

# Documentation

**Romanistan.**

Crossing Spaces in Europe.

**Conference.**

25 & 26 November 2011, Vienna.



## Imprint

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Editor: Patrick Kwaśniewski  
Translation: Erika Doucette & Sam Osborn  
Layout/Graphic/Photos: Patrick Kwaśniewski

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Gumpendorfer Straße 63b  
A-1060 Vienna (Austria)  
office@igkultur.at

igkultur.at



# Culture

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication [communication] reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

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Amaro Drom e.V.



Federació d'Associacions  
Gitanes de Catalunya

romakult  
Roma Kulturzentrum Wien



**IG Kultur Österreich**

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**Patrick Kwaśniewski**

Patrick Kwaśniewski is responsible for the project communication for "Romanistan. Crossing Spaces in Europe."

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Further information:  
[romanistan.net](http://romanistan.net)



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Videos of the conference contributions:  
[youtube.com/RomanistanEU](https://youtube.com/RomanistanEU)



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YouTube channel "Mapping in Vienna":  
[youtube.com/Romakult1](https://youtube.com/Romakult1)



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Photographs from the conference are on the Facebook page:  
[facebook.com/Romanistan.CrossingSpacesInEurope/photos](https://facebook.com/Romanistan.CrossingSpacesInEurope/photos)

Patrick Kwaśniewski

# Introduction



**Romanistan.**  
Crossing Spaces in Europe.  
**Conference.**  
25th & 26th of November, Vienna.

The two-day conference took place in Vienna, within the framework of the EU Cultural Project “Romanistan. Crossing Spaces in Europe.”

The talks were held in German, English, Serbian, Slovenian and Spanish, with simultaneous translation into German or English. On Friday, 25 November, theoretical and political as well as historico-political aspects of dominance/power structures and self-empowerment were discussed at the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Art and Culture. On Saturday, 26 November, the praxis of self-empowerment was examined, particularly two aspects: “empowerment through networking(s)” and strategies of influencing how Roma are portrayed in the media.

In addition to this print edition, the conference was also documented in images, sound and video. The articles collected here are the talks held by the authors themselves or summarized versions.





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**Conference languages**

The talks were held in German, English and Spanish. Simultaneous translation was available in German and English.

# Moderation



## **Elisabeth Mayerhofer**

Elisabeth Mayerhofer moderated the first day of the conference. She is a cultural studies scholar and cultural manager. She is the managing director of IG Kultur Österreich and lives in Vienna.

[igkultur.at](http://igkultur.at)



## **Gilda Horvath**

Gilda Horvath moderated the second day of the conference. She is a freelance journalist and author. She is an editor at ORF (Austrian Federal Broadcasting Company) for “Radio Kaktus.”

[facebook.com/horvathgilda](https://facebook.com/horvathgilda)





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**Gabriele Gerbasits**

Gabriele Gerbasits is the business manager and EU project coordinator for IG Kultur Österreich. She is the IGKÖ representative on the board of the ENCC.

[igkultur.at](http://igkultur.at)

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**IG Kultur Österreich**

The IG Kultur Österreich is located in Vienna/Austria and represents the cultural-political interests of independent cultural organizations in Austria, in addition to providing information and services for these groups. IG Kultur Österreich's main goal is improving the working conditions for emancipatory cultural work.

**IG Kultur Österreich**

Gumpendorfer Straße 63b  
A-1060 Vienna (Austria)

Tel: +43 (1) 503 71 20  
Fax: +43 (1) 503 71 20 - 15  
Mobile: +43 (650) 503 71 20  
[office@igkultur.at](mailto:office@igkultur.at)  
[igkultur.at](http://igkultur.at)

Gabriele Gerbasits: Presentation of the Project

# „Romanistan. Crossing Spaces in Europe.“



Romanistan is an EU Cultural Project, coordinated by IG Kultur Österreich, and organized together with the Roma Kulturzentrum in Vienna, Fagic in Barcelona and Amaro Drom in Berlin.

Romanistan is a movement within the “House of Europe,” an emancipatory project to encourage self-organization, networking and creating long-term sustainable structures and strategies. It puts Roma cultural work, in all its heterogeneity and diversity, on the European map. Central issues are self-empowerment, self-organization, networking and cooperation, media and the public. The conference “Romanistan. Crossing Spaces in Europe” on 25 and 26 November 2011 in Vienna kicked off the project.

The conference was the public start of the project. On Friday, 25 November, at the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Art and Culture at Concordiaplatz in Vienna, structures of dominance and power, self-empowerment and antiziganism were discussed. The discussions on Saturday, 26 November revolved around networking and media representations of Roma, with a special focus on media appropriation.





# Partner Organizations



**Amaro Drom e.V.**

## **Amaro Drom, Berlin**

Amaro Drom vigorously researches Roma cultural work in Berlin. Key questions of concern

for them are: What is the content and form of the relation between cultural identity and cultural production? What possibilities does cultural work provide, particularly in terms of outreach and in cultural education? Which visions of self-representation, and of self-perception and perception by others already exist or are currently being developed within Roma communities?

Amaro Drom put on **ARTISTS THINK TANKS/WORKSHOPS** in December 2011. The symposium in Berlin represented the basis for the participation of Roma communities and for key discussions regarding the workshops that followed, where the participating artists presented their proposals for contributions for 2012 that tie into this EU project's theoretical basis.

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**Amaro Drom**  
Flughafenstr. 21  
12053 Berlin (Germany)

Tel: +49 30 43205373  
info@amarodrom.de  
amarodrom.de





Federació d'Associacions  
Gitanes de Catalunya

## **Fagic, Barcelona**

FAGIC Barcelona is the association of Roma organizations in Catalonia.

They support Roma rights and culture in the region and

maintain close relationships with public and private institutions. Among other things, they encourage self-organization of Roma associations, specifically through providing information and support and improving infrastructures.

FAGIC will be organizing the Saturday Festival “Viva la Cultura Roma!” at the city park (Parque de la Ciutadella) in Barcelona in June 2012. Several different activities will present a broad spectrum of Roma art and culture. This not only increases the visibility of the artists, but also of the organizations involved, and encourages the participants to build a network together.

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**Federació d'Associacions Gitanes de Catalunya**  
C/ Concilio de Trento, 313 - despatx 9.9  
08020 Barcelona (Spain)

Tel: +34 933 05 10 71  
Fax: +34 933 05 42 05  
info@fagic.org  
fagic.org





## **Roma Kulturzentrum Wien (Roma Cultural Center Vienna)**

The Roma Kulturzentrum  
Wien is one of several Roma

organizations in Vienna. There are organizations of Roma migrants that connect communities from the same country of origin, and there are organizations of autochthonous, Austrian Roma.

Roma Kulturzentrum Wien will offer workshops on antiracist cultural work to Roma organizations in Vienna. In addition, together with the “Aktionstheater Ensemble” (Action Theater Ensemble), they will develop a photo exhibition for billboards with the working title “Zukunftsmaschine” (Future Machine). The exhibition will consist of photomontages of Roma and migrants in their everyday work lives, of a future that has not yet become reality, and the imagined desires.

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### **Roma Kulturzentrum Wien**

Rotenhofgasse 80-84/2/3  
1100 Vienna (Austria)

Tel: +43 699 18130674  
info@romakult.org  
romakult.org



Impressions:

# „Oskar“, Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Art and Culture







Daniel Strauß

# Roma in Europe



I am a European. I belong to the second-largest group: men. To those who are a little overweight. My wife, as an expert on the topic, would add that I also belong to the group of handsome bald men. According to my citizenship, I belong to Germany, the country with the greatest

economic power in Europe. I also nominally belong to the large group of Christianity, people who wear glasses, and to the group Sinti and Roma. Right away, I would like to say something about differences and commonalities, because in Europe, the last group is trivialized, for the most part, to the disadvantage of the minority.

To begin with, the self-definition Roma means “person,” which brings up the question if all non-Roma were not people. Here, on the one hand, Roma is an umbrella term for all sub-groups of the minority, and on the other hand, Sinti was originally the name of a province in northwestern India, Pakistan today. There is a group of Roma who are a national minority and a group with a migration background. Religion is not a determining factor for the Roma community - there are Christian and Muslim Roma, which is an element of cultural difference within the ethnic group. This has an effect on clothing, food, etc. The language is extremely diverse, on the one hand there is the native language of each person’s country of origin, on the other there is also Romanyi, the common language of the Roma, which is found throughout Europe. The social spectrum is extremely



broad, there are intellectuals, actors, soccer players on national teams, great musicians, but also politically, they cannot be grouped together, there are even Roma on the extreme right. From a legal perspective, as mentioned above, there is firstly the national minority, and secondly the immigrant minority. The first are set in a specific framework. A national minority was already present at the time the nation-state was formed, indigenous, if you will. There are 27 countries in Europe that recognize Roma as such, and this entitles them to special forms of support that are legally binding. This means that, among other things, the Romany language is recognized as a dialect in Germany. So much for the differences.

The commonalities have to do with the common origin and language. Beyond that, there is something else that Roma in Europe have in common, namely, an extremely formative, shared experience, which is, however, determined by others. And that is social antiziganism. Antiziganism is discrimination against Roma, a fabric woven together out of images created by others to exclude Roma, from different places and based on different motivations, and clichés in literature and art, also in Goethe and Schiller, and is still expressed very openly today. Examples from classical literature have taught us that the “image of the Gypsy” represents a form of cultural heritage that is deeply rooted in the majority society. We also often find mystifying images of Gypsies in music, as a form of expressing emotions, identity and cultural awareness, in German folklore, and in folk music. Originally, science laid the foundation for the image we have today. In 1550, German humanist Sebastian Münster, who was portrayed on the one hundred German Mark bill, produced the first cosmography, the mother of all lexica, and under the entries for Gypsies and heathens, he incorporated everything in society that had to do with fraud, including criminal monks, mendicant orders, and Roma and Sinti. Subsumed here are all stereotypes, from heathenism to espionage, to the figure of the criminal, witchlike, demonic nomad. From here on, this image was widely spread. In 1770, a further leap in scientific discourse



took place when ethnologist Heinrich Gellman utilized this omnium gatherum of images to ethnicize and delineate categories of Roma under the term “Gypsy.” This image of the Gypsy as conceived by others as a symbol of the Other, this enemy image, a conglomerate of the majority population’s fantasies and disdain, a social image, became an ethnicized image that also conveyed social components. That image prevailed until the 1980s, and can be seen, for example, in the elaborate physiognomic descriptions in the Brockhaus lexicon or synonyms listed in the Duden thesaurus, equating Roma with the “dregs of society.” Examples of antiziganism can be found in all areas, all the way up to the “Zigeunerschnitzel” (Gypsy schnitzel) that is still found on menus in German-speaking countries today, and when it yields to political correctness, it suddenly becomes “Räuberschnitzel” (bandit schnitzel), emulating the same old attributes.

In all of this, no attention is given to the marked differences among Roma, they are generalized, portrayed as a homogenous ethnic group, the images of which are largely derived from hearsay, and while these are hardly based on concrete experiences, they are still widely circulated in the media and are politically tolerated. But antiziganism can also be fought. The first step is recognizing the problem. Having equal rights to participate in society is essential for minorities. In Germany, for example, since the Nazi pogroms in 1939, Roma and Sinti have been excluded from the educational system. The Third Reich brought forth a generation of illiterates, converting them to fit their image of the Gypsy. This situation went on until the 1970s. Although financial compensation was provided, no counter-strategy was developed in order to educate the next generation. There were neither projects initiated by the educational institutions, nor did parents complain--the previous generation cannot pass on an educational practice that did not exist for them. In this light, only little has changed for the second generation after Auschwitz, even in the third generation there is still a high rate of those without formal schooling. Here, I am talking about autochthonous Roma, mind you, a national minority. In order to change this



situation and in order to guarantee the human right to education for Roma, it is necessary to be politically represented on all levels.

There is one more thing I would like to point out here: regardless of the representation on a national level, self-empowerment remains essential. We, both Roma nationals and Roma migrant minorities, finally need institutions, organizations and projects where we can explore our own regional and local history, our own culture, our identity with all of the external influences, and the different lived realities. In addition, antiracism work needs to be done. These are important fundamentals for combating antiziganism.

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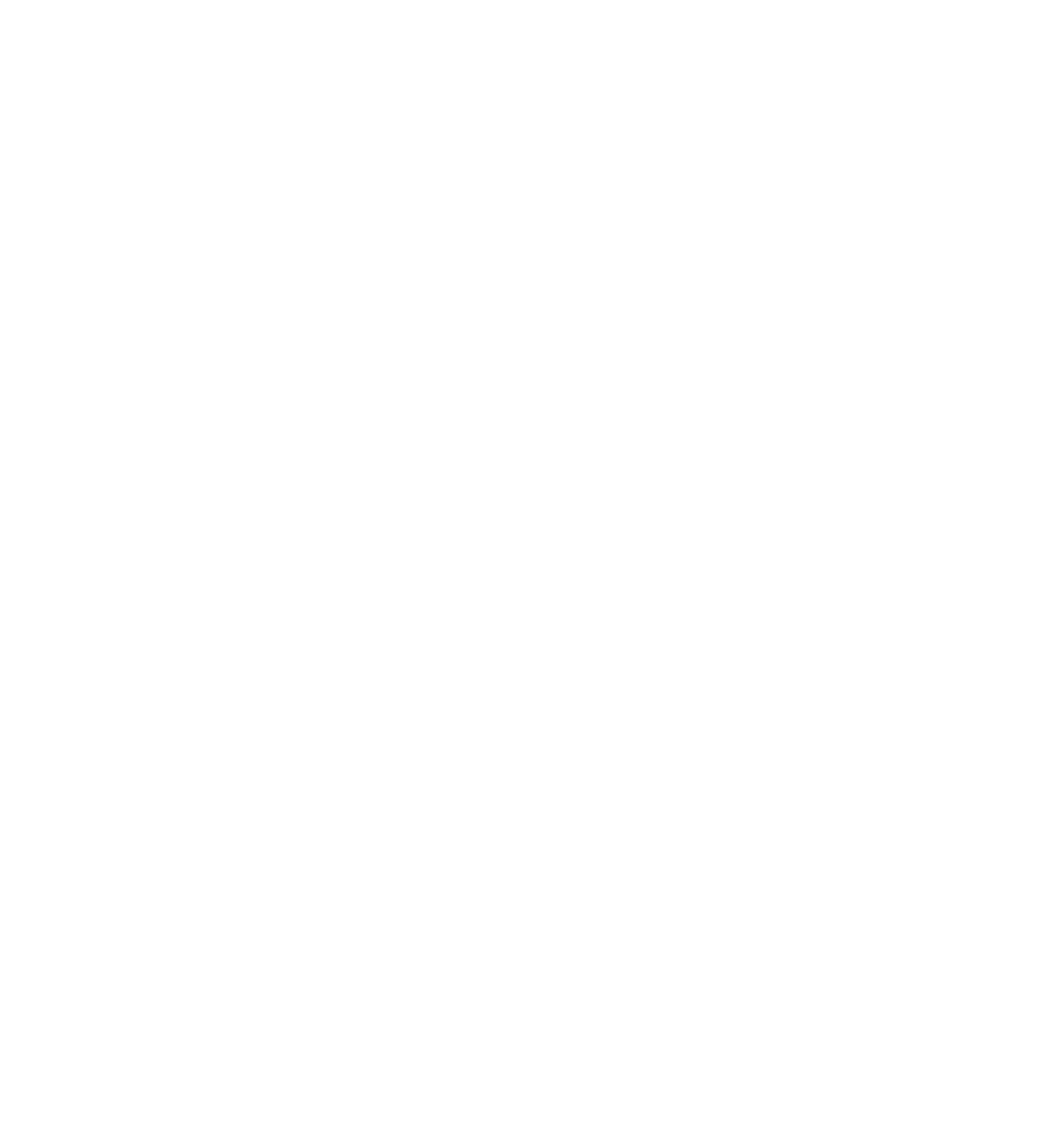
**Daniel Strauß**

Daniel Strauß is the head of the Gesellschaft für Antiziganismusforschung (Society for Antiziganism Research) in Marburg, Germany.

[antiziganismus.de](http://antiziganismus.de)







Ljubomir Bratić

# Mechanisms of Dominance and Self-organization



I would like to open with a quote by Harry Stojka, with whom I have had the great fortune to work on a play together. In the movie *Roma in Austria*, Harri Stojka says the following: “What I want – and this is going to sound banal – is for people to finally realize that we are

completely normal people. People always come up to me and say: ‘Oh, you’re such good musicians’ and so on ... We’re completely normal people. The question bothers me, actually.”<sup>1</sup>

What Harri Stojka wishes for in this quote – normality in the sense of equality – is, as obvious as it may sound, probably something that *Roma* will never achieve in the current social climate. In the following, I will voice a few reasons why this is so improbable.

The existence of *Roma* self-organizations brings a number of questions to the agenda, which were not and are not necessarily included in the previous discussions on migrant self-organizations. The fact that these organizations exist means that *Roma* view themselves as capable of working on a discourse that concerns both them and society, i.e. positing symbolic actions and participating in theory production through which new questions emerge, questions that demand answers.

On a fundamental level, one can claim that speaking about *Roma*

1 Harri Stojka, film: “*Roma in Austria*”  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EHPL3m0IINQ&feature=results\\_video&playnext=1&list=PL8A7347F2C96ABE2E](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EHPL3m0IINQ&feature=results_video&playnext=1&list=PL8A7347F2C96ABE2E) (15.11.2011)

self-organization is a form of revolt against the symbolic violence exerted against Roma as a group. In this regard, Roma are by all means comparable with any other minority: with women worldwide, with other autochthonous and allochthonous minorities in Austria and other entities organized as nation-states. This revolt represents more than merely an object of examination along the lines of the debates on equality in society. It questions the existing symbolic order; it poses the thoroughly radical question of the principles of this order, and these organizations position themselves – in regards to the possibility of transforming the existing racist normality – at the nexus of the ensuing mobilization.

The questions raised are about ascertaining, understanding and formulating strategies to deal with this normality. These three questions will accompany us in the deliberations that follow. It is a matter of providing a few possible answers to the question concerning the existing order and the possibilities and realities of its transformation. It is about transformation because we are not living in the best of all possible worlds, instead this world is fraught with inequality, characterized by a negative stratification along diverse axes.

### **General Principles of the Order**

Roma is one of the stigmatized groups in society. This is a claim that can be understood across all nation-state entities where Roma live as a “minority.” As those who are addressed, Roma are also the victims of a specific form of symbolic violence. This violence is forced upon them through collective acts of categorization.

These acts of categorization introduce a negative difference, a marking, and bring about a discourse that refers only to Roma and a possibility for agency for and shaped by Roma, within specific fields of action. Significantly, due to diverse “exclusions,” there is a difference in the access of the majority and of Roma to the field where public, visible participation in society is possible. It should



be noted that it is not a matter of denying existence altogether, but rather a certain kind of denial of an equal public existence. These exclusions vary according to their effects on each minority in a society. As a foundational structure, these exclusions are integral to marking minorities different.

Exclusion does not at all mean inhabiting a position outside, i.e. has nothing to do with what is “going on.” On the contrary: it is more about being set apart, about a kind of belonging – albeit in a form that is beyond the accepted “rules of the game.” The tactic employed here is making them invisible. For a long time, Roma as a whole have been denied a legitimate existence in Austria – and the situation is not much different in other nation-state entities. Thus, by being stigmatized as others, they were denied the right to a legally and publically acknowledged existence by the system, by legislation, i.e. within the framework of the dominant (police) order regime. This form of domination would be, if it were merely a method of repression, i.e. if the Roma were faced only with violent oppression, clearly recognizable and could thus bring about an equally clear opposition. However, the forms of domination of subordinate subjects in modernity are of a different nature, that of governmentality. This is to say that, by way of separate measures, the population and certain groups within the population become agents of their own oppression. Domination becomes self-domination, the dominance of others is overridden by self-domination. In this, those dominated contribute to their own invisibility and are content with what they are entitled to within the parameters that have been laid out for them.

This is what Bourdieu named the “effect of fate” (cf. Bourdieu 1998: 45-46 and 2005: 202). Exerting direct influence, the institutions of family, school, church and other institutional centers not only coerce the dominated into accepting the prevalent normality, against which they are discriminated and disadvantaged, but also into applying this normality to themselves. This is how Roma become Roma and also how other minorities become minorities. Whereby I



understand the term “minority” as a category pertaining to power and not to demographics. A minority is the outcome of a process within an institutional context. The primary characteristic of this context is inequality, which creates a situation where there are groups in society with a smaller (or larger) share of the commons. The minorities and the majority are thus the result of a constitutive process and certainly not unalterable entities, as is often asserted. In this sense, we are dealing with the outcome of historical power struggles, which – and this is an important postulate for the theory of political anti-racism – could have turned out differently. And if it could have been so then, there is no reason that it could not become different today. The situation, in which minorities are sociopolitical and cultural members of society, is what we are concerned with here. It is about the possibility to conceive of change. Instrumental to conceiving of change is paying attention to the processes through which the current situation has emerged, in other words: historicizing them in order to change things for the better.

This effect of fate contributes to Roma children being ashamed to introduce themselves as Roma and instead - as I was able to ascertain in a study of second-generation migrants in the 1990s in Tyrol (Viehböck/ Bratić 1994) - claiming to be Italian. Such acceptance of normality is no coincidence: it is there precisely in order to provide these young people with a possible field of action. At that time, they claimed that self-denial would help them make friends and establish romantic relationships with those who belong to the majority. Therefore, they are not the ones who should be condemned for their self-denial, but rather the societal system that prompts them to inflict this kind of violence upon themselves. The Roma have a problem with the society they live in, and not the other way around, as is often claimed, that society has a problem with the Roma. The societies we live in contribute to the existence of a discriminated group called “Roma” in the first place, and if we claim to be working on the emancipation of the Roma, then first and foremost, the focus must be on transforming the existing

structure of society. In this respect, working on the emancipation of Roma also means working on social transformation and thus on the emancipation of all other discriminated groups in society. I mentioned earlier that the majority employs a strategy of “making invisible.” Therefore, the demand for visibility – that, within the context of self-organizations, is somewhat of a main motive – must be regarded as one of their central characteristics. The exclamation “We are here in every possible way!” must be transferred to the public and produce something like a permanent echo as a sign of the transformations of this public.

### **Historicization as a strategy**

The normality of Roma and other minorities, which presents itself as eternal, is the outcome of a process of eternal perpetuation. Thus, the idea is not—except perhaps on a strategic level – to ascribe essential properties or characteristics to Roma, not even as a gesture of positive “philoziganism.” Instead, it must be understood that although normality presents itself as consisting of invariable and permanent structures, it is a system that developed historically and has been passed down through history to this day. The history of the Roma is a history of the progressive constitution of objective and subjective structures of dominance, and of the valid civic subject with a clearly distinguishable nationality. Those of us who are committed to a critical view of normality and to its transformation must concern ourselves with the question of who assumes this position of dominance, under what circumstances, how, why and by what means. It is important to comprehend how structures of dominance have been continually perpetuated over space and time and generations, and how they have come to appear so self-evident, as normality.

In this regard, it can be claimed that the official Roma history, as we know it to this day, is a history of the state apparatus. It is, as Bourdieu puts it, “a history of agents and institutions which permanently contribute to maintenance of these permanences.” (2002: 83) It is the history of the impact of all state and civil institutions,



the importance of which naturally varies from epoch to epoch, although they constantly remain in place to make certain sociopolitical, economic and cultural divisions (which are meant to channel potentials of power) appear as the social normality. However, this is not to be understood as an intention or an act of will. It is more a social facticity that is the outcome of of of an ongoing process dealing with several different smaller and larger power shifts in society. Politically, expressed in categories of power, they make up a compromise, a generally accepted consensus. The main question in regards to a consensus is the extent of its sustainability. The dominant work on sustaining and perpetuating consensus, employing the method of naturalizing injustice, a technique of producing it along the lines of eternal perpetuation. However, the dominated – those formerly stratified functionalities that were able to accumulate a political and thus conflictual subjectivity along the lines of social deterritorialization – strive to confound precisely these strategies of perpetuation and to replace them with a historicizing point of view. This point of view implies that the actors' situation is a product of social developments and could just as well have turned out differently. This insight into the possibility of a different and better sociopolitical, cultural and altogether general circumstance is the transition of the actors' position, from working in service to working along the lines of self-emancipation. The central position of every struggle against discrimination is the renewed discovery of the equality of all. However, this position is threatened by many misconceptions: I remember a discussion with a Roma activist about cooperating with a civil society organization of the Austrian majority. He said: "They can never comprehend our situation." I agreed with him and added: "The laws stand between us." Bourdieu describes this contiguity as a "different distances from necessity" (Bourdieu 1984: 32). It has to do with the different relationships to the world, which forms of existence are able to take which liberties in regards to the dominant necessities. Not

everyone can distance themselves from dominant necessities. To not think about ways out of the material necessities and



to act accordingly is a luxury that only few people in this world can afford. Because of this, different groups within society develop different approaches, based on the circumstances that characterize their everyday lives. Which forms of solidarity can be established between whom depends, among other things, on the real (forced) circumstances that individuals and groups live under. A considerable number of Roma in Austria and Europe are subject to racist immigration legislation, which is constantly becoming more restrictive, and act within these parameters.

So, if the activities and actions of people are to be comprehended, judged or explained by someone without taking into consideration the facticities of this existence, the outcome will merely be a mirroring of one's own conceptions. This is to say that the "practical sense" (Bourdieu 1984) of a Roma organization primarily lies in mitigating or stabilizing the legal situation under which its members live. The expectations of the individual activists depend upon their sociopolitical, economic and cultural situations. Although they are indeed subjects of their actions, they are not comparable with subjects of universal social activity, because they have developed very specific survival and assertion mechanisms by belonging to groups that are subject to very specific social fabrics and subordinated to very specific processes of subjectification.

Whatever Roma and other "minorities" are, and everything they do – regardless of the context – is marked by the fact that they don't belong to the dominant, but to the dominated.<sup>2</sup> This position entails

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2 The efforts of the European Commission in Brussels should also be assessed in reference to this. The fundamentally rational character of the declaration "EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020" ([http://ec.europa.eu/justice/policies/discrimination/.../com\\_2011\\_173\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/policies/discrimination/.../com_2011_173_en.pdf)) from 5 April 2011 loses its validation through an effect of double negation. Firstly, this is because these recommendations come "from above" and bear the handwriting of the existing dominant discourse of order that reveals their alliance with a series of centuries old attempts to solve the "Roma question" through normalizing and creating norms for the

a number of attempts to escape it. Two opposing poles of these (re-) actions are over-assimilation, which is carried out to the point of denying one's belonging to a certain group (for example, when Roma youth in Tyrol say they are Italian when they go out dancing), and the over-identification and essentialization of the group (for example, when they claim they are the chosen people). Neither of these two escapes the stigma because it is an integral component of social relations – meaning that which they are. The dilemma of minorities that are organized along the lines of minority politics is the same everywhere: What possibilities do I have, based on the attributes determined by myself and by others, to constitute the “I” (cf. Mead 1993: 197), to contribute rendering this “I” different? In a utopian version, this “I” – which is also a WE—would no longer exist in the current form, as that which is dominated. How can there be political work toward removing the self from discriminated positions within society? This question, in my opinion, is central for any critical examination of the position of Roma in our societies.

Under these circumstances, roughly outlined here, what Harri Stojka wished for in the quote at the beginning of this text – that Roma finally be recognized and acknowledged as “normal people” – is a difficult, lengthy and by no means an endeavor that void of conflict.

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Roma. Secondly, what renders such prescribed measures ineffective from the outset is that it is left up to nation state institutions to implement them transnationally. In this way, the rationality of a European discourse of order ends up being situated in an interstice, located in between the Roma's position as the actor and the rationality of the nation state. The danger of the activities attached to this strategy is that they will primarily be utilized by wealthy states (where there is only a small number of Roma living legally and a large number illegalized) to increase the pressure on the poorer states (where the situation of the Roma living there is the other way around) in order to solve the so-called problem of “illegality.” Instrumentalizing the “Roma” to put pressure on weaker European states is a practice that has yet to be addressed in social and political science research, while, there are a considerable number of artistic documents (such as Želimir Žilnik's film *Kenedi Goes Back Home*, 2003) that deal with the effects of this geopolitical power play.

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### Ljubomir Bratić

Ljubomir Bratic is a philosopher and freelance journalist living in Vienna, Austria.

[eipcp.net/bio/bratic](http://eipcp.net/bio/bratic)







I am going to do a five-minute presentation of a little exhibition. To do this, I have taken a few terms from the previous talk. We are now at the exhibition “Romanistan. Crossing Space in Europe.”

There is a video on a television that plays Mr. Stojka’s quote, namely that he wants to be seen as a citizen, not as a Roma, in a loop. Stojka wants to be normal, just like everyone else. How wonderful! But that is exactly what antiziganism is. We know what Mr. Stojka said, and everyone has their own thoughts on why he may have said that. There is a small radio playing in the corner of our exhibition. It is telling us that Roma are Germans, that they belong to the Union. But it doesn’t seem to be part of the exhibition, and there’s no mention of it in the program booklet, so I just walk on. Next, there is a painting of a 76 year-old Roma. It is a picture of a school class with their teacher. What is that about? Now, because we’ve heard quite a bit about education today, we have to ask ourselves: who needs to be educated? When I recently asked a group of thirty students from Berlin what they know about Roma and only one of them mentioned the Holocaust--while all the others talked about Brad Pitt’s character in the film Snatch or other pop culture stereotypes--I am really quite puzzled about what the educational system has done with them, how they come out thinking that the Roma are the ones in need of education. I say: we are all in need of education, all of Europe is in need of education. The next piece in the

exhibition is a video interview with Roma activists. They say it's time to take action, because a large number of Roma were being forcefully removed from a village. But then again, what's that got to do with me? What's that got to do with my life? What did I do wrong? Did I vote for the wrong politicians? Does it affect my life in any way? Do I even care? I have my own problems too.

We leave the entire exhibition behind and fly back home. In the airplane, we have our seatbelts on the entire time. I feel like I've been strapped down like this my entire life, held back through my own security. But where am I flying to anyway? And how will I get there and who is expecting me there? When we have thought through these things, we have taken a critical look at ourselves and our own perception. And then, we're already a step further.

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**André Jenö Raatzsch**

André Jenö Raatzsch is an artist living in Berlin, Germany.

[raatzsch.com](http://raatzsch.com)







# Roma as on the Borders of Europe



## ***Or: Rules and Regulations are there to be bypassed***

Since we are slowly, and with a significant delay, beginning to become concerned about our own social rights movement here on the Old Continent, I will attempt to outline a history of

emancipation using Édouard Glissant's essay on the creolization of the world (*Le discours antillais* from 1981, which was beautifully, but also somewhat misleadingly, published in German with the title *Zersplitterte Welten* [Fragmented Worlds]). Admittedly: I have no mandate for this, so everything will be "completely invented." There will be talk of Roma, i.e. of people, of advocates of an inherently cosmopolitan perspective, which, when carried across the Atlantic, would be comparable to the Caribbean Creole tradition. In comparison, Europe emerges as another figure from the Antilles, namely the *blanc matignon*--a heavily armed white enclave of generations, emerged from inbreeding among French large-scale landowners, plagued with a panic of their surroundings. There will also be talk of movements that gradually erode such extremely perverse identity constructions, despite all of their armament.

Inspired by Foucault's concept of "parousia" (developed in his Berkeley lectures from 1985, later published as *Fearless Speech* by *semiotexte*) and the ethos of the "war machine" (Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus, A Thousand Plateaus*), I want to counter the common strategy of inclusion/integration and reinforce

the already wide-spread European panic of the specter of swarming nomads. Of course, this is—like cursing itself—an empty and not a literal threat. These can, however, still be extremely effective when they begin to nag at the perpetrator’s guilty conscience. I don’t want to say that Roma/people should be excluded, or that the actual individuals belonging to this “minority” have some sort of mission to fulfill, but that we can only begin to speak of participation in society when everyone has the same access to resources. And it would be naive to believe that those in power would give up their social privileges by their own free will.

What I am going to do here is to conceive of self-empowerment beyond the borders of the permissible and beyond the missionary logic and the associated practices of laying blame, informing, and persuading. Because I don’t really believe in demanding equal rights (and certainly not in the right to participate in representative democracy), but instead in recognizing the universal situation of bastards and migrants (aside from those who take the metaphor of being uprooted literally and cultivating a certain pride in being a “potato”). But let’s introduce the actors first.

## **Roma/people**

The language, similar to Sanskrit, which has remained up until this day--and supposedly also genetic research--point to the Indian subcontinent as being the “country of origin.” Because there is no written documentation, one can only assume that their migration to Europe took place between the seventh and eleventh centuries and that they did so due to persecution. In Europe, the first mention of the “Untouchables” in written documentation is from thirteenth century Byzantine era, and since then, their history has culminated in further instances of persecution: from 500-year long enslavement in Wallachia and Moldavia, to having their heads shaven in France, expulsion from and executions in England, stolen children, forced labor, ethnic cleansing, to Porajmos in the Second World War.



Roma/people living “sedentary” lives in Europe for generations have gladly taken on the national languages, religions and everyday customs. Because they almost always carry visible markers of their alterity, they are subject to attacks by “brown mobs” and the racist “normality” (of bureaucracy, the legal system, social hardship, everyday racism at work, school, in their apartment buildings, etc). They usually function as a surface onto which cultural paranoia, benevolent paternalism, or forced depoliticizing culturalization are projected. The racially structured way that “majority society” deals with this is plain to see, be it through the cultivation of the specter of “parallel societies,” the obsession with the social hygiene of overflowing “ghettos,” the use of nature metaphors like “waves” and “flows,” their colonial gestures of “concern” and “assistance,” or the exotification of noble savages with musical talent.

## **Europe**

It could be claimed that in no way do colonial expansion, violence and discrimination stand in opposition to rationality, but that it is instead precisely the basis of the modern concept of the subject. Initiated by Renée Descartes in philosophy and by Sir Isaac Newton in the natural sciences, the rationalist revolution established a new paradigm for measuring and conquering the world. Just as the split between the mind and the body becomes insurmountable, different systems are viewed as incommensurable. The other significant break with the Renaissance is the transition from the particular to the universal. In a world that is slowly but surely being globalized through colonialism, laws are formulated with universalistic pretention and become irreconcilable with new strategies of domination. Foucault was probably right when he said that Nazism, which belonged to the modern mechanisms of power established in the eighteenth century, only led to paroxysms.

Racism is embedded in the structures of the nation-state (and by extension also of the supranational EU) and it begins with the sentence “all citizens are equal under the law.” Like a watermark, (not only) Germany’s Auschwitz shimmers through every



act since 1945—the pathos of tolerance, integration and dialogue are merely paternalistic instruments of domination. The “threshold of tolerance” is always already crossed (especially if someone is not willing to be satisfied with earning the lowest wages), it’s the same story again and again: whether it’s about Arabs, Africans or Roma, “idleness,” animal instincts” and “violence” have remained persistent attributes from the era of colonialism. German ideas of selfhood (as well as that of the French, etc.—it is likely that this is the Germanic hang-up par excellence) are based on romantic ideas, such as the rule of *jus sanguinis*, the nation of culture, and “*Volksgemeinschaft*” (community of the German people). Legally sanctioned manhunts (or police murders) are no anomaly in this otherwise egalitarian society—they are the rule/normality.

## **Borders**

As we have learned from Deleuze’s analysis, capitalism is inextricable from the nation-state, which controls the borders and ensures a sort of semi-penetrability, that is, that certain “flows” are treated differently, linking the absolute mobility of capital with labor conditions that regulate sedentariness, and enforcing profit maximization as the *conditio sine qua non*. This explains the unbelievably violent clash between the objective cosmopolitan demand for freedom, inherent to migration, and the imperative to control the movements of labor. All modern disciplinary institutions and the entire field of police studies focus on the “abnormal.” Clearing out “vagabonds,” as the poor are called, was and remains a widely accepted procedure. In present-day France, the vagabond law still exists, on the basis of which a person with less than 5 EUR cash in their pocket is liable to prosecution. The code de l’indigenat from 1874 officially sanctioned, among other things, “rebellious acts” and “insulting representatives of authority.” As a sign of the continuity of the police state, residence permits can be revoked at any given moment on the nebulous basis of posing “a threat to public peace and safety.” In a “Europe without borders,”



the controls have only been disseminated and are still omnipresent. New bilateral agreements are constantly being made with “countries of origin” to ensure that deportations run smoothly. Personal statistics show that, as expected, police interest has focused on those traveling by bus, not on frequent flyers. This is similar to the anti-Muslim sentiment stirred up towards refugees from Bosnia in Switzerland, while at the same time, hotels in Zurich try to lure oil magnates with daily halal menus. Despite the widespread illusion, capitalism has never been liberal, but rather always state-run.

### **Now back to Glissant**

Identity politics based on ethnicity, which are unable to depart from the binary logic of “us” and “them” and unable to escape the racist Manichaeism, continue to be unsuccessful, precisely because they have been so successful. The divide-and-conquer mode of segregating the people “affected” is one of the things that enables millions to be transferred from the poor to the rich in order to fill the financial gaps produced by speculation. Bourgeois reformist cynicism is always inextricably linked to fascism at its most vulgar.

There is no partial emancipation and no freedom within reaction, politics as a process must be conceived of without a subject and then rhizomatically linked to different experiences of struggle. Only when different groups of outcasts come together can a truly internationalist community of shared experience emerge, with no chauvinistic ulterior motives. A critical counter-power emerges when not-belonging is broken up into new belongings and alleged homelessness makes way for the liberation of home (Castro Varela).

For sure, many Roma/people seek to simply be perceived as normal, and don't ever want anything to do with politics. Nonetheless, many experiences and survival strategies from the involuntary exodus are universally politically useful, from distrusting the state, extending solidarity and kinship beyond the nuclear family, to encoded forms of communication. In populist times that are most



intricately linked to de-legitimizing political power, “talking to the neighbors” and the initial “walking on the grass” are the necessary conditions for a collective “revolutionary becoming.” Hanging over the general social exclusion is the imminent fundamental political question of equality.

In the end, concerning the alternatives to state-run projects, at the conference in Vienna, I began to deliriously imagine how all of a sudden, overnight, all the EU flags in Brussels, Strasbourg and in the World Wide Web were replaced with those from Romanistan, and then how the entire European administration began to offer free housing, free education and health care for all. Acquiring knowledge and becoming decontaminated from the fear of those in power are the seeds of rebellion. I hope the “IT experts” will take care of the rest.

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**Teodora Tabacki**

Teodora Tabacki is a philosopher and anti-war activist living in Paris, France and Berlin, Germany.

[eipcp.net/bio/tabacki](http://eipcp.net/bio/tabacki)







Pedro Aguilera

# Anti-Gypsyism and Stigma



## **Anti-Gypsyism policies in Europe**

### **1. European Commission against Racism and Intolerance**

The fight against racism and intolerance is one of the *raison d'être* of the Council of Europe

(CoE), whose historical and political roots go back to the Second World War and the need to prevent its horrors from happening again. For over 50 years, efforts to promote tolerance have been at the heart of the Council's work, reflected in its various programs in political, legal, social and cultural fields.

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

ECRI was established by the first Summit of heads of state and governments of all the member states of the Council of Europe. The decision of its establishment is laid out in the Vienna Declaration, which the Summit adopted on 9 October 1993. The second Summit in Strasbourg, 10-11 October 1997, strengthened ECRI's range of action and on 13 June 2002, the Committee of Ministers adopted an autonomous Statute for ECRI, which consolidated its role



as an independent human rights monitoring body.

Basic principles guiding ECRI's action:

Since its first meeting in March 1994, ECRI has developed its action step-by-step. Its strategy has been to build up activities gradually, thus ensuring that they are constantly evaluated, consolidated and used as a basis for the next step forward. In line with its founding documents, ECRI follows a certain number of basic principles that help to ensure the impact of its action, among which the most important are:

- ECRI members are independent and impartial in fulfilling their mandate.
- ECRI examines all necessary measures to combat violence, discrimination and prejudice faced by persons or groups of persons on grounds such as “race”, color, language, religion, nationality or national or ethnic origin.
- ECRI deals with all CoE Member States on an equal basis.
- ECRI's findings are based on a great variety of sources.
- ECRI cooperates and consults in all its activities with relevant governmental and non-governmental actors.

Who are the ECRI members?

ECRI's Statute provides that that the Commission should consist of members “with a high moral authority and recognized expertise in dealing with racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance.” Each CoE Member State has the right to appoint one ECRI member and has the legal duty to appoint an independent and impartial member. After the approval of their nomination by the Committee of Ministers, members serve for a term of



five years, which is renewable.

A strength of ECRI is its multidisciplinary composition, which brings together a wide range of knowledge and skills. Although predominantly composed of members with a legal background, ECRI also includes persons from national human rights institutions and anti-discrimination bodies, social scientists, journalists, businesspeople, etc.

ECRI's permanent Secretariat is located at the Council of Europe headquarters in Strasbourg.

What does ECRI do?

ECRI's task is to provide CoE Member States with concrete and practical advice on how to tackle problems of racism and intolerance in their country. To this end, it examines in each country the legal framework for combating racism and racial discrimination, its practical implementation, the existence of independent bodies to assist victims of racism, the situation of vulnerable groups in specific policy areas (education, employment, housing etc.) and the tone of political and public debate around issues relevant for these groups.

In its work ECRI uses a very broad definition of racism and racial discrimination, as experience has shown that these concepts are changing and can take different forms.

ECRI's action does not only cover the most blatant abuses of human rights such as state sanctioned segregation, apartheid or Nazism. It also covers other forms of racism and discrimination, which can occur in subtler, but nonetheless harmful forms of differential treatment experienced in everyday life. They can include targeting persons on the grounds not only of race or ethnic origin, but also of religion, nationality or language, or a combination of these grounds.



ECRI's main statutory activities are:

1. country-by-country monitoring
2. work on general themes
3. relations with civil society

#### 1. County by country monitoring

In the framework of its country monitoring work, ECRI analyses the situation closely in each of the member States and then draws up suggestions and proposals for dealing with the problems of racism and intolerance identified in each country. All countries are dealt with on an equal basis. The work is organized in 5-year cycles, covering 9 to 10 countries per year.

ECRI's sources of information: ECRI's written sources include all documents produced by the Council of Europe or other intergovernmental organizations, documents produced by the national authorities of the country in question and by local, national or international NGOs, together with studies, research and press articles. In addition, a contact visit is made to the country by an ECRI delegation provides the opportunity to gather further information from other sources.

The visit includes direct consultations with the national authorities, relevant NGOs, representatives of minorities, independent experts and any other qualified persons. The procedure by which ECRI reports is that these are first transmitted in the form of draft texts to the Member States concerned, thereby initiating a process of confidential dialogue with the national authorities of these countries. The content of the report is reviewed in the light of this dialogue.

The report is then adopted in its final form and transmitted by ECRI, via the intermediary of the CoE Committee of Ministers, to the government of the Member State concerned via.



The report is then made public, unless the government in question is expressly against its publication.

In 2008, ECRI began with the 4th round of its country-by-country monitoring work, covering the period 2008-2012. The 4th round reports focus on “implementation” and “evaluation”. They examine the follow-ups and implementations of ECRI’s main recommendations from previous reports and include an evaluation of policies and new developments since the last report.

A process of interim follow-up takes place two years after the publication of the reports.

**Open dialogue:** The publication of ECRI’s country-by-country reports is an important stage in the development of an on-going and active dialogue between ECRI and the authorities in Member States with a view to identifying solutions to the problems of racism and intolerance which they face. The input of NGOs and other bodies or individuals active in this field is welcomed as a part of this process and ensures that ECRI’s contribution is as constructive and useful as possible.

The latest ECRI country-by-country report was published on Lithuania, (4th report). Further some on-going monitoring reports are on Andorra, Croatia and Denmark.

## OTHER AREAS OF INTEREST

Prevention is better than cure, and combating racism can only be effective if the antiracist message is filtered down to society in general. For this reason, awareness-raising among the general public and a communication strategy are crucial. ECRI has adopted a specific program of action on relations with civil society to consolidate this aspect of its work, which identifies four priority areas of action:



## A.- Organization of national round tables and seminars

Round tables and seminars: at the national level, round tables are regularly organized following the publication of ECRI's country monitoring reports. The main aim of these events is to develop ideas as to how to solve the problems of racism in the country and to ensure the implementation of ECRI's specific recommendations. At the European level, ECRI organizes expert seminars on topics of particular interest.

## B. Thematic meetings and consultations with non-governmental organizations

NGOs are ECRI's key partners in the fight against racism and intolerance. ECRI is strongly committed to strengthening its cooperation with NGOs by exchanging information, organizing meetings and consultations and developing its network of partner NGOs. NGOs are a vital source of information about the situation of vulnerable groups and racist incidents. ECRI's relationship with NGOs is a genuine two-way exchange, as these organizations also play an important role in helping to establish priorities for ECRI's work. Cooperation with other European and International Organizations: ECRI also cooperates with all the relevant actors at the global and European level in the field of combating racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance.

## C. Development of a communication strategy, including ECRI's Website "Combating racism and intolerance": [www.coe.int/ecri](http://www.coe.int/ecri).

## D. Contact to the youth sector.



H. Cooperation with other European and international Organizations  
ECRI also cooperates with all the relevant actors at the global and European level in the field of combating racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance, including: the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)'s tasking on tolerance and non-discrimination within the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and the Anti-Discrimination Unit of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) within the United Nations.

## 2. Work on General Themes

On the basis of its country monitoring work, ECRI has identified the following areas of particular interest:

- The use of racist, anti-Semitic and xenophobic elements in political discourse
- The collection of data is broken down into categories, such as nationality, national or ethnic origin, language and religion (ethnic data collection)
- Combating racism while respecting freedom of expression
- The relationship between integration and the fight against racism and racial discrimination

General Policy Recommendations:

ECRI elaborates General Policy Recommendations (GPRs) addressed to the governments of all Member States. They



provide detailed guidelines which policy-makers are invited to use when drawing up national strategies and policies in a variety of fields. So far, ECRI has adopted twelve General Policy Recommendations:

- General Policy Recommendation N° 1 on “Combating racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance.” This recommendation provides a number of guidelines for the adoption of national measures concerning legal and policy aspects of the fight against racism and intolerance.
- General Policy Recommendation N° 2 on “Specialized bodies to combat racism, xenophobia, Anti-Semitism and intolerance at national level.” This recommendation underscores the important role of national specialized bodies in combating racism and racial discrimination and sets out the basic principles concerning their statutes, forms, functions and responsibilities.
- General Policy Recommendation N° 3 on “Combating racism and intolerance against Roma/Gypsies”: This Recommendation takes as a starting point the fact that Roma/Gypsies suffer throughout Europe from persisting prejudices, are victims of a racism which is deeply rooted in society and that their fundamental rights are regularly violated or threatened. It encourages the adoption of a series of measures to combat manifestations of racism, intolerance and discriminatory practices against Roma/Gypsies.
- General Policy Recommendation N° 4 on “National surveys on the experience and perception of discrimination and racism from the point of view of potential victims.” This recommendation identifies ways how the results of such surveys may be used to highlight problems and improve the situation of victims of racism and racial discrimination, and provides guidelines for carrying out these surveys, including their practical organization, design and follow-up.
- General Policy Recommendation No 5 on “Combating intolerance and discrimination against Muslims.” This recommendation advocates the adoption of a number

of specific measures for combating intolerance and discrimination directed against Muslim communities, including measures to counteract hostile stereotyping, prejudice and discriminatory acts.

- General Policy Recommendation N° 6 on “Combating the dissemination of racist, xenophobic and anti-Semitic material via the Internet.” This recommendation requests governments to take the necessary measures, at national and international levels, to act effectively against the use of Internet for racist, xenophobic and anti-Semitic aims.
- General Policy Recommendation N° 7 on “National legislation to combat racism and racial discrimination.” This recommendation contains the main elements that ECRI considers important to feature in the national legislation of the Member States in order to combat effectively racism and racial discrimination. It advocates for the adoption of a comprehensive body of anti-discrimination legislation, containing provisions in different fields of law and covering areas such as employment, housing, education, access to social and public services.
- General Policy Recommendation N° 8 on “Combating racism while fighting terrorism.” This recommendation stresses the need for Member States to refrain from adopting anti-terrorist measures that are discriminatory, notably on grounds of race, color, language, religion, nationality or national or ethnic origin. It underscores the responsibility of Member States to react promptly and effectively, which includes taking action through legal measures and acts of racism and racial discrimination resulting from tensions generated by the fight against terrorism.
- General Policy Recommendation N° 9 on “The fight against anti-Semitism.” This recommendation reflects ECRI’s concern about the increase in the dissemination of anti-Semitic ideas and in acts of violence perpetrated against members of Jewish communities and their institutions. It suggests legal and policy measures that Member States should take action in a variety of

areas, including criminal legislation, education and awareness raising, research, and inter-religious dialogue.

- General Policy Recommendation N° 10 on “Combating racism and racial discrimination in and through school education.” This recommendation presents Member States with a comprehensive set of detailed and practical proposals in order to help governments to ensure compulsory, free and quality education for all, to combat racism and racial discrimination at school and to train all teaching staff to work in a multicultural environment.
- General Policy Recommendation N° 11 on “Combating racism and racial discrimination in policing.” This recommendation aims to help the police to promote security and human rights for all through adequate policing. It covers racism and racial discrimination in the context of combating all crime, including terrorism. It focuses particularly on racial profiling; racial discrimination and racially motivated misconduct by the police; the role of the police in combating racist offences and monitoring racist incidents; and relations between the police and members of minority groups.
- General Policy Recommendation N° 12 on “Combating racism and racial discrimination in the field of sport.” This recommendation sets out a wide range of measures that the governments of Member States are advised to adopt in order to successfully combat racism and racial discrimination in the field of sport.

General Policy Recommendation No.13, related to of anti-Gypsyism and discrimination against Roma

Last September, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) launched a General Policy Recommendation and issued guidelines to the Council of Europe’s 47 member countries to fight a rising tide of anti-Gypsyism and discrimination against Roma.



The guidelines – contained in the its thirteenth General Policy Recommendation – call for action to stop the segregation of Roma children at schools and to integrate them with pupils from the majority population, to provide access to decent housing that is not segregated, to ensure that Roma are not evicted without notice or are provided with new housing opportunities, and for steps to be taken to legalize long-standing Roma sites built in breach of town planning regulations. It calls for Roma to have secure access to quality health care and for the end of segregation in hospitals, stating that discrimination in the health sector must be subject to prosecution and punishment. There should be no obstacles for Roma to exercise traditional trades, and Roma should be consulted in searching for alternatives, for instance through micro-loans or tax breaks. All Roma children should be registered at birth and given identity documents.

Governments should encourage Roma victims of violence and crime – including misconduct by the police - to lodge complaints, and the media should avoid spreading hate speech in their reporting.

The guidelines also urge equal provision of public services such as water, sanitation, electricity, refuse removal and transportation for Roma communities concentrated in certain neighborhoods. It asks governments to ensure that freedom of movement legislation does not discriminate against the Roma and that their culture is protected and promoted within the majority population.

## **2. Anti-Gypsyism in History**

The history of Roma migration into Europe was abruptly brought to a halt for those Roma who arrived in the Romanian territories of the Southern and Eastern Carpathian Mountains. Roma who arrived in Wallachia and Moldavia in the second half of the 14th century were forced into bondage and slavery for five centuries, and their history was marked by a turning point comparable only to the enslavement of the Afro-American population in the United



States.

Roma were owned by the Prince (as “slaves of the State” – “*tigania domneasca*”), by monasteries and by private individuals. Selling, buying and giving away whole families of slaves were common practices among the owners, who had unlimited rights over their slaves in 1857, one year after slavery had been completely abolished, there were 33,267 now free Roma families in Wallachia; 6,241 of them had been slaves: of the state, and 12,081 slaves of the Church. 14,945 families had belonged to the nobility. In Moldavia, there were an estimated 20,000 families. If every family consisted of an average of five people, then approximately 250,000 Roma lived in these two principalities. In the whole of Central and South-Eastern Europe, there was a Roma population of considerable strength. In fact, slave-owners could do whatever they liked to their slaves, short of killing them. Towards the middle of the 19th century, an abolitionist movement emerged among intellectuals in the Danubian Principalities, and the figure of the “Gypsy” became a frequent subject in newspaper articles, poetry, literature and plays. Once the emancipation of slaves had been achieved, it raised – and still raises today – the issue of their integration into the social and economic life of Romania. Traces of slavery persisted in the memories of former masters and their slaves, and the period of slavery has marked relations between the descendants of these two social strata to this day.

There were several anti-Roma laws around Europe between S. XV and XIX, some of which forced Roma out of the country or Kingdom, others forbid them to use their language, dresses, work in their traditional jobs, or to establish residence in towns or cities. Some anti-Roma laws prescribed the full assimilation of the Roma. But the most important anti-Roma behavior appeared in the S. XX at the beginning of 1920 with the rise of the concept of “race” and with Nazism, The central terminology and attitudes, which the Nazis later used as reasons for killing those “unworthy of life” had been determined long before they had come into power. The term “race,” for



instance, has been used to categorize people since the 17th century. Usually, this was done according to geographic criteria combined with external characteristics, such as skin color or certain peculiarities. In the 18th century, Carl von Linné, the founder of the modern systematology of all living things, categorized people according to skin color (white, red, yellow, black) into four types and attributed certain characteristics to each type. According to him, the Europeans are white, “ruled by laws, sanguine, and are muscular,” while the Asians are light yellow, “ruled by opinions, melancholic and are stiff.” Up to this day, the term “race” is inextricably interwoven with judgments on value. The use of skin color as a means of differentiation is still common, even if the underlying notion of “races” has lost ground.

In the 19th century, several racial theories came into circulation. The nature of “races” (according to the theory, there were somewhere between three and eleven) differed and came to correspond to certain values. The highest value was attributed to the “Caucasian,” “white,” “Germanic” or “Aryan race.” In the mid-19th century, Arthur de Gobineau also postulated the existence of higher and lower “races” in his “*Essai sur l’inégalité des races humaines*” (Essay on the inequality of human races). In his opinion, the “Aryans” and “Nordic peoples” in particular belonged to the higher races, thus reflecting the general body of thought that was already in circulation. What was new about his ideas, however, was his strict rejection to “mixing” the “races,” which would lead to degeneration and ultimately to destruction. In connection with this, Belgian Richard Liebich coined the term “unworthy life” a few years later (1868).

Against the background of scientific biology, which considered hereditary factors as fundamental to human existence, the ideas of superior and inferior, “pure” and “mixed races,” “worthy” and “unworthy life” found their way into criminology. For the first time, in 1876, Italian Cesare Lombroso, declares “genetic predisposition” responsible for the “Gypsies” alleged criminal acts in his “*L’uomo delinquente*” (The criminal man).



The idea that races could be made “superior” by controlling procreation, a widespread idea in Europe and the United States, was coupled with the call for “eradicating” “genetically unfit” (erbuntüchtige) in Germany after World War I. The demands for racial hygiene ranged from internment, to abortion and sterilization, to euthanasia. In 1920, Karl Binding and Alfred Hoche demanded that all those who lead a “ballast existence” and who were a “burden to society” be killed. In 1923, the first chair of Racial Hygiene was established in Munich; its holder, Fritz Lenz, wrote a text on “Menschliche Auslese und Rassenhygiene” (Human selection and racial hygiene), which later had some influence on Hitler’s *Mein Kampf*. Organizations, groups of scientists and private influential individuals fought to spread the ideas of racial hygiene, which fell on fertile ground in Germany during the interwar years. Political parties, particularly the Nazis, used these ideas to fan the flames of the increasing resentment towards the Jews and other population groups. [Ill. 2]

On July 14, 1933, the racial theory was finally adopted by the laws of the Third Reich. The notion of “unworthy life” had a significant influence in the Nazi racial policy. On the one hand, “genetically fit” (erbggesund) and “Aryan” offspring was supported, and on the other hand mentally and physically challenged people in addition to “asocials” and “foreign races” were persecuted. The “Gypsies,” whose place in the system was difficult to determine due to their Aryan descent, were generally considered “asocial” and were consequently seen as an “asocial race,” in the absence of a better criterion, which can be read in the book “opening the way to the extermination of unworthy life” by Karl Binding and Alfred Hoche.

Their main idea was to save money, i.e. not to invest money in those groups, as the investment costs were too high. On the other hand, extermination was a much more clear-cut and cheaper solution. Here the group of Roma was included, because Roma were identified as an asocial group, although the definition focused generally on Roma, people with disabilities, and others. Nazi ideology was



strongly based on ideology; the Criminal Police were instructed to arrest and Roma, among others, to the labor camps based on ethno genetic data, which was collected when Roma were registered. According to the factsheet provided by the Council of Europe, the Nazis were not able to make use of the prejudices that deeply rooted in the population, but also of the decades of police experience in dealing with the “Gypsy plague.” In both Germany and Austria, the centralization of the “Gypsy battle” traditionally waged by the police began in the 1920s. At first, the authorities registered the Roma in order to “preventively fight crimes.” In 1936, the “Zentralstelle zur Bekämpfung des Zigeunerunwesens” (Central Bureau for Fighting the “Gypsy” Plague) was established in Vienna. In Germany, the nomination of Heinrich Himmler as “Reichsführer SS” (head of the police force) for the Ministry of Interior paved the way for “standardizing” action taken. Against the backdrop of wide-spread anti-“Gypsyism,” at first “Gypsies” were primarily seen as a police problem, but due to the constantly rising influence of racial theory, the aspect of assessing “Gypsies” based on race ideology grew more and more important. The “Nürnberger Rassengesetze” (Racial laws) of 1935 led the way by classifying the “Gypsies” as “racially inferior,” declaring their nationality invalid and thus stripping them of their civil rights. Afterwards, scientists took on the task to prove these dogmas were right. The NS regime had found another “enemy” whose slandering and extinction could unify the “German people.”

As Robert Ritter, doctor and psychiatrist was appointed head of the “Rassenhygienische und erbbiologische Forschungsstelle” (Research Centre for Racial Hygiene) in the Reich’s Department of Public Health, he became a central figure in “Gypsy research” in the Reich. His main goal was to prove that criminal and “asocial” behavior was hereditary. While the Jews had been accused of intellectually “dissolving” the structure of the state, the “Gypsies” were declared “primitives,” “poor in culture” and lacking history, who threatened the moral order by “mixing” and “building a criminal sub-



proletariat” based on their race. Already by 1935, the demand was made that “Gypsies” should be interned in labor camps and subjected to forced sterilization. Ritter’s main focus were “Gypsy half-breeds,” the classification of which was even broader than that applied to the Jews: people were declared “Gypsy half-breeds” when at least one of their eight grandparents was Roma.

In a pamphlet issued in late 1938, Heinrich Himmler announced that he would “solve the Gypsy question through the nature of that race.” The theories of Nazi scientists and politicians remained, however, contradictory until 1942/43. On the one hand, the Roma’s Indian descent classified them as “Aryans,” but, on the other hand, politicians and scientists wanted to prove they belonged to a “foreign race” (Artfremdheit) in order to legitimize their persecution.

Because of the ideological contradictions, the persecution of “Gypsies” was carried out in a far less coordinated manner than that of the Jewish population. For instance, several Roma were still in the army in 1943, although that very army was involved in the Roma genocide in the East, and although thousands had already been killed in concentration camps. These members of the army were deported directly from the front to Auschwitz, sometimes even with medals of honor.

The fierce persecution of Roma by German Nazis – and other fascists – had its roots in three distinct features of European thought and policies in the first half of the 20th century. Traditional anti-Gypsyism was widely accepted throughout Europe. It is composed of a complex mixture of social prejudices, such as the idea that “Gypsies” were carriers of dangerous diseases and prone to stealing children whenever possible. In the early 20th century, this was combined with a rabid form of racism, which believed so-called “anti-social behavior” to be a hereditary trait of certain groups within population. The third crucial feature of persecution mechanisms – introduced by the German Nazis after their ascent to power in 1933 – was the system of so-called “preventive fighting of crimes,” which enabled the



authorities to arrest and imprison anyone they considered “potentially dangerous” to society, even if they had not committed any crime or misdemeanor. The harsh economic climate of the interwar years in Europe further contributed to the growing friction between Roma and non-Roma in many European countries. Especially in Central and Eastern Europe, many Roma lived either as itinerant artisans or as agricultural laborers. During the so-called “Depression” of the late 1920s and early 1930s, many Roma lost these traditional forms of income and became dependent on public welfare and health care. However, most of the villages and towns were reluctant to shoulder this financial burden – claiming that the “Gypsies” did not belong to their populations – and tried to push them into other municipalities. German and Austrian police forces began registering the Roma in so-called “Zigeunerlisten” (“Gypsy” lists), and to take their photographs and fingerprints well before the Nazis ascent to power. Thus, these lists later turned out to be fatal for most persons registered.

These factors formed the background for the increasing persecution of so-called “Gypsies” after the Nazi ascent to power in 1933. Already in 1933, Roma were forced to undergo sterilization and in 1935, a special law forbade intermarriages between “Gypsies” and “Aryans.” Between 1936 and 1938, the two central institutions of “Gypsy” persecution were created, the so-called “Rassehygienische Forschungsstelle” (Research Centre for Racial Hygiene) and the “Reichszentrale für die Bekämpfung des Zigeunerunwesens im Reichskriminalpolizeiamt” (Reich Centre for Fighting the Gypsy Plague within the Reich Office of the Criminal Police). Local authorities not only supported policies against Roma, but they also often urged the central institutions to speed up and intensify the measures, e.g. in a notorious pamphlet by the Nazi “Gauleiter” of Burgenland, Thobias Portschy. In 1938, Heinrich Himmler – the commander of the SS (“Schutzstaffel”, Protective Squadron) and Reich chief of the German police – issued a decree to “solve the Gypsy question” according to “racial principles,” and in 1939, he signed a special decree forcing all Roma to



give up travelling and remain in the city they were staying in at that time.

After intensive discussions concerning the so-called “Gypsy Policy,” Himmler ordered the deportation of all “zigeunerische Personen” (“Gypsy-like persons”) to concentration camps. The camp book of the so-called “Gypsy Camp” at Auschwitz-Birkenau registered 10,649 female and 10,094 male prisoners, many of whom were children. Two thirds of the imprisoned Roma had been arrested in Germany and Austria, over 20 percent came from Bohemia, and close to 6 percent from Poland. Every day, sick and weak prisoners were dying and repeatedly large numbers of sick prisoners were sent to the gas chambers, among them a large number of German and Austrian Roma on May 12, 1943. By the end of 1943, 70 percent of the prisoners of the “Gypsy Camp” had already perished. Towards the end of July 1944, all inmates of the “Gypsy Camp” at Auschwitz-Birkenau, who were thought to still be able to work, were transferred to other concentration camps and forced to work in factories and industrial plants. On August 2, 1944, the SS-troops surrounded the “Gypsy Camp,” and the following night all remaining prisoners in the “Gypsy Camp” were murdered in the gas chambers.

### **3. Anti-Gypsyism today and the ECRI GPR 13**

ECRI, through their tools to detected anti-Gypsyism and discrimination against Roma in Europe, recognize that, despite the efforts of some governments in Europe, bodies specialized in equal treatment, and NGO activities, the situation of the Roma Community in Europe has going from bad to worse. For this reason, ECRI set up a task force to develop a new Policy General Recommendation (R.P.G) focused on the anti-Roma behavior and how to overcome this situation. There are some specific areas of work in the Recommendation.



One of the most important points in the GPR is point 13,

which is the definition of anti-Gypsyism. I would like to point out that it is the first time that anti-Gypsyism has been defined as clearly as possible. The recommendation says that anti-Gypsyism is a specific form of racism, an ideology founded on racial superiority, a form of dehumanization and institutional racism nurtured by historical discrimination, which is expressed, among others, by violence, hate speech, exploitation, stigmatization and the most blatant kind of discrimination and stresses that anti-Gypsyism is an especially persistent, violent, recurrent and commonplace form of racism, and they are convinced of the need to combat this phenomenon at every level and by every means.

This behavior is explicit in some areas, such as in education.

Education:

The Strasbourg Declaration, among others, considers education one of the milestones and declares governments should “Promote through effective measures the equal treatment and the rights of Roma children especially the right to education and protect them against violence” or “Ensure effective and equal access to the mainstream educational system, including pre-school education, for Roma children and methods to secure attendance.”

Unfortunately, according to the NGO equality in U.K, the real situation so far is more like this. “In the Czech Republic, Slovakia and some other new EU Member States, Roma ethnic group children are disproportionately placed in special schools for the mentally disabled or in de facto segregated schools. When these same children migrate to the United Kingdom with their parents, they are educated in mainstream schools. Equality, in cooperation with the Roma Education Fund, carried out research to find out what impact mainstream schooling had on Roma children who had previously been



streamed into special or de facto segregated schools. The findings of this pilot research, "From Segregation to Inclusion" show that Roma pupils in the United Kingdom quickly catch up with their non-Roma peers to gain an attainment level just below average. Between March and September 2011, Equality carried out research among Roma of Czech and Slovak nationality who had migrated with their families to Leicester, Chatham, Rotherham, Wolverhampton, Southend-on-Sea, Peterborough, London and Derby in the United Kingdom. It was found that 85% of the pupils interviewed had been previously placed in a special school, de facto segregated school or predominantly Roma kindergarten in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. This despite the European Court of Human Rights finding in 2007 in the case of D.H. and others versus the Czech Republic that the disproportionate assignment of Roma children to special schools without an objective and reasonable justification amounted to unlawful indirect discrimination in violation of the European Convention on Human Rights'.

For years some education practitioners in Eastern European countries have argued that segregated or special education is in the best interests of Roma children. Equality's research on the impact of mainstream education shows this to be untrue: the average attainment of Roma pupils in numeracy, literacy and science was just below average. The research also found that the more the Roma pupils were integrated within classes and schools, the fewer community cohesion problems existed both in and out of school. This contrasts sharply with the view of the majority of Roma students that they had experienced racist bullying and verbal abuse by non-Roma peers, as well as discriminatory treatment by teachers, at Czech and Slovak schools.

As I mentioned above, in 2007, The European Human Rights Court issued a statement on the action of DH and Others vs. the Czech Republic. The Czech Republic was sentenced for violating Art. 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights



and Article 2 of Protocol No 1. The Czech Republic and Slovakia had allowed a system of segregation that systematically enrolled Roma children in “special schools.” These measures were “supported” using anthropological reasoning and were even approved by the educational community and the education ministry, which have also repeatedly denounced NGOs.

GPR 13 and education:

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

## Health System

According to the Country-by-Country reports, there is evidence proving that there is discrimination in access to the public health system in some European countries. The ECRI’s Recommendations have been developed in order to overcome this situation. But in some European countries there is also an extreme example of anti-Gypsyism regarding the sterilization of Roma women.

According to a report by Ina Zoom in Czech Republic “more than 100 Roma women have been forcibly sterilized in Slovakia, it argues NRC in its report to the European Commission in 2003.”

The most recent evidence of forced sterilization was the resolution of the European Court of Human Rights in



the case V.C. against Slovakia. The court found evidence and ruled that Slovakia is obliged to pay to V.C. more than 31.000 EURO compensation. The complete text of this resolution is available at: <http://cmiskp.echr.coe.int/tkp197/view.asp?item=1&portal=hbkm&action=html&highlight=V.C.%20%7C%20slovakia&sessionid=83079924&skin=hudoc-en>

The court took into consideration the reports and recommendations proposed in Slovakia's country-by-country report. The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) condemns sterilizations of Roma women without their full and informed consent. ECRI is very concerned about reports that were brought to their attention on both national and international levels at the beginning of 2003, claiming that Roma women have, in recent years and for a long time running, been subject to sterilizations in some hospitals in Eastern Slovakia without their full and informed consent

Recommendations: ECRI is of the opinion that the possibility of sterilizations of Roma women without their full and informed consent calls for immediate, extensive and thorough investigation. It seems clear to ECRI that such investigations should not focus their attention on whether a signed form can be produced, but on whether the women involved were fully informed of what they signed and about the full implications of sterilization. ECRI also recommends that, prior to and notwithstanding the outcome of the investigation, more adequate safeguards should be put in place to forestall any further problems or lack of certainty in this area. In fact, at present and on the legal level, the authorities have acknowledged there are still some inconsistencies between the law in force and specific regulations issued previously. Clear, detailed and coherent regulations and instructions should thus be issued immediately to ensure that all sterilizations are carried out in accordance with the best medical knowledge, practice and procedures, including the provision of full and comprehensible information to patients about the medical procedures proposed to them. In the following (fourth monitoring cycle) report on Slovakia,



published on 26 May 2009, ECRI concluded as follows: “ECRI notes with concern that the problems as regards investigations into allegations of sterilizations of Roma women without their full and informed consent noted in its third report remained.”

So the GPR, point 13, and health focuses on:

- Forced sterilization of Roma women should be expressly prohibited.
- Taking measures to secure equal access to all quality health care to Roma.
- Recruiting health mediators, in particular from the Roma community to provide liaison between health personnel and managers and Roma.
- Taking positive measures to ensure that no financial or administrative hindrance impedes the access of Roma to health care and medical treatment.
- Preventing and combating any segregation in hospitals and in particular in maternity wards.

## ROMA AND HOUSING

### The right to adequate housing

The United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), the body entrusted with overseeing the implementation of the ICESCR, has derived the right to adequate housing from the “right to an adequate standard of living, including adequate food, clothing and housing.” In General Comments No. 4 and No. 7 on the right to adequate housing, the CESCR observed that all persons should possess a degree of security of tenure which guarantees legal protection against forced



evictions, harassment and other threats. More specifically, in its General Comment No. 4, the CESCR defines “adequate housing” as housing enjoying “sustainable access to natural and common resources, clean drinking water, energy for cooking, heating and lighting, sanitation and washing facilities, food storage facilities, refuse disposal, site drainage and emergency services.” Moreover, housing should be both affordable and habitable. Habitability entails “allocating adequate space and protection from cold, damp, heat, rain, wind or other threats to health, structural hazards and disease vectors.”

Adequate housing must also ensure the physical safety of residents and must be culturally adequate. Furthermore, the location of housing facilities must allow for the residents to access employment and social facilities, including healthcare, educational institutions and childcare services. Finally, housing must not threaten the residents’ right to health and thus must not be constructed in polluted areas. The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) in Article 5(e)(iii) obliges States “to prohibit and eliminate racial discrimination in all of its forms and to guarantee the right of everyone [...] to equality before the law, notably in the enjoyment of [...] the right to housing.”

### Security of Tenure:

Information and data collected by RAXEN show that Roma and Travelers living in informal settlements, squats and many living in accommodation with fixed short-term or no firm rental agreements, lack security of tenure. The number of Roma and Travelers living in informal settlements or unauthorized housing in the EU is unknown, but there is evidence of the persistence of this phenomenon despite measures taken to eradicate it. Forced evictions are a constant threat to persons living in such conditions. For example, in Slovakia, the Mid-Term Development Strategy of the Romany Ethnic Minority in the Slovak Republic defines unsettled land ownership as one of the principal reasons behind housing problems. In Bulgaria,



according a report in 2002, 70 per cent of the houses in urban Roma neighborhoods were illegally built. In Greece, a report prepared by the Public Enterprise of City Planning and Housing in 1999 recorded approximately 63,000 Roma living in unregulated encampments and 10,570 “nomadic” Roma. In France, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights noted in 2008 that most Roma groups live in squalid shantytowns, often without access to water or power. In Ireland, the 2007 Annual Count of traveler families found 7 per cent of the total 8,099 traveler families living in unauthorized accommodation.

#### Authorities Lack Information about the Number and Status of Romani Settlements

Many authorities do not gather and make public accurate data about the number of Roma or Romani communities in their jurisdiction, nor information as to whether settlements are formal or informal, or whether the settlements have access to basic services like water and sanitation, electricity, public transport, education and health care. In Štip, Macedonia, local NGOs reported that the municipality does not have any information about the number of Romani households living in formal or informal housing. According to NGO estimates, between 65-90% of Romani households in Macedonia are not legally registered. The failure of local authorities to gather this information demonstrates a lack of political will on the part of Member States to implement their legal and policy commitments; the collection of data related to structures inhabited by Roma and their legal status is a prerequisite for effective policy implementation on improving the housing conditions of Roma.

#### Authorities do not Formally Recognize Long-Standing Romani Communities:

Many Romani communities have existed for decades or even centuries. Despite their longstanding existence and the fact that residents in such settlements may have a claim to legal tenure through adverse possession, authorities often fail to make any distinction



between settlements which have grown up spontaneously in the last few years or which have been long-established. Sometimes those established 50 or 100 years ago developed on land, which was at that time not of any particular interest to any municipality, or was not included within a national development plan. Authorities did not pay attention to the fact that informal Romani settlements have grown from day to day.

#### Confusion about Land Use and Ownership:

Because of the failure of authorities to legally resolve the situation of such settlements for so long, a lot of confusion exists among the inhabitants concerning their ownership of houses and/or land. Living in such settlements their whole lives, many simply take for granted that they are rightful owners of their homes. This is the case of residents of Albania's Fshati Rom Romani community in Driza. Residents were not aware that the land on which their houses were built belongs to the State and that they do not have proper titles for their houses, which were built without planning permits.

#### GPR 13 and Housing:

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



GPR and other provisions:

- The participation of Roma in the media sector in general should be promoted by taking steps for journalists and presenters from among Roma communities to be recruited and trained.
- The media should be encouraged to refrain from broadcasting any information likely to fuel discrimination and intolerance toward Roma.
- The legislation and its implementation on the freedom of movement of persons within the EU should not be discriminatory towards Roma.
- Governments should set up a comprehensive system for recording acts of violence against Roma.
- Governments should also encourage systems to monitor anti-Gypsyism online and ensure effective prosecution.
- All Roma children should be registered at birth and all Roma should be issued with identity documents.



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**Pedro Aguilera**

Pedro Aguilera is a political scientist living in Barcelona, Spain.







What went through my mind during the talk was that it is extremely important to break down the full spectrum of antiziganism in Europe. Unfortunately, we have received very little concrete information about the situation in Austria.

When did antiziganism begin? With Nazism? We have a document from 1818, an edict that addresses how the “Gypsy plague” is to be dealt with. Work had therefore already been done, upon which the Nazis could build. The few who survived the Nazis are also in the midst of a cultural catastrophe. People and also knowledge were torn away from a community so heavily built on extended families. Austria’s Second Republic was not shocked by this fate, and it did not ask how Roma and Sinti could be helped. Instead, already in the 1950s, laws with adverse effects were laid out for them, they were not issued trade licenses that families had had before the war, marriage licenses were revoked, and citizenship was denied, even to those who had been living in Austria for generations. And all of that followed the horrors of the concentration camps. From naked survival to a life without rights. The effects of the Austrian state’s neglect of their situation are still tangible to this day. But there are some positive developments. Although it has come extremely late, psychotherapy is now offered free of charge to the victims of Nazism and their families.

Antiziganism in Austria is not so openly expressed as in other countries, such as Hungary. No camps or walls have



been built, but it still does happen that someone does not want to have a Roma child in a school. It also still happens that bad reputations are spread publically, clearly pejoratively, like a recent case in Wels, when there was talk about how a place rented out for a Roma wedding was laid to waste--and where I personally witnessed the opposite--and at the same time, after rock concerts, when the floors look like a tank had rolled over them, there is only talk about how great the concert was. People don't have the confidence to openly speak their mind. So, of course, the housing association doesn't write in their letter "You can't have the apartment because you are Roma!" -- but the effect remains the same.

So, when we say it's necessary that we find out more about each other, that isn't done (for instance, when we go to schools) by painting a pretty picture of the Roma as perfect citizens. Instead, we show the entire spectrum. And the spectrum ranges from those who wear business suits and carry a laptop to those with three tarpaulins under their arms or those making small deals just to ensure their survival. And there's nothing in it about the dangerous, aggressive people, as the stereotypes would like us to believe. But one thing has to be said: I wouldn't be surprised if we were aggressive folks. Because we would have enough reason to be. But the Roma are neither vengeful, nor is it important to them to point the finger at somebody. They just want a piece of acceptance, openness, and responsiveness.

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**Nicole Sevik**

Nicole Sevik is general secretary of the organization Ketani in Linz, Austria.

[sinti-roma.at](http://sinti-roma.at)





Impressions:

Depot







Media:

# Representation by others and Self-representation

Presentations of self-empowerment based media projects

What are their goals? How have they been able to reach them? What has been successful, what has (not yet) worked out? What can we learn from their experiences?



## **Migrazine**

Migrazine is a multilingual, self-organized web journal, edited and produced by migrant women, which appears three times a year. It was originally set up as an information pool for migrant women in cultural work.

After a technical overhaul and content revision, it became a form of thematic intervention, evolving from an information forum for migrant women to a discursive space created by migrant women. According to Vina Yun, migrant women are not defined as an ethnic, but rather a political identity, which resolutely resists subsuming migrants under one culture (culturalization), that happens, for example, when social or economic problems are hidden behind the guise of “intercultural conflicts.”



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### **Vina Yun**

Vina Yun is a freelance author, a writer for the Austrian feminist magazine “an.schläge” and on the editing board of “nylon” (today: “fiber”) and “MALMOE.” She lives in Vienna, Austria.

[migrazine.at/autorin/vina-yun](http://migrazine.at/autorin/vina-yun)





## Radio Patrin

The radio program “Radio Patrin” began as part of the migrant network of radio programs on regional radio stations and has now become a larger media initiative. Galjus’s idea for this program was to create a modern version of radio

communication, a Europe-wide medium for those who are excluded. The US government has even deemed the language Romanyi a threat to national security. For this reason, the idea of Radio Patrin is also understood as a form of terrorist communication. The term “terrorism” means putting forth representations that counter all forms that seek to suppress speaking for/about oneself, and has an effect within Europe today on a political, structural and hegemonic level. Radio Patrin is the voice of Sinti and Roma and understands truth as being diametrically opposed to the representation by others in mainstream media, and consciously challenges common stereotypes.

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### Orhan Galjus

Orhan Galjus is a journalist and the executive director of “Radio Patrin.” He lives in Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

[radiopatrinlive.com](http://radiopatrinlive.com)





### **Romedia Foundation**

Romedia Foundation is internationally active in combating stereotypical depictions of Roma and antiziganist representations. Among other things, Romedia Foundation produced a documentary series in

collaboration with a public broadcasting company. Forty-two films were made over the course of four years. Although production was cancelled when the political climate changed in Hungary, the films that had already been produced are still being aired in other countries. Barsóny believes this is a powerful strategy for two reasons: (1) because of the high quality production of the material; and (2) because of Romedia Foundation's independence and objectivity. In this way, it was possible to convey personal narratives, even in the face of strong political resistance. Placing the films in an international context has also been helpful; this was possible since some of the pieces produced dealt with contexts outside of Hungary. Romedia Foundation understands its work as part of the struggle for survival being carried out in the public arena, and employs journalism as a weapon.



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#### **Katalin Barsóny**

Katalin Barsóny is a sociologist, filmmaker and the head of "Romedia Foundation." She lives in Budapest, Hungary.

[romediaarchive.net/roma-woman/](http://romediaarchive.net/roma-woman/)





## **FAGIC**

Self-organizing the way media content is produced and distributed is a key method for countering antiziganist representations. This also means understanding the origins of antiziganist media discourse. In Spain, it began early on with

political interventions within the context of the first genocide of the Roma, which led to a ban of the Romany language, thus increasing the difficulties for Roma to speak for themselves within media discourse(s). At the same time, Roma were considered part of the Spanish population, which also meant that negative representations were created to politically legitimize the genocide. These images still circulate today and are used to uphold discriminatory politics, which also underscores the great necessity of criticizing media on a larger scale. In addition to building our own channels of communication, we also need to direct our attention to intervening in mainstream media.

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### **Cristóbal Laso Silva**

Cristóbal Laso Silva is vice president responsible for politics and communication at FAGIC in Barcelona, Spain.

[fagic.org/](http://fagic.org/)







# Self-empowerment through Networking(s)

How can we forge cooperations beyond national, religious and social borders?



## **European Roma Union**

Romanistan will become part of Europe, just as Europe will become part of the concept of Romanistan. The idea of a Roma World Organization definitely stirred up conflicts. The twenty million Roma in Europe need their own organization.

At the moment, fifteen countries are participating in this organization, which should be conceptualized in a way that is compatible with the European Union. In order to achieve this, we will have to found several preliminary organizations, set up associations that deal with specific issues, achieve organizational standards that surpass those of the Union, encourage autonomy and strengthen networks.



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### **Dragoljub Acković**

Dragoljub Acković is an anthropologist and political scientist, director of the Museum for Roma Culture and president of the European Roma Union. He lives in Belgrade, Serbia.





## **Slovenian Roma Union**

In Slovenia, Roma largely live in cities and suffer under utmost difficult social circumstances, including limited educational opportunities, unemployment, poverty and utmost discrimination. Only between 1995 and 2007 did the

Slovenian government begin to initiate diverse projects for minorities. Since then, many initiatives have managed to become independent and begin working as self-organizations. The legal and political situation has also improved within the Republic. There are now regional-level political representatives, which has contributed to improving conditions for creating self-organizations. The projects largely focus on education, employment, housing and health; separate forums for women and intellectuals have also been established.

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### **Jožek Horvat**

Jožek Horvat is the president of the Slovenian Roma Union. He lives in Murska Sobota, Slovenia.

[zveza-romov.si](http://zveza-romov.si)





### **ternYpe**

The network has been established as a space for activism, self-organization and youth empowerment. Almost half of the entire European Roma population is below the age of eighteen, and exchange between the generations is few and far

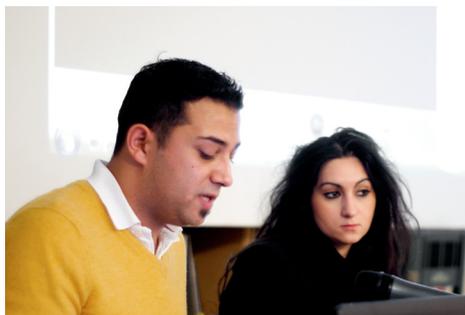
between. It seems that the older generation sees the younger generation as a threat to their own social standing. If anything, it is extremely important to strengthen the youth, to encourage them and build up their self-confidence, especially regarding their political work, since their self-esteem has already been so adversely affected by discrimination. Involving the youth is extremely important, not only in terms of identity formation, but also because it encourages them to become politically active. They are not only the future of the movement, supporting youth is also a question of strengthening self-determination. This also means including youth in the decision-making processes that will impact them the most.



**Karoline Mirga**

Karoline Mirga works in the youth network “tern Ype.” She lives in Krakow, Poland.

[romayouth.com](http://romayouth.com)



## **Roma Academic Club**

The Roma Academic Club is especially interested in the field of education. Here, it is possible for Roma with higher education and academic training, those still in school, and also non-Roma to network and work together to combat discrimination. The

organization seeks to make the importance of education clear and to actively involve children and adolescents in the educational system and to improve their career opportunities. For example, a fund was created for students and measures have also been drawn up to increase the enrollment of Roma students at universities. The Roma Academic Club also offers tutoring and courses in Roma settlements, which are held by members of the community.

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### **Vinko Cener**

Vinko Cener is the vice president of the Slovenian Roma Academic Club. He lives in Murska Sobota, Slovenia.

[romskiakademskiklub.si](http://romskiakademskiklub.si)





### **Alle bleiben (Everyone stays)**

Autochthonous Roma who had to flee Kosovo during the war are still merely tolerated in the European countries where they have sought refuge. This has been the case for some twenty to twenty-five years. What does “tolerance” mean within this

context? It means living in constant fear of deportation, since permits are given only for the following one to four weeks. It also means forced unemployment, since they are not granted working permits, and that they are forced to leave the educational system after completing compulsory education. That is structural racism: institutionally excluding migrant Roma, while simultaneously demanding them to become “integrated.” In order to change this situation, we started the campaign “Alle bleiben” (“Everyone stays”).



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#### **Kenan Emni**

Kenan Emni is an organizer at the Roma Center Göttingen and with the campaign “Alle bleiben.” He lives in Göttingen, Germany.

[roma-center.de](http://roma-center.de)  
[alle-bleiben.info](mailto:alle-bleiben.info)





Discussion:

# Romanistan in Austria



The discussion “Romanistan in Austria” focused on deliberating concept of Romanistan in terms of a virtual community to a sovereign nation. The local dimension, however, also brings up very specific questions. Which strategies are useful within the framework of a cooperation

project based in Austria? Which official measures will be taken and further built upon?





According to Rodolf Sarközi, the idea of a Romanistan nation goes back to 1933, when Roma had begun to be registered, making it easy to deport them to concentration camps in 1939. Within this context, registering Roma is viewed critically, even if done within the framework of

an international “Romanistan” passport in order to create freedom of travel. This goal has been realized through EU citizenship and through the passports issued by each nation. Therefore, Sarközi considers himself Austrian and as a well-deserving citizen of the Austrian state. Roma are one of six recognized minorities in Austria. For this reason, autochthonous Roma enjoy a special legal standing. But even here, it would be necessary to reflect on this and find a way to create unity, instead of splitting up into many different organizations, in order to make the best possible use of the resources. Participation in society is not only characterized by the Roma’s specific legal standing and by their organizations, but especially by their cooperation with and participation in other social areas, including party politics. However, there is no need to wait for them to network, because, to put it plain and simple: (for example) the Minority Advisory Council at the Office of the Federal Chancellor, which Sarközi chairs, doesn’t want to be part of a network, or at least he himself doesn’t want to. In addition, when criticizing the inaccessibility of public funding/support for the existing organizations, it is important to note that without this funding, most of these initiatives would not even exist. It would be extremely important not to offend those who fund the work, and not to highlight the negative aspects of their work. Financial support, offered for example by the Austria’s Labor Market Service (AMS) or the Romafond, would never differentiate between autochthonous and migrant Roma. Generally, when considering the situation of the Roma,

one must remember that many Roma families are not in need of any funding, because they are able to support themselves. Generalizations and initiatives, such as having one's own party or country like Romanistan, would only add to the resentments toward Roma. The state and political parties should therefore rather be viewed as partners who implement the demands.



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**Rudolf Sarközi**

Rudolf Sarközi is the chair of the Kulturverein österreichischer Roma (Cultural organization of Roma in Austria).

[kv-roma.at](http://kv-roma.at)





Rosa Gitta Martl disagrees that there are already enough organizations and that we should limit our focus on creating a form of unity. Greater diversity has a greater effect. Also, diversity brings about synergy. For instance, for the propaganda film *Tiefland* (Lowland) (the

title for which is taken from an opera about the Spanish Roma) by Leni Riefenstahl, which was filmed in Salzburg, Roma from so-called “collection camps for Gypsies” were forced to participate in the film as extras. Many were deported to Auschwitz and murdered after the shooting the film. Roma in Austria were only officially recognized as victims of Nazis in the 1990s, they had struggled for years to bring attention to their concerns. The director of the film, who had since aged, traveled to Spain to present her work in a positive light to the local Roma community. They were familiar with what had happened and she was met with bombardments of name and shame. This is an exemplary form of solidarity. Autochthonous Roma also need to show their solidarity on specific issues, such as the panhandler ban, which, to a great extent, stigmatizes migrant Roma. In order to represent the diversity of interests, it is necessary to have diversity in the organizations, projects and initiatives. Overarching forms of solidarity make it possible to join forces and deliberate common concerns.

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### Rosa Gitta Martl

Rosa Gitta Martl is the founder of the organization Ketani for Sinti and Roma. She lives in Linz, Austria.

[sinti-roma.at](http://sinti-roma.at)





There is still much work to be done concerning the general situation of Roma in Austria. Work needs to be done on political, structural and institutional levels, as well as by increasing self-awareness and empowerment within the Roma community. The distribution

of resources, however, is taking place along a dividing line that has split the community into autochthonous and migrant Roma. Financial and political opportunities for migrant Roma in Austria are extremely limited. First of all, within modern diversity politics, migrant Roma are split off to increase the difficulties in creating self-organizations. For instance, the City of Vienna refuses to support migrant projects that only focus on one single ethnic group, claiming that doing so does not contribute to integration, but to further segregation. Similarly, the national funding bodies are also reluctant to provide support, showing that Austria, in comparison to other countries and to the EU, seems to be more wary of providing funding initiatives specifically for migrant Roma. The only political support for funding that seems to work is reserved for autochthonous Roma. This was posited in response to Sarközi's statement that we should be happy with what we have, instead of critiquing state policies and of funding. A great deal of awareness raising and activism is still necessary.



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### **Usnija Buligovic**

Usnija Buligovic is the project coordinator at Thara Haus Volkshilfe. She lives in Vienna, Austria.

[volkshilfe.at](http://volkshilfe.at)





Under the 1976 Minorities Act (Volksgruppengesetz), Austrian legislation distinguishes autochthonous from migrant minorities. There is a department for recognized minority groups in the Office of the Austrian Federal Chancellor. This recognition also gives

minorities a vote in the Minority Advisory Council, is helpful in terms of financial support and provides structural support for founding organizations. One of the largest minorities, however, are immigrants, former guest workers from former Yugoslavia, who are not taken into consideration at all here. The problem caused is quite obvious when viewed against the backdrop of the Office of the Federal Chancellor's implementation of the EU framework strategy, and although they have been entrusted with this task, they do not take migrant Roma into consideration. It is therefore important to form as many organizations as possible with different kinds of functions, which correspond to the needs of the heterogeneous group of Roma. The next step would be to form a coalition at a key political moment.

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### Cornelia Kogoj

Cornelia Kogoj is a journalist, Germanist and curator. She is the general secretary of the Initiative Minderheiten. She lives in Vienna, Austria.

[minderheiten.at](http://minderheiten.at)





If we look back on history, Nenad Marinkovic reminds us, what may have been missing were solidarity and networking. That could be why the moment in history never arose for a nation of Romanistan to actually be declared. Today, it is this kind of solidarity that must

be worked on in order to build a bridge between autochthonous and migrant Roma. But that would only be the first step. Next, institutions would have to be created. There are many problems for migrant Roma initiatives due to language, but also due to the lack of structure. That's why so much potential is lost, and there is no doubt that this potential exists. This is where solidarity and a functioning network could come in and serve as vehicles for transferring this potential.



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**Nenad Marinkovic**

Nenad Marinkovic is the artistic director of Roma Kulturzentrum Vienna. He lives in Vienna, Austria.

[romakult.org](http://romakult.org)





One aim would be to have something like a yearly meeting, in order for all the organizations in Austria to be able to network. This could give us an overview of the entire spectrum of the individual strategies and specific focuses. We could share information about current

projects, exchange addresses and discuss cooperations. In this way, at the same time, several projects could receive information about a specific project that they might like to take part in and help organize. It would be a form of networking that would create and make use of the synergies in the best possible way, in a way that has never been done before.

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### **Nicole Sevik**

Nicole Sevik is the general secretary of the organization Ketani in Linz, Austria.

sinti-roma.at





**Dokumentation**  
**'Romanistan. Crossing Spaces in**  
**Europe. Conference.**  
**25 & 26 November 2011, Vienna'**

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Gumpendorfer Straße 63b  
A-1060 Vienna (Austria)  
office@igkultur.at

igkultur.at

Further information:  
romanistan.net



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