Third Migration

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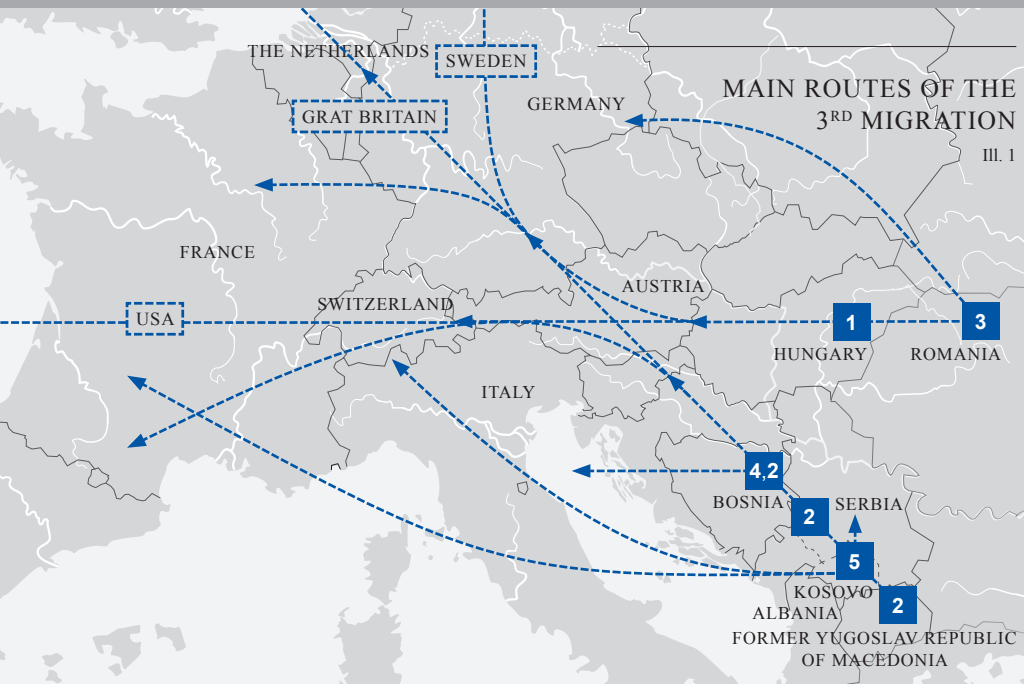
Migration in the Course of Recruiting "Foreign Workers" | Going West – The Fall of the Iron Curtain | Looking for Political Asylum – Migration since the Mid-90s | Fleeing War in Former Yugoslavia | Being a Migrant in a Foreign Country

After the first appearance of Roma in Europe and the wave of emigration after slavery was abolished in Romania ("Second Migration", around 1850), the last migratory movement of Roma from Eastern to Western Europe took place in the second half of the 20th century. This "third migration" has to be considered in connection with external factors: war, political changes and the resulting economic crises made many people leave their country of origin; in the Roma's case, massive racism and discrimination in all areas of everyday life have to be added.



MAIN ROUTES OF THE 3RD MIGRATION

Ill. 1

1 REFUGEES FROM HUNGARY IN 1956

During the Hungarian Uprising in 1956, 150.000 people fled Hungary, among them many Roma, particularly Lovara families, who were received mainly in Austria.

2 FOREIGN WORKERS, 1960s AND 1970s

Yugoslavian Roma, mostly from the poorer regions of Serbia, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina emigrated to Western Europe, the strongest migration taking place in Italy, Austria, Germany, France, and the Netherlands.

3 REFUGEES FROM ROMANIA, 1990-1995

4 ASYLUM-SEEKERS FROM BOSNIA-HERCEGOVINA, 1991-1995

Ten thousand Roma fled the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina from 1991 to 1995, and demanded political asylum in Austria, Italy, Sweden, Great Britain, Germany and Switzerland.

5 REFUGEES FROM KOSOVO*, 1998-1999

* All reference to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo

INTRODUCTION

Up to this day, the picture of the "Gypsy" has been determined by the romantic transfigured idea of a "free", "vagabond" way of life. The Roma are often seen as a very "mobile", "lightly migrating" population. But in fact, the overwhelming majority of Roma today are sedentary. Thus, migratory movements of Roma in the second half of the 20th century can mostly be put down to external factors, such as war, political and economic instability, racism, discrimination or systematic violation of human rights. In this way, the migrating Roma are, like all other migrants (or refugees), people who left their home country in order to achieve a better standard of living in the medium or long term, or who need immediate protection or asylum. [Ills. 2, 3]

Statements about the Roma's numbers are based on estimations in the whole of Europe, because many do not register themselves as Roma in the censi. Moreover, it is nationality, and not ethnic affiliation of migrants that is being registered in the target countries; hence the number of Roma migrants and refugees in Western Europe can only be estimated. Some estimates count 200,000 to 280,000 Roma migrating from East to West, settling primarily in the neighbouring countries of the former Eastern Block, such as Germany, Austria, and Italy. Compared to the general trend of the East-West migration, the Roma's share is quite low.

In some Western European countries the Roma who immigrated over the last decades make up a considerable part of the overall Roma population. For instance, estimations say that about 80% of the Swedish Roma are Roma from former Yugoslavia, Finland, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary.

NUMBER OF ROMA, BY COUNTRY

Country	Total Population	Official Number	Estimate	Country	Total Population	Official Number	Estimate
Albania	3,549,841	1,261	90,000–100,000	Luxembourg	442,972	N/A	100–150
Austria	8,150,835	95	20,000–25,000	Macedonia	2,046,209	43,900	220,000–260,000
Belarus	10,350,194	11,283	10,000–15,000	Moldavia	4,431,570	11,600	20,000–25,000
Belgium	10,258,762	N/A	10,000–15,000	Netherlands	16,171,520	20,000	35,000–40,000
Bosnia-Herzegovina	3,922,205	9,092	40,000–50,000	Norway	4,525,000	356	500–1,000
Bulgaria	7,928,901	370,908*	700,000–800,000	Poland	38,633,912	25,000–30,000	50,000–60,000
Croatia	4,334,142	6,695**	30,000–40,000	Portugal	10,084,245	44,600	45,000–50,000
Cyprus	762,887	N/A	500–1,000	Romania	21,698,181	535,250	1,800,000–2,500,000
Czech Republic	10,264,212	11,716*	250,000–300,000	Russia	145,470,197	152,939	400,000
Denmark	5,352,815	N/A	1,500–2,000	Serbia and Montenegro	10,677,290	143,519**	400,000–450,000
Estonia	1,423,316	N/A	1000–1,500	Slovakia	5,379,455	89,920	480,000–520,000
Finland	5,194,901	10,000	7,000–10,000	Slovenia	1,930,132	2,293	8,000–10,000
France	59,551,227	N/A	280,000–340,000	Spain	40,037,995	325,000-450,000	700,000–800,000
Germany	83,029,536	50,000-70,000	10,000–130,000	Sweden	8,875,053	20,000	15,000–20,000
Greece	10,623,835	150,000-300,000	160,000–200,000	Switzerland	7,283,274	N/A	30,000–35,000
Hungary	10,174,853	190,046	550,000–600,000	Turkey	66,493,970	N/A	300,000–500,000
Ireland	3,840,838	10,891	22,000–28,000	Ukraine	48,760,474	47,914	50,000–60,000
Italy	57,679,825	130,000	90,000–110,000	United Kingdom	59,778,002	90,000	90,000–120,000
Latvia	2,385,231	7,955	2,000–3,500				
Lithuania	3,610,535	N/A	3,000–4,000	Total	795,101,136	2,281,577–2,581,577	6,105,600–8,625,150

Ill. 2
Number of Roma, by country.

Sources: The national statistical bureaus of the countries included that were consulted are: CIA World Factbook (Washington, D.C.); the European Union "Regular Reports of the Candidate Countries for Membership in the European Union"; government reports provided to the UN Comittee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination; government reports provided to the Council of Europe's Committee on the Framework Convention; "N/A" indicate that official data is not available. Some countries have provided official estimates (see for example Finland, Germany, Greece, Italy, Moldova, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom). The source of the column "Estimate" are NGO estimates provided in Liègeois and Gheorghe (1995).
** Census 2001 ** Census 1991*

(from Roma Rights 1/2004, p. 9f)

MIGRATION IN THE COURSE OF RECRUITING "FOREIGN WORKERS"

At the beginning of the 1960s, some Western European countries started to cover their need for – mainly manual – workers by recruiting foreign workers. For example, Austria opened an official recruitment office in Istanbul in 1964. As a consequence, about one hundred thousand people willing to work, mainly as unskilled workers, were brought to Western Europe. [Ill. 4]

These so-called "foreign workers", who have generally been called "Gastarbeiter" (immigrant workers, literally "guest workers") in German usage since 1968, had been recruited mainly from Spain, Greece, Turkey and Yugoslavia. A considerable part of them were Roma. Most of them came from former Yugoslavia, which, unlike the rest of the Communist Block, offered a liberal travelling policy. From 1965 onwards, the Yugoslavian authorities officially permitted and controlled work migration, a few years later it was already possible to travel to Western Europe with a simple tourist visa. Yugoslavian Roma, mostly from the poorer regions of Serbia, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina emigrated to Western Europe, the strongest migration taking place in Italy, Austria, Germany, France, and the Netherlands. Many of them were employed in factories or in the building trade, others worked as seasonal workers. The vast majority already had a permanent employment on their arrival, others tried their luck. Commuting to the country of origin was common, and many Roma used the money they had earned for houses in their home country. Even though at first this migration was intended for a limited time only, the link to the host country became stronger over the years, and finally the centre of life was moved to the new home country. [Ill. 5]

THE ABRACADABRA OF ROMANI STATISTICS

It is widely accepted that reliable demographic and social statistics on the Roma are nonexistent. [...] The reason for this can be traced to the Roma and government authorities, both of whom have found it undesirable to collect Roma-related statistics. Roma have little reason to trust "Gadže" (non-Roma) with notebooks and questionnaires visiting their ghettos. Authorities and the media have been ambivalent at best [...] At present, Roma-related statistics are trapped in a set of legal and policy problems, including data protection laws, constitutional rights to choose freely one's ethnic identity, and the needs for ethnically coded disaggregated data for anti-discrimination agendas. It should be noted that Roma in some countries are reluctant to reveal their identity. Of the countries with large Romani populations, Bulgaria is an example of a country in which the gap between census data and estimates is relatively small: estimates are only about double census data. [...] In contrast, the Czech Roma present a real statistical puzzle. While both government and independent sources estimate that approximately a quarter of a million Roma live in the country, the most recent (2001) census gave the number as 11,716 [...].

Ill. 3 (from Roma Rights 1/2004, p. 8ff.)

Ill. 4
Arrival of immigrant workers in Vienna, April 1964.
(from Gürses et al. 2004, p. 92)

Dragan, who was taught the traditional kettle making by his father, never thought of staying in Vienna: "In 1970 when the first child was born, Dragan and Mirza went to Austria to earn more money, their daughter stayed with her grandparents in Serbia. The second child, born in 1971, did not have enough space in the small worker home in Vienna, either. The couple wanted to stay in Austria only for a short time, but the opportunity for earning money was so tempting that Dragan and Mirza are still (...) living in Austria (...). In the meantime, they had built a house in Serbia, which is not used anymore. Dragan's father died, and his mother and children moved to Vienna. Both children are married and have children of their own."

Ill. 5 (translated from Heinschink / Hemetek 1994, p. 181f.)

GOING WEST – THE FALL OF THE IRON CURTAIN

The initial euphoria at the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989 was soon gone. Contrary to the desired approach of East and West, disapproval grew, on the part of the West, of the influx of the commonly so-called "economic refugees". Politically, this attitude found expression in many Western European countries in a step-by-step intensification of immigration and asylum laws.

Many people from the former Communist Block put great hopes on a stable and safe future in the West. The political turning point had caused economic changes which had left, particularly, the workers in the unprofitable large state combines unemployed. The Roma were among the biggest losers in this transition phase. They had often been employed as unskilled workers, hence with their dismissal they had also lost all hopes for future work. Up to this day, they are affected by an extremely high, up to 80-90% rate of unemployment in some regions of Central and Eastern Europe.

The political change in the former Communist Block also led to an increased resentment and to racially motivated attacks against Roma. The anger at the economic difficulties was exploited by some media and politicians for whom the "Gypsies" were easy targets. For instance, the Czech newspaper "Express" warned in an article that appeared on July 2, 1990, that the "Gypsy" 's fertility could cause a "catastrophe", leading to the result "that within a century the country may well have to be renamed the 'Romská republika'". [Ill. 8]

While in former Czechoslovakia acts of violence against the Roma were committed mainly by skinheads, in Romania, Roma were targets of pogrom-like acts of violence. On June 12, 1990, Roma were the victims of rampaging mine workers that had been called into the capital by President Iliescu in order to end the protest against the old political guard. A part of the mob went

Ill. 6
A Romani house in Plăieşii de Sus shortly after the outbreak of violence of June 1991.
(from Haller 1998, p. 38)

"In Plăieşii de Sus, Harghita County, a town with 3,200 inhabitants, 200 of whom are Roma, villagers burned 28 houses and killed a Romani man on June 9, 1991. The sequence of events began on June 6, 1991, when four Romani men beat Ignác Daró, a night guard, because he interfered as they beat their horse. Shortly after the incident, the crowd beat two innocent old Romani men out of revenge. One of them, Mr Ádám Kalányos, later died of the injuries he had sustained. In the meantime the police arrested the four Romani men. Two days later a warning sign appeared on the outskirts of the settlement where the houses of the Roma families stood, informing the inhabitants that on June 9, Sunday evening, their houses would be set on fire. The Roma informed both the police and the village municipality, but in vain. Nobody intervened. On Sunday in the afternoon they fled to the stable of the local co-operative farm. An organised group of villagers then cut the electrical wires leading to the Romani settlement (to avoid a short circuit that would leave the whole village without electricity), knocked down the telephone pole connecting the village with the neighbouring village of Miercurea Ciuc and then set all of the 28 Romani houses on fire. Other pogroms followed in Vălenii Lăpuşului, Maramureş County, on August 13, 1991, where villagers burned eighteen houses, and in Cărpiniş, Timiş County, on March 17, 1993, where five houses were destroyed. By this time, however, the mass-media had already lost interest in the theme."
Ill. 7 (from Haller 1998, p. 37)

"SOCIALLY INADEQUATE POPULATION"

The Slovak Premier Vladimir Meciar's speech on September 4, 1993 in Spiš, lead to an uproar in the international media when he said it "was necessary to curtail the 'extended reproduction of the socially unadaptable and mentally backward population' by decreasing family allowances". According to the later released official translation Meciar's speech read: "They [the "Gypsies"] should be perceived as a problem group that is growing in size ... this means that if we do not deal with them now, they will deal with us later ... another thing we have to consider is extended reproduction of socially inadequate population."
Ill. 8
(abbreviated from Crowe 1995, p. 66)

As one Roma intellectual expressed the trigger for migration: "The risks involved in being a Gypsy in Romania in 1990 persuaded all those offered the opportunity to take refuge abroad; perhaps it is no better there, but at least you can nourish the hope that it is up to you alone that you maintain your dignity."
Ill. 9 (from Crowe 1995, p. 147)

into the quarters inhabited by Roma, beat up the inhabitants and destroyed their property. Similar things happened from then on in several towns all over Romania, where ethnic Hungarians and Romanians attacked their Roma neighbours with open violence. In the period between 1990 and 1995 alone, 30 such acts of violence were registered, which in some cases even caused deaths. [Ills. 6, 7]

The combination of violence, discrimination and racism, the bad economic and social situation, sheer poverty and mistrust of public institutions made many Eastern European Roma fear for their existence, thus causing them to emigrate. [Ill. 9]

Fleeing Romanian Roma made up a considerable part of the East-West migration in the recent past (since 1990). Some estimates count up to 70,000 Roma refugees up to the year 1992 in Germany alone. Germany – like other target countries – was, among other reasons, attractive for those willing to emigrate because they already had existing connections – family or friends – there. In addition, a general emigration from Romania to Germany had started in the course of specific return policies for German settlers in Transylvania and the Banat (in 1990 alone, about 80,000 Saxons and Swabians left Romania). Another popular target country was France. Both countries had a small number of Romanian Roma immigrants already in the 1980s, who had applied for asylum but whose status continued to be unclear. At the beginning of the 1990s, the arrival of several hundred Roma in French cities like Rubaix, Toulouse or Nanterre is documented, but in many cases they have been expelled again.

Ill. 10
Frontpage of the German news magazine "Der Spiegel" on September 3, 1990. It reads: "Asyl in Deutschland? Die Zigeuner" ("Asylum in Germany? The Gypsies").
(from Der Spiegel 36/1990)

HUNGARIAN UPRISING AND PRAGUE SPRING

During the Hungarian Uprising in 1956, 150,000 people fled Hungary. Among them, many Roma, particularly Lovara families, who were received mainly in Austria. Also, the arrival of Russian tanks in former Czechoslovakia in 1968 (Prague Spring) caused a wave of emigration in the course of which several hundred Roma emigrated, partly through Austria, to Sweden.
Ill. 12

SUDDENLY FOREIGNERS OR STATELESS PERSONS

After the splitting of Czechoslovakia in 1992, the Czech Republic enacted a new citizenship law, which turned the vast majority of the Roma population living in Czechia into foreigners or stateless persons over night. According to the new law, everybody who had not had the Czech citizenship before 1945 had to apply for it. In Slovakia, in contrast, all citizens with Czechoslovakian citizenship could opt for Slovakia. Almost 95 % of the Czech Roma population came from Slovakia, and many of them, just like their children born in Czechia, could not fulfill the criteria for Czech citizenship and were turned into foreigners or stateless persons in their own country.
Ill. 13

The journal "Der Spiegel" reports the German population's aggressions in the face of the "wave of Gypsy immigration": "... already panic rises in some cities like the Saarland Lebach. In order to protect the population against 1,400 Gypsies who live in this asylum-seeker town with a population of only 22,000, the mayor had the town house and public pool barricaded. In Bottrop, the local population tried to prevent a Gypsy tent settlement through a sit-in. In Herford, the cautious citizens announced that they would build a "militia" against the Gypsies. And in Essen, for the time being the culminating point of degenerated citizen anger, the neighbours of a home for people seeking asylum even signed on gangs of thugs according to the police. Allegedly, they wanted to pay 5,000 German Marks to the radical right-wing skinheads for attacks against the unwanted neighbours ..."
Ill. 11 (translated from Der Spiegel 36/1990, p. 35)

The rising number of Romanian Roma in Western Europe as well as the general East-West migration had a strong impact on the increasing walling off of borders. The latter process showed itself mainly in the introduction of visa regimes and of more and more rigorous immigration and asylum regulations. Some countries signed bilateral treaties for taking back emigrants, which were more or less openly directed against "poverty refugees" and resulted in the expulsion of many Roma. In November 1992, the bilateral expulsion treaty between Germany and Romania came into force, and provided for the expulsion of Roma after a negative asylum decision. This example was followed by France in 1994.

In Austria, visas for Romanian tourists had already been introduced in 1990. Also transit countries like Poland, former Czechoslovakia, and Hungary made entry more difficult. In addition, they signed referral treaties with target countries, for instance, the Czech Republic with Germany, in 1994. Many immigrants were expelled "back" to their country of origin or over the borders of the transit country.

In Western Europe, the immigration of Eastern European Roma attracted great attention on the part of the media and politics. The myth of the itinerant, vagabonding "Gypsy" without state was deemed well-suited for the "intensification of the debate on migration". Some German media talked about the country being "flooded" by Eastern European "Gypsies", who were generally cast off as "economic refugees" and "poverty asylum seekers". [Ills. 10, 11]

At the beginning of the 1990s, radical right-wing youths committed

Ill. 14
In Czech Usti Nad Labem the major had a 65 m long and 1.8 m high wall erected between the houses of Roma and non-Roma in October, 1999; the picture shows the dismantling of the wall in the same month, because of international protest.
(Romano Centro 27/1999)

INFANT AND CHILD MORTALITY RATES IN ROMANIA

(infant and child mortality rates death by 1000 live births)

ETHNIC GROUP	INFANT MORTALITY (0 to 1 year)	CHILD MORTALITY (1 to 4 year)	TOTAL INFANT AND CHILD MORTALITY (0 to 4 year)
Romanian	**27.1**	**1.1**	**28.2**
Hungarian	**19.8**	**0**	**19.8**
Roma	**72.8**	**7.2**	**80.0**

Ill. 15

POVERTY AND ETHNICITY

(the case of Bulgaria and Romania, 1997)

ETHNIC GROUP	SHARE *of the respective ethnic group in total population (percent)*	POVERTY RATE *(percent of the respective ethnic group belwo poverty line)*	POVERTY DEPTH *(average sortfall below poverty line)*
Bulgarians	**83.6**	**31.7**	**8.5**
Bulgarian Turks	**8.5**	**40**	**12.8**
Roma	**6.5**	**84.3**	**46.6**
Other	**1.4**	**46.9**	**15**
Bulgarian total	**100**	**36**	**11.4**
Romanians	**89.8**	**29.7**	**7.3**
Hungarians	**6.8**	**28.4**	**6.7**
Roma	**2.3**	**78.8**	**33.2**
Other	**1.1**	**32.6**	**8.0**
Romania total	**100**	**30.8**	**7.9**

Ill. 16

attacks against the asylum seekers in many German cities. In Rostock, Hagen, Lebach, Bottrop, Herford, Essen, Leipzig and other places acts of violence were committed, sometimes even pillage. The Roma were among those concerned, too.

Not only Romanian Roma fled to Western Europe. In the whole Central and Eastern European area a migratory movement of Roma started after the opening of the East. Roma from Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary or Poland put their hopes on a new beginning in the West. For many, however, the journey ended in a reception camp, sometimes not even in the target country but in transit countries like Poland, Hungary or former Czechoslovakia. [Ill. 13]

LOOKING FOR POLITICAL ASYLUM – MIGRATION SINCE THE MID-90S

In the wake of intensified border control, increasingly rigorous immigration regulations and a tightening net of expulsion treaties between target countries and the countries of origin, the first strong wave of immigration from Eastern Europe died away. Still in the mid-1990s, the appearance of smaller groups of Roma from Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Poland, Romania, or Slovakia attracted great attention from the media and politics in countries like Belgium, Finland, France, Canada, Norway, Switzerland, and Great Britain.

In fact this attention was caused by relatively small groups, not more than several hundred people a year. The agitation about these immigrants can be traced to the deeply-rooted prejudices against "Gypsies", and to the obvious presence of these refugees who did not – contrary to other Roma – travel alone, but at least in smaller family groups.

The reasons for this flight were, in many cases, acts of violence by skinheads, lacking security in the face of right-wing attacks, discrimination, harassment by local authorities and the police, poverty, unemployment and lacking adequate possibilities for education. [Ills. 14-16]

Only rarely was asylum granted according to the Geneva Convention, because the severe violation of human rights, discrimination and racism were not considered as open political persecution. Quite the reverse: the countries of origin were considered as "safe third countries". Additionally, it was claimed that even in the case of massive discrimination there were no cases of persecution by the state. [Ill. 19]

Most target countries reacted to this immigration by introducing visa obligations. In 2001, Great Britain stationed some border guards at the Prague airport, in order to prevent refugees-to-be from emigrating. On the other hand, the fact that France granted political asylum to Hungarian Roma refugees in 2001 caused ill-feeling among the Hungarians, as it cast a bad light on Hungarian minority policies.

FILED AS "OTHERS"

In the 1991 census in Bosnia-Herzegovina, only the four big national groups – Bosnians, Serbs, Croatians and Yugoslavs – were registered in detail. The Roma were subsumed under "Ostali" (others) and numbered 8,900. It is estimated, however, that there were about 40,000 to 60,000 Roma in Bosnia-Herzegovina before the war. Incidentally, the figure of the census was also taken over by international organisations, which led to the fact that there was almost no attention paid to the Roma's fate or their possibilities of return.

Ill. 17 (see European Commission against Racism and Intolerance 2004, Report on Bosnia and Herzegovina, p. 26f.)

"THE WORST IS BEING SCATTERED"

"In a basket, I sometimes took the children with me to the fields, where I dug and worked. And now we have lost everything. We have to ask and plea for it. And now we even have to go to a third country, to save our lives and our children. Did it have to come to that? It is so hard for me that my children went to America. The worst is not being able to be together. My children, my daughters-in-law, my grandchildren are gone. Wherever I go, I cry and cry. When will they return, perhaps never, perhaps I will never see my children again. When I have to apply for emigration, and they tell me that I cannot go, I will tell them: Rather kill me than tell me I cannot go ..."
Mrs. Mehic, 55, from Bjeljina, Bosnia-Herzegovina, refugee in Berlin.

Ill. 18 (translated from Mihok 2001, p. 133)

Ill. 15
Children born in Romania between July 1994 and June 1999. (from United Nations Development Program (1999) Reproductive Health Survey: Romania, draft)
Ill. 16
Poverty and ethnicity, the case of Bulgaria and Romania, 1997. (based on the same source as Ill. 15 above)

In 1997, a TV program about the successful emigration of a Roma family to Canada caused the emigration of Czech Roma who wanted to follow this example. Some Czech mayors saw this as an opportunity to get rid of their Roma population, and gave free one-way tickets to the Roma willing to emigrate.
Ill. 19

FLEEING WAR IN FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

Estimations say that up to the mid-1990s, up to half a million people fled the chaos of war in former Yugoslavia. Even though the number of Roma among the refugees is not known, it is highly probable that there were many Roma among them. Ten thousand Roma fled the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina from 1991 to 1995, and demanded political asylum in Austria, Italy, Sweden, Great Britain, Germany and Switzerland. [Ill. 17]

Many fled because they were afraid to get between the two war-waging ethnic groups, or because they lived in the areas that were fought over. The Roma were rejected by both sides. Additionally, some of the Bosnian Roma were Muslims, and thus threatened once more. For example, the relatively big Roma settlement in Bijeljina (Bosnia-Herzegovina) – counting almost 8,000 inhabitants – was expelled almost completely. In many cases, the whole community fled together. Single families went to a country where they already had family or friends. In Germany, they were "tolerated", and their judicial status limited to an uncertain period of time.

Up to now, the return of minorities to Bosnia-Herzegovina is difficult if not impossible because of unsolved distribution of property and law guarantees. Still, in Germany measures were taken at the end of the 90s to make the people return of their own free will. Refugees were expelled to Bosnia also without their consent, to a country which was organised according to ethnics after the war and where the Roma did not have a place. [Ill. 18]

The Kosovo-conflict triggered another wave of emigration. After the conflict intensified in the summer of 1998, hundreds of thousands of Kosovo-Albanians and Roma were expelled. The return of the Albanians in June 1999 caused another flight on the part of the Roma. After the invasion of NATO troops, big parts of the Albanian population and Albanian extremists turned against the Roma, Egyptians and Ashkalije, even if they had fled together with the Albanians. This "ethnic cleansing" happened before the international community's very eyes. Up to 14,000 of 19,000 Roma homes and 75 settlements in Kosovo were completely destroyed. Up to 80% of the estimated 150,000 Roma, "Egyptians" and "Ashkalije" from Kosovo had to flee. The majority fled to neighbouring countries and regions of former Yugoslavia, mainly to Serbia and Montenegro, and former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, others to Western Europe or the USA. While they were usually placed in reception camps in the third countries, they were but "internal displaced persons" in Serbia and Kosovo.

Up to this day, for many refugees, returning is impossible due to the still life-threatening situation. A symbol of the devastating effect the conflict had on the formerly existing Roma community in Kosovo is the Roma-"Mahalla" (district mainly inhabited by Roma) in Mitrovica (with a pre-war population of about 8,000), of which not a single house has been reconstructed.

"TE PUČLAN MAN, SO SIUM ME ..." –
"IF YOU ASK ME, WHAT I AM ..."

"Te pučlan man, so sium me vi sar dikav man, ka vakerav sar Rom": "If you ask me, what I am and what I feel, then I am a Rom. Sometimes I would like to have a native country, because I do not belong anywhere. When we have the big Roma meetings they say: You are a German. That is true. I do not know what to do with tradition. I am a modern man. But in my veins is Roma blood. I am proud to be a Rom."

Demir R., born 1981, was 13 months old, when his family left Kosovo and came to Freiburg, Germany.
Ill. 20 (translated from Birgin / Wieczorek 2005, p. 36)

BEING A MIGRANT IN A FOREIGN COUNTRY

In the host countries, most of the migrants have to face a whole new beginning. They have to adjust to completely new surroundings, language and culture. The residence permits of Roma immigrants in Western Europe vary. Many Roma who had arrived in the 1960s as "foreign workers" already have a permanent residence permit or nationality, their children have already been born in the new home country. Others opt for work permits and permanent stay, keeping their original nationality and a strong relationship with their country of origin. Their children grow up within two cultures. While the cultural traditions are upheld in the family circle, where Romani and the language of the country of origin is spoken, they are being socialised in the language and culture of their new home in school. The clash of different cultural values, the looser contacts with the family caused by migration and crumbling family structures lead to a disintegration of old traditions. The same applies for the Romani language, which – spoken only within the family circle and not supported by external educational measures – is subject to extreme pressure of assimilation. [Ill. 20]

The situation is even worse for those who do not have a permanent residence permit, as for those who demanded political asylum at the beginning of the 1990s. Increasingly rigorous asylum regulations and temporary or limited residence permits cause insecurity and the fear of being expelled into the country of origin. This mainly concerns Roma refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia or Kosovo. Put into refugee camps and other temporary accommodations, they only have limited – if at all – possibilities to work and start a new life.

The Eastern European Roma who demanded asylum since the mid-90s in the course of smaller migratory movements were rarely granted asylum or any other legal status. Most often, they had to leave the country again.

The increasing international awareness of the "Roma question" put pressure on many Eastern, but also Western, European countries to question their minority policies. Among others, this led to increasing recognition of Roma as an ethnic minority, providing minority rights including promotional measures mainly in the area of education, language, and culture. Minority support and the resulting rights are, however, granted mainly to old-established Roma groups, even if newly-immigrated groups were already granted citizenship.

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