

Dosta! Enough!
Go beyond prejudice,
discover the Roma!

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Introduction

Who are the Roma ?



The Roma are a European people but of Indian origin, whose ancestors left the Ganges valley, in northern India around 800 years ago. There are now in Europe about 12 million Roma, usually living in very difficult conditions and facing discrimination every day.

What is their history in Europe ?

For centuries the Roma have been hounded out of countries, deported under threat of sanctions if they remained, including the death penalty – all for the only reason of being born a Roma. The Romani people have had to flee violence and discrimination wherever they were.

On August 2nd and 3rd 1944, several thousand Roma and Sinti were massacred at the Zigeunerlager in Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp.

An estimated 600.000 to 1,5 million Roma were exterminated during the Holocaust. As a percentage, that makes Roma the ethnic group most affected by the Nazi killings. Over 90 percent of the Roma population of Austria, Germany and Estonia was exterminated by the fascist regimes.

What problems do the Roma people face in Europe today ?

Roma rights are violated every day in Europe. Roma workers are refused jobs,

their children are refused places in school. Their community is often considered marginal and traditional, meaning they are more likely to suffer social exclusion.

In reality, Roma can be considered as the first European people, since they “broke” European borders much before any international treaty or Convention existed. They travelled all around Europe enriching their culture with the culture of the visited countries, as well as enriching European cultural heritage.

Why is the Council of Europe, with the financial support of the European Commission, running the DOSTA! campaign ?

The Council of Europe is Europe’s guardian of human rights, and it is our duty to make sure everyone’s rights are respected. Not only should Roma have a system that secures their human rights, but they also need to be recognised a precious part of European culture.

In this task the Council of Europe is supported by the European Commission; both institutions are campaigning to change attitudes – to remind that Roma have the same rights as any other Europeans. This is the paradox of our campaign: there should not be the need of campaigning for recognizing the citizenship’s rights of minority groups. We are campaigning to turn around prejudices, setting a challenge to Europeans: “Go beyond prejudice: discover the Roma!”

Which is the aim of this publication ?

The Dosta! campaign toolkit is conceived for helping you understanding what is the Dosta! campaign and how you can use it for fighting anti-Gypsyism by taking concrete actions at the local level. The toolkit includes a video-kit that you,

or media professionals, can use free of charge while reporting about Roma.

The material produced within the Dosta! campaign has not to be considered as an exhaustive picture of the very complex Roma culture and identity but just as inputs for starting contributing, through your help, to the fight against prejudices and stereotypes towards Roma.

For more information : www.dosta.org



CHAPTER I

Get in touch
with the Dosta! campaign

The Campaign Background

The Dosta! campaign is an awareness raising campaign conceived within the framework of the third Council of Europe/European Commission joint project "Equal Rights and treatment for Roma in South Eastern Europe". Two previous joint projects on Roma were implemented in the region, from 2000 to 2005, especially for addressing social key issues like access to housing, employment, education and health, all of them fields in which Roma are still facing severe difficulties.

However, though in most cases the Governments realised the necessity to improve the situation of Roma by adopting comprehensive policies involving all relevant actors, and first of all the Roma themselves, it was recognised that the efforts made by the participating governments were often frustrated by deep-rooted prejudices and discrimination practices among the local authorities and the local population.

Therefore "Equal Rights and Treatment for Roma" aimed at:

- ❖ assisting both governments and Roma representatives in enhancing their capacity to participate together in the effective monitoring and evaluation of the National Strategies for Roma in order to ensure their effective implementation;
- ❖ conducting an awareness raising campaign on Roma culture focused on combating prejudices, stereotypes through the promotion of a positive image of Roma.

That third Joint Project was indirectly strengthened by the Council of Europe third Summit Action Plan, Chapter three: "Building a more Human and inclusive Europe", in which the Heads of States and governments of the Council of Europe member states confirmed their *"commitment to combat all kinds of exclusion and insecurity of the Roma communities in Europe and to promote their full and effective equality. We expect that the European Roma and Travellers Forum will allow Roma and Travellers to express themselves with the active support of the Council of Europe. Steps will be made to establish co-operation among the Council of Europe, the European Union and the OSCE in this field"*.

After the end of the joint project, the Dosta! campaign has now its own life and continues to be a tool for fighting anti-Gypsyism everywhere in Europe.

The Challenge

When thinking on Roma, a big collection of stereotypes comes out: Roma gain their life by begging or stealing, they do not like working, they do not want their children to attend schools, they do not want to integrate the societies in which they live, they prefer living in shanty towns, they are the main actors of the trafficking in human beings.

These negative beliefs can be stereotypes, i.e. preconceptions and clichés, or prejudices, i.e. irrational feelings of fear and dislike; both lead to discriminatory attitudes that may impede Roma from having access to citizen, human and social rights. Prejudices and stereotypes are often also the bases for racism which,

in the case of the Roma, is too often justified and shared also at political level.

Prejudices and stereotypes are often so strong that they are also reflected in some expressions of our language. **But they are as strong as they are wrong.**

Dosta! communication and awareness-raising campaign, targeting the local level in participating countries, helps to break down prejudices and stereotypes by bringing together Roma and non-Roma citizens.

Basic considerations

- ❖ The campaign addresses very deep-rooted beliefs and prejudices. This campaign is considered as the first step of a long process to be continued through future projects.
- ❖ The campaign architecture addresses national, regional and local partners, who “translate” and multiply the campaign message. The local dimension is taken into account and specific cooperation at local level are encouraged.
- ❖ The campaign **messages are the same for all European countries.**
- ❖ The campaign is conceived as a tool for the Roma representatives, the majority population and the governments for changing the status quo. It is built up with the contribution of the Roma, through the Council of Europe Roma network, but also with the contribution of the European Roma and Travellers Forum. **The participation of the Roma in all the process related to them is a key issue for the success of any event aimed at granting their access to social and human rights.**

Target groups

The campaign targets “society at large”, by identifying target groups that are most likely to “cascade” and multiply the message, such as journalists, teachers in primary and secondary education, youth, members and organisers of civil society organisations, or members of local and regional parliaments.

Campaign messages



People usually pay more attention to messages that are unusual, loud and exotic. Negative messages that implicitly criticise the audience, attack its self-esteem or openly arouse fears, are usually ineffective and may even be counter-productive.

Therefore, Dosta! campaign conveys two basic **positive** messages:

- (a) A socio-political message: Roma have rights and aspirations like everybody else. They are citizens of the countries they live in and they have to be recognized as such, in the

full respect of their citizenship and human rights. Granting a positive approach of Diversity in European societies means enable all citizens to get new competences and skills for facing future challenges and building stable and cohesive societies.

- (b) A cultural message: Roma culture is part of Europe's cultural heritage and it has contributed to the enrichment of European societies. It is now time to recognize this contribution.

What do we expect from the Dosta! campaign

The knowledge of the "other" is essential for discovering that traditions and habits, languages, the colour of the skin, etc. are only one part of the multiple elements which characterize human being. These elements cannot make the majority population forget that "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood"¹. Living together in cohesive societies means first of all being opened for mutual understanding and for the intercultural dialogue. It also means knowing that there are people who are not always able to enjoy their human rights, and having the willingness of denouncing the situation and being part of the processes which change the status quo.

The Dosta! campaign wants to build bridges between the majority population and the Roma people, by facilitating a better understanding of Roma culture and encouraging the participation of all in making human rights a reality for Roma. Say "Dosta!" to anti-Gypsyism, be an actor of the change!

¹ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, art. 1.

Campaign tools

Website: Dosta! multi-language internet site is the platform for the promotion of all the campaign's activities, as well as for the collection of audio-visual material, to be used in all Council of Europe member states. The website is conceived as an interactive tool allowing users to register and log-in for posting comments, forum's topics or downloadable material. Web address: www.dosta.org



Creative visuals and slogans: The visual and slogans are elaborated in cooperation with the Council of Europe Roma network as well as with the Council of Europe Communication Department. They can be used on material such as leaflets, posters, promotional material (tee-shirts, mouse pads, etc.) and audio-visual products. You can get them by simply sending an e-mail request at info@dosta.org (according to the availability of the stocks).



The most recently created visuals concern the branding of a maxi-hoarding that is advertising the campaign in front of the Council of Europe since August 2007, as well as the branding of the CD "Music Beyond Prejudice: Romani variations on the European Anthem".

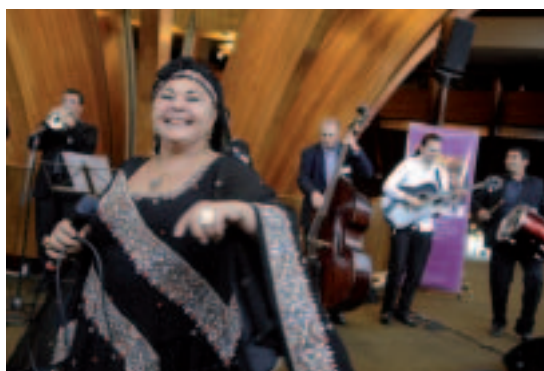
The TV spot is one of the main tools of the Dosta! campaign. It is the result of a brainstorming meeting organized in cooperation with the Council of Europe Communication Department and some Roma media experts who contributed to its script. It is based on photos taken during a field visit to Serbia organized in cooperation with the Association of Roma Students in Novi Sad. The TV spot exists in two versions, 50 and 25 seconds in Albanian, Bosnia and Herzegovina's local languages, Serbian and Macedonian, apart from English, French and International; it is posted on the campaign website and is distributed free of charge to national televisions for broadcast, or to NGOs for publishing on their internet site. Other language versions are in pre-production phase.

The campaign's TV spot has been already regularly broadcast by Top Channel TV (Albania), RTRS and Federal TV BHTV (Bosnia and Herzegovina), the Macedonian National TV MRT ("the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"). In addition, the TV spot has been aired on 2nd February 2007 by Italian National Television Rai3 during its night news, as well as aired regularly in 2 cinemas in Turkey from 31 March to 15 April 2007 at the occasion of the Istanbul Film Festival.

A radio spot has been produced in Albanian, Bosnia and Herzegovina's local languages and Serbian; the radio spot has been already broadcast by Top Albania Radio (Albania), RS Radio Bosnia (Bosnia and Herzegovina), and Radio B92 (for Montenegro and Serbia).

Both the TV and the Radio spot are available on the campaign website (www.dosta.org) and on the Council of Europe website main page (www.coe.int).

Media pack for journalists: it includes a video kit in DVD and BETA SP format with interviews to senior International officials, video-interviews to testimonials, a Euronews report on Roma, the Dosta! campaign's television spots, the "Tool for fighting stereotypes towards Roma". The media pack is distributed to the Press during major Council of Europe Roma related events.



Photographic support: Photographic images to support the campaign have been gathered by the Council of Europe photographer in Serbia. A selection of them is published on the campaign website. All the photos are available upon request. A selection of photos has been printed out and used as a Photo Exhibition.

VIP testimonials: We have invited personalities with popular mass appeal and recognition to provide statements in favour of Roma, to break-down the barriers caused by prejudices. These statements are published on Dosta! internet site and the testimonials are provided free of charge to national media.

Media Outreach: A press officer is allocated the task of following the campaign and preparing press releases, fact files and other written material for the media. Press Service support is sought for individual events.

Campaign Activities

In 2006/2007 the Dosta! campaign organised/sponsored several events in the five participating countries, such as:



- ❖ The official launches of the campaign in the participating countries, which consisted in press conferences organised in the participating countries for presenting the Dosta! campaign's communication tools.
- ❖ The Dosta! campaign video competition, addressed to art academies/schools, artists and NGOs which have been invited to produce a short video promoting the basic campaign message(s).
- ❖ The "Fortnight of Roma Cinema", held in Strasbourg from 1st to 14th November 2006, organised in Cooperation with the Council of Europe Education Department and the Cinéma Odyssée. On

7 November, a special evening included the projection of the movie "Latcho Drom", by Tony Gatlif, followed by a debate animated by Mr. Gatlif himself and the Prize giving ceremony for the Dosta! video competition under the auspices of the Council of Europe Secretary General, Terry Davis.

- ❖ The week on Romaphobia, which took place in Strasbourg from 17 to 22 November 2006. The event was organised by the Forum of European Roma Young People (FERYP), as a follow-up of the study session in 2005 "Roma Youth – Situation and Perspectives 10 years after the RAXI Campaign". The Conference was planned as an opportunity for FERYP to bring together young Roma to discuss the new challenges faced by the Roma in Europe in relation to the themes of the European Youth Campaign – Diversity, Human Rights and Participation.
- ❖ The Regional Festival "Art against stereotypes", which took place from 5 to 7 April 2007 in Tirana, Albania, was organised in cooperation with the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports in occasion of the International Roma Day, the 8th of April. Photos, paintings/sculpture and handcrafts were exhibited at the International Centre of Culture, where multimedia corners (Dosta! campaign photo exhibition,



the videos which were pre-selected for the Dosta! campaign video competition, and clippings from the artists) were also available for visitors. On 5 and 6 April from 18:00 to 21:00 two artistic performances took place bringing together famous artists from South Eastern Europe like Muharem Serbezovski, Silvi Duo Band, Muharrem Tahiri and Hamza Tahirov, Muharrem Ahmeti, Tehemana, and Grupa Europa among others.

in building up bridges between the Roma and the local population.



❖ The Regional Media training for journalists and government's spokespersons took place in Belgrade, Serbia on 15-16 May 2007. The media training was one of the most successful campaign activities: some participants have put the new acquired skills into action immediately as part of their work at a national level or in the media. The training was also useful as a way of building bridges between the different countries involved in the campaign. It was also the occasion for enabling young Roma journalists to work together with non-Roma journalists and governmental representatives.

❖ The Dosta! campaign Youth Video Project Plementina, Kosovo, was implemented from 1st September till 15 November, in Plementina, Kosovo (Serbia). Young people who have spent a significant part of their lives in an IDP camp have received a training on movie making with the aim of producing a 20 minute documentary showing their lives in their community and how they consider the prejudices on Roma. The documentary has been presented in Kosovo and is available free of charge upon request for TV stations.



❖ The campaign has been present at the EX-Yu Rocks Festival, which took place in Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina, on 27-28 July 2007, through the sponsorship of a Roma Band.

❖ The Summer Camp and Festival "Roma are Europe too", was organised by FERYP, in cooperation with the Dosta! campaign, in Ohrid, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", on 21-25 August 2007. A short movie realised by the participants makes an excellent summary of the impact of this activity

❖ The Schools and NGOs project competition was launched in March 2007 for awarding innovative initiatives aimed at promoting a better understanding of Roma culture. The winners were selected by an international jury and announced in October 2007.

- ◆ The Special Dosta!-Congress Prize for Municipalities was launched in June 2007 for strengthening the role of local authorities in the field of Roma and minority rights' protection. A Prize giving ceremony took place in Strasbourg on 20 November 2007 for rewarding the winners.

More information on the CD and on the artists on the Dosta! website.

*The campaign continues on the internet:
www.dosta.org.*

Now it is your time for campaigning!

Music Beyond Prejudice



The CD "Music beyond prejudice: Romani variations on the European Anthem" has been realised in cooperation with the Council of Europe Communication Department as a tool for closing the first two years of the Dosta! campaign. The CD contains 5 different arrangements of the European Anthem in Romani language and style performed by artists from Albania, France, Serbia and "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia". The project counts with the contribution of Mrs. Esma Redzepova, known as the "Queen of Gypsy Music" and nominated twice for the Nobel Prize for Peace. She presented the CD by performing at the launching event which took place in Strasbourg, on 20 November 2007, after the Dosta! – Congress Prize giving ceremony.



CHAPTER II

Is this a stereotype?
A tool for fighting
stereotypes towards Roma

Stereotypes and prejudices

Stereotypes and prejudice are means for categorizing the world around us.

According to the definition of the Cambridge Dictionary, stereotypes are "a fixed idea that people have about what someone or something is like, especially an idea that is wrong"; according to the same dictionary, prejudices are "an unfair and unreasonable opinion or feeling, especially when formed without enough thought or knowledge". In other words, stereotypes are preconceptions and clichés, while prejudices are irrational feelings of fear and dislike. They can be understood as filters which somehow protect us against information overflow and allow us to judge people without knowing them personally or only superficially: they limit our view on what the reality is.

In this sense one could argue that stereotypes and prejudice have a positive function as they enable us to make decisions quickly. Very often, however, stereotypes are used to justify and support the beliefs and values of the majority population. The 'common' is perceived as the 'normal' and things done by distinct social groups or minorities are devaluated when they do not conform to these 'norms'. One of the most striking elements of stereotypes and prejudice is that they are usually **created by the powerful and applied to the weak**, who cannot control the way they are perceived by others nor are they able to change these perceptions. A common saying has it that stereotypes are usually true. Whenever a true aspect of a stereotype is found this aspect justifies and reinforces the stereotype.

Politicians and media very often make use of stereotypes. Playing with negative feelings or fears is a good way to

win an election or to sell a paper. People normally use stereotypes to define and justify the status quo. The ones who suffer from stereotypes are not those whose fears are exploited but those being presented in a negative light, the stereotyped.

Anti-Tsiganism, anti-Gypsyism, and Romaphobia

Anti-Tsiganism, anti-Gypsyism, and Romaphobia essentially mean the same thing:

... a distinct type of racist ideology. It is, at the same time, similar, different, and intertwined with many other types of racism. Anti-Gypsyism itself is a complex social phenomenon which manifests itself through violence, hate speech, exploitation, and discrimination in its most visible form.

[...] Anti-Gypsyism is a very specific form of racism, an ideology of racial superiority, a form of dehumanisation and of institutionalised racism. It is fuelled by historical discrimination and the struggle to maintain power relations that permit advantages to majority groups. It is based, on the one hand, on imagined fears, negative stereotypes and myths and, on the other, on denial or erasure from the public conscience of a long history of discrimination against Roma².

2 Source: Valeriu Nicolae, ergonetwork; For the full version of this definition by Valeriu Nicolae go to <http://www.ergonetwork.org/antigypsyism.htm>
The Documentation Centre of German Sinti and Roma and the Land Associations of Sinti and Roma launched initiatives in various Länder and developed materials for schools and educational institutions. These materials deal with discussing and analyzing racism and with the existing patterns of clichés and prejudices regarding the Sinti and Roma. They also serve for analyzing and assessing the history of the Sinti and Roma genocide perpetrated by National Socialism. The Baden-Württemberg Land Association of German Sinti and Roma, both on its own initiative and in co-operation with schools and

The three terms do not vary in content but in usage. While anti-Gypsyism is the term most often used on the international level some Roma, especially those from Eastern Europe, prefer the term anti-Tsiganism as Tsigan is the term used in their region. Both terms, Gypsy and Tsigan, are pejorative in nature, which is why some scholars prefer the term Romaphobia.

Anti-Semitism and anti-Gypsyism

All across Europe, the Jews and the Roma have historically been the two minorities that have suffered most from discrimination on grounds of their supposed “inferiority” and the subsequent negative stereotyping attached to this alleged status of inferiority.

Both minorities originated from outside Europe, the Jews from the area of what is now Israel and Palestine and from the southern shores of the Black Sea, and the Roma from India. Both migrated due to persecution, both have suffered down the ages at the hands of the majorities in Europe and both were considered inferior and many of both groups were exterminated by the nazis during the second world war. Both suffered under the communist regimes in Europe but Roma still experience discrimination, hatred and prejudice while anti-Semitism is today, fortunately, condemned at all levels (society, politicians). Anti-Gypsyism is even not recognised as an existent phenomenon and therefore not condemned.

Aspects of anti-Gypsyism

Dehumanization and reducing the Roma to their ‘Gypsiness’ are core elements of

anti-Gypsyism. Roma are seen as less than human and thus not morally entitled to human rights. This dehumanization is not based on misconceptions or ignorance but **appears to be a legitimising myth that justifies the majority’s abusive behaviour of Roma who are not perceived as individuals but simply as ‘Gypsies’**. Very often, instead of talking about the problems that the Roma face, there is talk about ‘the Gypsy problem’ due to their ‘Gypsiness’. ‘Gypsiness’ itself is defined by negative means only.

Stereotypes and prejudices about Roma are very often at odds with rational thought. Many times they reveal more about the cultural background of the person talking about Roma than about ‘Gypsies’. When making a list about the ideas that people have about Roma, many things seem absurd but nonetheless people stick to them as though they were unquestionable truths. There are many examples in history of absurd assumptions being at the foundations of a society’s world view (eg. the earth is flat), but many people, especially forward thinking people, are often unwilling to accept that this might still be the case today.

Stereotypes and prejudices against Roma, and thus anti-Gypsyism, are so deeply rooted in European culture that they are most often not conceived as such. Those who suffer from them have to engage in the tiring task of convincing others that they are being discriminated for no reason. **One obvious sign of anti-Gypsyism is the fact that many people who have never had close, personal contact with Roma are nonetheless able to provide a detailed picture of them. How they look, live, and behave. Very often the behaviour of one individual is automatically applied to all ‘Gypsies’. The (negative) behaviour is attributed to Romani culture, not to the individual in question.**

other institutions, carried out projects for analyzing and assessing “anti-tsiganism” (anti-Gypsy hostility). The European Roma and Travellers Forum (ERTF: www.ertf.org) is working on its own definition of this phenomenon.

Overcoming anti-Gypsyism

Anti-Gypsyism can only be overcome if people admit to its existence. Nothing can change as long as people are not aware that it is a reality: the problem is not the Roma but anti-Gypsyism!

The role of the media

The media, sometimes unconsciously, too often consciously, spread anti-Roma feelings. In case of reporting a crime committed by a person mentioning the ethnicity does not have any positive impact. By the same token, patronizing attitude is also harmful. In addition, media generally do not pay attention to stories in which the Roma are the victims, as it is the case for racist attacks or hate speeches pronounced by politicians towards Roma, all of these acts that media could help to condemn.



Media can be a valuable tool of awareness raising and promotion of diversity and multiculturalism, if committed to change. Instead of focusing on negative headlines about Roma emphasis should be put on finding positive stories and on giving the Roma a voice. **There are lawyers, teachers, politicians and doctors of Roma ethnicity**, so why not reporting about them? Ask those whose stories usually remain unheard! ³

³ On this topic read the article : The representation of Roma in Media, by Karin Waringo, Chief Executive Officer of the European Roma and Travellers Forum, appended. Kindly authorized for publication for Dosta ! campaign.

Is this a stereotype?



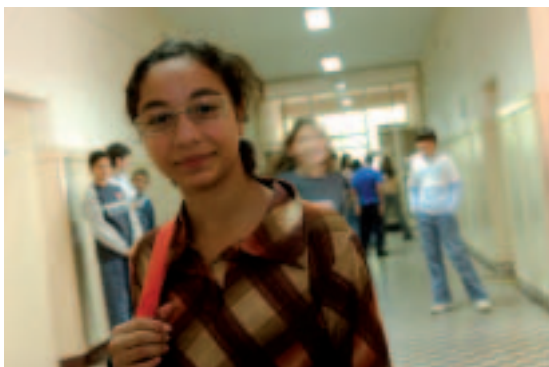
Roma are freedom loving, easy going, and carefree nomads, wearing colourful clothes and lots of golden jewellery. They are passionate dancers, gifted artisans, and great musicians. Their women are beautiful and seductive like Georges Bizet's Carmen or Esmeralda from the 'Hunchback of Notre Dame'. They tell fortune and can curse you if you do not give them any money. They are poor and beg. They do nothing to improve their own situation and steal geese and chickens. They prefer to live on welfare than to work. They have more children than they can feed and clothe.

One day they will probably "out-baby" the majority population. Girls get married at a very early age, the men beat their wives and exploit their children. At night they dance around camp fires and sometimes they steal babies in order to sell them. They do not have a religion, are dirty, and a burden to society. They do not want to integrate and marginalize themselves. They are most happy when they are away from non-Roma. They do not want to be citizens of the country they live in and whenever they migrate, they ruin the reputation of the country that they have come from. They like to live close to trash dumps and their houses are very dirty. They are afraid of water, allergic to soap, and do not know how to use a water toilet. They are a source of disease. They do not know how to read and write, and somehow are not interested in learning it or in going to school. They must be mentally deficient.

Maybe they are not even human beings. They live in huge family groups and do not mind to share one room with ten people. They are greedy and never satisfied. They are lazy and not trust worthy. They are genetically predestined to become thieves and drug dealers. And anyway, the term 'Roma' is just an invention and they are actually called Gypsies or Tsigani.'

There are very many stereotypes about Roma. You have probably heard many of them yourself. **Read here to learn more about the most common misconceptions about Roma.**

Stereotype n°1: 'Gypsies' are 'just Gypsies'



Roma are often perceived as a homogenous group and many times they are reduced to their 'Gypsiness'. They are not perceived as individuals but simply as 'Gypsies'. Some people can produce the most outrageous stereotypes about Roma but then claim that they know one 'who is not like that!'. Talking badly about Roma damages all Roma including the one who is supposed to be 'different'. Roma who do not fit the image that others have about 'Gypsies' are often not perceived as Roma. In reality **there is not a single Roma who could meet all the stereotypes that exist about them.**

There is a huge heterogeneity among the Roma themselves. What is true for one group might be different for another. Differentiating only between 'traditional' and 'integrated' Roma would be

too easy. What is true for all the populations is true for Roma as well: **generalisations are never true and the differences between the individuals are greater than the differences between ethnic groups.** Roma live in many different environments, speak different languages and different dialects of Romani, they can be found on all five continents, and have adopted many of the habits of the majority population of the countries they live in. They are engaged in numerous occupations, are members of different religions, and their financial and educational situation also depends from person to person, from group to group, and from the general situation of the country they live in, **just as for any other citizen!**

Stereotype n°2: Nomadism

Roma are often perceived as carefree nomads with no significant worries: free to do whatever they want to, freedom loving, and easy going, living in tents or in caravans and dancing around fires every night. When they are hungry they just steal a chicken from a local peasant.



This almost romantic picture of Roma life is very far from reality. **Only 20% of European Roma today is still nomadic,** almost exclusively in Western Europe. In previous centuries nomadism was almost never a matter of free choice but of persecution. Continuous expulsion is a main feature in Roma history.

Throughout the middle ages, Roma were often mistaken for Muslims and encountered the hatred of the Christian Europeans. They were not allowed to settle down or to work in many countries and thus had to find other ways of making a living. Finding a place to stay, a home is a common theme in Roma tales. During the Holocaust Roma were one of the primary targets of the Nazi regime and were sent to concentration camps all over Europe. After the end of communism many Roma fled from ethnic persecution. Again this was conceived as nomadism rather than an attempt to save their lives. Since the fall of the iron curtain countless Roma in eastern and south Eastern Europe have fallen victim to violent attacks, evictions, destruction of property, and even murder.

During the centuries settling down often meant having to abandon Roma traditions and culture. Many Roma did this, thus choosing the path of assimilation. Most of those who would have preferred to maintain a nomadic way of life fell victim to forced assimilation policies as early as in the 18th century. During communism the majority of the remaining nomads were settled down by force.

Stereotype n°3: Music and dancing



Especially in literature dancing is considered a genuine feature of Roma traditional culture and used to represent them as being 'exotic'. Roma, however,

do not habitually dance, unless dancing is a common tradition of the country they live in (for example in Spain and in South Eastern European countries).

Music is much more a skill or trade which served as a survival strategy than a main feature of Romani culture. **Not all Roma are musicians** but certain groups have specialized in it. Some have become famous after carrying out studies for making of music a profession. In many countries Roma musicians are often hired for weddings or other special occasions by the majority population. At these events they play whatever the 'Gadje' want to hear rather than traditional Roma music. In addition specialists draw a clear distinction between the non-Roma folk music played in the Romani manner and real Romani traditional music – *Romane purane gilia*.

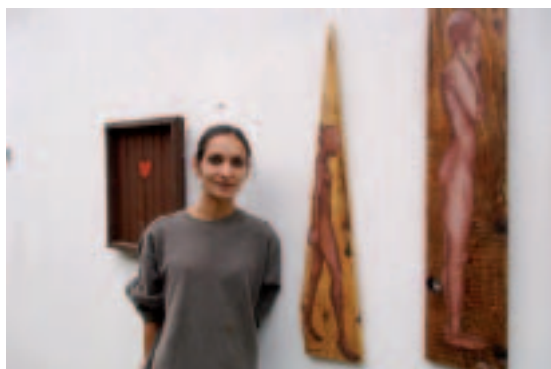
Stereotype n°4: Fortune telling

A common folk believe has it that Roma can curse you, for example, when you do not give them money. Others believe that they can put you into a trance and will then steal your valuables.

Roma do have in their traditions a belief system that includes omen and curses but its nature is completely different. Those few Roma who practice fortune telling do so only for the benefit of "gadje" but never among themselves.

Stereotype n°5: Traditional crafts

One of the most well known crafts practiced by Roma is that of a blacksmith. They probably acquired this skill in Armenia as many of the Romani terms which refer to this craft derive from the Armenian language. One of the main reasons why Roma were enslaved in the Romanian principalities was because they were skilled workers.



During the 500 years of slavery other crafts were also developed. Until today Romanian Roma categorize themselves according to which profession they practice. Many Roma family names such as Gabor (smith) and Ciurar (sieve maker) refer to professions. Other professions which are typically linked to Roma are training bears (ursurari), searching for gold in the rivers (aurari), or spoon making (linguran).

As many Roma were doing metalwork 'Gadje' often said that Roma know the secrets of iron and of copper. Since they also practice different forms of wood work it can be added that Roma also know the secret of wood!

The reality is very different: Roma are European citizens and therefore, as any other citizen, they look for job opportunities that can enable them to fulfil their aspirations. When they have the chance of overcoming society or institutional discrimination they are employed in any sector of the job market. If those who are employed are often considered as "exceptions" is just because discrimination is the common rule.

Stereotype n°6: Customs

When talking about Roma customs one has to keep in mind the Roma's diversity. There are a few customs which are similar among all Roma who still follow a traditional way of life but there are also very many customs that differ from

group to group or even sometimes from family to family.

Customs among Roma just vary as the customs of the population of any European country vary from region to region.

In addition, one has to keep in mind that the majority of European Roma no longer lead a traditional way of life and do not follow or even know about the 'old' customs.

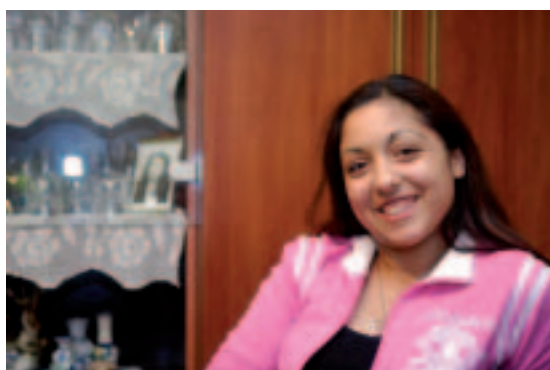
In popular culture Roma are often depicted in a romantic way as beautiful, colourfully dressed people, proud and independent, life-loving and passionate, carefree and enjoying the simple pleasures in life. Their music is passionate and their women seductive. This picture is especially prevalent in literature and in paintings and is perpetuated today by groups such as 'medieval' societies or 'Renaissance' organizations, but cannot in any case be considered as the reality of today's European Roma⁴.



⁴ To learn more about actual Roma customs go to <http://www.geocities.com/~patrin/tradition.htm>.

Stereotype n°7: Dress

In the minds of many, all Roma wear colourful dresses and a lot of golden jewellery. Today only very few Roma still dress in this way. Among traditional groups men quite often adapt the way of dressing to their environment. Since the head is regarded as the body's focal point, they might draw attention to it by wearing large hats and wide moustaches. On special occasions, a good suit and a brightly coloured neck scarf might be worn.



Flowers, colourful skirts, blouses, and head scarves are not specific to Roma women but can be found everywhere in the East from India and Iran up to the Balkans.

Traditional Roma women had the habit of wearing long, colourful skirts, often consisting of several layers. In some traditional communities married women still demonstrate this fact by wearing a *diklo*, a headscarf. Traditional Roma women usually allow their hair to grow long and braid it. Jewellery was used not for its beauty but for its intrinsic value, as in other countries of the East. In times where bank accounts were unknown, carrying your valuables on your own person was seen as safer than carrying it in a box.

Traditionally, acquired wealth was converted into jewellery or coins called *galbi*. Among some groups coins were worn on clothing or adornments or even braided into the women's hair.

The colours of clothes have different meanings. Red, for example, is the colour prevalent at marriage ceremonies. It does not symbolize only love, as in the West, but individual sacrifice for the collective weal. Instead of individual selfish love, traditional marriage blesses the long-term alliance between families, which become *hanamik* (in-laws).

Stereotype n°8: Purity

Roma are often regarded as dirty. They are accused to be allergic to soap, afraid of water, and a source of disease. **These are definitely stereotypes.** Some Roma have limited access to fresh water because they live in isolated places without water pipes, plumbing, or indoor toilets. Finding a better place to live or improving living conditions is often difficult or impossible. The responsibility of reversing this situation stands on States and Governments which have the obligation to grant to every citizen the access to the basic social rights.



Cleanliness and purity were among the highest values of Roma traditions, both in the physical as well as in the ritual purity sense. There were very specific rules about personal hygiene, washing dishes and clothes, and about what kind of water to use. Taking a bath in a bath tub for example was forbidden, as this would mean to lie in one's own dirt.

Despite this, it is true that the life expectancy of Roma in many countries

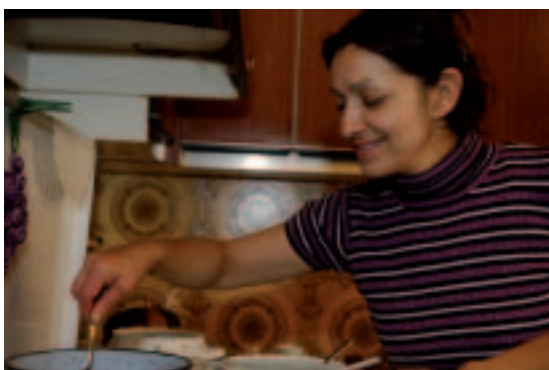
is 15 years less than that of the majority population, but again, the responsibility for this is not on the Roma who are simply the victims of lack of access to adequate utilities and to health care.

Stereotype n°9: Religion

Many people think that Roma do not have a religion. This is not true. Roma usually adopt the religion of the majority population that they live among. There are Roma of Muslim faith as well as of all kind of Christian dominations: Catholic, Orthodox, Lutheran, Evangelist etc.

Only among some traditional groups, formal religion is complemented by faith in the supernatural, in omens, and curses. These beliefs vary among different Roma groups and are influenced by the most common superstitions of the countries they live in⁵.

Stereotype n°10: Women



There are two main ways of stereotyping Roma women. The first one portrays Roma women as passionate dancers, ready to seduce any man, fiery and exotic, immoral and lusty; the other as old fortune tellers ready to curse you or to put you into trance if you do not give them any money.

The second view depicts Roma women as dirty, having too many usually naked children, being beaten by their husbands and exploited by their wider family. They marry at age 11 and have the first child at age 13.

Concerning the first view it has to be pointed out that traditional Roma have very strong moral values. Premarital intercourse as well as the betrayal of the husband are traditionally unacceptable. In addition, some scholars argue that those elements of Roma dancing, which are often seen as seductive, are in fact relic of Indian temple dances, which were not intended to be seductive at all. Music, dancing, and fortune telling, which are seen as integral elements of Roma culture by many, were in fact a means of making a living.

Concerning the second view, the difficult living conditions which many Roma face have to be taken into account. Lack of utilities such as running water, having no clothes for children, or eventual cases of domestic violence are indicators of poverty but not of 'Gypsiness'.

Stereotype n°11: Children

Since birth rates among Roma are generally higher than among non-Roma, it is feared in many countries that Roma will out-baby the majority population. No one looks at the positive aspect of this, i.e. that Roma, as well as the immigrant population, indirectly help to combat Europe's population ageing.



⁵ To learn more about them go to <http://www.geocities.com/~patrin/beliefs.htm>.

Roma children are often seen as filthy beggars or pick pockets. Their parents do not seem to look after them well and are assumed to be ready to exploit them. Roma parents love their children just as much as any other parents. Children are adored and cherished and the whole family feels responsible to raise a child. The ways Roma children are raised might differ from that of the majority population and reflects the harsh reality in which Roma live in. Roma children grow up in traditional families and mostly learn by example and not by teaching. This learning method is also used by other people who live in harsh environments and cannot dedicate a lot of time to teaching (for example the Inuit, who are pejoratively called Eskimos). Learning by example includes processes of observation, imitation, and, later on, participation.

If some Roma children are seen begging or caught pick pocketing, this should be regarded as an indicator of the harsh social climate in which their specific community has to live. In this respect, is interesting to quote the Italian Ministry of Internal affairs, Mr. Giuliano Amato, who said –during a visit to a Roma settlement in Roma, Italy, on 15 August 2006- *“the recognition of Roma rights is a European topic which concerns everybody; Italy is one of the countries where the Roma minority is not recognised; nonetheless Italian Roma are ready to be part of Italian society but they face too many difficulties for integrating the school system and getting a job. One cannot simply believe that Roma children are criminals by nature: one should look at the reasons and conditions that push some Roma children to become criminals”*⁶.

6 Source: http://passineldeserto.blogosfere.it/2006/08/amato_occorre_r.html

Stereotype n°12: Financial situation



Roma are usually conceived as either extremely poor or as incredibly rich. If they are poor then this must be due to their laziness. If they are rich then this is most likely a ‘proof’ of drug dealing or other forms of illegal businesses. In reality, poverty nowadays is often due to the fact that Roma have been left out of the post-communist political and economic transitions. Still today, they are discriminated and often excluded from the school system (see stereotype 13); they face discrimination when seeking for a job, and in many countries they are segregated in geographically isolated settlements. In some cases, their situation excludes them from the social protection benefits (institutional discrimination). As a consequence, many Roma today are trapped in a vicious circle of poverty and social exclusion which cannot be considered as their own fault.⁷

7 For further details go to:
http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTROMA/Resources/roma_in_expanding_europe.pdf,
Report on “Access of Roma to Employment in SEE”, 2005
Report on “Access of Roma to Employment” in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2004
Report on “Access of Roma to Employment” in the “former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, 2004
Report on “Access of Roma to Employment” in Serbia and Montenegro, 2004

Stereotype n°13: Education

Many non-Roma tend to believe that Roma do not value education. This is, to a certain extent, true when it comes to very traditional families and only with regard to formal education.

What is true is that poor education levels today are a major obstacle for Roma to access the labour market. Educating Roma children is thus seen as essential in overcoming poverty.



However, Roma children who want to go to school have to face many obstacles. For those Roma who live in isolated settlements, the way to school alone becomes a hurdle. Furthermore, parents might lack the financial means for buying proper clothes, shoes, school supplies, and food for their children. Exclusion from the part of the teachers and schools is also an issue. Many Roma children are forced to attend separated classes in order not to mix with children coming from the majority population. In many countries Roma children are overrepresented in special schools or classes for mentally disabled children. In 2006 several anti-Roma demonstrations organised by the parents of non-Roma students took place in different European countries at the entrance of de-segregated schools in which Roma children were enrolled.

In many countries Roma children are overrepresented in special schools or classes for mentally disabled children.

This is often part of public policy: in some areas the special schools are the only ones which have a school bus and offer free school lunches. Also the children whose mother tongue is Romani, might for example not completely control the majority language: in these cases the presence of a Roma school mediator could help in making the children learn more rapidly; unfortunately, the role of the Roma school mediator is not institutionalised. Parents are often recommended to have their children sent to special classes without receiving an explanation of the whole meaning and consequences of this.

In addition, text books often spread a negative image of Roma or completely ignore their role in history. And of course, Roma history is not included in the schools'curricula.

Even those Roma, who go to regular schools, prestigious high schools or university, often face discrimination. Many teachers and professors think that it is shameful to teach Roma students at their renowned institution. For this reason Roma students are often discouraged from going to high school or from applying for a good one. They are often told that they won't 'make it' anyways.

Stereotype n°14: Employment



Roma are often seen as work shy and as voluntarily living on welfare rather than looking for a job. This picture is far from

the reality of most Roma. There would be no point in denying that there are some Roma who prefer to live on welfare just as much as this phenomenon can be found in other ethnic groups, included in the majority population. The crucial question, however, is not if Roma want to work but what kind of employment they can find, if any: Roma are virtually invisible in the service sector. There are almost no Roma taxi drivers, shop assistants, kitchen workers, waiters, or door men. It goes beyond the imagination of many to employ a Roma house cleaner, let alone a baby sitter.

If Roma find employment then it is usually in physically demanding, often dangerous, and badly paid jobs. In many cases the transport to and from work already consumes the biggest part of the salary. Roma are hired as garbage collectors, field hands, or as forestry labourers, thus in the least prestigious work places. Legal work is often denied, forcing Roma to work black. While unemployment rates are generally high in Eastern Europe, the rate of Roma unemployment (in some settlements as high as 100%) in no way compares to that of the majority population. Improving educational levels alone will not be enough for ensuring better employment of Roma. A change in attitude also has to take place on the side of the employers and of the National Employment Agencies. Nothing can change as long as common stereotypes about Roma are not being questioned. What speaks against hiring a Roma to do qualitative and responsible work? Many non Roma cannot support the idea of hiring (a qualified) Roma for superior positions. Employers are often unwilling to even hire Roma as contract workers and thus force them to work black.

Stereotype n° 15: Housing



Many people seem to believe that Roma prefer to live in unhygienic housing conditions. While there are surely many Roma who live without running water, indoor toilets, electricity, and heating it would be hard to find a single Roma who would not like to exchange these conditions for a nice house or apartment. Many Roma live close to trash dumps, or in isolated settlements without utilities because these are the only places where they are allowed to stay.

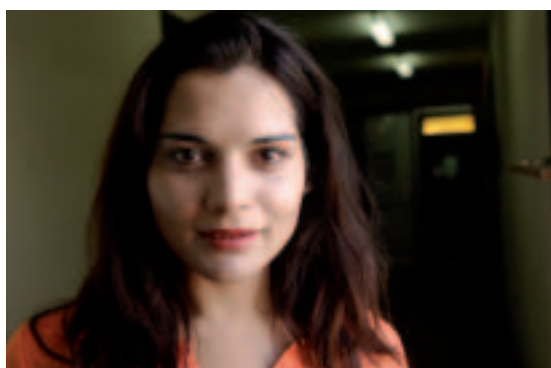
Unlawful forced and collective evictions of Roma are a weekly phenomenon in Europe (often not reported by Media), clearly infringing the obligations undertaken by European countries through the signature of international treaties.⁸

Improving the infrastructure of Roma settlements is one of the top goals of today's Council of Europe policies. Unfortunately many governments are reluctant or slow to invest into better housing for Roma⁹.

⁸ See for example Council of Europe recommendation on improving the Housing conditions of Roma where it is stated: "Member states should establish a legal framework that conforms with international human rights standards, to ensure effective protection against unlawful forced and collective evictions and to control strictly the circumstances in which legal evictions may be carried out. In the case of lawful evictions, Roma must be provided with appropriate alternative accommodation, if needed, except in cases of force majeure"; more information: http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/romatravellers/documentation/recommendations/rechousing20054_en.asp

⁹ From August 2006 till November evictions occurred in Russia, Albania, the United Kingdom, Bulgaria, Greece and Slovenia

Stereotype n°16: Roma and society



Roma are often depicted as untrustworthy and unwilling to integrate into society. But when too many non-Roma do not trust Roma it is very difficult to continue willing to be part of a whole. 'Integration' usually means the loss of Roma culture without being fully accepted by the majority population. Even educated Roma who have lived inside the majority population all their lives often face exclusion. The fear of being rejected is sometimes so present that some Roma have to hide their ethnic origin in order to continue living in the society instead of on the fringes of it. As long as marrying a Roma or allowing one's children to do so is still a taboo for many, there can be no talk about the Roma's unwillingness to integrate. Self-marginalization, when it is the case, is and has been a survival strategy rather than a free choice.

Passivity

Many people accuse Roma of not doing anything in order to improve their own situation. This accusation concerns their financial situation as well as employment, education, or housing.

One has to keep in mind, however, that half of Europe's Roma were enslaved for 500 years. During this time learning how to read and write or revolting against inhuman treatment was forbidden and harshly punished. Killings of Roma

under slavery were so common that many cases were not even registered. Even today violence against Roma often goes unnoticed. Centuries of forced passivity make it hard to encourage human rights movements today. Demanding your rights is still dangerous. Roma activists in many countries face harassment and physical violence by the authorities as well as by the police.



Reputation

In many eastern European countries the majority population claims that the Roma ruin their country's reputation when they migrate to other countries. Apart from the fact that reputation is not a concept used in Western politics, it is the treatment of the Roma and not the way that they behave, which can be held against the states, from which they have come.

In a recent poll 70% said that Roma should be denied the right to foreign travel, even when all legal conditions are met.

The Romanians also view Roma as tarnishing the country's international image and, in particular harming the country's prospects for integration into Europe. This was aggravated last year when high profile articles appeared in the French media claiming that Romania's Roma immigrants were responsible for rising crime rates in France. Other European media followed suit. As a result, the French government imposed stiff visa restrictions that affected all Romanians.

The French government has since withdrawn these restrictions but damage to the Roma's image remains¹⁰.



In September 2006 a member of the European parliament, of Roma ethnicity, fell victim to the racist attacks of a Bulgarian parliamentary observer. Since this incident happened on the day when it was decided that Bulgaria and Romania would join the European Union the question arose if human and minority rights are really valued in Bulgaria.

Crime

Many people seem to believe that Roma are genetically inclined to commit crimes. This is nonsense. In many cases Roma are the first to be suspected of having committed a crime but the last to be rehabilitated when proven innocent. Whenever Roma do commit crimes the whole community is stigmatised and

therefore judged and condemned for the act of an individual.



Theft

Common stereotypes depict all Roma as thieves. This is again the consequence of judging a whole community for the acts of individuals who just belong to the community. Every society has its thieves and criminals, but not for that the whole group is systematically stigmatised, as it happens to Roma.

Recognition of the crimes of which Roma were victims is, on the contrary, hard to obtain. **Does anyone ever think about the things that have been stolen from the Roma?** Roma were victims of the Holocaust: their valuables, especially gold, were taken from them before they were sent to death. In today's post communist transition period, Roma often fall victim to pogroms or unjust forced evictions, during which their property is often being destroyed¹¹.

Roma steal babies

The myth that Roma steal babies is centuries old. Even today it is often repeatedly told. In 2006, Romanian press reported about a Roma women who had kidnapped a non Roma child. It later turned out that the women was not Roma but Romanian. Of course this fact did not

¹⁰ Source: NDI report 'Roma Political Participation in Romania' February 2003

¹¹ For more detailed information about forced evictions visit the homepage of the Roma and Travellers Division of the Council of Europe: www.coe.int/romatravellers.

hit the news. When Roma children are kidnapped by non-Roma, fall victim to violence, or are murdered this is hardly ever becomes a public scandal.



Drugs

There surely are some Roma who deal in drugs just as much as you can find drug dealers in basically any country in the world. Roma are not genetically inclined to deal with drugs nor is drug dealing a part of Roma culture. When it does occur it should be regarded as yet another indicator of the hardships Roma face when trying to enter the 'normal' work market and of the resulting poverty, just as **it happens to all vulnerable groups, including those belonging to the majority population.**

Conclusions

Did we convince you? So now help us in breaking down prejudices towards Roma!

Dosta!



CHAPTER III

Campaign Toolkit

How to plan a campaign

Why campaign?

The Irish author Oscar Wilde said “There is only one thing worse in life than being talked about, and that is not being talked about”.

Yet all too often, we try and impose new measures, laws or practices on society without even telling the citizens about it first.

No wonder it takes time to change their attitudes!

Campaigning is about taking people from where they are to where you want them to be. It is about getting people to see why change is necessary, how it can make things different, and how it can actually be a positive thing... getting them to react positively. Campaigning is persuasion.

It can be persuading a lazy child to clear up their bedroom; or it can be persuading a whole society to adapt new habits – not smoking in public places perhaps, or driving with their safety belts fastened.

Or changing the prejudices of a lifetime so that Roma people are valued in their societies and the majority population will be able to build up better societies...

Where to start a campaign?

All campaigning starts by working out where you are exactly at present.

To be able to make progress, you need to draw up a “snapshot” of the present situation.

Commercial companies can do this through tracking sales records. Public authorities and NGOs can do it through other records... such as census figures, police statistics or figures that show

the amount of people going through education or training, or getting into employment.



Your government may have carried out research on how the Roma are perceived in your country: this would be a very good starting point for you. Otherwise you can make your own research by simply analysing the news in the media about Roma: you will realize that most of the time the information spread is about negative events. Maybe there is something special about the Roma that is specific to your region? Analyse that too. Have there been changes in recent years, are there new trends? All this information is important for you to build up a picture of what the situation is at present. What are the new laws, if any? Do you have any feedback on how the general public has reacted to them? Do you have any quotes from individuals that encapsulate a mood?

All these facts are important. Both issues campaigning and marketing of products begins with facts. Specialists use techniques such as PESTLE analyses to map where they are at the beginning of the campaigns. This shows them the Political Economic Social Technological Legal and Environmental aspects of their subject. It means you have a beginning - so you have a base to measure the impact of your campaign. And it makes it a lot easier to decide what you should say, to whom, and how.

Five Big Questions to ask at the Beginning of a Campaign



- Where are we now (the snapshot)
- Where do we want to be (our aim)
- How do we get there? (our objective)
- Which way is best (our strategy)
- How can we make sure we arrive (our tactical plan)

All these steps will mean that our campaign is more likely to be successful, and our resources well used.

Using the Snapshot

The information you gather will help you to get clear answers to some important questions:

- What is your target audience?
- What sort of messages do they respond to?
Children will react differently to adults, women to men and so on
- How do you get to them?
Do they watch the television? Do they read newspapers? Are they impressed by politicians? Do they admire pop stars?

IMPORTANT: When it comes to Romaphobia or anti-Gypsyism, the target group is likely to be very wide, since you are trying to influence the majority. If your campaign is really going to be successful you will have to cut this large group down into the smaller components

which are the most appropriate for your own country – it could be by generations or by social group for example.

You can then start to look at what means you have to develop the campaign.

- Do you have a budget? If you do – that's great. But be careful to spend it wisely! And if you don't, don't despair. You can do a lot on a small budget.
- Do you have a staff of people to work with you? Campaigns properly run need a lot of enthusiastic and motivated people.
- Do you have any friendly allies – such as other NGOs or prominent people who are working with the Roma? Always remember that you have the Council of Europe and the European Commission!
- Do you have any already existing material – such as good written fact sheets for journalists, or pre-edited radio reports? The Council of Europe has developed some material which can be used.

Developing your Objective

The best objectives to follow in life are SMART.

That means they are:

- Specific
- Measured
- Achievable
- Realistic
- Timed

In personal life a bad SMART objective would be:

"I think I'll give up smoking"

A good one would be:

"I will cut my cigarettes down to one a day by 28 June 2008 and stop smoking completely by 1 October"

For the Roma campaign a poor objective would be:

"We want to stop people here insulting the Roma and give them better chances"

A better one would be:

For governments: *"By December 2008 we want to pass new laws through our parliament to stop discrimination in the workplace against Roma. By mid July 2009 we want employers to have these in place, and be using them in a positive way"*

For NGOs: *"By December 2008 we want to reduce hate speeches against Roma by systematically denouncing them. By mid July 2008 we want people in our environment and local community to take conscience of the fact that stereotypes are wrong and create opportunities for them to know who the Roma really are"*

Developing your strategy and tactics

You now have a good idea of the present situation and a goal to shoot for. How are you going to do it?



You need a strategy, which will be the Big Picture, and your plan to get to where you want to go.

You also need tactics which are the tools you use along the way to effect the change you want.

The strategic plan is very important. It involves much thinking and needs to be constantly revised.

The tactics are the day to day means by which you carry out the strategy.

The Strategic Plan

You are like a general in charge of your own campaign when it comes to the strategic plan. The basics are the target audience, which we already covered, a decision on the messages you will give to them, and then the route you will take to deliver this.



A PR plan would ideally cover a number of months and would put all the different steps down in a timeline so that it is easy to follow. It gives a date when work should start on different stages of the project, who will do them and for when.

Time spent planning will save you time in the long run, because it will be easier to control what is happening, and will give you flexibility if needs be.

Tip: A campaign is a huge amount of work; but it becomes more manageable if it is chopped into small pieces. How would you eat an elephant? By cutting it up, of course!

Tip: keep your planning very neat and clear, and make it easily available to everyone in your team. Make sure there are precise deadlines for the different sectors of the work and that there is a name next to each project.

Tip: keep meetings very short and very to the point to leave people time to get on with the actual work... the TACTICS

The Tactics and Tools

The first and most powerful weapon in your armoury is your message. This can also constitute your slogan.

The slogan of the DOSTA! campaign is:

*GO BEYOND PREJUDICE –
DISCOVER THE ROMA*

This slogan was decided after brainstorming sessions which included communications experts and Roma people. It is targeted at non-Roma.

You may also have sub-slogans and messages that you can use in your own countries for different parts of the campaign. To make sure they are effective they must be:

Simple

Clear

Memorable

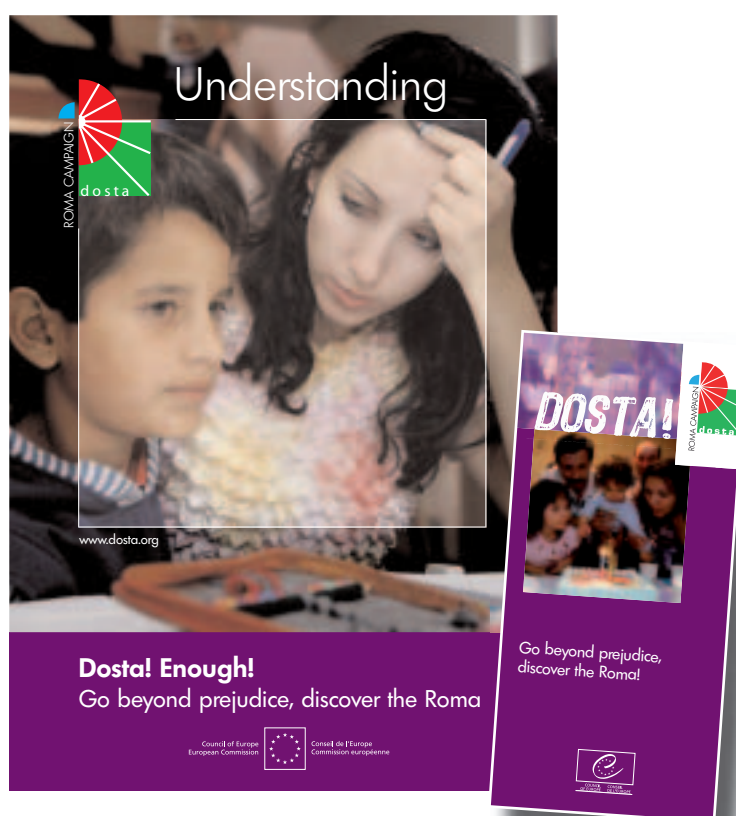
The advantage of slogans and messages is many-fold. You can use them on posters, on material, they will give you a recognition factor with the public, and they will serve as “sound-bites” – that is the small quotes that journalists love and which can be used by experts in interviews.

Tip: Think of providing a sheet of messages for your politicians or for allies in NGOs so that they can use the same slogans again and again in press interviews – it really gets the message over to the public!!

Campaign Products

DOSTA already has a good number of products that have been put at your disposal. These include:

- brochures
- posters
- a television spot in different languages
- a radio spot in different language
- interviews with VIPs
- the DOSTA website with the different manuals and guides that can be given out to the public and to the press
- The CD “Music Beyond Prejudice”



You may also wish to produce your own as a complement:

- Fact-files for journalists, with facts and figures about the Roma in your country/community; success stories about what has already been achieved; some comparisons with other countries.
- A list of experts including Roma who would be willing to be interviewed by journalists. These could include “real live specimens” of Roma people, who could talk about the reality of their daily lives. Make sure you have their consent before giving out names, though!

- A website of your own. It doesn't necessary need to extremely professional: it must be easy to surf, accessible to any computer, and not require specific technology or software to be installed (for example, try to avoid flash effects). Interactive websites will allow you to collect material from visitors who will be able to post comments and photos, suggest forum topics, etc. A good strategy for improving the visibility of the internet site is to include the function "e-mail this page" to enable people to forward your homepage through e-mail.
- A monthly electronic newsletter with the latest on the campaign, make it chatty, informative and bright, rather than long and institutional.
- Promotional material such as T-shirts or a bookmark or a mug that can be given as gifts or used to distribute at public events. Bracelets are particularly fashionable at presents, and ribbons on clothes get people curious about the campaign.
- A photo gallery is a good add to a website, and you can also use it for postcards and other material. Make sure the pictures are not stereotyped, and that you have legal consent to use them from the person depicted.
- The DOSTA! website includes a page of testimonials of people who support the campaign. You should look for people who are non-Roma who are willing to act as "friends" to your campaign, especially people who are well known and willing to give their face (and time!) for free.

The most important thing about campaign products is to USE THEM.

It is no good having the most beautiful poster in the world if the people in the street never see it.

It is no good having a powerful television spot if it is never heard.

It is no good putting money and resources into a website if you never have any hits.

Tip: Make sure that you put a lot of emphasis on how to market and distribute these products. Work out where the best outlets would be. Which poster sites will be seen by the most people? Can you get the national television to show the Roma television spot at primetime?

Following up your work



Public relations work is never finished. Monitoring the effects on your target group is a very important part of the whole process. It allows you to see what worked, what could have gone better, and what needs to be tweaked so that it can work next time.

Try to get as much hard detail as you can about the effect the campaign is having. Perhaps you can carry out an opinion poll to see if people have heard of the campaign and what their reaction is. You can access what sort of reaction you are getting from journalists – and how much coverage you have had.

And finally...

Some ideas you might like to try

- ⇒ An open air festival with Roma and non-Roma artists in the main park
- ⇒ Sponsoring Roma people to give lessons to little children in school and facilitate meeting with their parents
- ⇒ A puppet play for children about the Roma
- ⇒ Producing postcards to distribute for free in restaurants and bars
- ⇒ Organising a special debate in parliament
- ⇒ Getting the local television station to include a Roma character in the most popular television show
- ⇒ Having posters all over town on 8 April, the Roma Day.



Creating PR Strategy

Some definitions

Aim - what we are trying to achieve; long term aspirations

Objective – the measurable steps by which we can judge that our aim is being achieved.

Strategy – the “how”: the rational for all our actions which helps create a master plan to guide and explain our activities.

Tactics – the actions by which we implement our strategy and achieve our aims and objectives: events, press work, film etc.

Techniques for working out strategies

SWOT – TOWS Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats. (From the work of Professor Heinz Weihrich, San Francisco University)

Brainstorm using the four areas, then analyse to find a strategy. This can be a combination

WT – minimise weaknesses and threats simultaneously. Could include retrenchment, joint ventures or liquidations. “Cutting the losses”

WO – Minimise weaknesses by maximising opportunities. For example, bringing in new skills or technology.

ST – Use strengths to minimise threats; using technical or financial resources against competitors.

SO – Use strengths to maximise opportunities. The most desirable strategy.

Reaching the Media: the press office “toolkit”

Good media officers work with a “toolkit” of different techniques. The first and most important is personal contact, making networking a primary skill for the press officer. A database is essential to keep up those contacts. Other parts of the “kit” include media campaigns, press briefings, press kits and releases.



Here is a brief run-down of those techniques.

Personal contact

It is much easier to get a journalist interested in your story if you already have a relationship of confidence with them.

Media officers spend the bulk of their time cultivating contacts. This means the very basic social skills of keeping up a good working relationship: calling the journalist from time to time with new information (even if it is not for immediate publication), sharing coffees and lunches, perhaps introducing them to experts in your group or people who would interest them, whilst at all times respecting their hectic lives and treating them with courtesy, respect and efficiency. Time invested in journalists pays off a thousand fold when you have an important story for them – they will be much more inclined to listen to you

attentively than if you had telephone a newspaper “cold”.

Building these contacts can take many years, but nothing really replaces a relationship of trust between a journalist and their “source”. This is one of the reasons why journalists are so concerned to protect their “sources” and not reveal who has given them information.

Networking



Networking is the strategy “par excellence” to ensure optimum coverage for events

- ✦ Get to know journalists. Find journalists’ guides. Track down information on different media via the Internet. Some good sites include <http://www.world-newspapers.com/>
- ✦ Learn about the different approaches that journalists take. (news angles) Read papers and magazines to see who is writing about what, and what sort of style they are using (is it a front page story? A feature? Are they interviewing experts, or is it an analytical article?) Listen to radio and watch television. What are the top themes? How are they being shown – as part of the news programme, in specialised reports, in interviews of reportage?
- ✦ Never underestimate the power of card swapping – not just for the Japanese, but as a great way of collecting people’s names. If you are the sort of person who finds it

difficult to fit names to faces after the event, make a note of anything that strikes you about the person's physical appearance – the crazier the better – but don't note their clothing, unless you're certain they will never change their clothes!!

- ❖ Expand your knowledge of the different styles in European countries. Try the International Journalists' Network (www.ijnnet.org) or the European Journalist Centre (www.ejc.nl) which give profiles of different countries. A good book is "Hitting the Headlines in Europe" (Cathie Burton and Alun Drake).
- ❖ If you work in a specialised field, get to know the journalists who are covering your area. Follow their work and see what they are interested in, so that you can decide how to tailor your stories to them.
- ❖ Use the specialised media. General reporters in the mainstream media will get story ideas from magazines and websites aimed at special interest groups: they will notice your story if it is carried by these specialised outlets.

Build a Database



(from "Hitting the Headlines in Europe" by Cathie Burton and Alun Drake, Council of Europe)

"The technical possibilities for computerising your communications are manifold, and you should be able to find a

package to suit your needs and your budget. Before parting with your hard-earned cash, though, make sure you are investing in a product that is right for you. If you do not have the necessary technical expertise in the team around you, you should make sure you are getting good advice. You don't necessarily need the latest, most powerful package on the market. Your equipment has to meet your needs and your budget.

Most office packages have a database, with Microsoft Access predominating. These are generally perfectly adequate to keep anything from ten to ten thousand names, and can be designed to allow a flexible system. Think logically about what you want before you begin work on the database. Do you want to be able to send to regional groups separately? Do you want a flexible system that allows you to "pick and mix" your targeted journalists according to themes, or geography? Will you need to use the database for traditional mail shots, or e-mail and faxing? How much detail will you need? What can you do without? Be sure of your needs before you start and you will save a lot of grief afterwards.

Take the case of a press officer for a campaigning group on human rights issues, based in Manchester in England, but wanting to send information to the whole of Western Europe. Some of the stories are aimed only at the British press – indeed some are only for the regions. But sometimes she will want to target continental Europe. Her ideal database will allow her to pick out individual journalists, to make selections according to where journalists are based, and to pick and choose different names.

If your work involves a number of different issues, the system can be designed in an even more sophisticated way, knitting in fields for themes such as green issues, animal rights, human rights etc.

The database will then allow you, for example, to pinpoint the names of UK journalists interested in green issues, and working in Brussels. This is especially useful if you are likely to be travelling and organising press events in different countries.

The database currently used by the authors was designed in Microsoft Access and has contact details for nearly 8,000 different journalists and 5,000 different media. It covers 62 countries – from Armenia to Uzbekistan, passing by Japan and the Vatican, and can categorise journalists into 41 different areas of interest.

You should think of your database as living and changing. The media world changes almost every day, and you need a system that will cope with this. Your software needs to be flexible, and you need to be diligent about fostering your contacts and changing your database when they change. Don't expect them to get in touch with you!

And a few final points - some of them commonsense, but none the less worth remembering:

Spellings – be careful with name spellings. This might be obvious in an English-speaking context, but if you are dealing with Russians or Bulgarians for example, you need to be aware that their names may have different spellings when transliterated from Cyrillic. You also need to decide what to do about accents. To ensure your database is workable, everyone must use the same system of spelling. You can decide on your own system, but basically everyone using the database has to know the spelling rules and stick to them. If you are using one of the Latin languages, such as French, you will need to decide whether to include the accents. Germanic languages – such as German itself, Danish and Norwegian, use umlauts and accents such as ö and

Ä which can be rendered into English spelling with the addition of an e (for instance Rössle becomes Roessle).

E-mail addresses – if you are sending out by e-mail, you need to make sure that the message will reach the newsdesk even if your particular contact is away from the office. You do not want your story to get lost while it waits for someone to come back from their holidays. Always double up with a newsdesk address if the message is not purely personal.

Faxes – E-mail is already predominant worldwide, but you might find that you need to use faxes. Make sure your fax is going to reach the right person – you may even try and find out where the fax is physically located, so that you are sure your material will reach the right place at the right time. “

Written Material – Press Releases and Briefing Packs

Press Releases

Press releases are simply a way of catching a journalist's attention. They should NEVER replace the work of personal contact.

Releases need to give information clearly and succinctly. Think like a journalist! What do you need to know?

- ❖ What is happening?
- ❖ When is it happening?
- ❖ Where?
- ❖ Who is involved – what are their titles, the exact spelling of their names? Always use their full names for the first mention and Mr... or Ms... for the second or third.
- ❖ What is the aim?

Always give a contact number of someone who knows the event fully and can be reached AT ALL TIMES.

Video/ Audio News Releases



These are the equivalent of a press release for television/radio stations.

A Video news release will include footage provided free of copyright that the television station can use to illustrate a story. These could include reconstructions: for instance, a story about a conference on bioethics could be told with pictures of babies, Dolly the cloned sheep and the interior of a science lab. There may also be interviews with experts that the television can use

An audio news release will provide similar material for radio – interviews with key experts, background noises appropriate to the story, music.

Press Packs

Press packs are very useful for campaigns or other big events. They include background information that can be helpful for journalists to get the information they need to tell story.

Packs can be sophisticated, if you have a lot of money, with photos and glossy text. Or they can be simple and basic. The important thing is that they are a means for journalists to get QUICK and SIMPLE information.

Use language that is clear and put your ideas succinctly. Use bullet

- ◆ points for separating information in a useful way.
- ◆ Use statistics and comparisons. Always say where you got the information, so that it can be shown to be accurate.
- ◆ Use a design which includes your contact number on EACH PAGE of the press pack.
- ◆ Include practical information – how to get to the event, a map, details on journalists' accreditation.

Press Briefings and Press Conferences

Press briefings and press conferences can take different forms, and you need to think about the best way to convey your information.



Formal press conferences (seated, in a “theatre” atmosphere) are best:

- ◆ If you have a very important person with little time to meet individual journalists.
- ◆ If you have a large number of journalists
- ◆ If you are working in different languages and need interpretation.
- ◆ If you want your story to be covered as widely as possible.
- ◆ If your story is not difficult to understand or controversial.
- ◆ If your story is very important (be sure about this!)

They are not good:

- ❖ If you have a restricted number of journalists
- ❖ If you have a number of different people available for press interview (no press conference should have more than 3 speakers)
- ❖ If your story is “softer” or is complicated to understand.
- ❖ If your story is politically sensitive and you might be exposed to hostile questioning.
- ❖ If you want your story to have “exclusivity”

Organising a formal press conference

You will need:

- ❖ a large enough hall. (easy in Strasbourg and Brussels). Your own, or try a local cinema or theatre; or look for a representative governmental building, which will show the commitment of your authorities in engaging themselves in favour of Roma
- ❖ a raised platform, with a backdrop of your own logo (for television)
- ❖ microphones, for the speakers, and a “wandering” mike for journalists questions.
- ❖ A functioning system If you need interpretation, trained interpreters and technicians.

Beforehand:

- ❖ Look carefully at the timing of the event before you book it. Be helpful to journalists by scheduling it in the morning so they can work on the story before their deadline. Make sure it does not clash with other major events.
- ❖ Decide which audience you are targeting

- ❖ Write a brief press release with ALL the practical details
- ❖ Call journalists to brief them on the story and gauge their interest
- ❖ Prepare any press packs or additional material you need to hand out

Journalists are a breed unto themselves, and you cannot tell how many will turn up to your event. With some experience you will get a feel for the interest, and be able to plan accordingly. Be prepared, however, to be flexible,

During and After:

- ❖ Make a note of the journalists who attended, their contact numbers and the issues that interested them.
- ❖ Use the information to refresh your database.
- ❖ Monitor what was written/broadcast
- ❖ Follow up contacts where necessary (but don't overreact)

Informal Briefings

The Standing Mike

Very useful for VIP visits. Set up a mike as the VIP comes out of meetings for a “meet the press” session. The VIP gives a key message and then takes questions before moving on to the next leg of the visit.

Informal briefings

Informal briefings are very useful:

- ❖ If you want to speak to a limited number of journalists
- ❖ If you do not need interpretation
- ❖ If you want to give a “friendly” impression (for instance, this is useful for giving out controversial or difficult information)

- ❖ If you want to ensure that only certain journalists are targeted (exclusivity)
- ❖ If you are briefing on “softer” stories.

You will need:

- ❖ a small room, a coffee bar, drinks, comfortable chairs
- ❖ written material for the journalists
- ❖ an interviewee or interviewees who are prepared to speak in an open and friendly manner

The Media Strategy

Every event or important campaign needs to include intricate forward planning. The best is to work very well in advance – magazines and television documentaries often need at least six months to prepare, although you may not always have the luxury of time.

Your plan will need to look at the nature of your event and how to target it to the written press (including newspapers, magazines, and specialist publications) and the electronic media (tailoring it to radio and television).

You will need to think about when is the best moment to contact journalists (not too early, or they will forget; and obviously not too late). What material will you give them? Does the material need to be tailored differently to different media and different audiences (for example, you may need to think of a “tabloid” treatment that includes humour and human interest, and a “quality” angle which gives a more serious slant).

Think hard about what sort of product you need from the “toolkit”.

And remember....be FAST, FLEXIBLE and FOCUSED.

Monitoring

Monitor the results of your work. How much coverage did you get? Was the coverage an accurate reflection of your message? How can you refine it for next time?

Games and Role Plays



Scenarios for practice press conferences:

1. Roma Singer Lola has been arrested by the police on suspicion of dealing with drugs. You are part of her Public Relations team, and need to face the press.
2. You are promoting new measures to help Roma people get access to housing, and want positive coverage in the press.

Exercise One – Planning creativity

1. You are a television company launching a new “reality” TV show – a bit like Fame Academy, it invites normal people to sing before experts, to find the next big pop star. You will be travelling around the main towns listening to “talents”, and the broadcast will show the story as it unfolds. How will you publicise your new show?
2. You are a group of activist against animal cruelty. You want to launch

a European wide campaign to stop people using fur. How will you design the campaign for maximum impact.

3. You are the agents for an aging singing star who wants to re-launch his career after a long break for health reasons. How are you going to remarket him?

Exercise Two - creating events

1. You are the creative team in a PR agency which has been approached by an international airline to run a campaign for them. The airline wants to get more customers in Central and Eastern Europe, but they also want to show that they are ethical and concerned about human rights and the environment. What special events would you plan for them?
2. You are PR consultants working with the local football club. The team is worried about the image of the country and wants to give itself an international perspective. What sort of actions would you suggest?
3. You have just opened a restaurant in your country and want to attract some custom from international visitors. What publicity ideas might work?

Exercise Three : Communications Strategies :

1. The Story :
A major conference on Cyber-crime scheduled for September.
Aim : To bring together European countries to fight cyber-crime.
Issues : Hacking and computer fraud, child sex sites, racism sites, how to control the internet.
Guests : Bill Gates of Microsoft;

Prime Minister Adrian Natase of Romania; a "survivor" who was implicated in the child sex trade.

People involved : The computer industry; the media, Police forces, including Interpol; lawyers and academics.

Format : A two day conference.

2. The Story :

A campaign for healthier eating in schools.

Aim : To combat a growing trend towards child obesity in Europe by persuading schools to serve healthier food to children.

Issues : Children are getting fatter and unhealthier in western Europe. Experts think this is because they are tempted to eat "junk" food, especially at school. Your campaign wants to stop junk food being sold, stop drinks machines in schools and encourage children to eat more healthily. You will need to think up some good ideas of how to do this. It involves schools in the whole of Europe, so you will need to target.

Format : A number of expert studies that show obesity levels and the difference in approach in different countries.

Two conferences held in different parts of Europe bringing experts together.

3. The Story :

You are a Hell's Angels bike club, and you have recently found out that the European Commission are trying to ban big bikes because they think they are dangerous.

Aim : To stop the Commission passing the law and save the big bikes.

Issues : The law is wrong in your view. Big bikes are not dangerous, because you need to be skilled to handle them. All European countries have driving tests to ensure

that novice drivers do not get to handle the big bikes. You think the Commission should be looking at training for young bike drivers instead.

Banning the bikes would cut out a lot of pleasure for a lot of people. It would mean the end of important classic European makes such as Triumph – so it would adversely affect manufacturers.

Format: Events, rallies and lobbying.



CHAPTER IV

Collection of Articles

Interview with Thomas Hammarberg

Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights

Q&A: "Where Europe Has Failed These Europeans"

17/10/2007 - IPS / Italy and USA



Thomas Hammarberg was elected Commissioner of Human Rights of the Council of Europe in October 2005. He plays a crucial role in promoting implementation of the recommendations of the human rights system of the Council.

The Council of Europe has 47 member states in the Europe region, and is the oldest organisation working for European integration. It is separate from the European Union (EU), and therefore from the European Council of the EU.

Thomas Hammarberg was elected by the parliamentary assembly of the council, which comprises members from national parliaments. Apostolis Fotiadis from IPS discussed with him the key problems that Roma, one of the most discriminated against groups in the EU face today.

IPS: How do you explain the persistent anti-Roma feeling that extends across Europe? What are the sources of the problem, and how can we address them?

Thomas Hammarberg: I think it is difficult to define any rational legacy. They

have been made scapegoats for problems of our societies. For long people who could stand up and defend them have allowed an atmosphere in which Roma are targeted as unwanted. It is an issue with a long history as well. During the Nazi period more than half a million were exterminated, and we never nominated an apology to them.

IPS: Do you think that the condition of Roma is deteriorating or improving around Europe?

TH: I'm worried about it. There seems to be a change towards polarisation. Groups of people adopt a very anti-Roma discourse that leading politicians seem to tolerate. This is a quite unfortunate development because carelessness or indifference can sometimes legitimate further intolerance. We should again appeal to the politicians to be careful, and stay with the side of the Roma rather than join in with any xenophobic tendency.

IPS: Is it easy to compare the treatment of Roma communities in different countries in the same region, for example Greece, Romania and Bulgaria?

TH: I deliberately avoid the entire discussion about comparing who is best. Many countries in the region are going through profound change while they emerge from the Soviet period; thus they have different starting points. My picture is that Roma people are discriminated against in every country. When it comes to employment, to healthcare, to real possibilities for political participation in elections or political structures, the situation is problematic.

IPS: How could the problem of their political participation be addressed?

TH: Much of the responsibility for this problem occurs from lack of interest or negative interest of political parties. Mainstream political parties have to become more open to Roma people; usually they are not. Take for example election campaigns where even candidates of major parties make xenophobic statements against the Roma instead of going to the Roma communities, listening to what they want, and try to represent their views. Also, the Roma have to organise themselves and try to be better represented.

IPS: Should emphasis of their incorporation in political life be on the local or national level?

TH: Both are important, but we should focus on the local for now. Many important decisions affecting the Roma are taken at this level. In some countries they have special reserved seats for Roma in local assemblies. In Slovenia they have one seat in each municipality where Roma live. In Romania they have a seat saved in the parliament. Though this is not the finest solution, it is something that should be tried.

IPS: Is there any success story?

TH: Yes, there are places in the Scandinavian countries where the housing problem is more or less resolved. In parts of Slovenia, communities have been fairly positive in dealing with Roma. The experience is that when authorities and politicians have tried, though it takes a bit of money, it is possible to reach solutions.

IPS: Are there cases where pressure from the Council of Europe can increase efficiency of Roma communities' protection?

TH: Additional political pressure at least to the permanent members of The European Council might have

considerable effect. They should realise that the Roma issue is one of the black sides of Europe, take responsibility, and go after their country members. It is also necessary to increase pressure on local authorities to revise their policy when it comes to evictions. Sometimes eviction might be necessary, but this must be done the right way and after alternative housing solutions have been offered to people.

IPS: What could you still improve in the way you work?

TH: The important thing for us is to know what is going on. Many times we don't know, or information comes late. The Roma rights centre in Budapest helps a lot, as well as various NGOs. Still, the key issue remains that we don't manage to persuade local authorities to deal with problems of the Roma.

Speech by Dr. Karin Waringo, presented at the Public Hearing 'Image and Imagination: Anti-Gypsyism in European media'

European Parliament, Brussels, 6 June 2006
Kindly authorized for publishing to the Dosta! campaign

Two months ago, a newspaper, to which I used to contribute to, published an article on the practice of child marriages in a remote Roma community in Romania. The tenor of the article was that Roma continue to uphold ancient traditions which disrespect basic Human Rights and are thus co-responsible for their alienation.

The issue as such would probably not have struck me if I had not had, two and a half years ago, on a similar occasion a discussion with the author of the article, where I tried to persuade him that our task as journalists should be to contribute to the understanding between people instead of fostering prejudice and distance.

So why had I failed to convince him? What is his interest and motivation to write about Roma the way he does, and why is his approach so shocking to me? This has led me to reflect more generally on the status of Roma in the media, reflections which I would like to share with you today.

If we think about Roma in the media we will probably all recall at least one incidence where Roma were portrayed by media in a particularly loathsome way. Only a few weeks ago, on the occasion of the murder of a Belgian teenager by a person who was described as a dark-skinned foreigner, we assisted here in Belgium to an unprecedented media campaign, first, against people from Northern Africa, then against "Gypsies".

All of us are familiar with headlines such as "Gypsies under arrest" so that we easily tend to believe that media are abounding with reports about Roma: In reality, however, media reporting on Roma is rather scant.

One year ago, I surveyed the websites of several media including the news websites of Google and of the BBC and was much surprised to notice that only very few articles related to Roma. This has led me to the conclusion that Roma are a non-subject for the media.

To give you an idea: In the BBC archives, which covered at that time a period of six years, the word "Roma" gave me 98 hits and the word "Gypsies", which encompasses UK Travellers, 174. Withdrawing the non-fitting items from the first list I had 87 news items dealing with the situation of Romani people.

Using the same method on the German Google news site which covers a period of one month I found 341 articles comprising the word "Roma", many of which actually referring to an Italian football team as well as a likewise Italian racing driver. The word "Zigeuner" gave me 85 hits.

Under-reporting is compound with very selective reporting limited to just a few issues. These issues are generally related to social problems or problems of social coexistence: Out of the 87 BBC articles I screened, 40 articles dealt with instances where Roma had become victims of discrimination, 14 with Roma initiatives in

defence of their rights, five with anti-discrimination measures and three with culture. Four articles had the Holocaust as an issue. Five were essentially background articles.

Since BBC cannot be considered as representative for media in general I made random tests with other media and got roughly the same results. A comprehensive survey of national and regional media by the Roma Press Centre in Hungary found that Roma are mostly, meaning in 63.4 percent of the cases, represented in relation with so-called "Romani issues" defined on the basis of racist stereotypes, such as for instance, poverty, housing problems and crime. A German study covering 944 articles published in 12 local newspapers in the period between 1979 and 1991 found that in 60 percent of the articles Roma were mentioned in relation with crime and in 37 percent of the articles in relation with social conflicts. Another interesting finding of this survey is that Roma were mostly mentioned in relation with institutions of public control such as police (51 percent of the cases) and justice (23 percent).

Another important characteristic is that articles on Roma are much more frequently to be found in the local than in the international pages and in local rather than in international media. Indeed, much of the coverage fits into the category "news in brief" with hardly any background reporting or analysis.

Non-surprisingly, much of the media coverage on Roma is negative: A survey on minorities in European media found that half on the articles on Roma were neutral and a third negative. While pointing out at the generally negative portrayal of ethnic minorities in the media, the author of the survey, Jessica ter Wal, noticed that "Sinti and Roma/ Travellers are the group most often portrayed negatively".

But my purpose here is not just to describe a situation we are all more or less familiar with, but to try to find explanations. Unfortunately, I am not aware of any research covering the motivations and interests of journalists and editors. So I will have to mainly rely on my experience and intuition:

First, I would like to underline that the situation of Roma is not particular in a sense that "minorities" in general are given little attention by mainstream media and if they are so, "minority issues" are generally dealt with from the perspective of the majority.

Minorities do not appear as an actor of society with specific interests and concerns which have the same validity as the interests and concerns of the majority.

In describing minorities and minority concerns from the perspective of the majority, media tend to reproduce racist stereotypes and bias which go with it.

We can find very similar kinds of reporting about immigrant people, refugees or Muslims, and indeed in the Belgian case, to which I referred to earlier, Muslim youth and people from Northern Africa were the first to be ostracised before ostracism targeted Roma.

I nevertheless believe that there are some peculiarities as regards to media reporting about Roma which are rooted in the particular type of racism affecting Romani people with its strongly dehumanising bias.

If we keep in mind that journalists reporting on Roma bear with them a whole series of prejudices such as that Roma are dishonest people, who are not to be trusted, that they are secretive and follow some strange kind of outdated lifestyle, we should not be surprised about the results:

In relation with crime, articles frequently mention the Romani background of its perpetrator or suspect, in

particular, if this person is accused of an act involving swindle or deceit. This was for instance the case a few weeks ago here in Belgium when three Roma were arrested in relation with con-theft. Here the newspapers titled: "Con-theft: Three Gypsies under investigation" and "Police operation in Gypsy camp". A Swiss newspaper wrote last Summer: "Gypsy gang arrested – Theft series resolved".

The fact that Roma are considered as dishonest people who keep isolated from the rest of society has as a consequence that journalists will rather turn to other sources such as public authorities, social workers or neighbours rather than interview the Roma themselves. (The German study which I quoted earlier found that even in case the interests and concerns of Roma are represented media tend to rely on non-Roma sources such as charities rather than on Romani organisations.)

Generally speaking, it is much easier to sell, including to editors, articles which confirm existing stereotypes rather than articles which counteract them.

Roma continue to be considered as social outcasts who do not deserve the same treatment and respect as other members of society which becomes apparent from the following quotes: the first one, taken from the article on child marriages to which I referred to before, says: "Inward-looking, the Gypsy community is at risk to perpetrate a life style which will only contribute to its further isolation."

The Belgian newspaper *La dernière heure* commented the arrest of a Romani teenager in relation with the murder at the Brussels Central Station as follows: "Adam's arrest will certainly not contribute to change the hardly affable image they [the Gypsies] are carrying with them for many years."

In the same context, *Le Soir*, went even further in legitimating prejudice against Roma: Following a description of Adam's uncle, described as "in his fifties, a lean body in a black suit, his collar open, long square tipped shoes", the newspaper commented: "What is the purpose of rejecting stereotypes in front of a Gypsy who wants to be approached as such?"

I understood that my colleague who keeps reproducing stereotypes about Roma is doing so primarily for the purpose of providing entertainment: Stories which are based on sensationalism and depict Roma as a kind of subhuman beings sell. The reality is much more harder to place.

A union representative of the *Daily Express* which, two years ago, brought a series of scare stories about east European Roma invading the UK following EU enlargement, commented:

"In the case of the stories on the Roma people we felt it was a cynical campaign to boost circulation. They [the editors] saw the effect the headlines had, and exploited it by having as many scare stories about Gypsies "overrunning" the country as possible."

As a result, media tend to foster negative views on Roma rather than to counteract them. According to an English survey on prejudice from 2003, 35 percent (or 14 million people) of the English population express open prejudice against Roma and Travellers. Their views are mainly influenced by media with TV and newspapers playing the most important role. The survey also found that readers of the tabloid press are more likely to express negative attitudes against ethnic minorities and refugees which can of course be interpreted in two ways.

Press Complaints Commissions are pretty inefficient in dealing with and remedying to racism and anti-Gypsyism. According to the former journalist and

publisher Bob Borzello “not one of the 600 or so complaints made to the Press Complaints Commission (PCC) since 1991 about alleged racism in the Press has been upheld.” Out of the 54 complaints the German Zentralrat Deutscher Sinti und Roma filed with the German Press Council in 2004, only 44 were forwarded to the Press Complaints Commission which considered almost half of them as unfounded. Only ten complaints ended with the conclusion that the articles or reports were indeed discriminatory and only in two cases was a reprimand issued to the media.

The problem is that these commissions are composed by the same people who produce stereotyped reports and tend to be complacent with the journalists and editors. In many cases, press complaints commissions have even confirmed racist bias, when justifying for instance the journalists’ mentioning of the Romani background of a culprit or suspect by arguing that this was an essential element to the understanding of the crime.

Coming to the end of my presentation, I would like to draw a few recommendations:

To Roma rights activists and other people involved in the fight against discrimination:

Do address to the media; try to understand their mechanisms and learn to react in an appropriate way. Negative reporting may simply be the result of ignorance and fear to ask the right questions to the right people. If you feel that reports misrepresent reality, do not hesitate to write to the journalist or editor. As we saw before journalists or editors tend to reproduce views they consider as representative for their readers. They should learn that their readers do not support racism.

To policy-makers:

Support diversity in the media.

Media should reflect diversity in society and not just the view of the dominant group.

Diversity should be reflected both in the content of media as well as in the people who produce it.

This could be one of the tasks of the European media policy which is so far limited to the promotion of European TV productions with little consideration to their content.

It is hard to understand why in a society with more and more “black” people and people of mixed origins, TV presenters continue to be predominantly blond and blue-eyed.

In 2000, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination adopted a series of recommendations related to Roma in the media including the recommendation to develop media and educational campaigns to educate the public about Roma and to facilitate the Roma’s access to the media. They have obviously remained dead letter.

As someone who has worked in the field of media for a number of years and who continues to believe in the democratic value of media, I would like to conclude by warning against the tremendously negative impact of the current wave of liberalisation and concentration in the media sector: By transforming news into a mere product which needs to be sold and journalists into mere sales persons they foster a kind of journalism which gives precedence to sensation over hard facts and information.

Defending Roma Rights: a lawyer's perspective, by Gloria Jean Garland

Senior Rule of Law U.S. Agency for International Development

In 1993 when I first moved to **Central Europe**, I was invited to a reception with a group of high-ranking Slovak judges and lawyers. I found myself in a conversation with a small group of English speakers discussing Bill Clinton, world politics and rock-and-roll music, among other topics. I found them to be intelligent and interesting, warm and engaging. These are wonderful people, I thought. This is a friendly and fascinating part of the world. Then the topic of conversation switched to Roma, and the beautiful people I was speaking to suddenly became very ugly. The jokes and comments were appalling. But in Central and Eastern Europe in the 90's, it was absolutely acceptable for politicians, judges, government officials – the kind of people one normally looks up to – to make derisive and racist comments about the Roma.

In Slovakia, a young Roma man was doused with gasoline and set on fire by a group of skinheads, in full view of his horrified family. Also in Slovakia, a group of young thugs decided they would attack a Roma family for no reason other than the fact that they were Roma – brutally beating to death the mother of six children. In Romania, an angry mob killed three Romani men who had been involved in a fight and burned 14 Romani family homes. In Bulgaria, police beat to death a young Romani man who had been arrested for theft. In the Czech Republic, 80 to 90% of the children in special schools for the mentally handicapped are Roma, even though they make up about only 5% of

the total population. In Croatia, education officials apologetically explained to me that they could only have separate Romani classes in the lower grades because there were not enough Roma in the higher grades to make separate classes financially feasible.

Western Europe is not much different. In Aspropyrgos, Greece, I saw bulldozers destroying make-shift Romani family homes in an effort to “clean up” Athens before the Olympic Games. Denmark and Germany expelled Roma refugees back to a dangerous and uncertain situation in Kosovo. Italy placed Roma seeking public assistance into squalid and dangerous camps, reserving the public housing in the cities for the non-Roma. Belgium expelled a group of Slovak Roma by tricking them into coming to the police station under the pretext of completing documents to seek asylum. The United Kingdom passed a regulation authorizing customs officials to single out Roma and other minority groups for special scrutiny at the border. In light of the attitudes expressed by politicians, judges, police and the public in general towards the Roma, it is not so surprising that such appalling conduct is often shrugged off or ignored.

The Roma make up Europe's largest and most despised minority group. In virtually every country in Europe, they struggle with poverty, discrimination, lower education levels, and shortened life expectancies. They are often the victims of police brutality and public and political indifference, if not downright

hostility. But the situation appears to be improving, albeit slowly. Creative and dedicated lawyers and human rights organisations have used the European Court of Human Rights to challenge the member states of the Council of Europe in their treatment of the Roma and have forged new paths to justice in cases like *Assenov v. Bulgaria*, *Connors v. United Kingdom*, *Moldovan v. Romania*, *Nachova v. Bulgaria*, and others.

Armed with a mandate of defending human rights and protecting parliamentary democracy and the rule of law, the **Council of Europe and European Court of Human Rights** have been at the forefront in defending the rights of the Roma and in encouraging their social and political inclusion in European affairs. To encourage and assist lawyers in bringing cases involving Roma before the Court, the Council of Europe provides study sessions and training programs to familiarise them with the Court's procedural requirements and case law. This publication is offered in hopes of encouraging stronger and better defence of human rights in general and Roma rights in particular. Welcome to the struggle!

Article by Michael Guet

Head of the Roma and Travellers Division



Published in the Social Cohesion Newsletter

Everyone in France, and in many European countries, remembers the heat wave of summer 2003. Although France has one of the most comprehensive and efficient health systems in the world, the heat wave surprisingly led to the deaths of several thousand people in just a few weeks, mainly the elderly living alone who had lost contact with their families.

This tragedy highlighted the dangers and fragility of today's extremely individualistic modern societies, a dramatic contrast to the mindset and way of life of Roma communities which have a totally different set of values.

Because of their strong community relations, it is unlikely that there were any Roma victims of the heat wave. To a large extent, the Roma throughout Europe have preserved strong communal relations. Children, teenagers, parents and grand-parents all live together or at least close to each other. The meaning of the word "family" goes far beyond the nuclear family, extending to the level of the community ("vitsa" in the Romani language).

This belonging to a group also makes for solidarity, mutual help and shared responsibility, a concept encapsulated in the Romani word "phralipe" (brotherhood). Their community way of life brings protection, safety, control and guidance. It also makes it easier to pass on traditions and cultural values from one generation to another.

Nowadays, our modern individualistic societies provide little room for this

communal lifestyle. But it is a lifestyle that often gives rise to tensions with the majority society. Most prejudices against Roma result from a negative image of this communal way of life. Hundreds of "Gypsy" caravans are thought to be touring around while often it is only a few. The Western media writes about massive migration waves of Roma from central and eastern Europe, but in practice the migration of Roma individuals is not in such significant numbers. The community way of life of Roma can also bring about negative effects for Roma communities as a whole. For example, it is inconceivable that the police would wake up a whole neighbourhood when coming to arrest a person suspected of having committed a crime. When it comes to arresting a Roma however, the police have no hesitation in disturbing the whole community, including children and the elderly (as they all live together), sometimes also destroying the property (caravans, houses, etc.) of persons who are not in any way involved with the issue. It seems that the Roma – because of their community lifestyle – are perceived as a whole.

The Council of Europe and other players are confronted with a twofold task: on the one hand they should work for the desegregation of Roma schools and the de-ghettoisation of Roma settlements,

but at the same time they should respect the tradition of Roma who want to remain together. Some Roma even prefer living in appalling conditions as long as they can stay together with their relatives. They might refuse social housing if it means living in separate blocks of flats. A few years ago in Skopje, the UNHCR had great difficulties in persuading some Roma families, who had been living in a camp for more than five years, to move to nice private houses, because this meant that they would be separated. It is very important to understand the reasons for such apparently unreasonable decisions. It is only too easy to make incorrect conclusions based on old stereotypes. Like everyone else, Roma do not like dirt and do not want to live in poverty. They just attach high value to their traditional communal lifestyle.

Ignoring this pattern of Roma culture could lead one to conclude that Roma are desperate people who want and like to live in squalor.

Authorities should respect and accommodate historical traditions – for instance by providing large halting sites for Travellers or housing solutions that would preserve some degree of community lifestyle. Solutions to ghettoisation or segregation should be found elsewhere: not by forcibly mixing communities but by providing bridges and more contacts between various cultures and traditions in order to eliminate negative stereotypes. After all, by respecting communal lifestyles where they still exist, we might be able to reduce the number of victims during the next heat wave.

Blacken your face and go to the stadiums, by Valeriu Nicolae

Director of ERGO Network

February 25, 2006

Late in the game, Samuel Eto, fed up with racial abuse coming from Saragoza's supporters, tries to leave the field. Referee Victor Esquinas Torres stops the game and calls for an announcement against the racial abuse. Players from Barca and Saragoza gather around Eto to show their support. Frank Rijkaard, the black coach of Barcelona, persuades him to keep playing.

February 1, 2006

UEFA organizes an exceptional event the "unitedagainstracism" conference in Barcelona. Romanian Federation representative Daniel Prodan downplays the occurrence of racism in Romanian stadium, despite compelling evidence presented on anti-Gypsyism in Romanian stadiums. He even seems upset that Roma should call themselves Roma, afraid that others may confuse Romanians and Roma. Yet over 1.5 million Romanian citizens are of Roma origin, and the word "Roma" has existed in the language of the 8 to 12 million Roma in Europe since early than the establishment of the Romanian state.

Angel Maria Villar Llona, President of the Royal Spanish Football Federation, makes an unconvincing and for many inept intervention during the closing session of the conference, again downplaying racism in the stadiums. Like many other federation leaders, he seemed interested puts more effort towards denying racism than fighting it.

November 26, 2005

Marc Zorro, Messina's Ivorian player, is abused by Inter Milano's supporters during a cup game. Zorro takes the ball and walks off the field in tears. Adriano, the black Brazilian from Inter, with the support of Messina's players, persuades him to continue the game.

Earlier, in a match against Treviso, the whole Messina team blackened their faces in a show of solidarity.

November 29, 2005

Mariko Dauda, the Ivorian player of Dinamo Bucharest, is abused by supporters of his own team, who throw bananas on the pitch during a training session.

October 23, 2005

Despite a huge scandal and repeated suspensions in 2005 for racist incidents in their stadium, Steaua Bucharest supporters chant "We hate the crows (pejorative for Roma and black players), suspend us!" and display two banners, one reading: "Last chance for Romania – zero tolerance (against Roma)" and the other showing a huge crow.

Although widely reported, anti-Gypsyism during football games in Romania is still tolerated. The Romanian Federation and the Romanian Professional League continue to deny or ignore racism in the stadiums.

We need to take action before this beautiful game becomes an ugly one. In Western Europe, Thierry Henry,

Ferdinand, Van Nistelrooy, Vieira, Eto and Zorro have taken a stand against racist abuse of black players. Many have joined them.

Central and Eastern Europe, together with the Balkans, remain silent when it comes to racism.

Well-known football players have made a difference in the fight against racism. In November 2005, Danish referee Kim Nielsen sent out a player because of his racist abuse of a black player. But this kind of action is not frequent enough.

Racism is ugly. But football is our game, and it is a beautiful game. Pele, Eusebio, Eto, Zorro, and every African and Roma player ever abused by racists deserve a day when everybody shows their respect and understanding for what they have gone through. I wish to see the day when UEFA, FIFA, national federations and football sponsors ask us all to go to the stadiums with our faces blackened in a strong show of support.

Michael Jordan once said that nobody remembers losers, no matter how hard they work. If we do not win the fight against racism, all of us loose. This is a beautiful game, not a racist one.

PS. In Romania we are winning. At the end on 2007 our campaign Racism Breaks the Game Violence Breaks Life named Banel Nicolita a Roma Romanian player as the ambassador against racism and violence in football. The Romanian Football Federation adopted the fight against racism and violence on stadiums as a main priority for 2008.

For more details please see: <http://www.romadecade.org/index.php?content=187>

Valeriu Nicolae is the Executive Director of the European Roma Grassroots Organisations www.ergonetwork.org

Extracts from the speech by Ivana D'Alessandro

**Project Manager of the Dosta! campaign,
at the launching event in the Republic of Serbia**

28 February 2007

Media Centar, Belgrade

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all let me thank you all for the interest you showed in the Dosta! Awareness-raising campaign and therefore in Roma issues.

I should take this opportunity to thank all the Roma that are not here today, the Serbian citizens of Roma origin that you saw in the TV spot we just presented, those Roma who opened the doors of their houses and of their working places to us for lending their image to the purposes of the Dosta! campaign.

The TV spot is one of the campaigning tools of the Dosta! campaign. It is the result of a brainstorming meeting organized in cooperation with the Council of Europe communication Department and some Roma media experts whom contribute to its script. It is based on photos taken during a field visit to Serbia organized in cooperation with the Association of Roma students in Novi Sad and has been produced here in Serbia by a local Production Agency. The music is Dgelem Dgelem, the Roma anthem, kindly authorized by Mr. Saban Bajramovic.

It is one of the tools that we aim to spread with the help of the Media, which I'm very glad to see here today. In fact, this campaign deserves a key role to Media.

Media directly or indirectly contribute to the development of the critical thinking of the population.

They are our main source of information. They also are a source of knowledge. And the knowledge of "the other" is the key for mutual understanding, the key for looking to the "other" simply as neighbour.

(...)

It could still seem a paradox that awareness-raising is needed for reaffirming the rights of a group of people.

Perhaps, with the help of some of the Roma who contributed to this campaign, I could try to give you some other practical examples that justify the need of such a tool.

When the Council of Europe photographer and I came to Serbia in September 2006, we met a young woman who is now a Roma activist. She told us about her childhood. She is the daughter of a Roma man and of a Serbian lady; she lived all her life in a non-Roma neighbourhood, being the only Roma student at school. In that school, she heard many strange and at the same time horrible stories about the Roma; some of her friends ensured that Roma steals babies; she was so horrified that she decided to hide her identity and she started mistrusting her own father, whom she suspected to have a double life. When she was a teenager, she had the chance of meeting with other Roma, and she realized that what she heard in the past were just prejudices.

We also met a pharmacist in his pharmacy shop. His personal story is of course a successful one. However he considers that his personal success is

not so relevant, since the majority of Roma is still suffering and having inadequate living conditions. He said that the successful Roma is the one who had access to the same chances as the others did. He considers that those opportunities should be given to all the Roma, in order they could demonstrate how much they could contribute to the societies in which they live.

We met an entrepreneur who had some difficulties in understanding why we were interested in his story. He simply worked abroad for a few years and then came back to his country, Serbia, to which economy he just wanted to contribute, as any other Serbian citizen would have done, he said.

We met a mechanist who was pointing out that the Roma are losing most of their culture and traditions for integrating European societies. It is a great loss that according to him Roma have to afford. What he regrets, is that these efforts are not always recognized by the majority population, and not always lead to the so desired integration.

However, he continues thinking that despite discrimination the Roma have to fight for their rights to show that they are ready to offer their contribution to the society.

Finally we met a judge. He thinks one of the major changes in modern societies is the separation of powers introduced by the French revolution; but he pointed out that Roma never had access to any of those political powers. According to him, the Roma are condemned for mistakes they didn't make, and that they are enduring the weight of an image that do not correspond to reality.

The common point of these Roma who finished their studies, who found a job, who had access to a proper housing, is their skin. They all told us they were

whiter than their friends and therefore they didn't look so "Roma".

When thinking on Roma, a big collection of stereotypes comes out: Roma gain their life by begging or stealing, they do not like working, they don't want their children to attend schools, they do not want to integrate the societies in which they live, and they prefer living in shanty towns... These negative beliefs are often so strong that they are also reflected in some expressions of our language. But they are as strong as they are wrong.

Let me reassure you and tell you that **this situation is not proper to Serbia.** Roma are the most discriminated group in Europe, including Western Europe. However nobody should be afraid or ashamed of his ethnic origin. It is true that there are Roma living in shanty towns, or begging, and stealing, but many times this is just the result of the poor living condition and the lack of opportunities that impede them being citizens, in the full respect of their rights, duties and aspirations.

That is why we are launching the Dosta! Campaign.

(...)

We always say that we do not want to replace governments but to assist them, as well as that we want the Roma to be part of our work.

We very much count on Roma leaders and Ministries concerned – at all levels – to assist and support the implementation and achievement of this project.

We don't want this project to be exclusively a joint CoE/EC action; we expect the participation of the authorities of the participating states to feel that they own the project and fully commit themselves to its goals. We hope to share with participating governments both the responsibilities for the project as well as its success.

I would like to conclude this presentation by quoting the words of the Director of a Roma newspaper here in Serbia: "My message to the Roma is to be more active in the fight for their rights but also to continue their efforts for integration. To non-Roma I would say to give the Roma the possibility of building together European societies, in order to have a Europe for all. Once this will happen, we will be al proud to call our societies DEMOCRACIES".

Thank you for your attention.

The voice of the Roma - some of our partners speak



Name :

Biser Svetlinov

Profession :

PhD student and Project Manager in Integro Association Bulgaria

Country : Bulgaria

Biser is a PhD student and a Project Manager in Integro Association, Bulgaria. He is 26 years old and he lives between his village and two towns because of his work. He is Bulgarian and he speaks Bulgarian, English, Turkish and Romani. He likes reading and trekking. He is a Roma.

It was not easy for him to find a job in his region, but he believes he succeeded in it thanks to his honesty, sense of responsibility and motivation. What he likes most of his job is the possibility of meeting and communicating with others.

Question: What does it mean for you being Roma?

BS: Being a Roma reminds me first of all my origins but it also means that you are always facing a challenge, a challenge which consist in proving or showing that there is no differences between you and the representatives of the majority population.

Question: How would you explain to a gadgé who Roma are?

BS: The Roma are the people who had the chance to know more different cultures than any other people who live in this planet. We are human beings as any other human being, and we differ from other ethnic groups just because we have different views because of the things that happened around us and the influence of a different education.

Question: Which, according to you, is the best quality of the Roma and which is the worst defect?

BS: The best quality of Roma is their hospitality and the worst defect is the fact that they use to depend on others, and to accept to consider themselves as second hand persons.

Question: What is the most important value in your life, and why?

BS: Surely the respect for the others, starting from the family till the last foreigner you meets. For me the base for starting a relation is to respect the people you meet and to accept them as they are.

Question: What would you like to say to the gadgé who are reading this interview?

BS: I would certainly tell them: don't be afraid to approach Roma, to know them, and to become their friend: they are not so scary!



Name :

Livia Jaroka

Profession :

Politician

Country :

Hungary

"I know the Roma, and I know the prejudices that they have to face, and I know that sometimes these prejudices come out also from the media. If the Media would know better who the Roma are, they would also know that I'm not an exception at all. There has been little information given both by the Roma and by the non-Roma on the real situation of the Roma.

Therefore very rarely media and politic are able to show the reality, which is that Roma have built together with non-Roma their countries. If you ask me which is the difference between a Roma and a non-Roma, I will not be able to reply, because there is not difference, except maybe the physical appearance. What I know is that until people will not stand up for claiming societies which do not discriminate, every policy will be useless”.



Name :

Eva Rizzin

Country :

Italy

Profession :

Doctorate in research on the geopolitics and geostrategy of anti-Gypsyism in Europe. Belongs to the Sinti minority in Italy. Collaborates with Universities, research institutes and NGOs (OsservAzione and Sucar Drom). She is a member of the committee “Rom e Sinti Insieme” (Rom and Sinti together).

The future of us Roma and Sinti can be constructive only if we are fully and actively involved as participants in policies which concern us. We still have a long way to go to eliminate discrimination, since even the best legal standards are ineffective if there is no political will to turn them into concrete initiatives. I am deeply convinced that this battle, as all those for equal opportunities, is in the first place a battle at the level of understanding, as today public opinion is ignorant of our cultures.



Name :

Grigori Raducan

Profession : Romani NGO leader,” International Relations and foreign languages”

Country :

Republic of Moldova

Grigori is 23 years old. He works as a leader for a Romani Non-Governmental Organization called “International Relations and Foreign Languages”. What he likes most of his job is the fact that he works in an international environment, and therefore he is constantly in contact with different cultures. His favourite hobby is reading. He speaks Romani, Moldavian and English. He is Roma.

He moved away from the place he was born and many things changed since then. One of the positive has been that he stopped feeling discriminated and was warmly welcomed by the society that hosted him; he could start a new life there also because people were not aware of his origins. Unfortunately, he also learnt that Roma people are discriminated everywhere.

Discrimination is also part of his worst souvenirs of his childhood, that was despite this full of pleasant moments.

Grigori describes himself as a young Roma: he feels that “being a Roma is more than a nationality; it is my character, my way of thinking, my mentality etc. I love roma unique culture and mentality”.





Name :
Rade Ciric
Profession :
mechanic
Country :
Serbia

"Non-Roma should give the Roma the possibility of changing their own destiny. Roma should open themselves to non-Roma for building together European societies. Once this will happen, we will be able to call our societies "democracies".



"Roma are making enormous efforts for integrating the societies in which they lives. Sometimes this has meant losing their traditions, accepting to be assimilated for surviving. But we need to keep our identity and our most difficult task is now to choose which aspects of our culture to protect and which traditions to abandon for modernity. These efforts should be recognized as the proof of the willing of Roma to be European citizens".



Name :
Zoran Jovanovic
Profession :
Judge at Stara Pazova's Court
Country :
Serbia

Country : Spain

"When I was a child, the main problems Roma were facing in Spain were the access to education, housing, and employment. Now it is clear that the main problem we have to deal with is discrimination. I believe society has tendency to segregate those who are "different" and therefore the Roma. But I also believe that we, the Roma, have made tremendous efforts for adapting ourselves to the lifestyle of the societies in which we live, and therefore we do not consider ourselves as different".



"One of the major changes in modern societies is the separation of powers introduced by the French revolution; however, Roma never had access to any of those political powers. Roma are condemned for mistakes they didn't made, and they are enduring the weight of an image that do not correspond to reality".



Name : Stevan Nikolic
Profession :
Director of a newspaper
Country :
Serbia



The kids, the future of all.
www.dosta.org



CHAPTER V

Useful documents

Council of Europe

Committee of Ministers' Recommendations (binding for all Council of Europe member states)

- ❖ Recommendation (2006)10 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on better access to health care for Roma and Travellers in Europe
- ❖ Recommendation (2005)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on improving the housing conditions of Roma and Travellers in Europe
- ❖ Recommendation (2004)14 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the movement and encampment of Travellers in Europe

- ❖ Recommendation (2001)17 on improving the economic and employment situation of Roma/ Gypsies and Travellers in Europe
- ❖ Recommendation (2000) 4 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the education of Roma/ Gypsy children in Europe
- ❖ Recommendation (1983) 1, on Stateless Nomads and Nomads of Undetermined Nationality
- ❖ Resolution (1975) 13 on the Social Situation of Nomads in Europe

For consultation visit:

http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/romatravellers/documentation/recommendations/default_en.asp

ECRI (European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance)

The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) is the Council of Europe's monitoring body, combating racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance in greater Europe, from the perspective of the protection of human rights. ECRI's action covers all the measures needed to combat violence, discrimination and prejudice against persons or groups of persons on grounds of race, colour, language, religion, nationality or national or ethnic origin.

ECRI was established by the first Summit of Heads of State and Government of the member States of the Council of Europe. The decision is contained in the Vienna Declaration which the Summit adopted on 9 October 1993. The second Summit in Strasbourg on 10-11 October 1997 strengthened ECRI's action and on 13 June 2002 the Committee of Ministers

granted ECRI its own Statute, thereby consolidating its role as an independent human rights monitoring body.

- ❖ CRI(2007)39 ECRI General Policy Recommendation N°11 on combating racism and racial discrimination in policing
- ❖ CRI (2003) 8 ECRI general policy recommendation N°7 on national legislation to combat racism and racial discrimination
- ❖ CRI (2007)6 ECRI General Policy Recommendation N°10 on combating racism and racial discrimination in and through school education
- ❖ CRI (98) 29 rev. ECRI general policy recommendation N° 3: Combating racism and intolerance against Roma/ Gypsies (adopted in March 1998)

For consultation visit:

http://www.coe.int/t/e/human_rights/ecri/4-publications/1default.asp#P720_8178

Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms

(ETS No. 005)

Open for signature by the members of the Council of Europe, in Rome, on 4 November 1950.

Entry into force: 3 September 1953.

(Unofficial Summary)

The "European Convention on Human Rights" sets forth a number of fundamental rights and freedoms (right to life, prohibition of torture, prohibition of slavery and forced labour, right to liberty and security, right to a fair trial, no punishment without law, right to respect for private and family life, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and association, right to marry, right to an effective remedy, prohibition of discrimination). More rights are granted by additional protocols to the Convention (Protocols 1 (ETS No. 009), 4 (ETS No. 046), 6 (ETS No. 114), 7 (ETS No. 117), 12 (ETS No. 177) and 13 (ETS No. 187)).

Parties undertake to secure these rights and freedoms to everyone within their jurisdiction. The Convention also establishes an international enforcement machinery. To ensure the observance of the engagements undertaken by the Parties, the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg has been set up. It deals with individual and inter-State petitions.

Among the rights guaranteed under the Convention there are the right to life, the prohibition of torture, the prohibition of slavery and forced labour, the right to liberty and security, the right to a fair trial, the right to respect for private and family life, the prohibition of discrimination.

For consultation, visit:

<http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/Commun/ListeTraites.asp?MA=3&CM=7&CL=ENG>

The European Social Charter

The European Social Charter (referred to below as "the Charter") sets out rights and freedoms and establishes a supervisory mechanism guaranteeing their respect by the States Parties. Following its revision, the 1996 revised European Social Charter, which came into force in 1999, is gradually replacing the initial 1961 treaty.

The rights guaranteed by the Charter concern all individuals in their daily lives:

HOUSING

- ❖ access to adequate and affordable housing ;
- ❖ reduction of homelessness ; housing policy targeted at all disadvantaged categories ;
- ❖ procedures to limit forced eviction ;
- ❖ equal access for non-nationals to social housing and housing benefits ;
- ❖ housing construction and housing benefits related to family needs.

HEALTH

- ❖ accessible, effective health care facilities for the entire population;
- ❖ policy for preventing illness with, in particular, the guarantee of a healthy environment;
- ❖ elimination of occupational hazards so as to ensure that health and safety at work are provided for by law and guaranteed in practice;
- ❖ protection of maternity;

EDUCATION

- ❖ free primary and secondary education;
- ❖ free and effective vocational guidance services;
- ❖ access to initial training (general and vocational secondary education), university and non-university

- ✦ higher education, vocational training, including continuing training ;
- ✦ special measures for foreign residents;
- ✦ integration of children with disabilities into mainstream schooling ;
- ✦ access to education and vocational training for persons with disabilities.

EMPLOYMENT

- ✦ prohibition of forced labour;
- ✦ prohibition of the employment of children under the age of 15;
- ✦ special working conditions between 15 and 18 years of age;
- ✦ the right to earn one's living in an occupation freely entered upon;
- ✦ an economic and social policy designed to ensure full employment;
- ✦ fair working conditions as regards pay and working hours;
- ✦ protection from sexual and psychological harassment;
- ✦ freedom to form trade unions and employers' organisations to defend economic and social interests; individual freedom to decide whether or not to join them;
- ✦ promotion of joint consultation, collective bargaining, conciliation and voluntary arbitration;
- ✦ protection in case of dismissal;
- ✦ the right to strike;
- ✦ access to work for persons with disabilities.

LEGAL AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

- ✦ legal status of the child ;
- ✦ treatment of young offenders;
- ✦ protection from ill-treatment and abuse ;
- ✦ prohibition of any form of exploitation (sexual or other) ;
- ✦ legal protection of the family (equality of spouses within the couple and

- towards children, protection of children in case the family breaks up);
- ✦ the right to social security, social welfare and social services;
- ✦ the right to be protected against poverty and social exclusion;
- ✦ childcare
- ✦ special measures catering for the elderly.

MOVEMENT OF PERSONS

- ✦ the right to family reunion;
- ✦ the right of nationals to leave the country;
- ✦ procedural safeguards in the event of expulsion;
- ✦ simplification of immigration formalities.

NON-DISCRIMINATION

- ✦ the right of women and men to equal treatment and equal opportunities in employment;
- ✦ a guarantee to all nationals and foreigners legally resident and/or working that all the rights set out in the Charter apply regardless of race, sex, age, colour, language, religion, opinions, national origin, social background, state of health or association with a national minority.
- ✦ prohibition of discrimination on the basis of family responsibilities ;
- ✦ right of persons with disabilities to social integration and participation in the life of the community.

For consultation, visit :

http://www.coe.int/T/E/Human_Rights/Esc/

Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities

The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of 1994 entered into force on 1 February 1998. Thirty-nine States are currently Party to it.

Although not the only instrument to be developed within the Council of Europe relevant to the protection of national minorities, the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities is certainly the most comprehensive document in this area. Indeed, it is the first ever legally binding multilateral instrument devoted to the protection of national minorities in general.

The Framework Convention sets out principles to be respected as well as goals to be achieved by the Contracting Parties, in order to ensure the protection of persons belonging to national minorities, whilst fully respecting the principles of territorial integrity and political independence of States. The principles contained in the Framework Convention have to be implemented through national legislation and appropriate governmental policies. It is also envisaged that these provisions can be implemented through bilateral and multilateral treaties.

The main operative part of the Framework Convention is section II, containing specific principles on a wide range of issues, inter alia :

- ❖ non-discrimination;
- ❖ promotion of effective equality;
- ❖ promotion of the conditions regarding the preservation and development of the culture and preservation of religion, language and traditions;
- ❖ freedoms of assembly, association, expression, thought, conscience and religion;

- ❖ access to and use of media;
- ❖ linguistic freedoms:
- ❖ use of the minority language in private and in public as well as its use before administrative authorities;
- ❖ use of one's own name;
- ❖ display of information of a private nature;
- ❖ topographical names in the minority language;
- ❖ education:
- ❖ learning of and instruction in the minority language;
- ❖ freedom to set up educational institutions;
- ❖ transfrontier contacts;
- ❖ international and transfrontier co-operation;
- ❖ participation in economic, cultural and social life;
- ❖ participation in public life;
- ❖ prohibition of forced assimilation.

For more information visit:

http://www.coe.int/T/E/human_rights/minorities/

European Union

- ❖ European Union Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin and the Treaty on European Union and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union;
- ❖ Guiding Principles for improving the situation of the Roma adopted by the European Union (COCEN Group) at the Tampere Summit in December 1999
- ❖ European Parliament Resolution on the situation of Roma in the European Union, adopted on 28 April 2005,
- ❖ European Parliament Resolution on the situation of Roma women in the European Union, adopted on 1 June 2006;
- ❖ European Parliament resolution of 31 January 2008 on a European strategy on the Roma

For consultation visit :

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/fundamental_rights/roma/index_en.htm



ANNEX I

Dosta! Campaign video-compilation

1. Prize giving ceremony of the Dosta! Congress Prize for Municipalities and launching of the CD "Music Beyond Prejudice" (2m 06s)
2. Message from Mrs. Esma Redzepova (Macedonian, 22s)
3. Interview with Mr. Michael Guet, Head of the Council of Europe Roma and Travellers Division (French, 2m)
4. Interview with Mr. Henry Scicluna, Council of Europe Co-ordinator for Roma issues (Italian, 1m 20s)
5. Interview with Mr. Terry Davis, Secretary General of the Council of Europe (English, 1m 24s)
6. Interview with Mr. Thomas Hammarberg, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights (English, 2m 24s)
7. Interview with Mrs. Livia Jaroka, European Parliament Member (English, 2m 34s)
8. Dosta! Campaign Euronews Pass (English, 2m)
9. Dosta! Campaign Euronews Pass (French, 2m)
10. Jekh Kham Jekh Sel, documentary movie by Balkan Sunflowers for the Dosta! campaign (Romani with English subtitles, 20m)
11. Roma are Europe too, documentary movie by the Forum of European Roma Young People (FERYP) for the Dosta! campaign (various languages with English subtitles, 14m)
12. Press clip on the Regional Festival "Art against stereotypes", Montenegro Television (3m 15s)
13. TV spot realised by the Association of Roma students of Novi Sad, winner of the Dosta! campaign video competition (Serbian with English subtitles, 60s)
14. Dosta! campaign TV spots (all existing versions, 55s and 25s)

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