COMPLEX THING. MINE HAS MANY DIFFERENT SIDES.  
I'M OSTALINDA. I'M SPANISH AND MEXICAN. I'M ALSO EUROPEAN...AND A ROMA  
WOMAN.

### ALINA

Alina, sociologist, human rights activist  
IT HURTS ME THAT SOME OF MY BEST FRIENDS TURNED THEIR BACK ON ME WHEN I  
TOLD THEM THAT I AM ROMA.  
I'M ALINA. I'M ROMANIAN AND I'M A ROMA WOMAN.

### KATALIN

Katalin, sociologist, film maker, human rights activist  
MY MOTHER WAS THE FIRST FROM HER VILLAGE WHO GOT TO UNIVERSITY. TODAY,  
THERE ARE 42 MEMBERS OF MY FAMILY WHO GOT UNIVERSITY DEGREES.  
MY NAME IS KATALIN. I'M HUNGARIAN AND I'M A ROMA WOMAN.

**I'm a Roma Woman  
I'm a European Woman  
I'm a Woman**

### Lyrics:

Romanes	Englsih
Šudri balval phurdel katar me avilom Maren man, shuden ma Feri kaj me rom som Maren ċi na džanen Katar me avilom Phenas lenge dosta! Te pharilo o ilo Ušten sa Romalen keras šukar trajo	A cold wind blows over the land where I come from Black rain covers the cold road They beat me and ignore me just because I'm Roma They beat me because they don't know where I'm from It's time for us to say enough! Our hearts cannot take any more of this. Rise all you Roma for a better life.

**Activists featuring in the spot:**

**Isabela Mihalache** from Romania is Senior Program Manager at Open Society Institute (OSI)'s Roma Initiatives department, Budapest

**Violeta Naydenova** from Bulgaria is program coordinator at OSI's Roma Initiatives department, Budapest  
**Ostalinda Maya Ovale** from Spain is the Head of Women's Rights Unit, European Roma Rights Centre, Budapest

**Alina Covaci** from Romania is program officer at OSI's Public Health Program department, Budapest

**Katalin Bársony** from Hungary is a film director. She is currently the editor in chief of Mundi Romani at Duna Television Hungary

The 5 young Roma women got acquainted throughout years of common action and participation in the International Roma Movement.

The **Roma Woman campaign spot** was directed by Csaba Farkas, Katalin Bársony and Péter Kohut. Thanks to the co-operation of a devoted team, production and post-production took three days all in all. Music and lyrics for the video were created especially for the campaign.

Directed by: Csaba Farkas, Katalin Bársony

Camera: Csaba Farkas; Tisztartó Szilár

Edited by: Péter Kohut

Music: [Babos Project Romani](#)

Lyrics: Ágnes Daróczi

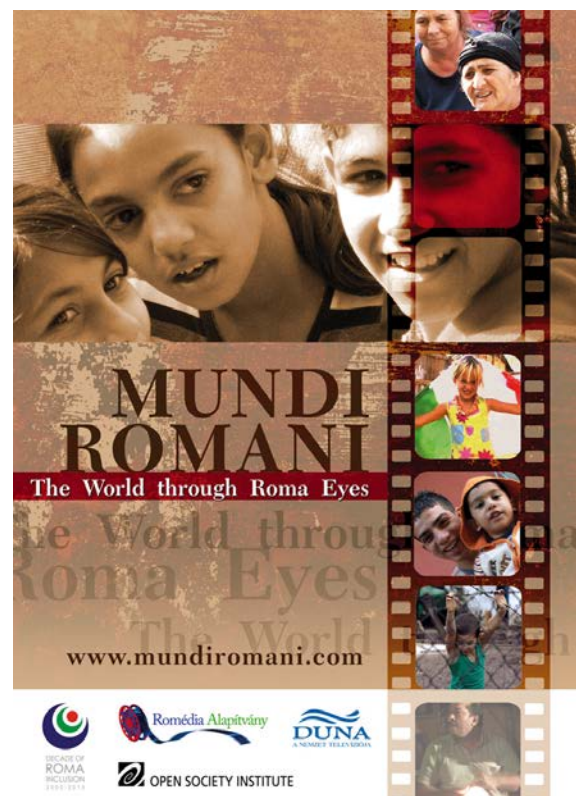
Storyboard: Katalin Bársony; Csaba Farkas; Marion Kurucz; Emilia Klöpfler

Colorist: Benedek Kabán

Graphic design: Kamilla Kovács

Make-up: Eszter Szántó

Assistant: Éva Blénesi



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