

NEW FACES OF ANTIGYPSYISM IN MODERN EUROPE

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PREFACE

The present volume includes papers from the International Seminar “New Faces of Antigypsyism in Modern Europe” held in Prague during the World Roma Festival Khamoro 2012.

The overall objectives of the seminar were to warn of the escalation of antigypsyism and anti-Roma violence and to call on the Council of Europe member states to start taking responsibility and guaranteeing protection for the largest ethnic minority in Europe.

The seminar brought together scientists, representatives of European institutions and Roma activists who discussed issues of antigypsyism from historical, political, sociological and economic points of view as well as the causes and possible consequences of the escalation of antigypsyism in the modern world.

INTRODUCTION

Hristo Kyuchukov

“ANTI-GYPSYISM” OR “ANTIGYPSYISM”

In my discussions with my colleague and friend Markus End (e-mail exchange of July 9, 2012) on defining the term “antigypsyism”, we looked at the details of how this term would be written. It was Markus End who turned my attention to the fact that writing the word “antigypsyism” with a hyphen (anti-Gypsyism) means that the word “Gypsy” is accepted and recognized. However, written without a hyphen, this word has almost exactly the same meaning as “antisemitism”. I agree with this argument.

The argument against the hyphenated form is best shown by another text¹ arguing against the hyphenated form of “anti-Semitism” as follows: “If you use the hyphenated form, you consider the words ‘Semitism’, ‘Semite’, ‘Semitic’ as meaningful. They supposedly convey an image of a real substance, of a real group of people - the Semites, who are said to be a race.”

“Antigypsyism is a historically emerging and self-stabilizing social phenomena combined of 1) a homogenizing [sic] and essentializing [sic] perception and description of certain social groups under the stigma of ‘Gypsy’ or other related

1) <http://sicsa.huji.ac.il/hyphen.htm>

terms 2) an attribution of specific deviant characteristics to the stigmatized 3) and discriminating social structures and violent practices that emerge against that background.” (Markus End, e-mail of July 9, 2012).

As an editor, I have taken the liberty of correcting the term “antigypsyism” in all of these articles to this form. I think this should be an example of how, in future publications, this term should be used.

Defining “antigypsyism”

According to the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, antigypsyism is “[...] expressed, among others by violence, hate speech, exploitation, stigmatization and the most blatant kind of discrimination”.² The forms of antigypsyism can be found in all aspects of life: School, university, the workplace, the media, political parties and their leaders, and the Internet. In most cases, antigypsyism is trained and taught at home from an early age, when majority-society children are told fairytales that an “old Gypsy woman or man will come and take the child away if the child does not behave”. At the playground, non-Roma mothers do not allow their non-Roma children to play with Roma children, because “they are dirty”. When a non-Roma child does something wrong, the parents will punish the child with the words: “Don’t behave like a Gypsy!”

In contemporary Europe, antigypsyism starts being taught at kindergarten and continues to be taught in school and at university. Particularly in East European countries, these forms of racism and discrimination are so predominant that non-Roma people are not aware of them. It is considered “natural” that in school textbooks there is no information about Roma and their contribution to world history and culture. It is considered “natural” that the Romani language is not taught in the schools, although the European Charter of Minority Languages and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights say minority children have the right to study in their mother tongue from the level of kindergarten. Most Education Ministries will not implement such recommendations, explaining that “The Roma do not speak one language”, “Romani is not a real language”, or “there are no teachers in Romani”. At the same time, Education Ministries will not open university programs to prepare kindergarten or primary/secondary school teachers to teach in Romani.

Another factor strengthening antigypsyism in these societies is the media, which plays an important role in forming antigypsyism in contemporary Europe. Journalists who are products of the majority society have the same negative attitudes towards Roma as any member of that society. The media presents only negative examples of Roma life. Never, or only very rarely, will the media show the positive

2) This definition is taken from an unpublished paper of the “Preparatory Meeting of Civil Society Representatives” on 21 March, 2012 held in Brussels.

sides of the Roma, although there are thousands and thousands of good examples of Roma life. Positive examples of Roma cannot be sensationalized, which is what makes newspapers marketable. At the same time, the negative opinion in society is being formed towards Roma and misrepresented information is often used in hate speech against Roma, who are called humiliating names in the news.

A third important factor playing a role in forming antigypsyism is politicians and their political parties. Political leaders' public statements form public opinion towards Roma, and often the Roma are blamed by politicians for all the problems of these societies. Some political leaders in Europe gain political prestige with their negative comments about Roma and use the Roma issue in their electoral campaigns to win votes.

All of these factors in forming contemporary antigypsyism are presented in this volume.

Organization of the volume

The volume has three parts. The first part includes papers by university professors and researchers. Specialists in the field of Roma Studies such as Professor Thomas Acton, Professor Eva Davidová, Associate Professor Hristo Kyuchukov and Associate Professor Jaroslav Balvín, together with a specialist on the issues of antigypsyism, Markus End, present the historical, socioeconomic, and educational bases of antigypsyism in different European contexts.

The second part of the volume presents the insiders' view of young Roma on antigypsyism. Different authors such as Angel Ivanov, Guria Bumbu, Andrea Bučková, Jarmila Balažová, and Anna Darósz, present recent anti-Roma events in East and Central European countries such as Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia.

The last part of the volume presents the views of institutions on these anti-Roma events. Different institutions and organizations, such as the European Commission, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, the European Roma and Travellers Forum, the Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat, the European Roma Rights Centre, and the International Romani Union express their positions on current antigypsyism in Europe.

At the end of the volume we include the "Joint Statement of the Participants in the International Expert Seminar" which was also separately distributed by the organizers of the seminar, the NGO Slovo 21, to different governmental and international institutions and organizations.

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PART I

ANTIGYPSYISM PAST AND PRESENT

HISTORY OF ANTIGYPSYISM IN EUROPE: THE SOCIAL CAUSES

Markus End

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Introduction

The phenomenon of hatred against the so-called “Gypsies” has existed in different forms for more than 500 years. From its very beginnings, it has posed a massive threat to the lives and health of the people stigmatized as “Gypsies”. Antigypsyism showed its true potential for destruction in the Holocaust committed against half a million Roma, Sinti and other people seen as “Gypsies”. Until now, antigypsyism has been the cause of the stigmatization of certain people as “Gypsies”, for the segregation of and discrimination against such people, and of physical attacks against Roma, Sinti, Travellers and other people seen as “Gypsies”.

After presenting a short working definition of antigypsyism, I will argue for a perspective shift in approaches to antigypsyism. Therefore, I will propose to differentiate between five different levels of antigypsyism, and afterwards I will present an analysis of three important tropes of antigypsyist semantics.

Definition

I see antigypsyism³ as composed primarily of two elements. First, there is resentment against “the Gypsies”, which involves a majority society sharing images and beliefs and projecting them onto specific social groups, among them mainly those which identify themselves as Roma, Sinti, Kalderashi, Irish Travellers, etc. The second element of antigypsyism consists of discriminatory and often violent social structures and actions with which Roma or other people stigmatized as “Gypsies” are confronted.⁴

The Holocaust⁵ committed by the Germans and their collaborators marks the worst manifestation of the persecution of people as “Gypsies”. An estimated 500,000 people were killed as “Gypsies” from nearly every European country, and tens of thousands more were victims of forced sterilization, deportation, or detainment camps.

3) For a discussion of the German term “Antiziganismus” see Heuß 1996, p. 110, Wippermann 1997, p. 11f and Zimmermann 2007.

4) Within this paper, I will use “Roma” as the term for people who self-identify as such. “Gypsies” is used for the projected image that majority societies have made up for Roma and for others.

5) For the history of the genocide of the Roma, see Michael Zimmermann’s benchmark book, “Rassenuropie und Genozid” (Zimmermann 1996). See also Rose 1995.

However, the persecution of people as “Gypsies” has a much longer history and has been happening for nearly half a millennium. In today’s Europe, antigypsyism is still among the most virulent and most violent forms of social resentment. Millions of Roma live in inhumane circumstances in many European countries, among them Bulgaria, Romania, and Hungary. In Kosovo, tens of thousands of Roma were cast out of their homes after the civil war. In many European countries such as Italy, the Czech Republic and Bulgaria, violent uprisings against Roma people have taken place during the last year. At the same time, Roma are the biggest so-called “ethnic minority”⁶ in the European Union.

Despite this violent history and the current dangerous situation, social scientific research on antigypsyism is still in its early stages and has yet to become its own discipline; very often antigypsyism is not even recognized as a separate phenomenon, distinct from racism and/or antisemitism. A critical treatment of antigypsyism that goes beyond a simple declaration of its existence is rarely found in publications about National Socialism or racism and rarely found in the public discourses of European majority societies. Moreover, the theoretical discourse on antigypsyist resentment has barely taken place.⁷

Therefore I want to propose an approach to antigypsyism which tries to avoid some of the mistakes that have been made in the past, aims for a multi-level analysis, and offers an explanation of antigypsyism completely separate from those approaches which focus on the cultural differences between Roma and the members of majority societies.

Shift in perspective

The most important shift in an analysis of antigypsyism must be a change of focus from the object of discrimination – the Roma – to the majority society. Until now, especially at European level, the fight against antigypsyism has always focused on the Roma. Improving the poor living conditions of many Roma is an important goal. However, it is even more important to understand the fact that these poor conditions must be interpreted as the result of centuries-long discrimination, which still exists today. Working to improve the living conditions of many Roma without acting against antigypsyist discrimination is a lost cause in the long term. Of course, this does not mean that improving people’s living conditions will not help them, even for decades. It simply will not eradicate the discriminatory effects of antigypsyism and its social sources.

6) For the term “ethnic” I follow Claudia Breger, who called for an historical analysis of this term. See Breger 1998, p. 2, footnote 7. See as well the first thesis of “Elements of Anti-Semitism”, Horkheimer 1989, p. 177-178.

7) For notable exceptions see Maciejewski 1996; Hund 1996, 2000; Willems 1997; Breger 1998 and Scholz 2007.

What one needs to understand is that antigypsyism does not necessarily need actual Roma people to discriminate against. Antigypsyist images can very well be projected onto other groups as well. Also – and this is the most important point I want to make – it is necessary to understand antigypsyism as an ideology, a form of communication, a set of images and stereotypes which are constructed, perpetuated and reaffirmed by majority societies. We need to not only analyze these discriminatory actions and structures themselves, but also to analyze the patterns, logic, and functions of antigypsyist ideology.

Five levels of antigypsyism

I want to propose, therefore, a differentiation between at least five different levels of antigypsyism (see End 2011): **The first is at the level of social practice.** It is on this level that real people – in the vast majority of cases, people who describe themselves as Roma, Sinti, Kalé, Travellers, etc. – are injured or killed, kept out of the labour or the housing market, or are simply looked at strangely and frowned upon. Even though there is still a lot of work to do, there are already vast amounts of information about this level of antigypsyism on hand, both on historical and current forms of discrimination.

The social practices that sum up the first level take place in a **historical and social framework** of political developments, economic crises, anti-discrimination laws, etc. I understand this framework to comprise the second level of antigypsyism. Very often, elements of this social and historical framework are misinterpreted as the causes of antigypsyism, for example, when politicians argue that an economic crisis is the cause for violent uprisings against Roma. There is an important difference between the cause of something and the specific circumstances which promote or restrain the manifestation of antigypsyist social practices. An economic crisis might well be one aspect of a social framework which promotes the development of antigypsyist movements, laws and actions, but it is not the cause for antigypsyism itself. In order to be able to accuse “the Gypsies” of being responsible for a bad economic situation, individuals and groups in the majority society need to have inherited a whole set of traditional antigypsyist images, stereotypes and legends prior to passing such a judgment. **Those images and stereotypes are the third level of antigypsyism** I want to point out. On that level, we must analyze all the “knowledge” about “Gypsies” which is produced and re-produced in European majority societies, in the minds of its members and in the products of its culture industries. There are a lot of studies, especially literary studies that describe these images⁸.

However, generally those images and stereotypes are misinterpreted as either a false generalisation of someone’s real experience, or as merely an image which the majority society creates in order to deal with the “strange” and “unknown”. I want

8) For some interesting works in the field of literary studies see Breger 1998, Saul 2007, Solms 2008 and Uerlings/Patrut 2008.

to point out that both of these interpretations are untrue. The logic behind the image of the “Gypsy” has nothing to do with either real experiences or with a reaction to “strangers”.

On the fourth level, I put the analysis of the structure of the meanings of antigypsyism. I understand this structure as a combination of abstract meanings (see Holz 2001: 133-140) underlying antigypsyist stereotypes and images. Those images exist in their current form not by chance, but are the expression of a system of meanings and a structure of communication that defines them.

This structure’s specific form is a reaction to the social norms and values that evolve in the majority society. Those norms and values are the fifth level of antigypsyism in the model I want to propose. To enforce values and norms in the majority society, the “Gypsies” serve as projective counter-images of the “good citizen” who behaves well and thinks and feels according to such norms and values. Since forms of behavior and feelings that violate these norms continue to exist in society, the members of the majority project those violations of social norms and values onto the figurative “Gypsy”. The authorities follow suit and help establish the figure of “the Gypsy” as the model of a certain kind of non-conformist behavior (see Lucassen 1996).

The historical background of antigypsyism in Europe

The historical situation in which European societies mention “Gypsies” for the first time in the early modern period has to be understood as one of fundamental social change. As Franz Maciejewski points out (Maciejewski 1994, 1996), Western societies went through a process that changed the foundations of society itself. According to Maciejewski, economically this meant the process of transformation from an agricultural economy to a capital-based economy, including the rising significance of labor and work and the necessity of self-discipline. Politically, it meant both a process during which territorial and later nation-states were established, as well as the strengthening of their monopoly on violence. At the level of gender relations, it meant the strengthening of the patriarchy, as well as the establishment of the feminine-coded private sphere and the masculine-coded public sphere, as well as the strengthening of sexual moral codes. Culturally, it meant the establishment of a scientific approach to the world, together with the necessity for a rational approach to one’s way of life (see Maciejewski 1994: 42, Maciejewski 1996: 12.)

All of those fundamental changes had to be forced upon individuals, and changes in cultural values and norms had to be enforced and reproduced by religious and political authorities. It was a long process and many individuals and social groups hesitated or even resisted joining the new order. The image of “the Gypsy” was one that helped promote these values. By allowing individuals within the majority to project all failed attempts to live up to such values on those stigmatized as “Gypsies”, majority-society members were given the possibility to strengthen their individual and

collective identities and to take violent actions against those stigmatized as the ones questioning the new values and thus as symbolizing an imagined, archaic society.

Elements of the structure of meanings

I want to support my argument by analyzing three of the basic tropes of modern antigypsyism (see End 2012).

My analysis focuses on the meanings of *non-identity*, *archaic parasitism* and *the absence of discipline* attributed to “the Gypsies”. To be clear: What I am referring to is not an analysis of “Roma cultures”, nor of a social utopia, nor of any real characteristic of an actually existing group. Rather, this is the description of patterns of antigypsyism which can be found in antigypsyist texts or media from majority societies.

Non-identity

The first important element of the antigypsyist structure of meanings is typically expressed as follows: “Gypsies don’t have a stable identity. On the contrary, their characteristic is non-identity, ambivalence.” The antigypsyist structure of meanings is always a dual structure, because it tells us something about the majority society as well. In today’s antigypsyism, the “we-group” is always formed nationally, so for this example I will choose the “Germans”, although it could be any other European nationality as well: “Germans have a stable, rooted, fixed and undivided identity.” These two statements may sound extremely abstract at first, but they express a part of the core sense of antigypsyism.

With the development towards territorially organized states, the necessity to control the population and to define individuals as parts of the state grew. The first mode of directly conveying identity to state subjects was through religion. In the early modern period, the common people were obligated to have the same religious denomination as the nobility. In the world outlook at the time, there was no place for an ambiguous position between religions, nor was there the possibility for an individual to change religion, nor even the non-existence of religiousness. However, these transgressions were exactly what writers at the time said about “Gypsies”: That they were either without religion, were changing it whenever they wanted, or inhabited more than one denomination at the same time. So the role of the “Gypsies” in this antigypsyist mentality was not only that of having another denomination or another religion of the same kind as one’s own, it was also that of occupying a position outside the whole system of religious identity.

The same position outside the system of identities was assigned to “Gypsies” in the realm of nationalities and national identities. In antigypsyist thinking, the image is not that “Gypsies” have a nationality like “the Germans”, “the French” or “the Polish” do; rather, what is said about “the Gypsies” is that they have no nationality –

they do not belong anywhere and are not rooted anywhere at all. Another version of this national non-identity is the use of the term “not really”, which functions like this: “Yes, they are Germans, but they are not really Germans like other Germans.”

However, this is not the same “not really” of other “not really Germans”, such as “Turkish” or “Polish” people. “The Gypsies” are really not really. Even the racists would not know which country to send them to, which country they “belong” to. So the racist slur “Turks go back to Turkey” wouldn’t be possible for the imagined “Gypsies”. Their place in the identity-system of nationalities is that of non-identity⁹.

The language of “eternal nomads”, “unstable life styles”, “flexibility” and even that of “the Gypsies” as the “real Europeans” must accordingly be interpreted as one of the ways in which majority societies strengthen their specific concepts of stable, discrete group identities.

Archaic Parasitism

The second central element of antigypsyism is the trope which I will call “archaic parasitism”. Its abstract form goes like this: “Gypsies don’t produce their food themselves. They get it from their hosts by ignoring the basic rules of economy.” Of course, there is a counter-narrative to this for the majority society: “Germans earn their bread by working hard”.

Those statements help to explain the difference between the structure of meanings (which is the fourth level of antigypsyism) and the images and stereotypes (i.e., the third level). The stereotypes about “Blacks”, “Jews” and “Gypsies” regarding the subject of “work” appear pretty similar at first: The verdict on all of them is that they are supposedly “lazy”, without the “will to work” etc. The prejudices sound so alike that many scholars have come to believe there is a parallel between the different structures of mainstream resentment regarding “work”. However, analyzing these deeper meanings offers the possibility of better understanding what antigypsists mean when they say “Gypsies” are “unwilling to work”. What they have in mind is often described as a kind of parasitical relationship. The majority society produces the food while the “Gypsies” consume it. This comparison is the core of all “Gypsy”-related stereotypes, such as “begging”, “petty thieves”, “living from their music”, “social fraud” or “fortune-telling”. The “Germans” produce the food, the “Gypsies” eat it.

The function of these narratives in this case is different from that of the unwillingness to work ascribed to “Jews” or “Blacks”. The meaning of “Jewish laziness” in modern antisemitism is also that “Jews” consume the food which the majority society produces, but their procurement of it is different. Whereas the construction of the “Gypsies” is built on the idea of ignoring and undermining

9) For the non-identity attributed to “Jews”, see Holz 2004.

standards of civilization, such as the rule that one has to work and to own property or the very idea of property as such, the construction of the “Jews” signifies them as stretching, perverting, or overreaching the modern achievements and rules of civilization, such as stock exchanges, banks, interest, the media, etc. So the “Jews” are imagined to be too civilized, whereas the “Gypsies” are imagined as archaic.

The construction of “Black laziness” is again different. In racist Eurocentric worldviews, “Blacks” live directly from nature, without working. They just gather from the rich environment (i.e., nature) they live in. The construction is not a parasitical one, but rather that of closeness to animals, to nature itself.

The antigypsyist view of “the Gypsy” in the economic field of “work” is that of an archaic parasite who lives off of the products of the hard work done by the majority society.

Absence of discipline

This idea expresses itself as follows: “Gypsies tend to directly satisfy their desires. They are not able to discipline themselves.” vs. “Germans discipline themselves and plan for the future.”

This trope is relatively easy to understand. In many ways, “Gypsies” are the symbol for a lack of discipline, organization, or planning, in contrast to the “Germans”. This trope, just like the others, is most obviously connected to the disciplinary actions undertaken throughout past centuries in early modern Europe.

The notion finds expression in many variations. A very colorful example is Grellmann’s notion that “Gypsies” would be able to live days without bread, as long as they have their tobacco (Grellmann 1787: 47-48). Tobacco here is the symbol for pure, undisciplined lust. Bread, on the other hand, is the symbol for rational nutrition, without any taste or satisfaction. Not only is this “Gypsy” form of consumption imagined as direct, desirous, and purely in the present, so is any action of the so-called “Gypsies”. In the antigypsyist worldview, “Gypsies” play music without notation, have sex without restriction, spend all their money on festivities, and don’t think about tomorrow, much less the distant future.

Conclusion

This text is just a very short insight. I have tried to point out that all the stereotypes that exist about “Gypsies” are rooted in the historical social processes of norm- and moral-production which European majority societies have undergone. That does not mean it is not possible to find Roma who behave in the ways that antigypsyist stereotypes imagine them. Rather, it means that it is irrelevant whether Roma people do or do not behave in these ways, because antigypsyism is not based on truth or facts. Antigypsyism will continue to serve as a basis for the stigmatization of Roma people as “Gypsy nomads” even where they have been

settled for generations, and as “Gypsy beggars”, even where they work as farmers. It is a cultural tradition, an image, and a form of communication that is reproduced independent of the real life of the people stigmatized as “Gypsies” – a construction in the minds and the cultural products of the majority society that does not require any relationship to real experience. This is why it is so important to change perspectives and analyze antigypsyism as rooted in majority societies, not in the Roma people themselves.

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ANTIGYPSYISM IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA DURING THE COMMUNIST ERA (1950 – 1989)

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In the history of the European Roma, two main approaches of majority societies to this ethnic group can be traced. The first was an absolute rejection of coexistence with Roma by outlawing their presence (mainly from the mid-15th century until the mid-18th century and then again during World War II). The other approach consisted in imposing the cultural model of the majority society upon Roma. In the 18th century, Maria Theresa and her son Joseph II tried to repressively but unsuccessfully enforce the latter method with the aim of the complete assimilation of the Gypsies. The same approach was applied in postwar Czechoslovakia, where the totalitarian regime tried to enforce it for more than 30 years, with increasing intensity between 1958 and mid-1989. These attempts, successful or failed, had many negative impacts on this ethnic group in terms of its character and nationality status.

The development of the solution to the “Gypsy question” enforced by the state in post-war Czechoslovakia may be divided into individual stages covering the following periods:

1945 – 1949

1950 – 1957

1958 – 1964

1965 – 1968

1969 – 1973

1974 – 1989

Each of these stages was characterized by a certain approach, later called a “concept for a solution”, that was either of a repressive nature or the result of efforts aimed at helping Roma at the cost of suppressing their ethnic/national specificity and originality. All of them had a common denominator, namely, the effort to conceive and solve the Gypsy question from the outside and from the top down through decisions taken by the political and state bodies of that time, without any cooperation with the “target” of the solution, the Roma themselves. With the exception of the fifth stage, i.e. of the 1969-1973 period, when a significant role was actively played by the Gypsy-Roma Union that was conducive of a more positive development in this context in Czechoslovakia, most of the stages in the totalitarian regime’s solution until 1989 were based on “about us without us” decision-making. This is one of the reasons why so many inappropriate concepts were implemented during the past 50 years, concepts that significantly deformed the developmental changes in the Roma way of life, their hierarchy of values, and their attitude toward their own identity.

Stage period	Responsible institution	Objective of the solution	Enacting of the implementation	Main means
1. 1945 – 1949		Emancipation of Roma population (theoretical)	Košice Governmental Programme (1945)	Guarantee of non-discrimination (theoretically) Providing possibilities to integrate with the society, find a job
2. 1950 – 1957	Ministry of Culture, Education and Information	Solution of socio-cultural issues (unsystematic)		- 1 st solution of socio-economic issues of Roma population; - cultural-educational work
3. 1958 – 1964	National Committees – departments for internal affairs of the Ministry of Interior	Conversion to sedentary lifestyle of all Roma, socio-economic settlement – with the aim of complete assimilation	Act no. 74/58 Resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia no. 58	- liquidation of the nomadic lifestyle - control of Roma people's residence - registration of nomadic and semi-nomadic persons (February 1959) (help of National Committees in conversion to sedentary lifestyle, finding a job, education)

<p>4. 1965 – 1968</p>	<p>Governmental Committee for the issues of the Roma population</p>	<p>Objective – assimilation (systematic)</p>	<p>Government Resolution no. 502/65</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - setting up of a Governmental Committee, commissions, authorized representatives for the solution -comprehensive and planned solution of the “Gypsy question” - systematic relocation and controlled “dispersal” of Roma (from Slovakia to Bohemia and Moravia)
<p>5. 1969 – 1973</p>	<p>Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in the Czech and the Slovak republics</p>	<p>Social integration (Czech Republic), acculturation of Roma (Slovak Republic)</p>	<p>Government Resolution no. 384/68; Government Resolution CR no. 279/71, Government Resolutions SR no. 210/71, 94/72, Government Resolution CR no. 231/72, Government Resolution SR no. 308/74</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - cancellation of the Governmental Committee, - cancellation of the Roma dispersal policy (in 1970 in CR, in 1972 in SR) - establishment of the Gypsy-Roma Union in CR and SR (1969) and its disbanding (1973) - systematic solution of the whole issue on the social basis

<p>6. 1974 – 1989</p>	<p>Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs</p>	<p>Modification of the method of social integration – later already recognizing of the ethnic specificity of Roma</p>	<p>Government Resolution no. 294 of November 1989</p>	<p>- certain liberalization (1989) - introduction of the term “Roma”, recognition of their ethnic identity, support of the Romani culture, requirement of higher education etc.</p>
<p>After November 1989 until today</p>	<p>Government Council for Nationalities</p>	<p>The previous solution of the Gypsy question by state but also other specific solutions cancelled, registration of Roma cancelled</p>	<p>Nationality rights (theoretically) – Charter of Human Rights (UN)</p>	<p>- Roma recognized as a nationality (possibility to declare it during census), establishment of Roma entities and parties, new problems</p>

The period of 1950 – 1957

The beginning of the 1950s saw increased activities of state bodies in addressing the Roma issue. A positive fact was the cancellation of the “Gypsy” Act, Law No. 117 of 1927, which applied until 1950, and the emancipation of the Roma population “de iure”. Roma were no longer subjected to a special policing regime (such as “traveler” identity cards, dactyloscopy, etc.)

A Government Resolution adopted in 1950 focused primarily on improving the material conditions “of this group of the population”. In some of the most problematic “Gypsy settlements” in Slovakia, the resolution initiated construction of roads, wells, hygienic facilities and power supplies. Attention concentrated also on the problem of school attendance by Romani children (until then the percentage of Romani children attending school had been insignificant) in order to eliminate their illiteracy. However, the necessary prerequisites for their attendance were not created at that time, nor was there any consensus of opinion as concerned the concept of a solution to “this problem”.

Especially after 1950, many discussions were held among the defenders of several different theories and views on this issue. These discussions were also reflected in the agendas of the first conferences initiated and organized by the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Oriental Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences in Prague, and mainly in the agenda of the first National Conference of Workers Cooperating with Gypsies held in Prague in 1952. Although certain appropriate principles, both theoretical and practical, were already formulated in that context, many of the proposed initiatives were never implemented in practice.

Most of these discussions at the beginning of the 1950s sought an answer to the basic question of whether to address the Roma question as a nationality issue. Most of the few experts in this field supported the self-awareness process of Roma as a nationality. In spite of this, the views of the political establishment later prevailed, and an inappropriate decision was enforced regarding the assimilation concept, i.e., the “gradual mingling” of the Roma with the majority population.

In March 1952, the Czech and Slovak Ministries of Interior issued directives on “regulating the conditions of life of persons of Gypsy origin” that became the basis for the work of the National Committees and social organizations with Roma in all areas of life. However, such initiative was taken only by the Ministry of Education and Culture and by the national healthcare system, while socio-economic and other important areas were neglected. In compliance with the political atmosphere of the 1950s, the aim of the directive was “to involve persons of Gypsy origin in the ‘constructive’ efforts of the people’s democratic state”.

Liquidation of the nomadic lifestyle – forced conversion of Roma to sedentary life (1958-1959)

The year 1958 was a milestone in the development of Roma in Czechoslovakia, and a very repressive one.

Due to the “so far unsatisfactory solution” of the “Gypsy question”, the initiative was assumed by the politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, which issued a resolution “On work with the Gypsy population in the Czechoslovak Republic” in April 1958. Based on this resolution, which was subsequently specified to reflect the needs of individual ministries and National Committees, Law No. 74/58 Coll., “on imposing a sedentary lifestyle on travelers” was issued. It was approved by the National Assembly on 17 October 1958 and became the legal basis for the liquidation of the nomadic lifestyle of Roma (particularly Vlax Roma) and all travelers. Pursuant to the implementing regulations of the Ministry of Interior of 12 December 1958, the scope of the law was extended to also cover persons who led a semi-nomadic life, including not only persons such as travelling comedians, knife-grinders and umbrella repairers, but mainly the entire semi-nomadic Roma population, i.e., the Roma who often migrated between Slovakia and Bohemia, but were otherwise traditionally sedentary. This legislative measure was rather questionable, as it did not actually eliminate Roma migration, but merely made it more complicated.

Section 2 defined a traveler as follows:

“Travelers living a nomadic lifestyle are persons who alone or in a group wander from one place to another and avoid working or use dishonest means to earn their living even if they have a permanent residence in a certain location”.

On the one hand, the law relentlessly and uncompromisingly addressed “the nomadic and parasitic way of life” while on the other hand boasting that it provided conditions so the nomads could change their way of life, as stated in Section 1:

“National Committees provide persons who lead a nomadic lifestyle with comprehensive help so they can convert to the sedentary lifestyle; they are mainly obliged to help these persons with finding a suitable job and housing and to educate them systematically to help them become orderly working citizens”.

On the basis of Section 4, the law’s closing provisions, the Czech Ministry of Interior issued directives for measures pursuant to the law and for the preparation of the nation-wide registration of these people on 8 December 1958 (the Slovak Ministry of Interior issued the same directives on 12 December 1958).

Until February 1959, Roma horse-drawn wagons (vurdona), or vehicle-drawn caravans could be seen on the roads of Czechoslovakia. In the cold late night and early morning hours of 3 to 4 February, census officers invaded Roma families, woke

up the adults and children, and recorded the persons present there. The village or town where those Roma happened to be on that day became responsible for them as their “home location” and was obliged by law to provide them with at least makeshift homes, with work for the men, and with education for the children, as well as with the necessary healthcare. Wheels were forcibly removed from Roma wagons and their horses were sold. The Vlax Roma in particular protested against such interventions, as horses had always been their companions and helpers.

This raid forcibly changed the traditional life the Roma had lived for hundreds of years.

During the 1950 census in Slovakia, almost 42 000 people who were 15 years old and older admitted to being illiterate, 25 000 of whom were of productive age. Of that number, more than 75 % were Roma. This number stayed constant for many years because the number of illiterate or semi-literate Roma youths reaching the age of 15 without completing elementary school was roughly equal to the number of persons completing literacy courses.

A literacy program for the Roma population (in the district of eastern Slovakia more than 80 % of illiterate persons were Roma) was launched at the end of 1951 and continued through the first half of the 1960s. However, these efforts did not bring much success, nor did those aimed at improving medical care and hygiene habits, as most of the measures were just formalities, designed without the necessary knowledge of the Roma mentality and, once again, mostly without the cooperation of educated Roma.

In 1956, the Ministry of Interior prepared a “Situation Report on the Gypsy Question in Czechoslovakia”. The number of Roma in the country was estimated at 130 000 at that time (but many more than the reported 16 000 Roma were living in Bohemia and Moravia).

The critical situation in the solution to the Gypsy question – primarily the increasing problems concerning the social field, employment, the way the Roma earned their living, their education as well as their housing conditions – got even worse in the beginning of the second half of the 1950s.

The period of 1965-1968

This period may be roughly defined by Government Resolution No. 502 of August 1965 and Government Resolution No. 384 of November 1968. The 1968 resolution, inter alia, cancelled the Governmental Committee for the Issues of the Gypsy Population and delegated its powers to the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, which was from then on entrusted with resolving these issues through National Committees, and the social security departments of the Councils of the Regional and District National Committees.

Government Resolution No. 502/65 establishing the Government Committee had been conceived in a new way with respect to a number of issues. The Government Committee was supposed to have guaranteed the necessary comprehensive approach. However, its new ways of solving this issue were also not well-thought-out; moreover, its concept for the solution was not based on scientific knowledge or practical experience. Thus, for instance, the concept established by the 1965 Resolution of a more even “dispersal” of Roma throughout the population by removing them from places where they were highly concentrated, was inappropriate and hardly feasible in practice. As a result of complications in the fulfillment of this solution to the “Gypsy question”, as well as for other reasons, the Government Committee was cancelled in 1968 and other changes were made in the approach and solution to the problem.

The plan to liquidate Gypsy settlements and their “dispersal from places of high concentration” was based on the census in the mid-1960s, in which the Roma population in Slovakia amounted to about 163 000 persons, i.e., almost 4% of the overall population. There were 1 027 Roma settlements, with 16 500 Roma families living in 12 500 shanties. Less than half of the Roma of productive age were employed and about 20 000 Roma were illiterate. The plan was to liquidate 611 Roma settlements (almost 7 000 shanties) by 1970 and provide substitute housing to 8 000 Roma families, representing more than 52 000 persons. In this context, the relocation of 2 170 Roma families (about 14 000 Roma) was planned within the specified regions and districts.

In Slovakia alone, the planned “dispersal” concerned almost 10 000 Roma families (about 63 000 people). In addition, the plan for this period included the construction of 284 wells, 537 basic hygienic facilities in the settlements, 120 km of access roads, power supplies for 70 settlements, etc.

The poorly-conceived, “grandiose concept of dispersal” of Roma families on such a large scale soon proved to be infeasible in practice, as were “the schedules of liquidation of gypsy settlements”, the relocation of thousands of people, and the principles of dispersal (which had been approved by the Government Committee and were further specified by the Ministry of Finance as the principles of providing financial compensation for the forced purchase of “gypsy shanties”). In addition, the “voluntary” relocation and dispersal were interpreted as the obligation of Roma families to move into a specified district, regardless of the Roma families’ own relationships and other aspects of life in their home locations.

In spite of this, the efforts to implement this concept, whose unfeasibility was obvious already at the time, came to a head in 1967. During that year alone, National Committees purchased from Roma (as a rule in return for a small amount of compensation) 1 931 shanties (the reported compensation for which was CZK 17 million). Of those who sold their shanties, 3 178 Roma moved to Bohemia and the rest to other locations in Slovakia. Although later 1 043 Roma moved back to Slovakia from Bohemia, their number in the Czech Republic increased by 2 135 persons.

The “Gypsy question”, despite society’s long-term efforts to radically solve it, did not disappear. On the contrary, it escalated both qualitatively and quantitatively, with a growing number of Roma and their continuous re-location throughout the whole territory of the state. Conflicts between Roma and the rest of the population became more frequent and obvious, although they were now taking place at another level, resulting from a new, different motivation compared to the past. The social isolation of a substantial part of the Roma population was persisting and deteriorating in various locations. The Roma themselves were gradually losing their traditional life values and certainties, which were not replaced by new values. They often felt a loss of Roma unity and identity as they were forced to “adapt” to the rest of the population and get rid of their Roma identity. This was conducive of new and increasing numbers of problems within the Roma community, the tragic impact of which has been made manifest only today. The consequences of these previous “concepts” have begun to emerge, concepts that not only underestimated the importance of familial relationships and social and ethnic links, but did not respect the very nature of the Roma ethnic minority, which should have been positively developed rather than suppressed and damaged.

The period between November 1968 and 1973

The important milestones in this period were the following documents and facts:

- Government Resolution No. 384/68 of November 1968
- Establishment of the Gypsy-Roma Union in the Czech and Slovak Republics in 1969 and its disbanding in 1973
- Government Resolution No. 279/70, which significantly changed the previous concept of the solution to the Gypsy issue in Czechoslovakia; the central focus now became the social integration of Gypsies. Through this resolution, the policy of “dispersal” was abandoned in the Czech Republic. In Slovakia, it was pursued until August 1972
- Government Resolution No. 231/72; this resolution superseded the two previous resolutions and set out a new concept for the solution, inter alia introducing scientific, particularly sociological, research in this field, the objective findings of which were, however, purposefully distorted in the research report explaining the resolution.

The basic implementing regulation in the field of the solution to the “Gypsy question” in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic was Government Resolution No. 231/72, which set out “principles better corresponding to the objective situation and the needs of further socialist development”. Thus, a gradual concept had been developed for the “social integration” of all Roma and their coexistence with the rest of Czechoslovak socialist society of that time.

Social integration – i.e., adaptation of Roma to the majority society - was conceived of as a long-term social process.

The program formulated by the state for this new solution to the Roma issue abandoned the previous concept of Roma assimilation but proposed to “integrate” Roma into society, taking into account their differences and respecting the positive specific features of this ethnic group “with the active participation of Roma in the solution”. This can be perceived as a certain kind of progress in this field, although in practice the situation was often quite different, as problems could not be addressed by short-term efforts or by isolated events or measures.

The progress in this stage was also hindered by the growing disagreement with such a solution on the part of the Roma themselves. Negative aspects of the inadequately conceived program came to the fore, but it was mainly the social and political pressures within the Roma population that, reinforced by the events of the 1968 “Prague Spring”, resulted in the establishment of the Gypsy-Roma Union in both Bohemia and Slovakia.

The establishment of the Gypsy-Roma Union in the Czech and Slovak Republics in 1969 temporarily increased the Roma’s awareness of their own identity and culture. Its establishment and activities were facilitated by the democratization process of the 1968 “Prague Spring”. One of the results of the solution to the previous problems in the nationality and ethnicity structure of Czechoslovakia was the preparation (in March 1968) and the approval (in April 1969) of the establishment of the Gypsy-Roma Union, first in Slovakia, and then in the Czech Republic.

During 1968, representatives of the Slovak Roma, including the first Roma physician in Slovakia, Ján Cibula, MD, of Klenovec, and Anton Facuna of Bratislava as the heads of the delegation, sent a proposal to the Prime Minister to establish a “Union of Czechoslovak Gypsies”, along with a request for his support in recognizing Roma nationality, permission to establish the Slovak Gypsy-Roma Union, to publish a journal, and a proposal for the political representation of Roma. Although recognition of the Roma nationality was unacceptable to the Czechoslovak political representation of that time, the Slovak Gypsy-Roma Union was later permitted. Roma representatives, as well as experts in the Czech Republic, however, continued to struggle for recognition of the nationality status of the Roma living in Czechoslovakia. Nevertheless, success in this area was not achieved until as late as in the 1990s, i.e., 25 years later.

Establishment of both Unions was possible mainly thanks to the preparatory work of a number of outstanding Roma personalities, mainly from the ranks of the intelligentsia, including Ing. Miroslav Holomek (later chair of the Central Committee of the Gypsy-Roma Union), the teacher Antonín Daniel, JUDr. Tomáš Holomek (the first Roma lawyer in Czechoslovakia), Zikmund Vágai, the historian Bartoloměj Daniel and others in the Czech Republic, as well as Ján Cibula, MD, Anton Facuna, Antonín Pompa, the lawyer JUDr. Gustav Karika, and a number of others in Slovakia.

In the Czech lands, the first constituent congress of the Gypsy-Roma Union was held on 30 August 1969 in Brno. In addition to aid from their permanent staff and leading personalities, both Unions received assistance from voluntary workers in specialized commissions in their emerging regional district and local organizations, and their Bulletin and a journal, *Romano lil*, were published. Their efforts and intensive activities were based on the statutes and program of both Unions.

At the end of 1969, the Gypsy-Roma Union in the Czech Republic had almost 1 500 members. One year later, it had 4 846 members, in November 1971 it reached 7 000 members, and in 1972 it had 8 500 members.

Both Unions became social organizations within the then-existing National Front. Historically, they were the first Roma entities representing the Romani movement in Czechoslovakia with activities based on their own programs and decision-making.

During their four years of activity, both Gypsy-Roma Unions recorded many achievements in the field of education and in the development of Roma culture (training courses, contests, festivals) as well as in the economic field. The first Roma farms were established, namely “Nevodrom”, attached to the Central Committee of the Gypsy-Roma Union, and “Butiker” within the Slovak Union, employing many Roma. A program for the revival of traditional Roma crafts was launched after the establishment of a Roma cooperative of artisan blacksmiths in the town of Podunajské Biskupice (nowadays Dunajská Lužná) near Bratislava. In the course of seeking the right ways of development, and due to a lack of experience in Union activity, a number of mistakes were later made, primarily in the farms. These partial drawbacks, and the allegedly inadequate activity of the Union’s members, were exploited by the political management of the National Front and, under pressure from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia the Gypsy-Roma Union was forcibly disbanded in April 1973, despite the protests of its management and all their supporters and experts on Roma issues. The actual reason for the disbanding was obviously political, as the Party bodies were afraid the Roma would enforce, through their Unions (particularly the Czech one), recognition of the status of Roma nationality, which they had been trying to achieve starting in 1972.

Liquidation of this first official Roma movement and political entity was an historic mistake. It represented the forced discontinuation of a promising development in which Roma were no longer the manipulated “objects of the solution” but its actual actors, participating in decision-making. The discontinuation of the process to revive the nationality-ethnicity issue affected developments in this field in both parts of the republic, as well as cooperation with foreign and international Roma organizations. In 1971, representatives of the management of the Czech Gypsy-Roma Union had actively participated in the first congress of the World Romani Union in London.

After 1973, all these activities were discontinued and the representatives of Roma or experts in the Roma issue were not allowed to attend any other congresses or events. Everything returned to the old practices. The Roma once again lost all their hopes.

Prior to that, a new Government Resolution, No. 384 of 1968, had been approved closing down the activity of the previous Government Committee, mainly, the centrally conceived and implemented long-term liquidation of “undesirable” (primarily Slovak) localities with high concentrations of Roma.

The Gypsy-Roma Union made one of the most important steps toward the present multiform, manifold activities of the Roma movement. It won recognition also on the international level at the first constituent congress of the International Romani Union (IRU) (the former World Romani Union) in 1971 in London. The GRU made the first, decisive step toward a change in the status and life of most Roma in Czechoslovakia, a change in Roma self-identification and self-awareness, and a change in the attitudes of the majority society.

The period of 1974 – 1989

This period was characterized partly by a changed approach to the Roma population, based on a concept designed by the Government of the Czech Republic at that time, which aimed at Roma “social integration”, i.e., their gradual adaptation to the majority society with a certain respect for their specific ethnic features.

Already in 1972, the Slovak Republic made a decision to pursue a different concept and to solve the “problem of the Gypsy population” through acculturation of the Roma. The term “acculturation” in and of itself already indicates the approach of the governmental and party bodies toward Roma at that time, which considered them as having no culture. Opinions on the need to eliminate the “cultural backwardness of Gypsies” were often mistakenly confused with Roma ethnic specificity which, however, was not respected much in this concept.

In January 1976, the Presidium of the Federal Government considered the revision report on the fulfillment of the Resolution of the Government of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic No. 231/1972 and approved amended principles of the national “socio-political measures for the care of the Gypsy population” which superseded the previously valid principles. The social care of the Roma population was to be conducive of the creation of prerequisites for the gradual, long-term process of generating Roma integration and their conflict-free coexistence with the rest of the society.

The concept of the coercive sterilization of Roma women introduced at this time was highly inhumane. Its implementation contravened human rights principles because, as was later found out through consistent investigation, a greater part of the women who underwent sterilization did not know about it in advance or were not informed about its consequences. In many cases it happened that these women were then abandoned by their husbands (who had also not known about the sterilizations in advance) because, according to the Roma traditions, an infertile woman is no longer a “true” woman. Such “solutions”, which also affected very young Roma women, met with a highly negative response and justified resentment, even abroad.

A number of educated Roma, as well as other people and experts on the Roma issue, were aware of the actual status of the Roma ethnic minority at that time, but it was impossible to publish the true facts. This was denounced by the dissidents of the Charter 77 on 13 December 1978, and the denunciation, signed by Václav Havel and L. Hejdánek, was presented for discussion abroad.

Accentuating a material and organizational solution to the Gypsy issue in the 1970s logically resulted in inadequate attention being paid to other spheres. One of the effects of the accent on the material aspect of the solution was the formation of a group or class of people who now tend toward material values and consumerism. The possibilities of the political approach to this issue that had prevailed so far had been completely exhausted, from the societal point of view, and it was necessary to develop a new concept.

In the 1980s, the milestones in the context of the solution enforced by the state in Slovakia were Government Resolution No. 141 of 1980, Resolution No. 23 of 1983 and primarily Resolution No. 102 of 1985, which already termed the further procedure of the solution to the Roma issue “socialization”, i.e., socio-cultural integration.

During the previous decades, the number of “sets of measures”, different schedules, and resolutions had been constantly growing, but these measures often remained at the declarative level only. Their implementation at different levels and degrees of management and the actual solution to the Roma issue therefore stagnated. Based on its most recent resolution, the government embarked mainly on the task of “minimizing the high proportion of the unhealthy population” through offering substantial financial incentives to Roma women who agreed to be sterilized.

In the 1980s, internal differentiation within the Roma population was increasing not only socially, but also in terms of their culture, their lifestyle, and their way of coexisting (or not) with the rest of the population. The previous accent on the improvement of the material situation of Roma had negatively affected or even deformed these other spheres.

The internal differentiation of the Roma groups in Czechoslovakia at that time introduced a new aspect. Some Roma voluntarily socially integrated or even assimilated in an effort to “adapt” to the others. However, many of them unduly accentuated the material component of their new lifestyle, unfortunately to the detriment of many positive Romani values; the Romani culture was fading away and their language was no longer used. The group of Roma living in inadequate living conditions and social poverty, mainly in the Roma settlements, still prevailed.

Conclusions of the overview of the developmental stages of the state-directed solution to the Roma question in Czechoslovakia in the period of 1945-1989:

The 45 years reviewed herein have shown that the attempts and efforts made by the society of the former socialist state at the “acculturation”, integration, or even assimilation of Roma with the majority population were absolutely inappropriate in terms of their concepts and also infeasible in practice. This was not only an issue of the socio-economic and so-called “cultural backwardness” of the Roma minority, but first and foremost it was an inter-ethnic problem, the problem of mutual coexistence, the coexistence of different ethnic groups or nationalities within a society and the overcoming of deeply rooted prejudices that further complicate this process. Despite certain achievements in the increase of a significant number of Roma people’s socio-economic status and changes to their material living conditions and lifestyle (often at the cost of losing their identity), the situation in this area is worse nowadays, namely as a result of the above-mentioned “solutions” designed by the communist society in the past.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BASES OF ANTIGYPSYISM

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The title I have been given by the organizers comes squarely from the old Marxist narrative of base and superstructure, within which the limits to human life and endeavor are set by two constraints; first, the absolute need to feed and clothe ourselves, without which we cannot even survive; and second, the creative wellspring of human desire which leads us to accumulate both the objects of desire and the means of obtaining them. Cultural phenomena are explained as the theoretical facilitation and legitimization of the material satisfaction of needs and desires, that is, a superstructure upon the material base. And indeed, if the organizers have looked at the work of my youth, they will have seen that, drawing particularly on the Romanian social scientists P. N. Panaitescu (1941) and Henri Stahl (1980), my challenge to try to deconstruct the racist and post-racist cultural explanations of traditional Gypsyism, of relations between Roma and Gaje, has constantly made its starting point the question “cui bono?”, that fundamental tool of Marxist analysis which looks to the identification of collective economic interests as the starting point for explaining social action. So, both the actions of Romani groups, and the ideologies of accommodation, protection, control or exclusion which guide the “host societies” are ultimately guided by the desire to prosper and the need to survive. So, even if antigypsyism, like other variations of racism, once it exists, may serve the psychological needs of “authoritarian personalities”, the explanation of its origin, form and content lies not in individual psychopathologies, but in the socio-economic rationality of society.

The key words there, however, are “once it exists”. For as that almost forgotten luminary of late Marxism, Althusser (1969: 87-128) showed us, once ideologies have been created, they take on a life of their own. Once established, they multiply their own internal rationales, cultivated by the scholasticism of priests, bureaucrats and professors who strive to record and classify the remarkable inventiveness of the human imagination, in so far as they can do so within the twin material limitations of survival and desire/greed. And the long tale of vanished civilizations given us by the archaeological record shows that sometimes ideology does triumph over material necessity, and human individuals and groups sometimes go, willingly or stubbornly,

exultant or ignorant, or both, to their own destruction, but do not altogether die. Cultural residues of long-vanished modes of production, of which not the least are the vocabularies and structures of human languages themselves, are all around us, overwhelming us with the complexity of the antecedents of the knowledge which guides our actions.

The 20th century heirs of the Marxist tradition were wont to make a distinction between race and class (which in fact they derived partly, and mostly without acknowledgment, from Weber). Class concerned real material interests. “Race”, once Black people, starting with W. E. B. du Bois (1935), had taught Marxists (and the world as a whole) that it was not a fact of nature, became “ethnicity”, part of socially constructed status, hence part of ideology and the superstructure. Racism – and any ethnic politics – thus became a mere mask of class interest. Antisemitism could be a prejudice against a lower ethnicized class of workers in some places, or a racialization of anti-capitalism in others, the “socialism of fools”, as Bebel may or may not have said (Evans, 2005:496).

The only problem with all of this is that the distinction between ideology and science, which Marx actually shared with all the positivists from Comte to Parsons, does not, in the end, despite the very diverse efforts of Popper (1970) on the one hand and Althusser (1969) on the other, hold up. The habits of positivism continue to flourish in the social sciences, but within philosophy and mathematics, as Hofstadter (1979, 2007) demonstrates, Gödel’s (1962, originally 1934) theorem shows that even internal systemic consistency can only be guaranteed for bi-truth-valued systems. Any particular version of science is only as good as its own internal logic, which is itself prey to the paradoxes which affect many-valued logical systems, and also in the real world – just like any other ideology – may find its theoretical truths contradicted by brute material reality.

For, although brute material reality remains around to confound our dreams, our idea of reality is itself a kind of dream. We know it is at least partly a dream because we remember things we once believed that got contradicted by the material world around us. But we can never even be sure that those moments of contradiction will not be confounded as illusory in the future. Nonetheless to act at all, we have to avoid solipsism and retain a faith in probable truth. So even if we start all social analysis from the search for material interests, and place (relatively) autonomous ideology firmly into the cultural superstructure, nonetheless we cannot sustain the distinction that class is an effect of material reality, whereas race and ethnicity are mere cultural residues, because as we look at the dynamics of ethnic or caste interaction, we are forced to theorize these, too, as ultimately an historical outcome of the division of labor.

A great wave of idealist progressivism in the last third of the 20th century abandoned Marxist analysis along with the discredited official Marxist politics and eschatology because of the complexity and uncertainty thus exposed in the concept

of “the material.” There is a temptation therefore, to damn all speculation about the social and economic bases of antigypsyism as having only thrown up simplistic explanations, especially in the old Soviet bloc, which only delayed and then straitjacketed ineffectual attempts to end antigypsyism and integrate the Roma. What we need, some activists say, is firm and general anti-discrimination laws, and the will, and the trained lawyers, to prosecute the breach of them. A little less understanding, a little more condemnation, as a British Prime Minister once said.

But all previous attempts in human history to bend events to our desire by the mere force of the political have been defeated by the rediscovery that although humans make their own history they do not do so freely, and the limits to our freedom of action always appear in both material and cultural guise, because any understanding of a material limitation is also cultural. And, to reclaim the right to a Marxist inspiration, any cultural understanding can only exist in the space between material possibilities and material limitations.

The current discourse of the “intersectionality” of inequalities and oppressions, derived from half a century of feminist theorization of multiple oppression, hybridity, and translocational positionality, have brought the recognition that prejudicial ideologies of gender, class, ethnicity, differential ability, sexuality, and all kinds of other human difference are legitimating explanations of domination which take ideas from all over the place. They reflect both current realities and cultural residues, which means that theoretical explanation has to be grounded in specific and historical analysis.

Such analysis has already begun in many places. A useful starting point is the essay on “Anti-Gypsyism Research: The creation of a new field of study” by Herbert Heuss (2000:63), which posits that a common methodology does not lead to a universally applicable set of answers. The key paragraph of his paper runs:

“Anti-Gypsyism research must not be primarily read as an attempt to explain existing patterns of violence. Their causes lie beyond both the Roma themselves and the image of ‘Gypsies’ created by the majority. Anti-Gypsyism research must not posit the existing structures of prejudice as the primary cause for the persecution of Roma, or else they will retrospectively rationalize the irrationality of the historical forms of these antipathies. This also means that a historical continuity of anti-Gypsyist stereotypes cannot be unconditionally postulated. That the image of ‘Gypsies’ remained the same over the course of centuries does not necessarily mean that the function of this image did not change. The image of the ‘Gypsy’ had a different function under feudalism from under the Weimar Republic, and a different one there from in the Federal Republic of Germany.”

Heuss thus effectively finds three or possibly four different sets of social and economic bases over history, in Germany alone, for the perpetuation of antigypsyism. In the world as a whole, there must be dozens. But within the recurrent economic

patterns of the transition from feudalism to capitalism, there are some common themes – some structural alternatives, we might say. To survive at all within any state, Roma must find some form of protection to co-exist with antigypsyism. But this commonality is not sufficient to excuse us from detailed local analysis if we wish to understand a local situation. But the commonality is sufficient to convince many Gaje that there is some common pattern or explanation to what they perceive as “the Gypsy problem” – “vagrancy” in the 17th century, “race” in the 19th century. We need to be careful not to fall into the trap of searching for an anti-racist, or non-racist, general answer to the questions that “race” used to answer. It is as we have done that the cultural residues of previous antigypsyisms have mingled in the ideological melting pot of Gypsyism and its successor, Romani Studies. They can also mingle with any other racist stereotypes. Ní Shuinéar (1997) shows us how Irish people mingle the content of English prejudices against the Irish with more standard forms of antigypsyism, into their own prejudices against Irish Travellers. They project the stereotypes they fear onto those they are othering. Nor should we suppose Romani people themselves are immune to the cognitive content of the stereotypes of antigypsyism. The outcry over the English television series *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding* has seen many English and American Romanichals who should know better utilizing that double stereotyping of Irish Travellers to suggest on the internet that it is all the fault of Irish Travellers for willfully living up to the stereotypes. The pernicious and pervasive legend of the 4th nail of the cross¹⁰ almost encapsulates the internalization by some Roma of the co-option of Christian imagery to anti-Gypsyism.

One paradox is that the conceptual lineage of the Gypsy stereotype, and with it, antigypsyism, reaches back in time to before the origin of the Romani language, and an identifiable Roma people, as the work of Marsh (2008: 159-165) shows. Marsh’s doctoral research suggests that the Gypsy image originates with Byzantine occultists or fortune-tellers of the eighth century CE. After the defeat of the Persian Empire and its official Zoroastrian religion by the Muslims, Byzantine occultists spun the myth for their customers that they were heirs of the wisdom, skills and aesthetics that the Zoroastrians had inherited from the ancient Egyptians of the pyramids. Thus the pretence of an Egyptian identity could become an asset in the business not only of fortune-tellers, but of entertainers of various kinds. One may speculate that this persona, with its positives and negatives, was assumed also by fortune-tellers from the Dom who had been in the Middle East since the 9th century. Indeed some of the earliest archival instances that the classical Gypsyists cite as reference to Gypsies are rather early to have been speakers of Romani if we assume that the Romani language originates in the 11th century. This might suggest that the first people of Indian origin upon whom the “Gypsy” label descended were Dom, not Rom. When the Romani speakers consolidated their language and arrived in Anatolia, they may well have walked into an already-developed Gypsy stereotype.

10) This legend suggests that the Gypsy blacksmith who was commissioned to make four nails for the crucifixion only used three and stole one. Jesus cursed him and his family to wander for ever as a punishment for this theft, but then, after the blacksmith pleaded, mitigated the curse by giving the family permission to take small things that their owners did not really need.

McVeigh (1997) also suggests that antigypsyism may have been influenced by a more general anti-nomadism derived from European sedentary peoples' distrust of the military aggressions and invasions of pastoral nomads from the 5th century onwards. Even though the social and economic organization of commercial nomadic groups tend to lead to military and political dependence as surely as the logistical competences and collective solidarity of pastoral nomads have led to the establishment of military empires, the protectors and employers of commercial nomads have often been – and in the Middle East, still are – pastoral nomadic aristocracies. Different groups of commercial nomads possess all kinds of skills – music, metal-work, transport animal supply and care, carpet-supply, to name but a few, which were essential to a medieval army on the move, and many medieval armies had at their core pastoral nomad societies who had moved on from simply using their muscle to negotiate better terms with agriculturalists to either outright plunder or permanent feudal domination.

We can suggest that even before Grellmann (1783, 1787) the various stereotypes of vagrancy and conspiratorial deviance were adapted in different parts of Europe to different situations. People made sense of them according to their own local circumstances. The malign genius of Grellmann was to racialize this complex bundle of concepts in accordance with the emerging Linnaean biological determinism which would fit in with the “scientific racism” of the 19th century, the knowledge which guided the European powers for around a century. Even though “scientific” racism has been formally discredited after the defeat of Nazi Germany, all the elements which Grellmann synthesized, using racism as theory, remain to become entangled with contemporary Romaphobia.

Does this mean that we cannot “explain” antigypsyism simply by identifying its social and economic bases as lying in the relations of production which have led to the particular contemporary crises of capitalism, such as rising unemployment, inequality and relative poverty for which Roma are scapegoated? Indeed we cannot: Such economic reductionism would simply reproduce the recurrent failure of idealistic social-democratic policies. But at the same time, antigypsyisms cannot just be treated as irrational forces of nature. They originate in, and are explicable by, past eras in the relations of production.

Perhaps the most comprehensive study of exactly how the historical understanding of Romani/Gypsy/Traveller identities have been produced, negotiated, morally evaluated, and turned into the conceptual building blocks both of antigypsyism, and collective Romani political self-assertion has recently been produced by the Dutch social scientist Huub van Baar (2011). He adopts an indeterminist approach which uses meticulous archival research to explore the internal rationalities of different discourses, particularly in the era of Grellmann at the end of the 18th century, the foundational era of Gypsyism, which he contrasts to the last three decades of the European project after 1989, when the focus of the Western powers in the EU changed in a few years from that of gentle amelioration

of the position of the Roma in Western Europe to that of preventing migration from Eastern Europe. Van Baar shows us that with enough patient scholarship, we can gently deconstruct the intellectual genealogies of these positions – and then we can locate the often furious debates within the real clashes of material interests in the wider political world within which Roma are only a part.

The differences between different countries, and the situation and history of different groups of Gypsies/Roma/Travellers, do hold political possibilities. The particular racisms and classisms and sexism (and ableisms, of course) of one country may seem really foolish to the citizens of another country with a different constellation of social and economic bases of discrimination, and this may enable an internationalized Romani movement to engage international humanitarian sentiment to attack particular examples of oppression. Equally however, it may divide the Romani movement, as when sedentary East European Roma condemn the defense of nomadism as merely an internalization of a racist legitimization of evictions. We always need to understand more, to condemn less.

Antigypsyism may seem like a many-headed hydra of unimaginable complexity; but this is also an illusion. The complexity is, must be, imaginable. The heads may be many, but they are not infinite, and if we continue to cut them off one day we will lay bare their bleeding trunk, the immediate appearance of material reality. If we strip away the paint and the varnish, one day we will be able to start from scratch on the bare metal of our common humanity. Even though the historical tasks are arduous, it remains the case that, instance by instance, by uncovering the historical, social, and economic bases of the forms of antigypsyism, we can, bit by bit, emancipate ourselves from them.

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ON THE OPTIONS OF TEACHERS AND SCHOOLS TO COUNTER ANTIGYPSYISM IN SOCIETY

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Antigypsyism is a concept applied to theoretical and practical forms of aggravated hatred on the part of society's majority toward the Roma. It is analogical to antisemitism, except that the objects of ethnic hatred are the Roma, not the Jews.

In Czech schools, antisemitism is being explained and forms part of the curriculum in several subjects, mainly in history, literature, and civic education. The essence of antigypsyism, on the contrary, is not being explained at all. This is for a number of reasons, mainly the fact that the public conceives of the Roma as a marginalized group that has no chance of integrating into society, unlike the Jews.

Despite that, we are convinced that explaining antigypsyism should become part of education, not only at the university level, but also at the secondary and elementary levels, for both non-Roma and Roma. Teachers should be informed and educated in this area, even if these issues are not now covered in their respective subjects of instruction. At present, the most constructive curricula in this process are the pedagogical curricula oriented toward multicultural and intercultural education. Since mitigation of interethnic tensions is the objective of this process, communication between the teacher and the Roma pupil's parents is necessary.

Pedagogues have emphasized many times the important role of optimal communication between teachers and their pupils' parents. The importance of this relationship has been often proved in numerous research studies. A specific dimension is attributed to communication between teachers who are members of the society's majority and pupils and parents from a minority community, in other words, with the "others".

One specific minority that is considered the most problematic, conflictual and handicapped is the Romani ethnic minority. Lately, the relations between majority societies and the Romani minority have been very tense. This is evident from the various forms of violence between neighboring Romani and non-Romani populations in some cities in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The most recent case that stirred up public opinion in Slovakia was the violent act of a policeman in the town of

Hurbanovo. While off-duty, he walked into a Roma family's home and shot three people dead, severely wounding two others. His motivation is not yet clear, but he has already been accused of premeditated, i.e., planned murder. The atmosphere of racial hatred in Slovakia is quite apparent, as various statements responding to this incident on the Internet indicate wherein gratitude is expressed to the gunman for taking justice into his hands and demonstrating how to get rid of the "Gypsies". Last year, a mentally unstable man also started a shooting spree targeting a Roma family in the Devínská Nová Ves quarter of Bratislava, killing seven people and injuring others. That case was probably one of bad neighborly relations with the Roma family who were victimized.

Another interesting case occurred in the town of Břeclav in the Czech Republic. The outcome was one of severe injury, whereby a boy lost his kidney and accused three "Gypsies" of having attacked him. During the investigation that followed, however, it was established that the 15-year-old had made up the whole story for fear of telling his mother the truth, namely, that he had injured himself by falling from an eighth-floor balcony to the floor below while showing off in front of his friends. He deceived the whole country with his lie and stirred up considerable anti-Roma hatred in many people. The significant fact here is that the whole country believed him due to the majority's a priori attitude toward the Roma minority. They believed the Roma had "done it" even before the police could investigate. Singer Michal David even sent CZK 100 000 from the proceeds of a concert in Břeclav to the "suffering boy" to help him recover "from the attack by the Gypsies". This was supposed to be a symbolic gift to all the victims of violence. Here, again, the attitude and relationship of the majority society toward the Roma as a whole was in play. Even before the police began to investigate the event, a political party that promotes racial hatred called for a gathering of its members in Břeclav, where they demanded severe punishment for all Roma. Typically, before learning the facts, a number of regular citizens joined their assembly, aggravating tensions between the majority and the Roma minority.

The scenario in Břeclav was a replay of the mood of antigypsyism among the sympathizing citizens who joined with the so-called Workers' Social Justice Party, which promotes racism and hatred of "others", last year in the north of the Czech Republic in a region known as the Šluknov foothills around the towns of Varnsdorf, Rumburk, and Šluknov. Anti-Roma demonstrations took place there responding to certain criminal activities committed by Roma who had moved to those towns from elsewhere. These Roma came from other parts of the Czech Republic, forced to leave by an economic situation that made them unable to pay rent. Real estate speculators acting in concert organized the moving of these Roma families to housing settlements in the north. However the rents charged these families and the loans they borrowed from usurious lending organizations (such as the Provident company) just aggravated their existing problems. Before long, criminal activities emerged, followed by anti-Roma demonstrations. Such was the explanation of the events on which the

officials of the Šluknov town hall agreed with regional-level Roma coordinators and the director of the local “special” primary school. My research started with those institutions with the aim of identifying the true reasons for these phenomena. The results of my research are supposed to demonstrate how to overcome the problems arising from the hate-based relations between the Roma minority and the Czech majority.

My main objective was to show that all members of society, in general, are greatly responsible for the improvement of interethnic relations – not merely on the general level, but also as members of various professions, of whom schools, their principals, and their teachers play a major role. Moreover, in order to be able to find out whether schools and teachers have a long-lasting effect on these problems, we have to identify and generalize their views, as well as the views of politicians, civil servants, professionals, pedagogues, etc. I therefore compiled certain questions for those representatives, whom I try to ask about the “neuralgic localities of tension” mentioned above. The results (their responses) will be generalized for the purposes of interpretation in the form of a qualitative survey. I believe that presenting these issues and reasons to the public is important for the creation of a tolerant atmosphere in society, in addition to being interesting information for the readers of my article. Moreover, I would be happy if my forthcoming work encourages a more profound contemplation of the problems outlined and the responses obtained.

It is obvious that societal tensions keep growing, and that the Roma have become a scapegoat for many economic problems. These phenomena not only indicate racial intolerance and discrimination, but also include phenomena that are explicable by antigypsyism – i.e., the hatred of and systematic hostility toward the Roma and their people as a whole, for which the economic problems in society are just a pretext. Teachers, as members of the influential profession of education, should manifest the multicultural essence of their profession in this situation. The degree of this tendency in the Czech teaching profession can be ascertained by means of research in the form of various surveys, which is exactly what my study will be about. As the author of this text, I presume with confidence that the realization of this study is bound to facilitate deeper recognition of the multi-faceted relations between the Roma and non-Roma and demonstrate our professional obligation to take a specific stance on these issues. Education, intercultural communication, and the conscious enlightenment of pupils and their parents, both Roma and non-Roma, is the way to go. Rejecting antigypsyism as a trend similar to antisemitism is fundamental to teachers’ humanitarian mission and to their professional ethics.

ANTIGYPSYISM AND UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

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Introduction

Universities everywhere around the world are considered to be the most progressive institutions. Usually the most progressive innovations of humanity are born in universities – new theories, new research findings, new ideas in the field of any science. Most of the Nobel Prizes each year go to university professors and researchers for their progress in the science. One could not imagine that in the universities there is racism and discrimination, or that antigypsyism could exist there.

The present paper, however, is going to discuss not the most progressive innovations of university professors, but the antigypsyism and discrimination in the university education of two countries, Bulgaria and Slovakia. The authors of this article have experience working in different universities in East and Central Europe, but for approximately two years they have been working at Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra Slovakia, at the Institute of Romani Studies. The second author acted as Director of the Institute for approximately three years and the first author acted as Deputy Director of the Institute for approximately one year. This gave us the opportunity to witness different forms of antigypsyism and we will discuss them here. We do this for the purpose of recognizing the forms of antigypsyism in university education and fighting against them one way or another.

The Bulgarian case

The University of Veliko Tarnovo

Antigypsyism of the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency

During the academic year of 2003-2004, the University of Veliko Tarnovo opened a new university program, “Primary school education and Romani language”. The curriculum for the new program was developed like the curriculum of an already-existing program, “Primary school education and foreign language”. In the fourth year of the existence of the program, the National Agency for the Accreditation of University Programs had to evaluate all the pedagogical programs of the Pedagogical Faculty, where the “Primary school education and Romani language” program was also based. Together with the Romani language program, other programs such as “Primary school education”, “Pre-school education”, “Primary school and pre-school education”, “Primary school education and sport”, “Primary school education and foreign language” and “Social Pedagogy” were evaluated by the accreditation commission. Although almost all the pedagogical programs had the same problems and same weaknesses, the recommendation of the Chair of the Pedagogical Committee, Professor Georgy Bizhkov, to the Rector of the University was to close down the “Primary school education and Romani language” program and to stop accepting students. What is the history of the whole process? Let us go through it chronologically.

The Accreditation Council assigned an Expert Group whose head was at that time Associate Professor Galya Hristozova (now Professor). The Expert Group drafted an Evaluation Report on the Pedagogy Studies’ curricula accreditation at the University of Veliko Tarnovo and visited the university to make the assessment and draft the Evaluation Report to the Pedagogical Committee.

The National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency’s (NEAA) letter no. 382 of 26 March 2007 demonstrates that a copy of the Evaluation Report was sent to the Rector of the University of Veliko Tarnovo for comments and opinion, to be returned within two weeks. The university did comment on the report, as evident from letter no. 137 of April 12, 2007, filed under number 214 on April 27, 2007 at NEAA. In its opinion, the university explicitly disputes the Expert Group’s findings and conclusions about the “Primary school education and Romani language” program on each of the assessed criteria.

The Commission for Protection against Discrimination demanded from the NEAA a certified copy of its final act on the request for curricula accreditation from the University of Veliko Tarnovo, as that final act constitutes an official decision. However, the NEAA Chair only provided the Commission with a copy of a letter from NEAA to the University of Veliko Tarnovo describing the decision-making procedure of the Pedagogy Committee, its content, and its motives.

In letter 721 of 5 June 2007 from the NEAA to the University of Veliko Tarnovo, the Pedagogy Committee adopted the Expert Group's Evaluation Report. On 26 April 2007, the Committee had adopted its final act on curricula accreditation and granted accreditation to all B.A. and M.A. pedagogical programs at the Pedagogy Faculty of the University. The program "Primary school education and Romani language" was among those programs. The overall assessment of the program is "good" and gives a six-year term for its accreditation. However, the NEAA recommended the University stop accepting students for the program, which literally means closing it.

The Commission for Protection against Discrimination (CPD) found the following points in the Report of the NEAA to have been discriminatory:

1. RACIAL DISCRIMINATION as per Article 1.1 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination was committed by the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency through its Pedagogy, Music and Dancing Arts Committee (chairperson Prof. G. Bizhkov) through its decision of 26 April 2007, based on its differentiated approach toward the evaluation of the "Primary school education and Romani language" program. In that decision, the Committee granted curricula accreditation to the Pedagogy Studies Faculty at the University of Veliko Tarnovo and also recommended suspension of enrollment and training in that particular academic course.

2. By virtue of the Protection of Discrimination Act (PDA) Article 47, point 2, the CPD orders the restoration of the initial situation prior to the infringement described in point 1 of the present decision; imposing per PDA Article 76, Paragraph 1, point 1 on the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency mandatory administrative measures for eradicating the harmful consequences of this infringement and **INSTRUCTING** the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency to take measures to revise and abrogate the Pedagogy Committee's recommendation to the University of Veliko Tarnovo that the university suspend the enrollment and training of students in its "Primary school education and Romani language" course, and to formulate instead specific recommendations and deadlines for that course as it did for all other academic courses at the Pedagogical Faculty of the University.

3. Per PDA Article 76, Paragraph 1, point 1, the CPD **IMPOSES** on the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency mandatory administrative measures for the prevention of similar infringements in future, and **INSTRUCTS** the Chair of the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency when appointing standing committees' and expert groups' chairpersons and members, i.e., when exercising his powers under Article 10, Paragraph 2, points 6 and 7 of NEAA Rules of Operation, to promote the representation of persons of ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities in the decision-making process as per PDA Article 38.

4. As per PDA Article 4, Paragraph 2, the CPD **ESTABLISHES** that the direct discrimination on ethnic grounds and the infringement of PDA Article 4, Paragraph 1 has been committed by the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency and by the University of Veliko Turnovo, represented by Rector Professor Plamen Legkostup, through the suspension of enrollments into the program “Primary school education and Romani Language” for academic year 2007/2008, following the NEAA Pedagogy Committee’s decisions and recommendation of 26 April 2007.

5. The National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency and the Rector of the University of Veliko Trnovo, Professor Plamen Legkostup, have **ESTABLISHED** that the National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency, through its Pedagogical Committee’s recommended suspension of enrolment and training in the “Primary school education and Romani language” program, as stated in the curricula accreditation decision of 26 April 2007 for the Pedagogy Studies Faculty in that University, **committed discrimination** as per PDA Article 5 in conjunction with PDA Supplementary Provisions, Paragraph 1, point 5, by instructing the University of Veliko Tarnovo to commit the above-described discrimination.

6. As per PDA Article 47, point 2, the CPD **ORDAINS** the last provision restoring the initial situation before the infringement and, as per PDA Article 76, Paragraph 1 imposes on the University of Veliko Turnovo mandatory administrative measures for elimination of the infringement’s **harmful consequences**, by **INSTRUCTING** it to resume enrollment into the Pedagogy of Primary Education and Romani Language Studies.

7. The CPD **ESTABLISHES** that the infringements herein established have affected an undetermined number of persons but a determinable group of persons, i.e., those who identify themselves as Roma.

8. The CPD **DETERMINES** as per PDA Article 67, Paragraph 2 a period of one month from the delivery of this decision to the addressees wherein they shall take measures implementing these instructions and informing the Commission of them in writing.

One might wonder what the reasons were for the actions of the NEAA against the program “Primary school education and Romani language”. The main reason was the racism of the Chair of the Pedagogical Committee, Prof. G. Bizhkov, who commented publicly many times that there was no need for such a “Gypsy program” and said it was damaging the image of the university. Prof. Bizhkov, in his capacity as Chair of the Pedagogical Committee, had decided a few years before closing down the program in Veliko Tarnovo to close the same program at another university, the University of Stara Zagora.

However, the people from the Expert Group, headed by Professor Galya Hristozova, who visited and performed the assessment of the program, were no less racist. It is more than obvious that they were tasked with recommending closing the

program by the Chair of the Pedagogical Committee, Professor Bizhkov. During one of the hearings at the Commission for Protection against Discrimination in this case, the head of the Expert Group, Professor Galya Hristozova, said that there is no such a thing as the Romani language, that it is not even a language, and that “Roma children do not need to study the Romani language, because they know it”. These kinds of statements and many more were made insulting and humiliating Roma people in Bulgaria. Roma children who study in their mother tongue and who study the Romani language were written about in the first official Report of the Agency to the University.

Actually, the curriculum and all of the documentation of the “Primary school education and Romani language” program “was exactly the same quality as the ‘Primary school education and foreign language’ program”. If the Romany Program was recommended to be closed, then why was the other program not also recommended to be closed? The reason was simply the racism of the people in the NEAA, who also are university professors.

The antigypsyism of Bulgarian professors and students at the University of Veliko Tarnovo

While the impetus to close the program came from the NEAA on the one hand, there were also attacks against the Roma program from university professors and students who are ethnic Bulgarians, as well as attacks targeting Roma students. Some university professors are also members of the Bulgarian nationalist and neo-Nazi parties ATAKA and VMRO. They did not want so many “gypsies” at the university, because it might get the image of becoming “ziganized” (“gypsyized”), as they were saying, and they did not want to have any subjects regarding Roma and the Romani language.

In 2007, the university had to elect a new Rector. One of the candidates was Professor Legkostup. Before the elections for Rector, professors who are representatives of the two ultra-right political parties, ATAKA and VMRO, held meetings with all of the candidates for the position of Rector and set the condition that they would support the candidate who would close down the Roma program after winning election as Rector. It is more than obvious that Professor Legkostup was the one who agreed to do that, because he was supported by the representatives of ATAKA and VMRO at the university.

Bulgarian students were also showing their antigypsyism in different ways: Skinhead students attacking Roma students at the dormitory; writing different slurs about Roma on the walls of different buildings of the university; calling the students all kinds of insulting and humiliating names. Very often this was done in front of ethnic Bulgarian professors who did not react in any way to stop the racist comments or the humiliating name-calling.

Burgas University

Burgas University is another university with very high anti-Roma attitudes. What are the bases for such a statement? After closing down the Roma Program at the University of Veliko Tarnovo, we tried for approximately four years to open a BA or MA program including the canceled curriculum at Burgas University. The Rector and the Vice-Rectors were very supportive of this idea; but many professors were very opposed to it. The most striking situation was when an MA program on “Intercultural education and bilingualism” was offered and some teachers were against it. Their opposition was motivated by the notion that many Roma might come to study in that program, because “bilingualism” in Bulgaria is associated mainly with the Roma community. Although many interesting courses were offered for the program, none of them were accepted because the university staff constantly linked the idea that of “Gypsies” coming to their university.

Slovakia

Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra

In 2008, Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra opened a new program called “Romani language and culture” at the Institute of Romani Studies at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Healthcare. The program received accreditation from the Slovak Ministry of Education. However, the Dean of the Faculty, Professor Eva Sollarová, and the Director of the Institute, Associate Professor Rastislav Rosinský did not advertise the program well, and in the first year there were only four students registered for it. The program was a BA program and we had the idea to make it an MA program as well. The idea was to invite international students to study in Nitra, but the reaction of the Dean Sollarová was: “No, I do not want so many Gypsies here. The Gypsies always make problems!” The next year the program was not advertised at all, and no students were accepted into it.

Professor Sollarová’s work style at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Healthcare is discriminatory and openly racist, not only towards Roma teaching staff, but also towards Roma students. Very often Roma students have been the subject of “roasting” by university teachers in the presence of the Dean. Instead of stopping them, she has reinforced such attitudes by demonstrating even stronger negative attitudes towards Roma students.

This was the attitude taken by non-Roma students towards Roma students at this university as well. Often openly racist statements by ethnic Slovak students were expressed not only verbally, but also in written form on the walls of the faculty or in the student dormitory.

Conclusions

These examples from different universities in Bulgaria and in Slovakia show the existing forms of antigypsyism, discrimination, and racism in countries that are members of the European Union. If the so-called “elite” and “intellectuals” have such attitudes toward Roma, one cannot expect that “white” citizens of these countries with lower educations will have different attitudes. We are not generalizing that all universities in East and Central Europe harbor such an attitude, but the fact that some do is a dangerous tendency. Usually the intellectuals and the elite of a country are the ones fighting for the human rights of minorities, and they do not participate in the oppression of others. However, it seems that in today’s Europe other types of feelings, attitudes and behaviors have been developed towards Roma. Referring to the notion of “antigypsyism”, it is obvious that the racist comments and actions described above are part of it.

PART II

FORMS OF ANTIGYPSYISM IN EUROPE

ANTIGYPSYISM IN BULGARIA

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Introduction

Antigypsyism is a consequence of social, political, institutional and media racism, discrimination and exclusion against Roma. Racism, as Ian Hancock writes in his article *The Consequences of Anti-Gypsy Racism in Europe*¹¹, is defined as “the belief in the superiority of a particular race.” He continues by saying “*This tends to reinforce particular patterns of the behavior of the majority over the minority, the dominant over the weak. Racism is prejudice plus power, and no one can deny the existence of racism in all areas of administration. It is legitimized in society by its very institutional nature. It ensures that in a racist society some citizens automatically have opportunities for success and security in life which are available to them in a routine way, while other citizens must struggle for those same opportunities or else not have access to them at all. A dominant, racist population sets up so many barriers in race relations, that those excluded from full participation in the system come to feel like a surplus population, worthless and frustrated.*”

In the fall of September 23, 2011, Bulgaria experienced its worst-ever ethnic flare-up. Anti-Roma demonstrations broke out throughout the country following an incident in Katunitsa, a village near the town of Plovdiv. The incident was linked to a local dispute with Kiril Rashkov, who happens to be notorious as the “Roma King” in Bulgaria. The incident with “Tsar Kiro”, as many are calling him, turned deadly when a man he was connected to ran over a 19-year-old ethnic Bulgarian boy. The situation quickly deteriorated into a riot started by the local ethnic Bulgarian community and continued by soccer hooligans, who set fire to cars and houses belonging to Rashkov’s family. The local riot turned into a regional one against Roma communities throughout Plovdiv region. In the course of a day or two, Roma communities across Bulgaria prepared for the worst days of their lives. Many of them were scared for their lives and those of their families and relatives. Moreover, many could not go to their workplaces or allow their children to go to school because of the fearful riots across the country.

11) Source: <http://www.othervoices.org/2.1/hancock/roma.php>

What was the case of Katunitsa in 2011?

The Katunitsa case was a local, individual criminal incident that turned into a national ethnic crisis. It involved a combination of anti-Roma rhetoric, anti-Constitutional and inhuman acts against Roma; the scapegoating of Roma, and the mobilization of radicals and their supporters. It was also a case of ethnic racism and intolerance against Roma and non-compliance with established democratic values, human rights, and the Constitution. The Katunitsa case also represented a politicized attempt at ethnic cleansing and gains by populist and anti-Roma political powers.

The Katunitsa incident should not be treated in isolation but rather should be seen as a crystallization of structural conditions, political pressures, and social frustrations that had been accumulating in Bulgaria ever since the day of transition from communism to democracy (November 10, 1989). Most people in Bulgaria saw the case of Katunitsa as a collective crime of the Roma, not as a crime committed by an individual. Therefore, the majority of Bulgarian society supported the riots against the Roma. Moreover, a significant percentage of Bulgarian youth committed physical violence against Roma across the country¹².

Why did the Katunitsa case happen?

The process of the transition from communism to democracy in Bulgaria has been very cumbersome. Since the 1990s, nationalism and racism have become a major part of politics and society in Bulgaria. Alarming escalations of violence against ethnic Roma, and racist and xenophobic nationalisms have been taking place in Bulgaria but are nothing new. The pursuing of political interests has become a major element of the ruling governments. The representatives of the currently ruling party, GERB (Citizens for the European Development of Bulgaria), for example, did not have any interest in protecting the lives, rights and properties of Roma families throughout Bulgaria because their attempts to do so would have lost them the votes of many ethnic Bulgarians, most of whom hate Roma. The current government has turned a blind eye to violence and discrimination against Roma, who have been bullied by right-wing extremists, and racism against them is considered acceptable in mainstream society. There has been no sign of a strategy to solve the problem. Antigypsyism and hate speech against Roma in Bulgarian society have taken place throughout Bulgaria. Far-right parties such as ATAKA and VMRO tried to gain political benefit by winning votes through anti-Roma rhetoric and hate speech. The proximity of the Katunitsa incident to the presidential and municipal elections certainly made it the ideal vehicle for nationalist and ultra-nationalist parties attempting political gains.

Due to ineffective governance, the response to the ethnic clashes was very ineffective and irresponsible. Prime Minister Boyko Borisov told Interior Ministry Chief Secretary Kalin Georgiev to do nothing to stop the hooligans destroying and

12) Videos: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=swj3bf8PGOE> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P94mbCZPDmc>; http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UUjA67brQTU&feature=results_main&playnext=1&list=PLB05CC5ED1D49B169

burning down the house of Kiril Rashkov on the night of September 26, 2011. Mr. Borisov stated in front of journalists that “Whoever wants to destroy may destroy.” He also said “To those who want to create tension, I oppose this by building roads” in response to the ethnic crisis. Minister of Interior Tsvetan Tsvetanov went on vacation exactly when the ethnic crisis blew up in order to deal with the political campaign of his boss, Boyko Borisov, the leader of GERB. The Bulgarian President, Mr. Parvanov, summoned the Consultative Council on National Security on October 1, 2011. This Council is only called when the country faces internal security issues or crises, to discuss urgent measures to secure law and order, and to prevent ethnic tension. However, no actions were taken to secure law enforcement. Prosecutor-General Boris Velchev reminded prosecutors to exercise the law by treating cases of ethnic and religious hate with the necessary attention, but this did not happen. At the beginning of October 2011, a 27-year-old man was sentenced to 10 months of probation because he called for the “slaughtering of Gypsies” on Facebook. Investigations of hate crimes or racially-motivated cases have been conducted in a sloppy manner.

In September 2011 my colleagues and I went to talk to the head of the Bulgarian delegation at the European Parliament, Andrey Kovachev, to draw his and his colleagues’ attention to the case of Katunitsa and request their prompt and adequate actions. The response was: “Wait until October 23.” This was the date of the presidential and local parliamentary elections; we were told to wait until then and hopefully the political populism, anti-Roma rhetoric, rallies and torture the Roma had been suffering would end. It was an outrageous response from a political figure and an expression of antigypsyism by the Bulgarian political authorities.

The political elite stimulated negative attitudes towards Roma by using populist, anti-Roma rhetoric to win votes. Antigypsyism played a significant role in the 2011 presidential and local elections. Most of the votes previously given by ethnic Bulgarians to the ATAKA party were now given to GERB, the ruling party, because they used populism and anti-Roma rhetoric as a tool in their political campaigns. Politicians competed to win the votes of those who were against Roma. In previous years, politicians in Bulgaria had competed for the Roma vote, but today they strive to win the votes of those who are against Roma. The politicians stimulate a negative attitude towards ethnic minorities by using anti-Roma and populist rhetoric to win more votes, and this anti-Roma political rhetoric has consolidated antigypsyism in society. In May 2012, Mr. Tsvetanov, the Prime Minister and GERB’s political leader, also went to agitate for Roma votes in the town of Kyustendil by using populist promises to Roma that their future would be bright because GERB was taking care of their needs by hiring prominent Roma to work in the government administration.

The political and party system is almost wholly detached from the Roma, engaging with them only during elections in order to buy Roma votes. The Bulgarian government has not effectively counter-acted neo-nationalist groups in Bulgaria and has not taken preventive measures to stop the emergence of new conflicts resembling Katunitsa. Most of the cases under investigation have been halted by the prosecutor’s office and never reached the courts. At the same time, many ethnic Bulgarian outlaws

have been ineffectively prosecuted, i.e., not one of the 100 arrested ethnic Bulgarians, of the 200 hooligans who burned down the house of Mr. Rashkov and threatened the lives of Roma from Katunitsa, have been convicted or sentenced. They were released from custody the next day. Their ethnically-motivated crimes were described as simply “hooliganism” or “normal” assaults.

Taking these facts into consideration, it is clear that the Bulgarian government has not taken the necessary preventative measures against ethnic clashes in the country. Rather, the government acts as a fireman trying to extinguish a fire that has already been started. All Bulgarian citizens paid the price of these disturbances, rallies, threats, etc., due to the inaction of government representatives and their failure to properly tackle ethnic crises.

Consequences of the case of Katunitsa

As a result of the mishandling of Katunitsa, hate speech¹³, anti-Roma protests and marches have broken out throughout the country. Anti-Roma prejudices and negative attitudes are not only typical for ATAKA supporters, but are also now typical of even more representatives of Bulgarian society. Freedom of speech, according to international legislation, is a standard that is subjected to limitations, and such limitations should be envisioned through law. The leader of ATAKA violates Bulgarian law on anti-discrimination with his scandalous anti-Roma publications and public speeches. His freedom of speech should be limited and he should be sanctioned. Why doesn't the government react? The truth is that people in Bulgarian institutions carry the same type of anti-Roma prejudices. In other words, Roma in Bulgaria are falling victim to a vicious cycle: Strong expressions of antigypsyism are easy to sell to politicians, the media and society as a whole.

Violent and organized crime against Roma was committed using Facebook, radical websites, and an ultra-national TV channel (Skat) after Katunitsa. The aim of the anti-Roma protests was to address the so-called “Roma criminality”. Organized, violent anti-Roma protests swept across Bulgaria as the capital city Sofia played host to a demonstration entitled “Gypsy crime: A threat to the state.” Thousands of pro-nationalists, supporting parties such as ATAKA and VMRO, attended these meetings, many of them wearing T-shirts reading “I do not want to live in a Gypsy country”. The protests and public reaction towards the Roma was naturally a cause for great concern for Roma and their families, but not for the Bulgarian government. It did not take much longer for the protests to become publicized and accepted in Bulgarian society. On 24, 25, 26, 27, 28 and 29 September 2011, protest rallies were organized by the VMRO and ATAKA parties in the cities of Bourgas, Varna, Ruse, Pleven, Plovdiv, Sofia, Stara Zagora, Pazardjik, and Blagoevgrad which resulted in attempts at violent attacks on Roma neighborhoods. Radical parties mobilized voters

13) Volen Siderov, the leader of ATAKA, an ultra nationalist party, published a black-and-white leaflet that was full of anti-Roma political material consisting of 28 pages of his own publications and speeches. in which he talks about the “Gypsization of Bulgaria” (meaning that Bulgaria is turning into a Gypsy state) and “Gypsy criminality” (various criminal acts such as thefts, rapes and killings). Through this propaganda, he aimed at planting hatred in society against the Roma.

during their campaigns with slogans such as “Convicted Gypsies belong in work camps!” or “Bulgaria for Bulgarians!” (slogans of ATAKA). As a result, many Roma ended up being injured and some found their death. Roma were beaten up by radicals supporting radical parties who marched in towns chanting the slogans *Bulgaria for Bulgarians! Convicted Gypsies belong to work camps!* Racism against Roma was considered a normal act. Many of the Roma who were injured refused to talk to the media or inform the police. The dead body of a Roma man was discovered on 28 September 2011 on a highway near the village of Skutare, Plovdiv district; this caused a big disturbance amongst the inhabitants of the Stolipinovo neighborhood in Plovdiv, who do not want to accept the official statement of the Police that his death had not been a murder but, was the result of a car accident.

Racist violence, too, is becoming more and more a part of everyday life. The state, however, is doing little to counteract this. The riots that Bulgarian society has witnessed must be regarded as part of a broader context and related to the attacks on the mosque in Sofia and the church of the Jehovah’s Witnesses in Burgas, incidents that preceded Katunitsa. Those two previous attacks were clear signs that ethnic and religious intolerance was about to spiral out of control. The Interior Minister’s flagrant statements about Bulgarian Roma (“Roma quarters are incubators of crime”), made during a visit to Brussels in September 2010 and at a European Commission conference in Sofia in 2011 (where he said that Roma leaders are criminals) also contributed to the growing ethnic tension in the country.

In a statement on 25 September 2011, Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko Borisov admitted: “Police lost control of the situation in Katunitsa”. The way the police let the mob set the two houses on fire showed its mishandling of the situation. An immediate, unified and categorical political reaction was notable in its absence - whether from Prime Minister Boyko Borisov and the governing GERB or the other establishment parties. This may well explain the hesitation of the police in taking effective action on the night of the killing. It is true that the authorities were caught by surprise, but a more decisive governmental response at the start could have defused much of the public tension.

This failure of the political mainstream surrendered the interpretation of what was happening to the media and the nationalists. As a result, the Katunitsa incident allowed racist language to enter the election campaign at unprecedented levels. The radicals run the show instead of the ruling government. The failure of law enforcement and the authorities to properly tackle Katunitsa left Roma communities throughout Bulgaria defenseless and therefore resorting to mob actions. The GERB government is politically responsible for the escalated tensions in Bulgaria during the time of the election campaign and Katunitsa. The society witnessed growing fear and distance between ethnic Bulgarians, Roma and Turks, mistrust of state institutions, and the undermining of democratic values. Moreover, Katunitsa showed the discrepancies existing in Bulgarian political and social systems which have not been properly tackled for many years.

ANTIGYPSYISM IN ROMANIA

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History – Evolution:

Antigypsyism is hostility, prejudice or racism directed at Roma people, popularly known as Gypsies, who over time have been considered thieves, treacherous, lazy, fortune tellers, dirty, uneducated, etc. Because of their semi-nomadic lifestyle and differences of language and/or a general feeling of distrust and rejection of Roma has occurred in the European countries to which they have migrated throughout history.

Roma families have lived in Romania at least since the 13th century. As a social group, the Roma have been subjected to long periods of exclusion, discrimination and even slavery (as the great academician Mihai Kogalniceanu described in his stories in 1891). In the 20th century, 220 000 to 500 000 Roma persons died in the Roma Holocaust. During the communist regime (1947 - 1990), Romania's Roma policy turned into a strongly assimilationist one, in which cultural aspects of Roma life were considered social problems.

Romania has the largest number of Roma people among the European countries. According to the official census of 2011, 619 000 people declared themselves as belonging to the Roma minority, or 3.2 % of the population. The Research Institute of Life Quality says the number of self-identified Roma in Romania is 1.5 million (6.7 % of the total population). This is the most-often used informal assessment and considered the closest to reality (2010, OSF, No information, no progress). Amnesty International has mentioned a number of 2.2 million Roma, or nearly 10 % of the population of Romania.

Roma are distributed throughout all Romanian counties, according to official statistics which have recorded the highest percentage of people self-declared as Roma in the following counties: Mureş (7.0 %), Călăraşi (5.6 %), Bihor (5.0 %), Dolj (4.3 %), Sibiu (4.2 %) and Arad (3.9 %). The Romani language is spoken by about half of all Roma families in Romania (little more among the Roma who declare themselves differently than Roma “assimilated”).

Studies and reports

A Gallup survey conducted in 2009 by the Fundamental Rights Agency of the European Union shows that in Romania, the majority society perception of Roma remains focused on stereotypes such as crime, violence, lack of interest in school, etc; 72 % believe most Roma people are law-breakers and 20 % believe Roma access into shops or bars should be strictly forbidden. According to this survey, 31 % of respondents had interacted with Roma during the previous six months, and 64 % of respondents believed Roma to be more violent than members of other ethnic groups such as Romanians, Hungarians, etc. When they were asked to say the first thing that comes into their mind when they hear the word “Roma”, 23 % of respondents mentioned issues related to crime, stealing and begging, 10 % talked about uneducated or dirty people, 5 % mentioned the terms “despicable” and “repugnant” and only 16 % considered Roma “normal” people. On the other hand, an ADF report shows Romania has the lowest level of discrimination against Roma of any country surveyed.

According to another study, 40 % of Romanians believe is “bad or very bad” to have mixed marriages between Roma and non-Roma, 25 % believe Roma children should not play with children from other ethnic groups, and 35 % of non-Roma respondents consider it not recommended for non-Roma and Roma populations to live together in the same area (INSOMAR, 2009). Over 60 % of Romanian people now believe discriminatory treatment is legitimate. Most agree with the following statement: “If I were an employer, I would not hire a Roma person because most of them are lazy and steal”. The perception of the majority validates the discriminatory treatment Roma do receive; most respondents suggested that Roma receive what they deserve.

Generalized stereotypes about Roma in the currently mixing European society are, that Roma cheat, are unable to take on new ethical imperatives of sociability, and are unable to adapt to new technologies.

The latest study on this issue, conducted in April-May 2011 by the Soros Foundation Romania, is entitled “Situation of Roma in Romania, 2011: Between discrimination and social integration” and shows that only 35.5 % of Roma people in Romania had a job in 2011. The study shows that the proportion of Roma in Romania who have worked continuously for the last two years is only 10 %, while 51.5 % of respondents said they had not worked in the past two years; 76 % of the unemployed expressed readiness to immediately start work if they were offered a job. With respect to their education levels, 25 % of Roma adults over 16 years old do not know how to read and write. Furthermore, only two out of 10 Roma children go to school. Their most common complaints relate to a lack of financial resources. Roma women in Romania are far more illiterate, with a 10 % difference between them and Roma men in terms of declared capacity to read and write. According to the survey, 23 % of Roma in the sample research never graduated from any school, 26 % graduated from more than four grades of primary school and 34 % graduated from primary school only. Only 17 % attended high school or university education.

In these circumstances, the chances of Roma inclusion are significantly reduced, because under Romanian law, vocational training courses are available only to persons who have graduated from secondary school.

Forms of manifestation of antigypsyism (political statements, press, cyber-hate, sports, etc.)

Antigypsyism in Romania is not a form of discrimination based on differences of culture and behavior, but an attitude of utter contempt. It is not intended to criticize, but to humiliate and demean. Anti-Roma speech in the public sphere does not indicate dislike, but hate, and is intended to harm. Roma are not disliked for some characteristics which are perceived as negative - they are hated simply because they are Roma. This hatred is not even aimed at assimilating Roma by force - which would also be unacceptable - it merely seeks to exclude them.

Romanian “hate-speech groups” (“groups that promote hate speech”) are now proliferating on the Internet. Under the pretext of anonymity, people go online to feed on hate, resentment, envy, and angry, even criminal, behavior. One example of this is the blog *antitigani.blogspot.com*, which directly advises people to commit acts of hatred and violence against Roma.

Hate speech is particularly dangerous because all anti-Roma activities - evictions, school segregations, physical aggression - spring from it. Vilifying statements made by high officials, including ministers, politicians and various authorities, are echoed by the press and provide legitimacy for hatred and hence for exclusion. As a result, ordinary citizens, fortified in their prejudices, condone and support discriminatory measures against Roma.

On May 4, 2005, the Mayor of Craiova told the newspaper *Gardianul*, “I pee on them, that mother f...Gypsy jerks and hooligans”. This local politician, elected on the list of the ruling Social Democratic Party, made it clear in less than 400 words what he thinks of Roma: “stinky ugly gypsies,” “shits,” “jerks,” “dirty,” “hooligans.” He described a “war” against gypsies and expressed his wish to deport them from his city. He is still the most popular politician in Craiova nowadays.

It might be argued that most hate speech comes from extremist political parties. The facts show, however, that some of the most alarming statements have been made by politicians with governmental responsibilities representing moderate parties. Such behavior can only encourage extremists in their hate campaigns - and history teaches us that the marginal parties of today could be the dictators of tomorrow.

The Mayor of Craiova was even more straightforward in presenting Roma as sub-human in January 2005 when he stated on television that “[...] if I put them [Roma] in the zoo and showed them to kids saying ‘Look at the monkeys’, they wouldn’t see any difference.”

On March 19 2006, the crowd at a football stadium in Bucharest did not mince words in expressing their feelings as they chanted “We hate the Gypsies.”³ This contemptuous attitude has a dehumanizing effect which categorizes Roma as inferior beings and, at best, as objects of derision.

Let us not forget that some want to go even further. In a Romanian football stadium in March 2006, thousands of football fans chanted “Die Gypsy.”

On 19 May 2007, the President of Romania, Mr. Traian Basescu, addressing Ms. Andreea Pana, a journalist, stated, “You pussy, don’t you have anything to do today?”, and then said privately while being recorded, “How aggressive that stinky gypsy was.”² These remarks, uttered by no less a person than the President of a European Union Member State, epitomize the spirit of antigypsyism that is today rampant amongst public authorities in Europe.

When the current President of Romania, Mr. Traian Basescu, was Mayor of Bucharest, he was reported to have stated, “Gypsies are nomads and nobody can do anything about them - they will bring their horses into the flats and there any attempt to civilize them ends [...] we should build society being aware of the miserable existence of Roma and the problems they face daily”.

On 27 and 28 September 2007, the newspaper *Flacăra Iaşului* ran texts including the following statements: Gypsies are... “those disgusting beings” with “filthy and lewd women” dragging their “broods that shit on themselves”,... “a living proof we come from monkeys”, ... “hysterical”, ... “cunning”, ... “treacherous”, ... “societal abortions”,... “those gypsies multiply like rabbits (my apologies to rabbits) only to get their stinky dirty paws on the welfare of some poor children ... the gypsies steal, are rapists”...

These excerpts are from two articles authored by two members of the Romanian Writers Union, one of whom is the spokesperson for the Museum of Literature (*February 11, 2010*).

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania, Mr. Teodor Baconschi, claimed during a press conference that: “We have some physiological, natural, crime-related problems among some Romanian communities, especially among the Roma ethnic community.” Following this statement, many criticized Baconschi’s apparent belief in biological racism. His declaration appears to link biology, criminality and ethnicity. Many Roma organizations asked Minister Baconschi to resign. He refused to resign and strongly rejected any accusation of racism (*February 23, 2010*).

In some parts of the country, such as Baia Mare and Satu Mare, “antigypsy” walls have been erected in order to hide Roma ghettos from view. An underground group that calls itself “EnE”¹⁴ graffitized such a wall with anti-racist slogans at 26 Corvin Street in Satu Mare. The same group claimed responsibility for a similar act in Baia Mare, on the “Great Gypsy Wall”.

14) „EnE” stands for the Romanian phrase “E nevoie”- “is needed”

The Board of Directors of the National Council for Combating Discrimination decided on 15 November 2011 to apply sanctions against the municipalities of Cluj and Baia Mare for taking actions designed to segregate Roma.

Thus, “The Board of Directors found unanimously that building a partition wall between social housing occupied mostly by Roma living in Horea Street in Baia Mare and Main Street (the sidewalk and the road for automobiles) is an act of discrimination (...). For this detected contravention the appellant had to pay a fine of 6,000 lei. Also, the Board of Directors recommended demolition of the wall and taking measures to improve the living conditions of Roma residents of Horea Street”, states a press release issued by the National Council for Combating Discrimination (NCCD). Also, the Board of NCCD determined that “moving Roma people living in Coastei Street in Cluj-Napoca to the landfill Pata Rat¹⁵ is an act of discrimination (...). For this contravention, the appellant had to pay a fine in total amount of 8,000 lei”.

On February 24, 2012, the Magistrates Court of Appeals quashed the fine levied against the Mayor of Baia Mare, Catalin Chereches, for building the “Roma Wall”. The NCCD had fined the mayor of Baia Mare because he had allowed the construction of the wall separating social housing in the city, occupied mostly by Roma citizens, from the main street. The construction of this wall was followed by immediate reactions from organizations in combat discrimination and from the U.S. Ambassador in Bucharest, Mark Gittenstein, who himself visited the place and discussed the issue of Roma isolation with local authorities.

In Baia Mare, in early June 2012, Mayor Chereches evicted 38 Roma families from the Craic neighborhood, sending them to live in a building inside a former CUPROM plant¹⁶. The so-called apartments where the Roma were accommodated were contaminated with toxic chemicals. Because of the move, 22 children and two adults were poisoned. They were then transported to hospital.

The U.S. Embassy expressed its concern on June 6, 2012 regarding the removal of the Roma families and their residency in buildings at the CUPROM plant, and asked the Romanian authorities, at both local and central level, to take prompt action to ensure social protection of those families.

“The Embassy of the United States is concerned with the most recent actions by the authorities in Baia Mare with regard to Roma residents of the city, most particularly the relocation of a number of families from the Craica neighbourhood to a commercial building previously occupied by Cuprom”, reads a press release quoted by EVZ¹⁷.

”We urge city, county, and national authorities to take prompt action to guarantee the welfare of these families, as well as of the other members of the predominantly Roma neighbourhood of Craica who are still under threat of eviction by the authorities of Baia Mare,” the American diplomats add in the document.

15) Pata Rat – name of street in Cluj Napoca town; it also gives the name to the landfill situated in its vicinity.

16) CUPROM SA is the leading copper company in Romania and one of the largest in Eastern Europe, which operates secondary smelting, refining, casting, drawing, bunching and enamelling facilities.

17) EVZ - **E**venimentul **Z**ilei is one of the leading newspapers in Romania. It is based in Bucharest and its name means „The event of the day“.

The U.S. Embassy emphasized with the same occasion that “according to numerous reports in Romanian and international media, within hours of the move to the Cuprom building many of the relocated families - and particularly their children - became ill and required emergency medical attention”.

According to the same release, “the building apparently was never inspected or made safe for human habitation. Toxic chemicals were left unsecured and no provision for proper sleeping quarters, sanitary facilities or food preparation was made “.

”These residents were removed from their existing homes with the promise of safe and secure alternative housing, but it is clear that the Cuprom building is neither safe nor secure”, adds the release. It concludes describing the situation as “a failure by the city authorities to provide basic protections to its citizens,” which “also contributes to the strong perception of willful discrimination towards the Roma community.”

On June 7, 2012, the NGOs Romani Criss and Equal Opportunities organized a protest against the measures taken by the management of Baia Mare City Hall in front of the Office of the Government of Romania. Thirty four other NGOs, including non-Roma ones participated in and supported the protest (APADOR - CH, Pro Democracy Association, Center for Legal Resources, Active Watch - Media Monitoring Agency, Centre for Independent Journalism, REF, Ruhama, Institute for Public Policy, SASTIPEN etc.). All participant organizations signed an open letter¹⁸ addressed to Prime Minister Victor Ponta.

It underlines that “signatories publicly protest against that, so far, the Romanian Government remained impassive to these serious violations of human rights, which allowed the mayor to extend its racist policy towards Roma and gives a wrong signal to other local authorities to act similarly”, reads the above mentioned letter. It refers both to the situation of Roma families (in Baia Mare) that were moved into the building of CUPROM plant where they got intoxicated, and to the 2 meter high wall built at the order of the Mayor of Baia Mare in order to separate the area inhabited by Roma people by the rest of the neighborhood.

At the protest, civil society representatives chanted slogans such as following: “You led the Roma to acid for votes”, “Dozens of children poisoned means thousands of votes”, “Because I’m Romani I go to CUPROM?”, “Social housing, not banned substances”, “Down with Racism!” etc.

The protesters used ingenious props, consisting of drums on which the chemical formula of sulfuric acid was written, banners with slogans against Mayor Cherecheș, various messages against the USL¹⁹, and T-shirts reading “I am Roma” (“Eu sunt rom” in Romanian).

18) See <http://www.policycenter.eu/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Scrisoare-deschisa-Baia-Mare-organizatii-non-guvernamentale-iunie-7-1.pdf>

19) The **Social-Liberal Union** (Romanian: *Uniunea Social Liberală*, **USL**) is a Romanian political alliance formed on 5 February 2011 between three parties, the Social Democratic Party, and the Centre Right Alliance made of the National Liberal Party and the Conservative Party which currently form the parliamentary majority and the government.

On June 7, 2012, Nils Muiznieks, European Union Commissioner for Human Rights, criticized the decision of the authorities of Baia Mare to move hundreds of Roma into the buildings of a former chemical plant. He said to an interview with AFP: “The relocation into the former chemical factory buildings is clearly not an adequate, alternative housing solution. An effective investigation should be conducted by the Romanian authorities to establish the responsibilities for any damage caused to the health of the people concerned. These people should be provided with reparation.”²⁰

Measures and strategies

National Plan for Roma (NPR) of the Romanian Parliamentary Subcommittee for Roma, outlined in the document **Recommendations for an Action Plan**²¹ “presumes that the Roma themselves want change, adapting to new standards of postindustrial / postmodern society and that they are best able to impose their own exit from the crisis, without “civilizing” interferences from outside. Thus, at the boundary between sociology and cultural anthropology, *social economy* and *organizational culture* is a solution for planning and for cultural evolution, reintegration of “ghettos” in local community, as simple “neo traditionalist” re-structuration of the “corporate” entrepreneurship (cooperatives in the former communist camp), respectively, rethinking Roma culture and its structure through a modernizing re-conversion of Knowledge and adapting it to the new global context”.

A conclusion arises - through a new social, multicultural cohesion replacing the old demo-liberal theory of social integration we can expect the active inclusion of disadvantaged groups.

A key component of such corporate governance is the development and implementation of programs to promote Roma communities and organizations within ethical and social standards and the ethnic community (from fundamental human and civil rights as part of community development actions and the modernization of Roma education and organizational culture in order to combat social exclusion, discrimination and racism).

“Similarly, the negative signals sent by certain Roma customs (early marriages, exploitation of child labor, family violence, the status and role of Roma woman) do not mean that the value of collective memory / culture is obsolete and should be abandoned but its periodic readjustment is necessary, in order to adjust it to modernity”, states the same document - **Recommendations for an Action Plan**.

Romania has made progress in public policy on the social inclusion of Roma, this aspect being part of the EU accession process. Thus, between 1998 and 1999, the first partnership took place between non-Roma civil society and Roma representatives. This collaboration resulted, in 2001, in the creation of a pillar of Roma inclusion strategy²². The document is important not only because it represents

20) See http://www.coe.int/t/commissioner/News/2012/120607BaiaMare_en.asp

21) See <http://www.cdep.ro/co/docs/F1768764652/Plan%20migratia%20internationala%20a%20romilor.pdf>

22) Government Strategy for Improving the Situation of Roma (GD. 430/2001)

the viewpoint of the management of the Romanian Government on the Roma situation, but also because it represents the endorsement of a policy change aimed at social policy, with clear objectives: Preventing and combating institutional and social discrimination, ethnic preservation of Roma identity, ensuring equal opportunities to achieve a decent standard of life, and stimulating Roma participation in economic, social, cultural, educational and political society.

In 2002, the Ministry of Health issued Order 166, approving the creation of the job of “health mediator” for 166 people in 34 pilot counties. After 10 years, in Romania, over 600 such mediators are supporting Roma people, facilitating communication between communities and health professionals and contributing to the effectiveness of public health interventions.

Another important step toward social inclusion in Romania was taken by the Minister of Labor, Social Solidarity and Family through Order No. 338/2003 to institutionalize the occupation of “school mediator”. Introduced experimentally in Romania since the 1990s, the NGO sector and school mediators aimed to facilitate access to education for children from disadvantaged groups, creating favorable school attitudes among young Roma and preventing discriminatory behavior by educational institutions.

The Minister of Public Administration and Internal Affairs issued Order No. 408, amended by Order No. 37/01.02.2002, through which were established County Offices (formed by Roma experts and authorities’ representatives) in every prefecture in Romania, involving 41 Roma experts in total. These Roma experts are the main mediators between Roma communities and local public administration.

In 2007, the Romanian Ministry of Education issued Order 1540 which aims to prevent, prohibit and eliminate segregation, seen as a serious form of discrimination with adverse consequences for children and their equal access to quality education. To achieve this objective, segregation was banned starting with school year 2007 – 2008 for first and fifth-grade classes, which can no longer be formed on the criteria of groups mainly or solely consisting of Roma.

The Order included a school desegregation plan and a set of indicators of inclusion for school managements and teachers.

From 2000 - 2012, Romanian MP Nicolae Paun, a member of the Roma community, chaired the Commission on Human Rights, Religions and National Minorities of the Chamber of Deputies (Parliament of Romania). The Commission’s members decided during a meeting held on 25 February 2009 to set up a “Subcommittee on Roma Issues”.

The responsibility of this subcommittee was to monitor the problems faced by Romanian citizens of Roma origin, domestically and internationally, and to promote the rights of Roma children (and not only of them) through collaboration with governmental institutions, nongovernmental organizations inside the country and abroad, and through work in the field of discrimination, child protection and equal opportunities. The subcommittee aims to promote, in law (but not only through law),

legislative initiatives and proposals for viable social measures to improve the situation of Roma citizens and Romania's image in the world. One of the purposes of this sub-activity was to work together with authorities inside the country and with similar commissions on Roma issues at the parliaments of European Union Member States to improve the situation of the Roma, taking into account the many problems we face today in terms of human rights, most often because of belonging to this ethnic group.

The main document prepared by the subcommittee is the National Plan for Roma (NPR), whose objectives are found in the Government Programme (2009-2012).

During 2008 - 2011, the Social Inclusion Program (SIP), worth 46.7 million EUR, was implemented by the Government for Romanian citizens of Roma origin through the National Agency for Roma and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. The Ministry of Labor, Family and Social Protection has been encouraging progress for the development of Roma communities in Romania. I would like to enumerate some of the results of this program in the field of education: Ensuring 3 000 places for Roma children in secondary schools in Romania; the annual reservation of 500 seats for Roma high school graduates, in Romanian universities; the establishment within each County School Inspectorate (CSI) of the position of a school inspector for Roma; as the CSI supports the teaching of Romani language in the schools, 25 000 Roma students are enrolled in courses of Romani language; and the positions of Roma school mediators are now paid by municipalities and County School Inspectorates. In the school year 2009 – 2010, 424 such mediators were employed, and in the school year 2010 – 2011, another 376 mediators were employed; since 2010, 10 Roma students have received Master's degree scholarships and 30 doctoral fellowships, awarded through a project funded by the European Social Fund. Also, Roma students have received support to undertake professional training courses at European institutions.

Also, another project developed by NAR²³ - "Building and implementing an innovative interdisciplinary doctoral program on Roma issues" – provides for the granting of 30 doctoral fellowships, of which 10 are for Roma Ph.Ds for the academic year 2010 – 2011 pursuing interdisciplinary research in Roma issues in the following key areas: Political science, administrative sciences, communication sciences and sociology. The transnational mobility of 30 doctoral students in Roma issues by developing partnerships with prestigious universities / research centers in the European Union and by supporting doctoral students to participate in doctoral mobility study stays at universities / research centers in the European Union has also been improved.

The report²⁴ of the National Agency for Roma shows that over 45.000 Roma people have participated between 2008 – 2011 in programs for children and adults and were included in activities such as counseling, training and maintenance support for the establishment of new businesses and access to labor market.

23) National Agency for Roma – Romanian Government

24) See National Agency for Roma – Public policies and programs for Roma implemented by governmental authorities of Romania (2008 - 2011) -

<http://www.gov.ro/upload/articles/115343/21.%20Politici%20C8%99i%20programe%20publice%20pentru%20romi.pdf>

Following the initiatives of the National Agency for Roma, persons belonging to Roma minority who also speak Romani were included as census-takers, facilitating access to local Roma communities and communication with their members. These measures led to increased self-esteem, leading to an increased number of Roma people declaring Roma ethnicity in the 2011 census.

Census results from 2011 show that 3.2 % of the population, or 619 000 people, declared themselves as belonging to the Roma minority. To provide a complete picture, I want to present comparative results from the censuses over the last 20 years. In 1992, over 401 000 people declared themselves as belonging to the Roma ethnicity, or 1.8 % of the general population. Ten years later, in 2012, the share of people admitted their affiliation to the Roma minority was larger: 535 000 declared themselves as belonging to the Roma ethnicity, or 2.5 % of the population.

Lately, governmental and political actors have focused on the development and completion of the Romanian Government Inclusion Strategy for Romanian citizens of the Roma minority for 2012-2020. The purpose of this *Government Strategy for the period 2012 - 2020* is to ensure social inclusion – the economic and cultural development of Romanian citizens of the Roma minority - by implementing integrated policies in education, employment, health, housing, culture and social infrastructure.

The Government strategy aims to empower local and central public authorities, the Roma minority and civil society with a view to increasing the socioeconomic inclusion of Romanian citizens of Roma origin. The Government aims to ensure equal and free access by Romanian citizens of Roma origin to quality education at all levels of the public education system; to support economic growth and the development of a knowledge-based society; and to promote inclusive education inside the educational system, including the prevention and elimination of segregation and discrimination based on ethnicity, social status, disability or other criteria that affect children and young people from disadvantaged groups, including Roma. Also, through this strategy, the Government wants to stimulate job growth and Romania's attractiveness for foreign direct investment, as well as to stimulate health promotion measures to contribute to Roma minority citizens' access to healthcare services and an increased life expectancy.

Two other guidelines in this governmental strategy that are to be ensured by central institutions, local and social partners are: Decent living conditions in disadvantaged communities from an economic and social point of view by providing access to public services and, infrastructure, and through the maintenance and development of and the Roma minority's cultural identity (language, customs and heritage). The strategy includes an action plan and sectorial performance indicators for implementation, with annual deadlines for meeting those indicators. The budget is 234,710 thousand lei for five of the eight years of the strategy.

To develop a governmental strategy is an important step for Romania, but we consider it imperative to shift from the theoretical to the practical adoption of

measures to produce measurable effects for Roma communities. In a report adopted on 23 May 2012, the European Commission invited Member States to implement national strategies to improve the economic and social integration of the 10 to 12 million Roma in Europe. Member States developed these plans in response to the EU Framework for National Strategies for Roma Inclusion, adopted by the Commission on April 5, 2011 (see IP/11/400, MEMO/11/216) and approved by EU leaders soon thereafter (IP/11/789). The document shows that Member States have made efforts to develop a comprehensive approach to Roma integration. The European Commission report shows that one positive aspect is that all of the Member States have replied to the Commission by setting up national contact points in order to monitor the implementation of national strategies. This shows there is political will to address the challenges of Roma integration.

The Commission shall periodically review the measures taken by Member States as a continuation of the report²⁵. The Commission will annually publish reports on the registered progress as a result of measures adopted at national level in accordance with the EU.

Local authorities requested technical assistance in Romania through the National Contact Point for management, monitoring, reporting and evaluation and paid health workers within the new legal context determined by Ordinance 162/2008 on the decentralization of the Institute of Public Healthcare and the supporting of the establishment of the Ministry of Health's Unit for Technical Assistance, Monitoring and Evaluation and the activities of the health mediators.

The National Council for Combating Discrimination operates nationwide; its authority is independent, under parliamentary control, and operates in the field of discrimination. It is a guarantor of respect and applies the principle of non-discrimination in accordance with domestic legislation and international documents to which Romania is a party.

The Council exercises its powers in these areas:

- Prevention of discrimination through information campaigns on awareness of human rights, the effects of discrimination, the principle of equality, as well as through training, information, projects, programs, studies and reports at local, regional and national level.
- Mediation of discrimination disputes with those involved before the National Council for Combating Discrimination which aims to reduce and eliminate acts of discrimination, not to impose fines.

25) See <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/789&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en> - European Commission – Press release: **EU leaders endorse Commission's plan for Roma integration**: (...), Commission will then assess the national strategies and report back to the Council and the European Parliament in spring 2012. This exercise will be repeated on an annual basis, thus launching a regular review of progress made at national level within the EU framework“.

- Investigation, determination and sanctioning of discrimination. For more accurate analysis and decision-making in cases where complaints are received ex officio, the Board of Directors has measures at its disposal for investigating cases, after using which it finds whether an act of discrimination has occurred and, if necessary, sanctions it.
- Monitoring of discrimination cases discovered by the NCCD by monitoring the parties involved.
- Provides specialized assistance to the victims of discrimination in explaining the law through the lawyers of the NCCD, guides the activity of filing petitions and additional information resulting from this procedure.

Best practices of NGO sector on Roma issues

Through the projects implemented by our association (Pakiv Romania Association), 13 financed by SOPHRD and 1 financed by EC through Lifelong Learning Programme, we implement in fact positive discrimination measures stipulated by the Decade of Roma Inclusion and Roma Inclusion Strategy, based on EU funds and on three lines of governmental programs: **health, education and employment**. The measures implemented by the projects undertaken are: **counseling, guidance and job placement of Roma people, support for Roma pupils and students** in schools through scholarships, **vocational training for adults** and also **national awareness and information campaigns** on important issues as health, education and employment.

Some of the most important results we achieved in the last two years of activity (2010 - 2012) are: over 2500 counseled persons, over 500 formed persons, 60 new founded businesses, 5 cooperatives for Roma women. By the end of our projects (half of the year 2013), some of them being in implementation now, around 600 persons will have been occupied.

Through nationwide campaigns in a number of 87 communities, Roma people have benefited from free medical tests and were guided to be consulted by the family doctor.

An important role that our association has at national level is achieved by 6 cultural units with Roma specific. These cultural units have the role to change society's attitude towards Roma communities through volunteer activities highlighting the contribution of Roma in the fields of culture, art and music, by realizing short films, documentaries and cultural events all over the country.

In order to make the link between majority and Roma minority, in all of Pakiv's centers nationwide, work mixt teams formed by Roma and non-Roma people and carry out all our activities.

Conclusion

Roma in Romania still face problems that call for solutions. Further action is necessary to reduce anti-Roma animosity, stereotypes and discrimination. Together, we will find a way to develop joint actions to create conditions for a better life for the Roma and for Europe.

ANTIGYPSYISM IN SLOVAKIA

Andrea Bučková

Bratislava, Slovakia

Antigypsy or anti-Roma manifestations in Slovakia follow the same model as in any other country of the former Eastern bloc:

- *They are an ideological manifestation of hostility, intolerance and prejudice against Roma as an ethnic group;*
- *They are accepted and supported by the broad public in any form or scope;*
- *A significant element fostering anti-Roma aversion is a vague political environment.*

Police cruelty and brutality, coercive sterilization, physical attacks, targeted segregation, the erecting of permanent physical barriers, the purchase of plots of land in the locations of illegal Roma settlements in order to evict them, unduly delayed court proceedings and toothless laws, news published in the gutter press, growing extremism, denial of entry to restaurants and bars, or the Roma as the objects of political campaigns and populism - these are some of the forms of manifestation of antigypsyism in Slovakia.

Scandals that shatter the fundamentals of democracy and human rights principles for the functioning of an advanced democratic society have become more frequent and have a tendency to escalate.

The situation in Slovakia

One of the first cases in which a citizen of Roma origin died as a result of a “police investigation” **was the case of 50-year-old Karol Sendrei in 2001**, who died from the consequences of extensive external, but primarily internal, injuries to the heart, lungs, spleen, broken ribs, and multiple fractures of the skull. He was subjected to **torture lasting 10 to 12 hours**. Involved in the brutal practices at the police station were seven policemen who had arrested Sendrei together with his two sons. The boys “only” sustained severe injuries. In this case, the fault was not only on the part of the policemen, but also on the part of physicians who did not consider the extent of

the injuries of all three arrested persons to be so severe as to require hospitalization and who never even inquired about the circumstances of the incident. After their medical examination, the policemen took the detainees back to the police station and continued “investigating”. The verdict of the Supreme Court in this case, finding the officers guilty, was issued as late as eight years from the time the incident occurred.

According to internet sources, in March of this year, the WORLD ASSOCIATION OF FORMER CZECHOSLOVAK POLITICAL PRISONERS, based in Poprad, approached the President of the Slovak Republic with a request and a petition for a pardon for the three main actors in this incident, former policemen who were sentenced to either 7 or 8.5 years in prison. Those seeking clemency consider the actions of the former policemen to have been **human error committed under the extreme conditions of their service and their effort to fight against “Roma crime”, which continues to rise.**

In April 2009, Slovakia was shocked by another case of police sadism against six Roma children from the Košice suburb Lunik IX, aged between 10 and 16 years. The children were brought by policemen to the local police station in March 2009 after they had robbed and injured an elderly woman. According to the prosecution, policemen threw the boys into the entrance hall before some barking dogs, some of whom savaged the children. Policemen called the children vulgar names and beat them. They forced them to slap each other on the face and then gave them 10 seconds to take off all their clothes. Some officers recorded all this using mobile phones and cameras. One month later, one of those recordings was leaked through the media to the public. The prosecutor claims the cruelties went on also in the afternoon, i.e. at a time when they were no longer recorded. According to the prosecution, one of the policemen put a gun to the head of one of the boys and asked him if he wished to be shot. Later, he allegedly forced the boy to lick the policeman’s shoe. Ten policemen, nine men and one woman, were charged with abuse of authority, and four of them were accused of blackmail. Neither the three senior constitutional officials, nor Deputy Prime Minister for Human Rights and Minorities Dušan Čaplovič, nor the police ever apologized to the Roma children and their families for this ill-treatment. The regional police director and the then (as well as the current) Minister of Interior refused to assume responsibility for the scandal. According to the media, only one court proceedings in this case took place last year.

The so-called Devín massacre took place in August 2010, when a former soldier, Mr. Harman, murdered a five-member Roma family (four women and one man), who allegedly, according to the media, had made his life a misery for 20 years. He also killed another man, whose ex-wife was among the four murderer women and who had planned to visit his son there. During the incident, Harman also injured another 15 persons. Since he committed suicide, the case was closed without an exact determination of the actual motive. The former Minister of Interior introduced stricter conditions for possession of firearms and in addition started to deal intensively with



Ivan, the 13-year old boy from the Lunik IX Suburb, claims that he **was savaged by a police dog**

the identification of focal points of criminality. He contracted a consultant on Roma criminality, who on the basis of an analysis provided by police specialists for work with marginalized communities, prepared a map of 220 areas of Roma criminality. At this point all of the specific measures or policies to prevent anti-Roma extremism and the intensification of anti-Roma manifestations ended in Slovakia.

Similarly, in the case of the coercive sterilizations of Roma women, government representatives have not followed international treaties and obligations, either. Although the European Court of Human Rights, in its first judgment concerning a coercive sterilization, the case of *V.C. versus Slovakia*, decided that the government has violated the law by coercively sterilizing this particular Roma woman, the victim has not yet received any compensation and no governmental representative has presented any apologies for this brutal, irreversible intervention into her personal integrity.

Targeted segregation in the field of education or medical care, although quite frequent, is paid inadequate attention by the respective competent ministers. Reports of watch-dog associations or human rights organizations containing enough facts and arguments on individual findings meet with no response at the level of relevant measures and/or sanctions and pass unnoticed.

“Five minutes of fame” are given by politicians and the media to the building of anti-Roma concrete walls that certainly are not proof of an integration process. In spite of this, financings from EU Structural Funds flows to these villages and towns for the support of projects that declare, for instance, that they will improve the social conditions of Roma (albeit behind walls), or support social inclusion etc. (See photo.)



The town of Prešov decided to build such a wall eight meters long and two meters high. It **strongly rejects the accusation of segregation**. The picture above shows the former State Secretary of the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family, who was responsible for the so-called socially excluded communities (“SECs”). Last year she submitted for the consideration of the government an Act on SECs which, among other things, included one curious point, namely “one warm meal a day for passive allowance recipients“. The key element of the Act was the introduction of e-pay cards.

A topical issue that is, however, neglected by political representatives is the gifting or purchase of plots of land on which illegal Roma settlements are located. A representative of the extreme right wing of the People’s Party - Our Slovakia (Ľudová strana – Naše Slovensko) was gifted part of the land in a Roma settlement in Krásnohorské Podhradí by its original owner. Subsequently the new owner of the plot announced the demolition of the settlement because it was “illegal landfill”. The long-debated problem concerning such illegal constructions is now beginning to take on another dimension in Slovakia.

Main players within the limits of the law

Undoubtedly the most marked sign of anti-Roma manifestations in Slovakia is their penetration into the political mainstream.

If representatives of strong political parties communicate their concerns about a rapid increase in the number of fellow citizens of Romani origin, who will be able to elect their own community mayors,

If the majority society lends an ear to such considerations, that the Roma population explosion may be stopped by reducing benefits in material need to three children per family,



Billboard of the Slovak National Party
(Slovenská Národná Strana)
– man of Roma origin with “added” tattoo.

If the model of boarding schools as an ideal prototype and model for the solution of the “Roma problem” is offered to the public, or

If the most popular media publish an article quoting a prominent representative of the Slovak political scene stating that “Slovakia cannot manage to solve the Roma problem unless it will enforce on the European level certain concessions in terms of the scope of human rights”, then

...is it not the right time to ask whether tolerance for anti-Roma manifestations in Slovakia is not in fact limitless?

The fact is that such rhetoric is used not only during election campaign, but these opinions are conveyed by representatives of local, regional or national authorities most frequently during campaigns.

“We are pushed out of our country by the increasing number of gypsy parasites”.

(Marián Mišún, member of NŠ-ĽS party, the then-chairman of the local department of the municipality of Púchov, April 2011)

A standpoint of the law enforcement body

*“As according to the Slovak dictionary the word ‘gypsy’ can be interpreted as a member of the Roma ethnic group as well as a **liar**, it is impossible to state clearly whom the person had in mind. (Spokeswoman of the Regional Directorate of the Police Corps, Žilina)*

“I will eliminate unfair preferential treatment, and not only of gypsy parasites.” - Marián Kotleba’s slogan in a leaflet during his election campaign for the post of president of the autonomous region of Banská Bystrica, 2009.



The leaflet of the Ľudová strana – Naše Slovensko Party. Marián Kotleba used this “leitmotif” also as a candidate in the local elections in 2010.

The civic association People against Racism (Ľudia proti rasizmu) lodged a complaint against Kotleba.

The District Court in Banská Bystrica gave the following ruling in the matter:

“There is no positive proof that the act was committed by the accused person”.

Court of appeals – Regional Court in Banská Bystrica: **“The act is not a criminal act”.**

The civic association People against Racism (Ľudia proti rasizmu) has lodged a complaint where it points out that:

- ▶ This billboard’s slogan supports the stereotyped cliché that Roma refuse to work and purposefully live at the expense of the majority.
- ▶ Spreading such a generalizing image of Roma is tendentious, misleading, dangerous and illegitimate, as it instigates a general hostility towards members of the Roma ethnic group.
- ▶ The ruling political party will provoke through this billboard campaign a negative, intolerant attitude toward the given minority as a whole

The ruling of the court in the respective matter was as follows:

“...criteria for the commission of an offence were not met, as from the viewpoint of the Slovak National Party the aim was to draw the public’s attention to citizens who grossly abuse the social care system, are not interested in working, and to spark a broad debate on a topic that is part of its election program. The person on the billboard serves only as an illustration, without any reference to a minority in ethnic or nationality terms.” (Office of Judicial and Criminal Police, Department of Summary Procedure, Section of Summary Procedure Bratislava – Staré Mesto).



Immunity of representatives of the political party continued also during the pre-election campaign this year.

Selected rhetoric of politicians:

“If we do not solve the Roma problem, they will solve the Slovak one!”

“Paying them for idleness costs us huge amounts of money. Let them clean forests, dig sewer trenches, clean streets, mow grass and do similar unqualified work which they can manage. They will get used to working and we will save billions which can be used somewhere else. ‘No pain, no gain’ - that applied in the past and must apply also now.”

Obyčajní ľudia, predvolebný program (Ordinary people, pre-election programme)
April 2010 <http://obycajniludia.sk/nase-priority/>

“IS IT WORTHWHILE FOR INHABITANTS OF SETTLEMENTS TO WORK?”

“People in material need, who have children, get from the state in addition to social allowances so many benefits its incredible.” (Štefan Kužma, SDKÚ -Slovak Democratic and Christian Union, the strongest political party in Slovakia in the long run).

“Roma are like devils, by means of your votes I will help you get rid of them”
(candidate for local mayor of the village of Horovce, October 2010).

“As soon as the Lunik IX suburb is completely pulled down, I will place there and also in other parts of the town, where the inhabitants of Košice are endangered by asocial groups, police stations with 24-hour service and the central office of the municipal police will be moved to the Luník IX suburb. As Mayor of Košice I will definitively liquidate and subsequently demolish the Luník IX suburb.... ”

Candidate for the post of Mayor of the town of Košice - <http://cyrilbetus.sk/>

The nature of anti-Roma manifestations indicates that they do not differentiate in terms of social status, gender, or standard of education achieved; that they are targeted at Roma as such. The state must take adequate political responsibility for any efforts to manipulate the public by diverting attention from real socioeconomic problems. Short-term measures have a tendency to intensify social tension.

Acknowledgment: This article is based on the sources of the civic association People against Racism (Ľudia proti rasizmu) (Bratislava, Slovakia), whom I wish to thank for their cooperation.

ANTIGYPSYISM IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Jarmila Bálažová

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Czech Republic*

My colleagues and I at the nonprofit organization Romea are doing our best to break down stereotypes by focusing on collaboration with non-Romani journalists. Sometimes we are successful, and sometimes we run into the persistent grudge that our society holds against Romani people, which has recently been intensifying once more. This antigypsyism has been appearing more and more frequently, along with racism in official publications as well.

We are all currently witnessing how Europe, several decades after the end of the Second World War and the horrors of the Holocaust, is allowing the return of hatred against the Roma national minority. Because Romani people are economically, educationally and socially disadvantaged in various countries, post-totalitarian ones in particular, they are not allowed genuine participation at the political level and therefore have no effective defense against either latent racism or racism expressed through physical violence.

The media, as we all know, play an immeasurably fundamental role in the creation of public opinion about minorities, the Roma minority included. Sometimes this role is positive, and sometimes – unfortunately, more often - it is negative.

I will focus my presentation on several examples and observations that represent the situation in the Czech Republic in particular. However, these examples are comparable to those of many other countries in Central and Eastern Europe.

The changes that accompanied the advent of democracy after 1989 unfortunately caught most of Czech society, including the Roma community, unprepared. In particular, we were unprepared for an increasing number of neo-Nazi and racist demonstrations and for the groups and individuals who choose to profile themselves that way politically.

The 1990s began in the Czech Republic on a rising tide of antigypsyism and tension. This took the form of drastic pogroms against places where Romani people live in greater numbers. The neo-Nazis have that violence on their conscience, as they do the more than 20 racially motivated murders that have been committed in my country.

Today the Roma minority is not represented in Parliament. Roma people are managing to defend themselves in a limited way only, and are currently being moved more and more onto the fringes of society economically.

At the start of this century, there was a further transformation in the sentiments against this minority. The Czech Republic, which unlike other countries has never had any historical experience with ghettos, has now allowed them to be created. The number of socially excluded localities is growing at a chilling rate and one-third of the entire Romani population lives in them today. These ghettos are accompanied by a high rate of socio-pathological phenomena such as crime and drug use. The majority society is also calling Romani people “parasites” for accessing welfare.

The so-called “Romani topics” have been artfully reshaped during the last five to eight years into a policy against “inadaptables” which is being taken up not only by neo-Nazi parties, but also by “serious” politicians coming into both chambers of the Czech Parliament from regions that have long underestimated the importance of addressing these phenomena. These politicians are behind this continually intensifying antigypsyism, which has suddenly found a more logical excuse for itself. This is no longer just about neo-Nazism or racism; instead, it is about the need to discuss these matters openly. Politicians score political points and support when they voice an openly anti-Romani, hateful ideology.

Antigypsyism in Europe, particularly after the economic collapse in these post-communist European countries, is very dangerous. This sentiment has been passed from the neo-Nazis to politicians who are even cleverer than they are at manipulating public opinion. In 2011, mobs of “decent citizens” with sticks in their hands marched through some towns in the Šluknov district, trying to reach buildings where the “inadaptables” live. Such events are a warning to us. Kristallnacht can repeat itself, as can the terminology of those days (which has just undergone slight permutations) for the non-Aryan, the unfit, the genetically impure, and the inadaptable.

A special role has been played recently in the Czech Republic by certain media outlets, in particular online ones, as well as by privately owned television stations. Excesses have been committed by public broadcast television as well. Public radio broadcasting has essentially behaved the most professionally recently. Let me give you several examples:

In the Czech Republic there is an online media outlet called Parlamentní listy, which means Parliamentary News. Despite its name, it has nothing to do with Parliament. For the last year and a half, it has literally been conducting a media witch hunt against Romani people. The editors give space to people with documented links to right-wing extremism and publish vituperative articles about Roma people that are completely fabricated. These false reports are then reprinted by mainstream media outlets without any attempt to verify the information. Our civic association, Romea, is a thorn in the side of these hacks, as we have revealed several of their articles to have been lies. Not only did Parlamentní listy have to publish an apology, but the other

mainstream media outlets had to as well. For example, one false report described the Romani treasurer of a party that does not exist in the Czech Republic, the European Romani Party, running off with this non-existent party's non-existent money. All of it, naturally, was pure invention, and we revealed that after just one week of research.

Another example concerns the privately-owned television station Nova. Most recently, for example, Nova broadcast the testimony of a girl who claimed she had been attacked and raped by a small group of Romani men. This report prompted yet another wave of negative reactions to this minority. Two days later, police determined the girl had invented the entire incident. The television station never apologized.

My final example comes from the public broadcaster, Czech Television. Petr Uhl, the former Czech Human Rights Commissioner, and Anna Šabatová, the former deputy ombudsman, sent a complaint to the public broadcaster over the fact that the term "inadaptable" was being frequently used in the reporting of this public broadcasting television station to evoke a connection to Romani people and to create an anti-Romani atmosphere. A lawyer for Czech Television responded to their complaint by giving a shocking explanation. Not only did he harshly reject the complaint per se, he defended himself with these words: "Several Gypsies work in our television station, one of them even anchors the news."

My aim in giving you these examples has been to give you the hint that the media deserve greater scrutiny from us all. We need a bigger strategy on how to collaborate with them. There is no doubt that there is a need for media analysis, for work on the creation of public opinion, and for greater objectivity regarding the position of Romani people not just throughout Europe, but throughout the world.

ANTIGYPSYISM IN HUNGARY

Anna Daróczy

Budapest, Hungary

I am in a special position as a Romani woman who does not bear the typical marks of a Roma in her appearance. People talk explicitly about their opinion, stereotypes, and hatred towards us Roma in front of me. Although I do not “look like a Roma” I grew up with a strong sense of Romani identity, because my father is a Roma activist.

I never realized when I was being discriminated against. Not when my head teacher in elementary school told my best friend not to hang out with me, nor later, when I applied for jobs and was rejected after only two minutes at the interviews. The antigypsyism is so deep-rooted in Hungary that it took me years - dealing with Roma issues - to realize that my own friends are racist. After eight years I asked them not to use the terms “don’t be a Gypsy, don’t act like a Gypsy” when someone (including myself) behaved so as to arouse antipathy, and when I did, they blamed me for being too serious, for lacking a sense of humor. They still use these terms, except when I am with them.

I would like to highlight a few episodes in Hungarian common talk. As you might have heard, between July 2008 and February 2009, six Roma were killed throughout the country: Racist perpetrators threw Molotov cocktails at houses inhabited by Roma families so the people fled the burning buildings and then were shot with rifles. Six people were killed including children. At first the police and politicians denied racist motivations and what is more, even denied the murders themselves. At that time we – me, my family and friends – realized we can be killed anytime, anywhere and, since the above-mentioned cases were only negligibly discussed by the public, it seemed likely to us we could be killed without anybody caring. The developments of the trial of the perpetrators are being reported by only one internet-blog, not by newspapers or television reports. Non-Roma acquaintances judge us to be paranoid.

In February 2009, a Romanian handball player, Marian Cozma, was killed in front of a night club in Hungary by Roma. The vogue for this case is so high that even Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán commented on the judgment of the appeal court - in which the murderers got lower sentences than at the court of first instance - and expressed his dissatisfaction with the verdict (violating the separation of powers).

A few months ago, Gábor Vona, the head of the far-right party Jobbik, gave an interview on a TV show about the problem of the decreasing population in Hungary. He was explicitly discussing the main problem being that Hungarians bear less and less children while “Gypsies reproduce like rabbits”. He proposed creating policies to encourage non-Roma to bear more children and Gypsies to bear less - otherwise in fifty years the latter will be in the majority.

At the end of May the home of one of my friends was burnt down - the only house on the street inhabited by Roma.

A few days ago, “X” signs were painted on the houses of Roma in a Hungarian town. On the wall of a store a swastika, Hitler’s name, and the slogans “Gypsies you will die” and “You, marked with the X will burn” were graffitied.

It is impossible to travel in Budapest without hearing people talk about “dirty Gypsies”, “stinky Gypsies”. I myself have gotten used to sitting on the metro and bold men wearing military boots getting on; I start to read, dab at my phone, or simply pretend to not be there.

In my opinion, the most dangerous effect of general antigypsyism is that people slowly start to internalize these stereotypes and believe they are really “like that”. I will never forget my (at the time) 12-year-old niece asking me “If they hate us so much, why don’t we go back to India?” These are the things that make me very angry.

What can be done? So many things, but only with the political will to change.

We hear every day that education is the key to success and as a social educator I do share this belief, but I think quality and content matter the most and it is time to educate non-Roma about us - about our history, achievements and experiences. I believe in multicultural education. I would suggest incorporating Romani history into school curricula, arm-in-arm with sensitizing trainings where one can learn through self-experience what it feels like to be oppressed. I propose sensitizing and multicultural trainings for teachers, politicians, social workers and everyone working with Roma or other minorities.

PART III

**THE VIEW OF INSTITUTIONS
ON ANTIGYPSYISM**

EU ANTI-DISCRIMINATION AND SOCIAL INCLUSION POLITICS

Brigitte Luggin

European Commission Representation in the Czech Republic

Many of the Roma in Europe face prejudice, intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion in their daily lives. They are marginalized and live in very poor socioeconomic conditions. This is not acceptable in the European Union at the beginning of the 21st century.

Last year in April, the European Commission managed to put Roma integration high on the EU's political agenda by launching the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020, as well as putting it on the Member States' national agendas.

The "EU Framework for national Roma Integration Strategies" reflects an unprecedented political commitment by all key players. For the first time, the Member States at the highest political level of Heads of States and Governments agreed to put into place national Roma integration strategies and address the current situation of Roma in four key areas – education, employment, health and housing.

I would like to stress that the EU Framework calls on the Member States first of all to ensure that Roma are not discriminated against but are treated like any other EU citizens with equal access to all fundamental rights.

The EU Framework expresses the idea that social and economic dimensions are complementary to existing EU legislation and policies in the areas of non-discrimination, fundamental rights and free movement of persons.

The Commission has concentrated its efforts on making sure Member States correctly transpose and implement existing legislation protecting the rights of Roma people.

First, the Commission is strictly monitoring the implementation and application of the Racial Equality Directive (2000/43/EC) across all Member States.

Second, the Commission has taken all necessary measures within its power to ensure that the safeguards for citizens in the Free Movement Directive (2004/38/EC) are fully respected by all Member States.

Third, the Commission is closely monitoring the transposition and implementation of Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA on combating racism and xenophobia, which obliges Member States to penalize the intentional public incitement to violence and hatred against groups or individuals by reference to their race, color, religion, descent or national or ethnic origin. If transposed and implemented correctly and in full, this Framework Decision will greatly contribute to the fight against racism and xenophobia against Roma.

More generally, the Commission is following closely the recent developments in the EU Member States and strongly condemns all manifestations of racism and xenophobia, as these phenomena are incompatible with the values and principles on which the European Union is based. Public authorities must unequivocally distance themselves from and actively fight against racist and xenophobic behavior.

Stepping up the fight against discrimination and racism, including those forms affecting Roma people, must be part of a strong approach in each Member State.

On 21 May, the Commission adopted a first assessment report on the national Roma integration strategies. The Commission is pleased to see that all Member States paid attention to promoting anti-discrimination and to the protection of fundamental rights in their national strategies.

This shows there is a strong political will to tackle the challenges of Roma integration.

Investing in Roma might not be politically opportune, but it makes economic sense. In these times of crisis, the better economic and social integration of all EU citizens is imperative because otherwise potential talent could go to waste.

Roma integration must not be seen as a cost, but as a benefit to society. Member States have just started their work. They now need to implement their strategies, strengthen them where needed, and put in place a long-lasting framework. The European Commission and the European Parliament will follow this closely and report publicly about progress made – or the lack thereof.

DECADE OF ROMA INCLUSION SECRETARIAT ON ANTIGYPSYISM

Adem Ademi

Budapest, Hungary

In 2003, nine governments took part in an event called “Roma in an Expanding Europe: Challenges for the Future”. This conference was co-sponsored by the Open Society Institute, the World Bank, and the European Union. It brought together Roma leaders, high-level government officials from eight Central and Eastern European countries, and other international leaders to address the need for Roma inclusion in policymaking processes. At the closing session in the Hungarian parliament building, **the nine governments endorsed the “Decade of Roma Inclusion”**. Officially the nine countries launched the Decade of Roma Inclusion in February 2005 in Sofia. Three more countries, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Spain, joined the initiative in 2008.

Through the years, it became clear that the Decade is not a bag full of money, but an initiative which aims to provide a framework for governments to set their own goals for Roma integration, an initiative that called upon each government to develop National Action Plans (NAPs) on the four pillars of Education, Employment, Housing and Health and to address the needs of the Roma in their countries in a systematic way. Poverty, Gender and Discrimination were the three cross-cutting themes of the initiative.

The compulsory exercise of developing NAPs was seriously taken into consideration by all participating governments except Romania, which remains the only country without a Decade Action Plan. Some of the states have developed concrete and realistic approaches, and others less realistic but still vivid Decade Action Plans. Perhaps the pressure by the EU Accession process stimulated the commitment of most of the countries at that time and there was a kind of dynamic spirit of competition at the very beginning of the Decade’s launching.

Decade Presidencies organized workshops mainly on the four pillars of Education, Housing, Health and Employment, which were then discussed, good practices from which were analyzed, and lessons learned were shared in largely a very successful manner. A forum for exchanging practices under the Decade already existed, and the European Commission is now continuing that path.

The Hungarian Presidency first touched on the cross-cutting issue of discrimination, organizing an anti-discrimination workshop in Budapest in 2008. The main purpose of the workshop was to discuss the legal environment of anti-discrimination measures in EU and non-EU countries, the implementation of legal acts, best practices on antidiscrimination and the work of Roma civil rights organizations. There was nothing mentioned about antigypsyism. The controversial fact is that 2008 and 2009 will forever remain dark years for the Roma in Hungary.

The Slovak Presidency was a bit more concrete on this issue and organized a regional Conference on Combating Extremism in March 2010. What is important for this conference is that it discussed topics like media and extremism, impact of the media on the propagation of extremism and possibilities for the media to participate in its elimination, concretizing plans and tasks of the future concept of counter-extremism efforts in Slovakia and the broader understanding of extremism and the application of that understanding in practice. The conclusions and recommendations from this event are available on the Roma Decade website under the link of Decade Presidencies.

Unfortunately neither there, nor at the later Czech or the current Macedonian presidency was antigypsyism discussed. The pre-condition for implementation of any Roma related policies at national and local level is recognition that it exists.

We can therefore summarize the situation by saying that the issue of antigypsyism was presented, but not visibly addressed in the first seven years of the Decade of Roma Inclusion.

In April last year, the European Commission launched a communication for the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies (NRIS) up to 2020. We can call this a similar, more or less developed initiative, an initiative that came to serve the same purpose – to provide a framework for governments to develop a set of policies for addressing Roma issues in a systematic way but, this time, in accordance with EU 2020 principles.

One should be aware of the differences between the Decade and the EU Framework. The Framework covers all EU Member States, there will be funds available to support its implementation, and a so-called “robust monitoring” of it will take place. What it has in common with the Decade is that it covers the same four pillars (but without the crosscutting issues), and it requests the development of a set of policies. The Decade calls these “National Action Plans”, the EU Framework calls them “National Roma Integration Strategies”. There are “National Coordinators” appointed in the Decade. But “National Contact Points” in the European Commission initiative and so on.

Where is antigypsyism? The problem is that it is not addressed by the EU Framework as well.

The European Commission has requested governments to develop their NRISs but has given no clear guidance on addressing antigypsyism. Many civil society

organizations raised their voices, saying measures on antigypsism will be largely missing and it should be addressed as a pre-condition for successful implementation of any NRIS. This concern was not positively responded to in many of the discussion as some NGOs claim, nor was a response made to the official request of the European Roma Policy Coalition (ERPC) at the EU Platform meeting in November last year.

Looking at some of the Strategies prepared, we can notice that the element of antigypsism is lacking, or is only declaratively stated with no measures indicated to be taken if certain situations are faced, as well as no mention of preventive measures.

It was said there is low absorption power among the Member States to apply for EU funds for Roma Inclusion. I remember last year the Romanian Decade National Coordinator elaborated how they have used only 1 % of the total available EU funds for Roma Education. The pragmatic question is: “How will a government implement a large scale program for Roma in a certain country when the majority population believes that Roma should not be supported, but unemployed people in general should; or when a mayor of a city does not accept EU funds for improving the living conditions of his Roma citizens because he will not be re-elected by the majority if he does so?”

The Decade Secretariat, in cooperation with the ERPC, organized a pre-Platform meeting where about 50 representatives of civil society discussed the extraordinary EU Platform meeting held in March this year. The conclusions were handed to the European Commission the next day at the Platform meeting, both in printed form and through a presentation. One of the three conclusions from the meeting was:

“No NRIS can succeed without clear action to combat Anti-Gypsyism, as this is one of the causes of exclusion that the strategies are designed to address. The Commission should ask the Member States to come back within six months with concrete plans to address Anti-Gypsism in the context of the NRISs.”

Among other points, the conclusions also say: “The National Roma Integration Strategies largely fail to incorporate these elements. It is imperative to remedy this failure urgently. Unless Anti-Gypsyism is at the core of the revised strategies, unless there is an explicit intent by Member States to address the structural, direct and indirect discrimination endured by Roma every day; to combat the violent racism fomented by hate groups of the far-right; and also to face up to the existence and the omnipresence of institutional racism and take appropriate measures to eliminate it, all attempts at social inclusion and implementation of the strategies are doomed to failure.”

In the recent communication of the EC from 21 May 2012 – the assessment of the drafted Strategies – it was hard to find any analysis of to what degree the governments plan to take measures against antigypsism. The strong concerns of civil society, I am afraid, were not seriously taken into consideration.

The only sign is at point 2.2, Assessment of Structural Requirements, where the EC calls on Member States to ensure that Roma are not discriminated against but are treated like all other persons with equal access to all fundamental rights as enshrined in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

At the last EU Platform meeting we could notice that the European Commission is limited in directly addressing the issue of antigypsism and should be always careful about this term. This is understandable in a way, but what is less understood is the fact that we are speaking of a pre-condition for successful implementation of the set of measures; a pre-condition that makes the success of the NRIS dependent on the measures and action taken against antigypsism.

We are aware that antigypsism is not a simple but a very violent form of racism targeting Roma which must be stopped. As long as antigypsism exists and the media and politicians either support it or will not condemn it openly, Roma will have to do a lot of work to gain respect from the majority population.

Caught by the storm of institutional racism and the winds of everyday attacks on the streets, in the media, and in our homes, Roma have become veterans of stirred-up suffering.

To address this issue we all have to be aware that we desperately need political will. Once Roma become subjects introducing public policies and no longer remain the objects in whose name public policies are introduced, change might be ahead. If current Local, National and International Frameworks do not clearly address antigypsism, I am afraid that all activities and measures will remain in the mode of “business as usual” and will not seriously contribute to Roma Inclusion.

EUROPEAN ROMA AND TRAVELLERS FORUM ON ANTIGYPSYISM

Robert Rustem

ERTF, Strasburg

As Europe demands human rights for the people of Syria, this meeting recognizes the deceptions and betrayals of Roma people who are unable to enjoy many of those same rights in the Council of Europe member states they call home. Restrictions on travel, collective expulsions, violence and intimidation are just a few of the hallmarks of the 21st century Roma experience. Like the everyday denial of decent education, healthcare, employment and justice, these realities of Roma life systematically crush the hopes of the Roma community that human rights are indeed universal.

What is all too common, however, is the bleak situation faced by the Roma community, wherever you look in Europe.

Antigypsyism is widespread, generalized, constant, and often institutionalized. Without knowledge of its nature we will never be able to tackle the problems which Roma in all walks of life face.

We must also never forget the tragic period of the Second World War, when Nazi Germany – misguided by a criminal racist ideology – condemned the Roma to extermination, along with other peoples classified as subhuman and unworthy of existence.

The European Roma and Travellers Forum, together with other organizations, has a long history and experience in fighting against antigypsyism in the Council of Europe member states.

The recent anti-Roma violence that recently burst out in some member states has hit the headlines and outraged the European public once again.

Few seem to realize that violence in all its forms – physical and psychological – hits the Roma population daily and everywhere throughout Europe. The violent incidents in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary should be viewed in the context of broader antigypsyism against Roma, characterized also by constant forced evictions, segregation, police brutality, social exclusion and hate speech, public anti-Romani statements by state representatives, intimidation and impunity. The list is not exhaustible.

Antigypsyism has become a usual environment for its manifestation in Europe, an accepted way of thinking and reacting for large numbers of people of all categories in our societies. In times of economic crisis and political turmoil, societies tend to always look for scapegoats.

The Roma have been depicted as illiterate and unwilling to integrate, encompassing the perfect image of what is going bad in our societies. Deprived of proper education and excluded from the labor market, they are branded as parasites of the same societies that have marginalized and oppressed them for centuries.

The recent migration trends are but symptoms of Member States' failure to take responsibility for all their citizens and provide for a climate where Roma can enjoy and fully exercise their rights.

There is a growing fear among the Roma that their "home countries" cannot protect them and that consequently the solution is to flee their countries. Having said this, I would like to present to you today two cases in which ERTF was involved in fighting against Antigypsyism: i) The ERTF complaint against France under the Council of Europe Social Charter and ii) Ethnic profiling at the borders in Macedonia.

ERTF Complaint against France

In February 2011, the European Roma and Travellers Forum submitted a complaint against France in respect of violation of Article 16, Article 19, paragraph 8, Article 30 and Article 31, paragraph 3, of the revised European Social Charter, alone or in conjunction with the non-discrimination clause in Article E.

The contention of ERTF is that the corpus of concerns rises to the level of and amounts in practice and effect to a violation of Articles 16, 19, 30 and 31, read in conjunction and/or independently of the Article E non-discrimination provisions of the Revised European Social Charter.

The wave of expulsions from France, which began on 19 August 2010 which led to the deportation, within two weeks, of approximately 1,000 Roma and to the dismantlement of 128 Roma camps, is an undoubtedly discriminatory action, performed by the French authorities, and directly contradicting France's obligations under International and European law.

A comprehensive review of the situation in Romani encampments in France, the government's social inclusion policies and relevant legislation, strongly indicates a range of systemic violations of the right to adequate housing where Roma are concerned, and thus seriously threatens the existence and wellbeing of Romani families and communities.

Existing policies in France were leading to substandard and deteriorating residential conditions, which have led to the evictions of Roma without the provision of alternative housing and remedy for the widespread social exclusion of Roma.

However, with the announcements made by President Sarkozy on 21 and 28 July 2010 that a new concerted policy of forced eviction and mass expulsion of so-called unlawful camps was to be implemented, the situation faced by Roma in France has deteriorated substantially.

In addition to the discriminatory effect on the Roma population, there was an evidence of discriminatory intent. The internal memorandum of 5th August 2010 circulated to police chiefs and signed by the Chief for the Minister of the Interior, stated: Three hundred camps or illegal settlements must be evacuated within three months; Roma camps are priority, and that “it is down to the prefect in each department to begin a systematic dismantling of the illegal camps, particularly those of the Roma”.

The approach of the French government to the housing situation of Roma points to direct discriminatory policies, which keep Roma excluded, marginalized and oppressed. As a result, not only are Romani families often denied in practice the most basic public services and benefits (even the right to vote) on the grounds of race and/or ethnicity, contrary to a range of international commitments undertaken by France towards the elimination and prosecution of all forms of discrimination, but they are openly, officially, systemically targeted.

The deportations follow a proposal made by President Nicolas Sarkozy on 30 July 2010 to strip “French citizens of foreign origin” of their nationality as punishment for violent crimes committed against law enforcement officers. If passed into law, this proposal would violate Article 1 of the French Constitution, as well as France’s obligations under European and international law, and may also contravene France’s treaty obligation to prevent statelessness.

In the complaint, the ERTF requested that the European Committee of Social Rights reviews the facts presented in this Collective Complaint and finds France in violation of the aforementioned articles of the Revised European Social Charter, in order to urge the French Government to apply directly the revised European Social Charter and to adopt a national long-term strategy including positive action measures to combat the social exclusion of Roma, through the improvement of their housing situation.

The European Committee on Social Right on 24th January 2012 made its decision regarding ERTF complaint. The conclusions were communicated to the French government and to ERTF, however we do not have right to make them public until 16th June 2012. I invite you to check the web-page of the Council of Europe’s Social charter after this date and read the conclusions. At this moment I can only mention that they are in favor of the ERTF complaint and allegations.

Ethnic profiling at the borders in Macedonia

Macedonia was granted a liberalization of its visa regime with the European Union on 30 November 2009. It entered into force on 19 December 2009.

The visa liberalization had an almost immediate and considerable impact on the number of asylum applications filed by Macedonian nationals. UNHCR figures shows an almost eight times increase in this number between 2009, when it stood at 838, and 2010, when it reached 6,289 applications.

In order to reduce the number of asylum seekers in the EU, the Macedonian authorities started implementing certain ethnic profiling “measures “at the borders. In our opinion this is pure antigypsyism.

In September 2011, organizations from Macedonia and members of ERTF informed the Secretariat that a vast number of Roma with valid passports and the necessary documentation for travel were prevented from leaving the country. Moreover no explanation from the border police were given to them and the passports were stamped and marked with AZ, azilant. (“Asylum seeker” in English).

Consequently the ERTF wrote a letter to the Prime Minister of Macedonia asking for an explanation about the measures implemented at the borders in Macedonia which are violating the freedom of movement of Macedonian citizens from the Roma ethnic community. Unfortunately until today we haven’t received any reply. At the same time, we have also alarmed the European Convention against Racial Discrimination (ECRI), the Council of Europe Human Rights Commissioner, the Framework Convention for Protection of National Minorities (FCPNM), the European Commission and the Legal fairs and the Human Rights Commission of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

In the absence of a reply, ERTF organized a field visit to Macedonia (26 – 29 May 2012) to find out more about the situation. During the visit, we had many meeting with representatives from the NGOs, political parties, representatives from the government and international organizations. All of them, with an exception of the government officials have confirmed that a selective policy toward Roma is being implemented. Moreover there is no written directive but rather oral instruction communicated to the chiefs of the border control units. Having said this, the decision and evaluation of “who is a potential asylum seeker and who is not” is solely left to the individual, the border police to decide.

The ERTF will not remain silent about this flagrant violation of basic human rights and the deprivation of a certain community just because they belong to a certain ethnic origin. We intend on 28 June 2012 to raise this issue at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and to ask from its committees to investigate this problem and sanction the country implementing this anti-Roma measures. At the same time we will continue fighting against this and similar problems and make sure that our community is equally treated and benefiting from the Human Rights.

In addition I believe that the states must demonstrate political commitment to prevent collective criminalization, introduce institutional guarantees to combat discrimination and segregation, and take steps to significantly improve the socioeconomic conditions of Roma in Europe. Without urgent measures to curb this phenomenon and put a stop to all forms of discrimination and exclusion of the Roma population, Europe risks to relive the dark days of the past.

States have to start taking responsibility and guarantee protection for all their citizens!

EUROPEAN ROMA RIGHTS CENTRE (ERRC) ON ANTIGYPSYISM

Marek Szilvasi

Budapest, Hungary

In this paper, we will try to break down the antigypsyism argument into some tangible indicators of what it effectively means on the ground in everyday experiences of many Romani people in European societies. The paper endeavors to map areas in which rights of Romani people continue to be severely violated: violent attacks, freedom of movement restrictions, hate speech, agendas of extreme political parties, segregation in education, evictions and expulsions, trafficking, failures in child protection and coercive sterilization.

Violence against Roma

In cases brought by the ERRC in Croatia, Bulgaria and Macedonia, the European Court of Human Rights has confirmed that the state is obliged to investigate and prosecute persons who commit violence against Roma, whether they are private actors or state officials. Despite this, most perpetrators of violence against Roma in Europe act with impunity. Since 2008, the ERRC has registered the number of attacks against Roma in Hungary, Czech Republic, and Slovakia resulting in a combined total of at least 11 fatalities. The attacks involved Molotov cocktails, hand grenades and guns, police violence, arson attacks, mob violence and demonstrations. ERRC monitoring found that, in the vast majority of the cases, no perpetrator has been punished; indeed, police suspended investigations without identifying any suspects in nearly one third of the cases²⁶. Attacks continued throughout 2011 and 2012. In March 2011 a Romani boy was attacked and insulted on the way to school by three men in Serbia, which also witnessed several cases of police violence against Roma. In Macedonia, in October 2011, a 17-year old Romani boy was attacked and stabbed at school by a non-Roma boy because of his Roma ethnicity. Starting in early August 2011, a wave of anti-Roma demonstrations took place in cities across the Czech Republic and Romani settlements were targeted by mobs. In Bulgaria, the death of a young man who was hit by a vehicle on the night of 23 September 2011, triggered violent anti-Roma protests across the country. In 2011 the ERRC monitored four violent mass attacks against Roma in Italy: three involved setting Romani homes on

26) See "Fact Sheet: State Response to Violence Against Roma" for a more detailed analysis <http://www.errc.org/cms/upload/file/state-response-to-violence-factsheet-april-2011.pdf>

fire; the other was an armed attack by non-state actors. In Northern Italy a false rape accusation against a Romani man resulted in a series of violent attacks on a Romani settlement in December. ERRC research carried out in Italy in 2011 revealed that 26% of the Romani women interviewed had suffered attacks perpetrated by the police including physical violence, degrading treatment, verbal assault and sexual harassment. In France several attacks targeting Roma were reported and complaints filed; however few have been investigated and prosecuted. Most common are arson attacks on Roma property, of which seven were reported resulting in at least one death and multiple incidents of property damage. In Russia several cases of police violence against Roma were reported. In January 2012 police carried out an organized raid on one of the Roma settlements in Uzhgorod, Ukraine. Romani individuals, including women and children, were beaten, verbally abused and had tear gas used on them.

Freedom of movement

Germany paid more than 100 Roma to return to Romania in June 2009. Finland, amid public outcries about public security, threatened expulsions in 2010 and also paid Roma to return to Bulgaria and Romania in 2010-11. In many cases, police action has been concurrent with statements by public officials that Roma as an ethnic group are predisposed to crime and antisocial behavior. In France the repatriation of Romanian and Bulgarian Roma is an ongoing issue of discriminatory practice, which is in violation of the fundamental rights of these European Union citizens. Throughout 2011 the ERRC monitored the situation of Romani communities with respect to expulsion orders and detention. During this period the ERRC found that Roma who had received expulsion orders were being placed in detention centers even before their 30-day window to leave the country had expired. Denmark summarily expelled 23 Roma to Romania in July 2010, 24 hours after they were detained. ERRC appeals against these deportation orders were sustained by a Danish court, which ruled the deportations illegal. Sweden expelled 50 Roma to Romania in 2010. In both Serbia and Macedonia several hundred Romani individuals were illegally prevented from travelling outside the country, because of a perception they could be seeking political asylum in EU Member States.

Extremist political parties and hate speech

Extremist political parties and politicians have stepped up their anti-Romani rhetoric and actions in many European countries. In Hungary, the Magyar Garda (banned in 2009), Szébb Jövőért Polgárőr Egyesület and related organizations engaging in paramilitary activities with an explicitly racist agenda continue to operate openly. In Gyöngyöspata the groups patrolled a Romani neighborhood for 16 days in March 2011, intimidating and harassing Romani residents. Shortly afterwards, the group was disbanded by order of Hungarian courts. Jobbik, an extremist party with an

overtly anti-Romani platform, won four seats in the European Parliament elections in 2009 and 47 seats (17% of the vote) in the national parliament in 2010. In Italy, the Government has continued to use anti-Romani rhetoric to harden public opinion against Roma and Sinti and has moved aggressively to evict Roma from their homes and move them into controlled camps. Italy went so far as to declare a “state of emergency” with regard to the Roma in 2008. In a case brought by the ERRC, Italy’s highest court last year ruled the state of emergency to be illegal. In February 2012, the Italian Government appealed the Council of State decision before the Court of Cassation. The Council accepted the request to suspend the effects of its decision from last year, which declared the State of Emergency was illegal and unfounded. The State of Emergency is not now in force, and the Court of Cassation, the highest court in Italy, will still consider the substance of the original decision at a later date. In Slovakia since 2010, the far-right Ludova Strana Nase Slovensko has been increasingly active with rhetoric, specifically referring to “Gypsy criminality”. Before the upcoming elections (March 2012) the Slovak National Party, which is currently in parliament and was one of the coalition parties in the previous government, has put up billboards that target Roma, and perpetuate myths about the minority. Slogans include: “Let’s not feed those who don’t want to work” and “How long are we going to lose on the gypsies? Let’s change it!” In February 2010 the Romanian Foreign Minister made public statements suggesting that Roma are genetically predisposed to criminality and media reported that the President defended the Minister. Romanian MPs also attempted to officially change the name of Roma to “Gypsies” to avoid confusion with “Romanians”. During the media frenzy surrounding the expulsion of Roma from France, the Bulgarian Prime Minister and the Romanian President erroneously referred to the Roma as nomads.

Systemic segregation in education

The European Court of Human Rights has affirmed that school segregation of Romani children (in schools for children with disabilities and in separate schools or classes in mainstream schools) constitutes illegal discrimination in judgments against the Czech Republic (2007), Greece (2008) and Croatia (2010). Despite these rulings, educational segregation of Romani children is systemic in many European countries: Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia are noteworthy, with credible reports of segregation in Macedonia, Northern Ireland (UK), Portugal and Spain. At the end of 2011, a district court in Eastern Slovakia confirmed segregation at one of the local schools and ordered the school to introduce measures to integrate Romani children into mainstream mixed classes.

Widespread residential segregation and forced evictions

An October 2009 report of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, prepared by the ERRC, found that “segregation is still evident in many EU Member States, such as Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Greece, Spain, France, Cyprus, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and Slovakia, sometimes as a result of deliberate government policy.” In Italy, the placement of Roma and Sinti in “nomad camps”, which offer substandard conditions and are located outside the city, constitutes an official policy to segregate Roma and Sinti from the Italian majority. Evictions of Roma, many of which violated international law, have been carried out in Albania, Bulgaria, France, Italy, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and the UK. Italy has been particularly active in conducting hundreds of evictions, affecting thousands of Romani people in both Milan and Rome in recent years. Between April and December 2011 ERRC monitored 131 evictions in Italy. In Cluj, Romania, approximately 250 Romani persons were evicted from their homes in the centre of the city by the Municipality of Cluj and relocated to the site of a former dump on the edge of the city in December 2010. The housing provided is segregated, substandard and disconnected from public transportation into the city. In June 2011, the Municipality of Baia-Mare in Romania built a concrete wall in the town to separate the Romani community from the rest of the city. Since April 2011, forced evictions of Roma have continued in Slovakia: in July 2011, the homes of 80 Romani persons, including women, children and the elderly, were demolished in a Romani settlement on the outskirts of Kosice without an offer of alternative accommodation. In November 2011, Portugal was found to be in violation of the Revised European Social Charter in regards to housing, in a case brought by the ERRC to the European Committee of Social Rights. In the UK, the Irish Travellers at Dale Farm lost a 10-year struggle before domestic courts for their homes, which were demolished in October 2011 by the authorities without an offer of culturally adequate alternative accommodation for the affected families. Systematic evictions of Roma in France are continuing. From April to October 2011, the ERRC recorded 46 forced evictions in France involving 5753 people. The most recent eviction took place on February 27. A total of 130 Romani individuals (including 35 children) were evicted by the French national police and French border police from a school building. The families were staying in the school building because their previous accommodation was burnt down on 24 February, 2012. The families moved to the school building on 25 February. Notifications to leave the school were issued to the families on the same day by the Municipality of Rhone. The police evicted them two days later. In Serbia, Roma continue to face eviction orders and violent attacks. In 1 May 2012, Roma, who had been previously forcibly evicted and relocated from Belgrade’s Belvil settlement by city authorities on 26 April, additionally faced violent attacks.

Trafficking in human beings

Low socio-economic status, low educational achievement, and high levels of unemployment, compounded with high levels of discrimination and racism, place Roma at an inordinately high risk of becoming victims of human trafficking. A 2010 US State Department report discusses the overrepresentation of Roma as victims of

trafficking and their high vulnerability to sexual exploitation, forced labor and child begging in nearly half of the European countries covered. ERRC research in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia during early 2010 indicated that Roma represent 50-80% of victims in Bulgaria, at least 40% in Hungary, 70% in Slovakia and up to 70% in parts of the Czech Republic.

Failures in child protection: In many countries, Romani children make up a disproportionate number of the children in state care, suggesting a failure of the state in preventing family break-up. In Bulgaria, Romani children account for around 50% of the children in the State-run children's homes and about 33% of the children in State-run homes for children with intellectual disabilities. In the Czech Republic, around 40% of the children in a sample of 17 children's homes visited by the ERRC in five regions were Romani. During research in five counties in Hungary, Romani children were found to represent 65% of the children in State care. The General Directorate for Social Assistance and Child Protection in Romania reported that Romani children constitute up to 80% of the population in children's homes in some regions. In Slovakia social workers and child protection officials report that Romani children compose at least 70% of the children in institutional care.

Denial of access to healthcare and social assistance

Discrimination remains a barrier to healthcare and social assistance for Roma in many European states. In a 2009 case brought by ERRC, the European Committee of Social Rights found Bulgaria in violation of the European Social Charter twice by failing to ensure that Roma have adequate access to the healthcare system and to social assistance, prompting the Government to amend the law on social assistance. In Kosovo, lead contamination of IDP camps housing Roma in Northern Mitrovicë/Mitrovica is considered one of the biggest medical crises in the region. Despite significant international and EU attention, Roma continue to live in one of the camps after more than 10 years, exposed to lead contamination which has reportedly resulted in dozens of deaths.

Coercive sterilization of Romani women

In Hungary the ERRC has documented sporadic cases of the coercive sterilization of Romani women, most recently from 2008. Czech cases have also been reported as recently as 2007. In November 2009 the Czech Government expressed regret about the individual sterilization of Romani women, but no Government has adopted a comprehensive plan to compensate all victims or adequately reformed healthcare law regarding informed consent. Although numerous cases have been documented in Slovakia, there has been no Government response to date.

INTERNATIONAL ROMANI UNION ON ANTIGYPSYISM

Stanislaw Stankiewicz

Warsaw, Poland

Migration and Countries

Roma have lived for centuries in Europe, and it should not be necessary to actually have to say that they are true Europeans. When they arrived, most nations did not even exist and the concept of a country as a nation did not exist.

Roma have lived for centuries in Europe, without their own borders but with a culture that they have not given up, with their own language and traditions. Having a different culture within a country does not mean that one is not a citizen of one's country. Roma are actual citizens of the countries they live in, often proud ones; they are officially registered, pay their taxes, and work, in fact, like everyone else.

Roma are citizens. They have the same duties and rights as others from the same country.

One always speaks about a Roma problem, but what about the problem that European nations seem to have about Roma? After more than a thousand years, Europe seems to still have an issue with a transnational minority? Are European nations only paying lip service to the principle of diversity and integration? Or are they just engaged in alibi exercises while thinking that Roma are actually an "issue"?

In most countries, where Roma live side by side with the general population, the question is what are the governments doing to further integration, to improve the situation? Which programs are they engaged in? We have to remain critical and keep an open eye for those misbegotten policies and programs that have existed and unfortunately continue to exist.

The currently burning question, especially after the events in Italy, is why Roma immigrate to other countries. An actual monitoring and thorough analysis is ERPC actually required, as de facto, Roma are no less but no more mobile than the rest of the population. Both Roma and non-Roma seek places where their life is better, but also where the life of their children might get better than the places they used to live in.

Roma are not more “mobile” than other Europeans. There is a small percentage of Roma who have been traditionally travelling, but the vast majority was always sedentary, and this for centuries. Looking backwards into European history, we easily see that it is a human constant to seek a better place, a better life. After all, would we have Germans, Slavs, and many other Europeans in today’s Europe if they had not migrated away from their original homes? Not to mention wars and other extreme situations that force or forced entire populations to migrate. The last example thereof is the war in Kosovo that *de facto* cleansed the country of much of its Roma population.

Unfortunately, nationalism, especially the thoughts that are profoundly ingrained nowadays in Europe, that a nation is one “race”, have found their expression in extremism, populism, in various movements such as the Skinheads and the neo-Nazi groups. And in such states, defined along often false “ethnic” lines, Roma have no place. This phenomenon is not limited to Europe but can also be seen in other countries, such as the USA and Canada.

Most European nations do not even attempt to better the situation. To improve the general situation of Roma or even to make them “feel” at home is often an empty promise. Politics towards the largest European minority is often improvised, passive or at most reactive, and most of all, populist. It seems almost that Roma are perceived as a threat - that being “different” is a threat to one’s country. Does the population fear integration? Fear that Roma could take their jobs? Is this the reason why many countries tend to send Roma to “special” schools (read schools for the mentally retarded)?

Actually, one should create programs not only for Roma, but foremost for the general population to realize that their myths about country and nation are actually that, myths that prevent the true integration of all minorities within one country. The barrier between the population and Roma has to be broken.

What are countries actually doing to further the acceptance and integration of Roma or of the integration of people with a different culture? They are not demons, they are not bandits - they are citizens.

On the Roma side, the Roma need to know and believe that the cultural differences and old prejudices are not preventing them from being citizens of the countries they live in. Should this belief in integration fail, then Europe will be facing a major migration in the coming years.

Europe and the Roma Question

At a time when many nations, especially from Eastern and South Eastern Europe are being integrated into Europe, at a time when people are being told they are Europeans, subject to the same rule of law, to the same rules, one should not forget that Roma are Europeans. They are so because this is their history, but also because they are citizen of the countries they live in.

However, there are European Union Member States that are advocating for the “identification” of Roma in their passports. Are we going towards a Europe where the laws and freedoms are only valid for the general population but not for selected minorities? Is not this reminiscent of apartheid, of segregation, or of worse? This is certainly not written anywhere in the law.

Practically, however, European law is not respected by European countries. What else can one say when a European citizen from Romania or Bulgaria, such as in Italy currently, is being deported for the sole “crime” of being Roma? And what are European institutions saying to this?

Actually and rationally, these Roma migrants are not migrants. They are exercising their rights as European citizens. The rights to travel and to live, the right of establishment as enshrined in the European principles.

The French and Italian situations actually show that these principles are being trampled with total impunity by governments in Europe, that their actual laws are being disregarded. We, as Roma, ask what the consequences of tolerating such behavior are going to be for Europe.

Migration and EU Policies

European policies on migration are written down in many documents and these policies should be respected, also when the migration is illegal. Controls exist and should be and are enforced on illegal immigration from other countries.

What are migrants in integrated Europe? Are Roma in Europe defined as migrants? Other Europeans in Europe are at least not perceived as such. Nobody (or nearly so) says that other non-Roma in the EU are actually migrants. Migrants tend to be defined as people from non-EU countries who come to Europe. As such, Roma who are citizens of EU Member States should not be considered “migrants”, for there is no legal basis for this; rather, they should be considered as the other Europeans are.

Discrimination arises from the fear of the “others”, of people who are “different”, and is often based on stereotypes. Italy and France are again such examples, where the Roma are officially defined as “travelers”. This definition stems from the Mussolini era of the 1930’s.

If Europe continues to define people through old, inaccurate stereotypes, if Europe continues to see Roma as travelers, then chances are that they will continue to look at them as illegal immigrants.

Migration, Language and Xenophobia

In countries defined (albeit often totally arbitrarily) by a single race and culture, a different culture or language, is often perceived as a threat. This is natural, although one should bear in mind that these countries did not exist as such 200 years ago, and that in most cases, their languages were unified even more recently. Confronted with another culture, the reaction is often open xenophobia.

When groups of people of a different culture settle in a different country, the initial reaction is often one of rejection: “We do not want them here.” The smaller the country is, the more strident the reaction. This is understandable, for if one’s identity depends on one’s appurtenance and culture, aliens are a threat.

Europe needs a thorough discussion of these tendencies and a thorough program to counter them. These tendencies are all too visible, say, when a few Roma speak Romanes in a public place. Those who do not understand almost immediately have a fear reaction and are identifying the Roma as dangerous aliens, and this although we have many different languages in Europe and always have had.

Not speaking the local language is a source of discrimination, be it at the airport, with the local authorities, but also when seeking work. The new (i.e., post 19th-century) nations actually do not tolerate diversity and require their citizens to speak a unified language. Stuck in one language, restricted into one culture, most people feel threatened by another culture and language.

So education, more education, knowledge, openness, and respect about one’s and other cultures needs to be furthered, especially in a global world as we know it nowadays. Without this, there is no better future, no chance for improvement.

This will require political will, this will require change. Without this, there will be no improvement.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION AGAINST RACISM AND INTOLERANCE ON COMBATING DISCRIMINATION AGAINST ROMA

François Sant'Angelo



European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)

**The independent human rights monitoring body of
the Council of Europe in the field of combating
racism and intolerance**

- ECRI is a human rights body of the Council of Europe, composed of independent experts, which monitors problems of racism, discrimination on grounds of ethnic origin, citizenship, colour, religion and language, as well as xenophobia, antisemitism and intolerance, prepares reports and issues recommendations to member States.
- ECRI takes its decisions at plenary sessions held in Strasbourg three times a year.
- ECRI has a permanent Secretariat provided by the CoE and based in the Directorate General of Human Rights and Legal Affairs.

Background

- The CoE estimates that there are over 11 million Roma in Europe, over 5 million of whom live outside the EU (notably in Turkey, Russia and Serbia).
- Recent developments in several CoE member states have highlighted the fact that the Roma continue to be victims of discrimination and intolerance.
- Strasbourg declaration, October 2010 = pledge to cooperate at all levels on Roma issues (including EU, national governments, NGOs) including European training programmes for Roma mediators and lawyers.

General provisions

- Urges countries to ratify Protocol 12 to the ECHR (anti-discrimination), as well as the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.
- Countries should develop and implement comprehensive national plans on Roma-related issues, working together with Roma representatives.
- They should also develop mutual trust between Roma and public authorities, in particular through training mediators (see next slide on ROMED).

ROMED

- In “the Strasbourg Declaration” of 2010 CoE member States agreed that the Council of Europe should implement a European Training Programme for Mediators “ROMED”.
- Objectives of the ROMED:
 - To promote real and effective intercultural mediation
 - To ensure the integration of a rights-based approach
 - To support the work of mediators by providing tools for planning and implementation of their activities

More about ROMED: <http://coe-romed.org/about>

Education

- Each Roma child should have genuine access to nursery school.
- Urgent steps should be taken to end segregation at school and the placement of Roma children in special schools.
- Measures should be taken to prevent and combat stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination experienced by Roma in schools.
- Teaching on the Roma genocide should be included in school curricula.

Employment

- Positive measures should be taken for Roma in respect of employment, as concerns particularly recruitment and vocational training.
- Steps should be taken to stamp out discrimination against Roma as regards, inter alia, recruitment.
- There should be no obstacles to Roma exercising their traditional trades.
- Roma should be consulted to find alternatives to vanished trades in which they have traditionally engaged, for instance through loans and/or tax benefits.

Housing

- Governments should combat forced or de-facto segregation.
- Roma should not be evicted without notice and without opportunity for re-housing in decent accommodation.
- Steps should be taken to legalise illegal Roma settlements built in breach of town planning regulations which have been tolerated for a long period of time by the authorities.
- Governments should ensure that appropriate encampment whether for permanent occupation or transit areas are available in sufficient numbers on suitable and duly services sites.
- Governments should make sure that Roma communities are not disadvantaged in respect of public services such as water supply, electricity, refuse removal, transport and access to the road system.

Racist violence and crimes against Roma

- The police and prosecuting authorities should conduct investigations of racist crimes against Roma.
- Steps should be taken to encourage Roma victims of racist violence and crimes to lodge complaints.

Media

- The participation of Roma in the media sector in general should be promoted by taking steps for journalists and presenters from among Roma communities to be recruited and trained.
- The media should be encouraged to refrain from broadcasting any information likely to fuel discrimination and intolerance toward Roma.

Other

- The legislation and its implementation on the freedom of movement of persons within the EU should not be discriminatory towards Roma.
- Forced sterilisation of Roma women should be expressly prohibited.
- Governments should set up a comprehensive system for recording acts of violence against Roma.
- Steps should be taken to promote Roma recruitment to the police force and their participation in the media sector.
- Governments should also encourage systems to monitor anti-Gypsyism online and ensure effective prosecution.
- All Roma children should be registered at birth and all Roma should be issued with identity documents.

Follow-up

- Findings of ECRI country by country monitoring reports.
- Judgements of the European Court of Human Rights: ECRI standards and country-by-country monitoring reports are increasingly referred to by the Court in its judgements.
- Monitoring of NGOs and national Specialised Bodies against discrimination.

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Joint Statement of the Participants in the International Expert Seminar

NEW FACES OF ANTIGYPSYISM IN MODERN EUROPE

Prague, June 1-2, 2012

On June 1-2, 2012, as part of the World Roma Festival Khamoro in Prague, international scientists in Romani Studies and researchers of antigypsyism met with experts of different international Roma NGOs, including the European Roma and Travellers Forum (ERTF), the International Romani Union (IRU), the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC), the Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat, the Forum of European Roma Young People (FERYP) and experts of European intergovernmental bodies, such as the Council of Europe's European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) and the European Commission Representation in the Czech Republic.

The aim of the seminar was to bring together NGO representatives, Roma activists, researchers and experts on antigypsyism issues to report on and discuss forms of antigypsyism in Europe.

The experts agreed that antigypsyism is a violent form of racism targeting Roma that shapes whole societies and targets people perceived as "Gypsies". Antigypsyism has existed in different forms for at least 500 years and reached its most destructive form in the Holocaust during which an estimated 500 000 people were killed as "Gypsies" by the Nazi Germans and their collaborators in many European countries.

The experts shared their own findings and made it clear that the present situation of antigypsyism has reached an alarming peak, threatening the lives of Roma throughout Europe. Roma are constantly confronted with antigypsyism at many different levels: Individual discrimination in everyday life, institutionalized discrimination by state authorities and laws, and hate crimes, as well as stereotypical media representations. In today's Europe, Roma have to deal with anti-Roma rallies, arson attacks, police brutality, forced sterilization and gun attacks, as well as school segregation, exclusion from labor markets, ghettoization and denial of basic services. This is an enduring obstacle for the process of Roma social inclusion and their ability to pursue their happiness.

At the same time it was agreed that governments, international organizations as well as local authorities most often fail to recognize the underlying anti-Gypsy nature of the above mentioned phenomena.

Therefore we urge the local, national and international stakeholders to:

- include Roma in the decision making and policy implementing processes on all

levels;- recognize the existence and the increasing waves of antigypsyism and to openly express the need to act against antigypsyism;

- establish measures against antigypsyism in the national action plans of their National Roma Integration Strategies that could include:

- the training and education of decision makers, teachers, social workers, police officers, state officials and legislative personal etc. on the history, experiences and achievements of Roma and the history and mechanisms of antigypsyism

- the support of scientific research into antigypsyism

- the forming of special bodies to investigate cases of antigypsyism and to counsel the government.

FACES OF KHAMORO 2012

