

# FRANCE EVICTIONS AND EXPULSIONS: ERRC HELPS MORE THAN 2,000 ROMA

France stepped up its programme of evicting and expelling Roma over the last three months. Despite pre-election promises from President Hollande, the new Government seems to be set on following Sarkozy's failed policies on Roma.

The ERRC has followed many of these evictions and expulsions on the ground, mainly in the cities around Paris, where the biggest migrant Roma population is found. Through its monitor in France, the ERRC provided legal aid to Romani families facing eviction and expulsion in eight settlements between June and August, representing more than 2,000 individuals. The ERRC helped them by filling out legal aid application forms, gathering relevant documentation for their complaint and getting in touch with adequate pro-bono lawyers. The monitor was also present during many court hearings and advised Roma on the possibility of an appeal when necessary. Most of these cases are pending, and the length of the court procedures is often disheartening.

The ERRC also briefed media on the evictions throughout the summer, gaining coverage in France and beyond. Through documentation on the ground and the media monitoring, the ERRC recorded more than 3,330 people evicted from their dwellings between June and August 2012. More than 350 people were sent back to Romania under the so-called voluntary returns scheme, and the authorities issued more than 400 expulsions orders.



Gheorghe Platz, near Porte de la Vilette, Paris, 13 July, a settlement under the threat of expulsion.

PHOTO CREDIT: ERRC

From Budapest, the ERRC issued two press releases and a fact sheet on evictions and expulsions of Roma in France in the week of an inter-ministerial meeting chaired by the Prime Minister on 22 August. The outcome of this meeting was quite disappointing. The Government publicly announced that the evictions will continue - even without any adequate housing solutions - and decided not to eliminate employment restrictions on Romanians and Bulgarians. The Government has been evicting dozens of families almost every day since the beginning of August, with 500 people evicted from their settlement in Stains (Seine-St-Denis) on 29 August and 200 people receiving expulsion orders in Bobigny on the same day.

In an editorial published in **EUobserver**, the ERRC outlined its disappointment that the new administration has not learned the lessons from its predecessor, and would like to see more targeted action to help Roma integrate. Our report on evictions and expulsions of Roma will be published in autumn 2012.

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

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Gheorghe Platz, Residents await to hear what will happen, with a court hearing due on 11 September.

PHOTO CREDIT: ERRC



## 20 ROMANI ACTIVISTS FROM 10 COUNTRIES ATTEND ERRC SUMMER SCHOOL

From 21 to 31 July 2012 the ERRC hosted 20 Romani and Traveller participants in Budapest at its ninth annual Roma Rights Summer School. The Summer School aims to build capacity among young Romani and Travellers active in the field of human rights. Participants came from all corners of Europe: Bulgaria, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Macedonia, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Slovakia, Serbia. Four interns involved in the ERRC's Romani Internship Programme were also invited to participate in the Summer School, and two of them acted as session facilitators.

Many of the participants were university students or recent graduates, and several of them had an established job and professional experience in relevant fields such as anthropology, communications, teaching, sustainable economy, and so on.

The Summer School included an intensive ten days of sessions led by experts in human rights and Roma-related issues and group discussions with young Roma from around Europe. The Summer School offered both an introduction to



ERRC 2012 Summer School participants in the courtyard of the European Youth Centre Budapest.

PHOTO CREDIT: ERRC

human rights using non-formal education methodology based on participatory and "learning by doing" principles as well as an excellent forum for the exchange of ideas, networking, innovation and expertise for the participants who are at an early stage of their careers.

Participants were introduced to domestic and international human rights legislation and procedures, as well as to monitoring and reporting on human rights issues, media and public speaking, community organising and advocacy techniques and tools.



ERRC Executive Director Dezideriu Gergely speaks with the participants about the European Convention of Human Rights and its implementing mechanisms.

PHOTO CREDIT: ERRC

## ERRC TRAINS ROMANIAN MEDICAL PROFESSORS ON DISCRIMINATION

The ERRC Executive Director delivered training in Romania on "Non-discrimination of vulnerable groups in the health system" from 31 May to 3 June 2012.

The training targeted university professors from several Romanian state medical universities to provide the participants with information on discrimination faced by Romani individuals in the healthcare system of Romania.

The training was organised by the **Association for Development and Social Inclusion Romania** in partnership with the European Roma Rights Centre, the **University of Medicine and Pharmacy-Iasi**, the **University of Medicine and Pharmacy-Cluj Napoca** and the Romanian Association of Resident **Doctors**.

The training is part of a project called, "**Education for Non-Discrimination in**

**the Universities of Medicine and Pharmacy from Romania**" which aims to introduce courses on ethics and non-discrimination into the curricula of Romanian medical universities. As a result, a course on medical ethics and non-discrimination of Roma in the health system was taught for the first time in Romania during the 2011-2012 academic year. The project was funded by the **Open Society Foundations Roma Health Project**.



## INVISIBLE COMMUNITY: ROMA IN RUSSIA WITHOUT DOCUMENTS

One of the major problems that Romani individuals face in Russia is a lack of personal identification documents. As a result, Romani individuals have severe problems accessing basic social services. This issue is high on the agenda of the ERRC in its work in Russia. In 2011, ERRC field research and follow-up monitoring in Rostov Oblast confirmed that the lack of personal documents is one of the biggest problems in Romani communities around the region.

In July 2012, the ERRC conducted new field research in Russia's Rostov Oblast to map out the extent of statelessness among Roma in the area and to clarify the legal procedures under Russian law for acquisition of citizenship and various personal documents. During the trip, the ERRC visited four Romani communities, and interviewed relevant authorities and local NGOs.

In all four Romani communities visited, Roma are missing all or some personal documents. Roma with whom the ERRC spoke also reported the persistence of various forms of police abuse: "We are always stopped by police for identity checks. We always have to pay bribes in money and cigarettes to be left alone," one Romani woman in Rostov-on-Don told the ERRC.

The research found that many Roma do not have a Russian passport, and most children lack birth certificates. Most Roma live in informal housing and find it difficult

to obtain registration at their place of residence. Without a document certifying the registration of the residence, a person cannot obtain medical insurance, file a complaint in Court or sign a work contract.

The ERRC interviewed local authorities dealing with personal documents to clarify the concrete procedures under Russian law on obtaining personal

documents. The research, supported by the OSI Human Rights Internship scheme, follows six months of desk research compiling the main legal provisions on statelessness, citizenship and personal documents under Russian law. The research will serve as a basis for future ERRC projects tackling the lack of access to personal documents among Roma in Russia.



A Romani woman in Russia – one of many who face obstacles to accessing fundamental rights because of a lack of personal documents.

PHOTO CREDIT: ERRC

## AN ONGOING STRUGGLE: IMPLEMENTING THE D.H. JUDGMENT

This year marks the fifth anniversary of the 13 November 2007 judgment of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) case *D.H. and Others v The Czech Republic*. In this momentous decision, the ECtHR ruled that segregating Romani students into special schools is a form of unlawful discrimination that violates fundamental human rights. The ERRC litigated the case from its inception in 1997, and since the ECtHR judgment it has been involved in monitoring of the judgment's implementation. With just a few months until the fifth anniversary of this landmark judgment, very little progress has been made on its implementation. Five years later, supported with new evidence, the ERRC concludes that not much has changed for Roma children in the Czech Republic. In recent months, the ERRC has taken an active role in several initiatives targeting the full implementation of the D.H judgment.



Romani children in the Czech Republic are still in segregated education five years after a European Court ruling.

PHOTO CREDIT: ERRC/AI

## NEW ERRC AND AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH IN OSTRAVA SCHOOLS

The ERRC and Amnesty International (AI) carried out research in Ostrava to bring about information about the current situation in the schools and communities implicated in the D.H. decision. During visits to Ostrava in June and July, ERRC and AI researchers visited three schools and conducted interviews with Romani children, their parents and legal guardians, teachers, teacher assistants, headmasters and local activists to document if and how the situation has changed for Romani children in Ostrava since the judgment. The ERRC and AI team also interviewed representatives of the Ministry of Education, Governmental Agency for Social Inclusion, Commissioner for Human Rights and Defender of Rights (Ombudsman). A report of the research findings will be issued in October 2012 and will provide a grassroots perspective on changes in the education system which have been advocated by the Ministry of Education. The report will also shed some light on the current educational prospects of Romani children in Ostrava.

The joint report, which will be accompanied by a photo exhibition, will become a part of further coordinated activities related to the D.H. case fifth anniversary which the ERRC is preparing with other local and international partners. These coordinated activities will reach several European cities: Geneva, Strasbourg, Brussels, Prague and Ostrava.

### ERRC AT AN OSI MEETING IN OSTRAVA

On 8-9 June the ERRC took part in a network meeting of the Open Society Institute in Ostrava, focused on coordinated advocacy related to the fifth anniversary of the judgment. The ERRC underlined that the Czech government's implementation of changes needed to address the systemic discrimination outlined in the judgment is slow and unsystematic, and discussed the potential for further legal action to bring additional pressure on the Czech Government to speed up its actions.

### ERRC PARTICIPATION IN CZECH MINISTRY OF EDUCATION ROUNDTABLE

On 24 July 2012, the ERRC participated in a roundtable discussion on inclusive

education organised at the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport in Prague. The Minister of Education called this meeting to update different actors and promoters of inclusive education on their current steps facilitating a transformation of the Czech education system towards a more inclusive model. The meeting was also a platform where different levels of public administration bodies, **Public Defender of Rights, Czech School Inspectorate**, NGOs, associations of diagnostic centres and special pedagogues, interest groups and individual activists exchanged their views and opinions on relevant changes supporting inclusive education.

During the roundtable discussion, the ERRC shared its concerns that five years after the Czech Republic was found to be violating Romani children's education rights, their situation has changed very little on the ground. The life prospects of thousands of Czech Romani pupils remain dire. The ERRC also pointed out its close monitoring of the steps taken at the Ministry in recent years and expressed hopes that with the newly appointed Minister, the Czech Government will truly commit to the full execution of the DH judgment.

## ERRC IN THE FIELD WITH THE NEW COUNCIL OF EUROPE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSIONER IN ITALY

The **Council of Europe's new Human Rights Commissioner** Nils Muižnieks visited Rome to observe the living conditions of Romani and Sinti communities in the city on 4 July 2012. During his trip, the ERRC facilitated a field visit by Commissioner Muižnieks to two Romani camps and a meeting with Roma rights organisations and activists. During a roundtable meeting with NGOs and activists, the Commissioner and his team came together with representatives from the ERRC, **Federazione Roma e Sinti Insieme** and Consulta Roma e Sinti of Milan, **Fondazione Romani, Associazione 21 Luglio, Popica Onlus** and activists from the formal camp, Castel Romano. During the meeting, a general



Human Rights Commissioner Muižnieks speaks with Romani residents from Rome's formal camp Salone, during his July 2012 visit to Italy.

PHOTO CREDIT: ERRC

### NGOs and activists attending the roundtable meeting with Human Rights Commissioner Nils Muižnieks presented their recommendations to the Italian authorities:

- Emergency policies should stop;
- Roma and Sinti representatives should take part in decision making process on matters related to them;
- The Strategy should be applied at a local level;
- Forced evictions should stop; and
- Authorities should act to stop hate speech and violence against Roma.

overview of the situation of Roma and Sinti in Italy and the role of the new integration strategy were among the topics of discussion. NGO representatives and activists underlined that the Italian **"National Strategy for the**

**Inclusion of Roma, Sinti and Caminanti Communities"** provides new hope for the integration of Roma and Sinti communities. However, they also talked about the shortcomings of the Strategy as well as problems in implementing it. The situation in informal and semiformal camps and ongoing evictions were discussed, and the ERRC underlined the racist environment targeting Roma in the country, and pointed out the fact that hate speech and physical attacks often remain unpunished.





The ERRC monitored the eviction of via del Baiardo, a semi-formal Roma camp in Rome, Italy.

PHOTO CREDIT: ERRC

After the meeting, the Commissioner and his team visited the formal camp, Salone,

ERRC monitored an eviction of the semi-formal Roma camp, via del Baiardo, after

and the semiformal camp of Salvati. Both camps are inhabited mostly by Roma from the former Yugoslavia and Romania. In the camps, Commissioner met with residents and received information about the problems they face. The report of the Human Rights Commissioner's visit is forthcoming.

### "Via del Baiardo" Camp Evicted

On 5 July 2012, the

ERRC partner **Associazione 21 Luglio** announced that it was in progress. The camp was home to around 295 Roma, mostly from the former Yugoslavia and Romania, many of whom had lived in the camp for over 20 years. The Director of the Department for the Promotion of Social Services in the Municipality of Rome told the ERRC that due to health and hygiene concerns, the Municipality planned to relocate approximately 100 Roma to the new camp of La Barbuta. The rest, generally Romanian Roma, would not be provided alternative accommodation unless they had children; families with children would be offered emergency shelter. The eviction at via del Baiardo was completed on 13 July and the camp was closed down. Approximately 80 Romanian Roma, and one Romani woman from Serbia with a child, accepted emergency shelter. Most of the camp's remaining population declined the offer of emergency shelter and also refused to move to La Barbuta.

## ERRC FIGHTS FOR ADEQUATE ACCOMMODATION FOR SERBIA'S BELVIL EVICTEES

In recent months, the ERRC intervened to improve the housing situation for several families forcibly evicted from Belgrade's Belvil settlement and forcibly relocated to the south of Serbia. On 26 April 2012, Belgrade City Administration evicted around 1,000 Romani men, women and children who lived in the informal Belvil settlement. Four Romani families with seven children

were sent back to Niš, where they were accommodated in an abandoned warehouse with no access to water, electricity or sanitation facilities, while hygiene and living conditions fall far below minimum standards. On 13 July 2012, the ERRC and partners sent a letter to Serbian authorities to demand urgent measures to provide a minimum standard of decent

housing conditions for the Romani families living in the abandoned warehouse in Niš. Five days after this joint action, the City of Niš finally provided water to these families. On 13 August 2012, the ERRC also briefed the Commissioner for Equality on the situation of these families. The ERRC and partners continue to monitor the situation.

## ERRC WINS NEW CASES BEFORE THE EUROPEAN COURT

The ERRC won three cases before the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) in the last period. Two of these cases, one against Russia and one against Hungary, involved violence against Roma by State actors, while the other case, against Slovakia, concerned failure of authorities to conduct an effective investigation. The ERRC is happy with these judgments, however it is disappointed with the Court's failure to establish a violation of the right not to be discriminated against (Article 14) in its rulings.

**Klein and Alexandrovich v Russia:** On 3 May 2012, the European Court of Human Rights delivered its **judgment** in the case of Klein and Alexandrovich v Russia, which was litigated by the ERRC together with a local lawyer. The case, filed to the ECtHR in 2005, concerns a Romani woman who was taken to a police station under suspicion of robbery and was found dead in the police station yard after several hours. Domestic investigation into the incident proved to be unsuccessful,

shedding no light on the possible reasons and circumstances of the woman's death in police custody. The Russian Federation has been held in violation of the right of the applicants – the husband and son of the deceased as the closest relatives – to have an effective investigation into the circumstances of the death of the Romani woman (Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights). The applicants were awarded financial compensation in the amount of 20,000 EUR.

**Kiss Borbála v Hungary:** On 26 June 2012, the ECtHR delivered its **judgment** in a case brought by the ERRC and the **Hungarian Civil Liberties Union** (HCLU) concerning the excessive use of police violence against a Romani woman when police intervened at a family party at a private house. The Court found that Hungary violated Article 3 of the Convention, and awarded the victim 5000 EUR in damages. The Court concluded that the police had used excessive force during the incident, and that such use of force

resulted in injuries and suffering of the applicant, amounting to degrading treatment. The Court also noted that no internal investigation or disciplinary procedure appeared to have been carried out within the police force. With this judgment the court again reaffirmed that state authorities must deal with any and all cases of violence against Roma, especially when State actors are involved. **Video testimony from the victims** is available on the HCLU website (in Hungarian, with English subtitles).

**Koky and Others v Slovakia:** On 12 August 2012, the European Court of Human Rights delivered its **judgment** in a case filed by the European Roma Rights Centre together with the League of Human Rights Advocates in 2003. The Court ruled that Slovakia failed to carry out an effective investigation into a violent attack against Roma. The case concerned a February 2002 violent attack of 10 Slovak citizens of Romani ethnic origin in Ganovce-Filice. A group of men armed with baseball bats

and iron bars, shouting racist language, attacked the applicants' settlement following an earlier incident in a bar when a non-Roma waitress refused to serve a drink to a Romani individual. The victims suffered serious injuries, including a skull fracture to one, as well as damage to their property during the racially-motivated attack. In its judgment, the ECtHR stated that the Slovak authorities failed to carry out an effective investigation into the incident or provide an effective remedy for the violations.

The applicants were awarded monetary compensation of 55,000 EUR.

In the last quarter the ERRC also submitted written **comments** to the ECtHR in the case of **Gábor Vona v Hungary**, concerning the dissolution of the Hungarian Guard Association. The ERRC is not a party or a representative in the case, but submitted comments as a third party addressing attitudes towards racism in democratic society and discrimination against Roma. The

ERRC claimed that the Court must take into account these issues, among others, when it considers restricting freedoms of association and assembly, guaranteed under Article 11 of the Convention. The submission recalled that States have positive obligations to protect against discrimination and various forms of racial hatred. It also presented material on the broader situation of discrimination against Roma in Hungary and beyond. The case is currently pending before the Court.

## ERRC PREPARING TO TRAIN COMMUNITY PARALEGALS IN UKRAINE

On 9-13 August 2012, the ERRC conducted a field trip to Odessa, Ukraine, in preparation for a new community legal empowerment project that the ERRC is implementing in the area. The first phase of the project, including a training of potential community paralegals, will start at the end of September 2012. During this trip, ERRC staff members and the local monitor visited several local Romani communities targeted in the project and discussed the project's aims, main activities, obstacles and necessary arrangements before the start of the first training. ERRC staff conducted interviews with people in the communities to tailor the precise scope of the project activities to the needs and capacities of the communities and to better understand the practical allocation of resources needed to carry out the project in the most efficient way possible.

ERRC staff members also conducted several meetings with local NGOs and potential partners to assess practical prospects, advantages and disadvantages of the pa-

ralegal project and elaborate joint activities essential for the project to be successful. A follow-up visit will be conducted in September before the first training.



ERRC Research Coordinator Djordje Jovanovic, pictured left, doing community outreach with potential community paralegals as part of the ERRC's legal empowerment work in Ukraine.

PHOTO CREDIT: ERRC

## ERRC MEETS WITH PRO-ROMA NGOS IN BRATISLAVA

On 31 July 2012, ERRC staff members and the local monitor for Slovakia travelled to Bratislava for a meeting with Slovak civil society organisations working on Roma-related human rights work. The ERRC organised the meeting and met with representatives from **Amnesty International Slovakia**, **Milan Šimečka Foundation**, **Center for the Research of Ethnicity and Culture** (CVEK) and **Partners for Democratic Change**

**Slovakia** (PDSC). The meeting was intended as an informal forum for the ERRC to touch base with Slovak NGOs, and to exchange information, ideas and plans to collaborate. Participants at the meeting also discussed current developments in Slovakia that impact Roma, including; how Romani issues were negatively reflected in campaigning in last Slovak elections; the turbulent situation in the Office of the Plenipotentiary for

Roma Communities; the Roma-related responsibilities of the Ministry of Interior; renewed calls for boarding schools for Roma; the National Roma Integration Strategy and consultation with civil society; and the effectiveness of the national equality body. All the participants expressed their openness to ongoing collaboration, in particular in advocacy work and public policy review regarding housing and education.

## ERRC WELCOMES NEW TEAM MEMBER



**Ailsa Spindler**  
Development Manager

In July 2012, Ailsa Spindler joined the ERRC team as the Development Manager. Ailsa graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Rural Environment Studies in 1977. Most of her career has been as a manager in the not-for-profit sector, including as Executive Director of ILGA-Europe, Director (Scotland) of the Terrence Higgins Trust and Chief Executive of Surrey Wildlife Trust. While working in Brussels she also chaired the Social Platform's Discrimination Working Group. Ailsa's experience includes significant fundraising to ensure the ongoing viability of the organisations for which she has worked.



## INTERN REFLECTIONS

### Monica Murgia (Italy)

Before starting my three-month internship at the ERRC in June, I had many questions about how Romani activists can really be part of the fight for their own rights. My anthropology studies at university did not provide me with an answer to this question. Although I had the theoretical knowledge, I never had the opportunity to meet with people who had direct experience in fighting against human rights violations. My experience at the ERRC provided me with this opportunity. The work of the ERRC in the rights of Roma, through strategic litigation or research or media work has enriched my understanding of this field.



At the ERRC, I came to understand that to become a powerful agent of change, one should go beyond theoretical knowledge; the fight against discrimination requires understanding real time situations and concerns in the field. This can only be gained through careful listening to the voices of the community.

Besides my desk research tasks in the office, I had the opportunity to participate in the ERRC Summer School which brought many Romani activists together to share real life experiences. We had the chance to learn more about human rights in a very active way. Personally, I was very touched and found the experience very enriching. Moving forward, I take with me the plan to conduct research about identity and discrimination from an anthropological perspective. My time at the ERRC was a good starting point, and now I feel that I need to study and work even more to improve the situation of disadvantaged groups that don't have the opportunity to speak up for their own rights – in Italy, where I am from, and everywhere.

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### Valarie Hansen (USA)

I started my internship with the ERRC in June and was here for two months. My time at the ERRC has been amazing and life changing in ways that I might never fully comprehend. I had the opportunity to work with a wonderful group of interns and staff who have taught me so much about human rights advocacy, social change and life. Meeting people from so many countries and so many backgrounds really made the experience for me; I think I will best remember all the discussions we had.

I have spent plenty of time in classes in the US talking about advocacy, policy and law, but being here in Budapest gave life to the abstract concepts I'd learned. In the office,

I found staff working against many of the political barriers I'd read academic articles about, and in meetings we debated – with urgency – things I'd only heard idly discussed among philosophy students. It was so eye-opening to see the challenges and triumphs of advocacy, litigation and human rights work unfolding before my eyes.

Apart from these grandiose thoughts, I also gained valuable work experience here. I had the opportunity to work on so many tasks: tracking down media contacts, preparing presentations for the Roma Rights Summer School, preparing press releases, writing chapters of a paralegal training manual, and so much more. It was wonderful to be able to contribute to so many activities pursued by the ERRC.

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### Jasmine Goldstein (France/UK)

In the past few years I have developed a keen interest in minorities and discrimination, both through my academic work and personal experiences. Coming from France, I was particularly conscious of the problems of Roma integration – the previous French Government having raised much awareness, although in a very negative manner, of the problem. As an MA student of Political Science in my penultimate year, I hoped the ERRC would help me better understand the difficulties facing Europe's largest and most discriminated minority.



During my internship at the ERRC, I was lucky enough to be assigned the project of the Roma Rights Summer School: a ten day non-formal education session gathering young Roma and Traveller activists from all over Europe. As part of the team in charge of the Summer School, I was given a range of responsibilities: from the anticipated "intern tasks" such as standing by the printer all day to print 25 copies of a 300-page manual and hole-punching, to the more stimulating preparation of fact sheets and presentations for the Summer School. During the Summer School, I contributed to the smooth progress of study sessions and activities, as well as note-taking to later draft the analytical report and evaluations.

I am confident that this internship has provided me with knowledge and an understanding of the discrimination of Roma in Europe, as well as reinforcing some key professional skills such as working within a team, coordinating groups and managing the sometimes delicate balance between receiving tasks and taking initiative. When I reach the end of my internship, I will take with me a clearer view of my professional goals and a strengthened belief in the importance of the respect and implementation of human rights.



### **Manon Fillonneau (France)**

I recently graduated with a Masters in the field of “Political science and international relations” from Toulouse, France. My Masters thesis was about the right to work and the right to residency of Roma in France. After developing extensive but primarily academic knowledge about the situation of Roma in France, I thought that an experience with the ERRC could enlarge my understanding of Roma rights in Europe. As I am about to step into the professional world, this internship seemed to be a good way to improve my knowledge and professional skills and get a good insight of what it is like to work in an NGO fighting for human rights at a European level.

Prior to my arrival at the ERRC, I completed a four-month internship in an organisation helping migrants in France through legal aid and strategic litigation. I mainly worked with unaccompanied minors in Paris. This experience encouraged me to learn more about Roma rights. Since I started this internship in July, I have worked on mapping advocacy areas of interest for achieving Roma rights in the European Union. This task has been as challenging as it has been interesting. I really enjoy the work that I have been given.

In brief, being an intern at the ERRC completely matches my expectations as I am gaining more professional experience in an enjoyable working atmosphere while being in Budapest, a truly amazing city.

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### **Amelie Deramond (France)**

I was a legal intern at the ERRC for three months. When I first started the internship I expected to strengthen my knowledge on Roma rights in general in Europe but more particularly regarding France; I was not disappointed.

I am a student in the University College of Cork and as part of the LLM in Human Rights I began to write a thesis on Roma rights and freedom of movement in the EU following the mass expulsions of Roma from France to Romania and Bulgaria. This is why this internship was very dear to me.



I was extremely pleased with the internship. I really enjoyed working with a dynamic team. I mainly helped with research on Roma rights in France and closely monitored the situation of Roma in France with regards to evictions and expulsions issues. As France has lately undertaken a new change in Government it was a very exciting time to monitor the changes for Roma in France. Sadly however, those changes are yet to come, and Roma in France still face major discrimination with regards to housing rights and particularly to freedom of movement rights. My main project was to help in the drafting of a report on Roma rights in France for the attention of the new French President M. Hollande. I also contributed to drafting the ERRC submission for the Universal Periodic Review of France. As part of my tasks I also did some legal research on discrimination and I now have a better understanding of EU and international human rights standards.

I can truly say that this internship gave me a great working experience and I developed many new skills in communication, researching, advocacy and litigation. This experience has inspired me to eagerly continue my work on human rights and especially Roma and Traveller rights.

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### **Veronica Sauer (USA)**

Spending three months as a legal intern at the ERRC was a great introduction to the world of Roma rights and the work of an NGO dealing with the rights of minorities. After spending my first year of law school doing much more disengaged, theoretical work, I was really excited by the opportunity to start seeing the law in action as I spent my summer working with the ERRC. The dynamic community was definitely one of the highlights of my time here, as I learned an incredible amount both from ERRC staff and the wonderfully diverse intern community.

In addition to learning much more about the dire situation of the Roma across Europe, my work at the ERRC doing research and assisting with European Court submissions helped me to establish a solid background both in Roma issues and in European human rights law more generally. After spending my first year of law school focused on American law, I enjoyed the exposure to a wealth of different national law systems, and I welcomed the opportunity to work closely with experienced staff lawyers thinking through new arguments and polishing submissions.



The ERRC was really supportive of our work and education both in and out of the office. The opportunity to attend lectures and conferences on Roma issues at CEU and Corvinus University as well as to attend significant cultural events really added a lot to my summer experience. I look forward to putting my new knowledge and perspective to use as I continue on with law school and eventually pursue a career dealing with international law and minority rights issues.