

ERRC RECEIVES DANISH HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD



ERRC Executive Director Dezideriu Gergely and Legal Trainee Tefik Mahmut receiving the award on 12 December 2013 in Copenhagen.

PHOTO CREDIT: ERRC

The European Roma Rights Centre received the PL Foundation's human rights award on 12 December 2013 for its "outstanding contribution to the struggle for human rights."

The human rights award was introduced in memory of Poul Loritzen, a Danish businessman and member of the resistance during World War II. Since the 1980s, it has annually honoured individuals or organisations for their extraordinary efforts for the values set out in the Universal Declaration for Human Rights.

"We're very honoured to receive this award, which highlights the ongoing urgency of fighting for Roma equality and social inclusion in Europe," said Dezideriu Gergely, executive director of the European Roma Rights Centre.

The award ceremony took place on 12 December 2013 in Copenhagen. Danish supreme-court judge Poul Soegard awarded ERRC representatives with the prize.

Among the recipients of the PL Freedom Prize in recent years have been:

From Syria: Artists Ali Ferzat and Orwa Nyrabia; From Hongkong: Han Donfang, China Labor Bulletin; From Burma: Khin Maung Win, the Democratic Voice of Burma; From Zimbabwe: Nokuthula Moyo, Zimbabwean Human Rights Lawyers; From Sudan: Dr. Nagib Nagmeldin, the Amel Center for Treatment and Rehabilitation of Victims of Torture; From Pakistan: Dr Khalida Salimi, Sach - Struggle for Change; From Tunisia: Prof. Moncef Marzouki, the Tunisian League for Human Rights.

The ERRC has received numerous awards for its efforts to advance human rights respect of Roma: in 2012, the **Stockholm Human Rights Award**; in 2010, the **Silver Rose Award of SOLIDAR**; in 2009, the **Justice Prize of the Peter and Patricia Gruber Foundation**; in 2007, the **Max van der Stoep award** given by the High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Dutch Foreign Ministry; and in 2001, the **Geuzenpenning award** (the Geuzen medal of honour) by Her Royal Highness Princess Margriet of the Netherlands.

THE ERRC COMBATS RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION AGAINST ROMA AND EMPOWERS ROMA TO DEFEND THEIR OWN RIGHTS.

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ERRC SECURES SIGNIFICANT FIRST INSTANCE VICTORY IN ROMANIAN EVICTION CASE

On 30 December 2013 the Cluj County Court ruled that the **removal of some 300 Roma from the centre of Cluj-Napoca to Pata-Rât**, near the city's waste dump in December 2010, was illegal. For the first time in Romania, the municipality was ordered to provide the evicted Roma with adequate social housing. The judgment is not final and has already been appealed by the municipality.

The ERRC, which has supported the evicted Roma community in bringing these proceedings, welcomes this judgment and hopes that it will mark a turning point in what has become a worrisome trend of evictions directed at Roma communities in Romania.

The county court dismissed two of the favourite arguments put forth by Romanian local authorities in order to

sidestep prior judicial review when removing Roma communities: that their actions somehow don't really qualify as an eviction and that they are merely exercising statutory powers to demolish unauthorised buildings.

First the court held that this was not a relocation, as claimed by the municipality, because the alternative accommodation provided did not comply with statutory standards for social housing, the families having been forced into unheated, overcrowded housing units, with limited access to water and sanitation. Consequently, this was an eviction and, as such, also breached Romania's statutory moratorium on wintertime evictions.

Significantly, the court also found that the municipality's failure to show that all the buildings cleared were unauthorised

compromised the lawfulness of the entire action. This marks a shift in the standard to which authorities are held and should make them think twice before razing entire Roma communities. The county court also highlighted that the hastily enacted eviction circumvented usual procedural safeguards applicable to all administrative acts under Romanian law.

The European Court of Human Rights held in *Winterstein v France* that a full-fledged judicial review of the proportionality of any proposed eviction should be available and current Romanian law clearly falls short of that standard. However, the recent judgment shows what can be achieved when a court focuses its interpretation of existing law on the effectiveness of the procedural guarantees provided, rather than 'box-ticking' compliance.



56 Romani families were evicted from Coastei Street in the centre of Cluj-Napoca to Pata-Rât on 17 December 2010.

PHOTO CREDIT: ERRC

SLOVAKIA POLICE MISCONDUCT CASE – CHARGES AGAINST VICTIMS DROPPED

The ERRC continues its involvement in the case of a police raid in a Roma settlement in Moldava nad Bodvou, Slovakia. As a consequence of the police actions, two young Romani men (one of them with severe mental disability) were arrested and criminally prosecuted due to an alleged attack against a police patrol. The ERRC undertook their legal representation through local lawyers and thanks to this cooperation the charges against mentally handicapped E.R. were dropped in August 2013. In January 2014, criminal proceedings against the other man were also terminated. The

District Prosecutor concluded that no criminal offence against the police had been committed during the **police action in June 2013 in Moldava nad Bodvou**. The decision can still be reviewed.

The ERRC welcomes this decision and hopes that now the last criminal proceedings against the victims have been dropped, the authorities will at last carry out an effective investigation into the motives of this police action.

However, concerns still remain in relation to the will of political elites to properly

investigate the police actions in Moldava nad Bodvou. No police officers have faced charges for the raid to date, even though the Slovak Ombudsperson found serious violations of Slovak and international law in the action. Recently, some positive developments occurred when the Prosecutor General reopened the case and a new investigation was initiated into the matter. The ERRC looks forward to seeing the results of the full investigation of everything that happened to this community, and will continue to advocate for justice to be served.

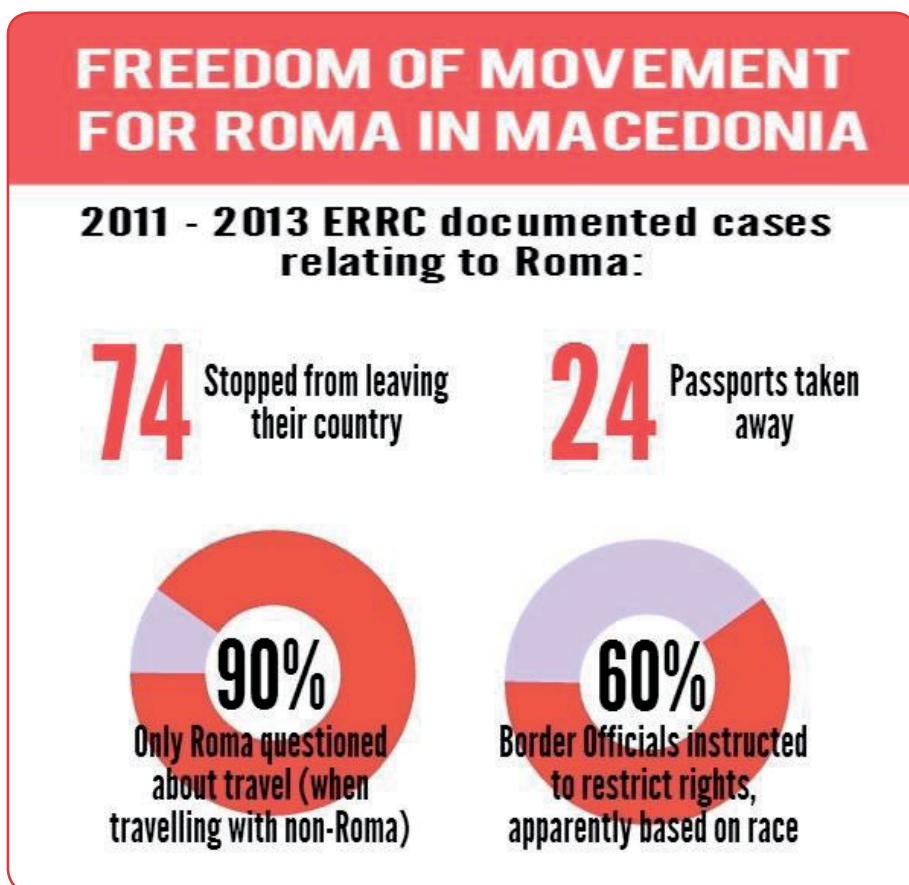
ERRC CHALLENGES DISCRIMINATION OF ROMA AT THE MACEDONIAN BORDER BEFORE THE CONSTITUTIONAL COURT OF MACEDONIA

The ERRC launched an initiative before the Constitutional Court of Macedonia on 26 February 2014, claiming that amendments to the Law on Travel Documents of citizens of Macedonia (grounds for revocation of passports as well as obstacles to the right to leave the country) are in conflict with the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia as well as with international instruments for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Citizens of Macedonia have enjoyed the right to visa-free travel to the Schengen Zone since 19 December 2009, and enjoy the right to visa-free travel to other neighbouring countries. Citizens of Macedonia also enjoy a human right to leave their own country. The ERRC has become aware that some Romani individuals cannot exercise these rights; they are subject to discriminatory practices and other inappropriate treatment by border officials when they are trying to leave the country.

The ERRC has conducted research on the matter and gathered data which indicates that racially motivated discriminatory practices by Macedonian officials take place at the borders of Macedonia. Between 2011 and 2013, the ERRC documented the cases of 74 Romani individuals who were prevented from exiting the country as well as 24 cases of passport revocations by Macedonian border officials. Additionally the ERRC, while working in the field, has become aware of another 50 similar cases.

90% of the ERRC's documented cases show that only Roma were asked for evidence to justify why they were travelling (i.e. in cases when Roma and non-Roma were travelling together). Furthermore, 60% of Roma involved in these cases



were told by the border officials that they (the border officials) were instructed to restrict the rights of the people concerned. It appears that they were 'instructed' to act based on race. 30% of those Roma concerned were told explicitly by the border officials that they cannot cross the border due to their ethnicity; that is, they were explicitly told that they cannot cross the border because they are Roma.

In its Constitutional Court initiative, the ERRC has requested the highest judicial

authority of the country to declare certain amendments to the law – allowing for the revocation of passports in various circumstances – unconstitutional. The law currently grants the authorities excessive powers to revoke passports, and these powers significantly worsen the situation of Macedonian Roma who wish to exercise their free-movement rights.

Findings of ERRC border research are available in [English](#) and in [Macedonian](#).

ERRC CONTINUES CHALLENGING DISCRIMINATION OF ROMA BEFORE TRIBUNALS

As of end February 2014, the ERRC was litigating 66 cases before the domestic courts, the European Court of Human Rights and the European Committee of Social Rights. The ERRC has another 45 cases currently in the development stage. The cases concerned France, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Macedonia, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Turkey and Ukraine.

Of the ERRC's seven current thematic priorities (disaggregated data, access to education, free movement and migration, state response to violence and hate speech,

access to housing, identity documents, women's and children's rights), the one the ERRC is currently litigating the most (and likely will be for some time) is access to housing (mostly forced evictions).

In **Romania**, in the coastal town of **Eforie Sud**, the authorities evicted a community that had been living for decades in the centre of the city. The municipality relied on laws that left the community with few remedies. The community was offered shoddy alternative accommodation. The ERRC is teaming up with local partners to challenge the decisions on which the eviction was

based and the failure to provide suitable alternative accommodation.

In **Italy**, the ERRC is taking on the **practice of the authorities in Milan of evicting Roma settlements** with no formal notice (and therefore no access to a remedy): on 5 February 2014 the ERRC lodged applications on behalf of several families subject to such a no-notice eviction. This was an unusual case because the ERRC's clients exhausted no formal remedies at domestic level before going to the European Court; while they may be rejected for that, the ERRC believes that because the

way the eviction was carried out deprived them of all effective remedies, the European Court should deal with the matter. A similar no-notice eviction took place in Milan on 13 March 2014, and the ERRC is handling the matter in the same way. The ERRC hopes that by systematically challenging these evictions in the courts, we will establish that they are illegal

The second most important area of litigation for the ERRC is challenging the State response to violence against Roma. The ERRC **continued to work on representing the victims** of a violent police raid on a Romani settlement in Eastern **Slovakia**.

The ERRC's paralegal programme in **Ukraine** – with ERRC-trained paralegals in a Roma community helping others secure identity documents – is proving to be a fruitful experiment: several clients have secured documents and others have been refused in ways which promise to lead to interesting strategic litigation on appeal.

Lack of identity documents is a major issue for Roma in **Russia** as well. In this country, following field research which highlighted the persisting problem of lack of documents for Romani individuals, the ERRC initiated litigation in September 2013 to secure identity documents for various Roma. The cases will touch upon different scenarios where Roma lacking different documents will try to secure them with the help of a lawyer. This will

provide an important opportunity to test the systems in place in Russia for getting documents for people who have been living without documents for years.

Other ERRC legal steps taken by the ERRC in the period between October 2013 – March 2014 include:

- In **France**, the ERRC made submissions in its own name (along with other NGOs) in March 2014 seeking damages against a municipality which directly discriminated against Romani children by segregating them in a separate school building.
- In 2013, the ERRC initiated cases before the **Macedonian** equality body. In one of those cases, involving the refusal to allow Roma to enter a swimming pool at a local sports centre, the equality body decided at the end of 2013 there had in fact been discrimination. The ERRC is now looking how best to promote awareness of this decision and use it to secure justice for the victims.
- In late 2013, the European Committee of Social Rights also declared admissible a collective complaint the ERRC submitted with the support of the Irish Traveller Movement against **Ireland**. The complaint concerns violations of the housing rights of Travellers. The Irish Government submitted their observations in mid-February and the ERRC is now preparing its response.

- In **Ukraine**, in September 2013 the ERRC together with Renaissance Foundation Ukraine began proceedings in Uzhgorod, Transcarpathia region, to attempt to legalise land for five clients. These families were threatened with eviction in summer 2013 as the homes in which they live are not officially registered. This is one of the first attempts in Ukraine to legalise land for Romani families who lack formal legal registration despite living on the land for many years.

Winterstein v France

One of the most important legal developments in the past few months has been the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights in the case of **Winterstein v France**. The case was brought by travellers who were threatened with eviction from the halting sites where they were living. The ERRC intervened in the case in 2009. The judgment found that France had breached Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights. The main problem (and a problem which persists in France) is that the authorities and courts did not balance the interest in evicting the applicants against the interference with their right to respect for private life and home. The Court also stated that Roma and travellers should not be subjected to a forced eviction unless they are housed. The ERRC legal team **published a blog about** the judgment.

ERRC TARGETS IMPROVING THE SITUATION OF ROMA IN FRANCE THROUGH EMPOWERMENT

As forced evictions continue at a steady rate, the ERRC is expanding its activities in France at a time of acute crisis for many Romani families who have moved to seek a better life.

ERRC monitoring and activities to date have concentrated on identifying and analysing general patterns of the situation of migrant Roma in France, finding out how many people have been affected, and offering legal assistance for Romani individuals challenging expulsions and forced evictions and protecting the right to education.

With support from the **Bernard van Leer Foundation**, the ERRC is now complementing these monitoring and other activities with a research and advocacy project on the access to fundamental human rights of Romani migrants living in France, with a particular focus on women and children. The project will analyse access to education, employment and healthcare as well

as housing rights and the impact of forced evictions, or threat thereof, on Romani migrant women and children and develop

strategies to tackle those problems through participatory and empowerment approaches regarding access to rights. This will add



L'Île Saint Denis, France, 16 December 2013, training day for assistants for ERRC's Romani women's empowerment project.

PHOTO CREDIT: ERRC

an important substantial dimension to the reporting the ERRC (and others) have done so far. This model is based on the ERRC's close monitoring of evictions and expulsions in Romani settlements in Paris over two and a half years.

The nine-month project includes desk and field research, completion of a final inclusive research report and an advocacy campaign. The efficacy of the ERRC's anticipated activities is reliant on methodical and comprehensive research focusing on the three French cities (including their suburbs) with substantial

populations of migrant Roma: Paris, Lille and Marseille. Systematic examination and assessment will lead directly to an informed, evidence-based and participatory approach for providing support to the Romani community.

Participation of Romani communities within the project is ensured through six Romani migrant research assistants. Their work as research assistants will contribute to capacity-building within the communities through workshops and focus groups. The involvement of Roma in this project aims to enhance opportunities to become

agents in challenging human rights violations and building sustainable change.

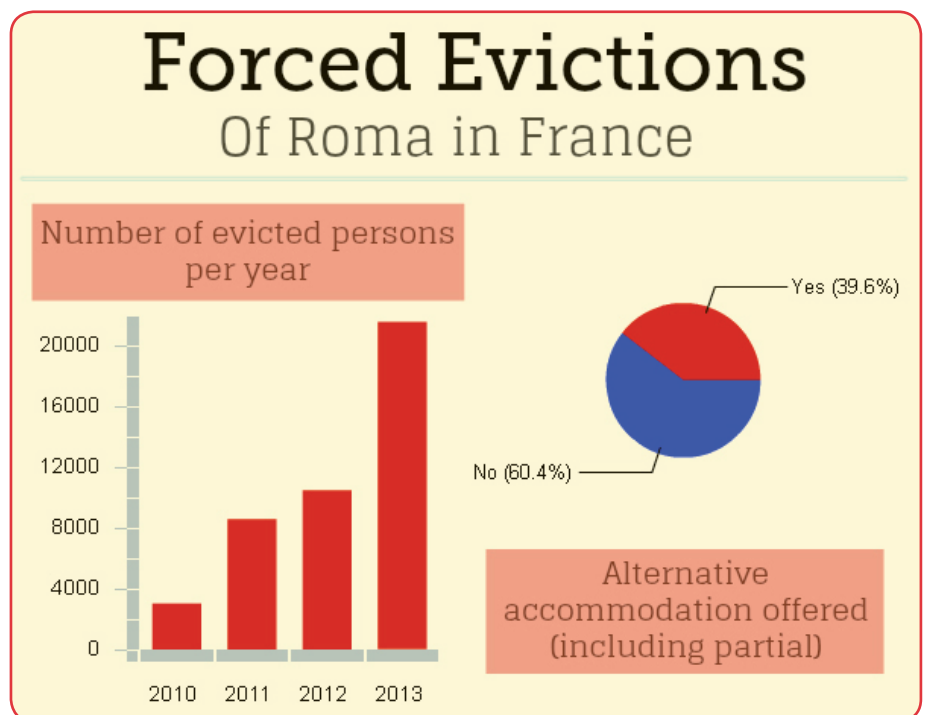
The advocacy campaign will be developed after the findings of the research are established so that it can address the most important issues for migrant Romani women and children and be the product of their direct participation.

The ERRC aims to keep an open and effective line of communication among all stakeholders to improve the situation of Roma in France and to identify possible collaborations throughout the course of the project.

FORCED EVICTIONS OF ROMA DOUBLE IN FRANCE

On 14 January, the ERRC and la **Ligue des droits de l'Homme** (LDH), a French NGO, held a **press conference** in Paris to release the figures for the **2013 census of evictions of Roma in France**. The two organisations had an extraordinary figure to reveal: 21,537 Romani migrants were forcibly evicted from their homes in 2013, compared with 9,404 in 2012 and 8,455 in 2011.

The ERRC representative gave a presentation on the situation of Roma in Europe, particularly in relation to housing, and on how evictions tend to be unlawful because they breach the European Convention on Human Rights. A colleague from LDH gave a 20-minute presentation on the figures. A Romani woman who has been living in France for the past six years gave a presentation about her experiences, having been evicted some twelve times in six years. Approximately 30 journalists attended the event, which last about an hour and a half. The journalists were particularly engaged, asking numerous questions. The event was a huge success. Media around France, Europe and, indeed, beyond (including *The New York Times*) took up the



story. Later that same day, the President of France, in a press conference, reacted to the news, although not positively, so it remains unclear whether there will be

a change in behaviour on the part of the French authorities. What is clear is that ERRC will continue monitoring these forced evictions and taking action to stop them.

ERRC REPORT HIGHLIGHTS HEALTH INEQUALITIES IN ROMANIA

In November 2013 the ERRC launched a **report on health inequalities between Roma and non-Roma communities in Romania**, and the need for data, disaggregated by ethnicity, in order to monitor these inequalities.

The report was officially launched in Bucharest on 22 November 2013. On 21 November 2013, the ERRC Executive Director and Romanian legal team met with the Minister for Health to discuss the findings of the report. The ERRC also met with the Advisor to the Prime Minis-

ter on Roma Issues, the President of the National Agency for Roma, the President of the National Council for Combating Discrimination, and the National Authority for the Supervision of Personal Data Processing to discuss the report and the need for disaggregated data. This project is supported by Open Society Institute, through the Roma Health Initiative.

The report shows serious health inequalities between Roma and non-Roma households. The average age at death is 16 years lower in Roma households;

the mortality rate in those aged under 10 is over three times higher in the Roma population; the average time between first diagnosis of a condition and death is 3.9 years in the Roma population while it is 6.8 years in the general population; almost 4 times as many Romani children had never been vaccinated; the rate of diagnosis of TB is more than double that of the general population and many other conditions show a higher diagnosis rate among Roma respondents, particularly at a younger age. The survey was carried out by Gallup Romania among

1200 Roma households and 900 non-Roma households.

The report outlines that disaggregated data, disaggregated by ethnicity, is necessary in order to monitor the existence of health inequalities. It is also needed in order to monitor any changes

to existing inequalities brought about by public policies. The report outlines that, although some states claim there is a prohibition on collecting such data, this is not the case; disaggregated data can be collected once certain safeguards are in place, and when necessary for reasons of public interest.

The report was also presented at the European Public Health Association Annual Conference in Brussels in November, and at the Computers, Privacy & Data Protection Conference in Brussels in January 2014.

DARE PARTNERS VISIT HUNGARY TO FIND SUCCESSFUL PRACTICES ON ROMA EDUCATION AND DESEGREGATION



DARE Network partners visiting the local primary school in Hejőkeresztúr where a successful integration project of Romani and disadvantaged children is being implemented.

PHOTO CREDIT: ERRC

The Desegregation and Action for Roma in Education (DARE) Network gathered for a three-day exchange visit in Hungary on 9 February 2014 to visit schools where good practices of desegregation projects are implemented, and to discuss successful practices on school desegregation and access to quality education for Romani children.

The visit was organised by the ERRC in collaboration with the **Chance for Children Foundation**, a Hungarian NGO en-

gaged in litigating school segregation and ensuring equal access and quality education for Romani children in Hungary.

Network partners visited the local primary school in Hejőkeresztúr where a successful integration project of Romani and disadvantaged children is being implemented through various innovative programmes such as group work, board games and talent care. The methodology of teaching adopted by this school is recognised as a best practice for integration in Hungary.

The network partners visited a Romani settlement in Nyíregyháza where a segregated school was closed down in 2007 as a result of legal proceedings launched by the Chance for Children Foundation to eliminate the segregation of Romani children. However, the school was reopened by the Greek Catholic Church in cooperation with the local municipality in 2011 and has continued to operate as a segregated Romani school. The Chance for Children Foundation has launched a civil claim against the Church and the local municipality in order to close the segregated school down and bus children to other mainstream schools.

During their visit, the network partners visited an after-school programme facility in Budapest IXth District, where they met with project coordinators, teachers and Romani students participating in the after-school programme. The aim of this programme is to provide help for students with their core subjects and to help their integration into various schools. The programme also provides activities in order to facilitate community development.

As a final programme, the exchange partners visited the Headquarters of the **Roma Education Fund** in Budapest, where they got an insight into the work of the organisation and its different grant and scholarship programmes offered to Romani students.



DARE Network members meeting in Budapest at the ERRC office on 9 February 2014.

PHOTO CREDIT: ERRC

ERRC HIGHLIGHTS OVERREPRESENTATION OF ROMANI CHILDREN IN SPECIAL SCHOOLS IN SERBIA

On 28 November 2013, the ERRC, together with independent experts, researchers and representative of the League for Roma in Serbia organised a media event in Belgrade to present findings of research on overrepresentation of Romani children in special schools in Serbia.

During 2013, the ERRC conducted a survey in schools and with parents of Romani children. The survey highlighted the insufficient support for Romani children to enable them to stay in mainstream schools; 70% of the respondents confirmed that the school did not offer any additional support to their children in order to keep the student enrolled in the mainstream schools. The survey results also underlined that the majority of Romani parents (63%) prefer their children to receive education in mainstream schools.

This research was complemented by a survey conducted in ten locations across Serbia, in 128 households including Romani students of "special schools." In the course of the survey, a team of 15 Romani researchers, previously trained by the ERRC, interviewed parents and caregivers of Romani students about the processes leading to the placement of the children in "special schools."



The ERRC presenting the findings of its research on overrepresentation of Romani children in special schools at a press event in Belgrade.

PHOTO CREDIT: MEDIJA CENTAR BEOGRAD

TABLE: Special Schools with highest percentage of Romani children in academic year 2012/2013

School	Absolute number	% of Romani students
SPSE Vidovdan in Bor	69	73%
PS Sveti Sava in Prokuplje	23	68%
SPSE Veselin Nikolić in Kruševac	75	63%
PS Novi Beograd in Belgrade	58	40%

CONFERENCES... WORKSHOPS... SEMINARS...

Between October 2013 and March 2014, the ERRC initiated or attended several workshops and conferences to table various Roma rights related matters across Europe.

Workshop with Macedonian Journalists

The ERRC organised a workshop for Macedonian journalists on 25 December 2013 in Skopje. The objective of the workshop was to raise the awareness and interest among Macedonian media on Roma rights issues in general and on ERRC thematic priorities in Macedonia in particular. These topics include: free movement and migration, access to education, state response to violence and hate speech, and access to housing. During the workshop, the ERRC presented its work across Europe and in Macedonia, and responded to questions raised by journalists.

Hate Crimes and Roma in Turkey

The ERRC, together with **Human Rights Joint Platform** (IHOP) and Roma Youth

Association organised a two-day workshop on Hate Crimes and Roma on 21-22 December 2013 in Ankara. At the workshop experts made a presentation on European and national policy and the legal framework on addressing hate crimes. At the workshop, attended by Roma rights organisations, human rights organisations, academics and activists, participants discussed hate crimes committed against Roma in Turkey and state response to these crimes. Representatives of Roma and non Roma rights organisations also discussed how to cooperate effectively on tackling hate crimes.

Workshop on Roma Rights for Journalists from Turkey

Turkey is home for, according to unofficial estimates, approximately 4 million Roma. However, Roma are probably the least studied group in Turkey. Many Roma live in poverty and face discrimination in daily life. However, the presentation of Roma in mainstream media is biased and reproduces traditional stereotypes.

The ERRC organised a 3-day workshop on Roma rights for 10 journalists from Turkey. The workshop, entitled *Europe's Roma Problem from the Human Rights Perspective: Roma and European Integration*, took place in Budapest on 9-12 December 2013.

The workshop was designed for active professional journalists from Turkey to improve their understating of Roma-related matters, and discuss human rights problems of Romani individuals and communities across Europe with experts and journalists.

During the workshop, the journalists had the opportunity to hear several presentations on various aspects of Roma rights matters, and meet with experts, academics, representatives of Roma rights related organisations and journalists covering Roma issues.

Visa Liberalisation in Balkans and Roma

The ERRC organised a workshop on Roma Migration which was held in Belgrade, Serbia, from 27 November

to 29 November 2013. The workshop focused on the Western Balkans and the EU Visa Liberalisation Dialogue. 15 people, including lawyers, activists and academics, presented their work on topics related to the visa liberalisation process and Roma. The papers will be included in a special issue of the Roma Rights Journal on this topic, which will be published in 2014.

Papers focused both on the legal and political framework in countries which Roma migrate from, including Serbia, Macedonia, Albania, and Kosovo, and also the situation in target countries for migration, such as Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and Greece. The reasons for migration, such as discrimination and social exclusion, and the reception in target states for migrants were also covered. The negative representation of Roma migrants in the media in target states was highlighted, as was the failure of states to respect the rights of Roma migrants.

As well as the 15 presenters, a wide range of civil society representatives also attended the workshop. This provided an excellent opportunity for information-sharing and networking. The results of this were clearly visible as the ERRC and others discussed and planned follow-up activities in relation to the issues highlighted.

Anti-discrimination law in education in Macedonia

The ERRC, together with a local NGO, hosted a workshop for teaching experts, social workers, NGOs and officials on anti-discrimination law in the field of education. This two-day conference took place in Ohrid, Macedonia, on 9-10 November 2013 with 25 participants.

The overall objectives of this workshop included;

- Encouraging decision makers to fully respect the principle of non-discrimination of Romani children in referral to special education;
- Raising awareness of anti-discrimination law and its impact on decision makers;
- Raising awareness of discrimination of Romani children in special education in Macedonia and its similarities with other countries;
- Discussing possible strategies on how decision makers can address the problem of wrongful referral of Romani children to special education.

During the event experts from the ERRC presented the principles of European and Macedonian anti-discrimination law and

the right to education. Participants had an opportunity to debate the application of these principles in Macedonia, particularly on the application of these principles in relation to the testing of children and their placement in special education schools. The ERRC experts also presented the ERRC's research on the overrepresentation of Romani children in special-education schools in Macedonia.

Seminar for judges in Serbia

As a continuation of previous cooperation, the ERRC and Serbian Judicial Academy (JA) held another seminar for judges on the issue of housing rights and the protection of minorities – international and constitutional perspectives, on 1 – 2 November 2013 in Belgrade, Serbia. While the seminar held in February 2013 gathered administrative and basic court judges, this event was aimed at bringing together 19 appellate court judges from Belgrade, Nis, Kragujevac and Novi Sad. The goal of the seminar was to raise awareness of the recent developments in practice before the UN bodies and European Court of Human Rights in the context of forced evictions of Roma, and also raise awareness of the constitutional and international housing rights standards.

The participants had an opportunity to hear Prof. Dr. Marija Draskić, Serbian Constitutional Court judge, who spoke of direct applicability of international human right law under the Serbian Constitution. Prof. Dr. Ciril Ribičič, law professor at the Faculty of Law at Ljubljana University and former Constitutional Court judge, presented the legal protection of minorities in Slovenia, with specific focus on the Roma minority, while Doc. Dr. Ivana Krstić from Belgrade University Faculty of Law gave a presentation on the protection of housing rights under the UN system and an overview of the relevant case law concerning Roma.

On the second day, Prof. Dr. Dragoljub Popović, judge of the European Court of Human Rights, discussed with the participants the issue of forced evictions in the case law of the ECtHR. Finally, Mr. Dušan Ignjatović, attorney and consultant for the Council of Europe, presented the programme for human rights education for legal practitioners (HELP) and other educational and informative resources of the Council of Europe which are available for judges.

The seminar was organised within a project supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and with a contribution from the Council of Europe.

Inclusive Education Workshop in Czech Republic

The ERRC representative travelled to Brno in order to hold a joint workshop on inclusive education at the Pedagogical Faculty of the Masaryk University in Brno. The workshop was prepared through a joint effort of the ERRC and the **League of Human Rights**. The workshop was held at the premises of the Pedagogical Faculty on 16 October 2013. The workshop consisted of two classes of 45 minutes and was attended by approximately 80 students. The workshop was officially a part of the subject of *Common standards for teachers* – a cross-sectional, general lecture on teaching methods and social science background. The participating students are in the second year of their bachelor studies to become teachers at the second level of the elementary school system. They are following various teaching specialisations.

The workshop was a pilot project during which we aimed to test how the theme of inclusive education can resonate among future teachers in a relatively conservative education system. The ERRC and the League of Human Rights acknowledged that the pilot was successful and the two organisations are willing to expand the project in two future phases: 1.) holding similarly formatted workshops in other pedagogical faculties in the Czech Republic; 2.) in the second phase to prepare an official syllabus and apply for seminars on inclusive education to be officially recognised and taught at Czech pedagogical faculties – we are planning to invite education experts to assist in developing the curriculum and syllabus.

The ERRC's primary objective for holding this workshop was awareness-raising around the **D.H. vs. Czech Republic** case and discrimination of Romani children in education. The ERRC country experts have previously experienced a very low awareness of the case among the general public, but also among education experts in particular. Without considering the human rights frame and the judgment of the ECtHR, inclusive education is mostly perceived as an alternative (competitive) way of educating children, not as a necessity responding to existing human rights violations. The initial hypothesis of a low-awareness level of the DH case was confirmed during the workshop as very few participating students knew about the Czech Republic being condemned by the ECtHR for discriminating against Romani children.

Workshop on Monitoring Ukrainian National Action Plan

In October 2013 the ERRC held a two-day workshop in Kiev, Ukraine, on monitoring the new Ukrainian National Action Plan on Roma Inclusion, which was adopted and published in September 2013. The workshop was attended by 16 activists from Romani civil society organisations all across Ukraine and training was provided by Aleksandra Bojadjeva of the **Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation**, Alyona Luneva, who has worked with Roma civil society organizations in Ukraine and Stephan Muller of the ERRC. Representatives of the Renaissance Foundation Ukraine also attended the workshop.

The main focus of the workshop was an assessment of the National Action Plan, and models for monitoring the implementation of

the action plan. The workshop also examined ways to advocate for improvements to the National Action Plan.

Anti-Gypsyism Conference in Montenegro

ERRC representatives attended a two-day conference hosted by the Decade of Roma Inclusion in Podgorica, Montenegro on anti-Gypsyism. At the event, experts presented lectures on the history of anti-Gypsyism and anti-Gypsyism in modern Europe. Other presentations covered topics such as how anti-Gypsyism manifests itself in Europe today and the importance of promoting the understanding of anti-Gypsyism as a distinct racist ideology, similar to (but much less understood than) anti-Semitism. Participants also heard presentations on multiple discrimination against (educated and uneducated) Romani women.

ERRC representatives presented a one-hour lecture on the legal tools available to the ERRC, focusing on three topics: ERRC's actions to combat hate crimes; ERRC's actions to assert Roma rights in France in a general anti-Roma climate; and the legal tools that may be available to tackle hate speech, with a focus on the internet. Participants then, in groups, responded to a case study about hate speech on the internet. ERRC representatives also delivered a 1.5-hour lecture on various cases in Romania, combining video with explanations and discussing the history of anti-discrimination laws in Romania and how the Romanian authorities (and particularly the Equality Body) have reacted to various acts of anti-Gypsyism. The group consisted of NGOs and representatives from equality bodies and other State institutions.

TRAININGS

In the period between October 2013 and March 2014, the ERRC organised several trainings on Roma rights related matters targeting different groups.

Training for young Roma activists in Italy

The ERRC and its Italian partner **Associazione 21 Luglio** organised **training for young Romani activists in Rome**, Italy on human rights. The first session of training took place on 20 October 2013, providing an opportunity for the participants to be immersed in human rights, minority rights and the legal framework concerning discrimination. The participants also benefited from the experience of experts on human rights issues.

A key target of the course was to provide the Roma and Sinti young activists with practical and theoretical knowledge about international, national and regional human rights instruments, and tutoring on the legal framework of human rights. The course was organised as a part of the activities of the Associazione 21 Luglio's campaign *Stop all'apartheid dei Rom!* (Stop the Apartheid of Rom), supported by the Bernard van Leer Foundation.

Training for judges and lawyers in Ukraine

On 16-19 December 2013 the ERRC staff held two very successful trainings, one for judges and the other for lawyers, in Odessa,



The ERRC and its Italian partner Associazione 21 Luglio organised training for young Romani activists in Rome.

PHOTO CREDIT: ASSOCIAZIONE 21 LUGLIO

Ukraine. Both trainings were dedicated to the European Convention of Human Rights, concentrating on how to litigate discrimination cases at the national level, taking into account international jurisprudence, and in particular, that of the European Court of Human Rights. The training also focused on cases decided by the European Court of Human Rights involving Ukraine.

The training for national judges was attended by 22 judges from Odessa, Transcarpathia, Kiev and Crimea regions.

Training was delivered by the ERRC staff in cooperation with the Ukrainian National Academy of Judges. Judges showed a great interest in the themes covered, and many stated that they had not had a chance to attend such training on this topic previously.

Training for lawyers was attended by 10 practising and recently qualified Ukrainian lawyers from Odessa, and Transcarpathia. This training was delivered by ERRC staff lawyers.

As both the judges and lawyers came from different regions of Ukraine, this provided an opportunity to discuss and compare different approaches to handling discrimination cases, involving representatives of different ethnic backgrounds. Both trainings attracted big interest and inspired constructive debates and discussions. As a follow up to the training the lawyers expressed interest in cooperating with the ERRC and tackling discrimination by getting involved in litigation where appropriate

Training on housing rights for lawyers in Turkey

The ERRC, in cooperation with **Istanbul Bilgi University**, organised a two-day training entitled, *Housing Rights of Roma in Turkey: International Law and Constitutional Perspectives* in Istanbul, Turkey on 16-17 November 2013. The training targeted practising lawyers from across the country. At the training, experts from the ERRC and academics from Bilgi University presented international and national legal and policy

framework on housing rights. The ERRC presented the situation of Roma across Europe and Turkey. The experts also made presentations on topics such as the Turkish Constitution and direct applicability of international standards, Protection of Roma housing rights under the Article 8 of European Convention of Human Rights, Housing rights under the Urban Transformation Law, Protection of the right to housing under the UN system, and Prohibition of discrimination based on ethnicity under domestic and Council of Europe framework.

NEW PUBLICATIONS



Roma Rights 2013: National Roma Integration Strategies: What Next?

The ERRC published online the new issue of Roma Rights which focuses on National Roma Integration Strategies and the objectives, challenges and shortcomings of the EC Framework which aims to improve the situation and status of Roma across Europe. The articles assess the existing national strategies and also look to the future to consider what needs to be done to increase the prospects of success.

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We recently uploaded our newest video message, which is entitled, "Camp and Housing Rights of Roma in Italy". You can watch it here.



ERRC COUNTRY MONITORS

The ERRC has selected human rights monitors in its target countries. ERRC Monitors are responsible for investigating and documenting human rights abuses that Roma face, maintaining contact with relevant actors, closely monitoring developments related to Roma, and acting as a liaison between the ERRC and local lawyers as well as local organisations and communities in their countries. They cooperate with the ERRC staff members in Budapest to develop appropriate responses to violations.



Hacer Foggo (Turkey)

Hacer has worked for 15 years as a reporter with various papers and magazines, focusing mainly on issues of human rights. Since 2003, she's been focusing on the problems of Roma in Turkey. She has been a leading activist in the campaign to save Sulukule, the oldest Romani settlement in Europe. She has also contributed several publications on Roma rights related matters. She is also the author of a book called "Kırmızı Püskül".



Manon Fillonneau (France)

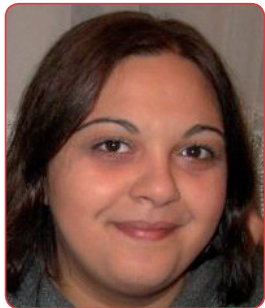
Manon holds a Master's degree in International Relations from Sciences Po University in Toulouse. Her Master's thesis focused on resident rights and the right to work for Roma in France. Since 2009, she has been working in the area of human rights and migration. She was an intern for an Australian civil rights NGO and worked with asylum seekers. In Paris, she worked with **Groupe d'information et de Soutien des immigré-e-s** (GISTI) providing legal aid to migrants and unaccompanied minors. After a three-month internship at the ERRC office in Budapest, she became the Human Rights Monitor for France in October 2012.

Markus Pape (Czech Republic)

Markus holds a Master's degree. His study on the concentration camp for Roma families in Lety u Písku was an attachment of a criminal complaint on the suspicion of genocide. As a legal consultant for the ERRC he contributed evidence to the case D.H. & others. His legal representation of the victims of the Vítkov arson attack case led to a ground-breaking verdict in Czech Republic in terms of classification of the crime committed, the sentences and the approved amount of compensation. In total he has worked for the ERRC for eight years so far.



Marija Manić (Serbia)



Marija is studying law; she has only one exam left to graduate at the Law School University of Niš. She has had a long relationship with the ERRC. She was an intern in 2000. In 2001 she was a member of the ERRC delegation that participated at the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in Durban, South Africa. She worked as a researcher and gender fellow in various ERRC projects. As the coordinator of the Roma Women Rights Center that she founded, she implemented various projects regarding Romani women's rights, prevention of trafficking and readmission.

Mustafa Asanovski (Macedonia)

He holds a BA in English Language and Literature and completed a Master's programme in conflict management, conflict analysis and negotiation. He has been working on Roma related issues for more than ten years. He started to work for the ERRC as an intern in 2009 and then as of 2010 he assumed the position of Human Rights Monitor/Researcher for Macedonia.



Olena Fyudr (Ukraine)



She is a specialist in criminal law, She studied at Odessa National Law Academy. Olena completed postgraduate study at the Kiev Academy of Internal Affairs. She is a member of the Council of Roma of Ukraine. She is a lawyer at the NGO Narodna dovira of Cherkassy region. She conducts training for young Roma lawyers in the field of social and labour rights and human rights.

Robert Matei (Romania)

Robert started working with Roma communities in 2005 as a local expert on Roma issues, when he first observed the precarious environment Roma children live in and the absence of basic support in their attempts to achieve social integration. Since 2006, he became a member of the Resource Centre for Roma Communities, where he had the opportunity to work on local and national projects aimed at improving the situation of the Roma population. In 2012, he started his collaboration with ERRC working as a human rights monitor. Currently he is studying public administration.



Rosi Mangiacavallo (Italy)

Rosi holds an MA in Interculture and Social Citizenship and a BA in Politics and International Relations. She has worked for over eight years with Romani communities in Italy and Roma Rights NGOs based in Europe. She joined the ERRC as an intern in 2010. In 2011 she started working as Human Rights Monitor for Italy and since May 2012 she has been ERRC's Researcher and Human Rights Monitor in Italy. She is based in Milan.



Tomáš Sivák (Slovakia)

He holds a Bachelor and Master's degree in Public Administration and Public Policy from the University of Pavol Jozef Šafárik in Košice. He works also in the Roma Media Centre in Košice as a journalist. Tomáš is a 25-year-old Roma from Svidník and he lives in Košice. He speaks Slovak, Romani and English.