Roma/Gypsies:
A European Minority
MINORITY RIGHTS GROUP

Minuty Rights Group works to secure rights and justice for ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities. It is dedicated to the cause of cooperation and understanding between communities.

Founded in the 1960s, Minority Rights Group is a small international non-governmental organization that informs and warns governments, the international community, non-governmental organizations and the wider public about the situation of minorities around the world. This work is based on the publication of well-researched reports, books and papers; direct advocacy on behalf of minority rights in international fora; the development of a global network of like-minded organizations and minority communities to collaborate on these issues; and the challenging of prejudice and promotion of public understanding through information and education projects.

Minority Rights Group believes that the best hope for a peaceful world lies in identifying and monitoring conflict between communities, advocating preventive measures to avoid the escalation of conflict and encouraging positive action to build trust between majority and minority communities.

Minority Rights Group has consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council and has a worldwide network of partners. Its international headquarters are in London. Legally it is registered both as a charity and as a limited company under the United Kingdom Law with an International Governing Council.

Acknowledgements

Minority Rights Group gratefully acknowledges all organizations and individuals who gave financial and other assistance for this report.

This report has been commissioned and is published by Minority Rights Group as a contribution to public understanding of the issue which forms its subject. The text and views of the individual authors do not necessarily represent, in every detail and in all its aspects, the collective view of Minority Rights Group.

THE AUTHORS

JEAN-PIERRE LIEGEOIS is director of the Centre de Recherches Tsiganes (Gypsy Research Centre) at the René Descartes University, Paris. He is an author of numerous articles promoting an understanding of Roma/Gypsy issues and manages a substantial project funded by the European Commission on Roma/Gypsy education. He is editor of Interface magazine and Interface Collection.

NICOLAE GHEORGHE is a Romanian sociologist who belongs to the Roma community. He has long been active in the defence of the Roma community both in Romania and internationally. He is coordinator of the Roma Center for Social Intervention and Studies and senior researcher at the Institute of Sociology, Bucharest.

THE PROCESS

As part of its methodology, MRG conducts regional research, identifies issues and commissions reports based on its findings. Each author is carefully chosen and all scripts are read by no less than eight independent experts who are knowledgeable about the subject matter. These experts are drawn from the minorities about whom the reports are written, and from journalists, academics, researchers and other human rights agencies. Authors are asked to incorporate comments made by these parties. In this way, MRG aims to publish accurate, authoritative, well-balanced reports.
Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities

(Adopted by the UN General Assembly. Resolution 47/135 of 18 December 1992)

Article 1
1. States shall protect the existence and the national or ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic identity of minorities within their respective territories, and shall encourage conditions for the promotion of that identity.
2. States shall adopt appropriate legislative and other measures to achieve those ends.

Article 2
1. Persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities (hereinafter referred to as persons belonging to minorities) have the right to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, and to use their own language, in private and in public, freely and without interference or any form of discrimination.
2. Persons belonging to minorities have the right to participate effectively in cultural, religious, social, economic and public life.
3. Persons belonging to minorities have the right to participate effectively in decisions on the national and, where appropriate, regional level concerning the minority to which they belong or the regions in which they live, in a manner not incompatible with national legislation.
4. Persons belonging to minorities have the right to establish and maintain their own associations.
5. Persons belonging to minorities have the right to establish and maintain, without any discrimination, free and peaceful contacts with other members of their group, with persons belonging to other minorities, as well as contacts across frontiers with citizens of other States to whom they are related by national or ethnic, religious or linguistic ties.

Article 3
1. Persons belonging to minorities may exercise their rights including those set forth in this Declaration individually as well as in community with other members of their group, without any discrimination.
2. No disadvantage shall result for any person belonging to a minority as the consequence of the exercise or non-exercise of the rights as set forth in this Declaration.

Article 4
1. States shall take measures where required to ensure that persons belonging to minorities may exercise fully and effectively all their human rights and fundamental freedoms without any discrimination and in full equality before the law.
2. States shall take measures to create favourable conditions to enable persons belonging to minorities to express their characteristics and to develop their culture, language, religion, traditions and customs, except where specific practices are in violation of national law and contrary to international standards.
3. States shall take appropriate measures so that, wherever possible, persons belonging to minorities have adequate opportunities to learn their mother tongue or to have instruction in their mother tongue.
4. States shall, where appropriate, take measures in the field of education, in order to encourage knowledge of the history, traditions, language and culture of the minorities existing within their territory. Persons belonging to minorities should have adequate opportunities to gain knowledge of the society as a whole.
5. States should consider appropriate measures so that persons belonging to minorities may participate fully in the economic progress and development in their country.

Article 5
1. National policies and programmes shall be planned and implemented with due regard for the legitimate interests of persons belonging to minorities.
2. Programmes of cooperation and assistance among States should be planned and implemented with due regard for the legitimate interests of persons belonging to minorities.

Article 6
States should cooperate on questions relating to persons belonging to minorities, inter alia, exchanging information and experiences, in order to promote mutual understanding and confidence.

Article 7
States should cooperate in order to promote respect for the rights as set forth in the present Declaration.

Article 8
1. Nothing in this Declaration shall prevent the fulfilment of international obligations of States in relation to persons belonging to minorities. In particular, States shall fulfill in good faith the obligations and commitments they have assumed under international treaties and agreements to which they are parties.
2. The exercise of the rights as set forth in the present Declaration shall not prejudice the enjoyment by all persons of universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms.
3. Measures taken by States in order to ensure the effective enjoyment of the rights as set forth in the present Declaration shall not prima facie be considered contrary to the principle of equality contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
4. Nothing in the present Declaration may be construed as permitting any activity contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations, including sovereign equality, territorial integrity and political independence of States.

Article 9
The specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system shall contribute to the full realization of the rights and principles as set forth in the present Declaration, within their respective fields of competence.

For further reference, see also the following instruments:
The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), article 27;
The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965), article 2;
The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1995);
The OSCE Budapest Summit Declaration (1994), Chapter VIII, the Human Dimension, articles 23 and 24.

Preface

Minority Rights Group (MRG) first published a report on the Roma (‘Gypsies’) as they are known in Western Europe in 1973 and has closely followed developments affecting this minority ever since. Following the collapse of the communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe and significant changes in the situation of Roma/Czégyp in Europe as a whole, MRG commissioned a full updated report Roma/Gypsies: A European Minority, from two acknowledged experts in this area. This report is seen as a reference support to the work of Minority Rights Group, in particular where MRG has established practical training initiatives with the Roma/Gypsy communities to encourage empowerment and also, multicultural education projects to inform and educate ‘majority’ communities.

The new report has adopted a different approach from its previous edition and offers a thematic analysis of the situation of the Roma/Gypsy in the post-communist era. Many of the problems this persecuted minority suffers are not unique to any particular country, although specific instances in different countries are cited in the report. The authors give an overview of the Roma/Gypsy communities in and to the history of discrimination and persecution in Europe, analyzing the various policies adopted during the 600 years since the Roma/Gypsies first migrated to Europe.

The report examines specific areas where Roma/Gypsy community as a whole currently faces particular difficulties. Roma/Gypsies face disadvantage and discrimination in all spheres: employment, housing, health, education and vocational opportunities. In addition, they suffer from the accumulation of centuries of prejudice and negative stereotyping, which have adversely affected policies conducted towards them. Up until recently, there has been little recognition of the Roma/Gypsy as a distinct ethnic, linguistic and cultural group and hence a lack of recognition that many of the problems they encounter result from the violation of their rights as a minority.

Much of the focus of concern has to be on the issues of Central and Eastern Europe, whilst acknowledging that the record of Western European states is also poor. Roma/Gypsies, however, have suffered disproportionately in the political and economic changes which have resulted since the fall of communism. In many cases, while communist policies towards Roma/Gypsies were far from exemplary, as MRG’s earlier report demonstrated, there was a bottom line for Roma/Gypsies in terms of social protection, and in providing the resources necessary to implement non-discriminatory and affirmative policies in housing, health, education and employment. There have been disturbing instances of violence against Roma/Gypsies in many countries where political and social transformation is taking place with Roma/Gypsies often being seen as the scapegoat for wider social ill.

There are some positive developments noted in this report, notably the greater freedom of Roma/Gypsies to organize themselves and lobby for the protection of their rights at international and national levels. There have been many initiatives put forward by a variety of European institutions in the last few years which underline the increasing awareness that Roma/Gypsies as a transnational minority need to be recognized and protected at European as well as national levels. MRG welcomes initiatives by the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to devise particular attention to the Roma/Gypsy issue since April 1993 when the High Commissioner on National Minorities was given a mandate to report on the position of the Roma/Gypsy within the OSCE region. MRG actively participated in the Roma/Gypsy Seminar in Warsaw in September 1994 and some of this report is based on submissions made by the authors to the Working Groups at the Seminar.

The Roma/Gypsy community was the focus of much attention at the Romanian government-sponsored Conference on Tolerance in Bucharest in May 1995. Roma expressed widespread anger at the way they perceived that their name and their identity had been changed by the Romanian authorities. The Romanian government denies any change, stating that its preferred name ‘Digs’ is tradi tional and avoids confusion with Romanian nationality. The argument is symbolic of a lack of consultation, trust and confidence in Roma/Gypsies in many states.

Traditionally, the OSCE concerned regarding national minorities has focused on security concerns and the danger of conflicts between states. In this case, there is a narrow concern to discourage migration, but also a wider concern that the issues surrounding Roma/Gypsies are an indicator of how tolerant and protective of human rights any society is. Few states can be proud of their record.

As the authors state, the time has now come, since the problems have been identified and aired, to adopt an integrated, inclusive and sensitive approach to the problems faced by Roma/Gypsies as a hitherto neglected minority group.

Alan Phillips
Director
September 1995
Roma/Gypsy: terminology

Gypsy: Term used to denote ethnic groups formed by the dispersal of commercial, nomadic and other groups from within India from the tenth century, and their mixing with European and other groups during their diaspora.

Roma/Rom: A broad term used in various ways, to signify:
(a) Those ethnic groups (e.g. Kalderash, Lovari, etc.) who speak the ‘Vlach’, ‘Norouz’ or ‘Rom’ varieties of Romani language.
(b) Any person identified by others as ‘Tsigane’ in Central and Eastern Europe and Turkey, plus those outside the region of East European extraction.
(c) Romani people in general.

Traveller: A member of any of the (predominantly) indigenous European ethnic groups (Woonwagenbewoners, Mincéiri, Jenisch, Quinquis, Resende, etc.) whose culture is characterized, inter alia, by self-employment, occupational fluidity, and nomadism. These groups have been influenced to a greater or lesser degree by ethnic groups of (predominantly) Indian origin with a similar cultural base (see ‘Gypsies’).

The authors have used the designation ‘Roma/Gypsies’ for the multitude of ethnic groups covered by the above terms, in deference on the one hand to familiarity and on the multitude of ethnic groups covered by the above terms, in deference on the other to self-designation.

Context

History

The first Roma/Gypsy groups reached Europe from the East in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. At this time, they still remembered their homeland, as testified by numerous documents dated between 1422-1590, a period during which their Indian roots were gradually obscured by legends of Egyptian origins. With their arrival came attempts from the local populations to categorize the newcomers, with diverse names referring to their supposed origins. For example in Greece a sect from Asia Minor, whose members had a reputation as soothsayers and magicians, had been collectively known for centuries by the name of ‘Atsinganos’ (‘untouched, untouchable’). When the new group arrived from the East, this name was attributed to them, and, with variations, was to remain in use in numerous countries (as ‘Tsigan’ in Bulgaria, Romania, and Hungary, ‘Cigani’ and later ‘Tsiganes’ in France, ‘Zigeuner’ in Germany, ‘Zingari’ in Italy, ‘Cigano’ in Portugal, etc.). Similarly, many regions frequented by Travellers of Eastern origin were, at that time, known as ‘Little Egypt’. This is probably why, when these Travellers moved on to other European countries, they were frequently dubbed ‘Egyptians’, another name which has remained in a variety of forms, with ‘Gypsies’ in English and ‘Gitanos’ in Spanish.

It was not until the late eighteenth century that a comparative study, carried out in Hungary, of Roma/Gypsy terminology and of Indian languages, made it possible to formulate the hypothesis – subsequently confirmed by linguists – of the Indian origin of these communities we shall be calling ‘Gypsy’ or ‘Roma’. The migrations of their ancestors, originating in India, probably developed over a number of centuries, prior to their arrival in Europe. More recent research demonstrates that the chronicles of Persian and Arab historians and geographers confirm linguistic findings. The following reference dates indicate the first recorded Roma/Gypsy presence in various European countries, bearing in mind that earlier arrivals may well have gone unnoticed:

1407 Germany
1419 France
1420 Netherlands
1422 Italy
1425 Spain
1501 Russia
1505 Scotland, Denmark
1512 Sweden
1514 England
1533 Estonia
1540 Norway
1584 Finland

Once in Western Europe, groups often continued to travel from one region or country to another, however, others reduced or discontinued their migrations and adapted their work practices in response to local demand, for example taking up trade, craftsmanship or seasonal agricultural labour. In the course of their travels, these Roma/Gypsy groups encountered other Travellers of indigenous European origin. For example in Ireland from the twelfth century a group known as ‘Tinklers’ or ‘Tyshers’ has main-
The politics of negation

Policies towards Roma/Gypsies have always constituted, in one form or another, a negation of the people, their culture and their language. Policies can be broadly grouped into three categories: exclusion, containment, and assimilation. While it is possible to trace a general chronological trend in the policies from the seventeenth century, these categories are not mutually exclusive: they can operate side by side during the same period in different states, or even simultaneously, resulting in a form of containment within a given state – even in the twentieth century.

Exclusion

From the time of their arrival in Western Europe in the fourteenth century, Roma/Gypsies have been seen as intruders, eroding into societies just as the state was attempting to organize and control them. Local communities had limited horizons, and faced with these newcomers, they reacted with mistrust, fear, and rejection. Though there were some exceptions, mistrust was the rule. Such rejection, localized at first, rapidly became a state affair with the passing of royal edicts condemning and banishing the Roma/Gypsies on pain of corporal punishment.

Examples of exclusion policies are numerous: indeed all of the states under consideration have probably practiced this at one time or another. For instance, in France in 1504, Louis XII banished Roma/Gypsies altogether; by 1550 the penalty for defying the ban became death by burning. Such sentiments of mistrust and xenophobia were to lead towards more formalized and codified measures. In France, the Gypsy Law of 1677 (Loi sur les Gens de Tour) was promulgated, making it a capital offense to be a Roma/Gypsy. In Spain, King Charles II, by the Royal Decree of 1688, decreed that any Roma/Gypsy, male or female, over the age of 18 caught on Prussian territory. In Italy between 1506 and 1785, 148 anti-Roma/Gypsy laws (or for every 1.5 years) were passed.

In the Netherlands, rejection was absolute. From the seventeenth to the eighteenth century, Roma/Gypsy hunts (huntenlagen; pagans hunts) were organized. The same thing happened in Sweden where large numbers of so-called Gypsy hunts took place, sometimes to the ringing of the church bells, with orders to shoot if they met with resistance. Sometimes such hunts were highly organized military affairs with the participation of infantry, cavalry and conscriptables. Bonnies for captured Roma/Gypsies were instituted, leading to the rise of professional Roma/Gypsy hunters. Similarly, in Venice, a tax dated 1692 offers an amnesty to convicts serving galley sentences of up to 10 years, on condition they take up Roma/Gypsy-hunting.

Various such policies were also pursued in Scandinavia. Despite Roma/Gypsies being clearly identified, they were never defined in historical legal documents. The stereotyped image presented in these texts never attempt- ed fairness or accuracy; on the contrary, the negative image was deliberately stressed in order to serve as a basis and justification for repression. For just one example, by defining the Roma/Gypsy, they were equal- ly unconcerned with their own reasons for reacting to them as they did. All the very fact of being a Roma/Gypsy was seen as sufficient reason for condemning both the individual and the group. They were denounced for ‘living the life of a plunderer’ and suspected for any crime, as if they had done nothing. As a Straubing magistrate wrote at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

I have no evidence of criminal acts committed by this people, but their situation is such that they cannot but be tempted to commit them if the occasion presents itself... They cannot but be dangerous.

Today, the terms that figure in everyday speech, the images propagated in certain songs, popular sayings that associate Roma/Gypsies with everything negative (e.g. ‘to lie’, ‘ideal’ or ‘be as dirty as a Gypsy’, etc.), along with negative terms reserved even more for them, have often been passed down to local variants thereof, and used as synonyms for lying, cheating, and the like in a great number of languages – all gathered together under the title ‘Zigeuner’ during the Nazi era. However, insofar as the terms used by the communities them- selves, are like the names used by the communities them- selves, also very diverse. They have acquired deep roots in a most legalistic, with political and administrative tests often using colloquial terms, or inventing parapHRases or metaphors encapsulating official policy at the time. For instance, personnes d'origine nomade (people of nomadic origin), migrants or people of a foreign culture, and was the preferred term in France in the 1970s, when the policy was one of assimilation. This report sometimes uses the terms ‘travelers’, which is often the preferred name of a number of communities of non-Indian origin, and is relatively free of negative overtones. The term Gypsy is not generally viewed in a pejorative sense, however it does have some negative overtones, for example in Germany, due to the stigma attached to the word ‘Zigeuner’ during the Nazi era. However, insofar as the communities covered by these designations have no col- lective term for themselves and use these terms in the political context (for example ‘Tsiganes’ in France, ‘Gitanos’ in Spain, etc.), they are acceptable options, par- ticularly for Western Europe. As for the name ‘Roma’ or ‘Roma/Gypsy’, while it does not cover all of the groups concerned, it is increasingly being applied by political circles, and it does have the advantage of clear demarcation from terms with pejorative connotations in most languages, with political leaders being the last to recognize this.

Content

The politics of negation

Exclusion

From the time of their arrival in Western Europe in the fourteenth century, Roma/Gypsies have been seen as intruders, eroding into societies just as the state was attempting to organize and control them. Local communities had limited horizons, and faced with these
into one of assimilation, characterized by the goal of absorbing Roma/Gypsies, now redefined as misfits associated with social and psychological difficulties. Once again cultural questions are transformed into ‘social problems’.

Every state in Europe has been involved in this type of policy, however it has been most evident under the socialist regimes of Central and Eastern Europe. It should therefore be borne in mind that if this report does not explicitly name a given state as it outlines its analyses, these are nonetheless relevant to every country in Europe.

The implementation of this general policy takes many forms. First, there is control by means of a multitude of detailed regulations, dealing directly with every aspect of Roma/Gypsy life: travelling and setting up camp, legal status, the exercise of itinerant and artisans trade, scrap collection, etc. The different elements of such regulations are not always legal, nor constitutional, in particular those dealing with personal legal status when it is negatively defined or treating Roma/Gypsies or nomadic peoples as an undifferentiated group (i.e. when they are subjected to automatic eviction or other discriminatory treatment).

Elements of this policy may be mutually contradictory: for example, legislation limiting the duration and location of stay in urban areas versus the legal obligation of children to attend school. Although these measures do not in a general rule apply specifically to nomads or Roma/Gypsies, it is important to consider the web they weave around those who are caught up in them, confronted in their day to day lives by regulations which prevent them from stopping from travelling according to their wishes and needs, and curtailing their work possibilities. Roma/Gypsies form a population for whom these laws are mutually reinforcing in their negative effects. For example, a person who is forced to move too quickly or, to stop in bad conditions, loses his or her sources of income and suffers reduced initiative and adaptability. Moreover these illegal practices, carried out by force and threat, thrive on Roma/Gypsies’ ignorance of their legal rights.

It is worth pointing out the selective manner in which many laws are applied to Roma/Gypsies. For example, legislation controlling the composition of caravans in built-up areas is enforced differently depending on whether the caravans belong to workers on a building site, tourists, or Roma/Gypsies. The latter are in fact working or are travelling as tourists at the time. In other words the sole fact of being a Roma/Gypsy, and being perceived as such, provokes discriminatory treatment which is backed up by law.

Regarding legislation, a new approach has developed which, in many states, consists almost exclusively of social welfare. Such social policies, fed by assimilationism, confer an important role on social work and on various official and voluntary bodies formed for, but not by, Roma/Gypsies. Thus control is made more humane, but at the same time, tightened and, within the overall policy of absorption, the trend is towards the ‘normalization’ of what is perceived as marginal or deviant. This control can act as a block to genuine aid which, if administered in accordance with Roma/Gypsy socio-cultural realities, could help them to adapt successfully to new situations.

From indecision to innovation?

The failure of assimilation policies is gradually being recognized. There are new general developments, notably that many states must now acknowledge that immigrant families, which they had assumed would eventually be returning to their countries of origin, are there to stay. Serious consideration of the changes required to improve coexistence in countries which have become multicultural is therefore required. New conceptions, such as ‘inter-cultural education’, have emerged, spread, and are slowly, hesitant-ly, being translated into reality. Another very significant development has been the political and social upheaval in Central and Eastern Europe in the 1990s, bringing general destabilization and, for Roma/Gypsies, a further deterio-ration of their situation. In a number of states, East and West, Roma/Gypsies are once again being cast as scapegoats by politicians and the public.

The goal in most states is for the ‘social integration’ of the Roma/Gypsies. But the goal is an ambiguous one, and its realization fraught with difficulties. Is not integration, in the sociological sense of the term, the ‘final step’ towards assimilation? Is this not merely a new ‘politically correct’ formulation which has the advantage of being vague and thus open to interpretations and manipulation? And, between a governmental goal of integration which claims to be based on respect, and its effective realization, there are a number of obstacles.

Whatever policy is adopted with regard to Roma/Gypsies, there will always be two fundamental, inseparable questions: the first concerns the recognition of culture, language and lifestyle, and the second, ensuring that Roma/Gypsy citizens of a given state receive the full benefit of laws protecting their rights as a common group and as individuals. Or, to put it another way, in the Roma/Gypsies’ distinct identity taken into account? If so, how is this done, and what means are made available to support this identity once the debating stage is over? And, having decided on the means, are they actually imple-mented? Are they in fact compatible with the criteria of recognition and respect, and are not results are produced? Particular attention should be paid to the con-tent and application of national constitutions, and the gaps between theory, practice, and reality.

The present period is one of transition, indecision, hes-itation and contradiction. On the whole, however, the gen-eral direction is a positive one: today’s indecision and the questions to which it gives rise, open the way to new ideas and approaches. Now that the opportunities exist, it is the responsibility, and the duty, of all concerned – politicians, administrators, and those involved at the grassroots – Roma/Gypsy and non-Roma/Gypsy – to ensure that the new era will be one of innovation.

Some aspects of the current situation

Accommodation, employment and health

Over a number of years the analyses presented in earlier reports compiled for numerous international insti-tutions, as well as studies undertaken by various non-governmental organizations (NGOs), have converged in their exposure, and denunciation, of the difficult condi-tions in which Roma/Gypsy families live, and are forced to live. A hearing held by the European Commission in 1991 gave Roma/Gypsy delegations from 14 states an opportunity to express themselves, and a resumé of their statements subsequently issued by the Commission pro-vides a succinct overview of their situation. These conclu-sions were recently restated at the Seminar on the Human Dimension of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), ‘The Rom in the CSCE Region’, held in Warsaw, September 1994.

Conditions in general

- Difficult living conditions, also deteriorating, sometimes sub-human living conditions.
- In these circumstances difficulty of retaining the Roma/Gypsy identity.
- Need for recognition, not criticism. Roma/Gypsies were often forgotten in the midst of current changes and difficulties in most countries. They were kept on the fringes of politics.
- Opening up of Eastern European frontiers: Roma/Gypsies have received the same treat-ment as other refugees.

Rejection

- Racist clichés can be found everywhere, includ-ing the media, which all too often carries racist propaganda and encourages rejection in attitudes and conduct.
- Terminology should be reviewed. Roma/Gypsies are often stigmatized and their cultural charac-teristics are not recognized. Romantic clichés do not improve the image of Roma/Gypsies and Travellers, nor do negative stereotypes which put Roma/Gypsies on the same footing as beggars and outcasts, encouraging a stress on the misfitness in analyses and government action.
- Many publications present a negative image of Roma/Gypsy communities.

Justice

- In many cases the judicial authorities fail to deal with current changes and difficulties in most countries. They were often forgotten in the midst of current changes and difficulties.
- Sometimes the police break their professional secrecy and violate national constitutions by revealing, where Roma/Gypsies are involved, the ethnic identity of detainees.
- Care should be taken with the international develop-ment of computerized records, which are tanta-montant to setting up a police surveillance system.
- Roma/Gypsies are not asking for compassion, but for the right to equality with other citizens. Racism and discrimination against the Roma/Gypsies.

Employment and economic activities

- Difficulties in the pursuit of economic activities due to racial discrimination and the constraining envi-ronment: these made it difficult to inte-grate into society.
- Difficulties in employment or retraining in con-nection with current changes in economic activities. Traditional activities should not be discouraged; some of them still have a future.
The most arduous work is often given to Roma/Gypsies. Problems caused by bans on door-to-door sales, as many Roma/Gypsies are involved in itinerant trades. Such restrictions are inconsistent with freedom of movement and free competition in the member states, and should be looked into.

Many shifts are undersigned. Significant shortfalls in vocational training. Take-up in training establishments should be improved, particularly since the issue of work permits may be subject to a certain level of education.

Health

Life expectancy is poor. Older people are rare, while infant mortality remains significant.

Education

Prejudice and stereotypes

Sterotypical images of Roma/Gypsies are used, whether consciously or not, to inspire and then to justify attitudes and behaviour towards them. Throughout Europe the whole set of imagery has been constructed and developed from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries onwards, imagery which rapidly crystallized into stereotypes forming a reservoir into which anyone can dip at will and find something to back up their arguments and justify their policies – be they assimilationist or rejectionist. In describing exclusion policies, we should remember that there was no attempt to find out who the Roma/Gypsies were; it sufficed to designate those who ‘led the life’ and to construct around them a brooding, repellant image, in order to undertake measures of rejection defined by the political mood of the moment.

The politics of assimilation have characterized Europe over the last few decades, and continue to do so. The emergence of the urge to assimilate must be seen as part of the image of the Roma/Gypsy stripped of cultural and ethnic distinctiveness. General measures aimed at Roma/Gypsies must be an air of legality, and for this reason the ‘Roma/Gypsy’ groups which are also general in every possible sense – for any recognition of the existence of a unique, dynamic culture or language would hamper the implementation of covert assimilationist measures, now that forced assimilation is no longer ideologically acceptable. As a rule the representations constructed in connection with this goal tend to blur all cultural characteristics in order to reveal a ‘social problem’. This is clearly illustrated in official modes of designation. Roma/Gypsies are defined through an arbitrary process which fixes upon a term and strips it of any ethnic or cultural connotations with which it may be associated: for example in 1967 the High Court in London defined a ‘Gypsy’ as a person living a ‘nomadic life, with no fixed employment and with no fixed abode’.

The following year a ruling was made indicating that any one of the above criteria can be used, as follows: one who buys a caravan and parks it illegally is, by this process, a ‘social problem’. This is clearly illustrated in official modes of designation. Roma/Gypsies are defined through an arbitrary process which fixes upon a term and strips it of any ethnic or cultural connotations with which it may be associated: for example in 1967 the High Court in London defined a ‘Gypsy’ as a person living a ‘nomadic life, with no fixed employment and with no fixed abode’.

The view from one’s own culture is coloured by that culture. The notion of collective responsibility, and an appropriate legal response, require further work.

Basic legal protection is essential for Roma/Gypsies, as much for the exercise of their trades as for their children’s schooling. It does not appear necessary to undertake much for the exercise of their trades as for their children’s schooling. It does not appear necessary to undertake much for the exercise of their trades as for their children’s schooling.

Roma/Gypsy children can make do with materials which are thought to have no linguistic, cultural or ethnic roots. They are instead a ‘social problem’ requiring ‘rehabilitation’ and ‘reintegration’, who can – and must – be brought back into the fold of society. It is extremely important to stop and consider these stereotypes and their implications, but it is not easy to do so.

The consequences of this are extremely negative, because it is these images which inspire, channel, and justify action. This is how cultural questions are reclassified as ‘social problems’; it is this vision which lies behind the animosity and by extension the right – of active intervention, and gives rise to measures of ‘assistance’ opening up the way for full-scale drives aimed at ‘reintegration’ and ‘rehabilitation’. These flawed analyses encourage a focus on the consequences of a given situation (such as health problems, poverty, illiteracy, etc.) rather than on their root causes (rejection, inappropriate provision, etc.).

The next stage is to juggle these parameters, which only modifies the effects without addressing the causes, and risks aggravating the situations supposedly being rectified.

Discrimination and violation of rights

Selective application of basic rights

The overwhelming majority of Roma/Gypsy are citizens of the European Union, and are subject to provisions for Roma/Gypsies. They are ‘ascribed’ – that is, they are allocated the legal status of ‘citizens of the Union’. This is given to all citizens of the member states, and is given to Roma/Gypsies by virtue of their being a minority group.

Along the same lines, familiar terms are no longer used in referring to Roma/Gypsies, but they persist in the minds of the people to whom they refer. The Roma/Gypsy child in particular is subject to a certain level of education.

The consequences of this are extremely negative, because it is these images which inspire, channel, and justify action. This is how cultural questions are reclassified as ‘social problems’; it is this vision which lies behind the animosity and by extension the right – of active intervention, and gives rise to measures of ‘assistance’ opening up the way for full-scale drives aimed at ‘reintegration’ and ‘rehabilitation’. These flawed analyses encourage a focus on the consequences of a given situation (such as health problems, poverty, illiteracy, etc.) rather than on their root causes (rejection, inappropriate provision, etc.).

The next stage is to juggle these parameters, which only modifies the effects without addressing the causes, and risks aggravating the situations supposedly being rectified.

The consequences of this are extremely negative, because it is these images which inspire, channel, and justify action. This is how cultural questions are reclassified as ‘social problems’; it is this vision which lies behind the animosity and by extension the right – of active intervention, and gives rise to measures of ‘assistance’ opening up the way for full-scale drives aimed at ‘reintegration’ and ‘rehabilitation’. These flawed analyses encourage a focus on the consequences of a given situation (such as health problems, poverty, illiteracy, etc.) rather than on their root causes (rejection, inappropriate provision, etc.).

The next stage is to juggle these parameters, which only modifies the effects without addressing the causes, and risks aggravating the situations supposedly being rectified.
Acts of violence

The litany of acts of violence against Roma/Gypsies throughout Europe is a lengthy one, and includes cases in many countries. Some cases have been highlighted by the media, others have remained invisible. In the space limitations of this report, we shall focus on a couple of cases from Romania, and the interested reader can consult the numerous reports compiled by human rights organizations for further details on the particular situation facing Roma/Gypsy communities there and elsewhere. It should also be emphasized that, while Romania has the highest concentration of Roma/Gypsies anywhere in Europe, which justifies singling it out for particular attention, its situation is far from unique: rejection of Roma/Gypsies, and violence against them, exist throughout Europe. While we focus on an event that occurred at Băcău, Romania, in early 1995, equally horrifying scenes were being enacted: in Austria, several Roma/Gypsies were deliberately murdered in a bomb attack, while in Madrid, 36 Roma/Gypsy families (soon to be joined by a further 80) had been ‘reaccommodated’ for over a year on one of Europe’s major rubbish tips, in contact with highly dangerous toxic waste. Many other examples could be cited. The fact that certain incidents may be raised to the status of ‘incidents’ by media attention should not shield the violence and rejection suffered by Roma/Gypsies on a daily basis.

The events of January 1995, Băcău, Romania

In the village of Băcău, some 23 km from Bucharest, on the night of 7−8 January 1995 (the Orthodox festival of St John), following a confrontation between villagers and Roma/Gypsies long settled in the village, Roma/Gypsy houses were set on fire and destroyed. As always in situations of this kind, the situation was difficult to control, with each side blaming the other. It is nonetheless certain that two ethnic Romanians fired a hunting rifle at a neighbouring Roma/Gypsy family, gravely wounding two of its members. In the resulting confrontation three Roma/Gypsies and two Romanians were seriously wounded.

The Roma/Gypsies immediately notified the police and handed over the gun to the police, from which it was confiscated from the villagers in question. Fearing further violence, they then fled the village. On the evening of 8 January, and despite the presence of the police, called together by the ringing of the church bell, burned down the empty homes belonging to Roma/Gypsies. Three were completely destroyed in this way, and a fourth was severely damaged. All belonged to families which had had nothing to do with the original conflict. They were destroyed simply because Roma/Gypsies lived in them, and villagers seized the opportunity to force Roma/Gypsies from their vandalized homes. It should be born in mind that in Romania, as in all other Eastern European states, Roma/Gypsy are full citizens, legal residents in the towns and villages in which they have been settled for a very long time. In principle, they should enjoy the same rights as other citizens.

Significant precedents

The conflict in Băcău is the latest in a series of some 30 similar incidents which have occurred in Romania in recent decades. In many of these, confrontations have been triggered by acts of violence which have ‘accidentally’ been committed in the presence of the church bell, to attack Roma/Gypsy homes. These scenarios are the contemporary equivalents of the pogroms once common in Central and Eastern Europe. In the district of Giurgiu alone, four incidents of this type occurred during April-May 1991, all in villages close to Băcău, and all culminated in the burning of Roma/Gypsy homes and the expulsion of their occupants from the village. To this day, the perpetrators have not been brought to justice. Investigations and legal proceedings—launched in response to direct complaints from the victims rather than at the initiative of the authorities—have often failed due to lack of evidence because of village solidarity. The victims have been left to pick up the pieces by themselves, with no compensation.

The Federation of Romanian Roma and the Roma Centre for Social Intervention−RomaCRIS (members of the International Roma Union and of the Standing Conference for Cooperation and Coordination of Roma/Gypsy organizations), have denounced these attacks and protested against the authorities’ passive attitude in the face of repeated, collective violence directed at the Roma/Gypsies. These organizations fear that the current situation of mass violation of human rights may go on indefinitely unless those in power resolve to put an end to it. They also feel that the national and local authorities bear a direct responsibility for the impunity of those involved. Such an attitude on the part of the authorities is, they feel, an implicit encouragement to any such acts of violence, with all the negative consequences this entails both for internal security and for the process of establishing the rule of law. In this context, and with the support of associations in other countries, they also call on international organizations and national governments to reconsider their classification of Romania, and certain other states, as ‘safe countries regarding the repatriation of Roma/Gypsies’ nationals, until a rule of law capable of protecting all citizens from such mass violations has been put into operation.

These organizations, like so many other local and national Roma/Gypsy associations throughout Europe, have been working for years to end the spiral of violence and resolve local conflicts, to promote civic awareness among the children of their communities, to support grassroots environmental initiatives and instead of others. In this context, it is also work to those with whom they have been expelled from their villages to re-establish themselves there, and ease the repatriation process of families which have sought and found refuge elsewhere abroad. The long-term aim of this community work is to build democracy at a local level; in Romania, it is being undertaken in close cooperation with the local authorities in a number of districts, as well as NGOs from several Western European countries. It is nonetheless imperative to emphasize that only sustained action on the part of the political authorities—in fact by integrating the institutions of the rule of law into the daily lives of all citizens, most of whom live in non-democratic local and regional communities—will bring these efforts to fruition.

From toleration to insecurity

The authorities’ apparent toleration of anti-Roma/Gypsy violence makes it impossible to enforce the civil and criminal liability of those involved in these crimes, and thus to bring them to justice—a state of affairs which cannot but encourage the population at large, partially instigated and facilitated by the unfolding period of transition, to project its malaise onto the Roma/Gypsies and make them its scapegoat. The authorities tend to justify the impunity of the guilty by citing peasant solidarity; the latter are quick to follow this reasoning by claiming that Roma/Gypsy’s collective culpability gives rise to collective reprisal. Of course such an attitude goes entirely against the letter and spirit of the law, but villagers claim that their is likewise a ‘collective culpability’, and that their criminal responsibility is attenuated by the fact that their actions are merely a response to Roma provocation, and are a legitimate self-defence. In this context, it is sometimes claimed that an impartial application of the law would result in a spiral of violence far worse than the simple feelings of injustice aroused by the impunity of the guilty. On the contrary: the authorities’ passivity in itself acts as tacit consent encouraging the development of an ideology opposing ‘locals’ and ‘outsiders’, finding concrete expression in every exercise geared towards the total and definitive expulsion of all Roma/Gypsies from the community, as was done in Bolunită Deal and Ogezezei, both near Băcău.

Position of the experts and human rights organizations

International experts on human rights and inter-ethnic violence have indicated that the Romanian situation is characterized by:

- The low threshold of mob violence ... whereby individual (common criminal) offences may trigger the development of an ideology opposing ‘locals’ and ‘outsiders’, finding concrete expression in every exercise geared towards the total and definitive expulsion of all Roma/Gypsies from the community.

A report by the Fédération Internationale des Ligues de Droits de l’Homme (FIDH) International Federation of Human Rights Leagues), also points out the risk of condoning violent behaviour and attitudes of defiance towards the institutions of the law, and thus of a repetition of such incidents.

The report from Human Rights Watch, goes, as far as so to say that:

- Mob violence ... reveals a type of lynch law that is often supported by the local government.

The local authorities are, in some cases, active participants in the violence, but more frequently involved in creating the climate of extrajudicial abuse of Roma, and are also responsible for perpetuating acts of justice after the crimes have been committed. This jeopardizes the safety of Roma in Romania and has set a dangerous precedent to be followed elsewhere.

The report of the FIDH mission of inquiry, 28 February – 5 March 1994, by Robert Gelli and Jean Delay, states:

‘Judicial response to murder, arson, and the destruction of homes belonging to Roma has been exceptional. Observations outlined below concern the events at Hadareni, 22 September 1993: four dead, three of them Roma, situation in Hadareni. 14 Roma houses destroyed, despite the presence of police and fire-fighters’.

The report states that the following conclusions may be drawn from the mission carried out in Romania:

- Events in Hadareni were not followed up by forceful expulsion of the Roma population there, thanks to the fact that – as the Romanian authorities assured us – the Law of 1971 is no longer enforced. At the same time, following consultation with the Hadareni village council, some families are still being pressured to return.

- Up to the day of our departure, the perpetrators of the acts inflicted upon the Roma of Hadareni on 21 September 1993 had neither been arrested nor charged in connection with the judicial inquiry, despite the fact that evidence making it possible to identify the main participants had been gathered.

- The themes of public order and opportunity favoured by the hierarchical subordination of these magistrates charged with running the judicial inquiry, and the lack of power of the parties involved, must take precedence in the assessment of the legal response to the criminal violations committed.

- The difficulty – indeed, the impossibility – of identifying individual perpetrators of violence and of finding them as advocated by the judicial authorities in explanation of the state of their investigations, does not necessarily constitute an obstacle to assigning criminal responsibility to those identified as having taken part in, or having instigated, these acts, through complicity or criminal behaviour recognized under existing Romanian law (for example, failure to render assistance to a person in danger, riotous assembly, mob violence, incitement to racial hatred, provoking others to break the law, associating with criminals, etc.), none of which has been invoked or even examined.

- The events at Hadareni are part of a general context of repeated acts and a climate of rejection of Roma/Gypsies, reduced and amplified by the media and certain politicians; the disproportionate, violent, collective response of non-Roma populations gives these
In Romania as elsewhere, the recent upsurge in violence against the Roma/Gypsy and other ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities reveals the need to build democratic security for all citizens regardless of their sense of identity. This security must be founded in the institutions of the rule of law and, above all else, in justice.

As Max van den Stoel, High Commissioner for National Minorities, said on the occasion of the CSCE Human Dimension Seminar, Romanians in the CSCE Region:

‘The problem of racially motivated attacks against Roma and their property is not a purely legal one. Certainly a proper legal framework is necessary for protecting persons against racially motivated attacks, but in most cases a basic framework already exists. There must, however, also be clear political will - from the highest to the lowest levels of the state - to combat racial violence.’

Migration and refugees

It should be borne in mind that nomadism, sometimes in the form of ongoing migration is a fundamental factor in the lifestyle of a significant number of Roma/Gypsy communities. Roma/Gypsy history is marked by migration, some of it involving such large numbers that this appears as successive waves of migration in the sense of direction of Western Europe and the Americas. Such a wave is occurring in the 1990s, a period during which migration has taken on new and alarming proportions. Roma/Gypsy communities and for the surrounding communities which welcome or reject them. All over Europe, this movement is giving rise to a reactivation of the policies outlined previously: exclusion, containment and assimilation and these policies are back with an unexpected vehemence and in new forms.

Senior migration and travel is one of the effects of change in the lifestyle of a significant number of Roma/Gypsy communities. Roma/Gypsy history is marked by migration, some of it involving such large numbers that this appears as successive waves of migration in the sense of direction of Western Europe and the Americas. Such a wave is occurring in the 1990s, a period during which migration has taken on new and alarming proportions. Roma/Gypsy communities and for the surrounding communities which welcome or reject them. All over Europe, this movement is giving rise to a reactivation of the policies outlined previously: exclusion, containment and assimilation and these policies are back with an unexpected vehemence and in new forms.

The reasons behind migration are diverse. Roma/Gypsies flee from various forms of persecution: expulsion, banishment, organized hunts, forced settlement, interstate agreements dictating where they can reside, etc. Given this hostility, their only option is to move on and see if things are better elsewhere. The 1990s offer a vivid illustration of the push factors involved: physical attacks, racist pogroms, murders and burnt-out homes. There are also social and economic reasons for travelling. Moving about gives different groups an opportunity for close contact with each other which can lead to new ties (sometimes even marriages), or, on the other hand to mutual opposition within which each group feels its own uniqueness justified and strengthened.

Travel makes clearer contacts possible, but also permits separation if conflict arises, whilst also providing an escape mechanism, and an escape route. This is especially true for those who travel there exists, on the one hand, a ‘structural nomadism’ due to certain forms of social and economic organization, and, on the other, a ‘reactive nomadism’ brought about by outside factors: eviction, regulations, family illness, economic opportunity, etc. These two sets of factors combine to determine actual migration.

Thus the key to understanding every Roma/Gypsy-related question is diversity: diverse situations and diverse groups of push and pull factors and political contexts must be considered in their entirety. A proper examination of nomadism and migration – fundamental components of Roma/Gypsy history – would require an encyclopaedia all to itself. Within the limits imposed by the scope of this report, let us summarize and say that nomadism is neither always a product of Roma/Gypsy culture, nor entirely the source of that culture. The two are closely linked, notably because these communities have, by choice or obligation, always had to make mobility a factor in their lifestyle. In this context, migration is a particular manifestation of nomadism, a variant usually dictated by a set of circumstances which launch the Roma/Gypsy family on to a new path.

Currently, and increasingly, migration and other forms of travel are taking on great significance in the collective conscience of many countries. This is due to the day-to-day mobility as is generally thought, but more as an explanation of the dispersal resulting from centuries of movement. In the past, Roma/Gypsy people were becoming increasingly aware of this, and the ongoing rapprochement of Roma/Gypsy and Traveller communities, regardless of where they are based, is clearly expressed in the emergence of a transnational Roma/Gypsy identity, that of a non-territorial people whose members are linked by cultural and normative bonds.

Diversity is also operative, given that in international law, Roma/Gypsies moving from one state to another may be classified as immigrants, migrant workers, refugees, asylum seekers, displaced persons, stateless persons, etc., a jumble further complicated by legislation and other regulations at national level, with their own specificities and conditions, creating a particular administrative language with its own variants such as ‘itinerants’, ‘nomadic populations’, ‘populations of nomadic origin’, etc.

Some aspects of the current situation

Current migration and its significance

Since the early 1990s, a new preoccupation with migration in general, and fear of a ‘Roma/Gypsy invasion from the East’ in particular, have given rise to much discussion, and it is often in order to retain that they take to the road. Travel also plays a role in economic equilibrium, in the sense that when families exercising the same trade live side by side, they find themselves in direct competition; moving on avoids market saturation. In tandem with the diversity of reasons for travel, there are a variety of practices connected with it, evident in the range of means of transport, frequency of moves, scope of travel, types of accommodation, etc.

To convey this schematically, we note that for those who travel there exists, on the one hand, a ‘structural nomadism’ due to certain forms of social and economic organization, and, on the other, a ‘reactive nomadism’ brought about by outside factors: eviction, regulations, family illness, economic opportunity, etc. These two sets of factors combine to determine actual migration.

In view of the seriousness of the situation of the Roma (Gypsies) in the CSCE region, the High Commissioner on National Minorities was requested at a meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials on 29-30 April 1993 ‘to study the social, economic and humanitarian problems relating to the Roma population in some participating states and the relevance of these problems to the mandate of the High Commissioner and to report thereon to the Committee of Senior Officials through the Chairman-in-Office. In the discussion, it was further therewith stated that these problems, which fall into the larger category of migration problems, could also have an international dimension.’

The dangers and powerful forces of Roma/Gypsy migration are often exaggerated, and little hard information is available as yet to provide a more accurate understanding of real movements. Neither in France, the region where Roma/Gypsies are usually based, have comprehensive migration reports been offered estimates, subsequently amalgamated, in the CSCE report which emphasized their provisionality, significance and impact. Various reports have offered estimates, subsequently amalgamated, in the CSCE report which emphasized their provisionality, significance and impact. Various reports have offered estimates, subsequently amalgamated, in the CSCE report which emphasized their provisionality, significance and impact.
Yet migrants of this type, in the popular image of refugees and asylum seekers, are not the only Roma/Gypsies crossing the borders of 1990s Europe. For example, significant numbers of Romanian Roma/Gypsies travel to Poland and the Czech Republic for the summer, and Roma/Gypsies travel within the Balkan countries in connection with commerce and seasonal agricultural labour. Migration may also take place in highly organized forms. For example, Romanian Roma/Gypsies have tended to emigrate in family groups rather than individually. Groups of Roma/Gypsies from a given locality or region of Romania have congregated in separate parts of the Republic of Macedonia and Poland and have all signed similar agreements with Germany.

Acts of violence against Roma/Gypsies have been rarely seen in the Roman/a and French governments in the light of this reality. As the quality of the two countries' history of coexistence, the lesson of the 1990s, is to serve as a reminder of the need for a harmonized solution of these problems, part of the political agenda of many member states. When we speak of Roma/Gypsy migration, the facts are often veiled by a culture of silence and a lack of respect for people and their human rights, all combine to erode the resilience of individual men, women and children, and that of the community as a whole. 

Consequences for the Roma/Gypsy

The current situation is a very grave one:

- Assimilationist policies have not led to integration, nor to adaption and harmonisation coexistence, but to the marginalization of Roma/Gypsies.
- Rejection remains the dominant attitude of society at large; tension develops into open conflict; scapegoats are quickly identified, with the result that they are harshly treated in an atmosphere of constant insecurity.
- Reality is always effectively obscured by the imaginary, and prejudice and stereotypes continue to inspire and subsequently to justify attitudes and behaviour.

It is difficult to remain immune to the effects of the treatment one is forced to endure. A small but growing number of those subjected to such treatment feel exhausted and crushed. The negative imagery surrounding Roma/Gypsies, the use of certain representations as instigative instruments in undermining community cohesion, as well as false promises and pseudo-redemption indicating a lack of respect for people's human rights, all combine to erode the resilience of individual men, women and children, and that of the community as a whole.

Extract from a letter of recommendation by Radio Djipe, President of the International Roma Union, November 1990.

The Roma/Gypsy, the standing organization of the World Roma (Gypsy) Congress, wishes to express its universal and continuous concern. Today, daily and hourly, the Roma/Gypsy is subjected to physical and psychological abuse, to a dramatic, indeed tragic situation of Roma and Sinti in many countries of the world, particularly in the states of Eastern Europe. For this reason the Roman/Gypsy has repeatedly called for an international approach to the Gypsy problem, which is particularly acute in the case of states without a homelone have been roaming for years around Western Europe wherever the CEC has had repeated appeals for an international approach to the Gypsy problem, which is particularly acute in the case of states Gypsies (...) believing that only an international approach to the Gypsy problem in Western Europe can lead to its solution.

The authors proposed that the governments of the member states adopt a coordinated approach to reception of Roma/Gypsies resident in their territories, to the early identification and repatriation of Roma/Gypsies, to the development of restrictive and coercive measures. We noted above that current migration is reactivating anti-Roma/Gypsy policies in Europe; in this context this contradiction will spread all the way up to the international institutions which have up to now pursued important and positive actions in the same direction. The work of the European Communities, particularly the Western European Union, has been crucial in this respect since the 1950s.

It is without doubt that because they have no home country and that they travel about without passport, many legal and social difficulties, the authorities and repelled from one country to another. It is the duty of the Community to put an end to this situation, for the Community must show solidarity with this group.

Within the Council of Europe, in 1981 the Standing Committee of Regional and Local Authorities of Europe (CCLRE) adopted a resolution recognizing the right of local and regional authorities with regard to the cultural and social problems of populations of nomadic origin, in which it recommends that the Committee of Ministers adopt a legal instrument culminating in travel to at least in all member countries.

The Conference also called upon the governments of member states to sign and ratify the relevant conventions on the status of stateless persons and refugees. In 1983 the Committee of Ministers adopted its own resolution. On stateless nomads and nomads of undetermined nationality, outlining proposals for action and stressing the possibility of obtaining identity papers enabling them to travel at least in all member countries.

That it is desirable to contribute at a European level to a harmonization of these solutions of problems, particularly for humanitarian reasons in a way consistent with the legislation of each member state, while at the same time respecting the nomads' 'way of life.'

Many more texts could be cited, but these few references suffice to indicate both the significance of this question at European level and the existence of convergent proposals from diverse institutions – proposals which serve mainly to improve the situation. The idea of a comprehensive, coordinated approach to the problems associated with migration was endorsed at the Warsaw Seminar on the Roma, organized by the CSCE and the Council of Europe in late 1984, where it clearly emerged that an effective response to these difficulties will require an international approach. In this context, it is evident that the creation of a new forum for cooperation against Roma/Gypsy migration is necessary. Several initiatives have been launched in recent years, in particular for humanitarian reasons in a way consistent with the legislation of each member state, while at the same time respecting the nomads' 'way of life.'

It is without doubt that because they have no home country and that they travel about without passport, many legal and social difficulties, the authorities and repelled from one country to another. It is the duty of the Community to put an end to this situation, for the Community must show solidarity with this group.
In addition to the discriminatory, coercive treatment to which Roma/Gypsies are subject, and the difficulties arising from the transformations currently rocking the states of Central and Eastern Europe, the present period is also characterized by significant change affecting the form and nature of contact between Roma/Gypsies and surrounding populations. This includes the changing needs in societies increasingly motivated by consumerism, linked with profound economic and technological change. These developments have both economic and psycho-cultural consequences, affecting Roma/Gypsies in very particular ways such as the deteriorating quality of life on the road, the increase in suburban nomadism and urban settlement, and the resulting population concentrations in poor conditions. Negative social, economic and health effects have resulted.

This is a critical period in Roma/Gypsy history – but it is not only the Roma/Gypsies who are in crisis. Apart from the centuries-old discrimination to which they are subject, and the regulations by which they are encompassed, the present crisis is, for the large part (notably on the economic plane) the crisis of surrounding societies. They too are finding it difficult to adapt, and find expression in a mounting rejection of others. Yet there are no grounds for overall pessimism: the culture of most Roma/Gypsy groups is thriving, lived as a daily, complete and coherent reality, and age-old adaptive strategies are still being exercised. Moreover, the present period, with its characteristic indecision and the introduction of innovative approaches in certain states, the increasing support of international institutions and the emergence and activism of Roma/Gypsy political, social and cultural organizations, forms a context which may favour positive progress.

Several aspects of the current situation of Roma/Gypsies concern the legal status of the groups in question. The most critical concern is whether they are recognized as a minority in the sense that international law provides for in articles 1 and 2 of the Declaration on the Rights of Minorities.

The constitutions of most Central and Eastern European states draw up since 1989 provide for the recognition of Roma/Gypsies as a minority in legislative systems which fail to cover the particular rights of national or cultural minorities in general. In those states with a strong democratic tradition, the rights of ethnic and cultural (linguistic) minorities are covered within the provisions of common law, and Roma/Gypsies, as citizens (theoretically) enjoy these general rights with no supplementary, specific legal protection.

Further study needs to be undertaken in this field, and may in fact be one of the first projects launched in the wake of the CSCE/Council of Europe meeting of September 1994 (see below). Such a study would also require frequent updating.

The following is a brief catalogue of quotations from various national texts, with some of the measures taken. This classification is therefore solely illustrative covering only the legal situation. However, we can distinguish a number of broad categories:

- The neglect or non-recognition of Roma/Gypsies as a minority in legislative systems which fall to cover the particular rights of national and/or cultural minorities in general. In those states with a strong democratic tradition, the rights of ethnic and cultural (linguistic) minorities are covered within the provisions of common law, and Roma/Gypsies, as citizens (theoretically) enjoy these general rights with no supplementary, specific legal protection.
- Failure to recognize Roma/Gypsies as a minority with specific rights, in those legislative systems which do recognize the rights of other minorities, which are clearly defined and recognized in the constitution and legislation, and/or in bilateral treaties covering political and cultural life. Non-recognition of Roma/Gypsies in connection with such provision is discriminatory; it is usually justified on the pretext that they fail to qualify under existing criteria for recognition of ‘historic’ national or linguistic minorities.
- Legal recognition of Roma/Gypsies as a minority through various legislative and other measures, such as the inclusion of Roma/Gypsy representatives (whether elected or appointed) on diverse bodies at local and national level; in particular those concerned with minorities and their rights. The constitutions of most Central and Eastern European states drawn up since 1989 include provisions for minorities, including Roma/Gypsies. Moreover the principles and rights provided for in the case of national minorities may be reaffirmed in additional official documents and declarations specifically recognizing Roma/Gypsies as a national or ethnic minority. They may also be mentioned specifically, alongside other minorities, in the constitution itself and/or in laws adopted with regard to minorities. There may also, in addition to general provisions covering all national minorities, be legislation specifi-
The European Parliament, which regularly questions the Commission with regard to the action it undertakes, has a sustained interest, evident in oral and written questions, resolutions, and active support during the difficult situation of Roma/Gypsy communities.

The Council of Europe

Through its Recommendation 563 (1989) on the situation of Roma/Gypsies and other nomads in Europe, as well as by the many questions it has submitted to the Committee of Ministers, the Parliamentary Assembly has shown attention to the situation of Roma/Gypsy communities.

Resolution 75(13) (Concerning Recommendations on the Social Situation of Nomadic Populations in Europe, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 22 May 1975) addressed questions of general policy, stopping, and travelling. In 1982, the Committee of Ministers adopted Recommendation R(83)1 on Identity Documents and the Circulation of Nomads in 1986. The Committee of Ministers, at its meeting in April 1984, in reply to question no. 271, ‘On the Recognition of the Roma in Ethnic Minority’, recommended that the Committee of Ministers take the initiative, if necessary in conjunction with the national governments, regional and/or local authorities of the member states, in the fields of culture, education, national, rural, and daily life, as well as general measures such as research, cooperation with the European Community, consultation with representative international Roma/Gypsy organizations, and designating mediators. This recommendation repeatedly emphasizes that, ‘as one of the very few non-territorial minorities in Europe, Gypsies need special protection’.

Following a meeting in 1991, CLRAE organized a colloquium in Slovakia in 1992, bringing together local authorities, representatives of Roma/Gypsy communities, and experts. This confirmed the results of the 1991 hearing. Its conclusions emphasized the necessity both of updating and of reactivating the 1981 resolution, and of putting in place a new work programme. In 1993, the Parliamentary Assembly adopted Resolution 129(93) ‘On Gypsies in Europe: The Role and Responsibility of Local and Regional Authorities’, was adopted in March 1983. The Conference expressed its regrets that texts already adopted had been followed by few concrete efforts. It urged local and regional authorities to adopt a holistic approach, within which they should take the necessary measures to facilitate Roma/Gypsies’ integration into local communities, develop consultation and participation with Roma/Gypsies themselves, combat prejudice, and take a part in developing a network of municipalities.

The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe has been asked to urge governments to implement the adopted texts, to invite the CDCC to intensify the work in which it has been engaged for a decade through publications, organizing seminars, commitment to establish and participating in the municipalities network, launching a ‘European Gypsy Cultural Heritage’, and identifying other key Roma/Gypsy-related aspects within the new ‘Democracy, Human Rights, Minorities: Educational and Cultural Approaches’. The resolution also carries proposals in relation to human rights, the study of migration-related questions (through the activities of the European


cally targeting the situation of the Roma/Gypsies, and protecting them.

Indirect or implicit institutional recognition through the setting up of a government commission specifically in order to deal with Roma/Gypsy-related questions, and by developing programmes specifically targeting Roma/Gypsy communities and organizations.

To conclude, the typology must be cross-referenced with administrative practice, the development of concrete action and the amount of funding made available for the implementation of legislation and other provisions. At one end of the scale there are places where Roma/Gypsies enjoy recognition and legal status in theory, but virtually never in practice, and at the other extreme a total absence of legal provision accompanied by concrete support for Roma/Gypsy communities.

Some additional considerations may be useful in analyzing the situation.

In this regard, there is no sharp dividing line nor difference between the states of Western, and those of Central and Eastern, Europe.

In the current context of ideologically based extremism and paradigms are set, but taking a constructive perspective it may be useful to analyze these with a view to a clearer definition of goals proposed at improving Roma/Gypsy situation and legal standing. The magnitude of change can be identified, as can the directions it is taking, and in examining instances of discrimination we can identify either that there are an expression of political resistance, entrenched routine, or a conservational attitude towards minorities in general.

In relation to the geographical term ‘minority’, it is important to note that states with little experience of their own can benefit from that of other states which have been developing activities in this field; further lessons can be drawn from the experience of other minorities in those cases where Roma/Gypsies have yet to be taken into account (for example, bilateral treaties on national minorities, none of which, to date, mentions the Roma/Gipsies).

The emergence of a political space for Roma/Gypsies...
Committee on Migration (CDMG) and the study of questions relating to the mass media. It invites everyone to join their organizations to actively participate and emphasizes the importance of the work being carried out by the European Community and the CSCE, as well as the necessity of ensuring the complementarity of their work. The municipalities network was launched in 1995. The Joint Council for Cultural Cooperation has commissioned a preliminary study with a view to developing the European network of municipalities.

- The CDMG has intensified its work in relation to Roma/Gypsy communities in January 1994, it recommends to the Committee of Ministers to:

  - Carry out an in-depth study on the different aspects of the situation and the living conditions of Gypsies in the new European context. This work should be undertaken with due regard to Recommendation 1203 (1993) of the Parliamentary Assembly on Gypsies in Europe, and in close cooperation with work being pursued in other fields, notably within the European Union.

Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) (Formerly the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, CSCE).

- At the conclusion of the Copenhagen meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE, in June 1990, an important document was adopted by the participating states. This final document says that these states have come together “to reinforce respect for and enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, the development of human contacts and the resolution of the issues of a related humanitarian character.” Chapter IV is entirely devoted to national minorities: its Article 40 concentrates on questions of racism, and it is important to note that Roma/Gypsies are explicitly mentioned. The concept of minority community has been also mentioned by name in this context.

- As a follow-up to the Copenhagen meeting, a CSCE organized a minori ties (Roma/Gypsies) program for National Minorities was charged with:

  - Tracking the social, economic, and humanitarian problems concerning the Roma population in several of the member states and their relevance to the mandate of the High Commissioner (decisions in Helsinki, chapter II, paragraph 2.7) and to report on the questions concerning the Roma and Gypsies covered in Chapter II, paragraph 2.7 (to the Committee of Chief Civil Servants.

The report, based on analysis of reports compiled on other occasions, and referring back to texts already adopted (notably the Resolution of 22 May 1989 adopted by the Ministers of Education of the European Community, as well as Council of Europe and UN texts), was submitted in September 1991. It contains proposals of a general nature but also proposals expressed specifically in terms of the dynamic of the human dimension developed within the CSCE. It makes reference to the texts mentioned above, adopted by the participating states, and deals with the implementation of the CSCE’s commitments, particularly those measures mentioned in the document issued at the Copenhagen meeting.

- During a CSCE-organized seminar on minorities (Warsaw, May 1993), in connection with the work of the sub-group on ‘dispersed minorities’, Roma/Gypsy-related questions were once again given prominence. In 1984 the CSCE, in cooperation with the Council of Europe, held another seminar in Warsaw, this time focusing on the situation of Roma/Gypsy communities. This seminar confirmed and strengthened concepts and working guidelines developed over a number of years, and a marked willingness for inter-institutional cooperation was shown in connection with the development of a partnership involving Roma/Gypsy organizations. The Roma/Gypsy came up yet again at the CSCE meeting in Helsinki (March 1993) in the chapter dealing with questions of involvement and cooperation in the human dimension:

  - The participating states... reaffirm the need to adopt appropriate programmes addressing problems of their respective nationals belonging to Roma and other groups traditionally identified as Gypsies and to create conditions for them to have equal opportunities to participate fully in the life of society, and will consider how to cooperate to this end.

- In April 1993, the CSCE’s High Commissioner for National Minorities was charged with:

  - Tracking the social, economic, and humanitarian problems concerning the Roma population in several of the member states and their relevance to the mandate of the High Commissioner (decisions in Helsinki, chapter II, paragraph 2.7) and to report on the questions concerning the Roma and Gypsies covered in Chapter II, paragraph 2.7 (to the Committee of Chief Civil Servants.

The report, based on analysis of reports compiled on other occasions, and referring back to texts already adopted (notably the Resolution of 22 May 1989 adopted by the Ministers of Education of the European Community, as well as Council of Europe and UN texts), was submitted in September 1991. It contains proposals of a general nature but also proposals expressed specifically in terms of the dynamic of the human dimension developed within the CSCE. It makes reference to the texts mentioned above, adopted by the participating states, and deals with the implementation of the CSCE’s commitments, particularly those measures mentioned in the document issued at the Copenhagen meeting.

During a CSCE-organized seminar on minorities (Warsaw, May 1993), in connection with the work of the sub-group on ‘dispersed minorities’, Roma/Gypsy-related questions were once again given prominence. In 1984 the CSCE, in cooperation with the Council of Europe, held another seminar in Warsaw, this time focusing on the situation of Roma/Gypsy communities. This seminar confirmed and strengthened concepts and working guidelines developed over a number of years, and a marked willingness for inter-institutional cooperation was shown in connection with the development of a partnership involving Roma/Gypsy organizations. This seminar confirmed and strengthened concepts and working guidelines developed over a number of years, and a marked willingness for inter-institutional cooperation was shown in connection with the development of a partnership involving Roma/Gypsy organizations. The seminar also confirmed and strengthened concepts and working guidelines developed over a number of years, and a marked willingness for inter-institutional cooperation was shown in connection with the development of a partnership involving Roma/Gypsy organizations.

- The fact that, in many countries, various obstacles exist to the full realization of persons belonging to the Roma community of their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, and that such obstacles constitute discrimination directed specifically against that community, rendering it particularly vulnerable.

It also stated that “manifestations of prejudice, discrimination, intolerance and xenophobia affect the Roma/Gypsy community, and recommended a draft resolution for adoption by the Commission on Human Rights (33rd Session, 28 August 1991/91/31, Protection of Minorities). Finally, the CSCE’s High Commissioner on Protection of Minorities, as well as a vital informing and sensitizing role within the CSCE. In March 1993 the UN upgraded its classification of the IRU to that of Consultative Status, thus giving greater weight to its contributions.

The problems faced by Roma/Gypsies in different states are highlighted by special rapporteurs of the Commission on Human Rights, discussing their human rights situation in many countries and their plight as a consequence of persecution; even equal treatment for those seeking asylum; engaging the attention of the relevant UN bodies such as the Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Committee on the Rights of the Child, mention the situation of Roma/Gypsies in their respective states with increasing frequency.

UNESCO has given moral support to a number of major projects related to research, teaching, and/or publication, especially in connection with the Roma language (for example the seminar on standardizing Romani, Warsaw, April 1990, to which UNESCO sent the head of its linguistics division). It has also provided financial support for two summer schools organized by the IRU (Belgrade 1989 and Vienna 1990). UNESCO is currently involved in literacy- and education-related pilot projects in a number of states, as well as a pilot project focusing on Roma/Gypsy culture.

UNICEF, through its International Child Development Centre (ICDC), has been working in Central and Eastern Europe to develop a new generation of young people, particularly in regard to education, in several states. A comparative study, a seminar, and a participatory approach have been developed to investigate the situation and networking of certain projects has been undertaken and will be intensified over the course of 1995. In this context, too, the experience accumulated by European Community projects may be of direct benefit to project development in Central and Eastern Europe; conversely, the West has a great deal to learn from activities developed in these parts of Europe.

International support

A n overview of the activities of the past few years shows that European institutions have responded positively to some of the proposals of such resolutions, and their member states are taking an active stance. There are signs that a more wide-ranging approach is being adopted. This is characterized by a new emphasis on initiatives, which should open up the way towards examining questions within their overall context: an intensification of reflection; a diversification of the methodology; and a collaborative system.

In the context of the present period of indecision, international institutions have an important role to play, and can exercise significant influence. An evaluation of the implementation of certain measures, for example in the field of education, reveals that new practices contribute to greater respect for Roma/Gypsy communities and their cultural and political dynamics are emerging at both national and international level. However, there remains a need for independent, solid, fully competent management and information, consultation, coordination, evaluation, and continuity.

The development of political action by Roma/Gypsies

Roma/Gypsy organizations

The history of Roma/Gypsy organizations goes back a long way, and has passed through a number of stages which cannot however, be covered in depth. In the 1920s and 1930s, Romani associations were set up in Russia, Belarus and Romania, and in other countries in the 1960s. In the aftermath of the Second World War, there is hardly a state in Europe in which Roma/Gypsy organizations have not emerged. Meetings – local, regional, national, sometimes even international – are being held. In conjunction with the profound transformations taking place in the states of
The emergence of a political space for Roma/Gypsies

Central and Eastern Europe since 1989, there has been a mushrooming of Roma/Gypsy organizations there, and these taking their place in the political arena, the number of associations is on the rise in Western Europe too.

At international level, the Comité International Tzigane (a committee) was founded in 1967, and organized the first World Gypsy Congress (London, 1971) with delegates from 14 countries and representatives of observers. The presidential address by Shobdan Berberski encapsulated the spirit behind the Congress:

The goal of this Congress is to bring the Rom together and to enable them to act throughout the world, to bring about our emancipation in accordance with our own intimation and ideals – to go forward to a rhythm that suits us ... Everybody we do will bear the mark of our own personality, it will be amaro Romans dun, our own Gypsy way ... Our people must plan and organize action at local, national, and international level. Our problems are the same everywhere: we must make use of our own models of education, maintain and develop our Rom culture, encourage new dynamism in our communities and forge a future compatible with our lifestyle and beliefs. We have been patient for long enough, and I believe that we can succeed – starting today.

Delegates rejected the terms ‘Tzigane, Zigeuner, Gitano, Gypsy,’ etc., which are not their own, and opted instead for the term ‘Roma.’ In a strong feeling of unity, they declared that, all things being equal – referring to the old Romani proverb, ‘a sa e Rroma phrala’ – they felt that their aspirations were the same in the various countries, and as organizations came into being, the Roma became increasingly aware of their shared identity, just as they were asserting their presence to the world at large. The International Gypsy Congress, which first took place in Göttingen, Federal Republic of Germany, in May 1981, with some 300 delegates representing 22 states. It focused on the re-creation of the Doban and Romani/Gypsy victim continuing demand for war reparations. The Fourth Congress was held in Srenoc, near Warsaw, 8-11 April 1990, and brought together 320 participants from 24 states. This was the first time a Congress was held in Eastern Europe, and the majority of delegates came from this region, reflecting the strong commitment of states where Roma/Gypsies were unable to send representatives to earlier Congresses, among them Romania, just emerging from its own revolution. Similarly, this was the first opportunity that representatives from many Soviet republics, and Albania, had had to participate in an event of this kind. Significantly, the states of Western Europe were poorly represented.

Today, national and international meetings are taking place at an ever-quicker pace. The International Roma Union has, from the early 1990s, played an increasingly important role as a directorate within the NGO dealing with national governments it takes an active and constructive role at seminars and conferences, particip- also in the work of the European Commission for the Promotion of the Communities of Roma/Gypsies (Komite e Rromane Uniaqoro). This was established in 1992.

The Roma/Gypsy movement is taking shape on other continents as well. The International Roma Federation was founded in 1993 in the United States, with the aim of intensifying cooperation between Roma/Gypsy groups that are already active in Europe, and currently developing in Latin America, Australia etc. However, here we shall concentrate on the European context.

Towards a European partnership

A general rallying is also evident among Roma/Gypsy organizations at European level: recognizing the necessity of developing partnership with European institutions and organizations; setting up a consultative formula for the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE on the situation of the Roma/Gypsies, to be held in September of that year, participants advocated the setting up of a Standing Conference for the Co-operation and Coordination of Roma Associations in Europe. The concept was clarified over the course of preparatory meetings and at the seminar itself. This Conference is not intended as a new organization, nor does it replace any existing body at national or international level. Its purpose concerns the practical goal of optimizing preparations for the September CSCE seminar, and of establishing dialogue, information exchange and cooperation between existing associations to improve coordination and avoid duplication. The role of the Conference is essentially the coherency promotion of Roma/Gypsy associations in their dealings with national and international authorities.

Another development has been the setting up, at the initiative of the International Roma Union, of the European Committee of the Roma Union (Europapo Komite e Rromane Uniaqoro). This was established in September 1991 by delegates to a conference in Oslo, near Rome, representing some 15 European states, again with the hope of setting up a development forum for Roma/Gypsy organizations and institutions.

In June 1984, at a meeting in Strasbourg under the auspices of the French Parliament, put forward at a November 1990 meeting at the OSCE, a draft proposal for the setting up of a Standing Conference for the Co-operation and Coordination of Roma Associations in Europe. The concept was clarified over the course of preparatory meetings and at the seminar itself. This Conference is not intended as a new organization, nor does it replace any existing body at national or international level. Its purpose concerns the practical goal of optimizing preparations for the September CSCE seminar, and of establishing dialogue, information exchange and cooperation between existing associations to improve coordination and avoid duplication. The role of the Conference is essentially the coherency promotion of Roma/Gypsy associations in their dealings with national and international authorities.

The reaffirmation and reclaiming of Roma/Gypsy identity by migrants and asylum seekers

As they undergo the experiences associated with migra- tion and the seeking of refuge, individuals, families, and members of local and national communities alike, have to discover new aspects about themselves and their collective identity. They may also find themselves sharing these experiences with other individuals and ethnic groups from different countries, all part of the same currents of migration and all confronting the same attitudes from majority/native populations.

In all of these new situations, Roma/Gypsy groups find fresh allies (humanitarian organizations, groups defending the interests of refugees or human rights in general) and new partners for the same ideal of rights, freedom on how many asylum seekers will be taken in, a limited number of temporary work contracts, etc.). They thus discover themselves in entirely new contexts: not just different countries and cultures, but also refugee camps or suburban hostels where they are allowed to stay for a time, being outside of the standard Romani way of life and the same number again of observers, representing a wide variety of interests and backgrounds and speaking different languages, they joined together in order to bring about a new organization, Romano Ekhipe (Romani Union) emerged from this Congress, and sought to redefine this new formula, and the recognition of international bodies. It aimed to combat the politics of rejection and assimilation, and to promote the recognition of Roma cultural specificity, their right to maintain and develop this, and the recognition of international bodies. It aimed to combat the politics of rejection and assimilation, and to promote the recognition of Roma cultural specificity, their right to maintain and develop this, and the recognition of international bodies. It aimed to combat the politics of rejection and assimilation, and to promote the recognition of Roma cultural specificity, their right to maintain and develop this, and the recognition of international bodies. It aimed to combat the politics of rejection and assimilation, and to promote the recognition of Roma cultural specificity, their right to maintain and develop this, and the recognition of international bodies. It aimed to combat the politics of rejection and assimilation, and to promote the recognition of Roma cultural specificity, their right to maintain and develop this, and the recognition of international bodies. It aimed to combat the politics of rejection and assimilation, and to promote the recognition of Roma cultural specificity, their right to maintain and develop this, and the recognition of international bodies. It aimed to combat the politics of rejection and assimilation, and to promote the recognition of Roma cultural specificity, their right to maintain and develop this, and the recognition of international bodies. It aimed to combat the politics of rejection and assimilation, and to promote the recognition of Roma cultural specificity, their right to maintain and develop this, and the recognition of international bodies.
Confirming a cultural space for Roma/Gypsies

The variety of Roma/Gypsy groups and the construction of a cultural identity

Roma/Gypsy reality is enormously varied. The historical experience of various groups, their encounters, stopping-places, routes travelled and intersected, and the diversity of their contacts with constantly changing surroundings, have given rise to a great variety of cultural and social characteristics within various groups – and continue to do so. Always immersed in other cultures, Roma/Gypsy life is characterized by continuous adjustment and adaptation to a changing environment. Roma/Gypsy society has thus been characterized, throughout its history, by the invention and development of strategies of adaptation and negotiation. The result is a tradition of change and innovation. Public misunderstanding of Roma/Gypsies – and even research concerning them, by seeking to establish constancy and uniformity where in fact there is only change and variety – have contributed to popular misconceptions and given rise to analyses based on total inaccuracy – which have a very direct impact on policies affecting the Roma/Gypsies themselves. After all, it is argued, Roma/Gypsies are changing; they are not what they were in the past, so they are no longer ‘real Roma/Gypsies’, i.e. they are no longer themselves, so they need to be helped to ‘integrate’. A different analysis is required, recognizing the permanence of lifestyle and profound sense of identity characterizing Roma/Gypsy culture.

Social organization is one of the elements which sustain this lifestyle and enable it to adapt to changing circumstances. Roma/Gypsies form a ‘worldwide mosaic of diversified groups’. This is to say, on the one hand, that a mosaic constitutes a whole, the elements of which are in some respects linked to each other, and that the connections permeating the whole contribute to its organization and structure; and, on the other hand, that the whole possesses its own individual characteristics which, taken in isolation, make it appear to be different from every other component. Out of the differences which arise and develop, there is a need to be helped to ‘integrate’. A different analysis is required, recognizing the permanence of lifestyle and profound sense of identity characterizing Roma/Gypsy culture.

The variety of ethnic self-identifications are an obvious sign of diversity. Hundreds of names formed by a wide range of diverse criteria cover hundreds of groups, each of which insists on its own uniqueness. Generally, these groups comprise extended families, however, no group can be understood in isolation. Family groups are part of wider social groups and thus, like a series of Chinese boxes, sets and subsets are formed, taking in more and more groups. It is the group system itself which must be taken into account in any comprehensive, dynamic approach to Roma/Gypsy society: groups exist because of, and for, one another, and it is within this framework that a balance is established, applying to alliances by marriage as much as to business deals. Roma/Gypsy political life is dis- fused, an inextricable presence in every social act and in all relations, be they of association or opposition. It sometimes crystallizes in connection with certain mechanisms such as the kris, an organ of justice and social regulation in certain Roma/Gypsy groups. While there are certainly families whose fortunes have, in one way or another, detached them from this great group network, these generally maintain an awareness of such relations in preceding generations.

The interlinking of these groups, and their adherence to common values, are maintained through encounter and exchange; links are woven day by day, reinforced, refined, sometimes discontinued. This organization is entirely adaptable to circumstance, to the variety and challenge of the encounters and conditions which come its way. Groups may draw closer together or even merge, while others retreat, subdivide, or even fragment down to the individual level if they are absorbed by their environment; the whole is capable of encompassing all of these processes, and it is regulated by mechanisms of social control, thus guaranteeing the continuity and cohesion of social structures. While the relative distance between groups is felt in a wide variety of ways, and is sometimes significant, a feeling of closeness and community nonetheless exists; for example, in some groups the saying ‘we are Roma, and we are together’ is frequently cited to emphasize Roma/Gypsy identity and in praise of cherished group values (hospitality, generosity, friendship), to soothe inter- family tensions or as an expression of a desire to unite, in the face of adversity brought about by non-Roma/Gypsy. Cultural wealth

Contribution to European cultural heritage

As previously discussed, one of the most important tests ever issued by an international organization with regard to Roma/Gypsy people is the Resolution of 22 May 1999 on school provision for Roma/Gypsy children, adopted by the Council and the Ministers of Education of the member states of the European Union. Its significance is far-fetch-
Measures associated with intercultural education

Every state has attempted, through diverse experiences and governments of the member states to provide this culture and language with the means, not merely to survive, but to develop, giving short shrift to the necessity for basic schooling, and with parental desire to ensure that their children receive it. At present, there is a widening rift between Roma/Gypsy children and those of surrounding society, and many already difficult situations will deteriorate rapidly and dramatically with the concomitant risk of certain forms of marginality and/or delinquency.

The analyses carried out nonetheless emphasize that it is possible to envisage a more positive future:

- Measures associated with intercultural education open the way to new practices validating the different cultures present in the classroom, taking each child’s own capabilities and experiences into account. Such measures make it possible to adapt the school to Roma/Gypsy children.
- Every state has attempted, through diverse experiments and/or programmes, to respond to Roma/Gypsy parents’ wishes regarding school provisions for their children. Some aspects of these efforts have been successful, others less so. It is important to identify, analyze, and publicize those approaches which have demonstrated their value, to support innovative projects implemented in partnership, and to suggest new ones. The broad evaluation made possible by the study prepared for the European Commission clearly demonstrates that the recommended holistic, structural approach (through cooperation, coordination, and information) has a significant impact on overcoming the major obstacles blocking Roma/Gypsy children’s access to school.

In many ways Roma/Gypsies demonstrate better adaptation to present changes, and to future ones, than other sections of the population due to their economic flexibility, geographic mobility, in-family education, and community values. Finally, in diverse ages and situations, parents and professional educators around them wish to convey to the children corresponds to many of the values which the professional educators wish to convey to the children. Active adaptation to the environment, in social as well as economic terms, today requires a grasp of certain basic elements which enable one to analyze and comprehend a changing reality. On the cultural plane these same elements can serve as tools for those wishing to conserve, affirm and develop their own unique identity.

Parents are aware of this, and are increasingly willing to send their children to school. Here we find a crucial second link between the general situation and the schools: the transformation of living conditions for economic activities, entailing a necessity for basic schooling, leaves the parental desire to ensure that their children receive it. At present, there is a widening rift between Roma/Gypsy children and those of surrounding society, and many already difficult situations will deteriorate rapidly and dramatically with the concomitant risk of certain forms of marginality and/or delinquency.

The analyses carried out nonetheless emphasize that it is possible to envisage a more positive future:

- Measures associated with intercultural education open the way to new practices validating the different cultures present in the classroom, taking each child’s own capabilities and experiences into account. Such measures make it possible to adapt the school to Roma/Gypsy children.
- Every state has attempted, through diverse experiments and/or programmes, to respond to Roma/Gypsy parents’ wishes regarding school provisions for their children. Some aspects of these efforts have been successful, others less so. It is important to identify, analyze, and publicize those approaches which have demonstrated their value, to support innovative projects implemented in partnership, and to suggest new ones. The broad evaluation made possible by the study prepared for the European Commission clearly demonstrates that the recommended holistic, structural approach (through cooperation, coordination, and information) has a significant impact on overcoming the major obstacles blocking Roma/Gypsy children’s access to school.

In many ways Roma/Gypsies demonstrate better adaptation to present changes, and to future ones, than other sections of the population due to their economic flexibility, geographic mobility, in-family education, and community values. Finally, in diverse ages and situations, parents and professional educators around them wish to convey to the children corresponds to many of the values which the professional educators wish to convey to the children. Active adaptation to the environment, in social as well as economic terms, today requires a grasp of certain basic elements which enable one to analyze and comprehend a changing reality. On the cultural plane these same elements can serve as tools for those wishing to conserve, affirm and develop their own unique identity.

Parents are aware of this, and are increasingly willing to send their children to school. Here we find a crucial second link between the general situation and the schools: the transformation of living conditions for economic activities, entailing a necessity for basic schooling, leaves the parental desire to ensure that their children receive it. At present, there is a widening rift between Roma/Gypsy children and those of surrounding society, and many already difficult situations will deteriorate rapidly and dramatically with the concomitant risk of certain forms of marginality and/or delinquency.

The analyses carried out nonetheless emphasize that it is possible to envisage a more positive future:

- Measures associated with intercultural education open the way to new practices validating the different cultures present in the classroom, taking each child’s own capabilities and experiences into account. Such measures make it possible to adapt the school to Roma/Gypsy children.
- Every state has attempted, through diverse experiments and/or programmes, to respond to Roma/Gypsy parents’ wishes regarding school provisions for their children. Some aspects of these efforts have been successful, others less so. It is important to identify, analyze, and publicize those approaches which have demonstrated their value, to support innovative projects implemented in partnership, and to suggest new ones. The broad evaluation made possible by the study prepared for the European Commission clearly demonstrates that the recommended holistic, structural approach (through cooperation, coordination, and information) has a significant impact on overcoming the major obstacles blocking Roma/Gypsy children’s access to school.

In many ways Roma/Gypsies demonstrate better adaptation to present changes, and to future ones, than other sections of the population due to their economic flexibility, geographic mobility, in-family education, and community values. Finally, in diverse ages and situations, parents and professional educators around them wish to convey to the children corresponds to many of the values which the professional educators wish to convey to the children. Active adaptation to the environment, in social as well as economic terms, today requires a grasp of certain basic elements which enable one to analyze and comprehend a changing reality. On the cultural plane these same elements can serve as tools for those wishing to conserve, affirm and develop their own unique identity.

Parents are aware of this, and are increasingly willing to send their children to school. Here we find a crucial second link between the general situation and the schools: the transformation of living conditions for economic activities, entailing a necessity for basic schooling, leaves the parental desire to ensure that their children receive it. At present, there is a widening rift between Roma/Gypsy children and those of surrounding society, and many already difficult situations will deteriorate rapidly and dramatically with the concomitant risk of certain forms of marginality and/or delinquency.

The analyses carried out nonetheless emphasize that it is possible to envisage a more positive future:

- Measures associated with intercultural education open the way to new practices validating the different cultures present in the classroom, taking each child’s own capabilities and experiences into account. Such measures make it possible to adapt the school to Roma/Gypsy children.
- Every state has attempted, through diverse experiments and/or programmes, to respond to Roma/Gypsy parents’ wishes regarding school provisions for their children. Some aspects of these efforts have been successful, others less so. It is important to identify, analyze, and publicize those approaches which have demonstrated their value, to support innovative projects implemented in partnership, and to suggest new ones. The broad evaluation made possible by the study prepared for the European Commission clearly demonstrates that the recommended holistic, structural approach (through cooperation, coordination, and information) has a significant impact on overcoming the major obstacles blocking Roma/Gypsy children’s access to school.

In many ways Roma/Gypsies demonstrate better adaptation to present changes, and to future ones, than other sections of the population due to their economic flexibility, geographic mobility, in-family education, and community values. Finally, in diverse ages and situations, parents and professional educators around them wish to convey to the children corresponds to many of the values which the professional educators wish to convey to the children. Active adaptation to the environment, in social as well as economic terms, today requires a grasp of certain basic elements which enable one to analyze and comprehend a changing reality. On the cultural plane these same elements can serve as tools for those wishing to conserve, affirm and develop their own unique identity.

Parents are aware of this, and are increasingly willing to send their children to school. Here we find a crucial second link between the general situation and the schools: the transformation of living conditions for economic activities, entailing a necessity for basic schooling, leaves the parental desire to ensure that their children receive it. At present, there is a widening rift between Roma/Gypsy children and those of surrounding society, and many already difficult situations will deteriorate rapidly and dramatically with the concomitant risk of certain forms of marginality and/or delinquency.

The analyses carried out nonetheless emphasize that it is possible to envisage a more positive future:

- Measures associated with intercultural education open the way to new practices validating the different cultures present in the classroom, taking each child’s own capabilities and experiences into account. Such measures make it possible to adapt the school to Roma/Gypsy children.
- Every state has attempted, through diverse experiments and/or programmes, to respond to Roma/Gypsy parents’ wishes regarding school provisions for their children. Some aspects of these efforts have been successful, others less so. It is important to identify, analyze, and publicize those approaches which have demonstrated their value, to support innovative projects implemented in partnership, and to suggest new ones. The broad evaluation made possible by the study prepared for the European Commission clearly demonstrates that the recommended holistic, structural approach (through cooperation, coordination, and information) has a significant impact on overcoming the major obstacles blocking Roma/Gypsy children’s access to school.

In many ways Roma/Gypsies demonstrate better adaptation to present changes, and to future ones, than other sections of the population due to their economic flexibility, geographic mobility, in-family education, and community values. Finally, in diverse ages and situations, parents and professional educators around them wish to convey to the children corresponds to many of the values which the professional educators wish to convey to the children. Active adaptation to the environment, in social as well as economic terms, today requires a grasp of certain basic elements which enable one to analyze and comprehend a changing reality. On the cultural plane these same elements can serve as tools for those wishing to conserve, affirm and develop their own unique identity.

Parents are aware of this, and are increasingly willing to send their children to school. Here we find a crucial second link between the general situation and the schools: the transformation of living conditions for economic activities, entailing a necessity for basic schooling, leaves the parental desire to ensure that their children receive it. At present, there is a widening rift between Roma/Gypsy children and those of surrounding society, and many already difficult situations will deteriorate rapidly and dramatically with the concomitant risk of certain forms of marginality and/or delinquency.

The analyses carried out nonetheless emphasize that it is possible to envisage a more positive future:

- Measures associated with intercultural education open the way to new practices validating the different cultures present in the classroom, taking each child’s own capabilities and experiences into account. Such measures make it possible to adapt the school to Roma/Gypsy children.
- Every state has attempted, through diverse experiments and/or programmes, to respond to Roma/Gypsy parents’ wishes regarding school provisions for their children. Some aspects of these efforts have been successful, others less so. It is important to identify, analyze, and publicize those approaches which have demonstrated their value, to support innovative projects implemented in partnership, and to suggest new ones. The broad evaluation made possible by the study prepared for the European Commission clearly demonstrates that the recommended holistic, structural approach (through cooperation, coordination, and information) has a significant impact on overcoming the major obstacles blocking Roma/Gypsy children’s access to school.

In many ways Roma/Gypsies demonstrate better adaptation to present changes, and to future ones, than other sections of the population due to their economic flexibility, geographic mobility, in-family education, and community values. Finally, in diverse ages and situations, parents and professional educators around them wish to convey to the children corresponds to many of the values which the professional educators wish to convey to the children. Active adaptation to the environment, in social as well as economic terms, today requires a grasp of certain basic elements which enable one to analyze and comprehend a changing reality. On the cultural plane these same elements can serve as tools for those wishing to conserve, affirm and develop their own unique identity.
Conclusion

A great deal – indeed, nearly everything – remains to be done in order to achieve respect for the rights of the Roma/Gypsy minority. The proposing of working guidelines lies outside the remit of this report. However, if one considers the body of texts put together at the initiative of various international organizations (European Union, Council of Europe, OSCE, UN), one realizes that many such proposals have already been formulated. The time has come to implement them, through a practical approach taking into account the dynamics of the different communities involved, as well as a realistic recognition of the diverse socio-political and socio-economic parameters involved. A detailed outline of the practicalities of such an approach has been undertaken elsewhere. Briefly, it is a question of:

- flexibility in diversity,
- precision in clarity,
- internal dynamics as the baseline,
- dialogue,
- coordination,
- study and reflection,
- information and documentation.

We shall only stop to focus, in this text on minority rights, on the development of partnership within a framework of intensifying dialogue. Consultation and cooperation can lay the foundations for respect for rights, and the demand for such a partnership has long been expressed by Roma/Gypsy organizations. It is now shared by international institutions (see the numerous texts issued on this subject, and their proposals), and concrete advances are occasionally being achieved at state level. We stress that a consensus is currently emerging, and with it the potential for establishing real partnership. The authors of this report have, over a number of years, repeatedly submitted proposals along these lines to the European Commission, Council of Europe, and OSCE, conditions are now ripe – provided existing will is transformed into action – for a realistic recognition of the diverse socio-political and socio-economic parameters involved.

Annexe

Romna/Gypsy women’s manifesto, Seville, May 1994

On the occasion of the ‘First Gypsy Congress of the European Union,’ and following a proposal put forward by the women of the European Working Group on School Provision for Gypsy and Traveller Children, namely Jordianna Bourgognin (France), Ana Giménez (Spain), Mary Moriarty (Ireland), Carmen Carillo (Spain), and the President of the Gypsy Women’s Association Sindo Kali, a parallel meeting of Roma/Gypsy women took place.

These women unanimously signed the following declaration:

The Gypsy women coming together on the occasion of the ‘First Gypsy Congress of the European Union’, driven by their concern over the condition of Gypsy women in the European Union, and in particular by the problems associated with the education and schooling of their children, reached the following conclusions:

Given the gravity of the social, educational and cultural situation of Gypsy women and their children, we state the need for:

1. The establishment of urgent measures in the political, social and economic fields with the aim of eliminating poverty, marginalization and ethnic discrimination.

2. The strengthening and developing of measures in the field of education so that girls and boys will have the same educational opportunities, a sine qua non for the social adaptation, and for their acceptance as full citizens of the European Union.

3. The enabling of the Gypsy woman to fully take on the uses defined by Gypsy culture, including in contexts which curtail such expression.

We feel:

- That one of the main problems that we, as Gypsy women, face, is low self-esteem. There is an urgent need to strengthen our awareness of our own value and of our ability to resolve our own problems.

- There is no doubt that such self-awareness would lift our social, educational, political and cultural awareness. It would also lead to our undertaking social and educational action ourselves.

We therefore propose:

1. To hold European-level meetings of Gypsy women, with the aim of analyzing the social, political and educational problems we face,
Recommendations

Recognition of identity

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Minorities makes it clear that states have a duty to protect the existence, and the national or ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic identity, of minorities within their respective territories and shall encourage conditions for the promotion of that identity.

Non-discrimination

Roma/Gypsies are entitled to equal treatment before the law and have the right to expect that those guilty of crimes directed against them be subject to investigation in accordance with the law. They should enjoy full and equal rights both as citizens of a given state and as a recognized minority group.

Equality of treatment

Roma/Gypsies should receive the same treatment as other refugees when seeking asylum. The basic principles of the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness should be applied to Roma/Gypsies when they do not have the nationality of the state in which they reside.

Participation

Roma/Gypsy-based NGOs should receive financial and moral support. Their work should be promoted and recognized as a way to enhance participation of the Roma/Gypsy in devising and implementing policies which affect them. Informed consent of the population should be sought before entering into implementation phases of projects.

Education

Multicultural approaches to Roma/Gypsy education and to the education of young people as a whole should be fostered and encouraged throughout Europe as a vital component in combating prejudice and negative stereotypes. Better vocational training and educational opportunities, including the encouragement of traditional occupations are also required.

Need for comprehensive approaches at the international level

An integrated approach to the various measures adopted by a variety of European institutions should now be adopted. MRG welcomes the creation of a Roma/Gypsy contact point under the auspices of the OSCE and calls for cooperation of all institutions and NGOs in the sharing of information and expertise.

Right to self-designation

All minority communities have the right to choose their own identity. No country has the right to change the appellation of a particular community without their consent.

NOTES

1 For further details on this point see Kenrick, D., Gypsies, From India to the Mediterranean, Gypsy Research Centre- CRDP Midi-Pyrénées, Interface Collection, Toulouse 1994.
2 For more in-depth treatment of the topics covered in this chapter, see Liégeois, J-P., Roma, Gypsies, Travellers, Council of Europe Publications, Strasbourg, 1994.
3 Source: Gypsy Research Centre, René Descartes University, Paris, 1994; this table gives ‘stable’ numbers more indicative of the long-term picture than of recent population movements, the inclusion of new arrivals would entail a significant rise in the figures given for several Western European states such as Sweden, Italy, Germany, Austria, etc.
4 This typology and the examples illustrating it have been developed by Jean-Pierre Liégeois in a number of works, for example ‘Le discours de l’ordre: poncifs publics et minorités culturelles’, in Espirit, Paris, 1980 and Témoignages, Mapero, Paris, 1983. A synopsis is presented in Roma, Gypsies, Travellers, Op. Cit.
5 The Interface Collection has a number of works on this tragic period of Roma/Gypsy history (see Bibliography).
8 Extracts from the report on the hearing held in May 1991 by the European Common Executing European Institutions, General Directorate for Employment, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs, Directorate for Social Security, Social Protection, and Living Conditions, are presented in this chapter (see Bibliography).
9 For more detailed analysis see Roma, Gypsies, Travellers, Op. Cit.
15 For a more detailed analysis see Roma, Gypsies, Travellers, Op. Cit.
16 Ibid. In addition, the OECD compiled a report in 1993: Beyssac, A., Evaluation of Gypsy Populations and of their Movements in Central and Eastern Europe and in some OECD Countries, focusing on the issues of migration, application for asylum, demographics and employment.
19 The full text of this research proposal is reproduced in On Gypsies. Texts issued by international institutions, documents compiled by Marielle Danbakli, Gypsy Research Centre – CRDP, Interface Collection, 1994.
20 Ibid
21 See also Roma, Gypsies, Travellers, Op. Cit.
22 Certain texts issued by international institutions have expressed a demand that such a study be undertaken, see for example: Resolution 1203 (1993) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, which, under ‘General measures’, recommends that ‘independent research should be initiated into the national legislation and regulations concerning Gypsies, and their application in practice, and regular reports on this research presented to the Assembly’, (Article 6).
24 See bibliography for reference details.
25 See bibliography.
26 The proceedings of this seminar were published: Gypsies in the Locality, Strasbourg, Council of Europe Press, Studies and Texts Series, 1994.
27 For further details see the quarterly information newsletter Iface, published by the Gypsy Research Centre, René Descartes University, Paris.
32 Ibid
33 We remind the reader of a detailed report on the implementation of the resolution subsequently adopted by the Ministers of Education is in existence: see Liégeois, J-P., School Provision for Gypsy and Traveller Children, Op. Cit.
34 In connection with compiling School Provision for Gypsy and Traveller Children, a specially commissioned report on Gypsy in-family education was written.
37 In Romani language there is a distinct word for women, i.e. Romani/Romana.

38 In Romani language there is a distinct word for women.

---

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**


---

**Commission of the European Communities and Council of Europe publications on the subject of school provision for Roma/Gypsy children**


---

**Extract from Liégeois, J-P., *School Provision for Gypsy and Traveller Children*, Ibid.**

In Romani language there is a distinct word for women, i.e. Romani/Romana.

---

Centres and Regional Department of Pedagogy

- English version, Editorial Presencia Gitana Valdermodro, 70 y 78
- French version, Broumoni Baut-UF, 63000 – Clermont-Ferrand, France
- University of Hertfordshire Press College Lane, Hatfield Hertfordshire AL1 3BA, UK

---

**The Rukan Series:**


---

**General**

- Lindgren, A., *Socio-political Data*, Council of Europe, for the English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese and Valencian.

---

**The Interface Collection:**

An European collection of reference works developed with the support of the European Commission by the Gypsy Research Centre of the University Paris Descartes, Paris, in collaboration with expert groups (of historians, linguists, anthropologists, education specialists etc) and a network of publishers in several countries. Some titles receive Council of Europe support for distribution in Central and Eastern Europe. The following titles are currently (August 1995) available:


---

**The Rukan Series**:


---

**Publishers’ addresses**:

- CRDP: Centre Régional de Documentation Pédagogique Midi-Pyrénées
- 3 rue Roquelaine 31069 – Toulouse Cedex, France

---

**Bibliography**
About Minority Rights Group
Reports

Minority Rights Group began publishing in 1970. Over two decades and ninety titles later, MRG’s series of reports are widely recognized internationally as authoritative, accurate and objective documents on the rights of minorities worldwide.

Over the years, subscribers to the series have received a wealth of unique material on ethnic, religious, linguistic and social minorities. The reports are seen as an important reference by researchers, students, and campaigners and provide readers all over the world with valuable background data on many current affairs issues.

Six reports are published every year. Each title, expertly researched and written, is approximately 32 pages and 20,000 words long and covers a specific minority issue.

Recent titles in our report series include:

**Africa**
- Somalia: A Nation in Turmoil
- Middle East: Bedouin of the Negev
- The Kurds

**Americas**
- Maya of Guatemala
- The Inuit of Canada
- Native Peoples of the Russian Far North

**Asia**
- Afghanistan: A Nation of Minorities
- The Adivasis of Bangladesh
- Chinese of South-East Asia

**Europe**
- Minorties in Central & Eastern Europe
- Native Peoples of the Russian Far North
- Northern Ireland: Managing Difference
- Refugees in Europe
- The Saami of Lapland
- The Sikh

**THE AMERICAS**
- Amerindians of South America
- The East Indians of Trinidad and Guyana
- French Canada in Crisis
- Haitian Refugees in the US
- The Maya of Guatemala
- The Miskito Indians of Nicaragua
- Mexican Americans in the US
- The Original Americans: US Indians
- The Western Saharan

**THE MIDDLE EAST**
- The Armenians
- The Baluchis and Pathans
- The Biharis of Bangladesh
- The Chinese of South-East Asia
- The Tibetans

**THE SOUTHERN OCEANS**
- Aboriginal Australians
- Diego Garcia: A Contrast to the Falklands
- East Timor and West Irian
- Fiji
- The Kanaks of New Caledonia
- The Maori of Aotearoa – New Zealand
- Micronesia: the Problem of Palau
- The Pacific: Nuclear Testing and Minorities

**WOMEN**
- Arab Women
- Female Genital Mutilation: Proposals for Change
- Latin American Women
- Women in Asia
- Women in Sub-Saharan Africa
Roma/Gypsies: A European Minority

The Roma/Gypsy community has been persecuted in Europe throughout history, whether through banishment, Roma/Gypsy hunts or the Roma/Gypsy Holocaust of the twentieth century.

*Roma/Gypsies: A European Minority* charts the course of these events on the Roma/Gypsy consciousness and examines current-day policies of exclusion, containment and assimilation whilst also considering the position of Roma/Gypsy communities in Eastern and Central Europe in the wake of the fall of communism.

The authors Jean-Pierre Liégeois and Nicolae Gheorghe, renowned experts on this subject, discuss European and international institutions' responses to the growing sense of shared identity that exists among Roma/Gypsy people, highlighting the achievements that have been made to date and outlining the many issues still to be resolved.

To this end, *Roma/Gypsies: A European Minority* concludes with a set of recommendations concerning identity; non-discrimination; equality; asylum; participation; education and self-designation, arguing that a European-wide integrated approach to these issues is long overdue.

Minority Rights Group

Minority Rights Group, an international human rights organization and registered educational charity, investigates the plights of minority (and majority) groups suffering discrimination and prejudice – and works to educate and alert public opinion.

We produce readable and accurate reports on the problems of oppressed groups around the world. We publish six new and revised reports a year. To date we have produced over 90 reports, a World Directory of Minorities, several books and education packs.

MRG works through the UN and elsewhere to increase the awareness of human rights issues and – with your help – is supporting minorities in the international arena.

For full details contact:

Minority Rights Group
379 Brixton Road
London SW9 7DE
UK

Telephone: +44 (0) 171-978 9498
Fax: +44 (0) 171-738 6265