

# Roma Youth Empowerment for Active Citizenship

empowerment and  
challenging antigypsyism through  
non-formal education

an educational toolkit



# Roma Youth Empowerment for Active Citizenship: Empowerment and Challenging Antigypsyism through Non-formal Education

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# contents

## 1. Executive Summary .....6

## 2. Introduction

Aims and objectives of the seminars .....	8
Programme and methodology .....	9
Conclusions and outcomes .....	10
Phiren Amenca: voluntary service as a tool to fight antigypsyism .....	12
Grundtvig Learning Partnership .....	15
Council of Europe: challenging antigypsyism in youth work .....	16

## 3. Key topics of discussion

History of antigypsyism in Europe: The social causes .....	22
History and narratives about Roma in Europe .....	34
A better life in Western Europe?! The situation of recent Roma migrants in France and Germany .....	40
Interview with Georgi Ivanov, Phiren Amenca volunteer .....	46
Situation of Roma in Hungary .....	52
The challenge of comic books for Roma people .....	56

## 4. Toolkit: Activities to challenge antigypsyism

Roma History .....	64
Role Play: The Extraordinary Commission on the Roma issue .....	80
X-MEN versus MAGNETO .....	92
Odd one out: Who wants you to be in their group? .....	98
“BOOGIE MAN”: Stories of the world .....	102

## 5. Initiatives – Activism for change

Learning from other Budapest based Roma and non-Roma organizations: How to respond to antigypsyism? .....	104
Develop your own initiatives: New ideas to challenge antigypsyism .....	110

## 6. Conclusions and Follow-Up

Conclusions and outcomes .....	114
Learning Points of Participants .....	115
Impact and follow-up .....	117
Recommendations to European Commission and Council of Europe .....	118

## 7. Appendices

Description of partner organizations .....	120
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# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The learning partnership for “Roma Youth Empowerment for Active Citizenship” brings together Roma organizations experienced in adult education from 5 European countries for a two year lasting transnational networking and learning process. The main aims of the partnership are to strengthen the foreign language skills, the initiative and the social and civic skills of young adult learners, Roma and non-Roma, to combat racism and xenophobia, as well as to improve the approaches and methods of staff and trainers in the field. The partnership addresses the transnational and European challenge, which was recognized by the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020, that young Roma are at risk of social marginalization through lack and failures in formal educational systems. Stigmatization and social marginalization are recognized as the root causes of social exclusion. Therefore, the partnership develops innovative and inclusive approaches in adult education with young Roma and non-Roma adults based on non-formal and informal educational methods, and disseminates and advocates practices on national and European level.

The partnership organized various training-courses for young adult learners, and for staff members and trainers in May 2013 in Berlin, in September 2013 in Budapest, and in October 2013 in Kosice, in order to develop new educational tools and methods, and to develop their capacity in civic education and training. The seminars and trainings aimed to challenge antigypsyism as a specific form of racism and empower young adults, volunteers and youth leaders, as well as their organisations to address it in the context of their local work. A variety of methods were used during the seminars, from theoretical input to role plays and visits in the field, but always starting from participants experience and interest.

Within the sessions we analysed how marginalized groups – among them the Roma – are kept by majority society on the current social status quo through exclusionary social mechanisms. In order to reflect upon the constructed image of the ‘other’, we’ve used the metaphor of the „Boogie Man” as an expression of the fears of ‘the majority’ towards the „gypsies”.

This report will give you an overview of the seminars’ aims, methods, as well as its outcomes. It also explores the main themes of discussion in the session through articles from experts and team members. We’ve also considered important to introduce in the report some of the activities developed or adapted for the seminars that can be further used in youth work challenging antigypsyism by our volunteers and all those interested. The final part of the report gives an overview of different initiatives to challenge antigypsyism.

In conclusion, we believe that much remains to be done in order to challenge the current European paradigm, which manifests the “Roma as the problem”, and to shift our attention to stereotypes and antigypsyism; thus, to discuss, deconstruct and challenge the exclusionary mechanisms of the majority society. Shifting the focus to antigypsyism can empower young Roma and non-Roma, and strengthen their capacity to defend their human rights. In this respect, human rights education plays an important role. We hope that this report contributes to a growing debate and interest in this topic, and gives ideas for further educational activities of youth organizations on local and international level in Europe.

*The most useful thing I’ve found in the joint seminars is the idea to give the opportunity to young people that work in the same direction to meet, and to exchange with each other, and to have this feeling that we are not alone. This feeling is really great.*

Georgi, Phiren Amenca  
volunteer

## 2. INTRODUCTION

The partnership organized various training-courses for young adult learners, and for staff members and trainers in May 2013 in Berlin, in September 2013 in Budapest, and in October 2013 in Kosice, in order to develop new educational tools and methods, and to develop their capacity in civic education and training.

### Aims and objectives of the seminars

The seminars aimed to raise the awareness and youth activism to challenge stereotypes and antigypsyism, as well as to support the work of young Roma and non-Roma volunteers and activists as they engage to tackle discrimination and promote inclusion in their communities across the world.

The specific objectives were:

- to encourage dialogue and exchange of experience among participants;
- to offer information and resources, and raise awareness of issues related to youth voluntary service as a powerful response to xenophobia, and racism;
- to encourage critical reflection regarding antigypsyism and the situation of Roma in Europe, through both historical exploration and analysis of the current European context;
- to explore good practices of youth work challenging antigypsyism;
- to develop and share tools and methods in civic education and training in the work with young adults on racism, stereotypes and antigypsyism, as well as to build the capacity of young trainers and facilitators;



- to act as a powerful international network, supporting young activists through a sense of encouragement, community and a variety of services and support systems;
- to share information on different organizations and stakeholders relevant in the field, with a special focus on the Roma Youth Action Plan.

### Programme and methodology

The programme of the seminars was built around key topics:

- **Roma History:** We discussed the issue of national historical narratives and the need for several reference points of the European society, including the Roma. We analysed different sources from personal stories to the promotional materials of the European Commission.
- **Antigypsyism:** With the support of a guest expert, we analysed the mechanisms and processes of antigypsyism. Through several examples we understood how the homogenization, generalization, stigmatization and judging processes work.
- **Situation of Roma:** We got to know the situation of Roma in Europe with a special focus on Hungary and France, as well as examples from various countries through sharing experiences and knowledge of participants.



- **How to react:** We invited a guest from the Hungarian Civil Liberty Union and got to know how legal advisory service is combined with grassroots work. We visited five different Roma and Roma-related organizations in Budapest to understand their approach and strategy; moreover, an expert shared the experience of ternYpe International Roma Youth Network and of the ROMA REACT online campaign. We analysed the X-Men movie/comic books and identified Roma heroes in them such as Magneto. The participants got familiar with the positions of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King in the African-American Movement in order to discuss about integration, separation, self-determination, segregation and inclusion.
- **Initiatives:** The participants worked on their own initiatives, and we got to know the Roma Youth Action Plan and further opportunities provided by the European Commission and the Council of Europe.

The methodology used was based on the approaches of non-formal education, starting from the experience of participants and centred on their interests and learning needs. The methods varied from expert input, group discussions and role plays, to individual reflection and collective action.

## Conclusions and outcomes

The seminars achieved the goal of raising the participants' awareness about the mechanisms and dimensions of antigypsyism, as a basis for critical thinking about the situation of Roma in Europe. The seminars successfully framed elements in the debate around "antigypsyism", focusing on the problem of stereotypes and stigmatization in the society, thus going beyond a perspective which often looks exclusively at the Roma, their situation and culture.

As a result of the work in the seminars, dialogue, networking and joint engagement of young Roma and non-Roma were strengthened through development of initiatives which were to be implemented within the context of the local work of the partner organizations.

The seminars developed new methods and approaches which can be applied in other seminars, specifically a resource-based workshop on Roma history narratives, a role-play of a stakeholders' conference on the migration issue (e.g. in France), and a discussion on minority strategies based on the X-Men comics/movie drawing parallels to Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X.

Participants highlighted in their evaluation that the seminars supported the increase of their critical thinking skills and that it gave them a lot of knowledge and capacity to recognize and understand the mechanisms of antigypsyism in European context and beyond and it challenged them to also reflect on their own attitudes and behaviours. The seminars were an important experience in understanding and becoming part of a Roma and non-Roma movement and reflecting on how to best intervene in their communities through grassroots action. This educational work draws on the experience and cooperation of Phiren Amenca with the Council of Europe, and the seminars served as a good expression of the Phiren Amenca mission statement to challenge stereotypes and racism. As a result of a seminar of Phiren Amenca/RGDTIS, a video with stories of volunteers and active members of the organisation has also been produced and is available here:

<http://phirenamenca.eu/videos-challenging-antigypsyism/>



# voluntary service as a tool to fight antigypsyism

## mission

a network of Roma and non-Roma volunteers and voluntary service organizations creating opportunities for  
**NON-FORMAL EDUCATION, DIALOGUE  
AND ENGAGEMENT**, in order to **CHALLENGE  
STEREOTYPES AND RACISM.**

## principles

### Volunteering and voluntary service

We believe that volunteering is a powerful tool of social change, as volunteers dedicate their time and energy to contribute to society. Based on national and international voluntary service programs, the Phiren Amenca network creates opportunities for young Roma and non-Roma to live and engage in local communities and projects for up to one year. Placement themes may include youth and sport activities, social inclusion, arts and culture, environment and human rights. In exchange for their engagement, the volunteers can benefit from an unforgettable life experience, intercultural learning, non-



formal education, and new language skills. Voluntary service organizations in the Phiren Amenca network are European and North American non-profit bodies sending and/or hosting these young adults, and providing support such as mentoring, on-arrival, mid-term and pre-departure seminars, pocket money, room, board and insurance.

### Non-formal education

The experience of voluntary service can both stimulate & challenge young people through meeting new cultures, languages, people and ideas. This opportunity can enable the volunteers to develop new skills and talents, discover new interests, and make new relationships. Phiren Amenca network wants to support and encourage volunteers in this learning experience through seminars on intercultural learning, conflict-management, Roma history and cultures, civil rights activism, as well as discrimination, mechanisms of exclusion, antigypsyism and extremist movements today.



### Dialogue and Engagement

We believe that we need an active dialogue and engagement in society to strengthen trust, mutual understanding and respect between Roma and non-Roma. Phiren Amenca volunteers share a passion to learn and engage for our common mission to





challenge stereotypes and racism. Phiren Amenca encourages an open and safe community to share experiences in the dialogue among volunteers, hosting placements, local communities, and network members.

## Challenging Stereotypes and Racism

Stereotypes and racism are the root causes of social exclusion and marginalization of Roma. As Roma and non-Roma we want to create equal opportunities for all young people in our societies, especially through giving equal access to voluntary service.

more info at [www.phirenamenca.eu](http://www.phirenamenca.eu)



# Grundtvig Learning Partnership

## Roma Youth Empowerment for Active Citizenship

## mission

The main aims of the partnership are to strengthen the foreign language skills, the initiative and **SOCIAL AND CIVIC SKILLS OF ADULT LEARNERS**, to **COMBAT RACISM AND XENOPHOBIA**, as well as to improve the **APPROACHES AND METHODS** of staff and trainers in the field.

The learning partnership for brings together Roma organizations experienced in adult education from 5 European countries for a two year lasting transnational networking and learning process. The aims will be reached through local and national training-courses, actions, performances, summer schools, and debates, through international mobilities of staff/trainers and young adult learners to share practices and experiences and to transfer methods cross-borders, through networking meetings, through the establishment of ICT working tools such as an online intranet, webpage and video-conferences, and last but not least through the development of toolkits and a publication of best practices, needs and recommendations for educational institutions and policy-makers. The partnership addresses the transnational and European challenge, which was recognized by the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020, that young Roma are at risk of social marginalization through lack and failures in formal educational systems. Stigmatization and social marginalization are recognized as the root causes of social exclusion. Therefore, the partnership develops innovative and inclusive approaches in adult education with young Roma and non-Roma adults based on non-formal and informal educational methods, and disseminates and advocates practices on national and European level.



Lifelong Learning Programme

With the financial support of the Grundtvig Learning Partnership programme in the framework of the Lifelong Learning Program of the European Commission.



## CHALLENGING ANTIGYPSYISM IN YOUTH WORK

The last years have been marked by significant progress in terms of policy and directives adopted by European institutions and organisations aiming to change the situation of the largest minority in Europe, the Roma. The adoption of the Strasbourg Declaration on Roma by the Council of Europe in 2010, the equality directives and the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies of the European Commission, and the Action Plan on Improving the situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe constitute a significant step towards guaranteeing respect for the human rights and social inclusion of Roma people in Europe. All these steps and measures are important, but they need to take in consideration the experience and needs of Roma young people, as well as they need to translate into measures and actions that manage to positively affect the daily life of Roma communities in Europe.

## Challenging antigypsyism, exercising human rights: the contribution of youth work

The youth sector of the Council of Europe has already initiated activities with Roma young people in 1995 through a training

course in the framework of the first All Different-All Equal youth campaign against racism, Anti-Semitism, xenophobia and intolerance. Activities, such as study sessions, training courses, support to local youth projects and youth organisations have been always part of the work of the Department against racism and discrimination and for human rights.



# The Roma Youth Action Plan

The Roma Youth Action Plan was born in 2011 as a response of the Council of Europe to two types of challenges: the ones faced by Roma young people in European society and to the absence of Roma youth issues and concerns in the policies and programmes of the European institutions. The plan was a result of the Roma Youth Conference (Strasbourg, September 2011) and is based on the input of Roma young people and youth organisations.

**The plan aims to:**

- Support the creation of an environment where Roma youth can grow up free from discrimination and confident about their future perspectives, while appreciating their plural cultural backgrounds and affiliations as young people, as Roma, as citizens of their countries, and as active Europeans
- Change prejudices and stereotypical attitudes against Roma
- Support and develop the participation and autonomy of Roma youth at European, national, and local levels
- Defend the human rights of Roma by empowering young Roma through human rights education
- Promote real equal opportunities for Roma young people in

- all aspects of life, notably education, employment, health, and housing
- Combat the segregation of Roma schools and settlements
- Support an integrated approach to all Roma youth-related policies
- Value and promote Roma identity, culture, and language.

**The guiding principles of the Roma Youth Action Plan are:**

- Direct, constant and consistent involvement of Roma youth and Roma youth organisations in the implementation of the Plan with other partners
- Creating synergies among initiatives in order to respond to the need for systemic changes in structural forms of discrimination
- Adopting human-rights based approaches to the challenges faced by young Roma, including a concern for gender equality
- Mainstreaming Roma issues in youth policy and mainstreaming youth issues in Roma-related policies
- Encouraging change and action at the local and national levels.

**The main working areas of the Roma youth action plan are:**



- Strengthening a Roma youth identity
- Addressing multiple discrimination and recognising plural identities Building a Roma youth movement
- Building a stronger Roma youth movement
- Increasing the capacity of Roma youth organisations to participate in policy making
- Human rights and human rights education
- Combating discrimination and antigypsyism.

Each of these working areas is supported by activities implemented either by the Youth Department of the Council of Europe, or by partner organisations and institutions: Forum of European Roma Young People, ternYpe – International Roma Youth Network, European Youth Forum, but as well the Open Society Foundations, the European Roma Rights Centre and OSCE-ODIHR. An Informal Contact Group coordinates the partners in the implementation and evaluation of the programme of activities.



## Taking action from local to international level

The challenge of any European action plan is to translate itself in meaningful changes in the life of those who are its target, and the success of the Roma youth action plan is equally dependant on that. Combating discrimination relies on the capacity of the Roma community and Roma young people to recognise it and uphold their human rights, as much as it relies on the capacity of the rest of the society to address racism and discrimination, to take measures that all its members can enjoy and exercise their human rights and can freely participate in the life of the community.

**more info at [www.coe.int/youth/roma](http://www.coe.int/youth/roma)**



## 3. KEY TOPICS OF DISCUSSION



**HISTORY OF ANTIGYPSYISM IN EUROPE:**  
THE SOCIAL CAUSES

**HISTORY AND NARRATIVES ABOUT ROMA IN EUROPE**

**A BETTER LIFE IN WESTERN EUROPE?!**  
THE SITUATION OF RECENT ROMA MIGRANTS  
IN FRANCE AND GERMANY

**INTERVIEW WITH GEORGI IVANOV,**  
**PHIREN AMENCA VOLUNTEER,**  
ABOUT HIS WORK WITH ROMA MIGRANTS IN BERLIN

**SITUATION OF ROMA IN HUNGARY**

**THE CHALLENGE OF COMIC BOOKS FOR ROMA PEOPLE**



# HISTORY OF ANTIGYPSYISM IN EUROPE:

## THE SOCIAL CAUSES

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

After presenting a short working definition of antigypsyism, the presenter argued for a perspective shift in approaches to antigypsyism. Therefore, differentiating between five different



levels of antigypsyism was proposed, and afterwards an analysis of three important features of antigypsyist semantics was presented.

## Definition

Antigypsyism is composed primarily of two elements. First, there is resentment against "the Gypsies", which involves a majority society sharing images and beliefs and projecting them onto specific social groups, among them mainly those who identify themselves as Roma, Sinti, Kalderashi, Irish Travellers, etc. The second element of antigypsyism consists of discriminatory and often violent social structure and actions with which Roma or other people stigmatized as "Gypsies" are confronted<sup>1</sup>.

The Holocaust<sup>2</sup> committed by the Germans and their collaborators marks the worst manifestation of the persecution of people as "Gypsies". An estimated 500,000 people were killed as "Gypsies" from nearly every European country, and tens of thousands more were victims of forced sterilization, deportation, or detainment camps.

However, the persecution of people as "Gypsies" has a much longer history and has been happening for nearly half a millennium. In today's Europe, antigypsyism is still among the most virulent and most violent forms of social resentment. Millions of Roma live in inhumane circumstances in many

1. Within this article, I will use "Roma" as the term for people who self-identify as such. "Gypsies" is used for the projected image that majority societies have made up for Roma and for others.

2. For the history of the genocide of the Roma, see Michael Zimmermann's benchmark book, "Rassennutopie und Genozid" (Zimmermann 1996). See also Rose 1995.

European countries, among them Bulgaria, Romania, and Hungary. In Kosovo, tens of thousands of Roma were cast out of their homes after the civil war. In many European countries such as Italy, the Czech Republic and Bulgaria, violent uprisings against Roma people have taken place during the last year. At the same time, Roma are the biggest so-called “ethnic minority”<sup>3</sup> in the European Union.

Despite this violent history and the current dangerous situation, social scientific research on antigypsyism is still in its early stages and has yet to become its own discipline; very often antigypsyism is not even recognized as a separate phenomenon, distinct from racism and/or antisemitism. Therefore I want to propose an approach to antigypsyism which tries to avoid some of the mistakes that have been made in the past, aims for a multi-level analysis, and offers an explanation of antigypsyism completely separate from those approaches which focus on the cultural differences between Roma and the members of majority societies.

## Shift in perspective

The most important shift in an analysis of antigypsyism must be a change of focus from the object of discrimination – the Roma – to the majority society. Until now, especially at European level, the fight against antigypsyism has always focused on the Roma. Improving the poor living conditions of many Roma is an important goal.

However, it is even more important to understand the fact that these poor conditions must be interpreted as the result of centuries-long discrimination, which still exists today. What one needs to understand is that antigypsyism does not necessarily need actual Roma people to discriminate against. Antigypsyist images can very well be projected onto other groups as well. Also—and this is the most important point—it is necessary to understand antigypsyism as an ideology, a form of communication, a set of images and stereotypes which are

constructed, perpetuated and reaffirmed by majority societies. We need to not only analyse these discriminatory actions and structures themselves, but also to analyse the patterns, logic, and functions of antigypsyist ideology.

## Five levels of antigypsyism

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

The social practices that sum up the first level take place **in a historical and social framework of political developments, economic crises, anti-discrimination laws**, etc. This framework comprises the second level of antigypsyism. Very often, elements of this social and historical framework are misinterpreted as the causes of antigypsyism, for example, when politicians argue that an economic crisis is the cause for violent uprisings against Roma. There is an important difference between the cause of something and the specific circumstances which promote restrain the manifestation of antigypsyist social practices. In order to be able to accuse “the Gypsies” of being responsible for a bad economic situation, individuals and groups in the majority society need to have inherited a whole set of traditional antigypsyist images, stereotypes and legends prior to passing such a judgment. **Those images and stereotypes are the third level of antigypsyism.** On that level, we must analyse all the “knowledge” about “Gypsies” which is produced and re-produced in European majority societies, in the minds of its members and in the products of its culture industries.<sup>4</sup>

The logic behind the image of the “Gypsy” has nothing to do with either real experiences or with a reaction to “strangers”.

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

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

**A fourth level is the analysis of the structure of the meanings of antigypsyism.** This structure can be understood as a combination of abstract meanings (see Holz 2001: 133-140) underlying antigypsyist stereotypes and images. Those images exist in their current form not by chance, but are the expression of a system of meanings and a structure of communication that defines them.

**This structure's specific form is a reaction to the social norms and values that evolve in the majority society. Those norms and values are the fifth level of antigypsyism** in the model proposed here. To enforce values and norms in the majority society, the "Gypsies" serve as projective counter-images of the "good citizen" who behaves well and thinks and feels according to such norms and values.

Since forms of behaviour and feelings that violate these norms continue to exist in society, the members of the majority project those violations of social norms and values onto the figurative "Gypsy". The authorities follow suit and help establish the figure of "the Gypsy" as the model of a certain kind of non-conformist behaviour (see Lucassen 1996).

## The historical background of antigypsyism in Europe

The historical situation in which European societies mention "Gypsies" for the first time in the early modern period has to be understood as one of fundamental social change. As Franz Maciejewski points out (Maciejewski 1994, 1996), Western societies went through a process that changed the foundations of society itself. According to Maciejewski, economically this meant the process of transformation from an agricultural economy to a capital-based economy, including the rising significance of labour and work and the necessity of self-discipline. Politically, it meant both a process during which territories and later nation-states were established, as well as the strengthening of their monopoly on violence. At the level of gender relations, it meant the strengthening of the patriarchy, as well as the establishment of the feminine-coded private

sphere and the masculine-coded public sphere, as well as the strengthening of sexual moral codes. Culturally, it meant the establishment of a scientific approach to the world, together with the necessity for a rational approach to one's way of life (see Maciejewski 1994: 42, Maciejewski 1996: 12.)

It was a long process and many individuals and social groups hesitated or even resisted joining the new order. The image of "the Gypsy" was one that helped promote these values. By allowing individuals within the majority to project all failed attempts to live up to such values on those stigmatized as "Gypsies", majority-society members were given the possibility to strengthen their individual and collective identities and to take violent actions against those stigmatized as the ones questioning the new values and thus as symbolizing an imagined, archaic society.

## Elements of the structure of meanings

The argument put forth in this paper can be supported by analysing three of the basic tropes of modern antigypsyism (see End 2012). To be clear: what is referred to here is not an analysis of "Roma cultures", or of a social utopia, or of any real characteristic of an actually existing group. Rather, this is the description of patterns of antigypsyism which can be found in antigypsyist texts or media from majority societies.

## Non-identity

The first important element of the antigypsyist structure of meanings is typically expressed as follows: "Gypsies don't have a stable identity. On the contrary, their characteristic is non-identity, ambivalence." The antigypsyist structure of meanings is always a dual structure, because it tells us something about the majority society as well. In today's antigypsyism, the "we-group" is always formed nationally, so for this example we will use the "Germans", although it could be any other European nationality as well: "Germans have a stable, rooted, fixed and undivided identity."

So the role of the "Gypsies" in this antigypsyist mentality was not



only that of having another denomination or another religion of the same kind as one's own, it was also that of occupying a position outside the whole system of religious identity. The same position outside the system of identities was assigned to "Gypsies" in the realm of nationalities and national identities. In antigypsyist thinking, the image is not that "Gypsies" have a nationality like "the Germans", "the French" or "the Polish" do; rather, what is said about "the Gypsies" is that they have no nationality – they do not belong anywhere and are not rooted anywhere at all. Another version of this national non-identity is the use of the term "not really", which functions like this: "Yes, they are Germans, but they are not really Germans like other Germans." However, this is not the same "not really" of other "not really Germans", such as "Turkish" or "Polish" people. "The Gypsies" are really not really. Even the racists would not know which country to send them to, which country they "belong" to. So the racist slur "Turks go back to Turkey" wouldn't be possible for the imagined "Gypsies". Their place in the identity-system of nationalities is that of non-identity.<sup>5</sup> The language of "eternal nomads", "unstable life styles", "flexibility" and even that of "the Gypsies" as the "real Europeans" must accordingly be interpreted as one of the ways in which majority societies strengthen their specific concepts of stable, discrete group identities.

## Archaic Parasitism

The second central element of antigypsyism is the trope which we will call "archaic parasitism". Its abstract form goes like this: "Gypsies don't produce their food themselves. They get it from their hosts by ignoring the basic rules of economy." Of course, there is a counter-narrative to this for the majority society: "Germans earn their bread by working hard". Those statements help to explain the difference between the structure of meanings (which is the fourth level of antigypsyism) and the images and stereotypes (i.e., the third level). The prejudices sound so alike that many scholars have come to believe there is a parallel between the different structures of mainstream resentment regarding "work". However, analysing these deeper meanings offers the possibility of better understanding what

antigypsyists mean when they say "Gypsies" are "unwilling to work". What they have in mind is often described as a kind of parasitical relationship. The function of these narratives in this case is different from that of the unwillingness to work ascribed to "Jews" or "Blacks". The meaning of "Jewish laziness" in modern antisemitism is also that "Jews" consume the food which the majority society produces, but their procurement of it is different. Whereas the construction of the "Gypsies" is built on the idea of ignoring and undermining standards of civilization, such as the rule that one has to work and to own property or the very idea of property as such, the construction of the "Jews" signifies them as stretching, perverting, or overreaching the modern achievements and rules of civilization, such as stock exchanges, banks, interest, the media, etc. So the "Jews" are imagined to be too civilized, whereas the "Gypsies" are imagined as archaic.

The construction of "Black laziness" is again different. In racist Eurocentric worldviews, "Blacks" live directly from nature, without working. They just gather from the rich environment (i.e., nature) they live in. The construction is not a parasitical one, but rather that of closeness to animals, to nature itself. The antigypsyist view of "the Gypsy" in the economic field of "work" is that of an archaic parasite who lives off of the products of the hard work done by the majority society.

## Absence of discipline

This idea expresses itself as follows: "Gypsies tend to directly satisfy their desires. They are not able to discipline themselves." vs. "Germans discipline themselves and plan for the future." This trope, just like the others, is most obviously connected to the disciplinary actions undertaken throughout past centuries in early modern Europe. The notion finds expression in many variations. A very colourful example is Grellmann's notion that "Gypsies" would be able to live days without bread, as long as they have their tobacco (Grellmann 1787: 47-48). Tobacco here is the symbol for pure, undisciplined lust. Bread, on the other hand, is the symbol for rational nutrition, without any taste or satisfaction.

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5. For the non-identity attributed to "Jews", see Holz 2004.

## Conclusion

This text is just a very short insight pointing out that most the stereotypes that exist about "Gypsies" are rooted in the historical social processes of norm- and moral-production which European majority societies have undergone. That does not mean it is not possible to find Roma who behave in the ways that antigypsyist stereotypes imagine them. Rather, it means that it is irrelevant whether Roma people do or do not behave in these ways, because antigypsyism is not based on truth or facts. Antigypsyism will continue to serve as a basis for the stigmatization of Roma people as "Gypsy nomads" even where they have been settled for generations, and as "Gypsy beggars", even where they work as farmers. It is a cultural tradition, an image, and a form of communication that is reproduced independent of the real life of the people stigmatized as "Gypsies" – a construction in the minds and the cultural products of the majority society that does not require any relationship to real experience. This is why it is so important to change perspectives and analyse antigypsyism as rooted in majority societies, not in the Roma people themselves.

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# HISTORY AND NARRATIVES ABOUT ROMA IN EUROPE

*"The past is never dead. It's not even past."*

William Faulkner, Requiem for a Nun

## History, narratives and collective memory

Equally an act of investigation and imagination, history is means to study the past in order to understand the present. The analysis of the past offers the possibility to understand change and continuity over time. As an act of interpretation, examination, and re-interpretation, historic investigation is based on a variety of sources from written communication, oral history and encompassing the study of artefacts.

The analysis and interpretation of history provide an essential context for evaluating contemporary institutions, politics, and cultures. It helps one to understand the complexity of our world and provides insights to help cope with the problems and possibilities of the present and future.

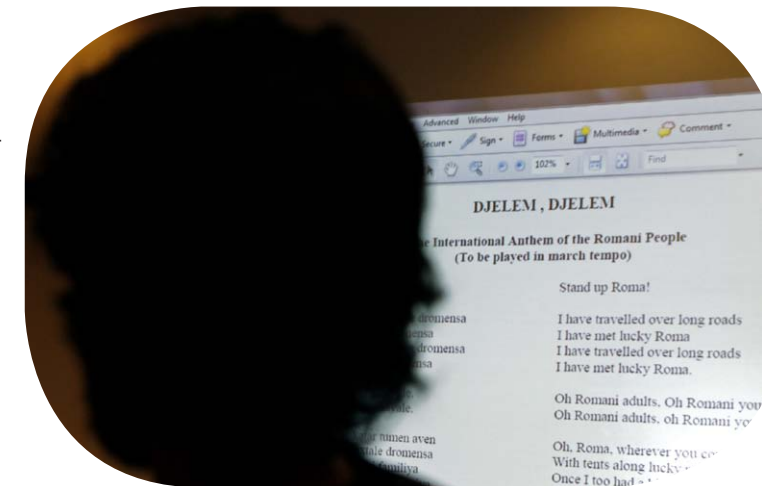
Agreement is not always to be found among historians, and eventually is not essential as the variety of opinions and

interpretations enrich the debate. Neutrality is hard to argue in history as being an interpretation done in the present over the past; it is subject to the opinions and beliefs, as well as the context in which the historian operates. Which means that all historic phenomena can be interpreted and re-constructed from multiple perspectives, depending on the evidence being used, the limitations and interests of those reconstructing and interpreting and the shifting cultural influences, which determine what each generation considers important in regard to the past? If neutrality is impossible in historic interpretation, objectivity is not.

If we are to look at historiography as a production and reflection of the times we are living in, we can also look at it as yet another reflection of the discrimination experienced in our societies. For example, the recognition of Roma history does not have a long past. It was not acknowledged until the second half of the 20th century, when historians with Roma background vindicated the right to create a neutral narrative taking into account the experience and opinion of the Roma community (viewed by many as pro-Roma) and opposed to existing narratives stemming from non-Roma sources and historians.

The focus on the history of a minority group and its mainstreaming into the historic production, alongside with recognition of the subject in mainstream history education is an act of justice and inclusion.

History is essential in creating a sense of identity for oneself and the community(ies) we belong to in an attempt to understand the collective past that brought us to the historic present. The way in which people identify and interact with one another is by and large a consequence of history, which shapes and conditions



individuals and societies whether they fully understand it or not. Thought by some to be the fundamental nature of the self, the construction of a personal narrative process is involved in a person's sense of personal or cultural identity, and in the creation and construction of memories. As Paul Ricoeur asserts in *Oneself as Another*: "the narrative constructs the identity of the character, what can be called his or her narrative identity, in constructing that of the story told. It is the identity of the story that makes the identity of the character". Each community and group has at least one narrative on its founding and becoming over time. These narratives are essential in group-identity construction and are an essential element in historical analysis, in history learning and teaching. This collective narrative is based on 'collective memory' of the group(s) we belong to

(family, ethnic group, etc.), and it is important as the individual memories and narratives take shape against this backdrop of collective memory. The narratives we tell about the past, be they explanations over the founding or explanations of major events in

the history of a community are present all over our daily lives through media, politics, education, places of collective memory and elsewhere.

## Politics of history education

Historic interpretation has also a political dimension attached to it. As one of the main subjects taught in formal education, history education is an indicator of 'the accepted' views of the present and a major means of socialising youth to the ideals and ideologies of the state. History education,

including curricula, textbooks and teaching methodology, is not just a simple delivery of facts, but the result of political action. Textbooks and curricula are a good indicator of the authoritative narratives of the state that delimit the proper behaviour of citizens. The content of these narratives, both what is included and what is forgotten, illustrate whose history is valued and reproduced in service to the state or social order. The construction and conduct of history education is indicator of the power struggles and ideological controversies on socialising and acculturating youth, and key elements in the processes through which a society is continually recreated.

The history of the Roma taught or untaught in the mainstream history education, as well as the methodology used, can play an important role in de-constructing and challenging antigypsyism or in reinforcing it by reiterating same myths that inform the current structures of discrimination. As D. Sibley explains: *"accounts of non-conforming behaviour assume the form of a romantic myth, or they involve amputations of deviancy, which are also largely mythical; the romantic image, located at a distance or in the past, necessarily puts the minority on the outside"* ( for more, see previous section on **History of antigypsyism in Europe: the social causes**).

## Reclaiming 'the forgotten' and listening to one another

Any historic interpretation is bound to 'the forgotten', as no reconstruction of the past can faithfully represent everything that happened and in the process of selecting sources something is always forgotten and left aside. This is equally valid for personal narratives and collective memories. But mainstream narratives often exclude the stories and memories of the minority groups or pick upon only those recollections that reinforce the mainstream narrative, creating another kind of 'forgotten' history.

However, all communities, including the Roma, have a collective memory and their own narrative over the past. Oral history represents an important endeavour in the process of ensuring testimonies from the Roma communities and their



own views and experience. As part of the Romani movement, we can identify a so-called “re-learning” and creation process of a common history or narrative, as a main element and basis of a group identity. International holidays like the 8 April (International Roma Day), or the 2 August (Commemoration Day of the Roma and Sinti Genocide – Porajmos) also serve this aim. To this end, materials such as the Roma History Factsheets and others have been produced to serve teachers and community workers to be able to inform themselves, but also organize lessons and activities for the community, but also for schools on the theme.

As well, youth organisations and especially minority youth organisations have the capacity to open the question of histories and narratives and support young people in the process of identity building by supporting them in necessary skills and attitudes to look at the past.

## Learning the history of the Roma and human rights education

During the study session, participants were introduced to the main phases of Roma history and were confronted with historical sources which they had to analyse. Many of them have not had before a structured presentation on the history of the Roma in Europe and it served as support to further understand the mechanism of discrimination.

Another element of the activity on history was to look at different sources and analyse them from a critical point of view. The sources were various from political texts of Roma organisations to fairy tales on the origin of the Roma, to photography, paintings and live interviews. While working with the historic sources, participants were also in a position to look, share and discuss what they have learnt about the history of the Roma community. This leads to a process of listening to each other and creates the basis for dialogue and more inclusive approach to the past, rather than learning an exclusive historic narrative mainstreamed. Participants were to analyse whether the source is of Roma origin, what is the meaning of that and if the community itself is aware of the existence of the source.

Working with the stories and metaphor of the ‘Boogie man’, the participants also were able to reflect on how identity building in opposition to the other, and on how further associations can be built in order to explain how the Roma become a ‘Boogie man’ throughout European history and narratives.

Human rights education provides also a context and approach in which sensitive issues of history can be dealt with from the values and principle perspective of human rights: equality, human dignity, but as well freedom, respect for the others, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice and responsibility.

The activity is extensively described in the toolkit section of this report.

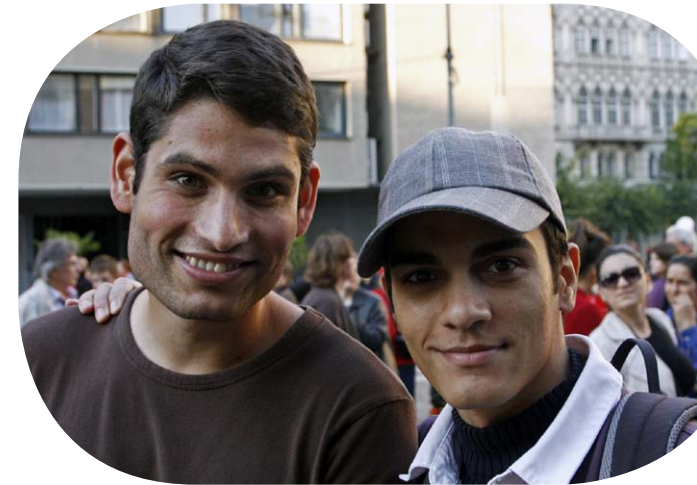
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# A BETTER LIFE IN WESTERN EUROPE?!

## THE SITUATION OF RECENT ROMA MIGRANTS IN FRANCE AND GERMANY

### Astrid Oelpenich

In 2007, the Romanian President Traian Basescu told his wife "how aggressive this filthy gypsy was"<sup>1</sup>. Between 2008 and 2012, he was involved in diplomatic negotiations with the French government concerning the situation of Romanian citizens, especially Roma, in France.

- The Romanian President Basescu: "As long as we are hypocrite about these issues, the integration of the Roma won't happen. We all know that the travelling Roma haven't really made a habit from working or from pursuing education for their children. These two things will have to be tackled and solved"<sup>2</sup>
- The French Minister of the Interior Valls: "France has a policy of evacuating illegal camps and of escorting them [the

1. This statement reproduces strong antigypsyist stereotypes which are present strongly in the discourse of the French and Romanian politicians. This fictional dialogue should give an idea of the political situation and positions which are articulated on international level.

2. Paun, Carmen (2010): "Basescu: 'The travelling Roma are those in need of integration'". <http://www.digitaljournal.com/article/297663> (17.10.2012).

Roma immigrants] to the border."<sup>3</sup>

- Basescu: "Romania will always defend the Roma's right to move freely in Europe. They are European citizens and as long as there is no evidence they broke the law they should enjoy the same rights of any European citizen."<sup>4</sup>
- The French President Sarkozy: "[The free movement of persons] does not entitle people to move onto territory that does not belong to them."<sup>5</sup>
- Valls: "The repatriations do not take the form, in any way, of forced, collective expulsions." "France cannot accommodate all the misery in Europe." "[The camps are] sources of illegal trafficking, of profoundly shocking living standards, of exploitation of children for begging, of prostitution and crime"<sup>6</sup>
- Basescu: "[I understand] the problems created by the Roma camps outside the French cities."<sup>7</sup>
- The French Europe Minister Lellouche: "Very few of the people coming here try to integrate, to fit in, and huge numbers of minors are involved in drug trafficking networks. There is no question of stigmatising a community ... but we are faced with a real problem and the time has come to



3. L., C. (2012): "Romania's Roma – Where is Europe's Roma Policy?". <http://www.economist.com/blogs/easternapproaches/2012/09/romania-roma/print> (17.10.2012).

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- deal with it.”<sup>8</sup>
- Basescu: “Maybe we need to guarantee them access to seasonal jobs. And maybe we need to think of a way to send teachers in these travelling Roma communities to teach the children to read and to write. We need to find intelligent solutions like these. The standard solutions used until now have not worked.”<sup>9</sup>



This conversation is a collage of statements made by members of the Romanian and French governments between 2010 and 2012 in reference to Romanian Roma residing in France. Since the accession of

Romania and Bulgaria to the European Union, and even before, an unknown number of Roma from these countries migrated into Western European countries to escape discrimination and socio-economic exclusion. As European citizens they made use of their right of free movement. In France, a big number of them have settled in illegal camps which have become the main focus of political discussions and media coverage of the topic. In July 2010 the French President Nicolas Sarkozy initiated a repatriation and deportation program, expulsing thousands of Roma back to Romania and Bulgaria. He asked his Interior Minister to “put an end to the wild squatting and camping of Roma”, and to break down half of 539 illegal Romani camps in France within three months, as the local authorized camps

8. Davies, Lizzy (2010): “Nicolas Sarkozy gets tough on France’s itinerant groups”. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/jul/27/france-nicolas-sarkozy-roma-gypsy> (17.10.2012).

9. Paun, Carmen (2010): “Basescu: The travelling Roma are those in need of integration”. <http://www.digitaljournal.com/article/297663> (17.10.2012).

were “sources of illegal trafficking, of profoundly shocking living standards, of exploitation of children for begging, of prostitution and crime”. A leaked file of the Interior Ministry to regional police forces singled out specific repressive measures towards Roma.

While Sarkozy used the moment to gain popularity through strong security measures, the European Commission in September 2010 criticized the stigmatization and discrimination of the Roma minority, and raised the question about France’s violation of European laws of free movement. The EU Justice Commissioner Viviane Reding called the situation a “disgrace”<sup>10</sup> and compared the measures taken by the French government to those in the Second World War. “In its Resolution of 9 September 2010 on the situation of Roma and on freedom of movement in the European Union [...], the European Parliament [...] expresses its deep concern at the measures taken by the French authorities and by other Member States’ authorities targeting Roma and Travellers and providing for their expulsion; urges those authorities immediately to suspend all expulsions of Roma (...)”<sup>11</sup>. The European Committee of Social Rights in its document emphasizes the right to free movement and the principle of equal treatment and makes explicit that the expulsions which explicitly targeted and stigmatized Roma, violated European laws. The stigmatizing rhetoric of the French government drew on fears and persisting antigypsyist prejudices. In 2011 the European Commission also condemned the expulsions “discriminatory”<sup>12</sup> and “contrary to human dignity”<sup>13</sup>.

Still the evictions and mass expulsions have not stopped since.

10. BBC News Europe (2010): “Q&A: France Roma expulsions”. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-11027288?print=true> (17.10.2012).

11. EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF SOCIAL RIGHTS (2011): DECISION ON THE MERITS. Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE) v. France. Complaint No. 63/2010. [http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/socialcharter/Complaints/CC63Merits\\_en.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/socialcharter/Complaints/CC63Merits_en.pdf) (29.11.2012). p.9.

12. Aljazeera (2011): “Rights body condemns French Roma expulsions”. <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/europe/2011/11/20111110201357532347.html> (29.11.2012).

13. Aljazeera (2011): “Rights body condemns French Roma expulsions”. <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/europe/2011/11/20111110201357532347.html> (29.11.2012).

They have continued in 2011 and even under the new Socialist government of Francois Hollande in 2012 without any concrete political intervention by the European Union.

In other Western European countries immigration of Roma was also a contested topic. Since the admission of Romania and Bulgaria to the European Union more and more Romanian and Bulgarian citizens have moved to Germany in search of a better life. In Berlin the case of several Roma families living in a park in 2009 has created strong media coverage of the topic with very one-sided opinions. The political institutions first reacted offering money to the people to return to their countries. Mainly due to the initiative of NGOs such as the Roma and non-Roma youth organization Amaro Drom contact points offering social consulting were created, supporting the new migrants with advice and translations in all life spheres.

# INTERVIEW WITH GEORGI IVANOV, PHIREN AMENCA VOLUNTEER,

## ABOUT HIS WORK WITH ROMA MIGRANTS IN BERLIN

**Interview conducted by Astrid Oelpenich**

*Georgi Ivanov is a Phiren Amenca volunteer who works in Amaro Drom e.V. contact point for Roma from Bulgaria and Romania in Berlin. Georgi himself comes from Bulgaria. He shared with us some of the experiences he faced during his work.*

*This example shows the importance of non-governmental actors and local networks as well as self-organizations showing solidarity and support to the people in their search for a better life. Still the various cases of discrimination show that it is important not only to offer support to those suffering from discrimination but also to address the antigypsyism which is deeply rooted in the majority society and to fight stereotypes*



*and racism. Roma from Romania and Bulgaria having the same rights as other European citizens on paper does not mean that they are being implemented.*

*We need governments and local political institutions which take a clear stand against antigypsyism and offer measures which respect the rights of Roma as of any other human being instead of delegating responsibility to their countries of origin and reinforcing racist prejudices.*

**Could you tell me what your work in the contact point is about?**

Three days per week I do the social consulting for the Bulgarians in Berlin. The people are coming with different problems like health insurance, renting flats, work, and everything possible. We try together with the clients to find a solution. How to handle the problem, what is the problem and what are the possibilities to find a solution. We also go with them to institutions; we translate for them and help directly therein the place. Our aim is to empower the people, so that with the time they can handle their problems on their own.

**Does this work in practice?**

It is hard because of the language. Most of the people who are



coming do not speak German and actually we are there like a bridge to regular services. People do not speak German and most of the regular services do not have employees who speak Romanian or Bulgarian. Most of our clients speak Turkish, and, in Berlin, if you speak Turkish you do not need to speak German because they live, they work and do everything in the Turkish speaking community. But slowly there are also a lot of people who can handle small things alone. They can go alone to some institutions and say what they want, take the paper they need, then bring it to the office and then we fill it in together.

**What are the main problems with which migrants from Romania and Bulgaria are confronted in Germany?**

I always say that their problems are not so different from the problems of the majority. They have the same problems. They have problems with the flat, with work, with their health insurance. Of course, they have some kind of special problems, because they are migrants. These problems are, as I said, the

language. Quite complicated is the issue of access to health services because most of the people do not have a health insurance in the country where they come from. And, of course, discrimination is a big, big problem. The institutions and the people try to put extra barriers in your way if you are a migrant from the Balkans.

**Most of your clients are Roma, but not all of your clients. Do Roma and non-Roma have different kind of problems or are they mostly the same?**

It is always the same. At the office, I do not feel this difference between the people, Roma and non-Roma, because they have the same problems, they are in the same situation and you can see it and you can feel it, how the people are really close to each other.



**Does the state take any measures to support the migrants in learning German?**

There are three or four NGOs which offer German language courses for free for migrants. But there are not a lot of free places and they are very fast taken. The city is not doing anything. There are really cheap courses in adult education courses (Volkshochschule), but they cost around 120 to 160 Euros and most people do not afford this money. If one obtains social assistance from the state, the course is for free.

**Can you explain to me why the people come to Germany?**

This is a very individual thing, I think. But, of course, most of the people want to have a better life and mostly they want a better life for their children. And the people come to Germany, because they cannot find work in Bulgaria or Romania or wherever they come from because of the discrimination in these countries. And if they find work, it is collecting garbage and it is really badly paid. They think they can find a better place here. And I also think that countries like Germany, Sweden or France, these Western European countries, they have a good reputation on the Balkans. They have the biggest companies, like Lidl or Kaufland which destroyed the small businesses which the people had.

**You mentioned discrimination several times. What is your experience with German institutions?**

It is really difficult to generalize the situation, because it is always different. When I came to Berlin, I thought that it is totally different than in Bulgaria, because in Bulgaria you cannot expect help from the people who work in the institutions. They just ignore you. And I was thinking: in Germany it is not like this. And actually now, I do not think like this, because it is really lucky to have a good person who is from an institution.

**Where can you see discrimination? Can you give some examples?**

For example, the people from Romania and Bulgaria are not

allowed to work without a work permit. They can work legally only with a small business. To get this, they need to get a tax number from the local tax office and the institution tries to find a way to stop that people from Bulgaria and Romania get this tax number. When the people get the application form for the tax number, they immediately get a supplementary form, which normally you only get when something is not clear. When the people see you are from Romania or Bulgaria, they immediately give you this paper. They do not prove the situation first.

**As most of the people who come to the contact point are Roma: Where and how are you confronted with antigypsyism in your daily work?**

In the beginning, I intentionally do not say that our clients are Roma, because we do not ask the people when they come in the office. But you are right, our target group are Roma and most of our clients are Roma. It is really hard, because here in Germany, antigypsyism is not so visible. But you can see it in the faces of the people. It is hard to explain, but you feel it. The

people are just going back as if they want to protect and the way they speak, how they look and how they explain is not really nice.

**How do you react to this kind of behaviour in the institutions?**

Actually I always really try to be nice, because if I start somehow to be aggressive or angry, this is not good for the people, for our clients. This is why I just shut my mouth and just try to make the situation easier. And of

course, we always try to write texts like articles about it to make it more public and also to react this way.

**What does Amaro Drom do to fight antigypsyism except for**

**writing texts?**

We also offer seminars, workshops, and trainings against antigypsyism for different people. We have different target groups. We want to reach young people, we want to reach the people who work in the institutions, we want to reach the teachers in the schools, everybody.



# SITUATION OF ROMA IN HUNGARY

**Marietta Herfort**

*“At the beginning, they said it was illegal money lenders or that it was Roma killing each other.”*

Viktória Mohácsi  
former member of the  
European Parliament

A series of brutal attacks targeting Roma were carried out in central and eastern Hungarian villages between July 2008 and August 2009. The attacks claimed the lives of six Roma people and seriously injured five others. In each case, the attackers used shotguns, and on three locations Molotov-cocktails.

On 23 February 2009, Róbert Csorba and his five-year-old son were killed by gunshots as they tried to escape from their Molotov-cocktailed home in Tatárszentgyörgy. The initial police investigation treated the case as an accident. The autopsy later confirmed that the victims died of gunshot wounds. Róbert Csorba's son was not the only minor who was attacked during this series. On 3 August 2009, 45-year-old Mária Balogh and her daughter were attacked in their home in Kisléta. The mother died after being shot while in her bed and her daughter survived, although badly injured.

These are just a few examples, but the series of crimes carried out between January 2008 and August 2009 targeting Roma and their property has created an atmosphere of fear in the Romani community. Four suspects accused of having committed the crimes were taken into custody in August 2009. On August 6, 2013, a Budapest court sentenced three far-right extremists to life imprisonment without parole for murdering the 5-year-old boy and four other members of Hungary's Roma minority. A fourth member of the group received 13 years. The four men had admitted their involvement, but had denied murder. They are likely to appeal.

## Is Antigypsyism accepted in Hungary?

*„The Hungarian Roma – non-Roma coexistence is the biggest problem of the society”<sup>1</sup>*

Jobbik – Movement for a Better Hungary

Gábor Vona, leader of the radical nationalist Jobbik party, declares that Hungary is facing many problems, including dependence on the European Union, the lack of jobs and „gypsy crime” which he calls a „problem of demography”. According to their statements, Jobbik took the lead as the only political party to face one of the underlying problems of Hungarian society, the unsolved situation of “the ever growing Gypsy population”. The way to solve this problem is „paved by the raising of children to respect social norms, education, vocational training and establishment of jobs” – they say.

On October 21, 2012, Jobbik organised a demonstration in the eastern Hungarian village of Kerecsend to protest against „Gypsy crime.” The party said the demonstration was a reaction to a call for help by locals who complained to the party that some of the Gypsy residents were making life impossible there. The mayor of nearby Gyöngyöspata (belonging to Jobbik)

1. Original in Hungarian: A magyar cigány együttélés a társadalom leg súlyosabb problémái közé tartozik



also participated in a demonstration and presented his own village as an example of how to curb begging in the last one year and a half.

The village of Gyöngyöspata was the flashpoint of friction between radical nationalists and the local Roma community in the spring of

2011. In March, activists of the 'For a Better Future Civil Guard' Association staged patrols in the village in protest to what they claimed, was a rising rate of criminality in the area. The situation turned tense, when a paramilitary organisation, Véderő, organised a training camp near the Roma neighbourhood in April, prompting the police to finally intervene after weeks in which these paramilitary organisations have illegally patrolled the village and provoked the Roma community.

Still today, radical nationalist parties and organisations are at work while Roma children are being discriminated against and segregated in many schools. Public figures use hate speech claiming that many Roma are mentally ill, because in Roma culture it is permitted for sisters and brothers or cousins to marry each other, building up on antigypsyist beliefs and trends already existing in the society and going unpunished. Meanwhile, thousands of Hungarian Roma immigrated to Canada and many are still considering leaving the country.

## Discussing the situation of Roma communities in Europe

One aim of the Phiren Amenca study session was to discover and discuss the Roma situation in Europe. We have picked up the case of Hungary as one of the most relevant and urgent ones in today's Europe and we have tried to look at the details of it, rather than just sticking to general appreciations of the overall society. For many of the participants, the details of the hate crimes in 2008-9 came as a surprise.

To discuss the situation in Hungary we have watched the movie „Just the Wind,” but as well we had discussions with activists such as Tibor Kis from Hungarian Civil Liberties Union who introduced to participants the Roma Programme, which the organisation has initiated after the attacks as means to empower the community to know and exercise their human rights.



# THE CHALLENGE OF COMIC BOOKS FOR ROMA PEOPLE

Vicente Rodriguez Fernandez

## The Roma archetypes and the antiheroes

For centuries, Roma have been an essential part of European folklore and myths, most of the time in a very simplistic and racist way. The Roma archetype in legends is always between villains and heroes. Throughout the history of literature one can find many examples of Roma people and the "Gypsy" stereotype, like *La Gitanilla* of Cervantes or Victor Hugo's *Bohemians* in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. From William Shakespeare to Stephen King there are thousands of references, but the case of American comic books is certainly exceptional.

The birth of the antihero archetype in American Graphic Novel and comic book genre came about in the 1960s. Antiheroes have been an essential part of literature's heritage throughout time, but during the decade of the '60s, in the so-called silver age of American comics, the emotional and psychological complexity of superheroes and villains became something much more real and contradictory than in typical myths or

legends. In this stage of history and in the following years, Roma people appear in American Comics not just as second-class characters but as total actors in the most important events.

## Dr. Doom, the greatest villain of all time, a Megalomaniac Roma genius

Victor Von Doom is one of the best known and most influential comic book characters of all times. He was created by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby and first appeared in *Fantastic Four* # 5 (1962). When this Dr. Doom appeared he changed the concept of villain forever. For example, we can say that George Lucas, the creator of *Star Wars*, based the infamous Darth Vader on the Dr. Doom archetype. An emotionally tormented character carrying a heavy burden of pain, despising all humanity for his extraordinary talent, covering his face because of his horrible scars, Dr. Doom became iconic.

The *Fantastic Four Annual* #2<sup>1</sup> (1964) is the first time that Dr. Doom's Roma origins appear: Victor Von Doom was born in Latveria (an imaginary country between Hungary and Serbia). As a child, Victor suffered from racism and persecution, losing his parents because of persecution by local authorities, particularly by "the Baron". Von Doom soon began a campaign of swindling the upper class through a variety of scientific tricks and potions, nobly giving all his gains to the poor. Yes, Doctor Doom first began as a strange sort of Robin Hood, waging class warfare against the gadjo aristocracy!

Victor grew into a headstrong and brilliant man, using technology to create fantastic devices to keep the Baron's men at bay and protect the Roma. His exploits attracted the attention of the dean of Empire State University<sup>2</sup>, who sent



1. [http://marvel.wikia.com/Fantastic\\_Four\\_Annual\\_Vol\\_1\\_2](http://marvel.wikia.com/Fantastic_Four_Annual_Vol_1_2)

2. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Empire\\_State\\_University](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Empire_State_University)

someone to the camp where he was living. The dean offered Victor the chance to study in the United States, and Doom chose to leave his homeland and his love, Valeria, behind. Once in America, he started to build a time machine and several amazing artefacts; one of them was a machine to talk with the dead. Unfortunately the machine exploded, disfiguring Doom's face and causing his expulsion. Subsequently turning his back on the world, Doom went to Tibet where a hidden group of secret monks took care of him. At the end of this time he had created for himself an armour and a mask: he became Dr. Doom, swearing revenge on those who were responsible for his pain.



He returned to Latveria and succeeded in taking over his country. First, he recruited Roma people, starting with his own family and community. By the end of the conflict it is obvious even to the army of Latveria that nobody can fight against Dr. Doom's intellect and

strategies. He became absolute king, taking a special interest in the welfare of the Roma people, and establishing a sort of dictatorship where Roma were not persecuted, there was no disease, crime or poverty—and, of course, no antigypsyism!!! Of course, the rest of Western civilization and the superheroes are not happy with Dr. Doom's ambitions, because he truly believes the world will be a better place with him as total owner.

## Richard Grayson, a Roma Batman in Gotham City

The first Batman comic book appeared in 1939, a bit after

Superman. Batman was created by Bob Kane and Bill Finger, and has become a legendary character in his own right. Thousands of references about Batman can be found in pop culture. Batman's impact on the world of literature and film is indisputable. What many people don't know is that the original Batman sidekick was Roma.

Richard Grayson, aka Robin, grew up in a Roma family of artists working in an itinerant circus. His family died tragically in an accident. Bruce Wayne, the original Batman, adopted him. In time, Richard joined Bruce in his fight against crime as Robin (later Nightwing), and he replaced Bruce as Batman several times.

The Gotham knights # 20 (October 2001) is a very interesting comic talking about the Roma origin of Richard. In the comic book, an old man, supposed to be his grandfather, even talks with Richard in Romani.

How some American comic book creators knew so much about Romani Language and culture, and how they took a big interest in Roma background for some characters is something that I cannot easily explain. A Roma guy in mainstream media who is not raising demons or telling fortunes? How did that happen?

## Magneto and his family, a history of revisionism

Magneto first appeared in X-Men #1 (1963), created by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby (see "Dr. Doom" above). According to their creators, the X-men comics were a representation of the civil rights movement of the 60s. While Charles Xavier and his X-men represented the search for peace and coexistence between people with different cultures and ethnic backgrounds as Martin Luther King did, Magneto and his brotherhood represented Malcolm X and the Black Nationalism movement that defended the total independence of Black-Americans in order to remove the danger of living in a society that hated them.

These two views about the mainstream-minority conflict were reflected in the comic with great success. In the comic books the premise was that the mutants are born with unique powers and abilities, and because some of them cannot hide these differences they are persecuted and discriminated. It is at



that point when Professor X defends integration and Magneto defends liberation. But who was Magneto? Erik Lehnsherr was a boy who suffered the horrors of Nazism as a result of his childhood in Auschwitz, and after seeing his family murdered he swore not to allow another

Holocaust to happen again. That's how he built his argument of liberation. As he says in X-men First class (the last X-men movie), peace was never an option.

During years many people assumed Magneto was Jewish, and there are several indicators in X-men comic books pointing to this. However, in the '90s, in X-men Unlimited#2, he was revealed as Roma!!!

The Roma origin of Magneto brings to focus the question of Roma genocide during the Second World War. Many youngsters and children who were reading the comic book series knew about this because of Magneto, but by the end of the twentieth century and coinciding with the creation of the first X-men movie, Magneto's Roma identity was denied. Clearly at that point he was represented as a Jew, as can be seen in the Magneto testament limited series where even his name is changed and all the history is reconstructed. This created a polemic for a whole generation of comic books fans. Thousands of posts on the Internet both defend and attack the Roma origin of Magneto.

Now the history of Magneto reflects several very strange realities: supposed to be Jewish, he married Magda, a Roma girl. After this he has two children who became superheroes, Scarlet witch and Quicksilver, both of them raised by Roma and with Roma archetypical backgrounds. It's very tricky to imagine a man who has passed the most part of his life living with Roma, married to a Roma woman, a man whose children are casually raised by Roma also... Of course it is possible, but why to deny the Roma identity of Magneto so strongly?

## Roma Pop culture, an emergent reality

The time has arrived when Roma people must reclaim myths, legends and pop culture as their own weapon; when for centuries non-Roma authors used the Roma archetype to express their ideas. It is time for Roma youngsters and activists to use pop culture to reflect their own point of view. Roma are the only ones who have the right to judge if Dr. Doom is evil or if Magneto is right or wrong.

American comic books represent a unique opportunity for youngsters to reflect about very serious issues as antigypsyism, structural discrimination, self-determination, integration versus liberation, and so on. We have the opportunity to destroy the barriers that mainstream activism is supporting, to use creativity and imagination to bring us to a whole new universe.





## 4. TOOLKIT: ACTIVITIES TO CHALLENGE ANTIGYPSYISM



The team of the study session developed and adapted several non-formal education activities to tackle different topics relevant to the aims and objectives of the study session. Some of these activities are presented here, at the request of the participants, to serve them as guidance for activities to be realized in the communities and organisations where they are active.

While the description of the activities follows the version used during the study session, we recommend to all who would like to try these activities with young people, to adapt them to the context in which they will be realised, to the level of knowledge and learning needs of their participants. We encourage youth workers and volunteers to read and make use of manuals such as **“Compass. Manual on Human Rights Education with Young People”**, or **“All Different – All Equal. Education Pack”** for inspiration and further understanding on how to plan activities on human rights issues.



# ROMA HISTORY

**Themes:** history of Roma people, narratives

**Duration:** 2 hours

**Number of people:** 10-40

**Issues/ Competences Addressed:** Critical analysis of historical sources, understanding terminology such as social reference point, narratives, oral history; knowledge of the main phases of Roma history

## Objectives of the activity:

The activity aims to support participants to reflect about Roma history and narratives through the analysis of various sources.

## The objectives are:

- To get to know the main phases and events in the history of Roma in Europe, such as the Porajmos (Holocaust, or "the devouring"), the civil-rights movement, the first World Roma Congress etc.;
- To familiarise participants with different historic sources and support participants to critically analyse them;
- To clarify relevant terminology such as social reference point, narratives, oral history, integration, inclusion;
- To understand the link between Romani movement and the need of a Roma narrative to support legitimacy;
- To understand multiperspectivity in historical analysis.

## Preparation of the activity:

- Prepare yourself on issues related with Roma history. Make sure to have enough knowledge to clarify participants' questions and/or ensure the presence of an expert in the session.
- Depending on the size of the group, prepare 3 to 5 different historic sources, which should be adequate to the level of knowledge of the participants. Each hand-out should include guiding questions to support the working groups to

analyse the source.

- Ensure that you have thoroughly gone through the sources and are able to clarify questions related with their origin, intent, critique.

## The activity step-by-step:

<b>Step 1</b>	Introduction to Roma history and to relevant terminology	(30 minutes)
<b>Step 2</b>	Small group work on historical sources	(45 minutes)
<b>Step 3</b>	Plenary presentation of the work and debrief	(45 minutes)

## Step 1: Introduction to Roma history

Introduce participants to the main phases of Roma history by introducing their main characteristics. You can build a timeline together with them, making use of the knowledge the group already has. You can make use of the timeline suggested by the publication "Factsheets on Roma history".

Ask participants if they know any tales/stories about their ethnic or national groups' origins. Share with them one of the fairy tales about the origins of Roma and discuss about the importance of stories on ethno-genesis.

Clarify with participants the important terms for further discussion, such as: history, narrative, historical source, minority, reference point.

## Step 2: Small group work on historical sources

Split participants in small groups and distribute to each group a historic source to analyse. Ask them to read the texts, and use the guiding questions to analyse the source. You can use the sources in the appendix or prepare others that are relevant

at the local level. For each of the sources, the groups will find general guiding questions and specific ones.

The groups should be able to summarize the conclusions of their discussions in a 5 minute presentation to the plenary.

## Step 3: Presentation of the group work

Ask participants to present the results of their work in the plenary. Allow only clarification questions at this moment from the group.

## Debrief and evaluation

Lead a discussion with the group on the following questions:

- Do all sources have a historical relevance? Why? Why not?
- What are the differences between the Roma and non-Roma narratives? What makes the difference relevant?
- What is the importance of Roma narratives on Roma history for a Romani social movement?
- What is the importance of oral history for the Roma narratives?
- What is multiple perspectivity in historical writing? How can we have a narrative accepted by the mainstream?

## Tips for facilitators

The work with sources is very important in the small working groups, especially the discussion among participants. If the participants do not follow the guiding questions, the facilitators can remind them, but try not to influence the discussion too much.

## How to further adapt

You can use sources relevant for the local history of the Roma community. You can also transform the introductory part into an activity of its own to allow participants to learn more about the history of the Roma.

## Ideas for action and follow-up

- Young people can do a research on history school books to see if there is any information about Roma or other minorities and how this is presented.
- Invite young people to do interviews in the community about important events in history of the Roma (i.e. interviews about the Holocaust)

## Materials

- Sources for group work
- Projector with screen and speakers
- Flip chart paper and markers for group presentations

## Further information

- **Factsheets on Roma History**, Council of Europe, available at: [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/roma/histoculture\\_EN.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/roma/histoculture_EN.asp)
- **Ian Hancock**, We are the Romani People, 2002.
- **Ian Hancock**, The Pariah Syndrome, 2000.

# Roma History Source 1

## The European Roma and Travellers Forum Charter

The full version of the Charter is available online at: <http://www.internationalromaniunion.org/index.php/en/organization-status/ertf-charter-on-the-rights-of-the-roma>

Here are some important points of the charter for your working group:

### Point 2

For more than six centuries, we Roma have lived here in Europe. Our history has been marked by Antiziganism<sup>1</sup>, slavery, discrimination, persecution, expulsion, violence and genocide; this history has been written with our people's blood.

### Point 4

We Roma have been deprived of recognition as a national minority group so far. Traditionally, we are regarded as a social fringe group, as a social problem that is to be "integrated" by means of disciplinary measures and state repression.

### Point 5

Our fate has been determined by self-appointed experts and specialists; our history has been written by linguists and gypsyologists.

<sup>1</sup> The term was taken from the German word „Antiziganismus" and in English is called antigypsyism. For more information see the chapter about antigypsyism.

### Point 17

By discrimination against our language, customs, tradition and culture, by falsification of our history and our identity, the breeding ground for European Antiziganism was created.

### Point 30

We, the ERTF as the only legitimate representation of Roma in Europe authorised by democratic processes, declare the principles of this Charter on the rights of Roma as binding and actively commit ourselves to promote the implementation of this charter in collaboration with all Roma and everyone of good will.

## Details from the Proclamation:

### Article 1

Roma is; who avows oneself to the common historical Indo-Greek origin, who avows oneself to the common language of Romanes, who avows oneself to the common cultural heritage of the Romanipe.

### Article 3

Every person of our people has the right to self-determined designation, identity and community. Every person has the right to freely practice his/her religion, culture and tradition. Romanipe is based on unity through diversity.

### Article 15

States shall ensure that Roma history, origin and fate, persecution and community are included in school curricula. To this end, States and international institutions shall develop such curricula in collaboration with Roma institutions and integrate

them without delay into their educational systems.

## Article 23

As pacifists who do not wish to participate in acts of war, we Roma shall not be forced into military service; though this does not affect the right of individual Roma to volunteer for military service.

## Article 26

In order to succeed in the implementation of large parts of this charter, legally binding agreements of the member states of the Council of Europe, the European Union, the United Nations and the OSCE are necessary. These kinds of legally binding agreements only could contribute to the abolishment of the present unequal treatment of our people among the states and to the respect for the special situation of our people.

## Article 27

Nothing in this charter may be interpreted as implying for any state, people, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act contrary to the Charter of the United Nations or construed as authorising or encouraging any action which would dismember or impair, totally or in part, the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign and independent states. In the exercise of the rights enunciated in the present declaration, human rights and fundamental freedoms of all shall be respected.

The exercise of the rights set forth in this declaration shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law, and in accordance with international human rights obligations. Any such limitations shall be non-discriminatory and strictly necessary solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and for meeting the just and most compelling requirements of a democratic society.

## Group discussion questions:

- What is the source about?
- What makes the source Roma or Roma-related?
- What is the target group for the source?
- Was the source produced by Roma or non-Roma? Why?
- Do Roma know the source?
- What are the main issues addressed in it related to the social inclusion of Roma?
- Have you ever heard about the ERTF?
- How does the Charter define Roma History?
- According to the Charter what does Romanipe mean?
- How would you define the target group of the Charter?



# Roma History Source 2

## Gogol Bordello: Break the Spell

lyrics from album: Trans-Continental-Hustle, 2010

Just because I come from Roma camp on the hill  
They put me in a school for mentally ill  
Opa, opa deedeeda  
All their lies about Roma

Just because I do refuse to take your pill  
Any road I take leads to the Bastille  
Opa, opa deedeeda  
And all their lies about Roma

You love our music but you hate our guts  
And I know you still want me to ride the back of the bus  
Yeah yeah yeah yeah  
Opportunities for me is a red carpet to hell  
But I'm a Roma wunderkind I'm gonna break the

Break the spell (break the spell)  
Break the spell (break the spell)  
Break the spell (break the spell)  
I'm gonna break the spell (break the spell)

Like a pro I pack your dance floor  
But you want me to come in and exit through back door  
Opa, opa deedeeda  
All their lies about Roma

You love our music but you hate our guts  
And I know you still want me to ride the back of the bus  
Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah  
Opportunities for me is a red carpet to hell  
But I'm a Roma wunderkind I'm gonna break the

Break the spell (break the spell)

Break the spell (break the spell)  
Break the spell (break the spell)  
I'm gonna break the spell (break the spell)

We came from Rajasthan as non-militant travelers  
The time in Byzantium made us even more advanced  
And at the end I gotta say to conclude our little study  
One thing about them gypsies, they never bored nobody

You love our music but you hate our guts  
We know all about you, you know nothing about us  
Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah  
Opportunities for me is a red carpet to hell  
But I am Roma wunderkind I'm gonna break the

Break the spell (break the spell)  
Break the spell (break the spell)  
Break the spell (break the spell)  
Break the spell (break the spell)

Break the spell, I'm gonna break the spell, gonna  
Break the spell, I'm gonna break the spell  
I'm gonna break the spell,  
You gotta break the spell  
I'm gonna break the spell...

### Group discussion questions:

- What is the source about?
- What makes the source Roma or Roma-related?
- What is the target group for the source?
- Was the source produced by Roma or non-Roma? Why?
- Do Roma know the source?
- What are the main issues addressed in it related to the social inclusion of Roma?
- What kind of historical information can you find in the lyrics about the wandering/persecution of Roma?
- Find two concrete examples for daily discrimination in the lyrics!
- In which cases the author uses the words "Roma" and in which "Gypsy"? What are the reasons for the difference?

# Roma History Source 3

## Roxy Freeman: "My Gypsy childhood"

The Guardian, Monday 7 September 2009

The whole article is available at:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle/2009/sep/07/gypsy-childhood-prejudice-education>

*"Roxy Freeman never went to school. But at the age of 22, she decided to get a formal education, forcing her to face up to the prejudices that blight her Gypsy community – and to shackle her wandering spirit."*

My upbringing was unusual, but not unique. Until I was eight my family lived on the road, travelling around Ireland by horse drawn wagon. I was one of six children, with three more half-sisters, and our family was considered small. Having 12 or 13 children was common among Travellers in Ireland.

Marrying first cousins is also common among Gypsies (and a potential genetic time bomb), my parents come from very different backgrounds. My mother was born into an upper-class American family. On her gap year she literally ran away with a Gypsy – my father, who bred horses. Both are extremely intelligent and open-minded people who wanted to bring us up in a stimulating, free and fulfilling environment.

Instead of going to school, my siblings and I, like many children from travelling families, were taught about the arts, music and dance. Our education was learning about wildlife and nature, how to cook and how to survive. I didn't know my times tables but I could milk a goat and ride a horse. I could identify ink caps, puff balls and field mushrooms and knew where to find wild watercress and sorrel. By the age of eight or nine I could light a fire, cook dinner for a family of 10 and knew how to bake bread on an open fire.

Unlike some of my siblings, I learned to read when I was quite young. My mother and grandparents bought me books and, with mum's help, I could read by the time I was about nine. I bought them [i.e.: books] in charity shops or asked for them as birthday presents; together, books and cards gave me an understanding of words and numbers in the absence of any formal education.

Gypsies and Travellers are the only social group that it is still acceptable to insult. In part, I think this stems from our levels of illiteracy and lack of social involvement; if people are unaware of what is being written about them, they're not going to dispute it. And if they don't dispute it, it will carry on.

It can be hard to reach your full potential without schooling, but compared with traditional illiterate Gypsy or Traveller families, we had good opportunities and were not expected to marry young, have lots of children and follow in our parents' footsteps. As a child, my passion had been flamenco (the music of the Gypsy community in Spain). My mother took me to a dance class after we settled in Norfolk when I was about nine, and I was hooked.

We had rented a piece of land for our wagons and been granted special residency rights by the council. We moved into mobile homes and eventually built a wooden structure to house a bathroom, kitchen and communal area. This meant I could have regular lessons and I became a professional flamenco dancer. By the age of 17, I was filled with a desire to leave the chaotic comfort of the camp behind. After saving money doing care work I travelled around the world for years, dancing in flamenco bars in Australia, flamenco schools in Spain and on beaches in India.

But even when I was travelling, I never really told people about my upbringing or family, for fear of negative or ignorant responses. Without school it is hard to make lifelong friends, and I know that only my family understand my fears, emotions and background. My family was so large and close that I never felt I needed friends. But while I was away, a sense of discontentment grew inside me that I knew wasn't going to go away.

Yet when Gypsies and Travellers do want to settle down, there are extra complications. More than 90% of planning applications submitted by Gypsy families are refused, compared with 20% of non-traveller applications. Also, Gypsies may be buying pieces of land on green belts and have little or no knowledge of the administration system. A planning application by a Gypsy family is always met with an extreme number of objections by the local residents (I know this from experience). And it's a fact that having Gypsies in a neighbourhood lowers the price of property.

After completing my access course (thanks to a wonderful tutor, I got distinctions in all the units), I did a degree with the Open University, and that meant completely changing my way of life. Last November, at the age of 30, I moved to Brighton to study at Brighton Journalist Works. I live here with my boyfriend in a flat, which is bizarre and alien to me. My family are, admittedly, no longer truly nomadic, and my parents support my decision to transform my life, but I have never lived within bricks and mortar before, and I feel completely out of touch with nature now."

### Group discussion questions:

- What is the source about?
- What makes the source Roma or Roma-related?
- What is the target group for the source?
- Was the source produced by Roma or non-Roma? Why?
- Do Roma know the source?
- What are the main issues addressed in it related to the social inclusion of Roma?
- Is Roxy Roma or non-Roma?
- What makes her Gypsy? What makes her Roma? What makes her non-Roma?
- How did she benefit from Roma culture?

## Roma History Source 4

### Do we really know the Roma?

a video by the European Commission

#### video available online at

[http://artists-for-roma-net.ning.com/video/do-we-really-know-the-roma?xg\\_source=activity](http://artists-for-roma-net.ning.com/video/do-we-really-know-the-roma?xg_source=activity)



### Group discussion questions:

Watch the film carefully and answer as a group the following questions:

- What is the source about?
- What makes the source Roma or Roma-related?
- What is the target group for the source?
- Was the source produced by Roma or non-Roma? Why?
- Do Roma know the source?
- What are the main issues addressed in it related to the social inclusion of Roma?
- Which professions are showed in the film?
- Which social classes do the Roma protagonists represent?
- How do the Roma figures talk about other Roma and about their own efforts?
- How do non-Roma talk in the video about Roma?

# Ferdinand Koci: One Part of the Romani History

[http://www.grtleeds.co.uk/ferdinand\\_gallery/17.html](http://www.grtleeds.co.uk/ferdinand_gallery/17.html)



Look carefully at the picture and answer as a group the following questions:

- What is the source about?
- What makes the source Roma or Roma-related?
- What is the target group for the source?
- Was the source produced by Roma or non-Roma? Why?
- Do Roma know the source?
- What are the main issues addressed in it related to the social inclusion of Roma?
- Do you recognize anybody from the picture? If yes, who?
- Which main moments of Roma history are visible on the painting?
- What are the main social challenges addressed on the picture?



# THE EXTRAORDINARY COMMISSION ON THE ROMA ISSUE

**Themes:** migration, human rights, institutional discrimination

**Duration:** 3 hours

**Number of people:** 15-40

**Issues/ Competences addressed:** critical thinking, debate, negotiation, public speech

## Objectives of the activity:

The role play aims to make the participants aware of the current situation of Roma in Europe, focusing on the situation in France. The activity aims to raise their capacity to analyse and understand antigypsyism, as well as structural and institutional discrimination.

## The concrete objectives are:

- to analyse the situation in France regarding the expulsions of Roma starting with 2010;
- to reflect upon the process of stigmatization, institutional discrimination, and scapegoating of the Roma by public authorities in Europe;
- to understand the different perspectives and argumentations of public authorities, civil society and Roma community in respect to discrimination in Europe;
- to reflect on the responsibility of society, governments and media to protect and ensure the human rights of minorities.

## Preparation of the activity:

Choose adequate and up-to-date videos, articles and webpages that can give a brief informative input on the issue of migration and expulsions. Make sure to have read enough

background information on the issue to be able to offer participants details on the causes to the situation, the positions and arguments adopted by the different sides.

Make sure to prepare the role cards depending on the number of participants and groups during the role game. Ensure you have copies of the situation and background material available for everyone.

Prepare an adequate set-up for the works of the commission and negotiation setting and create the right atmosphere.

## The activity step-by-step:

<b>Step 1</b>	Introduction to the situation in France to ensure that all participants have all relevant information	(30 minutes)
<b>Step 2</b>	Introduction to the role play, distribution of roles and preparatory work in small groups	(30 minutes)
<b>Step 3</b>	The meeting of the Extraordinary Commission on Roma issue	(60 minutes)
<b>Step 4</b>	De-rolling and debriefing	(60 minutes)

## Step 1:

You need to ensure that all participants understand what happened in 2010 when the expulsions of Roma from France towards Romanian and Bulgaria started. A documentary film of Romedia Foundation can present the context of the conflict, as when the expulsions started in 2010, including statements of the French Minister of Interior Affairs, the European Commissioner Vivianne Reding, statements of civil society organizations and Roma migrants themselves.

[http://www.mundiromani.com/videos/?video\[video\]\[item\]=80](http://www.mundiromani.com/videos/?video[video][item]=80)  
(from time: 2:56 until 12:00)

Alternative: Al Jazeera documentary: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TmirOqIMgCk>

## Step 2:

Read out the situation to the participants and invite them to working groups. Distribute them their role cards and ensure that they know where everyone is based. Allow them to prepare for 30 minutes. Make sure that you and your colleagues are around to support their preparations and answer specific questions. Ensure that you brief and prepare the chairpersons for the work they will have to do during the actual role play. You might want to involve them into setting up the room for the Commission.

## Step 3:

The meeting of the Extraordinary Commission brings together all the parties to find a joint solution. All parties can deliver a speech about their position and demands, and a chairperson facilitates a discussion. The chairperson can propose a final agreement, which does not have to reflect the interests of all parties, or the committee can also call the negotiations as "failed".

## Roles & groups:

- French government
- Romanian government (ambassador in France)
- European Commission
- Civil society organizations
- Roma
- Coalition for a safe neighbourhood
- Chairperson(s) of the Commission
- Media group

## Debriefing and evaluation

Before moving to debriefing and evaluation of the activity, allow participants a moment to de-roll, especially since the discussion during the role play can be very heated and

emotional for participants. You can do a little energiser/exercise to allow participants to get out of the roles they have previously fulfilled.

Gather participants in a circle and discuss following:

## Group discussion questions:

- What has happened during the meeting of the Extraordinary Commission?
- How did you feel in your roles and during the discussion?
- How did you build your role?
- How do you feel about the facilitation and the power associated with different roles?
- Were the arguments used in the discussion realistic?
- What is the social and political problem at stake and what should be done to change it?

## Tips for facilitators

- **Assistance during role preparation:** Visit each group during the role preparation phase to clarify the doubts and questions, ensure that all participants are prepared to talk and participate.
- **Balance of participation:** Often one or two people in each group take the role of the speaker in the plenary. Adequate preparation time, support during group preparation phase and instructions should encourage all participants to speak, e.g. for the opening debate the participants can share the role of giving a short opening speech.
- **Chairperson:** The chairpersons take a leading role during the game, and need a good preparation at the beginning, e.g. to understand their tools of moderation (e.g. limited speaking time, speaking list, parity/imparity). The chairpersons need to be good facilitators and eloquent enough to keep the basic control of the Commission, as well as to propose a way forward (compromise, final resolution) if necessary.
- **Rules of the role play:** Rules can be given by the facilitator or can be established by the chairs.
- **Dynamics of the role play:** It is relevant for the facilitator

to keep in mind and prepare the chairs for the dynamics of the role game. The role play can start with an opening speech of the chairs to explain the setting and objectives of the Commission, the urgency and relevance of the political issue, and the rules of the Commission. Short two minutes lasting opening speeches of all parties can follow, thus allowing all parties to speak and to outline their basic argument. Afterwards, the chairs can open the speaking list, allow the parties and the media to create strong dynamics, discussions and interventions; while at a certain moment the chairs need to push for a solution, e.g. by finding a compromise, elaborate and adopt a resolution or bring the Commission to a failure.

- **Debriefing:** The imbalance of power of the different groups during the role game, the dominance of certain speakers and groups, as well as the discomfort with certain political positions can create strong emotions among the participants. The debriefing should enable the participants to leave the roles, and to analyse these power dimensions as well.

## How to further adapt

### Long version:

The role game can be prolonged for 1 or 2 days; thus, the negotiations and the dynamics of the role game can vary very strongly. A longer role game can give more space to the participants to find their role, to make use of different strategies including protest and interventions, and to elaborate through formal and informal negotiations a resolution or declaration of the Commission.

### Formalize negotiation process:

During a prolonged role game (1-2 days) a variety of rules can be adopted to frame the formal negotiation setting, and to strengthen the debate focus or the elaboration of a written resolution.

### Media:

The media group serves as an intervention tool, which develops its own dynamic as a group or can be used by the facilitator/chairs. The media can regularly comment the negotiations

through headlines or billboards, and in a prolonged game can use especially audio-visual tools, e.g. for off-record interviews, commentaries, summaries of developments.

## Ideas for action and follow-up

### Human Rights dimension:

The human rights perspective of the situation can be further discussed, e.g. by looking at the rights of migrants.

### Political engagement:

The participants can be encouraged to take action themselves, e.g. by raising the voice for the situation of Roma migrants, by criticizing the institutional discrimination and stigmatization of Roma in politics, society and media.

## Materials

- Informative input: documentary videos, articles on the migration and eviction issue
- Groups: role cards and working spaces during preparatory phase
- Materials: large poster papers, markers for media group, video camera, projector
- Round table setting: table setting with name (role) cards, table microphones

## Further information

### Evictions:

- Nicolae, Valeriu (2012): Failing Roma, again, online: <http://www.opendemocracy.net/valeriu-nicolae/fang-roma-again>
- Rorke, Bernard (2012): The Roma rights dilemma of the French left, online: <http://www.opendemocracy.net/bernard-rorke/roma-rights-dilemma-of-french-left>
- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French\\_Roma\\_expulsion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_Roma_expulsion)

### Compare to Model United Nations:

- <http://www.wfuna.org/wfuna-mun>

# THE EXTRAORDINARY COMMISSION ON THE ROMA ISSUE

## Rules and Role Cards

### Context:

Especially since the entry of Romania and Bulgaria into the European Union in 2007, an unknown number of Roma from these countries migrated into Western European countries, making use of their rights of free movement as European Union citizens. In July 2010, the French President Nicolas Sarkozy initiated a repatriation program, expulsing thousands of Roma back to Romania and Bulgaria. He asked his Interior Minister to "put an end to the wild squatting and camping of Roma", and to break down half of 539 illegal Romani camps in France within three months, as the local authorized camps were "sources of illegal trafficking, of profoundly shocking living standards, of exploitation of children for begging, of prostitution and crime".

A leaked file of the Interior Ministry to regional police forces singled out specific repressive measures towards Roma. While Sarkozy used the moment to gain popularity through strong security measures, the European Commission in September 2010 criticized the stigmatization and discrimination of the Roma minority, and raised the question about France's violation of European laws of free movement.

### The "Extraordinary Commission on the Roma problem in France":

As the situation continues in 2012, the Council of Europe invited all involved parties to participate in the "Extraordinary

Commission on the Roma problem in France", including the French government, the Romanian government, the European Commission, civil society organizations, Roma representatives, and the "Coalition for a Safe Neighbourhood", in order to find jointly a solution.

### Prepare for your intervention in the Commission:

Read your role card received together with this situation. Please discuss the questions from the position of your given role:

- Who are the Roma and why are they in France?
- What is the current problem under discussion?
- What is your position how to deal with the problem? What is your solution?

### Your presence in the meeting of the Commission:

- You have 1 ½ minutes to present your position, arguments and demands to the Round Table!
- You listen to the initial presentation of all parties.
- In the discussion you can act in all ways that fit to your role.

### Rules of the Round Table:

- Respect the chairperson(s) and their decisions.
- Keep the speaking time limits: 1 ½ minutes for initial presentations, 30 seconds for following discussion statements.
- Possible interventions: Request for 30 seconds to 1 minute break for negotiations.



## Role Card: French Government

You are convinced that Roma are a European problem, and France cannot take the responsibility to solve it alone. You want to put an end to the illegal Roma camps, which are a source of illegal trafficking, exploitation of children, prostitution and crime. Recognizing the shocking living standards in the camps, the government cannot accept such conditions in France, which put their health and well-being at risk.

You are not willing to give up your position. You can make a deal with the Romanian government, e.g. you offer money to solve the situation in Romania, but people have to go back. You know that if the Round Table fails, you win and you will do anyway what you want as a government. Nevertheless, you are afraid of bad publicity in Europe.

## Role Card: Romanian Government

You support the French government to take a tough position against the immigrants who disrespect European laws for personal benefit. You make a distinction between different groups of Roma, arguing that the travelling Roma are the problem. In addition you emphasize your country's success in the integration of more than 1 million Roma and the realization of EU standards regarding minority protection. You want to stop bad publicity for your country, and thus are open for solutions in cooperation with the French government.

"Maybe we need to guarantee them access to seasonal jobs. And maybe we need to think of a way to send teachers in these travelling Roma communities to teach the children to read and to write. We need to find intelligent solutions like these. The standard solutions used until now have not worked", President Basescu explains.

## Role Card: European Commission

Enough is enough. You warn all EU governments to "steer clear of racism and xenophobia". You are concerned about the violation of European laws by the French government, especially through the restriction of the free movement of EU citizens based on their ethnicity. The deportations are "a disgrace", and you did not expect to witness something like this "again after the Second World War".

You would be willing to bring the French government to court for violation of European laws, but you are careful, as you know the French government has a strong power in the EU, and not all Commissioners will support such a strong EU position. You do not like bad publicity while receiving the Nobel Peace Prize.

## Role Card: Civil Society Organizations

You are convinced that the French government applies discriminatory practices against Roma. The official speeches contribute to stigmatize Roma as a whole group and to deepen their exclusion. The Roma have left Romania because of deep poverty and discrimination. The Romanian government remains corrupt, is not willing to tackle discrimination and fails with their measures to bring change.

Since the economic crisis, racism and hate speech against Roma have become more visible & public. If there are any criminal acts, they have to go through individual investigation & jurisdiction; while the government continues to apply collective measures based on ethnic profiling. You do not accept false compromises; you are willing to boycott any false solution, to mobilize people on the streets & in the room to protest with and for the Roma.

## Role Card: Roma

Roma have left Romania because of the structural and institutional discrimination, wide-spread antigypsyism and poverty and exclusion. You use your EU rights to live in France, and even if you receive money from the French government to go back, you will return to France. You claim that you are European citizens and have the same right of free movement and social security as any other EU citizens.

You are shocked facing the same climate of marginalization and discrimination as in Romania. You are not willing to give in, but you want to have a strong voice. You are looking for supporters to protest and call on the European Union's responsibility for minority protection and ensuring equal rights. You insist on representing yourself and will leave the Committee if there is no solution for your demands.

## Role Card: Coalition for a safe neighbourhood

You are a group of concerned neighbours of one of the Roma camps. Since the Roma have come to your neighbourhood you feel that the crime rate has increased and the streets have become dirty. You are concerned about the children who play on the streets without attending a school and the safety of your neighbourhood. Therefore, you call the French government to take action against the gypsies and ensure law and order in the whole city.

Additionally you are furious about the gypsies benefiting from the social security system without ever having worked for it. There should be no privilege for anyone!

## Role Card: Media

Media can create certain headlines and positions on both sides in order to manipulate and influence the discussions. You can cause scandal against and about the French and Romanian government, but you can also strengthen the hard position of the majority population that the Roma have to leave, are criminals etc.

Make the headlines visible through posters, short creative publicity adds (e.g. small performance/theatre). Use the breaks to also "interview" people.

## Role Card: Chairs

As a chair you want to take an impartial role of facilitation of the session. Officially you have to ensure participation of Roma and civil society groups; nevertheless, you respect the power and interests of the political stakeholders, and thus you can hidden/softly misbalance the discussion for the governments. You keep a very strict time line of the meeting, and you can enable breaks for negotiations.

You are interested to bring the negotiations to a solution, e.g. by bringing a proposal (of yourself as chair or a proposal given by any group) for voting. However, if there is no possible solution, you can also declare the negotiation as failed and you reschedule another meeting.

### Possible basic facilitation rules:

- Opening speech of chair
- 1 ½ minutes speeches of all parties in the order of political importance
- **Discussion:** allow contributions, questions, proposals based on a speakers' list
- **Time:** keep the discussion contributions to max 30 sec. Cut participants when necessary
- **Breaks:** groups can ask for 30-60 sec breaks, decision taken by open voting of all parties
- **Results:** any group can present a written/oral proposal as conclusion

# X-MEN VERSUS MAGNETO

**Themes:** Roma superheroes in comic books, integration, emancipation, liberation, extremism, Afro-American civil-rights movement

**Duration:** 2 hour movie, 1.5 hour discussion

**Number of people:** 15-40

**Issues/ Competences addressed:** understanding different strategies for fighting oppression by minority groups, social and civil-rights movements, critical thinking;

## Objectives of the activity:

This activity is linked to the overall question how to engage for changing the current situation of exclusion of Roma. X-Men and the superhero Magneto (with a Roma background and Auschwitz experience) offer a parallel to the movement of Malcolm X for the liberation of the "black man" from the "white devil" versus Martin Luther King's philosophy of integration into society.

The most important aim of the session is to stimulate the participants to think critically in the key factors of integration, liberation and extremism. The session facilitates to leave the "integration/inclusion debate" from a mainstream society perspective, and to look into the strategies and perspectives of minorities for social change. Especially within the minority, it can enable to reflect about the role as minority-mainstream (or even elite) and about the responsibility in the fight against antigypsyism and other types of discrimination. The debate can stimulate a deeper discussion on the state, potentials and challenges of a social movement of Roma.

## The concrete objectives are:

- to debate about what can be our answer as minority rights

activists to a mainstream society that excludes us and threatens us with different manifestations of violence with governmental support;

- to debate about the motivation and legitimacy of the characters in the movie, what is the philosophy of X-MEN and MAGNETO.

## Preparation of the activity:

- Prepare film screening
- Prepare an interactive presentation of the roles of Martin Luther King and Malcolm X by using originals quotes

## The activity step-by-step:

<b>Step 1</b>	Presentation of characters and parallel Martin Luther King (Professor X) and Malcolm X (Magneto)	(30 minutes)
<b>Step 2</b>	Movie session: X-Men First Class (directed by Brian Vaughn 2011)	(120 minutes)
<b>Step 3</b>	The philosophy of X-Men & MAGNETO, possible strategies of minorities	(60 minutes)

## Step 1

### Presentation of characters and parallel Martin Luther King (Professor X) and Malcolm X (Magneto)

At the beginning of the session Malcolm X and Martin Luther King are introduced to participants as people with different methods on how to reach the same or a similar goal. Then the film, the content and the connection with the study session are outlined and Martin Luther King and Malcolm X are compared to Professor X and Magneto.

## Step 2

### Movie session: X-Men First Class (directed by Brian Vaughn 2011)

Participants are invited to watch the film keeping in mind the following questions for after the screening:

- What is the motivation of the characters?
- Strengths and weaknesses of Magneto and Professor X

### Step 3A

#### The philosophy of X-Men & MAGNETO, possible strategies of minorities

Collect first impressions, e.g. participants place themselves in the room:

- Which side are you on? Magneto or X-MEN?
- Why do you prefer one or the other strategy?

### Step 3B

#### Analysing the strategies and characters:

- What is the motivation of the characters?
- Strengths and weaknesses of Magneto and Professor X
- What is the influence of the background of the characters on their philosophy?
- How would you react in this abstract world? Do you think neutrality is possible? Why?

### Step 3C

#### Transfer of X-Men and the Afro-American experience to Roma issues:

- What do Roma need? Magneto or Professor X?
- Do civil-rights & social movements need outstanding leaders such as ML King or Malcolm X?
- What are the state, potentials and challenges of a Roma



social movement?

- What are parallels and differences between the Afro-American and the Roma situation and movement?

### Tips for facilitators

- **Introduction:** Do not overload before the movie the introduction with too much background information; thus, give a brief understanding of the characters and transfer possibilities, but do not frame too much the way how to look at the movie.
- **Quotes of the movie:** Use quotes of the movie of different characters, not just the main ones, in order to stimulate discussions and to reflect on the arguments, e.g. "You want to be accepted by society, but you do not accept yourself" (Magneto), "Mutant and proud" (Raven/Mystique).
- **Extremism and violence:** Be aware that the discussion can focus strongly on the violent potential of Magneto. Try to provoke the participants to reflect on his personal background, his motivation and development, as well as on the dangers of extremism. What are the differences and levels of radical thought, extremism and violent deeds?



- **Analyse the majority society position:** How do mutants and humans interact and depend on each other in the movie, how minorities and majorities in reality? What is the historical dimension of the majority-minority relationship, e.g. several centuries of Roma discrimination and persecution? Is there an interest in majority society to favour one minority strategy, e.g. by (de)legitimizing Martin Luther King and Malcolm X?

## How to further adapt

### Feminist criticism:

The movie and historical narratives focus on male characters, which can be strongly criticized from a feminist perspective. The discussion could look into female characters in the movie, as well as in the Afro-American movement, such as Rosa Parks, Soyer.

### Mutants as a metaphor for trans\* people:

The discussion could focus on the parallels between mutants and trans\* people in real life, a parallel which has been discussed by readers of the comic. You could take the fluidity of the gender binary, which relates to this topic (as shown in Raven/Mystique who can take shapes of both men and women), in contrast to the very stereotypical/sexist portrayal of most characters.

### Original cartoons:

The session could use the original cartoons, especially versions where Magneto speaks Romani.

## Ideas for action and follow-up

### Roma and pop culture:

Analyse further the role of Roma & Roma characters in pop culture, e.g. in Valencia the local Roma youth group Yag Bari held an encounter in a local comic book store.

### Roma movement:

Invite Roma organizations or different activists to reflect on the Roma movement, and how to mobilize a community for social change.

## Materials

- Video projector
- **Movie:** X-men-First Class: directed by Brian Vaughn 2011
- **Cartoons:** original X-men cartoons showing the story of Magneto in Auschwitz

## Further information

### X-Men:

- Magneto testament
- X men unlimited N°2 fatal attractions -by Fabian Nicieza
- X men 1-6 -by Chris Claremont and Jim Lee
- The uncanny X men n° 1 1963-by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby
- New Xmen-Quentin Quire saga-By Grant Morrison and Frank Quitely
- New Mutants-Magneto "good times" saga

### Martin Luther King:

- King, Dr. Martin Luther: I Have a Dream, Schwartz & Wade.

### Malcolm X:

- Malcolm X, Alex Haley (1965): The Autobiography of Malcolm X
- Marable, Manning (2011): Malcolm X. A life of reinvention, Penguin Books.

Robert Rustem (2010): Why Martin Luther King Matters To Europe's Roma, online: <http://www.ertf.org/index.php/10-news/news/72-why-martin-luther-king-matters-to-europes-roma>

### Videos:

- Eyes on the Prize: documentaries on the civil rights movement, online: [http://opendocumentaries.com/watch/eyes\\_on\\_the\\_prize-full.php](http://opendocumentaries.com/watch/eyes_on_the_prize-full.php)
- Malcolm X (1992), directed by Spike Lee

# ODD ONE OUT

## Who wants you to be in their group?

Based on: Education Pack "all different - all equal", Directorate of Youth and Sport, Council of Europe, 2nd edition, page 133-134, online: [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/Resources/Publications/2004\\_Education\\_pack\\_en.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/Resources/Publications/2004_Education_pack_en.pdf)

**Themes:** majority – minority relations, discrimination

**Duration:** 10 minutes + 30 minutes reflection

**Number of people:** 16+

**Issues/ Competences addressed:** critical thinking, self-reflection

## Objectives of the activity

- To start discussion about different groups in society
- To raise awareness about prejudice and discrimination
- To encourage empathy with the experience of rejection or exclusion.

## Preparation of the activity

Coloured sticky paper spots. For example, for a group of 16 people you will need 4 blue, 4 red, 4 yellow, 3 green and one white spot.

## The activity step-by-step

<b>Step 1</b>	Stick one spot on each player's forehead. Players should not know what colour spot they have.
<b>Step 2</b>	Tell the players to get into a group with others.
<b>Step 3</b>	None may talk, they may only use non-verbal communication

## Debriefing and evaluation

Help the group explore their feelings about what they did and what they learnt:

- How did you feel at the moment when you first met someone with the same colour spot as yourself?
- How did the person with the odd spot feel?
- Did you try to help each other get into groups?
- What different groups do you belong to e.g. football team, school, church?
- Can anyone join these groups?
- In our society who are the odd ones out?



## Tips for facilitators

Be aware of who gets the white spot. You can take the opportunity to manipulate the composition of the final groups, but do not make it obvious. Let the players believe that the spots were distributed at random. This activity can also be used as an icebreaker and to get people into groups for another activity.

## How to further adapt

- Use coloured sticky paper spots as above but don't have someone who will be the odd one out - at the end everyone will be in a group.
- Preparation as for variation 1 ask the players to get into groups so that everyone is in a group, but no group has more than one person with the same coloured spot i.e. you will end up with a multi group.

## Ideas for action and follow-up

- Review the membership policy of your group or organisation. Can anyone join?
- What can you do to make your organisation more open and welcoming to everyone?
- Being the odd one out does not always mean we have been excluded, sometimes it is by choice that we want to stand apart from others and be different.

## Materials

Coloured sticky paper spots

## Further information

**Alte Feuerwache e.V./Jugendbildungsstätte Kaubstraße (ed)**

**2012:** Methodenhandbuch zum Thema Antiziganismus für die schulische und außerschulische Bildungsarbeit [transl: toolkit on the theme antigypsyism for formal and non-formal education], edition Unrast.

# BOOGIE MAN

## Stories of the World

A Boogie Man is an amorphous imaginary being used by adults to frighten children into compliant behaviour. The monster has no specific appearance, and conceptions about it can vary drastically from household to household within the same community; in many cases, he has no set appearance in the mind of an adult or child, but is simply a non-specific embodiment of terror. Parents may tell their children that if they misbehave, the boogie man will get them. Boogie men may target a specific mischief — for instance, a boogie man that punishes children who suck their thumbs — or general misbehaviour, depending on what purpose needs serving.

In some cases, the boogie man is a nickname for the devil. Boogie man tales vary by region. The boogie man is usually a masculine entity but can be any gender or simply androgynous. We used the metaphor of the Boogie Man in order to highlight the characteristics of European attitude towards Roma. In our understanding, as a social reference point Roma can be described as the Boogie men of Europe.

### Study Session Theme Song:

#### "I'm your Boogie Man"

by KC & The Sunshine Band

I'm your boogie man that's what I am  
I'm here to do whatever I can  
Be it early mornin' late afternoon  
Or at midnight it's never too soon  
To wanna please you to wanna please you  
To wanna do it raw awhaw  
I wanna be your be your Rubber Ball  
I wanna be the one ya' love most of all - oh yeah

I'm your boogie man I'm your boogie man  
Turn me on

I'm your boogie man I'm your boogie man  
Do what you want  
I'm your boogie man I'm your boogie man  
Turn me on  
I'm your boogie man I'm your boogie man  
Do what you want

I'm your boogie man that's what I am  
I'm here to do whatever I can  
Be it early mornin' late afternoon  
Or at midnight it's never too soon  
To wanna take you to wanna hold you  
I wanna give my all, all to you  
And I want you to completely understand  
Just where I'm at that's where I am - oh yeah

I'm your boogie man that's what I am  
I'm here to do whatever I can  
Be it early mornin' late afternoon  
Or at midnight aww it's never too soon  
I wanna be with you I wanna be with you  
Yeah we'll be together you and me  
I wanna see you ah get near you  
I wanna love you up from sundown sunup

I'm your boogie man that's what I am  
I'm here to do whatever I can  
Be it early mornin' late afternoon  
Or at midnight it's never too soon  
To wanna please you to wanna hold you  
To wanna do it all all for you  
I wanna be your be your rubber ball  
I wanna be the one ya love most of all  
I'm your boogie man aha ...

### Group discussion questions:

- Do you know the name of the Boogie Man in your country/ region?
- How do sarcasm and apathy come up in the lyrics of the song?
- Forgetting the context of love, in your opinion, how far can be the Roma identified with the Boogie Man of the song?



## 5. INITIATIVES: ACTIVISM FOR CHANGE

### HOW TO RESPOND TO ANTIGYPSYISM?

#### VISITING LOCAL ORGANISATIONS, NETWORKS AND INITIATIVES

The aims for visiting different organisations, networks or initiatives in Hungary were:

- to get to know other organisations who are also working on challenging antigypsyism and racism;
- to discover how the organisations respond to antigypsyism;
- to explore different good practices; promoting engagement, mobilization, and local initiatives to challenge stereotypes and racism;
- to motivate the participants to develop their competences in anti-discrimination work, human rights education and youth work.

The participants formed five groups and they made reports and photos on the spot. These were presented the next day to the other groups, reflecting what they learned about the organisations.

### European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC)

The European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) is an international public interest law organisation working to combat anti-Romani racism and human rights abuse of Roma through strategic litigation, research and policy development, advocacy and human rights education. Since its establishment in 1996, the ERRC has endeavoured to provide Roma with the tools necessary to combat discrimination and achieve equal access to justice, education, housing, health care and public services. Strategic priorities include violence against Roma and hate speech, education, housing, women's and children's rights, movement and migration, and disaggregated data collection. The ERRC offers internships for young Romani activists and organizes a summer school on Roma Rights.

The ERRC has consultative status with the Council of Europe, as well as with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. The ERRC has been the recipient of numerous awards for its efforts to advance human rights respect of Roma.



more info at [www.errc.org](http://www.errc.org)

### Szemétálmok Független Színház (Garbage Dreams)

Participants of the seminar met Márton Illés (trainer) at the Garbage Dreams office in Budapest. There they watched *Tollfosztás* (Plucking of Feathers), a film about five Roma children, about discrimination, and murder in Hungary. The



Garbage Dreams is part of a big project, called Independent Theater, which was established in 2004 in order to produce and manage high quality artistic products with Roma and interethnic topics. The Independent Theater has many skills and experiences in developing young people regarding the use of citizens' media and creating high quality pieces of art in order to disseminate social messages mobilizing many people in an innovative, critical and humorous ways.

Phiren Amenca has also cooperated with Szemétálmok Független Színház during "Welcome to Planet Paprika: Phiren Amenca International Volunteer Seminar" held in Budapest in April, 2012.

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**more info at [www.independenttheater.blogspot.hu](http://www.independenttheater.blogspot.hu)**

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## Karaván Művészeti Alapítvány (Karaván Art Foundation)

A group of participants visited Karaván Art Foundation, hosted by Pál Nyári, who started the meeting with some funny energizing games and offered us great hot tea. Karaván was founded in 2000 in Budapest with the aim to enable talented Roma and non-Roma children and young adults studying acting for free. The aim of the foundation is to increase the opportunities for these youngsters and to facilitate their social mobilization. In the past 12 years the foundation has continuously developed. In addition to an acting studio they set up a children and youth group. They try to discover talented youngsters each year, first in the area of Budapest. The group of their students is heterogeneous.

There are Roma and non-Roma, disadvantaged and middle class youth. Currently the studio has 40 students. The foundation would like to ensure the artistic development of the youngsters within an inspirational community. One method which makes them unique is that the audience is also involved. After the plays there is the possibility to stay in the theatre and talk with the actors and staff. In the case of their most recent play („The Show Goes On”) the public can even decide about how the story shall continue on the stage.

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**more info at [www.karavan.co.hu](http://www.karavan.co.hu)**

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## Romaversitas Alapítvány (Romaversitas Foundation)

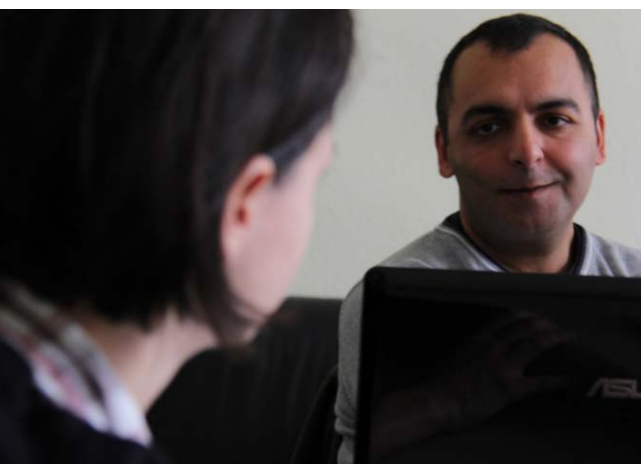
Romaversitas is the training and scholarship program for young Roma in higher education. The Romaversitas Foundation has been acting as a funder of university and college students for fourteen years. Romaversitas not only gives scholarships and various services, but also tries to create space for vibrant social life. Romaversitas believes that financial support is not sufficient for these mostly highly disadvantaged young people; a competence improving, disadvantage compensating training program is also needed for them to successfully complete their education and gain knowledge to be competitive in the labour market.

For the majority of the students the scholarship itself is tremendous help. Thanks to the thirty thousand forints per month they have to work less and may devote more time for academic studies and professional development. The Romaversitas Foundation supports fifty young people in the 2012-2013 academic year from Pécs to Szeged, including thirty-seven majors ranging from mechatronics engineering through medicine to social work.

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**more info at [www.romaversitas.hu](http://www.romaversitas.hu)**

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## Roma Sajtóközpont (Roma Press Centre)

Since its founding in 1995, the Roma Press Centre has, for the past seventeen years, published almost 4000 short news notices and hundreds of analytical reports related to Roma issues of all types. Almost 80 percent of them have also been published by national dailies. Between 1996

and 2004, the editorial office of the Centre provided internships to nearly 70 young Roma journalists who now work either in one of the mainstream editorial offices or in the Roma media.

Roma Press Centre's main goal is to change the image of Roma in the media because most articles in the mainstream press report some kind of conflict. More than one-fourth of these conflicts are of a social nature. However, a large percentage of them are about political conflicts and crime. Ninety percent of the conflicts are presented as conflicts between the minority and the majority, reinforcing the existing conflict between the minority group and the mainstream society, even though social issues concerning Roma affect others as well.

## Roma React

RomaReact is about both Roma and non-Roma who want to shape the public debate on Roma inclusion. The interactive multimedia mapping platform allows us to share everyday Roma realities and to challenge the stereotypes and prejudices that Roma face. A global online community is built seeking social change and justice. RomaReact mobilises young people to actively participate in society and become agents in their own lives as well as equal and respected citizens.

**more info at [www.romareact.org](http://www.romareact.org)**

## ternYpe International Roma Youth Network



International Roma Youth Network

ternYpe - International

Roma Youth Network was founded in January 2010 and unites different Roma youth organizations from Albania, Bulgaria, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Macedonia, Slovakia, Spain and Poland. We are a network of youth and youth associations, which creates space for young people to become active citizens through empowerment, mobilization, self-organization and participation. We believe in the common efforts by creating trust, and mutual respect between Roma and non-Roma youth.

**more info at [www.ternype.eu](http://www.ternype.eu)**

## TASZ – Hungarian Civil Liberties Union's Roma Program

The Hungarian Civil Liberties Union (TASZ) officially launched its Roma Program in the spring of 2010. At this time, they felt the situation against Roma in Hungary had become unbearable. It was decided that a serious human rights organization cannot stay silent about discrimination issues against the Roma. The basic goal of the Roma Program is to provide tools for people who want to defend and exercise their rights, which they are entitled to, but which somehow go unrecognized.

The Hungarian Civil Liberties Union (HCLU), Hungary's leading law reform and human rights watchdog NGO was established in Budapest in 1994. The HCLU operates independently of political parties, the state or any of its institutions.

**more info at [www.tasz.hu/en/roma-program](http://www.tasz.hu/en/roma-program)**

# DEVELOP YOUR OWN INITIATIVES

## NEW IDEAS TO CHALLENGE ANTIGYPSYISM

The final part of the seminars followed the aim to strengthen the self-initiative of the participants and their activism on local level. In individual and group working phases the participants were encouraged to relate the learning results and topics of the seminars with their own local realities, communities and youth organizations. Participants had the chance to build teams, to exchange different perspectives and to start new initiatives.

## Initiatives

### 1. Platform of volunteers

Phiren Amenca strives to create a platform for volunteers and former volunteers, in order to create further opportunities for dialogue, non-formal education and engagement, and to strengthen their role as multipliers and promoters of voluntary service. Phiren Amenca gives a high priority to youth participation and the rights of volunteers within its own structures

and work. The platform will meet in the framework of the annual meeting, including the General Assembly.

### 2. Awareness raising

- Blog: to share ideas about fighting antigypsyism
- Update the websites of non-Roma partner organizations so new volunteers know more about Roma and antigypsyism
- Give a report about antigypsyism to home community

### 3. Cultural events

- Talent show: sharing Roma related songs, poetry, visual art (both Roma and non-Roma involved)
- Children exchange: including Roma and non-Roma, developing a children's dance and music festival / show
- Documentary film festival: challenging „bogus refugee“ stereotypes in Canada
- Workshop with Roma and non-Roma youth: sharing and learning different dance styles and cultures



### 4. Educational activities

- Role-play focusing on challenging stereotypes and racism: to be presented in schools, in workshops, where different national / ethnic actor plays another national / ethnic identity
- Make an afterschool program for disadvantaged students (including sports, education, team-work, etc.)
- Language camp for Romani language
- Help to build a community between Roma and non-Roma in informal students' groups
- Organize seminar on antigypsyism in Bulgaria





- Initiate a discussion on antigypsyism with local college students

The coordination team gave guideline questions to prompt further development of the initiatives.

- What do you try to achieve? How? When? Where?
- What are the challenges to build up your initiative?
- What kind of support do you need?

## Presentations

Every participant had the opportunity to construct and develop their own initiative (alone or in a group), to shape ideas and initiate a project which will positively affect their particular topic of interest. The participants presented their initiatives in different ways: some made a traditional presentation (detailing the step-by-step process of how they would build up their initiative), others made a role-play advertisement about their project, presented as part of a radio or TV show.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS & FOLLOW-UP

The evaluations of the seminars were conducted with written questionnaires, in order to get an individual perspective of the participants. The questionnaire looked into the personal experience, reflections of certain sessions and overall impressions and learning achievements. Additionally, we conducted some evaluation activities in order to get a group perspective and interactive evaluation on a series of issues. We set up four corners in the room. In the first corner (graffiti wall) the participants could leave a last message for the group. In the second corner they had to put a point on a target, where we asked how familiar did they become with the main topics of the study session (challenging antigypsyism). In the third corner they had a more personal task, they were asked to share a secret with each other. In the last corner the participants were asked to reflect what their biggest surprise was during the seminar and during the week.



### Conclusions and outcomes

- The seminars achieved the goal of raising the participants' awareness about the mechanisms and dimensions of antigypsyism, as a basis for critical thinking about the situation of Roma in Europe.
- The seminars successfully framed elements in the debate around "antigypsyism", focusing on the problem of stereotypes and stigmatization in the majority society, thus going beyond a perspective which often looks exclusively at the Roma, their situation and culture.
- The seminars contributed to strengthening the dialogue, networking and joint engagement of young Roma and non-Roma who developed their own initiatives which they can realize in their local environments.
- The session developed new methods and approaches which can be applied in other seminars, specifically a resource-based workshop on Roma history narratives, a role-play of a stakeholders' conference on the migration issue (e.g. in France), and a discussion on minority strategies based on the X-Men comics/movie drawing parallels to Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X.
- The participants developed initiatives which they can realize at home, especially within the context of their local organizations and their voluntary service year, with the support of their sending organizations as well as with Phiren Amenca.
- The study session served as a good expression of the Phiren Amenca mission statement to challenge stereotypes and racism and the ternYpe mission to create space for young people to become active citizens through empowerment, mobilization, participation and self-organization.





## Learning Points of Participants

- Developing critical thinking and learning more about the situation of Roma, especially regarding the current rise of extremism, hate speech and hate crimes;
- Strengthening the understanding of the concept of antigypsyism, to analyse the stereotypes in the majority society, the process of in- and out-grouping which have led to centuries of stigmatization, marginalization and exclusion;
- Reflecting on personal preconceptions and stereotypes, as well as on the personal responsibility and commitment for the issue;
- Sharing personal experiences between participants concerning discrimination, personal engagement, activism during the voluntary service and shared visions;
- Creating an adequate and open space for dialogue among young people to openly discuss their concerns, questions and challenges;
- Taking a different perspective to look at integration, inclusion and self-determination through a controversial debate on the minority strategies of Magneto and Professor X (X-Men) as a reflection of the African-American movement of Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X;
- Analyzing their own needs in their project or community including where to engage and to develop their own (small-scale) initiatives;
- Getting a better understanding of the Roma movement, of initiatives of Roma and non-Roma organizations to challenge stereotypes and racism, and to work for the empowerment and mobilization of Roma communities.

## Impact and follow-up

- **Follow-up to the initiatives:** We aim to follow-up on the initiatives which participants developed during the seminar. Many of them have a good chance of realization, as the ideas are linked to local work, engagement or voluntary service projects, and the participants have the support of their local or sending organizations.
- **Structural development of a platform of (former) volunteers:** As a still young and growing network, we want to create a platform where the (former) volunteers can take a leading and responsible role, contribute to and influence the priorities and directions of the network, as well as to realize their own initiatives. This platform shall give the space for the participants to meet again, to take a role as multipliers, and to follow-up on their initiatives.
- **Capacity-building of young Roma as facilitators and trainers:** We want to provide capacity-building opportunities for members of the platform of former volunteers, especially to young Roma, in order to develop skills as facilitators and trainers to take such roles in the network seminars.
- **Future seminars and study sessions:** The partnership plans to organize two seminars and study sessions per year, involving potential young Roma facilitators and trainers, as well as bringing together Roma and non-Roma volunteers. The seminars are dedicated to contribute to the capacity-building of the whole network through building expertise, and developing new methods and strategies to challenge stereotypes and antigypsyism. Resource centre: The partnership wants to develop further a resource centre which offers material, methods, literature, films and other resources to our member organizations to organize (non-formal educational) seminars with their international and local volunteers on the relevant issues of the network.





- **Increase efforts and investment to address antigypsyism in policies and programs:** We suggest that the institutions strengthen the focus, the efforts and investments to address antigypsyism in policies and programs in order to tackle the roots causes of social exclusion of Roma: stereotypes and antigypsyism. Framing the “Roma issue” from the critical perspective on the mechanisms of exclusion and of centuries-long stigmatization through majority society can contribute to overcome the barriers of many programs focused on “integration” and “Roma communities”, as well as to empower Roma communities in their emancipatory movement.
- **Address antigypsyism in hate speech campaign:** We suggest to strongly take up the issue of antigypsyism in the Council of Europe hate speech campaign, as the scandalous situations in many European countries currently prove that Roma constitute one of the major target groups of hate speech in Europe.
- **Work with non-Roma organizations on antigypsyism:** We suggest stressing the focus on antigypsyism as well in the work with non-Roma organizations, including in general human rights training-courses, seminars and campaigns, as we need a change in the mentality in the majority society. We suggest that the work with non-Roma youth



organizations on antigypsyism shall also be considered for the Roma Youth Action Plan.

- **Research on antigypsyism:** During the study session we realized that there is a huge lack of quality research, case studies and scientific literature on antigypsyism.
- **Policy definition:** Recent policy papers and strategies attempt to address the concept of antigypsyism without having a clear definition or understanding of the underlying mechanisms. We suggest the European Commission and the Council of Europe to take up the issue to develop expertise for its own work, as well as for the wider field.
- **Manual on educational methods and approaches regarding antigypsyism:** We suggest revising the already existing educational tools and methods in the field of anti-racism, intercultural learning and human rights education (Compass, ADAE campaign materials), and developing, in cooperation with Roma experts in the field, some new specific manual for educational institutions and youth organization on antigypsyism.
- **Support grassroots initiatives on antigypsyism:** We suggest that the European Commission and Council of Europe support initiatives addressing and challenging antigypsyism not just on the international level, e.g. study sessions and seminars, but also that they support campaigns and activities on the grassroots level, e.g. individual and group initiatives which were developed by participants of the study session. We consider the grassroots level and practices as the decisive factor to make a change on the long-term; practices need to be developed on this level to generate a relevant and practice-based expertise.



## 7. APPENDICES

### THE PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

#### Amaro Foro e.V., Germany

„Amaro Foro“ is a transcultural youth self-organization of Roma and non-Roma, which creates space for young people to become active citizens through empowerment, mobilization, self-organization and participation. We believe in the mutual efforts to create trust and mutual respect between Roma and non-Roma youth. Amaro Foro is active in the field of youth work, adult education, social inclusion and art and culture, including non-formal education, empowerment of young women, capacity-building of young adults and youth leaders, and the promotion of volunteering, voluntary service and active citizenship. Recognizing that stigmatization and marginalization constitute the root causes of social exclusion, Amaro Foro creates dialogue on all levels, and raises the awareness of society, media, schools and authorities about stereotypes, antigypsyism and discrimination. Moreover, Amaro Foro works for the social inclusion of migrants, especially Roma, from new EU Member States in Berlin through advisory and education support, as well as empowerment, enabling the people to address their own needs and interests towards local authorities to enjoy the full citizens' rights and responsibilities. Amaro Foro e.V. is member of the youth organization “Jugendbund djo Deutscher Regenbogen LV Berlin”, of the national umbrella organization Amaro Drom e.V., as well as partner of ternYpe – International Roma Youth Network, and Phiren Amenca, the network of Roma and non-Roma volunteers and voluntary service organizations.

**more info at [www.amaroforo.de](http://www.amaroforo.de)**

#### Youth Network for Development, Bulgaria

“Youth Network for Development” association is a non-governmental youth organization founded in 2007 by a group of active and motivated Roma and non-Roma University students. The main goal of the NGO is to change exclusionary processes like segregation and the lack of participation of the Roma youngsters on local level. Our mission is to create opportunities for young Roma and non-Roma to become active citizens and their voice to be heard, so by common efforts and understanding Roma and non-Roma to be able live together in mutual respect and tolerance. The YND team consists of young Roma and non-Roma students. For the last two years the activities of the association include more than 200 youngsters from 15 different locations in South-Western Bulgaria. Currently the association supports the activities of 6 self-organized initiative groups on local level in the whole region. We plan to enlarge and strengthen our organization's network on national level. YND has supported young people and helped them participate in different international events.

**more info at [www.ynd-bg.org](http://www.ynd-bg.org)**

#### Roma Onlus, Italy

Roma Onlus is an NGO established in 2008, based in Rome and composed by both Roma cultural mediators and non Roma people. Roma's Method is active participation. Roma's Mission is to promote good aspects of roma culture and roma skills to interact with general collectivity by rediscovering and enhancing roma history and traditions and fight every form of discrimination. Its aim is to support the integration process of Romani community by mean of projects and activities directed toward the empowerment of Roma and Sinti in different fields: education, cultural awareness, social and cultural mediation, support to employment. Roma Onlus devotes a large part of its efforts to long-term empowerment practices such as schooling support and tutoring aimed to improve the access to higher education and the creation of gathering places for youngsters of roma and non roma background. Roma Onlus is a promoter member of “Coordinamento Rom a Roma”, a founder member of “Federazione Romani” (Italian Romani Federation), a founder member of Ternype (International Roma Youth Network) and a member of RGDTs - Phiren Amenca.

**more info at [www.romaonlus.it](http://www.romaonlus.it)**

## Roma Education Centre, Slovakia

OCR (REC) was based in 1999 in connection with a governmental conception for Roma issue - solving in Slovakia. The members of the non-governmental organization "Roma Education Centre" are young Roma and Non-Roma, volunteers and professional youth workers from Slovakia. Our mission is to facilitate communication and understanding between Roma communities and the majority and to support mobility, civic participation, education and empowerment of Roma and non-Roma youth on local, national and international levels. We believe in creating a common good based on trust and mutual respect between Roma and non-Roma youth. Most members of our association work voluntarily. Partly we prepare leisure time and educational activities for children and teenagers in Nové Mesto nad Váhom Roma community which is segregated and located outside of the town, where we have Roma assistants employed in a children and youth club in school. On regional level we work on networking of NGOs and we closely cooperate with Regional Leisure Time Center from Trenčín. Most of our volunteers on regional level are non Roma high school and university students who are interested in the work with Roma but they miss knowledge about Roma culture and habits. On national level we support a network and capacity-building activities of potential young Roma adults who would like to develop their skills. Those people don't have many possibilities and resources to travel and their mobility and opportunities to learn are therefore very low. OCR is founding organization of ternYpe - International Roma Youth Network through which we are developing learn-term programs and strategies.

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**more info at [www.mladez-ocr.sk](http://www.mladez-ocr.sk)**

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