

The ERRC combats racism and discrimination against Roma and empowers Roma to defend their own rights.

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## D.H. and Others Tabled for Discussion One Year On

ONE YEAR after the groundbreaking judgment of the European Court of Human Rights in the case *D.H. and Others v. the Czech Republic*, the European Roma Rights Centre, Roma Education Fund, Open Society Fund Prague and the coalition of NGOs "Together to Schools" for the Czech Republic are jointly organising an international conference entitled, "Education without Barriers: Romani Children in the Czech Republic" on 12-13 November 2008 in Prague, the Czech Republic. The event is organised under the patronage of the Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport.

*Czech Education System*, prepared in cooperation with the Roma Education Fund, which highlights the continued segregation of Romani children in Czech schools despite legal amendments in 2005 and the European Court judgment.

The conference will also feature panel discussions on the various problems of Roma in the Czech education system, and bring together educational experts, law and policy makers and civil society representatives from Europe to discuss good practices in schools integration of Romani children.

The agenda of the conference is available in [English](#) and [Czech](#).

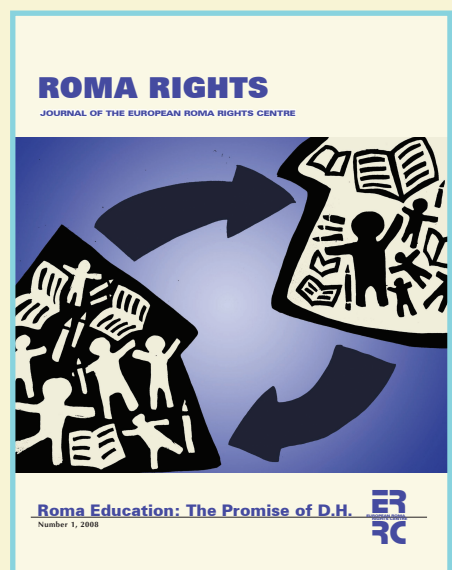
The aims of the conference are to:

- Develop further the dialogue about the need for reform in the education system and implications of the recent Court ruling amongst all relevant stakeholders;
- Continue dialogue with the relevant Czech authorities on the implementation of the decision;
- Provide an overview of the Czech Government's efforts and steps undertaken in order to address the situation of Romani children in education;
- Mainstream the human rights principals contained in the judgment in domestic and international policy and discourse on education; and
- Discuss positive practices in policy and legislative reform aimed at ending segregation of Roma in education.

During the conference, the ERRC will launch its new research report, *Persistent Segregation of Roma in the*

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### New Publication



The ERRC recently issued *Roma Rights 1/2008 - Roma Education: The Promise of D.H.* This journal examines the potential impact of the European Court of Human Rights' judgment in the landmark case *D.H. and Others v. the Czech Republic* and explores follow up advocacy efforts undertaken thus far.

# Mixed Results from the First Ever EU Roma Summit

**O**N 16 SEPTEMBER 2008, the ERRC participated in the first Roma Summit organised by the European Union in Brussels. The Summit, which brought together more than 400 intergovernmental, national government and civil society representatives, was the highest level meeting to date addressing Roma rights around Europe.

On the eve of the Summit, the ERRC issued a **public statement** calling on the EU to reaffirm human rights standards in policies on Roma. The European Roma Policy Coalition, of which the ERRC is a member, also called on the EU to firmly commit to the development of a **European Framework Strategy on Roma**

**Inclusion.** Unfortunately, European Union leaders fell short of making this commitment at the Summit.

Against the backdrop of the Summit, the ERRC, together with representatives of the Open Society Institute, Amnesty International, ERGO, Romani CRISS and Italian Roma and Sinti, met members of DG Justice, Freedom and Security, including Commissioner Jacques Barrot, to press the EU to react strongly against the Roma census undertaken by Italian authorities and to uphold fundamental rights within the EU. Commissioner Barrot's intervention at the Summit stood out against many for his strong public commitment to protecting individuals in Europe against violations of fundamental rights.

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## ERRC at the OSCE HDIM Meeting in Warsaw

**O**N 2-3 OCTOBER 2008, ERRC representatives participated in the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe's Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Warsaw. During the meeting, the ERRC made several interventions in different working sessions: The working session on Roma and Sinti issues and session on equality of opportunity on the basis of gender.

During the session on Roma and Sinti, the ERRC highlighted:

- The lack of strategies and policies for the inclusion of Roma in mainstream society and for the protection of their rights in a large number of countries within the OSCE region;
- The inadequate implementation of Roma inclusion policies in countries which have developed such policies; and
- The need for positive action measures that will enable Roma to effectively enjoy rights guaranteed in domestic and international law.

The ERRC called upon national governments, especially Member States of the EU, as well as the OSCE's Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues, to coordinate their activities and to work together towards the development of common European policy and standards for Roma inclusion.

During the session on equality of opportunity between men and women, the ERRC emphasised the specific position of Romani women who suffer multiple forms of discrimination on the basis of both their gender and ethnicity. The ERRC stressed that existing policies at the domestic and international levels do not provide adequate protection of the rights of Romani women and women from other marginalised groups, and urged national governments and the OSCE itself to work towards the development and implementation of policies which account for the impacts of multiple forms of discrimination and which eliminate discrimination based on gender and ethnicity.



*ERRC International Advocacy Officer Idaver Memedov made interventions in the working sessions on Roma and Sinti issues and on equality of opportunity on the basis of gender during the OSCE's Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Warsaw.*

## Ten Years of the Framework Convention

**T**his year, the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities celebrates the tenth anniversary of its entry into force. Honouring this, the Council of Europe organised a conference entitled “Enhancing the impact of the Framework Convention: past experience, present achievements and future challenges,” held in Strasbourg on 9-10 October 2008. The participants of the conference – including former and current members of the Advisory Committee, as well as representatives of NGOs and international organisations – assessed the impact of the Convention on national legislation and policies. An ERRC representative took part as a discussant

in the panel, “Impact-Assessment of the Framework Convention in the State Parties.”

The formal opening of the conference was preceded by a meeting of NGOs working on minority issues, coordinated by Minority Rights Group International. The NGO meeting resulted in a joint document “Assessing the impact 10 years on: NGO declaration on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities,” containing NGO findings and recommendations aimed at strengthening implementation of the Framework Convention. The text of the NGO Declaration, as well as the papers and studies presented at the conference, can be found at: [www.coe.int/minorities](http://www.coe.int/minorities).

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## ERRC Observes Italy's Census of Romani Camps

**T**HE ERRC continued to follow closely anti-Romani developments in Italy, particularly surrounding the implementation of the census undertaken in camps for Roma and Sinti. On 9-10 October 2008, an ERRC documentation team travelled to Rome, Italy, where they visited Roma and Sinti camps. The purpose of the mission was to observe the census undertaken in these camps by the Italian Red Cross to identify any irregularities and determine which, if any, human rights violations occurred. ERRC observers paid particular attention to the types of data collected, what Roma and Sinti living in the camps

were told about the purposes of the census and potential uses of the information, how the data will be used and stored. Since its October mission, the ERRC has been working to develop a report highlighting key concerns, which will be transmitted to Italian and intergovernmental authorities.

This mission followed a May 2008 research mission by the ERRC and several other organisations, which resulted in the report *Security a la Italiana: Fingerprinting, Extreme Violence and Harassment of Roma in Italy*, available on the ERRC website or in hard copy by contacting the ERRC office in Budapest.

## Research on Positive Action in Europe

**W**HAT is the role that positive action measures might play in preventing or remedying discrimination? As a member of a consortium of organisations led by the Centre for Inclusion and Diversity at the University of Bradford (UK), the ERRC is conducting a study entitled "Positive Action Measures in the European Union, Canada, United States & South Africa" (PAMECUS) to provide answers to this question.

The ERRC undertook research on positive action measures in Hungary, Slovakia and Sweden. In Slovakia and Hungary, the research focus was primarily on positive action measures targeting Roma. The first workshop, held in Budapest on 4 September, gathered 55 participants from 46 organisations from the public, private and voluntary sectors. The participants spoke about their understanding of positive action, their motivations



*More than 50 participants representing the public, private and NGO sectors attended the full-day workshop on positive action ERRC organised by the ERRC in Budapest on September 4.*

to undertake it and measured its effectiveness and impact. These topics were also discussed in Slovakia, in a workshop held in Bratislava on 16 September, jointly organised with the Milan Simecka Foundation. Following the workshops, the ERRC conducted in-depth follow up interviews with 28 organisations.



*The ERRC/MSF seminar on positive action for Roma in Slovakia was held in Bratislava on 16 September 2008.*

The research in Sweden was undertaken in a different way, by means of personal and telephone interviews with 48 persons from public and private institutions throughout the country. In this case, the focus was on positive action programmes for individuals disadvantaged on the basis of age, race or ethnicity, religion or belief, sexuality, gender or disability. All the country reports have now been finalised and the findings from this work will contribute to a comparative report on positive action to be published by the European Commission's Directorate-General Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities in early 2009.

# ERRC Brings France and Bulgaria before the Committee of Social Rights

**O**N 23 SEPTEMBER 2008, the Council of Europe's Committee of Social Rights, the body entrusted with monitoring the implementation of the (Revised) European Social Charter, declared admissible the collective complaint filed by the European Roma Rights Centre against France (No 51/2008). In its complaint, the ERRC alleged that Travellers (a term used in the complaint to refer to Travellers, Roma and Gypsies that have lived in France for many years and have French citizenship) are discriminated against with regard to access to housing (being the victims of forced evictions, residential segregation, substandard housing conditions and lack of security of tenure) and are socially excluded. The ERRC also alleged that France failed to take measures to address the deplorable living conditions of Romani migrants from other Council of Europe Member States.

The ERRC has also been in communication with the Committee regarding two collective complaints against Bulgaria – Nos 48/2008 (discrimination against Roma and other vulnerable groups in access to social and medical assistance) and 46/2007 (violation of the right to health and discrimination against Roma in access to medical insurance). During the last several months, the ERRC submitted responses to the government's comments on the merits of the complaints, in cooperation with the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee.

Information on these and other ERRC collective complaints, decisions by the European Committee of Social Rights and various ERRC submissions to the Committee are available on the ERRC website at: [www.errc.org](http://www.errc.org).

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## New ERRC Project on Anti-Discrimination Law and Housing Rights

**I**N SEPTEMBER 2008, the ERRC received support from the **United Nations Democracy Fund** for a new project addressing anti-discrimination law and housing rights matters in Albania, Montenegro, Macedonia, Serbia, Slovakia and Romania.

The project, which will span two years, aims to empower grassroots Romani organisations to advocate for the adoption of legal and policy measures to combat racial discrimination and to promote the application of international human rights standards regarding housing rights in national legislation. Within the framework of the project, the ERRC, together with Romani organisations, will:

- Develop and implement intensive campaigns for the adoption of anti-discrimination legislation in Albania, Montenegro, Macedonia and Serbia;
- Campaign for adequate legal protections against forced evictions; and
- Draw the attention of law and policymakers to the multiple disadvantages faced by Romani women and reinforce targeted measures at the national level for the protection of the rights of Romani women.

In the coming period, the ERRC will be issuing a public call for participants for the first training programme on anti-discrimination law advocacy, foreseen to take place in February 2009.

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## ERRC Managing Director – Robert A. Kushen

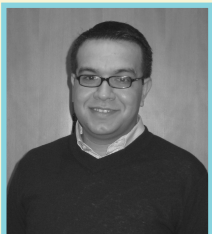
On 1 October 2008 Robert Kushen joined the European Roma Rights Centre as Managing Director, on loan from the Open Society Institute (“OSI”). Previously he served as the Executive Director of the Harvard PEPFAR Program, a \$80 million/year programme that provides HIV treatment services to 100,000 patients and related technical assistance to health care workers in Africa. From 1996-99 and 2003-07, he served in a number of positions at the Open Society Institute, including Director of International Operations from 2004-07. From 1999 to 2002 he served as Executive Director of Doctors of the World (DOW), a non-governmental organisation committed to addressing health care problems caused by human rights abuses in the U.S. and around the world. From 1991-1996, he served in the Office of the Legal Adviser of the U.S. Department of State, where he worked as counsel to the bureau on counterterrorism, liaison to the International Criminal Tribunals for Yugoslavia and Rwanda and negotiated a number of international agreements in the areas of scientific and environmental cooperation.



Rob’s experience on Roma issues includes the establishment, while at DOW, of health education and service delivery programmes addressing tuberculosis and maternal child health care for Roma, Ashkalia and Egyptian people in Kosovo. He has served as a member of OSI’s Roma Advisory Committee since 2004, which is responsible for oversight of all of OSI’s Roma programming.

Rob holds a JD from Columbia University, a BA from Harvard University in Russian Studies and is the author of a number of publications in the area of human rights and non-profit law. He is a member of the New York Bar Association and the Council on Foreign Relations, and serves on the Boards of several non-governmental organisations.

## International Advocacy Officer - Idaver Memedov



In August 2008, Idaver Memedov joined the ERRC as International Advocacy Officer. Idaver graduated as a lawyer and he is currently completing his MA in Public Policy at the Central European University in Budapest. Idaver joined the ERRC as an intern in 2006 and previously he worked for almost five years for the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights of the Republic of Macedonia as a lawyer and researcher. In addition, he has been involved in the past in a project on Roma in Macedonia and collaborated with different organisations working on Roma rights in the country.

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## ERRC Invites Applications for the Post of Executive Director

The ERRC is in search of a new Executive Director. The Executive Director is responsible for providing the strategic and management leadership necessary to enable the ERRC to fulfill its mission of promoting respect for and the protection of the fundamental human rights of Roma across Europe. The Executive Director reports to the Board of Directors, and is responsible for the hiring and management of staff.

Applicants should send a letter of interest (up to 500 words) indicating why they are ideally qualified for the position, a full CV and the names of two referees who may be contacted before interviews are held. Candidates are encouraged to submit their documents in electronic form.

For full job description and other information related to the vacancy, please refer to the [ERRC website](http://www.errc.org).

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