

**ROMANINET- A MULTIMEDIA ROMANI  
COURSE FOR PROMOTING LINGUISTIC  
DIVERSITY AND IMPROVING SOCIAL  
DIALOGUE:  
*REPORT ON ROMA PEOPLE***

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## REPORT ON ROMA PEOPLE

### 1. Historical highlights - attestation<sup>1</sup> of Roma population

As their name suggests, Roma (Gypsies) were initially believed to have come from Egypt. If we take into account the Gypsies' true ancestors, however, they were a group of people who left India in the tenth or eleventh century AD. Apart from one non-controversial fact, namely that Roma come from India, the rest of the Roma early history is a subject of controversy. When Roma left India, where they passed through, whether they came in one or many "waves" all is subject of discussion for lack of "hard" evidence.<sup>2</sup> The cause of the Roma Diaspora is also unknown.

One theory suggests that after they left India, the Roma migrated west to Iran (Persia) and the Arabian Peninsula, with some splitting off to the north to Central Asia (although some argue that the Central Asian group arrived in an earlier migration). Some groups moved westward to Byzantium and the Transcaucasus, reaching Europe no later than 1250. By the 1300's, their migration had reached South-Eastern Europe; by the 1400's, Western Europe.

When the Roma first arrived in Europe they were able to tell people that they had come from India; but this did not become general knowledge and in time it was forgotten by the Roma themselves. Various assumptions spread some quite bizarre; they were thought to be survivors of prehistoric races as Druids, Nubians, dwellers emerging from the hollow Earth or simply a population recruited from the fringes of European society that artificially dyed its skin and spoke a concocted jargon for purposes of criminal activity. Never referred to by their self-ascription Romanies (from an Indic root meaning "person"), many other names were given to them, most commonly Gypsies, Gitanos, Gitans (i.e. Egyptians), Zigeuner, Tsiganes and Cingaros.

The Roma people were already known in Byzantium in the middle of the 11th century when they started moving into Constantinople. The presence of Armenian words in all dialects of the European Roma according to those of F. Miklosic brings to the conclusion that the Gypsies had come to Byzantium from Armenia.<sup>3</sup> In the sources it was not established when the Roma people came from Armenia to Byzantium, but it is presumed that this happened in the first half of the 11th

<sup>1</sup> Jean Pierre Liegeois – "Roma in Europe", p. 15-18

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.Roma.org/Roma\\_history/](http://www.Roma.org/Roma_history/)

<sup>3</sup> <http://lovari.hr/gypsy-history/>

century when Seldjuk attacked Armenia and caused the known movement of people from Armenia towards Byzantium Antalya. According to the sources it is also not possible to verify what happened during Roma crossing to Balkans. Concrete mentioning of the presence of gypsies in today's Greece is found in the practicum of the Xiropotamos Monastery on Athos, from 1325 up to 1330, where it is written that Anna, daughter of Limocherval, had an "Egyptian" husband. According to other data, it seems that at the end of 13th and beginning of 14th centuries the Roma lived in Corfu, which at the time belonged to Angevins. There is also a possibility that at that time they lived in other areas of Byzantium that belonged to Venice. In any case, in the second half of the 14th century the Roma were present in the southern parts of Balkan Peninsula. This fact is being brought in connection with the advancing of Osmanli in Asia Minor and then with their coming in Europe. In Ottoman controlled territories their artisan skills, particularly in metal-working and weaponry, ensured a place for them in the economy, a status that by the 15th century has institutionalized slavery in the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia.

For example, mass settlement of Roma is taking place between the 13-14<sup>th</sup> century in Bulgaria. They arrived with the Ottoman army in the conquest of the Balkans under the names of "chingene", "sterlet", "kibti". Some of them settled down permanently and others became rovers. During the Renaissance, Roma neighbourhoods are formed in cities.

Starting with the second half of the 14th century, the evidences of Roma group dispersal in other parts of Europe are more numerous.

In Moldavia and Wallachia, the first known text on Roma people is connected with the situation of Roma families slavery. In this first reference dating from 1385, a group of Roma people, under the name of "gypsies", are included in a donation document of the voivode Dan I of Wallachia to the Monastery of Tismana. Other similar references occur also during the reign of Mircea Cel Batran. One of his documents, dated by the specialists in the 1390-1406 period also contains the first reference to a Romani group on the territory of Transylvania. According to another document, in 1416, the Transylvanian city Kronstadt (Brasov) gives them money and food. In Moldavia, the presence of Roma is mentioned for the first time in 1428, during the reign of Alexandru cel Bun, in a donation document to a monastery. From the time of their arrival in the Romanian medieval countries, Gypsies were the slaves of the landowners, to be emancipated only in 1851.

In Poland, a first document was mentioning the presence of Roma in Krakow in 1401, then in 1405 in Lvov. Other groups continued to spread in the fourteenth century in Bohemia and then, until 1430, throughout all Western Europe, except for the Northern countries.

Between 1407-1416, various chronicles refer to the presence of Roma in Germany. Next, the Roma travel across the Hanseatic cities and are reported in Saxony, Bavaria and Hesse.

In 1419, the French city of Chatillon en Dombes is making a donation to a group of gypsies bearing letters from the emperor and the duke of Savoy.

In the 15th century, by the time when the Catholic Monarchs began to implement the idea of Spain as a State, gypsies were already travelling across the Iberian Peninsula. Some families settled down in places like Andalusia, the so-called home of the gypsies. The history of the Spanish gypsies is the history of a culture clash between a traveller community and a sedentary one. The creation of a gypsy ethnic identity set against the majority of the population, the eternal conflict between gypsies and the powers-that-be. With the first Pragmatic Sanction of the Catholic Monarchs in 1499, a very long phase of harassment began, where the gypsies' cultural diversity was targeted and they were prohibited from using their language and traditional clothes, they were obliged to settle, to leave their traditional crafts and to serve a Lord. The Pragmatic Sanction of Carlos III in 1783, indicated the following: "I declare that those who call themselves gypsies are not so by origin, nor by nature, nor do they come from infected roots." In edict they were recognized as Spanish citizens but it denied their existence and diversity: the Roma did not exist, nor could they live as such. This equality of rights that was granted to the Gypsies was a de facto inequality until the Constitution from 1978.

In Portugal, the first written evidence of Gypsies presence dates from 1521 - the "Auto das Ciganas", by Gil Vicente and was represented at the court of King John III. One could say that from a first moment when gypsies were looked with curiosity, it arrived, 4 years later, to a successive period of persecution. In 1525 gypsies were forbidden to enter in the Portuguese kingdom.

After verifying the failure of this measure, new laws and subsequent trials were followed. Convictions and exile resulted from them. Gypsies were deported to Africa (Angola was the first Portuguese colony that received Roma) and Brazil and therefore expanded to other continents. Throughout the rest of the 16th century and first half of the 17th, laws against gypsies were legislated. This trend has eased after 1640, for the kingdom at war needed men for the army. Many Roma enlisted. Consequently, the group's presence was tolerated, albeit with the imposition of rules. In the early 18th century measures of gypsy expulsion returned under penalty of arrest. The institution of the liberal regime came to free the gypsies from persecution. In 1822 the citizenship for gypsy people is recognized.

Travellers in northern Europe are attested in the first half of the 16th century.

In the British Isles, Roma people are believed to have arrived in the second half of the 15th century, entering Scotland from Denmark. Referred to as ‘Egyptian pilgrims’ in older sources, they are known to have sought the protection of King James IV of Scotland on a journey to Denmark in 1506, which suggests that contacts with related Roma clans on the continent continued to be maintained for some time. The earliest reference to Gypsies in England is Sir Thomas More’s description of an ‘Egyptian’ woman who told fortunes in Lambeth in 1514. A subsequent reference from 1687 confirms the wedding of Robert Hern and Elizabeth Bozwell, ‘king and queen of the gipsies’ at Camberwell. While many subsequent sources speak of ‘vagrants’ or ‘travelling tinkers’ who cannot unambiguously be connected with the Roma, much of the history of the Romani-speaking community in Britain can be traced thanks to sources that provide us both with a description of the community and with a sample of their Romani speech. These offer attestations of the language from regions as far apart as Northumberland, Durham, Derbyshire, Cheshire, Norfolk, Hampshire and Kent.

Many repressive laws were passed from 1530 onward, banning Gypsies from entering England and Wales and forcing those already in the countries to leave. In the following years deportations of Gypsies are recorded. Scotland adopted similar measures in 1541 obliging Gypsies to leave the kingdom within 30 days. Similar laws continued to be in force for the following two centuries and were gradually abolished by 1856.

In Russia, the Roma came from the south in 1501 and Siberia is only reached in 1721. In Malta, in the first written historical presence of Zingari, Giacomo Bosio, the historic of the Knights of Malta shows that they lived in the caves of Rabat.

Other first mentions of the gypsies in chronicles of European countries and towns are: Ljubljana 1387, Hildeshaim 1407, Basel 1414, Augsburg, Lunenburg, Hamburg, Libek, Vajmar, Magdeburg, Leipzig, Frankfurt, Strasbourg, Zurich, Bern, Brussels 1417-1420, Netherlands 1420, Belgium 1421, Bologna 1422, Paris 1427, Constance 1430, Sweden 1512, Norway 1544 and Finland 1597.<sup>4</sup>

In modern history, the 19th Century was of particular significance for the European Roma. Although the quest began during the Enlightenment to provide a legitimate history and identity for that population, ironically the same period saw the establishment of the romantic “Gypsy” image that remains so firmly in place to these days. At the same time, the mid 19th century saw the

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<sup>4</sup> <http://lovvari.hr/gypsy-history/>

emergence of scientific racism which led ultimately to the attempted destruction of the Roma people in Hitler's Third Reich.

While the major episode in Roma history during the preceding century was the abolition of slavery in Romania and the resulting massive out-migration from that part of Europe to the rest of the world, the 20th century was marked by two main events: the Holocaust and the collapse of Communism in Europe. It also saw the emergence of organized Romani political activity, which flourished following the end of the First World War, mainly in Eastern Europe.<sup>5</sup>

Related to the Holocaust, in March 1936, the first document referring to "the introduction of the total solution to the Gypsy problem on either a national or an international level" was drafted under the direction of State Secretary Hans Pfundtner of the Reichs Ministry of the Interior, and the main Nazi institution to deal with Roma, namely the *Racial Hygiene and Population Biology and Research Unit of the Ministry of Health*, was established in Berlin.

In January or February 1940, the first mass murder of the Holocaust took place in the concentration camp at Buchenwald, when 250 Roma children from Brno were used as guinea pigs to test Zyklon-B, later used in the gas chambers at Auschwitz-Birkenau. In Czechoslovakia, special camps for dispatching Roma were built at Lety and Hodonín. During the Second World War, the Roma are also deported from Germany allied countries like Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Romania.

During the years following the war, the Roma population in Europe was numb. Political activity was minimal and Roma were reluctant even to identify their ethnicity publicly or draw attention to it through group effort. No reparations had been forthcoming for the Nazi atrocities committed against them and no organized attempts had been made by any national or international agency to re-orient the survivors such as were being put into large scale effect for survivors of other victimized groups; instead, pre-war anti-Roma legislation continued to operate against them. In Germany, until 1947, those who had come out of the camps had to remain well hidden or risk being incarcerated once again, this time in labour camps, if they could not produce documentation proving their German citizenship.

In the 50s and 60s, new waves of migration are taking place across Europe. In Denmark, since 1958, Roma were installed in Copenhagen and in Finland they lived in Helsinki. In Austria, many Roma are settled in the eastern region (Burgenland) since 1958. In the 1960s, a new wave of Yugoslav Roma arrived in Italy. In the same time, in Netherlands, where they were almost totally expelled by severe legislation, new groups arrive in several "waves", the main wave originating in

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<sup>5</sup> Ian Hancock – "Romanies" - Encyclopedia of Europe: 1789-2004

Yugoslavia and Hungary. Speaking of Yugoslavia, immigration of Roma people was initiated in 1960s, with successive revival, especially in the late 1980s, when thousands of Roma were leaving Macedonia, in particular towards Germany.

After the fall of the communist regimes, working abroad became a livelihood for tens of thousands of Roma from the former communist countries. Still, preferred destinations are Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal, France, Germany, Belgium, Holland and United Kingdom.



## 2. Geographical distribution of Roma people / Roma categories

### A. Population

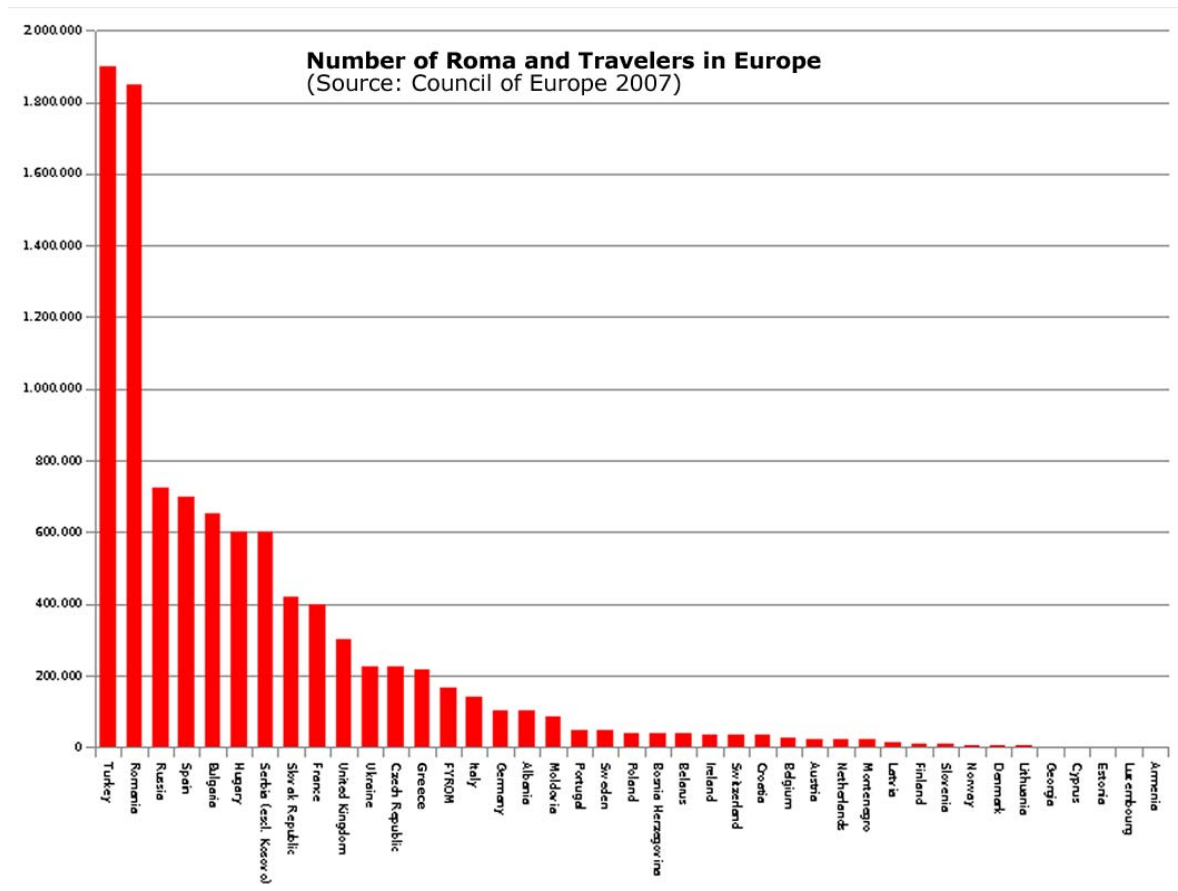
It is not easy to answer the question “What is the current Roma's population nowadays?”. On the one hand, the official representatives of many countries want to "reduce" the number of Roma living in their land - for example, in 1997, there were officially no Roma living in Moldavia - while on the other hand many Roma activists tend to cite way higher numbers. It is thus only possible to give a range of numbers, from low estimates to high estimates for any given country.

With a population in Europe estimated at 8 to 12 million, they can be found everywhere from Finland to Greece and from Ireland to Russia, but they have no "homeland." The greatest number live in Central Eastern Europe: Romania, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Hungary and former Yugoslavia.

According to the figures published by the Council of Europe in 2007, the total number of Roma and Travellers was of 9,855,382 people, the average estimation by country being as it follows in figure no. 1

Number of Roma and Travelers in Europe source: Council of Europe 2007	
Countries	average estimation
Turkey	1900000
Romania	1850000
Russia	725000
Spain	700000
Bulgaria	650000
Hungary	600000
Serbia (excl. Kosovo)	600000
Slovak Republic	420000
France	400000
United Kingdom	300000
Ukraine	225000
Czech Republic	225000
Greece	215000
Macedonia (FYROM)	165000
Italy	140000
Germany	100000
Albania	100000
Moldovia	84345
Portugal	45000
Sweden	45000
Poland	40000
Bosnia Herzegovina	40000
Belarus	40000
Ireland	35250
Switzerland	35000
Croatia	35000
Belgium	25000
Austria	22500
Netherlands	22500
Montenegro	20000
Latvia	11500
Finland	10000
Slovenia	8500
Norway	6650
Denmark	5500
Lithuania	3287
Georgia	2000
Cyprus	1500
Estonia	1250
Luxembourg	300
Armenia	300
<b>total</b>	<b>9855382</b>

A representation of these figures can be found in the following graphic having also the Council of Europe as a source.



According to the available data and statistics regarding the Roma population we have the following situation at national level:

In UK Gypsies were recognised as an ethnic minority in 1988. Their total population is sometimes estimated at around 65,000, though there are no precise figures. Moreover, those referred to both by officials and the media and popular perception as ‘Gypsies’ in fact include members of historically diverse communities. Descendants of Roma immigrants from the continents make up a large part of those who refer to themselves as ‘Romanichals’ or ‘Welsh and English Gypsies’. It seems likely that this population absorbed indigenous English Travellers who had maintained separate communities up to the 17th century and perhaps even later. The two other itinerant populations are the Irish Travellers and the Scottish Travellers. Scottish Travellers tend to base in Scotland; but Irish Travellers often maintain homes both in Ireland, England and Wales, alternating between various locations. The English or Romani Gypsies can be found throughout the country. While all three communities tend to interact, often share caravan sites, and even

intermarry and share family relations, there are Roma communities that are not itinerant and live quite separately. These are mainly descendants of immigrants from central and Eastern Europe who arrived in UK in the 1930s and later in the 1950s, as well as more recent immigrants who arrived in the country following the EU-expansion. These Roma immigrants are usually settled in the larger cities - mainly around London, Birmingham and Manchester.

In 1991, the Environmental Department reviewed 12,316 caravans in England, estimating that there are three people per caravan and nearly four persons per family on average, which would indicate the presence of about 40,000 nomads in England. Also in 1991, there were reviewed 708 families in Wales (over 312 in 1996) and a more complete calculation showed that about 800 families actually of about 3600 people were present.

In Scotland, 980 camps with 3000 persons are officially recognized and 1600 of them are schoolchildren.<sup>6</sup>

In the 18th century, in Spain, Gypsies numbered about 10,700, of which nearly 8,000 were living in Andalusia. Andalusia has always been regarded as the "gypsy homeland", where many Roma have always lived and now more than half of Spanish gypsies live there. In the 19th century there were reports that about 100,000 Gypsies lived in Spain.

At present there are some differing figures regarding the number of Roma citizens living in Spain. The Spanish Constitution does not allow discrimination or differentiated treatment and the municipal census does not collect specific data about races or cultures. Only a few studies carried out by Gypsy Associations or national and regional institutions, provide approximate data. According to the information provided by the Institute Of Applied Sociology, in 1978 the gypsies numbered 189,404 people in Spain. The statistics of the Institute Of Applied Sociology, updated in 2003 (with a 5.2% population growth), give a number of 435,629. Finally, data provided by Roma associations and institutions of the Autonomous Communities shows that the present estimated number of gypsies is 646,300.

In Portugal, it's also forbidden by the Republic Constitution to collect data based on ethnic origin, so the available data on this matter is scant. Most part of gypsy groups lives in areas with bigger population density, as for example Lisbon. One can also find a larger number of gypsy people in areas like Alentejo (especially in the District of Beja) and Trás-os-Montes. Gypsy groups are

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<sup>6</sup> Jean Pierre Liegeois – "Roma in Europe", p. 25-30

concentrated especially in regions of Portuguese littoral, with bigger population density, and in areas near the borders.

The total number of gypsies that was possible to identify was of 21.831 people, from which 20% live in Lisbon District.

In Bulgaria, there is no city in the country without at least some representatives of Roma families. Currently all Roma are sedentary, but in the recent and more distant past, some of them were wanderers. Regarding the religion they are divided into "Dassikane Roma", i.e. Christian Roma, and "Horahane Roma" - associated with Islam. The main meta-group Roma communities in Bulgaria identified by the researchers are three - Jerlii, Kaldarasi and Rudari.

Regarding the population size, in Bulgaria those who declared Roma identity in 1956 were about 194,000; in 1959—214,167; in 1976—373,200; in the 1989 the authorities counted 576,927 people as Roma, but noted that more than a half of them preferred and declared Turkish identity.<sup>7</sup> According to the last official census, in 2001 370,908 Bulgarian citizens define their identity as Roma.

In Romania, the Roma constitute one of the major minorities. According to the 2002 census, they numbered 535,140 people (2.5% of the total population), being the second-largest ethnic minority in Romania after Hungarians.<sup>8</sup>

However, other estimations put a higher number of Roma in Romania. According to a study of the Research Institute for Quality of Life from 1998 and published in 2000<sup>9</sup>, there are 1,452,700 to 1,588,552 heteroidentified Roma people (of whom 922,465 to 1,002,381 auto identified, representing 5 to 7% of the total population). There are many reasons why many Roma do not declare their ethnicity in the census: they do not have an identity card or birth certificate, they fear of discrimination or because of the process of ethnic assimilation.

In Greece, there were between 300,000 and 350,000 Roma, according to an estimate published by Greek Helsinki Monitor in 1999. The Greek Government estimates place their number between 200,000 and 300,000.

In Hungary, the real number of Roma is a disputed question. In the 2001 census only 190,000 people called themselves Roma, but experts and Romani organisations estimate that there are between 450,000 and 1,000,000 Roma<sup>10</sup>. Counties with the highest concentration of Roma minority

<sup>7</sup> Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov - "The Roma in Bulgaria", Sofia, 1993

<sup>8</sup> 2002 census data, based on Population by ethnicity

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.edrc.ro/docs/docs/Romii\\_din\\_Romania.pdf](http://www.edrc.ro/docs/docs/Romii_din_Romania.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> Stratégiai Audit 2005 - DEMOS Magyarország

are Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg (officially 45,525 and 25,612 people in 2001), but there are other regions with a traditionally high Roma population like parts of Baranya and the middle reaches of the Tisza valley. Although they were traditionally living in the countryside, under general urbanization trends from the second half of the 20th century many of them moved into the cities. There is a sizable Roma minority living in Budapest (12,273 people in 2001, officially).

In France, a 1961 census showed that 26,628 people are travellers, 21,690 are semi-sedentary and 31,134 are sedentary, resulting a total of 79,452 Roma population. Currently, it is estimated, taking into account the demographic progression, that Roma (nomadic or not) and travellers (nomadic or Gens du voyage) are a group of about 300,000 to 400,000 people<sup>11</sup>.

In Italy, the Immigration Observatory Council of Ministers gave at the end of year 1990 the number of 29,790 immigrants from Yugoslavia, regularly registered in Italy and there are reasons to believe that the majority were Roma. The estimated number of Roma in Italy ranges from 90,000 to 180,000 people<sup>12</sup>, but the number is higher if we take into account the illegal immigration from Romania and the former Yugoslav states.

Important groups of Roma can be found also in the former Yugoslav states like Serbia (100,000 to 400,000) Macedonia (50,000 to 260,000) and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In the northern Europe, there are approximately 10,000 Roma (Kale) living in Finland, mostly in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area and in Sweden where, in 1993, it was estimated that the Roma community amounted about 15,000 people.

## B. Roma categories

The Roma recognize divisions among themselves based in part on territorial, cultural and dialectal differences. Roma, besides the various names that are given to them by Gadže, use other names to describe themselves - their group appurtenance. Groups should not be mistaken for clans or lineages, for these are subdivisions of groups, and can vary in size from a few thousands (like the Lotfitka Roma, the Latvian Roma) to more than a million.

Some authorities recognize five main groups based on their geographical spread:

- ✓ the Kalderaši (the most numerous, traditionally smiths, from the Balkans, many of whom migrated to Central Europe and North America),

<sup>11</sup> Jean Pierre Liegeois – “Roma in Europe”, p. 25-30

<sup>12</sup> Jean-Pierre Liégeois – “Roma, Tsiganes, Voyageurs”, p.34, Conseil de l'Europe, 1994

- ✓ the **Gitanos** (also called Calé, mostly in the Iberian Peninsula, Northern Africa, and Southern France)
- ✓ the **Manush** (also known as **Sinti**, mostly in Alsace and other regions of France and Germany)
- ✓ the **Romnichal (Romanies)** (mainly in UK and North America).
- ✓ the **Erlides** (also known as Yerlii) (settled Roma population in South-Eastern Europe and Turkey).

Each of these main divisions may be further divided into two or more subgroups distinguished by occupational specialization or territorial origin, or both. Some of these group names are: Machvaya (Machwaya), Lovari, Churari, Sinti, Rudari, Boyash, Ludar, Luri, Xoraxai, Ungaritzá, Bashaldé, Ursari and Romungro.

According to another theory<sup>13</sup>, there are four main streams of Roma groups based on the of dialects they are speaking:

- ✓ The **Balkan Roma**, with a rather large Turkish vocabulary;
- ✓ the **Vlax Roma** who migrated to present day Romania and have a large Romanian influence in their dialects;
- ✓ the **Carpathian Roma**, found in the Czech and Slovak Republics, in Hungary and in Austria with a stronger layer of Slavic lexemes in their language;
- ✓ the **Nordic Roma**, with a strong German influence.

This four main groups include:

- ✓ **Balkan**: Arlii, Erlii, Jerlides, Sepetçides, Bugurdži, Kalajdži, Drindari.
- ✓ **Carpathian**: Czech, Moravian, Hungarian, West and East Slovakian and Burgenland Roma
- ✓ **Vlax**: Servi, Vlaxurja, Rišarja, Kalajdži, Vlax, Džambaši, Laxora, Gurbeti, Cerhara, âurar, Mačvaja, Patrinara, Lovara, Dirzara, Mašara, Kalderaši, Rudari, Bejaša, Ursari, Lingurari and Gurvara
- ✓ **Nordic**: Abruzezzi, Calabrezi, Cale, Kaale, Lotfitka, Manouches, Volšenenge, Polska, Sinti, and Xaladitka

<sup>13</sup> [http://www.rroma.org/the\\_rroma/rroma\\_groups.html](http://www.rroma.org/the_rroma/rroma_groups.html)



### 3. Specific social organization

Roma are organized in various subdivisions that, because of the lack of a better term, are called groups. The list of such groups is rather long, and each of them is further divided into smaller entities.

The first and most important level for Roma people is the family. The family, which can be rather large and span several generations, is the centre of a Roma's life. The first allegiance always goes to relatives.

As an example, in Bulgaria, the social organization of all Roma communities lies on the concept of the patriarchal family - the extended traditional family consisting of at least three generations living together. Family is the most important element of social organization for the patriarchal Roma and everything revolves around it. It educates the children on sex selective principle to adopt inherited ethno-cultural information, acquire and maintain ethnic specificity. The roles of men and women in the family are different and complement each other. The woman is the one that provides a quiet day taking care of kids and adults. She was brought up in a conservative way and is the one to ensure continuation of tradition in the group. Her particular concern is the education of female offspring before entering into matrimony. The man is head of the family, providing food and defending family reputation. This gives him the right to be the undisputed authority and to take the important decisions. The other important element of social organization is the social control that is applied comprehensively and further reinforces the primacy of Community structures over the individual. It is connected with numerous rules and prohibitions in respect of good and evil, pure and impure, right and wrong, permissible and prohibited.

In Spain, the Gypsies usually live very close to each other, especially with the father's family, so the relationship is daily, everyday.

The roles of Gypsy men and women in the family tend to be very traditional and conservative; usually the woman takes care of the household and the children and the man is responsible for the protection of his family and jobs, requiring greater physical strength. Both men and women are usually involved in earning the money for the family.

The elderly, especially grandparents, are the most respected. They are the ones with more experience and therefore they can be asked for advice as they are the wise men of the family.

In Portugal, the family is also one of the pillars of the Roma society and one of the factors that contributed most to the survival of the group. The concept of gypsy family represents the closest members residing underneath the same roof, like other relatives included in the extended network of relationships - extended family.

The second level is the lineage, that is, the extended family. For example among Kalderaši, one finds Jonešti, Bumbulešti, Miheješti, Saporrioni etc. These lineages take their names from some prominent old time leader or ancestor. For example, Jonešti is derived from Jono (John), Miheješti comes from Mihai (Michael). etc.

The third level of organization is the "sub-ethnic" group, like Kalderaši, Lovari, Sinti, Čurara, Mačvaja, Zlotara and so on.

Groups are in a way "historical" entities which are bound together by a common history (where the group originally settled or wandered) as well as by common traditions and language - a dialect - and sometimes by common trades. The appurtenance to a group is more important than the fact of being Roma.

Nomadic Gypsies often exhibit additional structures inside the group. Among these, one can count many Vlach Roma who were travelling with horses and carts. This allowed them to maintain a high degree of their social organization. The Kalderaši social organization provides a good example of these structures, which are also valid for others. In all countries in the world, Kalderaši are divided into nations: Serbian, Moldovan, Hungarian, Greek, Russian etc. A nation refers to the country in which they lived but rarely the passport they currently hold.

The Kalderaši who travelled and worked together formed a company, consisting of several families, not necessarily from the same lineage. The company's name is always derived from the name of its leader, the one representing the Gypsies in front of the local authorities.

These levels were extremely rigid and have remained so in certain communities.

The last level is the ethnic appurtenance, namely the concept of Roma, and, by opposition, the Gadže or non-Roma.<sup>14</sup>

Matrimonial alliances<sup>15</sup> are an essential element in the social organization and vary considerably from one Roma group to another. For some groups, such as Kalderaši and Lovari, marriage is the result of lengthy negotiations of the family. For others, Kales in Finland, Manus,

<sup>14</sup> [http://www.Roma.org/the\\_Roma/social\\_organisation.html](http://www.Roma.org/the_Roma/social_organisation.html)

<sup>15</sup> Jean Pierre Liegeois - "Roma in Europe", p. 54-60



Romanichals, Travellers in England, marriage often starts with a short run of young people who come to ask forgiveness and approval of their families, and for others, it sometimes happens that the escape occurs after an agreement between families, but before the marriage takes place. A marriage between two groups may occur and may pave the way for others, or conversely, due to displacement of one group would never be followed by others.

Lovara or Sinti Roma who marry in Burgenland in Austria have to break with their families. In Belgium, many marriages between travellers and manus are causing the appearance of another group. In Italy, the matrimonial exchanges between hrvatsko and slovesko Roma are leading to the merging of the two groups.

Travel must be understood more as real or potential mobility than as nomadism. The travel for the travellers and nomads is functional in various aspects: it allows a social organization, it permits adaptability and flexibility, it allows the exercise of professions. The journey allows different groups to live together in a residence, to be closer, sometimes to oppose or to marry. In addition to its social function, the journey has an economic function. It is obvious for certain occupations: street vendor follows the schedule of festivals and fairs, horse dealer at the fair on livestock, agricultural worker in the fruit seasons, vines picking and olives.

Britain is perhaps the only remaining country in which traditional Roma communities maintain an overwhelmingly itinerant lifestyle, living in caravans on designated campsites. Most families tend to be based on the same site for longer periods of time. This facilitates both school attendance and the maintenance of clients' networks and trade contacts. It is customary for families to travel during the summer months as well as occasionally to fairs and larger family gatherings. The extended family is both the domestic and productive unit. Core families usually occupy between one to three trailers that stand adjacent to one another, with close family relations occupying nearby plots.

## 4. Customs and traditions of Roma

### A. Customs and traditions

Traditions were one of the tools by which the Roma identity maintained itself through centuries and they played an important role in the life of Roma in every place they lived.

Traditions, called *romano zakono* among Roma living in Slavic countries, *romano sakaši* among Lovara, are transmitted from grand-parents and parents to their children and grand children.

These Roma traditions create the *romanimos* or *romanipen* - that is, the Roma identity. The place where these traditions take their full force among Roma in the entire world is inside the family and in family life. For Roma, the basic "unit" is constituted by the family and the lineage<sup>16</sup>. Traditions cover every aspect of life, from birth to death, for interrelations as well as for conflicts, for family life, hygiene and so on.

Family traditions still form the core of the Roma culture. They are still very much present and alive nowadays, even when the Roma do no longer live a "traditional" life.

An important event in the Roma life is the birth. In many Roma groups, before and after birth, there are a number of bans on the pregnant woman and mother. It is still functioning a very wide-cycle ritual, which serves to protect life and health of the young mother and baby.

In Portugal, the birth of children truly marks the recognition of man by its community. With the first-born son, the man accesses to a higher level and is seen as a true householder with autonomous authority. It also marks the status of women because she can hope to gain some influence and power, beyond which she no longer stays under the strict control of their husband's mother.

In Bulgarian Roma communities, after the birth, the baby is ritually washed in salted water (not to smell of green and to be more healthy), in which they put coins for health and spring blossom, if the birth is in the spring. They make him the so called cakes where relatives and friends gather at a table with ritual cakes, eating honey, halva and cheese. On cakes they do not serve alcohol. The young baby and his parents are gifted with the wishes and the baby is donated with money and clothes.

In Bulgaria there is also the boy trimming custom that represents a cause for family celebration. It is carried out in the yard by a professional barber, accompanied by music, jokes, wishes and festive table.

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<sup>16</sup> [http://www.rroma.org/rroma\\_traditions/](http://www.rroma.org/rroma_traditions/)

The first important step in the life of a newly born is the baptism, when the child is given his name. All members of the family as well as many members of the clan are present on this occasion. Important is the choice of god-father and god-mother, who are generally highly regarded members of the extended family.

The baptism takes place in church - catholic, orthodox or protestant - and after that, all the people attending party eat, drink and have fun. From that moment onward, the god-parents take an important place in the life of the child, as second parents, helping him in all difficult or important moments of his or her life.

The Muslim Roma in the Balkan doesn't practice, of course, baptisms. A very celebrated tradition by Muslims Roma is the "syunet" or circumcision of little boys till the age of seven. It is usually done by a wealthy Muslim named "syunetchiya" that makes the organization of the case for a whole region and for all uncircumcised small boys, regardless of their ethnic origin. They are brought in triumph on a green horse, on which a colorful blanket called "Asha" is placed. The celebration is accompanied by horse racing, wrestling and other attractive racing games, which make the event significant and to be remembered for years and it is often associated with a number of other important events, both in the individual lives of the contemporaries of the "syunet" and other public events occurring during or about the conduct of "syunet".

Another important event for the Roma is the wedding. Historically, among Roma (as among others), weddings did traditionally occurred at an early age - for boys, between 15 and 17 years old, for girls between 14 and 16, inside the community. However, in most places, Roma marriages are rarely official.

In Britain, marriage is similarly within the community, though marriage within the wider community of Travellers (including Irish and Scottish Travellers) is widespread and accepted. Couples usually marry at a very young age, sometimes after only a very brief acquaintance period. Romantic relations outside marriage are discouraged, and the community is especially protective of girls in this respect.

Possible wives for one's son are sought by hearsay, that is, Roma tell each other whose girl, from which family has the right age to marry. The father and mother of the groom (to be) sometimes pay a visit to the parents of the girl. The parents of the boy look for a future daughter in law who is beautiful, resourceful and from a well known family. Should they (and both the bride and groom to be) like the match, the ceremony corresponding to a betrothal may begin. In some

groups, money is paid for the bride, and sometimes large sums. Even now, this tradition of "buying" the bride has remained very much alive among Vlach Roma and especially among the Kalderaši.

A similar custom was practiced in the community of Muslims Roma and was called babahak (father's right). Nowadays, however, it is almost forgotten and obviously will be lost irretrievably.

The choice and ultimate decision rests on the parental side. Among Kalderaši, there are sometimes early agreements of betrothal, when the children are sometimes still of a very young age. In any case, should the wedding not take place, the parents of either the boy or the girl has to pay a fine.

Another well-preserved tradition, which precedes the day of the wedding is the bride's hennaing. It is best saved in Roma Muslims communities and it is made in a close family circle at the house of the bride. The ritual begins at midnight. The bride is hennaed consistently on the fingers of both hands and the palms, then on the fingers of both legs. The rite is accompanied by donating money on a white cloth, which is wrapped around the hands and feet of the bride. The white canvas is tightened with a red thread and together they symbolize the integrity of the young wife. Hennaing itself is made by an old and influential woman who has only one marriage and never cheated on her husband. She and all the older relatives bless the young couple and younger and agile women assist her throughout.

On the wedding day relatives from the settlement and even further, from other villages or cities, are present. They are to be honoured by an abundance of food and drinks, presented by the parents of the newlywed. From that moment onward, the two sets of parents are considered to be related.

At the wedding, all the guests give gifts to the newly-weds, sometimes even money and they return the politeness by giving small gifts to them. The wedding ceremonies culminate when the young couple retires to their room (it used to be a special tent) where they'll consummate the union. Traditionally, all guests waited for the result - the blood traces proving that the girl was a virgin, thus demonstrating to all guest she was honourable. If the bride does not prove to be a virgin, sometimes marriage breaks down and she is returned to her parents and the ransom is returned to groups that paid for the bride.

Another tradition exists among different Roma groups: the abduction of the girl by the boy or rather the flight of the young couple when parents haven't formally agreed to a wedding. After a few days, the young couple returns and the wedding is then celebrated. In some Roma groups, a symbolic form of this abduction is still practiced.

After the wedding, the girl wears a scarf over her head. She is not free to show her hair to others than her husband. This tradition is still enforced among many Roma, but in big cities, is slowly dying out.

The bride traditionally goes to live in her husband's family but her father and mother nevertheless keep an eye on her life in her new family. In the Spanish gypsy community, the couple is confirmed to be joined when they have the first child, man and woman, entering adulthood.

Should the marriage not work, divorce is allowed among Roma. This can either happen by mutual consent or be judged in the Kris. Once divorced, both are free to marry again.

The Roma communities have also specific customs and rituals related with death and funerals. Some of most typical traditions for death and burial are found amongst Kalderaši of Christian belief. When someone dies in the family, his close relatives buy the coffin and lay the dead in his best clothes inside it. Sometimes, objects dear to the deceased are put with him in the coffin. For three days, the deceased and the coffin remain at home. For three days and three nights, his family sits at his side.

On the fourth day, the deceased is carried to the cemetery, always feet ahead and buried in rich tombs, mainly common to Kalderaši community.

For Muslims Roma the burial custom involves giving away little money for the relatives of the deceased / iskati.

In Spain, at funerals, all the connotations of a nomadic people and those of an Oriental people are on display. Historically, the caravan and all the property of the deceased were burned and this ritual is still performed today by nomadic gypsies in Northern Europe. In Spain, they sold their horses or animals and burned the deceased's cart, and today there are still families who burn the clothes of the dead. They are acts of purification with Eastern origins. Today, Spanish Gypsies are usually buried, like the rest of the citizens, in cemeteries. The wake is always held in the house of the deceased, but they are beginning to use the funeral parlours more and more. They wear black dress whilst in mourning, and this cultural borrowing from the mainstream society is now used almost solely by the Spanish gypsies.

Another important part of the Roma traditions are devoted to rules about ritual cleanness and uncleanness. This concept has its real implications not only in the everyday life of Roma and the way they take care of their houses but also on some very important customs related to childbirths, death and funerals, etc. Finally, it also affects intergenerational relations as well as relations between Roma men and women and the perception of the elderly and children.

From her first menstruations and till the menopause a girl is considered as being potentially unclean and could thus also render a man unclean. A man is not allowed to touch her skirt and the women, on the other hand, are not allowed to sit near the tools used for work. Should this happen, the entire work becomes unclean and has to be thrown away or broken. When a Roma is considered ritually unclean, he cannot eat and drink together with the other Roma, but only among his closest relatives. This continues till the moment where the uncleanness ceases. Other things are considered ritually unclean. For example, the following: eating or drinking from plates or vessels on the floor; washing together men and women's clothes; washing together upper body and lower body clothes etc. are all "unclean". These traditions are still very much alive among many different Roma groups - more so even among the Kalderaši, Lovari, Sinti and Travellers in England. In England for example, Romani families still maintain the traditional values such as the dichotomy between clean and defiled, which expresses itself in the separation of water supplies according to usage, a preference for outdoor cooking (so as to be able to display publicly the separation of cooking utensils from those used for other purposes, such as cleaning and washing clothes), avoidance of certain topics of discussion in mixed gender company, avoidance of certain animals and their image (e.g. peacocks and snakes), and more. Polluted or defiled materials are disposed of through burning, and include the possessions of dead family members.

The highest instance of the Roma social structures is the Kris. This instance, a "Gypsy Tribunal", is in fact an arbitration court. The members of this court, are chosen among the most highly regarded, honest and intelligent Roma in the community. Each member of the community who has a problem with another one is free to call the Kris. The arbitrators meet and evaluate the evidence and the torts done to the plaintiff. The highest penalty handed out by the Kris is the banishment from the community, either for a given period of time or totally. This is a high penalty because a Roma cannot exist without the Roma social structures. This penalty is feared more than death. But one has to say that no Kris ever handed a death penalty. A Kris does not have the right to take a Rom's life. The Kris also hands out other penalties for example fines (sometimes rather high), to be paid by the guilty party.

This tradition is still alive, even in Western European countries, where Roma generally still continue to resolve internal disputes within the community.

## 5. Roma culture / influence on local culture. Personalities

Romani culture is diverse and there is no universal culture per se, but there are attributes common to all Roma: loyalty to family (extended and clan); belief in Del (God) and Beng (the Devil); belief in destiny; standards and norms, varying in degree from group to group; adaptability to changing conditions. Romani culture is diverse, with a multitude of traditions and customs but the integration of many Roma into non-Roma culture due to settlement has diluted many cultural values and beliefs.

Roma culture, like any other, has two main sides - spiritual and material. Spiritual side of the various Roma communities in Europe and all over the world is directly dependent on the following basic elements: lifestyle (nomad - settled down), religion, language. It is reflected in the Roma holiday calendar, special rituals and customs, community values, forms of intra-government, folklore, folk medicine and others.

### A. Roma spiritual culture

Roma have usually adopted the dominant religion of the host country while often preserving aspects of their particular belief systems and indigenous religion and worship. Roma religion has a highly developed sense of morality, taboos and the supernatural, though it is often denigrated by organized religions.

Officially, a large part of the Roma in the Balkan (Ex-Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Macedonia and Albania) and the Crimean Roma are Muslims. One can find some Muslim elements in their everyday life: their names, cooking, clothes and some ceremonies. In Bulgaria, Muslim Roma, except the most conservative among them, celebrate the Muslim calendar holidays. The biggest of them as for the entire Muslim world are the two Bayryama - Kurban / Koch Bayryam and Ramazan / Sheker Bayryam.

All other Roma are Christian, catholic, orthodox, some protestant (in Latvia, Estonia, Finland and Sweden, for example).

Since World War II, a growing number of Roma have embraced Evangelical movements. Over the past half-century, Roma have become ministers and created their own churches and missionary organizations for the first time. In some countries, the majority of Roma now belong to the Roma churches. This unexpected change has greatly contributed to a better image of Roma in society. The work they perform is seen as more legitimate and they have begun to obtain legal permits for commercial activities.



Evangelical Roma churches exist today in almost every country where Roma are settled. The movement is particularly strong in France and Spain; there are more than one thousand Roma churches (known as "Filadelfia") in Spain, with almost one hundred in Madrid alone. In Germany, the most numerous group is that of Polish Roma, having their main church in Mannheim.

In the last years, several other congregations have been actively proselytizing Roma like the Pentecostals - among Kalderasi, Lovari and Sinti, mostly in Western Europe. In England, a wave of conversions to a Romani Pentecostal Church began in the early 1980s and continues today among English Gypsies. Many families have given up certain traditions and trades that are deemed incongruent with the mission's teachings, such as fortune-telling, and attend church services on a regular basis. A Romani clergy has been trained within the community and is active in organizing conventions for its followers in the country as well as in missionary activity among Romani communities abroad.

Other congregations, like the Baptists, the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the Jehovah Witness are active in present days for example in Romania.

Apart from their appurtenance to a religion, the traditional Roma beliefs are very much dualistic: on the one hand Del or Devel (God), the source of all goodness, light and the protector of men; on the other hand Beng, the Devil, the source of evil, darkness and the tempter of men. This dualistic belief may be the trace of old oriental dogmas.

The oral folk tradition in Roma communities, which every cultural treasury can be proud of - stories, songs, legends, sayings and proverbs, riddles, folk poetry, etc. - has not been recorded and stored until recent years. Roma folklore is definitely the biggest and inexhaustible spiritual wealth, which gives an interesting picture of its carriers as a whole. There is a strong tradition of Romani music in Central and Eastern Europe, notably in countries such as Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and the states of the former Yugoslavia. One part of the Romani music is based on the folk music of the countries where the Romani went through or settled. Local music is adopted and performed - usually instrumental - and it is slowly transformed into Romani styles, which are usually more complex than the original styles. In its turn, Romani music has greatly influenced the local music. In Bulgaria, as an example, Roma songs and dances are a mix of Roma and Balkan folk traditions.

In the Western Europe, the Spanish flamenco is to a very large extent the music (and dance, or indeed the culture) of the Romani people of Andalusia.



Also in England, a rich repertoire of folktales and folksongs was preserved until recently among elderly Roma, with themes, motives and performance styles that are largely shared with the sedentary population.

Folklore medicine, mainly spread in Bulgaria but also in other Balkan countries and Romania, is a result of the isolation and the hostility towards the new lands seeking Roma migrants from older times, their distrust of traditional medicine and the lack of funds for specialized treatment in more recent times. All these reasons preserve many medicine formulas and practices as baene, making hamaliyka, casting a bullet po, of coals, lick of an eye, tear of a spleen and many others with high psychotherapeutic impact on the patient. Many Roma families retained to these days the ability to heal through herbs and specially prepared natural potions and ointments, passing it from generation to generation.

Fundamental Roma values are also an integral part of Roma culture.

In Bulgaria, they gravitate around freedom, family, kids, fun and traditions, meet the most necessary, the lack of ambition to rule over others, goodwill to Bulgarian culture, etc.

In Spain, the value system is constructed as a gypsy way of living and dealing with the world. The spiritual values of the Roma come from a traveller and oriental culture; they are a people who have travelled from India, across Europe, to Spain for over a thousand years. Now the vast majority is settled and lives in houses and apartments but still think of them as a traveller race and they retain their old cultural values with the oriental ideas of the pure and impure.

Some examples are the following:

- ✓ The value of being and not having.
- ✓ The value of one's word is respected among the Roma without papers or written documents having to be signed.
- ✓ The respect for elders, for their advice and experience.
- ✓ Freedom is one of the most important values to the gypsies. The individual and collective freedom, mainly the value that is given to the person and relationships.

#### B. Roma Material Culture

Roma material culture is the result of typical Roma crafts and their works. Since Roma discovered the world and the world discovered them, the glory of Roma crafts and their works is uncontested these days, and for centuries they have been the most certain source of livelihood, forming feeling and understanding of Roma material culture.

One of the oldest and most respected trades among Roma is blacksmith. It is sacred and is based on family and kinship principle. Even nowadays Roma remain the most popular blacksmiths and pieces of their work relieve work of the people; make their lives easier and the world around them more beautiful.

It can be similarly defined the craft of those Roma who continue the tradition of woodworking. In general, this craft is related to the art of producing of wooden spoons, bowls, pots, etc.

The gift to trade horses and other domestic animals is also an old ancestral tradition, which does not lose its magic even today in Bulgaria. In Britain, it is particularly prominent in Roma culture the participation in fairs, which occur once or twice a year, each on fixed dates, in a variety of locations across the country. They are often known as ‘horse fairs’ and still involve a fair amount of horse-trading, though now the principal purpose of horses is an investment in order to display.

Still in the British context, a specific element of the Travellers’ culture is the painted wagons, adopted in late 19<sup>th</sup> century and produced by sedentary wagon-builders. Many Roma still maintain painted wagons as collectors and display items. Favourite motifs and other pictures or statues put on wagons are horses, horseshoes, fruit, flowers, and birds. Modern caravans are also ordered from non-Roma manufacturers, and source and style are often subject to community-internal fashion. They tend to be decorated in colours and flower motifs on inside furniture.

Music playing and related dances are also an integral part of traditional Roma life. Roma have given an invaluable contribution to Russian Romance, Hungarian czardas and Spanish Flamenco.

Another typical craft Roma is related to the training of bears (by the Ursari, as they been known in Romania) and other animals (like apes). In recent years, this craft goes to its final sunset because of a number of objective reasons.

Unfortunately, nowadays we find a number of Roma craft works with unique technology already unknown. The loss of Roma material and spiritual culture is an integral part of the assimilation process of the community, running from the centuries.

### C. Personalities

Among the best known Roma personalities in culture but also in other domains, there must be mentioned:

COUNTRY	NAME	DOMAIN
Romania	Barbu Lautaru (Vasile Barbu on his real name)	Culture - was one of the most appreciated singers and kobsa players. He succeeded in mixing elements of Romanian traditional music with elements of Oriental music, Russian romance and Western elements;
	Anton Pann (Antonie Pantoleon Petroveanu)	Culture - poet, composer of religious music, folklorist, he composed the music of the national hymn of Romania;
	Zavaidoc (Marin Teodorescu)	Culture - singer from the inter-war period
	Grigoraş Dinicu	Culture - violonist and composer, he is known for his composition from 1906, named Hora Staccato
	Fănică Luca (Iordache Luca Ştefan)	Culture - pan-pipe player and Romani singer, he was considered one of the most talented pan-pipe players from all times;
	Ionel Budişteanu (Nae Ion Voicu)	Culture - Roma violinist and conductor
Portugal	Carlos Miguel	Politics and administration - he is the Mayor of a Portuguese Municipality (Torres Vedras)
	Quaresma	Sports - well known football player
Spain	EL PELE (Ceferino Gimenez Malla)	Religion - Bohemian beatified by Pope John Paul II in 1997.
	Juan Manuel Montoya	Medicin - Physician, he carried out the first study on the health and conditions of the Roma in Madrid
	Juan De Dios Ramírez Heredia	Politics - he was the first Gypsy member of the Parliament in Spain and also the first Gypsy MEP in Europe
	Adelina Jiménez	Education - the first Spanish Gypsy woman to gain a degree in teaching.
	Jose Heredia Maya	Culture/education - professor of Spanish Literature at the University of Granada; the most important Spanish language Gypsy poet of all time
Bulgaria	Dr. Atanas Dimitrov	Culture - philosopher, lecturer and translator
	Dr. Asen Kolev	Culture - philosopher
	Prof. Hristo Kyuchukov	Education - educator, linguist
	Ivan Kirilov	Justice/Culture - magistrate and

		writer
	Professor Alexander Chirkov	Medicin - Cardiac Surgery
	Russi Zabunov	Civil society - founder of the first Roma organization in Bulgaria
	Shakir Pashov	Politics - politician
	Manoush Romanov	Politics - politician
	Usin Kerim	Culture - poet
	Sally Ibrahim	Culture - poet
	George Parishuv	Culture - poet and journalist
	Vasil Chaprazov	Culture - poet and journalist
	Souli Metkov	Culture - journalist
	Stoyanka Sokolova	Culture - journalist
	Cyril Lambov	Culture - pianist, composer and conductor
	Angelo Malikov	Culture - tsimbalist, composer
	Hassan Chinchiri	Culture - violinist and conductor
	Ibro Lolov, Boris Karlov, Traicho Sinapov	Culture - accordionists
	Ivo Papazov, Mladen Malakov	Culture - clarinetists
	Serafim Todorov	Sports - box world champion
	Vasko Vassilev	Culture - sculptor
	Souli Seferov	Culture - artist
Hungary	Janos Balasz	Culture - artist known for his naïve art and poetry
	Janos Bihari	Culture /- a virtuoso violinist from the nineteenth century
Germany	Philomena Franz	Culture - She was the first Sinti awarded the "Federal Cross for Merits", the highest civil award which Germany confers
England	Ian Hancock	Education/Culture - Romani scholar, teacher and activist
France	Matéo Maximoff	Culture - writer
Sweden	Katarina Taikon	Culture - writer and journalist

## 6. Specific crafts and occupations

Traditional trades are inseparable from Roma groups, for these traditional trades formed one of the strongest bases of group identity. More important, work, most often in the form of trades, is an integral part of the Roma identity. That work is part of one's identity is illustrated by the various meanings of the word *butji* - work in Romanes. While it means work in general, some Roma groups use it only when speaking about smith-work. Should you ask a Crimean Rom "savo xizmeti keres?" - which trade do you practice?-, he'll answer "kerav *butji*" - literally "I work" - which means "I'm doing smith work". In these Crimean Roma dialects, the word *butjari* means a smith.

Traditional trades, perhaps with the exception of fortune-telling, are a man's work. Not to say that women are not involved, on the contrary as they more often than not, help their husbands, brothers and fathers at work.

There are several lines of traditional trades among Roma groups. The most important ones are: Metal work divided into copper and blacksmiths; Horse-dealing; Music as a trade and Wood. One should not think at these as a strict subdivision. In addition, Roma, throughout the ages have taken odd jobs to complement their incomes and have proved to be highly adaptable to more modern technologies.

Nowadays, one finds Roma in all trades, lawyers, doctors, scholars but also car mechanics, farmers and so on. This may seem as peculiar or even surprising but the fact that Roma have taken all professions is well documented as early as the 15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>17</sup>

Traditional trades and occupations include:

### A. Metalwork

One of the most important traditional occupations of the Roma is metalworking.

#### Ironwork

The profession of smith is one of the oldest among Roma. It used to be the main profession of the Carpathian and Balkan Roma. In those regions, Roma were actually well known and established blacksmiths, settled in villages, but were also renowned weapon makers. Such was their renown, that several Hungarian kings actually forbade the nobility to employ Roma smiths without his explicit authorization. In the Ottoman Empire, many were employed as *sabljari*, saber-makers,

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<sup>17</sup> [http://www.Roma.org/Roma\\_traditions/Roma\\_trades/](http://www.Roma.org/Roma_traditions/Roma_trades/)

directly under the Ottoman army jurisdiction. This gave rise to the so-called Cengene Sancak, an Ottoman army entity which employed many Roma.

Iron manufacturing trade includes the manufacturing of agricultural tools, household items, iron items for construction and installation, locks, latches, keys and different types of door locks and gates, horse shoeing, etc.

In Bulgaria, the manufacture of iron objects (hoes, axes, knives, hammers, sickles, scythes, shovels, forged nails) and related traditional Roma crafts blacksmiths, Burgudzii, Demirdzis and Chilingira, are nowadays combined with skills for machinery treatment of the metals, angle grinder and related services. In villages that combination goes with nablatanstvo (producing shoes for animals and shoeing them) and sarachlak (production of leather attributes for donkeys and horses).

The best hardware-smiths today make objects of wrought iron, ornamental iron fence panels, which are in demand not only to our market but often orders from abroad are received. Urbanization and industrialization reclassify part of the hardware-smiths in the production of pottery - troughs, pots, casseroles, vases.

#### Copperwork

Other work, another profession among Roma, closely related to metal work is tinning caldrons and pots. This profession, taken-up and still practiced nowadays by some Roma groups is found mostly in the Balkans, in Romania and in Hungary. Tinning and manufacturing copper utensils - pans, dishes, coppers, stills (for painting and for brandy), household items (jugs, cups, etc.) - is associated primarily with certain sub-groups of meta-group Kaldarashi community whose name comes from Romanian - *căldărar/căldăraș*, a caldron maker. One can still find gifted artisans among them. The technology and methodology of this profession is the same among all Roma groups and in all countries and also involves some basic knowledge regarding chemicals. This is to say that the technology is not as primitive as one might think. But the Roma realize it using primitive instruments and techniques. In connection with the elimination of restrictions on wandering, parts of the Kaldarashi sub-groups return to their wandering lifestyle. Because of this, the work is not done on stationary forges but these tinkers travel from village to village with all their instruments and each time set-up their work-place.<sup>18</sup>

#### Gold and silverwork

Among Roma - mostly in Romania - one also finds rather primitive jewellers (ardžintari from the Romanian word *argintar*, a man working with silver). They retrieve their metal from old silver

<sup>18</sup> [http://www.Roma.org/Roma\\_traditions/Roma\\_trades/coppersmiths.html](http://www.Roma.org/Roma_traditions/Roma_trades/coppersmiths.html)

coins and jewels sold to them by the local population. This trade includes the manufacturing of jewellery, harness parts, clothing (buttons), household objects and religious objects (censers, candlesticks, candles, crosses).

Interestingly enough, the smith terminology in Romanes is not of Indian origin. Most terms are actually derived from the Greek (with some words of other language, too). However, metal names are of Indian origins: *sastro* [iron], *somnakaj* or *suvnakaj* [gold], *rup* [silver]. Only two dialects have kept the old Indian *pirdo* [copper], while all others are using more recent acquisitions (*xarkuma*).

### B. Woodwork

Another trade, wood-carving, was brought by the Roma from India. Even now, in the Balkans, in Romania and Hungary, some Roma groups are still carving spoons, troughs and other utensils needed by the local population but mainly bought as souvenirs by foreign tourists. These Roma are called *Lingurari* (In Romanian *lingurar* - someone making spoons) in Romania and in the Balkan. In other countries - Hungary and Croatia - they are called *Bejaš*.

In Bulgaria, the basketry and wood processing is also a traditional trade. In recent decades the tendency to restore some of the old Roma crafts has not passed by the basket makers. Furthermore, production of traditional baskets, is modified and specializes in production of flower-baskets, curtains, tables, chairs, bags, umbrellas, brackets, etc. As materials hazel, beech and split wicker bands are used.

### C. Music

Regarding the Roma music, this is one of the most popular traditional Roma trades. This trade is a traditional craft for generations of Roma families and is transmitted from father to son, being practiced in a group, band. It is played at different occasions as weddings, parties, fairs and doesn't require knowledge of musical notes. The used instruments, in order of frequency, are: the violin, (including a type of improvised violin, actually a viola with a semicircular or with six strings), the lute, the dulcimer, the accordion (taken from German music), the bass (so called musicians cello and bass), the guitar, bagpipes, whistle, wooden willow, aspen or cane, tambourine (used by *Ursari Roma*), the clarinet.

Nowadays, in Bulgaria for example, the Roma singers and instrumentalists are working in professional recording studios for the interpretation of Bulgarian and Roma songs. The same phenomenon is happening also in other Balkan countries, Romania and Hungary.



The Gypsy music draws from a vast variety of ethnic traditions - for example Romanian, Turkish, Jewish, and Slavic - as well as Roma traditions. Gypsy music contains much improvisation, is spontaneous, is rhythmically rich, has varied melodic facets and is combining the use of pace with changes of rhythm.

Roma music is very important in Eastern European cultures such as Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, Albania, Hungary, Russia and Romania, and the style and performance practices of Roma musicians have influenced European classical composers such as Franz Liszt and Johannes Brahms. The distinctive sound of Roma music has also strongly influenced bolero, jazz, flamenco and Cante Jondo in Europe. European-style Gypsy jazz is still widely practiced among the original creators (the Roma People); one who acknowledged this artistic debt was Django Reinhardt.

#### D. Other trades

##### Itinerant specializations

In Britain, perhaps the only remaining country in which traditional Roma communities maintain an overwhelmingly itinerant lifestyle, the Romani Gypsies are almost all self-employed, and tend to maintain a portfolio of itinerant specializations. These include goods sales (hawking of blankets, linen, carpets, household wares); trade in second hand goods (cars, caravans, clothes, furniture); breeding of horses and pedigree dogs; clearance of discarded goods and waste, especially scrap metal; external building and gardening; casual entertainment; and specialized Gypsy crafts: handmade wooden clothes pegs and baskets, white heather, handmade flowers, lucky charms and lace, knife-grinding, fortune-telling.

##### Agricultural seasonal labour

It is practiced as a semi-nomadic lifestyle by the Roma who travel through the countryside and offer their own wage labour in agriculture.

##### The "Suitcase" trade

In Bulgaria, the "Suitcase" trade began its development as a kind of business for the supply of cheap clothing and small scarce industrial goods from neighbouring countries, and consequently it was limited to the purchase of goods from the famous markets in Dimitrograd in the Ilyanci quarter in Sofia. At the beginning the production was realized at an improvised stall in towns, but nowadays, after surviving during the transitional "Suitcase" period, traders already have their own



shops. Only a small proportion of them developed their activities to the extent of creating its own chain of prestigious shops and boutiques offering more quality and even branded goods.

In Spain, in Portugal also, the traditional occupation of the Roma groups are small business, which mobilizes the whole family, like selling in fairs and markets such items as clothing, footwear, carpets, or others.

#### Fortune telling

Since the oldest times, the Roma were known for practicing the art of fortune telling. Along the time, they used many methods, from crystal balls, tarot cards (it was said that Roma invented this type of cards) and palm reading. The women fortune tellers pretend that their powers come from the supernatural land. As a rule, they don't use fortune telling for other Roma. In their community they have other ways to foresee the future and to heal. Gypsies often wear lucky amulets and talismans, to prevent the troubles, bad spirits and illnesses. They also use herbs in healing the illnesses, many of them having pharmaceutical proprieties attested also by conventional medicine.

#### Working abroad

After the fall of the communist regimes, working abroad (Gurbetchiystvo in Bulgarian) became a livelihood for tens of thousands of Roma from the Eastern Europe. Preferred countries are Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal, France, Germany, Belgium, Holland and England. Usually men go first, and then their wives and children. It is preferred the job in construction, agriculture, trade and services. Minor part of these Roma settled permanently as colonies collected in a generic principle. Significant part of them, however, prefer to invest earned money in their homelands, in the construction of family houses, in buying land, animals and cars, in developing their own business.

#### Lost trades

Between Roma lost craft or currently endangered occupation, one can include:

- ✓ processing of bone and horn that were transformed in combs, buttons, knife handles, pipe grips and gun powder horns;
- ✓ processing of animal hair which was used to made brushes;
- ✓ horse dealership or horse trade. In all European countries, Roma where known as horse-dealers and more generally as specialists in that trade. Horse trading was the main profession for Roma in Poland, the Baltic States and Russia. Nomadic Roma in these countries travelled from city to

city. bringing horses along to be sold or traded in the next city. This was also done by Lovari from Transylvania and Hungary, which legends say they understand the horses' speech.

## 7. Institutions (official, NGOs, etc.) which represent the interests of Roma community

Institutions and organizations currently working for or involved in the development of the Roma community<sup>19</sup> in the European states are represented in the following table, but their list is not limited:

Country	INSTITUTION / ORGANIZATION	Web-site
Albania	Roma Active Albania	
	Union of Albania Roma - <a href="http://www.unioniamarodrom.org">Amaro Drom</a>	<a href="http://www.unioniamarodrom.org">http://www.unioniamarodrom.org</a>
Austria	ROMANO CENTRO	<a href="http://www.romano-centro.org/">http://www.romano-centro.org/</a>
	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights	<a href="http://www.osce.org/odihr/">http://www.osce.org/odihr/</a>
	University of Graz (Rombase project)	
	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)	<a href="http://www.fra.europa.eu">http://www.fra.europa.eu</a>
	Kulturverein Österreichischer Roma, Vienna	<a href="http://www.kv-roma.at/">http://www.kv-roma.at/</a>
	Verein Roma, Oberwart, Burgenland	<a href="http://www.verein-roma.at/">http://www.verein-roma.at/</a>
	Verein Ketani für Sinti und Roma, Linz	<a href="http://www.sinti-roma.at/">http://www.sinti-roma.at/</a>
	Romlex project at the University of Graz	<a href="http://romani.uni-graz.at/romlex">http://romani.uni-graz.at/romlex</a>
	International Center for cultures and languages	
Belarus	Ekipen	
Belgium	Vlaams Centrum Woonwagenwerk	
	European Roma Information Office	<a href="http://erionet.org/site/">http://erionet.org/site/</a>
	Open Society Institute and Soros Foundation Networks	<a href="http://www.soros.org">http://www.soros.org</a>
	The European Network Against Racism	<a href="http://www.enar-eu.org/">http://www.enar-eu.org/</a>
	European Roma Grassroots Organisation Network	<a href="http://www.ergonetwork.org">http://www.ergonetwork.org</a>
Bulgaria	Foundation of Regional Development Roma	<a href="http://plovdiv.techno-link.com/ClientsSites/romafon/ROMA.htm">http://plovdiv.techno-link.com/ClientsSites/romafon/ROMA.htm</a>

<sup>19</sup> [www.reocities.com](http://www.reocities.com); [home.medewerker.uva.nl/t.d.stek/](http://home.medewerker.uva.nl/t.d.stek/)

	Romani Baht Foundation	<a href="http://www.romanibaht.com">http://www.romanibaht.com</a>
	Integro Association	<a href="http://www.integrobg.org/en/">http://www.integrobg.org/en/</a>
	Amalipe, Center for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance	<a href="http://amalipe.com/">http://amalipe.com/</a>
	NGO Roma Together, Polski Trambesh	<a href="http://www.romatogether.org/">http://www.romatogether.org/</a>
	Inter Ethnic Initiative for Human Rights Foundation	<a href="http://www.inter-ethnic.org/">http://www.inter-ethnic.org/</a>
	Roma Foundation Iskra	
	Bahtale Chave Foundation	<a href="http://oldwebsite.nadejda-romite.org/bg/">http://oldwebsite.nadejda-romite.org/bg/</a>
	Roma Information Centre	<a href="http://www.ric-bg.info/bg">http://www.ric-bg.info/bg</a>
	Association DROM Organization, Vidin	<a href="http://drom-vidin.org/">http://drom-vidin.org/</a>
	Foundation "Sham", Montana	
	Foundation "Napreduk", Pazardjik	
	Foundation Roma - Lom	<a href="http://www.roma-lom.org/">http://www.roma-lom.org/</a>
	Open Society Institute, Sofia	<a href="http://www.osf.bg">http://www.osf.bg</a>
	"Student Society for Development of inter-ethnic dialogue	<a href="http://romastudents.org/">http://romastudents.org/</a>
	FRR Roma	<a href="http://frdroma.org/">http://frdroma.org/</a>
	FRKR "Nangle	<a href="http://www.nwngo.net/ngobaza/Nangle--mon.html">http://www.nwngo.net/ngobaza/Nangle--mon.html</a>
	Foundation S.E.G.A. - Start Effective Grassroots Alternatives	<a href="http://www.sega.bg">http://www.sega.bg</a>
	International Centre for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations	<a href="http://www.imir-bg.org/">http://www.imir-bg.org/</a>
	Ethnotolerance	<a href="http://ethnotolerance.org">http://ethnotolerance.org</a>
	Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, Sofia	<a href="http://www.bghelsinki.org/">http://www.bghelsinki.org/</a>
Croatia	Klub Roma Hrvatske	<a href="http://www.umrh.hr/Novo/asociation.htm">http://www.umrh.hr/Novo/asociation.htm</a>
	Unija Roma Hrvatske	<a href="http://www.unija-roma.hr/">http://www.unija-roma.hr/</a>
	Local Roma National Minority Council of Zagreb	
	Centre for Peace, Nonviolence and Human Rights	<a href="http://www.centar-za-mir.hr/">http://www.centar-za-mir.hr/</a>
	Centre for Civil Initiatives	<a href="http://www.cci.hr/">http://www.cci.hr/</a>
	Organization for Democratic Society	
	Human Rights Centre Zagreb	<a href="http://www.human-rights.hr">http://www.human-rights.hr</a>
	Centre for Education and Counselling of Women	<a href="http://www.cesi.hr/en/">http://www.cesi.hr/en/</a>
	Croatian Helsinki Committee	

	Center for Peace, Legal Advice and Psychosocial Assistance	<a href="http://www.center4peace.org/">http://www.center4peace.org/</a>
Cyprus	Dom Research Center	<a href="http://www.domresearchcenter.com">http://www.domresearchcenter.com</a>
Czech Republic	Centrum Romistiky (The Romani Studies Center)	<a href="http://pf.ujep.cz/cr/">http://pf.ujep.cz/cr/</a>
	Helsinki Citizens' Assembly, Roma Section	<a href="http://www.czechia.com/hcaroma">http://www.czechia.com/hcaroma</a>
	Nadace Dzeno (The Dzeno Foundation)	<a href="http://www.dzeno.cz/">http://www.dzeno.cz/</a>
	Nadace Romano Chave (The Romane Chave Foundation)	<a href="http://romove.radio.cz">http://romove.radio.cz</a>
	Romani Children and Youth Association of the Czech Republic	
	Romska Obcanska Iniciativa (The Romani Civic Initiative)	
	Romea and Romano Vodi, Prague	<a href="http://www.romea.cz">http://www.romea.cz</a>
	Roma Rising - Romove Obrozeni	<a href="http://www.romarising.com">http://www.romarising.com</a>
	Vzájemné Soužití (Life together), Ostrava	<a href="http://www.vzajemnesouziti.estranky.cz/">http://www.vzajemnesouziti.estranky.cz/</a>
	Athinganoi, Prague	
	Drom, Brno	<a href="http://www.drom.cz/">http://www.drom.cz/</a>
	IQ Roma Service, Brno	<a href="http://www.iqrs.cz/verze/en/">http://www.iqrs.cz/verze/en/</a>
	Romano Hangos	<a href="http://www.romanohangos.cekit.cz/">http://www.romanohangos.cekit.cz/</a>
	League of Human Rights LLP (Liga Lidských Práv)	<a href="http://www.llp.cz">http://www.llp.cz</a>
	People in Need	<a href="http://www.clovekvtisni.cz/indexen.php">http://www.clovekvtisni.cz/indexen.php</a>
	The Czech Government Council for Roma Community Affairs	<a href="http://www.vlada.cz">http://www.vlada.cz</a>
	International Romani Union	<a href="http://www.unionromani.org/union_in.htm">http://www.unionromani.org/union_in.htm</a>
	Documentation Centre for Human Rights	
	Romani Centre for Central and Eastern Europe	
	The Museum of Romani Culture	<a href="http://www.rommuz.cz/">http://www.rommuz.cz/</a>
	Association of Wallachian Roma in Czech Republic	
	The Khetane-Spolu Citizen's Association	
	The Society of Roma in Moravia	<a href="http://www.cepsr.com/clanek.php?ID=3">http://www.cepsr.com/clanek.php?ID=3</a>
The Romane Chave Foundation		
The Romani Democratic Initiative		
The Democratic Alliance of Roma of the Czech Republic		

Denmark	Romana Kulturako Centri, Kopenhagen	<a href="http://www.euroma.dk/">http://www.euroma.dk/</a>
Estonia	North-Estonian Roma Association, Põhja-Eesti Romade Ühing	<a href="http://www.estblul.ee/ENG/Members/pe_rooma.html">http://www.estblul.ee/ENG/Members/pe_rooma.html</a>
Finland	The Romany Mission/Romano Missio	<a href="http://www.romanomissio.fi/">http://www.romanomissio.fi/</a>
	International Romani Writer's Association	<a href="http://www.romaniwriters.com/">http://www.romaniwriters.com/</a>
France	Association Nationale Tzigane d'Enseignement et Pédagogie Scolaire (ANTEPS)	
	Association Tsiganes Solidarités	<a href="http://perso.wanadoo.fr/ats/">http://perso.wanadoo.fr/ats/</a>
	Comité pour le Respect des Droits des Tsiganes	
	Coordination des Associations Tsiganes de France	
	Etape 29 - Gens du Voyage	
	Romano Atmo	
	Romano Yekhipe, France	
	Union Socio-Educative Tzigane d'Aquitaine (USETA)	
La voix des Roms		
Germany	Dokumentations und Kulturzentrum Deutscher Sinti und Roma	<a href="http://www.sintiundroma.de">www.sintiundroma.de</a>
	Katholische Zigeunerseelsorge in Deutschland	<a href="http://www.ksfrs.de/">http://www.ksfrs.de/</a>
	Landesverband Deutscher Sinti und Roma	<a href="http://www.sintiundroma-nrw.de/">http://www.sintiundroma-nrw.de/</a>
	Roma Union Frankfurt	
	Sinti and Roma Partner Organizations of the Zentralrat	<a href="http://www.imadr.org">http://www.imadr.org</a>
	Verband Deutscher Sinti und Roma: Landesverband Berlin-Brandenburg	<a href="http://www.sinti-roma-berlin.de">www.sinti-roma-berlin.de</a>
	Verband Deutscher Sinti und Roma: Landesverband Baden-Württemberg	<a href="http://www.sinti-roma-bawue.de">www.sinti-roma-bawue.de</a>
	Verband Deutscher Sinti und Roma: Landesverband Hessen	<a href="http://www.sinti-roma-hessen.de">www.sinti-roma-hessen.de</a>
	Verband Deutscher Sinti und Roma: Landesverband Nordrhein-Westfalen	
	Verband Deutscher Sinti und Roma: Landesverband Rheinland-Pfalz	

	Gesellschaft für bedrohte Völker GfV	
	Forum Tsiganologische Forschung FTF, University of Leipzig, Leipzig	<a href="http://www.uni-leipzig.de">http://www.uni-leipzig.de</a>
Greece	Solidarity Center of Roma Women	
Hungary	Amalipe Association of Roma Culture and Traditions	
	Association of Roma Women Participating in Public Life	
	Autonomy Foundation (Hungarian Foundation for Self-Reliance)	<a href="http://www.autonomia.hu/">http://www.autonomia.hu/</a>
	European Roma Rights Center	<a href="http://www.errc.org/">http://www.errc.org/</a>
	Foundation for Roma Civic Rights and Legal Protection	
	Roma Research Institute	
	Roma Scientific and Artistic Society	
	Roma Youth Federation	
	Kalyi Jag Roma School for Vocational Training	
	Amaro Drom	<a href="http://www.amarodrom.hu/">http://www.amarodrom.hu/</a>
	Lungo Drom	<a href="http://www.lungo-drom.hu/">http://www.lungo-drom.hu/</a>
	Roma Civil Rights Foundation (Roma Polgárjogi Alapítvány)	<a href="http://rpa.ingyenweb.hu/">http://rpa.ingyenweb.hu/</a>
	The Gypsy Inter-Ministerial Committee	
Council for Roma Affairs	<a href="http://www.mfa.gov.hu">www.mfa.gov.hu</a>	
Manush Foundation	<a href="http://www.manush.hu/eng">http://www.manush.hu/eng</a>	
Ireland	Pavee Point Travellers' Centre	<a href="http://www.paveepoint.ie/">www.paveepoint.ie/</a>
	Irish Traveller Movement, ITM Network of local Traveller organizations	<a href="http://www.itmtrav.com/">http://www.itmtrav.com/</a>
	The National Association of Travellers' Centres	<a href="http://www.natc.ie/">http://www.natc.ie/</a>
Italy	Centro Culturale Zingaro "Thèm Romanó"	<a href="http://web.tiscalinet.it/associazionethrom/index.htm">http://web.tiscalinet.it/associazionethrom/index.htm</a>
	Centro di Documentazione Zingara (Opera Nomadi)	
	Centro Studi Zingari/Romanó Sicarimasko Than	
	Opera Nomadi	<a href="http://www.operanomadimilano.org/">http://www.operanomadimilano.org/</a>
	Romano Komiteto ande Italia	
	Unione Nazionale Internazionale Rom e Sinti in	

	Italia (UNIRSI)	
	Opera Nomadi, Calabria	<a href="http://www.operanomadirc.it/">http://www.operanomadirc.it/</a>
	Opera Nomadi, Centro di Documentazione Zingara, Torino	<a href="http://digilander.libero.it/ontorino/">http://digilander.libero.it/ontorino/</a>
	Opera Nomadi, Rom e Sinti, Padova	
	Thèm Romanó (Centro Culturale Zingaro), Lanciano	
	O Vurdón	<a href="http://www.vurdon.it/romani.htm">www.vurdon.it/romani.htm</a>
	Unione Nazionale Internazionale Rom e Sinti in Italia, UNIRSI, Milan	
	Inforoma	<a href="http://www.inforoma.it">http://www.inforoma.it</a>
Lithuania	Gypsy Fire and the Roma Community Centre	
Macedonia	Roma Community Center DROM Kumanovo	
	National Roma Centrum	<a href="http://www.nationalromacentrum.org/">http://www.nationalromacentrum.org/</a>
	Roma Association Cerenja and Radio Cerenja, Stip	<a href="http://www.cerenja.com.mk/">http://www.cerenja.com.mk/</a>
	Roma Progress, Rancovce	<a href="http://www.romaprogres.org/">http://www.romaprogres.org/</a>
	Roma Community Center DROM Kumanovo, Kumanovo	
	Center for Institutional Development	<a href="http://cira.org.mk/en/">http://cira.org.mk/en/</a>
	Association of Citizens Sumnal	
	<a href="http://romanationalcongress.webs.com/">http://romanationalcongress.webs.com/</a>	
Moldova	Tarna Rom	
Montenegro	Democratic Roma Center, Pogorica (at the Swedish Helsinki Committee)	
	Youth Cultural Center Juventas, Pogorica	<a href="http://www.juventas.co.me">http://www.juventas.co.me</a>
Norway	<a href="#">Romani og Romanøfolkets Landsforbund</a>	
Netherlands	Nederlands Instituut Sinti en Roma NISR	<a href="http://www.nisr.nl/">http://www.nisr.nl/</a>
	Stichting Roma Emancipatie	
	Spolu International Foundation, Utrecht	<a href="http://www.spolu.nl/">www.spolu.nl/</a>
	Landelijke Sinti en Roma Organisatie LSRO / Sinti en Roma Centrum, Best	
	Het Wiel, Stichting Woonwagennieuws	



	Woonwagenzending, Emmen	
	Nevepe, Rom News Agency	
	Radio Patrin	
Poland	Advisory and Information Centre of Roma	
	Centrum Kultury Romow Stowarzyszenie Społeczno Kulturalne	
	Amala Roma Society	
	Regional Museum, Roma Museum, Tarnów	<a href="http://www.cracow.travel">http://www.cracow.travel</a>
Portugal	Secretariado Diocesano de Lisboa da ONPC	<a href="http://www.sdl-onpc.org.pt/">http://www.sdl-onpc.org.pt/</a>
	Obra Nacional da Pastoral dos Ciganos	<a href="http://www.portal.ecclesia.pt/">http://www.portal.ecclesia.pt/</a>
	CEFEM - Centro de Estudos	<a href="http://www.cefitness.com/cef.php">http://www.cefitness.com/cef.php</a>
	Rede Europeia Anti Pobreza / Portugal - REAPN	<a href="http://www.reapn.org/">http://www.reapn.org/</a>
	Centro Europeu de Formação e Estudos sobre Migrações	<a href="http://www.fpce.up.pt/ciie/migracoes.html">http://www.fpce.up.pt/ciie/migracoes.html</a>
	Alto Comissariado para a Imigração e Diálogo Intercultural	<a href="http://www.acidi.gov.pt">www.acidi.gov.pt</a>
	Associação Cristã de Apoio à Juventude Cigana	
	Associação das Mulheres e Crianças Ciganas Portuguesas	
	Associação para o Desenvolvimento da Etnia Cigana	
	Associação Social Recreativa e Cultural Cigana de Coimbra	
	Associação Cigana de Leiria	
	DROM ROM - Associação Sócio-Cultural Cristã (ADR)	
	Federação Calhim Portuguesa	
	Igreja Evangélica Filadélfia Cigana de Portugal	
	Associação União Romani Portuguesa	
Romania	Agentia Impreuna, Bucharest	<a href="http://www.agentiaimpreuna.ro/">http://www.agentiaimpreuna.ro/</a>
	Resource Center for Roma Communities	<a href="http://www.romacenter.ro/">http://www.romacenter.ro/</a>
	Policy Center for Roma and Minorities	<a href="http://www.policycenter.eu/">http://www.policycenter.eu/</a>

	Roma Center Amare Romentza	<a href="http://www.amarerromentza.org/">http://www.amarerromentza.org/</a>
	Federația Etnică a Romilor din România	
	Fundația Soros	<a href="http://www.osf.ro/ro/index.php">http://www.osf.ro/ro/index.php</a>
	Centrul Romilor pentru Intervenție socială	<a href="http://www.romanicriss.org/">http://www.romanicriss.org/</a>
	Asociația Studenților Romi	
	Asociația Femeilor Rome	<a href="http://femrom.ro/aftpcn.html">http://femrom.ro/aftpcn.html</a>
	Centrul Romilor pentru Sănătate Sastipeu	<a href="http://www.sastipen.ro/">http://www.sastipen.ro/</a>
	Agenția Națională a Romilor	<a href="http://www.anr.gov.ro/">http://www.anr.gov.ro/</a>
	Alianța Civică a Romilor	<a href="http://www.acrr.ro/">http://www.acrr.ro/</a>
	Asociația Florarilor	
	Asociația Liga Meseriașilor Romi	
	Asociația Jurnaliștilor Romi	
	Asociația Unirea Romilor	
	Roma Concern	
	Asociația Creștin-Democrată a Romilor	
	Asociația Meșteșugarilor Romi din România	
	Asociația Romilor Lăutari	
	Asociația Șanse Egale pentru Romi și Sinți	
	Asociația Partida Romilor	<a href="http://www.partidaromilor.ro">http://www.partidaromilor.ro</a>
	Pro-Europa	<a href="http://www.proeuropa.ro/">http://www.proeuropa.ro/</a>
Serbia	<a href="#">Romski Informativni Centar, Kragujevac</a>	<a href="http://www.ric.org.rs">http://www.ric.org.rs</a>
	Society for the Improvement of Roma settlements	
	Roma Educational Centre	
	Association of Roma Students	
	Association for Educational Improvement	
	Roma NGO Ronos	
	Foundation for an Open Society	<a href="http://www.soros.org/">http://www.soros.org/</a>
	Civic Initiatives	<a href="http://www.gradjanske.org/page/home/sr.html">http://www.gradjanske.org/page/home/sr.html</a>
	Novi Sad Humanitarian Centre	<a href="http://www.nshc.org.rs/">http://www.nshc.org.rs/</a>
Slovakia		
	<a href="#">Jekhetane Spolu</a>	
	Open Society Fund - Soros Foundation	<a href="http://www.soros.org">http://www.soros.org</a>
	Únia Rómskej Mládeže	<a href="http://unia_romskej_mladeze.sk-firma.com/">http://unia_romskej_mladeze.sk-firma.com/</a>
	RMORK (Council of Romani NGOs)	

	Roma Press Agency RPA, Kosice	<a href="http://www.mecem.sk/">http://www.mecem.sk/</a>
	Romano nevo l'il	<a href="http://www.rnl.sk/">http://www.rnl.sk/</a>
	Office of the Slovak Government Plenipotentiary for the Roma Community ÚSVRK, Bratislava	
	Roma Institute	<a href="http://www.romainstitute.sk">http://www.romainstitute.sk</a>
	Roma Internet Radio Gipsy	<a href="http://www.gipsyradio.com/">http://www.gipsyradio.com/</a>
	Romathan, Roma theatre, Kosice	<a href="http://www.romathan.sk/">http://www.romathan.sk/</a>
Slovenia	<a href="http://www.zveza-romov.si/">Zveza Romov Slovenije (The Roma Union of Slovenia), Murska Sobota</a>	<a href="http://www.zveza-romov.si/">http://www.zveza-romov.si/</a>
	Romski Informativni center ROMIC, Radio ROMIC, Romano Them (Romski Svet), Murska Sobota	<a href="http://www.romic.si/">http://www.romic.si/</a>
	Amala, Roma association and music groups, Ljubljana	
	Bilingual paper Romske novice, Novo Mesto	
Spain	Anakerando	
	<a href="http://www.pamplona.net/">Asociación de Gitanos de Navarra "La Majarí"</a>	<a href="http://www.pamplona.net/">http://www.pamplona.net/</a>
	Asociación Nacional Presencia Gitana	<a href="http://www.presenciagitana.org/">http://www.presenciagitana.org/</a>
	<a href="http://www.eurosur.org/asgg/">Asociación Secretariado General Gitano</a>	<a href="http://www.eurosur.org/asgg/">http://www.eurosur.org/asgg/</a>
	Oripando Kalo	
	Secretariado Desarrollo Gitano	<a href="http://www.secretgitano.org/">http://www.secretgitano.org/</a>
	Unión Romani (Unión del Pueblo Gitano)	<a href="http://www.unionromani.org/">http://www.unionromani.org/</a>
	Unión Romani Andalucía	<a href="http://www.unionromani.org/pueblo_in.htm">http://www.unionromani.org/pueblo_in.htm</a>
	Fundacion Secretariado Gitano FSG	<a href="http://www.gitanos.org/">http://www.gitanos.org/</a>
	Hermandad de los Gitanos de Sevilla	<a href="http://www.hermandadde losgitanos.com/">http://www.hermandadde losgitanos.com/</a>
	Federación Autónoma de Asociaciones Gitanas de la Comunidad Valenciana	
	Federación de Asociaciones Culturales Cristianas de Andalucía	
	Federación de Asociaciones Gitanas Extremeñas	
	Federación de Asociaciones	

	Gitanas de Castilla y León	
	Asociación de Mujeres Gitanas "Alboreá"	
	Federación Regional Gitana de Asociaciones de Castilla-La Mancha	
	Asociación de Enseñantes con Gitanos	<a href="http://aecgit.pangea.org/">http://aecgit.pangea.org/</a>
	Federación de Asociaciones de Mujeres Gitanas "Kamira"	
	Federación de Asociaciones Gitanas de Cataluña	<a href="http://www.fagic.org/">http://www.fagic.org/</a>
	Asociación Juvenil Cultural Gitana "Ardiñelo Kaló"	
	Federación de Asociaciones Gitanas de Aragón	
	Asociación Iniciativa Gitana	<a href="http://www.iniciativagitana.org/">http://www.iniciativagitana.org/</a>
	Federación de Asociaciones Gitanas de Navarra "Gaz Kaló"	<a href="http://gazkalo.org/">http://gazkalo.org/</a>
	Asociación Socio-Cultural de las Minorías Étnicas "Unga"	<a href="http://www.gitaunga.e.telefonica.net/unga.htm">http://www.gitaunga.e.telefonica.net/unga.htm</a>
	Federación Andaluza de Mujeres Gitanas "Fakali"	<a href="http://www.fakali.org/">http://www.fakali.org/</a>
	Asociación de Promoción Gitana en la Rioja	
	Federación de Asociaciones Gitanas para la integración laboral y social, promoción y desarrollo del pueblo gitano "Calí"	
Sweden	Föreningen Resandefolket	<a href="http://resandefolketsriksorganisation.se/">http://resandefolketsriksorganisation.se/</a>
	Internationell Romani Råd	
	Romano Kulturako Centro - Romskt kulturcentrum, Stockholm	
	The Delegation for Roma Issues in Sweden	<a href="http://www.humanrights.gov.se/">http://www.humanrights.gov.se/</a>
Switzerland	<a href="http://foundation.rroma.org/">The Rroma Foundation</a>	<a href="http://foundation.rroma.org/">http://foundation.rroma.org/</a>
	Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions COHRE, Geneva	<a href="http://www.cohre.org/">http://www.cohre.org/</a>
Turkey	Romani Cultural Platform 'Romani Istanbul'	
	Foundation of the Romani Associations Federation EDROM	
	Sulukule Romani Culture and Development Association	
	Helsinki Yurrtaslar Dernegi	<a href="http://www.hyd.org.tr/">http://www.hyd.org.tr/</a>

	(Helsinki Citizens Assembly)	
Ukraine	International Charitable Organisation Roma Women Fund Chiricli	
UK	Advisory Council for the Education of Romanies and Other Travellers (ACERT)	<a href="http://www.acert.org.uk/">http://www.acert.org.uk/</a>
	The National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups	<a href="http://www.nationalgypsytravellerfederation.org/">http://www.nationalgypsytravellerfederation.org/</a>
	Gypsy Council for Education, Culture, Welfare and Civil Rights (GCECWCRC)	
	National Association of Gypsy Women	
	Natl. Assn. of Health Workers with Travellers	<a href="http://www.nationalgypsytravellerfederation.org">www.nationalgypsytravellerfederation.org</a>
	National Association of Teachers of Travellers	<a href="http://www.natt.org.uk/">http://www.natt.org.uk/</a>
	National Gypsy Council	<a href="http://www.grtleeds.co.uk">http://www.grtleeds.co.uk</a>
	National Romany Rights Association	
	Romany and Traveller Family History Society	<a href="http://www.rtfhs.org.uk/">http://www.rtfhs.org.uk/</a>
	UNITE (Unified Nomadic Integrated Transnational Education)	
	London Gypsy Traveller Unit (LGTU), London	<a href="http://www.lgtu.org.uk/">http://www.lgtu.org.uk/</a>
	Ormiston Travellers' Initiative (Cambridgeshire)	<a href="http://www.ormiston.org/opus24.html">www.ormiston.org/opus24.html</a>
	Friends Families and Travellers, Brighton	<a href="http://www.gypsy-traveller.org">http://www.gypsy-traveller.org</a>
	South West Alliance of Nomads (SWAN)	<a href="http://www.gypsytravellerhelp.org/">http://www.gypsytravellerhelp.org/</a>
	TravellerSpace, Penzance, Cornwall	<a href="http://travellerspace-cornwall.org/">http://travellerspace-cornwall.org/</a>
	Travellers Times, Hereford	<a href="http://www.travellerstimes.org.uk/">http://www.travellerstimes.org.uk/</a>
	The Clearwater Gypsies	<a href="http://www.clearwatergypsies.com/">http://www.clearwatergypsies.com/</a>
	One Voice 4 Travellers	<a href="http://www.gypsy-traveller.org/onevoice4travellers/">http://www.gypsy-traveller.org/onevoice4travellers/</a>
	Cheshire Gypsy and TravellersVoice	<a href="http://www.travellersvoice.org/">http://www.travellersvoice.org/</a>
	The Equality and Human Rights Commission	<a href="http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/">http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/</a>
Travellers Aid Trust, Kidwelly	<a href="http://www.travellersaidtrust.org/">http://www.travellersaidtrust.org/</a>	

	Journey Folki	<a href="http://www.journeyfolki.org.uk/">http://www.journeyfolki.org.uk/</a>
	Scottish Traveller Education Programme (STEP), Edinburgh University	<a href="http://www.scottishtravellered.net/">http://www.scottishtravellered.net/</a>
	Gypsy Lore Society	<a href="http://www.gypsylorosociety.org/">http://www.gypsylorosociety.org/</a>
	Boswell Romani Museum	<a href="http://www.boswell-romany-museum.com/">http://www.boswell-romany-museum.com/</a>
	Museum of East Anglian Life	<a href="http://www.eastanglianlife.org.uk">www.eastanglianlife.org.uk</a>
	The Museum of English Rural Life	
	Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group	<a href="http://www.dglg.org/">http://www.dglg.org/</a>

Bellow, there is a more detailed presentation for the countries involved in the ROMANINET project:

In Spain, the Roma movement currently has more than 600 associations (of which about 40 are Roma women's associations). There is a number of different umbrella federations and some large state-led associations. One way for these Roma associations to participate is in the only official, state-wide body for Roma participation in policies and actions affecting their community which was created by the Ministry of Social Affairs. This body is named the Comisión Consultiva para el Programa de Desarrollo Gitano (Advisory Committee for the Roma Development Programme) and it is formed of State Associations and Autonomous Federations of the Roma Associations.

Moreover, some Spanish Regions have their own Gypsy Organisations like the Gypsy Secretariat in Andalucia which is attached to the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Regional Council for the Roma Community in Extremadura, the Municipal Council of the Roma people in Barcelona. All these units are "advisory", without executive power and without direct access to the resources or the budgets of the administrations.

The current Socialist government has created two important institutions: The State Gypsy Council and the Gypsy Culture Institute. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (now Ministry of Health and Social Policy) created the State Council of the Roma people. This is an inter-collegiate, consultative and advisory organism, affiliated to the Ministry of Health and Social Policy. The Council confers an institutional status to the collaboration and cooperation between Roma associations and the General State Administration for the development of social welfare policies that allow the promotion of integration of the Roma population.

In Bulgaria, there are no specialized formal authorities at central, regional or local level to represent the interests of the Roma or any other ethnic minority. State and municipal institutions in the country conduct a balanced policy in this area, aimed at protecting the rights and freedoms of

all ethnicities. Among them, one of the most important is the National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Demographic Issues (NCCEDI) at the Council of Ministers (<http://www.nccedi.government.bg/>). At present, members of NCCEDI are NGOs led by Bulgarians, belonging to various ethnic minorities, including Roma. NCCEDI has its own subdivisions, based on a regional level at the regional administrations for the implementation of dialogue with local NGOs. The work of this state and public authority is a guarantor of the implementation of commitments made by the Republic of Bulgaria in compliance with the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

At the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science (MOMN) a similar role is played by the Advisory Board on educational integration of children and pupils from ethnic minorities, functioning since 2004. This public state body advises the Minister in taking decisions related to more effective integration through education. Apart from representatives of state institutions in it, equal members of representatives of Roma NGOs, NGOs contribute to the development of education for children from ethnic minorities, together with state universities and teachers' unions. All legislative and policy documents on educational integration, including the ones on Roma children, have started their development at this Advisory Board.

Furthermore, apart from state institutions in Bulgaria, several advisory bodies have been discovered for municipalities to facilitate dialogue between local authorities and representatives of NGOs.

The greatest achievement in the development of the Roma movement in the country, however, is the presence and operation of many Roma and non-Roma NGOs. Since 1989 Bulgaria has registered more than 500 Roma NGOs, about 20 of which have extensive organizational life and contribution to the development of the Roma community and inter-ethnic dialogue.

In the 1970s, a special service was set up in Britain, known until recently in most counties as the Traveller Education Service. Its task was and continues to be to supply educational support to Romani and Traveller children, both within schools and at home, on the sites. The TES has been useful in facilitating access to other forms of training as well as in raising awareness of Romani Gypsies and Travellers and their culture.

Furthermore, Several Romani museums have been set up around the country, documenting traditional crafts and folklore. They include the Boswell Romani Museum, Museum of East Anglian Life and the Museum of English Rural Life, which has an online exhibition on Gypsies.



Romani interest groups have been involved primarily in campaigns to abolish restrictions on caravan sites and to expand the number of sites and their infrastructure. They include the Gypsy Council and the Derbyshire Gypsy Liaison Group. A weekly radio programme for Romani people was launched on BBC regional radio in 2006, and several websites offer young Romani people a forum for exchange and a virtual meeting place, among them the award meaning site Savvy Chavvy.

In Portugal, the interests of the Gypsy community are managed by one formal organization, the ACIDI - Alto Comissariado para a Imigração e Diálogo Intercultural. Other NGO's and Portuguese Gypsy associations are involved in this activity.

In Romania, the official institution that represents the Roma minority at national level is the Roma National Agency. Furthermore, there are more than 300 non-governmental registered organizations related to the Roma community.