



FORUM OF EUROPEAN ROMA YOUNG PEOPLE

REPORT

STUDY SESSION  
“ROMA COMMUNITIES AND LEADERSHIP CONCEPTS”

22-29 June 2003, European Youth Centre,  
Strasbourg, France

Written by Valeria BODOCZKY – Rapporteur of the session  
and edited by Alexandra RAYKOVA – Course Director

## Introduction:

Dear readers,

The present report of the study session « Roma communities and leadership concept » will provide you mainly with information about the educational content of the activity. Therefore I am using the opportunity to focus your attention upon some of the political aspects:

This study session of FERYP is the first activity of the organisation since its official registration as an International Non-governmental Youth organisation. Therefore this activity has a significant role not only in the history of FERYP, but also for the future activities of the organisation, as it contributed towards identifying the needs for future activities. On the other hand served as possibility to examine the educational approach of FERYP and its political approach towards the topic of the seminar: « Roma communities and leadership concepts ».

Among the outcomes of the seminar, there were some very important and clear issues:

- This seminar was the initial step in the discussion of the topic. Further discussion specifically focused on the role of the young Roma as activists, mediators and leaders in their communities is needed;
- Specific training on necessary and relevant skills for the target group of FERYP will strengthen the capacities of the young Roma to act as such as well as to better contribute to the work of their organizations at local level;
- In order to better address the Roma issues, the role of the young Roma activist, mediators and leaders as well as the one of their organizations have to be further emphasized, promoted and utilized at all levels: local, national and European.

Those outcomes have been already considered in the discussions, which took place during the last Bureau meeting and some have already implications in future projects prepared by the organizations.

Additional aspect of this seminar was its important contribution in terms of enlarging its membership both among young Roma as well as among youth organizations in Europe.

I would like also to underline the positive experience that we had in co-operating with the EYCS for the preparation and the delivery of the seminar and to use the opportunity to thank to our educational adviser: Inge Stuer and all staff members involved in various aspects of the implementation.

We are also in particular satisfied from the co-operation with the Roma/Gypsies Division and we would like to express our gratitude to its all staff members, who were involved in the delivery of inputs at the session.

The contribution of the participants for the success of this activity was significant and has also to be considered.

Finally I would like to congratulate the preparatory team of the session for their professionalism, motivation and hard work.

Alexandra Raykova – Bulgaria, Dominique Steinberger – France, Ramiza Sakip – ‘the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia’, Valeria Bodoczky – Hungary and Demetrio Gomez Avila – Spain (who although not present in the session, participated in its preparation).

If you like to send your feedback or other comments related to the report, please use the e-mail address of FERYP: [feryp2003@yahoo.com](mailto:feryp2003@yahoo.com).

Alexandra Raykova  
President of the European Bureau of FERYP

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## **Monday, 23/06/2003**

Program of the day:

9:30	Opening
9:40	Official welcome Background of FERYP + Aims and objectives of the seminar
10:45	Coffee break
11:15	Expectations
12:15	Programme of the study session Working methods
12:35	Technicalities
13:00	Lunch
14:30	Getting to know each other
15:00	Reports in the plenary
15:30	Coffee break
16:00	Group building /exercise/ +
16:40	Debriefing

## **INTRODUCTION OF FERYP**

By Ramiza SAKIP

FERYP - the Forum of European Roma Young People is registered now officially as a European association with a seat in the capital of Europe – Strasbourg, France.

### **History:**

In May 1995 the Youth Directorate of the Council of Europe organized the first European Training course for young Roma/Gypsy leaders: “Situation and perspectives for the young Roma/Gypsy and Travelers in Europe” – held under the European Youth campaign against Racism, Anti-Semitism, Xenophobia and Intolerance, “All different, all equal”. The follow-up of this course was a seminar about networking between young Roma/Gypsy, held in September 1996 in Budapest.

The core elements of the FERYP`s philosophy are:

- Preparing the new/future generation of Young Roma activists, mediators and leaders to act for the improvement of the situation of the Roma communities in Europe;
- Representing its members and associates at European level;
- Co-ordinating and implementing activities with European and local dimensions - with, for and by Young Roma, designed to achieve the following objectives:

### **General objectives:**

- Provide information to members and non-members;
- Train members and non-members;
- Lobby and representation;
- Capacity building and support of local initiatives and projects (including institutional support/funding);
- Co-ordination/Logistic role for implementation of activities and projects, which are addressing specific needs and problems;
- Provide training and consultancy to non-Roma organizations and institutions that are willing to develop programs and activities for the benefit of the Roma community.

### **Activities:**

For the achievement of its objectives, FERYP can organize and implement, by itself or in co-operation with other organizations, the following type of activities:

- European training, seminars and meetings aimed at improving the capacity and the competencies of its members;
- Publications and information materials;
- Research activities;
- Youth exchanges, language courses and other international activities aimed at promotion of co-operation and dialogue between the Roma communities in Europe;
- Fundraising activities aimed at providing the necessary means for the work of the organization;
- Audio-visual activities aimed to raise awareness within the European society regarding the situations and the aspirations of the Young Roma as well as to provide information related to this;
- Other activities.

### **Implemented activities:**

- 1998 Training Course “Development of the European Roma Youth movement”;
- 1999 Training Course “Training of young Roma multipliers”;
- 1999 Seminar “Young Roma Women – twice discriminated...?”;
- 2000 Seminar: “Young Roma/Gypsy people in the new millennium: between tradition and modernity”;
- 2001 Training on project management.

## **BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY SESSION. INTRODUCTION TO THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE SESSION.**

By Dominique STEINBERGER

### **Why this study session?**

During the last study session organized by FERYP – “Training course on project management”, the participants raised the issue about the existing leadership concepts and practices within the Roma communities as well as about the conflict between the different generations of Roma activist.

It is becoming urgent for the Roma youth activists to define better their place and role as in their communities as well in their youth or traditional organizations.

It seems also that there are major differences between the Roma communities in the West and in the Central and Eastern and Northern Europe and there is a need to exchange and analyze the different needs, experiences and practices.

As one of the objectives of FERYP is to provide training to young Roma activists, in order to strengthen their local associations and to support solution of concrete problems at local level, FERYP undertook the initiative to run this study session in a European context.

### **Aims of the study session:**

- To support young Roma activists in strengthening their leadership capacities;
- To promote their role (individual and organizational) as social actor for change within and for the Roma community;

### **Objectives:**

- To provide participants with possibility to share personal experiences related to the topic;
- To share the different Roma realities and to define the needs of the Roma community related to the topic;
- To reflect upon different concepts, types/models of leadership in the Roma communities, as well as to their relevance to the present situation and needs of the Roma community;

- To provide the participants with necessary tools (information, skills, competencies) for improvement of their work as leaders/mediators in their local communities;
- To reflect on how they can use those instruments/tools back in their realities;
- To provide possibility for networking during and after the course;
- To introduce FERYP, the Council of Europe and the Youth and Sport Directorate;
- To explore the local realities of Strasbourg.

## **EXPECTATIONS**

By Valeria Bodoczky and Inge Stuer

The participants had to draw and make a poster about their expectations concerning the following aspects:

- 1. GAININGS-** What they would like to gain from this seminar?
- 2. FEARS** - What they would like to avoid?
- 3. CONTRIBUTIONS** - How they can contribute to the success of the seminar?

From these posters we organized an exhibition visited by everybody. There was possibility for questions for clarifications of the drawings as well as related to their content.

## **GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER**

By Valeria Bodoczky and Inge Stuer

In the afternoon the participants had opportunity to get to know each other.

They had to work in couples, and interview each other about:

1. Studies, family, favorite leisure time activities, etc.
2. Personal dream.
3. Their dream/vision about the communities to which they belong.

After the interview, everybody had to introduce his/her pair in the plenary.

## GROUP BUILDING EXERCISE

By Alexandra Raykova

### The “Desert” exercise:

The objectives of the exercise were both to facilitate the group building as well as to enter the discussion on the topic.

The participants had to complete a group task. The experience from the exercise was reflected in the plenary.

Among the conclusions made by the participants as a result from this exercise and in a relation to the topic of the seminar, were the following:

- The leader has to listen for the people behind;
- Before acting we should have strategy;
- Roma are often acting without strategy;
- But the group built during the exercise itself a strategy;
- We should think before acting;
- Learn from the former leader. The leader takes the final steps, which can be a success or a failure.
- If you fail once sometimes there is no opportunity to correct or start again like in the game...you don't have second chance in the Roma community. If you make mistake once the Roma won't respect you any more.

## Tuesday, 24/06/2003

Program of the day:

9:30	Opening
9:40	Sharing realities /workshop/
11: 15	Report in the Plenary
12: 00	“The Roma leadership at local level” Input by Dominique Steinberger
12:40	“The Roma women as leaders” Input by Ramiza Sakip
13:15	Lunch
15:10	Experiencing leadership and linked concepts /role game/
16:00	Debriefing

## **SHARING REALITIES**

By Valeria Bodoczky and Inge Stuer

This day the participants started working in two groups. The task was to share their realities. The questions on which they had to exchange were the following:

- 1. What is the situation of my community?**
- 2. What I would like to change/improve?**
- 3. What are the existing leadership models in my community?**
- 4. And what is my personal perception of how it should be?**

Below are the brief summaries of the reports of the working groups:

### **Report of Group 1:**

#### **Hungary:**

Very few leaders are able to represent Roma in a non-biased and intelligent way. Leaders of Lovari and Romungro working against each other and undermining any kind of discussion about the possibility of creating a stronger Roma civic society. Beash are very reclusive and prefer to live isolated. There are different trends within Hungarian Roma communities. Those are mainly:

- Isolation
- Assimilation
- Integration

Rampant corruption and nepotism, lack of co-ordination amongst NGOs  
Positive developments regarding the presence of Roma in the news and a good improvement in the way Roma are presented.

#### **Spain:**

A very important issue is to preserve the Roma identity (even though the language is almost completely lost) and at the same time to include Roma issues in the education of the majority.

The very important issue is the danger of assimilation and the confusion of assimilation and integration.

Positive example of NGOs working together and a democratic election of leaders.

Improvement in the representation of Roma in the local administrations.

Importance of education.

#### **Slovakia:**

Concerning the leadership the issues are identical: lack of leadership, nepotism, self-interest between the Roma leaders.

For the Roma community: abject poverty, luck of proper housing, lack of education for both the minority and majority, discrimination and racism

perpetrated by the political organisms of the majority, unemployment, bad attitudes of mass media that present Roma in a very stereotypical tendentious way, violence against Roma and police abuses, criminality and family violence in our communities, difficult access to the health system and public services, lack of citizenship, lack of statistics.

The group also discussed the scandal of forced sterilisation and the BBC report on it.

### **Romania:**

Same as Slovakia, with an accent on the isolation of the Rudari group.

### **Report of Group 2:**

#### **Romania:**

The community of Valea Jiului includes 8 towns:

Petrosani, Petrila, Aninoasa, Uricani, Lupeni, Barbateni, Vulcan and Lonea.

The economical issues in the area influence the social life of this community.

This area is mono-industrial and the people are mostly miners. There are more strikes and poverty because the government wants to close the business.

The communist regime brought people from all country so the population is mixed. Together are leaving: Roma, Romanians, Hungarians, Germans and Jews.

Roma population in the area is up to 14 500 people.

The people are very needy, no employment, no housing, there are places where the Roma population are not connected to the water system.

Most of them receive social allowance.

There are several Roma NGO trying to deal with social needs and with poverty.

"Tumende" is a Roma NGO that has a project at the local broadcasting TV working to reduce the stereotypes among non Roma and promote the Roma culture and freedom of speech.

"Tumende" is developing social and economic projects, capacity building development and network to improve the situation of Roma in this community together with local administration.

#### **Spain:**

About the Roma community in Madrid:

Roma are living in the ghetto, 80 percent of them mostly have social income, and the rest is working on market places having a small business.

There are no equal opportunities for education.

There are several NGOs working on the improvement of life conditions, developing the community network, educational and economical projects to ensure employment in the area. The most respected Roma are the musicians.

### **Hungary:**

Roma community in Budapest, 8<sup>th</sup> district (the slum area).  
80 percent of the Roma population is living in the district 8<sup>th</sup> in Budapest, this district is the poorest area with no social security, no proper life conditions.  
Discriminatory treatment from media. Even the local Roma Radio / Radio C/ which is lead by non-Roma.

There are several NGOs co-operating with the local authorities they try to improve the social conditions in this area.

The musicians have better life conditions and having respect of the non Roma society. There are language barriers, most of Roma do not speak well Hungarian, and therefore they have serious difficulties in the job market.

### **Report of Group 3:**

#### **Romania:**

It doesn't appear to have leadership, (although it exists). The people don't recognise the Roma leaders, as they don't know them.

#### **Sweden:**

The Roma leaders are authoritative leaders. There are 25.000 Roma living in Sweden and 200 Roma NGOs, which Erland thinks, that it is too much. Every second family has an NGO.

#### **Russia:**

The leaders or (barons) are those people who are rich, and they have direct link with the governmental institutions. There is no original leadership model.

#### **“the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”:**

There are many leaders. They need to be unified.

#### **Kosovo:**

The largest number of Roma lives in segregated settlements. These “houses” are often without electricity and water. The nutrition of the population is very problematic and therefore the life expectancy of the people is significantly lower than the one of the other populations. The majority of the Roma (after the crisis in Kosovo) are poor, without permanent jobs or social protection. They are not represented on the labour market because they do not meet basic criteria. The biggest problem is appropriate housing and demands immediate attention of resettlement projects.

### **Conclusions:**

We think that the current Roma leadership needs improvement, especially in the youth sector. We found similarities between the “leaders” of our communities and we discovered a very positive model of elected Roma

leaders in Spain. We think there are positive models of Roma leaders, which are passing by, unnoticed.

### **“THE ROMA LEADERSHIP AT LOCAL LEVEL”**

Input by Dominique Steinberger

Dominique Steinberger is running NGO in Strasbourg – ARPOMT. He has shared his perception about the leadership concepts in his community, which is based on his personal experience, knowledge and observations.

Below are some of the issues underlined by the speaker.

**“Leader“ means political involvement, mediation.**

- Unfortunately the Roma political leaders don't ask the approval of the community.
- To be a leader one does not need to have formal education. Schooling is not a condition for being a leader. The formal education is only a tool, or an instrument for the leader to act better.

**Types of the leaders:**

Internal and external.

**Internal:**

From the Roma community. The main purpose of such person is usually to defend the interest of the Roma community.

**External:**

Social workers, school masters.

Other types of leaders are the **religious leaders**.

They have big influence on the community.

### **“THE ROMA WOMEN AS LEADERS”**

By Ramiza Sakip

Ramiza Sakip has been working on Roma issues for the last 7 years. She is the President of Roma Youth Association “Anglunipe”, based in Skopje, “the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”. Ramiza was actively involved in working on Roma women issues.

Below are some of the elements raised in her input during the session:

“The roles and the functions of the Roma men and Roma women in the Roma community are clearly divided.

In the traditional Roma family the task of the Roma woman is to take care of the children, to maintain the household and to hold together the family.

To be a Roma woman leader in a community with patriarchal family value system is very difficult, but it is manageable.”

Ramiza pointed out that to be educated doesn't mean to be assimilated and that education has a very important role for the Roma woman – leader.

“The good Roma woman- leader is; respected and trustful person, activist, mediator, good listener, analyzer, good fighter, has a good vision about the community and clear aims in her work”.

### **Some points from the discussion after the inputs:**

- First of all the good leader has to be a good speaker, because he/she has to convince his/her community.
- The mass schooling of the girls in the Roma communities is the task of the next generation.
- We cannot forget our identity with the education, we have to realise that the education has to be a sword in the hands of Roma.
- The Roma leaders have to be educated and qualified to be in a position to decide for their community. The decisions on Roma should be done by the Roma themselves and not by non-Roma.

## **DECISION MAKING IN THE ROMA COMMUNITY. THE “COUNCIL OF THE WISE” – ROLE PLAY**

By Alexandra Raykova and Dominique Steinberger

### **Objectives of the session:**

- ◆ To provide space for exploring of the decision – making mechanisms in the Roma community;
- ◆ To analyse the role and the existing leadership models, by using concrete/private situation;
- ◆ To focus upon the place of the Roma women and Youth in the decision – making;
- ◆ To draw conclusions based on the experiences.

### **Description of the methods:**

#### **Role-play:**

- ◆ After the introduction of the objectives for the afternoon session, the participants will be acquainted in the plenary with the concept of the “Council of Wise”.
- ◆ The method will be introduced and the participants will be asked to decide if they want to take part as actors or observers.
- ◆ 7 – 8 participants will be selected to play (both male and female) and will receive role cards and the description of the situation that they have to play.
- ◆ Moving into the room opposite to the plenary.
- ◆ The actors have 5 min. to get into their roles.

- ◆ 30 min. performance.
- ◆ Coffee break for de-rolling.
- ◆ Debriefing on the questions:

1. How was it for you to participate in this exercise?
2. Are there similar structures in your community and how they are functioning?
3. What are the decision-making mechanisms in your community?
4. Is there any difference when it is private issue or when it concerns the whole community?
5. Are the Roma women and Young people involved in those and how?
6. Can you identify the leadership models and functions that were presented in the play?
7. What are the similarities with the real life situations?

### **Buzz groups:**

Participants are divided in groups of 3 people to draw conclusions guided by the question:

1. Is there need for improvement of the decision making in the Roma community?
2. And if yes what and how it should be done?

### **The roles:**

#### **The adult Roma woman**

1. 41 years old Roma woman, which is very traditional. For you the fidelity is the primary important moral quality of a Roma woman. You cannot understand and accept what this young Roma woman has done. You are supporting the idea of the Roma businessman that she should be excluded both from the family of her husband as well from the entire community. Your arguments are strong and based on the common perceptions of what the role of the Roma women in the family and in the community is.

#### **The NGO representative**

2. You are an NGO representative, respected by everybody. Your position is that the most important in this situation is to prevent eventual conflict between the two families, which can have a fatal outcome. Judgement of the persons involved is not necessary in your perception.

#### **The young Roma**

3. You are the youngest in the meeting, In fact you are not officially invited, but as your father is the most respected member of the Council you are allowed to stay at the meeting and even to contribute to the discussion. By chance you know that the relation of the Roma woman with her husband was not very good. He was constantly violent with her and on the top he was himself in a relation with another woman. You believe in love and that the private issues are matter of discussion between the persons involved and not of the entire community.

### **The Chairman of the Council**

4. You are the most respected member of the Council. You are also the oldest. You are trying to find out more about what have actually happened and you are trying to give the wisest advice, which will satisfy everybody.

You are facilitating the discussion. If towards the end of the meeting there is still no solution it is up to the Council to decide what should happen. But before that the Council will shortly consult with the community.

/5 minutes consultation with the other participants, who are observing/.

As your son came with you to the meeting he was invited to participate in the discussion.

The persons that will be present at the meeting are from the other members of the Council. One of them is only observer and the other one is your son.

From the families present are: the sister of Maria, the father of George and the mother in law of Maria.

### **The Roma businessman**

5. You are Roma businessman, which is invited to seat in the Council, because of his economic position and influence in the community. You are considering that both the Young Roma man and woman, who have committed to the sexual act, deserve serious punishment. In principle you think that the Young Roma and the woman have nothing to do in such meetings. Because of that you are ignoring the opinions of the Young person and the woman present and you are also trying to exclude them from the discussion and the decision-making.

### **The sister of the Young Roman woman**

6. You are the sister of the Young Roma woman, which is involved in this situation. As both of your parents have died and you are the only relative of this girl, you have been invited by the Council to express the opinion of your family.  
You are trying to argue that the cousin of her husband raped your sister and that she had no relation with him and in fact she is willing to stay with her husband.

### **The father of the young man**

6. You are the father of the young man who was involved in sexual relation with the wife of his cousin. Your son is single yet. For you it is the woman, who provoked your son and in your perception the reaction of your son is natural. As he is a man and young, he got involved in this.  
In fact you think that it is the fault of her husband and her mother in law that they have liberated too much this young Roma woman.

### **The observer**

7. You are invited to seat as an observer in the Council. You disagree with the way the discussion goes on. You would like to contribute, but you are not allowed to. You are trying with different means to get involved in the

discussion and if you cannot succeed towards the end of the meeting you can decide to leave the meeting.

### **The passive member of the Council**

9. You are member of the Council since long time. In this meeting are passive and you are not interested in the discussion. You want the meeting to finish as soon as possible, because you have another appointment.

Several times you are reminding that the time is running. You are participating weakly in the decision.

### **The situation:**

A young Roma woman - Maria, who is a daughter in law in a much respected family, had a sexual relationship with the cousin of her husband - George. George is single. Conflict is arising between the families of the two men. The "Council of the Wise" is initiating meeting to which the representatives of the 3 families involved are invited to solve the situation.

If it is not possible for the families to reach an agreement the Council will take the decision instead of them. If that is the case the Council will also consult with the community beforehand.

### **Conclusions of the exercise:**

In the countries of most of the participants the institution of Romani Criss is still functioning. The role game was really similar to the real Romani Criss. The participants pointed out that the involvement of the women and young Roma people to the decision making process of the Romani Criss would be very important.

## Wednesday, 25/06/03

Program of the day:

9: 30	Opening
9:40	"The Roma leadership from a European perspective" Input of Miranda Vuolasranta
11:15	Coffee break
11:45	"Leadership – theory" Input of Michael Guet
12:15	Discussion
13:00	Lunch break
14:30	Preparation for the NGO market
16:00	NGO market
18:30	END
20:30	Movie night

## **"The Roma leadership from a European perspective"**

By Miranda Vuolasranta, Roma/Gypsy Division of the Council of Europe

Mrs. Miranda Vuolasranta is a very charismatic Roma women leader who immediately had the attention of all participants. In her speech she explained the history of the traditional leaders in Roma communities and she stressed out the importance of preserving the Romany culture. The speaker introduced the present forms of Roma leadership at all levels and finally she underlined the important role of the Roma women in the community and their performances as leaders.

Below is an abstract from her input:

What kinds of leadership models are existing today in the Roma community?

### **Traditional leaders:**

- Head of the family, most often father, but can also be grandmother;
- Head of the extended family/ relatives/ - an older Rom/ni
- Judge ~ Roma Criss/Court nominated person by a the extended Roma family

The diversity of Romany associations is primarily an asset, and should be acknowledged and promoted as a resource. It may be also a liability, since diversity is often connected with

- Fragmentation;
- Isolation;
- Lack of communication both at national and at international level;
- Over-competition on same resources, lack of co-ordination in voicing and acting in cases of challenges and/or situations of crises etc.

### **Roma NGOs:**

#### **1. Local Roma NGOs:**

Most of the Romany-related organisations are locally based and oriented, dealing with issues closely connected to social services delivered by local authorities and public institutions; active in specialised areas of every-day life ( e.g. schooling, housing and camping sites, cultural activities, etc), and serving particular segments or sub-groups within the communities (such as children and youth, women, asylum-seekers, etc).

#### **2. National Roma NGOs:**

The Romany organisations aiming for more co-ordinated representation of Romany communities at national and international level are less numerous. The main issues raised by this type of organizations are: expression of collective rights (such as language, cultural symbols of ethnic/national identities, etc), combat of discrimination and defense of basic civic and human rights of Romany people, promoting dialogue, negotiation and partnership.

### *Examples*

Serbia: About 15 registered Roma NGOs, four political parties and three federations.

Slovakia: 18 Roma political parties, about one hundred Roma NGOs.

Hungary: 715 elected Roma local councillors, one National council of Roma self - governing bodies.

Romania: Currently about 120 Roma NGOs; at the beginning of the 90s there were only up to ten registered Roma political parties.

Spain: More than 100 NGOs.

Finland: Six national NGOs represented in State nominated advisory body where half of the 18 members represent central administration of the government and the other half national Roma NGOs; 15 local NGOs;

Sweden: two national umbrella NGOs represented in Governmental co-operation body; 25-30 local and regional Roma NGOs.

□ Approximately 13 European states currently have some kind of co-operation structures in the conjunction of government structures functioning between authorities and Roma.

- Advisory/consultative body
- Sub-committee under inter-ministerial committee

Only in few states these structures are regularly and efficiently functioning.

□ Proceedings for election and selection of representatives and officers of Roma in various national public bodies: legislative, executive, and consultative: 2-5 countries have Roma as counsellors, adviser or state official roles.

□ Recruitment of Roma officers in Roma-related executive positions full jobs, in national bodies.

□ Nominated by the Cabinet of the Government, on (political) party criteria

- Ex. Roma officers in position of State (sub) secretary, in charge with national and ethnic minorities /Roma affairs. Hungary 1994 -1998,

- In Romania 2000 nomination/ selection by a (sub-) ministerial body, on ad-hoc, personal criteria (expertise, personal contacts, self-promotion, etc.)

- (Republic, Hungary), Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (Finland)...

Ex. Officers on Roma issues in Ministerial bodies, such as Departments for National minorities issues in Ministry of Education (Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary etc.) Ministry of Culture (Romania), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Czech Republic).

### **Political Parties on national level:**

- Roma MPs: currently, there are 7 MPs of (asserted) Roma ethnic belonging, in the Parliaments of five countries: Bulgaria (two MPs), Czech Republic (one), Latvia (one), “The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” (one), Romania (two)
- There are MPs from the Roma party list: one in “The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”;
- On mainstream parties' lists: Bulgaria (two), Czech Republic, Latvia, Romania (one) on reserved seats for national minorities;
- Roma Mayors and Vice-Mayors: 8 in Slovakia, 1998-2002; 7 in Bulgaria, 1999-2003; 2 in Romania, 1996-2000;
- Roma as elected members of Municipal Councils/Body: about 400, mainly in Bulgaria, Hungary (separate from the local Councils of Roma minority ), Romania;
- Roma elected members of district councils: Romania, varying numbers, since 1992; other countries.
- Roma as members of regional parliaments NONE

### **International Roma NGOs:**

- **International Romani Union (IRU);**
- **Romany National Congress (RNC);**
- **Gypsies and Travelers International Evangelical Fellowship (GATIEF)**
- **International Romany Writers Association (IRWA)**
- **Forum of European Roma Young People (FERYP)**
- **International Romany Women Network (IRWN)**
- **A working group of Romany lawyers (RANELPI)**

There are national, regional and local Roma organisations (approximately 2500-3000 in Europe). Compared to the other actors in the European field, the Roma NGOs still have a little experience functioning as social actors, but at the same time we can see that the learning process has been quite fast, if we think that the other Europeans have centuries long experience on training, common influencing of the societies and the Roma have had such experiences only the last two decades.

### **Technical/research support unit for all partners:**

Proposed by the academic, independent expert bodies

- Project on Ethnic Relations (PER), USA
- Centre de Recherches Tsiganes-CRT-Paris
- Roma Centre –Univ. of Austin, Texas, USA
- European Roma Rights Center (ERRC), Budapest
- European Roma Information Office (ERIO), Brussels

### **Intergovernmental Institutions/parliamentary assemblies:**

United Nations, OSCE, EU, Council of Europe

- Non Roma representation
- Roma members in the European Parliament previously:

Mr. *Juan Ramirez Heredia*, Spain, on list of the Socialist party (Spain), 1990 –1996, not appointed as Roma representative

Mr. *Rutko Kawczynski*, Germany, elected on the list of the Green Party (Germany), 1990, mandate not validated;

- Separate Roma officers in the administration of OSCE/ODIHR/CPRSI (Nicoale Georghe) and Council of Europe (Miranda Vuolasranta)

### **Currently under examination in Council of Europe:**

- Initiative of the president of Finland, possibly establishment of European Roma and Travellers Forum (ERF). Independent, consultative high level platform of Roma representation with formal working relation towards CoE and possibly other intergovernmental institutions
- Representativity: international and regional Roma organization, tribes/religious/ gender and youth representation

### **What kind of leaders the Roma need in future?:**

- Be educated in order to be able compete with the non-Roma leaders
- Preserve and know well their cultural identity
- Have good language/communication skills
- NGO/ Civil society activists/mediators
- Teachers
- Carrier
- Officers
- Politicians
- Parliamentarians
- Media professionals
- Writers

### **"Leadership – theory"**

By Michael Guet

A question "Who is the good leader in the Roma community?", was addressed to the participants. The participants tried to gather together the characteristics of the good leader:

The good leader should:

- be strong and be able to find solutions for the problems;
- represent his/her community;
- have a strategy before acting;
- have good communication skills;
- have to know the needs of the community;
- have to listen to the people;
- have to think objectively;

- have to take critical measures when necessary to progress;
- be not a lonely person he/she is one in the community;
- good organizer
- be good observer
- be good at analyse
- find the path for the right solution

Mr. Guet completed the characteristics of the good leader with the list below. Before that, he highlighted that it takes time to become a good leader.

The good leader:

- should have good communication with the community
- should have the community support
- should have good communication outside of the community and /in the Gadge society
- should be able to break the barriers between the Roma and Gadge people
- should be able to mediate between the Roma and Gadge society
- should be able establish networks
- is not isolated
- is open minded
- is elected democratically
- is surrounded by good advisers
- is not escaping when he/she gets a good position
- knows that he doesn't know everything but he is trying to learn all necessary knowledge
- is not leader forever, the leader have to be changed time to time in the community

Furthermore, Mr. Guet focused on the existing leadership models. He explained that a good leader is a person who also uses the help and qualities of other people from his/her community and admits that he/she cannot know everything and therefore appreciates the help of his/her community.

Mr. Guet stressed that the leaders should not compete among themselves but give space also to other persons to intervene and participate in the leadership process.

The input continued in a discussion with the participants on the topic.

## **THE NGO MARKET**

In the afternoon, the participants prepared an "NGO Market". Posters with information about their communities, organisations and activities were exhibited and introduced.

At the official opening the president of FERYP - Alexandra Raykova provided an overview about the most important happenings of the Roma youth activism. She also underlined that today the Roma youth activism became a very important actor in promotion of social change for the Roma community.

## Thursday, 26/06/2003

Program of the day:

- |        |  |
|--------|--|
| 9:30   | Opening  |
| 9:40   | Introduction to the Council of Europe and the Roma/Gypsy Division<br>By Eleni Tsetsekou            |
| 10: 40 | Coffee break   |
| 11: 00 | Introduction to the Directorate of Youth and Sport<br>By Inge Stuer                                |
| 11:30  | Introduction to the International Roma and Sinti Music Festival in Strasbourg<br>By Corinne Grassi |
| 12:00  | Intro to the free day in Strasbourg<br>By Dominique Steinberger and Inge Stuer                     |
| 12:30  | Technicalities   |
| 13:00  | Lunch  |
- Free afternoon +  
Visit of the International Roma and Sinti Music Festival in Strasbourg.

## **Intro to the Council of Europe and the Roma/Gypsy Division** **By Eleni Tsetsekou**

Ms Eleni Tsetsekou introduced briefly the Council of Europe and went into detail concerning the work of the Roma/Gypsy Division.

From the website:

Since 1993, the Roma/Gypsy issue has been at the heart of three of the Council's top priorities: protection of minorities, the fight against racism and intolerance and the fight against social exclusion. Indeed, the difficult situation facing numerous Roma/Gypsy communities ultimately represents a threat to social cohesion in member states. Moreover, increasingly active Roma/Gypsy associations repeatedly appealed to the Council of Europe to ensure that this minority's fundamental rights were upheld in member states.

Accordingly, the Council of Europe decided to look at Roma/Gypsy issues to help bring about a long-term improvement in their situation. In order to place these issues on an institutional footing, in 1995 the Committee of Ministers set up a Specialist Group on Roma/Gypsies, tasked with advising member states on all Roma/Gypsy-related matters and encouraging international authorities to take action where it was needed. Its role complements that of the Secretary General's Co-ordinator of Activities on Roma/Gypsies, responsible for promoting co-operation with other relevant international organizations and developing working relations with Roma/Gypsy organizations.

One of the main objectives of the Council of Europe, as an intergovernmental organization, is to encourage member states to adopt a comprehensive approach to Roma/Gypsy issues. Indeed, it would appear that only a long-term vision of the solutions to the problem, together with measures aimed at improving the situation in various aspects of daily life, can lead to a lasting improvement in the situation of the Roma/Gypsies. Lastly, one of the fundamental principles guiding the Council of Europe's approach is participation of the communities concerned, through Roma/Gypsy representatives and associations. Without this, no lasting progress will be accomplished.

Further information about the work of Roma Division:

[http://www.coe.int/T/E/Social\\_Cohesion/Roma\\_Gypsies/](http://www.coe.int/T/E/Social_Cohesion/Roma_Gypsies/)

## **Intro to the European Youth Center** **By Inge Stuer**

The Directorate of Youth and Sport elaborates guidelines, programmes and legal instruments for the development of coherent and effective youth policies at local, national and European levels.

It provides funding and educational support for international youth activities aiming at the promotion of youth citizenship, youth mobility and the value of human rights, democracy and cultural pluralism. It seeks to bring together and disseminate expertise and knowledge about the life situations, aspirations and ways of expression of young Europeans.

It is worth visiting the website of the European Youth Center, for information about the funding and training opportunities.

Inserted is the PowerPoint presentation as used by Ms Inge Stuer.



Presentation of CoE  
with priorities 03 - 05

Further information: <http://www.coe.int/youth>

## **THE INTERNATIONAL ROMA/GYPSY MUSIC FESTIVAL IN STRASBOURG**

By Corinne Grassi

The International Roma/Gypsy Festival of Strasbourg is an annual meeting of the Roma and Sinti in the region for many years. It is organised and implemented by a team of Manouch and non-Roma people, who believe that Roma and Sinti and their values need to be better known and understood.

The festival is not a folklore meeting, but a place to share the different traditions of Roma and Sinti that are coming mainly from Europe. Especially through music and singing, but as well with painting, etc.

Examples of topics of the festivals in the past years:

- Women
- The Mediterranean Sea
- Circus
- Musical production

Furthermore Ms. Grassi introduced the topic of the festival this year as well as all technical information related to the participants at the festival.

In the evening of the FERYP participants visited the music festival and they had a dinner in the festival place.

**Friday, 27/06/2003**

Program of the day:

9:30	Opening
9: 40	Introduction of the workshops
	- "Leadership" by Alexandra and Dominique
	- "Communication" by Ramiza and Inge
9:50	I. Round of workshops
13.00	Lunch
14: 30	II. Round of workshops
18: 00	END

All participants participated in the both workshops.

The objectives of the workshops were to provide the participants with concrete skills that can support their performances in their organisations as well as to share heir experiences and knowledge related to the topics.

## **THE “LEADERSHIP” WORKSHOP**

By Alexandra Raykova and Dominique Steinberger

In the beginning of the workshop, Alexandra and Dominique asked the participants to express their expectations about their learning from the workshop.

**1. The expectations** of the participants were the following:

- To learn how a leader should respect the moral and ethics values of his community;
- To learn how to improve the leadership position of a Romany woman in her community;
- To learn how the leader can learn from his mistakes;
- To learn about new leadership models and how to adopt our working approach to the needs of the community;
- To learn more about the Roma history, future vision of Roma leaders and their communication ability;
- To learn how to collaborate with Roma people in the settlement and how to communicate with them intensively.

**2. Exercise - “Drawing the ideal Roma leader and his qualities”:**

The task:

The participants in the workshop were divided into two groups and were asked to draw on a flipchart the ideal Roma leader and his/her characteristics.

From the morning and the afternoon session we had four different pictures with the “ideal Roma leaders and their qualities”.

In three out of the four groups the picture of the “ideal Roma leader” was a picture of a man:

- whom the community respects
- who is from the community
- from a respected family
- who proceeds well in various situations
- who is a good model for the others
- who is open for the new ideas and approaches but never forgets the needs and realities of his community

- who pays attention to the young people and involves them in the decision-making
- who is good listener, mentor, mediator, speaker, organizer and manager
- who understands and respect the community
- who has the trust of the community
- who is honest
- who is humble
- who is open minded
- who keeps the traditions and the Romany culture
- who has moral and ethical sensitivity
- who speaks foreign languages

In one of the groups the picture of the “ideal Roma leader” was a picture of a woman

- who is very charismatic
- who is good speaker
- who is a good mediator
- who is very persuasive
- who is honest
- who is emphatic
- who has good knowledge about her community
- who can easily adapt to different situations
- who admits that she will not be a leader forever
- who gives space democratically to others also in her community

Input of Dominique and Alexandra to the outcomes from the first exercise: They pointed out the importance of having respect in the community and be able to communicate, organize, and use the cultural tools. It was also underlined that a good leader takes the responsibility for the group and they are also promoting democracy.

According to Dominique, in the Roma community, the Roma woman is challenged by the principles of the democratic society versus the Roma culture. The Roma women were oppressed by the men for ages, but nowadays many women are becoming leaders and they are undertaking roles and positions that were traditionally taken by men. In a democratic society we should have gender balance and none of the genders should prevail the other.

After the evaluation Dominique briefly described the existing leadership models in the Roma communities.

**The existing leadership models in the Roma communities:**

The Roma communities have the following models of leadership:

1. Leaders within the community
2. Leaders out of the communities
3. Leaders who come to the community

### **Exercise: “The Roma Community Center”.**

The task of the group was to build up Roma Community Centre from modeline. Some guidelines of what kind of facilities should be existing in the Centre were provided. 6 participants were building the centre and 2 were observes.

The participants evaluated their own performances as well as the performances of the others. Among the evaluated aspects were:

- Participation
- Team work
- Leadership roles
- Decision-making
- The interaction
- The process
- The result
- The learning points

The workshop was concluded with the following input, followed by the evaluation of the participants.

### **Input on “Qualities and competencies of a good leader”:**

By Dominique Steinberger

Some elements from his input:

The good leader:

- Is motivated
- knows how to dictate the group
- knows how to plan
- knows how to perceive and analyse
- knows how to reach an agreement on his idea
- knows how each individual finds his/her place in the project lead by him/her
- knows how to listen
- knows how to write and draft
- knows how to use effectively the communication tools: phone, internet etc.
- is good at time management
- is a good facilitator
- sees him/herself in the future

### **THE “ COMMUNICATION” WORKSHOP**

By Ramiza Sakip and Inge Stuer

In the communication workshop, the participants composed a petition letter and learnt how to make its presentation to municipal and other authorities and to media.

Before starting to write the petition, they brainstormed about the definition of the petition and the necessary elements of it.

Definition:

- A solemn supplication or request to a superior authority;

- A formal, written document, which is requesting a right or benefit from a person or group in authority;
- A formal written application requesting a court for a specific judicial action: a petition for appeal.
- Something requested or entreated.

The facilitators helped the participant to formulate the petition and provided them with a facts sheet, which stated the following:

### **FACT SHEET**

- Four years ago in 1999 , the Macedonian authorities together with UNHCR placed the Roma refugees, with the status of temporarily situated persons, at the camp in the municipality of Suto Orizari;
- Refugees from Kosovo demonstrated in front of the Embassies and offices of international institutions/organizations such as: EU, UN and the OSCE Mission to Skopje;
- The humanitarian shelter closed down in March of 2003 by the UNHCR in co-operation with the Ministry for Internal Affairs and Ministry of Labour and Social Policy has closed the camp;
- The solution was to settle the refugees in houses;
- The Roma refugees decided to pass the Greek border on May 19 and to apply for the asylum in EU;
- At the border crossing there are approximately 700 – 720 refugees from Kosovo among 14 pregnant women and 300 children below the age of 15;

Actually the preparation of the Petition was suggested by the participants in the seminar. As it was considered that as real leaders we had to react upon the urgent problem faced by Roma people.

After the seminar, the Petition was addressed to the office of UNHCR in Strasbourg and was forwarded to the office of the UNHCR in Skopje.

The Petition is attached as an appendix to the report.

The experienced gained in the workshop was evaluated very positively by the participants.

## **Monday, 28/06/2003**

Program of the day:

- 9:30- 10.00      Group picture
- 10:00 -10:30    Questions time
- 10:30 -11:00    Feedback and Follow –up
- 11:00 –13:00    Evaluation of the seminar
- 13:00            Lunch
- 14:30 – 16: 00 Evaluation of the seminar + Closing
  
- 21:00            Farewell party

### **Follow up the session:**

- The Petition written by the FERYP study session participants will be sent to the UNCHR.
- Report of the study session by Valeria Bodoczky
- Set-up an e-group of the participants by Adem Ademi

**The follow –up activities of FERYP** were presented by Alexandra Raykova.

The **evaluation** had two parts: completing of an evaluation form and verbal evaluation.

Some quotations from the evaluation forms:

- “I have learned more than I expected”;
- “I am motivated to keep high spirit for working on Roma issues”
- “I didn’t realised until now, how important is the involvement of the young people”.

## **ANNEXES:**

### PETITION

From: The participants of the study session “Roma communities and leadership concepts”, organised by the Forum of European Roma Young People from 22<sup>nd</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> of June 2003 in the European Youth Centre, Strasbourg, France.

To: UNHCR

We, the undersigned kindly ask you to consider the situation of Roma, Ashkaelia and Egyptians expelled from their homes in Kosovo by ethnic Albanians following the NATO action in 1999 and find an urgent solution to a humanitarian and shameful disaster on the European continent.

Until May 19, 2003, they lived in a camp administered by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in the Romani municipality of Suto Orizari in Skopje, Macedonia.

Beginning in early 2003, the UNHCR began putting pressure on them to move to private accommodation in homes in Macedonia but doing so was at the risk of any moment eviction and the condition offered were simply nowhere close to acceptable.

On May 19, 2003,(following the closure in March of the camp) they left the Suto Orizari camp and came to the Medzitlija border crossing with Greece. They have been on the Macedonian side of the Greek-Macedonian border since then, unable to cross the border and seek asylum in the European Union.

Kosovo remains dangerous, the lack of safety for Roma, Ashkaelia and Egyptians has been broadly acknowledged by competent international bodies. The offer made by the Macedonian government is not acceptable and we hope that UNHCR representatives will be able to negotiate their transfer into one of the member countries of the EU able to offer them the much needed security and accommodation.

Respectfully yours,

ADEMI Adem, Republic of Macedonia  
BLAGOEV Valentin, Bulgaria  
BODOCZKY Valeria, Hungary  
CHASHCIKINA Olga, Russian Federation  
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