

## OVERVIEW OF THE THREE-DAY-LONG EVENT

### **Nothing about us without us? – Roma Participation in Policy Making and Knowledge Production**

#### **11-13 October 2014, Budapest**

The three day event sought to explore the institutional and systemic obstacles to the substantive participation of Romani organizations, researchers, and concerned citizens in policies and representations affecting their lives.

Despite the increasing attention of international organizations and national governments to the plight of citizens of Romani origin, their social status has not improved significantly. It appears that neither Romani citizens, nor ‘the majority society’ are aware of and identify with the noble principles underlying such efforts. External pressure has not been coupled with dynamic social movements demanding the emancipation of Roma, the strengthening of democratic solidarity, and a culture of equality and diversity. On the contrary: nationalist and racist movements are on the rise, liberal approaches are openly negated by leading politicians throughout Europe, Roma are increasingly the targets of expulsion, marginalization, and segregation.

At a critical point in the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies and with the imminent appointment of a new European Commission, the event sought to take stock of current developments in policy, academia, civil society, and asked what directions should be taken in the struggle for social justice for Roma. The event comprised a workshop and a conference.

The conference on the 13<sup>th</sup> of October brought together high level policy-makers, and prominent Romani scholars and activists to reflect critically on the lessons of the first three years of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies.

The workshop on the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of October brought together a limited number of scholars and activists to reflect critically on (i) the state and future Romani activism; (ii) recent developments in the struggle for Romani self-determination in media and academic knowledge production; (iii) the lessons and potentials of cooperation with anti-poverty, feminist, worker, LGBT movements.

Organizers: Maria Bogdan, Jekatyerina Dunajeva, Timea Junghaus, Iulius Rostas, Marton Rovid, Andrew Ryder, Marek Szilvasi, Marius Taba

Supporting organisations: Corvinus University of Budapest, University of Bristol, Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat, Gallery 8, European Roma Rights Centre, Roma Education Fund, Making the Most of EU Funds for Roma Program of the Open Society Foundations, Roma Virtual Network, Romedia Foundation

## 11 OCTOBER 2014: WORKSHOP DAY 1

### 12.30pm- 2.30pm Tour of Budapest’s 8<sup>th</sup> district

The 8th district (Nyócker) is the Harlem of Budapest. This is the area of the city, which is mostly populated by Roma inhabitants. For a long time in the past it was demonized as the nightmare of tourists (and Hungarians as well). The area was said to be dangerous, slummy and strongly advised to avoid. Today the 8th district is the site of rapid development and gentrification, it is now the center of Roma community development, and many civil- and intercultural initiatives. The tour visits the secret 19<sup>th</sup> century sculpture garden, the main NGOs of the Magdolna Quarter, the Hungarian Roma Parliament, (which served as the Roma Cultural Center of Budapest for over 3 decades before in 2012 the local government closed it down), and it will extend to Gallery8 – Roma Contemporary Art Space.

Organized by UCCU Association and Gallery8.

### 3.00 – 5.30 pm Roma civil society: lessons from the past, challenges in the present

We reviewed, compared, and critically assessed the achievements of ‘Roma civil societies’ in the last 25 years both in Eastern and Western Europe.

Key questions: What were the trends in the development of Roma civil society? What ideas were behind the founding Roma organizations? Who were the major players? What strategies have these institutions used to advance the cause of the Roma? What leads to donor driven development (NGOisation) and under what conditions could autonomous membership based associations develop? To what extent and under what conditions could Roma organizations influence larger political and economic processes affecting the lives of Roma?

Invited debate starters: Thomas Acton, Nicoleta Bitu, Agnes Daroczi, Zeljko Jovanovic, Andrzej Mirga, Rумыan Russinov

Moderator: Iulius Rostas

### 12 OCTOBER 2014: WORKSHOP DAY 2

#### 10.00-12.30 Coalition building and transforming the Romani movement: feminism, LGBT rights, trade unions

We discussed the way the Romani movement relates to other social movements and how feminist and LGBT perspectives could be incorporated to the Romani movement. The women’s rights movement could be an inspiration for Roma movement as regards success in policy design and implementation and its discourse on specific gender issues. LGBT communities are also employing a rights discourse to dismantle the taboos of the mainstream society towards sexual orientations. Trade unions should be regarded as a natural ally of Roma in their fight for social justice.

Key questions: What could Romani organizations learn from other movements to attract support from a broader constituency? How could feminist and LGBT perspectives be incorporated to the Romani movement? How can the discourse of rights be developed in the Romani movement? How can we communicate a „stigmatized identity” to mainstream society? How can we build support outside of the Roma communities? How could trade unions promote an inclusive discourse on Roma?

Invited debate starters: Anna Daroczi, Jelena Jovanovic, Martin Kovats, Marton Joci, Vera Kurtic, Dezso Mate, David Tiser, Eniko Vincze

Moderator: Marius Taba

#### 13.30-15.00 Knowledge production and Roma representation

We discussed the role of scientific and expert knowledge production in the oppression and/or empowerment of Romani communities. We will explore various forms of relationship between the *researcher* and the *researched*. The role of scientific bodies such as the European Academic Network for Romani Studies will be debated.

Key questions What is the relevance of the ethnicity of the researcher? What is the relation between scientific knowledge production and the struggle for (self-) representation? Under what conditions can participatory research empower Romani communities? On what grounds can various institutions producing knowledge on Roma gain legitimacy?

Invited debate starters: Ethel Brooks, Timea Junghaus, Anna Mirga, Peter Molnar, Andrew Ryder, Mihai Surdu

Moderator: Maria Bogdan

16.30-18.00 Discussing the plan of the European Roma Institute

Invited discussants: Aurora Ailincăi, Ethel Brooks, Agnes Daroczi, Zeljko Jovanovic

Moderator: Timea Junghaus

19.00-20.30 Introducing the Buvero Roma Women program of Romedia Foundation

Buvero is a two-week residential summer camp program for young Romani women, based on the principle that today's digital media is the most powerful tool for communication and social change. First implemented in 2013, so far it has provided intensive theoretical and practical media training to 60 young Romani women from Hungary, Serbia and Germany. Buvero works to build a sustainable, international network of Romani activists empowered to create meaningful social change by addressing the root causes of Roma exclusion, through digital media. The word BUVERO means "shell" in the Romani language and evokes positive communication and the power of womanhood.

Screening of short movies directed by program participants to be followed by a discussion of the directors

Session introduced and moderated by Kata Barsony

13 OCTOBER 2014: CONFERENCE

**'Nothing About Us Without Us?'**

**Roma Participation in Policy Making and Knowledge Production**

9.30-10.00 Opening

- Welcome by Zoltán Szántó, Vice Rector of Corvinus University Budapest
- Opening remarks by Andrew Ryder, Corvinus University Budapest

10.00-11.30 What is happening on the ground? Assessing the impact of policies towards Roma and the potentials of transformative policies. Lessons from France, Hungary, and the UK

- Saimir Mile, La Voix des Roms, France
- Gábor Daróczi, Romaversitas, Hungary
- Sarah Cemlyn, University of Bristol, United Kingdom
- chair: Márton Rövid, Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation

12.00 – 13.30 The lessons and potentials of the European Union's involvement in the social inclusion of Roma

- László Andor, EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion
- William Billa, Member of the board of Roma Education Fund
- Nicoleta Bitu, Director of Center for Roma Studies, National School of Political Science and Public Administration, Bucharest
- Zeljko Jovanovic, Director of the Open Society Foundation's Roma Initiatives Office
- Soraya Post, Member of the European Parliament, Feminist Initiative Party
- chair: Iulius Rostas, Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj

#### 14.30 – 16.00 How to produce social change with EU funds?

- Costel Bercus, CMC Project Team Consulting, Romania
- Dan Doghi, Roma Education Fund
- Deyan Kolev, Center Amalipe, Bulgaria
- Violetta Zentai, Making the Most of EU Funds for Roma Program, Open Society Foundations
- Nadir Redzeqi, Making the Most of EU Funds for Roma Program, Open Society Foundations
- Chair: Marius Tabă, Roma Education Fund

#### 16.30-18.00 Knowledge production and the representation of Roma

- Ethel Brooks, Associate Professor, Department of Women's and Gender Studies, Rutgers University
- Ágnes Daróczi, Romano Instituto, Hungary
- Sheena Keller, EU Agency for Fundamental Rights
- Mihai Surdu, Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin
- Enikő Vincze, Faculty of European Studies, Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj
- chair: Tímea Junghaus, European Roma Cultural Foundation

#### 18.00-19.00 Book launch and drinks reception

[Hearing the Voices of Gypsies, Roma and Traveller communities: Inclusive Community Development](#)

Introduced by the editors: Thomas Acton, Sarah Cemlyn, and Andrew Ryder

Comments by: András Újlaky, Executive Director of the European Roma Rights Centre

Closing remarks by Malay Mishra – Indian Ambassador to Hungary