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ČAČIPEN PAL O ROMA
A Global report on Roma in Slovakia

INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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Michal Vašečka, Martina Jurásková, and Tom Nicholson
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PREFACE

This book is the result of the concentrated efforts of dozens of experts in minority issues in Slovakia. It is published at a time when the European Commission, after successfully wrapping up the integration process, is asking Slovakia to increase its efforts to find positive solutions for the problems of the Roma, as well as for the corruption that exists in all walks of life. This pressure from the international community to solve the "Roma issue" is easy to understand. It is not just that in failing to solve the important questions related to the Roma, Slovakia will cast doubt on the positive steps it has taken towards liberal democracy and a mature economy; nor does the issue merely involve a utilitarian attempt by the European Union to force a demanding solution from a future member state. The most important motive remains the fact that problems related to the ethnicization of poverty, social exclusion, and the marginalization of minorities are very familiar in most post industrial countries. Slovakia too cannot avoid making fundamental changes in the approach it has hitherto taken to the Roma issue. This book speaks of the potential that Slovakia has to launch these changes.

The Roma issue is becoming one of the most serious social, cultural, and civilization problems of the 21st century in Slovakia. Solutions to these issues require not only political will and courage, but also a vision of a multicultural Slovakia, and deep knowledge of the past failures that followed flawed solutions. Positive and successful solutions require clear and complete data, expert opinions, and the results of research.

The aim of the *Global Report on the Roma in Slovakia* is to make information on the Slovak Roma minority and the state's Roma policy available to the public. The work also outlines the prerequisites of a successful solution to the complex of problems jointly referred to as "the Roma issue". Such information is very scarce in Slovakia, and many existing analyses do not deal with the topic in sufficient depth. In recent years, warnings that Slovakia lacked complex sources of information on the issue that would allow a long-term approach in projects leading to change were sounded mainly by international organizations. In addition to the general shortage of information, the information that is available is scattered, while some minor topics related to the Roma issue have not been dealt with at all.

Thus, at the beginning of the 21st century, there was a clear need for a publication that would summarize what is known about the Roma in an academically precise form. Many Roma issue experts noted that various reports seeking to provide comprehensive coverage of the issue had already been published; however, as this issue is exceptionally broad, most of these reports, which

did not aim to create a complex analysis, were inadequate.

The Institute for Public Affairs (IVO), after several years of experience in publishing the *Global Report on the State of Society*, aspires to fill the gap with this book. The IVO listened to the opinions of leading Roma issue experts, while the concept and lineup of chapters was prepared by sociologist and IVO analyst Michal Vašečka, the book's eventual editor. The *Global Report on the Roma in Slovakia* covers 8 broad topics, and includes 34 chapters prepared by 45 different experts, whose work was reviewed by 18 readers. That some Roma-related topics had been neglected in the past was very apparent in the lack of relevant sources of information. This was also the case with Roma authors – despite the editors' desire to include as many Roma authors as possible, only five were ultimately represented in the book.

The *Global Report on the Roma in Slovakia* aspires to be a complex report that will serve as a reader for everyone who is interested in the Roma, and as a basis for the political and societal elites in Slovakia in the process of EU expansion. This is what made the editors' work so demanding – it was extraordinarily difficult to make the text suit both target groups: academic readers, and "policy-makers" who do not want and do not have time to look for information elsewhere. The authors thus emphasized the measures (policies) taken to address the Roma issue, and described the present situation and its causes. By interconnecting the individual topics, the editors were able to stake out a common ground between the Roma and the majority population, bounded by the coordinates of assimilation, integration, and segregation.

The authors of the *Global Report* sent a very important, although at first glance trivial message to the reader: It is necessary to differentiate between individual subgroups in the Roma population. Although the Roma are perceived as a homogenous group by the majority population, which results in a unified approach being taken to the Roma and their needs, the minority is in fact extremely heterogeneous. The authors of the *Global Report* recommend that the complicated internal structure of the Roma population be taken into account when preparing policy. Otherwise, Slovakia is bound to repeat the mistakes of the past, thus increasing the frustration of both the majority population and the Roma.

All chapters in the *Global Report on the Roma in Slovakia* have the same framework of values. The authors agree that:
• the Roma issue represents a combination of ethnic and social problems, which must all be taken into account when preparing public policy;
• the Roma issue is extraordinarily difficult to grasp, but is one that can be solved;
• the approach to the Roma in Slovakia should be based on desegregating the Roma;
• the Roma population is extremely heterogeneous, and must be approached as such;
• coordination and mutual awareness are key elements in preparing any public policy;
• all solutions to the Roma issue must focus on two target groups: the Roma and the majority population;
• considering the growing self-consciousness of the Roma, we must begin speaking of a Roma nation, not just a Roma ethnic group.

In recent years, the many publications of the Institute for Public Affairs have become true "agents for change". The authors of the *Global Report on the Roma in Slovakia* believe that their book will at least help to form a "critical mass of people" who are aware of the need to solve the Roma issue, who know

how to solve it, and who have the will to do so. To be able to solve a social problem, however, one first must be familiar with all aspects of it. The authors of the *Global Report* therefore consider it important that this publication deals with several topics that were previously terra incognita for the Slovak reader.

If the future is to bring positive solutions to the Roma issue in Slovakia, the people who form public policy must be prepared to study the background of the problems they are called on to address, and to learn a lesson from the failures of the past. If they do not, they are bound to repeat the mistakes that have been made again and again.

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FROM LEAVING THE HOMELAND TO THE FIRST ASSIMILATION MEASURES

Summary: This chapter notes the myths relating to the origins of the Roma, the proofs of their Indian origin, as well as the emerging theories of Roma authors. Indian society is unique not only in its ethnic heterogeneity but also in its social and cultural system. This chapter attempts to explain caste diversity, the role of the Roma's ancestors in this system, and their ways of life. It also deals with the names of the Roma and the origins of these names, and follows their arrival in Europe, pointing out the differing histories of the Roma in Western Europe, Hungary, the Balkans, Walachia, and Moldavia.

Key words: India, Rajasthan, Kanaudj, castes (Jats), Varnas, Brahman, Ksatrija, Vajshija, Shudra, Dharma, castes, Doma, Loma, Roma, Asinkar, Atsingan, Aegupti, Egypt Minor, Modona, Sigismund of Luxembourg, protective documents, expelling edicts, slavery.

INTRODUCTION

The Roma as an ethnic group are in a very difficult situation at the moment, struggling for emancipation and their own identity. They have no common territory and no state of their own; thus, they are increasing efforts to find their "birthplace", the land of their ancestors. The Roma long to find the roots of their traditions and culture, of which they never heard a word in school. More and more Roma have begun to seek emancipation as a "super-caste" or a "super-clan" community, and have begun to search for their history.

Sources on the earliest history of the Roma are lacking, while general European history sources were written by the non Roma; research, too, was also largely done by "gadjos" (pronounced "gad-joes", meaning "non-Roma"). An image of the Roma was thus formed that traces the development of the Roma in Europe through the eyes of the non-Roma. Today, the Roma are coming up with new theories, which may be understandable given that they are a vilified and disparaged nation, but which are unacceptable from the academic viewpoint.

ORIGIN AND POSITION OF THE ROMA IN INDIA

The question of the Indian origin of the Roma has been debated in the fields of comparative linguistics, history and cultural anthropology since the 18th century. The Indian origin of the Roma has been scientifically documented and is no longer disputed; however, the task remains to locate the ancestors of today's Roma on the Indian sub-continent, to define their position in Indian society, and to isolate the time and causes of their departure to Europe.

FIRST ATTEMPTS TO DISCOVER THE ORIGIN OF THE ROMA BY LINGUISTIC COMPARISON

The story of the Hungarian theology student, Stefan Vályi, who stumbled on the origin of the Roma after meeting some Indian university students and hearing them talk, is well known and often repeated. The students' language and appearance reminded Vályi of the Roma living near Komárno (in current-day southern Slovakia), so he compared their language and the Roma tongue. He wrote down more than a thousand words that the students used, most of which the Roma later understood when he repeated them. The *Wiener Anzeiger* journal published Vályi's report on his discovery in 1763.

Shortly thereafter, Samuel Augustini ab Hortis published a series of articles in the same journal under the title *On the Present State, Special Manners, Way of Life and other Properties and Gifts of the Gypsies in Ugria (from 1775 to 1776)* (ab Hortis, 1995). On the basis of their language, he too guessed that the Roma had come from southwest India. The scientific basis of Roma studies was finally laid by the philologists William Marsden (England), Jacob Rüdiger and Heinrich Grellmann (Germany) who, after copying ab Hortis' monograph without quoting the source, made a serious linguistic comparison of Romany and the Indian languages. Their work ended a long period of doubt and speculation on the origin of the Roma.

Comparative studies of Romany and the languages of the Indian sub-continent developed throughout the 19th century, during which August Fridrich Pott (1844 to 1845) and Franz Miklosich (1871 to 1882) published basic works on the language of the European Roma. Research has shown that Romany is older than the new Indian languages, because the Roma left India more than one thousand years ago; Romany thus developed earlier than Hindi. However, it is younger than Sanskrit, the oldest Indian language, and younger also than the next stage of languages, known as Prakrit. Romany, besides being unique proof of the Indian origin of the Roma, is also the only living proof of the existence of an intermediate stage between "old" and modern languages (Hübschmannová, 1995).

Miklosich and Pott both identified the homeland of the Roma as the Punjab, which lies in the north of Pakistan and India; even today, this hypothesis is often quoted as a fact. Nevertheless, the Roma certainly passed through this region on their travels to Persia and Byzantium. In 1927, the English linguist Ralph Turner presented a hypothesis according to which the Roma originally lived in Rajasthan in central India near the western border of Pakistan, from where they scattered across other areas in central, northeastern and northwestern India. In the absence of new evidence to the contrary, specialists accept Turner's argument (Hübschmannová, 2000).

Further linguistic research now suggests that the Roma arose from various groups living in central, northeastern and northwestern India, and that they lived in these regions for a long time. Working from the fact that dialect forms of Romany do not have a common basis, the linguists Venceľová and Čerenkov concluded that the Roma did not originate from a common Indian tribe, and that they were not even members of a single caste (Nečas, 1999). Answering other questions from the earliest history of the Roma, such as the causes of their diaspora and their exodus from the Indian continent, could help us determine their origin and pinpoint their homeland.

In his monograph, Ab Hortis summarized all that was then known and believed about the

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origin of the Roma. The best known was the hypothesis that the Roma came from Egypt, because one of the names used for the Roma originates from there as well. The town of Singara (today Atulib in Diar Beku) in Mesopotamia was considered to have been the home of the Roma, whence they were allegedly driven by the Roman emperor Julian. Another possible origin of the Roma was said to be the province of Zenopitana in Africa, as the people from this region were very good fortune-tellers; the roots of the Roma were also sought in Nubia, Abyssinia, and the Caucasus mountains. In looking for the forebears of the Roma, some "researchers" even arrived at the Biblical figure of Cain, the reason being that the Roma too are permanently on the run. The Roma have also often been considered descendants of the Jews, who were persecuted harshly in Germany and other countries in the 13th and 14th centuries (ab Hortis, 1994).

IDENTIFYING THE TERRITORY ORIGINALLY INHABITED BY THE ROMA

Following the discovery of the Indian origin of the Roma, and especially of their low position in the Indian socio-cultural system, which was viewed as insulting by the Roma intelligentsia, the search for a "better" version of the Indian history of the Roma continued. Thus were the Roma said to have come from the Gadulia Lohar Indian group that still lives a nomadic life in the Indian states of Rajasthan and Gujarat. Their main occupations are as smiths and traders in draft animals. Representatives of the European Roma, on the other hand, prefer to see their forefathers in the Banjaras, who are nomads living off trade with cattle. Many Banjaras live scattered across different Indian states (mainly Rajasthan and Punjab); they represent a higher social class than the Gadulia

Lohar group (Mann, 1990). Besides looking for their forefathers in higher Indian castes, Roma researchers also dispute the clearly proven Indian origin of the Roma, and look for common features between the Roma and Islam, the Arabic culture, or the Jews. Amateur historians place the homeland of the Roma in Canaan, in Palestine (Hancock, 1991), on Delos Island, or connect it with the Etruscans (Hübschmannová, 2000).

The most groundbreaking theory was presented by Marcel Courthiade, although his ideas flew in the face of centuries of scientific research. In an interview in the *Romano l'il nevo* Roma newspaper, Courthiade falsely stated that no researcher had yet published evidence of the Roma remembering their Indian origin (this was published in Forli in 1422, in Italy in 1590, and in southern France in 1630). These historical facts were brought to public attention by Emília Horváthová[1] and Bartolomej Daniel, who also noted the first linguistic attempts to prove the Indian origin of the Roma, which were published in the report of the Spanish writer Miguel Cervantes de Saavedra (Daniel, 1994). The young Roma historian Jana Horváthová-Holomková was also able to confirm that the Indian origin had been preserved in the clan memory of the Holomek family (Horváthová, 2000).

A text discovered by the Arabic chronicler Al Ubdi (b. 961, d. 1040) recorded how during the winter of 1017 to 1018, Sultan Mahmud from Ghazni near Kabul (today Afghanistan) invaded a certain town between Benares and Delhi, named Kanaudj. He captured all its inhabitants and sold them as slaves to Chorasan and Iran. According to Marcel Courthiade, these were the forefathers of the Roma, who roughly 150 years later revolted and escaped to Byzantium.[2] The text allegedly recorded that they continued their journey roughly 10 to 15 years later.

Courthiade characterized Kanaudj as the intellectual and spiritual center of northern India. To support his theory that the Roma originated from this town, he pointed to the absence of a tradition of agricultural work among the Roma (ignoring the question of why people used to living a settled life in a town would suddenly choose for centuries to practice a nomadic way of life and activities requiring permanent movement). Courthiade also cited the unity of the Roma language, and noted that the name of the town translated as "Kali", a goddess worshipped by the Roma. Courthiade said the name "Roma" came from the Drombas (artists and musicians) who lived in Kanaudj in great numbers. It is debatable whether further "proofs" of this theory will surface, or whether it is just another misinterpretation of history in an effort to raise the prestige of the oppressed and vilified Roma ethnic group (*Ale je…*, 2002).[3]

ORIGINAL POSITION OF THE ROMA IN THE INDIAN CASTE SYSTEM

Even though there is no doubt about the Indian origin of the Roma, it is easy to understand why Roma researchers strive to find new interpretations of the position the Roma held within the Indian caste system. According to a prominent Roma expert, Milena Hübschmannová, the word "caste" is of Portuguese origin, and is used in this form by most Europeans. All new Indian languages, however, adopted the Sanskrit expression "Jat". The word "Jat" describes a kin community following the same profession for centuries (or several similar professions), which represent its task (the "dharma"). Individual castes were economically complementary, and kept a certain social distance from one another. None of the castes was economically self-sufficient, and depended on the products and services of the other "Jats". Strict social boundaries existed between the castes, which could not be

crossed. Individuals were born into a caste, and found in it both their positions as well as rules that make it impossible to become members of another caste.

Ongoing research into the early history of India has produced several possible explanations for the decline in the social status of the Doma caste, from which the European Roma originated. Historians agree that the Doma were among the original inhabitants of India, and lived there before the country was invaded by Indo-European (Aryan) nomads from the north around 1,500 B.C. The conquerors found an advanced civilization in India, which happened to be disintegrating, but which was one of the oldest in the world. These facts were discovered in the 1920s, and the civilization was named Mohendjodar or Harrap. The Indo-European conquerors killed part of the original inhabitants, while some were pushed out to the geographical borders of India, and others were banished to the outskirts of society. The forefathers of the Doma, who were also the forefathers of the Roma, were presumably among the people enslaved (Oláh, 1997).

In the ensuing millennia of Indian history, the forefathers of the Roma (the Doma) represented one of the lowest castes in the complicated Indian caste system ("avarna"), and had to obey many restrictions.

From the turn of the second and first millennia B.C., old Indian society was divided into "Varnas". The four basic "Varnas" were the following: the noble "Aryans", including priests, scholars, and religious teachers, formed the highest caste – the "Brahman Varna". Then came the warrior class (the "Kshatria Varna"); the third level, the "Vaisia Varna", consisted of crafts people, tradesmen, farmers, and breeders, while the lowest – the "Shudra Varna" – included various servants. The untouchables were the out-

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casts, the lowest in the hierarchy, and could not touch any member of the four "Varnas". They were called "Atshut" in Sanskrit, "Punjabi" in Hindu, "Doma" in Kashmiri, and "Paria" in Tamil, from which came their name, "Pariahs". Everyone who performed "unclean" jobs such as sweeping streets, removing garbage, washing laundry, preparing wood for burning corpses, carrying nets, skinning animals and processing the hides, along with executioners, nomadic blacksmiths, musicians, dancers, ape and snake trainers, and professional cattle thieves belonged to this lowest "Pariah" category.

Each "Varna" had certain rights, duties and rules of behavior (the "dharma"). With the progressive sub-division of work and the development of Hinduism, the "Varnas" subdivided into a variety of sub-castes ("Jats") consisting of clans and tribes in which occupations were inherited from generation to generation. Among the individual Indian castes (there were over 3,000) an insurmountable social gulf existed. The caste into which a person was born remained his for the rest of his and his descendants' lives. The caste system determined one's social and legal position, one's choice of partner, form of participation in society, and future relationships. This meant that a male member of one caste could not marry a girl from another caste, and that people from one caste could not even touch a meal in a house whose inhabitants they considered ritually impure (who ate the meat of "forbidden" animals). These caste barriers still exist today, and not just in India: They survive among the Roma in Europe (Hübschmannová, 1995).[4]

The professions that the forefathers of the Roma lived from remain among the nomadic or semi-nomadic in India even today. Through their affinity to a caste, the Roma were fully dependent on other castes to provide them with the basic necessities of life. The Roma group contained no farmers, shepherds, or craftsmen producing the basic crops, food, clothes, or footwear. Their way of life, which in Roma studies literature is compared to a disintegrating primitive hunter-gatherer culture, forced the Roma to remain permanently on the move across increasingly large territories, and forced them to live in symbiosis with the surrounding populations, especially the farmers. The departure of the Roma from India dates back to the 9th and 10th centuries B.C. The gradual departure of the Roma "Jats" (the family-occupational castes) from India seems to have occurred some 2,500 years later, and presumably began in the area of the present Indian states of Rajasthan and Punjab. During this period, the Doma fell in the Indian social system to the lowest caste level – the untouchables. It is not known what happened to the cultural heritage of their forefathers. The Doma seem to have reached the European continent through Persia and Armenia (the Armenian relatives of the Roma are called the Loma), from where their voyage continued through present-day Syria (where they are still called the Doma) and across North Africa to the Pyrenees peninsula. Larger groups came through Asia Minor into present-day Greece (Greece is also the source of the first written historical mention of the Roma in Europe), from where they eventually moved to Central Europe (in the 12th and 13th centuries A.D.). The field of linguistics explains how the Doma got their European name "Roma" as follows: the rear palatal speech sound "d", which has no analogy in European languages, became "l" in west Asia, and finally the European "r": thus, Doma – Loma – Roma.

NAMES OF THE ROMA

NAMES FOR THE ROMA BASED ON GUESSES AND LEGENDS

Since the arrival of the Roma in Europe, various assumptions and legends about their

origin have circulated. This process, by which the Roma were given names and denominations by their surroundings – known as exoethnonymes – had already brought them two types of names in Byzantine sources – Athingan and Aegupti (*Romové v Byzanci*, 1999).

"Asinkan" as craftsmen

The previous form of the name Gypsy was "Atsinkan", "Asinkan" or "Atingan". The French orientalist J. Bloch believes that this name was brought by the Roma from the Iranian language environment, where the word "Asinkar" denotes a craftsman who works with metal, i.e. blacksmiths, ironmongers, tinsmiths, etc. In Greece, the name "Atsingan" was originally used to designate members of the wandering Manouches sect who entered Byzantium in the 8th century from South Asia, and earned their living by magic, fortune-telling, keeping snakes and swindling. The sect later vanished, but the similarity of the occupations and names of the Indian immigrants from Persia caused people to confuse them with the Manouches. The oldest written mention of the Roma in Europe came from a monastery on the Greek mountain of Athos (1068), where the Roma were named "Adsincans" – people who were considered great sorcerers in Constantinople. The ethnic denomination "Atsingans" or "Acingans" was used for the first groups of Roma coming to the Balkans and Central Europe in the 12th century. Until the 14th century this name was in general use, with the first speech sound being increasingly omitted until it finally became the rule; nevertheless, the spelling remained variable, especially when it came to the "n" in the middle of the word. Individual languages thus used different names, such as: "Acinganus", "Cinganus", "Cingerus" (medieval Latin); "Cingene" (Turkish); "Acigan", "Cigan"

(Bulgarian); "Ciganin" (Serbian); "Tsigan" (Rumanian); "Czigány" (Hungarian); "Cigán" (Slovak); "Cikán" (Czech); "Cygan" (Polish and Russian); "Zigeuner" (German and Dutch); "Zeginer" (Swiss German); "Cingare", "Cingar", "Cinhan", "Tsigane", "Tzigane" (different stages in French); "Zingaro" (Italian); "Ciganos" (Portuguese); and so on (Horváthová, 1964).

"Gypsies" as Egyptian emigrants

The second group of names was related to the alleged Egyptian origin of the Roma. In the second half of the 15th century, several pilgrims traveling through Modona on the Peloponnesian peninsula noticed that near the town was a hill with an adjacent area called Gyppe or Gypte, which the Venetians called Egypt Minor, and where the Atsingans lived during the Middle Ages. They often came to Modona, which was the usual stop of European pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem. In observing the pilgrims, these Atsingans noted the behavior of groups traveling to show penitence, heard various legends about the life of Christ, and modified the Christian obligations connected with penitence and repentance according to their own ideas. And thus did a great wave of Roma migration begin at the outset of the 15th century – at a time when many crusades, the Hussite wars, and various religious pilgrimages were underway. The Roma migrated in large groups under the leadership of princes and dukes of Egypt Minor. Taking advantage of the Christian legend of obligatory pilgrimage to show penitence, they acquired various supportive and protective documents from feudal magnates and rulers. In Europe their place of origin was mixed up or identified with Egypt, and thus they were called Egyptians. The following versions existed in different languages: "Gypthoi", "Aigyptiaki" (Greek);

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"Evgit" (Albanian); "Phárao népe" (Hungarian); "Egyptenarin", "Gipten", "Jipenessen" (Dutch); "Egyptians", "Egyptions", "Egypsies", "Gypsies" (English); "Egyptianos", "Egitanos", "Gitanos" (Spanish); "Egypcios" (Portuguese) (Fraser, 1998).

The Germans and the northern nations first considered the Roma to be Tatars, and thus called them "Tattare". In the Netherlands they were considered pagans and called "Heydens"; in several countries the name "Saracens" was used, in Poland it was "Wlosi". Some groups of Roma in France must have identified Bohemia as their land of origin, because as of the end of the 15th century they were called "Bohems" or "Boimes", while by the 17th century the name "Bohemians" had completely replaced the original name "Egyptians". This new name was used until almost the end of the 20th century. The name "Tsiganes" is used today. In parts of eastern Germany too, the names "Bemische Leit" and "Bohemische Leute" were used, proving that the Roma came to Germany from Bohemia. The name "Bohemiano" was used in 16th century Spain, where besides the prevailing "Egyptianos" or later "Gitanos", the name "Griegos" was also used, due to the fact that the Roma spoke Greek, and that Romany contained many words of Greek origin.

In Ugria (which included the territory of modern-day Slovakia), the name "Egyptians" was used as of the middle of the 15th century as an alternative to the older name "Gypsies". In the 17th century, some groups of Roma that had been banished from Germany sought refuge in Ugria, calling themselves Egyptian Gypsies. In sources from different regions, in complaints of various offences that had been committed by the nomadic people, or "gens Egyptica vulgo Cigani", the two names for the Roma got mixed up.[5]

WHAT DO THE ROMA CALL THEMSELVES?

The Roma call themselves different names according to which sub-ethnic Indian group they came from, and the wave and time of their migration to Europe. All European dialects of the Roma language include the word "rom", meaning man or husband. The female form is "romni", meaning woman or wife. As for the group name, the endoethnonyme "Rom", the term "Roma" is used mainly by the descendants of the first groups that spread across the Balkans and the eastern part of Central Europe before the 15th century. Groups in Western Europe from later migratory waves used their own names: the Sinti lived in German territory, the Manusha in France, the Romanitsel in England, the Kale in Spain and Portugal, and the Kaale in Finland. The word "manush" is also included in all dialects of Romany. It means man, while "Manusha" equals people. This word has the same form and meaning in Sanskrit as well, and is almost identical in other Indian languages. The use of the term for "people" in the form of an endoethnonyme is the oldest way in which ancient tribes and ethnic groups were named (Hübschmannová, 1995).

Most of the Roma living in Slovakia are "Rumungers", i.e. Roma who have lived settled lives for at least 300 years now. Although this name originally related only to the Hungarian Roma ("Ungers"), it was later used for all settled Roma: the Slovak ones were called "Slovatshike Roma", and the Hungarian ones "Ungrike Roma", according to the language of the majority population. The Roma who came to Slovakia in the 19th century from the Rumanian province of Walachia and lived as nomads until 1959 call themselves "Vlachi" or "Vlachika Roma". These nomadic Roma specialized in certain professions, according to which they received fur-

ther names: "Lovara" (horse smugglers), "Kalderasha" (pot-makers), and "Ritsharja", "Ursari" (bear leaders). Individual kin groups of the "Vlachika Roma" in southern Slovakia (e.g. the "Bougeshti") use their own names to further differentiate the group ("Kurkeshti", "Bograneshti", "Matshkeshti", "Tshureshti" and others). However, these names are not ethnonyms. Remnants of the German Sinti groups also live in Slovakia (Hübschmannová, 1995).

Problems arise in the acceptance of the name "Rom" or "Roma". Part of the Roma who have accepted the name Gypsies assume that this is a translation of their name, or they consist of assimilated Roma mostly from families of musicians in southern Slovakia who dissociate themselves from the ethno-identification and emancipation efforts of the majority of less advanced Slovak Roma. On the international level, conversely, the Roma do not accept the derogatory name Gypsy, which especially in Slavic languages has assumed a negative connotation (liar, fibber). The International Roma Union founded in 1971 agreed to use the common name Roma, which is now increasingly accepted in European countries, along with an acknowledgment of the Roma's minority rights. The International Union of Roma is the generally acknowledged representative of the Roma with representation at the United Nations.

ARRIVAL OF ROMA IN EUROPE AND CE REGION

THROUGH THE BALKAN AND PYRENEES PENINSULAS

Under the pressure of the Ottoman Empire, the Roma moved from Byzantium to Europe in several waves and stages. The main migration, which included many people, came in the 10th century over the Balkan peninsula, while another, smaller wave came from the shores of North Africa and through the Pyrenees peninsula. The first wave was of greater importance, because the Balkan peninsula became home to the European Roma, a base from which they constantly migrated, and to which they always returned. The Roma population was ready to come to Europe thanks to their long stay in the Byzantine Empire, where they learned different languages and cultures, and became acquainted with different social relationships, the ideology of Christianity, and the many crusades to the Holy Land.

THE OLDEST MENTION OF THE ROMA IN EUROPE

As we noted above, the oldest mention of the Roma in Europe was by a monk in a monastery on the mountain of Athos (1068), and concerned the Adsincans in Constantinople. In the 12th century, Roma clans advanced deeper and deeper into the Balkan peninsula, and divided into settled and nomadic groups. Smithing and metal working, the traditional Roma crafts, were very useful and much in demand in the economically undeveloped countries of the Balkans. Musical and artistic performances with dance and animals also became very popular; the Roma showed off their skills especially at feudal manors. The many professions of Roma clans inevitably led to their division and search for new subsistence possibilities.

The Roma advanced gradually and sporadically into the Pannonian lowlands of Eastern Europe, where the oldest reports of them remain unverified and scarce. The first Roma allegedly came to Ugria during the reign of King Ondrej II in 1219, as he returned from his crusade to Jerusalem. Several mentions of the existence of Roma tribes or clans, not including data on their precise location, were

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also made during the reign of King Ladislav IV at the end of the 13th century[6].

We encounter the Atsingans and Acingans in the 14th century as well: in 1378, the Venetian governor of the Peloponnesian peninsula, Nauplie, granted to Ján Atsingan the privileges that his ancestors already enjoyed. Corfu saw the establishment of "feudum Acinganorum" led by a Venetian governor in 1383. In the same year, the Walachian Duke Mircea I confirmed the validity of the gift of his uncle Vladislav, who in 1370 had given 40 families of Atsingan slaves to the monastery of St. Anton in Vodica (Fraser, 1998).

HISTORICAL MENTIONS OF THE ROMA IN THE SLOVAK REGION

Concrete mentions of the Roma in the region of modern-day Slovakia dating from the 14th century leave no doubt that the Roma were widely known in Slovakia at that time. The reeve of Spišská Nová Ves, Ján Kunch, mentions the presence of wandering Roma on the lands of the Mariássy family in 1322, although this has never been confirmed. In 1329, the Roma were mentioned in the Szabolcs-Szatmáry region, and in 1381 in the documents of the Leles convent in the region of Zemplín. In the 14th century, reports of donated Roma slaves originating from the south Carpathian mountains were quite common (Horváthová, 1964; Fraser, 1998). The word Gypsy ("Cigán") repeatedly appears in the names of villages and given names recorded in documents from the 14th and 15th centuries.

While the first groups of Roma moved around without arousing suspicion in ethically heterogeneous Ugria, and integrated into the majority population without problems, at the beginning of the 15th century the Pannonian lowlands were flooded by a new huge migratory wave of Roma. Because the Roma leaders behaved very ostentatiously and brazenly demanded material support (being on a journey of penitence), many contemporary reports by local chroniclers survive. These groups had no problems with the languages they encountered on their voyage (in Transylvania they got to know German particularly well), and addressed their own clan patriarchs as members of the nobility according to the area they were coming through – chief, duke, king, earl. In 1417, the largest groups lead by King Sindelomus and Dukes Panuel, Michal and Ondrej came from Budín through Košice all the way to Pressburg (Bratislava), where they split into two groups. At this point they produced a protective document issued by Sigismund de Luxembourg in south Germany's Lindave. Individual groups that in the 1420s wandered through several countries presented a protective document from the emperor dated 1423 and issued at Spiš castle for the group headed by Ladislav, as well as a protective document issued by Pope Martin V. Undoubtedly, many of these documents were forgeries or copies of original documents valid for one group only (Horváthová, 1964; Fraser, 1998).

From the end of the 14th century, after Serbia was defeated on the fields of Kosovo, Ugria became the immediate neighbor of the Turks, who put increasing pressure on the entire Balkan region. This may have been one of the reasons why craftsmen working with metal found more jobs here and more tolerance than in the more advanced Western Europe. Smithing, repairing weapons, manufacturing shot, helping with horses, and direct service in the army were the main reasons that large numbers of Roma were present in Central and Southeastern Europe. When they were awarded an important protective document by Emperor Sigismund de Luxembourg in 1423 in Spiš, they gained security in a territory of strategic importance

and wealth, which they could then start settling.

The Roma are known to have taken up some of the obligations performed by the inhabitants of the village of Beharovce, and to have rendered various services to the castle[7] (Horváthová, 1964). At that time, Slovakia was fighting off the Hussites and their crusades, and after the death of Emperor Sigismund, a fight began for the Ugrian throne. In the 15th century the Roma were used by Matej Korvín, by the Polish house of Jagelov, and especially by the Transylvanian Baron Ján Zápoľský. Thanks to their participation in military campaigns against the Turks, the Roma were awarded several protective documents for their services to the town of Sibiu in 1476. Matej Korvín awarded several Roma with a similar document in 1487, also for their participation in the wars. Vladislav Jagelovsky issued several protective documents in 1492 and 1496 to a group headed by Tomáš Polgár, based on which 25 Roma blacksmiths were able to freely practice their profession throughout the country. This group also served the bishop in Pécs, for whom they manufactured musket shot, cannon balls, and other weaponry (Horváthová, 1964).

The metalworking skill of the Roma, and their quick orientation and mobility on the ground, were abused the most by the Transylvanian Baron Ján Zápoľský. He first used the Roma to suppress and "crown" the peasant king Juraj Dóža after a failed crusade in 1514, which turned into a peasant uprising; a few years later, he used the Roma to take revenge on eastern Slovak royal towns that refused to support him in his attempts to take the Ugrian throne[8] (Davidová, 1965).

When Zápoľský became king in 1538, he issued documents ensuring support and respect for the ancient freedoms of the Roma. He introduced the function of noble Gypsy dukes, whose primary task was to collect taxes (these "vajdas" of Roma clans – the word is derived from "vojvoda", duke – de facto belonged under the jurisdiction of individual feudal manors). After the disaster of the battle of Moháč in 1526, when most of Ugria fell to the Turks, the Roma had no problem adapting to the new situation. They served as smiths, musicians, messengers, executioners, soldiers, etc. to anyone who required their services – the nobility, the towns, the Turks. During the anti-Hapsburg uprisings of the 16th and 17th centuries, the Roma also offered their abilities wherever they could be used. These circumstances probably contributed to the fact that smithing and music making were still the most frequent occupations of the Roma in Slovakia at the end of the 19th century. The Roma settled on individual feudal manors, and together with their landlords battled imperial armies (such as in 1557 when defending the castle of Veľká Ida), and together with their lords were banished. The feudal lords and the towns awarded permits to them to settle and practice their professions.[9]

In the 17th century, tolerance for the Roma began to decline. The anti-Hapsburg uprisings, the Turkish occupation, the arrivals and departures of nomadic groups, and the increasing slaughter of people in Western Europe, totally exhausted the economically stagnant Ungria. After the Thirty Years' War, Europe was full of wandering, plundering groups, who having lost everything in the war had nothing more to lose, and whom the Roma often joined. The number of "foreign" Roma grew considerably, and the possibilities of making a living were diminished. Complaints that the Roma were stealing horses, food and crops, as well as spreading disease, began to pour in. As a result, the Roma were banished from an increasing number of towns and districts, such as mining towns.

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The end of the Turkish occupation, and the Szatmáry peace treaty signed in 1711 after the last anti-Hapsburg uprising, allowed reconstruction to begin in the devastated land, and saw attempts to introduce new methods of administering the country and modernizing the economy. In the end, the enlightenment Emperors Mária Terézia and Jozef II also tried to solve the Roma issue.

CONCLUSION

The history of the Roma – not just on the territory of modern-day Slovakia – still contains many unanswered questions, such as the origin of the Roma. Many are not willing to accept the answers that have been provided, and thus keep creating new theories. The Roma have been stigmatized by the many years of discrimination they experienced, by the humiliating connotations of their name, and by the reluctance of the majority to respect their own traditional endo-ethnonyme, which they ultimately decided to use on the international level.

Insufficient historical research makes it impossible to reliably reconstruct the history of the Roma ethnic group on our territory since the Middle Ages. It will take great effort and an unprejudiced approach to achieve an objective view of the Roma's development and position in Ugria and Slovakia.

ENDNOTES

1. Emília Horváthová (1964) mentions the record from the town of Forli, and also the knowledge she acquired through her own research in southwestern Slovakia during the 1950s.
2. The first document about the Roma in Europe dates from 1068 (according to M. C.'s interpretation, the Roma should have been in Iraq and Chorasan at that time).

3. This issue was also taken up by Anna Koptová in her work *The Truth About the Roma?* (2001). More information on the Roma in Byzantium can be found in the textbook *The Roma in Byzantium*, 1998.
4. The author often notes the tactlessness of non-Roma authors in describing the low position of the Roma "Jats", and the relativity of notions such as high and low positions in the several thousand years of Roma history on the Indian subcontinent. She records that some Roma authors argue that the Roma originated from the highest Brahman castes, which is rather improbable, as members of these castes had to be familiar with very demanding and complicated texts and procedures used during different ceremonies, and they protected them from unauthorized access. She tends towards the opinion that the Roma were members of several castes, not just the lowest ones, as can be seen from their ability to adapt so quickly in the European Christian world (Fraser, 1998).
5. George Soulis mentions several authors in his article who wrote about Modona and the nearby Gyppe – Egypt Minor hill, thus proving that the Roma who came to Europe from a troubled Byzantium threatened by the Turks had not lied when they said they came from Egypt Minor. They really had come from Egypt Minor – but from a location in Byzantium with the same name. More information can be found in *The Roma in Byzantium* (1999) on pages 18 and 19. On the other hand, August Fraser proves that the Roma abused Christianity to repeatedly acquire new protective documents even 100 years after they were excommunicated from the church by the archbishop of Paris in 1427. It was then that the really drastic pursuit and slaughter of pagans began.
6. The experience that ethnologist Alexander Mušinka acquired in a long-term project in the village of Svinia (Prešov district) confirms that the Roma never use the word "Cigán" (Gypsy) when talking to one another. We can also mention the absurd conclusion of "historian" Jozef Duchoň, who in an article called *Gypsies – An Unknown Ethnic Group* published in the *Košický večer* daily paper on August 23, 2002, maintained that: "We are not obliged to start using the name Roma, as we have already grown accustomed to the name Gypsy."

7. Various services were provided during long hunts and driving beasts; the Roma were also experienced dog trainers, prepared and served food, and supplied the castle with wood, forest crops, etc.

8. On his order they torched the towns of Košice, Levoča, Bardejov, and Sabinov, and were prepared to do the same in other towns. Already before that they had been accused of espionage.

9. Several examples were mentioned by Emília Horváthová: in 1616 they received a writ of protection from Count Juraj Thurza in the town of Bytča; multiple permissions were awarded to the Roma by the towns of Ružomberok, Trebišov, and others.

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ANNA TKÁČOVÁ

THE ROMA FROM THE REIGN OF EMPRESS MÁRIA TERÉZIA UNTIL THE FIRST CZECHOSLOVAK REPUBLIC

Summary: This chapter deals with the position of the Roma from the mid-18th century to 1918, with the problems related to their nomadic or semi-nomadic way of life, and with the solutions advanced to these problems, especially during the phase of "enlightenment absolutism", when rulers, besides other reforms, sought to regulate the nomadic Roma in particular. The extent to which such regulation of the Roma was successful was shown during the 19th and early 20th centuries, when stagnation occurred, and regulations from the second half of the 18th century had to be constantly renewed.

Key words: assimilation, enlightenment, Mária Terézia, Jozef II, regulation of the Roma, listing, Hungarian listing, new peasants, new Hungarians, settled Roma, seminomadic Roma, nomadic Roma, Roma citizenship, deportation.

INTRODUCTION

The greatest "attention" paid to the Roma by the rulers of the lands they inhabited came during the enlightenment period, when the ruling class used regulations to attempt the full assimilation of the Roma with the majority population. However, despite the efforts invested, the plan did not bear fruit. Even though some of the measures taken by the enlightenment emperors Mária Terézia and Jozef II may seem discriminatory and inhuman today, at that time they presented positive steps, not just for Ugria but for Europe as a whole and its relationship to the Roma.[1] Compared to the enlightenment period, the responsible bodies in the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th centuries took only the minimum possible interest in the Roma. The measures they took, too, were unable to achieve the settlement of the nomadic Roma.

Listings, which were like an early form of population census, are an important source of information about the life of the Roma at the time (even though the data presented are not as precise as could be desired). Most listings were produced in the 18th century, and a few in the 19th. The most important listing of the 19th century was the 1893 Ugrian listing, which provides a fairly clear picture of the position of the Roma in Ugria. These listings are a rich source of information for specialists such as ethnologists and sociologists.

THE ROMA DURING THE ENLIGHTENMENT

WAYS OF ADDRESSING THE ROMA ISSUE, AND THE POSITION OF THE ROMA IN UGRIA IN THE 18TH CENTURY

The period of Roma persecution, which under the Hapsburg monarchy (especially in its western part) lasted until the late 18th century, was followed by a time of discriminatory measures (banishment, cruel treatment, mur-

der). Finally, the enlightenment brought a different approach to the nomadic Roma. The first positive change in the period of enlightenment absolutism was the 1744 edict of Empress Mária Terézia, according to which the country should get rid of the Roma by casting them out, not by killing them (as was happening in Austria and Bohemia). The Austro-Hungarian enlightenment rulers Mária Terézia (1740 – 1780) and Jozef II (1780 – 1790) issued many decrees designed mainly for Ugria, as the number of Roma in Ugria was far higher than in Austria or Bohemia, due mainly to the discriminatory measures applied there. The decrees envisaged the full assimilation of the Roma with the rest of the population, and they pertained especially to the nomadic and semi-nomadic Roma.[2]

The first requirement was that all Roma abandon their nomadic way of life. They were also prohibited from keeping and trading horses, and consuming the meat of already-dead animals. They were ordered to dress and farm like other people, or to choose a permitted craft and pay taxes in the proper manner. Their children were to be taken from them and sent to the peasants to be brought up;[3] all school-age children were to attend school regularly, while the older children were to learn crafts with local craftsmen or work as servants. They were prohibited from using their own language and their secret names. A Roma could not marry another Roma; they were obliged to marry members of the majority population, accept the Christian religion, and so on. In the drive to assimilate the Roma as quickly as possible, very harsh and violent methods were sometimes used. Talking in Romany and eating the meat of already-dead animals were punished by cudgeling – 24 blows for each offense (Horváthová, 1964).

According to the empress' decree of November 13, 1761, the settled Roma were not to call themselves Gypsies but "new peasants" ("neocolonorum" in Latin, "neubauer" in German, "ujparasztok" in Hungarian), "new Hungarians" ("ujmagyarok"), or "new citizens" ("ujlakosok") (*A pallas* ..., 1893). The function of the "vajda" was to be abolished.[4] According to the decree, the settled Roma were no longer to be under the authority of their "vajdas", but of the village reeves, who would supervise their behavior. The reeves were to visit the Roma every Thursday and check whether they were adhering to the decrees (Horváthová, 1964). All decrees that Mária Terézia and Jozef II issued regarding the Roma were published between 1760 and 1784.[5] They were sent from the Ugrian Royal Governing Council (hereafter URGC)[6] to individual districts, which were the executors of the decrees. Until the middle of the 18th century, the Roma belonged under the authority of the main regional governor, while from that point on the landlords became their masters.

The aim of these regulations was to get all Roma to settle down permanently, and to integrate them into the economic life of society so they could begin paying the feudal rent to their landlords, and well as state and regional taxes.[7] Despite the great efforts of the enlightenment rulers, however, the rules had little effect, mainly because those who wrote them knew little about the lives of the common people, about the economic and social position of the Roma, and the historical and social factors influencing the group. Finally, the economic and financial interests of the state and the indifference of the nobility in various regions towards enforcing the orders also played a negative role.[8]

Plans to regulate the Roma population aroused skepticism, and many of the measures were regarded with irony. People emphasized the negative features of the Roma way of life, maintaining they were inherent

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and could not be changed. The offenses of individuals or groups were generalized and magnified to absurdity, a typical example being a court case in the region of Hont in 1782, where 173 Roma were accused of cannibalism.

APPLICATION OF ENLIGHTENMENT REFORMS OF THE ROMA IN PRACTICE

The success of the regulations and the progress of the Roma population were measured by the emperors using "listings" of Gypsies or new peasants. On December 10, 1767[9], the URGC ordered that a listing of Gypsy families be performed.[10] Later (April 23, 1772), the URGC ordered that listings also include data on the payment of taxes (military and house tax). Thus, the listing from 1773, as well as the 1775 to 1779 listings, included the name of the head of the family, the number and age of the children (divided according to sex), the manner of their upbringing, the form of housing and clothing, legal position in society, occupation, name of master, whether the family ate already-dead animals, whether they owned horses, and the amount of military and house tax they paid. The listings were modified slightly in the 1780s, as in 1780 the regions received a new form for listing the Roma, according to which the following data had to be collected: the names of married Roma or the names of widowers and widows; the number of children under 2 years of age, under 12 years of age, and over 12 years of age; the manner of their upbringing (differentiated according to sex); and the occupation of the children. On top of that, the same data as before were collected.

Because the listings were not carried out during the same year in all regions, and because of differences in the ways the forms were filled in, it is not possible to numerically summarize the data collected from all over Slovakia. The listings taken during the 1780s show big differences in the number of Roma in individual regions, due mainly to the migration of Roma from regions where enforcement of the regulations was more strict, to those where the officials were more lenient. The listings suggest that the regulation of the Roma population was relatively trouble-free and in line with the plans of the enlightenment rulers. However, the reality was completely different. By examining the numbers and comparing the names on individual listings, we quickly see that the number of settled Roma was insignificant. The rest moved around within a single district, from one district to another, or between regions. Another problem was that the data were often modified by the census takers and embellished for the emperor.

THE ROMA IN UGRIA IN THE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY

DECREES AND MEASURES AGAINST THE ROMA IN THE 19TH CENTURY

The death of Jozef II put an end to attempts to regulate the Roma population. Certain efforts to assimilate the Roma appeared at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, but most of these were unsystematic and uncoordinated, and thus had little impact on the Roma. The regulations issued in the 19th century aimed to outlaw the nomadic life of the Roma, but police regulations on issuing passports were clearly not enough to eliminate the problem. In 1853,[11] the governor of Bohemia submitted proposals to regulate the Roma population and introduce the principle of equal treatment when issuing passports for the Roma, in order to limit further increases in the number of the Roma and to prevent them from wandering the country. Their iso-

lated position in the surrounding world was considered the main cause of the Roma's nomadic way of life.

Proposals to change this situation contained three points:

1. The Roma were to be permanently settled and integrated with the rest of the population. In disputed cases, the district authorities were to determine where individual Roma families had permanent residence, and filed such cases separately.

2. All Roma able to work were to be allowed to practice an occupation, and those not able to work were to receive suitable allowances. The Roma able to work were to be employed with craftsmen. It was to become easier for the Roma to acquire trading certificates, and initial financial support was to be provided (i.e. if they decided to settle in a certain location, they would be allocated a piece of land). Door-to-door trading was to be prohibited, as were horse-trading, individual acrobatic performances, puppetry, and wizardry. Roma who were unable to work were to be provided for according to the poor law (i.e. receive poor allowances) under the strict supervision of the municipalities. Special attention was paid to Roma children: school-age children were obliged to attend school, while grown-up children were to become servants, and small children were to be taken from their families and put into foster homes. It was also recommended that the quality of upbringing in Roma families be improved.

3. The issuing of passports to the Roma was to be limited to a minimum. The only exception was when the Roma applying for a passport could produce credible and stamped certificates confirming that the applicant practiced a craft such as day laborer, servant, or auxiliary worker. On each such passport the owner was to be labeled as a "Cigán" (Gypsy), so that "the police take special care to check this person". The employer had to report every employment or termination of employment to the municipal board, which was obliged to pass the report on to the district authority. It was forbidden to issue certificates allowing the Roma to travel with general formulations, such as: "to find a job". It was equally prohibited to issue passports for entire Roma families (the only exception being legal migrations) or for people who had been returned home by the authorities for wandering. Upon repeated wandering offences, or when the Roma did not fulfill their work obligations, they were to be placed in labor colonies (a kind of forced labor). Based on these proposals, the URGC on January 18, 1854 issued a decree calling for an expert opinion on the measures that had been taken to achieve this goal (preventing wandering and enforcing the settlement of the Roma) and at the same time required that statistical data be presented. The data were to include precise information on the number of Roma living in a given district, how many of them owned a trading license, what kind of activity they performed, how many Roma were unable to work, how many nomadic Roma with and without passports there were, and what forms of subsistence activity prevailed among them. This regulation, just as the previous ones, was not fully enforced by the authorities (the order was fulfilled, but the listing did not contain all the required information about the Roma) (Tkáčová, 2001).

Later, the wandering Roma were mentioned only in the laws on deportations (1871 and 1885) and the law on acquiring permanent residence. According to an 1886 Ugrian law, every citizen of the state was granted permanent residence automatically. The site of permanent residence could be changed (i.e.

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one could acquire permanent residence in a new village by paying taxes to the village for four years). An Austrian law from 1896, however, made the rules far more strict, stipulating that permanent residence could only be acquired on the basis of explicit acceptance of the applicant by the municipality. Permanent residence, according to the later law, was not to be withheld from any state citizen who fulfilled the conditions set by the law, who had reached the age of 21, and who had resided in the municipality for 10 consecutive years without receiving any allowance from the poor fund. In reality, acquisition of permanent residence under this law was very limited (Novák, 1924).

POSITION OF THE ROMA IN LIGHT OF THE 1893 HUNGARIAN LISTING

Formal Aspect of the Listing

At the end of the 19th century, more precisely on January 31, 1893, a very detailed Hungarian listing of the Roma was carried out.[13] According to Dr. Jekelfallussy, who at the time was the director of the Hungarian Royal Statistical Office, the aim of the listing was to provide the data and information necessary to prepare a proposal to solve the issue of nomads (i.e. to abolish the nomadic way of life). This proposal was closely connected with the attempt to find suitable ways for gradually forcing the nomadic Roma to settle down. The Interior Minister entrusted Hermann Antal, an ethnologist known for his research on the Roma, with preparing the entire listing, and analyzing and processing the data acquired in this important ethno demographic and statistical research. The listing was prepared and successfully carried out on a single day (January 31). The reason for this was to acquire as precise data on the Roma in Ugria as possible, and to prevent people from being counted twice or not at all

– this pertained particularly to the nomadic Roma. In cases where the listing could not be performed on a single day, a ban on movement was declared. If complications occurred, the army or the police were to be used to maintain order.

The acquired data were to record not only the precise number of Roma, but also the demographic characteristics that would elucidate the process by which nomads become semi-nomads and finally settled Roma. The basic idea was that to be able to understand the life of the nomadic Roma, one had to know about the lives of all Roma living in Ugria. The listing thus maintained a strict division of the Roma into settled, semi-nomadic, and nomadic. All Roma with permanent residence in a municipality were considered settled (even if during the listing they were somewhere else). The semi-nomadic Roma (partly or temporarily settled) were those who, due to their jobs, remained in one place for several months or years without having permanent residence there. All Roma who traveled together from place to place with their families (or group) were considered nomadic.

In places where few Roma lived, the listing was performed by the employees of local authorities. In locations with large numbers of Roma, special census officers were used. Information on the number of Roma in individual regions was drawn partly from the detailed 1873 listing, partly from the 1850, 1857, 1880 and 1890 head counts, and also from estimates. The data were gathered on the basis of questionnaires – there was a separate questionnaire for men and for women. Another important part of the questionnaire was a sheet filled in by the representatives of the various municipalities, from which valuable information on the lifestyle, socio-economic position, education, and behavior of individual groups of Roma (set-

tled, semi nomadic and nomadic) could be drawn. The listing provided information on the number of Roma, their religion, forms of subsistence, housing, age structure, marital status, use of mother tongue and other languages, education level (ability to read and write), whether their children attended school, etc.

The listing also dealt with the identification of the Roma. It was the first time[14] that several methods had been used to determine precisely who was and who was not a Roma. Ethnic and anthropological features were taken into account, while the listing also considered judgments on the ethnic background of individual inhabitants by people from the municipality. Even though the people who helped to determine ethnic membership were not specified in detail, they were likely formal and informal authorities of the municipality, such as reeves, notaries, priests, and teachers. With this type of identification, it is entirely possible that the non-Roma partner and children in mixed marriages were also identified as Roma (Džambazovič, 2001; Horváthová, 1964).

Results of the Listing

Number of Roma

According to the 1893 listing, a total of 274,940 Roma lived in Ugria, or 1.8% of all inhabitants of the country[15]. Of the total number of Roma in Ugria, 36,237 lived on the territory of present-day Slovakia (13.2% of the Roma living in Ugria), of whom 17,718 were men and 18,519 women. According to listings, 160,000 Roma lived on the territory of present-day Rumania, 65,000 on the territory of present-day Hungary, and 8 to 10 thousand on the territory of the former Yugoslavia. The largest number of Roma on Slovak territory lived in the Gemer region, and the fewest in Orava (Horváthová, 1964).

Table 1

Number of Roma in individual regions according to the 1893 listing

Region	Number of Roma
Gemer	5,552
Nitra	4,303
Bratislava	4,179
Šariš	3,261
Zemplín	3,081
Spiš	2,792
Abov-Turňa	2,782
Tekov	2,034
Novohrad	1,902
Trenčín	1,516
Hont	1,465
Komárno	1,197
Zvolen	1,182
Orava	216
Turiec	297
Liptov	478

Source: Horváthová, 1964.

The largest Roma communities were located near the towns of Šamorín (Bratislava region), Nitra and Nové Zámky (Nitra region), Komárno, Levice (Tekov region), Lučenc (Novohrad region), Rimavská Sobota and Rožňava (Gemer region), Kežmarok (Spiš region) and Košice (Abov – Turňa region). The most numerous category, according to the division into settled, semi nomadic and nomadic Roma, was the settled Roma, containing 243,432 people (88.5% of the total number of Roma), of whom 33,655 lived on the territory of present-day Slovakia (92.9% of the Slovak Roma population). There were 20,406 semi nomadic Roma (7.4% of the overall Roma), of whom 1,973 lived on the territory of Slovakia (5.4% of Slovak Roma); and 8,938 nomadic Roma (3.3%), of whom 609 lived in Slovakia (1.7% of all Slovak Roma).

Another 2,164 Roma could not be classified as belonging to any group. The listing showed that the majority of the Roma living on the territory of Slovakia and Ugria as a whole were settled. Of the total 12,693 Ugrian municipalities, Roma lived in 7,962 (63%), while settled Roma lived in 7,220. In

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52% (3,750) of Ugrian municipalities, the Roma lived outside villages, while in 40% (2,874) they lived scattered throughout the municipality. In 8% (596) of municipalities, the Roma lived both outside and inside villages. As the numbers suggest, more than half of the settled Roma lived separated or excluded from the mainstream community. According to an additional comment in the book version of the listing, the Roma tended to lived separately especially in regions inhabited by the Slovaks (Džambazovič, 2001; Horváthová, 1964).

Age Structure

The age structure of the Roma population in Ugria did not differ significantly from the age structure of the overall population of Ugria.

Table 2
Age structure of the Roma population according to the 1893 listing

Age group	% of the Roma population	% of the overall population
0 – 14 years	39.1%	36.7%
15 – 29 years	23.3%	23.8%
30 – 59 years	31.4%	27.5%
60 and older	6.2%	7.0%

Source: Horváthová, 1964.

If we compare the age structure of individual groups of Roma (settled, semi nomadic, and nomadic) we find that children aged 0 to 14 formed the largest proportion of the nomadic Roma (47%), a smaller share of the semi nomadic Roma (40.1%) and less smaller of the settled Roma (39.1%). The second-largest age category within these groups was people aged 30 to 59, who represented a 31.7% share of settled Roma, 29.9% of semi nomadic Roma, and 26.8% of nomadic Roma. The 15 to 29 years age group formed the largest proportion among the semi-nomadic Roma (25.6%), followed by the settled Roma (22.8%) and the nomadic Roma (21.8%). The smallest age category was that of people older than 60, the largest percent-age being among the settled Roma (6.4%). Semi nomadic and nomadic Roma had the same percentage representation of the oldest people, namely 4.4%. The listing also showed that the number of children in Roma families was higher than among the majority population, i.e. that the Roma birth rate was higher, but that on the other hand, Roma child mortality was also higher. There were very few single adults and very few deaths of children aged 6 to 14 among the Roma.

Marital Status

The listing provided evidence of a different form of upbringing and partnership relations among the Roma, influenced by the remnants of tribal structures and their different culture. It also indicated stability in both legal and unrecognized marriages, and showed that sexual life began at an early age, and that first-time mothers were also very young. Attention should be paid to the remnants of matriarchy among the nomadic Roma. Here, in many cases, the mother owned the shelter, and the children belonged to her clan.

The data were organized not only according to categories of Roma, but also from the viewpoint of age and sex, meaning that they can be compared with data for the entire population of Ugria. The listing implied that there were more cohabitations/marriages among the Roma (43.9%) than within the entire population (41%), and a smaller ratio of single people and widows, and that legal marriages prevailed (27.1%) over common-law partnerships (16.76%) in the Roma population.

When comparing categories of Roma, we find more marriages and common-law partnerships among the semi nomadic Roma than among the nomadic. Among the settled Roma, legal marriages prevailed, while among the semi nomadic and nomadic Roma, unofficial relationships had the upper

hand. The rate of legal marriages ranged from 28.2% among the settled Roma to 14.1% among the nomadic Roma, while in the case of "illegitimate" cohabitations, the rate was the opposite, at 15.6% compared to 23.3%, respectively. According to the listing, most couples living on the territory of modern-day Slovakia were lawfully wedded. A surprising finding was the 24 Roma who had been lawfully divorced, all of whom were women (23 originated from Šariš region and 1 from Novohrad). From the viewpoint of age, most Roma aged 20 to 24 already lived in some form of cohabitation.

Among 15 to 24 year-olds, a higher proportion of illegitimate cohabitations was seen among both men and women, although with increasing age the ratio slowly turned in favor of marriage. Men dominated all data concerning legal marriages (except on the territory of modern-day Slovakia), which, according to the authors of the listing, might be due to the fact that all marriages between Roma men and non-Roma women were legalized, while most marriages between Roma women and non-Roma men were illegitimate.

Religion
The Roma usually adopted the religion of the population on whose territory they lived, although this was usually just a formal adoption. Although the most widespread religion in Ugria was Roman Catholicism, there were fewer Roman Catholics and Protestants among the Roma than within the total population. Compared to the Ugrian population, the most frequent religion among the Roma was the Greco-Catholic and Orthodox faiths (the Orthodox was especially popular among the nomadic Roma). On the territory of Slovakia, according to the listing, most Roma claimed the Roman Catholic confession, and only a small share the Greco-Catholic faith (mostly in Zemplín and Šariš regions), the

Evangelical of the Augsburg Confession (Lutherans – especially in Gemer region), the Calvinist (mainly in Abov, Zemplín and Gemer regions), or other confessions (especially in Zemplín region).

Language
According to the data, more than half the Roma population could not speak Roma, and considered the language of the local community to be their own. Some 29.97% of Roma in Ugria considered Romany their mother tongue (especially the nomads – 62.12%). However, only a small percentage of the Roma could not speak another language: 38.10% spoke Hungarian (72.98% of whom spoke no Romany), 24.89% spoke Rumanian (84.20% of whom spoke no Romany) and 3.59% spoke Slovak (only 30.72% of these spoke no Romany). The highest proportion of Roma claiming Slovak as their mother tongue lived among the settled Roma. As for social categories, young Roma settled in towns were particularly ignorant of Romany.

Housing
Most of the Roma in Ugria lived in houses (61.74%), shacks (33.33%) or tents (3.25%). The smallest number of Roma lived in mud houses[16] or other types of dwelling. In comparison with the totals for Ugria, on Slovak territory almost one-third of Roma families lived permanently in mud houses, while another one-third lived in tents in the summer and mud houses in the winter; the rest lived in houses (usually one or two room houses), shacks and shelters. The settled Roma lived mainly in houses and mud houses, while the semi nomadic families used mud houses as temporary dwellings (during the winter), and the nomadic Roma lived mostly in shelters that they transported on two- or four-wheel wagons. On a Europe-wide scale, the average number of people sharing one room was 5.7 with the settled Roma (similar to the 1890 population census, when the figure was

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5.75); among the nomadic Roma it was 7.9. This average was slightly higher in Slovakia.

Property

Standard of living and property can be measured in terms of the acreage of land owned or used by the Roma. According to the listing, the number of Ugrian Roma who owned land was very low (only 10,088). The Roma farmed 0.011% of available land. Given that the Roma represented 1.8% of all inhabitants, this figure is extremely low. However, it was related to the overall economic level and geographic specifics of individual regions (for example, in the Liptov and Turiec regions not a single Roma land owner or farmer was found). Given that the Roma owned very little land, they formed one of the poorest classes at the time.

Means of Subsistence

Roma earned their livings in two or more ways. The listing included a total of 150 forms of subsistence.[17] Most Roma lived off music and smithery, professions that were practiced by women as well. They were usually paid for their work in kind (food, clothing, etc.). On the territory of Slovakia, the Roma mostly lived from smithery and metal working, music, and manufacturing bricks. Another group made rope, string and brushes. Among the illegal forms of subsistence, the most frequent were beggary, theft, fortune telling, and card reading. The source of subsistence could not be determined for about 1% of Roma living on Slovak territory. According to the listing, 78% of Roma living on Slovak territory had an occupation (including small crafts and seasonal work), while the remaining 22% of Roma older than 15 years (mostly juveniles and women) were unemployed.

Education

Compared to the population of Ugria as a whole, the Roma were considerably less edu-cated: only 6.45% of Roma older than six years could read and write (among the overall Ugrian population the figure was 53.4%). From the viewpoint of the sexes, 8.48% of Roma men and only 4.58% of Roma women could read and write. A similar difference was also seen among the overall Ugrian population, where the ratio was men – 60.21%, women – 46.50%. The ability to read and write increased with improving living conditions and position in society. Some 6.89% of settled Roma could read and write, while among nomadic Roma it was only 0.39%. As much as 90.9% of settled Roma men and 93.92% of settled Roma women were illiterate, compared to 37.89% and 46.89% within the entire Ugrian population, respectively. Illiteracy was even higher among the nomadic Roma, at 98.25% among the men and 98.91% among the women. The situation was similar on the territory of Slovakia: less than 3,000 Roma were literate or semi-literate, with the majority able neither to read nor write.

School Attendance

According to the listing, few Roma children aged 6 to 14 attended school, the situation being even worse among the nomadic Roma. In Ugria there were roughly 60,000 school-age children, 69.15% of whom did not attend school. In only in 23% of the Ugrian municipalities inhabited by the Roma did Roma children attend school regularly, while in 10% the Roma attended irregularly, and in 67% of municipalities the Roma children did not go to school at all. On the territory of Slovakia, 73 to 75% of all school-age children did not attend school. In comparison with the 14 to 15% of all school-age children who attended school on Slovak territory, the average among Roma children was 10%. The school attendance figures for Roma children were comparable to those of children of other nationalities. Teachers usually described the Roma children as physically more mature,

but less disciplined, less inclined to do homework, and less blessed with teaching aids than other children.

POSITION OF THE ROMA ON THE THRESHOLD OF THE 20TH CENTURY

At the end of the 19th century, their very low level of education and their traditional way of life handicapped the Roma, at that time the poorest social class, in successfully starting the 20th century. The ruling classes paid little attention to them because the Roma did not threaten their political and economic interests, and because with the surfeit of labor that existed at the time, the Roma were not much in demand. Closer attention was paid to the Roma in 1907 in connection with a brutal murder in a tavern in Danošská pusta, in which the Roma were the main suspects.[18] The Roma were also noticed by the press, which ascribed many pejorative characteristics to them to support the idea that it was useless to try to change their way of life (especially the nomadic Roma). The unfavorable situation of the Roma worsened after the outbreak of the First World War.

A decree issued in 1916 by the Interior Ministry was the last attempt to regulate the nomadic life of the Roma. The decree aimed to protect the domestic population from the Roma, i.e. to settle the nomadic Roma and include them in the labor process, not just to prevent begging and theft, but also to acquire further taxpayers and soldiers for the state. This decree also formed the legal basis for regulations on deportation. Wandering Roma were considered suspicious, and if they wandered about a municipality where they had no permanent residence, employment, or pension, according to the Interior Ministry's 1885 deportation order

they could be banished from the village or forced to work.

This regulation was intended to apply especially to wandering Roma who had neither the money nor the means (i.e. a job) to survive. Each municipality where the Roma lived was obliged to keep a register of every wandering Roma. This evidence was to be collected according to family. For each family, a separate registration sheet had to be filled in, and two copies made (one copy to be filed in alphabetic order with the municipality and kept updated, and the second copy to be sent to the Central Statistical Office). Even though this regulation did not pertain to the settled Roma, its unclear wording caused everyone to read it differently, and as a result, some municipalities applied the law to the settled Roma as well. Besides that, the instructions on integration into the labor process were very vague, and the issues of housing for the Roma and increasing their cultural level were completely avoided. Due to the war, this regulation was forgotten for several years (Horváthová, 1964).

CONCLUSION

Despite enduring attempts by the state to settle all nomadic Roma and change their lifestyles, these efforts were ultimately fruitless. Regulations that tried to change the Roma way of life failed largely due to the fact that the initiative always came from above, and the measures were always forced. Even though the regulations gradually became less strict, they always included discriminatory and repressive items. Not a single regulation respected the nature and cultural specifics of the Roma. Under these circumstances, the Roma were not interested in, or convinced of the need to change their lives, and they perceived the regulations as a necessary evil that was to be avoided as much as possible.

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ENDNOTES

1. During the reign of Empress Mária Terézia it was expected that the Roma reforms would be so efficient and fast that within several decades, the Roma would be completely integrated with the majority population, and future generations would only be able to learn about their lives, appearance, language, and characteristics from books (see ab Hortis, 1995).

2. Besides the group of nomadic and semi-nomadic Roma, there was also a small group of settled Roma. Being few, these settled Roma did not represent as large a problem for the Ugrian emperors as the nomadic and semi nomadic Roma.

3. During the reign of Mária Terézia, this was to be the fate of Roma children from 2 to 12 years of age. During the reign of Jozef II, Roma children were to be brought up by peasants from 4 years of age, and later from 8 to 10 years of age. Once they were 10 years old, they had to serve these peasants for as many years as they had been taught by them (see Šalamon, 1992, p. 73).

4. Within one manor, the Roma fell under a common "vajda" who had to be confirmed in his function by the local squires, and who was responsible for all the offences of his people. It was his job to solve minor disagreements and offences among his people. The organized wandering groups lived under the authority of the "vajda", while the unorganized groups did not recognize any authority, and crossed not just district but also regional borders; everywhere they went they committed petty thefts and other offences. The settled Roma lived under the authority of landlords or towns (Horváthová, 1964).

5. MOL: C56, 1783 – 1848, Elenchus Normalia Actorum 1760 – 1785.

6. The Ugrian Royal Governor Council was established in 1723 in Bratislava, and from 1783 to 1785 it formed a special department for dealing with Gypsies, the *Departamentum Zingarorum* (see Horváthová, 1964; Tkáčová, 2001).

7. Attempts by individual estates to make the Roma pay taxes began in the early 18th century. Landlords assigned administrative functions to some Roma, as can be see from a document dated October 25, 1776. The holder

of such a letter from a landlord was entitled to collect taxes from other Roma (see Horváthová, 1964; Hancock, 2001).

8. Attempts by the Roma to settle in one place often failed due to the refusal of landlords to accept the Roma on their land. The landlords were willing to accept only those Roma in whom they were confident that they would be of use (see Horváthová, 1964).

9. MOL: C56, 1783 – 1848, Elenchus Normalia Actorum 1760 – 1785.

10. The first listings from the territory of modern-day Slovakia originate from 1725 (Šariš and Tekov regions) and 1766 (Zvolen region). Then there was the 1768 listing (Abov and Turňa regions), the 1769 listing (Zvolen region) and the 1770 listing (Malý Hont region) (see Horváthová, 1964; State Regional Archive (SRA) in Prešov: ŠŽ1: L. C. 1725/58-61; Tkáčová, 2000).

11. SRA Košice: ATŽ, krab. Cigáni, bez označenia, year 1853.

12. The 1886 law and the 1896 law on the right of domicile were included in the Czechoslovak Constitution after the formation of the First Czechoslovak Republic.

13. It was also published as a book in 1895 after the results were processed (see Horváthová, 1964).

14. In the previous population censuses, only people whose mother tongue was Roma were considered to be Roma. In the 1873 listing there were no strict rules as to who was to be considered a Roma, or as to the characteristics on which the judgment would be based (see Džambazovič, 2001).

15. The actual number was slightly higher, around 280,000, because despite the care taken, some Roma were left out, such as the Roma from Budapest, whose number Kemény put at roughly 1,500.

16. Different kinds of mud houses were built for used either as permanent or seasonal dwellings. The mud house was a rectangular space (2 by 2 meters) dug in a slope, with walls made of wooden snags and thick twigs. The only opening was an entrance covered with a sheet. Dwellings partially set into the ground were called semi-mud houses, and they were a kind of transitional stage between the mud house and the one-room house (see Horváthová, 1964).

17. Here are some examples of their occupations: musicians, smiths, locksmiths, and makers of pots, bells, tubs, spoons, baskets, brooms, bricks, boots, shoes, rope, string, brushes, and lace. The Roma were also cobblers, clothes-washers, weavers, farmers, farmhands, day laborers, attendants, carters, traders, middle-men, bricklayers, horse-doctors and servants. Among the illegal forms of subsistence they resorted to were: prostitution, beggary, fortune telling, reading cards, fake healing, theft, and vagrancy (see Horváthová, 1964).

18. At that time the police apprehended 37 groups of Roma – a total of 400 people. To make them confess the police used battery, and torture by hunger and thirst. The public and the press were full of the controversy, with some defending and some accusing the Roma (see Horváthová, 1964).

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ZUZANA KOLLÁROVÁ

THE ROMA DURING THE FIRST CZECHOSLOVAK REPUBLIC, THE SECOND CZECHOSLOVAK REPUBLIC, AND THE FIRST SLOVAK STATE

Summary: This chapter summarizes the political and legal treatment of the Roma by the state. It concentrates on the legislation of Austria Hungary and the legislative measures of the First Czechoslovak Republic and the First Slovak State against the Roma from 1918 to 1945. It analyses the social rights of the Roma and their demographic development. It outlines the main problems in the relationship between the Roma and the majority society, focusing on attempts to eliminate poverty. It examines the life of the Roma in the interwar period.

Key words: political and legal treatment, legislation, laws, nomadic Roma, settled Roma, demography, crafts, school system, education, traditional way of life, ethnography, history.

INTRODUCTION

The growing number of Roma in Europe in the 20th century forced the public to start dealing with their way of life. The interwar period from 1918 to 1945 was very difficult, not just for Slovak society but also for the Roma. Society became aware of the "Gypsy issue" or the "Gypsy problem", caused by the poor standard of living, lifestyle, thinking, and culture of the Roma, as well as the increased social gap between the Roma and the majority population, the Roma's difficulty in adapting to the standards of society, and their resistance of the permanent attempts to "integrate" them into society. The living conditions of the Roma were influenced mainly by the laws adopted, their relationship to the majority population, and their willingness to adapt to the majority society (Bačová, 1994).

POLITICAL AND LEGAL TREATMENT OF THE ROMA BY THE STATE

ADOPTION OF AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN LEGISLATION

The period after the First World War was a test for the young Czechoslovak republic. One of the government's main tasks was to prepare a new Constitution. While it was in the end prepared according to the 1875 French Constitution, several laws and regulations originating from Austria-Hungary were also retained (*Slovensko. Dejiny*, 1978).

The most important legal norm pertaining to the Roma was the official ruling of the Vienna Interior Ministry on nomadic Gypsies, dated September 14, 1888. Its repressive provisions pushed both the nomadic and the settled Roma to the outskirts of society. The ruling was valid until 1927 in Bohemia, while in Slovakia and Ruthenia the relationship with the Roma was regulated according to the Ugrian body of law (with a Hungarian orientation); the provisions of the Vienna

ruling applied from 1918 till 1927. The ruling was the formal basis for the modification of legislation pertaining to the Roma issue after 1921 (Nečas, 1981).

In 1918 the Interior Ministry took over a circular from the Hungarian Royal Interior Ministry on statistics and registration of the Roma after the Czechoslovak Republic had already been declared; however, it was still not clear how the situation in Slovakia would evolve.[1]

SOCIAL POSITION OF THE ROMA AFTER THE FORMATION OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK REPUBLIC

At the time the independent Czechoslovak Republic was declared, the Roma were completely indifferent to developments, due mainly to their inferior social position and lack of education. Archive documents register cases of abuse of the Roma by Hungarian government circles to instigate ethnic hatred (Kollárová, 1988).

The growing economic crisis in Czechoslovakia was paralleled by the growth of the poorest class of people, of which the Roma undoubtedly were part. Their population was increasing, as was crime and the number of unhygienic Roma colonies. Many complaints were filed with the Ministry for the Administration of Slovakia, demanding a solution to the Roma issue. The greatest problems were caused by the nomadic and wandering Roma coming from Hungary and Rumania.

MEASURES AGAINST THE NOMADIC ROMA

The Czechoslovak minister for the administration of Slovakia, in a circular dated August 31, 1921, advised all regional governors to proceed according to the principles set in the attached decrees. He stated that: "The situation in Slovakia differs from the situation in Czech territory, because in Slovakia, unlike in the Czech Republic, there are many settled Roma (...) Despite that, we have to prevent the influx of Roma from abroad, especially from Hungary."[2]

In 1924, the Regional Political Administration in Prague prepared an alphabetical list of Roma with permanent residence on Czech territory. In 1925, the Interior Ministry tried – unfortunately to no avail – to prepare a similar list for Slovakia. However, these measures could not remove the causes of the backward way of life and the criminal behavior of the Roma, which included lack of employment, housing, and education. Every measure taken, rather than addressing the basic problems, aimed to facilitate the work of the security forces.

New legal regulations were prepared in Prague from 1922 to 1926, but never entered into force. A definitive "listing" (a sort of census) of the Roma was to be performed by July 1, 1927. To assure that the listing was precise, police stations were assigned additional personnel in areas with many Roma. As 1926 gave way to 1927, the relationship between the Roma and the majority population worsened. One of the reasons was "the revelation of Roma crime in the town of Moldava nad Bodvou" (Kollárová, 1992).

The evidence gathered was used to prepare the *Law on Wandering Gypsies*, which was approved on July 14, 1927. The law defined the term "wandering Gypsy", obliged the Roma to register themselves, allowed the authorities to check their identities in different ways, introduced Gypsy identification papers for people older than 14, limited the terms of itinerancy and the use of the itiner-

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ancy permit, prohibited the use of weapons and itinerancy in groups larger than one family, obliged the Roma to build camps only in places allocated for this purpose by municipal mayors, prohibited the stay of foreign Roma in the Czechoslovak Republic, allowed the entry of the Roma to be prohibited in certain places, introduced new rules pertaining to the health of people and animals, and allowed children younger than 18 years to be taken from their parents and placed in homes.

An executive order was added to this law by the government on April 26, 1928. The cabinet order dealt in detail with the listing and keeping of records on wandering Gypsies, Gypsy identification papers, itinerancy permits, the removal of children from their parents' care, and the cooperation of municipalities. The law was also complemented by orders from the relevant ministries.[3] The law set an example for other countries in Central and Southeastern Europe to follow. The fact that some concepts were not defined made it possible to proceed not only against the nomadic Roma, but also against the settled Roma. The law expressed the huge gap between the majority population and the Roma, the absence of political rights for the Roma, and the presence of discrimination against them (Nečas, 1981; Horváthová, 1964; Jamnická-Šmerglová, 1955; Gecelovský, 1986, 1992). An amendment to the government executive order dated May 15, 1928 established the Center for Records on Wandering Gypsies in Prague.

The law was modified according to the needs of various regions by the orders of district authorities. In the Spiš region, the law's provisions were modified to prohibit entry by Roma into:
1. all municipalities in the area of the High Tatras mountains;
2. all spa health resorts.[4]

Exceptions were given only to Roma musicians. The Roma did not attempt to unite in groups or political parties. Individual displays of resistance were quickly put down, and the Roma were imprisoned far more frequently than members of the majority population (Kollárová, 1987). The regional court in Bratislava, in an order dated March 31, 1932, ordered all district authorities, police commissariats and directorates to pay due attention to the nomadic Roma, and to limit their itinerancy in the interest of public safety (Gecelovský, 1992).

MEASURES AGAINST THE ROMA AFTER THE FORMATION OF THE SLOVAK STATE

Under the influence of Nazi Germany, the Slovak WWII Nazi-puppet government under Jozef Tiso approached the Roma issue far more vigorously than the interwar government. After the arrival of fascism in Slovakia in 1938, the position of the Roma remained slightly better than in Bohemia. The law on state citizenship, dated September 25, 1939, divided Slovak citizens into two groups – state citizens and foreign elements. Jews could not hold state citizenship under any circumstances, and as for the Roma, two approaches were taken:
1. If it could be proven beyond a doubt that the Roma lived an orderly family life, had a permanent abode and a job in the municipality, and if, based on their upbringing, moral and political reliability, and public actions, they had achieved the level of regular citizenship, then they could be a part of the Slovak nation.
2. If they did not meet the criteria, or met them only partly, worked only occasionally, spoke Romany, and their moral and political reliability were in doubt, then they could not be considered members of the Slovak nation.

The first regulations against the Roma during the period of the Slovak WWII State were included in circular No. 190, issued by the district authority in Bratislava on June 23, 1939, and calling for the confinement of the Roma to their home municipalities, banning trading with horses and the tapping, sale, and serving of alcoholic beverages to the Roma (Nečas, 1981).

On the basis of a motion by the Gendarme Headquarters, an outline was prepared of a government bill on wandering Gypsies and vagabonds. The bill was based on the 1927 Wandering Gypsy Law and the 1928 government order, and aimed to include the Roma in the labor process. For various reasons, the law was not submitted for approval (Nečas, 1981).

Discriminatory measures continued with the adoption of the Military Law on January 18, 1940, which deprived the Roma and Jews of the possibility to become soldiers. Those already in the army were to be dismissed and stripped of their military rank.

On February 29, 1940, the National Defense Ministry issued an order according to which the Roma and Jews were dismissed from the army. They received the designation "Worker Gypsy (Jew) out of active service" on their files, which were stored with the district headquarters or transferred to the records of infantry regiments No. 1 and 9. The soldiers were dismissed on January 31, 1940 and transferred to special records by April 15, 1940. On April 17, 1940, the National Defense Ministry issued an order with instructions on how to determine who was a Gypsy (Roma). On June 18, 1940, the Interior Ministry declared that all people having two Gypsy parents and living a nomadic way of life, or those settled but avoiding work, were Gypsies (Nečas, 1988).

Interior Ministry Decree No. 163 on Regulating the Situation of the Gypsies[5] dated

April 20, 1941 abolished itinerancy permits, and ordered all nomadic Roma to return to their home municipalities, to remove any dwellings near busy roads, and to find work (Nečas, 1988; Kollárová, 1987). In 1944, the Interior Ministry prohibited the Roma from traveling by train.

May 29, 1940 saw the issue of *Decree No. 130/1940 Coll. With the Powers of a Law Temporarily Regulating the Labor Obligation of the Jews and the Roma.* This decree became – beside other things – the basis for the definition of the notion of a Gypsy. Of the types of concentration camps proposed, only centers and labor units of "Aryan Antisocial Elements" were actually set up.

The anti-Roma measures peaked when the Roma were sent to labor camps. Pursuant to an Interior Ministry decree dated April 2, 1941, the country's labor centers were reserved for Jews who had been excluded from the economy, while the labor camps were meant mainly for the Roma. Using experience that had been gained with Aryan Antisocial Elements labor units, the Slovak government opened its labor units in 1942. A new regulation on the organization of the labor units was published in *Úradné noviny* (Official Newspaper) as Decree No. 419/1942. The first labor units were established in 1941 in the villages of Očová and Most na Ostrove. The Roma were sent to concentration camps in 1942, especially the "East Slovak labor units" headquartered in the town of Hanušovce nad Topľou. In 1942 and 1943, a Slovakia-wide selection and recording of "antisocial persons" was carried out (Nečas, 1976; Fedič, 2001).

Political, social, and ethnic oppression encouraged the formation of an antifascist movement that near the end of the war transformed into the Slovak National Uprising. The Roma fought together with the army and

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the partisans, but unfortunately, the only sources proving this are lists of soldiers killed in action. The Roma were among those killed in the following municipalities: Kremnička, Nemecká, Kováčová, Štubňa, Dolná Bzová, Dolné Hámre, Dolný Turček, Kríž nad Hronom, and Slatina. In the village of Čierny Balog, the Roma were burned to death together with their houses, and in the town of Krupina, the German troops slaughtered all the Roma. Several Roma were also executed in the municipalities of Tisovec, Žiar nad Hronom, Lutila, and Poprad-Kvetnica (Nečas, 1988; Davidová, 1965; Kollárová, 1992; Poliaková, 1999).

DEMOGRAPHIC DEVELOPMENT

The exact number of Roma that lived in the Czechoslovak Republic is not known. According to estimates, roughly 70,000 Roma lived in the Republic in 1918 (Nečas, 1994). The results of official population censuses were lower than the estimated numbers, as people could state basically any nationality they chose. The state administration attempted to perform a population census focusing on the Roma before the Republic was formed. The greatest problem was performing an accurate count of the nomadic and foreign Roma.

The first population census was performed in 1921. Here, ethnicity was determined according to the respondent's mother tongue. The results of the census were significantly biased, as it provided completely different data than other censuses. As of February 15, 1921, in the whole of Czechoslovakia, only 8,028 people claimed Roma nationality, out of that 61 in the Czech Republic and 7,967 in Slovakia and Ruthenia (Nečas, 1994). According to the Statistical Lexicon published in 1927, only 7,284 Roma lived on Slovak territory in 1921.

More precise data were provided by the registration of the Roma according to their permanent residence between 1922 and 1927. The listing was not completed in Slovakia, because the Roma from the XVI region were not counted. According to the Regional Political Administration in Prague, which compiled the alphabetical list of Roma, Slovakia also strove to create a similar list. In a letter dated May 11, 1927, the Interior Ministry in Bratislava informed the Interior Ministry in Prague that at the time there were 60,315 settled and 1,877 nomadic Roma living in Slovakia. We may assume that the number of settled Roma was quite precise, but the low number of nomadic Roma is suspicious. The nomadic Roma avoided these listings as best they could. Many had no identification papers, and neither the state nor the ecclesiastical registers kept a record of them. They did not know the year or place of their birth, and stated several surnames (Horváthová, 1964).

As of December 1, 1930, 227 people claimed Gypsy nationality in the Czech Republic, and 31,148 in Slovakia and Ruthenia, for a grand total of 31,415 Roma (Nečas, 1994). Allegedly, 13,211 lived in eastern Slovakia (Davidová, 1965). It is estimated that before the Republic broke up in 1938, around 110,000 Roma lived in the whole of Czechoslovakia (Nečas, 1994); other historians report about 100,000 Roma in 1945 (Horváthová, 1964). The war did not affect the Roma in Slovakia as badly as it did in the Czech Republic. There were several reasons for this: many of the Roma in Slovakia lived a settled life, while Germany considered Slovakia to be an ally.

RELATIONSHIP OF THE MAJORITY POPULATION TO THE ROMA

The relationship of the majority population to the Roma evolved slowly, varying accord-

ing to time and location, and differing in relation to the settled and the nomadic Roma. While in 1921 the regional governor of Spiš reported that most of the local Roma were working on farms, in forests, and in construction, and that only a few Roma were problematic, the region of Orava reported that wandering Roma had not been seen in Orava territory since the upheaval. The region of Trenčín, meanwhile, complained of nomadic Roma (Horváthová, 1964). Despite the variations, most Roma remained on the outskirts of society, especially due to their poverty, lifestyle, and the laws in force.

PROFESSION AS THE KEY TO ACCEPTANCE

Roma craftsmen had a special position in society. Craft skills were often the reason that entire families were permitted to settle. Blacksmiths, who performed a lot of work (shoeing horses, making chains, nails, etc.) in the villages, were much sought after. Society also showed respect for Roma musicians (Mann, 1992; Drenko, 1997). As the Roma population grew, however, these traditional crafts were unable to provide a living for all Roma. And so the Roma resorted to other, usually less skilled work. For example, in 1927, in 25 villages in the central Slovakia district of Levoča, the Roma worked as day laborers (26.2%), homemakers (23.8%), blacksmiths (6.2%), musicians (6.1%), farmers (4.68%), brick makers (2.4%) and miners (0.82%). Other occupations were rare – the jobs of servant, painter, locksmith, barber, caretaker, school servant, pig herder, bricklayer's helper, and horse merchant employed a combined 2.6% of Roma. Only 5.57% of the Roma lived from begging.[6]

Based on archival documents, it appears that the Roma were making quite strenuous at-

tempts to integrate with the majority population at that time. The prejudices of the population and of employers were the only hindrance to greater employment of the Roma. In the High Tatras, for example, the owners of recreational facilities traded waste fat and scrap food for eggs and forest crops gathered by the Roma. "It is true that some Gypsies work in the High Tatras all year long, they are polite, and it would be a pity to dismiss them. If the Gypsies are prohibited from working in the High Tatras, most will apply for welfare benefits, but if it is necessary not to have the Gypsies and their family members in the Tatras, then we must completely bar them from this area."[7]

MEASURES TO ADDRESS ROMA POVERTY

Society tried to remove the most blatant and grievous social shortcomings in different ways. According to the 1886 law, the municipalities were obliged to take care of their poor, a duty they tried to shirk in a number of ways. As of November 15, 1940, Slovak municipalities registered 32,575 people that had to be taken care of (more than 12% of the entire population). Some 8,939 of these, or more than a quarter, were Roma. To take care of the needs of these people, 10,471,283 crowns were allocated, or a minute 88 halers per person per day. As the whole of Slovakia had only 206 poorhouses for a total of 2,878 people, they naturally could not shelter everyone in need of help. There were two kinds of beggars – the poorest Slovak people, who had no option, and those who did not need to beg, but did so because they considered begging their profession. In 1940, Slovakia officially registered 10,763 beggars, of whom 7,599 were Roma (more than two-thirds). It was mainly Roma beggars who were classified as "professional beggars" (Straka, 1941).

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Isolated attempts to solve the problems of the Roma came from the League for the Cultural Elevation of the Gypsies, established in 1929 in Košice, and later renamed the Society for Studying and Solving the Gypsy Issue. The group was built around a nucleus of physicians from Košice, headed by Doctor Jaroslav Stuchlík. The League performed mainly cultural and social activities, depending on the financial support and subsidies it received. It organized medical checkups, vaccinations, and treatments for the Roma, it established the first Roma schools in the towns of Užhorod, Košice, Humenné and Levoča, and it also established several theater and musical groups. In the 1930s it even established a football club called ŠK Roma (Davidová, 1965; Horváthová, 1964).

The education of children presented a serious problem. The oldest mentions of Roma schools come from Ruthenia from the year 1926. Similar institutions were established in the Spiš region in eastern Slovakia. On December 15, 1927, the Ministry of Education and National Culture passed a decree establishing a special class for Roma children in the village of Ľubica. This class used normal curricula, but the demands on students were somewhat lower. The first teacher of the class was František Přikryl, who started to teach on January 16, 1928 in the presence of the gendarmes. Between 1928 and 1938, schools were established in Smižany, Levoča, Jablonov, Bystany, Levočské Lúky, Dvorce, Machalovce, Jánovce, Gánovce and Nová Lesná (Kollárová, 1992).

THE ROMA WAY OF LIFE AFTER 1918

The traditional Roma way of life did not change much after the formation of the Czechoslovak Republic. They lived dispersed among the rest of the population, as well as in large, isolated concentrations near larger towns and villages. Besides the settled Roma, Slovak territory became a popular destination for nomadic Roma.

The settled Roma usually built their dwellings out of whatever material was easiest to obtain – in mountainous areas it was wood, while elsewhere, shacks made of mud or mud-bricks, sheds with straw roofs, and simple mud houses were used (dwellings set partially into the ground). The interiors were simple, and dirty. There were no sanitary facilities, toilets, garbage pits, or wells with drinking water. The concentration of people was extremely high in such dwellings, often one person per square meter (Davidová, 1961). The nomadic Roma lived most of their lives in horse-drawn wagons covered with canvas. Only a few traveled on foot and camped in tents (Nečas, 1981). Not all Roma were satisfied with their fate, and many asked permission to build houses outside Roma settlements.

An important role in the Roma community was played by the "vajda". Initially, these people were the leaders of the group, their positions based on ability and property. During the First Czechoslovak Republic, the municipal authorities began to meddle with the selection of the "vajda", who was remunerated for his work both in kind and financially. All information about this process was gathered by the Interior Ministry, which emphasized the subordination of the "vajda" to municipal mayors (Kollárová, 1992).

Among the Roma population, just as among the entire Czechoslovak population, women prevailed over men. The ratio between men and women was 1,000 to 1,044, respectively, in Slovakia, and 1,000 to 1,063 in the Czech Republic (Nečas, 1981; Kollárová,1989).

Table 1

Age structure of the Roma according to the 1922 to 1927 head counts

Age group	Bohemia	Slovakia	Spiš
up to 3 years	6.7%	12.5%	9.52%
4 to 6 years	6.3%	7.5%	13.3%
7 to 14 years	13.3%	17.7%	24.8%
15 to 18 years	10.1%	9.0%	3.8%
over 18 years	62.0%	52.6%	48.5%

Source: Nečas, 1994; Kollárová, 1989.

Unsuitable living conditions caused many parasitic and contagious diseases. This was yet another reason for the majority population to exclude the Roma. Frequent illnesses included intestinal (typhoid fever), parasitic (scabies, lice), and infectious complaints (flu, tuberculosis), which were disseminated in schools. Doctors usually refused to visit Roma settlements, so the Roma usually had to cure themselves. The death rate of Roma children rose as a result (Horváthová, 1964; Kollárová, 1987; Lacková, 1988).

The Roma's unfavorable social position resulted in crime. The most frequent offences were petty theft, fraud, burglary, and assault. Brawls among the Roma were also quite common.

The misbehavior of the Roma increased discontent in the majority population, which sometimes resulted in spontaneous reactions, such as murder. One example of this was "the Spiš massacre", where in 1933, in the village of Spišské Bystré, a rampaging crowd demolished an entire Roma settlement because its inhabitants had refused to play music at a village celebration. In 1924, Roma were attacked in the village of Markušovce for stealing crops (Kollárová, 1992).

Archival data show that 98 to 99% of the Roma were illiterate. They usually claimed the same religion as the majority population around them. The Roma held no special cultural activities of their own, but participated in celebrations, performed at festive events, acted, recited, sang, and so on. The most sought after were Roma musicians, who were a must at high-society balls and luxurious cafés, as can be seen from the advertisements in contemporary newspapers (Kollárová, 1989).

CONCLUSION

The interwar Czechoslovak Republic was unable to integrate the Roma into the majority population in a satisfactory manner. The 1927 Law on Wandering Gypsies continued the legal persecution used in Austria-Hungary at the end of the 19th century, and represented the first anti-Roma law in the Czechoslovak Republic. The government focused mainly on administrative and repressive measures against the Roma. The situation peaked from 1938 to 1945, when the Roma were gathered into labor units. The increasingly repressive measures taken in the Second World War further lowered the miserable quality of the Roma's lives.

ENDNOTES

1. The letter of the Hungarian Royal Minister contained the following wording: "My predecessors defined the basic measures pertaining to the settlement of the nomadic Roma and their obligation to work in circulars No. 1500/1916 and 151041/1917 (Interior Ministry 1916 No. 5671 and 1917 No. 18471). Besides the circulars, they also collected data important for solving the Gypsy issue. In connection with the war and other reasons, the data are now outdated. Given that the urgent Roma issue can only be solved if we know the current situation of the Gypsies, some of whom were registered, others unregistered, and during the last head count not included, I consider it important to statistically process and thoroughly check the status as of November 1, 1918." (State Regional Archive in Levoča: SŽ – hlav. žup. – adm. 2460/1918)

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2. State District Archive in Levoča: OÚ Levoča adm. 4837/1921.

3. State District Archive in Levoča: OÚ Levoča adm. 10510/1928, 2149/1929.

4. State District Archive in Stará Ľubovňa: OÚ Stará Ľubovňa 176/1930.

5. State District Archive in Poprad: OÚ Poprad 2702/1928.

6. State District Archive in Stará Ľubovňa: OÚ Podolinec 1895/1941.

7. State District Archive in Levoča: OÚ Levoča 5565/1927 adm.

8. State District Archive in Poprad: OÚ Poprad 8197/1938.

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ANNA JUROVÁ

THE ROMA FROM 1945 UNTIL NOVEMBER 1989

Summary: This chapter is an overview of a relatively long period in the development and position of the Roma in Slovakia. The second half of the 1940s was characterized by open and permanent discrimination and persecution of the Roma, despite isolated attempts to improve their situation. The subsequent era of communist social engineering can be divided into several stages, during which the Roma were assimilated by oppression disguised as a socially concerned and paternal approach to the issue. The Roma had an opportunity to form their own cultural and social structure only during the brief "revival" of communism, which, however, became merely another means of ethnic manipulation.

Key words: assimilation, labor camps, listings, Gypsy identification papers, itinerancy permits, fingerprinting, social assimilation, forced assimilation, dispersal and relocation, socio-cultural integration, Union of Gypsies – Roma.

INTRODUCTION

The common features of the period examined were denial of ethnicity, political and legal rejection of the Roma community as an independent ethnic minority, and a split in academic circles. State policy was not ready to tackle this exceptionally important and sensitive issue, academic knowledge was lacking, and the attitudes formed in the interwar and war period led to the "Gypsy issue" being addressed as a matter of elevating the social and cultural level of a marginalized and basically unwanted group of citizens. Post-war developments led to the disintegration of the Roma's cultural and moral values that had been handed down within the family and clan community from generation to generation for centuries. During the period examined, the Roma were never full citizens of the state, even though discrimination against them was not always visible from the outside.

CULMINATION OF REPRESSION AGAINST THE ROMA AT THE END OF THE 1940S

PERCEPTION OF THE ROMA'S PROBLEMS AS SOCIAL PROBLEMS

At the end of the war, the social, health, and hygienic situation of the Roma in Slovakia was catastrophic, but unlike the Czech Roma, they had at least survived as a group, despite increasing anti-Roma measures and the preparation of the "final solution". The enormous poverty, especially among the east Slovak Roma, served to identify the problems of the Roma as economic and social. The state administration certainly did not consider the Roma issue a priority, but the circumstances and the accumulation of the problems of this ethnic group forced the state to deal with the Roma sooner than it had intended. Expectations that the Roma would,

after being granted the same rights as other citizens (Article V of the Košice Government Program), automatically integrate with the new society, proved wrong. The Roma also entered the renewed Republic with many expectations and hopes of improving their lives. As Milena Hübschmannová wrote, "phundriľa o Čechi – the Czech Republic opened", and the migration of the Roma from Slovakia, especially the country's eastern region, to the Czech lands began immediately after the war ended, or as other sources wrote, the Roma followed the retreating front line. The extent of the first spontaneous, uncoordinated movement of Roma into the Czech lands is not known, but the positive reports sent home by the first "reconnaissance" journeys of Roma men led to the departure of a growing number of Roma (Hübschmannová, 1995).

USE OF ROMA IN
THE POST-WAR RECOVERY

The attempts of the Interior Ministry to "include the Roma in community work" (decree of June 1945) forced the Roma to seek jobs, and encouraged the Slovak bodies to silently tolerate the departure of the Roma for Czech territory. The number of Roma in Slovakia grew after the southern lands that had been annexed by Hungary were returned to Slovakia. The Roma had been pushed out to this southern territory by the Decree of the Regional Authority of November 2, 1938. There is evidence that official Czech bodies, namely the Interior Ministry and the Ministry of Labor and Social Care, from 1945 to 1947 prepared a government order establishing a three-level system of labor camps for the Roma, where the Roma were to be sorted into groups, and alleged "foreign" Roma would be deported across the border. In connection with this plan, a listing (census) of Roma was prepared in 1947. The Czech au-

thorities attributed all illegal activity that was taking place in the cross-border area to "antisocial" Roma (smuggling, burglary of houses that had belonged to Germans who had been sent packing). The authorities faced the dilemma of finding a way to employ the Slovak Roma (they proved very useful in removing debris in Prague) without having to look after them permanently, and without having to let them settle permanently in the Czech lands. Complaints poured in that "Gypsy trains" were still arriving steadily, when in reality the Roma were being forced to move from place to place all the time. Preparation of an immediate ban on itinerancy was seen as the immediate goal.

TWO DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO
THE ROMA BY THE STATE

The attitude of official Slovak bodies and that of the majority population to "their Gypsies" differed. On the one hand a social and charitable approach was taken, according to which the Roma as the direct victims of war persecution received help from the state to solve their employment, housing, and other problems. On the part of the state officers, their sympathy for the Roma occasionally resulted in tolerance of offences by the Roma. Their mixed attitudes were also due to their fear of being accused of racism. Thus, the Roma came to be accommodated in the houses of dislodged Germans, such as in Chvojnica (Prievidza district), Knešov (Kremnica district) and in the region of Spiš; they also received food-coupons and clothes coupons, and political parties publicly took their side because they were not allowed to participate in the 1946 elections – the reason being their Gypsy nationality, which they had voluntarily claimed.

On the other hand, there is evidence that ongoing discrimination, persecution, enor-

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mous prejudice, and aversion prevailed over positive approaches, and that the social and economic expulsion of the Roma from municipalities and regions continued. The state's greatest problem was finding a way to disguise this repression. The Roma were automatically credited with antisocial behavior as one of their basic ethnic characteristics. With that in mind, several articles of the 1927 *Law on Wandering Gypsies* were put into practice (deportations, introduction of itinerancy permits, Gypsy identification papers, fingerprinting, limits on movement, prohibition of residence) (Jurová, 1996). Presidential decree No. 88/1945 on the mobilization of the labor force, the 1935 *Law on the Treatment of Unwanted Foreigners*, many internal directives of the Interior Ministry against illegal trade, begging, vagrancy, poaching, etc., and various measures by district authorities provided the basis for a whole range of measures against the Roma (Jurová, 1996).

THE LAW ON LABOR CAMPS AS A MEANS OF PRESSURING THE ROMA

Pressure was also exerted on the Roma pursuant to order No. 105/1945 of the Slovak National Council (SNC) on labor camps. The Roma were duly assembled in camps in the following municipalities: Megová Dolina, Ústie nad Oravou, Tichá Dolina, and Kraľovany (Jurová, 1993). Antisocial people and "layabouts" (meaning the Roma in particular) were also assembled in camps after their transformation into labor units in 1947, and the adoption of the 1948 *Law on Forced Labor Camps*. Recent research of the crimes of the communist regime 247/1948 Coll. on Forced Labor Campsorme Dolina, gainst Kremnica) and in the region of Spiš), theahas shown that from 1945 to 1953, some 9,000 to 10,000 people worked in these camps.

In the context of the Roma's persecution in Slovakia, the results of the listing performed according to the Interior Ministry decree of July 14, 1947, were very surprising to the nationalist Czech public, which accused the Roma of vagrancy, idleness and so on. Legislative proposals to assemble the Roma in camps had to be rejected as "politically unacceptable" in the new political environment, but the listing was performed in the Czech lands in August 1947, and in Slovakia in early 1948. The listing determined that 101,190 Gypsies/Roma lived in Czechoslovakia as a whole, of that number 16,752 in the Czech Republic and 84,438 in Slovakia. During the summer, when the Roma traveled for work to the Czech Republic, employment among Roma men hit almost 95%, compared to 81% among women (entire families were employed in demolition and removing debris, which was also a way for them to acquire building material). The employment of Roma women in Slovakia was lower, especially in families with many children, and due to general lack of job opportunities (Jurová, 1996).

ADDRESSING THE ISSUE OF ROMA SETTLEMENTS

In connection with the issue of allegedly illegal Roma settlements, and to illustrate the repressive measures taken against the Roma by the state administration, we should look at one of the first measures to be amended from the war period. On May 24, 1945, the Interior Ministry published an amended decree named Regulation of the Situation of the Gypsies, which ordered: "In municipalities where the Roma's dwellings are next to public and state roads, the dwellings are to be removed and located outside the village in a remote place to be specified by the municipality"[1] (Jurová, 1996). In the after-war period, the forced expulsion of the Roma from

municipalities continued, and state bodies convicted themselves of illegal practices after some of the Roma lodged complaints. They summoned the courage to defend their rights after houses were removed that had been built legally on their own land.

REACTION OF THE ROMA TO THE REPRESSION

Although the repression against the Roma lasted until the end of the 1940s, the Roma themselves expected things to change, and welcomed the events of February 1948, when the communists seized power. Little research has been done of the participation of the Roma in anti-fascist combat, or of the role of the Roma in the army's defeat of the fascists, but it is known that since the end of war, part of the Roma community supported the communists, and some even joined the Communist Party (Lacková, 1997). The Roma viewed the proclaimed task of "building communism" as removing the wrongs of the past. Some Roma welcomed and even demanded social support and charity from the state, but at the same time, this policy contributed to the growth of negative traits among the Roma, and led them to demand things they were not entitled to receive.

As the assembly of the Roma into forced labor camps intensified, the Interior Ministry received more and more complaints from the Roma alleging violations of their intentional rights, persecution, unfounded deportations, and constant pressure to accept Gypsy identification papers. The Ministry, in a decree dated October 4, 1948, warned its subordinate bodies that the wartime decrees were invalid, and prohibited the use of Gypsy identification papers (the requirement that the Roma carry an identity card was to suffice for registration purposes and the protection of the public interest).[2]

THE COMMUNIST REGIME AND ITS RESPONSE TO THE ROMA ISSUE AT THE OUTSET OF THE 1950s

FROM DISCRIMINATION TO THE FIRST ATTEMPTS TO ADDRESS THE ROMA'S SOCIAL BACKWARDNESS

In the early 1950s, at a time when ethnic policy inspired by Marxist theory about ethnic groups began to be put into practice, state policy towards the Roma was defined, remaining unchanged for several decades. By abolishing the 1927 *Law on Wandering Gypsies* in 1950, the last piece of discriminatory legislation against the Roma was removed; however, this did not make the Roma equal citizens. In the showdown between the ethnic and social approaches to the issue, the possibility to form and develop a Roma communist ethnic minority was denied, and the paternalist approach of social assistance, "protection" and "removal of Gypsy backwardness" through state intervention and manipulation carried the day.

In the early 1950s, the top state bodies enforced a demand for a universal solution to the Roma issue, despite resistance from municipal officials, who expected the socio-economic position of Roma families and the Roma issue to be solved in the process of the industrialization and socialization of Slovakia. The debates highlighted the contradictory approaches to the Roma issue of the two opposing groups.

ATTEMPTS TO SUPPORT THE ETHNIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE ROMA

Advocates of support for the development of the Roma nation and language hailed mostly from the fields of education, culture, and sci-

ence (which was the first to begin researching the Roma issue). The Department of Oriental Studies at the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences established a committee for the development of Romany, while the National Institute performed the first collection of materials and field research on settlements and Roma culture. Many Slovakia-wide events organized by teachers and various activists engaged in cultural and educational assimilatory work were held. Members of the Writers' Union also criticized the suppression of the Roma's ethnic and language rights, and supported the development and use of Romany in schools and cultural activities, and the establishment of a department for academic research into Romany (Jurová, 1966).

The argument used to support this approach was that during the 1920s and 1930s, a similar approach had been taken in the Soviet Union in connection with smaller nations and ethnic groups, in which the national independence of the Roma had been acknowledged as well. In addition, Roma collective farms and small cooperatives had been established, land had been allocated to them (this was not the best idea), some Roma books and journals had been published, and two Roma theaters had been established. Supporters of the Roma ethnic identity concept backed up their proposals by pointing to the Stalinist ethnic policy of the 1920s. The consequences and damages that this policy in reality caused, as well as the banishment of the Roma to gulags, were not discovered until much later, and were unknown to the defenders of the Roma.

CONSIDERATIONS ON
THE USE OF ROMANY AS
A TEACHING LANGUAGE

The opening of the archives of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia confirmed that the ideology

department had presented many proposals and requests to different officials of the Communist Party to issue a textbook of Romany. Such a work had been prepared in 1953 by the Moravian teacher Antonín Daniel (Jurová, 2000).

The cultural and social gap between the majority population, the Roma, and other minorities in rural eastern Slovakia, as well as differences between their housing and hygiene, were not so great in the early 1950s. Entire villages in northeast Slovakia that had been destroyed in the war were rebuilt using mud bricks made by the Roma (Jurová, 1993; Jurová, 1989).[3] If their ethnic and language differences had been accepted, Roma children could have attended schools as successfully as any other children, as their environment and knowledge were basically the same at the time. The 1950s clearly show that Romany could have been used in health education, cultural work, the activity of the first ensembles, the preparation of Roma journals, cultural and educational institutions, and the activities of school employees.

In view of the content of school curricula at the beginning of the 1950s, it would certainly have been possible to prepare text-books and use Romany in the education of Roma children in school, and in academic research and support for the development of the language. Romany stood a real chance of being used as a means of communication, a medium of teaching, and a tool in the ethnic identification, emancipation, and cultural development of the Roma. While political decisions prevented or explicitly prohibited the use and development of this minority language, it is clear that extensive ethnographic research was performed, and that linguistic research continued.

The language handicap of Roma children, which was increasingly confused with mental retardation, led a growing number of

Roma children to be transferred to "special schools" for the mentally handicapped. As a consequence of this policy, several consecutive generations of Roma attended special schools. These people today represent an army of unskilled and unemployed members of the Roma minority.

PROPOSALS TO CREATE INDEPENDENT TERRITORIES WITH ROMA INHABITANTS

Debate in the early 1950s also touched on other solutions to the Gypsy issue. Proposals were heard that independent territories be created with Roma inhabitants, starting with the creation of municipalities with their own officials and intelligentsia (of the sort that said: "Let's transfer the Roma near some brick factory and keep them occupied there"), and ending with sending the Roma to populate regions that were short of labor (such as the proposal of the Regional Municipality in Ostrava to settle the region of Osoblažsko). Proposals like these envisaged the creation of territories populated almost exclusively by the Roma (Jurová, 1996).

POLICY OF SOCIAL ASSIMILATION DURING THE 1950s

CREATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE "UNIVERSAL SOLUTION" TO THE "GYPSY ISSUE"

As we noted above, as of 1949 the Interior Ministry operated a joint committee that held regular sessions of ministers to prepare a universal solution to the Gypsy issue. The ministers used the argument of the backward way of life of the Roma, their economic dependence, and overall social and cultural primitivism over and over again. Since the end of the war, of course, even if the Roma had wanted

and had been able to solve their housing and social problems, they had not been allowed to do so. Instead, they were concentrated in isolated settlements that did not allow them to complete the necessary changes to their way of life. The committee, however, criticized the steady migration of the Roma to the Czech Republic, and the crimes committed in the course of this migration (Jurová, 1996).

By withdrawing the Roma's trade certificates (which had allowed them to practice a trade as self-employed people), canceling their musicians' licenses, prohibiting them from performing wage labor for private farmers (in order to speed up the collectivization and socialization of the countryside), and prohibiting small crafts in the early 1950s, the state deprived the Roma of the last remnants of their material culture and their last forms of subsistence. After that, the Roma were used in the state sector according to the labor recruitment needs set by the Five-Year Plans. They became unskilled laborers in physically demanding professions like construction, mining, and community work in towns. The "Vlachika Roma" did not respect the order to settle permanently, and henceforth became door to door salesmen, thus filling the gap left by the insufficient infrastructure.

REJECTING THE IMPORTANCE OF LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

At inter-ministerial meetings, arguments were presented against "overestimating the Gypsy language and culture, leading to the further isolation of the Gypsies, and encouraging them to stick to their old way of life and thinking". As E. Bacíková from the Ministry of Information and Education said: "The crowning folly of the entire solution is the proposal that the denomination 'person of Gypsy or Central Indian origin' be used in official communications, because the Gypsies are

ashamed of their name."[4] Acceptance of the Roma's identity and ethnicity was refused again, and the guiding principle for solving the "Gypsy issue" remained assimilation and changing their primitive way of life.

APPLICATION OF THE DIRECTIVE "ON THE REFORM OF CONDITIONS FOR GYPSY PEOPLE"

The Roma assimilation concept finally took legal shape in the Interior Ministry directive *On the Reform of Conditions for Gypsy People*, dated March 5, 1952. In accordance with this directive, the Roma were to be assimilated through municipalities and state enterprises, by integrating them into the labor process, providing them with suitable housing, increasing the school attendance of Roma children, preventing discrimination in everyday life, and through propaganda and agitation. Based on this program, research began into Roma settlements, medical checkups were started, and activists were recruited for working with the Roma. When the social program was put into practice, however, it quickly ran into problems. People began complaining of the "Vlachika Roma", and of the mass transport of Roma all over the Republic, from one district to another, with the assistance of the police. The local inhabitants often feared even to go to work when large groups of Roma were passing through their districts, and nomadic groups of Roma were even attacked.

While Czech official bodies increasingly dealt with the issues of "wandering people" and the definitive ban on itinerancy, the Slovak bodies were confronted with deepening social, health, and hygiene problems in Roma settlements. Despite the worsening situation, the Roma were not allowed to build houses on the territory of the majority population, and according to research by Milena Hübschmannová, there were even cases of Roma houses being pulled down, and Roma families attacked when they tried to integrate with the majority.

LIQUIDATION OF ROMA SETTLEMENTS

At the urging of the Health Ministry, and on the basis of a decree by the Committee of Representatives, extensive research was carried out in Roma settlements in the mid-1950s. These settlements were classified as concentrations of undesirable lifestyles, and hothouses of infectious disease. They were also identified as the causes of the isolation and primitive development of the Roma.

Some 1,305 isolated settlements were surveyed, containing 14,935 dwellings and 95,092 Roma. Instead of removing the remnants of the post-war discriminatory policy that had forced the Roma out of their home municipalities, and instead of recreating the original, natural Roma communities, the Committee of Representatives, in its Decree No. 39 dated September 18, 1956, ordered the Regional Flat and Civic Construction Administration to reconstruct the most backward Roma settlements using state support (loans and subsidies, state housing policy, the settlement of areas near the border, and the recruitment of men to work in the mines, which was connected with the departure of the entire family and the allotment of a state flat). There were also proposals to build houses for the Roma in places that had at first been rejected as inadequate. In the later stages, the entire flat building program had to be funded by the state, and the social dependence of the Roma family became the only criterion of eligibility for these flats (Jurová, 1996).

This extensive program of liquidation of the most backward settlements was not even started until the end of the 1950s due to lack of funds. The justification for such massive

assistance to the Roma was discussed as well, as those regions with the most primitive Roma settlements were full of non-Roma people with similar problems, where almost everyone who had a job had to travel long distances to work and back. Various earlier inquiries on "the integration of the Roma into society" had proven that in regions with sufficient jobs and a lower proportion of Roma, there were no difficulties in mutual relationships or in addressing the socio-economic status of Roma families, whose status was seen as the main indicator of their level of adaptation to and integration into the majority population.[5] On the other hand, many companies were criticized for neglecting their workers, for paying them lower wages because they were illiterate, and so on.

Even though the Slovak organs tried to improve the situation by taking partial steps, and to prevent the spread of epidemics and the decline of Roma health by adopting health measures, no fundamental improvements were achieved. A solution to the issue of the nomadic Roma, and plans for a meeting of the supreme Communist Party body to deal with it, had been in the wings since the mid-1950s. The scarcity of positive results from the social assimilation policy of the 1950s was said to confirm the need for a radical solution to the Roma issue. The Roma, for example, had refused to attend courses for illiterates, because their settlements were far from the villages where the courses were held. Various health and education courses for Roma "hygienists", organized by the Czechoslovak Red Cross, had been equally fruitless.

REJECTION OF
ETHNIC DEVELOPMENT, AND
THE BEGINNING OF
FORCED ASSIMILATION

The resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia,

dated April 8, 1958 and called *On Working with the Gypsy People*, firmly rejected demands for the acknowledgment of the Roma identity and their development as an ethnic group, which had started to crop up again towards the end of the decade. Instead, the communist elite launched the forced assimilation of the Roma, although this was not put into practice until 1970. To achieve its target, the resolution envisaged the creation of committees for solving the problems of the Gypsies, which were to become tools of state institutionalization. The aim was to achieve the overall social and cultural equalization and inclusion of the Roma into the majority population as soon as possible. The Communist Party was set the binding task of closely controlling the assimilation of the "ethnographic Gypsy group" (the term was selected because it clearly denied the ethnicity of the Roma). The supreme party body confirmed the correctness of the approach that had hitherto been taken to solving the problems of the Roma as "a socially and culturally backward people typified by their characteristic way of life" (Jurová, 1996). The resolution enjoined the state to "refuse the artificial attempts of some educational workers to create a literary Gypsy language out of the different dialects, and to establish Gypsy schools and classes with Gypsy as a teaching language" (Jurová, 1996). Such activities were seen as further strengthening the isolation of the Roma and slowing their re-education.

UNREALISTIC PLANS FOR
TACKLING SOCIAL BACKWARDNESS

To achieve the assimilation of the Roma and their identification with the majority population, all party, state and social organizations were to focus on removing shortcomings in the employment of the Roma, and in their health, education, housing, and hygienic conditions. All companies, municipalities,

and the entire health sector were assigned unrealistic tasks. The state began to improve the economic situation of Roma families by launching several programs. The employment issue was the first to be tackled; Roma workers, who had often been abused to fill the quotas of organized recruitment drives, were now assigned jobs with various companies – a total of 11,000 people in 2 years. Many families were allotted state flats, hundreds of families were allowed to build houses, and the plan to liquidate Roma settlements was launched (the settlements in Hôrka – Miklušovce and Kendice were the first to go). All of this was funded by the state, frequently against opposition from the inhabitants of the municipalities where the Roma lived. Many measures were adopted in the school system, such as the provision of scholarships to Roma students. There were also absurd proposals, such as the immediate schooling of all children of the nomadic Roma in homes that were to be immediately built (of course, the funds to pay for the plan were missing) (Jurová, 1993).

The 1958 *Law on the Permanent Settlement of Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic People* on the one hand obliged all municipal committees to provide help to nomadic people to facilitate their transition to a settled existence, and on the other prohibited the nomadic way of life under the threat of punishment. Section 3 on penal sanctions entered into force on March 1, 1959, meaning that the deadline for nomads to settle was effectively March 1; however, the Interior Ministry issued a directive in violation of the Constitution and fixed the deadline at February 3 to 6, 1959. In the end, as the municipal committees were unable to meet the conditions set by the law, i.e. to offer nomadic people "several housing and job options", the sanctions in Section 3 could not be applied in practice.

THE DISPERSAL AND RELOCATION CONCEPT VS. THE UNION OF GYPSIES – ROMA

FAILURE OF ASSIMILATION TO ACHIEVE THE DESIRED RESULTS

Seven years after the passage of the *On Working with the Gypsy People* resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, and the 1958 *Law On the Permanent Settlement of Nomadic People*, the decision makers realized that it was impossible to achieve the socio-economic goal of including the Roma into the majority population and solving their problems. Although statistics showed that 1,000 Roma had been brought into the labor process, 45 of the worst settlements and 2,500 shacks had been razed, and that efforts to improve the housing, education, and health situations of the Roma continued, the overall picture had taken a turn for the worse. The Roma included in the "listings" had remained in places where it was impossible to find jobs. Their original family and clan relationships had broken down, and the ideologization and politicization of life that had been intended to help "build the foundations of communism" had in fact done great harm to the Roma, deprived as they were of the roots of their different, unwanted, and misunderstood culture.

RELOCATION OF ROMA FROM PLACES WITH HIGH CONCENTRATION OF ROMA

Undaunted, in 1965 the state decided to use even more violent methods to influence the Roma, this time dispersing and relocating them from places where they lived in the greatest concentration. This was basically a program of aid for eastern Slovakia, which could not handle the situation and which

since the early 1960s had repeatedly demanded that the accumulating problems be solved on a Slovakia-wide or nation-wide level. These demands were certainly founded on objective and logical reasons, but the final version of the dispersal and relocation concept represented just another stage in forced assimilation and the solution of socio-economic problems using massive state subsidies. The concept was given concrete shape by a government decree dated October 13, 1965, pursuant to which a Government Committee for the Issues of the Gypsy People was established to guarantee a coordinated approach to the issue across Slovakia. The solution was to be put into practice by the Committee of the Presidium of the Slovak National Council for the Issues of Gypsy People. The priorities it set showed the strongly paternalistic approach that the Czechoslovak communist state took to the Gypsy issue and the extent of Roma manipulation so far. The Government Committee in Prague, and its Slovak counterpart, the Committee of the Presidium of the Slovak National Council, prepared plans for the dispersal and relocation of about 14,000 people, which included the number of settlements and shacks chosen for destruction, the cost of the plan, and the regions where the Slovak Roma were to be relocated (Jurová, 1996).

The measures adopted also included the principles on which the dispersal was to be based, financial provisions for exceptions in buying up Roma shacks and solving the housing issue of Roma families, and the means to apply pressure on financial institutions to lend money to the Roma to build houses. Despite massive loans and subsidies, many houses remained unfinished, gradually fell into ruin, and were finally reclassified as shacks. Since the only criterion for acquiring help from the state was that the Roma family had to be dependent on social assistance, many families acquired loans and subsidies several

times over. In the 1960s, when the strongest assimilation measures against the Roma were in force, the largest amount of financial help was also provided. However, the situation of the Roma was not improved to the extent desired, far less equalized with the rest of society; among the Roma, this policy only increased the abuse of state help.

The concept of dispersal and relocation was poorly designed and mistaken. The shortcomings of the program became evident as soon as it was put into practice. The recklessness of municipal officials who, in trying to get rid of the Roma as quickly as possible, sent families off to the Czech Republic under great pressure and with no preparation; the thoughtless and rapid purchase of shacks before sufficient flats were available; the abuse of the rules and the profiteering at the expense of the Roma; the decision of Czech districts to reject the Roma and send them back to Slovakia – these were only a few of the problems that accompanied the process. The huge cost of the concept, and its eventual failure, led the government in 1968 to dissolve the Government Committee for the Issues of the Gypsy People, and to hand the Roma issues portfolio to the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. This state of affairs lasted until 1989, with the Slovak authorities occasionally trying to send the Roma to the Czech Republic after 1968. The results of the concept: a meager 3,178 Roma moved from Slovakia in 1967, when the concept was at its height, while 1,043 people returned to Slovakia.

THE RESULTS OF DISPERSAL:
GROWING SOCIAL DISTANCE
AND CONFLICTS WITH
THE MAJORITY POPULATION

The Roma issue did not disappear, as envisaged by the decrees and measures adopted.

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Instead, it grew and spread to other places, and the growth of the unhealthy Roma population reached disturbing heights (especially in the settlements of eastern Slovakia). Despite minor successes in addressing the Roma issue, the disputes and the gap between the Roma and the majority population kept growing. The demographic data collected for the Government Committee in connection with the dispersal and relocation concept showed that the Roma population in Slovakia had doubled since 1947, and had grown more than threefold in the Czech Republic (due to the steady migration from Slovakia). Allegedly, dozens of thousands of Roma had not been included in the head count, mainly those whose cultural and social level was comparable to that of the majority population (even though their level of education was generally very low). Most Roma living in rural areas had barely finished elementary school, and were classified as unskilled laborers. The fact that the third, most backward category of Roma in eastern Slovakia represented the largest category in the census foretold the problems that were likely to remain in integrating the Roma in this region, a task that was seriously complicated by the rapid population growth among the poorest groups of people. The impact of making dependence on welfare the condition for the provision of state help to the Roma had finally become fully evident. On the one hand, negative and antisocial displays of behavior were spreading, undoubtedly as a consequence of the failure of the state's approaches, requiring that more effective measures be taken to cope with the situation. On the other hand, in keeping with political and social developments at the time, the Roma issue was gaining a new dimension, and new ways of approaching the issue were taking shape. Voices were once again heard in support of the previously suppressed socio-cultural, historical and ethnic identity of the Roma.

REACTION TO THE DISPERSAL: ACTIVATION OF ROMA REPRESENTATION

Since the beginning of the 1960s, the Roma issue had also been addressed by Roma activists working in regional and district committees, and employees of district state bodies who increasingly engaged in matters affecting their own ethnic group. In 1968, Roma representatives headed by Doctor J. Cibuľa and A. Facun proposed that the Union of Czechoslovak Gypsies be established. They sent their proposal to the prime minister of the Czechoslovak Republic, as well as to individual district and regional national committees in Slovakia, requesting support for carrying out their plan. The East Slovak district national committee, at its meeting on June 6, 1968, expressed support for all the requirements of the Roma representatives, and recommended that the Committee of the Slovak National Council for the Issues of the Gypsy People accept their proposal.

REPEATED REFUSAL TO ACCEPT THE ROMA

In 1958, refusal to accept the Roma as a nation had been based on a clear decision by the supreme party body after debates in party organizations in 1957 to 1958. In 1968, however, when the Nationalities Law was prepared, and in 1969 when the Union of Gypsies – Roma was set up, the Roma nation was rejected by some academics, starting a serious disagreement. The Roma in Slovakia were characterized as "an exterritorial, internally differentiated ethnic group living in a diaspora", one that had no prospect of evolving into a nation, and thus one that was not entitled to the legal and political status of a nation (Jurová, 1993, 1999, 2000). This position drew criticism and statements by Czech Roma representa-

tives and Czech academic circles that the Roma were indeed a separate ethnic group, and that only fear of them was preventing the state from admitting this. Failure to accept these opinions and demands thwarted the Roma's chances of ethnic identification and positive ethnic development for many years, while the split among the academics and within the Roma movement led to the formation of two Unions. The Slovak Union of Gypsies – Roma was approved by the Interior Ministry on November 19, 1968, thus permitting it to function as a cultural and social organization.

CONSTITUTIONAL MEETING OF THE UNION OF GYPSIES – ROMA

The founding meeting of the Slovak Union of Gypsies – Roma was held in April 1969. Although some delegates demanded the abolition of decrees limiting the freedom of movement and the residence of the Roma plus other rights, materials from the official meeting did not include ethnic identification issues or requirements that the Roma be acknowledged as a nation. The Slovak Union served as tool of manipulation, and was used to prevent the ethnic identification of the Roma in Slovakia. Not only the founding meeting documents, but also the Union's concept of its activities confirmed its loyalty to the political and ideological vision of the further integration of the Roma into communist society. Nevertheless, the political aspirations of the Roma in the Czechoslovak Republic endured, and local representatives, supported by academic circles, refused to give up the demand that the Roma minority be acknowledged as a nation, which in the end led to the abolition of all Roma organizations. Disputes between the two Unions prevented them from overcoming their mutual barriers and cooperating in favor of the Roma.

The hostility of the majority population and the state, as well as the political pressures on the Union, have yet to be examined on the basis of sources that just recently became accessible. However, it cannot be denied that the Slovak Union of Gypsies – Roma wasted a chance to participate in decisions on the development of the Roma ethnic group. Instead of mobilizing support for the emancipation of the Roma, it turned into an administrative, bureaucratic, and unwieldy organization isolated from the ethnic group. On the top level, the powers and organization of the group were the main problem, as well as personal quarrels between officials, who frequently informed on each other.

The Bútiker company was originally to have developed traditional Roma crafts and production to the benefit of the Roma; however, it became essentially an operation for "selling" workers to the Czech Republic, and was to a large extent manipulated by its founder, the Central Committee of the Union of Gypsies – Roma. Several businesses under the Bútiker went bankrupt, and there were many financial shenanigans and machinations that culminated in criminal activity. Besides the political squabbles, the very activity of the Union of Gypsies – Roma and the Bútiker were cited as reasons to abolish these organizations in 1973.

"SOCIO-CULTURAL INTEGRATION" OF THE ROMA IN THE NEXT STAGE OF COMMUNISM

REASSESSMENT OF CONTROLLED ASSIMILATION

The failure of the concept of controlled assimilation moved the state to reassess the practices used in connection with the Roma. The alternation between forced, repressive and re-educational assimilation, along with

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the strong focus on the social/economic aspects of the issue and paternalism towards the Roma, had not achieved the objectives set. By constantly refusing to accept their ethnicity, and hampering the ethnic and cultural development of the Roma, the state had merely turned the Roma into passive recipients of welfare. This was the main drawback of the approach to the issue by the communists: it did not permit the Roma to elevate themselves to the level of the majority population, to adapt and assimilate, as they could have done through their own ethnic development. Instead, in evaluating the results of the regime's assimilation of the Roma, only the socio economic level and the "improvement" in the living conditions of Roma families were taken into account.

From 1965 to 1971, when the disperse-and-relocate concept was being applied to the Roma (in Slovakia is continued even after the abolition of the Government Committee in 1968), Slovak bodies strove to get rid of the Roma. Some 4,750 shacks were destroyed, from which 23,700 Roma were moved to a new location. Approximately 6,000 Roma were assigned a job, and roughly 750 Roma boys and girls began to study at secondary vocational schools. The results of the 1970 census, despite confirming the apparent quantitative success of the concept, also showed that some indicators had worsened: housing, socio-economic composition (compared to the Czech Republic), demographic characteristics, and education (Jurová, 1993).

CONCEPT OF COMPREHENSIVE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL INTEGRATION

When setting out the future principles for addressing the Roma issue, despite criticism of the previous approach and the discontent

of Roma organizations with the results achieved, the communist regime was still unable to surmount the ideological and political barriers that prevented it from seeing all aspects of the position of the Roma, including the possibility of their ethnic and cultural development. The future of this important issue was now said to rest with the new concept of "comprehensive social and cultural integration" of the Roma, and the gradual equalization of their average living standard and cultural level with that of the majority population. The programs that flowed from this "new concept" did not include terms like assimilation or integration, nor were there any direct bans on the use of Romany. However, this did not spell a significant change from previous solutions to the Gypsy issue in the area of ethnic culture.

The new social and cultural integration concept was still based on equalizing the socio-economic and material indicators of the Roma with those of the majority, and on eradicating everything felt to be "backward" and "Gypsy", although in a more moderate way. The state envisaged its new plan as a long-term, multi-generational approach that would integrate the Roma over several generations. However, the development of the majority society (especially in the economic and social fields), and the continued growth of the Roma population, only deepened their differences (especially in eastern Slovakia). The more advanced and educated Roma kept moving away, while the size of the group living in the backward and isolated Roma settlements kept growing.

PRINCIPLES OF NATION-WIDE SOCIO-CULTURAL MEASURES

The nation-wide socio-political measures proposed by a 1972 government decree and amended by a 1976 government resolution

set the following priorities in addressing the Roma issue: employing all Roma able to work, educating and re-educating both Roma youth and adult Roma, addressing the housing issue, and eliminating Roma crime. Until 1989, the state continued setting quotas for the destruction of Roma settlements and shacks, and for schooling Roma children, within each Five-Year Plan. Assimilation in the school system was camouflaged by the establishment of many pre-school and school establishments for Roma children, and by the economic advantages that were provided to them. As for employment, the deformed wage policy of the communist regime robbed people of motivation to increase their level of education and qualifications. Roma laborers were usually assigned to companies on the basis of quotas, and belonged to the category of unskilled laborers. The communist regime's intention was to put a generous social policy into effect, but many of the tasks set by this social engineering experiment were unrealistic. The proliferating measures and resolutions often remained on paper, and despite being distributed to the various levels of the state administration, could not alter the fact that it was impossible to implement them. Although the ethnic and cultural characteristics of the Roma were not suppressed as harshly as before, the ensuing decades brought few possibilities for the Roma culture to develop. As communism fell apart, the Roma did not play an active role in their own "socio cultural integration" into society.

Until the end of the communist era, the Committee of the Government of the Slovak Socialist Republic for the Issues of Gypsy People played an important role in tackling the Roma issue. The central figure in this institution, and its salaried secretary (1966 to 1988), was a Roma named Imrich Farkaš, who helped prepare most Roma state policy materials. Farkaš opposed the establishment

and existence of the Union of Gypsies – Roma (1969 to 1973), promoted the "academic" definition of the Roma ethnic group created by Emília Horváthová, and in the 1980s advocated the assimilation of the Roma with the majority population. He also ordered that the name "cigán" (Gypsy) be written with a lower case letter "c" instead of a capital "C" at the beginning, prohibited the use of the phrase "Gypsy inhabitants" as it could evoke the idea of some nonexistent community, and promoted the integration of the Roma without the creation of special Roma cultural institutions.

NEW DEMANDS BY ROMA REPRESENTATIVES

From 1981 to 1984, the Roma representatives Samuel Gergel, Dezider Oláh, and Tibor Baláž appealed several times to the president of the Republic, Gustav Husák, to the chairman of the Federal Assembly, Antonín Jindra, and to the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, Jindřich Poledník. Their missives were then forwarded to the Slovak National Council and the Committee of the Government of the Slovak Socialist Republic for the Issues of Gypsy People. In their appeals, the Roma demanded that the decision of the International Union of Roma, and the UN resolution of August 26, 1977 on acknowledgment of the Roma nationality, be observed. They also demanded the observance of the appeal by the UN Cultural Committee to the member states, asking them to respect the 1971 decision of the International Union of Roma on the use of the name "Roma", and on the representation of the Roma in the UN's NGO sector. In accordance with these international resolutions, the three plaintiffs demanded that the rights of nationalities in Czechoslovakia be observed, including greater room for self-fulfillment

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(as other acknowledged nationalities enjoyed), the right to comprehensive education and cultural development, the right to associate in the Union of Roma socio-cultural organization, the right to publish press and receive information in their own language, and the acknowledgment of the Roma as a national minority named "the Roma".

Roma quisling Farkaš, on the other hand, drew up a long analysis of the appeal, and on August 15, 1984, a special session was held with the deputy chairman of the Slovak National Council, Dezider Krocsány. The Roma, once again, were reminded of the fact that they lived in a diaspora, and that they stood no chance of becoming a nation. They were even accused of not helping to elevate their own ethnic group, and not cooperating with the committees for solving the problems of Gypsies in their local districts. This demonstrates that even while the communist regime was beginning to fall apart, the Roma were unable to alter their position, or to alter the way the ethnic group was perceived by the state. They were kept in the position of objects that the state had to care for, and the communists continued to present their Roma policy as a success until the fall of the totalitarian regime in 1989 (Jurová, 1993).

CONCLUSION

Historical, ethnologic, sociological, and linguistic research of the Roma ethnic group in Slovakia has shown that in the political, ideological, and socio-economic conditions of the post-war period and the formation of the communist totalitarian regime, the Roma had no chance at emancipation. Instead, they remained an isolated ethno-cultural, caste-divided group, whose position as a stigmatized and marginalized people with distinct anthropological features was very precarious. They constantly faced prejudice, hatred, and ignorance.

The process of differentiation that had begun in the Roma ethnic group was suspended during the war, and the expulsion of Roma from the socio-economic system and their individual homes during the post-war period culminated in the communist liquidation of all forms of private ownership and undertaking, the mutual provision of services and contacts between different cultures, and the adoption of positive role models.

The state spent several decades tinkering with the procedures and goals of assimilation and "integration". Its solution to the "Gypsy issue" deprived the Roma of free will, input and initiative, and disturbed their ethical and moral values and ways of family and ethnic life. It did not permit the Roma to achieve self-fulfillment, and prohibited any displays of different cultural standards. On the other hand, it failed to replace these banned cultural supports with adequate role models and values, and forced the Roma to accept state ideas on how to integrate into "the new society" and eliminate "everything that is backward and Gypsy". The result of the communist regime's "solution" to the issue was the total disintegration of the Roma ethnic group, which was pushed to the outskirts of society, and suffered massive socio-economic, cultural and ethnic damage that was exacerbated by hostility from the majority population. The hopelessness of the situation has recently led to increased migration by the Roma abroad, to growth in crime, and to an escalation of aggression on both sides.

State measures to change the perception of and approach to this ethnic group had little effect in the 1990s, and the problems had to be shouldered by the third sector. True civic and ethnic equality for the Roma in our society are issues that have not been dealt with sufficiently. After years of transformation, the Roma issue has once again emerged as a social issue, and the tendency to solve social

questions by "supporting" welfare-dependent and inadaptable people has increasingly penetrated all strategies and short-term measures. This return to the social policy of the former regime, and to the former perception of the Roma issue, is very dangerous, both for the Roma and the entire country. If too great a burden is placed on the social benefits system, it will cause even more problems for the Slovak economy, and cannot be sustained for long. On the other hand, increasing the number of Roma workers, and especially the quality of Roma labor, will have a major impact on the development outlook of individual regions. The development of eastern Slovakia (where the proportion of the Roma is the highest) over the past 100 years is clear proof of this (Jurová, 1998, 1999b; Mann, 1999; Dostál, 1997; Vašečka, 2000; Vašečka, 2001). The Roma issue must be treated holistically by Slovak society, and their civic and ethnic rights as well as obligations must be guaranteed.

ENDNOTES

1. These measures were applied in the following municipalities: Ľubiša (Humenné district), Lúčka (Giraltovce district), Beharovce (Levoča district), Močarmany (Prešov district), Štós (Gelnica district), Hadviga – Briešťa (Martin district), Richnava (Košice – environs district). Some cases were discovered as late as during research in the 1950s, despite the order of the Regional National Committee in Košice prohibiting further construction in the settlements and the expulsion of the Roma from the municipalities of Trstené pri Hornáde, Rybník, Batizovce, Spišské Bystré, Holomnica, Toporec, Rakúsy, Kecerovské Pekľany, Kechnec, Turňa, Nižný Medzev, Moldava nad Bodvou, Slanec, and Trebišov. SÚA Praha, Office of the Prime Minister, 1945 to 1959, File No. 3,409, ref. 257.
2. Slovak National Archive Bratislava, Police Directorate in Bratislava, 1920 to 1945 (1950), File No. 31, Script No. 8/133.

3. For example, reports of hygienic and epidemiological stations from their examinations of settlements, activities to control tuberculosis. ŠObA Prešov, District National Committee in Prešov 1949 to 1960: safety reports and the Department of the Interior.
4. The *Cultural and Educational Care of the Gypsies* report, drawn up by E. Bacíková from the Ministry of Information and Education. In *Volume 2 of the quoted documents* (Jurová, 1996).
5. ŠObA Košice, East Slovak Regional National Committee, 1960 to 1969. Committee for Solving the Problems of Gypsy People, File No. 19, Script No. 103. Transcript of the Interior Ministry's decision. Also, the Slovak National Archives, the Central Committee of the Union of Gypsies – Roma (1969 to 1973). Documents of the constituting meeting, card No. 1.

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IVETA RADIČOVÁ

THE ROMA ON THE VERGE OF TRANSFORMATION

Summary: The current position of the Roma in Slovakia is influenced by both the country's pre-1989 history and its transition to democracy and market capitalism thereafter. The communist regime's policies regarding the living conditions, education, and work patterns of the Roma still determine the growth potential of these Roma communities. The changes that took place after 1989 have resulted above all in a social stratification of the Roma population that affects their way of life. This study analyses the post-1989 changes in education, employment, health care, and housing, and explains the effect of "double marginalization" and social exclusion on the Roma. It identifies the major strategies for including the Roma in society.

Key words: family, education, work, demographic structure, social structure, poverty during the period of transformation, double marginalization, culture of dependence, life strategies, dependence traps.

INTRODUCTION – HERITAGE ON THE VERGE OF CHANGE

The social, economic, and political change triggered by the 1989 revolution started an unprecedented process of transformation in Slovakia. The communist regime had deformed the understanding and observance of civic and political rights, and had significantly strengthened social rights. Unlike in other totalitarian regimes, it changed the way the economy functioned, ignoring supply and demand rules until the economy reached a dead-end street and was unable to compete. The most significant intervention in the functioning of society was the forcible change of the social structure and the natural stratification of society. The communist regime's preferential treatment of the lower social classes disadvantaged the upper classes, with many members of the pre-communist elite suffering direct discrimination.

The Roma, as part of the lower social classes, were the object of various attempts by the communist regime to improve their social status. The 1989 change, however, caught the Roma totally unprepared. The following chapter describes the situation of the Roma on the verge of transformation.

LIVING CONDITIONS

The fundamental doctrine of the communist regime towards the Roma was based on the Marxist provision that by improving the social conditions of the Roma, their behavior could be changed, and the negative phenomena connected with their membership in a marginalized group would be overcome. The communist regime thus expected that if the Roma's standard of living were raised to the average standard of living in the country, the source of their inequality would be removed. To reach this goal, various measures were

taken that can be characterized as acts of social engineering. Here are a few examples:

- state policy controlled and advocated the dispersal of the Roma, both throughout Slovakia, and from Slovakia to the Czech lands;
- natural Roma communities were broken up;
- the rural Roma population migrated from Roma settlements to towns and industrial cities;
- the natural links between the Roma community and the majority population broke down;
- the Roma were insensitively and forcibly allotted flats, and those from a socially disadvantaged environment were forced to live in them among majority society;
- the Roma were compelled to work under threat of imprisonment;
- Roma children were forced to attend school;
- the Roma were forced to participate in health protection programs.

These – seemingly positive – results were achieved by force, and without the Roma's consent or participation. One result of this was that some Roma vandalized and destroyed the property they had been allotted by the state, drawing widespread public resentment.

Why should it matter that these measures were forcible, and that they did not engage the Roma? The reason is that even though state policy resulted in far better living conditions for the Roma, many behavior patterns typical of the traditional Roma family survived. The modernization of the Roma community was thus largely one-dimensional, improving only the material aspects of life (Jurová, 1993).

The following patterns are typical of the surviving traditional Roma family traits:
- life in extended families, i.e. no shift towards the nuclear family;
- community-based way of life;
- absence of a boundary between the private and the public (no privacy in either the way of life or the relationship to property);
- view of housing as temporary and provisional;
- division of roles (the man is the bread-winner and the woman is responsible for the household);
- many children, large families (Mann, 1996).

The Roma community is a non-agrarian community unable to make a living on its own resources, and thus traditionally entered into relationships with agrarian cultures. These agrarian cultures, along with private ownership of land and ties to a certain territory, led to the creation of institutional and behavioral norms among non-Roma populations. As the Roma were never an agrarian culture, however, their relationship to the land was always weak, and they never formed any mechanisms or institutions related to agrarian-type private ownership. The Roma never formed a link to a certain territory, nor had any use for the accumulation of property. On the contrary, their crafts only found markets thanks to their territorial flexibility.

The different Roma view of property and territory resulted in the creation of social structures among the Roma based on blood ties. These Roma cultural norms can be described as a "permanently temporary" strategy. Institutional education, in both form and content, limits this Roma "strategy of the makeshift". Majority society educational institutions have no equivalent in the Roma community, leading the two (Roma and majority) social systems into conflict. From the Roma's point of view, participating in work and education means confronting another world. The integration of the Roma into these two spheres is an asymmetric process, meaning that although the Roma are subject to

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rules and regulations they did not create, their only option is to conform to these rules (Jurová, 1996).

The communist regime ensured that the Roma would conform by putting pressure on them. It did not attempt the symmetrical integration of the Roma in work and education, as might have been done through the use of family teachers, holding school lessons in the home, focusing on seasonal and casual labor, taking the "social age" of the Roma population into account, etc.

Undoubtedly, many measures adopted by the communist regime improved the standard of living of the Roma population. On the other hand, these measures often harmed the Roma: For Roma families used to the primitive conditions of Roma settlements, being thoughtlessly placed among the majority population in modern houses or housing estates often caused insurmountable problems of adjustment and alienation, which eventually became a source of mutual hatred between the Roma and the majority population. Somewhere here lie the roots of today's violence and racism.

Furthermore, thanks to the state's policy of forcible migration, dispersal and employment, the Roma community became part of the welfare benefits program. While these benefits did help the Roma escape misery and starvation, the Roma also grew used to state paternalism, which gradually replaced traditional family solidarity. A new culture of dependence on state institutions was born.

The historical experience of the Roma prompted specific reactions and behavior towards the majority population. Pushed to the outskirts of society, the Roma behaved as a group in danger: solidarity within the community increased, while prevailing strategies included flight (the makeshift strategy –

readiness to leave), or attack and aggression. These responses further deepened the separation and marginalization of the Roma.

EDUCATION

The result of the Roma's marginalization was a clear inability to cope with the requirements of the institutional school system, which led to their facing unequal opportunities on the labor market. This inequality was caused by the Roma's unfamiliarity with the school system, by differences in the social age of the Roma and that of the majority population, and by the type of education taught at Slovak schools. Education in Slovakia to this day focuses on encyclopedic knowledge, not on applying knowledge, and thus demands daily, systematic study. An important ingredient in the success of students is help from their parents in preparing for school. Clearly, this does not happen in Roma families, due to the standard of living among the Roma and the level of education of many Roma parents, as well as their belief that learning is a school business that should take place at school. Nevertheless, there have been several successful projects to address the situation, such as the "zero grade" scheme, a sort of preparatory year for elementary school to help Roma children start normal school attendance (see the chapter *The Roma in the Educational System and the Alternative Education Projects* in this book).

LABOR

Smithery and music making were the most important occupations of the Roma in Slovakia during the pre-industrial period until the beginning of the 20th century. Many Roma also earned a living by processing natural materials. Because the Roma never owned land, they were wholly dependent on

farmers for their basic food. On the other hand, the farmers needed cheap labor to hoe gardens, dig potatoes, harvest corn, cart hay, build houses, dig wells, chop wood, etc. In return the Roma usually asked for food, old clothes, old furniture, and household utensils. As this kind of coexistence benefited both sides, the Roma and the farmers maintained close relationships. During the industrial age, however, these links gradually dissolved, and the Roma were forced to start working in heavy industry. Given their low qualifications, after 1989 most Roma became superfluous in the new economy. The once strong relationships between the Roma and the majority no longer existed (Jurová, 1993).

The Roma's lack of any relationship to property, and their "strategy of the makeshift", in the post-1989 society limited their access to opportunities as well as their chances in competing for valuable goods (such as education and good jobs). The social exclusion of the Roma was under way on two fronts: marginalization, and incorporation.

Marginalization involves a limiting of options, frequently resulting in reproduced poverty. During the communist regime and the command economy, the state tried to solve the problem of marginalization by incorporating the rural population into the newly built heavy industry sector, where the country folk worked in positions requiring few or no qualifications. This form of incorporation was illusory, as it did not improve people's social position.

The poor social/economic position of the Roma had traditionally been improved by the informal economy. Only those whose living strategies were based on participation in both (formal and informal) economies stood a chance of improving their social position. The informal economy, however, requires the presence of domestic agriculture and

manufacturing, which in turn requires ownership of land and production tools. The Slovak unskilled workforce, at least those that worked outside the agrarian sector, tended to work in the factory during the day, and in the fields in the afternoon and evening. However, this never held true for the Roma. Their dependence on the formal economy caused them to fall even deeper into poverty than the majority population.

Besides the informal economy, another important factor in maintaining the standard of living of the majority population and incorporating it into society was that both partners had to have a job – the two income family model. However, many Roma families only had one income, as Roma women usually stayed home to look after their many children.

Differences in income and standard of living in communist-era Slovakia were never in direct proportion to the level of education achieved. Certain branches of industry, especially manufacturing, received preferential treatment – achieving a certain social status was based on the principle of collective and not individual mobility. Education was not seen as a tool for achieving a certain standard of living and social position. Instead, it was the chance to work in a certain industrial sector, and the type of education required to achieve this, that granted people a certain standard of living. The entire educational system in Slovakia had to conform to this principle, with the majority of Slovak citizens having only elementary education or secondary vocational education. After 1989, this became a trap, particularly for the Roma, who had been allowed to remain at a very low level of education and qualifications. As the communist economy had needed unskilled labor, the Roma had understandably not been encouraged to change anything in terms of their education and skills.

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POST-1989 CHANGES

CONSEQUENCES OF TRANSFORMATION FOR THE ROMA COMMUNITY

The 1989 social, economic and political change was launched in a situation that, with respect to the Roma, was characterized by the following:

1. The relationship between the majority population and the Roma was tense due to the feeling that resources had been unfairly redistributed.
2. The Roma had become fully accustomed to the rules and conditions of life under the communist regime.
3. The differences that existed between some groups of Roma were termed "socially pathological behavior", and some Roma communities were defined as unable to adapt to mainstream society. This was the spirit in which the state approached the Roma – their diversity was viewed as the result of a diseased Roma society. State social policy thus focused on "curing" this disease (*Romové v České republice*, 1999).
4. At the beginning of the transformation period, the job skills of the Roma were far inferior to those of the majority population. They also had many bad work habits that did not suit the requirements of a transforming economy.
5. The basic differences between individual members of the Roma community in Slovakia were due to the following variables: the status of the region in which they lived; the level of integration or segregation of their community; the level of concentration of the Roma in that community; and the proportion of Roma who lived dispersed among majority society. The level of integration or segregation was based on the following criteria: ownership relations (whether the Roma had legal title to their houses and lots), and access to infrastructure (sewage system, waste disposal, water etc.). Other differentiation criteria included the proximity of roads, the presence of electricity, the size of the flat, the size of the family, and the equipment of the flat.
6. The Roma population is heterogeneous, with the level of poverty depending on the level of segregation and the concentration of the Roma. The greater the segregation, and the more Roma that live in the segregated settlement, the greater the poverty.
7. The level of segregation is an important factor in the stratification of the Roma: the integrated Roma, whether living in high concentration in a certain area, or as part of the majority community, close ranks in a caste sense against those Roma who live in segregated settlements. The "integrated" Roma refer to these Roma as "Gypsies", and strongly distance themselves from this class of people. Segregated Roma living in marginalized regions thus experience an absolute form of ethnic poverty.

The social status of the Roma living in segregated settlements is far worse than that of the integrated Roma. In every region, Roma from the settlements are the poorest of the poor. Here again, the status of the region plays an important role – the situation of the segregated Roma in a marginalized region is much worse than that of the segregated Roma in regions with better macroeconomic, social and cultural characteristics, and can be measured by the type of house – whether made of brick or wood – the number of people sharing one bed, and the basic infrastructure and household equipment.

The segregated settlements are also incompatible with the majority when it comes to making rational choices about how to improve one's status. The social structure of the

Roma, the inaccessibility of the Roma upper class (the caste structure), and family ties are not conducive to an improvement in the situation of the Roma lower class. The social distance within the Roma population is not just spatial (between individual settlements) but can also be found within the settlements. In all regions of Slovakia there are settlements with socially differentiated communities of Roma, from the upper classes to the lowest. However, there is no social solidarity between them; the only solidarity that exists is within the family. The situation of the poorest segregated Roma thus depends directly on social networks between the Roma and the non-Roma.

Education and employment

After 1989, coercive tools stopped being used so widely in education and the school system, children stopped being widely put in orphanages, and the means of social control and law enforcement were relaxed; the result was increased school absenteeism among Roma children. During the communist regime, the police had had the authority to bring the parents of a hookey-playing child in for questioning, while the state could even take children from their parents or withhold welfare benefits if the children did not attend school. Roma children from separated and segregated settlements are now handicapped in three ways: first, during their enrollment in elementary schools, then in entrance examinations to secondary school. After considering their chances, they usually choose a secondary trade school (the determining factor being the distance of the school from their homes), which is the third limiting factor. They find themselves trapped in the position of unemployed trade school graduates with no hope of finding jobs near their homes. If they complete their education, they tend to return to their original environment

and reproduce their parents' behavior, usually ending up on welfare, which the young generation now regards as normal. If they do manage to get a job, it is usually only informal employment – either illegal work or short-term labor – and even these opportunities are becoming fewer with increasing segregation.

Health Care

The transformation of the Slovak health care system to an insurance system stressing individual responsibility for one's own health (e.g. the abolition of compulsory medical check-ups) caused the health of the Roma population to deteriorate. This decline was related to the tendency of the Roma to focus only on the present and to neglect preventive medical care. Their poor socioeconomic situation, and the unsuitable housing and infrastructure that go along with it, also contributed to the sharp decline in Roma health in Slovakia after 1989. All available data confirm that Roma health is worsening, especially in isolated Roma settlements. Since 1989, the number of upper respiratory tract diseases has increased significantly, and some settlements have recorded cases of tuberculosis. Due to the above factors, there is a constant threat of epidemics in Roma settlements. The most widespread diseases are skin and venereal diseases. Accidents are frequent as well. Some infectious and parasitic diseases occurring among Roma children are almost never seen among the majority population. Brain fever poses a grave problem. The frequent occurrence of various degrees of mental retardation among Roma children is also related to their socially disadvantaged environment. Even though the mainstream population has eradicated typhoid fever and is still trying to eliminate diseases such as trachoma (contagious eye disease), syphilis, and diseases

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of the lower respiratory tract and the intestine, many of these illnesses can still be found in Roma settlements. The most frequent diseases are scab (mange), pediculosis (lice infestation), pyoderma (skin disease), and mycosis (disease caused by parasitic fungus), along with the various consequences of chronic alcoholism, and accidents. Consumption of the meat of perished animals has also in some cases causing diseases of the gastrointestinal tract (see the chapter *Roma Health* in this book).

Housing

Housing policy is one sphere that has been almost completely removed from state hands, as concerns both flats and houses, and the land on which they are built. Some 90% of flats were put in private hands after 1989, while the land was given new owners. Tenants were allowed to acquire private title to land that they had occupied at no cost, provided they met two basic conditions:

1. The house built on the land had to have been built on the basis of a valid construction permit, or it must have had a valid construction approval.
2. If no "restituent" (the former owner of the land before its nationalization by the communists) was interested in acquiring the land, it had to be registered in the land registry.

If these two conditions were met, the tenant was allowed to request that title to the land be transferred to him or her. However, there was a serious shortage of information about these procedures among most Slovak people, all the more so among the Roma. Issues such as the legality or the illegality of land ownership had simply not existed during communism. The changes that took place after 1989 thus suddenly created a large group of Roma living illegally on someone else's land.

Moreover, legalizing one's land has become increasingly complicated, as the requirements for securing a construction permit (today one needs 32 permits) and building approval have increased as well. Many Roma dwellings do not meet the legal standards, but the Roma often do not have the money to reconstruct or complete their houses. Even when they do, they often cannot use the money because they do not own the land.

After 1989, the state cancelled its subsidized loans, stopped building houses, and turned the entire housing issue over to the municipalities and towns, who started to behave like any other player on the market. Now, with demand for flats far outstripping the supply, prices for apartments and houses have risen to levels that are out of sight for the average wage earner (to give the reader an idea, two-bedroom flats in Bratislava in early 2003 were starting at around 2 million Sk, or about $57,000, which is approximately 150 times the average gross national monthly wage. In other words, the average wage-earner would have to work for almost 13 years, without spending any money or paying any taxes, to afford a modest apartment for his family).

The chances for the Roma to acquire and keep a flat in this situation are thus minimal, as the competition is just too great, especially for housing at prices the Roma might just be able to afford. Housing construction in Slovakia since 1989 has fallen far short of the population's needs. The public reacts very sensitively to any injustice, whether real or perceived, in housing policy, housing control, the granting of loans, etc. The provision of community (i.e. cheap) housing as a response to the situation on the housing market cannot even begin to meet the needs of families in crisis. While the Roma are not the only ones in need, they are undoubtedly on the bottom rung of the ladder (see the chapter *Roma Housing* in this book).

POVERTY AND LIFE STRATEGIES

The changes described above are part of a new type of social stratification defined by new types of social relationships. The starting point for this new stratification comprised two stratification pyramids formed during the communist regime: the establishment pyramid (social capital) and the informal economy pyramid (private capital). These two pyramids later intersected, with social capital providing chances to create and access material capital. One only has to look at the Slovak business register to see how many former communist establishment members have done exceedingly well in the free market.

The Roma did not belong to either of these pyramids, and thus had no chance to join a higher class. Without access to either social or material capital, they stood no chance of winning a position or even participating in the new market. This applied both to the labor market as well as the market for privatized property – for example, when flats, houses, land, and small businesses were privatized (Kusá, 1997).

During the communist regime, poverty existed and pertained to the Roma, who tended to make up a greater-than-average share of the poorest category of people. After 1989, the concept of poverty acquired a new meaning based on the inequalities between individuals on the one hand, and entire social categories on the other.

The group characteristics of poverty have been dubbed the "new vertical poverty", a phenomenon in which entire social categories are made dependent on welfare benefits because of changes in the structure of employment. The main factor here is not the number of children, but inadequate education, and the decline of trade unions and entire branches of the economy, causing long-term unemployment. The Roma are a special case in that they combine the "old" form of demographic poverty (i.e. many children), and the "new" vertical poverty implicit in their lack of skills and their history of employment in obsolete economic sectors. In dealing with group/vertical poverty, individual life strategies are of great importance, but are not in themselves sufficient. One's chances of escaping this form of poverty also depend on the system of social care and rights. Vertical poverty is the result of changes in the system, not of individual failures. The depth and extent of Roma poverty is mainly a result of the scale and depth of their separation and segregation, and the income and asset inequality resulting from this segregation.

From the viewpoint of economic structure, the Slovak Roma are largely homogenous in class and qualifications. Most belong to the social and occupational category of "unskilled labor", which is why most Roma also belong to the group of low-income Slovak citizens. As for the nature of work, under the communist regime a certain Roma family "monotype" was created, characterized by unskilled industrial or agricultural laborers with neither vocational nor general secondary education, low average income per family member, and the man usually working outside the village where he lives. Since 1989, unemployment among Roma men has constantly increased, thereby also raising the number of Roma families in which both the man and the woman are unemployed (Džambazovič, 2000).

Among the Roma who live in poverty or threatened by poverty, various forms of inequality can be observed (Mareš, 1999):
- income inequality (inequality of possessions);
- consumption and lifestyle inequality (inequality of chances);

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- status inequality (the symbolic expression of inequality);
- inequality of abilities and inequality on the labor market (the theory of human capital);
- inequality in education and access to education (the theory of human capital);
- inequality in privileges and the strength of shared social networks (the theory of social capital);
- inequality in the distribution of influence and power (theory of political capital).

After 1989, the state reacted to this situation by creating a system of social welfare, a social safety net. The effect of this was to narrow the view of poverty to material and social need.

The state views poverty as an individual failure and a matter of personal responsibility, and in turn conditions the provision of welfare benefits on testing, measuring, and monitoring individual behavior and strategies. The culture of dependence is thus encouraged and strengthened, with all the features of reproduced poverty: feelings of marginality, distress, fatalism, despair, passivity, aggression, and impulsiveness, the absence of planning and saving strategies, and distrust of the authorities.

The basic strategy used in Slovakia to solve problems, by both the Roma and the majority population, is cooperation and mutual aid within the family and extended family. The difference lies in what kind of help the family and relatives provide, and whether they are able to help at all. Family strategies are determined mainly by the cultural and historical background and living conditions of individual families. The prevailing family strategy in settlements and villages depends on the social and cultural character of the municipality, much more than on the demographic characteristics of the family. The social and cultural character of segregated Romany settlements is one of collective marginalization and social exclusion with no potential for mutual help. Family-oriented living strategies are not effective, or rather are impossible to use this environment. The more homogenous the settlement, the lower the chance that supportive family networks will be effective. These living strategies are completely absent in segregated Romany settlements. Some NGOs are trying to compensate for the absence of supportive family networks and mutual help by creating community centers.

Under the new social circumstances, tried-and-true family strategies are being revived. Besides the family network strategy, the traditional majority population family also uses the strategy of self-help and going abroad for work. However, segregated Roma communities never use the self-help strategy (there is nothing to build on), unless one counts the theft of self-help products belonging to the majority population. The fact that the Roma do not use this strategy is not seen by the majority as traditional and typical Roma behavior, but instead as evidence of their laziness and inclination to steal – to take the easiest way out rather than actively change their position. The more open the Roma community and the more varied the environment it belongs to, the more likely it is that a self-help strategy will be used.

There is basically only one active strategy left for the Roma: departure. However, this strategy cannot be used in marginalized and segregated settlements (to be able to leave, one has to have certain resources). Collective departure is typical of the Roma, involving the departure of entire families from certain locations (among the majority population, usually only one member of the family leaves to find a job). Higher welfare benefits are a frequent motive. The mass exodus of Roma multiplies the tension within society, as the

majority population is then "punished" for their departure by individual states that introduce a visa obligation for traveling Slovaks as a defense against the influx of Roma (*Profile and Situation...*, 2000).

All of the strategies mentioned above are merely temporary and provisional solutions with no prospect of significantly improving people's living situations. Strategies typical of the pre-communist period, such as small-scale agriculture, breeding animals, and small handcrafts, which could have a longer lasting effect, have only been revived sporadically and in isolated cases. Not only do people lack the experience in these areas, but the country also lacks an efficient system of state support. Following the dissolution in the 1990s of the agricultural cooperatives and the state-owned farms that used to employ most of the majority population and the Roma, these cottage industry activities seem the only way to find new job opportunities. The decline in agricultural production, however, led to the departure of the majority population – its members either chose to travel to work in another location and back, or left their homes in the country altogether. Typical Roma crafts can no longer be used in the villages, as they always complemented other types of production by delivering certain products or services.

THE PHENOMENON OF
"DOUBLE MARGINALIZATION"

In some Roma settlements there is 100% unemployment. These are Slovakia's "valleys of hunger", territories with "visible islands of poverty". They are places threatened by total social disorganization and the formation of a culture of poverty as the only way of adapting to the situation. All of this is leading to the formation of an urban and rural underclass.

The post-1989 transformation, besides its structural dimension, also had spatial, regional, and micro-regional dimensions. Some areas turned into marginal territories in terms of socioeconomic development. Marginalization has roots in the past – the period of "communist industrialization" and the "industrial urbanization" of Slovakia. After 1989, the inherited marginalization of regions deepened further, and also afflicted new regions. The affected regions tend to be compact areas in the extreme south, east and north of Slovakia. These are areas with ethnically and nationally mixed inhabitants, thus giving marginalization an ethnic and a political dimension. Marginalized areas have several things in common: a high unemployment rate, a high long-term unemployment rate, and a high rate of social dependence. These characteristics depend first of all on the quality of human capital, infrastructure, and the social and spatial arrangement of the region. These marginalized areas combine the old demographic and the new vertical poverty, with low entrepreneurial potential and a low influx of capital and investments. A decline in living conditions, civilization and cultural standards, and difficult access to education and cultural activities, are typical in these areas. As a consequence, these regions have a limited ability to internally influence their own social development, just as they have a limited ability to adapt to the changed conditions since 1989, and few people capable of actively, responsibly and creatively searching for ways to escape their marginalized position.

The Roma who live in marginalized regions and segregated settlements find themselves in a situation of double marginalization. The limited possibilities of the marginalized region, combined with the absence of self-help potential, require specific support and development programs that focus on both the marginalized region, and the margin-

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alized, segregated settlements within that region. No program can be successful in the long term without making major changes in the field of employment and housing policy. Double marginalization cannot be overcome by individual life strategies (unless the strategy involves moving away). The multiple effects of disintegration and marginalization show up amongst the Roma in a long term lack of material security, and absolute poverty. Material security (food, drink, clothing, housing, and heat) allows biological survival and the satiation of primary needs, but also focus one on the need to have these goods. People begin to focus on survival rather than on living. Concentration on material security makes it impossible to improve one's living conditions. Material security is in fact a bridge, a prerequisite for achieving social security and taking care of one's secondary needs – especially self-identity, self-affirmation, education, culture, etc. The basis for achieving social security is social contacts, and social contacts are the only possibility for being included in the social order. The segregated Roma are pressured to acquire material security without having the chance to perform other activities, neither for themselves nor for others. They are not capable of participating in informal social networks by themselves. Forming such networks for the Roma and with the participation of the Roma is the basic aim of all social players. The strategies of the segregated Roma are survival-oriented, and make them dependent and reliant. Their dependence is of a material nature, because their survival depends on welfare benefits and other institutions. However, there is an equal threat of the formation of social dependence – dependence on others. The double marginalization of the Roma is accompanied by multiple dependence, both material and social. Double and multiple dependence means the

Roma are unable to participate, and thus lose their self-confidence and self-esteem.

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ZDENĚK UHEREK and KAREL A. NOVÁK

THE ETHNIC IDENTITY OF THE ROMA

Summary: This text explains the basic principles by which the Roma are grouped into social categories, both by themselves and by the majority population. It addresses issues such as self-evaluation and socialization among the Slovak Roma, and examines the state of their social consciousness and nation-forming processes. The chapter looks at ethnicity as a form of identity on a general level, and examines alternative forms of identification and the issue of ethnic identification among the Roma.

Key words: identity, ethnicity, ethnic identification process, sub-ethnic groups, family, nation, nationalism, traditions, stereotypes, integration, historical consciousness.

INTRODUCTION

Anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, in his book *The Thinking of Natural Nations*, states that all thought is based on order. He argues that people are only able to think about themselves and their surroundings if they are able to organize external and internal stimuli and experiences, and provided they can verify whether the qualities of things perceived by the senses are related to their real qualities. These processes create a world that is ordered logically. To keep their bearings in this world, people create "categories" by which they group the phenomena they encounter. Each group of people interprets the world slightly differently, within the framework of the ideas and language systems they use. Because people who use different languages organize the world differently, they perceive it in different ways as well (Carrol, 1956).

Just as people order the animate and inanimate world according to their systems of ideas and language, so too do they structure human society. The criteria they use are generally not invented by individuals but are inherited from the environment they function within. Most of these criteria are absorbed during childhood, through the process of socialization – becoming a part of society. This process is not passive: We constantly alter the criteria and shape them according to our personal and social experiences. In categorizing human society, we put ourselves into individual categories, and think about the categories we belong to and those we don't. Some of these categories include blondes and brunettes, pretty and ugly, good and evil, poor and rich, clever and stupid, black and white. Individuals classify each other arbitrarily, without either their consent or their knowledge of the results.

SOCIAL GROUPS AND THE ROMA

LANGUAGE AND THE ROMA

The language of the Roma in Slovakia is not homogenous. It has a common root, but several offshoots, such as the language of the Vlachika Roma and that of the Sinti, and the

tongue of the Slovak Roma, which can be further divided into East-Slovak, West-Slovak, Central-Slovak and Hungarian dialects; finally, there is the dialect of the Rumanian Roma who live in Slovakia (for details see the chapter *The Roma Language and its Standardization*). What characterizes these languages is that they were (and are) formed in close contact with the languages of the majority population. The different dialects spoken by the Slovak Roma result from the fact that the Roma have lived in different local environments in Slovakia. This indicates on the one hand that the language of the Roma is highly flexible, and on the other that Roma culture is not ordained by independent cultural institutions, which for example might try to codify a binding form of literary Romany. In fact, the Roma began to establish such cultural institutions only recently. In the absence of stable cultural institutions, Roma culture tends to change spontaneously and quickly, with both positive and negative results.

One can see a trend in the language of the Slovak Roma to separate words with Roma and non-Roma origins, with the distinction between the Roma and the rest of the world being of primary importance. For the Roma, the human world is divided into two basic categories – the Roma (or own group members – see below) and the non-Roma.

THE ROMA AS A SOCIAL CATEGORY

We form attitudes towards everything that surrounds us; we evaluate the known classified world; we create scenarios for how to deal with things and people. We identify with some groups of people and distance ourselves from others. If we find ourselves among people with a poor reputation in society, people who prevent us from developing, or people who cause us physical or mental pain, we may start to hate the category of people we feel we belong to.

Slovakia's Roma have a very ambiguous attitude to the category they have been assigned to, either by themselves or by others. Both the 1991 and 2001 population censuses showed that many ethnic Roma don't officially claim Roma nationality, but prefer to identify themselves in a different way (in each census, only about 20 – 25% of the ethnic Roma believed to live in Slovakia identified themselves as Roma, with many instead claiming Slovak or Hungarian nationality). In their local communities, however, the Roma often feel the impossibility of escaping this category. After all, one does not ask other people which categories they would place themselves in, but instead one automatically classifies others according to their speech, nonverbal communication, appearance, etc. This causes the Roma to be excessively sensitive to everything that relates to the category in which they feel trapped.

In addition to people not putting themselves in the Roma category and choosing to belong to a different nation instead, or of confusing the terms nationality and citizenship, a large group of people in Slovakia regard the term "Roma" as denoting a social and political category expressing certain political attitudes and activities. Many thus refuse to be placed in this category, even though they feel they belong to their local Roma communities. Such people might say of themselves that they are not Roma but Gypsies, and that they have nothing in common with the Roma who appear on television. However, many others still consciously claim to be Roma; this group is not homogenous, but includes Roma intellectuals, politicians and other members of the Roma elite.

As we said, we all automatically classify other people on the basis of the criteria we

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adopt from the people we live with. We constantly compare notes with others, to see whether our categorizations are similar, and whether others agree with our concepts and understand them. Through communication we clarify the boundaries of our individual categories and learn how to defend our own ideas. This kind of communication can also remind us that other people often put us in different categories than we do ourselves, however, and that people we thought to be like us may actually put us in a different category. We have all experienced those crises when our view of the world doesn't correspond with the views of others around us, creating conflicts over categories such child and adult, rich and poor, young and old, clever and stupid, domestic and foreign. When the Roma communicate with the majority population, they are rarely categorized according to their abilities, talent, age, etc., but usually according to their ethnic origin – Roma. This knee-jerk reaction complicates communication, and sets stereotypes on a collision course with the actions and attributes of the communicating parties.

SOCIAL GROUPS

The process of evaluation and categorization takes place in a world of real social relationships that an individual enters at birth. These relationships are partly determined by a person's origin and abilities, while the rest may be chosen. Social groups are formed on the basis of these relationships. People in groups interact either face to face or implicitly, and this mutual interaction, formation of alliances and interest groups influences the human perception of the world and how it is structured.

Social groups can be divided into primary and secondary groups. Primary groups are those whose members have frequent personal contacts, strong emotional ties, know each other well, and conduct their relationships according to unwritten rules that they make up themselves. Secondary groups, on the other hand, are those where mutual contacts are governed by reason rather than emotion, where social ties are less tight, and communication is not always direct but may be mediated; the social hierarchy is also more formal, and social interaction is controlled by rules set outside the group. Observance of these rules is often supervised by a mutually recognized authority. At any time, each individual belongs to a variety of groups, and has a certain status and role in each of them.

These groups shape both individual and collective constructions of reality (i.e. how the world is perceived) on the basis of language and categories. Individuals often find it easiest to communicate on this topic with members of their own groups, as such communication forms one's ideas and language. Through communication individuals share their social experiences, and create a world made up of common knowledge, experience, emotions and meanings, and predictable behavior and environments – this becomes the culture of the group and its members. That's why we sometimes speak of the cultural construction of reality.

THE ROMA AS MEMBERS OF SOCIAL GROUPS

The Roma in Slovakia have very little experience of either the creation of secondary groups or existence within such groups. Their basic social links are family ties and face-to-face relationships within their local communities. The rules of formal communication, and forms of solidarity based on other than family ties, are often extremely foreign to the Roma because of their limited access to structures beyond primary links, and be-

cause the Roma themselves do not create these secondary links. Even when the Roma participate in broader economic relationships, they are usually limited to the role of wage-laborers ordered and remunerated by an employer (once again, a face-to-face relationship). The employer, furthermore, often knows the Roma personally and asks them to carry out a particular task or service for compensation (such as a meal). The work or service is then carried out by an individual or an entire family, which also consumes the compensation. All of this takes place face-to-face within the local community, with formal relationships having little influence. Whereas in the past majority population individuals outside Roma families used to request work or services and give remuneration for them, many local communities have fallen apart since the 1989 revolution, and these formal institutions have fallen apart with them or been transformed. All that has remained in such places are family institutions, which is why it is so difficult for the Roma to cooperate in groups larger than a family or a local community, to form secondary group institutions or to interact in such groups.

THE HUMAN IDENTITY

DEFINITION OF IDENTITY

How we view ourselves is always somewhat different from how others perceive us. For the sake of our mental health and our ability to function in society, both points of view should be as similar and as complementary as possible. If an individual's idea of self is substantially different from that of his society or his real abilities and possibilities, he may experience mental problems and problems in communicating with society. The task for all of us is to show others what we are really like and what we really think, in an attempt to bring both realities (our own view

and the world's) closer together, and to live a life of harmony. However, this is not enough. Human society is varied, and every individual looks at others through different eyes. In seeking our own identities we must often abandon the idea that we will succeed in harmonizing our perception of ourselves with how everyone else sees us. Part of the search for identity is thus the quest for groups that confirm our own ideas. Berger and Luckmann wrote that "identity is formed by social processes" and that "history is written by people with clear identities" (Luckmann and Berger, 1999).

IDENTITY OF THE ROMA

The identities of individual Roma differ according to level of education, social status, and place of abode. The identity of educated, urban-dwelling Roma resembles that of members of the majority population. It consists of a plurality of statuses and roles formed during negotiations between the self and the individual's social environment. Nevertheless, Roma face a constant threat of conflict between their self-evaluations and the views of mainstream society, with Roma individuals evaluating themselves according to the results of their interactions and how well they are able to reach their objectives, and mainstream society using prejudices and stereotypes. The self-evaluations of the Roma correspond with the evaluations of their closest social surroundings (primary relationships within the family), but this is not enough to overcome the tension and uncertainty that results from conflict with how the rest of society views the Roma. It is often very difficult to communicate even with educated Roma, as they always assume that their counterparts are not speaking with them as colleagues, equals, or professionals, but as "Roma"; differences of opinion can easily be perceived as criticism and as personal attacks and failures.

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Pavel Říčan has noted that this imbalance between self-evaluation and the evaluation of the social environment may provoke a whole range of reactions from the Roma – from a loss of self-consciousness and an attempt to retreat into mainstream society, to self-pity and a deteriorating self-concept. The Roma often now disguise their identities and dissociate themselves from the society they came from, which sometimes leads to open confrontation. (Říčan, 1998). As for less-educated Roma from rural environments, the difference between their self-evaluations and the evaluation of mainstream society often means that personal identity is forged in interactions between the individual and the primary group, with contacts with the majority population being perceived as a necessary evil and gradually being erased from the personality forming process. On the other hand, mainstream society is sometimes perceived as an opposition group that has to be confronted. This may lead to double standards of ethical or moral conduct, where actions criticized in one's own group are allowed if committed against the mainstream population.

Besides the individual's identity there is also a group identity formed on the basis of how the group's members think of themselves and how they perceive their past, their importance and their goals in contrast to how those outside the group perceive them.

Each individual carries with him several group identities that are in permanent flux in both quality and quantity. The hierarchy of these identities is constantly changing as well, with group identities being of varying importance to each individual. Some researchers speak of a central "basic group identity" with a determinant role for the individual (Isaacs, 1975).

The group identity of the Roma is specific to the historical consciousness typical for their positions and habitat. The historical memory of the Roma is very short and very precise, and is usually limited to local and family affairs. This confirms that the priority group identity of the Roma is based on their extended families and local communities.

Another issue is the territorial position of the group. Although the majority of Roma in Slovakia are residents of the country, the notion of home is not as firmly fixed to their houses, country, place of birth or abode as it is with the majority population. Instead, it is tied to their relatives, families and extended families. Migratory groups like the Roma often stress the identity of the individual with his primary group instead of with the surrounding environment, which in turn leads to repeated migration.

ETHNICITY AS A SPECIFIC FORM OF IDENTITY

ETHNIC GROUPS AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS

Social groups form boundaries between one another on the basis of innumerable criteria, including language, religion, origin, history, views on life, knowledge, skills, ancestors, shared territory, way of life, customs or habits, values, food, housing, style of dress. Sets of these or similar criteria are often used to define the boundaries between social groups known as ethnic groups. Ethnic groups are sometimes defined as communities that differ from one another in their way of life and culture.

As ethnic groups are social constructs, they may take different forms and properties. In some cases the decisive criterion is language, in others it is religion, the origin of the parents, genetic affinity, how long the group has lived in a given area, or hatred of a common

enemy. The ways ethnic groups define themselves as distinct from other groups can differ widely. While surrounding groups often define themselves according to external, easy-to-identify features mixed with ethnic stereotypes, ethnic groups prefer genealogy, religion or cosmology. They often create myths referring to a common origin, history, mutual affinity to the group, heroic deeds by ancestors, lofty group morals, mutual solidarity, or important contributions by the group to human culture, world order or human civilization.

THE ROMA AND ETHNIC GROUPS

The term Roma denotes a number of migratory groups that originated in India, itself a vast subcontinent inhabited by many ethnic and language groups. In the 21st century the Roma can be found on all continents. Individual groups of Roma differ from each other in language, way of life, standard of living, and frequently also according to social and political orientation. Some individuals and groups that could have a common genetic or geographic origin don't consider themselves Roma, for two main reasons: first, being identified with the Roma is not considered a social advantage, and second, people often feel they belong to the majority culture, or choose another way of identifying themselves. The pursuit of the nomadic or semi nomadic way of life typical of many Roma groups in European countries among the settled majority populations also complicates the creation of ethnic links and institutions.

Many groups live in isolation, having little or no contact with other groups of Roma. This clearly limits the effect of institutions supporting mutual solidarity and the creation of social relationships based on a common culture, way of life and solidarity. Clear so-

cial organization is often present only at the level of family and extended family structures, and is not common in larger units. Nevertheless, some groups of Roma, mainly politically active elites, see the Roma as a nation or a European minority. Such groups attempt to create and maintain links among the Roma typical of ethnic groups and nations, as well as national and international networks. Non-Roma cooperating with the Roma elite often form parts of these networks or even their organizational backbones (for details see Uherek, 1999, p. 38 – 45).

Systematic efforts to encourage a sense of belonging and national consciousness among the Roma have only been visible for several decades, and the results are meager. Both mainstream society and the Roma have gradually come to accept the term Roma, a designation that should be a symbol of Roma unification. However, the term has only been in use for a little more than a decade, and thus has taken root only in some countries. Some groups classified as Roma by experts or by the public prefer other terms, such as Manusha, Sinti, Kale etc. The slow process of social stratification must take place before we see the rise of social organization and social elites capable of cooperating and representing the interests of individual groups, codifying the language, etc.

THE ROMA, ETHNICITY, SUB-ETHNICITY AND CASTE

Studies of the Roma way of life and language confirm our hypothesis that the Roma living in Slovakia today were not a compact ethnic group before they arrived in their current homeland. They included at least two separate groups – the Sinti and the Vlachika Roma – which differ from the "Slovak Roma" in their way of life and language. The dialect spoken by the two groups is also dif-

ferent, although the differences are largely due to the influence of the majority language on the original Romany tongue. The designation "Slovak Roma" (originally Gypsies) was created only recently by linguists to denote a sub-ethnic group of Roma whose language had been influenced by the tongues used by the Slovak population. The designation was introduced into academic language in the mid-1960s by Jiří Lípa (Lípa, 1965). Slovak Roma are considered a sub-ethnic group as a result of their five hundred years of coexistence with the Slovak majority population.

Individual migratory groups started to arrive in Slovakia gradually and haphazardly in the 15th century from the Balkan peninsula. This was a slow, successive, economic-based and sometimes even forced migration, with the Roma usually arriving in groups consisting of extended families. In the course of their migration the individual groups formed no social organization beyond cooperation between several related families. As the entire Roma migration to Europe happened in this manner, it is likely that these groups did not enjoy a close social organization in their countries of origin either.

Milena Hübschmannová asserted that both the Roma's social organization and their way of life were influenced by their having originated in Indian society, which is divided into "jati" (castes) and "upjati" (sub-castes), each forming communities with specific traditional caste professions and with rigidly defined status, rights, obligations, and ways of communication with other castes, which they complement economically within society. Individual "jati" maintain a certain social distance from each other; they differ in their ways of life, the food they eat, the clothes they wear; and their existence is possible only if they can exchange their own goods and services for those of other castes, as they

do not form economically independent units. According to Hübschmannová, this explains the different ways of life and traditional crafts of individual groups of Roma. Some crafts were absorbed during coexistence with the majority population, but others were imported from India. She also uses this example to explain the social distance, forms of social contact, and economic behavior exhibited by individual groups of Roma to the majority population (Hübschmannová, 1993; Hübschmannová, 1999). The residue of the caste system helps explain why the Roma identify only with some other groups of Roma, why individual clans maintain certain eating habits based on which they consider themselves ritually pure or impure, why for some groups it is degrading to live the way mainstream society does, to do physical work and so on.

THE SUB-ETHNICITY OF THE ROMA IN LOCAL SOCIETY

The Roma came to Slovakia as bearers of specific ways of life and strategies acquired during their migration and before, and proved successful in using them in their new surroundings. Emília Horváthová notes that the Roma practiced smithing and making music, baskets, brushes, paintbrushes and tubs, burning lime etc. (Horváthová, 1964). These and other activities are regarded by historians as typical and traditional for the Roma ethnic group. They defined the social status of individual clans and allowed them to integrate into the rural or urban economies. However, not all Roma families were able to integrate in this way. Some individuals managed to surmount the social barriers and win a full position in mainstream society. On the other hand, there were also groups that did not manage to integrate into the system. Roma families that were able to integrate identified with others in the municipality

where they worked and through their "gadžo" – the patron or godfather of an individual family. This system fell apart during the Second World War and especially during the communist years. Pride in one's socio-professional group – one's "jati" – and the endogamous (marrying only within one's group) nature of individuals, however, have largely survived to the present day. The Roma maintain a sub-ethnic differentiation, identify themselves as pure or impure, and uphold the principle of social distance.

Although some differences between groups have ceased to divide individual families (see Liégeois, 1997 or Marušiaková, 1988), the Roma have preserved the extended family as the basic unit of identification.[1] This was confirmed by Kumanová, who wrote: "Local allegiance and knowledge of tribal origin form the basis of their ethnic consciousness." (Kumanová, 1998) The extended family consists of the married couple, the father's parents and siblings, the families of the father's siblings, the children of the married couple, the families of their sons and their children, and sometimes also more distant relatives (Davidová, 1965). The family is monogamous, patriarchal, patrilinear, and is led by its elders.[2] It is quite common for several Roma families to live in close quarters, all of whom have a different status, communicate with each other but don't visit, and maintain a certain social distance. These families usually have relatives in several other places and maintain lively social contacts with them. In Slovakia it is common to find segregated dwellings in parts of municipalities or outside them (Roma settlements). Roma neighborhoods and housing estates perform the same segregation function in towns. The Roma family identifies with this environment, but if many extended families (clans) live here, they will consider only the part bordering on their immediate dwelling as their own.

If a problem has to be solved or some novelty introduced in a settlement or neighborhood, the heads of individual extended families must reach agreement on how to proceed. If municipalities want the areas inhabited by Roma to have some kind of self-government, they must help create institutions that promote negotiations between individual families, such as the "Vajda council". This type of institution does not always work, as the Roma may not identify with an entire location or all its inhabitants. On the other hand, the Roma tend to settle their problems with each other, and use non-Roma institutions only in extreme cases. The slow death of such institutions as Roma judges, vendettas, and highly ceremonial weddings, baptisms, and funerals also confirms this trend (Davidová, 1965).

Individual territories, while not as important to the self-identification of the Roma as their extended families, are still organized according to a hierarchy. The Roma are well informed of where other Roma live, and have a good idea of the situation there. They know where the "elite" lives, and where the situation is bad; they would never enter some of these locations, or marry off their daughter to someone from these areas. Besides the clans living in certain areas, other important evaluation criteria include way of life, the food people eat, the state of infrastructure, etc. Urban Roma settlements are generally rated higher than rural ones.

Besides where they live, the Roma sometimes identify with parts of municipalities that they do not inhabit, but whose institutions they use, i.e. shops, post offices where welfare benefits are paid, municipal offices, schools, places of work.[3] Their ability to use these institutions often reflects their level of integration into society. Nevertheless, these institutions contribute far less to the formation of group identity than the extended family.

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ETHNICITY AND FAMILY SOLIDARITY

The identity formed in endogamous clans scattered among the majority population only partly resembles ethnic identity as we know it. This is because most authors associate the concept with the industrialization, secularization, and modernization of traditional agrarian society. The modernization of eastern and central Slovakia (where most Roma live) is a relatively recent phenomenon, and in many places is not finished. Identity based on extended family and location is common to traditional pre-industrial communities, including the traditional Slovak rural community.

ETHNICITY AND THE ROMA

Traditional societies are socially heterogeneous, based on traditional statuses, and controlled by enforced solidarity. Gellner (1993) described pre-industrial societies as based on "a clearly specified social structure, and the accentuation of cultural differences among its subgroups – territorial, tribal, and occupational groupings." This type of structure is still quite common in the Slovak countryside, especially in Roma communities. Roma settlements have inner structures involving clan identities, a clear hierarchy of individual clans in each area, and finally a hierarchy of locations (settlements). These hierarchies sometimes have a ritual nature, disturbing the relationships between individual social groups.

In the pre-capitalist period, the natural boundaries were formed by clan and local allegiances and by caste endogamy. These boundaries were hard to penetrate and allowed no common identity across social layers to be formed. Such environments encouraged the formation of identities other than ethnic identities. According to Petr Lozoviuk (1997), this "anomaly" was due to "the fact that ethnicity is not a strong criterion of group organization".

For the Slovak Roma, the fact that the majority population sees the Roma as different in physiognomy and culture, and applies the same stereotypes and behavior models to all Roma, has played an important role in the construction of their identity. Lozoviuk notes that ethnically neutral groups often feel they are held back by their ethnically defined surroundings. The social environment itself puts pressure on neutral groups to show ethnicity. Ethnicity is a matter of relationships and interactions, and an ethnically neutral group reacts on the basis of stimuli coming from the majority environment. The result, however, is not always identification with the rest of the Roma.

Several field researchers have described situations in which individuals say it is necessary to be Roma to achieve a certain goal (which is perfectly legitimate, but at the same time clearly does not arise from individual conviction), or that they feel disadvantaged or aggrieved because they are Roma. On the other hand, under certain circumstances they feel allegiance to the Slovak state and nation. For example, after the Slovak ice-hockey team won the World Championship in 2002, many Roma spontaneously declared they were Slovak.

Some Roma specifics (the cornerstones for building a common identity) are forged by the majority from the outside, and may have nothing in common with being a Roma. For example, mainstream stereotypes of the primitivism and laziness of the Roma are mixed with romantic stereotypes about the musical talent of all Roma and their need to be nomadic, and with sophisticated constructions about the Roma's different views of time and space.

Pressure from different parts of society takes many forms. In a world where individual

groups of people are categorized as ethnic groups, it is members of these ethnic groups who are being spoken to or on behalf of, for whom social programs are being prepared, etc. These ethnic groups select spokesmen, form international networks and political organizations, and are the subjects of international forums. To take an example from the Czech national revival period, it is certainly no coincidence that Czech ethnicity became of interest during the formation of political parties whose electorates were members of this ethnic group.

The non-Roma elite has always treated the Roma as an ethnic group and perceived them as an ethnic unit. During the totalitarian period, when the Roma did not represent a group and were manipulated by those in power, nobody cared whether there was some social organization inside the group, and whether they formed a coherent whole. Under the system of representative democracy, however, ethnic groups are represented by individuals who speak for the entire group. Ethnic groups choose their representatives and delegate them to promote certain policies agreed by all as ideal. Such procedures require a high degree of social organization that is typical of nations.

THE NATION AND ETHNIC IDENTITY

WHAT ARE NATIONS?

Nations are political groups formed to achieve power or economic, cultural and educational objectives in a certain area. Nations begin to develop at the same time that civic society is being formed and inhabitants starting to divide political power. A single educational system means that all members of the nation share similar knowledge and use the same literary language. They usually belong to the same political system (often having their own state or aspiring to form one), and espouse the same religion.

The national interest is usually advocated by national representatives elected by the nation. Members of a nation usually inhabit a certain territory and feel mutual solidarity and solidarity with their nation. Ethnic ideology is often used to strengthen this solidarity, and attempts to show that all members of the nation have common ancestors, customs and knowledge, and that they share kinship. The nation, a large secondary group, is ideologically construed as a primary group, or at least as a group derived from the primary group. The group's "ethnic" homogeneity is achieved by a unitary educational system, socialization, the influence of the media and intellectual elites, and by face-to-face contacts and kinship ties.

THE ROMA IDENTITY AND THE NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS

The formation of national consciousness in relation to the Roma identity was best described by Milena Hübschmannová in her study *From an Ethnic Caste to a Structured Ethnic Community* (Hübschmannová, 1999). In this work she demonstrated how part of the Roma population that regards its Roma heritage as a symbol of belonging to a certain social class, changes its habitat (e.g. moving from an isolated settlement to a village), ethnicity and even nationality as they climb the social ladder. When an originally Roma family acquires jobs, improves their social status, and adopts the lifestyle of mainstream Slovaks, they move among the Slovaks and label themselves as such – directly the opposite of what nationalism would preach. Hübschmannová showed the contrast between Roma who act in this way and elites who, their social status having improved, de-

cide to "invest" the social and cultural capital they have acquired into the group, claiming and retaining their membership in it.

This mechanism can work provided the group accepts the new elite as members of it. This happens only when the links between the elite and the people whose social status did not improve remain very strong. The elites that promote nationalism usually want to preserve as much as possible in common between the higher and lower classes. However, these elements must not only be created, but also communicated and memorized so that everyone regards this common knowledge as unshakeable fact. The shared knowledge of the Roma includes the consciousness of a common homeland (usually a very strong motive in the nation-forming process) and of a common voyage to Europe, a common language whose codified form is now being finalized[4], a common fate in Europe, a shared space and status as a European minority, common ancestors who were great soldiers, musicians, blacksmiths and so on. It is historians, linguists and cultural workers who stimulate the creation of national myths, and the Roma are in the midst of this process now. Those who feel part of the Roma nation already have a thorough appreciation of the national consciousness.

ISSUES IN THE PROCESS OF ROMA ETHNIC IDENTIFICATION

MAJORITY POPULATION STEREOTYPES

There are many obstacles to the creation of a Roma ethnic identity, some of which we have mentioned above. Besides the diversity of the Roma and their division into many subgroups, one of the most limiting factors in the creation of ethnic identification is the image with which the Roma are asked to identify. The

stereotypes created by the Slovak majority paint the Roma as a people who cause problems for others, refuse to work, sponge on the social system, live in ghettos, etc. Many Roma accept these stereotypes, meaning that unless they are willing to live on the fringes of society, they will not claim membership in such a group. Even Roma who do show some of the above characteristics may not identify with the image, as it could reduce their chances of improving their standard of living.

CULTURE OF POVERTY

The stereotyped perception of the Roma is connected with the culture of poverty that characterizes the Slovak Roma.[5] At first sight Roma communities may be confused for traditional societies, but in the culture of poverty there is very little solidarity; any similarity with traditional societies is purely superficial. Poverty afflicts large groups of Roma living in socially and geographically isolated places. The majority forms its view of the Roma on the basis of the Roma's way of life, without accepting joint responsibility for their situation, and without understanding that their behavior has nothing to do with their being Roma – it is behavior that is common for all people living in extreme poverty and social isolation (Gellner, 1993). The environment of poverty is not only an unsuitable place to find one's identity, it actually creates an identity crisis. The way out of this crisis is to restore people's dignity and consciousness of self – in other words, to restore their "social identity".

DISPERSAL AS A FACTOR LIMITING THE CREATION OF HIERARCHICAL STRUCTURES

The way the Roma settled Europe and other continents also limits the process of ethnic

identification. Scattered across large areas, the Roma are unable to form national structures, nor do they have their own state. One of the prerequisites for the formation of a nation is a monopoly over the education of its inhabitants (Gellner, 1993). Without such a monopoly, it is difficult to promote a uniform interpretation of national myths. At present it would be very difficult to establish a Roma national education system, as it could deepen the differences between the Roma and the majority population (and the quality of their education) even more.

SHAPING OF NATIONS

Despite the many obstacles, the social construction of the Roma ethnic group and nation is slowly emerging with all the characteristics of European nations created on an ethnic basis. The collection and reconstruction of traditions is one of these characteristics. Traditions are often part of the multi ethnic heritage, but in this case they shape the boundary between individual ethnic groups, reconstruct history, and create national heroes, traditional meals and customs. These elements are gradually assembled into a logical structure, with items imported into the Slovak environment from the country of origin, such as language, ritual purity in eating, and the form of relationships with extended families.

The last major problem is that some stereotypes created by the majority population come to define the characteristics of the Roma nation. Besides romantic images of the Roma, people often use purely negative stereotypes to explain the problematic behavior of some Roma communities, stereotypes that are also applied to Roma who don't behave in this way. This poses a clear danger because neither the majority nor the Roma, even though they are affected by these stereotypes, are willing to accept the Roma's attributed "national habits".

CONCLUSION

"Ethnicity is a universal phenomenon and at the same time is a product of modern society. It is a kind of informal political organization." (Cohen, 1974) "Ethnicity is an inseparable part of an individual's personal identity." (Epstein, 1978)

As the above quotations show, people consider ethnicity a natural part of their lives. We have noted some problems hindering the process of ethnic identification among the Roma in Slovakia. There are many ways in which these barriers can be overcome, some of which may seem bizarre; however, bearing in mind that ethnicity is a social construct, most solutions are feasible if they are supported by a measure of social consensus.

The questions of purpose and legitimacy play an important role in ethnic identification and nation forming. Gellner holds that it is pointless to build new nations because there are no economic reasons for doing so – rather the opposite. Economic and political power remain in the hands of the elite, while for other citizens the new situation is not necessarily an improvement. Furthermore, although every nation strives for an independent state, few are able to bring nationalism to this final stage. With no room for the creation of endless additional states, nation forming thus can have little useful outcome.

One argument in favor of national and emancipation activities holds that the formation of a nation brings equality to its members. For the Roma this would certainly be an important development, as the various Roma groups are just as closed to the outside as the outside system is closed to the Roma. The

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question remains whether internal permeability can solve discrimination problems for the group as a whole. Another defense of nation forming is that the Roma would be a stronger political force in their own national structures, allowing them to advance their interests more effectively. In developed democracies, however, the formation of closed political interest groups on the basis of ethnicity tends to be frowned on because it can lead to violence between individual groups. We must therefore ask whether the ethnic and national principle shouldn't be rejected in favor of the civic principle. The Roma are in a state of flux, and it's up to them what way they choose.

We have mentioned some barriers to Roma ethnic identification. This does not mean, of course, that there is any crisis in the Roma's group identity (with the possible exception of the "culture of poverty" examples above). Undoubtedly, the various Roma groups exhibit many cultural differences from the majority. Culture is the context into which an individual is born, and each person's identity is something he chooses within the context of his own culture, even if this involves a rejection of that culture. One of the signs of an independent Roma culture is their different perception of group identity. By expecting the Roma to create a nation, the majority population is at the same time urging the Roma to accept one part of their culture. In a sense, this national emancipation has an assimilatory character – not assimilation into mainstream society, but into the structure of political nations. It also has an integration aspect – the Roma may figure as a nation among other nations – although there is no guarantee that they will have all the attributes of a modern political nation.

Part of the Roma population has already taken this integration step. Of course, one must ask how meaningful any nation-form-ing process can be when it is accompanied by the constant threat of nationalist excesses. Nevertheless, nation forming is underway thanks to the efforts of the Roma elite, as well as to pressure from that part of the majority population that perceives the world through its contextually formed categories. However, this pressure from the majority is irrelevant because it assumes the Roma nation will be based merely on ornamental features of the ethnic group, without having the basic functions of a nation. The Roma continue to debate to what extent autonomy should be preserved, what should be given up, and in which areas integration or assimilation are acceptable (Bělohradský, 1999).[7] As those leading this discussion also form closed categories, however, they often fail to notice that many individuals have already chosen independent, surprising and sometimes even bizarre ethnic identifications – choices that allow them to deal with the world around them.

ENDNOTES

1. There is also an extensive terminology used among relatives and extensive knowledge of very broad relationship links.
2. This characteristic bespeaks a certain Roma conservatism, in which the younger Roma must obey the older, and men dominate women.
3. Considering the high level of Roma unemployment, this factor lost a lot of its significance after 1989.
4. The language, even though it is spoken only by a part of the Roma population and is not unitary, is seen by the Czech and Slovak Roma elites as the most important element in ethnic identification (see Zaplatílek, 2001). The study also showed that respondents accentuated identity based on family ties.
5. This concept has many critics, although we believe it adequately describes anomic communities from the viewpoint of cultural change (see Novák, 2002).

6. Today's primary task is to make the majority education system more accessible to socially excluded groups of citizens, mostly the Roma. The present system of education (as described in field research carried out in eastern Slovakia), in which Roma and non-Roma pupils are separated using special schools and classes, only reproduces the lowest social class and the culture of poverty (see Willis, 1977).

7. The author compares the Czech Roma with the fate of African Americans, who chose integration, and American Indians, who chose the path of cultural autonomy.

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STANISLAV CINA

THE ROMA LANGUAGE AND ITS STANDARDIZATION

Summary: Romany, the language of the Roma, is an integral part of their identity. For ages, only a few international linguists paid any attention to Romany, or tried to codify its basic rules. This chapter describes the attempts of linguists to place Romany in the language tree, surveys the development of the language, and describes the differences between the European and Slovak dialects. The authors explain that it is difficult to define the language, not just on the international level but even within Slovakia. In Slovakia, despite the constitutional right of the Roma to use Romany in public and in schools, not all Roma speak Romany, and many do not want to use their native language in these environments. Many problems thus arise which neither the Roma nor the majority in Slovakia are prepared to deal with.

Key words: history and development of Romany, European and Slovak dialects, unique aspects of Romany, standardization and codification of Romany, international orthography, position of Romany in Slovakia, the European Charter of Minority and Regional Languages.

INTRODUCTION

Anthropological and linguistic studies have discovered that the Roma originated in India, and have identified a close relationship between Romany and some modern Indian lan-guages, especially Hindi. The basis of Romany is shared or at least closely related to these tongues, particularly in terms of vocabulary. Romany has many common or similar basic expressions and words with new Indo-Aryan languages, such as the terms for "head", "God", "fire", as well as some colors, numbers and so on. Until recently, Romany was the language of a closed ethnic group bearing signs and relicts of the tribal system. During the 19th century, Romany thus remained an underdeveloped and non-literary language.

Now that the Roma nation, ethnicity, and culture have been acknowledged both inter-nationally and in Slovakia, the position of Romany as a language is beginning to change. Some new needed words are being formed, and the language is being used in international political negotiations and at expert conferences, in the press and in lit-erature. Romany is thus gradually acquiring new tasks and functions. It is opening up to the outside world, and is thus being increas-ingly influenced and changed. These changes are related to the changing position of the Roma and the opening of their tradi-tionally closed, endogamous, and (until re-cently) tribal system. As the Roma gradu-ally take on certain elements of the major-ity society's way of life, they are becoming more frequently bilingual and even trilin-gual. Recently, a new type of bilingualism has been observed, especially in Roma families living scattered among the major-

ity population; besides Romany, these Roma also speak a special ethnolect, or slang, which is a mix of different dialects. In this slang one finds many Romany calques, which are verbatim translations of typical Romany constructions, idioms, and ways of expressing things into the language of the majority.

The publishing of periodical and non-periodical press and fiction in Romany began after the 1989 revolution. The study of the Roma and Romany was launched following the establishment of the Roma Culture Department at the Faculty of Education of Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra. The Roma theater Romathan uses Romany as its main performance language. Roma teaching assistants have begun working in some schools, and the possibility of offering Roma children bilingual education is being discussed ever more frequently.

PAST NOTIONS OF THE ROMA TONGUE

At the end of the 19th century, the linguistics branch was overrun with various romanticized notions and unfounded hypotheses that confused the Roma with the Tatars, with Jews from Egypt, or, vice-versa, which believed them to have descended from the Egyptians who chased the Jews (and so on). Linguists first struggled to determine which language group Romany belonged to. Nowadays, the theory of Ralph Turner is generally accepted; Turner showed that older forms of Romany were similar to Central Indian languages, whereas newer forms of Roma bore the influence of Northwestern Indian languages.

The first linguistically substantiated hypothesis about the origins of Romany appeared in 1760, and was formulated by the Calvinist priest István Vályi from Jabloňovce (Álmási) near Komárno in modern-day southern Slovakia. Vályi had become acquainted with three Indian students during his studies at the university in Leiden. Because their language reminded him of the tongue of the Roma back home in Komárno, he wrote down more than 1,000 of the Indian students' words and their meanings. On returning home and reading out the transcribed Indian words to some local Roma, he found that the Roma were able to understand and translate the words with no difficulty. He also noticed a similarity between Sanskrit and the language used by the Roma in the Hungarian town of Györ. His findings were published three years later in the *Wiener Anzeiger* journal, in an article by Székely von Dobo.

Independently of Vályi, the English philologists Jakob Bryant and William Marsden came to the same conclusion in 1785. Marsden compared the English and Turkish versions of Romany with Hindi. Several years before a seminal study of Romany by the German linguist Jacob Rüdiger was published (1782), Rüdiger's colleague Bacmeiser also published a brief study (1777), pointing out the close relationship between the language of the Gypsies and Multani – a language of Northwestern India. Rüdiger's work caught the attention of Heinrich Grellman, who in 1783 published a book on Romany and the migration and habits of the Roma.

Based on the information available to him, Grellman fixed on Hindustan as the origin of the Roma, and believed they belonged to the Shudra caste. He considered Gujarati to be the language most closely related to Romany, and explained the differences between these two languages as having been caused by the influences on the Roma after they arrived in Europe. Although Grell-

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man's work inspired many India specialists to study Romany, none was able to prove more than a similarity with Sanskrit. Around that time, many different works were published describing different Romany dialects (by Bischoff, Puchmajer, von Heister, Graffunder). Thanks to these works, August Fridrich Pott had enough material to prepare the first scientific, historical, and comparative study of Romany (1844), a work that earned him the title "the father of Romany linguistics".

DIVISION OF DIALECTS IN EUROPE AND IN SLOVAKIA BASED ON GEOGRAPHY AND LANGUAGE FEATURES

Two prominent Russian authors dealing with the Roma attempted to classify the European dialects of Romany in their study *Dialects of the Gypsy Language.* According to the authors (Wentzeľová and Čerenkov), the two basic factors governing the formation of European dialects were the following:

a) The ancestors of the modern Roma spoke different Central Indian languages and dialects long before they left India. This can be seen in the lexical differences between the Roma dialects from Asia Minor and those in Europe, as well as in the differences that did not arise within Indo-Aryan languages, such as the phonetic alternation -h- and -s- in some forms of nouns and verbs and in some pronouns and adverbs.

b) The European Roma began to divide into individual groups that ended up in different language environments and gradually lost contact with each other. The original lexicon of individual groups was preserved to a varying extent, and the different dialects usually preserved only one of several different synonyms.

CLASSIFICATION OF DIALECTS

1. a) The dialect of the Roma from the northern part of the former Soviet Union (ruska Romany, cheladitka Romany);
   b) The dialect of the Roma from the western part of Latvia and Estonia (lotfitka Romany);
   c) The dialect of the Roma from central Poland (felditka Romany).

2. The sinti dialect in Germany, France, Poland, the Czech and Slovak Republics, Yugoslavia, Northern Italy, and Austria (the dialect prevails in German-speaking environments).

3. a) The dialect of the Roma from northern and eastern Slovakia (servika Romany);
   b) The dialect of the Roma living in southern Slovakia and northern Hungary (ungrika Romany).

4. a) The erlides dialect (western Bulgaria, Macedonia, southern Serbia);
   b) The ursari (bear-leaders) dialect (Rumania, Moldavia);
   c) The krymtika dialect (Crimean Roma) surrounding the towns of Kotel, Sliven and Plaven (central Bulgaria – the Drindars).

5. a) The dialect of the vlachika Roma (Rumania, Moldavia – Lingurari, Eletari, Kekaviari);
   b) The dialect of the kalderasha (kettlesmiths) Roma, concentrated in the mid-19th century on the Rumanian-Hungarian border in Austria-Hungary. They now live in the former Soviet Union, in Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, France, England, and Belgium.

6. a) The dialect of the vlachika Roma in Yugoslavia, above all in parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina;
   b) the servi dialect of the left-bank Ukraine and neighboring areas (Plashtshunaja, Volochuja).

7. The dialect of the Finnish Roma (fintika Romany).
8. Volshenenge Kale – the Roma in Great Britain, above all in Wales.

CLASSIFICATION OF ROMA DIALECTS IN SLOVAKIA

The dialects of Romany spoken in Slovakia can be divided into several groups. The most widespread dialect is that of the Slovak Roma, spoken by about 85% of the Roma living in the country. Several regional dialect subgroups can be identified within this dialect:

A1: The East-Slovak dialect – this is very widespread and is similar to almost all other Slovak Romany dialects. It is the basis of standardized Slovak Romany;

A2: The Central-Slovak dialect – sometimes also called Hungarian Romany. This dialect is characterized by the use of the past continuous tense with frequent use of the áhi ending, and other peculiarities;

A3: The West-Slovak dialect – this can be identified by the use of palatal speech sounds with a hard pronunciation, and the substitution of the "h" sound of speech for the "s". This dialect also uses a lot of specific words that differ significantly from the words used in the East-Slovak dialect.

Other dialects of Romany spoken in Slovakia include:

B1: The vlachika dialect. From 5 to 10% of Slovak Roma speak this dialect, which uses many Rumanian words;

B2: Romany dialects from the south of Slovakia – ungrika Romany. This is a dialect with many Hungarian words, which the Roma use to express modern, technical, and abstract notions.

THE STANDARDIZATION OF ROMANY

The need to codify Romany began to be felt strongly during the 1990s. In reality, this is a process of standardization, as only the written form can be codified, and even that can happen only if the development of the language does not require further changes. The media still mention the Romany codification of 1971. However, this event did not happen as the media claim: all that occurred was that the Union of Gypsies – Roma adopted certain standards of written Romany that to this day are used in the Czech and Slovak Republics.

There are many unanswered questions concerning Romany. For example, are the Romany dialects used today truly dialects of the same language, or are we talking about a family of related languages? Which of these languages or dialects is generally the most understandable? Which is the most representative? Which should be selected as the language of negotiation at important international conferences? Into which version of Romany should important international documents be translated?

The idea of a common version of Romany first took concrete form at the 1st International Roma Congress in London in 1971. The delegates agreed that no one dialect of Romany was better than another, and that it was necessary to create a common language that would be used to communicate at the international level, and in which international documents and publications would be written. At the 2nd World Roma Congress in Geneva in 1971, the Finnish linguist Vania de Gila – Kochanowski proposed that the everyday words that various Romany dialects had absorbed from "contact languages" be replaced by Sanskrit words, and that words related to "modern vocabulary and special terminology" be replaced by international words taken from

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English or the romance languages. Although this proposal was supported unanimously by the congress, it was not put into practice.

Based on his field research, carried out especially in the Balkans, the French linguist Marcel Courthiade divided the dialects or languages of the Roma into three groups. His analysis led to the decision to try and standardize Romany. Courthiade's three groups were as follows:

1. The group of mutually understandable Romany dialects spoken by the majority of Roma around the world;
2. The strongly Germanized sinti-manouche dialects, which are difficult for other groups to understand;
3. Roma ethnolects (pidgin versions) of other languages, such as English, Spanish, or Rumanian, which – even though they contain Romany words – are completely incomprehensible to other groups of Roma.

Debate on this topic continued at the meeting of the Philological Commission of the International Roma Union (IRU) at the 4th IRU International Congress in Warsaw in April 1990. The commission presented two documents to the delegates. The first one, entitled *I Romani alfabeta – The Alphabet of the Common Roma Language*, outlined the rules of writing for all dialects of Romany. The document was adopted and was recommended by the general meeting – for a trial period of 10 years – as the common written norm for all Roma dialects. This did not relate to the second and third groups of Courthiade's classification of Roma dialects and languages, i.e. the dialects spoken in Germany, France, and northern Italy, and the ethnolects spoken by the Roma in Spain, England, Scandinavia, Rumania, and Armenia. The aim of the common orthography was to unify the different written forms, which would allow each dialect to read according to its own phonetic rules. The general principle of

the common orthography was: write as everyone else does, speak as you speak.

COMMUNICATION IN ROMANY AT PRESENT

THE STATE LANGUAGE LAW AND THE LAW ON THE USE OF MINORITY LANGUAGES

Just as in other European countries, not all Slovak Roma use Romany as their mother tongue. Since 1989, several books in Romany have been published, some literary works have been translated into Romany, and there have also been attempts to establish bilingual schools for children speaking Romany. The issue of using Romany as an official language or a teaching language is not considered problematic in Slovakia. According to the Slovak Constitution, Slovak citizens "who are members of national minorities have the right to be educated in their own language" (Vašečka, 2000).

On November 15, 1995, however, the Slovak parliament adopted the State Language Law, which limited the use of minority languages. The law did not set rules for the use of minority languages, and according to the Constitutional Court, at least one of its provisions was contrary to the Slovak Constitution. The law was criticized by both Slovak and foreign specialists, and drew an appeal from Slovakia's parliamentary European Integration Committee in 1997 that then-Deputy Prime Minister Jozef Kalman prepare a law on the use of minority languages in contacts with official bodies (Vašečka, 1999). Despite verbal assurances, no steps were taken, and the absence of the law played a large part in Slovakia's disqualification from the EU integration process.

After the 1998 parliamentary elections the situation changed, and the new parliamentary

Committee for Human Rights and Nationalities started preparing the Law on the Use of Minority Languages. The bill was opposed by the Roma community, while the Office of Legal Protection for Ethnic Minorities labeled it anti-constitutional. The original proposal considered the following languages to be minority languages: Hungarian, Ruthenian/Ukrainian, Polish, Czech, and German. The bill treated Romany as the language of an ethnic group, not a "nation", and proposed that Roma students would learn their mother tongue only when their parents requested it. The proposal was also based on the premise that Romany had not yet been codified, and thus could not be used in administrative and legal situations. The authors of the law thus showed their ignorance of the basic legal facts concerning the Roma minority – the Slovak parliament had granted the Roma the status of a national minority in 1991, while Romany had been codified in Slovakia in 1971. The chairman of the parliamentary Committee for Human Rights and Nationalities, Lászlo Nagy, in February 1999 publicly apologized for the ignorance of the MPs who had prepared the bill, and said that a new version of the Law on the Use of Minority Languages would include Romany (*Romano Nevo Ľil*, No. 371 – 377). The Law on the Use of Minority Languages was passed by the parliament after a long and emotional debate in July 1999 (Vašečka, 1999).

According to the current Slovak Deputy Prime Minister for Human Rights, Minorities and Regional Development, Pál Csáky, Romany may be used in accordance with the Law on the Use of Minority Languages. However, Csáky said the language should be used only on those levels and in those areas that are capable of supporting it, and that if no school textbooks and no laws have been published in a given language, that language should not be used in education and in contacts with official bodies.

According to the 1991 population census, there are 57 municipalities in Slovakia (the 2001 census put the figure at 52 municipalities) where the Roma make up more than 20% of the population. According to the law, in such municipalities the Roma may use their mother tongue in communications with public administration organs, and they are entitled to have all municipal signs written in Roma as well as Slovak. After the law came into force, it turned out that the Roma did not really want the Law on the Use of Minority Languages to be applied in practice, for several reasons: first, they were largely ignorant of the law; second, they did not see why they needed such a regulation; and third, many of them did not know Romany, especially in its written form. Apart from the unreadiness of the Roma to use the law in practice, the majority population was also unprepared for official communication in Romany. The state administration and municipal governments should thus start preparing for the moment when the Roma become aware of their rights and nationality, and start to demand that the Law on the Use of Minority Languages be applied in their daily lives (Vašečka, 2000).

THE EUROPEAN CHARTER OF REGIONAL OR MINORITY LANGUAGES

Slovakia signed the *European Charter of Regional or Minority Languages* on February 20, 2001. The Charter is the most far-ranging general contract governing the protection and use of the languages of national (ethnic) minorities in education, justice, state and public administration, media, culture, economic and social life, and cross-border cooperation. The charter was ratified by the Slovak parliament at the beginning of July 2001. Romany was among the nine languages selected by Slovakia in accordance with the Charter. Unlike in Hungary, which ratified the Charter for all

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minority languages except Romany, Slovakia pledged to fulfill the international agreement, even though its application was bound to cause serious problems for the Slovak state administration. This much at least could have been predicted from the country's first experiences with the Minority Languages Law passed in July 1999 (Vašečka, 2000).

The school system, for one, was not prepared for the use of Romany in education, and experts debated the sense of taking such a step. It is expected at this point that Romany will be used more as a taught language, and not as a language of instruction. It seems that legislation has outpaced the national emancipation of the Roma. The existence of such rights allows the Roma to develop their own identity; on the other hand, however, it creates grounds for conflicts between the Roma and the state administration and municipal governments (Vašečka, 2000).

Besides the constitutional right to use Romany in education, the use of Romany in schools is also encouraged by the positive results achieved by very young children who have the chance to study in two languages. On the other hand, the results of research by the Slovak Statistics Office in 1994, entitled "The Roma in 1994", fuelled a serious argument against using Romany in education. This is to date the only research in Slovakia that deals systematically with the issue of Roma ethnicity and self perception. Its main finding was that "the Roma identity" had become an internal matter of the Roma, and that from the outside it appeared that the Roma sought to assimilate into mainstream society (Vašečka, 1999). The opinions of the Roma on the use of their own language in education and cultural contacts differed, but tended to be negative. According to the aforementioned research, only 11% of Roma respondents believed that all subjects in elementary school should be taught in Ro-

many, while 33% thought that only some subjects should be taught in Romany, and 45% wanted no subject to be taught in Romany. The opinions of the Roma on the use of Romany in secondary schools and universities were even more negative. Although the research was criticized by Roma issues experts for having selected the respondents inappropriately, it remains the only research dealing with the issue. The Roma community and Slovak lawmakers should take an interest in repeating the research (Vašečka, 1999; see the chapter *Educational Attitudes and Aspirations of the Roma* in this book).

THE RECODIFICATION OF ROMANY

Based on a government resolution from 2001, the Office of the Slovak Government Plenipotentiary for the Roma Community was tasked with preparing a report called *Information on the State of Preparations for the Recodification of Romany*. The recodification itself was one of the priorities set by the Plenipotentiary Office in 2001. Since then a language committee for the recodification of Romany has been established, supervised by the Romany Culture Department of Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra. The language committee concluded that the basis for the recodification should be the Eastern Slovak Romany dialect. In order to formally recodify Romany, the rules of Romany grammar and a separate Romany-Slovak dictionary have to be issued. The Romany Culture Department is considering establishing a special department for researching the language.

CONCLUSION

Romany ranks among the most important elements of Roma consciousness. It belongs

to the group of Indo-European languages. Despite the Romany codification carried out in 1971 by the language group of the Union of Gypsies – Roma, Slovakia needs a recodification. This is due, among other reasons, to the fact that most research and academic texts were published in Roma and Czech versions, as linguists dealing with Romany worked mostly in the Czech half of the Czechoslovak federation before 1989.

Differentiating between the concepts "codification of written Romany" and "standardization of the language" must start. The rules of orthography may be set by an agreement or convention, and although they change frequently, they can be made binding for a given period of time. It is not possible, however, to codify a language. Standardization, on the other hand, is the process of spontaneous development of a language, which can be achieved through extensive communication in practice. The formal act of declaring Romany a codified language should take place under the auspices of the Office of the Slovak Government Representative for Solving the Problems of the Roma Minority.

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MILAN KOVÁČ and MILAN JURÍK

THE RELIGIOUS LIFE OF THE ROMA AND THE ACTIVITIES OF THE CHURCH IN RELATION TO THE ROMA

(**Milan Kováč** wrote parts 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, while **Milan Jurík** wrote parts 6 and 7)

Summary: This chapter surveys the spiritual and religious life of the Roma, and describes Roma religious attitudes. It analyses the notions of God and sanctity, and the Roma's understanding of these concepts. It examines Roma attitudes towards religion within the context of their identity. It summarizes the activities of individual churches and religious organizations among the Roma in Slovakia, and notes the great, but hitherto unused influence that the church and religion could have on the Roma. It ends by assessing the influence of the missionary and pastoral work that has been done by religious organizations.

Key words: Roma religious life, church, religious organization, confession, cult, sacrament, eschatology, missionary work, pastoral care, diocese, parish, ecclesiastical body, ecclesiastical community, denomination.

INTRODUCTION

The religious life of the Roma is a relatively new subject of research that received little attention before 1990. As it turns out, the marginalization of Roma culture extended also to the spiritual life of the Roma, the official goal being the complete assimilation of the minority. When in 1991 the Roma were granted official minority status (Mann, 2000), attitudes towards their language, culture, and religious life began to change. Churches and religious organizations were the first to react to the new situation. The evangelization activities of both large churches and smaller domestic and foreign religious organizations began to focus on the Roma, seeing an opportunity to acquire new members. The Roma, whose religious life was often lax or entirely absent, became a suitable target for massive missionary activity.

Academic study of the Roma's spiritual and religious life lagged far behind these practical activities by the churches. Apart from the sporadic activities of several researchers, a breakthrough in this field did not come until a common project by the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology at Comenius University, and the Ethnology Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, conducted from 2001 to 2002 under the name *Religiousness of Slovak Romanies*. Some 12 scientists participated in the project, whose main goal was systematic field research of Roma settlements that followed different faiths across Slovakia. The results of this research form the basis of all parts of the following chapter that deal with "religionistic" or ethnic views of the religious life of the Roma.[1] The second part of the chapter will deal with the responses to the issue by individual churches and religious organizations.

FACETS OF
ROMA RELIGIOUS LIFE

In Slovakia, the majority of the population claims the Catholic religion, and this preference is reflected in the Roma population as well. The assumption that the broad range of saints, the greater ostentation and the rich symbolism of Roman Catholicism were the main reason that the Roma preferred this confession, however, proved to be wrong. Roma attend church very rarely, and know and worship almost no saints. The fact that most Roma prefer Roman Catholicism is thus probably due to the Roma's assuming the external characteristics of the majority population. It was not established whether this denomination is particularly close to the Roma mentality. Finally, the Roma frequently only declare that they are Catholic, while in reality they do not live an active religious life, and do not know even the basic principles of the religion. Especially for this reason, many missionary groups of various denominations are gaining ground in Roma communities that are ostensibly Catholic. What is happening is not conversion from a former faith to a new one, but evangelization, in which the Roma without religion become religious. This is the view not only of the missionaries, but also of the Roma themselves. The success of the missionaries among the Roma is usually not connected with the denomination that comes to the Roma settlement, but with the interest and care the missionaries devote to the Roma.

MULTILEVEL FAITH

For these reasons in particular, the Roma easily modify or completely change their faith according to the current efforts of the new missionaries. As the pastor of the Christian Community church in Prešov, Gabriel Minárik, noted: "It is really not difficult to establish a group in a Roma settlement. Two or three healings, and then a manifestation of the power of God, are enough to grab their attention. It is more difficult to keep them with God," (Minárik, 2002) Roma "converts" thus often do not give up their original (also new, but at least earlier) confession completely. And so a multilevel form of faith occurs with the Roma, a virtually unknown phenomenon in the majority population. Three examples suffice to demonstrate this process.

The Roma in the municipality of Rankovce (in Košice-environs district in east Slovakia) were originally Catholic, which was another way of saying they were religiously passive. At the same time, there was an Evangelist church in Rankovce, and the Roma did not want to travel to another parish. After the 1989 revolution, one of them converted to the Seventh Day Adventists faith, and started an active mission among his fellow-citizens. Around 1993, many converted to the Adventists. A year later, however, some converted to the Evangelists of the Augsburg Confession, as the presence of the pastorate in their municipality permitted a more active (and convenient) religious life. Thus, practically every current Evangelist in Rankovce started as a Catholic, then became an Adventist, and finally converted to Evangelism. This explains the chaos in the forms of christening in individual families, as well as in the sacraments and other aspects of local Roma religion. Many Roma do not even know whether they should go to church on Saturday or on Sunday, so just to be sure they go to church on both days. As one local Roma said: "We learned both [faiths], so we take a piece of each." (Mináč, 2002)

A similar phenomenon was observed in the municipality of Bôrka (Rožňava district in east-central Slovakia), with the difference that the new missionary activities of the last

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decade did not reach the area. However, the original division of the local population between Calvinists and Catholics is enough to sow confusion, in which climate the Catholics attend the Calvinist church, and the Calvinists to the Catholic.[2]

In the municipality of Plavecký Štvrtok (Malacky region in west Slovakia), the Roma went through a complex change in their faiths only recently. The original belief background here was passive Catholicism. After the revolution, the Jehovah's Witnesses did some successful missionary work, and many Roma converted. In the mid-1990s, however, the same Roma converted "en masse" to one of the communities in the Pentecostal movement – the Word of Life. Paradoxically, these Roma visit the Christian Community church in Bratislava to this day. Their original confession under the guidance of the Word of Life missionaries inspired a group that had not originally converted to the Jehovah's Witnesses, but had remained passive Catholics. Thus, despite the fact that these two faiths are branches of the Pentecostal movement, the relationship between the supporters of the Christian Community and the Word of Life in the municipality is an antagonistic one. To add to the chaos, the dissenters from the Word of Life, together with the passive Catholics, call the religious converts "Baptists" (and vice versa), which they consider a pejorative religious synonym for "Satanist" (Podolinská, 2002). It is not necessary to add that this multilevel faith among the uneducated Roma population has blurred their understanding of the different notions and traditions of individual denominations.

THE NOTION OF GOD,
PRIVATE RITUALS, AND CULTS

The Roma notion of God – "O Del" – has a slightly different connotation than the major-ity population concept, more or less regardless of their denomination. First of all, the concept of the Holy Trinity is usually whittled down to God the Father and God the Son, occasionally complemented by a third party, the Virgin Mary. God the Father alone is perceived as the supreme authority, and is similar to the genealogical ancestor of the clan/humankind. The author personally encountered people who said that God (the Father) was their direct ancestor, three generations removed (Kovács, 2002). Jesus Christ (who is mostly regarded as a judge) and the Virgin Mary enjoy almost the same extent of worship. With the Roma, however, the Virgin Mary is not a cult figure to the same extent as Jesus Christ or God the Father, due probably to the strongly patriarchal way of thinking among the Roma. Almost no other saints are cultivated; the Roma tend to prefer a single universal authority over lower specialized patrons.

Church attendance is a special issue with the Roma, as they generally go there very rarely. The more religious Roma (excluding the eager converts) go to church from two to four times a year, on major holidays. Many, however, do not go to church at all. When the authors investigated the reasons, we found two major ones. The first is that village churches are important social meeting and communication places for the majority population, which is off-putting for the Roma, who feel ill at ease in such an environment. The second reason is that in church they are bound by rituals and schedules – the sermon of the priest, the confession, and the overall pressure of institutional church machinery. All of this is foreign to their free way of thinking, and they subconsciously avoid it.

On the other hand, the Roma visibly have a strong religious need and a genuine, authentic devoutness. This need is not satisfied in church, as it is with the majority population,

but mostly in private homes. The typical Roma dwelling is full of various icons, tapestries with religious images, statues, pendants, amulets, and so on. These objects, especially the pictures of Jesus Christ, are usually concentrated in one corner or on one wall of a room that represents a sacred zone within the dwelling. This is the place the Roma often pray, meditate, or talk to God. Most Roma that the authors asked about the issue gave the following reason: "God is everywhere." For this reason, too, they do not feel the need to go to mass and other ceremonies. "The House of God" for a Roma is often his own house. The Roma not only prefer to worship God in their own dwellings, but also consider it a superior demonstration of devoutness to going to church. They say: "God must be with us everywhere, with every step we take. We want him to live with us, we see him every single minute, every second." (Kovács, 2002) They are proud of the fact that they live their lives permanently "in front of God", thanks to their holy pictures.

Of the sacraments, christening is the most important for the Roma, and few of them are not christened. Most Roma who are active in minority churches and religious organizations today were originally christened as Catholics. Besides christenings, funerals are the only other religious event that is highly important in Roma communities. In many places, the traditional "sitting around the dead" has been preserved, although the form of the funeral itself usually depends entirely on the local church.

Weddings enjoy a special position as well, although even in Catholic Roma communities they are not perceived as a sacrament. The wedding and wedding ceremony are more a matter of private religiosity with the Roma, being carried out at home, without a priest, the central ritual being the oath of devotion. This promise is given in front of a holy image, by which the man and the woman solemnly swear. The partners promise mutual fidelity, while the act itself often includes sanctions (curses) that take effect if the promise is broken (Kovács, 2002). Bonds like this are the most frequent form of wedding among the Roma, despite the fact that for state authorities, couples thus wed are still officially unmarried, as they did not use any of the permitted forms of wedding (i.e. at a local authority or in a church). The Roma, on the other hand, regard such weddings as more binding because they are concluded before God and sworn with oaths bearing sanctions.

ESCHATOLOGY AND
THE SANCTION OF GOD

To understand the religious behavior of the Roma, one must understand their eschatological ideas. Eschatology – ideas of the afterlife – is very important especially from the viewpoint of regulating behavior through permanent references to what might happen (good or bad) after one dies, according to the quality of the life one lived. According to our research, the Roma's eschatological ideas differ slightly from those of the majority population. Almost all Roma, for instance, believe in "muls" – dead people who come back to harm living relatives (see Šebková, 2001). More importantly, the Roma generally assume that they will all go to heaven. The saying "Gypsies go to heaven" is remarkably widespread in all settlements across the country. The Roma say that they are "the good people", even if "the gadžos" (whites) often do not think so. In other words, the Roma set great store by their own morals and "good heart", which are supposed to be guarantees that after death they do not suffer punishment, but go directly to paradise.

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The idea of paradise or heaven differs as well. According to our findings, most Roma do not see the afterworld as particularly idyllic, but as a world similar or almost identical to earth. People even have to work there, although for "an appropriate reward". The Roma do the same there as they do here on Earth. The burial equipment the Roma use is obviously connected to these ideas. In many places, people put everyday objects into the coffin, food and canned food with can openers, cigarettes, alcohol, and especially the favorite objects of the dead person. They never forget to add some money, one of the explanations being: "so he can buy something there". The transition from the earth-life to the afterlife is thus a fluid one, for all that paradise resembles our world perhaps a bit too much. According to several informants, heaven is supposed to be a bit better. Some think that there is plenty to eat and drink there, or that there is music is playing all the time. It is particularly interesting that some Roma say that the afterlife is an improvement on the earth-life because there is "no discrimination" there. In sum, for the Roma the afterlife is rather a matter of course than a reward, which also flows from their ideas of life after death as a continuation of life on earth.

Nevertheless, a parallel idea of hell and after-death retribution for extremely wicked deeds does exist among the Roma. They usually imagine hell as boiling black pitch into which sinners are cast to suffer. Those Roma who commit the worst sins, such as murder or breaking a holy oath, go to hell. However, this is not necessarily the only punishment for such deeds. The Roma believe that God's punishment can be suffered during life on earth as well. For this reason, serious illnesses and family disasters are often interpreted as God's punishment for serious sins, usually assigned without ceremony to the suffering person or the members of his/her family. These sinners are not punished in hell after their death. Those who suffer for their sins during their lives go to heaven or purgatory. Thus, the only people who go to hell are serious sinners who did not pay for their deeds during their earth-lives. The punisher can be a devil called "O Beng", whom the Roma fear very much. They do not perceive him as a "seducer to sin", but rather as a separate personification of evil that comes as a punishment for sins and infractions against God's order.

Speaking of sin, the Roma follow a modified version of the Christian Ten Commandments. Only the commandments "Thou shalt not steal" and "Thou shalt not commit adultery" are modified. Theft is tolerated, or, as the Roma told us: "God tolerates theft if it was done out of hunger or need". Adultery comes from "the nature of the people", and thus God does not condemn it; it is also often justified as an act of love, which comes from God, and makes it impossible for God to condemn it. Despite these exceptions, the Roma attitude towards venal sins is not lax at all. On the contrary, they tend to perceive such sins not just as a threat to the moral code, but also as violations of the sacred code ordained by God (see Komorovský, 1995). In the end, the Roma have more respect for divine punishment than secular.

NEW RELIGION AND ATHEISM

A frequent question connected with the religious life of the Roma is the criteria according to which we define the Roma as religious. Very often, no external characteristics of religious life can be found in the settlements. Going to church, praying, and other usual forms of devotion are absent. Life seems reduced to its bare essentials, corresponding to Štampach's theory of "practical atheism" (Štampach, 2001). Only

a certain network of superstitions and curses can be observed that have certain transcendental roots.

But are the Roma really atheists? We think not. First, most of the Roma are christened, although they do not live an active religious life. It is highly unlikely that even as adults the Roma would forego christening, which is seen in their christening of their children. It is far more important to note that atheism generally assumes a certain active non-religious attitude. However, among the Roma one finds only the absence of a religious attitude, rather than a conscious or active non religious attitude. In the third case, the superstitious ideas, curses and oaths one finds among the Roma implicitly include the idea of the sanction of God and the transcendent roots of being. However crude and rustic these ideas seem, we can still see in them some vulgarized features of folk Christianity (for more on folk religion vs. official religion see Bělka and Kováč, 1999).

Roma in this spiritual state tend to be far more accepting of missionary activities than Roma with an established religious life. For this reason in particular, all missionary activities by churches in this direction have been successful over the last decade. However, it must be emphasized that in most cases they are not starting from scratch. Roma folk devoutness is deeply individual, family, or private, and is at the same time neutral. Roma who start to live an active religious life after a missionary visit are eager believers. In these cases, we encountered phenomena such as daily, lively, and spontaneous Bible discussions in settlements, creative scenes with religious topics, spontaneous composition of religious songs in Romany, and so on. We needn't add that such activities (not organized but resulting from activities within the community) are very rare in the majority population.

Modern times, however, are also ushering in completely contradictory phenomena. Many Roma refuse to live in the traditional way, and see departure for the anonymous environment of urban housing estates as the only way to escape the strict social bonds of home, where unfortunately the standard of living is often very poor. Probably the most anonymous of such housing estates is the Petržalka suburb of Bratislava. Here, researchers discovered a high concentration of Roma who had completely given up their original bonds on behalf of their vision of a new life.[3] As we later observed, traditional forms of religion represented an inseparable part of the bonds they had deliberately broken, which is why the members of the new, segmented, and anonymous Roma community in Petržalka ended up with atheism. Roma who belong to various internal Roma ethnic groups, and who grow up in a strict religious environment at home, are unable to create new religious bonds in their new environment. Roma atheism is thus becoming increasingly common for the scattered Roma populations of big towns.

If we look at the private religiousness of individual Roma families on the one hand, and socialization within the community as a prerequisite for maintaining this religiousness on the other, we come to a seeming paradox. If Roma religiosity is an individual matter, it should not cease to exist in the anonymous, every-man-for-himself environment of urban housing estates. The explanation for why it does, lies in the fact that practicing a private religiosity is only possible in the context of a rich social life and local bonds that form the necessary impulse for the religiosity.

ETHNICITY, CONFESSION, AND IDENTITY

A key issue that is assuming special importance in the consolidation of the Roma iden-

tity is the extent to which the ethnic identity of the Roma overlaps with their confessional identity (i.e. what religious denomination they follow). The previous section on multilevel faith foretold that the answer would be difficult to find. First, we have to realize that a huge problem lies with ethnic identity, as most Roma identify themselves as Slovak. They reason that as they were born in Slovakia and have a Slovak identity card, they are therefore Slovak. Clearly, they connect ethnicity to citizenship in a geographically defined state. "They told us we came from India, so let them give us Indian passports, and we will live in India and be Indians. But now we are Slovaks; the Roma do not have a country of their own." This primary "Slovak" self-identification is followed by identification with "being Roma", which is perceived more as a cultural trait than an ethnic category. Religious identity is in third place.

In the interests of simplicity, we might describe the self-identification process more or less the way Anna Botošová did in her research: "First I am the son of my father and a member of my family, then a member of my settlement or municipality; then I am Slovak, and then Roma (Botošová, 2002), and finally I am a Catholic." In other words, ethnic identity casts a long shadow over confessional identity. Moreover, the latter has undergone dynamic changes recently, which for most Roma means that confessional identity is not a force for stability. The fact that the Roma frequently have various faiths makes the dual Slovak – Roma identity even more complicated. Not to mention the complications in the Slovak south, where Attila Kovács observed that after the threefold Hungarian – Slovak – Roma identity, individuals still had to deal with a dual Calvinist – Catholic confessional identity.[4]

On the other hand, it must be noted that this chaos causes greater problems for the major-ity population than for the Roma themselves. We are used to thinking in definite categories, whereas in real life, these categories often overlap or merge. There are also Roma locations where religious identity is far more important than elsewhere. For instance, the Salesian mission in Poštárka near Bardejov (northeast Slovakia) managed to make self identification as Roman Catholics more important for the local Roma than their ethnic classifications. These Roma claim to be members of the majority population according to their faith, and keep their distance from the nearest Roma settlement in Zborov, where no mission was performed and religious life is very passive (Djurišičová, 2002). The Roma from Poštárka feel more Catholic than Roma, and regard the surrounding Roma in particular as "the others".

In spite of this complexity, religious self-identification has great potential, as can be seen especially in places with active missions. Regardless of which confession leads the mission, if it is conducted properly, it does not suppress the Roma identity but confirms it, which is connected with overall self-determination and a higher quality of life.

EVALUATION OF ROMA RELIGIOUSNESS

In evaluating the religious life of the Roma, we must bear in mind two completely different aspects. The first is the religiously passive communities that accepted the religion of the majority population long ago. Here, traditional forms of ritual and faith prevail, of the types that eschew external displays. This kind of religion is strongly private, and takes place in Roma dwellings within families, and within very tight social bonds. A system of sanctions based on God's holy order dominates here, and to a great extent determines the behavior of the community. Here, the influence of reli-

gious institutions is negligible. This "implicit" faith is important for the life of the community, although in places where faith weakens, space is created for the activities of various missionary organizations.

And here we come to the second aspect of Roma religious life – the religious fervor of those Roma who have recently been converted or religiously activated. Communities that have been religiously activated are characterized by eagerness, with members of the community often becoming missionaries. All members live very spontaneous and active religious lives, showing great interest in the practical use of individual articles of the new religion in their personal lives. On the other hand, this interest is often shaped by the social environment, the personality of the preacher, or other external factors that can change over time. The faith of the Roma often changes as well, and turns towards a new mission or new preachers in the neighborhood. The result is often a multilevel faith, as the Roma rarely disavow their original confession completely, and tend to lay one over another. For this reason, almost all the Roma who recently became religiously active have undergone one or more conversions during the last decade. This fact, however, does not impair the sincerity of their passion for the new religion.

In general, religiosity is one of the most important parts of the Roma's personal and social lives. If we approach this issue carefully, we could gain a strong tool for transforming not only the spiritual but also the social life of Roma communities.

WORK OF CHURCHES AND RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS WITH THE ROMA

The primary goal of Christian churches is to offer a message about God and redemption to people in a comprehensible manner (missionary work), and to take care of people in the religious community (pastoral work). People who accept this missionary message through their faith find that a new philosophy of life is formed, and that their values, moral standards, and principles change, resulting in a change in their lives and actions.

In the discussion below, the authors disregarded the Jewish Federation in Slovakia, the Czechoslovak Hussite Church, and the Christian Union in Slovakia, as none of these have done much work with the Roma. Churches and religious organizations are not ranked according to their position in Slovak society, but according to the amount of work they do with the Roma.

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC AND GREEK CATHOLIC CHURCH

The Roman Catholic Church reacted to the 1989 changes relatively quickly. As early as 1990, members of the pastoral group of the Roman and Greek Catholic churches began preparing to work with the Roma on the basis of their own experience. The concept was to respect the culture of the Roma ethnic group, and to assign each diocese a priest, entrusted with the care of the Roma.[5] This requirement, however, has not yet been met, as just half of the dioceses in Slovakia have a priest responsible for ministering to the Roma (mainly in eastern and central Slovakia).

In 1993, a Committee for Ministering to the Roma was established at the Conference of Bishops of Slovakia (later renamed the Council for Ministering to the Roma), led by the assistant bishop of the archdiocese of Košice, Monsignor Bernard Bober. The task of the Committee was to map out the situation of the Roma, determine how many of them

there were in individual deaneries, and evaluate the possibilities of pastoral work. The commission also organized the publishing of literature used in catechization (instruction by question and answer) and missionary and pastoral work. In 1995 a primer of religious education, called *Deloreske čhave* (God's Children) was published, while in 1997 a biography was issued of the first blessed Roma, Zefyrín Jimenéz Mallo[6] – *Un vero kalň* (The Blessed Roma, 1993) – as well as a Romany-Slovak version of the *Bible for Children* (1998).

Since 1993, annual Slovak-wide Roma pilgrimages have taken place in the village of Gaboltov (Bardejov district in northeast Slovakia) every August, attended by foreign pilgrims as well. The pilgrimages are organized by the Council for Ministering to the Roma, along with the Salesians and the Roma faithful. Besides the Way of the Cross and traditional services, the pilgrimage also includes performances by Roma music and theatre ensembles (e.g. from the municipalities of Varhaňovce, Toporec, Štrba, Bardejov, Hanušovce) and presentations of Roma handcrafts. This encourages the Roma in their spiritual life and strengthens their identity.

In emphasizing the need to help the Roma, the Iustitia et Pax (Justice and Peace) Commission at the Conference of Bishops of Slovakia has been equally active. The secretary of the Commission, Jozef Mikloško, appealed to Christian entrepreneurs and labor bureaus to create more jobs for Roma. He also appealed to Roma parents to support their children's education, arguing that without education they would be lost (www.rcc.sk).

In 2001, the Conference of Bishops of Slovakia published the *Pastoral and Evangelization Plan 2001 – 2006*, mapping the situation in all spheres of religious work, defining goals, and making concrete suggestions. In the chapter on the Roma, it noted that the religious behavior of the Roma is hard to understand for the majority population, and thus the church has only sporadically succeeded in entering this environment with effective evangelization. The Conference thus advised that more be learned about Roma culture, that cooperation between the parishes and the Commission for Ministering to the Roma be improved, that lay people be involved in missionary work, and that the skills of priests in working with the Roma be increased.

Although the need to coordinate the work of the Council for Ministering to the Roma at the Conference of Bishops of Slovakia is beyond dispute, especially on countrywide projects and support for local projects, the main point of the work is ministry activities conducted locally in individual parishes (Janto, 2000, p. 61 – 63).

Since the mid-1970s, a nun of Roma origin, sister Atanázia Holubová, has worked with the Roma in Bardejov. Intense ministry work here started in 1990 after the Roman Catholic Congregation of Salesians arrived. The Salesians, led by Don Peter Bešenyi, started working with Roma children in their center in Bardejov. Later they acquired a "house of culture" (like a community center) for their activities that is located directly in the Poštárka Roma housing estate; they rebuilt it into a Roma ministry center. At a ceremony on August 15, 1998, attended by Bishop Bernard Bober, the center was dedicated to the blessed Roma Zefyrín Jiménez Mallo. The Salesians extended their work to almost all age categories. In the ministry center they regularly celebrate masses at which the Roma meet the non-Roma, which contributes to a better social atmosphere in the town (Janto, 2000, p. 62 – 63).

EVANGELICAL CHURCH OF THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION

The Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession (ECAV) started work with the Roma before 1989 thanks to several priests who met the Roma daily and were not afraid to perform missionary work. In Slavošovce (Rožňava district in southeast Slovakia), for instance, where pastor Miroslav Hvožďara worked, the Roma were actively involved in parish activities. They had a choir, let their children be christened and married in church, had regular meetings for children, and the pastor was even invited to visit families and attend family celebrations.

After 1989, coordination of work with the Roma was taken over by the ECAV Committee for External Missions, led by Igor Mišina, the pastor in Rankovce (Košice-environs district; Mišina is today the Bishop of the eastern district). In summer 1996, an American pastor of Roma origin, Larry C. Merino, who comes from a family of nomadic Roma, visited the evangelical Roma at the invitation of the ECAV Evangelization Center for Mass Media. During his travels around Slovakia he organized successful evangelization sessions for Roma. Merino visited Slovakia two more times: in November 1996 and summer 1997. He still cooperates with ECAV.

In 1997, the priest-missionary Hans Martin Dern from Germany came to Slavošovce. From the outset he was very active in missionary and ministering work with the Roma. All activities organized by the church body are common, with both Roma and non-Roma actively involved. Together with the Roma, the priest-missionary created a group of Roma leaders/evangelists with whom he also visits other locations and performs missionary work, with the aim of inspiring and strengthening the faith of the Roma.

THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN SLOVAKIA

The Orthodox Church in Slovakia participates in missionary and pastoral work with the Roma, particularly through the activities of the spiritual administrators of the Orthodox communities in the eparchies (Orthodox dioceses) of Prešov and Michalovce in eastern Slovakia. In 2000, the Orthodox Academy in Michalovce[7] prepared a project to help ecclesiastical communities identify Roma candidates who, after an active catechetic preparation, could coordinate the work of church communities. In August 2002, the Orthodox Academy in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration in Slovakia (IOM) opened the Community Center of the Orthodox Academy. According to Orthodox Academy President Bohumil Vopršálek, the main work of the new center should be "regular meetings with children and young people from the socially weaker classes, especially the Roma". They should mainly be concerned with education, such as tutoring elementary school children, helping parents select a secondary school, and informing people of the chances of finding a job in a given region with a given type of education. The center also includes leisure activities (Hušová, 2002).

The Saint Nikolai children's home in Medzilaborce, the biggest of its kind in Slovakia, takes care of juvenile Roma mothers with children. The children's home was established and is run by the Philanthropy of the Orthodox Church in Slovakia.

THE REFORMED CHRISTIAN CHURCH

The Reformed Christian Church in Slovakia does missionary work mainly among children and youth in southern Slovakia. In in-

dividual ecclesiastical bodies, local volunteers and activists hold club and leisure activities.

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH IN SLOVAKIA

The local ecclesiastical bodies of the United Methodist Church do missionary and pastoral work among the Roma according to the need and their abilities. In Slavkovce, the United Methodist Church has a chapel standing right next to the Roma settlement. Since the mid-1990s, two members of the body have devoted their time to local Roma, with the chapel serving as a missionary house. The church also works with the Roma in Michalovce and Lastomír (eastern Slovakia), and Trnava, Partizánske and Sereď (western Slovakia).

THE UNITED BRETHREN OF BAPTISTS IN SLOVAKIA

The United Brethren of Baptists does missionary work with children and young people in particular, mainly in club or evangelization meetings. The ecclesiastical body of the United Brethren of Baptists in Banská Bystrica has worked since 1995 in several Roma settlements near Banská Bystrica in central Slovakia.

BRETHREN CHURCH

Since 1994, the Community of the Brethren Church in Košice has worked with Roma street children from socially weaker and less adaptable classes. Community volunteers organize club activities twice a week, in which about 100 children participate. In the first part of the club session, the activists help the children with school duties and home-work, and try to help them with their personal problems. In the second part, they sing songs and through various activities learn the message of the Bible. At the end, the children get a simple meal – bread and butter and tea. In the summer the children join a one-week Bible study camp.

APOSTOLIC CHURCH IN SLOVAKIA

The Apostolic Church in Slovakia performs missionary work among the Roma mainly through evangelization sessions and private Bible study groups. Members of the Apostolic Church work with children in the eastern and northern Slovakia municipalities of Vranov nad Topľou, Soľ, Bystré, Rudlov, Košice, Štrba, Bánovce nad Bebravou and Rožňava.

SEVENTH DAY ADVENTISTS

In 1998, several volunteers from the Seventh Day Adventists Church in Slovakia started working with Roma children in Žiar nad Hronom in central Slovakia. In voluntary club activities within the program *Filip's Friends*, they gradually taught the children the basics of the faith, as well as the basic rules of hygiene and a healthy lifestyle. Although they started working with just a couple of children, more children and even adults joined them later. The church thus extended its activities and added Bible classes for adults and the following courses for entire Roma families: cheap and healthy cooking, and family budgeting and saving. The Roma also take part in the activities of the humanitarian wing of the church, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), which is known for its worldwide humanitarian aid to people afflicted by natural disasters, as well as for its help in institutional development.

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

The Jehovah's Witnesses in their missionary work often focus on Roma communities, where they are particularly successful. Their success is due mainly to their sophisticated system of organized visits and free Bible study sessions at home, in which most of the organization's members participate. They personally visit almost every individual in the community, providing them with free color magazines (*Watchtower, Awake!*), which in many cases represent the only literature in Roma households. Roma from neglected regions are often impressed by the idea of a new world (without illness, pain, suffering, or poverty – the exact opposite of their current situation) that is supposed to arrive soon (*What Does God Require of Us?*, 1996). This new world is often depicted in the missionary magazines, which seems to be the best way to communicate these ideas to the Roma.

Members of the Jehovah's Witnesses must promise to live an exemplary life after their christening, voluntarily respecting the relatively strict rules of the religious organization. In this way they gradually gain a reputation as honest, polite, and diligent people. The Jehovah's Witnesses also help the Roma converts, who thus become their representatives. In regions with a higher concentration of Roma Jehovah's Witnesses, we see a decline in some negative behavior and phenomena (e.g. theft, illiteracy, abuse of welfare benefits, voluntary unemployment). On the other hand, in becoming members of the organization, the Roma converts almost completely lose their original Roma identity. The Jehovah's Witnesses in Slovakia have 165 bodies and work in almost all of areas of the country. Places with the highest proportion of Roma Jehovah's Witnesses include Ulič (Humenné district in eastern Slovakia), Košice, Fiľakovo (south-central Slovakia), Rož-ňava and Plešivec (Rožňava district in the southeast).

OTHER CHRISTIAN CHURCHES AND DENOMINATIONS

The Old Catholic Church in Slovakia, with only four ecclesiastical communities (Bratislava, Nitra, Žilina, Košice), is trying to start a leisure activity program focused on Roma youth.

After 1990, in almost every district town, groups of people supported from abroad started to establish communities of the Pentecostal Movement – the Word of Life International and the Christian Community. These denominations started intense missionary work that also targeted the Roma. Their missionary work was relatively effective, and the relatively dynamic communities of converts react very flexibly to the need to work with the Roma, not only in education but also in direct practical help for Roma communities.

EFFECTS OF THE MISSIONARY AND PASTORAL WORK OF CHURCHES AND RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS ON THE ROMA

Individual churches were relatively unprepared to launch missionary and pastoral work with the Roma after 1989, a state that has lasted until today. Most churches lack a systematic approach to working with the Roma ethnic group that would show a solid grasp of the initial situation, define some sensible goals, and make concrete recommendations.[8] In seminaries and theological schools, little or no attention is paid to the special requirements of ministering to the Roma, with the result that priests and lay activists frequently misunderstand Roma religious life. The church press is limited to information on the

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activities of Roma missions, and academic theological periodicals also lack research on the nature of Roma religiosity. Despite these negative circumstances, many parishes and church bodies perform effective missionary and pastoral work among the Roma. About 10% of the Roma in each location where extensive missionary and pastoral work is performed take an active part in religious life (regular visiting church services, Bible classes, prayer meetings, choirs, pilgrimages). The rest of the Roma usually claim to be religious, and occasionally participate in church activities (Janto, 2000, p. 72).

The active religious life of all churches and religious organizations is leading to positive, qualitative change. In adopting a new meaning of life, people's attitude towards education and work gradually change as well. Family relationships, ties between husband and wife, and relationships to other people also improve. Common participation in church services and other events, as well as the relationship with the majority population, are reducing ethnic tensions. Sometimes people even quit smoking or drinking alcohol. By taking part in pilgrimages, trips and other events, the participants overcome their social isolation and broaden their horizons.[9]

Missionary and pastoral work, which the churches are constantly trying to improve, may in future gradually bring positive results in activating and involving more Roma in religious life, in the everyday life of local religious communities, and through them also in the local community.

CONCLUSION

After studying the problem through fieldwork, the authors came to believe that Roma religiosity is being unjustly neglected and underestimated, not only by churches and religious organizations, but also by the state, lower elected governments, and the third sector. Here are some of the reasons for this situation, and some possible ways out.

First of all, churches and religious organizations are underestimating the need to specially prepare priests for working in Roma communities. We very often encountered cases when the local pastor ignored the Roma or did not understand their specific needs. Pastors often do not understand the Roma language or the specifics of their religious life, even in locations where the Roma represent the majority. The misunderstandings that arise often become an obstacle not just to the Roma attending church, but also to a greater degree in the socialization of local communities. Priests and preachers do not undergo the needed preparation, and judge the entire issue from the lay viewpoint of the majority population. One solution might be to increase the number of Roma priests, as there are few at the moment. Above all, however, we need a conceptual approach to ministering to the Roma from individual churches and religious organizations. Few churches take a thorough and integrated approach to pastoral work that would increase the educational, social and cultural level of the Roma communities they work in.

The state, lower elected governments, and the third sector are underestimating the potential contained in the work that is being done with the Roma by churches and religious organizations. If programs were created that emphasize cooperation between secular and religious bodies, social programs could be launched efficiently, the Roma identity could be strengthened, and the Roma culture and language could be developed in individual locations. Such cooperation could result in the launch of education programs for both adults and children. Given that the Roma distrust state institutions, these pro-

grams of socialization, employment, and education could be far more acceptable to them if promoted in close cooperation with local religious personalities that the Roma trust. The deep religiosity of the Roma could turn out to be one of the key factors in changing the problematic aspects of their social lives.

ENDNOTES

1. The results of the project were published under the title: *Boh všetko vidí. Duchovný svet Rómov na Slovensku* [God Sees Everything: The Spiritual Life of the Roma in Slovakia] (2002), including reports by those project participants to which the author refers below.
2. Information from a personal interview. See Kovács, 2002.
3. Information from research done in 2002 by Rastislav Pivoň among the Roma in Petržalka.
4. Information from a personal interview. See Kovács, 2002.
5. The work of the Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic churches was described in 2000 by Juraj Janto in the work cited below, from which we took some elements and completed them with updated information.
6. Zefyrín Jimenéz Malla was born in 1861 in Spain's Benavente de Segria, in a Catholic Roma family (Kalé). He lived as a nomad for almost 40 years, trading in horses. He was a layman member of the Franciscan order and the St. Vincent Society, which helped poor people. During the Spanish Civil War, he protected a priest, for which he was arrested. In August 1936 he was shot with a chaplet in his hands. In November 1993, the process of his beatification started, and on May 4 1994, Pope John Paul II canonized him as a blessed martyr of the Catholic religion (Riboldi, 1993).
7. The Orthodox Academy in Michalovce is an educational, cultural, social, and information center that has been active since 1998 as an NGO. Its aim is to create conditions for people who want to contribute voluntarily to presenting Orthodoxy and eastern spirituality in the ecumenical perspective.
8. The *Pastoračný a evanjelizačný plán katolíckej cirkvi na Slovensku 2001 – 2006* [Pastoral and Evangelization Plan of the Catholic Church in Slovakia from 2001 to 2006] is the first positive exception. It includes the chapter *Rómovia* [The Roma], and can therefore be considered the first in this field.
9. The positive changes in the life of the Roma caused by the work of the churches in individual locations are also examined by Janto (2000, p. 69 – 73).

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THE CULTURAL ACTIVITIES OF THE ROMA

Summary: This chapter examines the Roma notion of self-expression in art and culture since 1989, and looks at the practical aspects of putting these notions into action during the transformation of the former communist state into a market-based democracy, which brought changes to grant-supported culture and art. The author studies state-subsidized Roma institutions and the role of Roma NGOs in preserving, protecting and developing authentic Roma art and culture. The chapter ends with a discussion of Roma art and culture as the basis of self expression and the building of Roma identity, self esteem, and confidence.

Key words: Roma nation, process of gaining self-consciousness among the Roma, legislation supporting the development of Roma culture, fund allocation system, Roma institutions, Roma NGOs, Romathan, secondary school of arts, Roma literature, Roma music, films and radio programs about the Roma, Roma periodicals.

INTRODUCTION

While from the point of view of civic emancipation the Roma seem to be losing their national identity and ethnicity, in terms of self-recognition and self-identification in culture and art as an expression of their cultural consciousness and national identity, they have clearly managed to preserve their national cultural identity. However, this is less the result of their need to identify ethnically with each other than with a natural self-defense reflex. The Roma view their Roma identity ("romipen") as supranational, and identify with a worldwide Roma nation; in individual countries they present themselves to the majority population as citizens of that country. The culture and art of the Roma, which reflects the spiritual world of their creators, are especially based on their identity. Only here can they express themselves fully and freely.

Until 1989 the Roma in Slovakia were allowed neither to develop their culture nor to present it in public as the specific culture of the Roma minority. They could not establish Roma ensembles or interest groups, while Roma fairy tales could not be shown on TV, and literature about the Roma could not be published (Snopko, 1992). In other words, the Roma were deprived of their national identity and ethnicity. This deprivation had negative consequences not only for how the Roma were viewed by the majority, but also for their own community. The doubt that lingers among some Roma, especially those living in secluded communities, about their own ethnic characteristics and identity is proof of this.

VISIONS AND FULFILLMENT OF THE CULTURAL NEEDS OF THE ROMA

ROMA SELF-REALIZATION

The Roma are naturally versatile and very sensitive when it comes to art. After 1989,

when they were finally allowed to publicly identify and present themselves as Roma, they entered the stage of mainstream society with their art and culture. They made intense efforts to present their culture by establishing civic associations and folklore ensembles and organizing nationwide Roma folklore festivals. The intensity of such presentations was a natural reaction to their former spiritual oppression, and the Roma showed what had kept their national identity alive.

At the beginning of the 1990s, the idea of showing that "we are no worse than the others" was more subconscious than conscious among the Roma, but freeing themselves from this motivation proved a long and hard task because, even today, the Roma don't have what they most need to boost their self-confidence and give them a real feeling of freedom: appreciation and acceptance by the majority Slovak population. Even now they feel a greater need to prove their worth to the majority than to themselves. This situation is perpetuated by the unwillingness of the majority or the inability of the state to provide the conditions Roma culture needs to develop naturally: to rid the official image of the Roma of prejudice.

The presence of Roma culture – especially their musical, creative and performance talents – is visible in contemporary Slovakia in three main areas:
a) music performers; the Roma provide music at social events, performing for kings and aristocracy, at dances in villages, or in cafés and restaurants;
b) carriers and caretakers of Slovak folklore traditions;
c) carriers and caretakers of their own folklore traditions.

In all three areas one finds not only famous Roma names but also entire musical families and dynasties that have performed in Slovakia until this day.

PRACTICAL SATISFACTION OF ROMA DEMANDS BY THE STATE

The right of both the Roma and other minorities to equal rights, and to develop their language, culture, and art, is anchored in Slovakia's supreme law, the Constitution. Article 12, paragraph 2 of the Constitution guarantees equality to all citizens regardless their nationality, religion, beliefs and social affiliations. Articles 34 and 35 protect the right of minorities to learn the official state language, to establish and maintain educational and cultural institutions, to obtain information in their mother tongues, to use their mother tongues in communicating with official state bodies, and to participate in decisions on issues affecting national and ethnic minorities. These rights are put into force through individual laws (see the chapter *The Legal and Institutional Framework of the "Roma issue"* in this book).

As for the practical implementation of the Roma's right to develop their own culture, the following steps were taken in the years following 1989:
• The Culture Ministry together with Roma cultural organizations established the Association of Roma Cultural Organizations in Slovakia on May 21, 1991;
• At the initiative of the Culture Ministry, the government approved 5,800,000 Sk (then about $220,000) for four existing Roma cultural associations, and 3,500,000 Sk for other activities in extracurricular education and spare-time artistic activities;
• Employees of the Culture Ministry's Department for National and Ethnic Culture took part in expert talks on establishing the Romathan professional Roma theatre (June to September 1991), while the Culture Ministry established the theatre in May 1992;
• The first Roma weekly, biweekly, and monthly periodicals were published:

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Roma/Rómovia (November 1990), *Romano ľil/Rómsky list* (August 1991), *Romipen/Rómstvo* (October 1991), *Nevipen/Novosti* (February 1992), and *Luludĭ/Kvietok* (March 1992);
- The first books by Roma writers were published (fairy tales by József Ravasz, poems by Dezider Bang, a reader by Milena Hübschmannová for elementary school students, and an anthology by ethnographer Arne B. Mann called *Neznámi Rómovia* [1992]);
- On January 28, 1992, the public STV channel started broadcasting a weekly Roma National Magazine in Bratislava, Banská Bystrica and Košice.

In April 1990, a Department of Roma Culture at the Pedagogical Faculty in Nitra was established, followed by the founding of Secondary School of Art in Košice in 1992/1993, and the opening of a teacher-training course at the Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Prešov for elementary schools specializing in the Roma language and culture. Although their paths were not trouble-free, the institutions and initiatives founded during those early years (the theatre, schools, periodicals, publishing and other activities to present Roma culture through Roma NGOs) still exist.

During the first two years after November 1989, the Culture Ministry not only adopted the first *Principles of the Government's Policy Towards the Roma* (dated April 15, 1991) but fulfilled most of its tasks as well. The following tasks remained: to draft a proposal for organizing regional and national Roma folklore festivals; to provide material and financial aid to Roma cultural organizations for extracurricular education and spare-time artistic activities; to establish a national minority culture department (including Roma culture) at the National Center for Continuing Education; to draw up a method-

ology for educational activities among the Roma, the training of Roma leaders, and providing aid for Roma ensembles; and to reach agreement with local cultural centers on the free rental of premises for non-commercial educational and cultural activities of local Roma organizations.

FUNDING FOR
MINORITY CULTURES

After the political changes in 1989, many minority organizations were established. Every year, more organizations appeared to represent other national minorities in Slovakia, and to receive funding from the Culture Ministry. In 1993 the government's Council for Minorities and Ethnic Groups was established (Kollár and Mrvová, 2002).

Since 1996, minority culture in Slovakia has been funded in three ways:
1. Through specific transfers from the Culture Ministry's budget for projects supporting the development of national minority culture, including cultural activities, and publishing periodical and non-periodical press.
2. Through funding for minority cultural organizations as state-subsidized organizations at the regional level.
3. Through funding for activities to develop minority culture within the framework of subsidized organizations under the jurisdiction of regional authorities (museums, galleries, libraries, centers of continuing education).

A committee of experts at the Department for Minority Culture, appointed by the Culture Minister, assesses how Culture Ministry budget money for special purposes is allocated. The members of this committee, which also acts as an advisory body for the Culture Minister, include representatives of

all national minorities and ethnic groups living in Slovakia. Each minority has one vote on the committee. One of the committee's jobs is to establish subcommittees. Subcommittees established on an ethnic basis propose funds to be allocated to selected projects; they also evaluate minority culture projects according to the following criteria: quality, and the importance and significance of the culture activity for the members of the minority and for maintaining their identity. Final funding proposals are prepared by the Culture Ministry and approved by the Culture Minister (Kollár and Mrvová, 2002).

Minority cultures in Slovakia grow through the publishing of periodical and non-periodical press for minority members (in 2000, 40 magazines were published), state theatres with programs in minority languages (four theatres), state museums focusing on minorities (eight museums and departments of regional museums), civic associations promoting the culture of all 11 minorities, two semiprofessional folklore ensembles, regional centers for continuing education, regional and district libraries, and public media broadcasts in minority languages.

The public channel Slovak Radio broadcasts 45 hours a week worth of special programs for the Hungarian minority. Other minorities – Ruthenian, Ukrainian, German, Czech, Polish, and Roma – were allocated less time in the national-ethnic broadcasting scheme. Within its roster of national magazines, STV broadcasts for the Hungarian, Roma, Czech, Ukrainian, Ruthenian, Polish, Jewish, German, and Bulgarian minorities, and also prepares a multi-ethnic magazine. Besides supporting projects submitted by minority members, the Culture Ministry through the Department for Minority Cultures also subsidizes civic associations representing handicapped people, and multi-ethnic projects (Kollár and Mrvová, 2002).

Table 1
Culture Ministry funding for Roma culture projects in Slovakia from 1999 to 2002 according to type of activity (compared to Hungarian and Ukrainian minority funding – in Sk)

Year	Roma	Hungarian	Ukrainian
Cultural activities			
1999	2 787 750	7 848 135	1 119 990
2000	2 728 980	9 631 000	715 000
2001	2 890 000	10 751 000	887 000
2002	5 313 900	14 743 300	965 000
Periodical press:			
1999	4 908 800	9 770 000	1 136 000
2000	2 843 000	6 543 000	1 540 000
2001	2 150 000	7 486 000	1 460 000
2002	1 750 000	11 650 000	1 445 000
Non-periodical press:			
1999	150 000	6 195 800	34 000
2000	483 000	6 840 000	243 000
2001	358 000	5 181 000	213 000
2002	240 000	12 749 000	585 000

Source: Slovak Culture Ministry.

Until 1996, most cultural institutions were managed directly by the Culture Ministry. Since 1996, in keeping with the Law on Local Administration, most have been managed directly by regional state offices. Some 38 regional cultural centers were established, and 162 subsidized organizations were integrated within them. These changes did not influence minority culture funding, and the transformation of culture continued. At the same time, within its special purposes transfer, the Culture Ministry also supported several activities that fell flat (a supplement for minorities in the *Slovenská Republika* daily newspaper that was seldom read by minority members), or that did not meet minority needs (Kollár and Mrvová, 2002).

After 1999 the subsidized organizations that were under the authority of the state regional culture centers (and thus also minority culture institutions, with the exception of minority museums, which remained under the control of the Slovak National Museum) obtained their legal independence,

Table 2
Culture Ministry funding for Roma culture projects in Slovakia from 1999 to 2002, according to type of activity (with respect to the total number of applicants and projects, and the number of subsidized applicants and projects – in Sk)

	Applicants		Projects		Amount (Sk)	
Year	Total	Subsidies	Total	Subsidies	Requested	Granted
Cultural activities						
1999	24	18	82	43	30 273 353	2 787 750
2000	38	27	73	42	13 281 320	2 728 980
2001	48	23	107	34	24 454 691	2 890 000
2002	0	37	88	57	11 241 428	5 313 900
Periodical press						
1999	4	4	6	6	11 781 080	4 908 800
2000	4	4	5	5	10 451 700	2 843 000
2001	7	3	9	3	18 127 536	2 150 000
2002	4	4	6	4	6 725 980	1 750 000
Non-periodical press						
1999	4	2	4	2	1 646 000	150 000
2000	11	5	13	5	3 348 700	483 000
2001	10	2	18	2	6 606 384	290 000
2002	1	1	1	1	240 000	240 000

Note: Beginning in 1999, cultural projects could be submitted to the Government Office through the Office of Governmental Plenipotentiary for Solving the Problems of the Roma Minority (later the Office of Governmental Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities). Through this channel the Government Office allocated funding for various Roma culture projects in the following amounts: 1,952,300 Sk in 1999, 3,254,800 Sk in 2000, and 7,000,000 Sk in 2001 from the General Cash Administration section of the state budget.
Source: Office of Governmental Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities.

although they remained under the direct management of the culture departments of the regional authorities. After the 1998 parliamentary elections, a separate Department of Minority Cultures was established at the Culture Ministry, and started to cooperate with parliamentary committees and the Department of Intellectual and Social Development at the Government Office in supporting minority culture. The role of minority representatives in making decisions on funding for minority culture changed somewhat during the decentralization of state power from 2001 to 2003 and the establishment of regional elected governments. Within Slovakia's structure of regional administration, a system of enacting and guaranteeing minority policy is being prepared by the Culture Ministry to prevent ambiguities in the devolution of power from the state administration to the self-governing regions (Kollár and Mrvová, 2002).

THE ENACTMENT OF ROMA IDEAS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR CULTURE – ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES OF THE ROMA

From the outset, Roma movements and cultural initiatives were aware that they could communicate with the government, the Culture Ministry and other state departments only as legal entities, not as individuals. This was one reason why Roma cultural and social organizations were first established; these bodies later became the bearers of cultural development and the implementers of individual projects.

In Slovakia, the first Roma cultural and social organizations were established in 1990 on the basis of the previous experience of their leaders (most had been active while the Roma began to gain self-consciousness in the 1960s and 1970s), as well as according to the

model of other Slovak state-subsidized minority organizations. Among the first to be established were:

- **The Roma Cultural Association** (Prešov, 1990);
- **The Roma Intelligentsia Association in Slovakia** (Bratislava, 1990);
- **The Democratic Union of Roma in Slovakia** (Zvolen, 1990);
- **Romani kultura** (Bratislava, 1991);
- **The Roma Community Cultural Union** (Humenné, 1991).

The founders of these organizations copied the activity model of existing Hungarian and Ukrainian ethnic unions. They intended to found and manage regional branches or clubs, found and support local and national folklore ensembles, and organize regional and national Roma folklore festivals and artistic leisure activities in the regions where they operated. They also knew they had to cooperate if their activities were to be successful. For this reason, the first four Roma organizations in 1991 united under the Association of Roma Cultural Organizations in Slovakia (ARKOS), each of the members keeping its legal identity. ARKOS was meant to represent the Roma organizations in negotiations with the state; Dezider Banga was chosen its first chairman. ARKOS inspired trust in state representatives as it showed the unity of the Roma and offered a clear idea of how to promote Roma culture in negotiations.

Besides its unified approach to the state, ARKOS also represented its members professionally towards the Roma community. ARKOS expected that further cultural organizations in Slovakia would be established under its authority, according to the regions in which the organizations united under ARKOS operated, although it did not prevent the establishment of new organizations. It also expected that it would coordinate the cultural needs and interests of the Roma, thus forming a buffer between the state and individual Roma groups. For that reason, ARKOS offered Roma groups and individuals the chance to apply to the unions associated in ARKOS for the Sk 5 million in extra budget funds allocated by the government (*Romano ľil*, 1991, No. 2).

At the same time, each of the groups associated in ARKOS had its own ambitions (for example, to publish its own periodical), aims that were fulfilled thanks to support from the Culture Ministry. From the outset, however, the activities and applicants outnumbered the funds allocated for the promotion of minority culture.

The most influential Roma cultural associations naturally wanted to prevent the establishment of new associations and organizations, which they regarded as rivals for subsidies. These concerns about a possible loss of influence among the first established groups were visible at the ARKOS meeting in Nimnica from October 2 to 3, 1991. A report of the meeting, published in the *Romano ľil*, said that ARKOS discussed the objectives of the individual cultural unions and prepared a financial plan for the following year. At the same time, ARKOS was concerned by the trend in some Roma cultural organizations towards assimilation and "Slovakization", and thus denial of Roma identity. The meeting resulted in a letter to the Culture Ministry and the government demanding that these Roma-denying organizations should be funded from money other than that earmarked for the support of Roma culture (*Romano ľil*, 1991, No. 2).

The year 1993 saw a sharp about-turn in subsidies, the approach of the Culture Ministry to Roma cultural NGOs, and the representation of Roma cultural organizations. The new Slovak government restricted support for culture in general, including minority culture.

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COMPATIBILITY OF ROMA DEMANDS AND STATE SUPPORT

The results of the talks between Roma associations and unions and the Culture Ministry's Minority Culture Section in 2000 and 2001 show the extent to which the ideas of Roma of how to develop their culture are being matched in practice.

A) The recommendations from the workshop, which was known as "The Present Situation and Future of Roma Culture in Slovakia", held in Rimavská Sobota on October 17, 2000, included the following goals:

1. to establish district Roma centers for continuing education;
2. to ask the Slovak Government Representative for Solving the Problems of the Roma Minority to establish regional branches with power over cultural and social education;
3. to restore the legal independence of the Romathan state theatre in Košice;
4. to set up a subcommittee consisting entirely of Roma NGO representatives to assess Roma culture projects;
5. to establish a Roma artistic agency to coordinate and manage the presentation of Roma culture in Slovakia and abroad;
6. to publish the following periodicals:
   a) a weekly in three languages: Slovak, Roma, Hungarian;
   b) a magazine for children;
   c) a magazine for high school and university students, and for civic associations;
7. to prepare a radio and television broadcast project for the Roma and allow more time for broadcasting Roma TV and radio programs on public media;
8. to propose criteria for funding Roma culture to the Culture Ministry;
9. to establish a Roma culture museum in Slovakia;

10. to appoint a work group consisting of Roma and non-Roma, experts in Roma language history and research, to codify the Roma language.

B) The recommendations that came from the Culture Ministry Conference, called "The Prospects for the Development of Roma Culture in Slovakia at the Beginning of the Third Millennium", held in Banská Bystrica November 12 – 13, 2001, included:

1. to establish a Roma Culture Documentation Center at the Slovak National Museum, and for this purpose to create a group of Roma experts to found the institution;
2. to solve the financial problems of Roma Culture Departments at the museums in Rimavská Sobota and Humenné, and supervise how funds are used at these institutions (for example by controlling the purchase of items for museum collections;
3. to establish more Roma Culture Departments in regions with a high concentration of Roma (personnel issues to be solved using graduates from the Department of Roma Culture at Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra);
4. to help Roma community representatives become more active in media institutions and state administration and self-government bodies dealing with culture;
5. to re-assess the activities of the Regional Centers of Continuing Education (with the help of the National Center of Continuing Education); to establish Roma centers for continuing education if necessary, financed from the state budget; to prepare a bill on financing the culture of minorities;
6. to establish a branch in Lučenec of the Department of Roma Culture of Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra;
7. to fund the activities of the Romathan theatre in keeping with its importance as a representative art institution;
8. to provide funding in a reasonable time (i.e. as soon as possible after the commit-

tee of experts session) to bodies that have won subsidies for their projects from the Culture Ministry;

9. to ensure regular and fixed deadlines for submitting applications to allow a change in the purpose for which allocated funds are used;

10. to ensure greater transparency in the *Culture Ministry Conditions and Principles for Granting and Stating Culture Ministry Funds*;

11. to organize regular meetings of the Advisory Committee for Solving Problems in Roma Culture at the Culture Ministry's Section for Minority Culture;

12. to organize a meeting of the Advisory Committee for Solving Problems in Roma Culture to prepare the "Roma Day" project, and to appoint more members to the Roma subcommittee (all Slovak regions should be represented) and prepare new criteria for the allocation of funds (it should not be based exclusively on data from the Slovak Statistical Office);

13. to organize meetings between the authors of subsidized projects to draw up a year-round schedule of cultural activities and methods;

14. to support the publishing of a "Roma supplement" in a major periodical, if none of the publishing projects for adult press submitted for 2002 is satisfactory;

15. to ensure long-term continuity in the funding of a selected subsidized periodical, in order to avoid subsidizing a different periodical every year.

ROMA CULTURE IN SLOVAKIA

MUSIC

Music is the historically the largest domain of Roma culture. To the majority population, Roma music – the performing art of Roma musicians – is often a synonym for Roma art as a whole. Although during communism Roma ensembles were banned (Mann, 1992, p. 7), including folklore and musical ensembles, Roma folklore ensembles in villages (or within local folklore ensembles) never ceased to exist. However, they were forbidden to present themselves as Roma musical ensembles at official events.

After 1989, acknowledgment of the Roma nation and its right to present and form its own culture brought many changes to Roma musical life as well. It also meant a return of Roma culture associations and unions serving and promoting Roma culture, and was a step towards presenting their artists as Roma personalities. Two Roma musicians were among the first Roma personalities acknowledged by the state, namely Ján Berky-Mrenica and Rinaldo Oláh.

Interest in strictly Roma musical traditions flourished among NGOs after 1989 in the form of initiatives to preserve, present and support Roma violin players. The *Romani kultúra* cultural association (Bratislava), led by Dezider Bang, launched a new tradition, and since 1992 has organized the Slovak Festival of Violin Players in the village of Gemer, in eastern Slovakia's Rimavská Sobota district. However, it is also true that since 1992 (apart from the establishment of the Romathan theatre and the Orchestra of the Košice Secondary School of Art), no major Roma culture project has been started in Slovakia. This may be connected to the perception of top Roma musicians as Roma rather than musicians.

Besides well-known orchestras in Slovakia such as the Violin Orchestra, the Diabolské husle (the Devil's Violin) or the Grand Slovakia, and their leading talents Ján Berky-Mrenica (today also his son), Eugen Botoš and Eugen Vizváry – who play professionally and do not demand subsidies from the Culture

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Ministry – there is also one Roma professional orchestra which, as part of the Romathan theatre, is subsidized by the state. In Roma music, this ensemble does something that no integrated Roma collective has before – as a theatre orchestra it sometimes accompanies drama performances. In this regard, the founders of the theatre envisaged a dramatic role for the orchestra as well as an independent role as a separate ensemble. Besides theatre performances, the Romathan theatre also presents "solo" orchestra performances.

There are also several (especially children's) choirs active in Slovakia and focused on spiritual and religious songs. The first and best known (performing since 1993) is the Devleskere čhave (God's Children) choir from eastern Slovakia's Bardejov, led by Mária Holubová. Since 1995 there has also been a children's spiritual choir in the village of Varhaňovce, in eastern Slovakia's Prešov district, led by Mária Gáborová.

LITERATURE

Roma literature in Slovakia includes literature written by Roma that does not always deal with Roma issues, as well as literature written by non-Roma that does deal with Roma issues.

Unsystematic and uncoordinated publishing is hurting Roma literature and its development. There is no Roma publishing house to cooperate with all living and potential authors in Slovakia. In place of serious publishing, various interest groups publish books with small circulations and distribute them in non-traditional ways (i.e. to their friends and supporters), or use them for their own purposes. As a result, most books never make it beyond the publisher's archives. The absence of Roma books on the market suggests that Roma literature (or literature dealing with the Roma) does not exist, or that the literary community does not know how to handle it. Roma authors thus remain unknown and neglected.

ROMA FINE ART

Roma fine art in Slovakia consists mainly of the fine art of talented amateurs and native authors. Before 1989 there were several significant Roma artists associated in amateur art clubs at centers for continuing education who presented their work at exhibitions together with non-Roma amateur artists.

After 1989, centers for continuing education and cultural centers became less active, damping the enthusiasm of some amateur artists given the expense of pursuing their artistic interests alone. Some took advantage of the new opportunities and began selling their work or creating made-to-order work; others ceased working completely.

Both Slovakia and other countries have been impressed by the unusual inventiveness of Roma children led by teacher Ján Sajko in eastern Slovakia's Jarovnice village. Since 1993, the work of Sajko's students has been admired at all international children's artistic competitions (Czech Republic, Macedonia, Hungary, Germany, Japan, Finland, etc.). They have presented their works at exhibitions in the US, Austria, Germany; they show regularly in Sabinov (Slovakia), and since 2001 have sold their paintings at an auction organized by the *Maľujeme pre vzdelanie* (Painting for Education) project run by the S.P.A.C.E. Foundation.

PHOTOGRAPHY

It is still rather unusual for the Roma to be the subjects of a photo report or artistic pho-

tographs taken by Roma photographers and presented in periodicals or at exhibitions. More often, the Roma are photographed by non-Roma photographers. However, with Roma periodicals starting to be published, this sphere of Roma creative work is beginning to develop as well. The first photo exhibition of a Roma artist in Slovakia was that of József Ravasz, the Roma poet and writer.

Since 1993, Jozef T. Schön has started to be more active, not just as an author but also as a photographer and documentary maker. In 2001 his photographs made up a substantial part of the exhibition *Čie sú to deti?/Kaskere ole čhavore?* (Whose children are these?), prepared by BIBIANA, the international artistic institute for children in Bratislava. This was the first exhibition in the series *Akí sme, takí sme* (*Dialóg o tolerancii*) (We are what we are: Dialogue on Tolerance), subsidized by the Culture Ministry.

CINEMATOGRAPHY

Roma film in Slovakia today is dominated by cinematographic work about the Roma. Given the general stagnation in Slovak cinematography, films about the Roma are largely limited to TV documentaries and exposés. Since 1989, only three non-animated feature movies have been made about Roma issues – all of them fairy tales.

Most cinematographic work on the Roma is done in co-production with STV's documentary and current affairs departments, and is often subsidized by foundations (e.g. the Foundation for the Support of Civic Activities) or within the media projects of the Slovak government (such as subsidies from the EU's Phare programs, for example the Tolerance To Minorities program). They are often presented as short films to introduce a topic for a televised debate or talk show.

Some films are made as part of exposé programs, such as the minority show *Rómsky magazín* (Roma Magazine) or STV's religious program *Božie deti* (God's Children). These cinematic works most often involve presentations of the positive (educational or spiritual) activities of various foundations in Roma communities, artistic documentaries on Roma artists, or descriptions of crucial but little-known moments in modern Roma history (i.e. the imprisonment of Roma in Slovakia by the state during the second world war to serve in labor camps).

In October 2002, People in Need Foundation organized a one week international festival of documentary film entitled *Jeden svet*/*One World*, at which, in a special category called The Roma Today and Yesterday, films on the Roma that were made from 1950 to 1989 were presented.

STATE INSTITUTIONS FOCUSING ON ROMA CULTURE

1. The Romathan Theatre

The Romathan theatre was founded by the Culture Ministry in Košice in May 1992 at the behest of Roma and non-Roma intellectuals who wanted a professional Roma theatre. The proposal to found the theatre was presented by a Roma MP, Anna Koptová, in the last session of the Slovak parliament in December 1991.

From 1993 to 2002 the Culture Ministry gave 75,439,000 Sk in subsidies to the theatre. Up to September 2002, the theatre presented 29 premieres and 1,116 total performances, 178 of which were staged abroad and 500 across Slovakia outside of Košice. By the same date, Romathan performances had been seen by 325,666 people, of whom 137,799 abroad.

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2. Slovak Radio Programs for the Roma

The 1991 *TV and Radio Broadcasting Law* allows "the production… of programs to maintain and develop the cultural identity of Slovakia's nations and ethnic groups". Since 1991, minority programs have been broadcast by Slovak Radio's Minority Programs Department in Prešov.

The Prešov department started to broadcast programs for the Roma on December 31, 1993 with the following program structure:

– news in the Roma language (30 minutes per week);
– Roma cultural revue (once every two weeks);
– Roma magazine (once a month).

Slovak Radio's Department of Hungarian Broadcasting started broadcasts on June 5, 1998 for Roma who spoke Hungarian.

3. Slovak Television Programs for Roma Minority

The 1991 *Law on Slovak Television* ordains that STV, through television broadcasts in the mother tongues of minorities and ethnic groups living in Slovakia, allows these groups to promote their interests. STV started broadcasting in Roma on January 28, 1992, its plan being to broadcast a rotating weekly 30-minute show from each region (Banská Bystrica, Bratislava, Košice). During the early years of broadcasting, the authors of programs strove not only to work with Roma announcers/hosts, but also to broadcast in Roma with Slovak subtitles. This cooperation was halted, however, and although the departments still work with Roma presenters, they have no chance to check the accuracy of their translations.

In 1998, Slovak television started broadcasting a monthly, 13-minute exposé show called *Božie deti* (God's Children) on the STV 2 Bratislava channel, created by the Production Center for Spiritual Programs, and aimed at promoting relationships between the church and the Roma. In 1999, the program was extended to 30 minutes a month. Within the show, several films were made in a documentary style. In 2002 the program was almost cancelled due to money problems.

In 1999, a Minority Programs Department was established at the Košice STV studio, as Slovakia's central department for all minority programs (except the Hungarian one). There are now eight Roma current affairs programs broadcast on the STV 1 and 2 channels (26 to 30 minutes each); four are produced in Košice, and four in Bratislava. Moreover, the Roma issue is also supposed to feature on four "minority mixes" (mixed programs involving all minorities). Nevertheless, the extent of minority programming remains unsatisfactory. This insufficiency is usually justified by the lack of funds.

4. The Department of Roma Culture at the Gemer Museum in Rimavská Sobota

This department was launched on January 1, 1996. It was initiated by the museum in 1993, and focuses on the documentation of Roma spiritual and material culture.

5. The Department of Roma Culture at the Vihorlat Museum in Humenné

This department was founded by the Culture Ministry on December 16, 1993; it became operational in April 1994, focusing on crafts and Roma history until 1945.

6. The Documentary Center of Roma Culture at the Slovak National Museum at the Ethnographic Museum in Martin

The Documentary Center of Roma Culture in Martin was established on January 1,

2002 as part of the Slovak National Museum at the Ethnographic Museum of the Slovak National Museum in Martin. The center works on a nationwide level, and its mission is to acquire, collect, and present documents on the physical and spiritual culture of the Roma.

7. The Secondary School of Art in Košice (founder: Košice District Office)

8. Faculty of Education of Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra (PF UKF)**, Department of Roma Culture**

9. Branch of the PF UKF in Spišská Nová Ves

10. Branch of the PF UKF in Lučenec

CONCLUSION

Despite assertions that conditions are poor for the structured development of Roma culture in Slovakia, according to the needs declared in two memoranda from 1991 and 1994, the cultural activities that have been launched since 1989, at first glance, suggest that Slovak state authorities have honored their commitment to enable and support the development of Roma culture. The conflict is one of appearance and reality, quality and quantity; of the real needs that the Roma have declared on several occasions, and the real chances that these needs can be satisfied.

At first glance, compared to other Eastern and Western European countries, Slovakia does relatively well in supporting and presenting Roma culture, and boasts a relatively high proportion of institutions (both state and non-state) focused on promoting Roma culture. At the same time, the fact that the basic projects in this area continued to exist after 1993 was due to the enormous efforts of the groups directly involved (Roma NGOs, the managements of various institutions) to preserve these projects and their original mission.

The following objectives have to be ensured in the future:
- to respect the fact that the Roma minority – unlike others – did not have the right or the chance to develop its culture until 1989. Thus, institutions and activities (including existing ones) must be established and developed to compensate for the disproportion;
- to reassess the system of allocating funds from the state budget for the cultural needs of the Roma minority, not according to official data on the size of the Roma population in Slovakia, but according to its real needs;
- to draw up a concept for the overall and continuous development of Roma culture and art, in cooperation with Roma NGOs that deal with Roma culture and art, and that since 1992 have been responsible for several major projects in Roma culture and art;
- to reassess the system of allocating financial subsidies for cultural activities from the Culture Ministry, so that the cultural activities can start to be implemented at the beginning of the calendar year;
- to ensure that some conceptual and nationwide projects for minority culture development are not supported by the government through the Culture Ministry with only a partial subsidy, but with a full subsidy corresponding to real needs;
- to pass a Minorities Bill that would stipulate the responsibility of the state to support Roma periodicals;
- to involve the government and Roma NGOs and bodies dealing with Roma culture in preparing Phare projects in the field of minority culture and media. The same should be achieved concerning tenders for these projects and their implementation;

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- to have the government and the third sector cooperate with Roma NGOs in the field of culture and media, in drawing up and commenting on government materials on the overall development of culture and media (not only that of minorities) in Slovakia.

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ROMA MEDIA

Summary: This chapter offers a brief survey of the development of the Roma media after 1989. It evaluates the basic problems of the ethnic Roma press after 1989. It follows the development of the oldest Roma periodical – the *Romano nevo ľil* newspaper – as well as the fight for its independence. It analyzes the way readers view the newspaper's content, as well as the way *Romano nevo ľil*'s staff see the paper. It outlines new trends in Roma journalism, for example the Roma Press Agency. The chapter also deals with ethnic broadcasting on TV and radio. Special attention is devoted to the education of Roma journalists. Finally, the chapter compares the current needs and opportunities of Roma media.

Key words: ethnic press, grants, media market, remaindered copies, Internet journals, World Wide Web, ethnic broadcasting, education of Roma journalists, local correspondents.

INTRODUCTION

One of the signs of the growing self-awareness of the Roma after November 1989 has been the increased demand for Roma press. Unlike other ethnic groups living in Slovakia, which have seen the number of journals serving them grow enormously, the Roma have had to address problems such as which language to use (i.e. whether to use Romany or the Slovak language, which of the Ro-

many dialects to use, whether to translate texts into Romany, into Hungarian etc.). The Roma press have also had to identify their target group, and take into account the purchasing power of the target group. Rapid development of the Roma press was held back by the deepening social problems of the Roma, the concentration of the press in the most underdeveloped regions of Slovakia (the Košice and Prešov regions), the underrepresentation of Roma in state administration and municipal government bodies, and the absence of help from sponsors.

In evaluating the Slovak Roma press after 1989, there is no detailed information at our disposal. The only source of information is the number of journals published and information about the publishers. A more detailed structural analysis of periodicals is not available, making it impossible to compare them with the non-Roma press and other media information regarding the Roma.

THE MAKE-UP OF
THE ROMA MEDIA AFTER 1989

Before November 1989, 25 ethnic periodicals were published in Slovakia, none of them Roma media (for details see the chapter *The Cultural Activities of the Roma* in this book). After 1991, the database of the Journalism Research Institute in Bratislava registered 54 ethnic journals, of which 7 were Roma journals (Čupíková, 1997).

The activities of the Government Council for Ethnic Minorities and Groups commenced in 1993, after the formation of the independent Slovak Republic. Based on a document entitled *The Principles of the Provision and Accounting of State Funds Provided for Ethnic Minority Culture,* the Council limited subsidies for ethnic press, which caused a drop in both periodicity and circulation among individual journals, effects which have endured until today. As for the Roma, the situation was exacerbated by the lack of interest among the Roma in ethnic press, by internal disputes as to the nature of this press, and the deepening social crisis of the Roma. Due to these factors, Roma newspapers and journals are almost completely reliant on state subsidies and grants from Slovak and foreign donors. The irregularity with which Roma periodicals are published, and their distribution problems have prevented the Roma press from fulfilling its main function.

ROMANO NEVO ĽIL

The *Romano nevo ľil* (RNL) newspaper is the oldest Roma periodical in Slovakia. Founded in September 1991, it was first published as the *Romano ľil* (Roma letter – RL), in Slovak and Romany with a circulation of 5,000. The *Romano ľil* weekly arose from the personal initiative of Anna Koptová. In 1992, as RL's editor-in-chief, Koptová became a member of the Slovak parliament, and Daniela Hivešová-Šilanová was charged with the management of the editorial staff. At the beginning, RL was published on eight pages in a combination of Slovak and Romany. Between 1991 and 1993, RL built up its own editorial department, four branch editorial departments (in Prague, Bratislava, Banská Bystrica and Košice) and a network of local correspondents. The object was to establish outlets in all regional capitals. The editorial department won its legal independ-

ence in July 1992, after new legislation abolished the status of "civic economic association", which the editorial office had had until then. At the time, RL was drawing funds from the Culture Ministry. As the terms of funding for ethnic culture had not yet been set, the only criterion for the provision of funds was the intended purpose for which they would be used. As a periodical serving a minority that had not received any subsidies before 1989, RL obtained a full subsidy covering the costs of operating the editorial department. At the same time, however, the weekly faced one the most serious threats to its existence.

The periodical was attempting to address both the Roma (all social categories) and non-Roma (professionals and employees of local municipalities and state administration), resulting in dissatisfaction among individual target groups with the quality and quantity of information provided. Despite the struggle of the editorial department for professionalism and an independent view of the Roma, these reservations soon blossomed into criticism that threatened the very existence of the weekly. The reason that the weekly's management did not take radical steps to change the concept, was that at the time, RL was the only Roma periodical that existed, and it reserved the right to speak on behalf of all Roma; furthermore, it did not support the creation of yet more niche Roma media (the main reason being the shortage of money for minority press publishing).

However, Roma politicians viewed the weekly as a vehicle for their ambitions, and criticized the distinctly cultural orientation of the periodical: "I am very discontented with the large amount of space reserved for poetry and fairy-tales," wrote one Roma politician. "I think these type of articles belong in the *Roma* cultural journal. What the *Romano ľil* weekly should do is to look at both the good

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and the bad that are done by the Roma Civic Initiative, the Roma Intelligentsia Association, and other political parties and movements." (*Romano ľil*, 1992, No. 24, p.3)

It was clear even at that time that the community required a wider range of Roma press, or at least specialized journals. The needs expressed in various discussions and debates included a political weekly covering events on the Roma and non-Roma political scenes, a cultural periodical, a literary periodical, and a periodical focusing on the problems of isolated Roma settlements. Since September 1992, *Romano nevo ľil* (New Roma Letter – NRL), an independent cultural and social weekly focusing on the Slovak and Czech Roma, has been published by the Jekethane civic association based in Prešov.

The year 1993 was a watershed for the social, organizational, and especially financial support of ethnic minorities. The ethnic issue gained a new dimension after the declaration of Slovak independence, due largely to changed demographic ratios (for example, the Roma had been more concentrated in the Slovak half of the Czechoslovak federation). At this time, the Slovak Culture Ministry changed its approach to funding ethnic press, and in 1994 began providing ethnic press subsidies exclusively on the basis of submitted projects. This change was felt most strongly by the Roma press, where due to lack of funds, *Romano nevo ľil* saw its periodicity interrupted. For example, between February and May 1993 only one issue of *Romano nevo ľil* was published. On June 30, 1993, the NRL hired a new editor-in-chief, Pavol Žiga, who held the office until the end of 1995. From 1996 until now, the editor-in-chief has been Daniela Hivešová-Šilanová.

Since 1998, *Romano nevo ľil* has become increasingly professional both in content and layout. Fields that readers and Roma leaders had said were poorly covered improved, and *Romano nevo ľil* began monitoring Roma-related events, thus filling the information gap in this area.

The weekly has also played an educational role from the beginning. Intended for the Roma intelligentsia as well as the inhabitants of Roma settlements, the weekly's greatest problem has been the heterogeneity of its readers, who in many cases had only basic reading and writing skills. For motivational reasons, the weekly provided room to different civic associations and regional activists to speak their minds. On the one hand, this increased the Roma community's interest in its own press, while on the other it harmed the quality and professional level of the paper. The weekly regularly violated the basic rules of journalism, such as how articles were composed, how they were presented in the paper, and so on. Furthermore, from the marketing viewpoint, the weekly's management was unable to come up with a plan for obtaining funds from other than donor sources.

Faced with the almost complete absence of information and analysis concerning Roma press, the authors of this chapter analyzed the content of NRL/RL. The aim of this analysis was to determine how Roma and non-Roma information (and related community problems) were presented by a Roma medium, as well as to examine the structure, sources and nature of this information, and finally how language was used.

The authors worked with a sample consisting of 12 issues of *Romano ľil*, three each from 1992, 1994, 1997 and 2000, chosen at random. All information from these issues was processed and divided into pre-set categories. In their analysis the authors used the same methods as in analyzing non-Roma

media. They analyzed a total of 310 text units, i.e. an average of 25.8 text units per issue.

As for the type of information, content analysis showed that news pieces containing editorial comment and opinion were the most common (40.9%), far outweighing interviews, feature writing, and investigative reports. Even though the proportion of literary texts and cultural information was quite low, it was still too high for this type of journal.

The human rights issue that so dominated non-Roma media only started to gain ground at NRL during the last few years. Equally surprisingly, the newspaper paid relatively little attention to public affairs and the political scene (9% of content) and social issues (20%), which are in fact the most important sectors. Disagreements within the Roma community and on the Roma political scene were covered only marginally, with the topic dominating only during elections and during the brief period of unification and subsequent breakdown among Roma coalitions and parties. Community disputes (12.5%) prevailed shortly before and after the elections, as well as during the formation and breakdown of coalitions and Roma political parties. These issues were left mostly to NRL's readers and correspondents, who appealed to politicians to unite. The most common type of information presented by NRL was cultural (28.4%).

Journalists were the most frequent sources or bearers of information (61.2%), which is the same ratio as in the non-Roma media. State administration officials (2.7%), police (1.2%), independent experts (1.8%) and local municipalities (6.3%) were only marginally represented, as were representatives of Roma political parties (6.9%) and non Roma political parties (0.9%). This breakdown confirms the subjective nature of the information provided, and shows that most issues were presented exclusively from the viewpoint of the Roma community, and did not allow the competent people to express their opinions. The standpoints of these people were usually replaced by an editorial comment, which was not always either correct or professional. This approach creates the impression that the majority is not trying to solve the problems of the Roma, as well as that the editorial staff of NRL rarely use investigative journalism.

The majority of the 310 text units from 1992 to 2000 were neutral in tone (60.65%). The following types of information were included in this category: texts describing an incident, informing of an event, and so on (i.e. "this happened", or "this will happen"). Most were reports by the editorial staff. They were classified as neutral despite the frequent editorial comments they contained, which if published in non-Roma media would have been assigned a positive nature.

The text categories commonly used in non-Roma media – information giving a positive, neutral or negative image of the topic in question – were in our analysis of NRL further subdivided into information giving positive or negative images of the Slovak majority and of the Roma minority. Some 15.48% texts were found to give an explicitly positive image of the Roma, while 10.65% texts gave a clearly negative image of the Roma (most of the latter criticized the Roma political scene). On the other hand, 12.58% of texts gave a negative image of the non-Roma, usually criticizing the state administration, local elected governments, and the police. As it was noted above, the criticized institutions were not given space to respond directly (see Table 1).

The language used to present information was a separately analyzed category, in view of the

Table 1
Image given by articles

	1992	1994	1997	2000	Total	%
Positive image of the Roma	29	15	2	2	48	15.48
Positive image of the non-Roma	1	1	0	0	2	0.64
Neutral image	18	41	54	75	188	60.65
Negative image of the Roma	9	12	3	9	33	10.65
Negative image of the non-Roma	5	2	10	22	39	12.58

Source: Author's analysis of 12 issues of RL/NRL.

struggle over the nature of the Roma media, in which language plays such a key role. The authors discovered that besides the 310 analyzed text units in Slovak (100% of the analyzed texts), the issues examined included two other types of articles in Romany: texts written originally and only in Romany (1%), and texts translated into Romany (6.9%).

OTHER PRINT MEDIA

Structure and Funding of Ethnic Press in Slovakia

There were no significant changes regarding the ethnic press from 1996 to 1999 (see Table 2).

The basics of the media market – supply and demand – remained at about the same level.

Overall, there was a decrease of seven in the number of published titles, although Roma press titles increased by one when in 1998 the *Ternipen* (The Youth) bimonthly began publishing.

The Culture Ministry's minority funding criteria are quantitative and do not take into account the subjective development of each community. The Roma, for example, did not undergo the process of unification (even on the cultural level) as other minorities did from 1945 through 1989.

The Sam Adaj biweekly and the Štvorlístok monthly.

Thanks to a significant Culture Ministry subsidy, 1999 saw the launch of the *Sam Adaj* cultural and social biweekly published by the

Table 2
Survey of the ethnic press in Slovakia

nationality	periodicity daily	weekly	biweekly	monthly	bimonthly	other	total
Hungarian	1	9	7	25	1	5	48
Ruthenian	0	1	0	1	1	1	4
Ukrainian	0	1	0	2	1	0	4
Roma	0	1	0	1	0	1	3
Czech	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Moravian	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Croatian	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
German	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Polish	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Jewish	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
ethnic newspapers	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total	1	12	8	32	4	9	66

Source: Čupíková, 1997, p. 48.

Good Roma Fairy Kesaj Foundation. This event created healthy competition in the Roma periodical environment. Anna Koptová became the editor-in-chief. The journal was published in bi-lingual (Slovak-Romany) from until the end of 2000. However, it did not obtain the subsidy it requested from the Culture Ministry in 2001. The Good Roma Fairy Kesaj Foundation also publishes *Štvorlístok* (The Four-Pager) monthly for Roma children.

The Ternipen bimonthly

In 1999, the *Ternipen* bimonthly cultural and pedagogical journal began to be published regularly on a Culture Ministry subsidy by Roma Gemer, based in eastern Slovakia's Rožňava. Its first editor-in-chief was Emil Samko, but the post has been held by Jozef Červeňák since 1999. According to Červeňák, the Culture Ministry subsidy only covers printing costs and payment for contributors. Besides these significant Roma periodicals, the Culture Ministry also subsidizes the *Ľuďudi* monthly and the *Roma* bimonthly.

The Roma bimonthly and the Ľuďudi monthly

The *Roma* cultural bimonthly has been published by the Roma Cultural Union in Slovakia since 1991. The focus of the bimonthly is strictly intellectual, which obviously limits its readership. The Roma Cultural Union in Slovakia also publishes the *Ľuďudi* monthly, intended for preschoolers. Despite the expectations of experts, the monthly fails in its task of educating Roma children, as it is written in the dialect of western Slovakia, which makes it useless for Roma in eastern Slovakia, where 55% of the community lives, and where the educational problems are the most serious. The publisher also has troubles distributing the periodical.

The Híd – Most – Phurt biweekly

Besides the periodicals already mentioned, there are other more or less successful efforts. For example, the Roma poet Jozef Ravasz publishes his own literary biweekly, *Híd – Most – Phurt,* intended for Hungarian speaking Roma.

The Romane Vasta monthly

This monthly was launched in 1998, published by the Bratislava Roma Office (its headquarters were the then-Office of the Slovak Government Representative for Solving the Problems of the Roma Minority, headed by Vincent Danihel). Its editor-in-chief was Roman Estočák. The monthly attempted to advise Roma entrepreneurs on the establishment and operation of small and medium-sized companies. It was published in 1998 in Romany with a Slovak supplement.

REMAINDERED COPIES

An interesting point regarding the ethnic press is their specific approach to remaindered copies (i.e. those not sold). With titles that have longer periodicities, there is an apparent effort to make use of every single copy, so remaindered copies are practically non-existent. They also do not use traditional distribution channels through media distribution companies. This means that it is frequently impossible to obtain some of the journals.

THE ROMA PRESS AGENCY

Now we turn to a special Roma media case, the Roma Press Agency (RPA), which was established in February 2002 in Košice. It operates as an Internet journal, and is a

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project of the EccE civic association in Košice. It publishes in Slovak, English, and Romany. The agency's output is intended primarily for the non-Roma reader, which accounts for the majority of its content. From April until July 2002 (about 100 days), the agency released 125 texts in Slovak, of which 43.2% focused on the social sphere, 32.4% on human and civil rights, and 12% on the third sector. This structure brings RPA closer to that of non-Roma media in terms of content.

RPA's overall effort to influence public opinion through the non-Roma media is also reflected in its different article format structure compared to NRL. The most frequent type of report released by RPA is a news article (without the added and inserted opinions of the journalists and editors, in contrast with NRL); during the period examined, this category represented 72% of all text released. The second most frequent type of text was comments and analyses (7.2%). The ratio of this type of information is gradually increasing, even though it is not a typical press agency genre. RPA uses this genre to explain certain aspects of Roma life that are needed to give context to its news pieces. This genre is intended to educate the agency's subscribers and readers, and is closely related to the agency's public opinion mission.

There are also differences between RPA and NRL in terms of information source. The most frequent sources of information are journalist (providing information in 52.8% of RPA pieces), followed by individual, apolitical community members, mostly community leaders (44.8%), representatives of the third sector (20.8%), and municipal/local government representatives (20%). The police and various state bodies were sourced in almost 25% of text units. A special feature of this project is the connection between the Roma and non-Roma element. The Roma Press Agency functions as a Roma/non-Roma project based on the principle of equal representation, thus symbolizing the need for a mutual solution to the problems of the Roma.

TV AND RADIO BROADCASTING FOR THE ROMA

In Slovakia, minority culture is supported by minority language broadcasting on Slovak Television (STV) and Slovak Radio (SRo) public service channels, in accordance with the 1993 TV and Radio Broadcasting Law. The law calls for: "the production (…) of programs so the cultural identity of nations and ethnic groups is maintained and developed". Clearly, in this case we are not dealing with typical Roma media as in the case of the Roma print media described above.

STV has been broadcasting its "Roma Ethnic Magazine – Romale" since 1991. In past years, the program was put together by "Roma issues professionals" in close cooperation with the Roma. In 1998, however, problems were encountered with the expert level of the journalists responsible for the program. Given that the show is created by non-Roma, and not seldom without professional guidance, the majority of the reports are oriented towards culture and society with no ambition to influence majority opinion. The way the Roma are presented here in the end just confirms prejudices – even if positive ones – about the Roma.

SRo broadcasts a show called "National Ethnic Broadcasting". The programs divide time between minorities according to the ratio of their populations established by the 1991/2001 censuses. The Roma program department is headquartered in Prešov. SRo also broadcasts a program called *O Roma vakeren* (The Roma Speak), which is 30 minutes long. In comparison, the Ukraine and

Ruthene minority gets 13.5 hours of broadcasts a week, while the German minority gets 30 minutes a week, and the Czech and Polish minorities 30 minutes once every four weeks. In February 2002 another Roma program was added – the "Roma Cultural Revue". This program is broadcast twice a month and is 20 minutes long. Religious broadcasting is provided by SRo's studio in Banská Bystrica, which produces a program called *Balvajeskere Čahve*. There is also another 30-minute program named *Jekhetano drom* (The Common Path) for Hungarian-speaking Roma, which is broadcast by Radio Patria, SRo's main Hungarian editorial department.

EDUCATION OF ROMA JOURNALISTS AND THEIR PROSPECTS

The Center for Independent Journalism in Bratislava has run a training course for Roma journalists in Slovakia since 1999 (the Roma Mainstream Media Internship Program). Over a period of three years, 27 young Roma have passed the course, of whom two have found a professional job in the media: Ivan Hriczko, who worked as a full-time journalist for the TV NAŠA (later TV GLOBAL) regional television, and is now the head of RPA. The second was Denisa Havrľová, who works as a journalist for *Romano nevo ľil*.

The establishment of the Roma Press Agency was intended to create the opportunity for Center graduates to be employed as full-time and part-time journalists; however, the management of the training course were unable to cooperate with the agency's management. This resulted in moving the course from Košice, where the agency is headquartered, to Bratislava.

The RPA has a network of contributors and correspondents, and employs young Roma from regions with the highest proportion of Roma inhabitants – Košice, Prešov and Banská Bystrica. The Roma selected are trained by the RPA and work as local correspondents.

During its first three months of existence, RPA was able to place four of its scholarship holders with regional media (weeklies and TVs). After their first positive experiences, regional media were willing to employ further trainees. As these journalists are employed by the RPA, the chance for participants to gain practical experience seems real, albeit costly. The financial situation of regional dailies does not allow them to hire above their basic staff needs, regardless of ethnic origin.

CONCLUSION

It is vital that state support change from declarations to actual support of meaningful media projects with an influence on the Roma, and on improved coexistence between the Roma and the majority. On the other hand, Roma media must realize that unless they accept new development trends and modern marketing strategies, and unless they clearly define their target groups, they cannot fulfill their basic functions, no matter how much subsidies they receive. The structure of the Roma media must reflect the internal structure of the community. This means, first of all, that new media must be established, and second, that the existing media must be extended to TV and radio broadcasting, as these have a greater influence on the Roma.

The professionals responsible for Roma TV and radio broadcasting should, just as with the print media, clearly define the impact of their broadcasts on both individual Roma target groups and the non-Roma. As regards

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the Roma, broadcasts not only help develop Roma culture, but also dispel social tension. This means that "Roma broadcasting" must be given a new structure and become part of other programs intended for the majority. STV and SRo should try harder to find young Roma journalists and integrate them into their editorial staffs. Above all, the Roma must be seen on non-Roma programs on STV. This is the best way to increase the majority's sensitivity to the minority.

The positive pressure exerted by the EU on Slovak institutions over the past few years has helped to address some of the most serious problems facing the Roma. The Slovak government has launched several programs to improve the housing, employment, education, and health of the Roma. Nevertheless, various opinion polls show that almost 90% of the majority population has an aversion to the Roma. This is a signal that the majority does not accept changes that are forced on it from the outside, which ultimately could lead to greater tension between the Roma and the majority. If the role of the media in changing the way each side of the equation views the other continues to be neglected, it could jeopardize all that has been accomplished to date, and poison the relationship between the Roma and the majority in the 21st century.

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THE LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK OF THE "ROMA ISSUE"

Summary: This chapter deals with the legal status of the Roma in Slovakia. It considers the principle of equality, which is anchored in the Slovak Constitution as one of the basic principles of a democratic state. The chapter also addresses affirmative action and the rights of ethnic minorities, as guaranteed by the Slovak Constitution and governed by various laws. It examines international human rights documents in light of the Constitution, and the protection that the law affords the Roma. A survey of the concepts adopted by Slovak governments after 1989 is also included, along with a list of public bodies that have dealt with the Roma after 1998, including the Office of the Slovak Government Representative for Roma Communities.

Key words: Constitution, principle of equality, ban on discrimination, affirmative action, rights of ethnic minorities, international documents, laws, protection afforded by the corpus of criminal law, strategic documents, state institutions, Office of the Slovak Government Representative for Roma communities.

THE CONSTITUTION

INTRODUCTION

The Constitution of the Slovak Republic is the supreme legal act in Slovakia's body of laws. The special position that the Constitution occupies is of great importance to our exploration of the approach of the Roma minority to the Slovak body of laws. The most important provisions in this regard are those in the Constitution's second chapter, which deals with fundamental rights and freedoms, and those governing the relationship between Slovak and international law.

There seems to be a certain ambivalence in these provisions of the Constitution: on the one hand, members of the Roma community are guaranteed equality, while on the other hand they are granted some rights and freedoms that apply only to national minorities and ethnic groups, not to the majority population. We will deal first with the principle of equality and the ban on discrimination anchored in the Constitution, then with the rights of national minorities and ethnic groups, and finally with the relationship between international and Slovak law as anchored in the Constitution.

THE CONSTITUTIONAL PRINCIPLE OF EQUALITY

The Constitution anchors the principle of equality in Article 12, Paragraphs 1 and 2 as follows:

(1) All human beings are free and equal in dignity and rights. Their fundamental rights and freedoms are inalienable, irrevocable, and perpetual.

(2) Fundamental rights shall be guaranteed in the Slovak Republic to every person regardless of sex, race, color, language, faith, religion, political affiliation or conviction, national or social origin, nationality or ethnic origin, property, birth or any other status, and no person shall be denied their legal rights, discriminated against or favored on any of these grounds.

Article 12 relates to the use of rights that the Constitution calls "fundamental rights and freedoms", and which include the rights listed in the second chapter of the Constitution – fundamental human rights and freedoms, political rights and the rights of national minorities and ethnic groups, economic, social and cultural rights, the right to protect the environment and cultural heritage, and the right to judicial and other legal protection.

Since the Constitution does not define discrimination, when Article 12 is applied the complete wording of the Constitution must be taken into account, as well as the texts of international legal norms. The cited Constitutional provision clearly states that fundamental rights and freedoms are guaranteed to everyone regardless of race, color, nationality or ethnic origin (see below for more on the Roma minority as a racial or national minority). However, it remains unclear which acts can be classified as discrimination, and who can commit them, i.e. who can violate Article 12, Paragraph 2 of the Constitution.

As for racial discrimination, the definition provided in Article 1 of the *International Convention on the Removal of all Forms of Racial Discrimination*, dated December 21, 1965 (hereafter "the Convention") is very useful:

"The expression 'racial discrimination' in this Convention means any differentiation, exclusion, restriction or favoring based on race, color, social origin, nationality or ethnic origin, the aim or consequence of which is to restrain or limit the acknowledgement, enjoyment or implementation of human rights and fundamental freedoms on the basis of equality in political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life."

The Convention thus defines discriminatory acts very broadly, saying discrimination can be a matter of both the aims and consequences of such acts. As for who can violate the equality principle, the Convention says that the equality principle is usually implemented in public life, meaning that the most likely violator of the principle is the state. The state, however, is not only obliged to act in a non-discriminatory way, but it also has to ensure (primarily through legislation) that individuals do not act in this manner.

Similar limits also apply to provisions on discrimination in the *European Convention on the Protection of Human Rights.* The ban on discrimination relates only to the public sphere, with certain exceptions concerning private relationships when such relationships have a public dimension, for example employment. In this regard, the most important article of the European Convention is Article 14, on which the judiction of the European Court for Human Rights in Strasbourg is based.[1]

Besides the general provisions on equality in Article 12, the Constitution emphasizes the equality principle in relation to other rights as well, such as the right to own property (Art. 20, Paragraph 1), the right to vote (Art. 30, Paragraph 3), and the equal rights of children born to married parents and those born out of wedlock (Art. 41, Paragraph 3).

Affirmative action is dealt with as a separate issue in the Constitution. Such action usually involves the introduction of legislative or

government measures favoring certain (e.g. ethnic) groups of inhabitants by giving them preferential and unequal access to education or job opportunities; the aim is usually to help the group integrate better into mainstream society. Article 12, Paragraph 2 of the Constitution suggests that this kind of positive discrimination is prohibited: "no person shall be denied their legal rights, discriminated against or favored on any of these grounds", the document says, with "these" grounds including race, color, nationality or ethnic origin. On the other hand, the Constitution also allows some exceptions to this rule, such as in Article 38, Paragraph 1, according to which "women, minors, and disabled people shall enjoy more extensive health protection and special working conditions", or Article 41, Paragraph 2, according to which "pregnant women shall be entitled to special treatment, terms of employment, and working conditions". The present wording of the Constitution, however, indicates that any affirmative action beyond these specific limits defined by the Constitution would be contrary to Article 12, Paragraph 2, which bans positive discrimination.

THE CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS OF NATIONAL MINORITIES AND ETHNIC GROUPS

The Constitution itself does not define the terms "national minority" or "ethnic group"; nor does it provide any list of "state acknowledged" national minorities, as was provided by a 1968 law. According to Article 12, Paragraph 3 of the Constitution, "every person has the right to freely decide which national group he or she belongs to. Any influence or coercion that could affect or lead to a denial of a person's original nationality is prohibited". Thus, in theory there is no limit to the number of national minorities and ethnic groups in Slovakia.

The Roma minority has been *de facto* recognized as a national minority for some time now, with Slovak citizens claiming this nationality in regular population censuses (1970, 1980, 1991 and 2001). The Slovak government in 1991 acknowledged the Roma minority as a national minority, and the Romany tongue is explicitly mentioned among those regional or minority languages acknowledged by Slovakia for the purposes of the *European Charter of Regional or Minority Languages*. These facts suggest that in principle, a Roma national minority exists in Slovakia, enjoying all the rights guaranteed to national minorities by the Constitution.

The rights of national minorities and ethnic groups in Slovakia are governed by Articles 33 and 34 of the Constitution, as follows:

Article 33
Membership in any national minority or ethnic group may not be used to the detriment of any individual.

Article 34
(1) Citizens who belong to national minorities or ethnic groups in Slovakia shall be guaranteed their full [right of] development, particularly the right to promote their cultural heritage with other citizens of the same national minority or ethnic group, the right to receive and disseminate information in their mother tongues, the right to form associations, and the right to create and maintain educational and cultural institutions.

(2) In addition to the right to learn the official [state] language, citizens who belong to national minorities or ethnic groups shall, under conditions defined by law, also be guaranteed:
    a) the right to be educated in a minority language;
    b) the right to use a minority language in communication with official bodies;

c) the right to help make decisions in matters affecting national minorities and ethnic groups.

(3) The exercise of rights by citizens who belong to a national minority, as guaranteed by this Constitution, may not threaten the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Slovakia, or discriminate against other citizens.

Article 33 of the Constitution follows Article 12 in banning discrimination based on membership in a national minority or ethnic group. It does not differentiate between these two minority categories, implying that "national minority" and "ethnic group" are synonymous from the legal viewpoint. Article 33 does not introduce any special rights for members of national minorities and ethnic groups.

APPLICATION OF INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DOCUMENTS IN SLOVAKIA IN LIGHT OF THE CONSTITUTION

A major overhaul of Slovakia's original 1992 Constitution (the amendments took effect on July 1, 2001) expanded Article 1 of the Constitution with the following wording: "Slovakia acknowledges and adheres to general rules of international law, international treaties by which [the country] is bound, and its other international obligations". This is the cornerstone of the entire constitutional approach to the relationship between international and Slovak law. However, neither the text of the Constitution, nor the explanatory report that accompanies it, says whether unwritten sources of international law such as "customary international law" or "rules of courtesy" should be considered part of "the general rules of international law" and "other international obligations" that the document cites.

Article 1, Paragraph 2 does not contain any concrete information on the position of the international treaties by which Slovakia is bound, nor does it offer any classification of these treaties. For this we have to turn to Article 7, Paragraph 5 of the Constitution, which was added in the 2001 amendment, and according to which: "International treaties on human rights and fundamental freedoms, and international treaties for whose application a special law is not necessary, as well as international treaties which directly confer rights or impose duties on physical or legal entities and which were ratified and promulgated according to the law, have precedence over other laws". This means that all treaties that the Constitution identifies as international treaties on human rights and fundamental freedoms have precedence over other laws (as well as over regulations such as statutory orders, decrees and by-laws); they do not, however, supersede either the Constitution or laws passed by a three-fifths majority in parliament.

Article 7, Paragraph 5 anchors the precedence of international treaties on human rights and fundamental freedoms over Slovakia's regular (i.e. non-constitutional) body of law. However, the only treaties to enjoy such a position are those that were ratified and promulgated after July 1, 2001, i.e. after the amendment to the Constitution took effect. Treaties ratified before this date are governed by Article 154c, Paragraph 1 of the Constitution, according to which: "International treaties on human rights and fundamental freedoms which Slovakia ratified and promulgated according to law before this constitutional act took effect shall be a part of its legal order, and shall have precedence over other laws as long as they provide a greater scope of constitutional rights and freedoms".

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LEGISLATION

INTRODUCTION

The Constitution's regulation of human rights, which takes precedence even over international standards, is characterized by general formulations that do not allow precise conclusions on certain rights to be drawn. Furthermore, Article 51 of the Constitution envisages the use of some of the rights it grants only within the framework of laws that will later be adopted to precisely define these rights. These two facts – the Constitution's general wording and its reliance on other laws to define and enact its provisions – greatly increase the importance of lower laws and other legal regulations in implementing various articles of the Constitution.

The legal regulation of human rights that are especially important to the Roma has several characteristics. First, these laws enlarge on the principle of equality and the ban on discrimination mentioned in the Constitution. Second, laws on national minority and ethnic group rights grant these rights also to the Roma as a national minority. Finally, several provisions of the Penal Code also pertain to the Roma, namely those specifying criminal sanctions for attacks on racial minorities. From the viewpoint of Slovak legislation, the Roma are treated as citizens with the right to equal treatment, as members of a national minority having language and cultural rights pertaining to national minorities and ethnic groups, and as members of a racial minority enjoying special protection under the body of criminal law.

THE PRINCIPLE OF EQUALITY AND THE BAN ON DISCRIMINATION IN SLOVAK LAW

Article 12, Paragraph 2 of the Constitution guarantees equality for everyone regardless of, among other things, race, color, language, nationality, or ethnic origin. As the context suggests, the ban on discrimination expressed in this provision applies to all fundamental rights and freedoms included in the Constitution's second chapter, and the violator of this ban is, according to the Constitution, primarily the state. The Constitution, however, neither specifies the legal relationships to which this ban applies, nor defines the acts by which the ban could be violated, nor sets sanctions for such violations. The identity of the violator (i.e. mainly the state) can be deduced only from a logical interpretation of the entire Constitution. The constitutional ban on discrimination is applied through separate laws.

An example of a law that applies the discrimination ban to a particular legal relationship, by defining the violator of the ban as well as the unlawful act and the system of sanctions, is the 1992 Consumer Protection Law. According to Section 6, Paragraph 1 of this law: "The vendor must not act dishonestly or discriminate against the consumer in any way; he must not refuse to sell to the consumer any products exhibited or otherwise for sale, or deny any service which he is capable of providing; he must not link the provision of a service to the purchase of other products or the provision of other services, unless this limitation be usual in commercial relations, and be related to all products."

Section 112, Paragraph 1 of the 1996 Employment Law also applies the ban on discrimination to specific legal relationships. According to this law: "The employer must not publish job offers that include any limitations or discriminatory statements concerning race, color, language, sex, social origin, age, religion, political or other conviction or affiliation, trade union activity, membership in a national or ethnic group, or any other status."

In this regard, Section 13 of the 2001 Labor Code is of great importance, as for the first time in Slovak history it introduced a definition of indirect discrimination:

(1) Employees shall be entitled to the rights arising from labor relations with no restriction whatsoever, and no direct or indirect discrimination on the grounds of gender, marital or family status, race, color, language, age, health, belief or religion, political or other conviction, trade union involvement, national or social origin, national or ethnic group affiliation, property, lineage or other status, except in cases defined by law, or in cases involving tangible reasons related to the performance of the work, such as aptitudes or requirements and the nature of the work that the employee is to perform.

(2) For the purposes of equal treatment pursuant to Paragraph 1, indirect discrimination means an apparently neutral instruction, decision or practice that disadvantages a substantial number of physical entities, if such an instruction or practice is not appropriate or necessary, and cannot be justified by actual circumstances.

RIGHTS PERTAINING TO MEMBERS
OF THE ROMA MINORITY
AS MEMBERS OF
A NATIONAL MINORITY

At present there are more than 100 legal regulations in Slovakia dealing with the protection of national minorities. It is impossible to deal here with all of these regulations, so we will focus only on those that apply the rights of national minorities as stated in Article 34 of the Constitution (the content of Article 33, the main provision on the prevention of discrimination, has been dealt with above).

Article 34, Paragraph 1 of the Constitution guarantees all national minority and ethnic group members "their full development", which includes the rights to promote their cultural heritage with other citizens of the same national minority or ethnic group, to receive and disseminate information in their mother tongues, to form associations, and to create and maintain educational and cultural institutions. The Constitution says that the details of these rights will be set by other laws, meaning that their application in practice is limited until the laws executing these rights have been adpoted.[2] However, it is important to note that the individual rights of national minority members may also be governed by laws not dealing exclusively with national minorities: for example, the right to receive and disseminate information in one's mother tongue is granted by the Press Law, the Law on Slovak Television, the Law on Slovak Radio, and the Law on Broadcasting and Retransmission, without the need for a special a law for national minority members.

The right to form associations is basically a special form of the more general right of free association granted to all citizens of Slovakia by a 1990 law. The creation and maintenance of educational and cultural institutions largely falls under the right to associate, or the right to establish non-profit organizations (such as foundations, non-investment funds, not-for-profit organizations carrying out community services, etc.). On the other hand, even if the state took a neutral approach to the development of national minorities through general laws, the State Budget Law still allocates certain public money for the development of national minorities.

Article 34, Paragraph 2 governs the language rights of national minorities as well as the right to participate in decision-making on matters affecting national minorities and ethnic groups. Language rights include the right to learn the official state language and the right to be educated in a minority language

within the school system. A separate law – the 1999 Law on the Use of Minority Languages – introduced a rule according to which members of a national minority that in the most recent population census represented more than 20% of a given municipality's inhabitants, have the right to use their mother tongue in that municipality. The right to use one's mother tongue in communications with official bodies includes the right to submit written documents in the language of a national minority, and the right to receive an answer from a state body in both the official state language and the language of a national minority (except for public documents); national minority members are also entitled to receive the rulings of administrative bodies in their own languages. In municipalities where a given national minority represents more than 20% of inhabitants, street signs may be erected in the language of that minority, and the local council may hold proceedings in the language of the national minority if all people present agree. The Law on the Use of Minority Languages, however, does not cover the use of national minority languages under all circumstances, only in communications with official bodies. New procedures are being prepared governing language rights in communications with courts.

Article 34, Paragraph 2, Section c), grants national minority members the right to participate in decision-making on matters affecting national minorities and ethnic groups. Again, the legislation does not specify how this right is to be applied, and does not define which "matters" pertaining to national minorities should involve their participation. The right to help make decisions thus usually involves the right to vote in elections to municipal councils, regional parliaments and the national parliament. Another important form of participation in the administration of public affairs is the right of petition.

PROTECTION AFFORDED TO THE ROMA BY THE CRIMINAL LAW CORPUS

An important tool for combating racism and protecting the members of minority groups from attacks is the corpus of criminal law. Criminal law is a branch of law that defines, prohibits and punishes the most serious unlawful acts, which is why it uses the heaviest sanctions – penalties that lay the most serious restraints on the rights and freedoms of perpetrators of criminal offences, such as fines, prohibitions, forfeiture of property, banishment or imprisonment (the death penalty is forbidden under the Constitution and the international treaties by which Slovakia is bound).

The 1961 Penal Code protects and punishes everyone equally; however, it also contains provisions affording special protection to minorities as the potential targets of racially motivated attacks. It both prohibits and punishes some displays of racism, and prescribes severe sentences for some crimes if the perpetrator had a racial motive.

Laws Focused on Combating Racism

The Penal Code contains several provisions that protect members of national, ethnic and racial minorities from verbal or physical attacks. According to Section 198 of the Penal Code, anyone who publicly slanders a nation or its language, or any race or group, may be imprisoned for up to one year or fined. According to Section 198a (the crime of instigating national, racial or ethnic hatred), anyone who publicly stirs up hatred of a nation or race, or calls for restraints on the rights and freedoms of its members, may be imprisoned for up to one year or fined.

As of January 1, 1992 the Penal Code has also included the crime of supporting and

promoting movements (i.e. fascism) that suppress the rights and freedoms of citizens. Anyone who supports or promotes a movement that evidently strives to suppress the rights and freedoms of citizens, or that preaches national, racial, social, or religious hatred, commits a crime carrying a sentence of one to five years in jail. Perpetrators face imprisonment for three to eight years if they use press, film, radio, TV, or other media to commit their crime; if they commit their crime as members of an organized group; or if they commit their crime during a state of military alert. According to Section 261 of the Penal Code, anyone who expresses sympathy for fascism or a similar movement specified in Section 260 faces six months to three years in jail.

Racial Motives for Crimes

An equally important form of protection afforded to members of national, ethnic and racial minorities by the criminal law is the provision that in cases where a perpetrator can be shown to have had a racial or similar motive for a crime, this motive becomes a "qualifying moment", i.e. an attribute of a crime that allows a court to impose a higher sentence than if the attribute was not present. According to Section 196, Paragraph 2 of the Penal Code, anyone who uses violence against a group of people or an individual, or threatens them with assault, battery or grievous harm because of their political opinions, nationality, race, religion or absence of religion, faces up to two years imprisonment; however, if the perpetrator of the crime is not shown to have threatened the victims for their race etc., the maximum sentence is one year.

The same is true of murder cases (Section 219, Para. 2, letter f): If someone commits a murder because of the victim's ethnic, national or political affiliation, religion or absence of religion, he faces a jail term of 12 to 15 years, or even an exceptional sentence; in cases of "unqualified" murder, however, the sentence is 10 to 15 years. Other crimes that carry "qualifying moments" if they were committed because of the victim's ethnic, national or political affiliation, religion or absence of religion, include battery (Section 221 of the Penal Code) and grievous harm (Section 222).

STRATEGIC SLOVAK GOVERNMENT MATERIALS ADDRESSING THE PROBLEMS OF THE ROMA AFTER 1989

Besides legislation, the position of the Roma has also been addressed in the conceptual materials of various governments. Post-1989 approaches to the "Roma issue" began to accept the situation of the Roma as an ethical, economic, political, and social problem (Vašečka, 2000, p. 197)

The first strategic concept adopted by a Slovak government on the Roma issue was a 1991 document called *The Principles of the Government's Roma Policy*. This document included some general ideas on how to approach the Roma issue in terms of culture, education, economy, social security, and ethnic matters. However, it failed to specify concrete measures, or to say how the plan would be subsidized.

In terms of ethnic matters, the document said that the basic task was to acknowledge the independence of the Roma in the legislative and legal system, thereby putting the rights of the Roma and other minorities living in Slovakia on an equal footing. The aim was to acknowledge the Roma as a nation, and thus to ensure their political and legal equality.

In the field of social and economic security, the document's basic philosophy was not to

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give the Roma special treatment or state funds just because they were members of a minority. Instead, the document proposed to solve the problems of Roma in need of special social or other care through a wide-ranging social policy available to all people regardless of their ethnic origin. This concept was not adopted until the 1992 parliamentary elections, and the incoming cabinet led by PM Vladimír Mečiar did not take it further (Vašečka, 2001, p. 13).

In 1996, the third Mečiar government passed a document called *Proposal of Tasks and Measures for Solving the Problems of Citizens Requiring Special Help*. Besides briefly defining individual problems such as schooling for children, unemployment, housing, upbringing and education, hygiene and health, and negative social behavior, the concept included measures to help people in need of special help. However, neither the measures nor the funding needed to put them into effect were sufficiently spelled out. Although the title of the document suggested it wanted to address "citizens requiring special help" without regard for their ethnic origin, the tasks it set suggested that the target group was the Roma.

The implementation of the concept was supervised by the Office of the Slovak Government for Solving the Problems of People Requiring Special Help, which was established in 1995 as a special department at the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family. Branislav Baláž was appointed the government's representative to lead the Office, with the job of coordinating, regulating and supervising the Office's employment, social, housing, educational, health and sanitary activities.

Office employees worked on a new government approach to the Roma for the next two years. They analyzed the problems of the Roma and possible ways of solving them, as well as the approach other countries took to the issue. Finally, in November 1997, the cabinet adopted the *Concept of the Slovak Government for Solving the Problems of the Roma in the Current Socio-Economic Conditions* (Vašečka, 2000, p. 198).

The basic principles of the plan were as follows:
- The civic principle – respecting the values and way of life of the target group.
- The solidarity principle – removing prejudices and eliminating displays of extremism in society.
- The principle of allowing citizens to participate in solving their own problems.
- The principle of personal responsibility – solving the problems of the Roma not merely by declaring their rights, but by supplying aid provided the Roma themselves take personal responsibility.
- The principle of positive encouragement of people who, for various reasons, are unable to solve their own problems.
- The principle of solving the problem where it arises – in the natural social environment of the people the concept aims to assist (*Conceptual Plan…*, 1997, p. 6 – 7).

Money for solving social, housing and unemployment problems was not allocated to the Roma on the basis of their ethnicity, but was channeled into concrete projects to help people in need. This was meant to preserve continuity with the 1991 plan, which had also rested on the civic principle. The document briefly defined problems in individual areas, and proposed measures to solve them, the deadline being the year 2002. The measures were to be funded from the budgets of individual ministries and regional authorities.

After coming to power, the Dzurinda administration in 1999 scrapped the 1997 *Conceptual Plan of the Slovak Government* and

adopted a new document, called *Strategy of the Slovak Government for Solving the Problems of the Roma and the Set of Implementation Measures – 1st Stage*. This was the first concept that attempted to find a long-term solution to the Roma issue.

Action was to be taken in areas where the situation was critical – unemployment, housing, health, the social network and the school system – as well as in areas requiring improvement, such as human rights, the rights of national minorities, cooperation with NGOs, and regional development.

In its introduction, the 1999 Strategy described the state of society, taking into account the position of the Roma minority, and proposed measures to solve individual problems. Some measures (especially those concerning housing, unemployment and the social system) were insufficient, even though they had been classified as the most important. On the other hand, the Strategy was well prepared in the fields of culture and education, and in naming areas of discrimination against the Roma and proposing solutions (Vašečka, 2000). The measures defined by the strategy were to be funded from the budgets of individual ministries and regional authorities, which receive funds from the state budget on the basis of their annual requirements and concrete proposed measures.

Besides adopting measures, the strategy also intended to support projects funded from the General Cash Administration category of the state budget. These projects are submitted to the Office of the Slovak Government Representative for Roma Communities (the former Office of the Slovak Government Representative for Solving the Problems of the Roma Minority) by bodies dealing with the Roma issue, and are reviewed by the Committee for the Selection, Approval and Evaluation of Projects Solving the Issues of the Roma Community, which was formed as an advisory body to the government representative in 2000. The projects selected for funding are submitted for cabinet approval by the Deputy Prime Minister for Human Rights, Minorities and Regional Development.[3] In this way, the problems of the Roma minority are addressed not only by state institutions but also NGOs and other bodies dealing with the issue.

The Strategy requires individual ministries and regional authorities to draw up a set of measures and concrete tasks, including funding for them from their own budgets. The measures and tasks that were scripted were adopted by the cabinet under the name of *The Detailed Strategy of the Slovak Government for Solving the Problems of the Roma and a Set of Concrete Measures for 2000 – 2nd Stage*.

This "detailed strategy" included 282 concrete activities. The regional authorities and ministries allocated 165 million Slovak crowns (Sk – $4 million) to fund their programs. The tasks and measures were prepared in more detail, and just as with the first stage of the Strategy, were built on the civic principle emphasizing positive stimulation of the Roma. According to sociologist Michal Vašečka, the detailed strategy was the most in-depth concept adopted since 1989; it included precise definitions of problems and tasks, and focused on remote regions and sub-regions and areas affected by economic transformation.

When it came to the implementation of individual measures, however, the biggest problem was lack of money, because, as the detailed strategy stated, funding for individual measures proposed by the detailed strategy could be assigned only in the *Preliminary Draft of the 2000 State Budget*. This meant that it was not possible to increase

state budget funding, and that funding for the tasks adopted was limited by individual budget sections.

Besides the concepts mentioned above, on April 12, 2002 the cabinet approved a document called *Priorities of the Slovak Government in Relation to Roma Communities in 2002*, based on the foregoing strategy and the detailed strategy. The document envisaged the following priorities: education, support for the construction of municipal housing and services, influencing public opinion, the establishment of a Roma House, research, a complex program to develop Roma settlements, and a program of social fieldworkers. These individual programs aimed to help Roma communities develop in socially and economically troubled areas with education, housing and health problems. Bearing in mind that in 2002 the state budget didn't allocate any money for independent programs to improve the position of the Roma, the 2002 programs were to be funded from the *General Cash Administration – Reserve for Projects Addressing the Problems of the Roma Community* and the *Social and Cultural Needs of the Roma Community* chapters of the state budget, and partly from the budgets of various ministries (*Priorities of the Slovak Government…*, 2002). In terms of detail and the involvement of all players, the 2002 priorities were the first document to take an integrated approach to improving the situation of the Roma in Slovakia.

As can be seen in this brief summary of government concepts, Slovakia's post-1989 governments showed varying levels of interest in solving the Roma issue. Scrapping old plans and adopting new concepts every time the government changed proved ineffective, however, as given the depth of the problems the Roma face, the measures proposed by individual concepts could not be prepared and implemented during a single electoral term.

STATE INSTITUTIONS DEALING WITH THE ROMA ISSUE BETWEEN 1998 AND 2002

After the 1998 elections, the first Mikuláš Dzurinda cabinet established the post of Deputy Prime Minister for Human Rights, Minorities and Regional Development, which coordinated all issues related to national minorities and human rights. The office also administered sustainable development, regional development, drug control, personal data protection, and the third sector through the Government Council for Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organizations. Tasks related to national minorities, human rights, regional development and coordination of the EU's Phare project controlled by the Deputy Prime Minister for Human Rights, Minorities and Regional Development were coordinated by the Deputy Prime Minister's office and the Section of Human Rights and Minorities of the Slovak Government Office. The Deputy Prime Minister coordinated the preparation and review of projects dealing with the Roma issue, funded from the state budget on the basis of the government's 1999 strategy, and submitted them for the government's deliberation.

The aforementioned Section of Human Rights and Minorities was established in 1998 in accordance with the Slovak government's program declaration, and was integrated into the structure of the Government Office. In the first half of 2002 it had 17 employees in three departments: the Department of Human Rights and Minorities, the Department of Project Coordination, and the Department of Regional Development. As for Roma issues, the Section coordinated the implementation of the *Action Plan for Preventing All Forms of Discrimination, Racism, Xenophobia, Anti-Semitism and Other Displays of Intolerance* adopted by the gov-

ernment for the 2000 to 2001 and 2002 to 2003 periods. The Section was also responsible for implementing and monitoring Phare projects and the improvement of the position of national minorities in cooperation with other state bodies.

The Slovak government's national policy advisory, initiating and coordination body for 1998 – 2002 was the Government Council for National Minorities and Ethnic Groups. The Council recommended solutions to the Slovak government for the problems of national minorities in Slovakia. It also prepared, discussed and submitted to the government reports on the position and living conditions of national minorities and ethnic groups. Its head office was at the Section of Human Rights and Minorities of the Government Office, and it was chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister for Human Rights, Minorities and Regional Development. Members of the Council included representatives of Slovak national minorities.

The Slovak parliament's Committee for Human Rights and Nationalities is authorized to submit bills and other recommendations on matters falling into its jurisdiction, to supervise the observance and implementation of laws, and to submit proposals and standpoints to the parliament and the government. The Committee has 10 members, all of whom are MPs.

At the end of 1998, the Office of the Slovak Government Representative for Roma Communities was established. The cabinet appointed Vincent Danihel to the post of Government Representative in February 1999. One of Danihel's first tasks was to develop the Office and draw up a two-stage strategy for the Slovak government to solve the problems of the Roma national minority, as well as to coordinate the activities envisaged by the strategy. The Office was integrated into the Government Office. In the second half of 2000 it had 10 full-time and 2 part-time employees. It was funded by the Government Office, while from May 2000 to November 2002 the World Bank provided a grant of $278,300. Danihel was removed from his post in May 2001 on the basis of a human resources audit (*Information on Strengthening…*, 2002). The Government Office then held a public competition for the vacant post, with the participation of Council of Europe and EU observers, based on which the cabinet on June 1, 2001 selected Klára Orgovánová as the new Government Representative (*Evaluation of the Activities of the Slovak Government…*, 2001, p. 1).

The Slovak government, at a meeting on September 19, 2001, approved a modified *Statute of the Government Representative for Roma Communities*, a change in the Office's name, and a new organizational structure for the Office.[5] In accordance with its new structure, the Office opened a new branch in eastern Slovakia's Prešov to help collect field information and study the effectiveness of individual measures pertaining to Roma communities in eastern Slovakia. In the first half of 2002, the Office employed 16 full-time employees (3 in Prešov).

The Government Representative's main task was to coordinate the work of different state institutions in keeping with the cabinet's 1999 strategy and detailed strategy. However, the activities and the way the funds were spent remained largely uncoordinated and lacking in concept. To improve the coordination function of the Government Representative, the cabinet established a Joint Committee for the Affairs of Roma Communities (*Evaluation of the Activities of the Slovak Government…*, 2001, p. 2, *Statute of the Joint Committee…*, 2001).

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At the beginning of 2002, the Representative's Office established an Advisory Committee to the Slovak Government Representative for Roma Communities, which helped prepare programs to solve the problems of Roma communities. The Advisory Committee employed mostly Roma representatives.

Other bodies that administer the field of national minorities and ethnic groups include the Culture Ministry (Section of Minority Cultures), the Education Ministry (Department of National Schools, State Pedagogical Institute, methodical centers), the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family (Department of Family Policy, Health Care Section), the National Labor Bureau, the Ministry of Construction and Regional Development, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Department of Human Rights), the Ministry of Health (State Health Institute) and regional and district authorities.

the Problems of the Roma Community, and 15 million Sk for the Social and Cultural Needs of the Roma Community). A total of 50 million Sk was allocated for 2002 (15 million Sk for the Reserve for Projects Solving the Problems of the Roma Community, and 35 million Sk for the Social and Cultural Needs of the Roma Community).

4. In August 2002, the cabinet approved the release of funds to implement these priorities. The field worker program was co-financed by the National Labor Bureau.

5. In September 2002 the cabinet approved the new Statute of the Slovak Government Representative for Roma Communities. In comparison with the previous one, this statute was more detailed, especially in specifying the main tasks of the Government Representative and relationships with state bodies, regional governments and other entities. The most important change was that the Government Representative now reported directly to the Prime Minister and not to the Deputy Prime Minister for Human Rights, Minorities and Regional Development.

ENDNOTES

1. In connection with the Convention it must be remembered that Slovakia also signed Additional Protocol No. 12, which broadens discrimination protection to the rights granted by the legislation of individual states (Article 14 relates only to cases where discrimination concerns the rights granted by the agreement itself). So far, Additional Protocol No. 12 has been ratified by only one Council of Europe member state – Georgia.

2. In this connection we note the legal disputes that arose from not adopting the Law on the Use of Minority Languages, and the ruling of the Constitutional Court on this matter.

3. In 1999, the state budget allocated 15 million Sk ($375,000) for projects from the General Cash Administration – Reserve for Projects Solving the Problems of the Roma Community budget category. Some 30 million Sk was allocated for the years 2000 and 2001 (15 million Sk into the Reserve for Projects Solving

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6. *International Convention on the Removal of All Forms of Racial Discrimination No. 95/ 1974 Coll.*, (New York: UNO, December 21, 1965).

7. *Koncepčné zámery vlády SR na riešenie problémov Rómov v súčasných spoločensko-ekonomických podmienkach* [Conceptual Plan of the Slovak Government to Solve the Problems of the Roma in the Current Socio-Economic Conditions], (Bratislava: Úrad vlády SR, 1997).

8. *Návrh úloh a opatrení na riešenie problémov občanov, ktorí potrebujú osobitnú pomoc na rok 1996* [Proposal of Tasks and Measures for Solving the Problems of Citizens Requiring Special Help for the Year 1996], (Bratislava: Úrad vlády SR, 1996).

9. *Oznámenie MZV SR č. 588/2001 o uzavretí Európskej charty regionálnych alebo menšinových jazykov* [Declaration of the Foreign Ministry No. 588/2001 on the Signing of the European Charter of Regional or Minority Languages], (Bratislava: MZV SR, 2001).

10. *Podpora vlády rómskym projektom* [Government Support for Roma Projects], (Bratislava: Úrad vlády SR, 2000).

11. *Priority vlády SR vo vzťahu k rómskym komunitám na rok 2002, Komplexný rozvojový program rómskych osád a Program sociálnych terénnych pracovníkov* [Priorities of the Slovak Government in Relation to Roma Communities in 2002, Complex Roma Settlement Development Program and the Program of Social Field Workers], (Bratislava: Úrad vlády SR 2002).

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14. *Štatút Medzirezortnej komisie pre záležitosti rómskych komunít* [Statute of the Joint Committee for the Affairs of Roma Communities], (Bratislava: Úrad vlády SR, 2001).

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23. *Zákon č. 140/1961 Zb* [Law No. 140/1961 Coll.] *Trestný zákon v znení neskorších predpisov* [The Penal Code, as amended].

24. *Zákon NR SR č. 387/1996 Z. z. o zamestnanosti v znení neskorších predpisov* [The Employment Law of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 387/1996 Coll., as amended].

25. *Zákon č. 311/2001 Z. z. Zákonník práce v znení neskorších predpisov* [Law No. 311/2001 Coll. – the Labor Code, as amended].

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INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTS CONCERNING THE ROMA

Summary: The author surveys the most important documents drawn up by the United Nations, the Council of Europe, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) dealing with the position and the rights of the Roma. An awareness of the unusually poor position of the Roma has led to the drafting of wide-ranging documents addressing the legal status of the Roma and their struggle against discrimination. As can be seen from some recent documents discussed in this chapter, temporary measures are increasingly seen as a suitable way of achieving equality for the Roma. Such documents often emphasize the importance of giving the Roma a voice in decisions on programs that affect them.

Key words: United Nations, Council of Europe, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, struggle against discrimination, segregation, housing, education, social exclusion, racially motivated violence, decision making role, affirmative action.

INTRODUCTION

The phrase "international documents pertaining to the Roma" refers to all binding international legal or political human rights documents, including those focused on discrimination. It also covers all documents adopted during the past decade focusing on positive measures in favor of minorities. During the said period, several international organizations devoted their attention to the Roma as a group whose standard minority rights (language and cultural) as well as almost all human rights were being systematically violated. This third group of documents focused on the Roma tend not to define new rights, but instead to monitor the implementation and supervision of human and minority rights regarding the Roma approved by the international community, as well as measures intended to help the Roma achieve true equality.[1]

The most important documents that are binding on Slovakia have already been translated into Slovak. The following survey looks especially at documents in the third group, i.e. related to Roma issues, as well as general documents in which the Roma are highlighted. The author also briefly summarizes the standpoints of bodies monitoring the observance of covenants by contracting parties, including Slovakia. The other documents presented in this chapter are political documents that lay out moral and political commitments.

THE ROMA IN UNITED NATIONS DOCUMENTS

The first mention of the Roma in the documents of the United Nations (UN) occurred in the resolution of the Subcommittee for the Prevention of Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities[2] 6 (XXX), dated August

31, 1977. The resolution includes an appeal to all states inhabited by the Roma to ensure the Roma have the same rights that other people enjoy.

The Roma were mentioned again in a UN document 14 years later, in Subcommittee Resolution No. 1991/21: "in many countries there are barriers preventing members of the Roma community from applying their civic, political, social, and cultural rights. These barriers represent discrimination against the Roma, due to which this community is particularly vulnerable".

In Resolution No. 1992/65, entitled *Protection of the Roma*, the Human Rights Committee called upon the Subcommittee's special minority reporter to pay special attention to the living conditions of the Roma (Yeung Sik Yeun, 2000).

In 1999, the Human Rights Committee's special reporter for current forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance, Maurice Glélé-Ahanhanzo, went on a mission to the Czech Republic, Hungary and Rumania. In his report he found a similar level of prejudice against the Roma in all three countries, however, he noted differences in displays of discrimination, as well as each country's methods of combating it. The report contained no general recommendations, but made recommendations for individual countries regarding their current problems (segregation of Roma pupils, depiction of the Roma in the media, police approach to the Roma, absence of a far-ranging anti-discrimination law (Glélé-Ahanhanzo, 1999).[3]

This special report was written during intense preparations by all international human rights organizations for the World Conference Against Racism. The UN organized a seminar of particular importance for the Roma in July 2000 in Warsaw, naming it *The*

Central and Eastern European Regional Seminar of Experts on the Protection of Minorities and Other Vulnerable Groups and Strengthening Human Rights Capacities at the National Level. In the recommendations adopted for the World Conference was a separate section called *Lingering Racism Towards the Roma* (clauses 54 to 59). The experts pointed to the need for better cooperation between individual governments and Roma organization leaders, and the need to devote special attention to the Roma during the World Conference. They also warned that the activities of individual governments should be based on reliable statistics, and recommended that the World Conference appeal to individual states to give Roma children equal access to education as recommended by the OSCE's High Commissioner and the Council of Europe's Group of Experts (*Report of the Central and Eastern European…*, 2000).

The UN Council Against Racism held its first debate on the situation of the Roma at its 57th meeting in 2000. The talks resulted in the adoption of General Recommendation No. 27, headlined *Discrimination Against the Roma*,[4] which together with the declaration and the action plan adopted by the World Conference represents the cornerstone of the UN's endeavor to improve the position of the Roma. In its six parts the document proposed that the signatories to the *Agreement on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination* adopt general measures to protect people from racially motivated violence, as well as measures in the fields of education, social security, media, and public life.

The Agreement advised of the need to adopt anti-discrimination legislation, strategies and programs to improve the position of the Roma and the relationship between the Roma and the rest of the population. It recommended measures in education (active coop-

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eration with Roma parents, preventing the segregation of Roma pupils while leaving open the possibility of bilingual education or education in the Roma's mother tongue), Roma living conditions (adopting affirmative action measures regarding Roma employment, preventing the segregation of housing, supporting Roma health). The document also said the state must act if racism, hatred, or incitement to discrimination and violence were spread by the media. Measures to boost the participation of Roma in public life envisaged the participation of Roma communities in designing, implementing and evaluating all projects and programs affecting them, and the participation of the Roma at all levels of public administration. The UN High Commissioner was recommended to establish a department in his office covering all Roma issues. The Agreement at the same time recommended that the World Conference pay attention to Roma communities as among the most disadvantaged and discriminated groups in the world (*Discrimination Against the Roma*…, 2000).

These recommendations drew a response in Durban. The Declaration of the World Conference included one clause devoted exclusively to the Roma (clause 68): "It is with deep concern that we note the ongoing displays of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and similar intolerance, including violence, aimed at the Roma, and we recognize the need to adopt effective policies and implementation mechanisms to achieve their full and effective equality." (*World Conference Against Racism...*, 2001a)

The action plan that was adopted invited all states to ensure equal access to education at all levels, including complementary programs of intercultural education, and the recruitment of Roma teachers and assistants, thanks to whom children and juveniles could study their mother tongue. At the same time

it encouraged states to adopt suitable and concrete policies and measures, to develop implementation mechanisms in cooperation with Roma representatives, and in regions where such mechanisms are absent, to exchange experiences in order to eradicate discrimination. It also recommended that intergovernmental organizations deal with the Roma issue in their help and cooperation projects, and support their economic, social, and cultural development (*World Conference Against Racism...*, 2001).

The results of the UN World Conference Against Racism deservedly provoked confused reactions. However, from the viewpoint of the Roma, the documents that were adopted were of great significance: for the first time, the minority was included on a list of groups considered the most vulnerable in the world.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF UN COMMITTEES ON SLOVAKIA'S PERIODICAL REPORTS

The submission of periodical reports on the implementation of ratified agreements by contractual parties to the respective UN committees is one of the UN's basic control mechanisms. Four committees also accept complaints by individuals. Slovak citizens rarely take advantage of this possibility, however, and instead tend to submit complaints to the European Court for Human Rights.

The Human Rights Committee

Slovakia's initial report on the *International Pact on Civic and Political Rights* was discussed by the Committee in July 1997. The Committee expressed concern, as the report contained evidence that the Roma were a

frequent target of racist assaults, and that they were not being sufficiently protected by law enforcement bodies. The Committee observed that Slovakia had not adopted any legislation to allow the use of minority languages in communications with official state institutions. The Committee thus recommended that laws guaranteeing minority language rights be adopted immediately. The Committee also requested additional information on guarantees that school textbooks did not include any materials supporting anti-Semitic or other racial opinions (*Concluding Observations…*, August 4, 1997).

The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

This UN Committee reviewed Slovakia's first, second and third periodical reports on the *International Agreement on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination*, which were submitted as a single document in August 2000.

The Committee saw the following acts by Slovakia as positive: creation of the post of Deputy Prime Minister for Human Rights, Minorities and Regional Development; creation of the post of Government Representative for Solving the Problems of the Roma; approval of a document entitled *The Strategy of the Slovak Government to Solve the Problems of the Roma and the Set of Implementation Measures*; and adoption in 1999 of the *Law on the Use of Minority Languages.*

On the other hand, the settlement structure of the Roma minority was criticized. The Committee was extremely concerned that two municipalities – Ňagov and Rokytovce – had banned Roma from entering their villages, and that proceedings to revoke the decisions were extremely lengthy. The Committee recommended that Slovakia reassesses legisla-

tion on local residence permits, and promptly and thoroughly examine cases of discrimination regarding access to housing. The Committee asked Slovakia to monitor the trends underlying racial segregation, and to present its findings in ensuing reports. The Committee also focused on recurring violent crimes against the Roma and other ethnic minorities, recommending that these crimes be investigated promptly and thoroughly, that racist organizations be prosecuted effectively, and that the state run prevention programs to combat racially motivated violence.

Other recommendations concerned the education of Roma children (concern was expressed over the many Roma children not attending school, and segregation in the education system), and the position of the Roma on the labor market (the Committee called on Slovakia to prohibit discrimination in the workplace, to introduce special programs to cut Roma unemployment, and to focus on vocational education for the Roma within the framework of the *National Employment Plan*). The Committee also discovered some negative phenomena related to Roma health (high mortality, poor nutrition, poor knowledge of child and maternal health, inadequate access to clean drinking water and sanitary facilities). The Committee requested information on the inclusion of human rights education in the curricula of schools, police academies, and correctional centers; on campaigns to increase public awareness; on the fulfillment of Resolution No. 110 of the Slovak parliament's Human Rights and Minorities Committee; on cooperation between the Attorney General's Office and NGOs in the detection of racially motivated crimes; and more detailed statistics on the number of racial offences (*Concluding Observations…* May 1, 2001).

At the same meeting the Committee took up a complaint filed by Anna Koptová alleging a disregard for human rights in the decisions

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of the Ňagov and Rokytovce municipalities to ban Roma from entering these villages. The Committee recognized the complaint as legitimate: although the decisions concerned only a certain group of Roma who had previously resided in these villages, the context in which they were adopted clearly suggested that other Roma were also prohibited from settling there. The Committee recommended that Slovakia take all necessary measures to ensure the full and immediate removal of documents limiting the freedom of movement and residence of the country's Roma.[5]

Another complaint the Committee accepted was one by Miroslav Lacko, who had allegedly not been served in a restaurant at the Košice railroad station. Given that the owner of the restaurant had been convicted of a criminal offense following the intervention of the Public Prosecutor's Office, the Committee concluded that despite the length of the proceedings, the Agreement had not been violated. At the same time it recommended that Slovakia amend its legislation to ensure access to public places, to provide sanctions for refusing access on the grounds of race, and to speed up investigations of such offences.[6]

The Committee on the Rights of the Child

The Committee discussed the *Initial Report of Slovakia on the Agreement on the Rights of the Child* in October 2000. The concluding observations that were adopted discussed the situation of Roma children in six points (points 19 through 24), stating that despite ongoing efforts by the state, Roma children were nevertheless exposed to discrimination as defined by several provisions of the Agreement, particularly article 24 (the right to receive the best possible health care), article 27 (the right to a standard of living ensuring physical, mental, spiritual, moral, and social well-being), and

article 28 (the right to education). It recommended that Slovakia adopt all necessary measures to ensure that all the country's children enjoyed all their rights in accordance with the Agreement, without facing discrimination. The Committee agreed with the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination's recommendations, and recommended that Slovakia adopt them.

The Committee took the view that Slovakia did not fully protect children and their rights from all forms of discrimination as called for in article 2 of the Agreement, as the state failed to adopt affirmative action to support vulnerable groups of children, especially Roma children. Roma children clearly require more help and support from the state to be able to enjoy their right to develop the same way other children do. The Committee thus recommended that Slovakia review its implementation of this Agreement article.

Another source of concern was the huge regional differences in the accessibility of health care, the extent of malnutrition among children under five years of age and school-age children (particularly those from the most vulnerable groups). Despite the sophistication of state social policies, some groups of children – the Roma, street children, and children in orphanages – live in social and economic exclusion. The Committee criticized the fact that a substantial portion of Roma children attend "special" schools (for retarded children) due to language and cultural differences between the Roma and the majority, that the schools law does not provide for education in the Roma tongue, and that negative stereotypes of the Roma and their children are generally accepted – as was also noted in the initial report. The Committee recommended that further measures be adopted to ensure equal access and opportunities for Roma children in relation to education, and called for extra classes to be cre-

ated if necessary. The state was also advised to ascertain whether the Roma approved of the way the Roma language was taught in school, and to consider the possibilities of teaching entire curricula in Roma (*Concluding Observations…*, October 23, 2000).

The Committee Against Torture

Slovakia's initial report on the *Treaty Against Torture and Other Kinds of Violent, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment* was taken up by this Committee in May 2001. The Committee pointed to accusations that the police had participated in attacks against the Roma and other groups of inhabitants, as well as accusations of police inactivity in cases where the police themselves had failed to provide adequate protection to victims of racially motivated attacks by skinheads or other extremist groups. The Slovak authorities, the Committee noted, had failed to investigate such accusations rapidly, independently, or thoroughly, and had also failed to prosecute and sentence those responsible for this behavior. The Committee's advice that measures be taken to ensure the rapid, independent, and efficient investigation of accusations of improper treatment or torture by the police remain generally valid. One requirement pertaining to the Roma was that Slovakia in its next periodical report present statistics on people placed in military and civilian state institutions for reasons of detention, correction, psychiatric treatment, special education etc., together with data on their ethnic origin (*Concluding Observations…*, May 11, 2001).

THE ROMA IN COUNCIL OF EUROPE DOCUMENTS

Unlike the UN, the Council of Europe has been adopting documents concerning the Roma since the end of the 1960s. The first important document dealing with the possible admission of new countries with large Roma minorities to the European Union was *Recommendation 1203 (1993) on Gypsies in Europe*.[7] In 1993, western countries experienced the first waves of immigrants from South-Eastern Europe, which raised fears of anti-Roma feelings and violence against Roma settlements. The Recommendation characterized the Roma as a true European minority without their own state, and as a group requiring special protection in culture, education, equality of opportunities, and everyday life.

October 1993 brought the first summit of Council of Europe member states in Vienna. The meeting's main topic – besides reform of the control mechanism of the *European Treaty on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the Protection of National Minorities* – was the struggle against racism. The declaration and action plan that were adopted triggered the establishment of the European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), which was later asked by the Council of Ministers to pay special attention to discrimination, prejudice, and violence against the Roma. Besides preparing reports on individual member states, the ECRI also won a mandate to make general political recommendations for individual countries.

The ECRI's position was strengthened by the second summit of CE countries in 1997. After two general recommendations to combat discrimination, in 1998 the Commission issued the *ECRI General Policy Recommendation No.3: Combating Racism and Intolerance Against Roma/Gypsies*[8], which was endorsed by all top representatives of states participating in the European Conference Against Racism in October 2000. The document opened by stating that the surviving

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prejudice against the Roma had led to many forms of discrimination, and that this discrimination was the main factor in the social exclusion affecting many Roma.

The following international documents and measures were to be used to combat racism in individual member states: the *General Treaty on the Protection of National Minorities* and the *European Charter of Regional or Minority Languages;* suitable and unambiguous provisions in penal, civil, and administrative law; the provision of legal counsel to victims of discrimination; no tolerance for perpetrators; training for the staff of investigative and judicial bodies to help them understand cultural differences and recognize prejudice; dialogue between the police, local authorities, and the Roma; activities to help journalists understand their own responsibility in the dissemination of prejudice; preventing discrimination against the Roma in granting state citizenship and asylum proceedings; ensuring active and equal participation of the Roma in decisions at the local, regional, and national levels; educating the Roma about their rights; special attention for Roma women, the most frequent victims of double discrimination (racial and sexual); combating the segregation of Roma children in schools, and ensuring equal access to education; incorporating Roma history and culture into school curricula, and educating teachers in this respect; supporting NGOs dealing with the Roma; encouraging Roma organizations to participate in civic society; strengthening mutual trust in order to preserve and develop an open and plural society and peaceful coexistence.

In 1994 the General Secretary appointed a coordinator of activities concerning the Roma, and an intergovernmental Group of Roma Issue Specialists was established to prepare an action plan in cooperation with the European Committee for Migration. Cooperation with other international human rights organizations[9] intensified, and the Committee adopted two important recommendations.

The first was entitled *Recommendation No. R (2000) 4 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on the Education of Roma/ Gypsy Children in Europe*.[10] The main education principles listed in the addendum to the Recommendation stemmed from the knowledge that present problems had been largely caused by past education policies, which had led either to the assimilation or the segregation of Roma children.

Partnership cooperation was the main idea of the last recommendation of the CE's Committee of Ministers, entitled *Recommendation Rec (2001) 17 on Improving the Economic and Employment Situation of Roma/ Gypsies and Travelers in Europe*.[11] Like the previous text, this one also emphasized both sides of the same coin: non-discrimination and affirmative action in the field of employment should be suitably combined. Several statements in this document reflected the adoption of two anti-discriminatory directives by the EU Council,[12] for example its emphasis on both direct and indirect discrimination against the Roma, or on improving the efficiency of anti-discrimination legislation by shifting of the burden of proof to the defendant. Special attention should be paid to points 14 to 16, which proposed possible affirmative action.

Recommendation 1557 (2002) 1: The Legal Situation of the Roma in Europe[13] is so far the last document prepared by the Council of Europe. Its main innovation is its emphasis on the group nature of rights, which may be connected to the fact that there were no issues regarding the Roma (i.e. territorial autonomy etc.) that in the case of other ethnic

minorities had prevented the adoption of formulations resembling collective rights.

The unifying motive of the document is to acknowledge the Roma as an ethnic or national minority in all member states. The recommendations section identifies six basic conditions needed to improve the position of the Roma: definition of their legal status; design and implementation of programs to integrate the Roma into society; guarantees of the participation of the Roma in decision-making at all levels, including the pan-European; ensuring equal treatment for the Roma minority as an ethnic or national minority in education, employment, housing, health, and public services; preparation and implementation of affirmative action and preferential treatment guidelines for socially disadvantaged communities, including the Roma, in education, employment, and housing; adoption of special measures and the establishment of special institutions for protecting the Roma language, culture, traditions, and identity, as well as combating racism, xenophobia, and intolerance on the local, regional, and international levels.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF CE MONITORING BODIES

The ECRI, in accordance with its mandate, prepared and published two periodical reports on Slovakia: the first in 1998, and the second in 2000. The first dealt extensively with the exceptionally poor position of the Roma. It criticized the frequently passive approach of the police and judicial bodies in cases of racially motivated violence, the ineffective implementation of laws (e.g. in cases of discrimination on the labor market or by state authorities), the absence of independent special institutions dealing with racism and intolerance, and the low representa-

tion of the Roma in secondary schools and universities. The document also recommended that the possibilities of more extensive education in the Roma language be investigated (*The ECRI's Country-by-Country Approach…*, 1998).

The second report was very similar to the first as far as the Roma were concerned, and singled out the following problems for special attention: poor implementation of anti-discrimination legislation, the passivity of the police and other prosecution bodies, and hesitation by the courts when considering the racial motives of crimes. ECRI experts recommended immediate steps be taken to eliminate discrimination in education, especially the segregation of classes and the high representation of Roma children in special schools, as well as the lack of teaching in the Roma language. They again requested reliable data on the number of members of minority groups (*The ECRI's Country-by-Country Approach...*, 2000).

The CE's traditional monitoring body is the Advisory Committee of the General Agreement on the Protection of National Minorities, although it usually passes its findings on to the Committee of Ministers for a final standpoint. Despite this mechanism, the reports of the Advisory Committee are not just recommendations for the Committee of Ministers, but as they are published together with the reaction of the monitored states before the Committee takes a decision, they have considerable authority. In accordance with Article 25 of the General Agreement, Slovakia has so far submitted one report on implementation (the Advisory Committee adopted a report on this information in September 2000). The findings and recommendations regarding the Roma that were presented to the Committee of Ministers for adoption were in many respects identical to the findings and conclusions of the ECRI: as signifi-

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cant social and economic differences remain between the Roma and the majority population, attention must be paid to initiatives supporting full and effective equality; the government's strategies to solve the problems of the Roma minority should be implemented in close cooperation with the Roma; the state should support intercultural dialogue and take steps to prevent negative stereotypes in the media; lingering problems in the implementation of anti-discrimination legislation must be solved, and the relationship between the police and minorities must improve; investigations and prosecutions of racially motivated crimes must be speeded up. The report stated that the practice of placing Roma children in special schools was not compatible with the General Agreement, and said the state should analyze to what extent Roma language education met the requirements of the Roma.

In keeping with its usual practice, the Committee of Ministers in *Resolution No. 5* (2001)[14] on Slovakia's implementation of the General Agreement diplomatically softened the language used by the Advisory Committee; however, in essence the report remained the same. The Committee stated that despite government efforts many problems remained with the Roma and the implementation of the General Agreement, especially discrimination against the Roma, treatment of the Roma by police, and the enormous social and economic gulf between many Roma and the majority population.

The most powerful and best-known European human rights protection tool – *The Treaty on the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms* – contains no provisions on minority rights, nor does its article 14, banning discrimination, apply separately – only together with another article of the treaty. Nevertheless, the European Court of Human Rights has passed down

several rulings on complaints by Roma alleging the violation of rights enshrined in the Treaty. The number of such cases is expected to grow as more member states ratify the Additional Protocol No. 12 to the *Treaty on the General Ban on Discrimination.* Even after the Additional Protocol takes effect, however, Geoff Gilbert's warning will remain valid: although the Treaty may under certain circumstances protect minority rights, we must remember that it was not created for this purpose, and the courts may still reject complaints alleging violations of "minority rights" as unjustified (Gilbert, 2002).

THE ROMA IN OSCE DOCUMENTS

Since 1990, the OSCE (formerly the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe – CSCE) has recognized the Roma as a group with special problems. This phrase first appeared in a document from the Copenhagen Meeting on the Human Dimension of the CSCE, adopted on June 29, 1990. The Report from the Geneva Meeting of Experts on National Minorities of the CSCE in July 1991 again acknowledged the problems of the Roma, and the Report's signatories expressed readiness to take steps to achieve full equality of opportunities between members of the Roma minority legally residing in their countries and the rest of the population. The participating countries committed to improving the enforceability of people's rights with respect to crimes motivated by racial, ethnic, or religious prejudice.

In a document from the Moscow Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE in October 1991, the Roma were mentioned in connection with human rights education whose purpose was to help fight intolerance, prejudice, and hatred. In the 1992 Helsinki document of the CSCE, the participating countries again acknowledged

"the need to prepare suitable programs focusing on the problems of Roma citizens and other groups traditionally designated as Gypsies, and to create such conditions for them that give them equal opportunities to fully participate in the life of society. The countries also undertook to consider the possibilities of cooperation leading to the achievement of this aim". The document also contained a decision creating the post of High Commissioner for Minorities. The Helsinki Meeting tasked the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) with organizing special seminars on problems related to the human dimension of the OSCE. One of the first of these seminars, held in September 1994 and organized in cooperation with the Council of Europe, was devoted to the position of the Roma.

The OSCE saw a real breakthrough after the High Commissioner presented a report in September 1993 stating that only some Roma issues fell under his jurisdiction. Roma communities faced more complex problems, he said, which belonged to the human dimension of the OSCE's commitments, and required long term program support, monitoring and assistance. These problems were to become a standard aspect of the human dimension, creating a new contact point for the Roma within the ODIHR. The recommendations of the High Commissioner were adopted by the participating countries at the Budapest summit in December 1994. The document adopted contained a resolution on the proposed contact point, and laid out its tasks.

In 1998 the Council of Ministers in Oslo adopted a resolution on strengthening the operational power of the OSCE in relation to the Roma. It strengthened the ODIHR contact point for Roma issues and charged it with new tasks, such as cooperating with OSCE field missions, collecting information on leg-islation and other measures by participating countries, organizing seminars and workshops, cooperating with the Council of Europe's coordinator for the Roma, etc.

The heads of the participating countries, in a declaration adopted at the OSCE's Istanbul Summit in November 1999 (clause 31), expressed regret for displays of racism and minority discrimination, and promised to ensure that "all laws and policies will fully respect the rights of the Roma, and where necessary, support the adoption of anti-discrimination legislation". They also underlined the importance of dealing thoroughly with the social exclusion of the Roma. The new European Safety Charter, adopted at the same summit, in clause 20 restated the commitment of the participating countries to achieve full equality of opportunities for the Roma, and to redouble efforts to eradicate discrimination against them.

Before his mandate expired, the first High Commissioner, Max van der Stoel, presented the next *Report on the Situation of the Roma and Sinti in the OSCE Area* in March 2000. Here he recommended that the powers of the ODIHR's contact point be strengthened, and proposed four groups of measures to member states: **discrimination and racial violence** (the adoption of complex anti-discrimination legislation, the preparation and implementation of affirmative action and preferential treatment programs for qualified Roma, the adoption of internal discipline standards and fast and appropriate sanctions for state employees, including policemen, who discriminate against a minority, training courses for policemen, prosecutors and judges focusing on international law), **education** (besides recommendations from similar documents issued by other international organizations, the High Commissioner mentioned the coverage of school attendance costs, including the provision of food to children, as one of

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the prerequisites for successful education), **living conditions** (a recommendation that governments show greater readiness to guarantee loans from international organizations for housing projects, to prevent segregation in housing, to solve the legal status of Roma in their place of abode, and to pay special attention to the situation of Roma women, especially to their health), and **political participation** (support for the political participation of the Roma at all levels of the state administration (*Report on the Situation of the Roma…*, 2000).

As far as OSCE is concerned, in accordance with the recommendations of the High Commissioner, published in his first report on the Roma, the Roma issue really became part of the implementation meetings of the human dimension, and the third meeting held in September 1999 in Vienna was devoted exclusively to this issue.

CONCLUSION

During the period leading up to Slovakia's scheduled May 2004 entrance to the European Union, the Slovak public focused on the fulfillment of the EU's "Copenhagen criteria" as a precondition of EU membership. Documents related to Slovakia's accession as an EU candidate country – including resolutions of the European Parliament, the European Commission, and the Joint Committee of the European Parliament and the Slovak parliament – all included statements on the need to improve the position of the Roma. These documents, however, do not rank among traditional international documents, not least due to their validity, which expires with the country's expected EU accession.

As far as European rights go, it must be emphasized that the regulation of specific

minority rights is and probably will remain the domain of member states. On the other hand, when it comes to human rights in general (i.e. also the prevention of discrimination), Europe's common bodies have acquired some fairly significant powers in the last few years. The situation of the Roma as a vulnerable and disadvantaged group is thus likely to attract further attention by the Union even after Slovakia's EU accession.[15]

In conclusion we must stress that this chapter is by no means an exhaustive treatment. It does not, for example, include the partial results of expert studies which in every international organization preceded the adoption of every single document – the many resolutions and declarations of the UN's special bodies, the evaluations of various international action plans, etc. For practical reasons it was not possible to analyze Slovakia's implementation policy here; instead, the chapter was meant as a brief introduction to the issue, and attempted to give the reader some basic facts, as well as a starting point for further study. The links that can be found in the references should provide access to other documents on the Internet.

ENDNOTES

1. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe pondered the adoption of an independent Charter of Roma Rights several times – the last time in its *Recommendation No. 17 (2002)* – but without specifying what it should contain. The opinions of Roma legal experts on the utility of such a document vary.
2. In 1999 this body was renamed the Subcommittee for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights.
3. The special correspondent in the countries mentioned also carried out the next mission and recorded the positive steps governments had taken since the first report was published. The report from the second mission is available at:

http://www.unhchr.ch/huridocda/huridoca. nsf/2848af408d01ec0ac1256609004e770b/ 4c609b38f502b1f6c1256a160044e837/ $FILE/G0110888.pdf

4. The general recommendations and comments of individual committees, such as interpretations of treaties and individual provisions, serve as instructions for contractual parties on how to prepare their periodical reports. See: *Discrimination Against the Roma*: CERD General recom. 27. (General Comments) Dok. CERD/C/SR.1424, annex V, sect. C August 16, 2000;
http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(Symbol)/ 11f3d6d130ab8e09c125694a0054932b? Opendocument

5. See *Communication No. 13/1998. Jurisprudence,* August 25, 2000; http://www.unhchr. ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(Symbol)/464937c637ce5c0e c12569d20033a961?Opendocument

6. See *Communication No. 11/1998: Slovakia. Jurisprudence,* August 9, 2001; http://www. unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(Symbol)/2daf63a7b f679e68c1256ae900513ec9?Opendocument

7. See:
http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=http% 3A%2F%2Fassembly.coe.int%2FDocuments%2F adopted Text%2Fta93%2FEREC1203.htm

8. See: http://www.coe.int/t/e/human_rights/ ecri/1ecri/3general_themes/1policy_ recommendations/recommendation_n%b03/ recommendation_n%b03.asp

9. One of the most important results of this co-operation was the *Rules for Improvement of the Roma's Position*, adopted by the Work Group of the EU Council for Expansion during the 1999 Tampere Summit, which were basically prepared by the Council of Europe's Group of Experts for the Roma and the High Commissioner of the OSCE for Minorities. The pro-Roma activities of the Council of Europe as of 2000 have been described in detail in the MG-S-ROM report No. 17 (2000), entitled *The Activities of the Council of Europe Concerning Roma/Gypsies and Travelers* (http://www.coe.int/T/E/ social_cohesion/Roma_Gypsies/Documentation/MGSROM_Documents/20001120_ MG-S-ROM(2000)17_Activities.asp#Top OfPage).

10. See: http://cm.coe.int/ta/rec/2000/2000r4. htm

11. See: http://cm.coe.int/stat/E/Public/2001/ adopted_texts/recommendations/2001r17.htm

12. The council's Directive No. 2000/43/CE dated June 29, 2000 defines the policy of equal treatment of people regardless of their racial or ethnic origin, while Directive No. 2000/78/CE dated November 27, 2000 fixes the general definition of equal treatment at work.

13. See:
http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link= http%3A%2F%2Fassembly.coe.int%2F Documents%2FAdoptedText%2Fta02% 2FEREC1557.htm

14. See: http://cm.coe.int/stat/E/Public/2001/ adopted_texts/resCMN/2001xn5.htm

15. The best-known anti-discrimination directives by the European Community – Nos. 2000/43/EC and 2000/78/EC – have already been partially adopted by Slovakia. Another important initiative is the proposal of the European Commission to adopt a General Resolution on combating racism and xenophobia, which would harmonize the body of criminal law of individual member states in this regard.

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BALÁZS JARÁBIK

PERSPECTIVES OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN SLOVAKIA

Summary: This chapter deals with the terms and concepts of affirmative action, and surveys its application in practice. It evaluates the arguments most commonly used against affirmative action, and analyzes how affirmative action is treated in international documents as well as in the legislation of different countries. It analyzes the position of affirmative action in the relevant international documents, and deals with the legal and practical aspects of affirmative action in Slovakia.

Key words: affirmative action, positive discrimination, reverse discrimination, prohibition of discrimination, equal treatment, international law, domestic legislation, decentralization, EU Race and Employment Directives.

INTRODUCTION

Within society, many minorities feel that they are not heard in the public domain, that they have no access to services or education, that basically they have no chances or opportunities. Discrimination against neglected groups and their members occurs on three levels: personal, institutional, and societal. Personal attitudes and beliefs make individuals fear, dislike, and avoid groups of people because of vague differences between them, and encourage stereotypes about what these people are like. Affirmative action, also known as equal opportunity programs, is the latest international trend in fighting discrimination. However, affirmative action programs are hindered by several factors: differences between methods and concepts, differences in the definitions of such programs, and above all varying degrees of political determination to put them into practice. Moreover, affirmative action is a concept without a generally accepted legal definition. The UN Progress Report offers the following provisional definition: "Affirmative action is a coherent package of temporary measures aimed specifically at correcting the position of members of a target group in one or more aspects of social life, in order to achieve effective equality." (Bossuyt, 1998, p. 3)

TERMINOLOGY

There are many definitions of affirmative action, and the difference between terms like affirmative action and positive discrimination is not clear.

Affirmative action and other race-related remedies were created to erase differences in rights and opportunities influenced by skin color (Curry, p. 1). Affirmative action is based on the concept of socio-economic equality, which was popularized during the 1960s in the United States. Access to "the basics of life" (e.g. education, medical care) was at that time presented as the right of every American. One definition of the term

"affirmative action" is given by Rosenfeld, quoting Kent Greenawalt: "Affirmative action is a notion that refers to attempts to bring members of underrepresented groups, usually groups that had to suffer discrimination, into a higher degree of participation in some beneficial programs. Some affirmative action efforts include preferential treatment; others do not." (Rosenfeld, 1991, p. 42)

Reverse discrimination is an extreme form of affirmative action, one which runs counter to the concepts of equal protection, due process, and fundamental rights (see Peters, 1999, p. 2). Reverse discrimination occurs when a discriminatory structure that advantages some individuals/groups and disadvantages others is merely "reversed," so that the formerly disadvantaged individuals/groups enjoy privileges that are no longer granted to the formerly advantaged individuals/groups.

As envisaged by the European Union, **positive discrimination** broadly encompasses "all measures which aim to counter the effects of past discrimination, to eliminate existing discrimination, and promote equality of opportunities between women and men, particularly in relation to types or levels of jobs where members of one sex are significantly under-represented" (DeFeis, 1999, p. 17).

Equal chances, or **equal opportunities,** are the newest terms in use. In 1996, the European Union adopted "gender mainstreaming" as a strategy to ensure equal opportunity between men and women (Ryan, 1998, p. 1). This concept appeared in the debates of the UN Third World Conference on Women (1985), and was specifically endorsed as a strategy at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995) and included in the Platform for Action that was adopted.

CONCEPT OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

In general there are three limits set by international law with respect to affirmative action:
- The foundation of affirmative action is the prohibition of discrimination on any grounds;
- Affirmative action may not lead to discrimination;
- Affirmative action has to be of limited duration.

The passage of laws designed to create social equality is inherently tied to whether the public accepts or rejects programs that purport to create equality. If the public rebels against the laws, some equality may still be achieved, but a great deal of public resentment may arise, as was the case in the US. Therefore, popular arguments are the final crucial ingredient in the success or failure of these policies. Here are the most popular arguments against using affirmative action policies, which are interesting when examined in the Slovak context:
- **Stigma –** If minorities are given preferential treatment in order to create greater equality, they will be stigmatized; their peers will believe that the minority workers or students have achieved their positions due to favoritism rather than merit (see Lax, 1996). One counter-argument holds that stigma already exists in the perpetuation of segregated schools and caste-like work conditions, and that it is better to move towards equality and risk some peer stigma than retain structural stigma (Lax, 1996, p. 5).
- **Innocent perpetrators –** The current members of "majority" groups who hold power in society (i.e. white people, men) are not responsible for the historical wrongs done to minority groups, and should not be made to suffer from reverse

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discrimination. On this point Spann writes: "Many members of the white majority concede that transgressions occurred in the past, but warn of the need for fairness in remedying these wrongs, asserting that members of the present majority rarely commit acts of overt discrimination, and that members of the present minority are rarely among the actual victims of past discrimination." (Spann, 2000, p. 1)

- **Constitutionality –** Some positive discrimination or affirmative action bills have failed due to the fear that they will not stand up in court. Spann cites the example of a quite progressive Scottish bill that failed due to the fear that it was not "ECJ-proof" (Spann, 2000).
- **Inherent subjectivity –** Compensatory justice (remedies to make up for past wrongs), may seek either to restore a previous state of equality before some wrong was done, or to create an entirely new situation where each person is equal. However, in the former instance, picking a reference point from which to re-create a former situation is a rather subjective matter, while trying to bring everyone to the same level is almost impossible, since the positions of the advantaged classes inherently depend on their superiority to the lower classes. A new state of equality can only be accomplished if the advantaged classes give up some of their power or allow their positions to be changed – and that probably poses the greatest challenge of all. Social positions are intricately connected to our mindsets, our realities – how can we expect to change that?
- **Equality as individuality –** Racial equality requires that people be treated as equals, rather than as members of racial groups (Spann, 2000, p. 8 – 9). Opponents of affirmative action often use the argument that approaches to social justice should be color-blind.

INTERNATIONAL LEGISLATION – PROHIBITION OF DISCRIMINATION IN INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTS

SLOVAK LEGISLATION AND INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTS

Various international conventions form an important bulwark against discrimination. Slovakia is a member of several international organizations whose goals include human rights protection, and has signed and ratified several international conventions that set duties and obligations for their signatories in this area.

The Slovak Constitution does not precisely define the status of international treaties binding on Slovakia with regard to the rest of Slovak law. It merely assigns a privileged status to international treaties dealing with fundamental human rights and freedoms.[1] The amendment to the Constitution that was approved in 2001[2] provides that all international human rights and freedoms agreements that guarantee a greater scope of rights and freedoms than domestic law, and that have been ratified and promulgated in the manner ordained by Slovak law, shall have priority status.

The legal acts of the European Union are generally not binding on Slovakia, as the country is not a member of the EU. But based on the Europe (Association) Agreement, Slovak laws have steadily been brought into harmony with EU laws.

PROTOCOL NO. 12 TO THE EUROPEAN HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS CONVENTION

An important new document adopted within the framework of the Council of Europe is

the *Supplementary Protocol No. 12* to the *European Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms Convention*. Its most important provisions are worded as follows:

"Article 1 – General Ban on Discrimination.

1. The exercise of all rights stipulated by law is safeguarded without discrimination on any grounds whatsoever, including sex, race, skin color, language, religion, political or other conviction, national or social origin, belonging to a national minority, property, gender, family or other status.
2. No one may be discriminated against by any public authority on any of the grounds stated in paragraph 1."

The Supplementary Protocol expands the range of rights whose exercise is protected, from the rights acknowledged by the European Convention to "all rights stipulated by law". Rights stipulated by domestic law are covered by this formulation, as well as other rights such as the right to equal treatment from state administration offices in the exercise of their decision-making powers. As article 1 of the Supplementary Protocol is closely related to article 14 of the Convention, the definition of discrimination is also identical in both cases. According to an official commentary on the Supplementary Protocol, there are not expected to be any broad obligations for member states to prevent discrimination among private individuals, except in relations between private individuals in the public sphere where the state has a certain responsibility, such as the accessibility of jobs or services.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION AGAINST RACISM

The Council of Europe's European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)

made two relevant recommendations regarding affirmative action:

- To promote the active participation of Roma/Gypsy communities in decision-making processes through national, regional, and local consultative mechanisms, on the basis of equal partnership;
- To encourage the training of Roma/Gypsies, to ensure full knowledge and implementation of their rights, and the proper functioning of the legal system.

Since the ECRI's recommendations are non-binding, the member states of the Council of Europe are not obliged to obey them.

DOMESTIC LEGISLATION

SLOVAK CONSTITUTION

In general, the Slovak Constitution is used to buttress arguments against affirmative action in Slovakia. Some politicians say that positive discrimination contradicts article 12 section 2 of the Constitution, which states: "Fundamental rights shall be guaranteed in Slovakia to every person regardless of sex, race, color, language, faith, religion, political affiliation or conviction, national or social origin, nationality or ethnic origin, property, birth or any other status, and no person shall be denied their legal rights, discriminated against or favored on any of these grounds." Similarly, article 34 section 3 of the Constitution states: "The exercise of the rights of citizens belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups (...) must not result (...) in discrimination against other inhabitants." Moreover, international documents that enable positive discrimination have priority only over regular laws, not over the Constitution itself (article 154c and article 7 section 5 of the Constitution).

On the other hand, many articles of the Constitution seem to contradict these prohibi-

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tions – for example, article 38 guarantees special work conditions for women, disabled people, and young people. On the basis of these derogations, several "lower" legal statutes in Slovakia now entitle specific groups to special treatment (the Labor Code, the Employment Law, etc.). The use of positive discrimination thus depends on one's reading and interpretation of the constitutional principle of non-discrimination. A more formal reading of the Constitution suggests a prohibition of positive discrimination (except for the instances cited in article 38). However, a more sympathetic view of the non-discrimination principle would seem to allow positive discrimination in all areas under certain circumstances.

As Corba, Jarabik and King pointed out in their working paper, the Slovak Constitutional Court has given only one interpretation of the relationship between the general (formal) non-discrimination principle and the Constitution's "positive discrimination" provisions. Although in past years various attempts have been made to introduce ethnic and nepotistic positive discrimination in higher education, and ethnic and gender-based[3] positive discrimination in elections, only one relevant case has reached the Constitutional Court in the last decade (Corba, Jarabik and King, 2002, p. 41). The case dealt with ethnic quotas in municipal elections; under the 1996 Municipal Elections Law, a certain ratio of seats on local councils were reserved for ethnic Slovak representatives in voting districts where Slovaks were in the minority. The Court in 1998 abolished this rule, referring to the general principle of non-discrimination, and reasoned that: "No matter what legal force a law has, neither the law nor its application by public administration bodies may advantage or disadvantage certain groups of citizens over other groups in their access to elected and other public offices (...)".[4]

PREPARATION OF NON-DISCRIMINATION LEGISLATION IN SLOVAKIA

Various Slovak laws contain non-discrimination provisions, but fundamental non-discrimination legislation and accessible procedures for filing discrimination claims are lacking. Also, discrimination in the sphere of private law, where such practices are more common, is not covered (Hrubala, 2001, p. 5 – 6). Nor has the *EU Race Equality Directive* (2000/43/EC) been incorporated into domestic legislation. In addition to the most important documents on racial and ethnic discrimination that have been signed and ratified, Slovakia recently signed the *Additional Protocol No. 12 to the European Convention on Human Rights* (October 2001); however, this had not yet been ratified at the time this chapter was written.[5] Protection against discrimination was also strengthened by a June 2001 amendment to the Labor Code[6], which incorporated definitions of direct and indirect discrimination.

A "non-discrimination legislation" proposal was prepared under the auspices of the office of the Deputy Prime Minister for Human Rights, Minorities and Regional Development in cooperation with the Center for Legal Analyses – Kalligram Foundation between November 2000 and April 2002. The concept of special non-discrimination legislation was not an easy one to put through in the Slovak context. The draft legislation incorporated definitions of all forms of discrimination based on an open list of grounds inspired by the following international documents: 2000/43/EC (*EU Race Directive*), 2000/78/EC (*EU Employment Directive*) and the *Additional Protocol No. 12 to the European Convention on Human Rights*. These documents represent the most important stage in the development of international (supranational) law in the field of combating

discrimination. They are of profound importance to Slovakia, a member state of the Council of Europe and a country that expects to join the EU in May 2004.

The proposed non-discrimination legislation concept in Slovakia embraces two statutes: an Equal Treatment Law (a substantive law) and a Law Establishing the Center for Equal Treatment (a procedural law). The Equal Treatment Law contains definitions of discriminatory conduct (direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, and stalking), based on the EU's Race and Employment Directives, which will apply to the entire legal system (public and private spheres). In order to provide victims of discrimination with an adequate and effective remedy, it guarantees them access to the courts to sue for satisfaction and damages. The statute neither rules out nor imposes positive discrimination. The procedural statute establishes the Center for Equal Treatment, defines its organs and their powers, and regulates their functions.

However, non-discrimination legislation is to be only part of a broader framework to combat discrimination in Slovakia. In the field of legislation, the Equal Treatment Law will include binding definitions of discrimination, and will provide a much-needed bridge between the constitutional non-discrimination provision, which is very basic and limited to the rights granted by the Constitution, and specific laws that regulate certain narrow areas and lack proper definitions of discrimination. On the institutional level, the establishment of the office of the Ombudsman, as provided for in the 2001 amendment of the Constitution, alters the current system of protection for human rights. Elected in 2002, the Ombudsman handles discrimination in public administration, while the Center for Equal Treatment covers discrimination in the private sector. These new institutions could

give new impetus to the fight against discrimination, and will cooperate with existing structures, such as the courts, prosecutors and other state bodies, in helping to enforce the law more vigorously.

Although the Slovak government approved the draft Equal Treatment Law in May 2002, the Slovak parliament the following month rejected the bill from its program of deliberations, thus dropping it without debate.

LEGAL ASPECTS OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN SLOVAKIA

Although the previous Slovak government's Roma strategy (*Strategy of the Slovak Government to Solve the Problems of the Roma and the Set of Implementation Measures – 1st Stage*, 1999; and *The Detailed Strategy of the Slovak Government to Solve the Problems of the Roma and a Set of Concrete Measures for 2000 – 2nd Stage*, 2000) contained the possibility of positive action, in general it is difficult to advocate positive discrimination in Slovakia. Neither the Slovak political elite nor the general public tends to support legal steps to solve the "Roma issue".

Opinions differ on positive discrimination in Slovakia, but many experts doubt whether any discrimination measures should be taken. Moreover, no body of legal theory concerning affirmative action exists, and legal debate on the issue is also lacking (Hrubala, 2001, p.20).

According to a Foreign Ministry questionnaire (*Questionnaire on Affirmative Action in the Slovak Republic*), positive discrimination can also be identified in paragraph 2/f of the 1996 Law on Employment, which gives greater access to jobs to disadvantaged groups in Slovakia (*Memorandum…*, 2002, p. 3).

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POSSIBLE FORMS OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN SLOVAKIA

The idea of affirmative action, as much as it may be needed in Slovak society, has only increased tensions between groups because it is perceived as producing unfavorable conditions for the majority population. For Slovaks who do not believe that discrimination exists in their country (see a survey by the Markant agency for the People Against Racism NGO, January 2001), affirmative action seems unfair.

A kind of positive discrimination (affirmative action) was practiced under the communist regime in the form of quotas for minorities, starting in the 1950s. This practice, for example, helped to strengthen the Hungarian minority's political position in communist Czechoslovakia. It also helped bring a handful of Roma political leaders to the forefront. Many citizens, however, saw this practice as politically unfair (Vašečka, 2001, p. 227).

The Strategy of the Slovak Government to Solve the Problems of the Roma (1999; hereafter referred to as "the Strategy") emphasized the need for positive stimulation of the Roma, insofar as the system allows for affirmative action. The measures proposed in *The Detailed Strategy of the Slovak Government to Solve the Problems of the Roma and a Set of Concrete Measures for 2000* (2000; hereafter referred to as "the Detailed Strategy") were drawn up in order of importance, so that the problems viewed as the most critical by the authors of the Detailed Strategy come first. However experts stress that no affirmative action has been taken in Slovakia recently, nor has any case law on the issue been created (Hrubala, 2001, p. 20).

To understand the negative view of positive discrimination in Slovakia, one needs to understand the irony of positive discrimination in the history of communist Czechoslovakia. This may also help one understand the recent needs of disadvantaged groups in Slovakia. The perceived abuse of the concept of equality by the communist political elite created a strong antipathy in society towards such practices. This perception, and the fact that the post-communist period provided no effective control of or answers to the new ethnic problems created, have fuelled misunderstandings toward minorities.

Positive discrimination also has negative connotations for those generations that grew up watching the communists give advantages to "their" people. Slovak society needs to be shown that modern equal opportunity policies have nothing in common with the positive discrimination policies of communism. The Roma minority, which in principle has an equal position in society, needs equal opportunities in practice as well. The state must therefore initiate policies in accordance with the new European model, and learn its lesson from the practices of the communist regime. The aim must be to give equal opportunities and access to employment, services and education to disadvantaged groups in practice as well as theory.

Below are some examples of programs helping to empower the Roma minority, measures which I believe could be a foundation for future affirmative action policies.

SLOVAK GOVERNMENT PILOT PROGRAM OF SOCIAL FIELD WORKERS

The government's new pilot program, known as *The Social Field Workers Program*, aims (1) to increase the number of field workers active in Roma settlements addressing the social needs of the Roma, and

(2) to increase the quality of the services they offer (*Progam…,* 2002, p. 13). The program was devised to address the fact that Roma living in settlements have almost no contact with the majority population. The social field workers are to advise on a whole range of issues, including health and employment. They will be selected in cooperation with the Roma Culture Department at the University of Constantine the Philosopher in Nitra, and in connection with the Sándor Márai Foundation's training program for Roma assistants.

The explanation for the program notes that, until recently, social field workers shared functions with the social departments of regional state offices, meaning they were burdened with administrative duties connected with welfare benefits in regions with high unemployment (in such regions, each social worker had to deal with anywhere from 400 to 6,000 files). In line with the Detailed Strategy, the job descriptions of social field workers in regions inhabited by the Roma were changed to allow them to focus on field work rather than office work, and to focus more specifically on the Roma rather than on all "citizens requiring special assistance" (*Stratégia…,* 2000, p. 3). At the end of 2000, these changes were published in the journal of the government in all regional state offices.

ROMA ADVISORS

There are no data on the number of Roma working as public employees, as it is not permitted to collect data based on ethnicity, but the Roma are clearly severely under-represented in all areas. Indeed, the access of the Roma to employment is one of the most important and sensitive issues in Slovakia. Roma leaders have been very critical of the state regarding the lack of Roma working at ministries, regional state administration bodies dealing with the Roma minority, and even

the Office of the Government Representative for Roma Communities. No concrete steps have been taken to increase the number of Roma employed by the state, as state policy is based on the civic principle. Representatives of the NGO People Against Racism, however, questioned whether the police are serious about recruiting Roma, following a meeting with Interior Minister Ivan Simko in 2002.[7]

The Strategy created the post of Advisor to the heads of regional and district state administration offices with responsibility for the problems of the Roma minority (*Stratégia…,* 1999, p. 35). Advisory Committees were also established to advise the heads of municipal councils on how to deal with the problems of the Roma minority. However, few Advisor positions have been filled – there are only three Advisors at the district level (Spišská Nová Ves, Bratislava and Banská Bystrica) and three at the regional level (Prešov, Banská Bystrica and Košice). While the Strategy does not explicitly say that Roma should be hired as Advisors, Roma actually occupy all the positions. The post of Roma Advisor in Spišská Nová Ves was created as the result of lobbying of the district state administration by several Roma NGOs. As the Open Society Institute's *Minority Report 2001* stated, some Roma experts maintain that the Strategy was drawn up without the participation of the Roma community, and that it is exclusively the result of the work of the state administration (Zoon, 2001, p. 55).

NGO PROGRAM: ROMA ASSISTANTS

According to NGOs, ways to raise Roma participation can be found at the local level. Several programs exist to increase the number of Roma active at the local/regional level. The program of the Wide Open School Foundation, called *Roma Minority Education Programs,* aims to create "effective

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schools" and other institutions to prepare Roma students to participate in building a democratic society. The program addresses the educational needs of the Roma by pushing for institutional change to eliminate institutional oppression, and by building the capability of the Roma to participate in education. The foundation developed an innovation called *Roma Minority Education* to train Roma as assistant teachers. There are now 20 Roma assistant teachers working in this area.[8]

Another program in this area was developed by the Sándor Márai Foundation, and is now being put into practice. The program prepares "Roma assistants" to do various kinds of fieldwork in Roma settlements. The course involves 300 hours of intense training to allow Roma specialists to work as assistants in different fields. The program awards a diploma on the basis of which Roma assistants may perform (state-funded) jobs in Roma communities. However, Roma assistants with a diploma are eligible for state-funded positions only if they plan to work in their own communities, thus representing a special and limited form of affirmative action. Despite the absence of a long-term legal status for the diplomas, the foundation has trained 46 assistants as part of a pilot project, and the National Labor Bureau has offered temporary positions to all graduates (see *Sedemmesačný tréning...*, 2002).

The National Labor Bureau has created a *National Action Plan of Employment*.[9] Although it did not develop special programs for the Roma until recently, this has become an important part of the agenda and a substantial source of funding. The Bureau has started to implement comprehensive programs (including training, micro-credit programs, and job searches for participants in training programs) for a small number of Roma. The Bureau is running three types of programs for the Roma, including training

Roma assistants. The Bureau in 2001 assisted with the employment of 116 people with total budget of 24 million Sk ($600,000).

ACCESS TO EDUCATION –
COMENIUS UNIVERSITY
MEDICAL SCHOOL

In May 2002 the Academic Senate of the Medical School of Comenius University in Bratislava approved a plan relaxing entrance exam conditions for Roma applicants to give them easier access to the school. The public reaction to this move provided an interesting window on the different understandings of affirmative action (in this case positive discrimination) among various interest groups in Slovakia. According to the Medical School plan, Roma applicants with test scores over 50% would be put into a special group, with the top three in the group being allowed to commence studies at the Medical School. The rule was not to apply to those Roma applicants who gained a place at the school under standard entrance exam criteria.

While Klára Orgovánova, the Government Representative for Roma Communities, welcomed the initiative, Roma political leader Alexander Patkoló attacked it. After a furious debate in the press, the Medical School rescinded its decision. A student of Roma origin filed a complaint with the Constitutional Court, alleging that his constitutional rights had been violated (the Court has not yet decided the case). The debate showed the depth of misunderstanding and the poor legal and functional awareness of affirmative action policies in Slovakia.

DECENTRALIZATION

Despite the strong (mainly financial) influence of the central state on local and regional

governments, the reform and decentralization of public administration, launched in 2001, opened the door to policy formulation at the local and regional levels. Since the media and international institutions tend to focus on regional administration, there is a chance that new policies toward minorities may be introduced at this level. The problems that exist must be reformulated to facilitate a better understanding of the steps that must be taken to aid such groups. The members of minority groups, whether they are Roma or handicapped people, for various reasons do not have equal access to education or jobs. Their lives are often more difficult because of this lack of access; attempts to erase differences between levels of access is the latest trend in Europe. In the EU, positive action/discrimination policies are based on offers of education to disadvantaged groups to reduce differences in access. The result is debate over equal access and the building of equal opportunity policies at the local level. The bottom-up approach can be a positive example for the state administration as well.

One of the best examples of equal opportunity policy at the local level is Great Britain. There, the first steps were taken in the late 1970s (Equality Opportunities Policy 1979 – 80), including legislative changes (*Race and Sex Relations Act*, 1976), the implementation of equality policy, the creation of community consultative committees, and the establishment of special equality units and special equality officers in the mid-1980s. Due to the active work of NGOs with the public, race relations became a top political priority, with the focus on employment and service delivery. In the early 1990s, a new "mainstreaming equal opportunities" policy focused on training programs for managers, while a mainstreaming manual for business was written.

The second concept is "ethnic bias", which refers to gaps in the political process that result in a lack of government or public institutions providing equal access to power and public resources to various ethnic and national groups in society.[10] According to Petra Kovács, a policy is ethnically biased if:

- One ethnic group has disproportionate (or exclusive) power over defining political goals and priorities;
- Structural arrangements favor the interest of one or another ethnic group in the course of policy formulation; and
- Rules for the distribution of public resources are not neutral in their effects (Kovacs, 2001, p. 6).

Ethnic bias can be detected by the presence of various forms of inequality between ethnic groups (symptoms of ethnic bias). Kovács suggests that ethnic bias can be identified in various stages of the political cycle. Depending on the stage of the political cycle in which ethnic bias occurs, different forms of ethnic bias can be identified. The identification of various types of ethnic bias can be used to develop policy implications (Kovács, 2001, p. 9).

Ethnic bias, as Kovács labels it, has three main components:

- Decentralization and public participation;
- Representation of diversity; and
- New politics of welfare; borders of the community (Kovács, 2001, p. 12 – 21).

The concept of ethnic bias is close to the concept of mainstreaming; however, it has been adapted specifically to the conditions of Central and Eastern Europe. According to Kovacs, the concept proposes a neutral, de-politicized approach to highly sensitive issues. The capacity of local governments to accommodate ethnic diversity is key to gaining cooperation from any public bodies. Approaches that offer governments the opportunity to take an active role in preventing discrimination are more efficient than the introduction of new standards (Kovács, 2001, p. 27).

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CONCLUSION

Affirmative action may have to be introduced to address the lack of social cohesion of different disadvantaged groups in Slovakia. Both US and more recent European experiences show that affirmative action is a possible but limited answer to the problems the Roma minority faces in Central and Eastern Europe. Since there exists no binding international document or treaty on affirmative action, recommendations on various levels should be made to the Slovak administration by its European counterparts.

However, due to bad experience with such policies in the past, the attitude of both decision makers and the public to the introduction of such policies is either neutral or negative. It will thus be important to show some positive aspects of these policies, as well as to emphasize the main precondition for affirmative action: the political courage to put it into action.

The Roma issue has became a priority for Slovak administrations since the election of the first Mikuláš Dzurinda government in 1998. There have also been many efforts by the government and NGOs to raise awareness and increase know-how on affirmative action and equal opportunity policies. Despite the efforts of the state administration, however, attitudes toward minorities have shifted little. It is thus vital that good policy formulation and implementation be strengthened on the local level. The recent reform of public administration, the growing powers of local governments and the creation of eight self-governing regions in Slovakia offer new soil for the creation of good policy at the local and regional levels, and for better implementation of these policies in those areas.

Discrimination can be prevented and affirmative action policies built only if there is significant public awareness within society. The task is therefore to convince society that ethnic diversity can benefit all members of society.

ENDNOTES

1. The corresponding provision of the Constitution, Article 11, is worded as follows: „International treaties on human rights and fundamental freedoms that have been ratified by the Slovak Republic and that have been promulgated in the manner which is enacted by law, have priority to its (internal) legal acts, in case they safeguard a greater extent of fundamental rights and freedoms."
2. More about the amendments of the Slovak Constitution see www.cla.sk
3. In 2002 the Interior Minister announced that the Ministry was preparing a statute that would guarantee a certain percentage of nominations on party candidate lists for women. This act in the end was not submitted to parliament.
4. See decision No. PL.ÚS 19/98
5. The *Additional Protocol No. 12 to the European Convention on Human Rights* was adopted on June 26, 2000 by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. It broadens the scope of article 14 of the ECHR on non-discrimination.
6. The Labor Code was amended in June 2001 (it took effect on April 1, 2002).
7. Press release, People Against Racism, May 29, 2002.
8. For more information see www.skoladokoran.sk
9. Approved by the government in 1999 for a period of three years and updated annually.
10. This concept was elaborated by Petra Kovács, OSI-LGI, Budapest, Hungary.

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IMRICH VAŠEČKA

THE ROMA ISSUE IN LOCAL SOCIAL POLICY

Summary: This chapter deals with current Roma issues in Slovakia and with the different approaches to solving them that can be found in local communities. It examines the vague and fickle term "Roma", and then describes what is understood by the term "the Roma issue". The chapter examines the exclusion and segregation of the Roma. The result of this process since 1989 has been the long-term mass unemployment of Roma people, and the social decline of those who before 1989 were integrated into majority society. Local governments are rated here according to the degree and type of help they provide to the economically dependent and segregated Roma.

Key words: social exclusion, Roma urban enclaves, Roma settlements, Roma issue, local governments, strategies, public administration, external and internal economic help.

THE ROMA ISSUE AS A COMPLEX, LONG-TERM SOCIAL ISSUE

When speaking of the Roma issue,[1] we cannot help noticing that it includes all of the current serious problems of this minority and of the country they live in. It is an issue combining many problems, such as high long term unemployment, a high ratio of illegal employment, low education and qualifications, inadequate housing, poor hygiene and health, lower life expectancy, a lower standard of living, the failure of children to attend school, extensive drug addiction among young Roma, gambling, dependence on welfare benefits, usury, and the scarcity of contacts with the majority population. The range of problems is so wide and their interconnection so strong that it is not possible to isolate the most serious challenge. If we want to tackle the Roma issue, we can start basically anywhere. At the same time, it is largely a social issue, because many members of both the majority and minority populations perceive it as worrying.

The issue is a long-term one because solving it will require a deep intergenerational change in both the majority and the minority. As the issue is very complex and has a social character, it must be tackled as a whole, and the public must be involved. Given the social exclusion of the Roma, the degree of poverty in the Roma population, and the minimum time required to achieve cultural and civilization change, solving the Roma issue will require an integrated approach, social agreement, and a plan that exceeds the four year election period.

WHOM DOES THE ROMA ISSUE CONCERN?

The answer to this question appears simple – the Roma issue pertains to the Roma and the majority population, although its form at

present is influenced by the majority. But where is the line that divides the Roma from the majority population? If we do not ascribe Roma identity according to anthropological features, we have only two possibilities – to associate Roma identity with subjective Roma identity, i.e. voluntarily and individually declared identity, or to associate it with Roma group identity, i.e. to arbitrarily consider everyone who lives in a Roma community and leads a "Roma way of life" as a Roma.[2]

The Roma group identity is in fact formed by everyday social relationships and the activities of the members of every local Roma community. The members of these communities are in contact on a daily basis, they influence one another, communicate, create their own world of meanings and symbols, form the language they use to describe the world, take part in the same rituals and ceremonies confirming their membership in the community, form mutual attitudes, and evaluate the world and their past in the same way. These people derive their individual identity from the identity of the community, while the external world defines their individual identity on the basis of their membership in a certain group. When we speak of the Roma, we speak of those Roma who form local Roma communities, and who live in dwellings generally considered to be Roma housing. Local Roma communities are socially and territorially defined, and are often segregated and separated. The majority excludes them, and the communities exclude themselves from the majority as well.

In this chapter, when we refer to the Roma, we mean those Roma living in communities which consider themselves Roma and are considered Roma by their surroundings, as well as those who publicly declare themselves to be Roma.

THE PRESENT FORM OF THE ROMA ISSUE

The Roma issue takes the following forms at present:

- **Social decline** of that part of the Roma population that before 1989 became part of overall Slovak society (Vašečka, 2002a, p. 233 – 234). This class of people gained a position as the lower class in terms of majority society before 1989. The economic and social transformation in 1989, however, put their position at risk, because most of them lost their jobs. At present they depend on welfare benefits and threaten to become long-term welfare benefit recipients. The problem is that after 1989, their access to opportunities such as education, work, and housing was restricted. The loss of jobs, social position and social contacts with the majority that resulted will be difficult for the older members of this class to recover from. Some Roma are now solving their economic problems and their feeling of insecurity by moving back to Roma settlements or urban ghettos. If we cannot provide development opportunities to them (or at least to their children) and encourage their mobility, the social decline of this entire group will be assured.

- **Delayed access** to modern civilization, culture and state for that part of the Roma population that in the 1980s and the early 1990s left Roma settlements, but which for different reasons failed to integrate into society. Such Roma claim to recognize the values and way of life of the majority population, but they struggle to put them into practice in their everyday lives. They are dependent on welfare, and both the non-Roma and the Roma elite reject them as socially inadaptable, second-class citizens. Their behavior often violates the norms of the majority society, which, when

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it concerns non-payment of rent, is a reason to move them into community housing on the outskirts of towns. However, the Roma often move to these locations by themselves to solve their economic problems and overcome their feeling of endangerment from the majority. Islands of poverty and resignation are formed where the chance to continue the process of civilization, cultural and civic emancipation is very low. However, the second aspect of this process is that rural settlements and urban enclaves are the way out of this difficult situation. Whatever the settlement or enclave may be, for the Roma it is a guarantee of safety and survival. For most Roma, the world, which stigmatizes and excludes them, represents a threat.

- **Despair** of Roma youth. Young and mostly unemployed Roma, unlike their parents, have no experience with a regular job, and their contacts with the majority are scarce and one-sided. They realize that their chances of acquiring a job and living a dignified life are minimal in the Slovak environment of latent discrimination. Members of this group need to break out of the vicious circle of despair. This requires specialized social work and more visible opportunities.

- **Social exclusion** from the local and global community of those living in separated and segregated Romany settlements and enclaves. These people are gradually becoming dependent on welfare benefits. As some researches and analyses (*Analýza...*, 1999) show, there is a real threat that these people will become victims of usurers. Based on the situation in some segregated Roma settlements (such as Rudňany, Jarovnice, Svinia, etc.), we can expect further segregation of the Roma from the non-Roma environment on the local level. The main problem is that communication between the

Roma and the non-Roma is not disturbed only on the level of direct personal contacts, but also on the level of institutions and establishments, which should form the basis for multicultural contacts and communication, such as schools, churches, medical establishments, restaurants, etc. (*Poverty…*, 2002). Without massive help from the outside, the Roma stand no chance of changing their situation.

- **Latent discrimination and intolerance** from the majority. In everyday life, this affects especially the Roma living in separated Roma colonies and enclaves, by limiting their access to opportunities and adequate help. The situation is further complicated by the fact that the Roma often do not pay sufficient attention to opportunities and offered help. To improve the Roma's access to opportunities and help, it is not enough to just change the laws and adopt administrative measures. What is needed is mutual trust and positive communication between the majority and the Roma. Then there is also the practical problem of how to provide (and accept) help, so that all human rights and principles of social equity are met, and at the same time a dignified standard of living is guaranteed to all while.

- **Insufficient potential and experience of the Roma community**, which so far has been unable to prevent exclusion. The Roma as a community do not have sufficient potential and experience to look for development sources, either inside their own community or outside it. While it may seem that this is not a problem of the Roma community but of the majority population, society has to mobilize itself to provide massive and long-term support for changing the behavior of the Roma in order to form a community capable of cooperating with other communities.

APPROACH OF
LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO
THE ROMA ISSUE

The communist regime applied a policy of centrally supervised assimilation against the Roma. This policy had several stages. For us, three things are important:

- This policy had both positive and negative aspects. Among the negative aspects was the use of force to distribute the Roma all over Czechoslovakia, the destruction of the organization and morals of traditional Roma communities, and the arbitrary identification of people as Roma based on anthropological features, which then served as the basis of manipulation, social experiments, and criminalization of the Roma, who at that time were referred to as "socially unadaptable citizens". The positive aspects were that the inclusion of the Roma into the structure of overall society was much faster than it would otherwise have been using the natural process of inclusion in eastern Slovakia. The inclusion potential of eastern Slovakia was, and remains, very low.

- The Roma, as the only group in communist Czechoslovakia, were able to make the communist leaders discuss meeting their group interests before 1989. This bears witness of the high development potential of the Roma in Slovakia.

- The reckless and fruitless social experiment in which the Roma played the main part increased aversion to the provision of help to a particular social group, and to interventions into the "Roma issue" to implement some vision or concept.

When the situation changed after 1989, the first to confront the Roma issue were the local governments of villages and towns. They were simply unable to deal with the task. On the state level, the issue was not tackled as a complex social problem, but rather as a set of partial tasks for individual state institutions. The various post-1989 governments adopted measures to help the Roma only after a problem had already occurred. Faith in the ability of Slovak society to deal spontaneously with the issue proved mislaid, as did faith in the potential of the Roma community to ensure its own development by itself. One explanation might be that this community was forced to embark on the journey to modernity, which deprived it of its internal strength. Nevertheless, it is clear that the Roma will require help for some time to come. The government was forced to deal with the issue in a more serious manner only after the occurrence of neo-fascist attacks on Roma, and after many protests were lodged by the Roma and EU countries. Central state bodies are finally beginning to appreciate the role played by local communities in solving the Roma issue. Research into the causes of Roma migration to EU countries has shown that this migration was to a certain extent a local strategy through which some groups of Roma reacted to the situation in which they found themselves after 1989 (Vašečka, 2002a, p. 232 – 233) Nevertheless, the Roma issue is not just a local issue. The central and local governments have to cooperate in solving it. If we categorize the help provided by local governments according to type, we get five groups of strategies: a wall against the Roma, inactivity and non-interference, normalization of a problematic situation, provision of external help, and provision of internal help.

THE WALL STRATEGY

This strategy is based on building frontiers and obstacles between the Roma and the non Roma. Its different forms have only one thing in common – they avoid solving the issue,

and they only react when the problem cannot be postponed any longer. The main methods used within this approach are administrative measures accompanied by long term welfare. In the better cases they just postpone integration for when the Roma "change", while in the worse cases they rely on dispersal of the Roma by either removing them or not letting them into the municipality.

This strategy takes several different forms at the moment:

- **Application of discriminatory measures** that cannot be challenged by law. The local government tries to prevent "*strange* Roma", i.e. those who do not have permanent residence in the municipality, to settle in the municipality, usually employing methods that are difficult to prove. In extreme cases they simply ban the Roma from entering the municipality.

- **Endeavor to ban the Roma from certain areas** that are regarded as highly important by the majority population. This approach takes the following forms:
  - Solving the issue of Roma who do not pay rent by moving them into community housing or by privatizing the municipal housing in which they live and permitting their subsequent eviction. The result of this approach is historical town centers and other lucrative town locations with no Roma inhabitants. On the other hand, one gets streets and neighborhoods inhabited mostly by poor and unemployed Roma who suffer from spatial, social and aesthetic isolation. A typical example is the Lunik IX housing estate in Košice.
  - Protecting certain area from thefts and devastation by the Roma by moving the Roma away. This is how the project of moving the Roma away from the Slovenský raj nature reserve came into

being (the Roma were moved to a settlement in Letanovce).
- Ignoring the actions of those who try to displace the Roma, harm them, and get rid of them. This includes attacks on Roma by skinhead groups, banning the Roma from entering restaurants, etc. Public administration bodies either do not intervene, or their interventions are very hesitant.

STRATEGY OF INACTIVITY
AGAINST PEOPLE ABUSING
THE ROMA SITUATION

Those who abuse the Roma to enrich themselves have no concern for improving the welfare of the Roma; their only concern is to make a profit. Public bodies should thus act against them and arrange a remedy. If the state and local governments do not act, they only encourage and strengthen this behavior.

Abuse of the Roma that is not opposed by the state administration most frequently takes the following forms:

- **Illegal employment of the Roma** under inferior conditions.

- **Usury among the Roma.** The issue of usury in local Roma communities cannot be solved simply by saying that without a plaintiff there is no defendant; municipal leaders know full well that people are terrified to give evidence, just as they know who the usurers are, and the terrible damage they do.

- **Application of measures** whose aim is to prevent abuse of welfare benefits. In some cases the municipalities have the right to provide welfare benefits in the form of food vouchers, or providing food to children at school, etc. Unfortunately, some

municipalities were not able to use this tool properly, and the money wound up in the usurers' pockets.

STRATEGY OF "NORMALIZING" PROBLEMS

The strategy of normalizing a problem[3] causes that the state administration does not consider a situation as serious as it really is, and as a result uses simple solutions and measures. Reasons for playing the issue down and using provisional solutions may vary, but what is important is the result, which is that the situation of the economically dependent Roma is being addressed but not solved. Instead of effective but demanding solutions, the state often resorts to provisional and administrative solutions, which are justified by the law, but which do not fix the problem.

This strategy can take different forms:

- Illegal employment of the Roma, which is being addressed by an inefficient system of administrative controls.

- In some Roma housing estates, cases of illegal destruction of property in devastated "houses of horror", which raise the entire specter of housing for economically dependent families, are handled by administrative measures only.

- All Roma who do not pay their rent are moved from the centers of towns to the outskirts, where ethnic ghettos are formed. The important thing for the state bodies is to stick to the law, and ensure that this commonly used measure cannot be contested from the legal viewpoint.

- Neglecting social work, which is the key to true help, and replacing it with welfare

benefits, even though it is clear in advance that the benefits will be misused.

The common feature in all of these strategies is that they postpone any solution of the issue by taking a flawed approach. A proper approach would involve demanding solutions that would have to be accepted by the public – which is very time consuming and politically and professionally demanding. This may be why the public administration is trying to find less complicated and provisional solutions. Moreover, society thus far has not called for demanding solutions (and it is questionable whether society could "afford" them at present). Yet the Roma issue is not about to disappear, and the lame solutions that are applied now only increase tensions and the cost of a real solution in the future.

STRATEGY OF EXTERNAL HELP

The aim of the social measures that the communist regime applied to the Roma was to eradicate their poverty and backwardness. The tool that was used to accomplish this was special welfare benefits and economic advantages; the idea was to level the results, not achieve equality of opportunities. This external financial help limited the poverty of the Roma on the one hand, but taught them inactivity on the other. They acquired a new philosophy, according to which the state was obliged to look after the standard of living of the country's inhabitants. This philosophy can also be found among the non-Roma, but there is one major difference – it is shared only by low income, non Roma families, while among the Roma it is used by almost all families. Thanks to the traditional stigmatization of Roma, these attitudes and behavior patterns are then attributed to the entire Roma ethnic group. The majority population then perceives this behavior as

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typical for the Roma, and not for all low income households dependant on welfare benefits regardless of ethnicity.

At present, the Roma community as a whole is unable to escape from its unfavorable situation without the help of the majority population. What they need in the first place is help that will allow them to recover their social sovereignty. The majority is not always capable of providing this kind of help, but instead tends to address minor problems, helping to alleviate the unfavorable material (shipments of clothes, etc.) and financial situations (welfare benefits). This kind of help is needed, but cannot represent the main form of aid, because it deepens the dependence of the Roma on material and financial help from others. Moreover, the provision of this type of help is problematic, as it is perceived as a social injustice by the majority population. This may be why in some locations it its hard to muster support for helping the Roma who live in Roma settlements and urban Roma ghettos.

STRATEGY OF INTERNAL HELP

The Roma minority at the moment depends on external help from the majority population. This means that the minority as a whole is not capable of solving its own problems by itself.

The basic precondition for effective internal help is that the majority perceives the help as its obligation, and as the repayment of a debt it owes to the minority; the minority must also be able to accept the offered help without suspicion.

Internal help should thus focus on strengthening the Roma community's ability to emancipate itself. This calls for projects whose aim is to increase the human potential of individuals and the social potential of the minority as a whole. The minority must be able to solve its own problems independently. Under the specific conditions of individual settlements, this means increasing the ability of local Roma community members to identify and define the problems they encounter in their communities, to find solutions, and create conditions (social, demographic, cultural, organizational, institutional, informational, and economic) for putting them into practice.

Only the NGOs have been able to provide this kind of help so far. The public administration, and especially local governments, have merely played the role of supporter of such activities, or in the worst case have at least not opposed them.

The common feature of such internal approaches is their scarcity, and the fact that they are not used by the state but by NGOs and, to some extent, local governments. If they are successful, they will become a positive example for others, and will corroborate the principle that a crisis does not necessarily represent a threat, but on the contrary may become an opportunity for change.

ENDNOTES

1. The Roma issue as such does not exist. It is an "issue" only from the viewpoint of the majority population, and it is defined by the majority's standards and values. This "issue" very likely takes a different form from the viewpoint of the Roma. We use neither of these viewpoints in this chapter. Our basis is the "objective" criteria derived from the characteristics of a well-functioning multicultural society.
2. This second approach is only possible if we want to make social policy measures more effective. Using this approach, social policy (or public policy) often slides towards discrimination and anti Roma measures.
3. The "normalization" of a difficult situation occurs when people see how reality differs from

what they consider normal, but they do not consider this deviation a problem that needs to be solved, and thus in the end consider the situation "normal". They may also refuse to see the deviation as a serious problem, and play it down and use provisional, simplistic and necessarily ineffective solutions. This often happens when people are sure that nothing can be done about the problem, or because they have experienced a similar situation in the past and know that the result is not worth the effort invested. When an issue is solved by "normalizing" it, it may even become possible to live with a problem that was originally unacceptable, but that due to various reasons was impossible to solve. The process of normalization is thus an acceptable excuse for the weakness of people who are unable to persuade state institutions to meet their obligations. It also allows people to conceal a lack of faith in their own abilities.

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JOZEF MAJCHRÁK

THE ROMA AS A TOPIC OF DEBATE FOR POLITICAL PARTIES

Summary: The author analyzes the attitudes of various political parties to the problems of the Roma. The chapter catalogues the reactions of individual politicians and political parties to events related to the minority, and includes a review of how the Roma issue was treated in the declarations and election platforms of political parties since 1990. It ends with a look at how major political parties addressed, or rather failed to address, Roma voters.

Key words: Roma, Roma minority, Roma issue, political party, politicians, program declarations, election platforms, elections, election campaign, Roma candidates.

INTRODUCTION

The Roma issue is gradually becoming part of the national discourse in Slovakia. This is probably because the issue has become a key topic in the relationship between the EU and Slovakia, a prospective EU member. Both the Slovak public and European institutions are now waiting to see how the Slovak political elite deals with the Roma issue. Political parties play a key role in this process, as it is they who in parliamentary democracies have the tools to advance their ideas on both the executive and legislative levels. The approach to the issue taken by those political parties with influence on the government, parliamentary or municipal levels thus plays a major role in resolving the problems of the Roma.

THE ROMA ISSUE AS PART OF THE AGENDA OF MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES

THE ATTITUDE OF
POLITICAL PARTIES
TO SELECTED EVENTS RELATED
TO THE ROMA ISSUE:
POPULISM VS. REALISM

The Roma issue begins to appear more frequently in debates between major political parties after 1998. Until then, the political minority agenda had focused primarily on the relationship between the Slovaks and the Hungarian minority. This shift in perception of the Roma issue by political parties was due to several factors. The most important was the exodus of the Roma to EU countries, especially England, Belgium, and Scandinavia. The Roma applied for asylum in these countries, whereupon the latter introduced visa requirements for all Slovak citizens. The Roma migration was accompanied by growing pressure from the EU on Slovak politicians to take more radical steps to tackle the issue. Other incidents sparking the interest of political parties in the Roma issue were recurring thefts of potatoes and wood in eastern Slovakia, for which the Roma were allegedly responsible.

In the reactions and statements of political parties on the Roma migration issue, anti Roma proposals prevailed over attempts to find real solutions. We can identify two ba-

sic approaches taken to the issue by political parties: populism and realism. The proponents of the populist approach hailed chiefly from the opposition Slovak National Party (SNS) and Smer party. Both tried to milk the majority population's negative view of the Roma for all it was worth. According to officials from these parties, the Roma exodus from Slovakia was caused by their desire to sponge off the generous welfare system of EU countries. Smer Chairman Robert Fico called the Roma migration "economic tourism". Similarly, SNS member of parliament (MP) Jozef Prokeš said that there were no race problems in Slovakia, and that the roots of the Roma migration were "purely economic" (*Sme*, December 16, 1999).

The measures proposed by these parties to solve the problem were mostly repressive and often in conflict with the law. In January 2000, SNS MP Rastislav Šepták said that all Roma who left Slovakia should have their passports confiscated for five years on their return. Fico, on the other hand, submitted a Welfare Benefits Bill to parliament, proposing to abolish a provision giving all citizens the right to receive welfare benefits for two months even while abroad, and to allow the authorities to stop the welfare benefits for one year of anyone who left the country and applied for asylum with the aim of obtaining unearned income.

The most realistic view of the Roma migration issue was that of the Democratic Left Party (SDĽ) and the Slovak Democratic and Christian Union (SDKÚ), both of which took an unprejudiced and big-picture approach to the issue. The two ruling coalition parties saw the same causes behind the Roma exodus, namely the bad economic situation in eastern Slovakia, and the insufficient education of the Roma. The solution most frequently proposed by these parties was the creation of new job opportunities using EU funds, and improving the education of Roma

children by introducing preparatory classes for elementary school.

The same populist/realist schema divided party approaches to the other main problem – the theft of wood and crops from public and private land in eastern Slovakia. The SNS, once again, proposed the most radical solution. During a press conference on July 28, 2000, the SNS asked the Interior and Foreign Ministries to protect crops by deploying the army. SNS Deputy Chair Dušan Mašlonka said: "The government should solve this agricultural catastrophe – the plague of Gypsy locusts on our fields." Smer, too, paid significant attention to this issue, although its vocabulary was not as radical as that of the SNS. In July 2000, Smer Chairman Fico presented a draft amendment to the Penal Code, aiming to reclassify petty theft from a misdemeanor to a criminal offense (the so-called Farm Act). MPs from all parliamentary parties supported this act. The wood and crop theft issue formed a major part of Fico's political agenda, and often brought out his most populist vocabulary.

The opposition Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS) also tried to capitalize on the situation. HZDS Deputy Chair Jozef Kalman criticized the police for treating the Roma differently than other citizens, which in his opinion prevented the application of the principle of non-discrimination in Slovakia.

A less prejudiced approach was taken by the Christian Democrats (KDH), who in summer 2001 began a discussion on what forms of field protection were acceptable from the legal viewpoint; the party recommended citizens protect their fields by legal means, such as forming field patrols. KDH Deputy Chair Vladimir Palko stressed several times that the Penal Code amendment presented by Fico was useless.

SNS and Smer officials often manipulated demographic estimates of the current and future

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size of the Roma population in their comments on the Roma issue. In June 2000, Fico claimed that by 2010 there would be 1.2 million Roma in Slovakia, of which as many as 800,000 would be dependent on welfare benefits. In his opinion, such a development would destroy the country's social system. He thus proposed to cap the payment of child allowance to three children per family at the most, and to make payment of the benefits conditional on the children's attending school. In September 1999, SNS Deputy Chair Anna Malíková claimed that the number of Roma would reach one million by 2010, adding: "I consider it immoral that my money and the money of working people is always used to subsidize people who create no value for this country."

ABSENCE OF A MORE COMPLEX VIEW

The basic characteristic of the Roma issue approach by the major political parties was a strong prevalence of frequently populist reactions to the current affairs over more complex proposals. No relevant political party has included solution of the Roma issue in their declarations (not so in the election platforms).

The only political party to include a more integrated approach to solving the issue in its agenda was Smer. The party's priorities regarding the Roma issue are as follows:
- support for social field workers;
- close cooperation with NGOs dealing with the Roma issue;
- respecting the freedom of choice of individuals and families, while advising them of the consequences of their demographic behavior for themselves (i.e. limiting child allowance after a certain number of children is reached) and for society;
- conditioning the payment of welfare benefits and child allowance on the family's children attending preschool and school;

- finding a way to make the payment of welfare benefits more efficient, and to prevent their abuse;
- making the position of Roma entrepreneurs more equal;
- using the special recipient status more consistently;
- educating the majority to show greater tolerance for the unique nature of the Roma.

Disunity and shallow views on the Roma issue were also seen among political parties during the late 2001 election campaign for regional parliaments. The Roma issue was an important topic in this campaign, especially in the Prešov and Košice regions. Almost all candidates for regional governors considered the situation of Roma as a grave problem requiring an immediate solution. However, the majority could not turn their proposals into solutions underpinned by their real possibilities and powers as regional governors.

ON THE VERGE OF RACISM

One of the most negative features of Slovak politics is the fact that many politicians make racist statements about the Roma. This is especially dangerous because it is not fringe or extremist politicians saying these things, but representatives of parliamentary political parties. In many cases, these statements are part of a strategy to increase popularity by using the Slovak public's negative view of the Roma. From 1998 to 2002, racist statements were most frequently used by SNS representatives (and later, after the party split in two, also by representatives of the Real Slovak National Party – PSNS); several HZDS politicians also made use of similar statements.

The best-known comments during these four years were the statements of SNS MP Vitazoslav Moric and HZDS MP Michal Drobný.

In August 2000, Moric proposed at an SNS press conference to establish American-style reservations for Roma who were unable to adapt to Slovak society. He defended his proposal with the following "reasoning": "If we don't make them [reservations] now, the Gypsies will build them for us in 12 years. The vast majority of mentally retarded people are born in Gypsy communities. What is so human about allowing a moron to beget another moron, and thus increase the proportion of morons and blockheads in our nation?" (*Sme*, August 5, 2000). Moric's statement aroused a wave of criticism, and both the Civil Democratic Youth and the Roma Initiative of Slovakia parties filed a criminal complaint against Moric for inciting racial hatred and defaming a race or a belief. In September 2000, the Slovak parliament withdrew the immunity from prosecution Moric enjoyed as an MP, opening the way for his criminal trial. During the parliamentary debate on withdrawing the immunity, HZDS MP Michal Drobný said in regard to the Roma: "How do you intend to punish them, if they are like animals from both the emotional and the human points of view? They are amoral, they live like pagans, and this is the source of the massive aggression against them."

A major risk of such racist statements by national politicians is that they help legitimize the attitudes and opinions of various right-wing extremist movements. Racism against the Roma is in fact a unifying bond between individual right-wing extremist forces in Slovakia.

THE ROMA IN
THE ELECTION PLATFORMS OF
POLITICAL PARTIES

The analysis of the election platforms of individual political parties and movements presented in this chapter deals only with major political parties, i.e. those with over the 5% voter support needed to get seats in parliament.

1990 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

Candidates in the 1990 parliamentary elections paid little or no attention to the Roma issue. The Roma were mentioned most often in places where political parties declared the equality of Slovaks and members of ethnic groups and minorities living in Slovakia. This was the case of the Slovak Communist Party (KSS), the Democratic Party (DS), the Slovak Green Party (SZS), and the Hungarian Christian Democratic Movement (MKDH). The election platform of the KSS, for example, stated: "We support the coexistence of Czechs and Slovaks with the Hungarians, the Roma, the Ruthenians, the Polish, and the Germans in a state guaranteeing their national and ethnic independence, and providing guarantees of their real political, economic and cultural equality." Similarly, the DS, in part of its election platform entitled *Nation, Motherland and State*, demanded a legal guarantee of full equality for all nations and ethnic minorities living in Slovakia. The Christian Democrats (KDH) criticized the fiction of the "Czechoslovak nation" and the "Czechoslovak people", and called them an offence to both the Czechs and the Slovaks, as well as to the Hungarians, the Ukrainians, the Germans, the Polish, and the Roma. The KDH also declared its intention to create the political and economic conditions for the self-development of all nations living in Slovakia.

The most comprehensive election platform statement on the Roma was that of the Public Against Violence (VPN) party, which contested the 1990 elections in coalition with the Hungarian Independent Initiative (MNI). In a chapter called *The National and Ethnic*

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Pillar, the VPN "welcom[ed] the healthy efforts of the Roma to improve their cultural and living standards and contribute to a dignified life for the Roma in Slovakia". There was no mention of the Roma in the SNS election platform.

1992 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

Among the key political parties and movements, only the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS – a VPN splinter faction) and the Democratic Left Party (SDĽ – a KSS splinter) included ethnic policies in their election platforms. The relationship between the Czechs and the Slovaks was the main issue discussed in the HZDS election platform chapter *National and Ethnic Program*. As for the remaining ethnic minorities, the HZDS expressed interest in guaranteeing full development to ethnic minorities and groups in compliance with international conventions. The SDĽ declared it would respect the right of minorities to be educated in their native languages, and support bilingualism in regions with significant ethnic minority populations. However, the Roma minority was never explicitly mentioned in the HZDS and SDĽ platforms, and the declarations in the SDĽ platform were mainly in response to the political and cultural demands of the Hungarian minority. The only political party to directly mention the Roma in its 1992 election platform was the MKDH. This coalition of political parties expressed support for the establishment of Roma schools. It also promised to support a review of the system of kindergartens, elementary, secondary and vocational schools to ensure they met the needs of ethnic minorities. No mention of ethnic minorities or the Roma was found in the election platforms of the KDH and SNS.

Before the 1992 elections, as before the 1990 elections, political parties tended to focus on the relationship between the Czechs and the Slovaks (the 1992 elections were key from the viewpoint of the future of the common state) and the Hungarian minority issue.

1994 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

Most of the programs of major political parties competing in the 1994 elections included statements on ethnic policy, with the exception of the KDH and the Union of Workers of Slovakia (ZRS). The Roma issue was mentioned specifically only in the election platform of the SDĽ, which in its *Rights of Ethnic Minority Members* section undertook to address social, economic, and other problems in ethnically mixed areas. The SDĽ also declared support for improving the unfavorable position of the Roma by "creating new job opportunities and improving their education". The SDĽ was thus the first Slovak political party after 1990 to have included the Roma issue in its election platform and to have outlined possible solutions, for all that they were very general in wording.

Some political parties, such as the HZDS and the Democratic Union (DU), confined themselves to declaring a general obligation to address the problems of ethnic minorities in accordance with the Slovak Constitution and relevant international treaties. Both parties at the same time rejected autonomy and the concept of collective rights, proving that their view of ethnic policy was confined to the problems of the Hungarian minority. A similar concept was presented by the SNS, whose election platform was largely nationalist when it came to minorities, and focused mainly on protecting Slovaks living in ethnically mixed areas. The most complete concept of ethnic policy was presented by the political parties competing within the MKDH coalition. Unfortunately, this was restricted to the Hungarian minority.

1998 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

Of the major political parties, only the SDĽ, HZDS and the Hungarian Coalition Party (SMK) paid special attention to the Roma issue in the 1998 parliamentary elections. The closest attention to the Roma issue was again paid by the SDĽ, which is interesting, given that the SDĽ is a left-wing political party that views the Roma issue as "an internal problem of the Roma minority in the search for their own ethnic identity and ways to implant it in education, culture, language, and the improvement of the social situation". According to the SDĽ, the basic solution to the Roma issue was "greater activity, effort and willingness to improve the situation on the part of the Roma". According to Miroslav Kusý, the wording of the SDĽ election platform suggested that the party "supports the anti-Roma prejudices of part of its voter base" (Kusý, 1998).

The 1998 HZDS election platform was written in the form of demands by "virtual" citizens to whom the individual planks in the platform were addressed. The platform contained no separate part devoted to ethnic policy, although two points pertained directly to the Roma minority. In the first point, where the virtual citizens demanded "the preservation and support of minority cultures", the HZDS undertook "to increase the ethnic awareness of the Roma, so they can freely claim their own nationality in population censuses". This wording has an apparent anti-Hungarian undertone, as many citizens who claimed Hungarian nationality in the 1991 population census were Roma. In the second point, the citizens demanded that "the relationship between the state and the church be resolved and developed in favor of the citizens". The HZDS undertook "to create conditions for the establishment of pastoral centers for evangelizing to and guiding the Roma". The following point was also indirectly related to the Roma: "in cases where groups of citizens are unable to adapt [to society], we demand that the provision of welfare benefits be tightened." Here, the HZDS undertook, albeit indirectly, to take restrictive measures against the Roma, promising "to replace the payment of welfare in monetary form with supplies of material" (i.e. food, clothes, etc.).

The SMK election platform focused on the Hungarian minority before the 1998 elections. The Roma were mentioned in only one paragraph of the social policy chapter, where the SMK emphasized the need for "the reasonable involvement of Roma communities in solving the Roma issue", stressing the principle of "suitable forms of integration instead of assimilation".

The election platform of the Civic Understanding Party (SOP) also contained a chapter on ethnic policy, although it only contained some general statements that omitted to specify the problems of individual minorities and how these would be solved.

Discussion of the ethnic minority issue was completely absent from the election platforms of the SNS and the Slovak Democratic Coalition (SDK). The SNS presented a concept of a nation state based on the principle of "extensive rights for Slovaks". As for the SDK, even though its election platform was one of the most comprehensive of all parties, and included parts on the position of women and youth, there was no mention of ethnic minorities.

Nevertheless, party platforms before 1998 elections showed signs of positive change in terms of the Roma issue compared to previous elections. Half of the political parties that received seats in parliament in 1998 (the SDĽ, HZDS, and SMK) had included the Roma issue in their election platforms. Al-

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though they still lacked a more complex view of the issue, compared to previous elections they represented a clear shift from general declarations towards identifying problems and possible solutions.

2002 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

Among the major political parties, the non-parliamentary Alliance of the New Citizen (ANO) paid the greatest attention to the Roma issue. Its election platform included an independent section devoted exclusively to the Roma issue. The ANO platform was built around the premise that if the country as a whole did not tackle the Roma issue, it would become a threat to all Slovak citizens. ANO promised to take a new approach to the issue based on the following steps:

- centralizing money for tackling the Roma issue;
- creating a center for tackling the Roma issue situated in eastern Slovakia;
- establishing a program of so-called "missionary work" as defined by law and carried out by university graduates (including psychology, social work, etc.).

In comparison with other political parties, the SMK also paid close attention to the Roma issue in its election platform. The party vowed to support programs based on the active participation of the Roma, such as training Roma assistants. After undergoing a training course, the task of these assistants would be "to help the Roma organize by themselves".

The election platforms of some political parties, such as the HZDS, SNS, and SDKU, contained no mention of the Roma or the Roma issue. Nevertheless, proposals that could have a significant impact on the Roma were found in chapters on social policy. The HZDS, for example, proposed to provide welfare benefits to "groups of citizens who are unable to adapt [to society]" in the form of material benefits. Similarly, the SNS supported providing material benefits to people unable or unwilling to use the monetary payments reasonably. The SDKU in its election platform promised to fight the abuse of child allowance, such as by the payment of allowances in kind, at shorter intervals, or by making payments conditional on the fulfillment of certain obligations (e.g. children attending school regularly, etc.).

The most repressive solutions to the Roma issue were proposed by Smer. In the section of its platform called *Order in Unemployment and the Social Sphere*, the party wrote: "through its economic and social policy, and through special health education and welfare work, Smer is prepared to influence the uncontrolled growth of the Roma population, which has been caused by the irrational state policy of supporting families with many children in which parents are not held responsible for the quality of upbringing and standard of living of their children."

Solutions to the problems of the Roma were only a fringe topic in the election platforms of parties that won over 5% support in elections, and thus qualified for seats in parliament. However, the positive trend started in the 1998 elections continued, and political parties gradually abandoned their general declarations on the need to solve the problems of the Roma in favor of more concrete measures. Based on how the political parties approached the topic in their election platforms, they can be divided into two groups. The first consisted of ANO and the SMK, who proposed and supported innovative approaches to the Roma issue (Roma assistants, state missionary work). The second consisted of political parties that advocated restrictive social policy measures, especially in the provision of welfare benefits. This group in-

cluded the HZDS, SNS, SDKÚ, and above all Smer. There was no mention of the problems of the Roma in the KDH election platform.

HOW THE MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES ADDRESSED ROMA VOTERS

Since the 1989 revolution, the major political parties employed no special strategies to address Roma voters. There have been no special campaigns focusing on the Roma as a target group, such as TV or radio spots, advertisements or promotional material in the Roma language. Apart from the HZDS, no major political party has organized personal meetings of their candidates with Roma voters. Roma candidates on the HZDS ticket visited Roma voters directly in Roma settlements even before the 1998 elections.

The most common way of addressing the Roma voter has been for the major political parties to enter into coalition with a Roma political party, or to offer positions on their lists of election candidates to Roma leaders. In the 1990 elections, the Roma Civic Initiative (ROI) ran in coalition with the Civic Forum in the Czech Republic, and with the Public Against Violence in Slovakia. As a member of these coalitions, ROI obtained four seats in the Federal Assembly and one in the Slovak National Council, which was held by Anna Koptová. Roma were also present on the list of candidates for the Communist Party. In 1994, Roma were nominated to the candidates' list of the Democratic Union (DÚ). In the 1998 elections, two ROI members were nominated to the HZDS list, while the SDK also sought cooperation with Roma minority representatives. This latter effort culminated in the signing of a contract on pre-election and post-election cooperation between the SDK and the Roma Intelligent-

sia for Coexistence (RIS) (see also *The Roma Political Scene* chapter in this book).

Before the 2002 parliamentary elections, the HZDS offered three positions on its list of candidates to representatives of Roma organizations. ROI Chairman Alexander Patkoló was offered the 75th position on the list of candidates, even though under the original agreement he had been offered a position among the top 30 candidates, thus giving him a reasonable chance of being elected to parliament. Three Roma candidates were on the candidates' list of the Democratic Party – Democratic Union (DS – DÚ). One Roma candidate stood for Smer.

On the basis of the results of the 2002 elections, none of the Roma candidates captured a seat in parliament. In comparison with other candidates, the Roma candidates also obtained few preferential votes, by which citizens could indicate their preference that a certain candidate be given a seat. For example, Alexander Patkoló, a HZDS nominee, obtained 365 preferential votes, while Smer nominee Jozef Bastyur got 118, compared to hundreds of thousands of preferential votes for the most popular Slovak politicians. Clearly, the Roma nominated to the lists of candidates of major political parties were unable to address even a significant number of Roma voters.

CONCLUSION

After 1989, Slovak political parties focused initially on solving the constitutional arrangement of the Czechoslovak Federation. After Czechoslovakia split apart in 1993, the minority agenda of political parties was dominated by the position of the Hungarian minority. The interest of major political parties in addressing the problems of the Roma increased slightly in the second half of the

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1990s, due largely to the mass migration of the Roma to several EU countries, followed by the introduction of a visa obligation for Slovak citizens on the part of the countries affected. However, the political agenda was still dominated by reactions to individual Roma minority affairs, rather than by systematic proposals for solving Roma problems. Some parties, such as the HZDS, SNS, PSNS, and Smer, tried to get the most out of the negative popular view of the Roma by using various populist proposals and statements. As Imrich Vašečka wrote: "They attempted to pin the Roma exodus on the hidden interests of political groups or of those who wanted to enrich themselves at the expense of the Roma. They also pointed out that the Roma were like tourists who saw their trips as an opportunity to earn money. Learning the truth required deeper thought, which neither the government nor any political party or NGO was willing to risk." (Imrich Vašečka, 2000)

The problems of the Roma are still not among the main topics on the election platforms of major political parties. Since the 1998 parliamentary elections a positive trend has appeared, with the Roma minority appearing more frequently on the election platforms of political parties, and general declarations giving way to concrete solutions. Considering the seriousness of the issue, however, the activity of political parties is insufficient. The parties do not consider Roma voters an interesting target group, and thus their election platforms contain only partial or even restrictive proposals, by which they attempt to win over majority voters.

The Roma issue is not a topic on which individual political parties greatly differ. Indeed, if there is a visible difference, it is usually only between parties taking a neutral approach to the issue, and those using populism to make political capital out of the Roma.

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MICHAL ŠEBESTA

THE ROMA POLITICAL SCENE

Summary: The author analyses the development of Roma political parties over the past two electoral terms (1994 – 1998 and 1998 – 2002), relations between Roma political leaders, and the attempt to unite the Roma political scene. He evaluates the likelihood of a Roma political party receiving the 5% of votes needed to secure representation in parliament, describes the achievements and setbacks of Roma political leaders in the country's first elections to regional parliaments in 2001, and analyzes the electoral behavior of the Roma across Slovakia with emphasis on Roma settlements. By way of comparison, he looks at the way ethnic minorities participate in the administration of public affairs in Hungary.

Key words: Roma political representation, participation, cooperation, fragmentation, Roma political parties, election platforms of Roma political parties, parliamentary, municipal and regional elections, electoral behavior, election campaign, standardization of the political scene, minority self-governments.

INTRODUCTION

The Roma gained the opportunity to form their own political representation and associate in their own political parties after the changes in November 1989. Over the past 13 years, however, only two or three political parties have been founded that attempted to unite the Roma political scene. Several attempts to do so before the 1998 and 2002 elections proved fruitless. No Roma political party ran in the 1998 elections as an independent party, while two Roma political parties ran in the 2002 elections, and several Roma appeared on the lists of candidates for parliamentary seats of non-Roma political parties. No representative of the Roma, whether standing as a candidate for the opposition Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS) party or the ruling coalition Hungarian Coalition Party (SMK), received enough support to win a seat in parliament.

The last time the Roma had representatives in national politics was in the Czechoslovak Federal Assembly and the Slovak National Council after the first free parliamentary elections in 1990, when they ran as candidates for the Civic Forum party in the Czech Republic and the Public Against Violence and the Communist Party in Slovakia. What possibilities does the Roma political representation then have to participate in the administration of public affairs? Should they attempt to run as members of a single political party, form pre-election coalitions with non Roma political parties, or join standard majority political parties? The creation of party lists of candidates before the 2002 parliamentary elections showed that the majority of non-Roma political parties are not yet ready to cooperate as partners with Roma politicians. One of the reasons for this is the stance of the majority population – if a party

put a Roma on its ticket, it could lose votes among the majority population.

COOPERATION OF ROMA POLITICAL LEADERS AND ATTEMPTS TO UNITE THE ROMA POLITICAL SCENE

After the 1998 elections, there was not a single Roma in the Slovak parliament. Jozef Ravasz, the most successful Roma candidate, received 3,110 "preferential votes" (a system allowing voters to mark which of a party's candidates they would like to see take seats in parliament), which was not enough to win him a seat in parliament. Indeed, seeded at number 88 out of 150 on the candidates' list of the HZDS party, Ravasz would have needed many times more preferential votes to leapfrog his higher-seeded colleagues and win one of the 43 seats the party captured. The Roma in municipalities with large Roma populations tended to vote for the HZDS and the united democratic opposition of the time, the Slovak Democratic Coalition (SDK) party. In the south of the country, the Roma embraced mostly the Hungarian Coalition Party (SMK), the party of choice for ethnic Hungarians living in the area.

Box 1
Comparison of Roma Electoral Behavior in Three Municipalities Inhabited by Roma

The electoral behavior of the Roma in the following municipalities cannot be used to make general statements about the Roma, because the comparison does not cover the electoral behavior of assimilated and integrated Roma, or of Roma living in larger agglomerations. The selected municipalities were characterized by a high rate of unemployment, increased levels of petty crime, a high birthrate, the absence of social contacts with the surrounding (majority) world, and other factors typical of poverty. In such environments, where life is mainly about survival, no significant level of political mobilization or participation can be expected. According to a research project by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), under the name *Roma Human Development Project*, carried out at the end of 2001 by the Institute for Public Affairs on a sample of 1,030 Roma respondents, 68% of them had voted in the 1998 parliamentary elections, compared to a national turnout of just over 84%.

According to data recorded after the 1992 parliamentary elections, the Roma Civic Initiative (ROI) party received 56.46% of votes in the northeast Slovak municipality of Lomnička in Stará Ľubovňa district (i.e. 166 votes) and 5.61% (72) votes in Jarovnice in eastern Slovakia (Mann, 1994).

Table 1
1998 parliamentary elections: Share of votes received by selected political parties in different municipalities with significant Roma populations (%)

Municipality	HZDS	SDK	SDĽ	SOP	SMK	SNS
Lomnička	76.16	8.49	1.91	1.36	1.09	1.64
Jarovnice	18.18	62.07	6.18	6.03	0.00	4.34
Lunik IX	15.13	51.61	4.21	6.57	0.00	1.98

Note: Political party abbreviations used, and position leading up to 1998 elections: HZDS (Movement for a Democratic Slovakia – government); SDK (Slovak Democratic Coalition – opposition); SDĽ (Party of the Democratic Left – opposition); SOP (Civic Understanding Party – opposition); SMK (Hungarian Coalition Party – opposition); SNS (Slovak National Party – government).
Source: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, 1998.

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Table 1 does not contain data about voter turnout in the different municipalities. In the 1998 parliamentary elections, the Roma electorate cast their votes mostly for two political parties – the HZDS and SDK. The number of SDK supporters in the Lunik IX housing estate in east Slovakia's Košice was surprisingly high; one would have expected the Civic Understanding Party (SOP) of 1994 to 1998 Košice Mayor Rudolf Schuster to earn more votes.

Jarovnice

The Jarovnice municipality was in a special situation before the 1998 elections. In July that year, the municipality had been hit by flooding, in which 50 people had died and massive damage had been caused to private property. Then-Prime Minister Vladimír Mečiar visited the municipality, and shortly thereafter, help was also offered by SDK Chairman Mikuláš Dzurinda. Several NGOs were involved in removing the damage caused by the flooding. For several weeks, Gustáv Karika, a member of the Roma Initiative for Coexistence party (RIS, which had signed a pre-elec-

tion cooperation deal with the SDK), also worked in the municipality. Although some local Roma were members of both Roma political parties, the activity of Karika (and presumably also the death during the electoral campaign of Roma Civic Initiative Chairman Ján Kompuš, who had been on the HZDS candidates' list) influenced the results of elections in this municipality.

As you can see from Table 2, voter turnout in the 1994 and 1998 elections in Lunik IX was almost identical. The SDK[1] saw the biggest gain in support. Most first time voters likely chose the SDK, while some of the Democratic Left Party's (SDĽ) voters from 1994 probably voted for the SOP in 1998. A small improvement (exactly 20 votes) was recorded by the HZDS.

Attention should also be paid to voter turnout in municipal elections held the same year. Only 180 voters (i.e. 10% of the electorate) cast ballots in Lunik IX, even though local Roma Jozef Šaňa was running for office. His comment on the low partici-

Table 2
Comparison of the results of the 1994 and 1998 parliamentary elections in the Lunik IX housing estate in Košice (%)

	Registered voters	Voter turnout in %	HZDS	SDK	SDĽ	SOP	MK/SMK	SNS
1994	1,392	50.86	13.69	20.98	11.31	–	0.15	1.34
1998	1,625	51.02	15.13	51.61	4.21	6.57	0.00	1.98

Source: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, 1994, 1998.

Table 3
Number and share of votes received by two candidates for the presidency in May 1999 presidential elections

Municipality	Valid votes cast	Votes cast for Vladimír Mečiar	Votes cast for Rudolf Schuster	Mečiar's share of total	Schuster's share of total
Lomnička	229	190	28	82.96	12.22
Jarovnice	1,245	294	837	23.61	67.22
Lunik IX	452	123	269	27.21	59.51

Source: Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, 1999.

pation: "Local people seldom go outside during the winter".

The presidential elections of May 1999 brought the best voter turnout in Jarovnice; in Lunik IX and Lomnička, less than 50% of voters cast ballots. Jarovnice and Lunik IX voters confirmed once again their rejection of authoritarian former PM Vladimír Mečiar. The strong support for Mečiar in Lomnička in both elections was apparently a relic of the high support the Roma Civic Initiative (ROI, a HZDS ally) enjoyed in the 1992 elections. Since 1994, the mayor of Lomnička has been a member of the Democratic Union (DÚ), a party that helped found the SDK in 1998.

Generally, voter turnout is very low among the Roma electorate in settlements. These settlements are typically marginalized territories with no social contact with the majority population. The "promises, sausages, and beer" type of electoral campaign that is common among majority voters is ineffective here (for the parties, the result does not justify the time and money invested), because most voters decide on the day of elections which political party they will support. These choices are influenced by the decisions made by other community members, by the mood of each voter, and last but not least by the weather.

A completely different type of electoral behavior occurs among assimilated and integrated Roma, who incline to Roma or non-Roma political parties depending on the degree to which they identify with them.

Box 2
Electoral behavior of the Roma in south Slovakia

The behavior of Roma voters in south Slovakia can be analyzed from the results of three municipalities with an above-average share of Roma inhabitants. The municipalities of Rimavská Seč and Lenartovce in the Rimavská Sobota district in southeastern Slovakia rank among the country's "Hungarian" municipalities, while Nižný Žipov in Trebišov district is a "Slovak" municipality (the division is according to whether the area is dominated by ethnic Slovaks or ethnic Hungarians). Given the results of the 1998 parliamentary elections in these three municipalities[2], it is clear that in places whose inhabitants are mostly ethnic Hungarians, the Roma tended to vote for the Hungarian Coalition Party. In Rimavská Seč, out of the 884 valid votes cast, 83% were won by the SMK, followed by the HZDS with 5% and the SDK with 3.5%. A similar result was recorded in Lenartovce, where out of the 331 valid votes cast, the SMK received 72%, the SDK 12.7%, and the HZDS 8.8%. On the other hand, the SMK did not receive a single vote in the "Slovak" municipality of Nižný Žipov, where the elections were won by the SDK (46% of votes) followed by the HZDS (15.2%), SDĽ (14%) and SOP (11.4%).

In the three municipalities, the Roma represent 41% to 57% of inhabitants. In Ri-

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mavská Seč, however, out of 1,781 inhabitants, only 106 people claimed Roma nationality (1,546 Hungarian and 84 Slovak nationality), while in Lenartovce, out of 546 inhabitants only 81 people claimed Roma nationality (426 Hungarian and 19 Slovak). In Nižný Žipov, meanwhile, out of 1,274 inhabitants, only 42 claimed Roma nationality (1,222 Slovak nationality).[4] We must also take into account the fact that children under 18 years of age represent about 50% of the Roma population. It is thus hard to determine (especially in Nižný Žipov) which political party the Roma voted for, however, the Hungarian-speaking Roma tended to prefer the Hungarian Coalition Party, and we can assume that their decision was largely based on their ethnicity. The chance of Roma political parties of winning votes among the Roma without building political structures in these regions is thus minimal.

After the 1998 elections, Roma political party representatives tried several times to form a common platform for the majority of Roma political parties, so that they would stand a chance of succeeding in the 2002 elections. First, a meeting initiated by the Roma Democratic Unity Party was held, at which five Roma political parties signed a coalition treaty. This was followed by talks among the representatives of 14 Roma political parties, and an agreement to establish the Coalition Council of Roma Political Parties. The attempt by Roma politicians, led by the Roma Civic Initiative (ROI) and the Roma Initiative for Coexistence (RISZ), to unite culminated in October 2000. The *Agreement on a Common Electoral Platform for Roma Political Parties and Roma Non-Governmental Organizations for Preparation for the Elections and the Entry of a Roma Political Entity to Parliament*, which was originally signed by 13 Roma political parties and 25 Roma NGOs, was seen as the most significant achievement in the process of unifying the Roma political scene so far. It was based on a consensus that before the 2002 parliamentary elections, Roma political parties should team up under the banner of the oldest and most consolidated Roma party in Slovakia – the ROI. The only party not to sign this agreement was the Roma Initiative of Slovakia (RIS), chaired by Alexander Patkoló.

WHY NOT INDEPENDENTLY?

No form of integration of Roma political parties and NGOs into one entity guarantees entry to the Slovak parliament, which involves exceeding the 5% threshold of public support needed to qualify for parliamentary seats. Estimates by ROI representatives and other Roma leaders that they stood a chance of receiving 700,000 votes in the September 2002 elections were absolutely unrealistic. Considering the age structure of the Roma population, and assuming no Roma party would have been widely supported by the majority population, this estimate would have meant that there were about 1.4 million Roma living in Slovakia (the highest reasonable estimates set the Roma population at around 385,000 – see the chapter *Roma Population Demographic Trends* in this book).

Furthermore, the expectation that non-Roma from the lower classes of society would support a joint party was wrong-headed. Even if, according to public opinion polls, this group of people has more in common with the Roma than with people of higher social

and economic status, the ethnic gap is still large enough to prevent them from becoming a Roma party electorate. Moreover, due to the large social gulf between the majority population and the Roma, the assimilated and integrated Roma tend to vote for majority political parties.[4] There are also many Roma, especially those living in south Slovakia, who vote for the Hungarian Coalition Party (see Box 2), and there is also usually a large proportion of invalid ballots among the votes cast by Roma who live in settlements. As for these settlement communities, lower voter turnout can generally be expected, as a certain number of Roma in the settlements have their permanent residence outside the municipality where they currently live, meaning they cannot vote. Some Roma live in settlements that are several kilometers away from the nearest village and the nearest voting station. Finally, according to research by the Institute for Public Affairs carried out in May 2002, as much as 83% of Roma respondents distrust all Roma political parties (*Rómske hlasy*, 2002).

THE ROMA PARLIAMENT

The next serious attempt to unite the Roma politically was the Roma Parliament, which had been set up by Roma representatives in March 2001 as the supreme organ representing the Roma nation in Slovakia. The Parliament held its first sitting in Banská Bystrica on May 19, 2001, at which officials and statutory representatives of the Parliament were nominated, and delegates adopted a three-member model of parliamentary committees to advise Slovak government ministries. Some new Roma groups became members of the Parliament, thus increasing the body's total membership to 156. Until then an informal organization, the Roma Parliament now became the most representative Roma body in Slovakia.

The speaker of the Parliament, Ladislav Fízik, suggested to the Slovak government and the national parliament that they could stop looking for a partner for addressing the Roma issue: "I hereby notify MPs and the government that we are their partner", said Fízik. After its founding session, the Roma Parliament worked hard to improve the political representation of Roma interests in Slovakia. At the beginning of October, the Roma Community NGO Council of the Roma Parliament asked all Slovak Roma who "have not so far realized the need to change their way of life, to recognize the need for such a change" (Vašečka, 2001).

During the lead-up to the country's first regional elections, in September 2001, individual members of the Roma Parliament had a difference of opinion. The Roma Parliament elected a new speaker at an extraordinary meeting, replacing Ladislav Fízik with Milan Mižič. The reason for the change was the refusal of Fízik and his RIS party to comply with the agreement between Roma political parties, according to which the Roma should run in the elections united under the banner of the ROI. Fízik said the session of parliament that replaced him was illegitimate, and in October 2001, several existing Roma parties applied to the Interior Ministry to register a new political party – the Roma Coalition Party (SRK), which aimed to unite the Roma before the regional and parliamentary elections. This initiative went against the original resolution of the Roma Parliament, according to which Roma parties were to have teamed up with the ROI. Fízik argued that the ROI had too many internal problems.

In May 2002, a meeting of 16 representatives of Roma political parties was held in Bardejov, after which ROI Deputy Chairman Milan Ščuka announced that Roma parties would run in the parliamentary elections united under the ROI. There was only one

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exception – the Roma Initiative of Slovakia (RIS), whose candidates were promised positions on the HZDS party's ticket. A month later it was decided that the Roma Civic Initiative and the Roma Coalition Party would not unite, as they were unable to elect a common chairman. Only 12 Roma political parties thus teamed up with the ROI. Later on, the Roma Coalition Party, the Roma Civic Union, and the Social Democratic Party of Roma in Slovakia registered a new party called the Political Movement of Roma in Slovakia – ROMA with the Interior Ministry. RIS Chairman Alexander Patkoló, meanwhile, ran seeded number 75 of 150 on the HZDS party ticket, a virtually unelectable position.[5] Thus, despite the repeated attempts by Roma politicians to unite, the September 2002 elections again saw two independently running Roma political parties: the ROI, which united 12 Roma political parties mostly from eastern Slovakia; and the Political Movement of Roma in Slovakia – ROMA, which united three Roma political parties from central and south Slovakia.

THE 2002 ELECTIONS

The election result was a complete fiasco for the Roma leaders. ROI won 8,420 votes (0.29%), and the Political Movement of Roma in Slovakia – ROMA gained roughly 2,000 votes less. Alexander Patkoló, running for the HZDS, did not receive enough preferential votes to make it into parliament. ROMA achieved its best result in the southeastern Slovakia's Rimavská Sobota district, where 1,354 people (3.27%) cast ballots for the party; ROI, despite taking 802 votes in east Slovakia's Spišská Nová Ves district, actually won its biggest proportion of votes (2.03%) in Kežmarok district in northeastern Slovakia.

The leaders of both Roma political parties announced they would resign, with Fízik

commenting: "I ask myself, why should they [Roma voters] vote for us? We have no power, no means of ensuring that our objectives and plans are put into action. The non-Roma parties have the power and the means. Even if they do not, our people seem to believe they do" (*Romano nevo ľil*, No. 557 – 565).

ELECTION PLATFORMS AND PRESENTATION OF ROMA POLITICAL PARTIES

Considering the stance of the majority population towards the Roma, Roma politicians are in a difficult position and have limited chances to present themselves. Their presentations must be acceptable to both the Roma and majority society; they must be objective; and they must demonstrate a profound knowledge of the problems, and respect for the views of the Roma, although not in a populist manner. Any Roma representative who is unable to do all of this becomes untrustworthy to the majority, and foregoes any chance of seeing his proposals accepted, even the reasonable ones (Holomek, 1999). The stances and presentations of Roma political leaders are generally aimed at two target groups – the Roma and the majority. Politicians who target only the Roma community must use a more radical approach, and must forego cooperation with non-Roma political parties. Roma politicians thus usually choose the first option.

After the founding of independent Slovakia, the Roma Civic Initiative remained the most important Roma political entity in the country. Apart from ROI, many Roma political parties emerged and perished, but their influence was always (and still is) minimal, since most failed to take on more than a regional or even local significance. Furthermore, they do not coordinate their activities. Before the

1998 elections, however, another significant political party emerged that claimed to belong to the then-opposition – the Roma Intelligentsia for Coexistence (which during 2002 transformed into the Political Movement of the Roma in Slovakia – ROMA). After the ROI quit its cooperation with the HZDS in 1998, and the Roma Initiative for Coexistence also suffered problems, the two parties were joined by the Roma Initiative of Slovakia.[5]

THE ROMA CIVIC INITIATIVE (ROI)

ROI claims to be a party on the left of the political spectrum, and is striving to gain membership in the Socialist International. ROI supported Slovakia's EU membership because it expects accession (due to happen on May 1, 2004) to bring an overall improvement in the life of the Roma. ROI's election platform for 2002 was based on an analysis of the status of individual sectors. Its main priority was the school system, which it dealt with in detail from pre-school education all the way up to universities. In its election platform, ROI appealed to Roma parents to take responsibility for raising their children. The party's proposals concerning housing were rather general, and the platform focused on solving the issue of ownership of the land on which Roma dwellings are built. To solve the unemployment problem, the party suggested increasing construction activities – building flats, highways, and rebuilding Roma settlements. ROI demanded that the government and all state bodies combat all displays of racism, and of racial, social and economic discrimination and intolerance. It proposed that the post of advisor to the Interior Minister be continued, and that similar advisors be deployed in regional police headquarters, police inspection bodies, and the Office of the Ombudsman.

POLITICAL MOVEMENT OF THE ROMA IN SLOVAKIA – ROMA

This Roma party was established only months before the 2002 parliamentary elections as a coalition of three Roma political parties from south and central Slovakia. The representatives of the ROMA movement chose unification of the Roma in Slovakia as their priority, a goal they viewed as key to success in both parliamentary and municipal elections. The wording of their election platform was quite general, focusing on improving the socio-economic position of the Roma and the poor by supporting small- and medium-sized enterprises, and adopting "development and revitalization programs", which it failed to specify in detail. The ROMA movement rejected the construction of lower-standard community housing, and declared that it intended to solve the housing issue through cooperative housing construction. The party declared it favored the civic principle, and an uncompromising battle against all displays of fascism, racism, discrimination, and intolerance. The ROMA movement supported Slovakia's NATO and EU accession.

THE ROMA IN
THE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS AND
THE FIRST REGIONAL ELECTIONS

In the municipal elections held in December 1998, the Roma were featured mostly on the candidates' lists of the ROI and the RIS, or as independent candidates. They also appeared on the candidates' lists of non-Roma political parties, such as the HZDS, SDK, SDĽ, KSS (Communist Party), ZRS (Workers' Party), and SMK. Altogether, 254 Roma candidates ran for municipal council posts, and 6 candidates ran for mayoral positions. In the end, 56 Roma were elected as coun-

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cillors, and all 6 Roma candidates were elected mayors (Vašečka and Džambarovič, 2000) in the following municipalities and city districts: Blatné Remety (Michalovce district, east Slovakia); Jurské (Poprad district, northeastern Slovakia); Lomnička; Žehra (Spišská Nová Ves district, east Slovakia) and Lunik IX (Košice city, east Slovakia). The sixth mayor-elect, Marián Billý of the village of Petrová (Bardejov district, northeast Slovakia) was thrown out of office after a vote of non-confidence by the municipal council immediately after taking his mayoral oath. ROI had also one non-Roma mayoral candidate, who in the end was elected mayor of the village of Čičava (Vranov nad Topľou district, east Slovakia).

In the December 2002 municipal elections, there was a clear shift in political participation among the Roma. Some 756 Roma candidates ran for city and municipal council posts, 19 for mayoral positions in villages, and 2 for mayoral position in towns (Levoča and Medzilaborce). Some 158 Roma were elected as councilors, while for the next four years, 10 municipalities will be represented by Roma mayors – five in the district of Rimavská Sobota (*Romano nevo ľil*, No. 572 – 579).

Before December 2001 elections to newly created regional assemblies, the leaders of the Roma Parliament announced that they would consider it a success if at least three to five candidates were elected to regional parliaments in Košice, Prešov, and Banská Bystrica regions. After the quarrel in the Roma Parliament in September 2001, however, and the founding of the Party of the Roma Coalition (SRK) two months later, the leaders in the end did not run for election as one entity. SRK Chairman Ladislav Fízik ran for the position of regional governor of the Banská Bystrica region, where he won 2,489 votes (2.13%), while in Košice region ROI

Deputy Chairman Milan Ščuka ran for the same position, receiving 2,158 votes (1.83%). The Roma ran for seats as members of regional parliaments mostly on the tickets of the ROI, the Roma Coalition Party, and the Roma Initiative of Slovakia. A total of six Roma political parties ran in the elections, including also the Democratic Alliance of Roma, the Roma Civic Union, and the Party of Roma Democratic Unity. Several Roma ran for the Regional Democratic Legion – East, and two ran as independent candidates.[6] None won a seat as a member of regional parliament.

THE FUTURE – THE ROMA AS MEMBERS OF NON-ROMA POLITICAL PARTIES?

As the foregoing text may have suggested, the chances of the Roma qualifying for parliamentary seats without cooperating with a non-Roma party are nil (see Box 3). In recent years, all attempts to form a strong Roma political party have failed, although they have not been entirely fruitless. Where minorities are concerned, the fewer minority political parties that exist, the more efficiently their interests can be advocated; this is a step that Roma politicians were trying to take before the 2002 parliamentary elections. At the moment, however, the Roma do not have enough potential as an electorate to be able to catapult a single ethnic party into parliament. Such a party, on the other hand, could be a strong and interesting political partner for non-Roma political parties – provided that the Roma are ever able to unite politically. Finally, a party established on the basis of ethnicity can only succeed if it manages to persuade the entire ethnic group that it is capable of defending its interests.

The stance of the Roma towards their own political parties shows that they are far from

Box 3
Roma participation in the administration of public affairs in Hungary

In 1993, the Hungarian parliament, by a 97% majority, adopted a Law on Minorities, on the basis of which minority self-governments were established in 1994. These self-governments have the right of comment (not the right of veto), which means that without the comments of individual self-governments, decisions affecting minorities should not be taken (for example, when a new director of a minority educational institution is appointed, the minority self-government must approve the candidate; the same holds true when minority schools are merged or dissolved).

Roma minority self-governments were established in 738 municipalities in Hungary, involving 3,000 elected representatives. In smaller municipalities, 50 votes are enough to be elected to a minority self-government, while in larger ones, 100 votes are needed. Members of minority self-governments elect a national minority self-government, headquartered in Budapest. The chairman of the National Roma Self-Government is Florian Farkas; his deputies are Lászlo Teleki and Béla Osztojkán.

Over the period from 1990 to 1998, the Roma always had representation in the Hungarian parliament. In the 1998 elections, however, no Roma politician made it into parliament, due largely to lack of interest from majority parties, and to the fact that Roma parties were preoccupied with a remorseless struggle for power in the National Roma Self-Government. The strongest party became the Lungo Drom (Long Voyage), which from 1994 to 1998 had taken advantage of its contacts with government structures; it later acquired an absolute majority in the National Roma Self-Government.

The majority political parties kept their distance from the Roma political parties after 1998 as well. In December 2001, the Young Democrats Party – Fidesz made public an agreement on pre-election cooperation it had signed with the Lungo Drom, which was valid for both parliamentary and local self-government elections. The Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP) also declared it would cooperate with all Roma organizations, within the Akácfa movement. This change of stance was caused by the tight contest for voter support between Fidesz and the MSZP, both of which reached out before elections to Roma voters especially from the right side of the political spectrum. Fidesz' strategy was based on research that showed the Roma were not a priori leftist party supporters, and that their willingness to vote did not differ significantly from that of the majority population, although it was somewhat lower. The elections confirmed this – general voter turnout was 71%, while Roma voter turnout was comparable, even in areas where the Roma live in settlements (the eastern and northeastern parts of Hungary). Most of the votes cast by the Roma went to the MSZP (the party put one Roma representative in the parliament – László Teleki) despite the fact that the Fidesz candidates' list included three Roma representatives who qualified for seats in parliament (Flórián Farkas, József Varga, and Mihály Lukács). None of the candidates who ran for Roma parties won parliamentary seats.

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convinced. According to Godla (2002), the Roma do not automatically cast votes for Roma parties and candidates, but on the contrary, distrust them. The experience of Roma voters is that Roma political parties are full of opportunists. Roma voters expect their candidates to perform what they promise as MPs now, before they are even elected. The Roma also expect entertainment from Roma political parties, even though they know that Roma parties, unlike their non Roma counterparts, do not have the money to provide this.

So far, the only parliamentary political party to have embarked on closer cooperation with Roma regional representatives is the ruling coalition Alliance of the New Citizen (ANO). Thanks to the initiative of František Guláš, in April 2002 the Roma Council of ANO was established in the Košice region.

According to Guláš, 42 Roma NGOs operating in the Košice region became members of this Council. Although no one from the Roma Council ran as a candidate in the parliamentary elections, representatives of the Council aspire to run in the next municipal elections.

Before the 2002 parliamentary elections, 20 Roma political parties were to be found in the registry of the Interior Ministry, although most of these were temporarily inoperable because they had joined forces with one of the two largest Roma parties. The extent of the confidence of Roma leaders in non-Roma parties on the one hand, and the extent to which Roma representatives were accepted by non-Roma leaders on the other, can be judged from the fact that fully six new Roma political parties were established between 1998 and 2002 (see Appendix).

APPENDIX

List of Roma political parties registered with the interior ministry as of september 21, 2002.

	Parties	Date of registration	Party headquarters
1.	Party of Integration of the Roma in Slovakia (SIR)	February 6, 1990	Humenné
2.	Party for the Protection of Roma Rights in Slovakia (SOPR)	February 15, 1990	
3.	Roma Civic Initiative of the Slovak Republic (ROISR)	December 6, 1990	Košice
4.	Social Democratic Party of Roma in Slovakia (SSDR)	April 19, 1991	Zvolen
5.	Union of Roma Civic Initiative in the Slovak Republic (Ú-ROI)	January 13, 1992	Košice
6.	Party of Labor and Security (SPI)	March 19, 1992	Bôľ (Trebišov district)
7.	Roma Congress of the Slovak Republic (RKSR)	August 20, 1992	Bôľ
8.	Democratic Movement of the Roma in the Slovak Republic (DHR)	April 23, 1993	Košice
9.	Party of Slovakia's Roma (SRóS)	July 28, 1994	Hôrka (Poprad district)
10.	National Roma Party (RNS)	August 15, 1994	Žiar nad Hronom
11.	Party of Roma Democrats in the Slovak Republic (SRD)	September 6, 1994	Košice
12.	Democratic Alliance of Roma in the Slovak Republic (DAR)	October 2, 1995	Bôľ
13.	Roma Initiative of Slovakia (RIS)	October 25, 1996	Bratislava
14.	The Hungarian Democratic Movement of Roma in the Slovak Republic (MDHR)	June 10, 1998	Kráľovský Chlmec
15.	Party of the Roma's Democratic Unity (SDJR)	February 17, 1999	Vranov nad Topľou
16.	Roma Christian Democratic Movement in the Slovak Republic	March 8, 2000	Drahňov (Michalovce district)
17.	Movement of the Vlachika Roma of Slovakia (HORS)	April 28, 2000	Štúrovo
18.	Roma Civic Union of the Slovak Republic (ROJ SR)	June 24, 2001	Rimavská Sobota
19.	Party of the Roma Coalition in the Slovak Republic (SRK)	October 16, 2001	Zvolen
20.	Political Movement of the Roma in Slovakia – ROMA (ROMA)	July 12, 2002	Zvolen

ENDNOTES

1. In the case of the 1994 elections, the figure listed for the SDK is the sum of the share of votes cast for the DU (11.16%), DS (6.4%) and KDH (3.42%); these three parties became the largest members of the five-party SDK coalition in 1998.
2. The results of parliamentary elections in individual municipalities can be found at the following web page: http://volby.statistics.sk)
3. These data come from the *2001 Census of Inhabitants, Houses and Apartments*.
4. The situation is similar regarding the claiming of Roma ethnicity: Roma with a higher social and economic status usually claim Slovak or Hungarian ethnicity.
5. One Roma candidate each was featured on the candidates' lists of the Hungarian Coalition Party and Smer, while the Communist Party featured two Roma candidates, and the Democratic Party four (see *Romano nevo ľil*, No. 552 – 556).
6. This analysis is based on the election platforms of the ROI and ROMA.
7. Out of all "Roma" candidates, independent candidates took the most votes – Vojtech Kökény won 1,239 votes in the district of Rimavská Sobota, and Július Grulyo received 1,319 votes in the district of Košice-environs.

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INGRID REPOVÁ and MAREK HARAKAĽ

THE ROMA AND THE THIRD SECTOR

Summary: The third sector in Slovakia developed quickly after 1989. Non-governmental non-profit organizations – foundations, civic associations, non-profit funds etc. – responded swiftly to the major changes and the new needs of society. Indeed, NGOs initiated many of these essential changes. In Slovakia recently, much attention has been paid to the Roma and activities to help poor Roma communities; it would be impossible to imagine these activities without the third sector. With the efforts of Slovak Roma community representatives, Roma NGOs are beginning to gain ground. This chapter describes the position of NGO and non-profit organizations in Slovakia, as well as some of their activities to help the Roma.

Key words: third sector, non-governmental organizations, the Roma, projects for the Roma, donors, foundations, civic associations, Phare, InfoRoma, Open Society Fund.

THE THIRD SECTOR IN SLOVAKIA

Since the outset of post-1989 political and social change in Slovakia, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have formed a quickly developing network of institutions active in different areas of the country's transforming society, and have become a symbol of Slovakia's civic society. In 1993 there were more than 6,000 NGOs registered in Slovakia, that number reaching almost 9,000 one year later. According to the Slovak Interior Ministry database, there are now 18,000 NGOs registered in the country, active in areas such as the education of children, youth and adults, sports, tourism and culture, humanitarian and charitable activities, environmental protection, human rights and tolerance for minorities (see *Info:Roma – Adresár mimovládnych organizácií …*, 2001).

One of the great advantages of NGOs over state institutions is their flexibility, ability to respond quickly to problems that arise and the needs of target groups, and their relative freedom to try new approaches. This is also true of programs to improve the position of poor Roma communities and the Roma ethnic minority in general. Efforts to solve the problems of these people have often been initiated by the third sector.

THE ROMA AND THE THIRD SECTOR

Members of various ethnic groups have been founding organizations focused on one or several nationalities since 1990. In 1991, the Slovak government adopted a document entitled *The Principles of the Government's Roma Policy*, which confirmed the ethnic independence of the Roma. The rights of the Roma to upbringing, education, press and other information in their own language, their right to develop their own culture, to assemble in associations and participate in

tackling issues pertaining to the Roma, were confirmed by the acknowledgement of the existence of the Roma nation.

In the beginning, such organizations focused on cultural activities, receiving subsidies from the Culture Ministry to publish newspapers, magazines and books and to organize cultural events. Only later did these foundations start providing scholarships to Roma children studying at secondary school and universities, and to focus on different educational programs, thus substantially broadening the range of their activities.

According to the Culture Ministry, in 2001 there were 130 NGOs focusing on the Roma and having the word Roma or a word in the Roma language in their names. The *Info:Roma – Address Book*, published by the InfoRoma foundation and the Open Society Fund in 2001, lists 223 organizations having Roma programs. It can be assumed that these organizations were established to do good, and that the majority actually do so. However, there are many other reasons that civic associations are established in Slovakia. In many communities, NGOs are the only means to initiate change, and offer the only way out of crises. Many NGO founders also see their organizations as one of the few possibilities to find employment.

The influx of funds supporting Roma projects (especially from foreign donors) and the multitude of training programs focused on the development of Roma communities were

undoubtedly among the main reasons that many NGOs were established in recent years. Most were established after 1998, while in some cases several organizations managed by an existing NGO were established at the same time in different regions.

Table 2
Breakdown of NGOs according to region

Banská Bystrica region	44
Bratislava region	31
Košice region	61
Nitra region	12
Prešov region	53
Trenčín region	6
Trnava region	9
Žilina region	7

Source: InfoRoma, 2002.

Table 3
Breakdown of NGOs according to activity

community development	53
human rights	44
social service, charity	65
leisure activities	60
upbringing and education	99
medical aid	16
environment	18

Source: InfoRoma, 2002.

Considering the recent changes – the establishment and dissolution of organizations, changes in their orientation, legislative changes, etc. – the above data cannot be considered authoritative. Some organizations, for example, were registered but ceased activities after a short time due to lack of funds. It is difficult to obtain current information on the activities or even the existence of some NGOs, as such data can often only be acquired through field research.

Table 1
Breakdown of Roma organizations according to year they were founded

1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
3	6	8	5	9	3	5	5	9	31	48

Source: InfoRoma, 2002.

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THE ROMA THIRD SECTOR –
EFFORTS TO CREATE
A COMMON PLATFORM

Since the early 1990's, several attempts have been made to unite organizations focusing on Roma communities to create a common organization or strategy. It is not easy to understand why these efforts have failed. Some believe it might be due to the different interests of NGOs, the disunity caused by personal leadership ambitions, or the destructive competition among individual organizations caused by shortage of funds. Attempts at unity could often not be put into practice, or resulted in agreements between just a few organizations.

An effort to create an independent Roma third sector was initiated in 1999 by Roma Gemer, a Rožňava-based organization. After the consequences of separation from the Gremium of the Third Sector, an NGO umbrella group, were realized, however, the plan was abandoned. The first agreement on the establishment of a special agency for Roma NGOs, and possibly also the creation of a separate Roma third sector, was reached in Smižany in October 1999. Regional organizations and associated special departments were to have formed the Roma third sector.

The Council of Roma Community NGOs was yet another institution created to unite the activities of various NGOs. The first call for the establishment of the Council came from a founding member of the Roma Parliament NGO and political party union in March 2001. After repeated rejections by different Parliament members, the Congress of the Roma Parliament agreed to create the Council by separating its political parties from its NGOs. The Council of Roma Community NGOs became an official institution in 2001. In the beginning it united 58 NGOs,

while today it reports 104 members. However, the Council has yet to publish the names of the organizations it covers. Several organizations have already officially abandoned cooperation with the Council, while others remain only formal members.

In 2001 the Open Society Fund helped establish a regional network of Roma information and advisory centers. One of the objectives of this network was to start partnership cooperation between NGOs and state administration and lower (regional and local) elected governments, education and social affairs departments, labor offices and other relevant institutions, leading to the creation of a common strategy and the coordination of activities at the regional level. The success of these efforts usually depends on the capacities and activities of the advisory centers, and the willingness of state offices and local governments to cooperate.

Another important mission of this regional network is to monitor the situation in various regions, to advise individuals and organizations on human rights protection, employment etc., and to assist start-up NGOs. The goal is to create a network of organizations communicating on the local and nation-wide levels, which, thanks to their experience, would help solve Roma community problems more effectively. The aim of further education and assistance by experienced NGOs is to improve the quality and professionalism of third sector organizations so they can become equal partners of Slovak and international organizations – donors, state and self-government institutions.

Other efforts to unite and coordinate the activities of organizations dealing with the Roma issue at the regional level resulted in the formation of similar associations at the regional level. The best known are the Regional Center for Roma Issues in Prešov, and

the Regional Association of Roma Initiatives (RARI), founded in 2000 in Banská Bystrica.

RARI focuses on coordinating the activities of organizations dealing with the Roma issue in the Banská Bystrica region, and on presenting and defending their interests in Slovakia and abroad. RARI also monitors the situation of the Roma in Banská Bystrica region, sets priorities and ways of tackling the most serious problems, and provides counseling and advice to all member and non-member organizations dealing with the Roma issue. It also facilitates the access of the Roma community to information, provides professional guidance in the creation of programs and projects focusing on the Roma, and offers education to help people acquire job and business skills. RARI's aim is to increase the employment and entrepreneurial spirit of the Roma by educating them and supporting them in employment and business. Some former RARI members have withdrawn from the group, however, and many of its plans and aims have remained on paper.

Some representatives of Roma organizations reject the participation of non-Roma organizations on projects for the Roma, and try to keep responsibility and authority to themselves. While it is vital that the Roma assume responsibility and participate in solving Roma community problems at all levels, it is fortunate that most Roma representatives and leaders with practical experience admit the need for partnership and cooperation between the Roma and the majority population when it comes to solving problems and improving mutual coexistence.

SOURCES OF FUNDING

Since 1990, NGOs have consumed major funds both for administration needs and concrete activities and projects. According to a monitoring team focusing on Roma projects in Slovakia[2], the total money spent can only be estimated, due to the diversity of funding for individual projects and difficulties in obtaining information. The funding sources of individual organizations have often depended on their field of activity.

Among the most important and permanent sources of funding for NGOs have been international institutions, foreign and Slovak foundations, and foreign embassies in Slovakia. The state has contributed through individual ministries (especially the Culture Ministry), the National Labor Bureau, and state administration institutions either independently or as a co-financer of the EU's Phare projects. At the moment, the largest volume of funds comes from the EU through the Phare program. The EU's interest in supporting Roma projects has grown substantially since 2000. Of the total volume of funds spent during recent years on Roma projects by the third sector, lower elected governments, schools etc., more than 50% has come from Phare. The rest were funds donated by international institutions, foundations, the state, and so on. The proportion of funds from each source has varied according to the type, region, and duration of projects. Funds from Phare and foundations have usually been intended only for Slovakia-wide projects, while a large proportion of funds and grants have been awarded to all forms of education, community development, employment programs, etc.

MOST FREQUENT NGO ACTIVITIES

It is not easy to specify the orientation of NGOs or classify their activities. NGO missions range from political activities and promoting the ambitions of their representatives, to regional and national activities to change the position of the Roma in Slovakia, to de-

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fending the interests of local communities. The nature of projects often varies according to the current needs of Roma communities and regions, or to the donor's priorities and orientation. On the one hand, this has allowed organizations to react swiftly to problems that arise and to find new uses for their funds, while on the other it has demanded fundraising and the adjustment of projects to current trends without taking into consideration the needs of the target group. Many NGOs have thus become "professional fundraisers", dividing their strengths to the detriment of continuity, quality, and professionalism in one or several fields of interest.

Support of Culture

Most organizations dealing with the Roma devote part of their activities to support of Roma culture as one of the most important means of raising the national consciousness of the Roma. Support by the Culture Ministry, foundations and other donors is frequently earmarked for the preservation of traditions and for cultural activities, as indicated by the many music and dance groups in all of Slovakia's regions. Thanks to the third sector, many of these groups become professional ensembles.

Cultural activities have also increased among the young Roma generation thanks to different clubs and hobby groups for children and youth that are emerging from civic associations, foundations, and schools. The organizational efforts of the third sector has allowed many of these groups to develop their activities and take part in Roma culture shows both in Slovakia and abroad.

Part of the importance of cultural activities is their educational benefit, as many include lectures on the history and traditions of the Roma. They also help increase understand-

ing between the Roma and the majority, and foster the formation of a group of activists and community leaders who later became leaders of Roma community activities.

The organization of Roma festivals and Roma ensembles shows has become a popular activity among Slovak NGOs. Several of these, without regard for the number of participating ensembles or their regional representation, are billed as Slovak wide or even international. This fact, among others, betrays the disunity and negative competition that sometimes exists in the third sector, as well as the insufficient coordination of financing activities.

Education

Many Roma and non-Roma NGOs in cooperation with schools focus on education. Their activities range from special methods and approaches in pre-school education, to the preparation of teachers' assistants, special support and acceleration school programs, scholarships for secondary school and university students, and the education of adults in communities. Education is not just in-school, but includes a number of out-of-school activities combined with tutoring and individual approaches, interest groups, clubs for children and youth, and special community education programs. Out-of-school activities and community education involving entire families and communities under the supervision of NGOs are helping to change perceptions of and approaches to education, especially in communities dependent on social aid.

It is vital that systemic change and the long-term experience of NGOs be incorporated in Slovak legislation and especially in school system legislation. However, this process is an exceptionally lengthy and complicated one.

Recent years have seen great interest from foreign donors in supporting and shaping a Roma elite capable of representing the interests of the Roma at all levels, as indicated by the many training activities of various organizations. In some cases, especially if this elite becomes somewhat removed from the Roma population and its problems, it begins to be seen as a preferred group, and becomes the target of criticism within the Roma community.

Human Rights, Racism and Discrimination

Although the Slovak Constitution and various laws guarantee equal rights and obligations to all Slovak citizens, practice shows that the experience of Roma individuals or groups is different from that of the majority population, especially when it comes to finding work, and getting access to schools, services and some establishments. These differences are often caused by actual negative experiences and invented prejudices on both sides.

The growing activities of different extremist groups, increasing racially motivated attacks, and escalating tensions between the majority population and the Roma represent very dangerous phenomena. One response to the danger has been different activities by NGOs focusing on human rights protection and combating racism and discrimination. These include especially regional and Slovak-wide programs to increase legal awareness, provide counseling, and protect the rights of the Roma and other neglected and endangered groups such as foreigners, minorities etc.

Many NGOs offer prevention programs, as latent racism, generalizations based on negative experience, stereotypes and prejudice are quite widespread in Slovakia. The aim of such preventive action is to remove prejudices and provide facts about other cultures. Activities like these help increase tolerance towards the Roma (and other minorities and ethnic groups) through anti-prejudice education in schools, common activities, and the presentation of positive examples.

Some NGOs focus on lowering the high rate of unemployment. Although this problem is of key importance, it is far harder to solve than many other problems due to the poor overall economic situation in Slovakia, Slovak legislation and other factors. Nevertheless, many other problems are directly related to unemployment.

Other fields of NGO activity include health (hygiene, sex education, preparation for parenthood, reproductive health, etc.), social services, sports, the environment, and programs intended for specific groups of citizens (women, young journalists, etc.).

ENDNOTES

1. Formerly the Council of Non-Governmental Organizations of the Roma Parliament, which later served as the basis for the establishment of the Roma Parliament civic association (registered on October 5, 2001) and the Council of Roma Community Non-Governmental Organizations.
2. A common project for monitoring Roma projects in Slovakia from 1993 to 2000 by the British Know-How Fund, the Delegation of the European Commission in Slovakia, the Open Society Fund, and the Foundation for the Support of Civic Activities.

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BORIS STREČANSKÝ

APPROACH TO THE ROMA ISSUE BY LOCAL AND FOREIGN DONORS

Summary: This chapter analyzes the notion of the "donor", and looks at donors from the context of the Roma issue. It describes the basic principles of donating and the factors influencing the founding of donation programs. The chapter also discusses positive discrimination in donation, and deals with some of the problems of creating donation programs with relation to the Roma issue.

Key words: donor environment, foundations, grants, public resources, grant programs, positive discrimination, operational programs, pilot projects, development of human and institutional capacity, grant cycle, leadership.

INTRODUCTION

The launch of grant programs and the approach of donors to the Roma is an unexplored topic that has been insufficiently researched. Developments in this field are very dramatic, and keep presenting new programs, approaches and strategies that have to be evaluated. Donating as an issue also attracts attention concerning the efficiency of the money spent. Surprisingly, this form of activity is occurring in the public sector, which is only slowly getting used to the role of private donors (local and foreign foundations), and where the principles of donor work are not known.

Donors have to make various decisions that define the parameters of their programs. The nature of donor programs is influenced by political factors, administrative limitations, the will of the donor, and the competence of the people implementing programs or benefiting from grants. Grant programs are just one of the development tools that allow target groups to carry out their ideas and thereby develop their capacities. This aspect is one of the key factors in the success of development programs as a whole, not just those concerning the Roma.

DONOR ENVIRONMENT

If we are going to speak about local and foreign donors, we must first make clear what these terms mean.

SLOVAK FOUNDATIONS

There are more than 500 Slovak foundations in Slovakia, although only a few use their own funds. In other countries, foundations were in the past and are now perceived as institutions that have their own financial resources, which they gradually enhance by increasing their equity capital (their endowment), and that use the returns from their assets to carry out their public service role. Equity capital is generally created from the generosity of the founder or donors who are willing to donate gifts to form the foundation's endowment. This type of foundation activity is in its infancy in Slovakia.

A more common type of foundation in Slovakia is the kind that continuously raises funds from both the private and public sectors to carry out their public service calling. A typical example is the Hour for Children campaign, in which the organizing foundation raises funds from the private sector and uses them for the purpose intended. Another foundation – Ekopolis – s also been administering US public resources during the past three years, and distributing them in grants to Slovak NGOs. During the past few years, much of the funds have been spent on projects focusing on the Roma. In 2001 more than 200 projects dealing with the Roma were funded, with about 50 million Sk ($1.4 million) donated.

FOREIGN FOUNDATIONS

Besides local foundations (i.e. those registered in Slovakia) there are also many foreign foundations operating in this country, either through agencies as registered foreign foundations, or at a distance. As for the origin of resources, these are mostly foundations whose property originates in the private sector, although there are also public-type foundations and foundations administering public resources (e.g. the C. S. Mott Foundation, the Ford Foundation, or Konrad Adenauer Stiftung). In comparison with Slovak foundations or with the government, foreign foundations are not an important donor, but are capable of providing forms of support the others cannot (such as general organizational support).

FOREIGN PUBLIC RESOURCES

Donors are not restricted to local and foreign foundations, but also include foreign public resources flowing into Slovakia through different channels: the programs of individual development agencies, such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) from the US, and the Department for International Development (DFID) from the United Kingdom; the common programs of several countries, which in Slovakia's case mostly involves EU resources, i.e. the Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre-Accession (ISPA) or the Special Accession Program for Agriculture and Rural Development (SAPARD), Phare, Socrates and so on; the programs of inter-governmental organizations, such as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the United Nations Environmental Program, etc.; multilateral institutions such as the World Bank; and programs implemented directly through the embassies of individual states. Unlike the endowment funds, these resources come from the taxpayers of individual countries and are under public control. The most important among these resources are those provided by the EU, the World Bank, and DFID.

SLOVAK PUBLIC RESOURCES

Donors also include Slovak public sector institutions such as the Slovak government, institutions under various ministries, public funds such as the Housing Development Fund, and special offices such as the Office of the Slovak Government Representative for Solving the Problems of the Roma minority.

BASIC FIELDS OF DONOR ACTIVITY: GRANTS VS. OPERATIONAL PROGRAMS

Essentially, donors may use the funds they have available (whether their own or provided by other donors for a certain purpose) in two ways:

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1. Through grants (gifts) to third parties for public service purposes (grant programs). Here, the donor provides the gift (grant) on the basis of a project submitted by another entity (another non-profit organization, association, etc.). The grant beneficiary assumes responsibility for the implementation of the project. The grant program can be either open, i.e. available to anyone who meets certain conditions (e.g. being registered as a NGO) or closed. If the process is closed, the donor itself chooses the recipient of the grant. The advantage of the grant approach is its democracy and plurality arising from the unlimited possibility to compete for the resources available, along with its better external control, while the downside is the risk that the money could be spent inefficiently on a purpose that the donor may consider important, but which may not be regarded as important by the applicants.

2. Direct implementation of community work (operational programs such as flat reconstruction, the operation of a kindergarten, the purchase of schoolbooks, educational programs, etc.). The donor itself is responsible for carrying out the program. The upside of this approach is that there is greater control over how efficiently the resources are used, while the disadvantages include the risk that the initiative will miss its mark and actually create a new need whose satisfaction in turn requires the continued existence of the institution and its operational programs.

A whole range of possible strategies exists between these two approaches. Donors in fact often combine several different approaches, implementing some parts of a project themselves, and launching an open grant program for the remainder. Some grant programs are more open, others less so.

FACTORS INFLUENCING
THE SETTING-UP OF
DONATION PROGRAMS

There is no universal approach to setting up donor programs that work in every situation. The proper set-up depends on the donor, its preferences and experience. The creation of donation programs is often influenced by external expectations, limits on the resources available, different accounting principles, time limits for spending the funds, the political priorities of the donor country and beneficiary country, and cultural factors (the degree of formality and interest on the part of the donor, relevant experience, etc.).

DONORS AND "DONORS"

As the heading suggests, the term "donor" does not necessarily denote an entity deciding independently about how its funds are spent. The donor must frequently consider the conditions that must be met so it can use the funds provided by the original "donor". Author will thus sometimes use the term "donor", meaning the origin of the money donated, in quotation marks. From this it also follows that not all entities with the word "foundation" in their names carry out grant programs by themselves, and may give the grants to third parties, all the while carrying out their own programs. In this context, not all foundations are equal to donors.

For the purposes of this chapter, donors are institutions that provide significant resources to Slovak programs, and whose programs are not exclusively operational, i.e. they actually provide grants to third parties. The donation issue is very complicated and diverse, and donors often use different rules when setting up their programs. In practice, several concurrent programs with the same objective can

frequently be found. To the casual observer it may appear that the individual programs are competing with one another, not supporting one another, and that they in fact overlap. However, the situation is not always what it seems.

Minimizing inefficiency in the use of resources requires that donors have the interest and ability to agree on a common approach. Even in Slovakia, individual programs are often fine-tuned, coordinated and even combined. Because of the institutional barriers in combining private and public resources, however, these efforts are often in vain. Sometimes the cause lies simply in the incompetence of the people involved.

On the other hand there is an initiative by key donors to provide an overview and a look back at developments so far. The result of this initiative is a book by Mária Lenczová entitled *Slovakia: Projects for the Roma. Findings, Recommendations, and Examples* (2002). This book offers advice to donors on how to carry out their activities in the most efficient manner. If subjective factors in the donor environment are disregarded, the following holds true: the flexibility of private resources is greater than that of public resources. On the other hand, when the degree of coordination and the suitability of donation program setups are evaluated, the amount of funds provided by individual donors also have to be taken into account. Naturally, those investing the most money should have the greatest say in how it is used.

DONORS AND THE ROMA ISSUE

Considering the money that comes from individual ministries and funds, the most important Slovak donor is the government. The importance of this fact lies not just in the amount of funds spent, but also in what the government does or does not do in this field. The government's activities strongly influence the way other donors set up their programs. The disinterest or failure of the Slovak public sector to make efficient use of public resources to improve the position of the Roma in Slovakia has led to a situation in which foreign donors are active in areas that normally should be under the jurisdiction of the public sector. This situation was caused by incompetence among the bureaucrats responsible for the use of budget money, as well as by rigidity in the rules governing the use of such funds, and political reluctance to discuss this important issue. These charges may be increasingly less deserved, but they still largely hold true.

After the Slovak government, the next most important donor (see Table 1) from the viewpoint of the volume of funds invested is the EU with its Phare program, which in 2001, together with the Slovak Government Office, allocated 10 million euros in co-financing Roma minority support, education and infrastructure programs. The most important is the Foundation for the Support of Civil Activities (NPOA), which administers EU funds within the framework of the National Minority Development Program, providing over 48 million Sk in funding for 109 projects focusing on the Roma.

The Slovak Open Society Fund (Nadácia otvorenej spoločnosti, NOS – OSF) is a significant long-term donor of Roma programs, drawing funds from the American philanthropist George Soros. Soros also provides funds for Slovak Roma development programs through the Open Society Institute in Budapest and New York. In 2001, the NOS – OSF provided 2.6 million Sk for 88 projects. In the case of the NOS – OSF fund, the most important issue is the form and strategy according to which the money will be distributed, not the amount spent. For a long

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Table 1
Volume of funds from selected institutions allocated to solving the Roma issue in 2001

Donor	Grant volume in Sk
Foundations	
NPOA	48,750,156 Sk
NOS – OSF	2,250,900 Sk
C. S. Mott Foundation	1,207,680 Sk
Environmental Training Program (ETP)	1,018,829 Sk
European Roma Rights Center (ERRC)	626,000 Sk
Total	**53,853,565 Sk**
International Organizations	
EU – Phare	420,000,000 Sk
The World Bank	32,552,100 Sk
International Organization for Migration (IOM)	1,606,000 Sk
Total	**454,158,100 Sk**
Slovak Government	
Slovak Government Office (in cooperation with Phare)	381,150,000 Sk
Office of the Slovak Government Representative	30,000,000 Sk
Total	**411,150,000 Sk**
Overall Total	**919,161,665 Sk**

Source: Internal document of a thematic group dealing with the Roma issue at the Donor Forum, 2002.

time, this has been the only significant foundation to systematically support Roma organizations, Roma leaders, and changing the educational system to make it more accessible to the Roma. It was an initiative of this fund that helped introduce Roma assistants, and encouraged the state educational system to adopt procedures tested in pilot programs by the Open Society Fund.

Among other foundations supporting Roma projects, sporadic help has come from the Integra and InfoRoma foundations, as well as some local foundations such as the community foundation Healthy Town Banská Bystrica. These are just a few examples to give readers a better idea of the diversity of institutions designated as "donors".

The Roma issue has become a focal point for foreign countries due especially to the recent migration of Slovak Roma to EU countries and Slovakia's efforts to become a member of the EU, thus naturally attracting more and more foreign donors. Slovak society, on the other hand, does not consider this issue to be as urgent as it should, and thus is not spending more domestic private resources on this

area, even though the amount of Slovak public money spent on Roma programs is increasing from one year to the next.[1] The World Bank and the UNDP are the most important fund providers cooperating with the Slovak government.

FROM UNCONSCIOUS GHETTOISATION TO CONSCIOUS INTEGRATION

Donors dealing with the Roma issue in Slovakia face several dilemmas (these problems are related to their level of autonomy in creating grant programs, which again is determined by the will of the donor of the funds; with donors operating in Slovakia, the level of autonomy varies and is always individually defined). One of these dilemmas is whether to create a special program for Roma projects, or whether to leave them to compete for grants in other, non-ethnic categories such as justice and education.

The approach taken by independent programs focused on the Roma is an example of positive discrimination towards this minor-

ity in the grant policy of individual donors, and creates equal conditions for all applicants. The disadvantage of this approach is that the competing projects address vastly different problems, which makes it harder to compare them. Roma projects may also be simply lumped together and expected to apply for money only from Roma programs, meaning that other programs that could significantly benefit the Roma community are not open to projects from this community

We must note, however, that the actual success ratio of projects submitted by the Roma in grant competitions is quite low, which is due mainly to the poor quality of the projects. This is apparent especially in their unrealistic budget and activity estimates. However, the reason may be a simple lack of resources; there are several quickly developing Roma organizations that are capable not just of writing but also implementing quality programs. Thus, the optimal way seems to be to support the original Roma organizations.

There are several types of donor approaches to the Roma issue:
a) Programs directly for the Roma.
b) Programs for the Roma and for other minorities or for the majority to which the Roma belong.
c) Programs focusing on the minority issue that attempt to increase tolerance and change the attitude of the majority towards the minority.
d) Programs whose target group is not ethnically specified (oriented towards education etc.).

The Slovak donor environment would certainly benefit from the integration of Roma projects into donation programs, and from reflection on the merits each project has for the Roma community, not just in the short or medium term, but also in the long term. Concrete policies (such as the length of the grant cycle) will always depend on the individual donors.

EFFICIENCY OF ROMA-ORIENTED DONATION PROGRAMS

NATURAL DONOR LIMITS

If we forget about Slovak public resources, the ability of the remaining donors to resolve the social problems of the Roma community are limited, even though expectations remain high. What is the optimum role for private and foreign donors regarding the Roma issue?

First of all, we must realize that foundations must follow the instructions of their donors. No Slovak foundation decides autonomously on the way its funds are used; instead, as was mentioned above, the vast majority of Slovak foundations simply administer the funds provided by their actual donors, regardless of whether they originate from abroad, from foreign governments, or from private persons.

Foundations with their own property (endowments) are more the exception in Slovakia, and only a fraction use the income from their assets to carry out grant activities. The ones that do so obtain only very small amounts in this way, ranging into the hundreds of dollars.

The administration of grant programs contains one very important indicator, namely the indirect costs-to-grants-awarded ratio. Every donor strives to increase the ratio of grants to administrative costs. The Roma issue is a quite a challenge in this regard, because based on the need that exists, donors should invest much more into visiting the organizations they support, and into consultation and advice. In another words, donor activity should not be limited to providing money, but should be preceded by intense

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communication allowing the transfer of the know-how, procedures and skills needed for the long-term success of projects.

PILOT PROJECTS AS A DONOR APPROACH TO THE ISSUE

Slovak foundations are more successful in raising and distributing funds through grants, including grants focused on solving the problems of the Roma. In comparison with public resources, foundations will never have enough money to implement nationwide programs such as housing and infrastructure reconstruction. Part of the programs of foundations is thus consciously and wisely focused on pilot model solutions to selected problems, thereby narrowing the foundation's scope of activities. This is essential, as donors want to see how their donations are helping. If donation programs are designed to be too general – the "everything to everyone" type of program – the impact of these grants will be impossible to see.

SUBJECTIVE FACTORS

The focus on solving general problems through pilot projects is a practical and rational approach in situations where the problem exceeds all current financial and human resources. Subjective factors, such as courage, leadership, the ability to see things differently, technical solutions, perseverance, ingenuity and enthusiasm are also of great significance for donation programs.

NARROWING THE SCOPE OF GRANT PROGRAMS: AN UNDESIRABLE TREND?

The present trend is a steady narrowing in grant programs to specific topics and specific target groups. The Roma community naturally does not seem very grateful for such a narrowed orientation. Given the current situation of the Roma in Slovakia, Roma-oriented grant programs should have a firm structure and focus, but in order to narrow the difference between the Roma elite and the Roma majority, at least several grant programs should be general in nature, supporting projects that affect a broad part of the community, not just priority projects. Hopefully, civil society among the Roma will be built in the same way it developed in the majority society, in other words gradually, and through natural selection. In this process, general-purpose grants[2] by foreign donors played an important role. These grants were awarded to Slovak NGOs, which gradually acquired the confidence of their donors and started implementing their visions irrespective of the short-term project cycle of most of the other foundations. Many of these organizations play an important role in their respective fields, and form the backbone of the NGO sector in Slovakia.

THE SHORT-TERM NATURE OF THE GRANT CYCLE

Yet another factor influencing the quality of donation programs is the short-term nature of the financial donation cycle. A much longer period is needed to test, prepare, implement and evaluate new solutions, and develop the abilities of individuals and organizations, than it takes to spend the funds on miscellaneous activities. The interest of donors in seeing quick results usually has a devastating effect, and leads to the opposite result. Foundations that only administer funds and focus on spending them on different activities, like the beneficiaries that receive the funds, focus on producing reports on training courses, activities and events, while not bothering to answer the most im-

portant question: "Are we doing the right thing?" If their efforts are to have meaning, building the potential of Roma leaders and organizations is one of the key roles they have to perform. "Building potential" is a phrase one hears frequently, whose practical use often ends in the seminar room or the training course class. However, it is the responsibility of donors to build the potential of the Roma community in a sensitive manner. The short-term nature of the grant cycle is not suited to this goal.

Of course, there are risks on the other side as well. People who work for foundations certainly know the term "donor fatigue", or the weariness that arises on long-term projects. It refers to a sort of "bad mood" that descends when the benefit of the grant for the target group seems to be diminishing and donors start looking for new targets that have not yet been addressed by the state or the private sector.

CONCLUSION

The common problem of donors and beneficiaries in Slovakia is the number of quality people with vision, enthusiasm and leadership who keep leaving for other professions, or emigrating. The result is that the donors with the necessary funds are afraid to risk them, while the beneficiaries, having apparently got used to the money, offer no new ideas or innovations. This is as true of Roma projects and the foundation sector as of the whole of Slovak society.

Several analyses (*Projects...*, 2001; Lenczová, 2002) of the approach of donors to Roma projects have observed that Slovakia lacks organizations that steadily and systematically builds up the potential of Roma leaders. It happens quite often that funds originally in-

tended for the Roma are channeled through non-Roma organizations, because the potential of the Roma organizations is insufficient (there are many ambitious projects with multi-million budgets, but few have been implemented; the unwillingness of foundations to risk in this regard seems justified). There has been no advance in this sphere during the last few years. The task of building human and institutional capacities remains a long-term one for both the foundation sector and the Roma themselves.

However, the possibilities of cooperation between the public and private sectors are far from exhausted. The Slovak foundations administering funds from foreign public sources have the necessary experience and are ready to administer the funds provided by the Slovak government. The Roma third sector is also attempting to administer funds. These efforts are justified, but they fail due to the limitations of the real world of finance, and due to a lack of trust. One might ask whether it is possible to build institutional and human capacity without letting these organizations solve problems and challenges on their own, which in turn improve their quality. It seems that this is the basic dilemma faced by all people working in the donation business: first of all, it is a question of trust and knowing your partner.

ENDNOTES

1. For example, in 1999, 15 million Sk was allocated from the state budget for tackling the Roma issue; in 2000 and 2001 it was 30 million Sk, and the estimate for 2002 was 50 million Sk. Together with the funds from other ministries allocated for this purpose, the total was even higher, but nowhere near the amount provided for development projects by foreign donors.
2. These are the so-called "general-purpose grants".

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MICHAL VAŠEČKA

RELATIONSHIP OF THE MAJORITY POPULATION TO THE ROMA

Summary: This chapter analyses the relationship of the majority population to the Roma in Slovakia, reflecting the results of public opinion polls. The author examines the considerable social gulf between the majority population and the Roma, and explains how these prejudices arose. The author analyzes the results of public opinion polls in explaining the social gap between the majority and the Roma, criticizes misleading studies of social distance, and examines perceptions of the social standing of the Roma in Slovakia. In conclusion, the author warns of a rise in tension between the majority and the Roma, and evaluates the danger of ethnic conflict as social chasms continue to deepen.

Key words: public opinion, social distance, prejudice, stereotypes, relationships, anti-discriminatory attitudes, empathy, inter-ethnic conflict, types and stages of conflicts.

INTRODUCTION

The different culture of the Roma and their different way of life are viewed negatively by the majority population, whose general opinion is that most Roma do not want or do not know how to adapt to social standards. This view of the Roma's "otherness" has led to a social gulf between the majority population and the Roma. According to all opinion polls concerning the relationship of the majority population to minorities, the social gulf, or "social distance", is greatest between the majority and the Roma. Over the long term, the relationship and attitudes of the majority population to the Roma have been far worse than the majority's relationship to other groups of inhabitants. On scales of social distance the Roma usually rank first, even if respondents can also choose other typically rejected groups, such as homosexuals, alcoholics, and drug addicts (Vašečka, 2001a).

Every opinion poll dealing with this issue since 1990 has confirmed that the social gulf concerning the Roma in Slovakia is equally great among all classes of inhabitants, regardless of age, sex, education, nationality, political sympathies, or the size of the municipality in which the respondent lives, and that the size of this gulf has not changed over time. A large part of the majority population views the presence of the Roma in Slovakia as a burden, and this feeling intensifies when they are asked to imagine the presence of the Roma in their neighborhood or close proximity. The proportion of people who would reject having a Roma as a neighbor has remained steady throughout the 1990s at more than three quarters of respondents (Vašečka, 2001b).

A large part of the majority population forms its attitudes to the Roma under the influence of prejudice and stereotypes rooted in ethnocentrism. The high degree of rejection and the widespread prejudice directly influence the behavior of the Roma, who often just

fulfill the image the majority population has of them. The tension between the Roma and the majority population keeps rising, and poses a real threat for the future of the liberal-democratic regime in Slovakia.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ROMA AND THE REST

Is the rejection of the Roma in Slovakia the result of prejudices and stereotypes? Is it the result of the vicious circle described in the "Thomas theorem", according to which prejudices that are believed to be true actually become true, and thus fuel new stereotypes? Or is this rejection the result of negative experiences that survey respondents have had with the Roma? Clearly, the answer is a mixture of all these factors. People's experiences affect the formation of prejudices, which are then reflected in the production of stereotypes; fully 50% of the respondents in a 1995 opinion poll conducted in Slovakia by the GfK agency had had no negative experience with the Roma. The percentage of people who have had a negative experience with the Roma in Slovakia has not changed much since 1995 – according to an opinion poll conducted by the Institute for Public Affairs (IVO) in March 2000, 42% of respondents had had a bad or somewhat bad experience with the Roma, while only 17% had had a good or somewhat good experience. Some 27.4% of respondents had had both good and bad experiences, and almost 13% had had no personal experience with Roma at all (Vašečka, 2001a).

The negative relationship to the Roma and the social gap between the majority and the Roma is not the result of the cultural "otherness" of the Roma in our modern society – attitudes to the Roma were equally negative in the past. During the initial stages of communism, the majority generally thought that the Roma could only overcome their backwardness if they gave up their way of life and adapted to the majority population as much as possible. The Roma were perceived by the majority as a socially underdeveloped group of people with inadequate work habits. While there are no reliable data on the social gap between the majority and the Roma before 1989, we may assume that the Roma were fairly strongly rejected. This

Graph 1
Evaluation of the relationship between the Roma and the rest of population (in %)
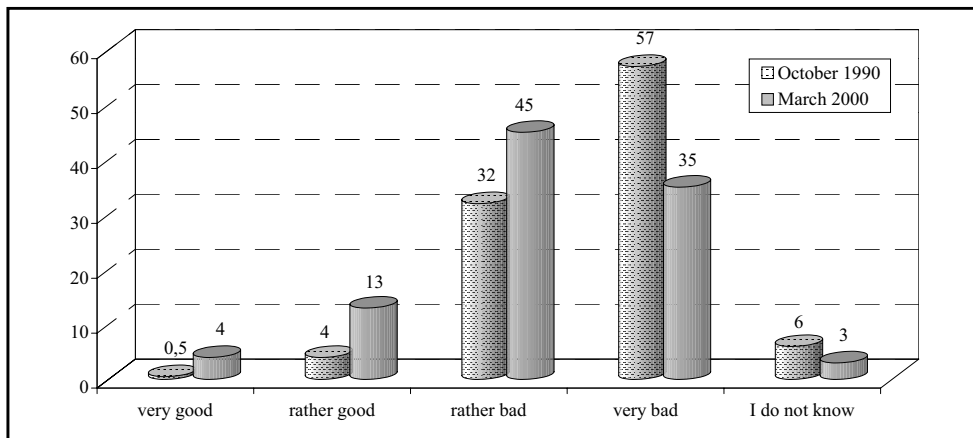
Source: Center for the Research of Social Problems, October 1990; IVO, March 2000.

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was fully displayed in the first opinion polls after 1989 (Vašečka, 2001a).

The declared relationship between the majority population and the Roma minority did not change much in the 1990s. An opinion poll conducted in November 1990 confirmed that the relationship between the Roma and the rest of population was very tense – over 90% of respondents assessed it as bad (somewhat bad or very bad) (*Aktuálne problémy...*, 1990).

Further opinion polls confirmed that the view of the relationship between the Roma and the rest of the population has not changed, and remains very negative. According to an opinion poll conducted by the IVO in March 2000, only 17% of respondents thought the relationship between the Roma and the majority population was good or somewhat good, while 80% called it bad or somewhat bad.good aothe Roma and the rest of population has not changed and the rea Only 4% of respondents had relatives among the Roma; 13% had Roma colleagues at work; 21% had Roma friends; and 23% had some Roma living in their neighborhood. As for casual forms of contact with the Roma, 61% of respondents knew some Roma well enough to greet them on the street and occasionally speak with them, while 93% encountered the Roma on the street, in the shops, or on the bus. Although most people assessed the relationship between the Roma and non-Roma as bad, only 43% of respondents said they had had a bad or somewhat bad experience with a Roma; 27% had had both good and bad experiences; 17% had had a good or somewhat good personal experience, and 13% had had no personal experience (Vašečka, 2001a).

People living in close contact with the Roma usually have fewer negative experiences with them than people without this kind of contact. For example, among those respondents who live next to a Roma family, 27% indicated they had had positive experiences, 32% mixed, and 39% negative experiences. On the other hand, among respondents not living near a Roma family, only 14% said they had had a positive experience, 26% mixed, and 43% a negative experience. Among people working with the Roma, 29% had had positive personal experiences with the Roma, 36% mixed experiences, and 33% negative experiences. The relationship between the Roma and the non-Roma population is assessed as poor not only by people who have

Graph 2
"What is your personal experience with the Roma?" (in %)
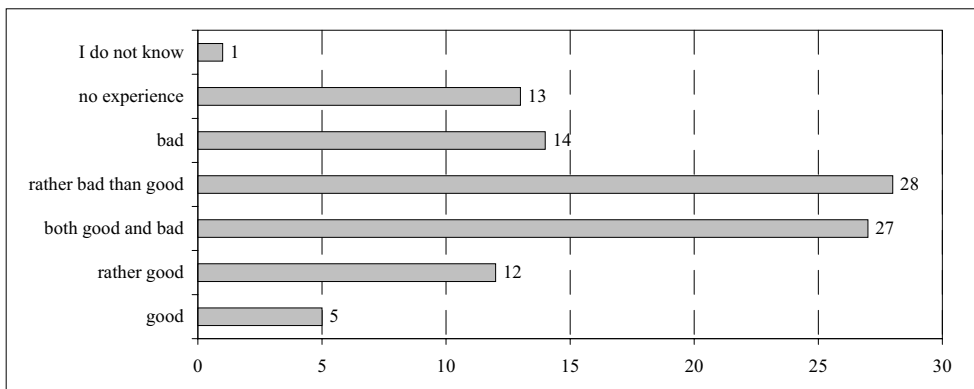
Source: IVO, March 2000.

had negative personal experiences with the Roma (91% of them state that the relationship is bad), but also by 78% of those who have had positive personal experiences with the Roma (Vašečka, 2001a).

SOCIAL GAP BETWEEN
THE MAJORITY AND THE ROMA

All opinion polls examining the social gap between the majority population and the Roma since 1990 have noticed that this social distance in Slovakia is equally pronounced in all classes of the population, and that it has remained constant over time. The ratio of people who said they would refuse to have a Roma as a neighbor remained constant during the 1990s at more than three-quarters of Slovak respondents. According to the opinion polls conducted by the FOCUS agency over the past decade, the degree of social distance (measured by the percentage of people who say they would refuse to live next to a Roma) developed as follows: 80% in October 1990, 80% in May 1991, 82% in January 1992, 94% in March 1993, 79% in October 1993, 78% in May 1994, 76% in

December 1994, 80% in October 1997, 76% in January 1999, and 78% in March 2000 (Vašečka, 2001a).

An opinion poll conducted by the Institute for Research of Public Opinion (IRPO, 1995) analyzed prejudices and stereotypes about the Roma by finding out which characteristics were attributed to the Roma by respondents. Among the positive traits were the following: musical talent (53%), talent for business (19%), carefree manner (16%), and love of children and family (10%). However, 32% of respondents in the IRPO poll could not think of any positive qualities. Among the negative characteristics were the following: crime-prone, work-shy, poor hygiene, alcoholism, noisiness, and deviousness. The various negative characteristics attributed to the Roma by the public are stated far more strongly and definitely than the positive ones. The IRPO researchers stated that this view of the Roma prevails among all inhabitants of Slovakia, and is very homogenous, not varying from one socio demographic group to another. Which traits are typical of the Roma from the viewpoint of Slovak respondents? According to a 1995 GfK Praha opin-

Graph 3
"Which properties are typical for the Roma?" (in %)
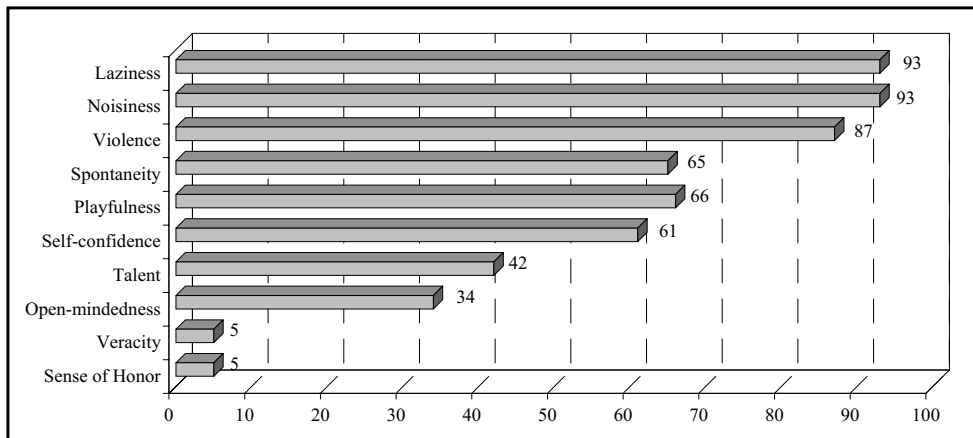
Source: GfK Praha, 1995.

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ion poll, negative characteristics clearly prevail (see Graph 3).

Most Slovak respondents mentioned displays of antisocial behavior as the thing they disliked about the Roma the most, including especially abuse of welfare benefits (84%) and criminality (89%). Opinion polls are constantly pointing out that the social distance between the Roma and the majority is significant among all classes of people, regardless of age, education, sex, profession, religion, and economic or foreign policy orientation. The social gap is closely related to people's perception of the proper relationship between the majority and minorities: the gap is smaller among people who emphasize the need to respect minority rights. On the other hand, people who show a greater degree of distrust towards "the others", are also marked by a greater sense of social frustration and injustice; they tend to expect the state to used a paternalistic approach, they often reject democratic principles, they tend to favor the "strong hand" style of government, they believe that the majority should take decisions even at the expense of minorities, and they show greater tolerance for racial and national hatred (Bútorová, Gyárfášová and Velšic, 2000). Lower-than-average social distance between the majority and the Roma was found among the inhabitants of the smallest villages, and among respondents claiming Hungarian ethnicity (FOCUS, December 1994).

Opinion polls confirm that personal contact with members of a minority decreases social distance. For example, among those who work with the Roma, as many as 65% have no objection to the presence of the Roma in Slovakia, while 44% would not mind their presence in their village or town district, and 28% would be comfortable with the presence of Roma in their immediate neighborhood. On the other hand, the greatest social gap

between the majority and the Roma is among people with no close personal contact with the Roma. For example, among respondents who do not encounter the Roma at all, only 34% accepted their presence in Slovakia, only 23% would accept them in their municipality, and only 12% would not mind having a Roma as a neighbor (IVO, March 2000). According to this poll, 80% of respondents considered the relationship between the Roma and the non-Roma to be poor, but only 43% of respondents said they had had a bad experience with them (28% more bad than good, and 14% bad); 27% had had both good and bad experiences; 17% had had good experiences (5% good, 12% rather good); and 13% had had no personal experience with the Roma. Data on the frequency of contacts between the majority population and the Roma show that most Slovak people have had some contact with the Roma; thus, when people evaluate the Roma, both prejudice and practical experience play a role. Some 4% of respondents had relatives among the Roma, 21% friends, 13% colleagues, and 23% close neighbors; 61% said they knew some Roma personally, and 93% said they regularly encountered the Roma on the street, in the shops, on the bus, or elsewhere (Bútorová, Gyárfášová and Velšic, 2000).

SOCIAL GAP BETWEEN THE MAJORITY AND "OTHER MINORITIES"

The relationship and attitudes of the majority population to the Roma have long been far worse than its relationship to other groups. On the scale of social distance the Roma always rank first, even when other rejected groups such as homosexuals, alcoholics or drug addicts are included. Compared to the Roma, even alcoholics and drug addicts are perceived more positively. Ac-

cording to research conducted by the IRPO in 1995, the inhabitants of Slovakia generally have the best attitude towards the Czechs, while the Roma top the other end of the scale. As many as 77% of Slovaks view their relationship with the Roma as hostile or somewhat hostile. This fact, and its constancy over time, has been confirmed by several ensuing opinion polls (FOCUS, 1999; IVO, 1999, 2000). The Roma are perceived as the ethnic group that most frequently evokes a negative reaction among the majority population. On the other end of the scale were the Jews (the Czechs were not included this time). Opinion polls conducted by the FOCUS agency and the Institute for Public Affairs repeatedly confirmed that respondents with a negative attitude towards one ethnic minority tend to reject other minorities as well. This was confirmed by an opinion poll conducted by the Institute for Social Analysis at Comenius University in May 1991 – respondents who were intolerant of the Hungarians were equally intolerant of the Roma, Jews, and foreigners (Vašečka, 2001a).

PERCEPTION OF
THE ROMA'S POSITION IN
SOCIETY

The huge social gap between the majority and the Roma is related to the lack of empathy that the majority show for the difficult situation the Roma are in. In 1999, according to IVO research, only 23% of respondents conceded that the social situation of the Roma had declined over the past two years, while 60% believed it had not (IVO, January 1999). In March 2000, as many as 49% of respondents stated that the Roma had equal conditions and chances for development as the rest of the Slovak population. Only 21% believed that the position of the Roma was worse; this opinion was more frequent among people with higher education

and those with friends, colleagues, and especially relatives among the Roma. Some 27% of respondents, on the other hand, were persuaded that the Roma were privileged in Slovakia. Several opinion polls looking at the relationship between the majority and the Roma have shown that even though respondents declare that all people in Slovakia should have equal rights (e.g. in the 1995 IRPO opinion poll, 80% of respondents held this opinion), this insistence on equality varies according to which national, racial, or religious group is in question (Vašečka, 2001a).

RESPONDENTS' OPINIONS ON
HOW TO ADDRESS
THE ROMA ISSUE

After 1989, the Slovak population began to realize that the "Roma issue" was becoming one of the greatest challenges Slovakia faced. According to research entitled *Slovakia Before the Elections*, conducted by the Center for Research of Social Problems established by the Coordination Center of the Public Against Violence party in May 1990, only 3.2% of respondents, when asked "What is the greatest problem Slovakia faces?" answered "the Roma issue", putting the Roma issue in 10th place at the time. The "rating" of the Roma issue gradually increased, however, and according to another opinion poll by the same Center in November 1990, the Roma issue ranked 7th (4.5% of respondents). This opinion poll warned that the intensity of the debate on coexistence between the Czechs and Slovaks was not warranted by the real state of the relationship between these two nations, and that far more serious issues remained in the background, open to abuse by irresponsible forces – the Center was especially concerned with the tense relationship between the Roma and the rest of Slovakia's inhabitants (Center for Research…, May 1990). According to the Center's May

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1990 research, the political engagement and representation of the Roma (in 1990 it was through the Roma Civic Initiative – ROI) was viewed rather negatively by respondents, who regarded ROI as the political party with the lowest intellectual potential, as a party that was not trying to solve problems, and as an opportunistic party (it ranked immediately behind the Communist Party) that would cause an economic decline if it won the elections (Vašečka, 2001a).

The huge social gap between the majority and the Roma in Slovakia is accompanied by support for anti-Roma legislation and a widespread refusal to consider positive solutions. The issue of discriminatory measures against the Roma was dealt with in an opinion poll conducted by the IRPO in 1995, in which 52% of respondents agreed that stricter legislation and regulations should apply to the Roma than to the majority population, while 66% of respondents thought that the Roma should live isolated from other inhabitants, i.e. in separate settlements.

The predilection of Slovaks for repressive measures as solutions to the Roma issue was also confirmed by the 1995 GfK Praha opinion poll. Some 74% of respondents thought that welfare benefits should be capped, while 46% supported limiting the high Roma birth rate; 50% supported stricter legislation for the Roma, 25% their isolation from the rest of the population, and 25% their banishment from the country. Fully 21% said they would not hesitate to take the law into their own hands. On the other hand, only a small part of the population realizes the need to solve problems that have been accumulating over decades – only 25% of respondents called for increased tolerance in society, and 21% thought that more should be invested into the education of the Roma. It was encouraging that 50% of respondents supported harsher punishment for displays of racism.

A large portion of the non-Roma population realizes the need to improve the education of the Roma and to allow them to form their own intellectual elite. According to an opinion poll by the IVO in March 2000, 65% of respondents agreed that "the state should ensure that more Roma acquire higher education and work as teachers, lawyers, doctors, and priests". It is encouraging that compared to the previous year the proportion of people who realized this need grew by nine percentage points. Many people in Slovakia view the insufficient preparedness of Roma youth to join the labor process as a handicap. In 1999, 76% of respondents opined that "the state should ensure that many more Roma children acquire vocational education". Allowing Roma children to study in their mother tongue had less support among the majority population: 39% supported it and 53% rejected it. Even fewer people thought it could aid the educational and cultural emancipation of the Roma if some TV and radio programs were broadcast in Romany: 34% of respondents supported this idea, 53% were against (Bútorová, Gyárfášová and Velšic, 2000).

In the opinion poll conducted by the Institute for Public Affairs in January 1999, 89% of respondents agreed that the state was obliged to ensure that the Roma stopped avoiding work and abusing welfare benefits. One of the key ways to achieve this goal is to reduce unemployment among the Roma, and many people realize this. In the same research, 58% of respondents agreed that greater efforts should be made to lower Roma unemployment. Many people who accuse the Roma of abusing welfare benefits see the solution as taking an undefined "individual approach" to the Roma. The discriminatory opinion that "different principles for the payment of welfare benefits should apply for the Roma than for others" was supported in March 2000 by 50% of respondents and rejected by 44% of

them (Bútorová, Gyárfášová and Velšic, 2000).

The lower engagement of the Roma in the labor process is only one of several reservations the non Roma have against the Roma. An even stronger component of the negative stereotype of the Roma in Slovakia is their "thieving and criminal activity", which according to the IRPO opinion poll is attributed to the Roma by three-quarters of the majority population (74%). This is one of the key reasons that more majority population members (53%) in March 2000 agreed with the (clearly discriminatory) opinion that "special, stricter laws should be applied to the Roma" than rejected it (42%). This trend was present in Slovakia at the beginning of the 1990s: for example, in October 1993 in the FOCUS agency's opinion poll, 48% of respondents agreed and 49% disagreed that "the Roma are a different group to which special, stricter laws should apply". It is thus easy to understand why Slovak political parties keep offering repressive solutions to the Roma issue. Accommodating and positive solutions would require a better social atmosphere, and Slovak politicians know it (Bútorová, Gyárfášová and Velšic, 2000).

ANTIDISCRIMINATORY ATTITUDES OF RESPONDENTS AND THE DEGREE OF EMPATHY TOWARDS THE ROMA

Most people in Slovakia do not approve of displays of racial and ethnic hatred, the target of which are most often the Roma. Some 65% of respondents in research conducted in March 2000 demanded that displays of racial hatred be punished more harshly than they had been in the past. The IVO opinion poll from January 1999 also showed that the majority of people condemn displays of racism from skinheads – as many as 70% agreed

that skinheads are dangerous (I agree entirely – 40%, I somewhat agree – 30%), while only 14% thought that skinheads were "doing the right thing" (I disagree entirely – 4%, I somewhat disagree – 10%) (Bútorová, Gyárfášová and Velšic, 2000).

It would be wrong to say that Slovak society is intolerant on the basis of data showing a rejection of the Roma only. According to the 1995 GfK opinion poll, respondents would be willing to support a protest against displays of racial hatred in the following ways: 11% would take part in a protest march, 43% would be willing to participate in a legal demonstration, and 70% would sign a petition. The majority population does not think that racial conflict and violence between skinheads and the Roma can be stopped or limited – only 16% think it is possible, while 65% of respondents think the opposite. The 1995 GfK Praha opinion poll also brought some interesting opinions to light on what should be tolerated. It is clear that Slovak inhabitants are not willing to tolerate any behavior from the Roma that reflects their level of integration into (or segregation from) society (Vašečka, 2001a).

CONCLUSION

The relationship of the majority population to the Roma is poor, and is staying that way. The Slovak Roma are one of the most rejected and despised groups in society. The fact that solutions to the issues affecting the Roma minority that might alleviate the conflicts between them and the majority are not moving forward is increasing impatience on both sides. The level of frustration keeps rising, and could take dangerous forms in the future. There is certain reason for optimism in the relationship of the Roma to the majority – despite being frustrated by the failure to solve the problems that are collectively

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referred to as the Roma issue, and despite permanent displays of discrimination against them, the Roma view the majority society in a much better light than the majority population does the Roma. Given the crisis in Roma identity, the Roma are beginning to show a much higher level of identification with the majority population. Although the Roma seem to get the rough end of the pineapple in the mutual relationship, there is still less of a threat that the Roma would start a serious conflict than the majority. The majority should realize this, because this situation could quickly change, which is rather ominous for Slovakia's future as a democratic and prosperous society.

There are at least three factors that lead us to suspect that the relatively positive relationship of the Roma to the majority might change. First, the majority's changing requirements of the Roma have the potential to increase frustration among the minority, and possibly to create conflict (Barša, 1999). Opinion polls keep showing that the Roma are viewed as inadaptable and unable to assimilate – despite that, they are permanently forced to do so. This inconsistent approach is like moving the goalposts – the requirements of the majority keep increasing, which allows the majority to keep postponing its acceptance of the assimilating Roma. This naturally increases frustration and breeds radical social and political attitudes.

Unless the approach of the majority to the Roma changes, the potential for conflict will increase, as indicated by Arend Lijphart's theory of the "horizontalization" of vertical ethnic structures in post-industrial countries with large ethnic minorities (Lijphart, 1977). Lijphart wrote that conflicts intensify due to sensitivity over the inequality between ethnic groups. Conflict may erupt when an ethnic group (which otherwise has a vertical structure of different income and status

groups) becomes horizontal – usually at the bottom of the social ladder. Loss of status and total deprivation can lead to serious conflict triggered by the ethnic group.

The potential for conflict was increased by the wave of democratization at the end of the 20th century. This endeavor to change the Leviathan and turn it into a "new democratic Leviathan" (Dahl) triggered radical attempts by many – often repressed – groups to bring about major social change. The question remains whether Slovak society will be able to respond to the cold smile of the "new" Leviathan.

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MARTINA JURÁSKOVÁ

RELATIONSHIP OF THE ROMA TO THE MAJORITY POPULATION

Summary: This chapter analyzes Slovak-Roma relationships and the atmosphere of coexistence in detail, focusing on how these matters are viewed by the Roma. It analyzes how the Roma perceive the majority population, the degree to which the Roma identify with the majority, and how the Roma see themselves. It stresses the diversity of the Roma, and looks at how different categories of Roma see the ethnic group's internal differences. The chapter analyses ethnic conflicts between the Roma and the majority, and presents a vision of the future.

Key words: relationships, attitudes, inter-ethnic conflicts, prejudice, stereotypes, identification, self-identification, self-reflection, sub-ethnic groups.

INTRODUCTION

"Cultural diversity is the basis of the wealth of humanity, and it is particularly important in the period of globalization. However, a differing cultural identity is often the cause of crisis, conflict and tension. Intercultural dialogue, and knowing the opinions of other cultural groups and how they perceive us, is becoming one of the greatest challenges of the 21st century." (Kolosok, 2002)

This statement holds especially true in Slovakia, where interethnic tension is very high. However, at the same time we must note that the relationship between the Roma and the non-Roma is marked by the clear dominance of the non-Roma culture; the intercultural dialogue between the two groups is actually more of a monologue.

We know a great deal about the stance of majority representatives towards the Roma minority, about what elements of the Roma culture they perceive as positive or negative, and about how much contact they have with the Roma. But what do we know of the Roma's stance towards the majority?

This is the question this chapter strives to answer. When analyzing the attitude of the Roma to the majority population, and examining how they view the mutual relationship and coexistence, we are limited by the little attention that was paid to the Roma and their view of these processes in the past. Ignorance of the other side's opinions on coexistence is par for the course with Roma issue experts, who are constantly in need of more precise information about the Roma population, starting with basic demographic indicators. Nevertheless, the author will try to describe the stance of the Roma towards the majority, and evaluate the coexistence through the eyes of the Roma on the basis of the little information that is available from researches.

ANALYSIS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ROMA AND THE MAJORITY

In trying to analyze the relationship between the Roma and the majority, we are greatly

limited by both a lack of data, and the irrelevance of some of what is available. Still, several research projects exist, allowing us to reach certain conclusions. Among qualitative research (in which people are interviewed and elements selected from the session by the researcher) there was the study conducted by the InfoRoma foundation from May to June 1996, which used the oral history method (68 interviews were conducted) to discover how the Roma perceived the key historical events of the 20th century. The study also focused on the relationships between the Roma and the majority population. Another piece of research, organized by the World Bank and the SPACE foundation and entitled *The Roma and the Labor Market*, was conducted in three Slovak districts on a sample of 356 respondents from November 2000 through March 2001, and dealt primarily with the "ethnicization" of poverty, but also touched on the relationship between the majority and the Roma.

Among the quantitative research that has been done (involving more factual question-and-answer research, filling in questionnaires), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) sponsored a study conducted by the Institute for Public Affairs (IVO) in November 2001 on a sample of 1,030 respondents from 10 districts of Slovakia, while the IVO did a study named *The Roma Before the 2002 Parliamentary Elections* in June 2002 on a sample of 323 respondents from 7 Slovak districts. All of these studies dealt only marginally with the relationship of the Roma and the majority. Soma data can also be drawn from the IVO project entitled *Training Program for Local Authorities and Opinion Makers* of May 2001, which dealt mainly with the Roma – non-Roma relationship; however, this was only the first attempt to study this unexplored issue. As this project included both Roma respondents as well as majority representatives, it gives us a chance to compare their attitudes.

ATTITUDES OF THE ROMA TO THE MAJORITY POPULATION

The main finding of all studies so far is that the **Roma's relationship to the majority is far better than majority's attitude to the Roma**, while their social distance from the majority is significantly smaller than vice versa. The Roma regard the majority as part of their world, and tend to want to see themselves as part of the majority. This shows the identity crisis that the Roma suffer from, one that has deep historical and social roots.

When evaluating the majority population, the Roma usually do not take extremely negative positions. Which majority population properties the Roma regard as positive and which as negative was measured in the IVO study of May 2001. The respondents were presented with human properties in opposing pairs, and were asked to mark on a seven-degree scale what traits they believed were typical of the Slovaks. The results are shown in Table 1.

It was interesting that 63% of Roma considered the Slovaks to be "our own", that is, their own kind. This suggests a high degree of identification with the majority population, and confirms the fact noted above that the degree of social distance that the Roma feel from the majority population is far lower than vice versa. By comparison, only 21% of majority population respondents perceived the Roma as "their own", and 28% stated that Roma were "strange" to them. The majority often state that the Roma do not possess positive qualities such as cleverness, cleanliness and industriousness.

However, we must differentiate between those whom the Roma consider the majority when

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Table 1
Slovak traits as perceived by Roma respondents

smart	55.6%	13%	10.2%	14.8%	0.0%	0.9%	5.6%	dull
capable	67.6%	10.1%	5.5%	12.8%	0.0%	0.0%	3.7%	incapable
industrious	68.5%	13.0%	0.9%	10.2%	1.9%	0.9%	4.6%	indolent
clean	75.0%	9.3%	0.0%	12.0%	0.9%	0.9%	1.9%	filthy
"our own"	63.0%	5.6%	4.6%	10.2%	5.6%	1.9%	9.3%	strange

Source: IVO, May 2001.

stating their attitudes. They usually think of the person living closest to them, or their friends from the majority population, when asked to imagine a majority population member. As soon as the relationship between the Roma and the majority society's authorities is mentioned, however, the Roma's attitudes change dramatically. They often accuse individual mayors, welfare workers, doctors, or other representatives of the state administration or local government of being responsible for all the wrongs and injustice in their lives. And their list of complaints is a long one: from pocketing the money which was to have been used to help the Roma, to reluctance to provide information and advice about the social benefits that represent their main income, unwillingness to pay the benefits, or disinterest in and rejection of the Roma when they try to obtain a dwelling by paying lower rent for a flat that has long been vacant.

The negative experience of some Roma with institutions and state bodies make the Roma feel as if the Roma issue and solutions to it were only a smokescreen camouflaging society's desire to control and manipulate the thinking of the Roma, and to oppress them instead of elevating them to the level of the rest of society. The following quote comes from a Roma woman who is highly recognized both among the Roma and among the majority:

"I would also like the Roma to do yoga. It would help them find themselves, to become stronger. I proposed to the Labour Office here in Šamorín [southwest Slovakia] that I would exercise with them free of charge for two hours every week – they refused. They refused – I don't know why. However, I know why they might have done so. This society's aim is not to educate the Roma, because oppressing them is much better. That's human nature – people like to oppress the weaker, it gives them satisfaction. I have figured out that much at least. The Slovaks oppress the Hungarians, the Hungarians the Roma, and because there is nobody left for the Roma to oppress, they want to make friends with the whites." (InfoRoma, May – June 1996)

PERCEPTION OF
MUTUAL RELATIONSHIPS AND
COEXISTENCE

The second dimension of the issue examined was the Roma's evaluation of their coexistence with the majority. Although the atmosphere between the Roma and the majority population in society is tense, the two sides see it differently. Despite the opinion of the general public that the relationship with the Roma is confrontational, tense, and full of conflict, the Roma see it as conciliatory, good, and peaceful. We can compare the difference in these perceptions of coexistence on the basis of the IVO research from May 2001. The results are shown in Tables 2 and 3.

On a scale where 1 is the most positive and 7 the most negative, the overall score given to the relationship by the Roma was 3.6,

Table 2
The atmosphere in the relationship to the Roma (as perceived by the Roma)

pleasant	36.7%	13.8%	2.8%	19.3%	6.4%	5.5%	15.5%	unpleasant
peaceful	38.0%	12.0%	3.7%	13.0%	6.5%	10.2%	16.6%	violent
unifying	30.6%	12.0%	8.3%	9.3%	5.6%	6.5%	27.7%	divisive
conciliatory	38.9%	9.2%	3.7%	16.7%	6.5%	6.5%	18.5%	conflict-ridden
concerned	24.3%	15.0%	6.5%	11.2%	3.7%	7.5%	31.8%	Indifferent
unity of people	48.1%	6.5%	4.6%	10.2%	2.8%	5.6%	22.2%	isolation of people

Source: IVO, May 2001.

Table 3
The atmosphere in the relationship to the Roma (as perceived by the majority)

pleasant	5.5%	6.8%	2.7%	15.1%	19.2%	30.1%	20.6%	unpleasant
peaceful	9.7%	12.5%	4.2%	9.7%	15.3%	25.0%	23.6%	violent
unifying	9.7%	6.9%	8.3%	15.3%	12.5%	20.8%	26.5%	divisive
conciliatory	6.8%	5.6%	5.6%	11.1%	18.1%	26.4%	26.4%	conflict-ridden
concerned	6.9%	2.8%	13.9%	20.8%	18.1%	15.3%	22.2%	Indifferent
unity of people	11.1%	11.1%	4.2%	11.1%	13.9%	25.0%	23.6%	isolation of people

Source: IVO, May 2001.

while the majority's score was 4.8. The Roma tend to evaluate the atmosphere as neutral, while the majority tends to see it as negative. We see a significant discrepancy between evaluations of the same thing by the two sides.

If we look at individual elements of the evaluation, we notice even greater differences. While 70.9% of majority population respondents judged the atmosphere of coex-istence to be more or less one of conflict, only 31.5% of Roma thought the same. It was also interesting that more than half of the Roma think that the Roma and the majority live in unity, while among the majority only one-quarter share this opinion.

The differences in views of the relationship between these two groups can be seen in the answer to the following question: "In general, how would you characterize the relationship

Graph 1
Assessment of the mutual relationship by the Roma

Source: IVO, May 2001.

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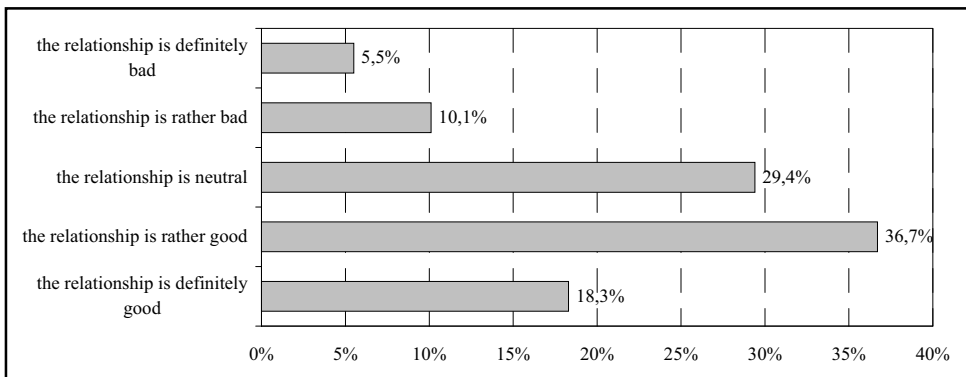
Graph 2
Assessment of the mutual relationship by the majority population

the relationship is definitely bad	23,30%
the relationship is rather bad	35,60%
the relationship is neutral	21,90%
the relationship is rather good	16,40%
the relationship is definitely good	2,70%

0%   5%   10%   15%   20%   25%   30%   35%   40%
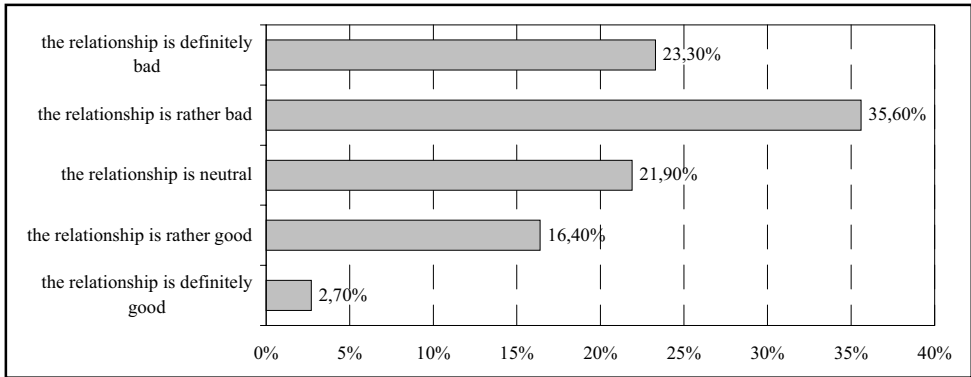
Source: IVO, May 2001.

between the Roma and the majority population?" The results are in Graphs 1 and 2.

Graphs 1 and 2 suggest that more than half of the Roma regard the mutual relationship as definitely or rather good, while one-third sees it as neutral. The situation is the reverse with the majority population, where almost 60% assess the mutual relationship as definitely or rather bad, and only a fraction of respondents (2.7%) think it is definitely good. The IVO research of June 2002, which also evaluated the relationship between the majority and the Roma, came to a similar conclusion. Even if the results cannot be compared with the majority opinion (because all respondents were Roma), the results for the Roma were very similar – as many as 63% of Roma thought the relationship was trouble-free or quite good, while 25% assessed it as bad or unbearable, and 12% as neutral.

What are the causes of this discrepancy in assessments of basically the same thing? One explanation could be that the research among the Slovak population tended to focus on views of the relationship in general, which views are to a great extent formed by prejudice and stereotypes anchored in public opin-

ion and not by practical experience (see the chapter *Relationship of the Majority Population to the Roma* in this book). On the other hand, the IVO research (November 2001 and June 2002) stressed the specific relationships directly in the community.

Despite this difference, which undoubtedly influenced the final outcome, the variations are huge. We can attribute them to the fact that the majority and the minority have different views of what constitutes a good and a bad relationship. Hypothetically, we can assume that if the identification of the Roma with the majority population is high, it influences their evaluation of the mutual relationship by somewhat alleviating the gravity of conflicts in society.

The qualitative researches also suggest that in cases where the Roma judge the coexistence in a negative way, they usually hold the majority responsible for this. Many researches examining the level of discrimination and prejudice against ethnic minorities have shown that the majority population shows the highest level of such behavior towards the Roma. The issue is regarded with equal intensity and sensitivity on the other side as well – displays of discrimination,

racism, stigmatization, and the inability to differentiate between a "decent" and "indecent" Roma are the most frequent issues the Roma bring up in relation to the majority. The IVO research (May 2001) suggested that half of the Roma respondents thought that the Roma were discriminated against in Slovakia.

Besides evaluating the relationship and the atmosphere of coexistence, for the analysis to be complete we must also examine the intensity and types of relationships between the Roma and the majority population. In the IVO/UNDP research (November 2001), 87.5% of respondents, when asked "Do you maintain some kind of relationship with members of the majority population", answered "yes", while only 12.5% answered "no". We must realize, though, that "no" in this case means the total segregation of the Roma. From this viewpoint, 12.5% is too high (Kriglerová, 2002).

The research focused on a broader scale of interactions between the Roma and the majority in Slovakia. The respondents answered the question "what types of relationships do the Roma maintain with the non-Roma" as follows:

DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTION OF THE MAJORITY AND MUTUAL RELATIONSHIPS BY DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF ROMA

Because the public tends to see the Roma as a homogenous population category, it must constantly be stressed that the Roma are characterized by great heterogeneity, causing different views of the issue examined. Views of the mutual relationship and coexistence are influenced by several factors. The most important are:
• socio-economic status,
• degree of integration,
• sub-ethnic differentiation.

On the basis of qualitative research by the World Bank and the SPACE foundation (November 2000 – March 2001), three basic social classes of Roma can be identified: the highest class are the rich "Vlachika Roma" and the intellectual and political elite from among the rest of the Roma groups. These are usually Roma from integrated urban environments.

The middle class consists of the "Rumungers" as well as the Hungarian-speaking Roma liv-

Graph 3
What type of relationship with the majority do you maintain?

☐	our children play together	55,40%
☷	we invite each other to family celebrations and weddings	28%
▨	mixed marriages	27,50%
▥	mutual help in dealing with the police	12,20%
■	common entrepreneurship	7,30%

Source: UNDP/IVO, November 2001.

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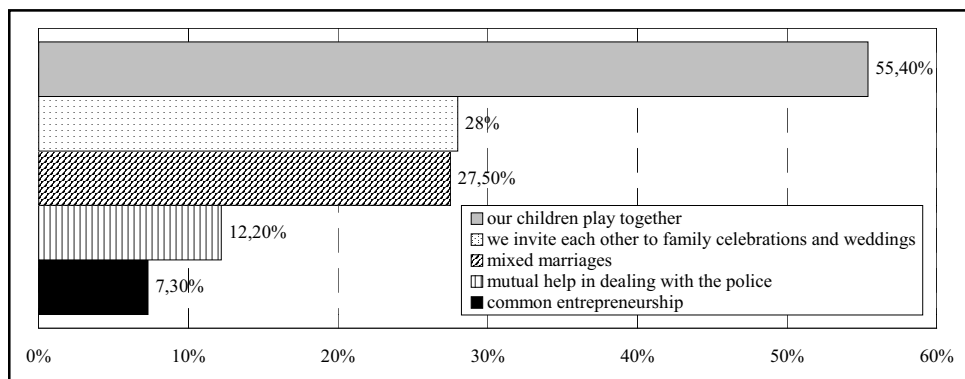
ing in towns and larger villages in integrated or separated environments. The type of location determines the degree of contact the Roma have with the majority population, which indirectly influences their standard of living. From the viewpoint of the overall society, the Roma middle class is more on the level of a lower class. Within the Roma population, however, the denomination "middle class" is appropriate.

The lowest class includes the poorest Roma living in settlements. These Roma live in poverty and in a state of perpetual material need; almost all of them are unemployed and show the characteristics of an underclass and a culture of poverty. They live in communities with very close relationships, rely exclusively on themselves, have limited contact with the majority population, and due to the endogamous selection of partners, most of them are connected by kin relations.

DIFFERENCES IN NATURE, INTENSITY, AND ATMOSPHERE OF COEXISTENCE

Research has shown that views of the mutual relationship, and the prevalence and forms of relationships differ largely depending on the social class to which people belong. The greatest differences were seen between the Roma living integrated among the non-Roma, the Roma who live in a part of a municipality which transits smoothly into a village or a town, and the Roma who live in a completely segregated urban ghetto or rural settlement.

The relationship between the Roma and the non-Roma was usually assessed as trouble-free in integrated locations, where there were more frequent contacts and social interactions, and where relationships were friendlier. In many of these locations, the Roma

respondents even said their relationship with the non-Roma was better than their relationship with other Roma.

The following quotation comes from the research conducted by the InfoRoma foundation (May to June 1996): "Thank God, we're fine here so far, we haven't had any problems with each other. I can sit with them at the table and have a chat. But there are also Roma here with whom they would not sit at the same table. And it's easy to understand why. You know, their clothes, their hygiene, their houses aren't what they should be. There are people like this and people like that. But we're doing fine here, no complaints."

The IVO/UNDP research (November 2001) also reported more intense, "socially close" relationships between the Roma and the non-Roma in integrated locations. If the Roma allow their children to play with non-Roma children, invite the non-Roma to their weddings and celebrations, and agree to mixed marriages, their trust in the majority must be very high. However, the data may not be completely reliable, because the Roma sometimes (as confirmed by several studies) express their desires instead of describing reality when asked research questions. Moreover, it is not possible to confirm or disprove the data by comparing them with data provided by majority population members, as this type of research has not yet been done in Slovakia. It can be assumed, though, that the figures on the types of relationships that exist between the groups would be much lower among the non-Roma (Kriglerová, 2002).

Thanks to the community type of life in segregated settlements, the Roma who live in these settlements identify strongly with the secluded we-group (the local community) and separate themselves from the they-

group (the majority population). Their relationship with their surroundings is also more confrontational, and they perceive all authorities representing society in a negative light. The differences between the relationships that are maintained between the Roma and the majority, according to the degree of integration, are shown in Graphs 4 and 5.

Graph 4
The "our children play together" type of relationship, according to the degree of integration
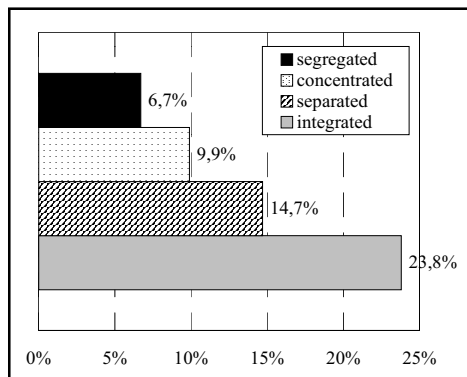
Note: The rest, up to 100%, comprise those who do not maintain this type of relationship.
Source: UNDP/IVO, November 2001.

Graph 5
The "mixed marriage" type of relationship, according to the degree of integration
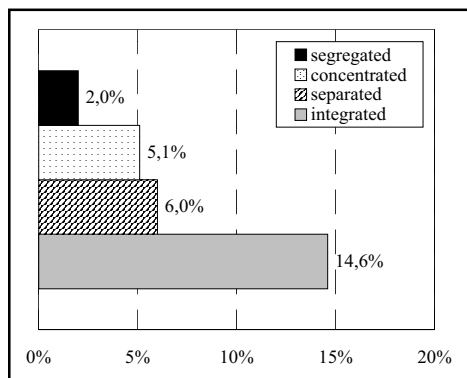
Note: The rest, up to 100%, comprise those who do not maintain this type of relationship.
Source: UNDP/IVO, November 2001.

DIFFERENCES IN THE DEGREE OF IDENTIFICATION WITH THE MAJORITY AND WITH THE ROMA

The degree of identification that the Roma show with the majority population is closely related to the degree, intensity, and frequency of relationships between the two groups, as well as to the degree of integration of the Roma in question. These degrees are in direct proportion to each other: the higher the living standard and spatial integration with the majority society, the better the relationship with the non-Roma, the higher the degree of identification with the majority population and the lower with the Roma, and vice versa. Hypothetically, if the identification of the Roma with the majority population is high, it can influence evaluations of the mutual relationship by somewhat alleviating the conflicts in society.

There is a tendency among the Roma living scattered in larger cities to hide the fact that they are Roma. "I live like the Hungarians do. So what kind of Gypsy am I? Do I have a capital 'G' on my forehead? I live like the Hungarian people do. I wash like them, shop like them, hoe my garden like them, I talk like they do to the authorities. If someone didn't know me, he would never guess that I am a Gypsy. I was often surprised when I traveled to visit my children at the dormitory, and Gypsies and other people traveled with me. I don't travel now, but those Gypsies didn't behave like they should have, and people would whisper to me – look at how those Gypsies are behaving. And I would reply, 'they will get better'. Of course, I didn't let on that I was a Gypsy too, but something in my soul gave such a tug." (InfoRoma, May to June 1996)

The increased degree of identification with the majority population among the integrated Roma can be seen also in Graph 6 (the data

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Graph 6
"I would not mind if my son/daughter married a member of the majority population" – % who agree, according to the degree of integration
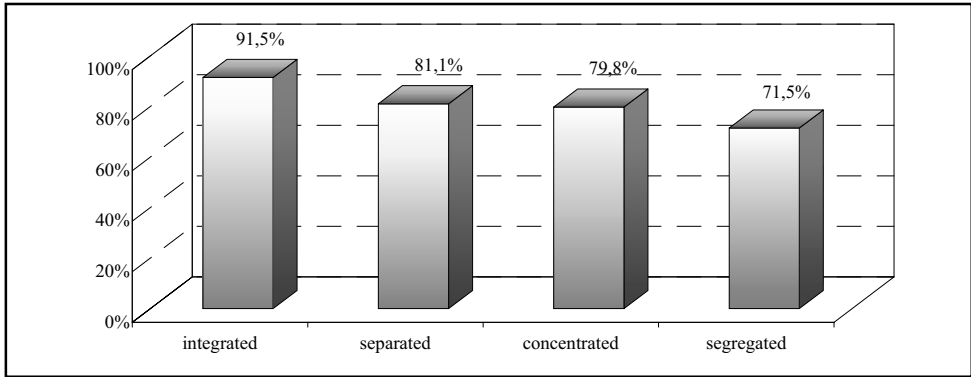
Source: UNDP/IVO, November 2001.

come from the quantitative research by IVO/ UNDP).

These data are not sufficient for us to determine the degree of identification, or definitely to accept the hypothesis on the identification of the Roma with the majority; however, they do indicate certain trends. That a Roma family is able to accept a representative of the majority as a family member could have other explanations (especially among the integrated Roma), but given the crisis in the Roma identity (see the chapter *Ethnic Identity of the Roma* in this book) and the low proportion of Roma who claim Roma ethnicity, the hypothesis of a high degree of identification with the majority population sounds plausible.

Given the high correlation between the feeling of identity, the socio-economic situation, and the degree of integration, the extent of identification with the Roma ethnic group falls as the socio-economic status and the degree of integration of the people in question increase. However, the middle and upper classes of Roma can also be divided into two basic groups. On the one hand there is a very large group of Roma who, because of

their identification with the majority, are losing their Roma identity; on the other hand, there is also another large group that still identifies very strongly with the Roma minority, as seen in their national awareness and attempts to emancipate the Roma nation.

EXPECTED FUTURE RELATIONSHIPS

The present attitudes, mutual relationships and conflicts between the Roma and the majority influence the way the Roma and the non-Roma see their future coexistence. The American sociologist W. I. Thomas (1927) considers himself the author of the theorem according to which if people define a certain (possibly illusory) situation as real, this situation can also produce real consequences. In our case this could mean that if the majority and the Roma consider their present relationship to be bad and expect it to worsen, aggression, hatred and conflict could really increase, as the Roma start reacting in a similar way. Failure to solve problems in the mutual relationship and other social situations could in future increase the social gap and cause a further escalation of social ten-

Graph 7
What kind of relationship do you expect in the future?
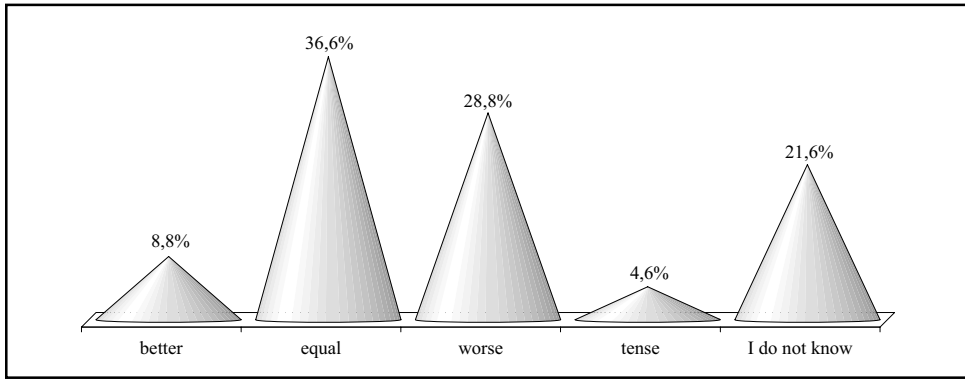
sion between the Roma and the non-Roma (Kriglerová, 2002).

The general trend seems to be towards a worse relationship. While at present as many as 63% of Roma respondents consider the mutual relationship to be trouble free and quite good, only 45% expect the situation to remain the same or improve. This means that there is a large category of Roma who consider the present relationship good, but expect it to worsen.

The integrated and separated Roma in particular expect a better or equal relationship with the non-Roma. In general, the better the current relationship, the higher the expectations for the future. Among the respondents who expect an improvement, 43% indicated that the present relationship was trouble-free, and 25% that it was good. On the other hand, half of those who now think that the relationship is unbearable expect tension to increase (Kriglerová, 2002).

The majority seems to have different expectations. In the IVO 2001 research, the opinions of Slovak people were marked by significant pessimism. As many as 85.5% of respondents thought it likely or rather likely

that Roma crime would increase; 87.8% of the majority population expected the size of the Roma population to grow rapidly, and 82% thought that it was unlikely or rather unlikely that the number of Roma with jobs could be increased (Kriglerová, 2002).

From the viewpoint of possible conflicts, it is important to know whether tension between the Roma and the rest of the population will escalate. Some 76.1% of respondents think that this is probable or very probable, while only 13.2% think the opposite, and 10.7% of respondents are unable to judge the matter. Because it is not clear what individual respondents understand by the term "conflict", or whether they have personally experienced some conflict, we can only assume that Slovaks expect a gradual increase in crime and the number of Roma, and thus more conflicts as well. However, this is already a vicious circle – if the non-Roma maintain this attitude towards the Roma, the social gap will begin to grow. With the increasing social distance, the exclusion of the Roma from participation in the social life of the majority population also increases. This promotes apathy among the Roma and reluctance to adhere to the standards of the majority society. The majority in turn perceives

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the violation of its standards as proof that the Roma are unable or unwilling to adapt, which further increases its rejection of the Roma. In the end, this process can lead to an escalation of tension in the mutual relationship and a growing number of conflicts (Kriglerová, 2002).

CONCLUSION

The history of the Roma in Central Europe is one of interethnic tension sometimes resulting in interethnic conflict. This is not unique to the culture of this region, as the situation is the same with all cultures that differ enough to have to seek forms of coexistence in such close quarters as exist in Slovakia. Interethnic tension itself is not necessarily a problem, and may even help the cultures find suitable forms of coexistence, if it can be regulated and if extreme aspects that might cause open conflict can be eliminated. For this to happen, both parties must understand the past and try not to repeat the mistakes that were made. This can only be achieved by using long-term strategies. Under certain circumstances, such strategies can best be created by the state, which has powerful tools such as the creation of legislation, the adoption of general political measures, repression, and public funding (*Romové v České republice*, 1999).

The present relationship between the Roma and the majority population, as presented in this chapter, is not very positive, and should not be overlooked. Above all, it presents a threat of conflict that could easily get out of control. We must remember that both sides show xenophobic tendencies, prejudice and intolerance, and contribute a roughly equal share to the tension. Neither the majority nor the Roma show much self-reflection, empathy, or understanding in the mutual relationship, and refuse to accept joint responsibility for the negative situation.

As we mentioned several times above, the different cultural background and the different ways of life followed by the Roma and the non-Roma are the basic factors driving the escalation of tension between these two nations. The everyday life of some Roma in Slovakia is still driven by traditional Roma habits and standards, which in some areas clash with the standards of the majority society. The majority, however, tends to see the entire Roma minority in a negative light, and to generalize from the negative behavior of the "inadaptable" part of the Roma.

The prevailing opinion among the majority population is that the Roma do not want or do not know how to adapt to social norms, and seem to resist the majority's efforts to integrate them into society. In this way the majority, either deliberately or unwittingly, shuts itself off from the rest of the population, and refuses to take the steps necessary to remove the tension and integrate the Roma into society (see the chapter *Relationship of the Majority Population to the Roma* in this book; Vašečka, 2001).

On the other hand, research shows that most Roma identify very strongly with the majority, and try equally hard to be included. The Roma usually maintain that all doors are closed to them, which increases their frustration at their inability to satisfy their needs and desires. It thus could happen, if it has not already, that the assumption that the Roma cannot be integrated becomes reality, and the Roma give up trying to change the situation.

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DEPICTION OF THE ROMA IN THE MEDIA

(Parts 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 were written by **J. Cangár**; part 6 by **A. Szép** and **A. Kotvanová**)

Summary: This chapter analyses the treatment of the Roma in major electronic and print media since 1989. It describes the public image of the Roma since their arrival in Europe and in Slovakia, and examines the role of the media in depicting the life of the Roma in Slovakia as monitored by different institutions and individuals. It also takes a close look at the electronic media monitoring done by the non-governmental organization MEMO '98 in 2000 and 2001. The influences shaping the image of the Roma in the media are defined, including international conventions on how the media should portray ethnic minorities. The authors track the Roma media and their role in raising awareness of the Roma migration. Examples from the Czech Republic and Hungary are also considered. In conclusion, the authors suggest directions in which thought on the media's portrayal of the Roma and their exodus might lead.

Key words: the Roma, historical determinants, stereotypes and myths about the Roma, position and role of the media, opinion-forming media, monitoring, MEMO '98, select broadcasts, media effects, ethics, principles of media activity, migration, media debate, prejudices, stereotypes.

INTRODUCTION

The state of post-1989 Slovak society has been demonstrated in many public opinion polls on the relationship between the Roma and the majority population. This relationship is not improving, rather the opposite. To what extent are the media responsible for this, and is this ethnic-social crisis in part caused by how the Roma are portrayed in the media? Several studies, polls and analyses have shown how the media shape or distort the public image of the Roma, how certain forms of presentation make or break the majority population's stereotypes about the Roma, and to what extent Slovakia's media policy corresponds to international media conventions and Slovakia's commitments and ethical norms in multicultural and multi-ethnic Europe.

What sparked this increased interest in the Roma issue were attempts by the Roma, starting in the late 1990s, to gain asylum in Western European countries, an event that attracted both media and public attention. However, greater media coverage did not mean a deeper understanding of the phenomenon, and did not reflect a determination to solve it quickly. The media coverage in fact was often marked by a right-wing approach with a hidden agenda, perhaps natural given the foreign policy implications of the Roma

migration to Western Europe. This migration was perceived as a threat to Slovakia's EU integration goals, because in consequence of the increasing number of asylum seekers, Western European countries began to doubt the human rights situation in Slovakia. The Roma asylum demands also led to pressure from the EU on Slovakia to deal with the problem at source, due partly to the fact that the asylum policies and asylum systems of many EU members were not prepared for such an influx, and partly to the increasingly negative views of immigrants among the inhabitants of the affected EU countries.

THE ROMA AND THEIR PUBLIC IMAGE

The media image of the Roma has long been identical to their public image, both during communism and after 1989 when people gained free access to information and the freedom of speech. Social awareness, the overall atmosphere in society, and the political thinking of the citizenry – in a nutshell, "the state of democracy in people's heads" – has also constrained the consciousness of the media. In this regard, little has changed in Slovakia since 1989; the level of democracy in a society is reflected in the level of democracy in its media. "A negative image of the Roma is built up by the media, which depicts them as dirty, lazy, cunning individuals, while these negative properties are then attributed by society to the entire Roma nation as their way of life, and as forming a value system that is unique to them." (Říčan, 1988) This has occurred despite the fact that the *Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms*, in chapter three entitled *The Rights of National and Ethnic Minorities*, clearly states in article 24 that "membership in any national minority or ethnic group may not be used to the detriment of any individual" (*Listina základných práv a slobôd*, 1992).

After 1989, however, the Roma issue began to receive closer media attention, and to be dealt with from different points of view. At the beginning, the professional level of the information presented was low; tendentious and sensational reporting prevailed. Slovakia's ambitions to join NATO, which brought pressure from the US, EU and Council of Europe (CE) to enforce the principles of democratic pluralism and to combat racism, prompted the media to report on national minorities, including the Roma, in a more intelligent and informed manner. Especially after 1998, the media sought to analyze the causes underlying the huge problems the Roma faced. The print media began to run more editorials and opinion pieces on the issue, and more space was given to experts on various aspects of Roma life. In the last two or three years, the second channel of the public service Slovak Television has been broadcasting documentaries that seek to provide a more complex and objective picture of the Roma issue; greater objectivity on the Roma has also become the aim of other major media. The way in which information is presented, however, still varies according to the liberality of the given media, and its acceptance and knowledge of the opinions of the minority.

Slovakia is evolving into a multicultural and multiracial society. Nevertheless, while the media do not create racism, they may be guilty of ignoring or supporting racist views. Research has demonstrated that neutrality in journalism is often perceived by viewers or listeners as a form of racism or xenophobia, and that people may mistake reporting on racism that is presented as "independent" news as actual approval of the racism. The media also often marginalizes racial and national minorities. Information on the Roma usually appears in the news only when something is happening, when there are issues or problems to inform audiences of. According

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to a Council of Europe recommendation, "If white Europeans don't see members of racial or national minorities on TV every day, it strengthens their perception that minorities are not fully equal members of society" (*Ako správne zobraziť*…, 1997, p. 5). Positive news about minorities is completely absent from Slovak reporting, with the Roma in particular being depicted as part of a problem or as a problem in their own right. People associate the Roma with crime, drugs, and terrorism, and perceive them as a problematic social group. Regional ethnic broadcasts, when they exist, are usually aired at unattractive times, and do not meet multicultural criteria. Many programs treat the Roma as an exotic topic, for all that the Roma were born in Europe, and cannot be considered strangers. Racism and discrimination, however, are leading to their exclusion from society and to their alienation, a process intensified by their generally low level of education and the lack of job opportunities in Slovakia.

IMAGE OF THE ROMA IN THE SLOVAK MEDIA

The Slovak Helsinki Committee (SHC) carried out two projects mapping the media image of the Slovak Roma. The first project, called *The Image of the Roma in Selected Slovak Mass Media*, ran from June 1, 1998 until May 31, 1999, and represented the first attempt to ascertain the image of the Roma in Slovakia's mass media. Conducting the research were two political science students from Comenius University in Bratislava, Boris Benkovič and Lucia Vakulová. The second SHC project, *Media Monitoring*, was undertaken as part of a project called *Developing the Practical Skills of Human Rights Monitoring and Advocacy*, which was supported by the European Commission. The project monitored the image of selected na-

tional and other minorities from March 1 till December 31, 2001.

The two projects aimed to show how the major print and electronic media were presenting the Roma nation and its problems, and which aspects and characteristics of the Roma were being emphasized and which marginalized. The main research method was quantitative content analysis, supported by qualitative analysis of various aspects of the media image of the Roma. The main criterion in the selection of media samples was how many people read or watched the given medium. The first project – *The Image of the Roma in Selected Slovak Mass Media* – monitored the six most read national papers – *Nový čas*, *Pravda*, *Slovenská Republika*, *Sme*, *Práca* and *Národná obroda* dailies. The electronic media survey included the main news programs of Slovak Television (STV), the privately owned Markíza TV (Slovakia's most watched channel), and the public service Slovak Radio. The *Media Monitoring* project basically continued the previous project and even used the same methods. As it did not focus exclusively on the Roma, the number of media monitored was cut to three dailies – *Nový čas, Nový deň* and *Sme* – and the main news programs of STV and Markíza.

Every report in which the Roma (Gypsies) or the Roma issue was mentioned orally or in writing was included in the research. Every report was identified by medium, date, name of information, placement in the medium, and length. Content variables included: type of information[1], nature of information, and content orientation (i.e. social sphere, education and culture, crime, social and psychological characteristics of the Roma, public and political sphere, human and civic rights). Individual categories had subcategories, allowing the contents to be processed in more detail (Benkovič, 2001, p. 6).

Graph 1
Content orientation of information about the Roma

Category	Value
Social sphere	33,8%
Education and culture	22,6%
Crime	20,8%
Social and psychological characteristics	9,7%
Public and political sphere	46,4%
Human and civic rights	42,9%

(Horizontal axis: 0%, 5%, 10%, 15%, 20%, 25%, 30%, 35%, 40%, 45%, 50%)
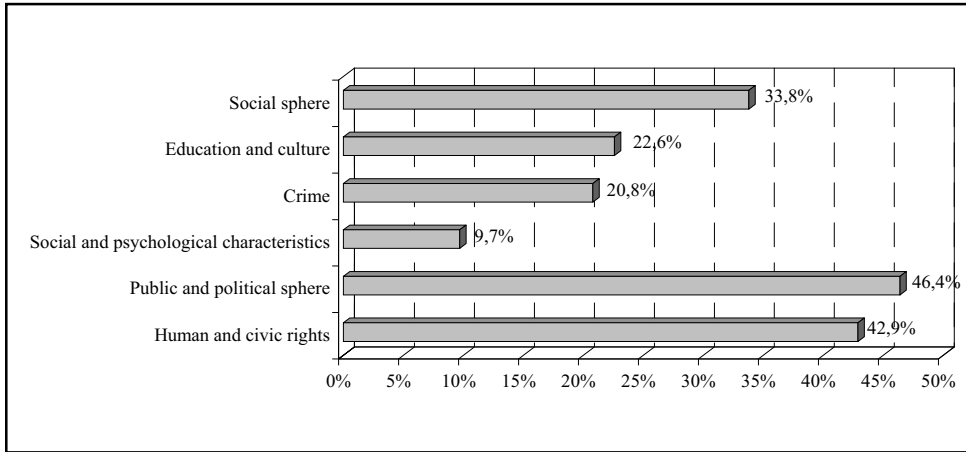
Source: SHC, 2001.

The following further categories were identified: information carrier, source of information[2], quality of information (analytical, descriptive), etc. Evaluations of whether the report gave the audience a positive or negative image of the Roma were a crucial part of analyzing the information. Within the two SHC projects, the authors described the mood of each report as positive, neutral or negative. If the report either directly or indirectly aroused negative feelings towards the Roma (through depictions of their behavior, social and psychological qualities, living conditions, etc.) or if it confirmed traditional majority stereotypes of the Roma, it was classified as negative. If there were no emotions visible in the reporting, if it was matter-of-fact with no judgments attached by the reporter, and if the report painted the situation of the Roma as neither better nor worse than it actually was, it was qualified as neutral. If the report directly or indirectly improved the image of the Roma, it was classified as positive (Benkovič, 2001, p. 6).

The file included 1,304 units, reports that in one way or another dealt with the Roma or the Roma issue. In 833 reports the Roma were the main topic, while in 470 the Roma were mentioned in some connection, but were not the focus of the news item. Of the total, 212 reports (16.3%) were presented by the electronic media, and 1,092 (83.7%) by the print media. During the period surveyed, the most news on the Roma was carried by the *Nový deň* daily (419) and the *Sme* daily (414) (Benkovič, 2001, p. 7). The prevailing type of report on the Roma was an editorial (31.2%) followed by a news wire story (20.7%) and a commentary (18.2%). The least frequent was a genre of humor, a letter from a reader, and a re-published report. Interviews were also surprisingly rare, even though they offer the reader great authenticity and unmediated opinions. Of the items published, only 6.7% were interviews.

The most frequent carrier or source of information in the coding units[3] was journalists and press agencies. The second most frequent source was various state authorities. The third carrier of published information were the Roma themselves, their organizations and political representatives. Foreign

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entities[4] were the source of 9.6% of processed information. This relatively high proportion is related especially to the observance of the Roma's human and civic rights and the issue of Roma migration (Benkovič, 2001, p. 9).

As for the sorts of topics presented in the reports, the public and political sphere dominated (46.4%), followed by human and civil rights and freedoms (42.9%). The third most frequently presented topic concerning the Roma community was social problems (33.8%). As for content orientation in the public and political sphere category, the most frequent reports concerned data on the number of Roma, and general reports on the Roma issue. This category also included reports on various Roma organizations, Roma political parties, and Roma candidates in regional elections. The human and civil rights category mostly included reports on discrimination against the Roma, racism and racial tensions, racially motivated attacks against the Roma, and various aspects of migration. In the social sphere category, the following reports dominated: news on the living conditions of the Roma, Roma housing and settlements, Roma children and child care, unemployment and social care, welfare benefits, and help provided to the Roma (Benkovič, 2001, p. 13).

Information related to Roma crime usually dealt with theft, fraud, usury, violent crime and sexual abuse, or Roma crime statistics in general. Information on the social and psychological characteristics of the Roma was presented in 127 coding units, including stories about the irresponsibility, arrogance, laziness, noisiness, etc. of the Roma. Mention of the artistic talents of the Roma, their cheerfulness, pride, and similar qualities was made in only one of five reports describing their social and psychological characteristics. The content of information reflected the real problems of the Roma nation (Benkovič, 2001, p. 15).

The structure of information about the Roma published by the *Sme* and *Nový deň* dailies was similar, with the exception of the public and political sphere. Public and political issues were mentioned far more frequently in the *Nový deň* daily. On the other hand, the human and civil rights issue was discussed more frequently in the *Sme* daily. In contrast, *Nový čas* devoted far more attention to the social aspects of the Roma minority, and carried about one-third more stories on "Roma crime" than *Sme* or *Nový deň*.

If we compare the structure of information about the Roma in the main news programs of the two key Slovak electronic media – STV and Markíza – we find that compared to STV, Markíza broadcast about one-third more information on "Roma crime". The share of information on the social aspects of the Roma and their social and psychological traits was similarly higher with Markíza than on STV (Benkovič, 2001, p. 16).

The fact that the methodology used to collate and process data in the *Image of the Roma in Selected Slovak Mass Media* and *Media Monitoring* projects was virtually identical allows us to compare the data acquired in these two projects. Changes in the information structure and share of topics presented by the various media were to a large extent determined by real-world developments affecting the Roma, but also reflected different subjective approaches to the Roma issue by journalists (Benkovič, 2001, p. 17).

From March through December 2001, both electronic media reduced their share of information concerning the social, public and political spheres. Markíza also saw a slight drop in the share of information concerning human and civil rights, whereas STV saw a minor increase in stories on this topic. The position of Roma crime in the overall struc-

ture of information presented on Markíza rose more significantly in 2001 than it did on STV, which saw only a small change in this area. Compared to STV and all other media, Markíza was marked by the relatively insignificant drop in information on the social and psychological characteristics of the Roma. The trend in stories on education and culture at Markíza was also contrary to that of STV (Benkovič, 2001, p. 20).

Of the 1,304 units of information recorded and processed from March until December 2001, the majority (as much as 84%) was neutral, describing matters concerning the Roma objectively without trying to influence the emotions of the audience. Some 14% of reports were negative, and only 2% were positive. Neutral and positive reports usually concerned such topics as Roma folklore, language, religious and media activities. Information that gave a negative image of the Roma was linked to the social and psychological traits of the Roma and Roma crime.

The highest ratio of negative information among the print media was published by *Nový čas* (22.4%) and among the electronic media by Markíza (19.6%). The findings showed that little analytical information was presented regarding the Roma issue, in other words few reports that identified not only the problem itself, but also its causes and results, and even possible solutions. Descriptive information outweighed analytical reports in the surveyed material by 85% to 14.4%, respectively (Benkovič, 2001, p. 20).

In monitoring the image of the Roma in the media, the authors identified two negative and very common ways in which the Roma were presented. The first was to emphasize an affinity to an ethnic group in reports that were negative in themselves (stories on crime, welfare benefits) and that concerned topics considered typical of the ethnic group in Slovakia. Indeed, in every single case when a perpetrator's ethnicity was mentioned, that ethnicity was Roma. Generalizations were also commonly used, with insufficient, if any, distinction being made between the behavior of the individual and that of the entire ethnic group. The reports thus sounded as if the anti-social behavior automatically applied to the entire Roma nation (Benkovič, 2001, p. 23).

The way in which the media cover the Roma helps to shape the attitude of society towards the Roma, while at the same time the attitude of the majority population influences the way the media approach the problems of the Roma. The media image of the Roma is unique compared to its treatment of other national minorities living in Slovakia, just as the position of the Roma in our society is also unique. The media take a unique approach to reporting on "Roma crime", the social problems of the Roma, and their ethnic characteristics (Benkovič, 2001, p. 45). The largely negative attitude of the majority population to the Roma is often brought out in situations when a news story on the Roma[5] provokes otherwise balanced journalists,[6] or politicians with an image of tolerance to the Roma, to spontaneously criticize the Roma. Their criticism often includes stereotypes, prejudices, and generalizations that suggest intolerance and racism.

One example was the statement of Pál Csáky, the Deputy Prime Minister for Human Rights and National Minorities, who when speaking publicly of the emigration of certain Slovak Roma used the phrase "Roma ethno-tourism". Also controversial was a statement by Justice Minister Ján Čarnogurský, who when asked what criteria could be used to find out how many Roma prisoners were in Slovak penitentiaries, said: "I can't tell you, but I can assure you that the wardens are able to tell

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who is and who isn't a Roma." (*Sme,* August 4, 2000) Such statements by members of the Slovak elite show how deep prejudice towards the Roma really is, and how little separates the radical parts of society from the more conciliatory representatives of the majority (Benkovič, 2001, p. 48 – 49).

Based on the premise that the media image of the Roma shapes the majority's stance towards the Roma and vice versa, it can be expected that if conflicts between the Roma and the majority population escalate, we will see a worsening of the image of the Roma in the Slovak media. This has already been seen in the way the Roma migration was presented in the Slovak media. Migration is not one of the factors determining the Roma situation in Slovakia, and has no influence on the social and economic position of the Roma minority, especially given the small number of migrants compared to the total number of Roma living in Slovakia. Unfortunately, the issue is an especially sensitive one for most Slovak citizens. In general, the way the media present various Roma issues depends on how sensitive the issue is for the majority population (Benkovič, 2001, p. 49).

Compared to 1998/1999, the year 2001 saw an increase in Roma-related reports in all monitored media. This growth was apparent even though the *Media Monitoring* project covered only 10 months, while the previous project covered an entire year. Markíza, for example, broadcast 58 reports on the Roma on its evening news programs from June 1, 1998 to May 31, 1999 (a period of 12 months). From March through December 2001 (10 months), however, the station aired 102 such reports, an almost 100% rise. This indicates growing interest among the major media in the Roma and related issues. Audiences are thus being exposed to more information about the Roma (Benkovič, 2001, p. 49).

MONITORING OF PRINT MEDIA

In the last four or five years, migration by the Roma to EU countries became one of the main topics of political debate in Slovakia. The EU countries affected responded by slapping visa requirements on Slovak citizens wanting to visit, thus increasing interest among the Slovak public in the Roma issue – not just immigration, but other matters as well. The media were no exception.

In 1999, Michal Vašečka and Bronislava Pinterová in their project *Monitoring Roma Migration to EU Countries*, which looked at how the event was covered by the major Slovak dailies (January 1999 to April 2000), analyzed the work of the *Slovenská Republika*, *Sme* and *Pravda* dailies. These periodicals had the greatest influence and most important positions on the media market, were among the most read, and covered the Roma issue the most comprehensively. Several regional periodicals from eastern Slovakia also had a significant influence on readers in their presentations of the Roma migration issue, such as the *Prešovský večerník*, *Prešovský denník*, *Korzár* and *Košický večer*; the papers were all published in areas where the Roma were the most concentrated.

The stances of the individual media varied according to their political orientation, and the social class, occupations and ethnic background of their readers. Reports on the Roma and Roma migration were published with increasing frequency during the period examined, with the migration issue indirectly sparking the interest of the media in other Roma-related topics, especially the problems facing the minority. The majority population tended to emphasize the economic causes of the Roma migration, calling it "ethno-tourism", while the Roma themselves said that racial discrimination was the main motive for their exodus. However, Roma representa-

tives were inconsistent in their opinions on the causes of migration, while the liberal media pointed to the worsening situation of the Roma middle class as a possible cause.

Especially since 1998, most media have portrayed the Roma differently than they have other national minorities. The Roma have been directly labeled as a problem group, and empathy and tolerance for them has been far lower than for other minorities. Among the print media, only the *Sme* daily sought to provide in-depth analyses and expert opinions on the Roma issue, or to give more room even to sensitive topics such as discrimination against the Roma and displays of latent racism. The paper treated the migration as both a social issue and a moral problem facing the majority. It analyzed its causes through the lens of human rights, discrimination, and racism, and provided space for the opinions of the Roma and Roma communities. The *Pravda* daily, meanwhile, presented the Roma issue as a social problem, and discussed migration especially in the context of its negative consequences for Slovakia. The *Slovenská Republika* daily presented migration as a social problem of a part of the population that was unable to adapt, defended the repressive practices of the state, and cast doubt on discrimination against the Roma, regaling its readers with the myth that the Roma enjoyed above-standard rights. The frequency with which information was presented by the individual media varied as well, with the *Sme* daily tackling the issue steadily and systematically, and *Pravda* and *Slovenská Republika* covering it only when the migration peaked in summer 1999 to Finland, and winter 2000 to Belgium (see Vašečka and Pinterová, 2000, p. 10 – 11).

In general, the media (including the three monitored dailies) lacked analysis, presenting the migration issue in black and white terms and confirming the majority stereotype that the Roma migration was just "economic tourism", or the pursuit of an easier life. All dailies viewed economic reasons (especially the asylum allowances handed out by EU countries) as the main cause of the exodus. *Slovenská Republika* even suggested a "conspiracy" against Slovakia to endanger its EU accession, while *Sme* and *Pravda* also alleged the migration had been organized by shadowy actors. The language the media used to present the issue was also interesting; *Slovenská Republika* used expressive, simple language, while *Pravda* and *Sme* did not use expressive words. Although *Pravda* and *Sme* strove for neutral terminology (departure of the Roma, migration of the Roma, emigration of the Roma), all dailies also used expressions with emotional undertones that colored their presentations of the migration (exodus of the Roma, organized departure of the Roma, asylum adventure). *Slovenská Republika* even used derogatory expressions (Roma conspiracy, Roma ethno-tourism, off to the fjords, Roma scouting party, etc.).

The reporting of the monitored media can be divided into several basic categories:
1. Analysis of the reasons for migration – reviews of the social situation of the Roma, racism and discrimination against the Roma, denial of the causes of the language (usury, commercial activity, abuse of asylum), reactions of Slovak politicians and Roma representatives, proposals on how to tackle the migration and other Roma issues.
2. Reactions by the West to the Roma migration – reactions from the EU, translations of foreign press articles, appeals by destination country representatives.
3. Reactions by the Slovak administration – the government, the Slovak secret service, analyses of proposals for improving the social position of the Roma.
4. Informative articles about the number of Roma applying for asylum, reports on the

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life of the Roma in their target countries, ways of going abroad.

5. The visa issue, introductions and cancellations of visa obligations.

6. Influence of migration on Slovakia's EU ambitions (Vašečka and Pinterová, 2000).

THE ROMA IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FROM 2000 TO 2002

The following conclusions can be drawn from the 2000/2001 monitoring of the news programs of the major Slovak TV and radio stations:

1. In general, very little space was given to the issue of national minorities by any monitored medium. Minorities were discussed most frequently on the news programs of Slovak Radio and the privately owned Rádio Twist.

2. When information on minorities was broadcast, the Roma were clearly the most discussed, receiving over 86% of airtime devoted to minorities.

3. The news was usually dominated by scandals, campaigns, and sensational events. It was no coincidence that the Roma issue was presented most frequently in August; in both 2000 and 2001, the summer months saw serious events that shaped the way the Roma (and minorities in general) were presented the rest of the year. During the late summer harvest in both years, the Roma were reported to be stealing potatoes in massive amounts from Slovak farmers; in both years, too, populist opposition leader Robert Fico of the Smer party presented some borderline racist ideas about how to tackle the Roma issue (i.e. stop the social benefits of those who traveled abroad to request asylum); and racial attacks on Roma saw the murder in 2000 of Anastázia Balážová, a mother of eight, and the beating and torture in 2001 of Karol Sendrei, who died in police cus-

tody. These events dominated reports on national minorities in all monitored media.

4. Another two issues that influenced the image of the Roma were the migration of the Roma abroad and the desperate situation of the Košice housing estate Lunik IX, a Roma ghetto in the east of the country. These two issues dominated the news in certain months in 2000 and 2001.

5. The news included few unattractive topics, such as how the state should tackle the problems of national minorities; relationships between minorities or between the Roma and local and regional elected governments; minority culture; the social sphere; and the school system. It seemed that the media were not interested in dealing with the problems of national minorities in their main news programs.

6. More than 85% of all information was presented neutrally. There was little positive news: in 2000 there were 21 reports and in 2001 28, representing a negligible share of the roughly 7,000 reports monitored each year.

7. The broadcasting of all monitored media was campaign-oriented, unsystematic, often based on happenstance or a search for scandal and sensation, and demonstrated a refusal to take responsibility, as seen in the neutrality of the reporting. When such reports are presented neutrally they greatly contribute to the formation of negative views among the majority population towards the Roma. Somewhere here lie the roots of the racism latent in Slovak society.

8. In 2000 and 2001, the approach of state representatives to Roma problems was wholly insufficient, and lacked any concept or system whatsoever. This was largely the fault of Deputy Prime Minister for Minorities Pál Csáky and those people who held the post of Government Representative for Solving the Problems of the Roma Minority. In 2000, the Slovak

media devoted a total of only 6 minutes and 11 seconds to presentations by these officials (i.e. not even 19% of time devoted to representatives of the Roma national minority), and in 2001 only 13 minutes and 28 seconds (29%). The presentations of these officials at the same time lacked regularity and method. During the years monitored there were months when the media did not mention the Government Representative at all.

9. The main contributors to this situation were the public media – STV and Slovak Radio. In some respects, STV's coverage had a significant negative impact on the presentation of national minorities (the Roma in particular) in the media.

The tendency of the media to invent issues and sensational events and information can be documented from the transcript of some news programs published on the MEMO '98 media watchdog's web page (http://www.memo98.sk) in the section *Rómovia v elektronických médiách 2000 – 2001* (The Roma in Electronic Media 2000 – 2001). Analysis of this information suggests the following:

1. The media create negative perceptions of information by the way they present it, the content they choose, and the headlines they assign. The acts or attributes of an individual or group are often attributed to the entire ethnic minority.

2. Headlines often suggest something not supported by the content of the story.

3. News readers invite conclusions that a visa issue pertaining to one country actually applies to the entire European continent.

4. The choice of words prefers the negative – "there was a massive attack" (evokes violence), "they have complicated the lives of" (overstatement – the problems affect travel only), "other European countries" (unjustified generalization regarding all European countries).

5. Reporters' questions are suggestive, evoking a sense of threat and drawing a negative answer.

6. Irrelevant information is broadcast which should not have been included in the news in the first place. Interviews are manipulated by reporters, unverified information is used, and the "facts" not backed up by proof. This amounts to a clear and conscious misleading and manipulation of viewers.

7. Unfounded negative consequences are suggested for all Slovak citizens in the responses of all EU countries to the offences committed by the Roma. These amount to absurd cases of assigning collective guilt on the basis of ethnicity.

8. Top state officials, including the president, present undiplomatic and questionable stances on some issues, especially Roma immigration. As it turned out, EU countries were able to solve the migration issue without blocking Slovakia's EU accession. Made-up "information" presented on major news programs, however, still has the power to arouse negative attitudes and reactions in viewers towards the people found guilty in the news.

9. Information presented as "breaking news" is included in broadcasts at the last moment, out of order, and introduced in a dramatic way. In fact, the way such information is presented, formatted and ordered contains elements of conscious viewer manipulation and the incitement of public alarm.

MEDIA COVERAGE OF ROMA MIGRATION

ROMA MEDIA AND THE MIGRATION

The Roma media in Slovakia show characteristics similar to those of Roma media in other central European countries, with the possible exception of Hungary, where the

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situation of the Roma is better. In Hungary, five Roma journals are published, the public TV and radio stations broadcast a Roma program every week, and about 10 regional TV stations produce Roma programs. A Roma media center has been active for five years now, and has been successful in placing its stories in the media (Bernáth, 2000); since autumn 2001 there has also been a Roma radio station on the air (Sánta, 2002).

In Slovakia, on the other hand, the public Slovak Radio channel broadcasts a Roma program in the Slovak language, while within the framework of Hungarian-language broadcasting there is a 30-minute Roma magazine broadcast twice a week. STV broadcasts for the Roma 26 minutes a month in Slovak within the framework of a minorities magazine.

As for Roma print media, the migration issue was covered most intensely by *Romano Nevo Ľil* (published since 1991) and *Sam Adaj* (published since 1999). An important role in informing the public could in future be played by the new (founded April 15, 2002) Slovak Roma Press Agency, which is subsidized from non-governmental sources and is headquartered in Košice (www.rpa.sk).

The position of the Roma media in Slovakia is very weak, with the state failing to support them despite providing support for the media of other minorities (Galjus, 1999). The importance of these media is thus very low on the international stage, while their position and influence among the domestic mainstream media is also limited. In general, the Roma media are unable to set the topics and decide the way information about the Roma is presented in the mainstream media, or even to influence coverage of the Roma. Their impotence is due to the fact that the majority media usually don't receive their information from the Roma media, and almost never cite

Roma journals. The Roma media are not an important opinion-forming force, even among the Roma.

Migration was one of the main topics in both of the aforementioned Roma journals. The two papers published agency news, short articles, interviews, and both factual and comprehensive reports. The information published by *Romano Nevo Ľil* was the more objective and analytical of the two papers. This journal published many facts related to immigration, even the opinions of the International Organization for Migration, which helped the Roma return from abroad. This organization held an information campaign to prevent asylum migration by explaining the differences between asylum-seeking and legal travel (especially in the case of the exodus to Belgium). A debate with the Belgian Ambassador to Slovakia, Francois del Marmol, was also published in *Romano Nevo Ľil* (No. 491 – 495), under the headline *Belgium will Welcome the Roma, but not as Political Asylum Seekers*. The emotional appeal *Roma, Don't Leave Slovakia!* (*Romano Nevo Ľil*, No. 329 – 399) was also worthy of note. An attempt to investigate the causes of migration, entitled *New Devils are Returning From the Finnish Heaven* was published in the same issue. A very thorough migration chronology was published in *Romano Nevo Ľil*, Nos. 329 – 399 and 400 – 415, under the title *Exodus 99*.

The *Sam Adaj* journal published a comprehensive report entitled *About the Roma – Seriously and Warningly, or the Real Causes of the Exodus* (*Sam Adaj*, 1999, No. 8). This and many other articles expressed the largely negative emotions and attitudes of the Roma towards their situation in Slovakia. The main blame was pinned on the state and its political representatives, which according to the paper represent the majority and are not willing, or at best not able, to solve the problems of the Roma. In general, the Roma media

failed to influence the migration debate in the media despite attempts to do so.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE MEDIA AND THE MIGRATION – EXAMPLES FROM THE CZECH REPUBLIC AND HUNGARY

When discussing the influence of the media on Roma migration, we cannot ignore the case of the Czech Roma and their applications for asylum in Canada. The case itself is often interpreted as a clear proof of the influence of the media on social processes, including migration. It all started when a report entitled *Gypsies go to Heaven* was broadcast on the Czech Republic's Nova TV on August 5, 1997. In the report, some Czech Roma described the idyllic life they were living in Canada, causing a mass migration by Czech Roma to Canada. This migratory wave caused a serious international problem, both on the part of Canada, which was unable to handle the acute influx of asylum seekers, and on the part of the Czech Republic, which was slapped with a visa obligation for its citizens (Janků, 2001). This event triggered debate on the causes of migration, the Law on State Citizenship, and the overall position of the Roma in the Czech Republic. The event led to a reevaluation of state policy and triggered a series of administrative and legislative changes, such as in the Law on State Citizenship (*Zpráva…*, 1997).

One of the most watched cases Europe-wide was that of the Roma from Zámoly, Hungary. In July 2000 a group of Roma from that country traveled to Strasbourg and applied for asylum in France. Most were granted asylum in March 2001. In addition, the Roma launched an action against Hungary with the European Human Rights Court, alleging violations of human rights, persecution, and discrimination by state institutions and lower elected governments. Although the case was ultimately dismissed on the grounds the Roma had not exhausted all legal avenues in the Hungarian judicial system, it drew an exceptional response from the media not just in Hungary, but also Europe-wide. For many it was an example of discrimination against the Roma in Hungary. The group's journey began in 1997 as a trivial case and ended up as a typical example of everyday discrimination against the Roma and the failure of the many institutions and mechanisms that should be addressing the problems of the Roma in Hungary.

Hungarian government representatives saw the issue as the result of unfair practices by the Roma and an unprecedented discrediting of the country. In Hungary a media war was unleashed, and the right-wing and public media in particular stirred up anti-Roma feelings. This issue indeed differed from others like it in the way it was covered by the media. The Roma from Zámoly were able to muster the support of foreign media even before they traveled to France, due largely to the fact that they were supported by some Members of the European Parliament and various human rights activists and organizations. The entire move was well prepared, and cannot be compared to similar attempts by the Roma to apply for asylum in other countries. One of the most obvious consequences of the media coverage of the issue were further attempts by Hungarian Roma (from Mosonmagyaróvár and Győr) to apply for asylum after the success of the Zámoly Roma (for details see Hell, 2002; Laszlóová, 2001; Miklósi, 2001).

MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE ROMA MIGRATION ABROAD

Despite the absence of in-depth research on the Roma migration, apart from media cov-

erage in Central Europe and Slovakia in particular, media coverage was most intense in the destination countries. Still, reactions to this – at least initially surprising – phenomenon appeared in all world media including Australia, Africa and the US (e.g. *National Geographic*, April 2001; *New York Times*, April 2 and 3, 2000; the South-African weekly *The Sunday Independent*, August 6, 2000, a documentary broadcast by the SBS in Australia June 27, 2000, etc.). Media coverage of the migration and related issues was naturally much higher in Canada, the target of mainly Czech asylum seekers.

In Europe, the asylum migration was seen as an unwanted by-product of the EU expansion process. Bitušíková (2001) wrote that Western Europe did not welcome the Roma with open arms, and that the prospect of more than 6 million Roma in EU candidate countries traveling to find a better life in Western Europe caused apprehension (Bitušíková, 2001, p. 72).

The initial phase of media coverage reflected surprise, was unbalanced and one-sided. Media experts later called such reports hysterical. Individual reports usually focused on the absolute poverty of Central European Roma, and presented shocking images such as discrimination, skinheads beating up Roma and so on, without providing a broader context. Negative views of the migration, and resulting criticism of the attempts of Central European countries to improve the position of the Roma (and thus prevent them from emigrating) were often exacerbated by the problems that the immigration caused in the target countries, especially in places where refugee camps were established. Although the number of Roma asylum seekers from Central Europe was not high compared to the total number of immigrants, it was unpredictable (insufficient understanding of the phenomenon made it impossible to predict the future), raising apprehension among the local citizens. Naturally, the sensitivity of the issue was quickly reflected in the media.

This kind of information sporadically appeared in the media in the later stages as well, depending on individual developments. These reports were frequently very emotional, as can be seen from their headlines – e.g. *Last Stop – The Ghetto* (*De Volkskrant*, June 17, 2000), *Gypsies in the Garbage Bin* (*Morgenavisen Jyllands-Posten*, December 3, 2000) or *Discrimination Against the Roma Knows no Limits* (*Le Figaro,* August 7, 2000); all focused on the most visible problems. Cases of racially motivated violence, the wall separating the Roma from the rest of the population in the Czech Republic's Ústí nad Labem, the Zámoly issue in Hungary, and other "offences" against tolerance were cited as apparent proof of the existence of discrimination. Politicians' comments were also frequently quoted, especially those expressing intolerance; the "solution" proposed by Slovak politician Víťazoslav Móric (herding Roma onto reservations) was very popular, while other comments were taken out of context and accompanied by emotive comments. These media presentations were marked by the one-sidedness of many journalists.

As time passed, both the print and electronic media began publishing more analytical reports, which portrayed migration and the position of the Roma minority in post-communist Central European countries in a more complex light, and with greater understanding for efforts to integrate the Roma into society. Representatives of both the governments and institutions responsible for this process, and the Roma themselves were given more space to present their opinions. They often reacted to the aforementioned criticism, such as in a report published in the Dutch periodical *De Volkskrant* entitled *The*

Fate of the Roma Requires a More Creative Approach on the Part of Western Europe (June 21, 2000) or the article by the Danish Slavic expert Peter Ravn, published in the *Morgenavisen Jyllands-Posten* daily (October 19, 2000).

The reports of the 5th World Congress of the International Roma Union (IRU) from July 25 to 28, 2000 in Prague were mostly positive. The French daily *Libération* published an interview with IRU President Emil Ščuka (July 15, 2000). The position of the Roma in Slovakia was compared with that in other Central European countries, and was praised from the institutional viewpoint. The government's efforts to combat discrimination were also seen as positive. Excerpts from this interview were published in many other periodicals. These reports aimed to portray the Roma issue as a Europe-wide problem requiring far-ranging and systematic solutions.

The Roma asylum issue often came up in connection with the policies of the target countries towards immigrants, especially in Belgium and Great Britain (*La Libre Belgique*, *Le Soir*, *The Observer*, *The Guardian*). Local human rights organizations criticized the actions taken by local authorities and the police in various cases, as well as tight immigration and asylum rules. Local displays of racism against immigrants, in which the impact on real state and the consequences of immigration were stressed, drew a lot of publicity.

Media coverage of the Roma migration from Slovakia in the Czech and Hungarian press, i.e. in countries coping with similar problems, deserves special attention. Most reports published in the Czech Republic noted that Slovak Roma had also applied for asylum in the Czech Republic, and reported on attempts to eliminate this practice. Despite a general attempt by the Czech and Hungarian media to report objectively, there was a clear tendency to describe the situation in Slovakia as worse than it actually was, presumably to distract attention from these countries' own problems, or to improve their image by showing that the situation was even worse elsewhere (see for example *Népszabadság*, December 29, 1999 and *Magyar Hírlap*, May 11, 2001).

Overall, the media debate concerning the Roma migration from Slovakia and other Central European countries was part of a larger discussion on the changing nature of migration, characterized especially by a change in attitudes. While until recently many European countries felt they benefited from the rich culture and diversity that immigrants brought with them, feelings have changed now that asylum systems are being swamped by economic refugees with little education and other handicaps that lead to their social isolation and displays of intolerance from their surroundings. This trend was confirmed by the EU Seville Summit, which proposed steps to eliminate both legal and illegal migration through coordination with source countries.

CONCLUSION –
THE MEDIA AND ETHICS

It is not easy to evaluate the performance of the media in the public debate on the Roma migration. Concrete research and deeper content analysis is sorely needed. Research that has been done has shown that media coverage of the Roma migration often used interpretations resulting in media stereotypes, with the Roma being depicted either as a problem or as victims. Both stereotypes are dangerous, given their negative connotations.

One of the first attempts to help journalists become more tolerant and overcome their

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prejudices was a workshop for journalists from regional and national Slovak media, as well as for journalism students, organized by the International Organization for Migration in September 2000. At this workshop, the IOM presented a handbook entitled *Media as a Means of a Culture of Tolerance, or "Zero Tolerance" to Intolerance in the Media*. This handbook was prepared on the basis of recommendations of the second report of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, adopted on December 10, 1999. The report recommended adopting a code of ethics for the media in dealing with racism and intolerance (for details see www.radaeuropy.sk).

Change in this area cannot be expected soon. One of the requirements for positive change is support from political elites and the state. Material adopted by the government, called *The Priorities of the Slovak Government in Relation to Roma Communities for the Year 2000*, identified changing public opinion as one of its priorities. The main targets of change were state representatives, the media and the public (*Priority vlády...*, 2002). To implement these intentions, in autumn 2001 the government launched a campaign called *We Are All Citizens of Slovakia – Cooperation as the Way to Finding Solutions to the Relationship Between the Roma and the Non-Roma*. In April 2002, on International Roma Day, the Office of the Slovak Government Representative for Roma Communities launched the *Čačipen* ("Truth") campaign. Within this campaign several different activities were carried out around Slovakia, together with a media campaign to present the Roma through the medium of both well-known Roma personalities and ordinary Roma citizens. The Office of the Government Representative will also support government projects in this field (*Priority vlády...*, 2002). The public media must also play an important role in creating a tolerant environment and eliminating stereotypes of the Roma.

Creating a set of ethics rules that journalists accept would be an important step towards improving the media discussion of Roma migration. Besides deeper knowledge of the overall context, which is a necessary ingredient of independent journalism, journalists must also take responsibility for the consequences that the information they publish can have. This means they have to accept ethical principles and minimize the damage their reporting can cause.

The societal change so needed in the case of the Roma minority must flow from the rejection of confrontation to the creation of an atmosphere of cooperation and solidarity, and the condemnation of intolerance. The media must play a decisive role in this process. Their sensitivity to open displays of racism, or the silent support and indifference of the public towards such displays, must increase. These campaigns cannot focus only on open racial hatred (which is very hard to influence) but also on "everyday" displays of racism that the majority population does not notice but which the Roma encounter frequently.

The development of the position of the Roma in Slovakia, of a better relationship between the Roma and the rest of the population, and of the overall position of national minorities in Slovakia, will depend on several factors. The degree of integration or assimilation of minorities will influence how nationalist or radical they become, and how well they co-exist within Slovakia's multicultural and multiethnic society. Slovakia's membership in NATO and the EU, together with the expected development of its economy and society, may influence the way in which civic society develops, and whether ethnic and other minorities become an integral part of

it. In the end, this may be a key factor in the successful solution of Roma minority problems.

The media have definitely contributed to negative views of the Roma in Slovak society. By reporting on the Roma in a neutral tone, the media not only strengthen the latent racism that is virtually genetically fixed in the thinking of mainstream society, but even help create the basis for racial hatred and intolerance.

• The present image of the Roma in the Slovak media mainly represents the positions and opinions of the majority population, which the media largely belong to. The dominant features of the media image are latent racism and intolerance towards the Roma.

• The characteristic feature of the Roma media image is an emphasis on the prejudices and stereotypes formed by the majority, and which the media don't consider racist.

• The image of the Roma is unique in comparison with other nationalities, ethnic or other minorities. The most frequent reports concern crime, social issues and the psycho-social characteristics of the Roma. The majority of these news items present the Roma in a negative light.

• So-called "expert estimates" of the number of Roma and the demographic development of this minority provoke negative reactions from the majority population, against both the Roma as a whole and individual Roma.

• Negative stereotypes and prejudice against the Roma have been present throughout their history, and have been determined by the political and socio-economic status of the societies the Roma lived in; they have always been more or less merely tolerated, and the object of harsh repression. These negative stereotypes and prejudices show few signs of changing.

ENDNOTES

1. Agency report, commentary, report, interview, editorial report, reader's letter, etc.
2. Individual Roma, Roma organizations, Roma political parties, different state bodies, independent experts, journalists, foreign entities, etc.
3. In each report it was usually possible to identify more than one source.
4. Above all foreign embassies, EU bodies, and various international organizations or governments of other countries.
5. For example, information about the abuse of social benefits during floods affecting the country, or the introduction of visa obligations for Slovaks as a consequence of Roma migration, etc.
6. They usually strive to present the problem from the Roma viewpoint as well.

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PETER PULIŠ

FORMS AND SCOPE OF ROMA DISCRIMINATION IN SLOVAKIA

Summary: This chapter charts and analyzes discrimination against the Roma in Slovakia from 1989 to 2002 as recorded by local and foreign organizations monitoring human rights in the country. It also addresses anti-discrimination legislation, especially in the context of European integration, and the structure of the Roma rights protection system in Slovakia. The author identifies the biggest problem as the scope of discrimination against the Roma in Slovakia, noting that the Roma experience discrimination every day and in almost all areas of public life. The chapter summarizes the advice of international organizations on the matter.

Key words: anti-discrimination law, direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, Slovak Constitution, public defender of rights, social security and social services, labor market, education system, health care, housing, police, the penal justice system, shops and services.

INTRODUCTION

The Roma in Slovakia face discrimination in almost every area of their lives. This discrimination must be viewed in the broader context of the problems that the Roma encounter on a daily basis, and which do not necessarily represent violations of their rights or discriminatory practices. These may consist of problems inherited from the communist regime, problems associated with the political, social and economic transformation after 1989, and finally problems caused by the social and economic situation of the Roma in Slovakia. In considering the form and content of discrimination against the Roma, we also have to examine Slovak legislation as it pertains to the protection of the Roma's rights.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF ROMA PROTECTION IN SLOVAKIA

CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK OF THE PROTECTION OF RIGHTS

According to the Slovak Constitution, members of the Roma community are guaranteed equality, but on the other hand they are granted some rights and freedoms that are peculiar to national minorities and ethnic groups and do not pertain to the majority population.

An important part of the Constitution in relation to human rights protection is its definition of the position occupied within the Slovak body of law by international treaties ratified by the Slovak Republic. The wholesale amendment of the Constitution that took place in 2001 added § 2 to Article 1 with the following wording: "Slovakia acknowledges and adheres to the general rules of international law, international treaties by which it is bound, and its other international obligations." The wording of Article 7, § 5 anchors

the precedence of all international treaties on human rights and fundamental freedoms "over the [Slovak] law". However, the only treaties that enjoy such a position are those that were ratified and promulgated after July 1, 2001, i.e. after the amendment of the Constitution took effect (see the chapter *The Legal and Institutional Framework of the Roma Issue* in this book).

ABSENCE OF ANTIDISCRIMINATORY LEGISLATION

The cabinet submitted a bill to the Slovak parliament in June 2002 on enforcing the country's equal treatment policy (also known as the anti-discrimination law). The aim of this bill was to define terms such as "discrimination", "indirect discrimination", "harassment", and "wrongful sanction", as until that point there had been no integrated legislation dealing with discrimination in Slovakia. The Slovak body of law contained only isolated regulations dealing with discrimination, some of which[1] (especially the Slovak Constitution) prohibit discrimination, but without defining discrimination and other related practices. The bill was at the same time based on EU legislation, and according to one of its authors, Jana Kviečinská, "it would be a significant addition to and simplification of Slovak legislation when it comes to combating discrimination" (*Antidiskriminačný zákon a Slovensko*, 2002).

Unfortunately, despite considerable support from EU representatives, NGOs specializing in human rights protection, and representatives of groups that are threatened by discrimination, the bill was not passed. At the suggestion of current Interior Minister Vladimír Palko, a member of the conservative Christian Democrats (KDH) party of the ruling coalition, it was not even included on the parliamentary agenda of debate. Palko, at the

time an MP, argued that such a law was not necessary for Slovakia to be admitted to the EU, and said that the bill contained "a puzzling notion – sexual orientation", which in his opinion was not a suitable topic of debate for parliament. The failure of the anti-discrimination bill could also have been due to the fact that it was submitted to parliament shortly before the September 2002 elections, and at a time when the KDH was trying to adopt a more fundamentalist and traditional Christian mantle (*Antidiskriminačný zákon a Slovensko*, 2002).

THE CONCEPTS OF DIRECT AND INDIRECT DISCRIMINATION

In connection with the definition of racial discrimination, we should note the definition stated in Article 1 of the *International Convention on Removal of all Forms of Racial Discrimination*, dated December 21, 1965: "The expression racial discrimination in this Convention means any differentiation, exclusion, restriction or favoring based on race, complexion, social origin, nationality or ethnic origin, the aim or consequence of which is to restrain or limit the acknowledgement, enjoyment, or implementation of human rights and fundamental freedoms on the basis of equality in political, economic, social, cultural, or any other field of public life."

The *International Convention on Removal of All Forms of Racial Discrimination* points especially to the public sphere, naming the state as the potential violator of the principle of equality.

As it was mentioned above above, Slovak legislation uses the notion of discrimination in places, but lacks a precise definition of the term that could be used in all spheres of public life. So far, discrimination in its broadest sense has been possible to define only on the

Box 1
The terms "direct" and "indirect" discrimination

§2 Definition of terms

(1) Discrimination can be divided into direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment, and wrongful sanction, including instigation of or incitement to discrimination.

(2) Direct discrimination is treatment based on any of the reasons stipulated in § 3 that is less favorable than it is, was, or would have been in a comparable situation with another physical or legal entity.

(3) Indirect discrimination is a seemingly neutral regulation, criterion, or habit on the basis of which any of the reasons stipulated in § 3 disadvantage a physical or legal entity. This does not hold true if such a regulation, criterion or habit can be justified by the pursuit of a legitimate goal, and if the means of achieving this goal are appropriate and necessary.

basis of a violation of the Constitution or of the treaties ratified by Slovakia[2], which stipulate the framework and scope of the human, civic, political, social, economic, and cultural rights of Slovak citizens. The bill on equal treatment was an attempt to introduce explicit definitions in this area.

PUBLIC DEFENDER OF RIGHTS (OMBUDSMAN)

The office of the public defender of rights was established in Slovakia on the basis of the Public Defender of Rights Law approved on December 4, 2001. According to Article 151a of the Slovak Constitution, the public defender of rights is "an independent body that in the scope and manner ordained by the law shall participate in the protection of the fundamental rights and freedoms of physical and legal entities in the proceedings, decisions, or inactivity of public administration bodies, if their proceedings, decisions, or inactivity is inconsistent with the country's legal order or with the principles of a democratic state and the rule of law."

Based on the Public Defender of Rights Law, the power of this office pertains to:
a) public administration bodies;
b) regional autonomy bodies;
c) legal and physical entities that according to a separate law decide the rights and obligations of legal and physical entities in the civil service.

According to Section 11, anyone can turn to the public defender "who believes that by the activity or inactivity of a public administration body his/her fundamental rights and freedoms were violated". Section 13 stipulates: "the public defender of rights acts on the basis of a motion by a physical or legal entity or at his/her own initiative."

After the public defender of rights reviews the complaint, he informs the person who submitted it of how the bodies in question should have handled his/her request, files a motion with the appropriate prosecutor in accordance with a separate law, notifies the appropriate state administration body that a violation has occurred, and asks for a remedy.

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST
THE ROMA IN SLOVAKIA

As we mentioned at the beginning, given the criticism and recommendations from international human rights organizations, we can say that the Roma in Slovakia face discrimination in all areas of their lives.

It is very difficult to quantify the exact extent of discrimination against the Roma in Slovakia in different areas. There are several problems in doing so:
- the low legal awareness of those Roma who are the most frequent targets of discrimination;
- the absence of organizations monitoring rights violations of the Roma in Slovakia in a purposeful and thorough manner over the long term;
- failure of the monitoring that exists to cover all of Slovakia.

In trying to describe and analyze the scope and forms of discrimination against the Roma, our conclusions can be supported by the monitoring of international and domestic NGOs and the findings of non-representative sociological research carried out among Roma respondents.

Detailed and long-term monitoring of Roma rights violations has been performed by the Office for the Legal Protection of Ethnic Minorities in Košice. So far, the Office has published three White Books describing individual cases when the rights of Roma inhabitants of Slovakia were violated, and what measures were taken to remedy the situation.

To get a better idea of the scope and forms of discrimination against the Roma in Slovakia, we will divide the topic according to the areas of public life where discrimination is the most distinct – social welfare and social services, the labor market, the education system, the health care system, housing, the police and the penal justice system, and shops and services.

SOCIAL WELFARE AND
SOCIAL SERVICES

In July 2000, an amendment of the 1998 *Social Welfare Law* took effect, tightening the conditions of eligibility for welfare benefits, or rather dividing welfare recipients into two categories: those whose material need (i.e. poverty) was due to objective reasons beyond their control, and those who had "subjective reasons" for their condition, meaning they were to some extent responsible for it or able to alleviate it themselves.

People applying for welfare benefits who were in poverty due to objective reasons, and who were registered at their local labor bureau as unemployed, were entitled to receive a welfare benefit equaling 100% of the "subsistence minimum", or the monthly sum of money that the state had decided was sufficient to afford the bare essentials of life. However, applicants in material need due to subjective reasons were only to receive benefits equaling 50% of the subsistence minimum. The following reasons qualified someone as having subjective reasons for being poor: being fired from one's job for violating the "working discipline", usually a set of rules on comportment, attendance etc.; quitting one's job voluntarily; if unemployed, refusing to cooperate with the labor bureau; and being registered as unemployed with the labor bureau for more than two years. While these changes were being put into effect, the InfoRoma foundation launched a project to provide economic and legal help to the Roma in the villages of Hermanovce and Chmiňany (both in Prešov district in east Slovakia). In the course of the project, it submitted 29 complaints to the Regional Authority in Prešov for suspected incorrect application of

the law (incorrect evaluations of the reasons for material need); 17 cases pertained to the Roma from Hermanovce, and 12 to the Roma from Chmiňany. The Regional Authority acknowledged 12 complaints from Hermanovce and 11 from Chmiňany as justified. In these cases, the material need of Roma welfare benefits applicants had been incorrectly evaluated as due to subjective reasons, meaning that 23 Roma citizens in poverty had had their welfare benefits unjustly cut in half.

The management of the Social Affairs Department of the District Authority in Prešov objected that they had acted in accordance with the orders of their superiors from the Regional Authority in Prešov, i.e. the same body that later evaluated the same decisions as wrongful (*Biela kniha*, 2000, p. 75, 76).

THE LABOR MARKET

The level of unemployment is very high among the Roma (see the chapter *The Roma and the Labor Market* in this book), and in many Roma settlements it is 100%. The main causes of this runaway Roma unemployment are the low qualifications of the Roma, the lack of job opportunities, the poor work ethic of the Roma, and the disinterest of employers in hiring Roma. According to the Roma, they are massively discriminated against on the labor market, especially by private employers who refuse to employ them without giving a reason, or after claiming that the Roma are unable to adapt to the work regime, or that they have had a bad experience with other Roma (*EU Accession Monitoring…*, 2000, p. 33).

Almost every study that so far has focused in one way or another on the economic situation of the Roma has presented this issue as significant. In the *Roma Human Development Project* conducted in November 2001 by the Institute for Public Affairs (IVO) in coopera-

tion with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP),[3] 84.5% of respondents who were having difficulties finding a job mentioned the fact that they were Roma (i.e. ethnic discrimination) as one of the three main reasons they had been unsuccessful.

The standard EU regulation protecting people from racial discrimination on the labor market is to a large extent based on experience with the protection of the equality of men and women on the job and in their access to employment. Besides direct and indirect discrimination, EU legislation also prohibits harassment, i.e. unwanted actions related to one's racial or ethnic origin that offend one's dignity or create an intimidating, hostile, derogatory, or offensive environment. It is also forbidden to instruct a third party to discriminate against someone.

Another very important EU directive is Directive No. 2000/43/EC which describes the term victimization – actions that do not have a direct connection to the racial or ethnic origin of the victim, but which are a reaction to a complaint or process begun with the aim of achieving conformity with the equal treatment principle.

An important means of protecting the complaint process is "shifting the burden of proof". Now, if the plaintiff can prove that events occurred, according to which it can be judged that he/she was directly or indirectly discriminated against, it is up to the defendant to refute the claim and bring evidence to prove that he/she did not violate the equal treatment principle (*Máme brát diskriminaci vážně?*, 2001, p. 23).

EDUCATION SYSTEM

The Roma are granted equal access to elementary, secondary, and university educa-

tion. In reality, however, few Roma children attend nursery school, and Roma elementary school students progress far more slowly than their non-Roma classmates. Few Roma children attend secondary school, and the number of Roma university students is minute (*EU Accession Monitoring…*, 2000, p. 25) (for details see the chapter *The Roma in the Education System and the Alternative Education Projects* in this book).

The Office of Legal Protection for Ethnic Minorities in Slovakia considers the biggest problem of the education system to be its assimilation policy towards the Roma. Many obligations from international treaties ratified by Slovakia are also ignored, especially the 1990 *New Europe Charter*, known also as the "Paris Charter", which obliges ethnic minority rights to be incorporated into education legislation. Regarding the Roma, not a single obligation in the *Agreement on the Rights of the Child* (particularly articles 24 to 27 on the right to be educated in one's mother tongue) has been included in education legislation (*The White Book,* 2000, p. 24). Implementation of this international obligation in Slovakia has been held up by several practical and technical problems, such as the need to re-codify the Roma language, the need for a standard textbook of Romany, the need to prepare teachers to teach in Romany, and the fact that many Roma children do not speak Romany, while many Roma parents do not want their children to study in Romany (see the chapter *The Roma Language and its Standardization* in this book). In the IVO/UNDP research (2001), 87.5% of respondents rejected the possibility that Roma teachers would teach Romany as a way of ensuring that Roma children have equal access to education.

One of the most frequent problems in relation to ensuring the equal access of Roma children to education and equal treatment in the education process is the practice of concentrating Roma children in certain schools, or sending them to "special schools" intended for mentally handicapped children, despite the fact that the Roma children are not mentally handicapped. Another problem is the social backwardness of Roma children, which the Slovak education system is not capable of handling. Due to this backwardness, Roma children cannot be integrated into the elementary and secondary school system to allow them to obtain the qualifications needed to be successful on the labor market (for details see the chapter *The Roma in the Education System and the Alternative Education Projects* in this book).

The placing of children in "special schools" is done on the basis of psychological tests carried out in the pre-school years. These tests focus on the abilities of children who are about to enroll in school. However, they do not take into account the different cultural and language background of Roma children. As a side effect of the practice of dispatching healthy Roma children to schools for the mentally retarded is that they are automatically disqualified from secondary education and tertiary educational and specialized institutions (*EU Accession Monitoring…*, 2000, p. 26). In the 2001 IVO/UNDP research, 18.3% of respondents stated that they had a child who attended a special school, while 12.3% said their child had been placed in the special school automatically. Here it should be noted that 91.8% of Roma respondents rejected the possibility of having their children put in separate classes in "mixed" schools, while 94.2% rejected specialized schools only for the Roma, as ways of ensuring equal access to education. The preferences of Roma parents clearly highlight the urgent need to integrate Roma pupils into the standard education process and to abandon all attempts to segregate them.

Peter Puliš

HEALTH CARE

The health of the majority of the Roma in Slovakia is worse than that of the non-Roma population (for details see the chapter *Roma Health* in this book). Experts warn that contagious diseases are more prevalent among the Roma than among the majority population. The incidence of diseases caused by insufficient hygiene, poverty, and external factors (hunger, inadequate housing, etc.) makes the situation particularly serious.

Information on the health care situation shows insufficient communication between the Roma and the staff of medical establishments, and insufficient understanding of the importance of prevention among certain groups of Roma. All available data suggest that the health status of the Roma is worsening. This is especially true of large and isolated Roma settlements (*EU Accession Monitoring…*, 2000, p. 28).

A common discriminatory practice in the hospitals of eastern Slovakia is keeping separate rooms for Roma and non-Roma patients.

HOUSING

The human right to adequate housing flows mainly from the right to preserve one's human dignity, which is equal to a ban on derogatory treatment, to ensure which the non-discrimination principle must be upheld. If our aim is to achieve the goal of adequate housing, this right must be implemented gradually; however, if our aim is to take action, we must do so immediately.

The right to adequate housing[4] should apply without regard to race, complexion, sex, language, religion, political and other conviction, national or social origin, property, lineage or other status.

In applying this right, the following has to be taken into account:
- the legal security of the housing, including legal protection from forced eviction and different forms of harassment;
- access to services and infrastructure (esp. services and installations required for health, security, comfort, and nourishment);
- the price of the housing, and the relationship of the cost of the housing to income, as well as protection from exorbitant rents and sudden increases in rent;
- habitability – whether the housing provides sufficient room and protection from the cold, wet, rain, heat, wind, and other health-endangering factors;[5]
- the availability of the housing – whether it can be accessed by handicapped people, senior citizens, children, disabled people, victims of natural disasters, people living in at-risk areas;
- appropriate location – whether it allows access to work, health services, schools, nursery schools and other social establishments;
- the cultural adequacy of the housing – the way the houses are built and the materials used should allow cultural identity and housing diversity to be expressed (*Máme brát diskriminaci vážně?*, 2001).

The issue of adequate housing is one of the most serious Roma-related issues in Slovakia (see the chapter *Roma Housing* in this book). The poor housing conditions of the Roma in Slovakia are the result of the poor economic situation and insolvency of the Roma, as well as the inability of some Roma families to solve their housing problems. Another contributing factor is the inconsistent approach of officials to the distribution of flats, the destruction of flats (by tenants), and the non payment of rent and fees for housing services (*EU Accession Monitoring...*, 2000, p. 30).

THE POLICE AND
THE PENAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Slovak law does not permit the discriminatory treatment of ethnic minority members in the penal justice system. However, according to the European Roma Rights Center, the Roma in Slovakia are treated differently in this system when they are in the position of defendants.

According to research conducted in 2000 at the order of the Justice Minister, which has some problems with methodology, 40% of all prisoners in Slovak penitentiaries are Roma. In 2002, the Justice Ministry web page (www.justice.gov.sk) published data on people convicted of crimes for the first half of 2002. The release of this information came as a shock to many human rights activists. Acting at the request of the People Against Racism civic initiative, two experts from the Section of Human Rights and Minorities at the Government Office explained why it is illegal to publish the ethnicity of convicts. "Affinity to a nation or ethnic group is based on the free decision of every individual, as guaranteed by the Slovak Constitution (Article 12, § 3). Based on this fact, statistical data on ethnicity related to convicts may not be published, as the ethnicity of convicts is determined by the police or prison wardens. Keeping and publishing such records represents a violation of the principle of equality, it is discriminatory, and is capable of inciting racial hatred. That is why it is contrary to Article 12, § 1 and 2 of the Constitution, and to several international treaties by which Slovakia is bound (*Ministerstvo spravodlivosti porušuje*..., 2002).

Roma leaders often allege that:
- the courts punish the Roma more harshly than the non-Roma;
- the Roma are remanded in custody for longer and more often than the non-Roma;
- courts inflict higher penalties on the Roma and do not use suspended sentences as often as they do with the non-Roma.

These allegations cannot be statistically proven, as ethnic crime data cannot be kept. Certain disproportions, such as harsher penalties in the case of less serious criminal offences like petty theft, could be related to whether the defendant is a repeat offender; however, this too is just speculation.

SHOPS AND SERVICES

According to the *International Convention on the Removal of All Forms of Racial Discrimination*, which Slovakia acceded to in 1974, everyone must have equal access to public premises and establishments, regardless of race, complexion, or ethnic origin.

According to Section 6, § 1 of the 1992 *Consumer Protection Law*, the vendor must not act dishonestly or discriminate against the consumer in any way whatsoever; he must not refuse to sell to the consumer any products exhibited or otherwise prepared for sale, or deny any service which he is capable of providing; he must not link the provision of service with the purchase of other products or the provision of other services, unless this limitation be common in commercial relations and related to all products.

In reality, the Roma face many limitations on their access to both public and private services (bars, restaurants, cinemas, sport stadiums, discos, hotels), especially in eastern Slovakia. One problem is the growing acceptance of this situation by both the Roma and by the majority population. The state fails to punish such practices, or to initiate legislation that would allow it to take more effective action (*EU Accession Monitoring*..., 2000, p. 30).

Peter Puliš

DISCRIMINATION IN THE MEDIA

The results of media monitoring from 2000 to 2002 suggest that the Slovak media share responsibility for the negative attitude the majority population takes to the Roma (see the chapter *The Depiction of the Roma in the Media* in this book). The media frequently reproduce the latent racism that is deeply rooted in the attitudes of the majority population, and help disseminate racial hatred and intolerance.

The 2000 to 2001 report published by the Roma Rights Center notes that journalists from major Slovak media are passive, and neither attack nor deny the stereotyped opinions and prejudices of the majority population regarding the Roma. On the contrary, their choice of topics and ways of presenting them tend to strengthen these prejudices. One of the reasons for this could be the fact that non-Roma journalists are ignorant of the Roma community.

The report sees the following negative trends in the approach taken by non-Roma journalists to the Roma:
- the media publish information on Roma crime supplied by regional police stations without trying to gain more information from the Roma community;
- the media analyze the way the Roma live in segregated settlements from the viewpoint of a financially secure person;
- most journalists fail to understand the opinions of the Roma, who may be angry in a given situation; this failure to understand is then reflected in the image of the Roma that the report presents to the public;
- newspapers frequently publish photographs of Roma in emotional and extreme situations;
- in acquiring information about the Roma from their non-Roma neighbors, journalists usually ask suggestive questions such as: "What problems do you have with the Roma in your village?";

- the media are more interested in negative stories (crime, migration, conflict) than in neutral or positive topics (*Human Rights Report*..., 2001).

SUBSIDIES FOR CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

The Office of Legal Protection for Ethnic Minorities in its 2000 *White Book* also dealt with discrimination related to the funding of Roma cultural projects. Subsidies for Roma cultural activities are continually being cut (see the chapter *The Cultural Activities of the Roma* in this book). The question is whether this involves discrimination; state subsidies could be falling because of a decline in the quality of projects presented, the lack of projects, etc.

CONCLUSION

The cases of suspected or confirmed discrimination against the Roma in Slovakia that have been publicized so far confirm the alarming fact that the Roma face discrimination on a daily basis and in almost all areas of public life. Many of these cases also indicate that the main reason for discrimination against the Roma is ignorance of rights and legal obligations, both on the part of the victims and the sources of discrimination. Also, the institutions that should act in alleged discrimination cases are not active enough, and do not enforce Slovakia's international human rights obligations strictly enough. The most effective way of removing this problem is educating people to enforce their own rights and observe the rights of others, whether these involve human, civic, cultural, or national rights, or the rights of at-risk groups. Education must also reach the employees of institutions where discrimination is suspected of occurring.

Transparency in human rights protection and in evaluations of discrimination is not enough. Slovakia lacks quality anti-discrimination legislation backed by the existing European legislative framework for rights protection and combating discrimination.

Slovakia also lacks specialized organizations whose activities and monitoring would cover the entire country and all at risk groups. An effective system of protection against discrimination requires the existence of bodies responsible for enforcing equal treatment regardless of racial or ethnic origin; special agencies seem the most efficient in this regard (*Máme brát diskriminaci vážně?*, 2001). These can be designed as bodies providing legal advice to plaintiffs at court, having in some cases independent investigative powers[6], or as investigative and decision-making bodies whose verdicts can be reviewed by a court[7]. Whichever model is chosen, the independent body fulfills yet another important task – it is established to protect the victims of discrimination, to provide legal advice, and to offset the disadvantage of the victim's lower economic and social position. This is the only way to build a self-regulatory legal protection system for Slovak citizens without always having to handle discrimination issues with the help and intervention of international organizations.

ENDNOTES

1. The legal order of the Slovak Republic includes the principle of equality and a ban on discrimination, as well as an equal treatment policy in several legal regulations of varying legal strength. Besides the general and special provisions on equality included in the Slovak Constitution (e.g. Article 12, Article 13, § 3, Article 20 Sect. 1, Article 30 Sect. 3 and 4, Article 34 Sect. 3), which prohibit discrimination in regard to all subjects of the law and their fundamental rights and freedoms, we can also find provisions on equality and non-discrimination

in several generally binding legal regulations having the effect of law (for example: Section 13 and Section 41, § 8 of the *Act No. 311/2001 Coll. – The Labor Code as amended by the Act No. 165/2002 Coll.*; Section 1, § 4 of the *Act No. 313/2001 Coll. on the Public Service as amended*; Section 6 of the *Act No. 634/1992 Coll. on Consumer Protection as amended*; Section 4 of the *Act No. 277/1994 Coll., on Health Care as amended*; and so on). The regulations of the Penal Code punishing discrimination and displays of intolerance represent a special group (e.g. Section 196, §§ 2 and 3, Section 198, Section 198a, Section 219, § 1 and 2 letter f) of the *Act No. 140/161 Coll. On the Penal Code as amended*) (*Dôvodová správa...*, 2002).

2. Slovakia's obligations towards the European Union represent a special category of the country's international obligations. EU regulations are not binding on Slovakia, as it is not yet a member of the union. However, the Slovak body of law must be adapted to the EU's body of law in the extent and according to the schedule fixed in the association agreement. Obligations pertaining to human rights are of particular importance, as according to the Copenhagen criteria, fulfillment of these criteria is required of all states that aim to become union members, and one of the conditions of union membership is observance of human rights and the protection of minorities, which is the main purpose of any anti-discrimination legislation. In this regard, Slovakia must adhere above all to Article 13 of the *Agreement on the Establishment of the European Community* (AEEC), which obliges the EU Council to adopt the necessary measures to prevent discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnic affiliation, religion, age, disability, or sexual orientation. Following the AEEC Article 13, in 2000 two exceptionally important legal regulations of the European Community were adopted amending the existing community law in terms of equal treatment: The EU Council's Directive No. 43/2000 dated June 29, 2000, which defines the policy of equal treatment regardless of people's racial or ethnic origin, and Directive No. 78/2000 dated November 27, 2000, which fixes the general framework for equal treatment at work and gainful activity. Both of these directives include some institutions that Slovak legislation so far does not know. Considering the ongoing approximation

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process, the inclusion of such institutions into the Slovak body of law would be a sensible step. They include especially the institutions of individual forms of discrimination and their definitions valid for a wide range of social relationships except exclusively private relationships; and then the extension of reasons on the basis of which discrimination is prohibited (especially disability and sexual orientation). There is also the institution of reversed burden of proof when deciding on whether discrimination did or did not take place (*Dôvodová správa...*, 2002).

3. This research was conducted on a sample of 1,030 Roma respondents.

4. Article 11, § 1 and Article 2, § 2 of the *Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Pact.*

5. It has also been recommended that the Principles of Healthy Housing by the World Health Organization be considered, which identified housing as one of the basic factors influencing the formation of disease.

6. For example, the Commission for Racial Equality in Great Britain.

7. For example, the Director of Equality Investigations in Ireland.

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THE ROMA AS THE TARGET OF POLITICAL EXTREMISM

Summary: This chapter discusses the treatment of Slovakia's Roma by extremist groups. It examines how the concept of "race" is used in public discourse, and describes racism and the extremist scene in Slovakia. The author also evaluates the legal tools the police and courts have to combat racism, describes police bodies that specialize in fighting racism, and documents racially motivated attacks against the Roma.

Key words: political extremism, race, racist prejudice/stereotype, skinheads, ideology, fascism, national socialism, racially motivated violence, the Center for Monitoring Racism and Xenophobia.

INTRODUCTION

The changes that took place in Central and Eastern Europe after 1989 confirmed that extremism is an inevitable accompaniment of a young democratic society. Democracies that try to eliminate this phenomenon by radical methods themselves face the threat that they will turn into dictatorships where there is only one possible correct opinion (Chmelík, 2001).

The Roma are the general and the main target of Slovak racist extremists. Thanks to an extremely wide social gulf between the Roma and the majority population (see the chapter *Relationship of the Majority Population to the Roma* in this book), the symp-toms of which are seen in all social groups, displays of racism are also common among the police. The Slovak public condemns radical extremist activities, and sociological research confirms a high level of social distance between the majority and the skinheads. At the same time, however, due to the complexity of problems connected with the Roma, a large part of the public supports repressive solutions to the Roma issue.

Slovakia has seen a significant improvement in legislation combating racism and within police bodies over the past two years. The establishment of the Center for Monitoring Racism and Xenophobia in 2001 was also a significant step.

However, right-wing extremist groups are not only present in Slovakia, but their activities are becoming increasingly visible. The country has 14 well-established and active groups that unite roughly 5,000 members and supporters of racial extremism (*Rasistický extrémizmus na Slovensku*, 2002). These rightist extremists no longer represent separate and isolated groups. Especially over the last three years, they have begun building infrastructure and links abroad with an unseen intensity. The most dangerous are those groups with connections to international organizations, and of course the Slovak divisions of the "white power" movement.

None of the current parliamentary parties can be labeled clearly extremist. With the Slovak

National Party (SNS) and the Real Slovak National Party (PSNS) failing to win representation in the parliament in the last elections (September 2002), there is now no openly nationalist party in the Slovak legislature for the first time since the founding of independent Slovakia in 1993.

DEFINITION OF POLITICAL EXTREMISM

POLITICAL EXTREMISM AND DEMOCRATIC SOCIETIES

Political extremism is defined as "a deviation from the generally valid and currently accepted standards. It takes the form of a political platform with strong elements of hatred and the rejection of compromise. It manifests itself in a radical or militant rejection of state policy or constitutional regulations, and does not shun the use of violence" (Chmelík, 2001, p. 8).

According to police methodology, one of the characteristic features of extremism is its ideological motivation, and in most cases the absence of material motives. This means that the extremist does not want to get rich, but on the contrary is willing to make sacrifices to achieve his goals. This separates extremism from other crimes based on egoism, satisfying one's needs, profit, or acquiring power and influence (*Metodika odhaľovania...*, 2001).

There are basically three stages in the development of extremism as a social phenomenon.

The first stage is characterized by the rule of the instincts, by irrationality or the total absence of planning in one's actions. It is often based on the feeling of being threatened. Socially, racially, ethnically, or nationally motivated acts are directed against people which the aggressor perceives as representing a group he views in a negative way. Of course, this only holds true for those forms of extremism that choose violence as their primary vehicle.

The second stage is characterized by a systematic attempt to achieve a partial or far-reaching change in the social and political system, by association in groups, and by planning and promotion of these endeavors. These activities are typified by a high degree of demagogy, disrespect for the law, disparagement of humanitarian principles, and a preference for radical methods.

The third stage – the peak of all extremist attitudes – is the formation of a political party, which on the basis of a clearly formulated ideology and electoral platforms pursues the goal of seizing political power and changing the political system. Extremist political platforms tend to offer quick solutions to complicated social issues, which are received positively by people who lack more profound knowledge of the issues at stake (Chlpík, 2002).

SOURCES OF SYMPATHY FOR EXTREMISM

The sources of sympathy for and participation in political extremism are usually connected with a feeling of failure and the lack of opportunities to achieve success and attention in society in the standard way. Extremist supporters may also be characterized by feelings of uncertainty and a need to belong, may be in the process of maturing and finding their position in society, and may tend towards a refusal to conform to systems of thinking and behavior, as well as towards radical attitudes and decisions; they may lack experience, and almost always are unable to imagine the consequences of their acts. Ex-

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tremist movements provide such young people with a chance to satisfy their needs and solve their present social situations (Chmelík, 2001).

RACISM

The basic ideological content of right wing or racially motivated extremism is racism. The basic display of this form of racism is the conviction of the exceptional nature and dominance of the "white" ethnic group.

THE CONCEPT OF RACE IN THE SOCIAL DISCOURSE

Improper Use of the Term Originating from Biological Anthropology

The term "race" comes from biological anthropology, and while the field of biology rejects the term, it has become a part of daily political and social discourse. The concept of race has become a "social construct" that is used to justify privileges for one's own group and the deprivation of a strange group. The perception of certain biological differences between people leads to these differences being perceived as constant and inherited from generation to generation. This view relieves the members of society from responsibility for the social, cultural, and political marginalization of other groups (Šmausová, 1999).

Racist Thinking, Racist Prejudices and Stereotypes

Thinking that interprets the differences between people as biological or racial differences – i.e. constant and inherent – tends to be pronounced at times when certain groups of people feel the need to explain some in-

justice in the social order. Races were never perceived in this social discourse as "horizontal" and culturally differentiated groups of people, but as a hierarchy at the top of which was the "white race" (Šmausová, 1999). Race at the same time belongs to what are known as endogamous groups, i.e. attributed and mostly inherent types of collective. This form of collectivity directly influences the nature of the concept of race. A race as a collective differs from collectives united by a common interest, which can be simply formed and dissolved, and in which membership requires a rational calculation of one's interest; in themselves, interest groups do not evoke any great passion or debate.

The reason why people who interpret differences between others as consisting in biological differences between races are called racists, with clearly negative overtones and implying a violation of the standards of democratic society, is that races represent discriminatory social constructs. Judging others not according to their individual qualities but according to certain "racial" characteristics implies racial prejudice or stereotyping (Šmausová, 1999).

ACTORS OF POLITICAL EXTREMISM

THE SKINHEAD MOVEMENT

History of the Movement

This movement first appeared as a specific group in Great Britain in the early 1970s. It arose in reaction to certain social events, such as a rise in unemployment, immigration, and so on. An important impulse in the formation of the movement was the social tension created by the influx of a cheap labor force that pushed young British people out of the labor market.

Most of the members of the movement back then were young workers. It was they who created the typical identifying characteristics of the group that are known to this day. The skinhead uniform consisted of heavy boots, jeans, and a bomber jacket. To appear even more different and to show their radicalism to the outside world, the skinheads shaved their heads.

What the members of the movement had in common were a similar position in society, an awareness of "nation", hatred of foreigners, and the use of "armed struggle" to express their beliefs.

The Skinhead movement has since then become a political movement. Its objective is to create a fascist state similar to the German state in the Second World War. The movement also sympathizes with German national socialism, which during the interwar period brought about a radical turnaround in Germany as well as major social change.

In future, the movement will probably take the form of an armed and propaganda-based fight to achieve change in the political system. This armed struggle will include "organized and spontaneous terrorism to threaten or liquidate all enemies" (*Správna cesta*, 1998).

Ideology of the Movement

Since it was formed, the aim of the movement has been to "retain and preserve a national and racial society using a radical social order". The means of establishing this order is fascism,[1] and the goal is national socialism.[2]

The skinheads regard the differences between the races as too great for individual races to be combined without negative consequences. According to the skinheads, the most visible differences between the races are physical (complexion, skeletal and skull structure, shape of the nose, mouth, and eyes), on the basis of which each individual can be grouped into a race. According to this ideology, differences also exist in the intellect. While the European and Asian races are considered intellectually similar, the African race is said to be at a lower stage of evolution. The white race has made an "overwhelming contribution to the development of humanity". According to the skinheads, the other races have just taken the fruits of the whites' efforts.

The skinheads consider multiculturalism a dangerous experiment, as a result of which the white race may "lose a large part of its creative energy". "The preservation of racial purity is one of the most important means for the preservation of the entire culture and civilization as an independent whole."

The struggle against the weakening of the white race, and for the elimination of all foreign influences, unites the Skinhead movement in individual countries and makes it a global movement. The common basis of all racial extremist movements in Slovakia is racism directed towards the Roma and the Jews, and resistance against the leftists. The movement's opinions have slowly split, and today three main opinion groups can be detected among the skinheads (*Rasistický extrémizmus na Slovensku*, 2002).

The Nationalists
- inclination to the ideas and ideologies of the Slovak Wartime State as the Slovak version of fascism, attempts to rehabilitate the officials of the Jozef Tiso – led WWII government;
- strong aversion to ethnic Hungarians, whom the nationalists accuse of trying to secede and take with them the southern part of Slovakia;

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- anti-Semitism absent or not as apparent as in other movements;
- stress on moral and Christian values which they claim are being destroyed by modern culture;
- rejection of violence as a way to solve problems;
- rejection of Hitler and Nazism;
- attempts to enter the political scene;

The Neo-Nazis
- national socialism as the social model;
- admiration for the German Third Reich, its ideology, army, and representatives (Adolph Hitler, Rudolph Hess, etc.);
- radical anti-Semitism – all world institutions are said to be controlled by Jews, who are the primary cause of the majority of problems in the world, from economic troubles to wars, environmental pollution and drugs;
- defense of Adolph Hitler and his policy against the Jews during WWII;
- denial of the Holocaust and downplaying its extent and meaning;
- proposal to solve the Roma issue by gathering the Roma in labor/concentration camps or deporting them to India;
- claims that the Aryan race represents the highest stage of evolution and was chosen to rule others;
- strong influence of Nordic mythology and symbolism – Runes, Nordic gods, Odin.

White Power
- white race is the highest evolutionary stage;
- ideal social establishment is national socialism;
- Europe should become a racially pure territory;
- purification of Europe and North America of other races and cultures;
- achieving this through RAHOWA (Racial Holy War), which will clear the areas inhabited by the white race of members of other races;

- rejection of cultures with other than white and European origin;
- aversion to homosexuals;
- claim that all world governments are controlled by the Jews ("Zionist Occupational Government", or ZOG);
- besides other races, attacks targeting "white trash" – anarchists, drug addicts, homeless people, criminals;
- denial of Holocaust.

The Roma in the Ideology of the Skinhead Movement

In Central and Eastern Europe, the skinheads use the Roma as a substitute for immigrants of African, Indian, or Asian origin, who are the main targets of racial attacks in Western Europe, but who are not as numerous in Slovakia as in Western Europe or the US.

According to the "historical explanation" of the skinheads, the Roma ("Gypsies") traditionally lived from horse and cattle theft, burglary, and murder. At the time of the Turkish raids in the 1500s, they were used by the Turks as spies. "The first written mentions of Gypsies in our region come from books of executions, where punishments and the course of trials were recorded, and from documents regulating the movement and the rights of Gypsies."

"History as written by the skinheads" further states that during the communist regime, the Gypsies transferred their parasitic way of life from trailers into apartment buildings. Common theft and burglary were replaced by another form of subsistence – the legal abuse of all the advantages that society provided to working people. After 1989, to everyone's dismay, we discovered that during the 40 years of communism, the original number of Roma had gone through the roof – in the Czech Republic 250,000 Roma were counted

Box 1
Solution of the "Gypsy problem"

The Skinhead movement offers a simple solution to the "Gypsy problem": "either they adapt quickly (within two generations at the most), or they will be eliminated (gradually or all at once)." (*Správna cesta*, 1998)

"The most acceptable solution would be to get rid of all people who are unable to adapt (i.e. those who don't work). However, there is yet another problem – how to prevent this ethnic group from mixing with our Aryan population. Considering the intellectual backwardness (on the verge of retardation) of the majority of this ethnic group, it is extremely dangerous for us to mix our advanced race with them. This mixing must be prevented by strict segregation and the isolation of as large a part of this ethnic group as possible (ghettos and concentration camps)." (*Správna cesta*, 1998)

instead of the original 500, and in the Slovak Republic a total of 400,000 instead of the original 30,000 to 80,000 (*Správna cesta*, 1998).

The Skinhead movement explains the "backwardness of the Gypsies" as the result of conditions within the ethnic group. They consider the lack of upbringing in the family and the transfer of "the parasitic way of life" to the younger generations as the main problem.

The Means of Propaganda

Propaganda is a very efficient tool in the skinheads' struggle for "purity of nation and race". Besides the traditional leaflets, "skinzines" (skinhead magazines), and translations of fascist books, another very effective means is music. The movement is able to recruit further members and supporters especially thanks to the enormous influence of music on young people (*Správna cesta*, 1998).

The exchange of information among right wing extremists takes place in the form of "zines" or "skinzines". The first magazines of this kind appeared in Slovakia in the early 1990s.

The main content of these magazines is historical documents from the WWII period, biographies of representatives of the Slovak State and the German Reich, local newspaper clippings on Roma crime, reports from concerts, and interviews with members of different bands. There are also translations of foreign texts pertaining to racism, anti-Semitic articles and reflections.

Besides the zines, which focus primarily on the racist skinhead community, there are also newspapers and journals of nationalist parties and groups that attempt to address the public. Their content includes a similar degree of racism and xenophobia as the skinzines of the Skinhead movement. They regularly include articles against the Roma and the Jews. The weekly *Zmena* (Change) has the highest circulation; its authors have been prosecuted for their anti-Semitic statements. The circulation and number of readers of other journals, such as the *Nový Slovák*, *Slovenská Pravda*, *Slovenské novinky*, *Slovák* and *Národná jednota*, are slowly declin-

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ing, and they are either falling out of print or are published irregularly.

The most important means of spreading propaganda at the moment is the Internet. Since 2000, the Internet has offered an increasing number of websites with racist, neo-Nazi, anti-Semitic and fascist content. The trend of publishing information in electronic form instead of in journals and zines is also growing. These websites are usually located on servers offering free storage space both in Slovakia and abroad.

If such a website is uploaded onto a server located in Slovakia, the administrators, after being advised of the illegal content, are obliged to remove it. Problems occur if the website whose contents are contrary to Slovak law is located on a server abroad, especially in America, where the publishing of such material is not a crime. Some of the American servers were even established with the aim of hosting the websites of right wing extremist and racist groups[4] (*Rasistický extrémizmus na Slovensku*, 2002).

Structure of the Skinhead Movement in Slovakia

The Skinhead movement has existed in Slovakia since 1990. In 1993, the first serious cases of racially motivated violence were recorded. At that time the first zines also began to appear – usually slapdash photocopies produced by amateurs offering poor graphics and content.

However, the right wing extremists have come a long way from the beginning of the 1990s. At that time, the groups were more or less haphazard, without a permanent structure or character, their members presenting themselves in public as hooligans, ruffians, and in recent years also as violent criminals

and murderers. Various foreign groups were able to penetrate Slovakia and establish themselves on the Slovak extremist scene, especially after 1995.

As for ideology, the individual groups initially focused on the heritage and ideology of the fascist Slovak State from WWII. The glorification of people like Alexander Mach, Andrej Hlinka and Jozef Tiso was one of the most typical features of Slovak ultra-right skinheads.

As for its opinions, the movement wallows in the ideology of the extreme right. From 1991 to 1993, several significant, but more accidental than purposeful meetings took place with foreign neo-Nazi activists developing the ideology of the movement.

The list of racist and extremist organizations may suggest that they are legion. However, many of the names on the list are groups comprising only several individuals. Some may no longer be active, or they may have joined other groups.

In 2001, the activities of these groups changed – the right wing extremist groups became more radical, and are now striving to acquire more members (*Výročná správa...*, 2002).

The following racist extremist groups claiming to belong to the Skinhead movement are active[5] in Slovakia at the moment:
1. Slovakia Hammer Skinheads[6],
2. Blood & Honour[7] Division Slovakia[8] (Bratislava),
3. Blood & Honour Nitra[9],
4. Blood & Honour Tatras Slovakia[10] (Prešov),
5. Blood & Honour Engerau[11] (Bratislava – Petržalka),
6. Blood & Honour Cassovia[12] (Košice),
7. Combat 18[13],

8. SS AG Slovakia – Security Service Action Group Slovakia[14],
9. Biela slovenská jednota[15] (White Slovak Unity),
10. Rytieri Slnečného klanu (Knights of the Clan of Sun),
11. Bojovníci keltského kríža[16] (Warriors of the Celtic Cross),
12. Celtic Tradition[17],
13. Christian Separatist Church Society Slovensko[18] (*Rasistický extrémizmus na Slovensku*, 2002).

Structure of Skinhead Movement Supporters

The age of members and supporters of the Skinhead movement is usually between 14 and 26 years. The age and social structure of extremist group supporters is closely connected with the activity they perform. People committing violent crimes on the streets are usually from this younger age group.

Most future skinheads get to know the ideology of extreme racism and neo-Nazism through skinzines and music. Young supporters aged 14 to 16 are called "baby-skins" or "kinder-skins". They prove their loyalty to the movement and its ideas through violent attacks, sieg-heiling in public, and wearing the signs and symbols of neo-Nazism.

The second group are the 17 to 21-year-olds. This is the group creating publications, skinzines and websites, while most of the members of bands also come from this age group. A number of brutal attacks against minority members or even murders were committed by people from this age group.[19] After their social position changes (university studies, permanent jobs, etc.) many of them terminate their activity in the movement.

Those who remain represent the last and the smallest category, the 22 to 30-year-olds. They organize concerts, distribute press and

Table 1
Estimated number of people in extremist groups in Slovakia (as of December 31, 2001)

	Total number as of December 31, 2001	Of the total:			
		extremists with right wing inclination		extremists with left wing inclination	
		active*	supporters**	active*	supporters**
Bratislava region	1,465	125	790	50	500
Trnava region	118	6	110	0	2
Trenčín region	115	20	50	15	30
Nitra region	115	15	100	0	0
Žilina region	385	50	300	5	30
Banská Bystrica region	355	30	300	5	20
Prešov region	203	150	52	1	0
Košice region	650	80	300	20	250
Slovakia total	**3,406**	**476**	**2,002**	**96**	**832**

Notes:
* The police consider active extremists to be people who:
   • take part in organizing events with mass participation;
   • publish or write articles for extremist journals or websites;
   • meet in extremist groups (or found them) and promulgate the ideology of the group.
   As for right wing extremists, active members also include those who have committed a racially motivated crime, and who are organized in some right wing extremist group.
** Supporters are those who by thought or appearance support some extremist movements or groups; however, their activities are usually limited to visiting live performances by extremist bands and reading extremist literature; they are not organized in any of the existing groups.
Source: Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic, 2001.

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music media, and build international contacts and local divisions of organizations. They stop committing violent crimes, and become more the ideological and organizational leaders of the young. However, they represent only a small percentage of the total number of neo-Nazis, because most quit the movement aged around 25.

As for the social composition of extremist group supporters, the majority are secondary school students (mostly of secondary trade schools), while some are university students and others are unemployed. Nevertheless, the people who produce and distribute items promoting racial, national, religious and other hatreds often include people with jobs or entrepreneurs.

The skinhead scene is a male affair. Women are rather scarce, and are often on the scene simply because their partners engage in the movement. Despite that, the "skingirls" or "renees" play an important role and sometimes even form women's groups (in Slovakia, for example, the WAU (The White Rose). They stress the need to create women's units to match the men's groups (*Rasistický extrémizmus na Slovensku*, 2002).

The total number of people estimated to be engaged in extremist groups in Slovakia, according to police sources, was 3,406 as of December 31, 2001. Of these, 476 people were classified as active right wing extremists, and 2,002 as supporters (*Výročná správa...*, 2002).

REGISTERED CIVIC ASSOCIATIONS WITH LINKS TO EXTREMIST GROUPS

The rightist extremist scene is usually identified with the Skinhead movement. However, groups whose ideology is based on neo-

fascist and fascist ideas and traditions represent a much greater risk to society. They unite people who on the outside live a normal, civic-minded life; they are also usually older than skinheads.

The majority of rightist groups are not registered as movements or associations. Given this fact, it is not possible to estimate the precise number of such groups and their members in Slovakia (Chlpík, 2001).

SLOVENSKÁ POSPOLITOSŤ (SLOVAK COMMUNITY)

This Trnava-based organization maintains close contacts with a similar organization in the Czech Republic – the Movement of National Unification – and is part of the international neo-fascist organization called the International Third Position (ITP). It promotes the heritage of the fascist Second World War state and its representatives.

Nové slobodné Slovensko (New Free Slovakia)

This is an extremist nationalist civic association with links to the extreme right and national socialist groups. There is nothing in its statutes that is illegal, and thus the association was registered at the Interior Ministry on July 27, 2000. The group organizes marches and public meetings and issues leaflets, whose content is usually on the verge of being illegal. Their website includes links to all significant right wing extremist groups in Europe.

Slovenská národná mládež (SNM – Slovak National Youth)

The youth movement of the Real Slovak National Party. Originally a youth organiza-

tion of the Slovak National Party (SNS), after the SNS split, most of the youth joined the Real SNS. It is a place where politically engaged skinheads can join the political party structure. In some towns, the entire structure of the SNM division is built on skinheads, who are acquiring more room and support to develop their activities (*Rasistický extrémizmus na Slovensku*, 2002).

POLITICAL PARTIES

The Slovak National Party (SNS)

A nationalist party that cannot be assessed as clearly racial and extremist, although its representatives have addressed many clearly racist comments to the Roma, the Hungarians, and other minorities (*Rasistický extrémizmus na Slovensku*, 2002).

The Real Slovak National Party (PSNS)

This party was formed after a group led by Ján Slota of the SNS split from the mother party. Its attitudes and statements are even more radical than those of the SNS. Many comments by chairman Slota have been assessed as racist, and were widely published in the media. The party maintains good contacts with similar nationalist parties abroad.

Other Political Parties

Besides the two parties mentioned above, there are also several small nationalist political parties (Slovak Folk Party – Movement for the Liberation of Slovakia, The People's Party, The Slovak People's Party, The Slovak National Unity) that are often represented by only a small group of people or even just one person. Most spring into action on the anniversary of the declaration of the Slovak WWII State – March 14 – and organize commemorative activities at the graves of its representatives, maintain contacts with groups of emigrants abroad, and issue their own press. All are based on strong nationalism, populism, and advocacy of the Slovak WWII State.

CRIMES BY EXTREMIST MOVEMENT MEMBERS IN SLOVAKIA

The police use the terms "action showing extremist characteristics" and "racially motivated crimes". An action showing extremist characteristics is any illegal act committed by a person:

a) who is a member of an extremist group;
b) who is in the file of people suspected of committing extremist crimes, or is in the record of extremist groups;
c) who commits a crime whose motive was racial, national, or another form of hatred;
d) who attacks a foreigner or a member of a national or ethnic minority without an apparent reason (*Nariadenie MV č. 27/2001*).

The definition of extremist crime is very broad and subjective, and was intended to be so. It was designed to motivate people to report all incidents of any significance related to displays of extremism. If such incidents are reported, it could help the police acquire an objective view of this type of crime in the future. Solving this type of criminal offences is also expected to build confidence among the victims and the public in the police. At the moment, many such cases are not even reported. Complaints originally filed as racially motivated also get changed in the course of an investigation to crimes without such a motivation (Chlpík, 2002).

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RACIALLY MOTIVATED CRIMES ACCORDING TO POLICE RECORDS

The year 2002 (see Table 2) saw the largest number of crimes motivated by racial, national or other type of hatred in the last six years, continuing a growth trend begun in 2001 (this type of crime was not statistically recorded before 1997). One of the reasons for the increase is that since 2001, increased attention has been paid to extremism, and the Slovak police have adopted some aggressive countermeasures.

From January 1, 2000 to December 31, 2000 the Slovak police recorded 35 racially motivated crimes, of which 25 (71.4%) were solved. Among racially motivated crimes, there were no murders, 5 cases of assault (3 of them solved), 19 cases of violence against an individual or a group of people (14 solved) and 11 other racially motivated crimes (8 solved).

The most frequent victims of these crimes were Roma. Of the 35 cases, the Roma were victims in 7. However, xenophobia and racial hatred does not focus only on the Roma, but also on other anthropologically distinct races; police records documented 12 attacks on African or Asian types of people.

A total of 33 people were accused of criminal conduct, most of them originating from the majority population. The skinheads naturally played an important role in these statistics, although in some cases their membership in the movement could not be clearly determined on the basis of police records. The police can have a major impact on events organized and prepared by interest groups that can result in racial conflicts. On the other hand, it is very hard to eliminate racial attacks by individuals or small groups of skinheads. These incidents usually take place in public (e.g. on public transport), they are sudden, and the attack is brief. It is equally difficult for people who witness these attacks to influence or prevent them. The fear of being attacked themselves, the complicated legal position of a person joining such a conflict,

Table 2
Crimes motivated by racial, national or other types of hatred committed from 1997 to November 31, 2002

racially motivated crimes in Slovakia	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	January 1 – November 31 2002
reported crimes	19	21	21	35	40	102
solved crimes	8	15	15	25	23	69
solved crimes/reported crimes, in %	42.1	71.4	71.4	71.4	57.5	67.6
prosecuted and investigated perpetrators of racially motivated crimes						
repeat offenders	4	1	5	7	3	3
minors – up to 15 years	0	3	2	3	2	9
juveniles – up to 18 years	15	12	6	9	5	14
territorial distribution of reported racially motivated crimes						
Bratislava region	5	3	2	14	10	23
Trnava region	0	1	1	4	2	5
Trenčín region	3	1	1	3	12	13
Nitra region	0	1	3	3	1	7
Žilina region	3	0	1	1	2	20
Banská Bystrica region	3	8	5	4	1	8
Prešov region	1	3	2	0	2	10
Košice region	4	4	2	4	9	8

Note: The data on number of crimes motivated by racial, national or other types of hatred for the year 2002 do not include data from the military and railway police, or data from the penitentiary and justice police forces. Because of that, the data for individual regions are not identical with the total number of such offences committed across Slovakia.
Source: Police forces of the Slovak Republic.

and the fear of revenge prevent people from giving testimony regarding such attacks, and the skinheads naturally take advantage of this situation. They feel relatively safe in this environment, and they are confident of their anonymity and the absence of recourse.

In 2000, such racially motivated crimes were increasingly committed by minors (5) and juveniles (7). It is bewildering that more than half of the solved racially motivated crimes were committed by children younger than 18. The skinheads usually recruit new mem-

Box 2
The case of Ivan Mako

On April 27, 2000 the district court in Banská Bystrica convicted a skinhead of racially motivated assault. The crime had taken place on June 11, 1996 in Banská Bystrica on Sloboda Square, where three men spit on, and then verbally and physically attacked a young Roma. The police managed to identify only one of the attackers after the incident. He was finally sentenced to two years in prison, with the sentence suspended for a period of three years (*Rasové útoky na Slovensku*, 2001).

The trial was rather complicated in the case. At the beginning, the judge disregarded the fact that this was a racially motivated assault. The plaintiff thus had to prove that the perpetrators had attacked him deliberately because he was a Roma, i.e. because he belonged to a different ethnic group. The district court judge, however, was of the opinion that the Roma belong to the same race as the perpetrators.

According to the victim's attorney, Ján Hrubala, the court should have taken into account that the skinheads attacked someone just because they were different, which had to be regarded as an aggravating circumstance.

In later proceedings, the attorney presented proof that the perpetrator was a member of the Skinhead movement, and that his con-

tact address could be found in magazines of the movement – skinzines.

The then-chairman of the Human Rights Committee of the Slovak parliament noted: "It does not matter whether according to some obsolete racial theory the Roma belong to the Indo-European or other race. The gist of the problem is more that in this case, which certainly is not an isolated one in Slovakia, even if there was no racial motive, then it was at least a case in which the fundamental human rights guaranteed by the Slovak Constitution were violated."

Because the judge refused to take the racial motive into account, in ensuing proceedings the attorney had to argue that international law treats the concepts of race, nation and ethnic group as closely related, and thus when it comes to protection, we cannot distinguish between an ethnic group and a race. Hrubala backed up his argument with a decision by the European Human Rights Court in Strasbourg, and by the fact that according to the Slovak Constitution, international conventions to which Slovakia is a signatory take precedence over Slovak law.

In the end, the court found the defendant guilty of racially motivated assault, and handed down the aforementioned suspended sentence (*Biela kniha*, 2000).

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bers from this age group. The other age groups had only a minimal share of this type of crime. We must realize, though, that the data pertaining to minor and juvenile perpetrators are by no means complete. The real numbers are presumably far higher, as this type of violence is quite frequent and it is present in latent form at elementary and secondary schools or in dormitories (*Bezpečnostná situácia…*, 2001).

Most racially motivated attacks in 2000 were conducted against people (11 cases) and against the property of the people attacked (3 cases). In 10 cases the harm was not physical – the offences involved insults due to racial or ethnic origin. There were also four cases of mass dissemination of racial hatred, in two cases through mass communication facilities. The life of the victims was jeopardized in three cases – one case of mortal injury and two cases of grievous bodily harm. The two cases of grievous bodily harm involved a long-term disability of more than 42 days or permanent consequences; nine of the cases of battery recorded involved a short-term disability of less than 42 days.

In eight cases in 2000, the physical attacks were committed by a group of perpetrators, in eight cases physical violence was used, in eight cases the attack was just verbal, and in five cases written. In one case the attacker was armed, using a baseball bat (*Bezpečnostná situácia…*, 2001).

It should be noted that in 2000, the occurrence of racially motivated violence in Slovakia was 133% higher than in 1999, which may be due to the fact that the victims reported the crimes more frequently.

From January 1, 2001 until December 31, 2001, the Crime Statistics System registered 40 crimes motivated by racial, national, and other forms of hatred. Of that number, 23

(58%) cases were solved; in four cases the perpetrator had been intoxicated, while three offences were committed by repeat offenders, two by minors, and five by juveniles. The most crimes were committed in the Trenčín region (12) and the fewest in the Nitra and Banská Bystrica regions (1 in each). As for the structure of racially motivated crime in 2001, the most (17) offences were crimes of supporting and promoting movements suppressing the rights and freedoms of citizens pursuant to Section 261 of the Penal Code.

From January 1, 2002 through December 31, 2002, police statistics registered 102 crimes motivated by racial, national, or other forms of hatred; 69 (68%) were solved. Of the 102 crimes, nine were committed under the influence of alcohol, 10 were committed by minors, and 14 by juveniles. The most crimes were committed in the region of Bratislava (23), the least in the region of Trnava (5).

CENTER FOR MONITORING RACISM AND XENOPHOBIA

On April 1, 2001, a decree by the Interior Ministry on combating extremism and on the establishment of the Center for Monitoring Racism and Xenophobia took effect. The purpose of the Center is:
- to set tasks for the Interior Ministry's units and the police forces in protecting life, health, safety, and property while preventing, detecting, and documenting crimes committed by extremists;
- to make police activity more effective in preventing, detecting and documenting crimes committed by extremists, and to ensure a more effective fight against racism and xenophobia,
- to establish a Center for Monitoring Racism and Xenophobia working at the Interior Ministry and among police forces, and supervised by the Department of Violent

Crime of the Criminal Police Branch of the Criminal and Financial Police Administration of the Police Forces Directorate of the Slovak Republic.

The Center for Monitoring Racism and Xenophobia keeps records of extremist crime, of people suspected of committing extremist crimes, and of extremist groups. Its tasks include:
• monitoring and evaluating the current situation, and analyzing the most serious cases and trends in extremist activity in order to anticipate the future direction of extremism and to take measures to suppress it;
• to control and methodologically guide activities in maintaining records at criminal police units at the district and regional levels;
• collecting, recording and analyzing information on displays of racism and xenophobia referred to it by Interior Ministry units;
• providing objective, reliable, and comparable data at the ministry level on displays of racism and xenophobia for the Slovakia-wide Center for Monitoring Racism and Xenophobia established and operated by the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family;
• preparing an annual report on extremism in Slovakia;
• receiving information from people and legal entities concerning displays of extremism, and in cases where the law may have been broken, submitting the cases to the responsible bodies;
• providing information (pursuant to the 2000 Law on Freedom of Access to Information) on the security situation in relation to extremism.

To strengthen dialogue between the Interior Ministry and NGOs, in December 2000 a group was launched for solving racially motivated crimes consisting of police headquarters staff and activists of third sector organizations (Citizen and Democracy, Open Society Foundation, People Against Racism, Zebra – Association of Afro-Slovak Families). This working group evaluates the possibilities of solving current problems, considers preventive measures, and handles the further education of police in the sphere of human rights. The third sector activists engage mainly in programs to suppress racism and xenophobia.

THE COMMITTEE FOR RACIALLY MOTIVATED CRIME

The Committee for Racially Motivated Crime was established by police headquarters in 2002. Its members include representatives of the Interior Ministry, the department of computer crime, the department of organized crime, investigators, the prosecution, and NGOs dealing with racism (People Against Racism, Citizen and Democracy, League of Human Rights Activists, Zebra, and the Open Society Foundation).

The committee sits once every three months and examines the procedures used by the police to combat racism, the Interior Ministry's approach to combating racism, and the investigation of current cases of racially motivated crime.

CONCLUSION

The Roma are the principal target of political violence in Slovakia. The activity of individual groups and organizations finds legitimacy among the Slovak population thanks to its high degree of social distance from the Roma.

Whether it is a question of verbal or physical attacks or the dissemination of racist information, the Roma as a whole feel endan-

gered by this political extremism. The point is not how many Roma have been the victims of racially motivated attacks. Their feeling of imperilment is based on the fact that people have been and are attacked merely because they were Roma. As a consequence, all Roma justly feel exposed.

The attempts of extremist groups to acquire political legitimacy and reach their goals pose a significant threat for the future. This is why repressive units of the state must take a zero tolerance approach towards all extremist practices; they must also carefully investigate all suspicions and strictly enforce the law when a racially motivated crime is committed.

The fact that extremist groups recruit their members among minors makes it necessary to introduce and intensify activities and programs in the first grade of elementary schools.

ENDNOTES

1. The Skinhead movement understands fascism as a political doctrine that rejects the current democratic order. It achieves unity and stability by concentrating all power in just one party. It enforces a system based on personal responsibility for an assigned task. It relies on the principle of a leader ("führer") who has absolute power and absolute responsibility.
2. According to the skinheads, national socialism protects the entire society, supports social justice, and protects national interests from foreign influence.
3. The movement sees the race theory of Adolph Hitler, who considered all races besides the German Nordic to be inferior, as an obsolete and impracticable display of racial idealism.
4. For example, www.odinsrage.com, where the Slovak Whitefront's website is also stored.
5. Activity means that over the past year, some activity by people belonging to these groups

was registered. The term "activity" includes the group's activity being mentioned in the press or on websites with extremist content. It must be noted that some people are active in several groups at the same time.

6. Together with Blood & Honour Division Slovakia, they began to dominate the Slovak extremist scene in 1995. In that year, the Slovak division of one of the most radical American neo-Nazi organizations was founded with the aim of unifying the ideology of the Skinhead movement. This organization brought to Slovakia a national socialist line that is directly linked to the national socialist heritage of the 1939 to 1945 Nazi-puppet Slovak State. Besides their primary interest – putting an end to Hungarian secessionism – they also glorify Rudolf Hess, whom they perceive as the peacemaker among the Aryan nations, and worship Adolph Hitler as the great man of nations, spread anti-Semitism, etc. They first demand a personal contact, and only later enable membership. They feel they are the elite of the elite, preferring education, awareness, and drill. Their organization is a strictly military one, and new members are accepted only after a thorough two to three-year trial period. Their main obligation is adherence to the *Code of Honor of the Hammer Skins.* Their symbol is two crossed hammers in a circle with the Slovak double-cross in the foreground. The SHS also exist at present, but they are more or less a distribution service, although they occasionally organize concerts and parties. They publish the *White Victory* journal. "Orientation: Against the racial impurity of our Earth, i.e. the Gypsies, the Niggers, and the Asians flooding the white world, the lies about WWII and especially the holocaust, sexual deviants (pedophiles, homosexuals) and their organizations, pornography, abortions (abortion = destruction of the white race), white trash: communists, anarchists, criminals, and traitors of the white race, the destruction of nature, the penetration of multicultural dirt into our country (what will the MTV and *Bravo* generation grow up to be), capitalism, and communism. The aim: national socialist society united under one leader. No capitalism, communism and exploitation of people. No

exploitation of nature – the racially pure and strong society can only exist in a clean environment."

7. In 1987, Ian Stuart Donaldson founded the neo-Nazi organization Blood & Honour (B&H). Since then this organization has expanded, with divisions in France, Germany, the US, Slovenia, Serbia, Belgium, Australia, and since April 20, 1994, also in Slovakia. Since Donaldson died in a car crash together with another Nottingham skinhead on September 24, 1993, B&H has become for many ultra-right skinheads a worshipped cult, and Stuart has been hailed as one of the greatest fighters ever for the white race. The Blood & Honour international neo-Nazi organization has several divisions in Slovakia. The aim of the organization is to unite both the active and so far passive members of the Skinhead movement. The political platform they use to do so is national socialism and the heritage of Adolph Hitler. The Slovak B&H divisions maintain close contacts with their foreign colleagues. Those in eastern Slovakia in particular have organized several events and concerts, where bands not just from neighboring countries such as the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Germany, but also from Scandinavia have performed.

8. Blood & Honour – Division Slovakia, the first Slovak division of this international organization, was founded in Bratislava on April 20, 1994. It published a well-prepared magazine named *Krv a česť* (Blood and Honor) with a color cover, and the journal *Zin* 1939.

9. Blood & Honour Nitra is particularly active in distributing musical media and press. It organized concerts of the Nitra-based groups Biely Odpor (White Resistance) and Front 18, and several concerts with international participants. It also mediated the printing of materials for foreign B&H groups.

10. Blood & Honour – Tatras was founded in October 1996, and focuses especially on the eastern part of Slovakia. This division covers white power bands such as DMS (Doctor Martens Skinhead) from Prešov and Edelweiss from Poprad. They publish the magazine *Krv a česť Tatry*.

11. B&H Engerau (Petržalka) was founded in 1997. It publishes the magazine *Biela Myseľ* (White Mind). It maintains contacts with the other B&H

divisions world-wide, and distributes materials such as CDs, MCs, clothes, and zines. Its activities have been investigated by the police.

12. This Košice division maintains very close contacts with foreign groups. Its website has been registered as www.bloodandhonour.org and all information on the site is in English. It includes links to all world B&H divisions. One of its leaders is at the moment being prosecuted for promoting fascism through the press. This division organized a memorable concert by Ian Stuart Donaldson on September 29, 2001 with the participation of the US group Max Resist, one of the best-known neo-Nazi bands of its kind in the US.

13. So far, no activity has been noted with this group, which is still in the preparation phase. It is a potentially dangerous group determined to attack targets such as civic activists, journalists, politicians, and other people who support anti-Nazi activities in Slovakia. "Combat 18 is a militant division of Blood and Honour that was founded by a great man and martyr, Ian Stuart Donaldson, who was killed in a car crash on September 24, 1993. Since then, the Combat 18 division was founded in Slovakia. At present the organization consists of a small number of people who, however, are very rigorous in their approach, and very determined to reach their aims. We are determined to fight the dirt of this world and stop the machinery of returning communism and the Z.O.G. system. We know that our journey has just begun, and that it will be a long and bloody journey full of defeats and victories, but we are ready to face it. Our strength, determination, and faith in the ideals of national socialism are growing from day to day. Stand up against the present world system and join the white revolution!" (*Die Treue*, http://www.geocities.com/spolecnost2002/treue/1-12.html)

14. The Slovak division of SS Action Group (Security Systems Action Group – SS AG), which was founded in the US, was formed in 1996, and it too professes national socialism, and places itself among those organizations combating "non-White" crime and the present government system. Recruitment of members: two- to three-month trial period, written, phone and direct contact, and payment of a membership fee. SS AG, which operates

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mainly in central Slovakia, also has outposts in Bratislava and Košice.

15. Biela Slovenská Jednota (White Slovak Unity) was founded in 1996 in eastern Slovakia. The aim of the organization is to unify the nationalist and national socialist stream within the Skinhead movement, and to achieve cooperation between the two groups. It was established as a distribution center for journals, different nationalist and anti-Semitic publications, music lyrics, T-shirts with neo-Nazi symbols and inscriptions, etc. It launched activities in June 1997, when it started publishing and distributing two journals (*Ostara* and *Hlas Slobody*).

16. Bojovníci keltského kríža (Warriors of the Celtic Cross) operate in the northwest Slovakia region of Žilina, and their main activity is organizing Skinhead movement meetings – so called White Power parties. These parties are also attended by skinheads from the Czech Republic.

17. This group operates in eastern Slovakia and has a close relationship to B&H Cassovia. It has organized most of the major concerts by White Power bands in Slovakia, such as the concert by the British Brutal Attack (October 17, 1998), Razor's Edge (March 1999) or Intimidation One and Max Resist from the US in Papradno in western Slovakia. It does not present itself in public in any way.

18. The person behind this organization tried to found an outpost of the religious-neo-Nazi organization Aryan Nations in Slovakia. After some disagreements, an outpost of a similar religious extremist organization – the Christian Separatist Church Slovakia – was established. Its founder established contact with the leaders of this organization during his stay in the US, and was even granted the title of priest, which he then began using in communications on Internet forums. He is one of the main ideologists of the racist-rightist movement in Slovakia, has translated different foreign publications dealing with the denial of the Holocaust for the Whitefront Internet server, and strives to have his texts published in the mainstream media.

19. July 1995 – Mário Goral, a young Roma, was burned to death by skinheads; the two main perpetrators were 16 and 18 years old. August 2000 – Anna Balážová, a mother of eight, was battered to death in her own home; the attackers were 20 and 21 years old.

20. *Law No. 140/1961 Coll,. the Penal Code, as amended.*

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ROMA POPULATION DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

Summary: This chapter deals with the basic demographic and geographic characteristics of the Roma, describing sources of data on the Roma population and the various ways of defining this group. It follows the evolution of Roma headcounts in Slovakia, and focuses on the spatial distribution of the Roma, across both Europe and Slovakia, also examining Roma demographic behavior (according to sex, age, marital status, as well as birth rate and mortality). The chapter concludes with an outline of the expected evolution of Roma demographic trends and of the number of Roma in Slovakia.

Key words: birth rate, fertility, mortality, number of children, distribution, age structure, Roma headcount, population estimate, census, prognosis, concentration, statistical count.

INTRODUCTION

Since the reproductive behavior of the Roma in Slovakia is quite different from that of the country's non-Roma population, demographic issues play an important role in each deeper study of the Roma. Given that the reproductive behavior of the Roma breeds myths that can cause serious political and social problems, it is very important that we have a reliable demographic picture of the Roma.

Most problems and misunderstandings arise from the fact that the terms "ethnic group" and "nation" are used interchangeably, without sufficient understanding of the difference between them. People's ethnic and national affinities differ in both content and in how they are determined. In some cases, the ethnic and national structure of a population may be similar, while in other cases they can be very different. These categories must be handled very carefully, particularly when it comes to the Roma. While members of other ethnic groups in Slovakia usually claim a nationality based on their ethnic affinity, most ethnic Roma do not claim Roma nationality, but instead say they are Hungarian or Slovak. The number of Roma officially recorded as living in Slovakia thus differs significantly from the number of Slovak citizens of Roma nationality, meaning that data on citizens of Romany nationality do not provide a true picture of the Roma ethnic group.

At present, there are no official statistics on the ethnic structure of the Slovak population. This type of data stopped being collected after 1989, for human rights reasons. These ethnic data have been replaced with data on the national structure of the population. Unlike the ethnic affinity category, which is defined according to set criteria and is independent of the will of the respondent (i.e. the person is usually classified on the basis of another person's judgment), national data are derived from the nationality that respondents voluntarily claim. We can thus only estimate demographic indicators for the Roma ethnic group.

This chapter focuses on the demographic characteristics of the Roma. On the basis of demographic statistics and analysis, the authors sketch the reproductive behavior of the Roma ethnic group, estimating the size and structure of the Roma population living in Slovakia today, and suggesting how it might develop in the near future.

Variations between regions, and between groups of Roma according to their level of integration into mainstream society, are significant factors influencing the demographic characteristics of the Roma. Not only are there considerable differences in Roma population sizes and reproductive behavior among individual regions of Slovakia, but there are also major demographic differences between integrated and non-integrated Roma. Unfortunately, there is not enough data to permit a precise analysis of these differences.

This chapter seeks to fill gaps in the data on the Roma. The demographic, socio-economic, and frequently also the human position of many Roma is very different from that of the rest of the Slovak population today. In some cases, the Roma are unable to improve their lot without the help of others. This help, however, must be based on accurate information to be fully effective. Exact data on the number of Roma living in Slovakia may also help counter unprofessional and misleading population estimates. Therefore, this chapter also contains a projection of the number of Roma living in Slovakia at present, and in the next 20 years.

SOURCES OF DEMOGRAPHIC DATA ON THE ROMA

Painting a demographic picture of the Roma is a demanding task, particularly given the lack of reliable data and the diversity of sources from which it must be gleaned. Information that is available may differ according to how the examined population group is defined (Roma ethnic group, Roma nation, Roma dependent on social benefits, Roma living in isolated settlements), or how the information is gathered (i.e. whether it is supplied by the people concerned themselves, or whether it is submitted by another person).

In the past, several official sources of data on the Roma, based on ethnicity, were used. In all of these data collations, individuals were marked as Roma by other people, usually those administering or gathering the information. Today, such data are regarded as contrary to human rights, and thus are no longer collected. These former "ethnic" data did not even cover the entire Roma population, usually omitting those Roma who lived integrated into the majority society; some data also focused only on one part of the Roma population (adults, nomadic Roma, problematic Roma etc.). Nevertheless, the ethnic data describe the Roma population more precisely and in more detail than data on citizens of Roma nationality. The main problem of the ethnic data is that the information is older and does not cover the latest demographic trends among the Roma.

To determine the number of Roma living in Slovakia since the eighteenth century until now, all kinds of data have been used, ranging from listings, registrations, population censuses and estimates. The main source of data underpinning demographic analyses of the Roma has been the results of the 1970, 1980, 1991 and 2001 population censuses. Concerning the demographic characteristics of the Roma, the most useful data are those from the 1970 and 1980 censuses, which, as far as methodology is concerned (subjective assessments by another person), covered the

majority of the Roma ethnic group in Slovakia. In the 1991 and 2001 censuses, people could decide for themselves which nationality they claimed. Only a small number of Roma claimed Roma nationality (about 25% of the total estimated size of the ethnic group). As mostly entire families were involved, the data offer a reasonably reliable picture of population structure (Finková, 2000).

ROMA NUMBERS IN SLOVAKIA

SLOVAK ROMA IN THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT

Exact data on the number of Roma living in individual European countries and in Europe as a whole are not available. The number of Roma has been measured in official censuses in many countries, particularly in Eastern Europe; these data, however, do not match the estimates of experts.

On the basis of several estimates, 6.5 to 8.5 million Roma lived in Europe in the 1990s. The highest number, in both absolute terms and relative to the rest of the country's population, lived in Central and Eastern Europe, creating a region with significant Romany minority concentrations from the Czech Republic and Slovakia through Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria to Macedonia and Greece.

The second, and less significant, area of Roma concentration is southwestern Europe, i.e. Spain and France (see Map 1 for details).

The best-known estimate of Roma numbers was the "Liégeois" projection presented by the Council of Europe in the mid-1990s.

The reliability of these figures is doubtful, given the inflated number for Slovakia, and the fact the Roma count for the Czech Republic does not correspond with the estimates of

Table 1

European countries with the highest Roma populations (estimate)

Country	Roma population	Share of total population (%)
Romania	1,800,000 – 2,500,000	9.5
Bulgaria	700,000 – 800,000	8.9
Spain	650,000 – 800,000	1.9
Hungary	550,000 – 600,000	5.6
Slovakia	480,000 – 520,000	9.4
Ukraine	300,000 – 500,000	0.8
France	280,000 – 340,000	0.5
Czech Republic	250,000 – 300,000	2.7
Macedonia	220,000 – 260,000	12.3

Source: Liégeois, 1995.

Czech experts. The Liégeois figures may thus in general have been overestimated, and the number of Roma living in Europe actually at the lower limit of this projection or below. Nevertheless, Slovakia ranks among those countries with the highest number, and especially the highest population share, of Roma in Europe, along with Macedonia, Romania and Bulgaria.

Comparisons can be made at the international level based on the results of population censuses performed in different countries at the beginning of the 1990s (Kalibová, 1998). Data from these sources indicate that the number and share of the Roma population is from three to eight times lower than the Liégeois figure, and are obviously underestimated. Both sources, however, identified the same countries as having the highest Roma counts in Europe. The Slovak and the Czech findings lead experts to the conclusion that the actual number of Roma lies somewhere between the results of the two data sources, and closer to the Liégeois estimate than to the census data.

The census results allow us to compare the age structure of the Roma population in individual countries. Among European countries, the highest ratio of children in the Roma population is in Slovakia (43.3%), followed

by Romania (41.4%). It can be assumed that the growth of these populations is more dynamic than in other European countries (see Graphs 1 through 6).

DEVELOPMENT OF ROMA HEADCOUNTS IN SLOVAKIA

The first written record of the Roma in Slovakia dates from 1322, and comes from the Spišská Nová Ves region in the east of the country (Horváthová, 1964). However, the first data on the number of Roma living on the territory of modern-day Slovakia were not recorded until the end of the eighteenth century. According to these listings, about 20,000 Roma lived on Slovak soil at that time (Jurová, 1995). In 1893, a Hungarian listing stated about 40,000 Roma (Džambazovič, 2001).

During the first Czechoslovak Republic (1918 to 1939), the 1921 and 1930 population censuses provided data on the number of Roma. In these censuses, the existence of a Roma nationality was admitted, with the basis for its determination being the Roma language. The Roma count in Slovakia was 8,035 according to the 1921 census, and 31,188 according to the 1930 census. However, these censuses came nowhere near the number of Roma determined in the 19th century census. During the interwar period, an Interior Ministry record listed 26,000 Roma aged 14 and older in 1927, and by 1938 contained data on more than 60,000 adults.

After the Second World War, several listings of Roma were performed. Some 84,000 Roma were recorded in Slovakia in the first post-war listing in 1947. In 1959, a listing of nomadic people, concerning the Roma in particular, was performed, finding a total of 27,933 people (Jurová, 1995). From 1966 to 1968, a national Roma listing run by the Sta-

tistical Office was compiled, registering more than 160,000 Roma living in Slovakia. Listings by the Interior Ministry and Statistical Office in the 1950s and 1960s were followed by registrations by municipalities, which were used as the basis for the payment of welfare benefits and the provision of social care for the Roma. In 1989, according to these records, 253,943 Roma lived in Slovakia. Although these data traced the Roma population more exactly than previous counts, they covered only those receiving some form of welfare benefits. The last nation-wide information on the number of Roma was the estimate of the Slovak Statistical Office from 1990, which claimed 263,337 Roma (5% of the overall Slovak population).

Between 1945 and 1990, the state did not officially admit the existence of a Roma nation. In state censuses, the Roma had to claim another nationality from among the "legitimate" nationalities, or register under the "other" category. In the censuses of 1970 and 1980, however, data on the Roma ethnic group were gathered and then evaluated separately. Special methods were used, with census officers deciding whether respondents were members of the Roma ethnic group on the basis of municipal records and their own judgments, the "criteria" for these judgments being way of life, living conditions, native language, standard of living, physical features, etc. According to the 1970 population census, there were 159,275 Roma in Slovakia (3.5% of the overall population), while in 1980 there were 199,863 (4%). It is estimated that these findings omitted about 15% of the Roma, mostly those who had absorbed the habits of the majority population, who tended not to claim Roma ethnicity, and whose reproductive behavior was different from that of most Roma. The census data from 1970 and 1980 thus represent the most complete source of data for demographic

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analyses of the Roma populations in the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

On the basis of the data available, it is clear that the country's Roma population is growing faster than the Slovak population as a whole. While between 1970 and 1980 the number of Roma increased by 25%, the number of Slovak citizens rose only by 10%. From 1980 to 1990, Roma population growth remained just under 30%, whereas the number of Slovak citizens grew by only 6% overall.

After 60 years, the Roma finally had the opportunity to claim Roma nationality and Romany as their native language in the 1991 population census. Only some made use of this opportunity, however, with 75,802 people claiming Roma nationality and 77,269 citing Romany as their mother tongue. The same happened in the 2001 population census, with 89,920 people claiming Roma nationality, about 25% of the Roma population in Slovakia.

Another source of information on Roma numbers is data gathering efforts targeting socially and culturally disadvantaged groups

(i.e. Roma living in settlements), which, however, cover only those Roma living in these settlements. According to these data, 123,034 people in 1997, 124,031 in 1998 and 130,356 in 1999 lived in Roma settlements across Slovakia. In 1999, Roma living in settlements represented 2.4% of the overall Slovak population, with ratios ranging across the country from 0.1% in the western Trenčín and northern Žilina regions to 8.6% in the eastern Prešov region. However, the reliability of these data is questionable.

Besides the data sources mentioned above, there are several Roma number estimates in Slovakia, some of which posit figures in excess of 500,000. It is believed that such estimates are unrealistic, and note that in most cases no information on the origin of these estimates is available. Given that the last precise information on the number of Roma in Slovakia was the 1980 population census, and assuming that the Roma count of 200,000 was underestimated by about 15%, we estimate that in 1980 not more than 230,000 Roma lived in Slovakia. If we take into account the reproductive behavior of the Roma and the likely rate of increase of the

Table 2
Development of Roma count in Slovakia

Year	Data source	Roma count
end of the 18th century	Listing	20,000
1893	Hungarian listing	40,000
1921	Census	8,035
1930	Census	31,188
1938	Police records (people living a Roma way of life)	60,000
1947	Census	84,438
1959	Listing of nomadic and semi-nomadic people	27,933
1968	Records of municipal administrations	165,382
1970	Census	159,275
1980	Census	199,863
1989	Municipal records	253,943
1990	Estimate (Slovak Statistical Office)	263,337
1991	Census	75,802
1999	Reports on Roma settlements	130,356
2000	Estimate (Vaňo)	365,000
2001	Census	89,920
2005	Estimate (Kalibová)	295,000
2020	Estimate (Vaňo)	515,000

Roma population, we arrive at a top estimate of 390,000 Roma in Slovakia in 2002, with the actual number likely somewhere between 370,000 and 375,000 people, or less than 7% of the total Slovak population. The number of Roma is expected to grow, however, and to exceed half a million (9.5% of the Slovak population) around 2020.

SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE ROMA

The Roma are very unevenly distributed around Slovakia. If we compare the results of the 1970 and 1980 censuses with the 1990 Slovak Statistical Office estimate, however, we discover that the spatial distribution of the Roma around Slovakia did not change much over the last third of the twentieth century. This conclusion is supported by the 1991 and 2001 census results, despite the fact they cover only a small part of the actual Roma population.

The population censuses and the Slovak Statistical Office estimate showed low numbers of Roma in western Slovakia and in the northern part of central Slovakia, especially in the Orava, Kysuce, Turiec, central Považie and Ponitrie areas. The lowest absolute and relative numbers of Roma, according to the Slovak Statistical Office estimate, were in the former districts of Dolný Kubín, Čadca, Žilina, Považská Bystrica and Prievidza.

On the other hand, the Roma population tends to be more concentrated in the south of central Slovakia and throughout eastern Slovakia, with the exception of the northeastern region on the borders with Poland and Ukraine. According to the Slovak Statistical Office estimate, around 60% of all Roma in Slovakia lived in 11 of the 38 former districts in 1990, an area spreading across the east from Lučenec and Rimavská Sobota through Rožňava, Spišská Nová Ves, Poprad, Prešov and Košice to Vranov nad Topľou and Trebišov. Whereas in 1970 the Roma count exceeded 10,000 in only three of the mentioned districts (Rimavská Sobota, Spišská Nová Ves and Poprad), all 11 districts exceeded this limit in 1990. In 1970, the Roma represented more than 10% of the population in only two districts (Rimavská Sobota and Rožňava), whereas in 1990 it was nine districts. In 1990, the highest overall Roma count was estimated in the districts of Spišská Nová Ves (20,115), Poprad

Table 3
Roma in selected Slovak districts from 1970 to 1990

Territory	1970		1980		1990	
	number	share (%)	number	share (%)	number	share (%)
Slovakia	159,257	3.5	199,017	4.0	263,337	5.0
Košice – city	4,566	3.2	8,081	4.1	11,328	4.8
Košice – environs	8,488	8.4	9,796	9.8	13,700	13.8
Lučenec	6,510	6.9	8,542	8.9	10,544	11.0
Michalovce	7,270	7.0	8,596	8.0	11,849	10.6
Poprad	10,377	8.8	13,668	10.0	18,456	12.0
Prešov	8,341	5.2	10,881	6.0	15,872	7.9
Rimavská Sobota	11,627	11.9	13,966	14.1	18,062	18.2
Rožňava	8,710	10.7	10,823	12.7	13,709	15.9
Spišská Nová Ves	10,997	8.5	14,390	10.3	20,115	13.8
Trebišov	8,138	7.1	10,442	8.9	14,443	12.2
Vranov nad Topľou	5,522	9.0	7,363	10.8	10,406	14.1

Source: 1970: *Sčítanie ľudu, domov a bytov 1970*, 1973;
1980: *Sčítanie ľudu, domov a bytov 1980*, 1983;
1990: estimate of the Slovak Statistical Office.

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Table 4
Municipalities with the highest ratio of Roma in 1980

Municipality	District	Population	Roma count	Roma ratio (%)
Lomnička	Stará Ľubovňa	782	645	82.48
Vtáčkovce	Košice – vidiek	483	359	74.33
Jurské	Poprad	500	362	72.40
Stráne pod Tatrami	Poprad	585	405	69.23
Výborná	Poprad	547	348	63.62
Radnovce	Rimavská Sobota	624	364	58.33
Rakúsy	Poprad	1,190	683	57.39
Kecerovce	Košice – vidiek	1,555	877	56.40
Varhaňovce	Prešov	795	448	56.35
Jarovnice	Prešov	2,686	1,442	53.69

Source: *Sčítanie ľudu, domov a bytov 1980*, 1983.

(18,456) and Rimavská Sobota (18,026). The highest ratio of Roma was found in the districts of Rimavská Sobota (18.2%) and Rožňava (15.9%) (see Maps 2 to 5).

In 1980 Slovakia had 2,724 municipalities; according to the population census results, Roma lived in 1,453 of them (53.3%). The highest ratio of Roma in a municipality was 80% (see Table 4), while in 15 municipalities the Roma share was higher than 50%, and in 209 more than 20%. Municipalities in districts with typically high Roma populations (Poprad, Spišská Nová Ves, Košice – environs, Rimavská Sobota and Rožňava) featured strongly.

Municipalities with the highest ratio of Roma to overall populations tended to number less than 1,000 inhabitants. The ratio of Roma

reached 10% in only a few towns (Fiľakovo, Levoča, Trebišov, Rožňava, Rimavská Sobota). The ratio of Roma did not exceed 5% in those towns with the highest absolute number of Roma (Košice, Bratislava, Prešov).

In 1980, up to 60% of the Roma in Slovakia lived in the countryside, especially in agricultural districts such as Rimavská Sobota, Rožňava, Košice, Michalovce and Trebišov. The Roma were relatively sparsely settled in mountainous regions (Prešov, Spišská Nová Ves) with little surplus agriculture production, until 1948 or 1958. Roma populations grew especially in municipalities from which the Carpathian Germans had been expelled after the Second World War (Lomnička, V. Slavkov, Kežmarok, Podolínec, Toporec), and also in rural areas following the population decrease caused by the abolition of pri-

Table 5
Municipalities with the highest number of Roma in 1980

Municipality	District	Population	Roma count	Roma ratio (%)
Košice	Košice	202,368	8,681	4.29
Bratislava	Bratislava	380,259	3,910	1.03
Prešov	Prešov	71,500	2,007	2.81
Lučenec	Lučenec	26,399	1,940	7.35
Rimavská Sobota	Rimavská Sobota	19,699	1,916	9.73
Rožňava	Rožňava	18,039	1,796	9.96
Fiľakovo	Lučenec	10,497	1,784	17.00
Levoča	Spišská Nová Ves	11,025	1,657	15.03
Trebišov	Trebišov	14,961	1,632	10.91
Michalovce	Michalovce	29,765	1,609	5.41

Source: *Sčítanie ľudu, domov a bytov 1980*, 1983.

vate land ownership and the ensuing migration in search of industrial work opportunities (Dubayová, 1994).

As far as the Roma were concerned, the 1991 and 2001 census results differed from previous censuses due to different data gathering principles. In 1991, 75,802 citizens (1.4% of the total population) claimed Roma nationality in Slovakia. In 2001 that figure was 89,920 citizens (1.7%). According to the 2001 census, the ratio of Roma did not exceed 10% in any district, with the highest ratio reported in the districts of Kežmarok (8.8%) and Levoča (7.1%) (see Map 6). These results also differed from previous findings in terms of Roma representation in districts near the border with Hungary (especially Rimavská Sobota and Rožňava). This lower Roma representation was probably caused by the Roma more frequently claiming other-than-Roma nationalities (not only Slovak but also Hungarian).

ROMA POPULATION STRUCTURE

STRUCTURE ACCORDING TO SEX

The ratio of Slovak men to women was 966 to 1,000 in 1980, with the number of men exceeding that of women only in the 30 to 34 age group. The situation was quite different among the Roma, however, with the men/women ratio 1,033 to 1,000, and Roma men prevailing until the 40 to 44 age bracket. Since the death rate of Roma men at the age of 44 in Czechoslovakia was only slightly higher than that of men from the majority population between 1970 and 1980, and the death rate among Roma women at this age was significantly higher than that of the majority population (Kalibová, 1989), it can be assumed that higher mortality among young and middle-aged Roma women is the reason that Roma men prevail over Roma women.

By 1991, the number of men per 1,000 women had decreased to 953 for the entire population, while among the Roma it had fallen to 1,021 men per 1,000 women. This shift was related to the relative decline of the younger age groups, which men tend to dominate, and the relative increase in older age groups, in which women prevail. This ageing process is now characteristic for both the non-Roma and Roma populations in Slovakia, although among the Roma this indicator remains at a level similar to developing countries.

AGE STRUCTURE

In 1980, children up to 14 years of age made up 26% of the Slovak population, while 50% of people were of a productive age (15 to 49 years), and 24% of people were in their postproductive years (50 and older). The age structure of the Roma, however, differed significantly: children made up 43%, people in their productive years 47%, and post-productive people 9%. The Roma child ratio was 1.7 times higher than that of the overall Slovak population, while the share of people of a productive age was roughly the same, and the ratio of people at a post-productive age was far smaller than the overall population.

In terms of regional differences, in 1980 the greatest proportion of children up to 14 years of age was in eastern Slovakia, both among the entire population (28%) and the Roma (46%). On the other hand, the smallest proportion of people in their post-productive years in both groups was also found in this region (see Graphs 7 to 10).

According to the 1991 census, the age structure of both the Roma and the overall population was largely the same as it had been in 1980 (see Graph 11). The 1991 census came too soon to register the significant changes

in reproductive behavior that occurred after 1989, and which considerably influenced the age structure of the population.

Changes in the age structure of the Roma population can be seen in data from 1999 on Roma living in settlements, according to which children already represented only 36% of the Roma population. Although these data do not include the entire Roma population, it can be assumed that if such a change occurred in the settlements, it certainly occurred also in the Roma population integrated into mainstream society, and probably to an even a greater extent.

These data chart an unsurprising trend towards a gradual decline in the ratio of children to the overall Roma population. In spite of the major decrease shown, from 43% in 1980 to 36% in 1999, the Roma still have a far greater proportion of children compared to the overall Slovak population, where in 1999 the ratio of children aged 14 or less was under 20%. By region, the lowest ratio of Roma children at the end of the 1990s was found in the central Nitra region (27.9%) and the western Trnava region (28.5%), while the highest share of children up to 15 years of age was in the eastern Košice region (43.7%).

With their age structure, the Roma are among those progressive populations with a significant ratio of children and a low proportion of older people, the reason being their high birthrate on the one hand and high mortality on the other. The age structure of the Roma is thus very different from that of the overall Slovak population, which is among the stationary type populations, and showing signs of shifting to the regressive type population category. A similar shift is also visible in the Roma population, where, according to estimates, the ratio of children will fall from today's 36% to 26% by 2020. However, the current high ratio of children and young peo-

ple means that the size of the Roma population will continue to increase in the near future, and that changes in this sphere will show up only in the long term.

STRUCTURE ACCORDING TO MARTIAL STATUS

Data on marriage and divorce rates for the Roma are not available. Partnership behavior can thus be described only from data on the marital status of Roma men and women. According to the 1980 census, 14.3% of Roma women aged 15 to 19 were married, compared to just 7.1% of all Slovak women. Between the ages of 20 and 24, 59.8% of all Slovak women and 66.7% of Roma women were married. A similar situation existed among men, where 44% of Roma men aged 20 to 24, and only 30% of all Slovak men of the same age, were married. Although the Roma tend to get married younger, however, the ratio of single people among the Roma in older age groups is higher than that of the overall population.

As for the ratio of divorced people in 1980, 1.7% of Roma men older than 15 were divorced, compared to 2% of all Slovak men. Among women older than 15, 1.9% of Roma women and 2.8% of all women in Slovakia were divorced. The relative rarity of divorce in the Roma population may be related to tendency of partners to live together before marriage, as well as to different views on coexistence between partners among the Roma.

REPRODUCTIVE BEHAVIOR OF THE ROMA

Both the birth rate and mortality of the Roma tends to be higher than among the non-Roma, meaning that the Roma population is increasing faster than the Slovak average. While no

specific data on the birth rate and mortality of the Roma exist, census results and other statistics can help us chart these demographic processes.

BIRTH RATE

The fertility level of Roma women can best be seen in data from the 1970 and 1980 censuses. At that time, Roma reproduction was changing significantly. The birth rate for all age groups decreased, with the largest decrease occurring among women over 25. The average number of live-born children per married Roma woman fell by 15%, from 4.7 in 1970 to 4.0 in 1980. However, it remained 1.7 times higher than the average number of live-born children per married woman in Slovakia overall (2.4).

By region, the average number of live-born children per married Roma woman in western (3.7) and central Slovakia (3.6) was below the national Roma average, while in eastern Slovakia the figure was 4.3. Regional differences in fertility at the same time pointed to different reproductive behavior among integrated and non-integrated Roma. The greatest differences between Roma and non-Roma fertility levels were seen in regions with the most segregated Roma settlements, while in regions where the Roma tended to be integrated or at least partly integrated with the rest of the population, their reproductive behavior resembled that of the majority population.

In the past, the higher birth rate among the Roma was often "addressed" by the use of discriminatory measures. In 1972, the Health Ministry issued a regulation on sterilization, pursuant to which any woman under 35 having four children, or any woman over 35 having three children, could be sterilized. A 1985 amendment to this rule lifted the age

restriction, and authorized the sterilization of women having three or more children. In 1988, a woman could receive up to 20,000 Czechoslovak crowns from the state for undergoing sterilization. Although it was not directly stated in the law, these measures were aimed at the Roma population. This project was halted in 1990, when sterilization became a medical procedure not covered by insurance (Mann, 1995). According to the current principles of family policy in Slovakia, parents are free to decide the number of children they will have and the timing of their births.

A prognosis of the development of the birth rate among Roma women in Czechoslovakia until 2005 was included in a Roma population estimate made by Kalibová (1990). According to her estimate, the average birth rate[1] among Roma women would fall from 4.3 to 3.1 between 1981 and 2005. The birth rate of Roma women from 2001 to 2005 (calculated for the whole of Czechoslovakia) was to be similar to the birth rate of all women in Slovakia in 1960, and was pegged at about 2.4 times the rate for all women in Slovakia in 2000 (the total birth rate being 1.3).

Research and observed trends show that the birth rate among Roma women is falling more quickly than expected; high and unregulated birth rates are certainly no longer typical of Roma reproductive behavior. Nevertheless, the birth rate among Roma women is still about twice as high as that of the overall Slovak population. We can expect this gap to gradually narrow (by 2020 it is expected to be only 1.4 times higher than the non-Roma population).

MORTALITY

Roma mortality can be charted only indirectly, by comparing age structures determined in 1970 and 1980. Based on these

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data, mortality charts were calculated for the Roma population of the whole of Czechoslovakia[2] (Kalibová 1989, 1991).

Between 1970 and 1980, life expectancy for children born[3] was 55.3 years for Roma men and 59.5 years for Roma women, or between 12 and 15 years less than for the overall population of Czechoslovakia (Kalibová, 1997). A similar life expectancy was seen among the Slovak population in the 1930s and 1940s. As average life expectancy in the 1970s in both parts of the former Czechoslovakia for both sexes was about the same, mortality among the Roma in Slovakia was likely not very different from the Czechoslovak average. Higher mortality and decreased life expectancy among the Slovak Roma could have resulted from their lower level of integration and standard of living compared to the Roma in the Czech Republic.

In general, life expectancy among the Roma is growing more quickly than life expectancy among the overall Slovak population. This is typical of all developing populations, and results from the potential amassed by their higher mortality in the past. The life expectancy of the Roma today is estimated to be about 10 years less than that of the average Slovak citizen; by 2020, this gap is expected to shrink to six or seven years.

The total mortality of the population is greatly influenced by infant mortality. Thanks to records kept by medical establishments in the 1980s, data exists on the number of infant deaths per 1,000 live births. In 1985, an average of 35 out of 1,000 live-born Roma children died before they reached the age of one year, compared to 16.3 for the overall population. Although infant mortality among the Roma fell from 1968 to 1985 by almost one-third, it remained 2.1 times higher than among the overall population, and matched the infant mortality level of the Slovak population in the second half of the 1950s. By region, the lowest infant mortality among the Roma in 1985 was recorded in western Slovakia (22.7), and the highest in eastern Slovakia (37.1) (Kalibová, 1989).

NATURAL POPULATION INCREASE

Since migration by the Roma abroad remains low, natural changes represent the decisive factor in Roma population developments. As noted above, the reproductive behavior of the Roma gives them a higher natural increase in population[4] than the non-Roma population. This is confirmed also by natural increase values per 1,000 people (see Graph 12), which themselves are due to a higher Roma birth rate only partly offset by higher mortality. Natural increase trends among the Roma and non-Roma also show differences. While the non-Roma are far more numerous than the Roma, since 1994 the natural increase of the Roma population has been higher than that of the non-Roma in absolute terms. Since 1998, in fact, the Roma have fuelled the total natural increase of the overall Slovak population, as the natural increase of the non-Roma has given way to a decrease (see Graph 13).

NUMBER AND STRUCTURE ESTIMATES OF ROMA IN SLOVAKIA TO 2020

In estimating the number of Roma living in Slovakia over the next two decades, we based our calculations on the assumption that there are now 370,000 to 390,000 Roma living in Slovakia, an estimate we believe to be justified. We further assumed that the reproductive behavior of the Roma and the non-Roma will continue to dovetail, mainly because of the ongoing social integration of the Roma, and the likelihood this integration will accelerate

after Slovakia's EU accession. Of course, we will not see a single reproductive behavior model in Slovakia in the next 20 years, as the differences are so great that they cannot be eliminated in the course of one generation.

We estimate that the birth rate differential will shrink, from twice as high among the Roma as it is now, to only 1.4 times that of the overall population in 2020. As far as mortality is concerned, we expect a reduction in the difference in life expectancy from the current 10 to 6 or 7 years in 2020. This means that the life expectancy of the Roma by 2020 should equal the current Slovak average, with the birth rate of the Roma equaling that of the overall Slovak population at the beginning of the 1990s. The expected development of the Roma birth rate and mortality will reflect an increasing convergence in the reproductive behavior of the Roma and non-Roma populations in Slovakia. In spite of this trend, in 2020 the difference will still be about one generation. We do not expect significant decreases or increases in the Roma population due to foreign migration.

Should these expectations be fulfilled, the number of Roma in Slovakia should increase from today's 380,000 to about 515,000, which will mean an increase in the ratio of Roma to the total population from 7.3% to almost 9.5%. Around 2020, the increase in the Roma population should slow sharply.

The average age of the Roma in Slovakia will still be lower than that of the non-Roma in 2020. Although the ratio of Roma in their pre-productive years will fall from the current roughly 35% to about 26% in 2020, it will still be nearly two times higher than the Slovak average. By contrast, less than 5% of the Roma will be in their post-productive years, more than two times higher than at present, but less than one-third in comparison with the overall Slovak population.

In spite of the growing similarity between the reproductive behaviors of the Roma and the non-Roma, an increase in Roma numbers and a decrease of non-Roma is expected. Besides differences in reproductive behavior itself, the main reason for this scenario is the different age structure between the groups, which causes certain demographic processes to continue. If current trends persist, the Roma by 2050 will not exceed 15% of the total population, and will probably reach only 12%, far below the "doomsday scenarios" recently presented by populist Slovak politicians, in which the Slovak majority would be outnumbered.

CONCLUSION

Less than 400,000 Roma live in Slovakia today, while by 2020 their number should exceed 500,000. From the demographic point of view, the Roma population is a developing population characterized by a progressive age structure with a high ratio of children. The increase in the Roma population, in the long term, is substantially greater than the increase in the non-Roma population, as the result of different reproductive behavior among the Roma characterized by a higher birth rate and higher mortality than the rest of the population. Although the reproductive behavior of the Roma is expected to become more similar to that of the non-Roma, some differences are likely to remain in the future.

Changes in reproductive behavior among developing populations are connected with a change in living conditions, an improved standard of living and level of education. The Roma will certainly follow this trend, although the changes will occur relatively slowly due to their isolation. Indeed, the crucial factor in conforming the demographic characteristics of the Roma to those of the

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non-Roma will be the integration of the Roma into mainstream society. If the state is to support the integration of the Roma, and to help improve their living conditions, unbiased information on the size and structure of the Roma population will be needed. The situation, however, is complicated by the lack of relevant data.

On the basis of the available data we can see that the Roma birth rate and mortality are changing. In spite of the decreasing birth rate, however, the age structure of the Roma will ensure an increase in the number of children born in the coming years as well. The improving health of the Roma will cause mortality to fall and will increase the average life span. The overall demographic situation in Slovakia will also have an impact. The low birth rate in Slovakia will likely prompt the state to take population measures that could modify the Roma birth rate as well. Nevertheless, the rate of increase in the Roma population in Slovakia is likely to fall in future, confounding wild prognoses that the Roma will reach one million in 2010 and become the majority population in Slovakia.

ENDNOTES

1. The average number of live-born children per woman during her reproductive period.
2. Given that data on domestic migration among the Roma is not available, these characteristics cannot be listed separately for Slovakia.
3. The average number of years that a person born now is likely to live.
4. The difference between the number of live-born and dead.

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ZUZANA KUMANOVÁ and ROMAN DŽAMBAZOVIČ

THE ROMA FAMILY: ON THE BORDER BETWEEN TRADITION AND MODERNITY

Summary: The family is one of the basic social units and one of society's most important institutions. In this chapter, the authors examine approaches to defining and studying the Roma family. They identify the characteristics of the Roma family, both in traditional and modern terms. The chapter identifies the most important factors behind the gradual changes in the Roma family, and discusses the reproductive behavior of traditional Roma communities.

Key words: Roma family, extended family, nuclear family, traditional Roma family, Roma family today, family behavior, approaches to family research, demographic revolution.

INTRODUCTION

The family is a social institution that provides a structure for social relationships. Almost all social and cultural regulatory mechanisms rest on the family as an institution, meaning that if one knows about the family, one will also know a great deal about cultural traditions, standards, values, and behavior patterns. Today the family has some very important functions and is perceived as very important both by the general population and the Roma. Through our families we find both our personal and our group identities (family history actually represents the history of its members and the history of a particular municipality or community).

In Slovakia and throughout Europe, the Roma family is unique. The Roma ethnic group is itself a unique and often secluded community that differs from mainstream society. Family is the key means of preserving and passing on Roma culture. The main features of the Roma family greatly influence all spheres of family life and family and reproductive behavior.

There is no one universal Roma family form and structure, nor has there ever been. The Roma family types defined by the authors are ideal types; in real life, we see a huge variety of family behavior.

THE TRADITIONAL ROMA FAMILY IN SLOVAKIA

DATA ON THE ROMA FAMILY IN THE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY

One way of discovering the characteristic features of the Roma family is special censuses that were conducted in Slovakia from the eighteenth century onwards. These polls represent an important source of data and provide information not only about population size but also age structure, number of children, size of families, family status, housing conditions, financial status, way of life, education, literacy, and religion. While every census is to some extent subjective, these early censuses still allow us to form some opinions about the family.

Table 1
Age structure of the Roma population and the entire population of Ugria (in %)

Age	Settled Roma	"Semi-settled" Roma	Nomadic Roma	Roma total	Entire population of Ugria
0 – 14	39.1	40.1	47.0	39.1	36.7
15 – 29	22.8	25.6	21.8	23.3	23.8
30 – 59	31.7	29.9	26.8	31.4	27.5
60 and older	6.4	4.4	4.4	6.2	7.0

Source: *Czigányösszeírás eredményei*, 1893.

In 1893, a count of Gypsies in Hungary's Ugria (*Czigányösszeírás...*, 1895) was conducted under the auspices of the Hungarian Royal Statistics Office in Budapest. Compared to the rest of the population in Ugria at the time, the census showed a higher number of children in Roma families, a higher birth rate, along with greater infant mortality, few independently living adults, and very few Roma child deaths between the ages of 6 and 14 years. From the viewpoint of age structure, children younger than 14 represented 39.1% of the Roma population, 15 to 29 year-olds 23.3%, 30 to 59 year-olds 31.4%, and Roma older than 60 only 6.2%. Children under 14 were the most numerous age group in the entire population of Ugria.

It is interesting that the age structure of the Roma minority was not so different then than it is now. We also find interesting differences between the age structure of the nomadic, the semi-settled, and the settled Roma in Ugria.

While there were more children among the nomadic Roma than the rest of the Roma, there was only a minor difference between the number of children in the families of settled and semi-settled Roma. If we compare the Roma minority with the entire population in Ugria, we see a difference in the proportion of people aged 60 and older. There is an obvious connection between standard of living and average life span. There were fewer people over 60 among the nomadic and semi-settled Roma than among the settled Roma.

The family characteristics and marital status of the Roma were surveyed in the census as well. The different cultural traditions of the Roma were taken into account in the census, and thus couples who lived together without being married according to the standards of the majority population were considered to be living in wedlock. Indeed, the Roma did not set much store by marriage; among young people, "mangavipen" (courting) was an organized affair, following which they were regarded as a married couple. The marriage and big wedding celebration ("báro bivaj") came later, often when the couple already had one or more children.

Among the Roma there were more people cohabiting/married (43.9%) than among the overall population (41.0%), and on the other hand a lower proportion of single people and widowed people. Among the Roma a whole, legal marriages (27.1% of the entire Roma population) prevailed over common-law relationships (16.8%). Marriages/cohabitations were more frequent among settled and semi-settled Roma than the nomadic. Legal marriages prevailed with the settled Roma, while among the semi-settled and nomadic Roma it was cohabitation without marriage; the percent of people living in marriages ranged from 28.2% among the settled Roma to 14.1% among the nomadic Roma, while common-law relationships varied from 15.6% (among settled Roma) to 23.3% (nomadic). These data suggest that the cultural and economic development of the local Roma community was/is connected with the

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gradual evolution of the demographic and family behavior of the Roma community to resemble that of the majority population (Džambazovič, 2001b).

The 1924 census showed that of the total number of partnerships in Ugria, 85.5% were legal marriages and 14.5% cohabitations (Nečas, 1998), while in 1893 the ratio had been 61.8% to 38.2%. This presumably reflected the greater assimilation of the Roma population, a process which had been unfolding over the 30 years.

The data show that while among young Roma (15 to 24) there was a higher rate of common-law relationships among both men and women, as the Roma grew older legal marriages began to dominate. Men of all ages showed a higher rate of legal marriage than women, perhaps because, as the 1893 census authors suggested, mixed couples involving a Roma man and a non-Roma woman tended to be married, while cohabiting Roma women and non-Roma men tended not to be married.

When describing the life of the Roma family, the authors discovered different forms of upbringing and a different kind of partnership, which was still influenced by tribal structures, the Roma's different culture and so on. The stability of legal and illegitimate cohabitations was also examined, together with early sexual life and the young age of first mothers.

The above historical and statistical sources, and the results of ethno-demographic research (Mann, 1992; Kumanová, 1999), show that the Roma family, compared to the majority population family, over more than a century differed in some marked ways, especially the high number of family members and the high number of children. From the point of view of age structure, Roma families still tend to have high proportion of children and relatively few old people. It was/is also typical for women to bear many children throughout their reproductive years, during which infant and child mortality gradually falls.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF ETHNOLOGICAL RESEARCH AND THE TRADITIONAL ROMA FAMILY

We can learn more about the Roma family from ethnological research. In the 1950s, Emília Horváthová defined the Roma family structure as follows: "A family consisted of several married brothers, their married sons and children. The Gypsies living in the municipality of Rožkovany call such a group a 'partija'. The affairs of the entire family are decided by a *vajda*, or local chief (also 'thute', 'mujalo', 'čibalo')." (Horváthová, 1954, p. 285)

A similar definition can be found in the work of Eva Davidová, according to whom most Roma until recently lived in patriarchal extended families that belonged to broader tribal endogamic (i.e. marrying within the tribe) groups. Family relationships and structure, and the hierarchy of family members to some extent still depend on the rules of the group (Davidová, 1995). The author also notes that the tribal bond is stronger than the family bond. Davidová says that besides the parents, the typical Roma family consisted of several married couples, parents, grandparents, married sons or daughters, and the children of young married couples.

Milena Hübschmannová identifies similar characteristics of extended Roma families. In the dialect of the Slovak Roma, the expression "familia/famelia" means: a) extended family, kinship, b) relative, relatives. Hübschmannová defines the Roma familia/

famelia as including relatives on both the mother and father's side, including four or five generations. Each member of such a family has their own place in the family community, from which their specific rights and duties arise. The position and tasks of each family member are internally differentiated according to their relationship to other family members and subgroups in the family community (Hübschmannová, 1996). The hierarchy is determined by the specific combination of sexes, age and kinship. The body of patterns and standards of trouble free co-existence in a family community is called "paťiv" (respect, politeness, honor).

In the nuclear Roma family, not even the birth of a child was reason to become independent. Segmentation occurred instead in relation to the family's ability to provide for all family members. The traditional Roma family was patriarchal, with significant authority invested in the men (fathers, husbands, sons, brothers). Sons were preferred when children were born, and the status of a family increased significantly as its male children grew up.

THE STRUCTURE OF
THE TRADITIONAL ROMA FAMILY
AND THE POSITION OF
ITS MEMBERS

Several important roles existed in the extended family, and each member of a "famelija" had their own specific rights and duties. The extended family was the basic economic and occupational unit, providing for the economic needs of its members. The entire burden of caring for the children lay with the mother, who decided not only how the household was run but also governed the finances. If the man did not have a steady job, the duty of providing the family with food fell to the woman. Among settled Roma in

eastern Slovakia, it was customary for Roma women to make the rounds of the villages and visit the non-Roma households. The women performed various small tasks on their regular round (repaired stove chimneys with mud, swept the yard, helped on the farm, in rare cases begged) and usually received compensation in the form of goods (eggs, bacon etc.).

Men were usually employed only for seasonal work, although some performed a craft or were musicians; their contribution to the family was therefore irregular. The chores (fetching water, chopping wood) in some regions were also done by the women, or in some cases by the children. Cooking and cleaning was entirely the responsibility of the women, who gradually transferred these duties to their children, especially daughters and daughters-in-law, allowing the older woman to retain decision-making power. If any children in the family were employed, or if they obtained some food, they put everything into the common household pot. This also applied to adult children who, with their partners, lived with their original family. The position of the daughter-in-law ("terňi bori") was interesting, as she usually followed her husband into the household of his family.

Marriages/partnerships were mostly patrilocal (a system of marriage where the wife goes to live with the husband's group). Responsibility for the daughter-in-law devolved to her mother-in-law ("sasvi"), who raised her to womanhood and motherhood. The task of the mother-in-law was to teach the young woman the customs of the new family. For example, the young daughter-in-law was not expected to know how to cook. She learned to cook in the new family, which had its own rules on hygiene and ritual purity when cooking; observance of these principles also determined the social status of the family. For

this reason it was extremely important that the customs of the family be kept, as this was the way the family maintained its identity. The position of the daughter-in-law in the family of her husband was the lowest in the entire family hierarchy. Besides her sex, her inferior position was cemented also by her youth, and by the fact that she was a stranger in the family, which could lead to mistrust. However, the daughter-in-law's position gradually changed in accordance with the number of children she bore and her age. Children were highly valued in the Roma family.

All household members helped provide for the family according to their abilities. Boys at a young age played instruments and gave the money they earned to their mothers, a procedure that did not change even when they got married. Together with their wives they worked for the benefit of the family. The oldest son in particular was brought up in such a way that as soon as he started earning money, he gave it to his mother. The oldest son was also expected to contribute to the needs of his younger brothers and sisters, to buy them clothes and so on. The sons were obliged to do the "men's work" (i.e. chopping wood). Male family members had to help build a new house for a nuclear family that was becoming independent.

The function of the traditional family, besides raising children, was also to provide general education and work skills. The mother had to raise all young children, especially the girls. Even at the age of 6 to 9, a girl had to be able to take care of her younger siblings, and to help keep the house clean. While the boys were more or less just looked after, the younger girls were ordered around far more and given small household tasks. In this sense, a chain upbringing functioned in the Roma family, with the older children raising the younger ones.

The girls were brought up so that when they were 14 or 15 year old they would be ready to enter a partnership. The father took over the upbringing of the boys when they were five or six. According to their age and physical ability, the boys helped with the men's work. The father gradually taught his sons his own craft or profession. In musical families, boys of 12 or 13 often played with their fathers and uncles in a band. Children also had to learn how to behave and to respect other family members.

The way that families prepared and ate food was one of the features that served to identify them. For example, the kinds of meat a family eschewed determined whether they were among the "žuže" (ritually pure) or the "degeša, dubki Roma" (ritually impure). The meat of dead animals, as well as horse, dog, and rabbit meat was considered impure. If children did not behave according to the wishes of their parents or the wider community (the community also had a role in the children's socialization), they were first scolded, and if this didn't help, they were punished. Children younger than five or six were punished by their mothers; older boys were punished by the father, and older girls by the mother. Only if the mother was at her wit's end with the daughters could they be punished by the father. This seldom happened.

The oldest brother ("baro phral") had many duties in the upbringing of his younger siblings, especially in cases where the father did not take care of the family or when he died. The oldest brother had enormous responsibility for his sisters, especially during their adolescence, when he watched over their virginity. He was also jointly responsible for selecting an appropriate partner for his sisters. Later on, the oldest brother also supervised the upbringing of the children of his brothers and sisters.

Upbringing in the family was a complicated process that ultimately prepared the Roma for life in the traditional community. Milena Hübschmannová claims that the "famelija" was the basic platform where social control mechanisms that prevented the individual from dishonoring the family were strictly enforced. Individuals was reminded of their duty to behave at all times in keeping with "romipen", or the body of Roma tradition and ethics, in various formal cultural ways (Hübschmannová, 1996). The family thus performed acts that were ordained by the system of social control that governed all community members. If a man did not take care of his family, perhaps drank their money away, his brothers and brothers-in-law could speak to him. The women could compose a song about his misbehavior, and criticize him in this way. If his behavior did not improve, he lost respect, and was given a derogatory name that could be used even by his children. The brothers-in-law and brothers could under certain circumstances even use violence.

The behavior of the mother was equally under social control. If she did not take care of her children and the household, she was exposed to public gossip. The pressure of community opinion was very strong. Infidelity in wives was particularly condemned. The "ľubňi" (easy) woman would be scolded, although nobody would object if her husband beat her up. She could even be banished from the house, and have her hair shorn as a sign of disgrace. Her hair would be cut by either her husband's family or her own, to show that the family condemned what she had done. Infidelity was more or less tolerated in men, in particular if it occurred with a non-Roma woman. In the traditional community, violence by men against women was partly tolerated, although if a beating exceeded the level of tolerance the community reacted, for example with a satirical song. The wife could leave her husband for a certain time and live with her parents, which was seen to bring shame on the husband and his family.

Research confirms that the traditional Roma family was also the unit on the basis of which its members were integrated into the wider community. If a family member did something that was contrary to good manners, the shame for his lapse fell on all family members. The importance of the family was also evident in the selection of a partner. It was considered important to choose a partner for one's child who came from a family with the same or a similar social status. This meant, for example, that a "žuže" Roma family would see it as a dishonor if their son chose a bride from a locality they considered "degeš". The prestige of the entire family would suffer from such an act.

In her research on the traditional meeting ceremony, Hübschmannová (1996) noted the importance of the family for the identification of the individual. The traditional meeting ceremony included the introduction of the "famelija" and the "fajta" (local community) that the individuals came from. In the past, Roma had a rough idea of which Roma lived in which region, whether according to the crafts they practiced, or whether they were considered "žuže" or "degeša, dubki". On the basis of introductory questions aimed at learning the "fajta", the individual was classified as a member of certain broader community. The affinity to a "famelija" classified him or her in a group of close relatives. At the end of the session, anonymity ceased to exist. Blood ties created strong bonds requiring Roma to cooperate and help each other, and marriage strengthened these even more (Fraser, 1998). Liégeois (1997) concluded that the bond between two people was in fact the result of a social agreement between extended families and the communities these individuals came from.

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Since the power and reputation of the family grew with its sons, whenever a child was born in the traditional Roma family, the desire that it be a boy prevailed. When the sons grew up, they could be expected to bring new labor to the family – "terňi bori". The physical strength of the family was also used to resolve various disagreements, often ending up in brawls. In order to maintain the size and strength of the family, the man might even follow his wife after their marriage to live in the house of her parents, thereby becoming the "pristašis" – the son-in-law. The concern for protecting the family was also visible in the saturation of the family's basic needs, and in the provision of a living to all members, regardless of their contribution to the common household. This can still be seen in protection and care for the old or handicapped. The elderly also enjoyed great respect in the traditional community and family. In each family, the oldest men and women both wielded great authority. From the point of view of authority, we can therefore speak not only of a patriarchy but also a "geriarchy".

THE ROMA FAMILY TODAY

The Roma family today may show both traditional and contemporary characteristics. There is thus still no unity in family and demographic behavior, or family patterns among the Roma. Nevertheless, some characteristic features in Roma family behavior can be identified, and some possible reasons for the differences pointed out.

Davidová (1995) wrote that the Roma way of life has developed in a unique way in Slovakia. Changes in the Roma way of life and thought have occurred in the individual (physical and spiritual dispositions), material (way of life, material conditions), social (social relationships, communication between families) and spiritual (spiritual culture, value

patterns) realms. These spheres are very closely connected. However, the family has also been shaped by political, economic, social, and cultural processes. On the one hand the family has tried to adapt to the new conditions, while on the other it has resisted certain changes and reacted selectively to external stimuli. The Roma population in Slovakia has been exposed to institutional acts by the Slovak state that greatly influenced it. These acts have often disturbed and thus changed traditional patterns of Roma family behavior.

The source material describing modern family behavior or today's Roma family is far less rich than on the traditional family. Besides several research projects in past decades aimed concretely at the Roma family (such as by the Socio-Scientific Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Košice in the 1980s, and by the Research Institute of Work, Social Affairs and Family in Bratislava in the 1990s), one finds only demographic data and research that dealt indirectly with the Roma family. Nevertheless, here too we find evidence that family behavior adapted to the new conditions (whether at the end of communism or during the 1990s).

SPECIFICS OF ROMA
DEMOGRAPHIC BEHAVIOR

The demographic and reproductive behavior of the Roma population differs strongly from that of the majority population; as a consequence of these dissimilarities, the structure and characteristics of the Roma family are also different. These differences influence the everyday life of the Roma; they may cause conflict between ethnic groups, or influence the ability of the Roma to find a job, and consequently win a position in society.

The different demographic behavior of the Roma minority is also reflected in its differ-

ent age structure compared to the rest of the population. The Roma population tends to contain many children younger than 14, and few older people in their post-productive years. As the last three population censuses from 1980, 1991 and 2001 show, children up to 14 years form the largest age group in the Roma population. The proportion of children in the Roma population is several times higher compared to Slovakia as a whole, while the ratio of people in their post-productive years in the overall population is many times higher than among the Roma.

Yet certain changes are visible. While the proportion of children from 1980 to 1991 was about 43%, by 2001 it had fallen to 39.5%. Although the census results are only approximate, it is clear that the reproductive behavior of the Roma in Slovakia is gradually changing.

However, despite the fact that the proportion of children in the Roma population is decreasing, the age structure of the ethnic group is still progressive, meaning there are more people in younger age brackets than in older ones. Experts connect this progressive age structure mainly with massive reproduction and the many children women bear throughout their reproductive years, as well as with the low lifespan of the Roma. While infant and child mortality among the Roma is falling and life expectancy is growing, these indicators are still far worse among the Roma than in the majority population. Compared to the rest of the population, the Roma also show a significant difference in their large share of first-time Roma mothers who are younger than 18. Jurová (1993) noted that in the more isolated regions of Slovakia, over 30% of Roma mothers gave birth to their first child at the age of 15 to 17.

The ratio of the Roma population to the overall population is growing especially quickly

in those regions of Slovakia where the reproductive rate of the non-Roma population is low, and there is negative migration (i.e. people are leaving, usually to find work, and not returning). In such areas, the Roma population tends to fill a certain demographic vacuum with its reproductive behavior, and many Slovak regions are unable to maintain the size of their original populations without the contribution of the Roma (Džambazovič, 2001a) (for details see the chapter *Roma Population Demographic Trends* in this book).

ROMA FAMILY TYPES

According to Bačová (1990), the Roma family is a different demographic type than the majority family. Based on research by the Socio-Scientific Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Košice (1988), a typology for Roma families in Slovakia was designed. The Roma family has many children, while women have children at a young age and give birth frequently during their reproductive years, limited only by biological factors (high natality is seen as confirming a woman's fertility). This leads to great differences in the age of children within a single family, as well as to the relatively youth of grandparents. Roma children, according to Bačová (1990, p. 492 – 495), tend to be "provided for" with partners at 16. The few who are not provided for at that age are usually preparing for a profession.

There is a high ratio of three- or four-generation families, and more than half of all Roma families are extended ones, which supports the hypothesis that the Roma socially depend very heavily on the wider family (Bačová, 1988). Acknowledged forms of partnership, parenthood and coexistence in the extended family set specific standards and thus control the family behavior of individuals, especially in extended, multi-generation families

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shielded from external forces. The biggest difference from majority society seems to be in matrimony as an institution. Although partners begin living together at a very young age, their partnerships tend to last for a long time; most Roma in one study were living in their first partnerships. In the Roma population, sticking with the typical extended and multigenerational family is a defense against majority society in which, as a minority, they have the lowest social status.

Mária Dubayová examined the formation and lapse of co-habitation arrangements among the Roma, and showed how the behavior of the Roma differs from that of mainstream society in partnership and matrimony. As Koteková (1998, p. 55) wrote, the formation of partnerships is a special process with the Roma. In most cases, partners begin cohabiting very early, often before they turn 18 (especially among women with children). With men, cohabitation tends to begin later, mostly from 18 to 24. One explanation of this behavior is that the sexual maturity of the partners tends to coincide with their social maturity as individuals, with their being acknowledged by the community/society. However, this partnership behavior also means that the individuals forego professional training, the adolescent acquisition of complex social abilities, and the search for a partner through several relatively non-binding relationships.

New partnerships begin at a very early age, and often with little or no financial security (including independent housing). The young family often lives with relatives and only becomes independent some time later. By living in a common household, however, the upbringing of the still young partners can be completed. More than half of Roma parents begin living together without getting formally married; marriage usually follows only after several years of cohabitation. On the other hand, Roma partnerships are character-

ized by a low divorce and separation rate (first marriages ended in divorce among only 3.7% of Roma men and 3.4% of Roma women). Thus, although partnerships begin very early, they last a long time. This knowledge, together with further information on employment, education, family income, housing, and material possessions, completes our image of the Roma family. Roma society, to judge from selected indicators, has been at least affected by the behavioral standards of the majority population. The author considers this to be both the cause and the consequence of the situation of the Roma population at the end of the 1980s.

In the Roma population there is a high incidence of extramarital births; in 1993, for example, 45.7% of all children born to Roma mothers were born out of wedlock, a proportion that rose in the following years. A high extramarital birth rate was seen mostly among young mothers; 20% of such births occurred among mothers younger than 18, while 13.2% of these women already had at least one child. On average, women younger than 19 in Slovakia give birth to 40% of all children born out of wedlock, most being mothers with elementary or vocational school education (Filadelfiová and Guráň, 1997). There are almost twice as many live-born children per married Roma woman compared to the rate for all Slovak women (for details see the chapter *Roma Population Demographic Trends* in this book). The demographic behavior of the Roma in Slovakia resembles that of the non-Roma population several decades ago.

ASSUMPTIONS AND
DETERMINANTS OF THE COMING
DEMOGRAPHIC REVOLUTION

The Roma are not a homogeneous group, and Roma families in Slovakia differ according

to several criteria. The Socio-Scientific Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences found that the most significant factors affecting whether Roma families showed different attributes than traditional families included: the level of integration of the Roma community in question; the size of the municipality (whether it was over 1,000 inhabitants); the concentration of Roma in the overall population (if lower than 5%); the presence of non-Roma neighbors; and a higher level of education among the Roma men (see Koteková, 1998). Others have also noted that place of abode, level of economic and cultural development, extent of positive contacts with non-Roma, and Roma concentration in individual regions, are all factors determining variations in Roma family behavior. As Kumanová (1998) and Mann (1992) stated, in the last two or three decades a demographic revolution has begun especially in the more socially and culturally developed Roma communities, and among middle-aged and younger Roma with at least secondary school education. This revolution is characterized by a falling birth rate and infant mortality, a falling average number of live-born children per mother, fewer births among women at the end of their reproductive periods (over 35 years), and fewer first-time mothers younger than 18 (Kumanová, 1998; Mann, 1999).

As Mann wrote, the decrease in births among women older than 35 could be a major force for change in the structure and size of the Roma family. He predicted the emergence of a more planned and responsible approach to parenthood. It is important to note that this demographic revolution also means gradual qualitative, not just quantitative changes, such as a more nuclear Roma family, in which the younger units of the extended family would become more independent in terms of housing, finances, and social conditions from the parent family, the extended family,

the clan, and from family bonds. An increasingly egalitarian character in partnerships can be seen as well. The manner of selecting a partner is also changing, from strict ethnic/sub-ethnic and local endogamy to exogamy (marrying outside the group) or to an endogamy that is socially determined, with the criteria for the selection of a partner being similar economic or cultural level (see Mann, 1992). Indeed, with small exceptions, the family behavior of some Roma groups today no longer differs from that of the majority population. We find characteristic features of the modern family especially among Roma who are integrated with the mainstream population, and who are more wealthy and better educated.

However, another fact is also clear. Many Roma live in traditional communities, known as Roma settlements ("romane gava"), which are concentrated, geographically segregated, and socially isolated from the local non-Roma population. In many cases, these segregated Roma settlements or segregated town and village districts are characterized by inadequate living conditions. Other handicaps are accumulating here as well, such as the high proportion of long-term unemployed people and households dependent on welfare benefits, a falling overall standard of living, and so on. These factors can make it even harder to change traditional, time-tested and functional behavior patterns. Even today we find the characteristic features of the traditional Roma family in such settlements. Tribal, family, and extended family relationships especially fulfill very important social and other functions in traditional Roma communities (i.e. common law, economic, educational, control, and identification functions).

During the last 50 years, researchers have identified two types of Roma family: the surviving multigenerational, extended fam-

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ily model, and the new nuclear family model, which is on the rise. Mann (2000) predicted that Roma with a higher standard of living would come to resemble the non-Roma more quickly, while changes in the demographic and family behavior of the disadvantaged part of the Roma population would be slower. In the end, this could drive a gradual wedge between the two Roma population groups.

CONCLUSION

The Roma family has been the object of several scientific studies; however, as different research methods were used, the results cannot be generalized. In periods when ethnic identity was denied and the Roma were assimilated, the traditional Roma culture was seen as backward, unprogressive, and a drag on development. Only the acceptance of the Roma as a minority at the beginning of the 1990s brought a change in the perception of their traditional culture and family. The issue of ethnicity, defined on the basis of language, local affinity, and anthropological features, shapes the notion of the Roma family.

The traditional Roma family was characterized by a greater number of children, a higher and more constant birth rate throughout the woman's entire reproductive period, and a lower average age of first-time mothers, than among the majority population. Cohabitation between partners was formalized in keeping with majority society law only after several years of living together, although confirmation of the bond according to common law occurred at the outset of the cohabitation. The traditional Roma family was multigenerational (large) and did not tend to be nuclear; authority was patriarchal and more or less patrilineal. Old people enjoyed a high social status in the Roma community and the Roma family, with the family thus showing

elements of gerontocracy. The traditional Roma family formed the economic and social bedrock for all its members, regardless of their economic contribution to it. The difference between the private and the communal was blurred, both in terms of earnings and the objects of everyday consumption. It was a platform for an individual's socialization, education, and upbringing in traditional culture. The function of social control was also performed within the family. There was a significant division of labor between men and women.

The family as such is a cultural universal whose characteristics change according to time and space. Until 1989, the traditional Roma culture and family were considered backward; manipulative approaches disturbed its traditional bonds from outside. Some of the family's functions were transferred to the state, such as economic security and education. The state, however, ignored the ethnic characteristics of the Roma family.

The Roma family is gradually starting to change, and in some Roma communities the seeds of a demographic revolution can be identified. Both quantitative and qualitative changes are occurring in the Roma family, among them a falling birth rate and infant mortality, a falling average number of live-born children per mother, fewer births among women at the end of their reproductive period (over 35 years), and fewer first-time mothers younger than 18. The Roma family is also becoming more nuclear, and forms of partnership and methods of selecting a partner are changing. The family behavior of some Roma groups today in fact does not differ from that of the majority population. This gradual change in Roma family behavior hinges on such factors as place of abode (whether the family lives in an urban, rural or segregated environment), the level of economic and cultural development of the

Roma community, the wealth of each family, the number of positive contacts with non-Roma, and the concentration of Roma in a specific location. On the other hand, even today in traditional Roma communities we can see the characteristic features of the traditional Roma family.

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ROMAN DŽAMBAZOVIČ and MARTINA JURÁSKOVÁ

SOCIAL EXCLUSION OF
THE ROMA IN SLOVAKIA

Summary: This chapter analyzes the content and profile of poverty in Slovakia. It describes the European concept of social exclusion, and finds links between this theory and Roma poverty in Slovakia. It analyzes the mechanisms of social exclusion, and describes the situation of poor, segregated Roma communities from the viewpoint of these mechanisms. It considers the implications of the social exclusion of the Roma, and proposes several inclusion strategies.

Key words: poverty, social exclusion, the Roma, unemployment, the labor market, dependency on welfare benefits, social distance, segregation, settlements, urban ghettos, anomy, culture of poverty, underclass.

INTRODUCTION

One of the most visible consequences of transformation in Slovakia has been the gradual creation of a new system of social inequalities and social stratification. This system is significantly different from that which existed over the 40 years of communist Czechoslovakia. The foundations of a new social structure are being laid down that resemble the basic elements, features, and relationships of social stratification systems in Western countries.

The increase in socio-economic gulfs between Slovak citizens, one of the products of the 1989 changes, has led to the "opening scissors effect", i.e. the rise and existence on the one hand of political and economic elites fenced off from the rest of society, and on the other hand of a far larger group of people dependent on state welfare and charity. The last decade has even seen an increase in individuals or social categories that seem to lie outside the social stratification system, and who are not allowed to participate in running society even to the minimum acceptable level.

As every individual's position in the structure of today's society depends primarily on his position on the labor market, the people who are most threatened by poverty are those who for various reasons are discriminated against (or excluded) on the labor market. This group includes the long term unemployed (i.e. people without jobs for over 12 months), ethnic minorities, senior citizens, and people with few qualifications. This kind of poverty involves entire social categories and is known as "new" poverty. However, poverty in Slovakia still shows the characteristics of the old-style demographic poverty. Thus, families with many members, and families with only one parent are among the groups threatened by poverty as well as those who are marginalized on the labor market.

Many of these characteristics apply in spades to a large portion of the Roma population living in Slovakia. Although official data and information on the situation of the Roma in Slovakia are insufficient, findings to date

have proven a significant correlation between ethnic affinity and poverty. The information available shows that the Roma form a significant share of poor households compared to the non-Roma population. The Roma, in fact, are among the major victims of the transformation process from the command to the market economy. One of the goals of this study is to identify the reasons for and consequences of the Roma's fate.

It is characteristic of the poverty of the Roma that it is related to their social exclusion. Unveiling the connection between Roma poverty and their social exclusion, its forms and mechanisms, is another objective of this chapter. The authors also intend to explore some possibilities of social inclusion, i.e. possible mechanisms and strategies for re-integrating the most endangered groups of Roma into civil society.

CHANGES IN POVERTY AFTER 1989

Before 1989, the state tried to deny the existence of poverty, as well as to eliminate it.[1] In abolishing the legitimacy of wealth, the legitimacy of poverty was eliminated as well. Poverty had no status, so society did not offer the poor any appropriate rules of behavior. Poverty at the time showed features of so-called **old** or **demographic poverty** (for details see Mareš, 1999; Možný and Mareš, 1994; Džambazovič, 2000). It consisted especially of temporary, general poverty that most Slovaks experienced for short periods of time. This poverty was mostly a private, individual, and temporary experience at a certain stage of a person's life cycle (or just a brief episode in life). It usually did not involve entire social categories based on status or class, but on the other hand did involve nearly the entire population. It was more of a poverty of society than poverty in society.

Long-term poverty affected only certain minor social categories, altogether about 1% of people in the former Czechoslovakia. Besides people living on the outskirts of society (released prisoners, alcoholics etc.), it affected households with four or more children (especially in Slovakia), old pensioners living alone, disabled people without work in their productive years, and single, divorced, or abandoned mothers with children.

After 1989, the poverty profile in Slovakia changed and shifted as inequalities rose. Even though poverty among Slovak people still shows signs of the old poverty, on can already see the emergence of various characteristics of **new poverty**. This kind of poverty is usually connected with certain social categories and particular regions, and may for many people become a permanent state; it is usually related to one's success on the labor market.

In the competition between market forces, we see that certain social categories have unequal chances of acquiring employment on the labor market. For various reasons, many people occupy a marginal position on the labor market, or are completely excluded from it. While work as a legitimate source of income gives people the greatest possible economic independence and self-fulfillment, having one's access to the primary labor market restricted is one of the most significant risk factors for poverty and social exclusion.

Different research and censuses have shown that households where the main provider is unemployed face an almost five times greater risk of poverty than those with a breadwinner. Similarly, the highest poverty risk rate and the highest chance of finding oneself in the lowest income bracket is among unemployed people, those with few or no qualifications, families with many dependents, one-parent families, and families living in the less

developed regions of Slovakia (see *Slovak Republic…*, 2001 for details).

These facts mean that the Roma ethnic minority is gravely threatened by poverty. Many Roma in Slovakia are not well educated, and face a high rate of (long term) unemployment. They are concentrated in marginalized regions, and many live in segregated locations with many children (see Radičová, 2001; Vašečka. and Džambazovič, 2000; *Slovak Republic…*, 2001).

Even today, poverty is generally a taboo topic in Slovakia. In official documents and statistics, the phrase "people in material need or social dependence" is used instead of the more direct term "poor people". Poverty in Slovakia refers primarily to a lack of financial and material resources, a situation in which one's resources do not allow one to live on the "subsistence level" affording the most essential needs as stipulated by law. Poverty represents an exclusion from access to goods and services, and is connected with a lack or imbalance in one's material resources. Social exclusion, on the other hand, is a far broader concept than poverty, and denotes not only a lack of material resources and the inability to take part in consumer society, but also insufficient, unequal or even zero participation in social, economic, political, and cultural life (Radičová, 2001).

THE ROMA: THE SOCIAL CATEGORY MOST THREATENED BY SOCIAL EXCLUSION

As an ethnic group, the Roma have always been among the poorest classes in society, even in the egalitarian communist society of pre-1989 Czechoslovakia. This fact has deep historical roots. The prevailing feature of Roma poverty was and still is its link to so-cial exclusion. The exclusion of the Roma in Slovakia stems from a combination of historical, cultural, social, and spatial factors.

Since the 12th century, when the Roma came to Central Europe, they have met intolerance both from the common people and the law. The approach that the communist regime took to the Roma ethnic group was strongly ideological. Because the Roma had different customs, cultural traditions, values and standards, and because they also lived at a low social and economic level, the regime considered the Roma "unadaptable", and thus subjected them to various strategies to eliminate their different culture and ethnic identity. These strategies were supposed to result in the gradual assimilation of the Roma into the majority society (Holecová, 2002).

"The basic doctrine of the communist regime towards the Roma was based on the Marxist prediction that by improving the social conditions of the Roma, their behavior could be changed, and the negative phenomena connected to their affinity to a marginalized group of citizens would be overcome. The communist regime thus expected that if their standard of living were brought into line with that of the rest of the population, the reason for their 'differentness' would be removed." (Radičová, 2001, p. 56)

Despite the fact that the economic and social status of the Roma improved somewhat during the communist period (e.g. their rate of employment and education level increased, illiteracy was eradicated, their health care situation improved, etc.), traditional values, standards, and behavior patterns still played an important role in traditional Roma communities. The institutions of the majority population could not find an equivalent for the arrangements of the Roma community, which were based on blood ties (Radičová, 2001). The process of assimilation thus did

not lead to the Roma accepting and identifying themselves with the institutional mechanisms of mainstream culture, but often led to these mechanisms being used by the Roma for their own benefit (Holecová, 2002).

From the ideological point of view, the state acted paternalistically towards all citizens. The regime's effort to connect the citizen directly to the state resulted in a strong dependence on the state. However, social policy, by emphasizing the generosity of the state as the basis for growing social security, encouraged passivity, resignation, and loss of faith in the purpose of personal striving among some individuals (Holecová, 2002). Under the influence of strengthening assimilation pressures, the Roma developed a strong client relationship towards the state, which became a partial substitute for traditional and community solidarity.

The disintegration of this paternalistic system and the beginning of market democracy turned the Roma into the biggest victims of the transformation process. The Roma[2] are now poorer than any other group, and their situation is worse than that of any others from the viewpoint of any basic social indicator, including education, health, living conditions, and access to job opportunities on the labor market and within civil society (*Poverty and Welfare…*, 2002).

SOCIAL EXCLUSION MECHANISMS

The concept of social exclusion is gradually gaining currency in the European social discourse, and is becoming a dominant paradigm in discussions on poverty in EU countries. This preference for the social exclusion concept is part of an effort to capture the change in character and the new features of poverty over the last decades of the 20th century. These changes undoubtedly include the following: the persistence of poverty over time, its spatial concentration, and at the same time dependence on the welfare state and the disintegration of traditional social institutions (Room et al, 1990).

The social exclusion concept thus offers a far more complex and broad view than what has gone before. The advantage of using it is that poverty is not reduced to the most frequently used monetary (insufficient income) or consumption dimensions (insufficient consumption). It shifts the emphasis from the financial handicap to the multidimensional nature of poverty by identifying some of its different consequences (Abrahamson 1995; Atkinson 2000).

According to Strobel (1996), social exclusion is perceived as a systematic process of marginalization, isolation, and weakening of social links, which can be felt both on the personal and social group levels. It means exclusion from participation in the common life of society.

Berghman (1995) also draws attention to a significant fact, stating that social exclusion is currently perceived as a consequence of the failure of society rather than the failure of the individual. Most at risk are those individuals or groups with weakened ties to at least one of the four levels on which individuals and groups are integrated into society: democracy and law (which support civil integration), the labor market (supports economic integration), the social state (supports social integration), and the family and community (support personal integration).[3] Exclusion from one integration element usually means exclusion from the other elements as well.

Social exclusion involves a very diverse set of social realities. The following are some of the forms and mechanisms of social exclusion:

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- **Economic exclusion** means exclusion from the standard of living and chances that are normal in society. Ways out of this situation include the individual's position on the labor market, his consumption level and the size of his income, the amount of property he has, his standard of living, etc.
- **Cultural exclusion** means denial of an individual or a group's right to participate in the culture of society and to share its cultural capital, education, and culture. Cultural exclusion can be identified on the basis of the level of education achieved and the approach to education.
- **Symbolic exclusion.** Social and cultural identities are, to a large extent, symbolic identities. Group membership is symbolically confirmed or refused. Symbolic exclusion is associated with the stigmatization of individuals and social groups that are perceived as different, deviant, or strange. It can be identified on the basis of the level of social distance, and the existence of prejudices or stereotypes.
- **Spatial exclusion** means the increased concentration of excluded persons in certain geographical areas. Within Roma communities we can identify segregated Roma residential areas (settlements, urban neighborhoods) as well as the phenomenon of **double marginalization.**
- These forms and mechanisms of social exclusion often manifest themselves in **exclusion from access to social services, health care, and social welfare**.
- It is possible to point out other forms of social exclusion: **political exclusion**, which means the denial of civic, political, and fundamental human rights; **exclusion from mobility in physical terms, and in the social hierarchy**; **social exclusion**, which in the narrower sense prevents people from sharing a certain social status or social institutions; and **exclusion from safety and exposure to increased risk.**
- Social exclusion mechanisms can be **psychological** as well, and be accompanied by feelings of shame, diffidence, and individual failure, as well as uncertainty and vulnerability.

In the sections below, the authors deal with those types of social exclusion that are the most relevant to the Roma in Slovakia.

ECONOMIC EXCLUSION

Economic exclusion is closely related to exclusion from or on the labor market. This type of exclusion is often the primary source of poverty, and in the end causes exclusion from the standard of living and the chances that are normal in a certain society.

The disintegration of the communist system, which required everyone to work and supervised labor integration, caused the position of the Roma to become even more marginal due to market competition. Bearing in mind that most Roma worked in jobs requiring no or few qualifications, the first stage of job cuts at factories hit them much harder than other social groups. Hanzelová (2000) states that from 1990 to 1991, Roma unemployment grew almost tenfold.

One's position on the labor market, together with one's status as an employee and the level of education achieved are the most important factors shaping how an individual is incorporated into the structure of society. Several facts related to the Roma contribute to their marginalized position on the labor market:
- low education and level of qualifications;
- latent discrimination against the Roma on the part of the majority population or employers (e.g. their reputation for being unreliable, lacking work ethics, discipline and motivation);

- poor housing, living conditions, and health;
- high rate of (long term) unemployment and the related devastation of Roma human capital and the loss of work habits (for details see the chapter *Roma and the Labor Market* in this book).

These handicaps are accumulating in many Roma, and when combined with the fact they may live in a marginalized region and a so-cially and geographically isolated settlement, neither individuals nor communities can be expected to emancipate themselves from their marginalized position. Roma who live in such locations generally lack job oppor-tunities, due especially to their limited social contacts outside the settlement, contacts that might help the inhabitants of the settlement find a job. Social networks and links are very strong in segregated communities, but the fact they are locally homogenous limits the information they can provide.

In some Roma communities, unemployment is virtually 100%. These are Slovakia's "valleys of hunger", territories with "visible isles of poverty" (Vašečka and Džambazovič, 2000).

Roma unemployment is usually long-term unemployment, and is accompanied by reli-ance on state help. According to an estimate by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and family (1997), in the second half of the 1990s roughly 80% of the entire Roma population was dependent on welfare benefits.

The high rate reliance on welfare benefits among the Roma was confirmed by research by the SPACE foundation and the World Bank.[4] Research conducted by IVO/UNDP[5] showed a significant share of welfare ben-efits in the overall income of Roma families (see Graph 1).

One of the economic results of Slovakia's high unemployment rate is that society has to carry a heavier burden in the form of increased taxes. As the Roma make up a large number of the unemployed, unemployment among the Roma is viewed very negatively by the ma-

Graph 1
The most important sources of income in Roma households

	Legend
⬜	Social assistance
▦	Child support (including paid maternity leave)
▨	Occasional job(s) without contract
▥	Pensions
▤	Regular wage job with contract
▨	Unemployment Benefit
▦	Regular wage job without contract
⊡	Other
⬛	Remittances from people outside the household
▧	Private maintenance (e.g. from ex-spouse or father of children)
▦	Occasional job(s) with contract
⬜	Self-employment/own business

Values: 392, 358, 172, 101, 57, 51, 35, 24, 13, 12, 9, 7

Source: IVO/UNDP, 2001.

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Graph 2
Three main reasons for the Roma's difficulties in acquiring a job
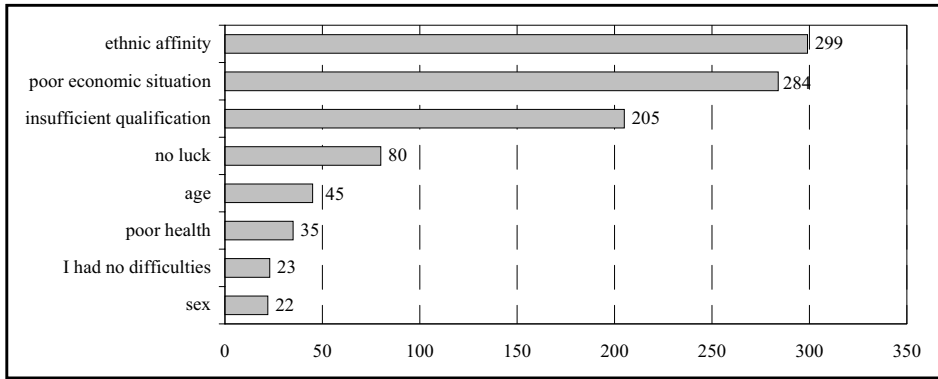
jority, which further increases the social distance between the non-Roma and the Roma.

Public opinion polls suggest that the Roma are regarded by the majority population as a category of society that is itself responsible for losing their jobs because of their negative character traits, such as laziness, lack of willpower, low work ethic, lack of interest in education, etc.

On the other hand, research focusing on the Roma has shown that the Roma claim to make great efforts to acquire satisfactory employment. Radičová (2001, p. 129), for example, based on talks with Roma (World Bank/SPACE, December 2000 – March 2001), noted their willingness to work in their statements: "if you have a job, it is easier for you to live, you are healthier and have more energy – life is better"; "when I had a job it had a good influence on the family, as there was at least some certainty"; "we were glad to be able to do something meaningful during the day, after two or three years you become unaccustomed to working, and then it is really hard". Many Roma labeled their permanent state of unemployment and uncertainty as the most demoralizing aspect of their lives, and expressed sadness at the lack of job opportu-

nities. The Roma themselves consider the following as the most important reasons they cannot get a job: the fact that they belong to the Roma ethnic group (discrimination from non Roma), and the generally poor economic situation of the country, which they use to explain the lack of jobs for people with low qualifications (see Graph 2).

SPATIAL EXCLUSION

At present, the social exclusion and poverty of the Roma are accompanied by their spatial exclusion. This type of exclusion results in the concentration of excluded individuals and social collectives in certain, usually disadvantaged geographical areas.

Slovakia has lingering regional disparities and marginalized territories (Falťan, Gajdoš and Pašiak, 1995).[6] which, compared to the rest of the country, are significantly disadvantaged. The distribution of the Roma across Slovakia is also very uneven, with the majority (about two thirds) of Roma gathered in these marginalized regions.

Another special feature of the spatial distribution of the Roma, unlike that of the major-

ity population, is the prevalence of settlements as the most common type of habitation. While most ethnic Slovaks live in cities (at the beginning of the 1990s it was 58%), the majority of Roma still live in the countryside (Vašečka and Džambazovič, 2000).

A frequent phenomenon in Roma communities is the segregation (both geographical and social) of Roma settlements, some of which arose naturally, others as the result of the state's policy of segregation, both during the communist period and at present. As a consequence of this segregation, several types of Roma habitation were formed, differing in their degree of isolation and geographical position (urban/rural).

Approximately 25% of all Roma live in segregated rural settlements, many situated in the marginalized regions of southern and eastern Slovakia. The actual number of Roma settlements is hard to estimate due to problems in counting the Roma population and defining the term "settlement". At the moment, the number of Roma settlements and villages where the Roma represent more than half of the population is growing steadily for various reasons, such as the migration of Roma from towns to the country where the cost of living is lower, and the movement of Roma into originally non Roma villages.

The lack of access to utilities and public services is another typical feature of Roma settlements in marginalized regions. In geographically isolated settlements, there are frequently no public services, or access to them is limited (i.e. shops, schools, preschool establishments, health care, post office, etc.). There is often no electricity, no running water, no sewage system, no waste disposal, and no proper access road. The poor and excluded inhabitants must overcome many obstacles in gaining access to

social services, due not least to the increasing cost and decreasing efficiency of these services (*Poverty and Welfare*…, 2002). In many cases, both the availability and the quality of services are limited. The causes are geographic segregation, communication problems between the providers and users of the service, social isolation, mutual mistrust, and lack of information.

By living in marginalized regions and at the same time in segregated and isolated settlements within such regions, the Roma experience what we call "double marginalization". This term denotes worse living conditions, as measured by economic and social indicators. The weakened and limited potential of the marginalized region, combined with the absence of self-help, self-organization and activation practices (exacerbated by self-exclusion), demand that a special approach be taken, including support and social development programs focusing on both the marginalized region and the marginalized, segregated settlements it contains. Double marginalization cannot be overcome by individual living strategies, as it is accompanied by multiple dependence, both material and social (Radičová, 2001).

Isolated and segregated areas inhabited by the Roma can be found in both rural (Roma settlements) and urban environments. These latter consist of urban ghettos, which can involve an entire town district or neighborhood, or just a certain street. These segregated areas, whether located on the outskirts or in the centers of towns, are treated as pathological by the majority population, which fears and avoids them. This "environment of the poor" (segregated and isolated settlements and parts of towns that at the same time suffer economic and social isolation) becomes a habitat that society does not control and does not want to control, a place that "orderly" citizens (often including the

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police) never visit. These are so-called "no go" areas: "no go in" for the luckier people living outside them, and "no go out" for their inhabitants (Bauman, 1995). This is why we can say that besides spatial segregation, the Roma also face social segregation. Those living in the segregated settlements or urban ghettos find themselves in a state of social isolation, and the effect of their concentration further emphasizes and strengthens the barrier between them and the others (Dahrendorf, 1991). To be restricted to a certain area with no chance of escaping considerably limits people's opportunities in the current global and mobile world.

The most frequent characteristics of segregated Roma locations include high (long term) unemployment, dependence on welfare, inadequate housing and hygiene, poor nutrition, an inferior living environment (e.g. ecologically contaminated), excessive consumption of alcohol and tobacco, and so on. In the end, all of these factors contribute to the poor health of the inhabitants (lower average life span, higher rate of infant mortality, prevalence of infectious diseases, etc.). Another problem is the growing number of dwellings within the settlements, as often neither the houses nor the land on which they are built are owned by their inhabitants (see Vašečka and Džambazovič, 2000; Radičová, 2001 for details).

Given the high degree of Roma segregation, their poverty is not scattered but is concentrated in one area, and thus is highly visible. Their spatial segregation is closely related to their minimal (or rather symbolic) contacts with the external environment. The more homogenous and endogenous the community, the more it becomes fenced off from the outside. On the other hand, individual families are more open to the influence of the Roma community, which becomes a control mechanism. It specifies preferred living and

working strategies, everyday behavior patterns, and determines reproductive behavior. The place and location of abode also influence the Roma's education (or rather, their perception of its importance), as well as their socio-economic and socio-occupational status (Vašečka and Džambazovič, 2000).

The cultural, social, and economic homogeneity of the Roma also has other negative consequences, one of the most serious of which is the absence of positive role models who could "destigmatize" the Roma's marginal status (Holecová, 2002). Poverty, (long term) unemployment, and reliance on help from the state often become the norm, and contribute to the formation of a culture of poverty. The concentration of poverty, together with segregation, causes social isolation, reduces direct links with the majority society to a minimum, and strengthens the barriers between the Roma and the majority.

As Radičová (2001) wrote, the basis for achieving social security is social contacts, which are the only possible way of being incorporated into the social order. However, the segregated Roma are not capable of ensuring their participation in informal social networks outside their communities. Their inability to participate in informal networks (see Granovetter, 1973 for details) to a large extent limits their access to basic resources. It makes them dependent, reliant on society. This dependency is of a material nature in the first place, as their survival depends on welfare benefits and other institutions. However, there is an equal threat of social dependence – dependence on others.

Double and multiple dependence prevents any activation and participation, and lead to a loss of self-confidence and self-esteem. This equation is strengthened and confirmed in everyday interactions with members of the (largely homogeneous) community on the

one hand, and on the other hand the impossibility of interaction with the majority ("their surroundings reject the Roma") and the tendency to self exclusion from such interaction ("the Roma reject their surroundings").

CULTURAL EXCLUSION

Cultural exclusion is the denial of an individual or a group's right to participate in the culture of society, or to share its cultural capital or education. The basic manifestations of cultural exclusion include the impossibility of using the Roma language in education, attempts to culturally assimilate the Roma, and the absence of a multicultural approach or ethnocentric view of the group's culture. One of the main indicators of the Roma's cultural exclusion is their exclusion from access to education, which in the end has an impact on their low overall level of schooling.

The Roma tend to be less educated in comparison with other segments of Slovak society. As for the level of education achieved, a significant number of Roma have not completed elementary school. While during the communist regime the level of Roma education slowly increased, a survey in 1990 showed that as high as 56% of men and 59% of women among the Roma had not finished elementary school (see the chapter *The Roma in the Educational System and the Alternative Education Projects* in this book). This hurts their chances on the labor market. Research shows that the level of integration or segregation plays an important role in this situation.

The inclusion of the Roma into the cultural (education) system is limited by several barriers. One of the most serious is the language barrier. The Roma from segregated communities usually speak some version of Romany

in combination with a certain Slovak dialect. Differences in their use and command of Slovak are influenced by the level of the community's integration or segregation, i.e. the frequency of contacts with the majority. Ignorance or insufficient command of the teaching language, so frequent in segregated communities, handicaps Roma children from the moment they enroll at school.

The frequent failures of Roma children in the first grade cause them to reject education provided by the Slovak school system. For Roma children who live in settlements, coming to school means entering an unknown, strange, and highly formalized and institutionalized environment, an experience for which they have not been prepared by their upbringing (Holecová, 2002). Moreover, this system puts great demands on them, requiring homework and help from the parents. The parents, however, are usually not able (having minimal education themselves and lacking money) or not willing (they do not understand the direct link between education and finding a job) to help their children and motivate them to become as educated as possible. Their cultural exclusion deepens as the Roma children are labeled incapable, incorrigible, and below average by their teachers, non-Roma classmates, and the entire majority population.

Yet another barrier that children from segregated settlements have to overcome is the poor quality and the ethnic homogeneity of the schools they attend. Ethnically homogeneous schools arise as the result of a natural process. If the proportion of Roma in a given location or school is high, the majority population parents tend to send their children to more distant schools attended by mostly non-Roma children. This means that schools in areas with large Roma populations are homogenous, which denies the Roma frequent contacts with the majority and positive social

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role models. The equipment of such schools is also often below standard and unsuitable. On top of this, Roma children are increasingly placed in "special schools" for mentally handicapped children, often without justification.

Children from segregated Roma settlements are thus handicapped many times over: by their absolute poverty, by the poor equipment of their households and low standard of housing, by the fact they are unprepared to attend school (they lack the elementary skills, knowledge, hygienic habits, communication skills, etc.), and by the low support (both material and spiritual) they receive from their surroundings and families. At the same time, they are entering an environment that views them negatively, and we know that children tend to express their dislikes very directly and candidly. In their new environment, they receive no help to become acclimatized, and are thus often excluded and rejected (Holecová, 2002).

In a world that revolves around survival and material security, education is seen by the Roma as an obligation towards the state, rather than an obligation towards their children. Especially in segregated settlements, where most people are long-term unemployed regardless of their education, there is little proof that education does pay. As good education is quite expensive nowadays, and is a cost that pays off many years later, many Roma do not grasp the relationship between making the investment and the profit (a good job) it can bring.

However, failure to achieve the minimum required level of education eliminates the chance of success on the labor market. The lower one's education, the less opportunity one has of finding a job. Many Roma do not grasp the direct relationship between education and employment because they see many individuals around them who were unable to find a job despite having completed secondary or higher education. Most Roma from segregated communities have only completed elementary school, or failed to complete their secondary school education. These educational categories of people represent the highest ratio of unemployed people in Slovakia (see Table 1). It is becoming increasingly difficult for unskilled workers to find a job, partly because demand for low-skills work is dropping, and partly because employing an unqualified person is more expensive than employing someone with higher qualifications, due largely to various non-wage labor costs and lower labor productivity (*Poverty and Welfare…*, 2002, p. 36).

Table 1
Structure of registered unemployed according to level of education achieved (%, as of December 31, 2000)

Level of education achieved	% share of jobless according to level of education achieved
no education, incomplete elementary education	2.5
completed elementary education	27.0
trade school certificate	34.7
secondary school (without A-levels)	3.7
secondary trade school (with graduating certificate)	8.6
general secondary school (with A-levels)	4.2
completed vocational school	16.3
higher vocational school	0.3

Source: National Labour Office, 2000.

SYMBOLIC EXCLUSION

Symbolic exclusion is an expression of the marginalization and stigmatization of some social groups by the public. It does not consist of real and active exclusion, but rather verbal exclusion and exclusion through various degrees of rejection and repulsion. Basically, any group perceived by the others as different may become undesirable and be verbally rejected (Holecová, 2002).

An example of symbolic exclusion with practical consequences is the differentiation between the deserving and undeserving poor at different times in history. This symbolic designation expresses:
a) the level of solidarity with the people excluded;
b) an opinion on the causes of their exclusion. It expresses whether the exclusion is believed to be due to the nature of society (inequality, injustice, structure of ownership or power, etc.), to problems in its functioning (failures in redistribution, decline in solidarity), or whether the fault is thought to lie with the victims (immorality, laziness, irresponsibility).

Differences between the cultures and ways of life of the Roma and non-Roma are the cause of social tension between these groups. The everyday life of many Roma in Slovakia (especially in traditional segregated settlements) is still driven by traditional Roma habits and standards, which in some areas conflict with the standards of the majority society. Problems related to coexistence between the Roma and the non-Roma result mainly from the special position of the Roma as an ethnic minority, one that visibly differs from the majority population and other minorities in its standard of living, lifestyle, thought, and culture. The differences exhibited by the Roma are viewed negatively by others. A social gulf, deepened on both sides by deep-rooted stereotypes and prejudice, thus forms between the Roma and the rest of the population. The prevailing opinion among the majority population is that most Roma do not or cannot accept social norms, and resist the majority's attempts to integrate them. These factors lead to the social exclusion and social isolation of the Roma (Vašečka, 2001b).

Public opinion polls focusing on the attitude of the majority towards the Roma were not held until after 1989. All revealed a high level of social distance between the majority and the Roma minority, which does not seem to alter with time. Various research has also shown that this social distance towards the Roma is exhibited by all classes of people regardless of age, education, sex, type of economic activity, religion, and economic or political orientation (see the chapter *Relationship of the Majority Population to the Roma* in this book).

Research suggests that society evaluates the Roma through the lens of prejudice, stereotypes, and simplified categories encouraged by the media; personal experience with the Roma is not the principle source of majority prejudices. This fact works as a self-fulfilling prophecy – i.e. a false statement that becomes true by being spoken, because it in turn influences the behavior of the people it concerns. The non-Roma's way of relating towards the Roma is one of the main barriers to their integration into society (Vašečka, 2001b).

Latent forms of discrimination against the Roma on the part of employers, as well as the stereotypes and prejudices of majority society, are yet another factor increasing the risk of unemployment among the Roma and deepening their marginalization on the labor market. The anti-Roma mood in society is also backed by the behavior of majority rep-

resentatives – state bureaucrats, municipal employees, police, and medical personnel. These prejudices and negative attitudes are often abused by Slovak politicians, whose populist statements are seen by the public as justifying their own opinions. In the end, this increases the majority population's rejection of the Roma. Latent racism that takes the form of indifference to or silent approval of open forms of racism is socially far more dangerous (Holecová, 2002).

The absence of positive role models for the Roma is not real, but rather artificially created. In municipalities where the social gulf between the two groups is not so large, mutual acceptance and communication is much better. As there are no conflicts in these locations, neither local mayors nor the Roma have any interest in making the issue public. On the contrary, they consider it their success if the "Roma issue" is not mentioned in relation to their village, allowing the problems to remain hidden. The public, on the other hand, perceives the Roma mainly as problematic and socially dependent individuals (Mann, 2000, p. 20).

POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION

The communist regime to a large extent destroyed the country's traditional Roma communities. The Roma lost most of their original values, traditions and habits. On the other hand, the state through its repressive policy of assimilation somehow prevented the Roma from internalizing the culture of mainstream society. The minority thus found itself in a kind of cultural vacuum, where there were no values, standards, or models of behavior they could consider their own or lean on.

By weakening the links between the individual and the traditional community, the communists at the same time strengthened the individual's dependence on the state, as a client towards his patron. The breakdown of the communist regime and the social change that accompanied it were thus more disorienting to the Roma than to the majority population. From one day to the next, the Roma lost the social security they had acquired during communism, and their social status declined steeply. At the moment, the social exclusion concept is very helpful in describing the position of Roma living in segregated communities.

One of the most notable and visible consequences of the social exclusion of the Roma is their absolute poverty. This poverty in segregated settlements naturally causes the Roma to focus on mere survival and securing their primary needs (food, drink, clothing, housing, and heat). This focus on survival comes at the expense of living, as concentration on the bare necessities makes it impossible to improve one's living conditions. Basic material goods are at the same time a bridge, a prerequisite for achieving social security and securing secondary needs, such as self-identity, self-affirmation, education, culture, etc. (Radičová, 2001).

The Roma's income is usually insufficient to satisfy even their basic needs (periods of starvation are no exception), because the long-term unemployed receive only 50% of the subsistence minimum benefit – that is, half of what the government calculates the average person needs to afford the strict necessities of existence. Considering the prevalence of long-term unemployment in Roma communities, welfare benefits are often the only income.

The amendment to the 1998 Law on Social Assistance, in cutting the benefits paid to the long term unemployed to 50% of the subsistence minimum, aimed to motivate people to

look for jobs and prevent abuse of welfare benefits. However, Roma from segregated settlements are extremely disadvantaged, due both to the absence of job opportunities where they live, and to their reputation for being unreliable, which makes it impossible for them to find a job, despite their interest in working.

On the other hand, the amendment failed to reverse the demotivating effect of welfare benefits, because the difference between the minimum wage and the subsistence minimum is still not large enough to make people start looking for jobs and accept work at the minimum wage. In families where the education level of the adults is low and the number of children is high, the inclination of the adults to stay home without work is quite rational, as their total income is the same whatever they do (i.e. child benefits and other welfare add up to the same income as working wages; see *Poverty and Welfare...*, 2002). The social network has no mechanisms that might allow it to reduce welfare benefits gradually after those receiving them find a job, which might stimulate them to remain on the labor market. On the contrary, the existing system actually penalizes those who do find a job.

The welfare system and the lack of job opportunities rob people of motivation to look for jobs, and create a trap of dependence and poverty. This is accompanied by feelings of despair, degradation, and marginality, which are exacerbated by life in an isolated and segregated community fenced off from its surroundings, as there is no way escape. The situation is especially critical among young Roma who have no work habits, and whose descent into the social network has a cultural and ethical dimension. In an environment with 80 to 100% unemployment, dependence ceases to be a visible stigma, but instead

becomes the norm or even a rational behavior pattern – the only possible way of adapting to the situation. Thus are the conditions formed for the creation of a subculture of unemployed Roma juveniles who perceive this status as normal. If the current situation leads to a transfer of poverty from one generation to the next, the Roma could find themselves in a permanently disadvantaged position.

Many experts have warned (e.g. Radičová, 2001; Vašečka and Džambazovič, 2000; Holecová, 2002) that the creation of a culture of poverty and the feeling of being at risk may increase mistrust towards the majority population, may boost aggression and crime, and may cause the Roma to lose respect for morals, values, and formal authorities, all of which may ultimately lead to lawlessness and the total breakdown of communities. If these developments do occur, they could contribute to the formation of a special "underclass" of people.

The term "underclass" may be understood as designating people who are permanently or long-term dependent on the welfare state. They have no job earnings, and their only income is welfare benefits and poor relief; their position in society is more that of clients of the welfare state than of citizens. In the broader and less ideological meaning of the term, the underclass also includes people who are permanently active on the secondary or informal labor market. The underclass environment is perceived by the majority population as lawless and characterized by total resignation, lack of respect for authorities, little social control, reliance on benefits, and loss of the work ethic.

As for crime, in general it is more common among minorities (with few exceptions), and may be up to several times higher than

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among the majority population. This is not some kind of deviation expressing their ethnic and psychological characteristics, but a sociological and socio-psychological dependency (Šišková, 2001).

According to statistics published by the Central Police Evidence Body of the Banská Bystrica police force (CPEB BB PF), Roma have a significantly greater per capita share of criminal offences than the majority population (see Table 2). However, the data are not entirely reliable, as it is not known on what basis the police determined that the culprit was Roma. We should note, however, that among the Roma, misdemeanors and less serious crimes are the most common. In keeping with their low position in society, the most common type of crime among the Roma is petty property crime.

Considering the many disadvantages the Roma face, in explaining Roma crime we can use Merton's concept of anomy (anomy is a state of lawlessness characterized by drug use, heightened crime, teenage pregnancies, unstable families, lack of faith in authorities, inherited poverty, and marginalization). According to Merton (2000), anomy can grow in a society if there is a contradiction between generally recognized objectives and time tested methods used to achieve them. A typical adaptation strategy is innovation, which is basically a deviant behavior by which individuals try to find other ways to achieve goals than well established means that are unavailable to them.

Anomy is one way to explain increased Roma crime. Other possible causes include the following:
• a high unemployment rate that leads to "social crime";
• the 40 years of communist rule, which almost destroyed the Roma culture and robbed people of their sense of ethics and respect for the law;
• the fact that the public expects the Roma to be criminals; it is a known fact that people tend to behave (in both the positive and negative senses of word) in accordance with the expectations of their surroundings – with their behavior, the Roma are only fulfilling the expectations of the majority population;
• ignorance of the law among the Roma;
• the permanent tension or even hostility between the majority population and the Roma (see Vašečka, 2001a; Říčan, 1998; Vašečka and Džambazovič, 2000).

Despite the fact that the level of crime, as one of the indicators of anomy, is much higher among the Roma, we cannot say that the Roma environment is anomic solely on the basis of this one indicator. We can only make certain assumptions about this phenomenon. People who are socially excluded have no reason to be loyal to the values espoused by the majority society, which after all has excluded them. Pathologic behavior may result, which in turn can result in total anomy. This phenomenon is especially apparent in Roma housing estates and urban ghettos, where in the anonymous environment of the city, tra-

Table 2
Share of total crimes committed by the Roma

Year	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Total crimes	46,398	69,872	88,157	105,060	146,125	137,713	114,579	99,402	92,395	93,859	94,016	88,817
Solved cases	40,723	40,288	43,863	44,760	52,981	51,327	49,153	45,116	43,642	45,658	47,067	47,107
Roma culprits	8,775	10,969	12,599	12,496	13,734	13,058	11,064	10,039	9,847	9,671	8,981	8,709

Source: CPEB BB PF.

ditional standards of coexistence and social control cease to be valid.

CONCLUSION – STRATEGIES OF INCLUSION

Poverty and social exclusion are becoming a Europe-wide problem, as can be seen in the fact that the struggle against poverty and social exclusion has lately formed the main part of EU program documents. Strategic goals have gradually been laid down that accept the key role of social policy. The role of social policy is to alleviate economic and social inequalities, support social cohesion, and connect the economic and social spheres. The strategic aim of addressing poverty and social exclusion is intended to support the process of social inclusion through the areas of social protection, employment, health care, housing, and education. Social inclusion should be supported through the following:

- making employment a right and a possibility for all;
- ensuring an income and resources that are adequate for a dignified life;
- removing disadvantages in the field of education;
- protecting family solidarity and children's rights;
- providing suitable housing for all;
- guaranteeing equal access to quality services (health care, law, welfare, culture, transport, etc.);
- improving the quality of the services provided;
- reviving areas with accumulated disadvantages (Valná, 2000).

In the end, social inclusion strategies should help ensure employment and access to goods, rights, and services for all. They should prevent exclusion from society, aid the most vulnerable individuals, and mobilize the cooperation of all important parts of society. It is clear that social inclusion involves a complicated system of measures in those areas of social and economic life that carry the greatest risk of poverty and social exclusion.

The analysis of the social exclusion of the Roma in Slovakia raises several questions, one of the most important of which is how to prepare an effective strategy of social inclusion for the poorest and most threatened segments of the Roma population.

There is no simple answer to this question. The issue of social exclusion and poverty has so many dimensions that solving them requires a whole range of strategies and measures. Furthermore, identifying possible solutions to the issue is a complex task requiring much time and the cooperation of many actors, both Roma and non-Roma, in all sectors and on all of levels of society.

One of the most important players in eliminating the social exclusion of the Roma is the state. Besides the moral imperative of having the state participate in solving the problems of the poorest part of the population, no solution can succeed without the power and funds of the state. Nevertheless, the government has only recently begun addressing this issue. Activities bringing positive and concrete results were launched only recently, and most were related to the Office of the Slovak Government Representative for Roma Communities (for details see the chapter *The Roma as a Topic of Debate for Political Parties* in this book).

However, the problem that the Office is grappling with is very complicated, and we cannot expect visible results soon. History has shown that forced assimilation, in ignoring the special characteristics of Roma culture, stands no chance of success, no matter how

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altruistic the motive. The true integration and inclusion of the Roma, along with a tangible increase in their standard of living, can only be achieved through gradual, non-violent change that takes into account the desire of the Roma to retain their cultural identity.

The effect of the various strategies depends on the availability of profound knowledge and precise data on the social exclusion of the Roma. It is thus vital that social and scientific research be supported, culminating in a database of Roma settlements in Slovakia that provides detailed information on infrastructure, degree of integration or segregation, the social and economic potential of settlements, etc.

The question remains whether these strategies should focus on the entire Roma population, or just its poorest segment; on the poorer parts of the population, or the population as a whole. Goal-directed programs can be tailored to the specific needs of the Roma; however, they can also divide communities and cause resentment, as some groups receive preferential treatment. The more general programs are easier to manage, are more popular with politicians, and can help integrate individual communities. On the other hand, these programs usually do not reach the poorest and the most isolated Roma settlements (*Slovak Republic*…, 2001).

The answer to this dilemma should be a combined approach. Strategies of social inclusion for the Roma should be put into effect on all levels of society, and include universal, regional, local and individual efforts. The various forms of poverty in Roma settlements require close cooperation and interventions that go beyond the framework of individual ministries.

The state should adopt measures to improve the living conditions of the Roma and increase the standard of living of the entire population. The positive effects would then be felt especially in the poorest segments.

After examining the level and type of poverty in Slovakia, while focusing on the Roma population, the analysts of the World Bank proposed the following solutions:
- lowering unemployment and increasing demand for work through economic growth and the reforms that support it;
- lowering non-wage costs – high income taxes and non-wage labor costs discourage employers from employing unskilled laborers, as the cost of employing such workers is much higher than the cost of employing highly qualified personnel.
- reforming the system of welfare benefits, which would increase the motivation to work and lower the risk of becoming dependent on the state. A change in the organizational structure of social departments is also required, to create more room and time for social field workers to do their jobs (this would require additional education and a more complex knowledge of communities, as well as the creation of a semi-professional network of field and community social workers, and the creation of community centers providing special social services);
- reforming the state welfare system to equalize chances in pre-school preparation, school dining halls, school attendance, etc.;
- completing public administration reform (decentralizing power in public and social services together with decentralizing financial and material resources, simplifying the basic agenda for the citizen, etc.);
- reforming the school system (changing the form of education, introducing multicultural curricula, etc.);
- making more effective use of the resources of individual ministries, the National Labour Office, and NGOs;

- reforming general and vocational education to ensure that workers are better prepared (Radičová, 2001; *Slovak Republic...*, 2001; *Poverty and Welfare...*, 2002).

ENDNOTES

1. The communist regime prevented the spread of poverty in many ways. Mass subsidies were allocated especially to those industries with a significant share of unskilled workers, and to those social groups that are traditionally the most susceptible to poverty. Industries such as mining, metallurgy, heavy manufacturing, engineering, and, after collectivization, also agriculture were the main target of subsidies to compensate their relative disadvantages (Mareš, 1999). Subsidies contributed to the creation and maintenance of over-employment and high wages. The risk of poverty among workers was further reduced by the social benefits infrastructure. The state directly improved the situation of low-income families through massive universal welfare benefits that were generally bound to employment. These acts legitimized the communist state and served as instruments of social control. Along with macroeconomic interventions, infrastructure subsidies, and interference with wages, the communist state also prevented the rise of poverty indirectly by improving the situation of low-income families through free health care and education and massive price subsidies for basic foodstuffs, housing, and energy.

2. The authors discuss the poverty of the Roma in general, which they assume pertains to the majority of the Roma. We must bear in mind, however, that the Roma are a very heterogeneous community. Besides differences between sub-ethnic and language groups, when examining the poverty of the Roma we must also take into account variations in place of abode, whether they live in towns or villages, and their position and rank in the structure of society and their own communities. The socio-economic level of individual Roma communities is undoubtedly influenced by the number of positive contacts they have with the non-Roma population, the state of the region in general, the number and concentration of Roma, the proportion of Roma in relation to the majority population, and the degree and type of integration or segregation (Mann, 1992).

3. Immigrants occupy an inferior position in relation to the state, especially illegal immigrants, who from the legal point of view do not exist in the host country. The link is also weak between the labor market and those who are disadvantaged on it in various ways: juveniles, senior citizens, handicapped people, people with few qualifications, etc. Finally, the link to civic society is weak for people who are isolated, individuals with behavioral disorders, etc. (Kotýnková, 2000).

4. The research that this study also was partly based on was ordered by the World Bank and conducted by the SPACE foundation. It began in December 2000 and ended in March 2001, and became part of the World Bank's global economic and sector analysis of Slovakia. By performing a qualitative analysis of Roma settlements, the project intended to fill in the gaps in the data available, and offer a clearer picture of the living conditions and social protection of the Roma in Slovakia, as well as of the access of the Roma to social services. Field research was performed in 3 districts and 27 settlements that differed according to their level of integration and the concentration of the Roma. The results of this research were published in two final reports, one by Iveta Radičová (2001), and one by the World Bank under the title *Poverty and Welfare of the Roma in the Slovak Republic* (2002).

5. In November 2001, research sponsored by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and performed by the Institute for Public Affairs (IVO) was carried out. The study looked at a sample of 1,030 respondents, with the aim of acquiring and analyzing information about the standards of living (the size, composition and sources of income, household equipment), family role-models, life styles and health of the Roma population, the opinions of the Roma on education, politics and political participation, as well as the overall situation in locations where the respondents lived. This was part of an international comparative research effort, in which, besides Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Romania also took part.

6. The marginalization of some regions, mostly located in the south, north, and east of Slova-

kia, became even more striking after 1989. It found expression in lower development potential, lower infrastructure quality, falling economic production, and poor use of the workforce available. These areas were characterized by a difficult social situation caused by long-term unemployment, poverty, and increasing social breakdown, which ultimately led to pathological social phenomena.

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THE ROMA AND THE LABOR MARKET

Summary: This chapter analyzes the position of the Roma on the Slovak labor market, and evaluates their chances of finding a job on the secondary and informal labor markets. It also analyzes the activities of the government and the National Labour Office to reduce Roma unemployment.

Key words: marginalization, segregated settlements, labor market policy, welfare benefits, employment, unemployment, long-term unemployment, labor market, secondary labor market, informal labor market, active labor market policy, National Labour Office.

INTRODUCTION

A person's position on the labor market, occupational status and level of education are the most important factors determining how that person will be incorporated into society. The position of the Roma on the Slovak labor market can be described as marginal or excluded. As a result of their exclusion from work, the Roma suffer from poverty and overall social exclusion, and are among the socially and economically weakest social classes. This low socio-economic status is passed on among the Roma from generation to generation.

The economic situation of the Roma family worsened sharply after the changes in 1989, a process that was marked by growing unemployment and increasing dependence on welfare. The Roma have definitely not been the winners of "transformation".

The Roma encounter various barriers when trying to find a job:
- the steadily falling level of education and qualifications among the Roma seems to be the main reason the Roma lose jobs and sources of income. It is also a legitimate reason for discharging Roma from work and for refusing them vacant positions if any are free;
- the Roma have long had a reputation as unreliable workers who lack morals, discipline and motivation. Although this reputation is partly based on the experience of employers, it is largely just a stereotype, and one that most Roma suffer from;
- the Roma still experience latent discrimination from the majority population and employers – as the "queue theory" suggests (see Fligstein and Fernandes, 1988), the Roma will always be at the back of the imaginary queue of people interested in employment with a certain employer who follows market principles;
- there is a high ratio of long term unemployed people among the Roma, which has devastated the human capital of the minority and led to the loss of work habits;
- the low quality of housing, poor living conditions and health status of the Roma impairs their ability to work. Roma dwellings, besides being overcrowded, are often unhygienic and lack adequate sanitation

equipment. This obviously impairs the health of the people living in these dwellings.

Besides these factors, the marginalized position of the Roma on the labor market is also influenced by several "macro" factors that pertain to the country as a whole:

- under the previous regime, the majority of Roma worked in heavy industry, which has gone through radical workforce reductions;
- agricultural cooperatives, which also employed many Roma, have disintegrated;
- demand for unskilled labor has decreased (in 1998, only 11% of all vacant jobs reported by employers to the National Labour Office were positions that could be filled by unskilled workers) (Hanzelová, 2000);
- the Roma, like many Slovaks, face growing competition from cheap workforces abroad – research shows that employers prefer to hire foreigners from the former Soviet Union when filling unskilled jobs. The reasons are obvious – low wage demands, higher qualifications, better discipline (Hanzelová, 2000);
- the economy has suffered a partial breakdown in some regions of Slovakia;
- the social welfare system does not motivate people to work.

These handicaps are piling up for the Roma, whose position is also influenced by several other factors contributing to their marginalization. When people with low qualifications and poor health, who face discrimination from employers and long-term unemployment, live in marginalized regions where even the majority population struggles to find work, they cannot be expected to extract themselves from this unfavorable situation alone.

POSITION OF THE ROMA ON THE LABOR MARKET

After communism, under which everyone was required to work, disintegrated in 1989, society faced a new phenomenon – unemployment – that most affected people who had been marginalized under the regime. The Roma, despite efforts by the communists to assimilate them, clearly ranked in this category (see the chapter *Social Exclusion of the Roma in Slovakia* in this book).

There are no exact statistics on Roma unemployment. All we have are unofficial statistics provided by the National Labour Office (NÚP) and the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (hereafter the Labour Ministry), which were produced by labor offices that wrote the letter "R", for "Roma", on the files of all Roma job applicants. This procedure was not founded in any law and disadvantaged the Roma on the labor market. Data collection was stopped in 1998, and the NÚP no longer keeps track of the ethnicity of job applicants (protection of privacy legislation forbids the collation of most data related to ethnicity). As a consequence of the decision of the first Mikuláš Dzurinda government (1998 to 2002) to end this illegal practice, data on Roma unemployment are now completely absent. Based on the unofficial data from the earlier pe-

Table 1
The share of Roma on overall registered unemployment from 1991 until 1999 (%)

Year	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998*	1999
% of jobless who were Roma	15.5	15.5	14.0	13.5	16.6	19.0	19.2	–	25.0

Note: No data are available for 1998.
Source: National Labour Office.

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riod, however, it is clear that the number of unemployed Roma in Slovakia has grown steadily (see Table 1).

High Roma unemployment was also shown by data from research finished in November 2001, which was sponsored by the United Nations Development Program and carried out by the Institute for Public Affairs. The goal of the research was to examine the degree of human development among the Roma (see Graph 1). The results of the research, which besides Slovakia was also performed in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Bulgaria and Rumania, were published in the book *Avoiding the Dependency Trap* (2002).

Neither majority population unemployment nor Roma unemployment is evenly distributed across the country. There are huge regional differences in unemployment in Slovakia, with the jobless rate the highest in marginalized regions, which at the same time are home to a higher proportion of Roma than more developed regions.

The difference between the level of unemployment and the number of registered unemployed, which is the greatest between the

Graph 1
Socio-economic status of the Roma
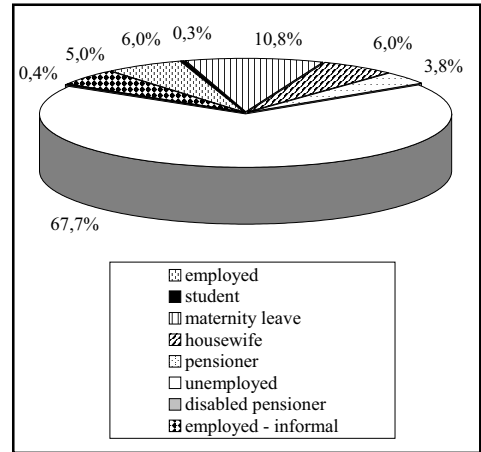
Source: IVO/UNDP, 2001.

western and eastern parts of Slovakia, is influenced by several factors:
• geographic position with respect to the centers of economic growth;
• the level of unemployment in different sectors of the national economy;
• the educational structure of the local population;
• the ethnic structure of the local population;
• regional business activity and its diversity;
• the standard of infrastructure.

Graph 2
Level of Roma unemployment in different parts of Slovakia
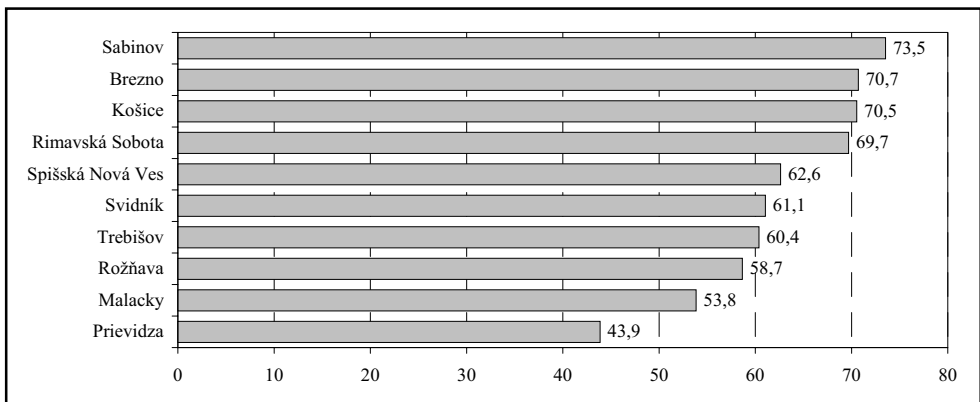
Source: IVO/UNDP, 2001.

LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYMENT

Roma unemployment differs from joblessness among other social groups in Slovakia primarily in its duration – it tends to be "long-term" unemployment, i.e. continuous and uninterrupted unemployment lasting longer than a year. The ranks of the long-term unemployed contain a high proportion of Roma (see Graph 3); the average duration for which Roma are registered as unemployed with the labor office is roughly 2.5 years.

Due to the typical duration of Roma unemployment, few Roma receive employment benefits (the entitlement to benefits ends after six months without a job). According to the National Labour Office, from 1991 until 1998, the proportion of unemployment benefit takers who were Roma slowly fell from 6.99% to 1.74%. The Roma thus became dependent on welfare benefits and child allowance instead as their only sources of income (see the chapter *Social Exclusion of the Roma in Slovakia* in this book).

Long-term unemployment, besides being a burdensome social and political problem, has many other negative consequences. In general, the longer the people are jobless, the lower their chance of finding a job again. It has been found that people unemployed for more than 15 months had a three times lower chance of finding a job than people who had been unemployed only three months. There are several reasons for this. Long-term unemployment wreaks havoc with the work ethic, and the unemployed person loses motivation to look for a new job, which ultimately results in his/her complete exclusion from the labor market. It also devastates the human capital of the unemployed person: People without jobs lose their labor skills, the daily routine and schedule that work provides, as well as the social networks related to employment. They become socially isolated and experience psychic deprivation and stigmatization. (see Mareš, 1998; Zelmanová, 1992 for details)

In some segregated, geographically and socially isolated Roma communities, especially in the marginalized regions of eastern Slovakia, unemployment is as high as 100%. These are Slovakia's "valleys of hunger", territories with "visible isles of poverty" (*So-*

Graph 3
Share of Roma on the overall number of unemployed according to duration of unemployment (%)
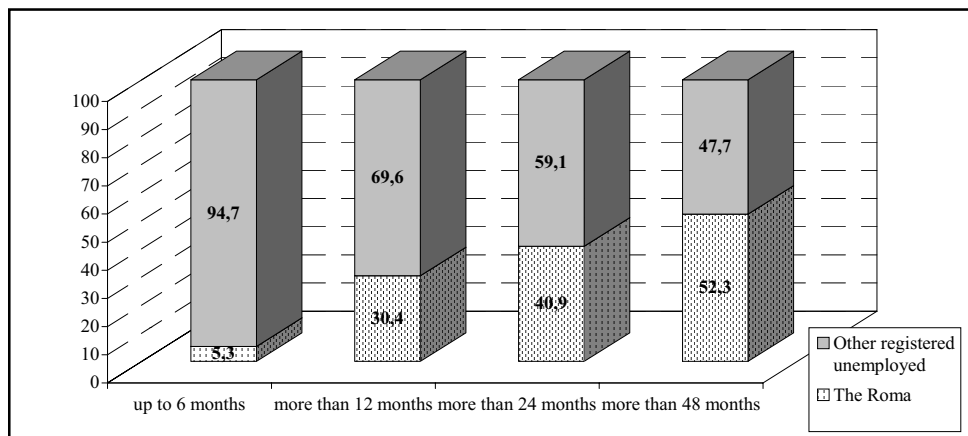
Source: Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, 1999.

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cio-economic sitiation of the Roma..., 2000). In such communities there is the threat of total social breakdown and the formation of a culture of poverty as the only way to adapt to the situation. As a result, a rural and urban "underclass" has formed, which like in other post communist countries has a clearly ethnic character (for more information see Holecová, 2002).

Besides that, long-term unemployment and dependence on the welfare system are beginning to be reproduced in succeeding generations. The number of families where both the parents and the children are long-term unemployed is growing, with the children having no experience of a permanent job. Roma youth are thus becoming one of the most at-risk social categories, and are gravely threatened by long-term unemployment. Many Roma young people never have a job, and become unemployed without a single work experience on the labor market. This is the result of several concurrent factors such as age, little or incomplete education or qualifications, the absence of job experience and skills, ignorance of labor market requirements, the fact they belong to a minority, and so on (Džambazovič, 2002). Long-term unemployment among young people can lead to a sub-culture of unemployment, in which there is almost no effort to find official jobs. At the end of 1999, young Roma represented almost 25% (62,532) of all registered job applicants; more than 60% of them had been looking for a job for longer than three years.

The inhabitants of segregated settlements have an even greater disadvantage, as their chances of finding employment are generally limited to seasonal and casual labor in neighboring villages or towns in the informal sector. Roma from geographically isolated and segregated territories generally have fewer opportunities to find a job, as their communities are to a large extent fenced off from the outside world. The inhabitants of these communities maintain limited social contacts outside their settlements that could help them find a job (*Poverty and Welfare...*, 2002, p. 31 – 34). Social networks and links are very strong in segregated communities, but the fact they are locally homogenous limits the information available.

SECONDARY LABOR MARKET

Even when the Roma do participate on the official labor market, they still tend to be employed only on the secondary labor market, which is characterized by unstable job positions, the constant threat of unemployment, inferior working conditions, lower wages, etc. Various barriers between the primary and secondary labor markets to a large extent prevent the interchange of workers between them. Such barriers include differences in required qualifications and related differences in the cultural and social capital of workers, discrimination based on race or social stereotypes, and so on.

Their insufficient education causes the Roma to be locked out of the primary labor market, which again influences their socio economic status and social potential. In contrast to the past, the Roma have begun to accumulate more on the secondary labor market, as the demand for cheap labor has dropped, as has employment in those branches of industry that previously employed most of the Roma population. Roma job applicants are always at the end of the "queue" for available positions (*Socio-economic sitiation of the Roma...*, 2000).

INFORMAL LABOR MARKET

Due to limited job opportunities on the formal labor market, many Roma try to find jobs

in the informal sector. Through informal employment they try to improve their standard of living. Informal labor market activities comprise various odd jobs such as self-help, collecting scrap, or activities that border on illegal. As for self-help, the Roma were never an agrarian culture, which is why this type of activity has no tradition or popularity among them.

The activities of the Roma on the informal labor market are usually semi-legal (as part of the "gray" or "black" economy) or include short-term seasonal jobs in agriculture and construction. Various studies (World Bank/SPACE, 2000 – 2001; IVO/UNDP, 2001) have shown that many Roma, especially those from segregated locations, improve their situations by collecting scrap (mainly iron) and forest products, and working on the side. The studies also mentioned several illegal activities, such as stealing potatoes, wood, metal, and building materials, illegal work, and poaching. Roma women also frequently help local non-Roma, and receive payment in the form of clothes or food rather than money. Most activities on the informal labor market are performed by men (Holecová, 2002).

Subsistence activities outside the official labor market are usually more intense than official market activities. Of course, it depends on what informal work the Roma are offered. Given that taxes and social fund contributions do not have to be paid on illegal labor, this form of work is more attractive than formal employment, both for the employees and the employers (see Radičová, 2001, p. 131 – 133).

However, Roma from geographically isolated and segregated territories generally have fewer opportunities to find jobs in the informal sector, as their communities are to a large extent fenced off from the outside world. Besides, these people maintain few contacts outside their settlements that could help them find a job (*Poverty and Welfare...*, 2002, p. 31 – 34).

Activities on the secondary labor market (if the considerable sums originating from illegal activity are ignored) can hardly substitute for a real job, and can only multiply the advantages of being on the formal labor market.

STRATEGIES FOR REDUCING ROMA UNEMPLOYMENT

STRATEGIES OF THE SLOVAK GOVERNMENT

In 2000 the Slovak government presented a strategy for solving the problems of the Roma ethnic minority, which was prepared by the Office of the Slovak Government Representative for Solving the Problems of the Roma Minority. It included a set of objectives and measures to lower unemployment. The basic aims were as follows:

1. to increase the role of retraining as a tool of active labor policy for the Roma, and for branches of industry which lack workers;
2. to support community service work in districts with high Roma unemployment and no other opportunities of acquiring a job;
3. to support Roma entrepreneurs in establishing and operating small and medium-sized companies (*Stratégia vlády Slovenskej republiky...*, 1999).

The government said it intended to create "suitable conditions for the Roma to acquire the same position on the labor market that members of the majority population have". It is important that legislative provisions are created for public contracts that allow the Roma to participate on works that they are capable of handling, thus gradually lowering

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their dependence on welfare benefits and forming a work "conscience" and social responsibility. The government promised to focus on increasing the level of education of job applicants (especially young ones) who can be expected to pass the retraining courses. It also intended to stimulate greater personal responsibility among the Roma for acquiring a job.

The government also promised to support community service work in districts with high Roma unemployment and no other opportunities of acquiring a job. These include especially districts in the Banská Bystrica, Prešov, and Košice regions.

The administration vowed to pursue a regional policy focusing on the economic development of the regions, the further development of small and medium-sized enterprises, and attracting more foreign investors to create new job opportunities.

Finally, the government intended to consider the possibility of helping entrepreneurs and employers with economic stimuli so that it becomes more profitable to work than to take welfare benefits, which was not only to increase employment among the Roma, but was also expected to improve the relationship between the Roma and the majority population.

A program of community service work was the only visible result of the strategy. It proved successful, providing the long-term unemployed with the chance of reacquiring work habits and being classified at state offices as "unemployed for objective reasons" (rather than "subjective reasons", another way of saying they could find work if they really tried). The reclassification meant that 100% of the monthly welfare benefit would be paid to them, rather than only a fraction as under the "subjective" category.

At the time this chapter was written, a new government strategy was being proposed, which unlike the previous strategy paid special attention to Roma women, who are disadvantaged on the labor market by both their ethnicity and their sex. The new employment strategy set the following objectives:

1. to expand active labor policy programs, and increase the role of retraining for Roma and branches of industry which lack workers;
2. to continue the community work project in districts with high Roma unemployment and no other opportunities of acquiring a job. These include especially the districts of Prešov, Košice, and Banská Bystrica;
3. to use existing credit and loan programs for small and medium-sized entrepreneurs provided by the National Agency for the Development of Small and Medium-Sized Businesses, and at the same time ensure that potential Roma entrepreneurs have information about the programs;
4. to prepare temporary measures giving advantages to entrepreneurs hiring long-term unemployed Roma (tax breaks, etc.);
5. to pay special attention to creating job opportunities for Roma women (e.g. by retraining them, or providing entrepreneurial guidance connected with granting small loans);
6. to increase the proportion of Roma working at labor offices, in order to remove one of the many barriers;
7. to establish regional Roma entrepreneurial agencies and offices for mediating employment in cooperation with the Agency for the Support of Small and Medium-Sized Businesses;
8. to involve young Roma in social and volunteer activities (*Základné tézy koncepcie...*, 2003).

ACTIVITIES OF
THE NATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE TO
COMBAT ROMA UNEMPLOYMENT

The National Labour Office (NÚP) is a member of a joint committee established by the Labour Ministry to define and address problems in the social sphere, including the problem of unemployment. The joint committee prepared a document entitled *Poverty and the Social Position of the Roma in Slovakia*, and presented it at a ministry meeting. The document included seven measures, two of which fall under the purview of the NÚP:

Measure No. 5: To create possibilities for employing Roma assistants in the compulsory school education of Roma children within the community work project. This should be partly funded from the state budget money allocated for community service work.

Measure No. 7: In locations with high concentrations of Roma, to employ Roma at District Labour Offices and the social affairs departments of district state authorities.

Since 1993, the NÚP has held many retraining and advisory courses for Roma clients. The most frequent retraining courses have been sewing, bricklaying, starting a business, folk crafts, and welding. Most of these courses have been held in the Prešov, Košice, Banská Bystrica, and Nitra regions. The level of education of the graduates of these training courses is usually very low. Most have some elementary school education, while many have no education at all.

As the retraining course graduates still had little chance of finding a job, since 2001 the NÚP has tried to combine this activity with several other steps including motivational and advisory programs, and advice on finding employment. The NÚP chose this strategy – i.e. step 1: motivation, step 2: retraining, step 3: employment – on the basis of its experience to date, knowing that if these steps were not taken together, the client usually could not find a job, or could not keep a job for long.

The year 2001 saw the creation of 116 community service job opportunities for Roma teaching assistants. In creating these vacancies, the NÚP cooperated closely with Roma civic associations.

In 2001, several negotiations were held on Roma employment pilot projects in cooperation with the NÚP leadership, such as the Arion project, which was used in Hungary from 1998 to 2000. The course material had been provided by Denmark and adapted to Hungary's needs. The textbook had been prepared after extensive research by an elementary school teacher who taught Roma children. It included a dictionary containing several hundred words from the fields of law, economy, and sociology, and was illustrated by a Roma artist. The aim of the course was to teach participants to read and write, and to help them participate in the life of society. The NÚP's main aim was to increase awareness of the project and find a concrete way to cooperate and participate in some of its activities. As Slovakia's employment law does not allow the NÚP to implement the entire project, the Slovak Government Representative for Roma Communities was asked to supervise it. The Arion project had not been put into action by the time this chapter was written (Bertová, 2001).

In 2000 the NÚP carried out a project called Active Help for the Roma on the Labor Market. This was a group advisory course focusing on young unemployed Roma registered with labor offices who had at least completed elementary school. The aim of the project was to motivate the Roma to go back to school and change their social standing.

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About 30% of those who passed the training course found a job within the community service work program. The training course continued in 2002.

Since October 2001, three district labor offices (Vranov nad Topľou, Trebišov, Galanta) have participated in a project called Improving the Position of the Roma. The main intention of the project was to mobilize the Roma. Its target group was long-term unemployed Roma younger than 30 who had completed secondary technical or secondary A level education. Only those who were interested in participating were included in the project. The problems of the Roma were identified in cooperation with the Association of Towns and Municipalities of each given region, Roma civic associations and foundations. The procedure was as follows:

1. identification of the target group;
2. identification of employers interested in employing some people in the professions selected;
3. in the first stage of preparation, within the framework of active labor policy tools (hereafter "ALP tools"), retraining was performed according to how many people were interested in certain professions;
4. using ALP tools in accordance with section 89 (in which job vacancies are created in agreement with employers) of the Employment Law, the successful graduates of the first theoretical preparation phase were allowed to start work for the employer based on a subsidy to create the agreed job position;
5. in the second phase, the successful candidates from the first part who were interested in self-employment based on a registration or a license could take a course called Entrepreneurial Basics, which was a training course for beginning entrepreneurs;
6. using ALP tools in accordance with section 88 (self-employment job vacancy) of the Employment Law, the successful graduates of the second part of theoretical preparation were allowed to start their self employment activity based on a subsidy to create the agreed self employment position,

In 2003, a new Phare program was scheduled to start called **Improvement of the Roma's Labor Market Position**. The project was intended to meet the political criteria of the *National Program for the Adoption of the Acquis Communautaire* – its aim was to improve the access of the Roma to education and the labor market. The project was to include advisory activities, motivational courses, and retraining for services and small businesses focusing on handicrafts and woodworking. The project intended to improve the employability of young Roma (15 to 26 years old) through counseling and education. It was to have two parts: a) an offer part oriented towards the client, i.e. registered unemployed Roma, and b) a demand part oriented towards the employer. Within the offer part, motivational and advisory programs were to be carried out, in which roughly 3,750 Roma were expected to take part. An equal number of Roma clients were to take part in further education and retraining. As for the demand part (employer oriented), around 500 long-term and approximately 3,000 short-term job positions were to be created for the Roma. The results of the project were expected to be: training for advisors and district labor offices, development and verification of special training modules for the Roma, the running of advisory and motivational programs, and the holding of retraining courses aimed at acquiring handicraft skills. The entire project was to be funded by Phare with a contribution from the NÚP (*Informácia o využívaní...*, 2001).

On April 23, 2002 the NÚP approved a project called **Roma Assistant** proposed by the Young Roma Association (YRA) from

Banská Bystrica. The YRA is a non-governmental organization associating young people, mostly secondary school and university graduates, including the non-Roma. It was established in 1999. The main aim of the association is to react to the needs and interests of Roma children and youth, and to participate in solving the problems of young people while accentuating the education of both young people and adults. The main objective of the project is to prepare 237 young unemployed Roma so that they can do educational and organizational work with Roma pupils, their families and the entire Roma community from which the children and juveniles come. The YRA project was joined by the Wide Open School Foundation headquartered in central Slovakia's Žiar nad Hronom. The Foundation was to provide the training part. The project consists of two parts, which were to be implemented simultaneously:

a) The retraining was expected to take 6 months (150 hours). After passing it, the graduate would be ready to work with elementary school pupils, in out-of-school educational establishments, and to communicate with the parents and the non pedagogical public. The graduate was also expected to be able to participate in creating a supportive study environment and organizing out of school leisure activities.

b) Participants in such training courses would be employed as teaching assistants within the community work program pursuant to the Employment Law. During school holidays, the assistants would work as social field workers directly in Roma communities.

On June 18, 2002 the NÚP approved the Office's participation in a project called **Social Field Workers**, which is part of a far-ranging development program. The Office provided 2.9 million Sk ($75,000) to create 18 community service jobs for a period of 12

months. A contribution towards wages was set at 7,439 Sk ($180) a month each to create 40 community jobs for long-term unemployed for a period of five months pursuant to the Employment Law.

CONCLUSION

The Slovak Constitution stipulates the right to work in Article 35, § 3: "Citizens have the right to work". Article 12, § 1 of the Constitution stipulates the following: "All human beings are free and equal in dignity and rights. Their fundamental rights and freedoms are inalienable", while § 2 says: "Fundamental rights shall be guaranteed in the Slovak Republic to every person regardless of sex, race, color, language, faith, religion, political affiliation or conviction, national or social origin, nationality or ethnic origin. No person shall be denied their legal rights, discriminated against or favored on any of these grounds". That means that the right to work is guaranteed to every person regardless of sex, race, color, language, faith, religion, political affiliation or conviction, national or social origin, nationality or ethnic origin, property, birth or any other status (Constitution, Article 12, § 2). At the same time, Slovakia is bound by some resolutions of international organizations that have long pointed to the high level of social exclusion among the Slovak Roma, and have long appealed to Slovakia to reduce it.

All national and European reports and studies so far that have dealt with the status of the Roma in Slovak society and especially on the official labor market have stated that this market is closed for them, which means they cannot exercise their right to work and are de facto disadvantaged.

Although evaluations by the European Commission clearly state the need to increase

efforts to address the Roma issue, the unsatisfactory situation in this area itself is not an obstacle to Slovakia's EU accession, which is why concern among politicians at the Roma issue is slowly falling. The unspoken assumption that the Roma issue should no longer receive so much attention because EU expansion has already been decided is very shortsighted. The ability of all Slovak citizens to find a job and be successful on the labor market is one of the basic prerequisites of social and occupational integration.

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STANISLAVA KOMPANÍKOVÁ and MICHAL ŠEBESTA

ROMA LIVING STRATEGIES

Summary: In this chapter, the authors highlight the various living strategies of Roma communities over the past 60 years. They analyze individual, family, collective, and local living strategies, describing the influence of poverty and social exclusion on these choices. The chapter describes how the living strategies of the Roma differ between regions by comparing a neglected region, an average region, and a developed region (as defined by the level of unemployment and the ratio of people dependent on state support).

Key words: integration, segregation, social exclusion, poverty, individual, family, collective and local living strategies, regional differences, active and passive living strategies, self-help, migration, social deviations, usury, crime, apathy, dependence, behavior patterns, rural settlements, urban ghettos, unemployment, informal employment, illegal work, solidarity, living strategy models, segregated settlement.

INTRODUCTION

The Roma community is not a homogenous whole, but varies internally according to several factors – regional and local differences, urban vs. rural environment, social status and level of education, occupation, number of children, etc. While these factors also serve to separate the majority population into various groups, others are typical only of Roma communities – the degree of segregation and social exclusion of Roma settlements, the concentration of Roma in a certain location, the ratio of Roma to non-Roma, the level of assimilation into mainstream society, allegiance to ethnic sub-groups of Roma (Vlachika Roma or Rumungers), and divisions into Hungarian- or Slovak-speaking Roma. These basic characteristics may all influence the living strategies pursued in a given Roma community.

In concrete terms, people who were assimilated into mainstream society under the totalitarian communist regime, and who now do not consider themselves Roma, may choose one type of living strategy, while those who live in isolated settlements or urban ghettos may choose another. Differences are also found among socially integrated Roma who live in villages and those who live in cities. The complicated internal structure of Roma communities thus requires an integrated approach to solving their problems. From the viewpoint of the economic and social position of the Roma, the level of development of various regions plays an important role. Only measures based on a thorough knowledge of the needs and living conditions of actual individuals in specific communities will be effective. If we want these measures to be successful, they must also be accepted by all Roma and non-Roma players, while the Roma must be convinced that the solutions offered are meaningful and effective (Radičová, 2001).

TYPES OF LIVING STRATEGIES

People's choice of living strategy depends on the situation in which they and their families live, and on their feelings about this situation. Survival strategies, for starters, are involuntarily "chosen" by people living in absolute poverty. Such strategies, which may be unsustainable and short-term (in some situations only momentary), are typical of remote regions and the segregated rural Roma settlements or urban Roma ghettos that exist in these regions. On the other hand, when an individual or a family moves up on the social ladder, their objectives and strategies for achieving them focus on maintaining the social and economic position that has been achieved, using mostly legal means. This type of living strategy is also short-term. The last stage is one of emotional satisfaction (measured not by income but by a person's feelings, which depend on whom he compares his situation with). However, the basic goal is always to improve one's social and economic status and quality of life using mostly long-term strategies and legal means. An individual's family, whether immediate or extended, and his or her ability to help plays an important role in all of these situations.

As stated earlier, the degree of integration or segregation of Roma communities plays a major role in people's choice of living strategies. Many Roma live in communities mixed together with non-Roma. These include people born from mixed marriages, the Roma "middle class" (formed mostly during the communist regime), the rich and nearly rich, and the Roma intelligentsia. These Roma usually choose their living strategies individually, regardless of pressure from society (Imrich Vašečka, 2000) On the other hand, Roma who live in separated and segregated communities have virtually no control over their economic fate, meaning that their economic status is the lowest in Slova-

kia (Bačová, 1990). Having little control over one's fate naturally influences one's choice of living strategies.

INDIVIDUAL LIVING STRATEGIES

The main factor influencing a person's choice of a living strategy is his or her social and economic status. The higher the person's status, the more likely it is that he or she will choose an individual living strategy. Curiously, the reverse is also true, with people in poverty or of low social status often choosing deviant forms of behavior due to their limited choices. Among the Roma, family, collective, and local living strategies clearly dominate.

FAMILY LIVING STRATEGIES

The basic problem-solving strategy used by both the Roma and the majority population is to cooperate with and seek help from the immediate and extended family. Differences exist, however, in how this family solidarity is used, and how it is incorporated in specific family strategies, i.e. what kind of help the family and relatives provide, and whether they are capable of helping at all (Filadelfiová and Guráň, 1998). In separated and segregated Roma settlements, we see a collective disenfranchisement and social exclusion with no potential for mutual aid. Family-oriented living strategies are ineffective and even impossible to use in these environments. The more homogenous the settlement, furthermore, the less likely it is that supportive family networks will be effective. Such living strategies are indeed completely absent in segregated Romany settlements (Radičová, 2001).

During the social and economic troubles that Slovak villages experienced after the 1989

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revolution, we saw the revival of old, time-tested family strategies in these rural environments: self-help and emigration to seek work (Filadelfiová and Guráň, 1998). Research by R. Bednárik (1996) showed that making up for lost income through self-help strategies such as food growing and conservation, clothes making and repairs of different kinds had become a traditional feature of the majority of Slovak households.

In segregated Roma communities, however, self-help strategies were never used in the past (there being nothing to build upon) and are not used today. Perhaps the only form of self-help in these communities is the theft of self-help goods belonging to the mainstream population.

COLLECTIVE AND
LOCAL LIVING STRATEGIES

Collective living strategies among the Roma vary from region to region across Slovakia, with Roma communities in each area reacting differently to their current situation. From a local viewpoint, however, these collective reactions to living conditions may appear identical and based on mutual imitation.

This type of imitative living strategy is typical of segregated rural settlements with few inhabitants. As long as at least one model living strategy exists, it can be imitated by the other members of the community. The creators of the model must be part of the community and must not be set apart from it, or they will cease to be worthy of imitating. In order to be followed, model strategies must also be visibly successful; if an individual's quality of life visibly increases thanks to the chosen strategy, others will emulate it. This tendency to imitate one or more models within a community often shows up in the appearance of individual dwellings, in the

standard of living, the approach to the non-Roma environment, etc. In some communities, certain "defensive" myths arise (for example, skinheads in a neighboring town) which are usually based on real experiences. Eventually, the entire community adopts these myths and modifies its behavior accordingly (e.g. by not sending their children to school in the neighboring town).

As found by Imrich Vašečka (2000), the Roma prefer activities that raise the income of the family and help increase the local prestige of the Roma community. In rural settlements with less than 500 inhabitants, the Roma actively differentiate between "our" and "strange" Roma, consider how non-Roma perceive certain collective activities, and take care to be seen in a positive light. These collective strategies are contingent on the existence of local models, whether Roma or non-Roma. Local Roma communities are usually segmented on the basis of ritual, kinship, and sub-ethnicity (Rumungers vs. Vlachika Roma), as well as on the basis of economic differences that can be attributed mainly to usury. The concept of a generally respected traditional community authority (such as the *vajda*) is no longer operational in most Roma settlements (Hirt and Jakoubek, 2000)

FORMS OF LIVING STRATEGIES

EDUCATION

Feeling positive about education and being aware of the need for education are long term living strategies. Among Roma communities, such awareness depends on the degree of integration into mainstream society – the greater the segregation, the lower the awareness of the need for education. Given their position on the outskirts of society, segregated urban and rural Roma

communities do not feel the need for education for two basic reasons: first, to survive in an environment where crafts were passed from father to son over the centuries, the Roma did not have to look for other kinds of education than that which existed; second, the constant harassment of the Roma by their enemies led to a way of life focused on the present – the future was forever unknown (Kaplan, 1999).

Most of the Roma, thanks to their position on the labor market, only come into contact with that part of the mainstream population that sets little store by education; besides, as unskilled labor can be well remunerated, there is sometimes no financial motive to send children to universities. Of course, this is only true of people in professions requiring few qualifications, and even here exceptions exist. In many families choice of profession is influenced mainly by practical concerns ("to learn something useful"), and by how the skills acquired can be used in the household or the shadow economy.

Education is also often a matter of finances. Many poor Roma families live in permanent need, and their priority is to survive, hence the focus on the present. Education, on the other hand, is a long term investment (Lenczová, 1999). Another important factor is that higher education (such as a vocational school) does not guarantee a job. Also, support for the education of juveniles usually focuses on schools whose graduates have little chance of finding a job. This type of education can bring the younger Roma generation into mainstream society, provided that they do not return to their original social environment. In sum, education is a vital precondition for the social and cultural development of the Roma population, and is the most important variable influencing their future social status and standard of living (Radičová, 2001).

UNEMPLOYMENT AND ITS INFLUENCE ON LIVING STRATEGIES

In many Roma settlements, people have become passive welfare benefit takers. In these settlements, a new generation of children is growing up who never saw their parents go to work or try to find a job. These children have a distorted idea of the world of labor, of various occupations, of the labor market and labor in general. The adults denounce the situation verbally, but in reality accept the social order as something completely beyond their control – "this is our fate, and there is nothing we can do about it". Their resignation is apparent, as the Roma do not even try to get a job or aspire to a higher level of consumption. Their time becomes elastic and filled with inactivity. The welfare system is seen as something natural, as is dependency on it.

As Mareš noted, unemployment is the source of both well thought-out and intuitive living strategies among unemployed people and those threatened by unemployment. These strategies are influenced by the culture and the length of unemployment, with the longer the period without a job, the greater the problems for the unemployed person, until he finally begins to perceive the situation as normal. This acceptance usually changes the living strategy of the unemployed, as through apathy the person ceases to embrace even those rare job opportunities they are offered from time to time (Mareš, 1994). Some Roma have very few qualifications and a reputation for unreliability, which disqualifies them from the labor market. This in turn pushes the Roma towards the secondary labor market and to the shadow and black market economy (where these handicaps play no role), where they are exposed to further risk of unemployment and welfare dependency. This trend is intensified by the size of fami-

lies, clan ties, solidarity within the extended family, and the poor situation of the entire ethnic group (Mareš, 1999).

MIGRATION

One of the active strategies used by Roma families to solve their problems is departure. This can take two forms – emigration abroad, usually to Western Europe, or moving within the country, usually from town to country-side. The aim of migrating to Western European countries is to improve social status, while the aim of moving from an urban to a rural environment is reducing the cost of living and preventing a decline into total poverty. In some cases departure is involuntary, such as when a family is forced to move for not paying rent.

Migration to Western European Countries

Migration to EU countries is a form of collective defensive strategy. According to research by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), during the 1990s almost all middle class Roma lost their jobs and today live on welfare benefits. A sharp decline in the standard of living they achieved and the real threat of lower welfare benefits has pushed middle class Roma in the direction of the lower classes. However, these are people who were able to help themselves during communism, and are also able to do so now. They seek and test different defensive strategies, one of which is migration. Thanks to their social intelligence and skills, and especially to help and information from the entire community, they know how to get their entire families to Finland, Belgium, Great Britain, or the Netherlands. They also know they stand a better chance of retaining their previous level of income

and acquiring opportunities for their children there – whether getting a job or prospering from a generous welfare system, the latter being the more frequent (Imrich Vašečka, 2000).

Research of two municipalities from the Spiš region in eastern Slovakia has shown that Roma from segregated settlements are not potential emigrants. In the first case, these people are not interested in leaving the relative safety of their homes, while on the other hand they do not have the social confidence to leave a home environment that is transparent and comprehensible and shelters them from the hostile world of the non-Roma. Those who do leave are Roma whose way of life most resembles that of the Slovak majority, but who are still not accepted by that majority. Their departure, if unchecked, could have very negative consequences, as the country would loose those people who demonstrate to both the majority and their own community that it is possible to integrate successfully (Kepková and Víšek, 1999).

Return to the Countryside

When people return to the countryside, the main reason is usually to reduce the cost of living. However, such moves frequently cause problems for both the newcomers and the local Roma community they choose. The new arrivals often have problems acquiring permanent residence in the village, as the majority population treats them as strangers and municipal officials try to get rid of them. The reason for the hostility is not just because they increase the number of Roma in the area – usually resented by the majority – and build shanties in the village, but also because they frequently become petty criminals, as they don't feel any close ties to the local non-Roma.

LIVING STRATEGIES OF THE POOR

Membership in an ethnic group, and race in general, are important features in the structure of poverty and inequality in the European population. Poverty is more frequent among members of ethnic groups than among the majority population. It is more than a matter of uncertainty of employment, low income, or unemployment, but includes a whole range of other disadvantages: fewer opportunities and a lower quality of life, inequality of access to health care, education and so on. It is also often connected with discrimination against ethnic group members on the labor market, in housing, education, etc. because of xenophobia, ethnic intolerance or racism from the mainstream population. Its roots may lie in demographic (large families) differences or the cultural behavior of ethnic minority members (Mareš, 1999).

The social status of Roma living in segregated settlements is the lowest of all Roma in Slovakia. Their absolute poverty and social and geographic isolation significantly influence their living strategies. The level of development of the region they live in is yet another important factor – the situation of segregated Roma in remote regions is far worse than that of segregated Roma in regions with better macroeconomic, social and cultural characteristics. Segregated Roma settlements also seek to improve their social status in ways that are incompatible with the majority: only here do people steal electricity, not pay their utilities bills, and commit frequent petty thefts. In places where the Roma live integrated with mainstream society, on the other hand, they attempt to overcome their poverty in ways typical of the majority population – planning their outlays, trying not to run into debt, reducing their spending not related to food, and trying harder to find a job (even though it may only be under-the-table work or begging abroad).

Many Roma agree that more children equals more money for the family, and while they may not admit this to be the case with their own families, they say it of the communities they know so well. This behavior is naturally passed on to the children, with new families being started by men who are not yet adult and, given the high unemployment rate in Roma settlements, are almost never economically independent. Nor can they rely on help from their parents, who are usually still having other babies (Bačová, 1990).

One of the traditional strategies in this situation is to limit consumption. In many Roma settlements people can only afford one warm meal a day, with breakfast and dinner frequently being skipped. Cigarettes are replaced by cheap snuff, and alcohol by "apple wine". People unwilling or unable to reduce their needs sometimes resort to semilegal or illegal practices.

CRIME

Crime is the most pathological of all individual living strategies, one that according to Lubecová (1996) is caused either by wealth (usually in richer regions with entrepreneurial potential) or by poverty severe enough to force people to seek illegal survival alternatives. In the case of the Roma, the prevailing motive is poverty.

Analyzing crime statistics according to ethnic or national groups is often seen as incorrect; viewing crime through the prism of ethnicity is very popular among racists and among politicians eager to score "points" for simplistic solutions to social problems. Members of ethnic groups in turn claim they are being perceived and judged *en masse* by the majority. It also contravenes civic rights to note that the perpetrator of a crime is a Roma, especially if the person does not wish

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to be so labeled (Říčan, 1998). As Večerka (1999) wrote, the theory of crime holds that certain behavior patterns are associated with specific living conditions and experiences on the one hand, and with socialization on the other. Physical and spiritual poverty, insufficient education, antisocial models, values and standards, an absence of positive patterns, feelings of homelessness and inability to influence one's fate, alcohol and drug addiction, broken families – these characteristics are found in the backgrounds of a majority of delinquents. The misfortune of the Roma is that they usually live in conditions that encourage antisocial behavior; small wonder that they frequently imitate such behavior.

Among people living in poverty (the norm in the majority of segregated or separated rural settlements and urban ghettoes), the prevailing crime is property crime. As noted by Šúryová (2001), the Roma have long been the most frequent perpetrators of property crime. In 2000, Roma perpetrators committed almost 30% of solved property crimes, the most frequent being burglary, and the most frequent targets shops, recreational facilities, restaurants, kiosks and flats. An even more pernicious form of crime among the Roma, however, is usury.

USURY

Usury is the point where the living strategies of two different types of people collide. Those unable to plan their spending, and who thus fell into poverty at the beginning of the 1990s, increasingly needed to borrow money from those who had funds and were better able to plan their finances. This more or less innocent relationship later turned into an illegal way of acquiring considerable amounts of money.[1]

Forms of extorting money are often drastic, with the usurer being backed up by his entire family clan. Usury is often the only way of acquiring money for Roma who want to improve their standard of living in settlements with almost 100% unemployment. Despite their questionable morals, it should be remembered that usurers usually feel responsible for their own futures, and their illegal activity ensures good living conditions for their children, who often rank among the best in school. On the other side of the coin, the usurers are often twisted by power and arrogance, with their children showing the same behavior.

Within the Roma community there are several ways to acquire power: to use one's organizational abilities, money or ability to enforce one's will, which sometimes depends on the number of men in the family, sometimes on their position in local government bodies or their ability to influence the decisions of such bodies. Such power has nothing to do with the traditional community, but takes advantage of community relationships to manipulate and exploit others (Imrich Vašečka, 2000). Usurers are frequently the main obstacle to attempts to change the status quo, as they are the only ones satisfied with the present situation.

THE SETTLEMENT AS SAFE HAVEN

Roma settlements, especially rural ones, protect the Roma from the outside world and help them in times of need. The settlement does not confer any status on individual Roma, however, and by leaving it, a Roma loses not only the collective status of the settlement, but also his own position within it. The usurer, for example, is a baron inside the settlement, and a nobody outside it. So why should they leave the settlements? Not only do Roma not tend to leave these environments, but on the contrary, some who left during communism are returning whenever

they feel their luck has run out elsewhere (Imrich Vašečka, 2000). Internal solidarity in settlements is strengthened by their negative relationship with mainstream society. Inhabitants' awareness of their own identity is strengthened and creates a basis for resistance, while resistance in turn shapes identity. Opposition to the majority (in some villages actually the minority, but nevertheless still socially dominant) population is strengthened by the uniqueness and unity of the Roma.[2]

EXAMPLES OF LIVING STRATEGIES IN THREE SLOVAK REGIONS[3]

To illustrate the different living strategies used by the Roma we have chosen three types of regions: a neglected region (with the highest unemployment and the greatest proportion of long term unemployed or people dependent on welfare handouts), an average region (with average unemployment and average dependence on social benefits) and a developed region (with relatively low unemployment and social dependence). In all of these regions one finds segregated and separated – mainly rural – settlements, as well as Roma living together with the majority population, and Roma living concentrated in a certain location within a village. Of the three types of region, developed regions have the fewest Roma.

In all three types of region we find settlements with socially differentiated Roma populations, from the highest class to the lowest. However, there is no social solidarity between them, only solidarity within each family.

The Neglected Region

What is common of all types of Roma settlements in this region is that the Roma expect to receive many services free, and are not willing to pay even a symbolic charge. This pertains especially to Roma living in settlements, but the behavior pattern can be seen in all areas the Roma inhabit. In some cases the Roma's strategy is unclear –for example, they complain that their children cannot afford to study at secondary school, even though, as people taking welfare benefits, their children are entitled to study for free, including free room and board in school dormitories (the only thing they have to pay is transport, and even that is subsidized by the state). Although the majority population expects help from the state and free or subsidized services, for most Roma this aid has become a basic and predominant behavior pattern.

The Average Region

Here, the Roma's living strategies include elements of an active approach to life: taking seasonal work, working abroad (mainly in the Czech Republic), doing under-the-table work for non-Roma, entrepreneurship, participating in community work, anticipating help from the government (more money in the form of benefits), considering moving to live among the non-Roma, urging mayors to improve the situation in given settlements, etc. The prevailing opinion in integrated settlements is that it is necessary to have a job and to give children a solid education.

The Developed Region

Active strategies with an emphasis on education and acceptance of any work available are the basic characteristics of this region. These active strategies, however, are not peculiar to Roma inhabiting suburban regions. There are also many negative features

of the Roma's behavior (aggression, theft, destroying housing, refusing to cooperate and communicate) that are typical of life in a ghetto.

Differences between generations are visible in integrated communities: the younger generation of integrated Roma is changing its reproductive behavior, planning and considering the number of children to have. The integrated communities also clearly accentuate education – everyone must at least have a vocational school certificate.

In segregated settlements, children and juveniles imitate the behavior of their parents, become quickly dependent on the welfare system, and find that education is basically unattainable for them. This is a typical case of reproduced absolute poverty. However, this social discrimination mainly reflects the decisions of the parents, who consider education a waste of money, and believe that their children will never find a job when so many of the majority population cannot.

RELATIONSHIP TO LAND – SELF-HELP AS A LIVING STRATEGY

Ownership of land seems to be an important differentiation feature, although for a majority of Roma farming is not a typical activity, and is practiced only if it is a tradition in the family.

The Neglected Region

Roma in some integrated and segregated areas in this type of region may own small acreages of farm land, although that does not necessarily mean that they farm it. As for keeping animals, Roma from segregated locations do not practice animal husbandry. Roma from integrated and separated commu-

nities also do not consider farm animals a source of food.

The Average Region

Growing crops and keeping animals is an exceptional activity in this region. Most Roma do not grow anything and have never asked that land be allotted to them. Those who do farm do so only because it is a tradition in their family. When asked why they do not farm or ask for land, answers usually include: the soil is no good (although non-Roma farm on the same land); breeding animals is not profitable and involves expenses for fodder and agricultural machinery; it is not our land; we have no land near the house; "that's gadžo (a derogatory term for white people) work". In some segregated settlements the reasons are more objective, and are related to the layout of the settlement (between a forest and a stream, where there is only room enough for dwellings) or the position of it (on a steep hillside). Ownership of land by Roma in segregated settlements remains the exception. In other Roma-inhabited areas the situation is somewhat different, with more than a half of all households owning land, usually a small plot near the house. Only in integrated municipalities does almost every Roma family have some land.

The Developed Region

Farming is not a common activity among the Roma here either. Even in municipalities where land is owned by almost every second family, only half grow crops. Raising animals in this region is more popular with the Roma; in segregated settlements, where almost nobody owns land, several families may keep pigs and poultry. It seems likely that certain groups of Roma have acquired the know-

how to grow crops, while others have focused on keeping animals.

SPECIFIC STRATEGIES OF THE UNEMPLOYED

In the past, agricultural cooperatives, local factories, smelting plants, mines, local construction companies and municipal or military forestry companies employed most of the Roma. Today, most young Roma have never had a job. In neglected regions, the living strategy of women after they finish elementary school is to get pregnant as soon as possible. Those with a job are usually unskilled laborers, skilled builders, cleaners or entrepreneurs. Those with jobs also tend to work near their homes; the Roma are unwilling to accept work outside their municipality or settlement, reasoning that after the cost of transport is subtracted from their earnings, their net income is the same as they make from welfare benefits. Travel expenses are generally accepted only for seasonal jobs, casual building labor and similar work. Roma are extremely unwilling to travel to work in other districts with a lower unemployment rate, much as the majority population, which is ready to travel for work on a daily or weekly basis, is not prepared to move to get a job. The exception is employment in the Czech Republic, where many Roma worked during communism. The number of Roma working there today, however, is negligible.

The Roma make little effort to find a job on the official labor market. Most say they are looking for jobs through the National Labour Office, but this is likely a formally accepted strategy, one that is ineffective in reality.

INFORMAL EMPLOYMENT

Given that most Roma are unemployed and dependent on welfare benefits, many try to improve their income through informal employment. The Roma usually do not peddle consumer items, nor do they sell agricultural products (when they sell produce, it is usually forest products). It is more common for the Roma to have small workshops where they manufacture items used in construction. However, the most frequent informal activity is playing music. Many Roma, especially those from segregated areas, try to improve their situation by collecting scrap iron and paper.

As for unofficial activities, collection of forest products, side work and seasonal jobs are the most common. The Roma also practice several illegal activities, such as stealing potatoes, wood, metal, and building materials, poaching, smuggling horses, and non-taxed work in construction companies and in the forests. In most cases, the illegal work is done by the men.

DEPENDENCE ON WELFARE BENEFITS

Poverty is a way of life passed on from generation to generation. The children adopt its value system, its attitudes and low hopes through the process of socialization, which then handicaps them in making the best of their own chances. A typical welfare benefit taker lives in a family where there is little chance that positive attitudes will be passed on to the children. This type of family lives on benefits, and the children will as well (Mareš, 1999). The number of families receiving welfare benefits increases as the level of separation from mainstream society increases. Assistance in integrated settlements is provided mainly by the extended family and usurers.

Long-term unemployed Roma, especially in segregated settlements, are heavily depend-

ent on welfare benefits, and are part of a culture of dependence. The benefits they receive represent their key income, allowing them to live at a certain minimum level, even though most criticize the amount of the benefits. Even Roma with a satisfactory standard of living regard welfare benefits as crucial to maintaining at least a minimum standard of living.

The degree of dependence on welfare benefits is strikingly high – many Roma's lives as well as the pace of their lives are controlled by benefits. The Roma are unable to save money, plan, think ahead, and are focused on the present. Some realize this, and would welcome it if their benefits were paid every two weeks, so they don't spend everything at once. However, few Roma actually support this idea.

In integrated environments, unemployment is usually not accompanied by the same amount of welfare benefits as in segregated settlements. If families in integrated environments turn for help, they usually turn to their non-Roma neighbors, and the help usually comes in the form of a loan. This help from non-Roma neighbors is a sign of mutual trust between these people, and is a sign that these Roma families are generally accepted as a part of the municipality.

CONCRETE SOCIAL POLICIES

As the foregoing suggests, the Roma in Slovakia form a heterogeneous group, meaning we cannot generalize about their situation or about solutions that could help them. There is no universal solution for any of their problems. The Roma's different situations and wishes require us to create a mosaic of development micro-solutions in a framework of cooperation and effectiveness. Short-term activities never bring long-term results or

significant progress. With a certain degree of simplification, we cab say that three main players significantly influence the lives of the Roma – the state, lower elected governments, and NGOs. We believe that efficient solutions require that the activities of all three players be combined.

CONCLUSION

The Roma represent a greatly heterogeneous community that cannot be considered as a single whole. No one Roma community is like any other, and we must take this into consideration when judging the Roma's behavior. The internal social structures of Roma communities are not based on the differentiation criteria of mainstream society.

The living strategies of the Roma in Slovakia are extremely varied, an inevitable result of the heterogeneity of the Roma community. The type of strategies and the means chosen to solve various situations are both individual – depending on each person's opportunities and abilities, socio-economic status, values and attributes – and social, set by external conditions on the level of family (ability to provide mutual help, family solidarity), community and overall society (social and economic situation, politics, legislation, attitudes to minorities).

The choice of living strategy depends on the situation the individual and his family are in, and on their perception of this situation. In Slovakia's remote regions, and for Roma living in segregated rural settlements and urban ghettos, short-term and often anti-social and survival-oriented strategies are common. These types of strategy cannot increase an individual's or a family's quality of life; they can only maintain the current level, and they often lead to poverty being passed on from generation to generation. As socio-economic

status increases, the objectives and means of achieving life goals change, with people often using legal but still only short-term strategies. It is only when an individual or a family enjoys a satisfactory standard of living that we see attempts to improve socio-economic status through long-term and legal strategies. The ability of the immediate or extended family to help is always important, as is the presence or absence of positive living strategy models, either among the Roma or among the mainstream population.

Research by the World Bank found that the basic differences that exist within the Roma population are due to the following factors: the status of the region; the level of integration or segregation of the Roma; the degree of concentration of the Roma, and the size ratio between the Roma and majority populations. These differentiation factors are important for three reasons. First, if we talk of the Roma and judge them together, regardless of the situation they are in, we encourage the Roma's exclusion by the majority population, as well as self-exclusion, separation, misunderstanding and feelings of injustice, all of which reproduce and multiply tensions within society. Second, the differences between the Roma are very important as they influence public opinion, especially among the majority. And third, in choosing a policy towards the Roma, knowledge of internal differences among integrated, separated and segregated Roma communities is vital. If we pursue only one central administrative policy, we cannot succeed (Radičová, 2001).

Many of the Roma face an array of problems they are not able to solve by themselves without help from the majority population. On the other hand, positive changes are not possible without their active participation and their determination to change their position. Both the Roma and the majority must state

their needs and goals, communicate, cooperate and coordinate their efforts. The state has an important role to play here, as does the state administration, lower elected governments, NGOs, and the Roma and non-Roma themselves.

ENDNOTES

1. The authors naturally do not claim that usury did not exist during the communist regime, merely that it was less widespread.
2. Similar situations occurred during the migration of the Roma from eastern Slovakia to the Czech Republic. As Hübschmannová (1999) wrote, one of the main reasons was that they were unable to communicate with the "strange" Roma in whose neighborhood they suddenly and unwillingly had to live. Many families from the village of Podskalka pri Humennom returned home from České Budějovice because, during the 1950s, there had been a bloody battle between clans followed by the imprisonment of the participants. As they didn't want to be exposed to further threat, the Roma chose to return to where they felt "among their peers".
3. The following sections are based on research by the World Bank, the results of which were published in a report called *Poverty and Welfare of the Roma in the Slovak Republic* in 2002, on the basis of which Iveta Radičová published her book *Hic Sunt Romales*, as well as on interviews with respondents carried out during the course of the research.

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ALEXANDER MUŠINKA

ROMA HOUSING

Summary: This chapter deals with Roma housing in Slovakia, describing various types of Roma dwellings from the historical viewpoint. The authors cover everything from the simplest nomadic Roma dwellings (tents, wagons) to mud houses and simple shacks, to the modern houses of settled Roma. It analyses institutional attempts to improve Roma housing and related topics, the characteristics of Roma habitation, institutional solutions to improve Roma housing, etc.

Key words: housing, Roma dwellings, Roma residential units, traditional and present habitation of nomadic Roma, traditional and present habitation of settled Roma, Roma housing in town and country, discrimination.

INTRODUCTION – DIFFERENTIATION CRITERIA OF ROMA HOUSING

The Roma are the only ethnic minority in Slovakia that does not inhabit a certain compact area. As a result, there has been no autonomous development in Roma housing; just as in other areas of Roma life, here also we have seen the influence of regional cultures. Nevertheless, the phenomenon of Roma housing still has a whole range of specific features and peculiarities.

In describing Roma housing we must consider several criteria that to a large extent determine this issue. First, we need to differentiate between traditional and current Roma housing. We also need to differentiate between nomadic and permanently settled Roma. Finally, we must distinguish between Roma who live in urban colonies, and those who live in the countryside. This division is only provisional; individual categories are not closed entities, and often overlap and supplement each other.

The term "traditional housing" denotes the housing the Roma used from the time they arrived on the territory of present-day Slovakia until the end of the Second World War, when major changes occurred in both their lives and the lives of the majority population. Besides the passage of the *Law on the Permanent Settlement of Nomadic People*, dated October 17, 1958, these changes included a state housing policy towards both the Roma and the majority population that caused a significant change in the housing situation in Slovakia. In this study, the period after the Second World War is called the modern or current period in Roma housing.

Bearing in mind that the Roma have lived a settled life in Slovakia since the 15th century, during the traditional period it is important to differentiate between the habitation of nomadic Roma and the housing of the permanently or long-term settled Roma.

Objective descriptions in such a short treatment are not always possible, especially as

the basic concepts in the field have not been precisely defined. For example, it is difficult to say with precision what is and what is not a Roma settlement, or a Roma shack; nor can we be certain when a Roma street can be considered a residential one where the Roma live integrated with the non-Roma, etc. These notions differ from case to case – what is considered a shack in the Roma settlement in the village of Ľubotín would be an above-standard house in the Roma settlement in Svinia. Author will try to compensate for this shortcoming by describing the individual characteristics and specifics of the basic concepts used in each passage.

TRADITIONAL DWELLING OF NOMADIC ROMA

LIVING IN A TENT OR A SHELTER

The simplest types of nomadic Roma dwellings are **tents** or **shelters** (čater). In the past, this type of dwelling could have been used by the Roma as their main dwelling, or the dwelling they inhabited in the long term. As Samuel Augustini ab Hortis wrote: "Those not having a permanent residence live in a tent together with their wife and children and everything they possess." (ab Hortis, 1995, p. 28) This type of dwelling endured until the 20th century, when the nomadic Roma were forced to settle. At that time, the tent was used only as a temporary refuge in case of bad weather. Even though we have relatively early information on the existence of shelters among the Slovak Roma, a more precise description is lacking. On the basis of information handed down from the past we know that canvas was the material most frequently used to build such shelters.

The presence of draft animals used to transport the entire household were an inseparable part of Roma life in tents and shelters.

The Slovak Roma almost exclusively used horses as draft animals. We have little information on the use of other draft animals, such as cows, mules, asses, oxen, and so on. Presumably, if they were used, it was only rarely and for short periods of time.

LIVING IN WAGONS AND TRAILERS

The presence of the horse is closely related to the existence of another type of nomadic Roma dwelling, the **wagon.** This type of dwelling endured in Slovakia until the forced settlement of the Roma in the 1950s. In some countries in Central Europe (especially Romania) you can still encounter such Roma wagons.

Drawing 1
Wagon
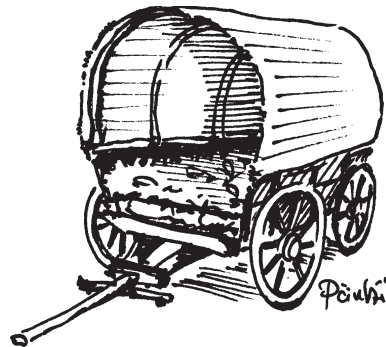
Author: Sergej Pančák.

Wagons, like tents and shelters, varied widely. The most frequent type were light "ribbed" wagons. Wagons with solid sidewalls were also frequently used, almost always for housing, and were covered by a canvas of cane mats stretched into a circular wicker construction. During stops, the wagon canvases were used as tents.

Unlike their tents, Roma wagons were often decorated with woodcarvings or, more commonly, with paintings. Frequently, the entire

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wagon was painted a base color with decorations painted over it. These decorations were usually various geometric shapes, but plant and animal motifs could be found as well. This kind of wagon became one of the basic images of Roma habitation in the majority population's culture, and survives as such until today.

Trailers arrived among the nomadic Roma in Slovakia relatively late, in the 19th century. This type of dwelling was an important qualitative improvement in the housing of nomadic Roma, because it provided them with a new standard of housing comparable with the settled Roma.

Drawing 2
Trailer
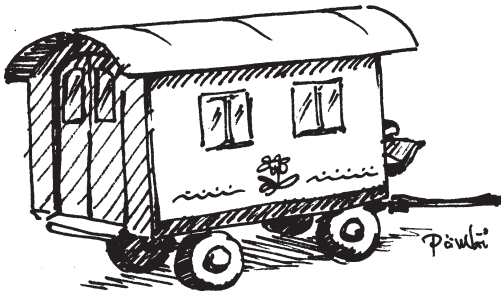
Author: Sergej Pančák.

The use of trailers or larger wagons was limited especially by the road network. Using them on inferior roads or off-road was very difficult.

Trailers are now found only rarely in Slovakia, as almost all of them disappeared after the forced settlement of the nomadic Roma in the 1950s. They are, however, still found quite frequently abroad. A special case in this regard is the use of trailers by some Roma families running carrousel shows, especially from the Czech Republic. Nevertheless, this type of dwelling is typical of all people in this line of work, regardless of their ethnic origin.

TRADITIONAL HOUSING OF SEMI-SETTLED AND PERMANENTLY SETTLED ROMA

LIVING IN MUD HOUSES

Houses made of mud are generally the simplest type of dwelling. They tended to be built as temporary dwellings for nomadic Roma in winter, or during longer stops at times when seasonal work was available. Sometimes they were also used as permanent residences, due especially to the ease of building and the reduced demands on construction material.

Drawing 3
Mud house
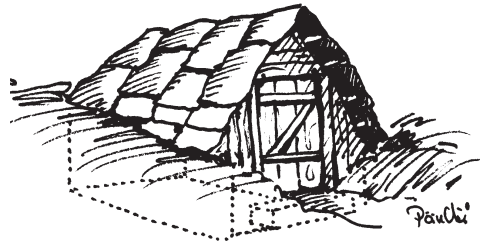
Author: Sergej Pančák.

The mud house was a single-room dwelling of a square or slightly rectangular shape that was built by making an excavation in the ground or in a slope. The dimensions of Roma mud houses varied, but the most common size was 2x2 meters, narrowing slightly against the slope. A space like this would then covered with a simple roof of clumps of grass, straw, or in the southern regions with cane. The roof was either flat, oval, or saddle-shaped, and reinforced with a wood construction. This type of dwelling had no external wall, so the roof of the mud house always reached the ground. The height of mud houses seldom exceeded 1.5 meters.

This type of dwelling has almost completely disappeared in Slovakia. The author encountered it only once – in the Roma settlement

in the village of Dlhé Stráže (Levoča district in north-central Slovakia). The type of construction, however, is still used today, although not for living. It is commonly found among the majority population for storing crops (most commonly potatoes).

SEMI-MUD HOUSE AS A TRANSITIONAL FORM OF DWELLING

The **semi-mud house** was a dwelling somewhere between a mud house and a single-room house. It required a certain skill to build, but was still simple enough to be built quite frequently in the past. The construction was set in the ground at a depth of 40 and 60 centimeters. It could be entered with the aid of a single step down on the inside.

Drawing 4
Semi-mud house
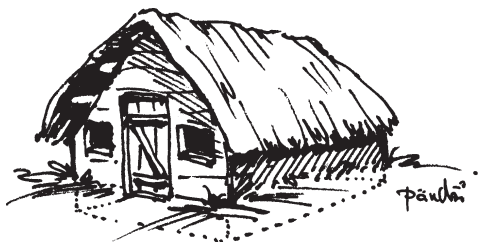
Author: Sergej Pančák.

The above-ground part of the construction resembled the mud house, the main difference being that the semi-mud house had external walls. The height of the walls usually did not exceed one meter. Wooden balks, or less frequently raw bricks or stone, were the main construction material. Individual materials and construction techniques were often combined. The walls were almost always wipe-covered with mud. According to Emília Horváthová, the external wall materials were arranged horizontally in the front and back, while the side walls were constructed by ramming posts vertically into the ground

next to each other (Horváthová, 1964, p. 272).

The semi-mud house was slightly bigger than the mud house, although the walls were rarely longer than 2 to 2.5 meters. The height of the building was about 1.9 meters.

The last difference from the mud house was the existence of a simple window in the front wall (usually next to the door), which, however, was not used for ventilation (it could not be opened), but instead to brighten the room (it was rarely washed).

THE MOST FREQUENT TYPE: SINGLE-ROOM HOUSE

The most common Roma dwelling in the past was a "step up" in development from the mud and semi-mud house: the **single-room house.** This was usually a simple construction with wall length not exceeding 3 to 3.5 meters, and a square or slightly rectangular ground plan. The construction itself consisted of one multipurpose room surrounded by external walls. This type of dwelling was dependent on the construction styles, especially the construction skills, of the surrounding population, as well as the building materials that could be found in the surrounding area.

Drawing 5
Single-room house
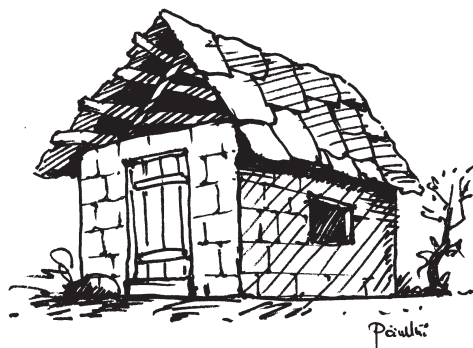
Author: Sergej Pančák.

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Photograph 1
Single-room houses in the village of Svinia

Author: Alexander Mušinka.

Log technology in the construction of the single-room house

In mountainous and wooded areas of Slovakia, single-room houses were built of logs. The main construction material was balks of softwood. In areas that lacked softwood, and in the southern areas of the country, blocks or bricks of clay were used. These were shaped by hand using wooden forms and clay mixed with straw. The surrounding walls were built either of thinner wooden stakes rammed vertically into the ground, or tied together and covered with mud to seal the spaces between them. This technology was also employed when wooden constructions were used, into which thinner laths or hazel twigs were nailed.

Current construction material: slag-concrete blocks

The use of other construction materials, such as stone, was rare in the past. Recently, how-ever, bricks from demolition sites or slag-concrete blocks have become a very popular construction material. The height of the external walls of a single-room house now reach two meters.

Single-room houses were built almost exclusively without foundations. Only when built on a slope was the front part of the dwelling leveled out with stones. However, this was the case only with log dwellings.

The front of the house contained a wooden construction (frame) for the door. This construction tended to have a high doorstep that fulfilled several functions:
- it reinforced the structure of the door and of the entire building;
- it prevented water or snow from getting inside the house;
- it was used for sitting on.

These constructions almost always had windows, usually in the front wall. However, the windows rarely had independent frames, and

could not be opened. Sometimes the opening was just fitted with a glass plate or old casements acquired from other people or from demolition sites. If a window was broken, it was rarely glassed in again. The hole was just covered with cardboard, a board, a piece of cloth, or more recently plastic wrapping.

The interior of the house was very modest. Given the limits on space, no bulky furniture could be placed inside. The furniture usually consisted of an oven and a simple bed (usually purchased from non-Roma or nailed together from boards) on which the parents and the smallest children slept. Sometimes a rack or cabinet for food could be found, or even a table and bench. Other members of the family usually slept on straw. The beds usually had blankets and cushions that the Roma obtained from non-Roma. It is a tradition among the non-Roma to give things that once belonged to deceased members of their families (including blankets and cushions) to the poor or to the Roma.

The external walls of shacks and shanties were often covered with a plaster of clay, both from the outside and the inside. They were then painted with lime paint or colored. The choice of color depended to a large extent on the traditional colors used for this purpose by the surrounding majority population. In individual cases, the external and sometimes also the internal walls were decorated with different ornaments and decorations.

Unlike mud and semi-mud houses, this type of construction is still common today, and in the poorest Roma settlements, it is the most frequently used type of dwelling. It is usually called a **shack, kher** or **shanty.** It can be also found in more advanced settlements, where mainly the poorest Roma use it.

Young families often use this type of house as their first home, due largely to the low cost and the speed of construction, and to the fact that living conditions in such houses are acceptable. Later, couples may save money to build a better house.

These shanties almost always have electricity. However, electricity is usually the only utility that can be found, and Roma settlements without even electricity are still no exception. The author never found running water, plumbing/sewage, or gas in these dwellings, but does not rule out the possibility that such houses exist.

In many settlements, several single-room houses are joined together into one construction unit. This usually occurs when, within one family, the younger generation becomes independent. The young then build a new house next to the old one, with an independent entrance and roof. The reasons for this can vary, but the three most frequent are:
1. the young have their own space to live in, but remain an integral part of the family, i.e. they help take care of the children, cook and collect firewood together, etc.;
2. they reduce the cost of the new house by using one wall of the existing house;
3. they solve the problem of a lack of space to build a house on an independent lot.

TWO-ROOM HOUSE

The next stage in the development of Roma dwellings was the **two-room house.** This was not a completely new type of dwelling; the two-room house was usually created by adding an additional room to an existing single-room house. However, many constructions were planned as two-room houses right from the start.

Here we must differentiate between two single-room houses joined together into one construction, and the genuine two-room

house. The main difference is that the two-room house had only one entrance. With two-room houses, the second room was usually an entrance hall. This was presumably absorbed from the majority population, where the entrance hall was an integral part of the house. In the case of the Roma, such dwellings were probably just attempts to imitate the standard of living of the majority population – in the beginning, the entrance hall was not used at all, or was used to store wood or food (e.g. potatoes). Later, the room was increasingly used as a kitchen.

Photograph 2
Two-room house in the village of Svinia

Author: Alexander Mušinka.

In constructions where the entrance hall was just added to an existing house (see Drawing 6), it usually had an independent roof that was not connected to the original one, and that formed a visibly independent construction. In cases where the house was originally built as a two-room house, the entrance hall was covered by the same roof as the living room.

The dimensions and construction technologies used were usually identical to those of the single-room house. The only difference was in interior furnishings, which in two-room houses were far richer, usually consisting of at least two beds, a kitchen table, chairs or a bench. The kitchen contained a large stove, storage cabinets for food, or a simple

Drawing 6
Two-room house with entrance hall added on
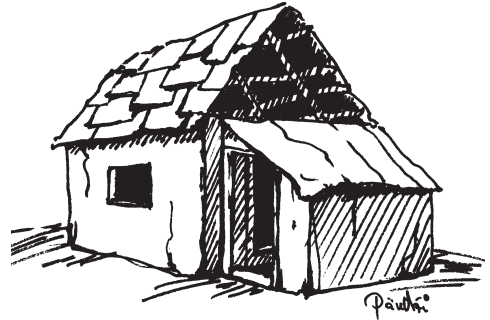
Author: Sergej Pančák.

cupboard. In most cases, these houses also included an independent wardrobe for storing clothes and textile accessories, and usually had a ceiling.

MULTI-ROOM HOUSES

As for other types of Roma dwelling, it is difficult to find significant elements that were specific to the Roma. **Multi-room houses** inhabited by the Roma were acquired in various ways, but the majority population always had an important share in such houses. They were only inhabited by Roma families whose standard of living was relatively high, and they were built in imitation of surrounding non-Roma houses.

If Roma houses were not built by non-Roma craftsmen, they were usually built by Roma craftsmen who also built non-Roma houses, thus acquiring sufficient knowledge and skills to build identical (or very similar) houses for the Roma. Thus, the difference between Roma and non-Roma houses was minimal.

The second way the Roma could acquire a house was to buy an older house from the non-Roma. If the house was made of wood, it was often transported to a Roma settle-

ment. This occurred especially in the mountainous areas of Slovakia, where this type of house was common. Other types of houses, such as those made of stone, were inhabited by the Roma on their original site.

If the construction of a Roma house differed from that of majority population dwellings, the difference tended to lie in the decoration of the houses and various outbuildings. No specifically Roma multi-room houses are known to have been built in Slovakia, unlike in Rumania, where the ornamental decoration of multi-room houses was clearly visible in the very architecture itself.

PRESENT HOUSING OF ROMA LIVING IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

At present, nomadic Roma housing does not exist in Slovakia, having been destroyed in the wake of the 1958 *Law on the Permanent Settlement of Nomadic People*. The image of the nomadic Roma with their wagons remains one of the many stereotypes cherished by the majority population as to how the Roma live and dwell. The image is in fact so deeply rooted in our minds that we still believe that some Roma practice a nomadic way of life. This notion is supported by the greater mobility of the Roma compared to the majority population. This increased mobility, however, is due to social and cultural processes in Roma society as well as to pressure from the majority population, and is absolutely not a relic of the nomadic way of life. This erroneous stereotype is also disproved by Andrej Gic: "In 1893, a detailed listing of Gypsies in Ugria [Hungary] was performed. The results showed that the majority of Roma in present-day Slovakia (roughly 36,000 of them) lived settled lives, while around 2,000 were semi-settled and only 600 were nomads." (Gic, 1999, p. 194) According to Arne B. Mann, the number of Roma directly affected by the 1958

law represented only 5 to 10% of the total number of Roma in Slovakia, the 5% figure being the more likely.

These days, one finds a whole range of housing and dwelling types among the rural Roma, just as among the majority population. Nevertheless, some dwellings are typical of Roma communities. As we mentioned, mud houses or semi-mud houses no longer exist in Slovakia, with the most frequent Roma dwellings in poor Roma settlements being one or two-room houses. The construction of multi-room houses, as in the past, is influenced by the majority population, and there are no major architectural differences between these structures. The quality of the houses is in direct proportion to the level of housing in the Roma community in the given municipality.

The development of Roma housing was significantly influenced by the housing policy of the state. The most significant improvement in Roma housing came in the post-war period, when during the 1960s Czechoslovakia enforced a policy of building individual family homes. Many Roma took advantage of this opportunity to build standard family houses, the state providing them with building lots and construction subsidies. Despite the vast socio-economic changes after 1989, which completely abolished this system and minimized flat construction, the family houses built in the previous period are still functional even in backward Romany communities (such as Jarovnice in central-east Slovakia). This is due mainly to the fact that the Roma were not given the houses, merely an opportunity to build one themselves. Their relationship to their houses was thus far stronger than if the house or flat had simply been assigned to them.

These days it is also possible to find new types of dwelling that did not exist in the countryside in the past.

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LIVING IN "HOUSING CELLS"

"Housing cells" can be found in the poorest Roma settlements, and are normally used as temporary dwellings for seasonal workers (shepherds, construction workers, etc.) or as temporary office premises.

The housing cell is a single-room, rectangular construction whose walls measure 2.5x5 meters, and which is covered with a flat roof. It is usually built around a metal frame, thanks to which the construction can be easily transported if necessary. This form of housing appeared in Roma settlements after the Roma began buying them from the agricultural cooperatives and construction companies where they used to work; other Roma received them from the state following various disasters, such as fires or floods. For example, in the eastern Slovakia municipalities of Jarovnice (Sabinov district) and Svinia (Prešov district), the government built several dozen housing units after disastrous flooding in 1998 to alleviate some of the local distress.

While at first sight the housing cells seemed an improvement on the single-room house or shack, experience from Svinia and Jarovnice proved the opposite. In comparison with the single-room house, the housing cell has several disadvantages for the unprepared Roma. Life in the housing cell is limited by various factors, such as the wooden floor, the large windows, the poor insulation during the winter months, and the use of ovens close to wooden walls, all of which place completely different demands on Roma used to living in single-room houses. Despite that, the Roma have begun adapting housing cells to meet their needs, reconstructing them from single-room into two-room units in basically the same way as with their traditional houses, i.e. by adding an entrance hall used mainly for storing wood and food.

Photograph 3
Housing cell with an additional room in the village of Svinia

Author: Alexander Mušinka.

LIVING IN APARTMENT BUILDINGS

Another type of dwelling not found in rural Roma communities in the past was **apartment buildings.** This type of dwelling appeared in Roma settlements after the Second World War thanks to the liquidation of the most backward Roma settlements and the inclusion of the Roma into the majority population. The process started in the mid-1950s when, at the request of the Regional Flat and Civic Construction Administration, a set of measures for the gradual liquidation of the most backward Roma settlements was prepared. One of the ways in which these measures were to be adopted was through state housing policy, under which several hundred apartment buildings were built in towns and in villages containing Roma communities. The state carried out this policy in an insensitive manner and without preparing the Roma for life in the new type of dwelling.

APARTMENT BUILDINGS WITH VARYING STANDARDS OF LIVING

Besides regular apartment buildings, housing estates with differing standards of living can also be found in rural Roma communi-

ties. Four such apartment buildings were built in the Roma settlement in the village of Svinia. Each two-story building contains six two-room flats and two 2.5-room flats. The flats consist of a large kitchen, a living room, a bathroom, and a small entrance hall. The 2.5-room flats have one more small room. Normally, these flats were connected to all utilities, including electricity, water, and sewerage. If there was no public water supply, a local water supply and sewerage system was built specially for the apartment buildings.[1] The buildings have no cellars, and heat is provided from local coal boiler rooms.

In recent years, i.e. after 1989, another category of Roma housing appeared, namely row-housing, usually built with the support of state and municipal funds. These units represent community housing, and consist of flats of a different standard for poor people. It is debatable whether this represents an independent type of dwelling, or merely an independent form of urban planning. Considering the substantial variation between the individual houses, the author suggests that this phenomenon should be considered a form of planning. From the architectural viewpoint, these are multi-room houses normally containing a kitchen, a bathroom, and a living room; in some cases there is also one more room (usually the bedroom). Houses like this were built in the eastern Slovak villages of Nálepkovo (Gelnica district) and Rimavská Seč (Rimavská Sobota district) as well as in the northeastern town of Bardejov.

ROMA HOUSING IN
THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

DIFFERENT HOUSING RULES

Roma housing in urban settings, unlike in the countryside, largely obeys different rules.

The basic difference is that in towns, the authorities do not take such a personal approach to Roma housing and the Roma way of life. Towns tend, to a greater extent, to enforce cultural and social rules in written form (resolutions, laws, decrees). These rules are also enforced with a less personal touch. For example, when community housing is allotted, in towns far less attention is paid to whether the recipient is Roma or non-Roma. It is also rare that the owner of a building lot will refuse to sell it to a potential buyer merely on the grounds that the buyer is Roma. In the countryside, however, the opposite occurs, with ethnic-based approaches often playing a very important role and in many municipalities forming an insuperable barrier to the Roma.[2]

ABSORPTION OF
HOUSING STANDARDS FROM
THE MAJORITY POPULATION

The Roma began to adopt the housing standards of the surrounding majority population far earlier in towns than in the countryside. This trend was also far more visible among some occupational groups of Roma, such as top violin players. This was noted in the past by several Roma researchers, such as František Štampach: "In the proximity of major Slovak towns, large suburban Gypsy neighborhoods were formed that in some cases were further subdivided into areas for wealthy Gypsies – the Gypsy nobility – and areas for Gypsies living equally as poor lives as semi-nomadic people. (…) In a Gypsy neighborhood or street, it is easy to distinguish the houses of a Gypsy musician, a lead violin player, a blacksmith, a laborer, or a wandering beggar. The tidiness of each house, of its interior and exterior, bear witness to the way its inhabitants live. (Štampach, 1929, p. 40)

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URBAN GHETTOS

Besides the categories we have mentioned, in towns we also find typical urban ghettos, or urban agglomerations inhabited almost exclusively by Roma. The best-known Slovak ghetto is probably the Lunik IX housing estate in the eastern Slovak metropolis of Košice. From the architectural viewpoint, these ghettos do not represent a separate category of habitation, as they consist mainly of apartment buildings with sub-standard flats.

In recent years, new types of urban flats in Slovakia have appeared, known as "social flats" (i.e. community housing). The best-known construction in this category is probably the sub-standard rental flats located in the eastern Slovak town of Prešov (this involves 176 largely two-room flats).

ROMA SETTLEMENTS

Roma settlements are an inseparable part of Roma housing types. In the past, nomadic Roma would usually settle in the proximity of towns or villages. They preferred places near flowing water or roads, or places providing sufficient space to graze their horses. If they were stopping somewhere only briefly, nobody would issue any kind of permission to them, as the owner of the land on which they were staying would usually not learn of their presence until after they left. In the case of regular stops, municipalities would usually designate places where the Roma could stay temporarily. This was true especially of nomadic Roma who provided local citizens with various services, such as making washing tubs, rolling pins, working as blacksmiths, etc.

RURAL ROMA SETTLEMENTS

The situation was slightly different for Roma who were looking to settle permanently. Unless they were invited by a nobleman or a squire to work on his manor or farm as hired labor, they usually found a place on the outskirts of a town or village; these places would typically not be used for farming, such as

Photograph 4
Scattered settlement in the village of Milpoš

Author: Alexander Mušinka.

riverbanks, stony fields, meadows near a forest, slopes etc. The choice of terrain was not random, but was almost always determined by the feeling in the municipality at the prospect of a permanent Roma settlement.

From the planning viewpoint, several types of Roma settlement can be distinguished. The basic and oldest type of settlement was the **scattered settlement**, which was not an independent planning unit. Individual houses

Photograph 5
Traditional street type settlement in the village of Kravany

Author: Alexander Mušinka.

Photograph 6
Street type settlement in the village of Ražňany

Author: Alexander Mušinka.

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or dwellings were often 10 to 15 meters from one another. The empty spaces in between were later filled in with further dwellings, allowing the settlement to keep growing. According to Arne B. Mann, this was the form of development that the Grün settlement in the village of Nálepkovo (Gelnica district) went through.

The second settlement type was the **linear settlement**. These were established on riverbanks or along roads, with the dwellings being built along the thoroughfare or waterway. The distance between houses was negligible.

The last settlement type was the **street settlement**, in which Roma dwellings formed an independent street usually at the end of village. This type is still very common and can be found, for example, in the northeastern Slovak villages of Spišský Hrhov (Levoča district) or Kurima (Bardejov district).

Roma neighborhoods whose development is limited by natural obstacles are also a somewhat special type: this may occur if there is a stream on one side and a steep rocky slope on the other (like the Roma settlement in the village of Koláčkov, Stará Ľubovňa district), or if the settlement is on an island/promontory formed by two streams (the Roma settlement in the village of Hermanovce, Prešov district).

In trying to define Roma settlement units, we encounter several theoretical problems. As we noted at the beginning of the chapter, it is impossible to arrive at an exact definition because of the lack of precisely defined concepts. One of the basic problems arises in defining the concept of a Roma settlement. According to the Office of the Slovak Government Representative for Roma Communities, the Roma now live in more than 620 settlements across Slovakia.[3] This information is misleading. In reality, the Roma in Slovakia live in roughly 620 municipalities; however, the fact these municipalities contain Roma dwellings does not mean they can automatically be classified as having a Roma settlement. On the other hand, in some villages the Roma live in two or three different places.

In general, in talking about Roma housing in Slovakia, we can say that in comparison with other Central European countries, the Slovak Roma tend more frequently to live in settlements on the outskirts of villages and towns. The precise number of Roma living like this is hard to determine. Some sources put it at roughly 25% of the entire Slovak Roma population (Radičová, 2002), but the number is likely higher. Individual types of settlement differ from one another on the basis of the overall social and cultural level of the local Roma community, its economic potential, its degree of integration with the majority population, or its ethnic composition. It is thus not possible to talk about Roma settlements as a single concept.

What kinds of Roma settlements can be found in Slovakia today? According to their proximity to and relationship with the majority population center in each municipality, they can be divided as follows:

1. **Completely segregated Roma settlements**: This is an independent planning entity physically separated from a village, and forming an independent unit. It is frequently several kilometers from the village. Typical examples include the eastern Slovakia Roma settlements in the village of Letanovce (Spišská Nová Ves district) or the village of Rakúsy (Kežmarok district). In some cases these settlements are not connected to utilities even if they are available. The settlement in the village of Ortuťová (Bardejov district) does not even have electricity.

Photograph 7
Traditional and modern settlements in the village of Svinia (before the flooding in 1998)

Author: Alexander Mušinka.

2. S**egregated settlements**: These are residential entities that, while physically separated from a village, are located in close proximity to it. What separates village and settlement is usually a natural barrier, such as a stream or a field, or a manmade one, like a road or a railroad track. Typical examples include the eastern Slovakia Roma settlements in the village of Svinia (Prešov district), which is separated by a stream; in the village of Kurov (Bardejov district), which is separated by a small field; and in the village of Hunovce (Kežmarok district), which is located behind a railroad track.

3. **Independent residential entities within a village**: These are most often independent streets or neighborhoods that, from the planning viewpoint, represent an integral part of a village, but that actually form independent socio-cultural entities. Typical examples include the settlements in the village of Hermanovce (Prešov district), located in the lower part of the village on a separate island between two streams; in the village of Ľubica (Kežmarok district); in the village of Kurima (Bardejov district); or in the village of Spišský Hrhov (Levoča district), where the Roma live on a separate street.

4. **Scattered communities**: These are villages where the Roma live scattered among the majority population. A typical example of this is the village of Nová Lesná (Kežmarok district) in northeastern Slovakia, where most of the Roma live scattered and at the same time fully integrated among the non-Roma, with no difference between their houses and the houses of the non-Roma. The fact that Roma live scattered across a village, of course, does not necessarily mean that they are integrated with the majority.

Villages with an absolute or dominant proportion of Roma are a special category. There are only a few such villages in Slovakia. Only one village (Lomnička, in eastern Slovakia's Stará Ľubovňa district) has a popu-

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lation that is almost 100% Roma. A distinct majority of Roma also inhabit the village of Jarovnice (Sabinov district), the village of Jurské (Kežmarok district), and a few others.

URBAN ROMA SETTLEMENTS

Urban residential entities can be divided into several categories:

1. **Urban ghettos whose populations are either mainly or wholly Roma.** These residential entities occupy a limited space, and are frequently physically separated from the surrounding town neighborhoods. The best-known urban ghettos in Slovakia are the Lunik IX housing estate in eastern Slovakia's Košice, and the Dužavská Cesta housing estate in eastern Slovakia's Rimavská Sobota. The houses in these locations are in very bad shape, with many virtually uninhabitable (the common rooms are demolished, the floors ripped up, and the sewerage, water mains, electrical installations, entrance doors etc. either damaged or missing). Experts use the notion "stripped flats"[4] to describe housing in this state.

2. **Independent urban districts with above-average concentrations of Roma.** This category contains several typological models:[5]
   • groups of substandard family houses frequently built during the interwar period as worker colonies (e.g. Čapajev Street in the town of Prešov). The Roma usually acquired these houses as municipal or company flats after they became unattractive to the majority population due to their obsolescence;
   • lower-quality flats in houses built after the Second World War (Pod Hrádkom Street in Prešov) or formerly standard flats in older houses which, due to poor maintenance, were reclassified into a lower category (Taras Ševčenko Street

and Majakovský Street in Prešov).[1] These flats were allotted to the Roma only when they became unacceptable to the majority population due to their falling standards (local heating, obsolete utilities, lack of a gas supply, etc.);
   • flats in old residential houses or independent family houses located downtown, and built during the interwar period or even earlier (Slovenská Street in Prešov). These flats were considered less valuable before 1989 because they lacked some modern features such as more modern toilets, central heating, warm water mains, gas supply etc., or because, given their age, they needed major reconstruction. The way the flats were divided architecturally was also unsuited to the needs of the day (flats that shared balcony entrances, that had mutually connected rooms, etc.). In the eyes of the majority population, these "handicaps" could not be offset by the historical value of the buildings or their downtown location. Given that, following nationalization, these flats were owned by the state or the municipality, they were often allotted to the Roma. The situation changed radically after 1989 when the buildings were returned to their original owners, who did not want the Roma around, but considering the value of the flats agreed to purchase them from the Roma;
   • newly built "social flats" (community housing) in independent residential houses (Stará Tehelňa in Prešov). These are rental flats built within the state's program of flat construction for poor people, under which the state can provide a subsidy of up to 80% of the total cost of construction.[7]

In the urban environment one naturally also finds standard flats and family houses inhabited by Roma. These are usually dispersed

among a normal built-up area, so we cannot speak of a special architectural style or plan of Roma housing. However, this is a socio-cultural phenomenon resulting from individual living strategies rather than from universal processes.

SELECTED ROMA HOUSING ISSUES

SOCIO-CULTURAL INTEGRATION

When we described individual urban and rural residential units, we did not analyze the degree of socio cultural integration of the Roma community into majority society. This issue is beyond the scope of this chapter; however, we can say that the greater the degree of socio-cultural integration of the Roma, the higher the quality of Roma dwellings and overall standard of living. This phenomenon is directly influenced also by the extent of Roma unemployment: the higher the unemployment and the longer its duration, the lower the quality of housing.[8]

LEGALITY OF BUILDING

An issue that has been frequently discussed recently is the legality or illegality of buildings inhabited by the Roma. There are two sides to this issue that have to be examined:
1. the legality of housing in the context of present laws and regulations;
2. the legality of housing in the historical context.

A considerable proportion of Roma dwellings, especially in the countryside, do not meet current regulations. Roma shacks, shanties, and even standard family houses are frequently built on lots with unclear ownership, without the correct building permit, in violation of building regulations, etc. The number of such cases is in direct proportion to several factors: 1) the socio-cultural level of the Roma community in the given settlement, and 2) the willingness of the local municipalities to help the Roma with the issue.[9] In other words, the worse the standard of living of the community, the greater the likelihood that constructions break the rules, and the lower the willingness of local municipalities to help remove the shortcomings.

This situation gives the municipality a legal argument to ignore the desperate infrastructure situation in Roma neighborhoods. Without building permits, the houses of the Roma de iure do not exist, so it is impossible to ask for state subsidies to build the infrastructure the Roma lack. On the other hand, the unclear ownership of the land does not allow the Roma to acquire a building permit, and so on. The result of this vicious circle are residential entities (especially completely segregated Roma settlements, segregated settlements, and independent residential entities within a village) in which there is no public road, no water mains, no sewerage, no public lighting, and so on, even in cases where these utilities are available in the non-Roma part of the village (for example, the Roma settlement in the village of Kurov, Bardejov district, has neither water supply nor a tarmac road, despite the fact the village itself has had both for a long time). We could fill an entire chapter with descriptions of the waste disposal situation. The disorder that reigns in Roma settlements is one of the most frequent arguments used by the majority population when criticizing the Roma way of life.

The causes and consequences of this situation are a topic for an independent study. Simply put, the situation is unbearable, and without help from the state no positive change can be expected.

The situation is completely different in the case of municipal flats and urban agglomer-

ates. Here, almost all building lots have clear owners, and the buildings have valid building permits.

Legality from the historical viewpoint

The historical legality of Roma settlements and other residential entities has not been adequately researched. Historian Anna Jurová is now addressing the issue. As we mentioned above, the way the Roma settled in the past was rarely spontaneous, but was instead followed and regulated very closely by the local authorities. Roma families always received precise instructions as to whether, where, and under what conditions they could settle. This process could be considered a form of legalization of their stay in a certain area. The assertion that a permit to settle is not the same as owning the land cannot be accepted; the land allotted was usually not usable for farming or other activities, and thus usually had no owner or registration. What is more important is the fact that the Roma were discriminated against for a long time and were not allowed to own land. While during the reign of Austro-Hungarian Empress Mária Terézia and Emperor Jozef II the state attempted to change this situation, little changed in real life.

Legalizing and "de-legalizing" Roma habitation for ulterior purposes

Even when the Roma were legally entitled to stay in a given municipality, this did not prevent the local majority population from removing this permission when it suited them. During the 20th century alone, this happened several times. For example, during the Second World War, the Nazi-puppet Slovak state (1939 to 1944) in some cases forced Roma to move further away from villages (e.g. the village of Veľký Šariš in Prešov district, and

others).[10] This trend continued after the War, although it took a different form. In some cases the Roma were "persuaded", or otherwise forced to move to near the Czech border. Their attempts to return to their original location were usually regarded very negatively by the local majority population, and they were not allowed to settle there again. For example, in the village of Chmeľová (Bardejov district), the local non-Roma refused to allow the Roma to resettle there after they returned from the Czech Republic following more than 50 years in exile. Some of the Roma thus settled in the nearby Roma settlement in the village of Zborov (Bardejov district). As part of a policy of atomizing and integrating the Roma population, entire Roma settlements were liquidated. The Roma were forced to live in newly built flats (e.g. in the village of Gerlachov, Bardejov district).

HAPHAZARD GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES

The basic mistake made by almost all communist-era government programs to improve the living conditions of the Roma was that they focused on mitigating the consequences rather than tackling the causes of various situations. It thus often happened that state-funded houses were built in the most backward Roma communities where the inhabitants were not prepared to use the new dwellings. The problem was both one of technical equipment and socio-cultural relationships. The use of a light switch, a water tap or a flush toilet may seem a mundane matter, but for people who have never seen such equipment, they can present an insurmountable obstacle. In non-Roma culture, people learn these things through a process of socialization that lasts several years. Communities that have not gone through this process will clearly not be able to use these things immediately.

The situation with this state housing was similar in terms of socio-cultural relationships. The change in the Roma way of life was too sudden, with several families now having to live in one house without regard for family and social links, which led to conflicts and tension. The second mistake was not to engage the Roma who were to live in the houses in the building of them. The Roma later destroyed the interior and exterior of these dwellings, clear proof of how little they identified with what they had been given.

On the other hand, activities that gave the Roma a chance to build their own houses were successful. The aforementioned state policy of the 1960s, which focused on awarding building permits and providing building subsidies, led to the Roma taking advantage of this system and building standard family houses which serve their purpose to this very day.

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST ROMA IN ACQUIRING HOUSING

At present, the Roma suffer considerable discrimination if they want to build a dwelling. First of all, they are handicapped by their relative ignorance of economic matters,[11] while they also have problems with the complicated process of acquiring a building lot, a construction permit, and the other necessary documents. To be able to handle all of this, one has to be part of a social solidarity network (acquaintances, colleagues, relatives, etc.). Without such a network, it is impossible to negotiate the process successfully or in a reasonable time.[12] The Roma, of course, do not tend to have access to such social networks.

Besides that, other handicaps include the reluctance of owners to sell a building lot to a Roma, the unwillingness of municipal authorities to support the Roma in the process, and so on.

CONCLUSION

What is the way out of this situation? In general, society must eliminate discrimination against the Roma in this regard. At the same time, society should give the Roma a real chance to improve their socio cultural standing by giving them a real opportunity to build their own dwelling.

The actions that the Slovak government took through the Office of the Slovak Government Representative for Solving the Problems of the Roma Minority, whose aim was to improve infrastructure in Roma settlements (including the Phare 2000 project), were very positive. The government's support for the construction of substandard flats, where municipalities could acquire a subsidy covering up to 80% of the costs of such flats, was also enormously helpful. These activities were even more encouraging because they were closely coordinated and mutually complemented each other. If the policy of the new Dzurinda government continues in the same direction, we can expect some positive changes in the living conditions of the Roma.

However, the Roma housing issue cannot be solved by such measures, as they once again address the consequences and not the problem. The Slovak government should adopt measures that would help Roma interested in buying a building lot. The Slovak Land Fund, for example, could play an active role in this process, as could other institutions. The government should prepare the administrative framework allowing houses to be built legally without the need to use one's "social network" (i.e. to make the process simpler, faster, cheaper, etc.). If this does not work, it might think about creating something like an "artificial solidarity network", i.e. institutions that would help the Roma (and the non-Roma) successfully negotiate the bureaucratic process. In addition, a sys-

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tem of subsidies for flat construction must be created in such a way that the Roma have a real chance of being granted some of the allocated subsidies.

An example of this is the activity of the American NGO Habitat For Humanity International (HFHI), which is preparing a project to build several houses in the village of Svinia (Prešov district). This organization is active in more than 80 countries around the world, and builds houses exclusively for marginalized groups of people. It follows several basic rules, which were also used in the Svinia program. The first rule is that the people for whom HFHI is building the houses must participate in the construction. The direct investments that the organization spends on building the house are treated as an interest-free credit (or an investment with very low interest), which the lessee has to return within 20 to 30 years. After repayment of the entire amount, the lessee becomes the owner of the house. The installments paid are used to build other houses. An important feature of the HFHI program is the NGO's active presence and direct community work, not just during the construction but also during the "installment period".

If the Roma are involved financially and physically in housing construction, they can be expected to have a far closer relationship to their habitations, and to take good care of them. At the same time, the Roma who are really interested in improving their living conditions will be clearly separated from those who only declare their interest.

ENDNOTES

1. Fences are an interesting architectural accessory from the socio-cultural viewpoint as well. The poorer and more segregated the community, the fewer fences one finds.

2. So far, this has been the standard practice when building apartment buildings.

3. The author personally witnessed a situation in the village of Svinia where nobody was willing to sell a building lot to a Roma (at any price) because anyone who did would have been exposed to considerable social pressure and criticism by the non Roma inhabitants, and would have found their continued existence in the village very difficult.

4. See the following web page: http://www.government.gov.sk/orgovanova/dokumenty/zoznam_obci.doc.

5. Similar "stripped flats" can also be found in municipal apartment buildings in villages. Here the situation is often even worse than in urban ghettos.

6. In this part the author only cites examples from the city of Prešov. The reasons for this are mundane: He lives in this city and knows it the best. The author does realize that there may be similar examples in other towns, but he does not know them well enough to say for sure.

7. In many cases these were "army flats" in which Czechoslovak soldiers were lodged. The flats were then transferred to the administration of the municipality. This is the case of Majakovský Street in Prešov, for example.

8. This is how flats in Prešov (Stará Tehelňa neighborhood), in the Roma settlement in the village of Čičava (Vranov nad Topľou district), and in the Roma settlement in the town of Veľký Šariš (Prešov district) were built.

9. Recently, two books were published dealing with the issue and the typology of Roma poverty in Slovakia. The team of authors, led by Iveta Radičová, published the results of the most extensive research conducted during recent years, a project known as *Roma and the Labor Market*, which was coordinated and funded by the World Bank. The two books were: *Hic Sunt Romales* (Radičová, 2001) and *Poverty and Welfare of the Roma in the Slovak Republic* (2002).

10. In many villages, land ownership is also unclear among the majority population. This issue was described by Roma writer Elena Lacková in her autobiography *I Was Born Under a Lucky Star* (1997).

11. For more on the reasons for this situation see Radičová, 2001, p. 242 – 244.

12. In this regard, the economic situation represents secondary discrimination, because a foreign national striving to settle in Slovakia would fail as well.

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ROMA HEALTH

Summary: The author draws a detailed picture of the health of the Roma, focusing on infectious, genetic, and cardiovascular diseases, the lifestyles and sanitary behavior of the Roma, and the living conditions in Roma settlements. The chapter offers anthropological data related to health, and examines cases of inbreeding among the Roma. A special section is devoted to the causes of slow mental development among Roma children, and to why these children are often placed in "special schools" without justification. The chapter ends by describing the approach of the state to the health of the Roma, and discrimination in health care.

Key words: Roma health, perinatal and infant mortality, inbreeding coefficient and consanguinity, infectious diseases, congenital glaucoma, mental retardation, nutrition, cardiovascular and chronic diseases, Roma settlements, discrimination in health care, government's approach to Roma health.

INTRODUCTION

The relatively poor health of the Roma is frequently mentioned in the growing number of books on Roma human rights in Central Europe. Despite that, specific information on the current Roma health situation in the Czech and Slovak Republics is scarce. There is a wide range of scientific reports from the period before 1989 dealing with this issue. After the revolution, however, research in

Slovakia turned its back on examinations of the health condition of individual ethnic groups, because from today's viewpoint, gathering such data is contrary to human rights. This makes it even more difficult to obtain the information needed to improve the current unfavorable situation.

Despite the limited information, there are many signs emphasizing the need to deal with the Roma health issue. Health is just one of the many problems influencing the overall socio-economic situation of the Roma, which in turn, along with poor housing and infrastructure worsen the poor health condition of the Slovak Roma. Bad health combined with low hygiene, poverty and other external factors (hunger, bad housing) and the genetic predisposition of the Roma to certain diseases, makes for a particularly serious situation. Poverty among certain Roma leads to many forms of deprivation, and is reflected in their relatively short life span, high rate of disease, chronic disease, and falling physical and mental performance. All available data show a decline in health, especially in the constantly growing and isolated Roma settlements. There has been a clear decline in Roma health since 1989. This was at least one area where the communist regime achieved positive results, for example in reducing infant mortality, increasing the average life span, and eradicating certain kinds of disease.

At present, the main factors influencing the poor quality of Roma health are the following:

- the lower education level of the Roma, and their related low health and social awareness;
- low standards of personal hygiene;
- low standards of community hygiene;
- poor housing and ecologically unsound, polluted, and devastated living environments; the alarming condition of isolated Roma settlements, where housing often does not even meet basic sanitary requirements, with no supply of clean drinking water, no sewage system or waste pits, dumps, waste disposal or sanitary facilities;
- the lingering overpopulation problem, with too many people often living in just one room;
- the bad economic situation of many families, which is frequently related to poor nutritional habits, unsuitable food, and the unavailability of the necessary medicines or adequate health care;
- increased consumption of alcohol and tobacco;
- the relatively high genetic load of the Roma ethnic group, which causes a high incidence of congenital (inborn) diseases (*Socio-Economic Situation...*, 2000).

This chapter attempts to characterize the Roma health situation in Slovakia. It aims to sum up the results of research in the following fields: health condition, nutrition, lifestyle, biochemical condition, immunological status, and epidemiological parameters.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF ROMA HEALTH

Despite having lived in Central Europe for many centuries, the Roma have been able to maintain an unusual specificity in anthropometric and genetic indicators. Differences in gene frequencies support the theory of the Indian origin of the Roma.[1] At the same time, there is also a significant genetic variability within the Roma population, which seems to be even greater than the variability in non-Roma populations that have been compared. This means that we should not generalize from the results of research performed in a certain area and on a certain group of Roma.

The overall mortality level of any population is significantly influenced by perinatal and infant mortality. In the *Roma Population Demographic Trends* chapter in this publication, the authors focus on the relatively high infant mortality among the Roma. Although it fell by one-third from 1968 to 1985, it nevertheless remained 2.1 times higher than in the rest of the population, and was equal to infant mortality levels seen in the Slovak population in the second half of the 1950s. In 1985, an average of 35 out of 1,000 liveborn Roma children died before they reached the age of one year. The figure for the entire population was 16.3 (Kalibová, 1989).

One of the reasons for such a high rate of perinatal mortality among the Roma could be low birth weight. Seres (1998) studied the low birth weight ratio between the Roma and the non-Roma in the vicinity of Rožňava in southeastern Slovakia from 1995 to 1997. The prevalence of low birth weight was generally lower among the non-Roma, and unlike among the Roma, it was decreasing.

Other studies have also documented the low birth weight, small stature, and smaller head and thorax circumference of Roma newborns in comparison with the remainder of the population. Based on data on births in Košice and Prešov, and disregarding other pathologic syndromes, Bernasovská et al (1977) reported that from 1968 to 1972, the average difference between the Roma and non-Roma children was 345g in birth weight and 1.5cm in birth length. In view of these differences, she proposed a new birth weight floor for the Roma – 2,250g – which

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Table 1

Newborns with low birth weight among the Roma and the non-Roma in the district of Rožňava from 1995 to 1997

	Roma		non-Roma	
	number of live born newborns	ratio of newborns with low birth weight (<2.5 Kg)	number of live born newborns	ratio of newborns with low birth weight (<2.5 Kg)
1995	277	13.7	481	5.2
1996	272	15.1	503	4.6
1997	311	13.2	459	3.3
total	860	14.0	1 443	4.4

Source: Seres, 1998.

seems biologically correct. Despite the new standard, the birth weight of Roma children is frequently too low.

In terms of the relationship between the age of Roma mothers and the birth weight of their babies, the newborn weight gradually increased with the increasing age of the mother. A direct relationship was also discovered between the height of Roma mothers, the birth weight, and the length of newborn children (Bernasovský et al, 1981). In this regard, it is interesting that an almost three times higher ratio of Roma women give birth to a child between the ages of 14 and 16 years (6.1%), compared to 2.1% of Slovak women before they are 17 years of age (Štukovský, 1969).

Dejmek et al (1996) discovered a significantly higher incidence of premature births among the Roma from the north of the Czech Republic (the majority of Roma living in this area come from Slovakia), which may contribute to the high Roma infant mortality rate. The incidence of premature births (where gestation is less than 37 weeks) was 13.4 out of 100 among the Roma and 5.0 out of 100 in the majority population.

Roma women from the vicinity of Rožňava in 1996 were found to have an abortion rate that was twice as high as among the majority population (Seres, 1998). Modern contraception was used by the women from this

area very rarely, far less than by non Roma women. The authors noted that the Roma used contraception (especially sterilization and the intra-uterine device) most frequently around 1980, which could be related to the financial allowance paid during communism to women who underwent sterilization. The use of contraception among the Roma fell sharply after 1989. The authors argued that given the high Roma unemployment rate in the 1990s, one of the reasons for this could have been the social welfare benefits associated with childbirth.

Mortality among very young children seems higher with the Roma as well. The death rate in three municipalities in eastern Slovakia's Spiš region (Bystrany, Spišské Tomášovce, and Spišský Štvrtok) of children up to three years of age was 47.1, 40.9 and 32.0 per thousand Roma children, respectively. These data pertain to the period from 1981 to 1990 (Mann, 1992). This ratio is significantly higher than the mortality rate of all Slovak children up to five years of age, which was 15.8 per thousand children in 1989.

Besides the characteristics we have noted of newborns and infants, differences can also be found among children of pre school and school age. In comparison with the non-Roma, Roma children are smaller and weigh less. The difference in height is more significant, and is simply an ethnic and anthropological trait among the Roma (Bernasovský

and Bernasovská, 1985). From the paediatric viewpoint, however, the slower psychomotor development and low bodyweight of Roma children represents a serious reason to postpone schooling by one year. In examining a group of 5 to 6-year-old children, we discovered that the children's bodyweights were far below the floor of 19Kg for boys and 17Kg for girls. In a control group of non-Roma children of the same age, the children usually hit the weight standard before they were 6. Differences were also discovered when we examined the bone development and sexual maturity of school age children (Hudáková, Bernasovský, and Bernasovská, 1982). This late development is generally caused by both inborn and external factors, such as poor socio-economic situation, lack of suitable parental stimuli in foster homes, and so on.

Bernasovský et al (1981) found when monitoring the level of immunoglobuline (serum antibodies) that in comparison to the non-Roma, the Roma children had a markedly higher IgG level (class G immunoglobuline, the level of which increases in the late stages of inflammations or when the body has been repeatedly exposed to infections) and a lower IgM level (class M immunoglobuline, the level of which increases in the early stages of inflammations or during the first infection). This difference could be caused by the increased frequency of infectious and parasitic diseases among Roma children. Higher IgG levels among Roma adults could be caused by worse hygiene and permanent exposure to microorganisms.

Even though the present Roma gene pool differs significantly from the rest of the population, and is characterized by the incidence of certain single-gene diseases (congenital glaucoma, phenylketonuria, etc.), the causes are not known. A thorough analysis would require an in-depth knowledge of the history,

demographic characteristics, and structure of the population resulting from marriages (Siváková, 1992).

In keeping with the Indian origin of the Roma, there is a strong tendency towards consanguineous marriages. According to Dronamraj (1960), this is typical for most of the Indian subcontinent. The population from this region seems to have the highest inbreeding ratio worldwide (Siváková, 1992). This was confirmed by a genetic analysis of congenital glaucoma with a recessively autosomal type of inheritance, performed on a sample of Slovak Roma (Ferák et al, 1980). Some 46% of the parents of the patients turned out to be related (consanguinity $\cong$ 46%).

The most consanguineous marriages occurred among the "Vlachika" (nomadic) Roma – 30.7%, among the Slovak Roma from Ratková – 14.7%, and the Roma from Gemer – 10.1%. A substantial number of such marriages were between cousins. Estimates of the inbreeding coefficient (F) are very high among the "Vlachika" Roma (F $\cong$ 0.05). This is the highest value of this index that has been recorded so far in any European population (Ferák, Siváková et al, 1987). Such a high F coefficient increases the number of homozygotes, or the so-called "recessively inheritable diseases" (such as congenital glaucoma), even if the number of genes responsible remains unchanged. To a certain extent it also increases the number of multifactor and threshold-conditioned diseases (e.g. phenylketonuria – a metabolism disorder causing heavy mental retardation, convulsions, and increased activity).

On the other hand, some other autosomal recessively inheritable diseases that are quite frequent in the rest of the Slovak population (such as cystic fibrosis) are very rare among the Roma. This may be due to the long-term

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reproductive isolation of the Roma. The Roma thus did not acquire the genetic aptitude for these diseases, while the diseases typical for them remained. Tay-Sachs disease, which occurs almost exclusively in orthodox Jews, and the Huntington's chorea typical of the inhabitants of the Pacific islands, are examples of such diseases.

It is possible that the Roma inbreeding coefficient is now falling. Cohn (Cohn, 1973 in: Ferák et al, 1980), who examined the sociological aspect of consanguineous marriages, came to the conclusion that the Roma may prefer this type of marriage because of the tradition of paying for the bride upon contracting the marriage. Because this habit is losing its importance as the Roma gradually mix with other cultures, we can expect consanguineous marriages also to lose their justification. Unfortunately, so far there are no indications supporting this trend. For further information on this topic, see Ferák et al (1980, 1987).

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

The catastrophic living conditions in settlements and locations with high concentrations of Roma, as well as the low health awareness among the minority, contribute to the frequent incidence of infectious disease among the Roma. Information on the infectious diseases of the Roma come from scientific studies performed before 1989, and from several more recent epidemiological reports.

There are signs that diseases such as hepatitis A, bacillic dysentery, giardiosis, scab (mange or fungal skin disease) and pediculosis (lice infestation) are a significant problem in many Roma communities. As noted above, a significantly higher level of IgG antibodies was discovered in Roma children aged 6 to 16 years compared to non-Roma children, indicating a higher exposure to germs, viruses, and parasites. The same study failed to find significant differences in the IgG levels of Roma and non-Roma children up to three years of age living in foster homes (Bernasovský, Bernasovská, and Hudáková, 1981).

Another study performed in west Slovakia's Nové Mesto nad Váhom (Krišlo, Sorf et al, 1990) discovered a prevalence of splenomegaly (frequently related to latent infection, even though the remaining symptoms may remain clinically silent) among the asymptomatic Roma volunteers, compared with a control group (10.5% compared to 4.9%).

The most serious infections are those of the respiratory tract. The incidence of tuberculosis decreased significantly in the former Czechoslovakia after 1960. A study carried out in west Slovakia, however, proved that the prevalence of active lung tuberculosis had remained higher and had decreased more slowly among the Roma than among the remainder of the Slovaks (Pozdechová, Badalík et al, 1969). Old Roma men in particular were susceptible to this disease, as a result of their lower social status, lower education level, and inadequate hygiene. A micro-epidemic of tuberculosis was recorded among Roma children in the Czech Republic in 1990 (Krepela, Kubec et al, 1994).

Yet another frequent infectious disease is viral hepatitis (infectious inflammation of the liver, infectious jaundice). The most frequent types of viral hepatitis are the A and E types, which are usually related to poor hygiene. This is a typical "dirty hands" disease, disseminated through contaminated water and food. The disease is usually acute, accompanied by typical clinical symptoms (jaundice, swollen liver, high temperature). Patients usually develop permanent immunity. The older the patient, the greater the insuscepti-

bility, which is why children suffer from this disease most frequently. Unlike B and C type hepatitis, the A and E forms of the disease do not evolve into a chronic state, and thus are less serious. Hepatitis B and C are disseminated by sexual intercourse, blood transfusions, and needles, and are often overlooked, becoming chronic and leading to cirrhosis or cancer of the liver.

Several hepatitis epidemics were reported in the Czech and Slovak Republics during the past decade. In 1990, there was a serious hepatitis A epidemic in Brno in the eastern Czech Republic. The Roma were the most afflicted, and the disease was unusually protracted. In 1999, more than 40 children suffered from hepatitis A, most of whom lived in the Roma settlement near Prostějov in the Czech Republic (*Mladá fronta Dnes*, October 16, 1999). In 2001 there was a widespread hepatitis A epidemic in Vrútky in northern Slovakia. Within two weeks, 41 cases of hepatitis were recorded, mostly among the Roma inhabiting the former railwaymen's flats with poor hygiene (*Národná obroda*, March 15, 2001).

The majority of Slovak Roma live in overcrowded and unhygienic flats. A journalist who recently visited the Košice housing estate Lunik IX, which is inhabited mostly by Roma, wrote: "A small flat consisting of two rooms was inhabited by 20 to 30 people. There were two families living in each room, all sharing one kitchen and one toilet. In some houses there is no tap water and no natural gas." (Holomek, 1998) Such conditions are an ideal breeding ground for an epidemic caused by poor hygiene. The situation is partly related to the inability of some Roma to pay rent, as well as to the fact that the Roma usually do not own the flats. Flat owners often refuse to provide basic utilities, such as water and waste disposal, to tenants who are overdue on their rent.

Yet another problem in reducing infectious diseases is the low level of inoculation among the Roma. In 1997 there was a pox epidemic in Košice; 10 Roma and 9 non-Roma fell ill. Five patients had been inoculated and three had not, because vaccinations had not been required for their age group. The inoculation records of the remaining 11 could not be found (Adamkovičová et al, 1999). The authors of a study on the issue stated that: "the Roma patients are a problem group both from the viewpoint of inoculation and medical documentation, and some Roma parents completely ignore vaccination programs." However, they failed to mention whether the majority of patients with missing records were Roma.

Measures to suppress disease among the Slovak population have always focused on the entire population without distinguishing between individual members. Nevertheless, measures were gradually adopted focusing on tuberculosis and polio control, while compulsory inoculation against several infectious diseases was introduced, and research was carried out in Roma settlements. Despite having eradicated typhoid fever, and despite ongoing efforts to nail down diseases such as trachoma (contagious eye disease), diseases of the lower respiratory tract, intestinal diseases, and syphilis, Jurová (1993) states that many of these diseases can still be found in Roma settlements. Besides those we mentioned earlier, the most frequent infectious diseases among the Roma are scab, pediculosis, pyoderma (bacterial inflammation of the skin), mycosis (diseases caused by fungi), enterocolitis (inflammations of the intestine such as salmonellosis, shigellosis), cowpox, and many others.

Many studies performed before 1989 provide data on the incidence of infectious diseases among the Roma. A 1967 study found that the proportion of Roma in-patients in Košice

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and Bardejov hospitals was higher than majority patients. An interesting exception is sexually transferred diseases, suggesting that the Roma still practice conservative sexual values, and that promiscuity is a rather new phenomenon among them.

ROMA HEALTH BEHAVIOR AND LIFESTYLE

Many scientific books issued before 1989 and dealing with Roma health emphasize the importance of healthy behavior, stressing especially the importance of daily bathing, hand washing, fingernail cutting, and hygienic meal preparation. Further research confirmed that the health of the Roma was very poor, and that many diseases among them were caused by malnutrition, an unhealthy lifestyle, and unwillingness to cooperate. Many basic data come from a study monitoring the Roma in Prague's fifth district (Brtníková and Zelenková, 1976). The report contains no concrete data or references to any literature, it just states that the Roma in this area suffer from a wide range of diseases caused by their unhealthy lifestyle. According to this report, the Roma are heavy smokers, and suffer chronic diseases of the respiratory system. It also refers to high alcohol consumption, which causes frequent diseases of the liver and the digestive system. The paediatric part of the report warns that Roma mothers suckle their children only briefly or not at all, and often smoke and drink alcohol during pregnancy. The report also mentions a higher (compared to other children of the same age) occurrence of injuries (especially burns), diarrhea and skin diseases in Roma infants and toddlers.

Growing prostitution and drug addiction among the Roma also presents a great health problem. They present an increased risk of HIV, hepatitis B and C, and other sexually transferred diseases, as well as an increase in crime and suicides.

ROMA NUTRITION COMPARED TO THE REMAINDER OF THE POPULATION

A variety of studies describe the lifestyles and nutrition of the Slovak population as a whole, but few examine the nutritional habits of the Roma. The Roma's socio-economic position is generally very poor, and there are many reasons to expect incorrect nutrition habits related to poverty on the one hand, and irresponsibility for one's health on the other. Collecting information on Roma nutrition is complicated. First, there is a communication barrier; second, many parents refuse to answer nutrition-related questions because they consider such information to be private. And third, ethnic groups are usually not included in official statistical data.

The impact of nutrition on health, the incidence of so-called "civilization diseases" (cardiovascular and cancer-related diseases, allergies, etc.), and life expectancy is well known. The quantity, composition and processing of food have a significant impact on one's performance and one's immune system. Nutrition is determined by habits, region, and many other factors, such as religious rules, degree of education, and socio-economic aspects.

The following data comes from a study by Kačala et al (2002), which was carried out in the Zlaté Klasy municipality, situated to the east of Bratislava. We should note that the local Roma community does not represent the Slovak average for the Roma, as it has a notably higher standard of living.

The food consumed was divided into several groups: animal foodstuffs, plant foodstuffs,

and drinks. The results are shown below in Table 2 and in Graphs 1 through 4. Consumption of food is broken up into daily and other frequencies in percent. As for the animal foodstuffs, there were major differences, to the disadvantage of the Roma, in the consumption of pork and smoked meat. As for the consummation of pork fat, the result was again to the disfavor of the Roma. The Roma also consume surprisingly large quantities of poultry in comparison to the remainder of the population. Roma women consume more eggs than the rest of Slovakia's women. While no such difference was recorded in men, the data may be biased, as men usually do not count the eggs used when preparing a meal.

The Roma eat a lot of fat meat and animal fat. Similar results were found in the Levice district in south-central Slovakia (Ginter, 1998). High food fat content is a factor in obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular and cancer-related diseases. On the other hand, the Roma consume fewer fruit and vegetables than the rest of the population. Plant foodstuffs are the main source of fiber, polysaccharides, bioactive substances, and vitamins (group B vitamins, folacin, C, E, K, A and other vitamins). Vegetable consumption was quite low among both ethnic groups, despite the fact they were from south Slovakia, an area where many vegetables are grown. The fact that the research was carried out at the beginning of spring may have had something to do with this. Low vegetable consumption was also seen in the Levice district (Ginter, 1998). Lack of fiber and antioxidant vitamins (especially the C, A and E vitamins) and group B vitamins in food leads to the formation of carcinomas and cardiovascular diseases.

The Roma consume more soft drinks with lots of calories, which contribute to obesity and related diseases. They also drink more spirits. The consequences of drinking alcohol are well-known – liver cirrhosis and related (frequently fatal) diseases, carcinomas of the gastrointestinal (digestive) system, as well as far-reaching social and economic consequences (family neglect and break-up, unemployment, accidents, etc.).

An interesting dependence was discovered in the Roma. After correlating mental well-be-

Table 2
Daily or every-other-day consumption of food by different ethnic groups

	Men		Women	
	Slovak	**Roma**	**Slovak**	**Roma**
animal foodstuffs				
pork meat	17	37	7	32
Smoked meat	15	43	8.8	43
pork fat	0	18	9	24
poultry	22	39	14	33
eggs	10	12	7	25
plant foodstuffs				
brown bakery products	63	66	77	47
white bakery products	29	66	25	65
sweets	18	35	20	56
raw vegetables[*]	11	41	16	40
legumes[*]	4	24	4	21
drinks				
lemonades	32	65	14	72
spirits	5	14	2	3
beer	19	23	4	0

Note: * With the commodities marked with an asterisk, a frequent answer was rarely or never.
Source: Kačala et al, 2002.

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ing and blood pressure levels, we obtained a linear dependence. High blood pressure equaled a poor mental condition, and vice versa. No such relationship was discovered in the rest of the population, which may perhaps be due to lifestyle and civilization influences. The increased acceptance of civilizational habits presumably causes a loss of "communication between the body and the soul".

In 1997 (Brázdová, Fiala et al, 1998) a study was done of the nutrition of Roma children in the Czech Republic. The authors spoke with 650 children aged 9 to 13 from different regions of Bohemia, and tried to determine their nutritional habits and their daily intake of the most significant nutritional substances. They discovered an inadequate consumption of vegetables (only 19% of the recommended daily intake, or RDI), fruit (20% of RDI), milk and milk products (32% of RDI), cereals, pasta, bread, and rice (63% of RDI). On the other hand, Roma children ate 4.5-times more fast food, containing loads of animal fat and sugar, than recommended. This could explain the high incidence of obesity among Roma children (Brázdová, Fiala, and Hŕstková, 1998).

When asked what they liked to eat, 90% of Roma children answered that they also liked healthy food such as oranges, apples, bananas, tomatoes, cucumbers, and potatoes, but said that they did not get to eat them very often. This seems surprising, given that most families modify their menu according to what their children like to eat. The limited food selection in Roma families may stem from their bad economic situation. However, this is contradicted by the frequent incidence of obesity among Roma children from certain areas (Brázdová, Fiala, and Hŕstková, 1998).

Many data confirm that poor nutrition may have an adverse effect on the stature of Roma children. Bernasovský et al (1986) examined the physical stature of 300 Roma children from eastern Slovakia. They found that these children grew up more slowly than children from the majority population. The children matured later sexually as well.

Graph 1
Frequency of pork consumption
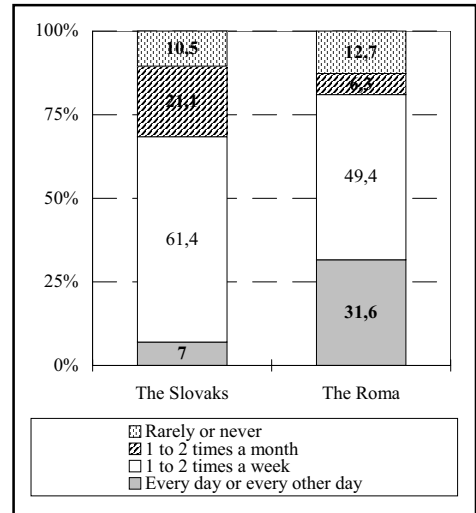
Source: Kačala et al, 2002.

Graph 2
Frequency of smoked meat consumption
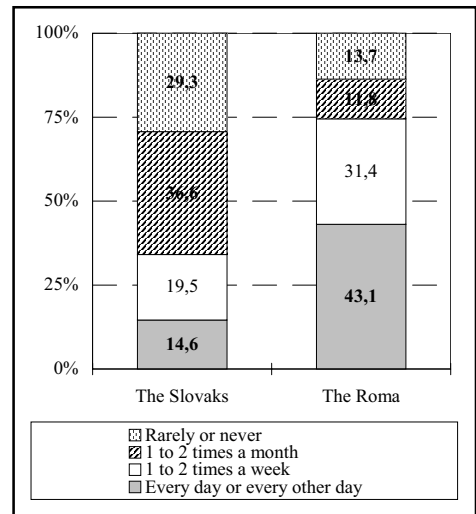
Source: Kačala et al, 2002.

Graph 3
Frequency of white bread and pastry consumption – men
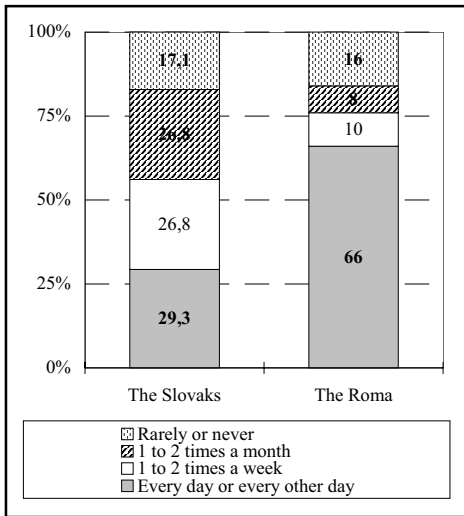
Source: Kačala et al, 2002.

Graph 4
Frequency of sweet drink consumption – women
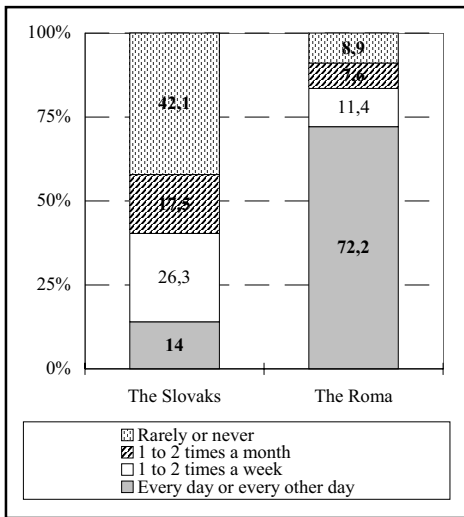
Source: Kačala et al, 2002.

The authors emphasized that the growth and development of children are determined by both genetic predispositions and environmental factors, an important part of which is sufficient intake of certain foods. The slow development of Roma children may be caused by insufficient intake of these substances.

CONGENITAL DISEASES

Much research dealing with Roma health focuses on congenital (inborn) diseases. Some authors tend to look at all Roma health problems in terms of inborn dispositions and high genetic load (inbreeding), which may be an over simplification of the issue. On the other hand, timely medical intervention can prevent the formation of or alleviate the symptoms of certain congenital diseases. It is thus very important to know whether there is a risk of a child being afflicted by a genetic disease even before it is born.

According to Seres (1998), the incidence of congenital anomalies in the Rožňava district from 1992 to 1997 was 2.15 cases per 100 births in the majority population and 2.37 per 100 births among the Roma. However, the variety of diseases of Roma newborns differed from the rest, and tended to be very serious diseases causing permanent invalidity. The most typical inborn diseases of the Roma are: congenital glaucoma, phenylketonuria, congenital hypothyreosis, craniostenosis (inborn deformity of the skull) and mental retardation. Some authors have tried to find a link between certain blood groups typical of the Roma and the increased incidence of certain parasitic diseases such as giardiosis (Bernasovský, 1981).

CONGENITAL GLAUCOMA

The most frequent single-gene disease afflicting the Roma is congenital glaucoma (CG). CG is a serious eye anomaly causing

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blindness. The disease is responsible for about 10% of all blindness cases in children. The incidence of the disease in developed countries is roughly 1 in 15,000 children, but among the Roma it is 15-times higher, or 1 in 1,000 children.

According to Gerinc and Ferák (1999), two clinical forms of the disease are known:
- autosomal recessively inheritable CG occurring in the Roma, which has a severe clinical phase during which about 75% of children go blind.
- sporadic, not inherited CG occurring in the rest of Slovaks, having a less severe clinical phase during which about 75% of children are cured.

The differences between CG among the Roma and the non-Roma in genetic factors and clinical indicators are shown in Table 3.

The main medical problem is represented by CG in Roma, who form an independent clinical unit from the rest of the population. Despite progress in microsurgery, treatment is very rarely successful, and roughly 10,000 Slovak Roma children go blind every year (Gerinec and Ferák, 1999). This figure represents a serious medical and socio-economic issue, because the state has to spend about 0.5 million Sk ($12,000) in care for each blind child every year.

The aforementioned authors were the first to identify the mutation responsible for Roma CG in 1997. To identify the mutation, they prepared a PCR[2] method test that was sensitive enough to be used in prenatal diagnostics as well as to identify healthy carriers of CG. Any marriage between Roma can be considered risky because of the high number of carriers. The said method can establish whether someone is or is not a disease carrier.

Screening healthy CG carriers is the most effective prevention means. Using this method we could considerably lower the incidence of the disease in just a few years. Another means of prevention is prenatal diagnostics in parents who are healthy but still carriers. If the fetus is diseased, the mother can decide whether to abort the pregnancy or not. If the results are negative, the mother can be sure she will give birth to a child not affected by CG. Use of this screening is well justified, as CG is a very serious disease causing life-long invalidity and trauma, not just to the affected individual but also to his/her family, not to mention the expense that screening could save the state budget.

Table 3
Statistically significant genetic and clinical indicator differences (incidence of congenital glaucoma) between the Roma and the non-Roma in Slovakia

Indicator	Population	
	Roma	non-Roma
Incidence within the family	53.30%	5.20%
Men: Women afflicted	1.18 : 1	1.55 : 1
Consanguinity of parents	40.80%	5.90%
CG incidence	1 in 1,250	1 in 22,000
Inheritability	autosomal recessive	polygenous
Incidence at the time of birth	94%	9.50%
CG laterality	100% bilateral	76.6% bilateral
Phase and prognosis	severe	benign
Blindness	60.50%	10.10%

Note: Bilateral means both eyes are affected.
Source: Oláh et al, 1998.

PHENYLKETONURIA AND CONGENITAL HYPOTHYREOSIS

These diseases are both metabolic disorders that occur frequently in the Roma. If not diagnosed and treated early enough, they can cause serious damage and life long invalidity.

Phenylketonuria is an inborn phenylalanine amino-acid metabolic disorder (phenylalanine is not transformed into tyrosine) characterized by the accumulation of phenylalanine and its metabolites in body fluids, whereby these substances act as toxins. The incidence of the disease in Slovakia is 1 in 10,000 newborns, but among the Roma it is roughly 1 in 1,000 newborns (Feráková, Ferák, Kádasi et al, 1991). The main symptoms of the advanced form of the disease are heavy mental retardation, convulsions, and hyperactivity.

Congenital hypothyreosis (CH) is an inborn lack of hormones produced by the thyroid gland (thyroxine and triiodinetyronine). Advanced forms of CH affect the central nervous system and the skeleton. Heavy mental retardation is common, while the body is disproportional and small; dwarfism can also occur. Symptoms may be absent at birth, and only evolve later. Late diagnosis and treatment can have serious consequences, which is why all newborns in Slovakia are checked for hypothyreosis (and phenylketonuria). Cretinism is hypothyreosis (thyroid deficiency) combined with irreversible changes to the skeleton and nervous system. According to a study by Lescisinová et al (1989), Roma newborns in eastern Slovakia (1985 to 1988) were affected by CH almost three times more often than other newborns. The incidence of CH in non-Roma children was 1 in 6,284, while in the Roma it was 1 in 2,192.

SLOW MENTAL DEVELOPMENT

Kvasnicová (1992) studied the incidence of slow mental development among 6 to 14-year-olds in the Banská Bystrica district. The prevalence of this phenomenon among Roma children was 21.5%, while among the non-Roma it was only 0.9%. Other surveys have also revealed a higher prevalence of mental retardation among Roma children compared to the majority population. However, we must make clear that these numbers do not always reflect reality. So far, no test of sufficient validity has determined that Roma children show slow mental development. A good example is the process of selecting and placing Roma children in schools and facilities for mentally retarded children – the so-called "special schools".

The long-term and extremely high proportion of Roma children and young people in Slovak "special" schools and facilities is a permanent education sector issue. The problem is being monitored, examined, and addressed, but it remains a problem. There seem to be many errors made in the approach, as well as in the selection and placing of Roma children in special schools. Personality-forming factors such as inheritance, environment, and upbringing are often under- or overestimated. A Roma child whose parents attended a special school is often automatically considered a potential special school candidate. If the child's siblings already attend a special school, the decision is almost a formality. Thus, entire generations of Roma can be found attending special schools, with the virtual certainty that their children too will be automatically treated as special school candidates.

The overestimation of environmental influences significantly affects decisions made on Roma children. At the same time, the impact

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of school or out-of-school education environments is underestimated, as is the influence of mentoring. Teachers do not have confidence in their own pedagogical abilities, and do not have faith in the effectiveness of mentoring in educating Roma pupils. Many elementary school teachers give up on their Roma pupils after the first failure, and try to transfer them to a special school as quickly as possible. For the elementary school teacher, transferring the Roma is the easiest way to shift the responsibility for educating them to another institution.

Because of deprivation and retardation, Roma pupils are simply expected to fail in common psychological tests for preschoolers. One of the causes of these selection failures is the absence of an appropriate test for Roma pupils. The test should be as visual as possible, and should not expect a level of knowledge or command of Slovak common among Slovak children. The mental development of 133 Roma pupils from special schools was tested after nine years of school attendance. The initial diagnosis was compared with the final one. The determined IQ range was from 53 to 112, with the average between 70 and 80.

Nevertheless, mental retardation is clearly more frequent among the Roma than among the non-Roma. Naturally, racial factors are not the determining ones. The main problems are premature birth, the young age of the mother at birth, and the fact that children, both before and after their births, are exposed to extremely poor sanitary conditions and noxious influences (alcohol consumption, smoking, poor nutrition, filth, and high incidence of disease). The high inbreeding rate also plays an important role, as well as the mentioned frequent incidence of certain congenital diseases (phenylketonuria, congenital hypothyreosis, etc.), which may cause mental retardation, sometimes very serious.

The incidence of slow mental development in the Roma exceeds the statistical average in an ordinary population. However, the situation is by no means as bad as the state of Slovak special schools may suggest. The indirect cause of this situation is the "content reconstruction" of elementary schools after 1976. Children from unstimulating environments were naturally not capable of dealing with the increased academic demands, and were unable to keep pace with their mentally more advanced peers. Teachers now do not have time to occupy themselves with slower pupils, and thus usually give up on them and transfer them to special schools. However, most of these children do not belong there; they should instead receive proper education and upbringing in regular elementary schools.

CHRONIC AND UNCLASSIFIED DISEASES

Thanks to the discovery of antibiotics, the 20th century saw a sharp decline in morbidity and mortality caused by infectious diseases, which had been the most common cause of death until then. Especially in industrial countries, these diseases were replaced by the "civilization diseases" caused by an unhealthy lifestyle, environmental pollution, improper nutrition, smoking and alcohol consumption. These include cardiovascular diseases (arteriosclerosis, heart disease, heart attacks), cancer-related diseases, allergies, diabetes, chronic obstructive lung disease, chronic neurological diseases, mental disorders, and many more.

Information about these diseases in the Roma is very scarce. Ginter et al (2001) believe that their high rate of early mortality has to do with cardiovascular diseases, which affect the Roma 2.5-times more often than the rest of the population. Mortality from cancer-re-

lated diseases is about 1.8-times higher, while the number of deaths due to external causes (injuries, poisoning, crime, suicide, etc.) is about 2-times higher than among the Slovaks. The authors felt that the large-scale cardiovascular mortality could be related to the high prevalence of diabetes and the high incidence of chronic infections. The Roma show a high prevalence of obesity, and low levels of HDL-cholesterol (the so-called "good cholesterol").

Several reports exist on cardiovascular diseases among the Roma. Nozdrovický has monitored a Roma community in the northeast Slovak municipality of Rakúsy since 1980. He has found that the most frequent cause of death in this community is cardiovascular disease. Among the causes he identified several lifestyle factors that could play an important role in the high rate of cardiovascular disease and mortality among the Roma. These include high consumption of animal fat and minimal consumption of fruit and vegetables, obesity, heavy and widespread smoking (often from a very young age), physical inactivity, and heavy drinking. Nozdrovický also noted the unwillingness of the Roma to help prevent and cure these diseases.

A study in Prague's fifth district found that many elderly Roma were invalids suffering from neurological, bone and joint diseases, and from chronic respiratory tract illnesses.

There are signs that chronic diseases (such as cardiovascular diseases and diabetes) are becoming a growing threat among adult Roma. The incidence of low birth weight among the Roma is very high (see above), and some data show that people who had a low birth weight are more susceptible to cardiovascular diseases and diabetes in adulthood.

THE ROMA AND THE HEALTH SYSTEM

ACCESS OF ROMA TO HEALTH CARE

There seems to be an urgent need to improve the relationship between the Roma and the health system. Seres describes several specific problems in the approach to the treatment of Roma women in gynecology and obstetrics wards. He mentions patients who left the hospital immediately after an essential and life-saving treatment was finished. He also noted a failure to cooperate in treatments with medications, especially when these are prescribed preventively, or when the patient does not feel any symptoms of the ongoing disease. The Roma are also reluctant to undergo regular outpatient examinations (Seres, 1998).

Jurová and Koptová state in their chapter *Risk Groups – Roma Children and Youth* that Roma mothers often leave their children alone in medical establishments immediately after their birth. The authors believe that this is caused by the long-term disintegration of the positive value orientation of the Roma family, and the weakening or even the loss of family cohesion and responsibility for raising children.

DISCRIMINATION IN MEDICAL CARE

The Slovak Constitution, in Article 40, guarantees everyone the right to protect his/her health, and assures Slovak citizens of the right to free medical care and medical aids on terms set by the law. Neither the Constitution nor the additional regulations on medical care contain any specific anti-discrimination measures. However, doctors are bound

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to provide medical care to everyone, regardless of their racial or ethnic origin (see *The Ethical Codex...*, 1992). Despite that, the Roma frequently meet discrimination in trying to gain access to medical care.

The incidence of infectious diseases among the Roma is higher than among the majority population. Epidemics of scab, pediculosis, pyodermatitis, mycosis, and ascariasis (many of these are parasitic or fungal skin diseases) among the inhabitants of Roma settlements are not rare. The periodic incidence of meningitis and typhus in Roma communities is used to justify requiring health passes from Roma children at the entrances to public swimming pools. Such health passes are not required from non-Roma children.[3]

Roma women often face discrimination both when visiting the doctor and during treatment. Roma women in eastern Slovakia have become accustomed to segregated maternity wards, which in this region are more of a rule than an exception; this segregation relates to all medical facilities, including showers and bathrooms (Zoon, 2001).

The Lunik IX Roma ghetto in east Slovakia's Košice saw the introduction of discriminatory measures limiting the access of Roma women to gynecological care. All Roma women from this housing estate were registered at one gynecological center, and could have a medical check-up only on Fridays. Only non-Roma women were served on other days.[4]

In 1990, a Košice NGO filed a complaint with the Health Ministry against the widespread segregation of Roma women on separate maternity wards. The ministry replied that the Roma patients had been separated at their own request, and because some of them were insubordinate and constantly violated hospital regulations (*The White Book*, 2000).

Based on the testimony of Roma asylum seekers in Finland and the findings of medical workers cooperating with Finnish NGOs, serious allegations were made that Roma women had been sterilized without their consent.[5] In November 1999, nurses from several Finnish refugee camps claimed that various gynecological procedures appeared to have been performed on many Slovak Roma women. The Finnish office of Amnesty International started to investigate the issue, stating that there were several worrying cases among the women. According to some reports, some Roma women who had had caesarian sections or other medical interventions performed in Slovak hospitals after 1990 had never been able to become pregnant again, despite not using any form of contraception (Zoon, 2001). The Human and Minority Rights Section of the Slovak Government Office denied any information on such practices (TASR press agency, March 9, 2000).

The Slovak Health Ministry has no data on Roma health, because according to its official line: "the ministry does not and cannot see who is a Roma and who is not."[6] Moreover, as the government recently noted, the ministry had not received or noticed a single case of Roma discrimination in state medical establishments in Slovakia.[7]

SUSPECTED STERILIZATIONS OF ROMA WOMEN

The issue of alleged forced sterilizations of Roma women in eastern Slovakia reverberated throughout the country and abroad at the beginning of 2003. The allegations were made in the report of the Center for Reproductive Rights and the Civic and Human Rights Advice Bureau, entitled *Body and Soul: Forced Sterilizations and Other Attacks on the Reproductive Freedoms of the*

Roma in Slovakia. According to this report, which was based on interviews with 230 Roma women from 40 eastern Slovakia settlements, hospitals in the area had forced Roma women to undergo sterilization, or the women had been sterilized against their will. The authors of the report also noted racial discrimination in access to health care and treatment, physical and verbal attacks against Roma patients, and misinformation about matters related to reproduction. Another problem mentioned in the report was refusal of access to health records (*Telo a duša…*, 2003).

According to the authors of the report, their research unveiled at least 110 cases of forced or constrained sterilization of Roma women, which, according to the authors, was only "the tip of the iceberg". Roma women had often been given misleading or threatening information by doctors and nurses with the aim of pressuring and intimidating them into consenting to be sterilized, a process that was then performed during a caesarian section operation. The physicians also frequently and irresponsibly performed caesarian sections of Roma women, partly as a pretext for sterilizations. The Roma women affected did not obtain precise information about the real chances that they would be able to become pregnant in the future, and they were intimidated into consenting to sterilization by threats that they or their child might die during delivery if the procedure was not performed. In other cases, the Roma women were not even informed of the sterilization, and were forced to give their consent afterwards. There were two cases of sterilization of women younger than 18 without the consent of their legal representative, which is required by law. The report mentioned the hospital in the eastern Slovak town of Krompachy as the place where most forced sterilizations had taken place (*Telo a duša...*, 2003).

The government reacted to the report by filing a motion for the criminal prosecution of an unknown culprit for the suspected forced sterilization of Roma women. However, it also filed a motion for the criminal prosecution of the report's authors, because, should the information in their report prove true, then they had by the same token failed to meet their legal obligation to notify the police that a crime had taken place. On the other hand, should the information prove false, they would be guilty of the crime of disseminating false information. The charges aroused a wave of criticism in the West. The Deputy Prime Minister for European Integration, Human Rights and Minorities, Pál Csáky, asked the appropriate ministers, the Public Prosecution Office, and the president of the police force to look into the issue.

The regional police in Košice launched a criminal prosecution for the crime of genocide according to Section 259, Paragraph 1, letter b) of the Penal Code, following the ruling of the regional investigation authority in Košice that grounds existed for the charges. The authority also asked the Faculty of Medicine at Comenius University in Bratislava to prepare an expert report.

The authority also established a control group consisting of a Health Ministry representative and various specialists and experts in gynecology and obstetrics, and tasked it with checking up on the gynecology and obstetrics ward of the hospital and policlinic in Krompachy. At the request of the investigator and on the order of the Health Minister, the control group performed an inspection of the said ward.

The group came to the following conclusions. The architecture of the hospital in Krompachy does not permit racial segregation. The doctors and the other personnel have the required qualifications and all hos-

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pital records were without faults. The female patients present in the ward, including the hospitalized Roma women, had no complaints. All female patients (from 1999 to 2002) on whom the sterilization procedure had been performed had signed an application to permit sterilization, and all these requests had been discussed and approved by the sterilization committee. Indications that the sterilizations should be performed were correct and in accordance with the directive on sterilization. In two cases, Section 7 of the directive, requiring the consent of both the person in question (even if the person was capable of judging the consequences of his/her decision) as well as the consent of the curator, was not adhered to (*Správa o výsledkoch šetrenia...*, 2003).

Besides that, the control group also pointed out data suggesting that the number of sterilizations among Roma women was significantly lower than among the rest of the population. The number of caesarian sections among the majority population was also found to be twice as high as among the Roma. These data were not felt to indicate the presence of genocide in the hospital examined (*Správa o výsledkoch šetrenia...*, 2003). The control group, after its work at the Krompachy hospital, was unable to confirm the allegations brought forward by the *Body and Soul* report.

The Health Ministry's gynecology expert, Karol Holomáň, in an interview with the *Sme* daily paper, pointed out what he called other serious shortcomings in the *Body and Soul* report, which further weakened the arguments of the report's authors about the forced sterilizations. For example, Holomáň said the assertion that more Roma women had undergone caesarian sections merely because the physicians wanted to perform a sterilization at the same time was false and absurd. According to the statistical data, majority popu-

lation women undergo caesarian sections twice as often as Roma women. Furthermore, a caesarian section is an operation, and must be indicated by some medical condition. It is also more complicated for the physician, especially if a caesarian is being performed for the second time on a patient. Caesarian sections are technically demanding and connected with complications. According to Holomáň, the only reason that a caesarian section can be performed in Slovakia is a medical reason, unlike in the US, where it can be performed at the wish of the female patient (*Sme*, February 24, 2003).

The ministry's gynecology expert also noted that the report's authors did not have even a basic level of medical knowledge, as proven by their statement that the caesarian sections on the Roma women in eastern Slovakia had been performed vertically, which is an obsolete method. The report stated that: "In most of the caesarians, the abdominal cavity was opened in the upper abdomen", i.e. from the navel upwards. This is not possible even in theory. The abdominal cavity can be open in two ways during a caesarian section – by performing an incision downwards from the navel, or by a horizontal incision. However, the most important part of the caesarian section is how the uterus is opened. Nowadays, the most frequent method is to perform the incision on the least congested part. The traditional corporal caesarian section, which was used 50 years ago, has been abandoned (*Sme*, February 24, 2003).

The report's main objection was that the women had not been informed, and had been forced to give their consent before an acute caesarian. Unfortunately, the directive on sterilization does not stipulate low long in advance a woman has to ask for sterilization before medical help is provided. In the case of an acute operation, it is not always possible to adhere to a certain time schedule. If the

woman's pelvis is narrow, all her pregnancies will inevitably end in caesarians, so she has a right to know what her options are and what the risks are. Naturally, she should be informed of these facts at a prenatal center, agreed Holomáň. However, statistics show that only 25% of Roma women attended prenatal centers often enough for such information to be ascertained and passed on; 25% do not visit a center at all before giving birth, and the remaining 50% only a few times. If Roma women do not attend the prenatal center, it is also difficult to inform them of other possibilities of contraception, something that was also criticized in the report (*Sme*, February 24, 2003).

The *Body and Soul* report had many serious consequences for Slovakia's image abroad, even though the government investigation proved the accusations of alleged sterilizations to be untrue. However, the report at the same time pointed to serious shortcomings in legislation and certain double standards in the approach of health workers to Roma patients.

Sterilization in Slovakia is governed by a 30-year-old law that has several shortcomings. One of the most serious is the absence of a mandatory time period during which the woman can decide whether or not the sterilization should be performed. The law also fails to define the conditions under which a woman may not take this decision (e.g. when she is under the influence of anesthesia, or prenatal stress). Given these flaws, doctors who request a signature from the patient in the operating theater itself, whatever the medical ethics involved, are not breaking the law.

Based on the report, the Health Ministry proposed a new law on sterilization according to which there should be a 72-hour period before consent is given. The law should also regulate the sterilization of young women.

The Health Ministry also issued an instruction unifying sterilization procedures and sent it to all directors of health facilities it administered, as well as to all self governing regions. Among other things, the instruction said that health facilities are obliged to acquire the consent of the legal representatives of all people with limited abilities to perform legal acts, such as minors (*Správa o výsledkoch šetrenia...*, 2003).

GOVERNMENT MEASURES IN ROMA MEDICAL CARE

The cabinet on September 27, 1999 approved a document entitled *Strategy of the Slovak Government to Solve the Problems of the Roma and the Set of Implementation Measures – 1st Stage* (hereafter referred to as "the strategy").

In this document, the cabinet confirmed the need to create conditions for solving Roma problems in areas where the situation is considered critical – unemployment, housing, the health service, the social sphere, and education; as well as in areas where there is still room for improvement, such as human rights, ethnic minority rights, cooperation with NGOs, and regional development.

The preparation of further steps included drawing up a strategy for individual departments, regions, and districts, including covering the costs from the 2000 state budget. A new document was created – *The Detailed Strategy of the Slovak Government to Solve the Problems of the Roma and a Set of Concrete Measures for 2000 – 2nd Stage* (hereafter referred to as "the detailed strategy"). Strategies concerning Roma health included the following measures:

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THE HEALTH MINISTRY

1. To continue implementation of the "Schools Supporting Health" project.
2. To prepare a preventive inoculation plan for Roma children aged 1 to 10 against type A hepatitis. The plan is to focus on children from environments with maximum infection risk – Roma settlements with very poor social and sanitary standards.
3. To implement projects prepared by the Institute of Health Education:
   a) increasing health awareness among Roma children aged 6 to 9;
   b) increasing health awareness among Roma children aged 10 to 15;
   c) preparing the Roma for planned matrimony and parenthood.

REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

1. To obtain hepatitis A and B serum, and ensure laboratory examinations of drinking water. To provide adult education on hygiene.
2. To carry out health education in cooperation with schools. The following topics are to be discussed: healthy nutrition, personal hygiene, parenthood, vaccinations, and the prevention of substance abuse.
3. To develop a project of peer education for municipalities with large numbers of Roma children.
4. To promote, via the media, health education focusing on the Roma.
5. To prevent the formation and dissemination of contagious diseases in Roma settlements by adopting preventive measures and increased hygiene control.
6. To establish home care agencies, especially in the districts of Malacky, Pezinok and Senec.
7. To perform quality controls of water sources supplying the inhabitants of Roma settlements. To take action if unsuitable water quality is discovered.
8. To implement educational programs, including promotions and lectures, focusing on basic hygiene habits in Roma families.
9. To continue educational programs focused on planned parenthood and healthy lifestyles.
10. State medical establishments will focus their health education on districts and schools with a high ratio of children from socially weak and inadaptable families. This will involve all school types, and above all classes with increased numbers of Roma pupils.

ROMA SETTLEMENTS

Life in Roma settlements (rural-type dwellings) is very risky. There is no suitable drinking water, sewage systems and septic tanks do not exist, solid waste piles up and decomposes, dwellings are overcrowded, and there are few access roads.

According to the Slovak Health Ministry, the highest share of people not having access to safe drinking water live in settlements in the Prešov region (51.4%), followed by the Košice and Banská Bystrica regions.

In 2001, the Slovak State Health Institute prepared a document for the Slovak Health Ministry called *The Program of Improving the Environment and Sanitary Conditions and Prevention of Infectious Diseases among the Inhabitants of Roma Settlements*. This document attempted to improve health in Roma settlements, and emphasized the need to involve the Roma in public life by giving them representation in local municipalities. It underlined the need for an active approach by the Roma to work, and the need to increase their educational level, while main-

taining a specific approach to selected Roma target groups.

DISCRIMINATION

The cabinet adopted a document called *An Action Plan for Preventing all Forms of Discrimination, Racism, Xenophobia, Anti-Semitism and Other Displays of Intolerance for the Period 2002 to 2003* (hereafter referred to as "the 2002 – 2003 action plan"). The 2002 – 2003 action plan proposed an information campaign and various types of human rights training, focused on preventing discrimination, racism, xenophobia and similar forms of intolerance, and envisaged strengthening the legal awareness of Slovak citizens in the effective use of protective measures.

The document states: "The Slovak Health Ministry will educate health workers in preventing all forms of discrimination, racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and other displays of intolerance. In preventing discrimination, it is necessary to focus on ensuring equal treatment for patients regardless of their sex, race, complexion, language, faith and religion, political or other way of thinking, national and social origin, ethnic affinity, property, class or position." However, the document fails to specify what measures will be used to achieve this.

The Office of the Slovak Government Representative for Solving the Problems of the Roma Minority, in cooperation with the InfoRoma foundation and the State Health Institute, prepared a project entitled "The Health Condition of Children and Women from Poor Slovak Communities". One of the priorities of the National Health Support Program (in accordance with the fulfillment of the Health for Everyone in the 21st Century program of the World Health Organization)

is to improve the health of the entire Slovak population. The project's aim is to collect data on the health of children from the lower social classes. The data is to be presented at the UNO meeting on children's rights, and should provide the information needed to create a policy improving health and disease prevention, and stressing the need to provide health care to the poorest people. The project is to be funded by UNICEF.

CONCLUSION

It is clear that the health of the Roma is substantially worse than that of the rest of the Slovak population. The main causes of this are the long-term adverse socio-economic situation of the Roma, their insufficient education and inappropriate lifestyle. While Roma health gradually improved during the communist regime, with infant mortality falling and many infectious diseases almost eliminated, since 1989 it has gradually worsened.

Although prevention and medical measures were well thought-out in the past, they were also of a forced nature, thus demotivating the Roma to practice preventive medical and sanitary measures. At present, preventive programs with the participation of the state, health organizations, NGOs, and the Roma are preferred. The basic principles of such programs should be supported by the Roma, and should be familiar and appropriate to them. The approach of NGOs to support "islands of positive deviation" within local communities is proving effective. Such islands may become positive examples worthy of following by other community members.

The detailed strategy focuses on vaccinating Roma children against hepatitis A and B[8] – according to government sources, the task has already been accomplished. The health

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of Roma communities is still threatened by serious diseases such as poliomyelitis (cerebral palsy) and meningitis (brain fever). State health institutions sometimes suggest that Roma parents should be blamed for this situation, as they lack the discipline to have their children inoculated (TASR press agency, February 16, 2000). As the Roma practice no systematic inoculation, there is a constant threat of an outbreak of new epidemics in Roma communities. In the spring of 2000, there were four new cases of meningitis diagnosed in the Roma communities near Michalovce in east Slovakia. Even though there were 300 children needing immediate vaccination in the area, only 10% of them received shots.[10]

Western specialists have already noticed this negative trend. Martin McKee warned in an article published in the *British Medical Journal* that "at the end of the 20th century, European governments cannot be allowed to ignore the needs of the multitude of their citizens". McKee criticized the scientific institutions of countries with large populations of Roma inhabitants for not paying sufficient attention to analyzing their health problems (McKee, 1997). Our objective in this chapter was to react to such criticisms by publishing a detailed report attempting to summarize the results of multiple epidemiological research on the health condition, nutrition, lifestyle, and inborn predispositions of the Slovak Roma.

ENDNOTES

1. The majority of documents examining this issue confirm that the gene pool of the Roma is different from that of the non-Roma, and the gene frequencies determined in individual systems are very similar to corresponding frequencies of different Indian populations (Siváková, 1992). The best-known evidence is the blood group distribution data. The Roma show increased frequency of the B-allele (i.e. the B blood group is the most frequent), a small proportion of the A/B-allele, and high frequency of the phenotype CCDee (Rh system), i.e. a high frequency of rhesus factor [+]. Similar findings are typical for the inhabitants of the Indian subcontinent. The Roma show a very low incidence of the Hp^1-allele (haptoglobine system), a low frequency of the P^a-allele (acidic erythroctic phosphatase, or ACP system) and the P^c-allele from the same system is completely absent. The frequency of the PGM^1_1-allele from the phosphogluco-mutase enzyme system is equally frequent (Siváková, 1983). All of these findings support the hypothesis of the Roma's Indian origin.
2. Polymerasis chain reaction (PCR) – a molecular biology method – is one of the most frequently used techniques in gene defect diagnostics.
3. Daniela Stabová, head of the Slovak office of the International Organization for Migration, quoted in Sobotka (manuscript, p. 20).
4. This procedure was introduced in 1997 and lasted until March 2001 (Zoon, 2001).
5. The Belgian NGO Roma Rights League claimed that several Roma women had testified to being sterilized by Slovak physicians after childbirth. OPRE Roma, March 9, 2000.
6. Information from the Section of Public Health of the Health Ministry, March 8, 2001.
7. The Slovak government's comments on the Advisory Committee's Standpoint to the report on implementation of the National Minority Protection General Agreement (FCNM), Para. 3, 2001. http://www.humanrights.coe.int/minorities/Eng/FrameworkConvention/AdvisoryCommittee/Opinions/Slovakia.Comments.htm
8. The cabinet entrusted this task to the regional authorities, allocating 800,000 Sk (18,675 €) for inoculation, health education, and laboratory tests of drinking water (see *Detailed Strategy,* 2000, page 39).
9. Information from the Section of Public Health, March 8. 2000.
10. According to a Košice epidemiologist, only 39 out of 300 Roma children were inoculated against hepatitis (see *Korzár*, February 16, 2000).

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THE ROMA IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM AND ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROJECTS

Summary: This part of the book deals with the education of the Roma in the Slovak school system. It takes a close look at the failures of Roma students at elementary schools, as well as how and why they are sent to "special schools" for retarded children. The chapter also deals with secondary and higher education. The results of an inquiry in the Košice and Prešov regions are added to the analysis. The authors also describe alternative education projects.

Key words: segregation at schools, Roma language, attitude of parents towards education, concept of education of Roma children, school attendance, textbooks, kindergartens, elementary and secondary schools, higher education, special schools, zero grades, Roma teaching assistants, alternative education projects.

INTRODUCTION

For several decades until the events of 1989, the Slovak education system developed in isolation from democratic education systems. Its management, goals, content, methods and organization reflected the regime in which it was formed. Since 1989, the Slovak education system has been characterized by instability and uncertainty in both concept and program.

In 1990, several major legislative changes were passed (in particular the *Law on State Administration in Education and School Self-Administration*), creating conditions for the democratic development of the school system. Among the main principles of the changes were the democratization and humanization of the school system and education. A path towards decentralization of schools and increased autonomy was opened up.

The Constitution was changed as well. The Slovak Constitution today fully respects human and civic rights, as well as the internationally codified rights of children, and outlaws any discrimination based on sex, membership in a nation or an ethnic group, religion, or other traits that could represent a cause for segregation in education. It also acknowledges the right of minorities and ethnic groups to receive education in their own languages. Slovakia at the same time ratified the *European Convention on the Protection of Human Rights* and the *Agreement on the Rights of Child*, which anchor the right to education.

In 1991, a new approach to the education of Roma children started to be used when the government passed *The Principles of the Slovak Government's Policy Towards the Roma*. According to these principles, the Education Ministry had to ensure that the specific needs of the cultural and educational development of the Roma population were met to the same extent as the needs of other ethnic minorities in Slovakia, in compliance with the *Human*

Rights Charter. The principles of the Slovak Education Ministry's approach to the education of Roma children in the state system were woven into the education process, into facilities for educational counseling, the preparation of teachers, and the financing of schools. Since 1999, the Education Ministry has emphasized the coordination of all educational activities aimed at improving the education of Roma children and students within the European Union's Phare programs.

In March 2001, the *Concept for Educating Roma Children and Students* was passed, covering education at all levels of the school system according to age categories; however, it made only minor changes to the status quo. Attempts to create education concepts for the Roma have so far been poorly prepared. The Office of the Slovak Government Representative for Roma Communities in its *2001 Roma Activities Evaluation* criticized the Education Ministry for not taking any real steps to implement the Roma strategy in education, for not providing any funds from the 2002 state budget for Roma education programs, and for taking a chaotic approach to major education issues.

In the 1991 population census, 76.68% of Roma reported that elementary school was the highest level of education they had completed; only 8.07% claimed to have trade school education, and that without having taken final exams. A mere 0.60% of Roma claimed to have secondary technical education, and only 0.84% had completed secondary A-level education. Among all ethnic groups in Slovakia, the Roma minority had smallest ratio with university education.

The low level of education of the Roma minority shows up in all spheres of life. It hurts their chances of finding a job, and is one of the most serious causes of high Roma unemployment. To increase their level of education, suitable conditions have to be created in the education system to accommodate the specific traits of the Roma in the content, form and method of pedagogy. This is a long-term process that cannot be undertaken without the participation of the Roma and their families.

The education handicap of the Roma has roots in the past, as well as in the different nature of Roma culture, in which cultural and spiritual wealth and heritage is passed from generation to generation through direct verbal communication only. Not even during their several centuries in Europe was this community as a whole able to reach a higher level of ethnic and cultural development. The poor education level of the Roma is also a consequence of their opinion of the value of and need for education in finding and defending their position in society (Jurová, 1994, p. 479).

ROMA STUDENTS IN THE SLOVAK EDUCATION SYSTEM

Roma children from their earliest years encounter intolerance, scorn, and contempt because of their skin color, their different view of the world, and their different understanding of truth and justice: they receive this treatment at school, in the street, in society, and when looking for a job. The language education of Roma children is also different; many speak only Romany which, although it is sufficient for life in their communities, does not equip them for success in school education. School, which as an institution imposes education designed by the majority population, is regarded by the Roma as superfluous and undesirable in their lives. Schools represent the fear of everything strange. All school reforms, education programs, projects and measures that have been

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passed "for the benefit of the Roma" have been done so without the involvement of the Roma. In a game whose rules they neither understand nor helped to create, the Roma have only one possibility: to get accustomed to them. Otherwise they banish themselves to the outskirts of the society.

Many school failures among the Roma do not issue from the basic mental inability of the students, but from the fact that these children do not have the basic social and work aptitudes needed for successful schooling, such as basic general knowledge and skills, command of language and vocabulary, basic hygienic habits, etc. Under appropriate conditions, most children have a chance of attaining a nearly normal level of mental development. However, the backwardness that occurs in the long-term absence of development stimuli, especially in early childhood, can never be fully compensated for, as can be seen in the problems Roma children have in coping with school, work, and other life situations.

In school-based education, general intelligence and ability to comprehend are important. These, however, are not inborn traits – one is only born with the predisposition for developing these abilities. From childhood on, Roma children are often stimulated in a different way than majority population children, and thus their intelligence develops in another direction, which while it may be less useful in a traditional school setting, may be more appropriate for developing emotions, one's relationship to nature, etc. When they start attending school, Roma children are flexible, willing, and eager to learn in the appropriate school conditions. In higher grades, however, their results often change significantly for the worse, and they start to be disobedient and lose interest in school. This can be partly explained by the onset of puberty, the greater academic demands, and

the fact that in the Roma family the children tend to be more involved in the activities of the adults, which contrasts with their role as students at school. The older Roma students are often frustrated by their failures, humiliated by the fact that they have to repeat grades, and often become bored and behave aggressively towards their teachers and schoolmates. In the situation as it exists at present, the Roma often emerge from school with an inferiority complex, and feelings of frustration and hatred.

A particular problem with these children is their social development, which in general is conditioned by habits, customs, taboos, and upbringing. Their upbringing gives them little stimulation and is of low quality, on the part of both their parents and the environment they live in. Because a neglected child with poor upbringing finds it difficult to adapt, this social negligence can easily mushroom into delinquency. We must also be aware of the fact that Roma children are socially excluded. The position of school-age children is terribly difficult when their families are despised. Roma students are seldom equal partners in communication with other students, and this is not due only to their language handicap. They lack the usual social routine, they do not know how to communicate with the group, and so on. On the other hand, Roma students have a good, intuitive social intelligence that help them satisfy their basic needs and intuitively find their way in human relationships.

The current school system is not prepared to accommodate the specific needs of the Roma related to education. In Slovakia, discrimination from teachers, segregated classes and entire segregated schools are not rare. Segregation limits mutual learning and disables mutual understanding. In such situations, it is society itself that holds back the people in the disadvantaged position, and not their

(often imagined) defects. Differences between people are natural, and schools should adapt their education methods to the needs of the child, not classify children into categories that are defined by the methods of education.

The government's strategy acknowledges the primary importance of education for addressing other problems of the Roma community. In spite of this, the government has only proposed a series of measures to improve the level of education, and is not taking direct aim at the problem of segregated classes and schools in Slovakia.

In many cases, activities that should be performed by the state are done by NGOs that bring new alternatives and approaches to the education of the Roma, such as new textbooks, training for teachers, and so on. Such NGOs include the Foundation for the Roma Child, the Orava Association for Democracy in Education, the Wide Open School Foundation, the Schola Project, the Association of Young Roma, and others (see below).

THE ROMA CHILD IN THE PRE-SCHOOL PREPARATION SYSTEM

The pre-school years are an important period of intense development in children. According to the findings of the 2000 survey conducted by the Methodical Center in Prešov, only 5.35% of students who attended either nursery school or kindergarten before they started their compulsory education were Roma, compared with the 11.12% of students attending first grade of compulsory education in elementary school who were Roma. This disproportion is due in part to the fact that in most Roma locations there is only an elementary or a special elementary school for handicapped children (Szigeti, 2002).

Education in kindergartens is provided by women teachers and kindergarten headmistresses. Roma mothers and Roma assistants are virtually absent from pre-school education. This sphere has still not been adequately addressed, and the absence of appropriate school legislation is obvious as well.

Graph 1
Age structure of children attending kindergarten in Slovakia in the 2000/2001 school year
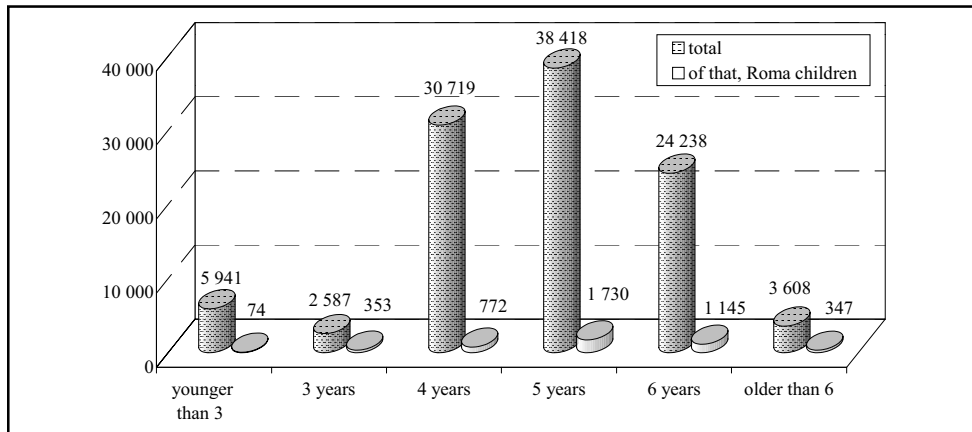
Source: Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic.

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As far as the methods of motivation used to encourage Roma parents to school their children in kindergartens (see Table 1), lectures and debates in Roma settlements were the least frequent.

Table 1
Methods of motivation used to get Roma parents to send their children to kindergarten

Method of motivation	%
visits to Roma families	24.56%
interview with the mother	18.95%
interview with the father	18.60%
interview with both parents	12.63%
lectures in the settlement	9.82%
debates in the settlement	7.02%

Source: Methodical Centre Prešov, 2002.

Children attending pre-school facilities communicate mostly in the teaching language of the kindergarten.

Many Roma children come to kindergarten from environments with poor hygiene and social conditions, and cannot speak the language used. To improve their knowledge of Slovak, bilingual aids with pictures that compare words in Slovak and the local Roma dialect, as well as fairy-tale books for Roma children are needed. Without them it is difficult to overcome the language barrier when helping children adapt to pre-school education.

The education program, which is based on gradual and unforced language preparation and the social adaptation of children to kindergarten conditions (often utterly different from conditions in the family environment), is very difficult to apply in classes with Roma children. The curriculum should focus more on emotional, moral, and aesthetic education with an emphasis on hygiene, self-reliance and maintaining the culture of the natural environment. Songs and music with elements of Roma music, which are very close to the mentality of these children, are rarely used in education.

The goal of some of the projects within the Phare 1998 program *Improving the Situation of the Roma in the Spiš Region* was to acquire experience from the first phase of the work of teaching assistants in kindergartens. These assistants worked in 10 kindergartens in the Spišská Nová Ves district that were attended by many Roma children. The work was performed according to three methodologies: the "work in the kindergarten" education program, the alternative methodology of the Mother and Child project, and the alternative methodology of the Step by Step pre-school education program. The key task of the teaching assistants was to work individually with each child, helping it with social and language integration. The childcare model that used the active cooperation of the mother was employed in kindergartens involved in the Mother and Child Project (Civic Association for Roma Children and Mothers, Rudňany, 1998). The mothers participated in some activities together with their children, or separately learned basic skills and helped with cooking.

THE ROMA CHILD IN
THE COMPULSORY
EDUCATION SYSTEM

Compulsory education in Slovakia usually lasts 10 years until the child turns 14, unless the beginning of compulsory education is postponed for the child. In the 2000/2001 school year, 576,331 students, 47,701 of which were Roma, attended elementary schools managed by the school departments of the district authorities in Slovakia.

Looking at the data from district school departments and individual schools in Slovakia, it is clear that the overall number of students is falling every year, although the number of Roma children starting their compulsory education is growing. The 62.44%

Table 2
Ratio of students in Slovakia according to year of compulsory education in the 2000/2001 school year

Year of school education	Total number of students	Of that, Roma	%
1st year of compulsory education	54,834	6,095	11.12
2nd year of compulsory education	56,814	5,614	9.88
3rd year of compulsory education	57,118	5,343	9.35
4th year of compulsory education	60,435	4,955	8.20
5th year of compulsory education	55,152	4,636	8.41
6th year of compulsory education	56,397	4,625	8.20
7th year of compulsory education	57,500	4,618	8.03
8th year of compulsory education	59,029	4,489	7.60
9th year of compulsory education	60,174	4,108	6.83
10th year of compulsory education	3,086	1,927	62.44
TOTAL	576,331	47,701	8.28

Source: Methodical Centre Prešov, 2002.

representation of Roma students in the tenth year of compulsory education shows that Roma students more often have to repeat some elementary school grades. Based on the figures, the year-on-year increase in the number of Roma students attending compulsory education has averaged about 6% over the past four years.

In 2000, the Methodical Center in Prešov conducted research to map out the situation in elementary schools regarding the structure of students and their school results, as well as the staff situation in elementary schools from the viewpoint of teacher qualifications and further education. The results were based on data acquired in 78 elementary schools from the Košice and Prešov regions (*Postavenie rómskeho dieťaťa...*, 2002).

Table 3
Number of students in the monitored schools

Total	26,724
Of that, Roma	9,790 (35.39%)

Source: Methodical Centre Prešov, 2002.

In the 1997/98 school year, of the total number of 644,796 elementary school students in Slovakia, 15,098 (2.44%) did not pass the year, of whom 8,605 (56.99%) were children from socially handicapped and neglected family backgrounds. In the first to fourth grades such children made up 67.74% of failures, while from the fifth to ninth grades it was 47.67%. This is a serious and alarming situation (Szigeti, 2002). If we compare Roma children to other children, we find that Roma children are almost 14-times more likely to fail a grade, 5-times more likely to get a worse mark for their behavior at school, 30-times more likely to leave elementary school before completing that level of education, and 28-times more likely than non-Roma children to be transferred to a "special school" for mentally handicapped students. The highest failure rate was found in the first grade of elementary school, where according to the data 22% of Roma students fail; in the fifth grade the rate is around 17%. These data are far higher than for the rest of the population.

In Prešov and Košice regions, where Roma students make up 35.39% of elementary school students, they represent 93.63% of the number of students who have to repeat a grade.

The school attendance situation is also unfavorable, with the concrete numbers from individual schools showing that the problem of school results is also connected with school attendance. Roma students miss 55% of all missed lessons in schools, meaning that

Table 4
Students repeating a grade

	Number of students	Number repeating a grade	%
Total	26,724	1,836	6.87
Of that, Roma	9,790	1,719	17.56
%	35.39	93.63	–

Source: Methodical Centre Prešov, 2002.

each Roma student misses one month of education per year on average. The situation is even more serious with lessons missed without justification, where the Roma have a 94.5% share. For every lesson that a non-Roma student misses, a Roma student misses a week (30 lessons) of school.

Table 5
School attendance

School attendance	Lessons missed	Lessons missed without justification
Total	2,181,354	302,050
Of that, Roma	1,202,689	285,451
%	55.13	94.50

Source: Methodical Centre Prešov, 2002.

Given the seriousness of the findings, the Education Ministry alone is not able to solve the problems of school attendance and student truancy. This was also seen in the *Information on the Analysis of the Occurrence of Truancy and Problematic Behavior among Students in Elementary and Secondary Schools in Slovakia*, which was drawn up for the Government Council for Crime Prevention.

One can identify with the recommendations that were made in the paper:
• to establish an interdepartmental work group (Education Ministry, Interior Ministry, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, and Family, local governments) aimed at preparing common procedures for dealing with truancy;
• to intervene early with students at the first signs of problems with school attendance and problematic behavior;

• to launch preventive and educational programs for district and regional authorities concerning the regional and ethnic characteristics of truancy in various districts of Slovakia;
• to ensure general awareness of the findings mentioned above in the selected groups (parents, schools, school departments, social departments of district and regional authorities, Government Council for Minorities, Office of the Government Representative for Roma Communities, the media, repressive organs, and courts);
• considering the seriousness and extent of the truancy, to make better use of the possibilities afforded by misdemeanor court proceedings, and to cooperate more effectively with local governments and repressive bodies.

Last school year, 25.52% of the students who completed their elementary education in the elementary schools monitored were Roma, but only 45% of these enrolled in a secondary school. The research also pointed out that there are students who try to acquire a complete elementary education, in which attempt elementary school principals try to meet their wishes by permitting an 11th year of school attendance.

It is positive that the position of Roma students in their classes and their relationship to non-Roma students is in 94.87% of cases regarded as normal or very good. This means that the students communicate with each other and influence, learn from and understand each other. With only 5.12% of Roma

students is this relationship evaluated as poor (*Postavenie rómskeho dieťaťa...*, 2002).

- There was no bullying or expressions of aversion found by the Methodical Center research. Despite that, non-Roma students also showed intolerance towards other cultures, value systems, religions and ethnic groups, not just the Roma;
- The language problem of Roma students is also serious, i.e. they do not have a proper command of the Slovak language.

The research showed a very high proportion of disinterest and passivity among Roma parents towards school and teachers – as much as 83.33% expressed such feelings. Only 12.82% had an active and positive relationship with schools and teachers, and 3.84% an actively negative relationship. This is a long-term situation that needs to be solved. Schools, teachers, the Roma and non-Roma NGOs have to get together to improve mutual communication.

A positive and supportive relationship among teachers towards Roma students prevailed (51.28%), but a relatively high ratio of teachers expressed passivity in their relationship to Roma students (43.58%), which is ominous. If we add the 5.12% of teachers who have a negative relationship with Roma students, we may have identified a possible reason for Roma failures at school. The attitudes of these teachers have to be confronted in the schools they teach at.

Regarding the results that Roma students reach at school, 78.2% of Roma parents show no interest in them, compared to the 5.12% of parents who take a regular interest in the school results of their children. More than 51% of students have an average level of self-motivation, but with more than 29% the motivation is very weak. Some 5.12% of Roma students have no self-motivation whatsoever, and 14% have strong self-motivation.

The possible reasons for this situation might be the following:

- the de-motivating character of the family and social environment;
- the de-motivating social system;
- little or no interest from the parents, poor intellectual preconditions;
- absence of help from the family;
- self-satisfaction;
- low or no ambitions.

The following are considered the most common difficulties Roma students face in studying:

- insufficient command of the Slovak language of instruction;
- small vocabulary and failure to understand many words;
- high rate of absence from lessons;
- no help or support from the family.

The level of upbringing, as characterized by adherence to school rules, the incidence of asocial behavior and so on, is relatively good among Roma students. The research of the Methodical Center in Prešov identified the behavior of as many as 66.66% of Roma students as normal. Minor lapses were observed among 24.36% of Roma students, and gross violations of school rules by 8.97% of students. The influence of the school must be strengthened here, and it must positively motivate the students and try to influence the entire family. In the schools monitored, praise was rarely used as a motivating force, the questionnaires stating that only 7.69% of Roma students were praised by the teacher. Other forms of praise did not occur. On the other hand, 29.34% of students were punished. This shows that schools are still coping with educational problems repressively, which is not effective. Some 23 (29.48%) Roma students were given a bad mark in the "behavior" category on their report cards, while 8 students (10.44%) were suspended and 1 (1.28%) was expelled

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from school (*Postavenie rómskeho dieťa-ťa...*, 2002).

GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES TO ACHIEVE A HIGHER LEVEL OF EDUCATION AMONG THE ROMA

Zero Grades

The "zero grades" project was started during the 1992/93 school year under the supervision of the Košice I District School Administration, with the aim of preventing failures, creating a positive relationship with school and education, and other personal development goals. The project drew a positive response from both teachers and Roma parents, not only in Košice but also in other Slovak districts with high concentrations of Roma students. The Czech Republic, which adopted the project, even succeeded in anchoring it in legislation. The project was based on practical experience and the proposals of experts, mainly teachers and psychologists, who had been working with Roma students for a long time. The aim was to prepare students from non-stimulating environments who faced language and social disadvantages so that they could handle the first grade of elementary school. The tools used to achieve this include intense, targeted education activities under the lead of experienced teachers over a period of two years.

After the zero grades project was approved by the Education Ministry, the Pedagogical-Psychological Consulting Center of the Košice I District School Administration, together with a university lecturer from the Psychology Department of Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Prešov, evaluated the experiment from the viewpoint of the changes in several psychological indicators among the students. The experiment was conducted at several elementary schools in Košice with a high concentration of Roma students. The basic question was whether the system of preparation in the zero grades would lead to different results and performance than among the children in the regular first grades. A great acceleration in the development of the children schooled in the preparatory "zero" grades was expected.

The results of the experiment confirmed the effectiveness of the zero grades in accelerating communication abilities, the fluency and richness of verbal expression, and vocabulary.

However, it was difficult to determine from the experiment what the decisive factor had been in the improvement. Was it the lower number of students in each class, which allowed the teachers to individualize their approach to the students, or the better technical equipment of the zero grades? The more motivating approach that was taken towards the children, which did not constantly emphasize performance, could also have been important, as well as the experience of the teachers and the intense support and help they received from other teachers and psychologists.

Besides praising the zero grade students for achieving better results, it is particularly necessary to recognize the positive changes that occurred in the socio-cultural area, changes that were not measured by the psychologists, but which were recorded during their many visits to these classes and during their individual work with the children, as well as in their interviews with the teachers and the parents.

On the basis of the empirical knowledge gained we can state the following:
• the overall atmosphere in the zero grades was more relaxed, friendly, and favorable than in the regular elementary school classrooms;

- the students mastered the curricula of the zero grade without significant problems;
- the behavior of the zero grade children was better than in the regular classes;
- the zero grade children generally showed a more positive attitude towards school and the school environment.

The organization, curriculum and content of the zero grades were designed with the aim of accomplishing the following tasks:
- allowing children from non-stimulating and disadvantaged language environments to prepare intensely for entering the first grade of elementary school;
- providing alternative and non-traditional forms of teaching, to give the children a chance to experience success and thus create early positive relationships with school and education in general;
- developing cultural, social and hygienic habits in which the children get used to systematic work, duties, routine, and organizing their own work;
- using the specific traits of Roma children, their musical and locomotive talents, and viewing them as stimulating and motivating factors in learning activities;
- involving the parents in out-of-class and extracurricular activities, raising their interest in schoolwork and the results, achievements and problems of their children;
- reducing the high number of failures by Roma students in the first and the second grades of elementary schools.

The zero grades program did some things differently in the organization of lessons and the selection of teaching methods. The students were at school from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Each class was led by two teachers with equal positions who switched around, as the teaching and education had no precise schedule. The teachers were autonomous, organizing the education process and the activities of the group at school and out of school.

The lessons were not normal lessons (45-minute lesson followed by 10-minute break, etc.), and the timetable had no fixed days and times for individual lessons to occur. These were modified according to the current disposition and abilities of the students. Individual study topics were divided into weeks, not days. The role of the parents in the process was not traditional either. They were engaged in the whole process, and were allowed to be at school every day; once a month, meetings of teachers, parents and children were organized. In these meetings, the parents could see the progress their children were making in behavior and knowledge. The main emphasis in the zero grades was on individual skills and individual approaches. One of the 13 classes was in a special school for handicapped children, where, thanks to the personal qualities of the teachers and the special pedagogical approach taken, the results achieved were very good. At this school, the tradition of such activities has survived until today (Maczejková et al, 2000).

Textbooks in Romany

In 1993 the Education Ministry approved the *Roma Spelling Book* in Romany and Slovak for the zero grades, and the *Reading Book in Romany and Slovak*. As of September 1, 1993, curricula for elementary schools with Romany as a teaching language were approved.

In 1995 the textbook *Amari Alphabet* (Our Alphabet) was approved and published in Romany and Slovak for the third and fourth grades of elementary school. In the same year, the Education Ministry approved *Selected Chapters From the History of the Roma* as additional texts for teaching history in the fifth to the eighth grades. However, these texts are not used in the educational

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process, as the teachers do not know the basics of Romany and the children (mainly those from eastern Slovakia) do not understand the language either (or rather the Roma dialect the textbooks are written in). In 2002 the Forum Institute and the Schola Project began trial use of two spelling books for the first grade of elementary school – the *Romani ABC* and the *Pherasune Literi*.

Flexibility of Curricula

According to the law, schools are obliged to include at least 60% of the content of the curricula set by the state in their education programs. Individual schools can modify only the remaining 40% of the curricula. This possibility to modify the curricula is in fact very rarely used, which is a pity, especially in schools where more than half the students are Roma.

ROMA EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

The international EUROROM project – *Integration of Roma Culture into School and Out of School Education* – is being carried out at four selected elementary schools as a part of the SOKRATES – COMENIUS program, funded by the European Commission.

The investment of 72 million Sk (about $2 million) was used to support the elementary school education of the Roma through the building of an elementary school in the Luník IX Roma ghetto and the Ťahanovce elementary school in Košice, the Ivan Krasko elementary school in Trebišov, and the elementary school in Sečovce (all in eastern Slovakia).

Training courses and continuing education for the teachers of Roma children are also helping to improve education at elementary schools. These activities are organized by the Methodical Center in Prešov and the State Pedagogical Institute in Bratislava, in cooperation with NGOs.

ROMA STUDENTS IN SPECIAL SCHOOLS FOR HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

Most Roma, both in Slovakia and abroad, complete their education in schools designed for mentally handicapped children, known in Slovakia by the euphemism "special schools". According to the statistics of the Institute for Information and Prognoses in Education, in the 2001/2002 school year, of the total number of 32,244 students attending special elementary schools, 3,176 were Roma.

Most of the special schools are in the Prešov region, where the greatest number of Roma settlements can also be found. These special schools are often located in unsuitable buildings such as former elementary schools and general-purpose buildings, only a fraction of which have been modernized.

A new phenomenon is beginning to be seen, whereby Roma parents prefer to place their child in a special school for mentally handicapped children rather than a regular elementary school, even if the child obviously does not belong there. A certain family tradition is arising in which the younger children follow in the footsteps of the older. The parents are often unaware of the consequences of attending this type of school for the education of their children.

In cases where the Roma children placed in special schools do suffer from a mental handicap, this is often not genetically conditioned but based on social negligence and a non-stimulating environment at home. Post-

poning school attendance is not the way to solve the problem; on the contrary, these children need intensive schooling. They arrive at elementary school with no pre-school preparation, they cannot communicate in the teaching language, and they do not have the basic hygienic, cultural and work habits. Even if they are not mentally retarded, the absence of these skills prevents them from mastering the learning tasks in the first grade of elementary school. Their psychological and pedagogical diagnosis is thus a difficult one. Cases have occurred in which children were placed in special schools without even being given a psychological test. On the other hand, while these tests can reveal a certain handicap with children from the majority population, that does not necessarily mean they are suitable for Roma children as well. The tests measure abilities and skills that are foreign to Roma children. The biggest problem is their poor command of Slovak, their insufficient vocabulary and their inability to express themselves. Roma children also often have deficits of attention, patience, endurance, fine motor skills, and experience and knowledge of the world, and also have different interests and needs.

If children suffer from a disorder or a health problem that prevents them from learning with the same ease as other children in a regular elementary school, however much development time is provided, then they must be given special pedagogical care. The education system enables such children to be put into a special school, a special class in a regular school, or to be integrated individually into a regular class at an elementary school. In all cases, the specific conditions the child needs to develop mentally and physically according to the best of its ability must be provided. It is becoming increasingly important to individually integrate handicapped students into regular schools. However, if a skilled approach and other conditions for successful integration cannot be ensured in a given case, then special schools provide the best form of education to children with certain handicaps.

The procedure for placing or transferring a student into a special school or a special class at an elementary school is the same. According to Section 14 of the Decree on Specialized Schools, the proposal to place/transfer can be filed by the legal representative of the student, the school the student attends, a pedagogical or psychological consultancy center, a health facility, state family and childcare authorities, or a special pedagogical consultancy center.

The headmaster of the individual school decides on the placement or transfer of the student into the special school or a special class of the elementary school. The decision is made according to the recommendation of an expert committee consisting of school teaching staff, a psychologist and a specialist physician. A representative of the special pedagogical consultancy center or the pedagogical/psychological consultancy center may be a member of the committee, while the student's legal representative can also be present. The commission is chaired by the head of the school into which the student is to be placed or transferred. The committee members become acquainted with the data on the student stated in the *Proposal to Place/Transfer a Child Into a Special School or a Special Kindergarten*. Besides personal data on the student, the proposal includes data on the student's home environment, the standpoint of the school, the psychological examination report, the report from the doctor's examination, and the minutes from the expert committee meeting in which the legal representative confirmed his/her approval of the placement or transfer of the child into the special school or special class of the elementary school. The proposal form is usually

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filled out by the pedagogical/psychological consultancy center or the educational consultant of the school. Before the decision is taken, a diagnostic stay can be ordered for the student. According to a special pedagogical diagnosis, the student may be placed in a higher grade than the one corresponding with the age of the student, if the information before the committee shows that the student's abilities correspond with those of the students in the higher grade.

The experience acquired in educating mentally handicapped students in regular classes of elementary schools shows that the handicapped children are not well served because of the number of students in the class and absence of an auxiliary teacher. Even if the content of the education can be adapted to the mental handicap of the student, the teacher in the joint class does not have enough time to approach the student individually. We consider "partial integration" to be a more appropriate form of education of mentally handicapped students in elementary schools. The timetable is prepared so that the children in the special class can participate in subjects such as sports, arts, and music together with the students of the regular classes. In this kind of educational process, the students from the special class can participate in all school events and visit school clubs together with the regular class students.

Since 1993/94, zero grades have been established for these children in particular. During their two years in this class, the children have the chance to partly cope with their handicap, to master the first grade of elementary school, and above all to experience success. This is one way to prevent a child from being placed into a special elementary school. It is very rare that students from special schools get put back into regular elementary schools, due mainly to the absence of special pedagogical care in elementary schools and the absence of an individual approach to these students.

The placement of children into special elementary schools can be prevented by the establishment of zero grades. This approach has proven especially effective with children whose mental retardation is caused by a non-stimulating family and social environment.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND
ROMA STUDENTS

The poor results of Roma students at elementary schools mean that they are basically not prepared to pass entrance examinations to secondary school, or for secondary school studies were they to get there. Few Roma – around 3% – study at secondary grammar schools and secondary technical schools. Among secondary studies, Roma students most often attend vocational schools and secondary technical schools, but even this represents only 8% of the total Roma population.

In the research conducted by the Methodical Center in Prešov in 2000, a questionnaire was prepared for secondary schools that mapped out the position of Roma students in the education system of secondary schools. Five secondary schools from the Prešov and Košice regions were involved in the research.

The number of students at the five monitored schools was 1,431, of whom 78 were Roma (5.45%). A positive phenomenon was the balanced number of Roma boys (40) and girls (38), which might indicate that the position of the sexes in the Roma community is slowly becoming equal. The number of Roma students fell off from the first to the fourth grades, indicating that after completing the first grade of secondary school, i.e.

completing their compulsory education, many Roma students do not continue their studies for various reasons:

- their inability to master the more demanding program, or their high rate of absence;
- disinterest from the student's parents and insufficient care;
- the efforts of the parents to involve these children in the state welfare network immediately after they have completed their compulsory education; we must think of ways of eliminating this phenomenon and preventing the Roma students from leaving secondary school.

The fact that a high percentage of Roma students live in settlements to a great extent reduces their motivation to educate themselves. Living conditions are factors that greatly influence studying conditions and the overall development of each child. For this reason, this factor must be considered very important. The research confirmed that most Roma students (74.36%) live in unsuitable, i.e. non-stimulating social conditions, and only 25.64% live in favorable conditions. The difficult conditions these students face in both studying and living is the main reason for their poor school results.

ROMA STUDENTS AND HIGHER EDUCATION

In the current education system, the chances of Roma students passing entrance examinations to university are very low.

The Roma Culture Department at the Pedagogical Faculty of Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra plays an important role in the education of the young Roma generation. The establishment of a Roma culture department enabled the school to offer university education to both young and adult Roma, as well as enabling the preparation of a qualified Roma intelligentsia, mainly teachers. Yet the development of the department was not easy, with frequent personnel changes causing lasting harm. The department has not lived up to expectations in the following spheres: research, publishing in the field of Roma studies, developing relationships with similar institutions abroad, developing Roma culture, language, history, teaching etc., and boosting the short term and long term development of the Roma nation. During its existence, the department has not educated any students who later became its experts.

In 1995 the Education Ministry established a detached office in Spišská Nová Ves of the Pedagogical Faculty of Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra. In 2000/2001, a new study program entitled Social and Missionary Work Among the Roma was opened at the Roma Studies Department of the Pedagogical Faculty of the same university. The task of the social and missionary workers is to work in Roma communities and help public administration bodies and educational institutions overcome communication barriers with the community through mediation.

In 2002/2003, a new field of study was opened in Lučenec at the detached office of the Roma Culture Department (KRK) of Constantine the Philosopher University, where students can study social work focused on the Roma community and teaching the first grade of elementary school, specializing in Roma children.

TEACHER TRAINING

TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

The 2000 research of the Methodical Center Prešov also monitored the qualifications of

Table 6
Teacher qualifications

Categories of teachers and tutors by teaching load and qualifications	First level (grades one to four)				Second level (grades five to eight)		Elementary schools – total	
	teachers	%	tutors	%		%		%
Qualified pedagogues teaching only their subjects (field of specialization)	411	58.97	115	71.88	514	55.15	1,040	58.13
Qualified pedagogues also teaching subjects outside their specialization	40	5.74	11	6.88	249	26.72	300	16.77
Qualified but not teaching their subjects of specialization	21	3.01	6	3.75	16	1.72	43	2.40
Not qualified	225	32.28	28	17.50	153	16.42	406	22.69
Total	697		160		932		1,789	

Source: Methodical Centre Prešov, 2002.

pedagogues teaching at the elementary schools in the Prešov and Košice regions attended by Roma students. The research involved 78 schools.

Of the total number of pedagogues involved in the research, 22.69% were not qualified (see Table 6). The situation in the first level of elementary schools was very bad, as one-third of the teachers were not qualified, which obviously influences the quality of the education of first level students.

Regarding further education, the situation in the monitored schools was very bad. Only 10% of pedagogues had completed some kind of additional education. Educational institutions, school managements and the Education Ministry clearly have a great deal of room to create further education programs for pedagogues.

ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROJECTS FOR ROMA STUDENTS

ROMA TEACHING ASSISTANTS

Among the generally known reasons for the low education level of the Roma, such as their different culture, poor motivation, the lack of interest on the part of the parents, and their ignorance of the teaching language, the fact that Roma children are often put into special schools because of their social backwardness rather than any mental deficiency also plays an important role. Teaching assistants could help Roma children acquire the social skills and motivation they need for education. Some 220 Roma are preparing for this job in retraining courses around Slovakia.

The Support for the Roma Minority in Education program, funded mainly by Phare, was launched under the auspices of the Deputy Prime Minister for Human Rights and Minorities, Pál Csáky. The Education Ministry had prepared a draft law on education, but it did not even get to the parliament, jeopardizing the entire project. The MPs finally enabled teaching assistants to act as pedagogues in elementary schools and special elementary schools in June 2002, at the last moment before the parliament was dissolved ahead of September 2002 elections. After the program is launched, the EU funds will be allocated among the schools where Roma assistants are working. At the moment, more than 200 young people are participating in the Teacher Assistant retraining course conducted by the National Labour Office in cooperation with the Association of Young Roma. The association selected suitable candidates, and the Wide Open School Foundation selected qualified lecturers. The teaching assistants are expected to fully join the education process in 2003.

THE STEP BY STEP PROJECT

The first attempt by the Wide Open School Foundation to innovate in education and search for alternative approaches to improving education was the Step by Step Project. This project was a significant step towards humanizing and democratizing schools, and offered a real chance for a multicultural concept to be used in pedagogical methods, for the socio-cultural differences of Roma students to be accepted, and for their potential to be developed based on the unique abilities of each student.

The philosophical and theoretical basis of the project is viewing education as a process in which the cognitive, emotional, social, and physical aspects of students have to be developed. The pre-condition for optimizing the development and education process is to view the biological, psychological and social characteristics of each student as a whole. The aspect of personality is the most important. The orientation towards each individual student's personality in the project caused a change in the organization of education and the control activities of the teacher. The teacher does not teach in the traditional sense, but controls and organizes the activities of the students by preparing conditions for these activities. The teacher helps the students achieve the goals of education through clearly defined expectations, and trusts the abilities of the students, enabling them to reach the goal in any way they like. Traditional classes and lessons as the basic organizational unit have in many ways proven their efficacy. To increase the effectiveness of the education, however, the organization of the class environment at elementary schools had to be changed, and the work had to be divided between the teacher and the Roma teaching assistant.

The Step by Step Project resulted in two projects by the Wide Open School Foundation: *The Acceleration of the School Success of Roma Students* and *The Reintegration of Roma Students from the Socially and Educationally Handicapped Environments of Special Elementary Schools into the Majority Population*. The aim of these projects was to uncover and deal with problems in the education of Roma students from the viewpoint of their individual needs as well as the institutional and professional problems of educational facilities. The projects had four major goals:

- to educate people participating in further education;
- to create learning environments based on democratic principles and mutual respect between the teacher and the student, and among the students;
- to ensure successive development and derive teaching methods from it;
- to ensure that all students acquire the same knowledge, artistic and practical skills for successfully integrating into a democratic society.

The basic idea behind the projects was to revaluate the existing situation and the success and failures of Roma students, the role of the teacher and the parents, admitting the existence of prejudice and stereotypes and the ways in which they are manifested. Historical, family and socio-political aspects were gradually added to the projects and their implementation.

PROJECT TO ACCELERATE THE SCHOOL SUCCESS OF ROMA STUDENTS

This project should support the education of Roma students at elementary schools, and is being implemented in cooperation with the Wide Open School Foundation and the Pedagogical Faculty of Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Prešov (UPJŠ).

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The theoretical basis of the project is to view the acceleration of the success of Roma students in Slovakia as part of multicultural education. The goal of multicultural education is to integrate the individual into the broader multicultural environment, and to preserve his/her personal and cultural identity. The criterion of this integration is to respect basic human and civic rights and general values, with the goals of education focusing on support for human and civic coexistence. In human relationships especially, tolerance and understanding are strengthened by this approach, and hatred, intolerance, fanaticism, racism etc. are suppressed.

The basis of multiculturalism is thus identity with one's own culture. In keeping with this broader multicultural aspect, the aim of the project is to accelerate the school success of minorities and ethnic groups by integrating their languages and cultures into the education process and changing the approach of teachers to Roma students, which requires learning about and respecting the individual cultural experiences of students.

Putting the project into action envisages help from Roma teachers/Roma teaching assistants who can speak their mother tongue (this applies especially in pre-school education as well as in the first grades of elementary schools).

The project was put through a trial run whose aim was to discover to what extent the work of the Roma assistant helped students to adapt to the class and the school environment, contributed to the removal of the initial language barrier and to the acceleration of learning success, and the extent to which the assistant's presence improved the social climate in the experimental classes.

The research sample included 129 students from experimental classes. In the sphere of cognitive development in non-verbal communication, which was determined through the CHIPS test, the final measurements indicated that the Roma assistant's presence in the class had a positive influence. The results for speech development, which were determined using the Heidelberg test, were equally positive

The level of social competence and peer relationships was determined by testing the social climate within the group. At the beginning of the experiment the climate in all tested groups was good, which was probably due to the specifics of life in the Roma settlement and the fact that the children knew each other before they enrolled in the school, and that their families were related.

A comparison of the differences in the performance of all students in the experimental and reference classes showed that while after the first year the experimental classes were statistically much better only in word tasks, after the second year these classes were much better in all monitored areas.

In determining the relationship of the student to the school, the teacher, and the Roma assistant, the questionnaire survey showed that most parents (83.0%) thought that their children liked going to school, and that they were not having any major problems. According to the statements of the parents, only one child had a negative attitude towards school. The parents evaluated the relationship of their children to the teacher very positively: 100% of children respected the teacher, 98.1% liked her, 96.2% trusted her, 94.3% had no conflicts with her, 90.6% thought of her as fair. The parents also evaluated the relationship of their children to the Roma assistant positively: 96.2% of parents thought their children respected, liked and trusted the Roma assistant. The parents expressed a similar relationship to

the teacher and the Roma assistants as the children.

In their evaluations of the **cooperation between the school and the family**, more than half of the parents (52.8%) considered cooperation with the teacher to be very good, while 47.2% thought it irregular but generally good; none of the parents thought that cooperation with the teacher was poor. The parents regarded their cooperation with the Roma assistant even more positively: 64.2% stated that their cooperation was regular and very good. When parents cooperate with the teacher, they prefer personal meetings at school, parent-teacher meetings, participation in meetings organized by the school, and the exchange of written information.

The students' results in the first two grades of elementary school showed significant differences in the number of lessons missed between the experimental and the reference groups. While in the experimental group there were 1,269 missed lessons for the first and second grades, in the reference group the figure was 4,393 lessons. Big differences were also seen between the experimental and the reference groups in the number of lessons missed without justification (*Akcelerácia úspešnosti rómskych žiakov*, 2000, 2001).

REINTEGRATION OF
ROMA STUDENTS FROM
THE SOCIALLY AND
EDUCATIONALLY HANDICAPPED
ENVIRONMENT OF SPECIAL
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS INTO
THE MAJORITY POPULATION

This project focuses on the need for the humanization and equality of educational opportunities and chances for all children. A far-reaching and integrated educational approach has to be ensured for the education of Roma students, emphasizing versatility, the adoption of general values, national and cultural identity, gradual socialization, and an appropriate level of autonomy. To meet these requirements, the appropriate conditions must be created for the systematic and effective stimulation of the cognitive, intellectual and personality development of Roma students in mutual cooperation and balance.

The project, which is managed by the Open Society Institute in New York, has been up and running since the 1999/2000 school year, not just in Slovakia but also in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Hungary. In Slovakia the project is being implemented under the auspices of the Department for Special Pedagogy of the Pedagogical Faculty of UPJŠ in Prešov and the Wide Open School Foundation.

The project tries to identify Roma students who were put into special elementary schools without justification. The aim is to improve their school results and re-integrate them into the elementary school system within three years, as well as to develop a functional model of school success for Roma students. The project is based on the assumption that if favorable conditions were created among Roma students for teaching and learning, then most would be able to study at elementary schools and achieve appropriate results according to the curriculum. The project attempts to implement the following:
• changing special elementary school curricula using the curricula of regular elementary schools;
• using the Step by Step method as a way to deliver educational content;
• training teachers and administrative workers participating in the project in anti-prejudice methods;
• using appropriate methods to support knowledge of the official language
• involving a Roma teaching assistant in each class.

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In keeping with the above goals, the teachers taught the children inner freedom, to search for their own identities, to accept responsibility, to make decisions, as well as social skills such as tolerance, patience for people, respect for their own lives and Roma culture, etc. The essence of the teacher's work lay in taking an individual approach to the students. The student is the center of attention, while the parents are partners in educating their children. The teachers and the Roma assistants created an environment that enabled the Roma community to feel closer to the educational process by showing the parents that they were welcome at the school. Besides the work of the teacher, the Roma assistant's role was also very important. The assistant helped in the class by translating for Roma students who did not speak the official language, serving as a role model, mediating between the school and the family, and integrating the Roma language, culture and history into the school setting. The teacher and the Roma assistant used various methods to educate the bilingual students.

The project was put through a trial run to determine the extent to which the Step by Step method worked with Roma students from special elementary schools and the extent to which the work of the Roma assistant helped accelerate the school success of Roma students, as well as whether the methods improved the social climate at the school or improved cooperation between the school and the family. The aim of the test was to acquire sufficient information so changes could be made in the practice of putting Roma students into special schools.

The following methods were used in the trial run: psychological testing to determine the level of cognitive development, written exams, and questionnaires for teachers, Roma assistants and parents. The research sample included 74 Roma students from five experimental and five reference classes.

The research data were summarized on two levels – international and national. The written exams were prepared in the individual countries, and then used to determine whether the curricula requirements for elementary schools had been met; standardized psychological tests were also applied.

These were the results of the trials:
- **cognitive development** – measured using standard methods for gauging inborn intelligence. The degree of success in the experimental classes was between 21.7% and 51.7%, in the reference classes from 20% to 45%. Both groups contained students with excellent non-verbal skills, as well as those who achieved very poor results. While in the first grade both groups were relatively equal, the results after the second grade showed a natural growth in skills, especially in the students from the experimental classes.
- **intellectual level** – as many as 35.1% of experimental class students could be expected to be able to cope with the requirements of the regular elementary school, while in the reference classes, only 21.6% of the students would fulfill this criterion.
- **evolution of speech** – measured using the Heidelberg speech evolution test (H-S-E-T). The tests tried to determine how well the Roma students could remember and reproduce various complex speech units, and form singular and plural constructions and derived words. The repeating of sentences showed a significant difference in favor of the experimental class. Compared to the students from the reference class, the experimental class students showed a greater ability to reproduce sentences more precisely.
- **attitudes to selected objects** (things, events or people, e.g. the school, mother,

father, work) – the test tried to show the subconscious relationship to reality as defined through selected notions. Positive attitudes (values over 20%) in the reference classes were expressed only to two objects – teacher and father – while in the experimental classes the values were significantly higher. Positive attitudes in experimental class students were expressed towards eight objects, of which four (love, father, mother, friend) reached more than 30%. Positive attitudes towards schoolmates, the teacher, the "gadžo" (whites) and the school ranged from 20% to 30%. The analysis showed that the attitudes of the students towards the objects selected differed greatly in the monitored samples. Not only were the attitudes of the students of the experimental classes more positive than those of the reference class students, but there was also a far lower occurrence of negative attitudes than with the reference class students.

- **visual and auditory development, development of perception and motor skills, right-left orientation** – statistically significant differences in favor of the experimental classes were seen in individual activities, emotional and social development, and in communication skills. The students in the experimental classes showed statistically much better perception skills after both the first and the second grades than the reference class students. While in positioning in space (sense of direction) there were no significant differences between the experimental and the reference groups, in spatial orientation the experimental class students were statistically better, as they were in auditory perception and auditory recognition.
- **Slovak language and literature** – after the second grade a significantly higher success rate was found in the experimental classes – 77.9%. Besides their good results in written tests, the experimental

classes showed better communication skills and positive social relationships.

- When knowledge and skills in **mathematics** were evaluated, just as in Slovak language and literature, 80% of the experimental class students were successful. Approximately 20% of the students were under the 50% success limit.
- **attitudes towards the school** – here, the participation of students in lessons and their evaluation of school activities were tested. Overall school attendance, as the basic pre-requisite for school success among the Roma students, was far better in the experimental than in the reference classes. The average number of missed lessons was lower in the experimental classes (17.5 days), than in the reference classes (30.5 days). We can assume that the work in the Roma community as well as the presence of the Roma assistant in the class helped improve school attendance. The interviews showed that all Roma students (both from the experimental and the reference classes) had a positive attitude towards school, with 95% of the experimental class students and 80% of the reference class students saying they liked to be at school very much.
- **evaluations by teachers** – among the methods that more than half of the experimental class teachers used in their work, and which they found helped students in the lessons, were: cooperative learning, group work and pair work. The experimental class teachers also preferred role play (40%), the use of Roma culture and songs (30%), morning meetings, and the use of teaching aids (20%). They also mentioned the involvement of the parents, using books with real topics, the creation of books, and group work.
- **evaluations by the parents** – all Roma parents (of students from both the experimental and the reference classes) considered school and the school attendance of

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their children to be very important. Most of all, Roma parents thought it was important that their children attended school on a daily basis. Although everybody was aware of the importance of education for the future of their children, the parents of the experimental class students more often cooperated with the school (by joining in school and class activities, participating in personal meetings, visiting courses for mothers, etc.) than the parents of reference class students. The high involvement of the parents correlated with the results of the experimental class students in the Slovak language, and with their overall school results. The attitudes of the Roma parents suggested that they considered the education of their children to be very important. More than half of the parents (57.2%) whose children attended the experimental classes said that the attitude of their child towards the school was positive; among the parents of the reference class students the figure was 35.1%. The parents (mostly of the experimental class students – 68.3%) were aware of the importance of the teacher's work and wanted the teacher to be appropriately remunerated for this work. On the other hand, 41.5% of the parents of reference class students and 29.1% of the parents of experimental class students thought that the most important thing was to be literate and educated, which is what they appreciated about the school the most. The visions and plans of the parents concerning their children were important as well. More parents of experimental class students (41.6%) than of reference class students (23.4%) wanted their children to acquire qualifications and find a job. In both groups, 14.3% of parents wished that their child completed elementary school and continued studying at a vocational school. It was interesting that only the parents of experimental class students had considered higher education for

their children, and had thought about which field of study their children might be interested in (*Reintegrácia rómskych žiakov...*, 2000, 2001).

ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM OF PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION FOR ROMA CHILDREN

This program is run by the Foundation for the Roma Child and aims to help talented and gifted Roma children and young people who wish to continue their education and develop their personalities. The mission of the foundation is to support schooling through educational and training programs, granting scholarships to secondary school and university students, alternative education programs, publishing activities, and so on. The Foundation for the Roma Child's main project is its "education centers".

One of the main impulses for creating the project was the significant reduction of the kindergarten network in Slovakia after 1989, the increase in kindergarten fees, and the dramatic growth in unemployment among Roma parents. The result was a clear drop in kindergarten attendance by Roma children, and the subsequent higher failure rate of Roma children in the first grade of elementary school (*Alternatívny program...*, 1993).

The project began in November 1993. The education centers are model pre-school facilities designed for children aged 4 to 6. The activities of the centers focus on preparing the children to enroll in elementary school with the active participation of the parents.

In cooperation with the department of social affairs, the foundation addresses people through leaflets containing information on the importance of enrolling children in school, and on the enrollment dates. Together

with elementary schools, the foundation helps place children in the first grade and thus prevents their segregation. The main goals of the project are:

- to complement family upbringing with education aimed at developing the child's general personality, and its social, emotional, physical and intellectual development in compliance with individual and age specifics;
- to improve the preparedness of Roma children for enrollment in elementary school through education and mentoring using an individual approach;
- to improve Roma parents' care of their children by involving families and particularly mothers in educational activities;
- to add elements of Roma culture to the program and develop the children's identities;
- to create pedagogical approaches aimed at developing the student's personality;
- to launch educational activities for pedagogues, parents, and members of local communities;
- to offer alternative programs in cooperation with other institutions (*Alternatívny program...*, 1993).

Cooperation and partnership are the main tasks of the education centers. To achieve these goals, the parents have to realize the importance of educating their children. Each parent has the right to directly observe the activities of their children. The environment and the relationship of the teachers to the children ensure that the children easily adapt to the new environment. When the parents see how the teachers work with their children, as well as the results the children achieve after a short time, they are usually motivated to take their children to the center regularly.

One of the methods of cooperation used is daily homework for the children. The home-work tasks are put in the students' books, and the children can thus increase the knowledge they acquire by doing homework with the help of their parents. This method of cooperation leads the parents to act more responsibility towards homework assigned by elementary schools.

The initial position of the Roma children who had visited the education centers was better from the start of their school attendance. Their command of Slovak and their motor skills were better, they had adopted the basic behavioral, hygiene and cultural habits, and they were also better prepared in terms of intellectual performance. As a result, the teachers and their schoolmates accepted them more quickly than they did other Roma students.

The foundation's main goal is to expand the program and offer it wherever appropriate. To achieve its goal during the 2002/03 school year, the foundation in cooperation with the Methodical Center in Prešov organized continuous education for teachers and people who work with Roma children and are interested in the education centers.

THE HEJ RUP PROJECT OF
HOME PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION OF
ROMA CHILDREN WITH
THE DIRECT INVOLVEMENT OF
PARENTS

The *Hej Rup* project, run by the Pro Familia NGO from Humenné, is based on two elementary social problems that affect the Roma population in particular. One problem is the increased rate of failure of Roma children in elementary school, caused by their insufficient preparation for school (especially in terms of language), and the insufficient care and support they get from their parents. Experience shows that pre-school

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education confers advantages that aid the development of the child. The second major problem is the high rate of unemployment among the Roma and in some regions in Slovakia, and the absolute impossibility of gaining qualifications or training to get a job.

The *Hej Rup* project came into being from 1993 to 1994 as part of a more far-reaching program called *Strengthening the Positive Aspects of Roma Families*. The aim of the program was to change the perception of the current problems in society, in a way that treated these problems as interrelated, rather than in isolation. In this view, problems are perceived not as burdens but as positive challenges. The project strives to connect three negative and isolated phenomena:
- the low number of Roma children attending pre-school facilities;
- the growing number of Roma families with pre-school age children, in which one or both parents have been unemployed in the long term;
- kindergarten teachers losing their jobs.

The project is based on the premise that each individual and family has the potential for positive development, and that parents are capable of acting in the interests of their children and of being responsible for them. In the education of a child, the role of the parent is irreplaceable. Parents are responsible for the present and future quality of life of their children (*Pomáhame Rómom...*, 1994).

In working with the family, this project rejects compensation in favor of support and development. Instead of uniformity, it strives for the tolerance of diversity, and supports independent decision-making and responsibility. The basic goals of the project flow from the aforementioned premises:
- to encourage Roma parents to positively influence the development of their children;

- to improve the preparedness of Roma children for enrollment in school, and thus increase their chances of success at school;
- to test a model of pre-school preparation for Roma children who do not attend a kindergarten, in which the schooling is carried out by Roma parents in the family environment under the guidance of a pre-school teacher.

In this way, the project creates job opportunities for unemployed kindergarten teachers, offers an alternative activity to Roma parents for whom the loss of a job allows them to develop and improve their parenting abilities, and at the same time provides pre-school preparation to Roma children who do not attend a kindergarten.

The project also includes group meetings with mothers and their children both outside the family and at home. The experience gathered during the project shows that the personality of the teacher is a substantial factor influencing the course and results of the project. The teacher's primary role is not to teach the child but to stimulate the mother to support her child. This requires special training of the kindergarten teacher to develop her ability to work with the parents.

After completing the program, all children showed an improvement in the monitored aspects, yet the rate of improvement varied. Some 71.2% of the school-age children were able to be enrolled in school as of the normal date. While only 41.2% of children could be schooled whose "home part" of the program had been weak due to insufficient cooperation, in the group whose parents had cooperated well, 80% of the children were ready to begin.

In the future, the project could be carried out in several ways: as the only available possibility for a given child, as a supplementary

form of schooling to institutionalized pre-school education in kindergartens, and as a preparatory phase in the pre-school education process to be followed by kindergarten education (*Pomáhame Rómom...*, 1999).

SCHOOL AND THE ROMA CHILD

This project was carried out by the Children's Hope civic association, whose target group is children younger than 15. The project ran from May to September 2002, and was aimed at specific educational activities for Roma children. The target group of the project was Roma children of different ages, and the activities were aimed mainly at:
• preparation for entrance exams;
• pre-school education;
• sports and other hobbies;
• work with computers;
• interviews with parents and family visits;
• running the healthy diet program;
• counseling on the upbringing and educational problems of children.

The short duration of the project and its focus on a small group of Roma children (only four students were involved in preparation for entrance exams) means that this did not involve a general concept of alternative education for Roma children; the aim was rather to focus on the concrete problems of particular target groups and help improve the situation through an individual approach.

A worker from the district pedagogical-psychological consulting center was involved in the pre-school activities, creating the basic teaching materials. The project also involved a Roma assistant from among the target group children's parents, who taught the children basic hygiene and various tasks (washing up, tidying up the education center). Twelve children were involved in the pre-school program, which took place in the education center every morning. According to the evaluation report, sports were among the favorite activities of the children and their parents. These activities resulted in a sports day, in which 49 children and parents participated. Other activities were an anti-drug program, teaching children to work with a computer, leisure time activities, and a summer camp (*Rómske dieťa a škola*, 2002).

The success of the project depended largely on the involvement and interest of the children in the individual activities. The hygienic habits of the children improved, they were able to independently solve some problems, and they helped each other and participated in creating further programs. A total of 81 children participated in the program.

The project also taught the children what their rights, responsibilities and duties were. When explaining these issues to the children, methods were used in which the teacher was not dominant, such as discussions involving the knowledge of the children participating in the program, making them co-implementers of the program. The project also used methods to influence willpower (exercises and the creation of habits) and the emotions through forms of moral encouragement (displays of confidence, delegation of important tasks, etc.). In cases of undesirable behavior, reminders, disagreement and rejection were applied.

Thanks to the project, cooperation was begun with children who are now preparing a simple education program for their peers, as well as with parents and many volunteers. Cooperation with teachers and district authorities proved difficult, as their work commitments prevented them from working in the field (*Rómske dieťa a škola*, 2002).

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THE GANDHI SCHOOL

This project is the continuation of a completed project of alternative education from Pécs, Hungary. It was initiated by the District Association of Roma Initiatives at the regional office in Banská Bystrica with the aim of providing children aged 10 years and older with a study program at an eight-year secondary boarding school. The result expected was that students would be prepared for university studies and other forms of postgradual study, or for the opportunity to study in various fields according to their interests and results. The aim was to give the Roma children a chance to succeed in their studies by changing the teaching approach taken in keeping with their ethnic culture and habits, involving mostly Roma pedagogues and using their knowledge from the Roma Assistant Project. The project strives to introduce Roma language and literature and Roma history and culture as compulsory subjects, and focuses on out-of-school education aimed at traditional crafts, music, art and drama, which are close to Roma traditions and culture. Another aim is to focus education on the position of the Roma in society, joint responsibility for the future, tolerance, and to inspire the Roma children to participate more in the civic life of the community and to encourage their self-confidence and self-fulfillment in society (*Gandhiho škola*, 2000). Children from socially disadvantaged environments have thus a chance to acquire A-level education and prepare thoroughly for university studies.

The project is now in the preparation phase. The authors have succeeded in integrating the school into the school system, while the curricula, plans and out-of-school activities are being prepared. The school building is already available, although the funds for its reconstruction still have to be found. The school should open in the 2004/2005 academic year.

LET'S HELP THE ROMA HELP THE ROMA

This project continues the long-term project *Support for the Positive Aspects of the Roma Family*, which is run by the Pro Familia association. Every year, around 200 children and adults participate in the program, with around 60 of them involved in regular and long-term work. It is part of a new phase of the program focusing on job creation for young Roma and making their activities within the projects more professional. Educational and stimulating activities that have been launched so far allow some participants to be prepared for involvement as assistants, semi-professional and professional workers in aiding Roma communities in the Pro Familia projects.

The main goals of the project are:
- to improve the professional preparedness and skills of Roma for working in the Roma community;
- to create a job vacancy for a Roma assistant;
- to stimulate self-supporting initiatives and the participation of the Roma in improving the quality of their own lives (*Pomáhame Rómom...*, 1994).

The project is expected to result in the professional preparation of long-term unemployed Roma to work in the Roma community.

Alternative professional preparation is provided through the training course *Social and Community Work in Roma Communities*. The project includes a self-supporting workshop for women (sewing and mending clothes, knitting, filling in forms in contacts with authorities, tidying up the household and the surroundings) and for men (minor household repairs and maintenance). Several new job positions could be created for young unemployed Roma (two full-time jobs and one

part time job) who work in the Pro Familia civic association. Some 8 mothers and 12 children regularly attend the course for parents with pre-school age children. In cooperation with the Methodical Center in Prešov, pre-school education workers were informed of the project. Information about the project was also presented at official forums, giving both the Roma community and the majority society a positive image of the Roma.

The project confirmed the suitability of the procedures applied: from voluntarism to employment (course participant – volunteer – occasional remuneration – part-time job – full-time job). If the project is to succeed, new job opportunities at NGOs have to be created for people who coordinate and supervise the projects, etc. (*Pomáhame Rómom...*, 1999).

CONCLUSION

Given the capabilities and opportunities of the Roma minority on the one hand and of the Slovak school system on the other, we must support and launch effective alternative methods of education with the help of NGOs, foreign partners and others. Interdepartmental cooperation in tackling problems caused by the conditions, circumstances, and other aspects of the Roma minority (health, social, economic, demographic) is also necessary.

During the decade in which the zero grade program has existed, hundreds of children have been given the chance to enroll in school in a different atmosphere and according to a different philosophy. In spite of the positive opinions of the teachers and parents and the evident success of the children, however, no social or political will has been created to integrate zero grades into education legislation.

At all levels of the Slovak school system, it is necessary to respect the rights of the individual – the child – to education according to his/her abilities, thus ensuring their future, independence, self-fulfillment, and satisfaction.

Alternative projects, in their conception, preparation, and realization, contribute to the education of Roma students and support their general growth and development. They support effective cooperation between the Roma family and the school, and enable their own identity and culture to be applied.

A key element in improving the effectiveness of education is the targeted and systematic preparation of teachers and especially their Roma assistants. The Roma assistants closely cooperate with the teachers in the class and support the students in learning, help them translate from Romany into Slovak, integrate the Roma language, culture and history into the education process, and support the meaningful involvement of the parents in cooperation with the school.

The effectiveness of the projects used was documented by the results of students in all monitored spheres. Statistically significant differences were recorded between the experimental and reference groups (insignificant after the first grade but significant after the second grade), especially in the knowledge and skills of the students.

The basic pre-requisite for the further development of Roma students is the use in practice of the basic principles tested by the alternative education projects. This requires further training of teachers and Roma assistants, support for the relationship between the family and the school, and the use of specific educational methods, forms, and tools enabling the specific potential of Roma students to be identified and developed.

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ELENA KRIGLEROVÁ and NATÁLIA KUŠNIERIKOVÁ

EDUCATIONAL ATTITUDES AND ASPIRATIONS OF THE ROMA

(**Elena Kriglerová** wrote parts 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6; **Natália Kušnieriková** wrote part 2).

Summary: This chapter analyses the results of research on the relationship of Slovakia's Roma to their own language, ethnicity, and education. The first part contains a brief description of individual approaches to the education of Roma in the past, describing their level of education and outlining the factors that influence this level, including the heterogeneity of the Roma population and the attitudes of the Roma to education. The aim of the chapter is to draw a complete picture of Roma education and emphasize the need to take the attitudes and opinions of the Roma into account when designing alternative projects to improve their education.

Key words: education level, attitudes, traditional values, community education, socialization, behavior models, education system, social exclusion, social dependence, education as a value, Roma language, alternative projects, segregation, discrimination, special schools, preparatory courses.

INTRODUCTION

The education of the Roma is a very complicated area of research, and is one of the most serious problems connected with the current situation of the Roma. The position of the Roma on the labor market is characterized by their high rate of unemployment and their de-pendence on state welfare; this position is to some extent determined by their level of education. While it is clearly necessary to deal with this phenomenon, this is not an easy task, as one's education level influences one's chance of finding a job on the one hand, while on the other hand, the education level of the Roma is determined by their socio-economic position vis a vis the majority population. For this reason, the complexity and multidimensionality of the education of the Roma must be monitored. One of the aspects that undoubtedly influence the Roma education level is their own attitude towards education and to the Slovak education system. Without the active participation of the Roma and the acceptance of their opinions and attitudes, we cannot succeed in increasing the Roma's level of education.

Despite this, we lack more profound analyses of Roma attitudes to education; recent sociological research of the social situation of the Roma has dealt with education only indirectly. This chapter aims to present basic information on the topic, as well as the view from "the other side"; it also outlines the value that the Roma ascribe to education, what education they consider sufficient to succeed in life, and especially which school system they think is ideal for ensuring equal access of Roma and non-Roma children to education. Here it is very important to isolate the factors that shape the attitudes of the Roma to education. The media and academic literature often allege that

the Roma lack interest in education, are incapable of adapting to the education system, and that efforts to increase their level of education are ineffective. As research shows,[1] however, the Roma population is very heterogeneous, and attitudes to education differ according to individual socio-demographic categories.

To create a full picture of Roma attitudes, we must briefly describe the education level of the Roma and outline the factors influencing it, as these factors also shape their attitudes and ambitions. One of the most important factors influencing the level and process of Roma education is the approach taken to the Roma in the past, especially in the education system. Many of the measures concerning the Roma and education used in this country since the 18th century have influenced the current education level of the Roma as well as their attitudes and ambitions. Thus, past attitudes to Roma education must be at least briefly described.

EDUCATIONAL ATTITUDES OF THE ROMA IN THE PAST

The Roma never had and still don't have their own institutional education system. Their education in the past was influenced by the lifestyle of the family and its relations to the majority population. Institutional education aimed at increasing their standard of living was not one of their priorities. Roma children learned all they needed to survive from their parents. It was not in keeping with the lifestyle of the parents or of the overall community for Roma children to leave the family for the purpose of education. Even if an individual did reach a certain level of education, he was often unable to find a job in his original community. Acquiring education did not mean improving one's financial situation.

EDUCATION OF ROMA IN THE HABSBURG MONARCHY

The Habsburg Monarchy Empress Mária Terézia (1740 – 1780) introduced assimilation measures in Austria-Hungary aimed at emancipating the Gypsies and merging them completely with the domestic population. Mária Terézia ordered Gypsy children aged 2 to 12 to be taken from their parents and educated in peasant families of the majority population. The parents naturally did not accept losing their children, so the authorities often had to use force. Children were placed in remote villages and regions to further the assimilation process. Older children often ran away from their "tutors". During the reign of Jozef II, Roma children brought up in peasant families aged 4 and older, later 8 and 10, were also supposed to work as servants during the whole period of their education (Šalamon, 1992).

Part of the policy of Mária Terézia and Jozef II was the introduction of school reform in 1777. Schools teaching writing, reading and arithmetic were established for very young children. The reform also made education compulsory, although compulsory education for children aged 6 to 12 was not specifically introduced until a 1868 Act (*Encyklopédia ľudovej kultúry Slovenska*, 1995) that also governed Roma children[2] and provided for education in one's mother tongue; however, this did not include Romany.

EDUCATION OF ROMA IN THE FIRST CZECHOSLOVAK REPUBLIC

In the first Czechoslovak Republic (1918 to 1939), the Roma were granted the status of a nation, and the Constitution guaranteed equality to all citizens. On the other hand, the provisions of the 1927 Anti-Nomadic Law were largely repressive and often conflicted with the equality guaranteed by the Consti-

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tution. The education of Roma children was still compulsory.

A specific example of the approach taken to education was the independent "Gypsy school" opened in Užhorod in 1926. This school was founded at the initiative of the Moravian Roma Ján Daniel, who had intervened with Czechoslovak President Tomáš G. Masaryk. The Roma themselves helped build the school and the schoolyard. Thanks to the support of the Head of the School Department in Užhorod, the school fulfilled a broader mission, as it had a modified education system based on the needs and abilities of Roma children. One of the reasons for building schools for Gypsy children at the time was also the fact that "Gypsy children are segregated from non-Roma children" (Šotolová, 2000, p. 51). Non-Roma parents preferred schools in which there were fewer Roma children than non Roma, or no Roma children at all. On the other hand, teachers wanted all children to be educated.

ROMA EDUCATION DURING
THE SECOND WORLD WAR,
THE WARTIME SLOVAK STATE, AND
THE PERIOD FROM 1945 TO 1948

During the Nazi-puppet Slovak State of the Second World War, the Roma were treated in two ways according to the State Citizenship Law of September 25, 1939. Those Roma who had a fixed address and a job belonged to Slovak society. The rest were "foreign elements" and could not become citizens of the Slovak State (Bačová, 1994). As many Roma parents could not document their place of abode and employment, their children were automatically excluded from schools (Šotolová, 2000). This measure meant a temporary halt to their school education. Those who did not obey the measure were placed in work camps.

According to the Košice Government Program of April 1945 (a communist-inspired document mapping out the development of the Czechoslovak state after the war was over and Slovakia and the Czech Republic freed of the Nazis), racial discrimination of citizens was forbidden. However, in the post-war yearning for "national purification", the Roma were often exposed to haphazard and inhumane treatment. The basic attitude towards the Roma was that they were a diseased and socially inadaptable minority, and the new regime began to return to the measures used against the Roma during the war. This included concentrating the Roma in labor camps where they were to be re-educated to make them fit "to live independent lives". *The Law on Wandering Gypsies* was still in force, and some municipalities used it to prevent the Roma from entering the municipality. All of this made school attendance very difficult for many Roma children.

EDUCATION OF ROMA DURING
THE COMMUNIST REGIME FROM
1945 TO 1989

The communist regime was also unable to halt the deepening poverty, cultural backwardness, exclusion, and isolation of the Roma from the rest of the society. The communists believed that the Roma's problems arose from their social backwardness and poverty, which in turn had been caused by the war and the capitalist political system. The communist ideology denied the ethnic identity of the Roma, their native language and values. Both the official ideology and the majority population categorized the Roma as a socially pathological group that the state had to take care of, even if this meant violating both the law and the principles of humane conduct. A 1950 government decree abolished the highly discriminatory 1927 *Law on Wandering Gypsies* and focused on improv-

ing the material conditions of the Roma. The first binding directive, *On Reform of the Conditions of the Gypsy People*, also included the schooling of Roma children and the eradication of illiteracy (Bačová, 1992).

The Education Ministry and the School Department's directives allowed special classes to be set up in regions with many "neglected Gypsy children". In the mid-1950s, ethnic schools for Gypsy students were officially established at "special schools" for the mentally retarded (Haišman, 1999).

Older Roma children who did not regularly attend school and could not be classified into an appropriate grade were schooled in "special classes" for the mentally retarded. Ignorance of the Slovak language also played a large role in this process. To change this, academic requirements were reduced, and the completion of lower elementary school grades was taken into account; exceptions and allowances also applied to those Roma children who continued in their studies (Jurová, 1991).

The 1960s confirmed the regime's orientation towards the Roma. They were perceived as "a socially and culturally backward population with a typical way of life". Assimilation concepts included eradicating Roma illiteracy. Teachers visited Roma settlements, and in some regions education was delivered to students in military and penitentiary facilities. The education of army recruits through literacy courses also played a certain role. In spite of such measures, illiteracy was not reduced to the desired level.

In the 1970s, the goal of integrating all Roma into the majority society and culture, and gradually increasing their average standard of living and culture to that of the rest of society gained ground. Political measures were taken to employ all Roma capable of working, to educate Roma juveniles and re-

educate adults, to solve the housing problems of Roma families, and to reduce crime. State policy controlled all important spheres of the life of the Roma. This unnatural relationship fostered dependency on state welfare. With one hand the state gave the citizen "material sufficiency" (the state determined who received help and when), while with the other hand the state deprived the citizen of his interest and ability to take care of himself and others. This state policy, paradoxically, led to general isolation, segregation, and intolerance. Tensions grew between the majority and the Roma.

The nationwide social measures concerning care for the Roma population, passed in 1972, emphasized that the integration of the Roma was a long-term generational process, and that the top priority was thus the education of Roma children and juveniles. In the sphere of education, "special schools" and separate and special classes in elementary schools were established. Roma children from backward families were put in school clubs and involved in other extra-curricular activities.

In the 1980s, compulsory education managed to reduce illiteracy, and the health system helped to reduce mortality among very small children. Despite government decrees, however, by 1985 the gap between the improving education level of all children and the stagnant or falling education level of Roma children had in fact increased – Roma children failed 14 times more often, left elementary school before graduating 30 times more often, and made up 24% of the student body in special schools for the mentally retarded (Haišman, 1999).

The socialist education system taught children to write and read, but it did not give them self-confidence. Many Roma children were confronted with their Roma origin as

something negative, unwelcome, inferior. They learned a new language and new terms that taught them that their culture and way of life were undesirable and not valued by society. Of course, many thus learned to attribute personal failures to their ethnic origin.

EDUCATION LEVEL OF THE ROMA

The level of education achieved by the Roma is significantly lower than that of the majority population (for details see the chapter *The Roma in the Education System and Alternative Education Projects* in this book). Graph 1 compares the education levels achieved by Slovak citizens and the Roma population. It shows the greatest differences in the higher education categories, i.e. people with secondary school or university education. In the graph, the category "no education" is not included, although in the IVO/UNDP research (November 2001), the Roma in not less than 11% of cases said they had not finished elementary school.[3]

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE EDUCATION LEVEL OF THE ROMA

The lower education level of the Roma compared to the majority population, and the poor results of Roma children in schools, can be attributed to different factors. Academic literature takes two different approaches to interpreting this phenomenon. On the one hand, Roma values and cultural differences (for details see the chapter *Multiculturalism and Inclusion as Solutions to the Roma Issue* in this book) result in Roma children not being able to adapt to the school system (see Box 1). On the other hand, the culture of poverty and the cultural exclusion of the Roma have an enormous impact on their educational failures. Explanations of the ambivalence of the Roma towards education can be found in both approaches.

These arguments are based on the assumption that even today, the Roma live in tradi-

Graph 1
Comparison of education level of Slovak citizens and the Roma
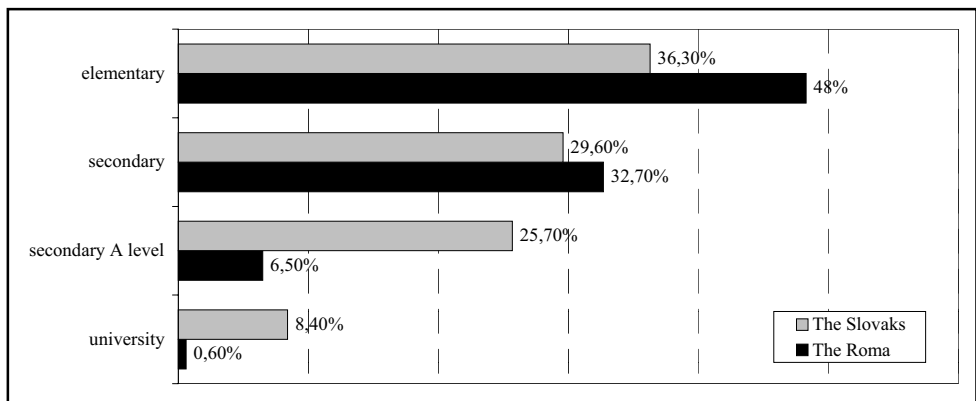
Note 1: The data on structure of education from the 2001 population census were not available at the time this chapter was written, so the data from the research of the Institute for Public Affairs in September 2001 had to be used.
Note 2: To enable the data for the Roma to be compared with the data for the majority, some Roma education level categories had to be merged.
Source: The Slovaks: Institute for Public Affairs, September 2001; The Roma: UNDP/IVO, November 2001.

Box 1
Differences between traditional education in the Roma community and the official education system

A child's identity is formed by the standards, values and behavior patterns of the culture it grows up in. Socialization within the Roma community is performed through extensive family links, which provide the children with an emotional background. The traditional Roma upbringing is a community upbringing. The children participate in daily community activities and learn values by watching and listening to other community members (Smith, 1999).

Roma children are brought up as little adults, and each child has the same rights as any other community member; they are not used to asking for permission if they want to do something. Relationships within the family are very strong. In most European countries, the parents want their children to grow up as soon as possible and become independent. In Roma families, the children often stay and live within the community (Daróczi, 1999).

Roma upbringing thus differs a great deal from that of the majority population. In most western education systems, the children's daily routine is highly structured and is bound to the fulfillment of school duties. However, teachers expect the same from all children and their parents. They assume that the parents consider the education of their children important, and that they themselves are educated and thus able to help their children with their homework, as well as give them enough time and space to do their homework.

This suggests that the value system in which the Roma children are brought up is not compatible with the value system that forms the basis of the education system in schools. The Roma are being asked to play a game whose rules they neither know nor helped to create. For Roma children, schools represent different habits and different values, and force them to speak a foreign language (Cangár, 2002).

tional communities and follow traditional values in bringing up their children. However, we cannot claim that all Roma in Slovakia live a traditional community-based life, and despite the fact that their values undoubtedly influence their way of life and thus their attitudes towards education, there are other factors that have a much greater impact on their low level of education. These factors include above all their poverty and social exclusion. One of the significant factors in Roma poverty is their low level of education (see Box 2), because this determines the position of the Roma on the labor market. At the same time, the impossibility

of finding a job also shapes the attitude of the Roma to education.

The individual attitudes of the Roma towards education are thus determined by many factors, often a combination of their different values and unstimulating social environment. In the next section we will focus on three main types of attitudes:
• attitudes towards education as a prerequisite for achieving success in life;
• opinions on what level of education is needed;
• opinions on the ideal education system from the point of view of the Roma.

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Box 2
Influence of the social situation on the education level of the Roma

The poor social situation of the Roma has an especially great impact on the education of Roma children from segregated settlements in the most marginalized regions of Slovakia. These children are handicapped several times over before even enrolling in school. They have no basic skills or even a basic ability to communicate. At the same time, Roma children are frequently absent from school, which they most often explain as the result of their insufficient clothing, the difficulty of traveling to school, the need to take care of their younger siblings, or illness. In segregated settlements there is no education-oriented social model to be followed (Radičová,

2001). Roma who live in poverty think first and foremost of looking after their material needs, meaning that the education of their children takes a back seat. The children lack motivation to learn, and the parents do not learn with them because they have neither the skills nor the appropriate conditions.

In the segregated settlements there is also a lack of cultural and social capital, because the Roma communities in such environments are often isolated from the majority population, resulting in ignorance of the different forms of supplementary education available for the chidren.[4]

SPECIFIC ROMA ATTITUDES TO EDUCATION

EDUCATION AS A PREREQUISITE FOR SUCCESS IN LIFE

During communism, one's level of education was not the main factor influencing one's standard of living, especially with the Roma, who were perceived on the labor market as people with no or few qualifications. At the same time, education was not a channel of mobility, and Roma could not rise to a higher rank in society by becoming better educated.

After 1989, most Slovak citizens realized the importance of education when looking for a job. However, the process took longer among the Roma, due to many of the aforementioned factors. One of the aims of the IVO/UNDP research from November 2001 was to find out which three conditions the Roma considered key to success in life. It was in-

teresting that 45.6% of Roma respondents mentioned education as one of the three basic prerequisites.[5] There are many factors influencing this attitude, however, on the basis of which the attitudes of the Roma towards education can be differentiated.

A significant differentiation criterion is the level of education achieved. The higher the education of the respondents, the more often they mentioned education as one of the prerequisites for success in life (see Graph 2). Better-educated Roma were aware of its importance despite the fact that their higher qualifications had not allowed them to find a job.

Another differentiation criterion was the respondents' age. Differences between individual age categories were not very big, but a certain trend could be seen. The only age category in which more than half of respondents ranked education as among the three

Graph 2
Importance of education according to education level of respondents

secondary vocational — yes 68,65% / no 31,34%
vocational — yes 55,25% / no 44,74%
elementary — yes 38,50% / no 61,47%
no education — yes 33,60% / no 66,30%

Legend: □ yes ■ no
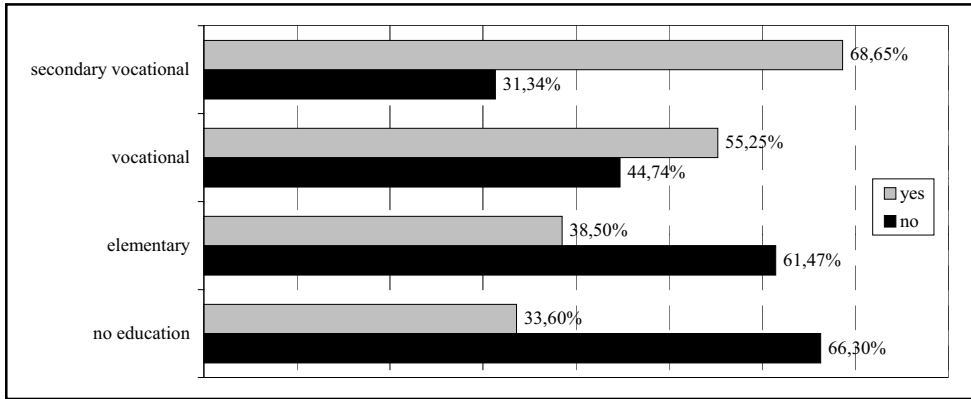
Source: UNDP/IVO, November 2001.

most important prerequisites was the youngest group, the 15 to 25-year-olds. The older the respondents, the less frequently they ranked education among the top three prerequisites. This may have been due to the fact that the older Roma lived most of their lives in communism, when education had no influence on the individual's position on the labor market. Another reason is undoubtedly that even Roma with higher qualifications are unable to find a job today, which is interpreted as evidence that education is not a factor in success in life (see Graph 3).

The region that respondents came from, and particularly their degree of integration, were other important factors in their attitudes to education. Integrated Roma in the most advanced regions (for example, in Malacky district in western Slovakia) were aware of the importance of education for their children, and often had a clear picture of their child's future if the child succeeded in reaching a higher level of education. In the integrated environment, the Roma are often part of broader social networks, their material needs are met, and thus their view of the value of education,

Graph 3
Importance of education according to respondents' age

15 – 25 — yes 54% / no 46%
26 – 35 — yes 47% / no 53%
36 – 45 — yes 45% / no 55%
46 – 55 — yes 41% / no 59%
55 and older — yes 32% / no 68%

Legend: □ yes ■ no

Source: UNDP/IVO, November 2001.

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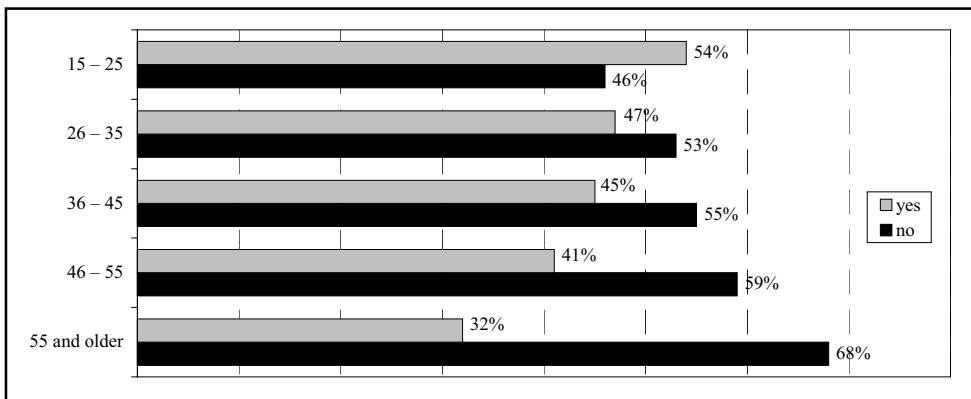
which was damaged during communism, is slowly being restored (Radičová, 2001).

Great differences can be seen in segregated settlements, however, where education is ascribed almost no value. Elementary schools are today attended by a generation of children whose parents never worked, meaning that the children see no positive role models in their parents. A significant factor in the Roma's disinterest in the education of their children – particularly in segregated regions – is their economic situation. For parents, school attendance involves costs that they consider pointless. If a child, after finishing compulsory education and turning 18, cannot get a job, it starts to receive welfare benefits, while children who continue their studies bring their parents only a dependent minor benefit (in the family allowance scheme), which is a lower sum.

ROMA OPINIONS ON WHAT LEVEL OF EDUCATION IS SUFFICIENT

Given that the Roma perceive the value of education in various ways (respondents may state that education is important for life, but have in mind only elementary education), the next goal of the IVO/UNDP research (November 2001) was to find out how much education the Roma believed their children needed to be successful in life. This question was divided into two sub-questions for girls and boys, because it was hypothesized that family/gender differences in this case would influence judgments of the necessary education level. This hypothesis was only partly confirmed. Graphs 4 and 5 show the Roma's answers in the cases of boys and girls.

In both cases, more than half of all respondents stated that trade school education was the minimum necessary to succeed in life. "Today you have to have a certificate for everything. When I look for a job, I have to

Graph 4
What level of education does a boy need to succeed in life?
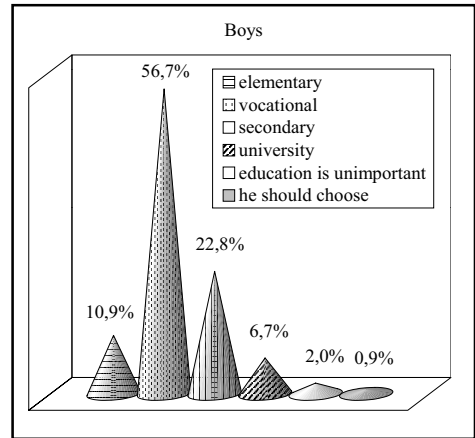
Source: UNDP/IVO, November 2001.

Graph 5
What level of education does a girl need to succeed in life?
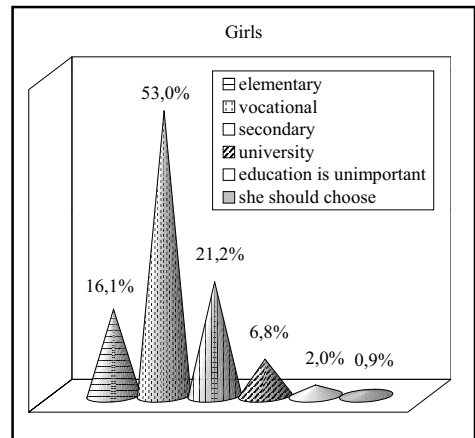
Source: UNDP/IVO, November 2001.

present my vocational certificate. That's why I want my children to acquire vocational education, so they have at least a chance to find a job" (respondent from the Stará Ľubovňa district in northeast Slovakia; the World Bank, SPACE, December 2000 – March 2001). While the differences between the education expected of boys and girls were not great, the hypothesis that boys were expected to ac-

quire a higher level of education, and that elementary education was regarded as sufficient for girls, was partly confirmed. Some parents do not consider qualifications important for their daughters. "If someone with a certificate finds a job, then it's the man. If a girl finds a skilful husband, she doesn't need education." (respondent from the Malacky district; World Bank, SPACE, December 2000 – March 2001)

Those respondents who stated that a child needs higher education (secondary A-level education or university education) did not distinguish between girls and boys. These Roma likely consider education to be a very important value, something needed to get a job and be successful, regardless of one's sex.

Just as the parents' level of education played an important role in whether they regarded education as one of the prerequisites for success in life, so it was also a key factor in the level of education they expected of their children – the higher the education level of the parents, the higher the education they expected from their children (see Tables 1 and 2).

In general, well-educated Roma are more aware of the importance of their children's education. At the same time, Roma parents frequently expect their children to reach at least the same level of education as they did. This was especially visible among the Roma who had completed vocational education, where the parents expected 64.35% of the boys 63.5% of the girls to acquire at least a trade school certificate. The situation was the same with respondents with secondary education, more than half of whom expected their children to achieve the same level of education (IVO/UNDP, November 2001).

In cases where the parents considered education one of the top three prerequisites for success in life, they tended to expect their children to achieve a higher level of education than they had. Their answers were consistent on this point, and applied equally to boys and girls: **More than half of those who expected their children to reach at least the vocational level of education ranked education as one of the top three prerequisites for success in life. On the other hand, up to 80% of those who thought elementary education was enough did not rank education**

Table 1
Level of education expected of boys according to parents' education (in %)

| | | education expected of children | | | | |
		elementary	vocational	secondary	university	other
level of schooling achieved by parent	uncompleted elementary	28	52.6	9.6	3.5	5.2
	elementary	15.06	54.8	20.08	6.6	3.5
	vocational	1.2	**64.35**	25.98	6.9	1.5
	secondary A-level	0	36.36	**53.03**	9.09	1.5

Source: UNDP/IVO, November 2001.

Table 2
Level of education expected of a girl according to parents' education (in %)

| | | education expected of children | | | | |
		elementary	vocational	secondary	university	other
level of schooling achieved by parent	uncompleted elementary	36	44.1	11.7	3.6	0
	elementary	21.7	49.9	18.1	6.47	3.7
	vocational	4.2	63.5	22.5	7.9	0.3
	secondary A-level	0	36.36	53.03	9.09	1.5

Source: UNDP/IVO, November 2001.

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as one of the three most important factors (IVO/UNDP, November 2001).

THE ROMA'S IDEA OF THE IDEAL EDUCATION SYSTEM

Recently, efforts have increased to solve problems in the education of Roma children. Alternative education projects have begun to gain ground, some of which have been very successful (especially ones involving parents in the education of their children); others, on the other hand, have failed. The reasons for such failures lie in the hitherto low emphasis on the attitudes of the Roma to education. For example, efforts to introduce Romany as a teaching language at elementary schools should be based on the interest of the Roma in being educated in this way. We must therefore focus on the identification of the Roma with their ethnic group, and on their relationship to Romany.

From 1996 to 1997, the State Pedagogical Institute researched the attitudes of the Roma towards their ethnicity and language. Some 45% of respondents considered the command of Romany important, but 20%, on the other hand, thought that Roma children did not need it at all. Attitudes here were influenced by the education level of the respondents, with the most positive attitude towards Romany coming from the more educated Roma, who, paradoxically, did not feel their children should have a command of the language (Somorová and Kňažiková, 2001, p. 52). These well-educated Roma tend to live in integrated regions where the use of Romany is far more rare, which is why they do not think their children need to speak it.

Among other Roma as well, a positive relationship to Romany does not automatically mean an interest in having children educated in Romany (see the chapter *The Roma Language and its Standardization* in this book). This was evident in the May 1994 research by the Slovak Statistics Office, which found that the Roma were not very interested in having their children study in Romany (see Graph 6).

The negative attitude of the Roma towards studying in Romany showed up also in the IVO/UNDP research (November 2001), where one of the questions dealt with how equal access to education could be achieved for both Roma and non-Roma children. The research was conducted in five countries.[6] **In all of the**

Graph 6
Opinions of the Roma on education in Romany
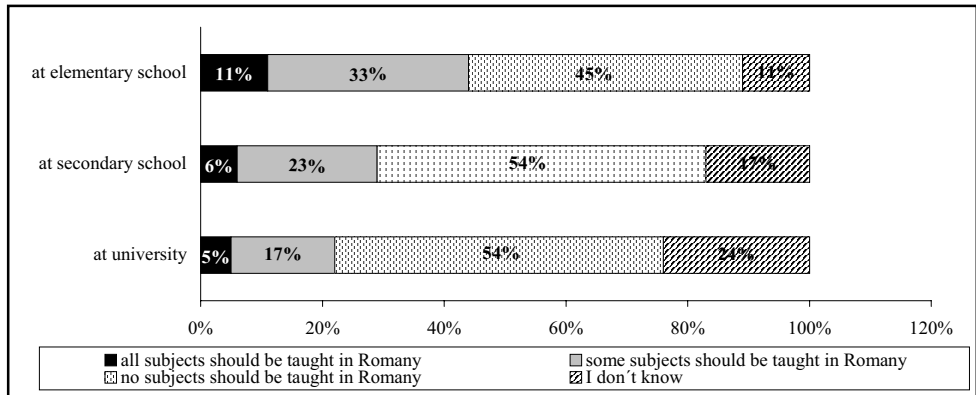
Note: The sample consisted of 682 respondents who claimed Roma ethnicity.
Source: Statistics Office of the Slovak Republic, May 1994.

countries, the Roma said that the best way of ensuring equal access to education was for their children not to be isolated from the majority in any way. The most frequent answer to this question was that Roma children should attend the same schools as the non-Roma, without any special support. This answer was given most frequently in Slovakia, where 84.6% of respondents mentioned this option as ideal. The Roma are thus aware of their social and symbolic exclusion, and don't want their children to be excluded within the education system in any way. "I don't want my children to attend a Roma school and study in Romany under any circumstances. Even now they have problems with being Roma. If they only meet Roma children at school, they will never be able to integrate into society as adults. I used to attend a school together with white children, and since then I have had many friends among them." (respondent from the Rimavská Sobota district in southeastern Slovakia; World Bank, SPACE, December 2000 – March 2001)

Another frequent answer was that children should take preparatory language courses.

Roma children, especially those from segregated settlements where only Romany is spoken, come to school with no knowledge of the Slovak language. As a result, from the moment compulsory education begins, they lag behind the non-Roma children, which often lead to their being transferred to special schools for the mentally retarded. **The most frequent "special school" transfers involve children from segregated settlements.** In the IVO/UNDP research from November 2001, **as much as 30% of Roma from segregated environments said that at least one of their children attended a "special school", while the figure was only 5.3% among the integrated Roma.** As the results of Roma children often improve after they are transferred to special schools, and the parents feel increased interest on the part of the teachers in their children, they automatically push to have their younger children sent to this type of school. "My son attended elementary school and his results were very poor. Since he has attended the special school, his results have improved, and the teachers spend more time with him. So we decided to enroll our younger daughter straight into a special school." (re-

Graph 7
How should equal access to education be assured for both Roma and non-Roma children?
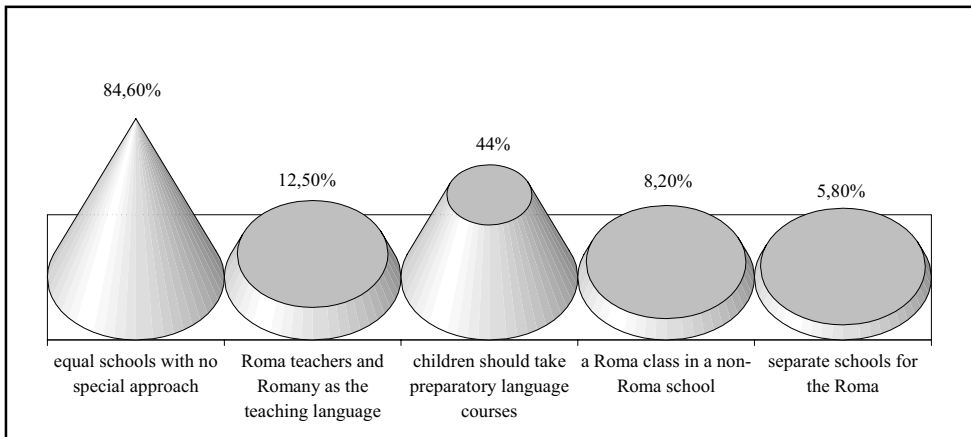
Note: The sum of the percentage values exceeds 100, as the respondents were allowed to choose several options.
Source: UNDP/IVO, November 2001.

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spondent from Malacky district; World Bank, SPACE, December 2000 – March 2001) Nowadays, many projects are being conducted (see the chapter *The Roma in the Education System and Alternative Education Projects* in this book) that address this issue. The support of the Roma in this regard is a promise that these projects will be effective.

CONCLUSION

This chapter aimed to show the heterogeneity of the Roma population and the differences in their attitudes towards education. Clearly, the attitudes of the Roma towards education are not as negative as frequently presented in the media and the academic literature. Their attitudes are determined by the economic and social situations in which the Roma live, rather than by their traditional values. Roma who live in marginalized regions in a culture of poverty show especially negative attitudes towards education, whereas Roma living in integrated regions are aware of the need to educate their children because they maintain a closer relationship with the majority population, and see positive models of people finding jobs thanks to their education. The school problems of Roma children from integrated regions are largely the same as those of non-Roma children. If Roma children have conflicts with teachers, it is usually because they have been disadvantaged on the grounds of their ethnicity. Roma who live integrated with the majority and have a higher level of education are particularly hurt by this kind of discrimination, because it leads to their children being transferred to special schools for no reason except their ethnicity (Kriglerová, 2002).[7]

To gain a better understanding of the education of Roma children and Roma attitudes and aspirations, research must be conducted into all aspects of the relationship between the Roma and education. The knowledge that such research would yield could help shake the myths and stereotypes about the Roma's opinions of education, and at the same time raise many questions concerning the implementation of various projects aimed at educating the Roma. These projects should involve the needs and opinions of the Roma, so they do not again end up in a game whose rules they did not help to create.

ENDNOTES

1. Concerning the social situation of the Roma, research entitled *The Roma and the Labor Market* was conducted recently by the World Bank and the SPACE Foundation on a sample of 356 Roma respondents, while research called *The Roma Human Development Project* was carried out by the Institute for Public Affairs together with the UNDP on a sample of 1,030 Roma respondents from 10 Slovak districts (the results of the research were published on the following web page www.ivo.sk/showvyskum.asp?Id=102).

2. Education was considered one of the ways in which the Roma could be helped to improve their living conditions. In Ugria (the part of Austria-Hungary that included the territory of present-day Slovakia), the ratio between literate women and men was 77:100, while among the Roma it was 54:100 (Džambazovič, 2001).

3. To compare the data with data for the majority, some of the education level categories had to be merged.

4. In the municipality of Lomnička in the northeastern Slovak district of Stará Ľubovňa, where almost 100% of the population is Roma, the *Roma School* project has been in action since 2001. As an experiment, a two-year course under the name *Agricultural Production* was opened at the elementary school in the 1999/2000 academic year for those pupils who did not finish elementary education. However, a significant problem occurred after 24 students enrolled in the first grade, but began to lose interest until 11 of them left the school. The reason for their departure turned out to be their parents' ignorance of the forms of support that existed for

children of welfare-dependent families. The head of the school continued the project in spite of the initial failure, and improved cooperation with parents. Today the school is ready to provide boarding facilities for students who travel to school (Roma Press Agency, June 12, 2002).

5. The most frequently stated prerequisites, in order, were: good health, good luck, education, job, state support, reliable friends with good contacts, special qualifications, and seriousness or steadfastness in one's attitude.

6. The research was conducted in Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania.

7. For example, in Kežmarok district in northeastern Slovakia, a female respondent gave this example: "When my daughter enrolled in the first grade, they automatically wanted to put her in a special school. I absolutely didn't agree with that, because I felt she was intelligent. Eventually I decided to enroll her in another school, where she was accepted without problems, and now she is doing very well." (Institute for Public Affairs, June 2002)

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ROMA MIGRATION FROM SLOVAKIA

Summary: This chapter describes the context of the decision by the Roma to emigrate to seek asylum in the late 1990s, and presents facts that should prompt state intervention. The main causes of the Roma migration were insufficient development opportunities for the Roma, their feeling of discrimination, and their resistance of development strategies. The decision of some Roma to migrate and thus solve these problems was also stimulated by racially motivated violence and a resulting feeling of vulnerability, as well as by the existence of a migration model assisted by information and help channels within the Roma community.

Key words: exclusion, discrimination, migration, mistrust, racially motivated violence, development strategies, the Roma, opportunities, external help.

"Considering all these circumstances, we feel it would be an exaggeration to speak of the causes of the Roma's departure from India. It would be more appropriate to speak of impulses."

(Horváthová, 1964, p. 25)

Every single Roma we talked to insisted that the Roma had been better off before 1990. They perceive the present as a step back. As one of them said: "The Roma should be returned to where they were 10 years ago."

(Vašečka, I., 2000)

INTRODUCTION

The above quotations represent two possible explanation of the Roma migration. The first suggests that there are no causes, only reactions to changing local conditions. The second indicates that the migration of the Roma, as well as migration by other minority members, has identifiable causes. This chapter is based on the latter opinion.

Migration occurs when a man, a family or an entire group moves from one social environment to another. There are many possible causes for this movement, but in general most are related to defects in the society the people are leaving.

The decision to migrate involves solving current and future problems in the given social environment by departing from them. Such departures may have two basic causes. On the one hand, the social environment may exclude the individual and leave him no choice but to go and find a home elsewhere; examples include the forced departures of dissidents during the communist regime. On the other hand, an individual may also choose to leave by himself, meaning that his departure takes the form of a separation from the original environment. These processes of exclusion and separation usually take place concurrently, and influence each other.

From the viewpoint of the majority population, the migration of the Roma to European

Union (EU) countries took the form of a separation from the environment that used to be their home, and was perceived as proof of their disloyalty, which is why the majority labeled their flight "ethno-tourism". From the viewpoint of the Roma, however, the migration was a reaction to their exclusion from society after 1989, and had deep economic and political reasons – in other words, their migration was a consequence of the discrimination the Roma face in society.

This chapter views the migration of the Roma to EU countries as a result of their exclusion from society after 1989, a change that forced the Roma to the bottom of the social structure; to outsiders, this process appeared to be an example of Roma separation. Some readers may object that the Roma were never a part of Slovak society, that they were always on its outskirts, and that it is thus inappropriate to speak of exclusion. However, this chapter is based on the assumption that the Roma were gradually becoming part of Slovak society during the communist regime, even if this was due to controversial forced assimilation measures. The depth of this process is not known, because no comprehensive research has been conducted on the issue. Nevertheless, after 1989 the Roma were increasingly excluded especially from employment, housing, and education. Migration seems to have been one of the answers to this process.

INTERNATIONAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT OF ROMA MIGRATION

Migration to EU countries, which is still ongoing, gives the Roma the chance to acquire a job and thus become equal members of society. It also grants access to the more generous welfare programs of these countries. Most Roma are what is known as "long term" unemployed (i.e. without jobs for over

a year), and have for years been involuntarily dependent on welfare benefits, as in the early 1990s they were the first to be discharged from work. They form a large group in Slovak society for whom welfare benefits have for years been the only source of legal income. Meanwhile, many Roma have lost any chance of finding another job. Migration to EU countries, where asylum procedures provide access to both jobs and greater welfare benefits, has thus become the only rational way for the Roma to improve their situation, as they can only gain – either a job or more money through welfare benefits. This explains why the Roma migration, both in the past and now, has taken the form of migration of entire families, sometimes even extended families, and why the main targets of the Roma have been countries with lax asylum procedures (as well as why these countries have reacted by tightening their asylum policies).

The migration of the Roma from Slovakia started between 1995 and 1997, when the

Table 1
Number of asylum seekers originating from Slovakia in EU countries, Norway, and the Czech Republic (1998 to 2001)

Country	1998	1999	2000	2001
Great Britain	2,207	6	3	60
Ireland	69	0	39	69
Belgium	985	994	1,241	855
Netherlands	293	360	977	211
Sweden	17	132	109	348
Finland	20	1,250	434	88
Denmark	90	987	10	312
Austria	0	11	0	0
France	0	12	0	0
Germany	0	313	0	138
Total for all EU countries	**3,681**	**4,065**	**2,813**	**2,081**
Norway	0	114	964	187
Czech Republic	6	12	723	387
TOTAL	**3,687**	**4,191**	**4,500**	**2,655**

Source: International Organization for Migration.
Note: The share of Roma is not stated, because asylum seekers were not registered according to nationality. It could be assumed, though, that the majority of the asylum seekers were Roma.

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first Roma departed eastern Slovakia for Great Britain. The number of Roma departing for abroad climaxed between 1999 and 2000 (Murín, 2002).

The table shows that the number of asylum seekers culminated at different times in different countries. The first migration wave headed for Great Britain, but after Britain reimposed a visa requirement on Slovak citizens, the migrating Roma chose Belgium and the Netherlands as their targets in a second migration wave. These countries reacted by tightening their rules for granting asylum. Belgium also introduced the institution of "clearly unfounded requests", which allowed asylum applications to be examined in "accelerated asylum proceedings", and denied monetary benefits to asylum seekers in these proceedings. A third migration wave thus turned towards the Scandinavian countries – Finland, Denmark and Norway. These countries too began imposing visa obligations on Slovak citizens. Their response proved effective, and the influx of Roma dropped off; however, most of the measures taken were administrative in nature, and are expected to be replaced in time by preventive measures.

The possible future of mass Roma migration to EU countries has been foreshadowed by the migration of Slovak Roma to the Czech Republic since the early 1990s. The extent of this migration has never been recorded, as the Roma have been coming to the Czech Republic to live with their relatives on long-term visits, thus bypassing asylum procedures. Since 2000, the number of Slovak asylum seekers in the Czech Republic has been further influenced by Slovak measures tightening the provision of welfare benefits and poor relief.

From the legal viewpoint, the Roma in Slovakia do not suffer from discrimination. Displays of discrimination against the Roma come from individuals acting without the endorsement of the state and contrary to the law. Slovakia is justly considered a safe country, and the requests of the Roma for asylum are generally judged to be unfounded; since asylum procedures were changed, these requests have been examined in accelerated asylum proceedings. Nevertheless, it has to be remembered that before these changes were made, some cases were recognized as justified, and the applicants granted refugee status (in Great Britain and Denmark). It is possible that the Roma in Slovakia may be exposed to latent discrimination. The majority of the Slovak Roma population also faces an extremely bad economic situation, which has structural causes. Violations of their human rights, attacks by skinheads, the indifference of state bodies, and everyday discrimination in contacts with the majority population, are also facts of life for Slovakia's Roma.

The migrating Roma may actually regard the above facts as disadvantages and discrimination, and may act and state reasons for their departure from Slovakia accordingly. However, the suspicion remains that the Roma are abusing the asylum procedures of EU countries with the aim of taking advantage of the considerable welfare benefits provided during this procedure. This suspicion, however, cannot be generalized, and cannot become the basis for tackling the entire issue.

Undoubtedly, the Roma are not migrating to EU countries only from Slovakia. Equal mass migrations of Roma have been seen in other Central European post-communist countries. Researches in the Czech Republic and Hungary show that the causes are similar to those among Slovak Roma. Thus, the migration issue is not a local one or the problem of just one country. It has become a Europe-wide problem that no country can solve it on its own.

Displays of racial hatred, xenophobia and other forms of hatred against certain ethnic groups and foreigners represent a problem across Europe. The cooperation of the Slovak government with the governments of EU countries, other candidate countries, human rights organizations and Slovak NGOs dealing with the issue is thus very important.

PRECONDITIONS FOR ROMA MIGRATION FORMED DURING COMMUNIST REGIME

In the first half of the 20th century, the Slovak Roma lived a mostly settled life, unlike, for instance, the Czech Roma. Measures taken by the Nazi-puppet Slovak state from 1939 to 1945, as well as the measures of the communist regime from 1948 to 1989, undermined the traditional structure of Roma communities and the traditional position of the Roma within the structure of local communities.

OPENING OF PREVIOUSLY SECLUDED SETTLEMENTS

During the twentieth century, many Roma left the settlements where they had been born and which had traditionally protected them from the world of the non-Roma. The Roma began to divide into urban (more prestigious) and rural (less prestigious) groups. They also divided into those who lived in normal houses and flats scattered among the non-Roma (more prestigious) and those who continued to live in shacks in large concentrations in segregated Roma settlements (less prestigious).

Those who left the Roma settlements – either voluntarily or as part of the forced relocations decreed by the communist state – were to a certain extent emancipated from the social isolation typical of the settlements. The social prospects of these people opened up, as did the world of institutions and organizations, and they were given new opportunities. They adopted new ways of organizing group activities, which on the one hand destabilized their previous social order, but on the other launched the process of overcoming the spiritual immobility typical of traditional communities, such as that of the Roma.

The majority population did not assign sufficient importance to these processes. The prevailing opinion was that the problems of the Roma were temporary in nature, as assimilation would solve them once and for all. In fact, the cultural change and the drive to "civilize" the Roma caused many problems and conflicts, because neither the Roma nor the non-Roma were prepared for it.

CHANGES IN THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF THE ROMA

The aim of the measures adopted during the communist regime was to end poverty in Roma settlements and gain control over the Roma community. The life of the Roma in settlements that the regime did not fully control was undermined by a policy of "individualization" that broke up Roma social groups all the way down to the level of the nuclear family.

The communist regime was able to reach both goals (beating poverty and control) by moving the Roma away from their settlements in eastern Slovakia into other parts of then Czechoslovakia, mainly larger Czech cities. In the relocation process, different Roma from various environments and groups were mixed together. The difficulty was that there were often insurmountable barriers between these groups. This haphazard mix,

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along with the anonymous environment of the city, weakened the traditional community organization of the Roma, and prevented the Roma's traditional system of social control from functioning. If the fact that the Roma were simply not prepared for the move is added, to the point of never having seen the "conveniences" of civilization that they suddenly encountered and were required to use (e.g. flushing toilets, gas stoves, life in multi-storey buildings, paying rent and other fees, etc.), we get a community that was unable to find its position in this new world. It was at this time that the Roma population started to slide into deep trouble.

ASSIMILATION AS THE WAY OF INTEGRATING THE ROMA INTO SOCIETY AND THE MEANS OF UNDERMINING THEIR IDENTITY

One of the goals of ethnic policy in countries east of the former Iron Curtain was to create an atomized mass of "people" in which ethnic differences ceased to exist. This also pertained to the Roma. The "socialist country people" concept, according to its creators, would allow both the minority and the majority to overcome the burdens of their ethnicity, and to create a joint social entity rid of all ethnic features. However, when applied in practice in communist countries, this concept tended to force the "people" to adopt the characteristics of the majority population, i.e. the state-forming nation. The real aim was to rid the Roma – and not just them – of their identity.

The communist regime strove not only to make the Roma part of the country's socialist country people, but also to transform them into "socialist state citizens". This concept had both positive and negative consequences for the Roma. For many it meant giving up traditional community relationships, al-

though after 1989 it also gave them an opportunity – like all other inhabitants of Slovakia – to enter a society in which everyone was equally protected regardless of their physical, ethnic or other characteristics. This opportunity was not matched by reality in the case of the Roma, for two reasons:

1. The open ethnicization of society, particularly after 1992, designated them as second-class citizens – "non-Slovaks" – while attacks by skinheads as well as the indifference of the majority society forced them to seek support among equally stigmatized people.
2. The Roma, as the least qualified and politically weakest group of the population, had to shoulder a large proportion of the social cost of economic transformation. As a result, they increasingly turned for safety to the mutual help provided by members of the traditional Roma community, with many Roma returning to the settlements in which they were born, or forming urban colonies (or being forced to form them), as when they do not pay their rent the state moves them into "community housing".

SOCIAL EMANCIPATION AND THE REPRODUCTION OF POTENTIAL ON THE LEVEL OF UNSKILLED LABOR

The life of the Roma community was fundamentally changed by the measures taken by the communist state pertaining to all people, as well as by the social measures intended specifically for the Roma. While the ban on enterprise affected everyone, the Roma, most of whom were small craftsmen and traders, were hurt the most. Due to their cultural and language differences from the majority, their chances of acquiring education were (and still often are) very limited. Thus, since the beginning of the communist era, the income

and possibilities of the Roma have often depended on unskilled labor.

The aim of the social measures that were especially focused on the Roma was to wipe out their poverty and increase their level of "civilization". The tool used to achieve these goals was special welfare benefits and advantages. This "external welfare help" limited the poverty of the Roma on the one hand, but taught them passivity on the other. The Roma acquired a new philosophy, according to which the state was obliged to look after the standard of living of the country's inhabitants. This attitude can also be found among the non-Roma (and not just in Slovakia) in low income households where unemployment is endemic, although with one fundamental difference. In the majority population only a tiny minority of people have this attitude, while among the Roma more than half feel that the state is responsible for them. This is largely due to the fact that most Roma formed the lowest social class during the communist regime. The majority population, however, regards this attitude as typical of the Roma, not of all low income households, regardless of ethnicity, that are dependent on welfare benefits. The result is that the Roma are stigmatized, and the social environment of people dependent on welfare becomes ethnicized.

ROMA SOCIAL STRUCTURE DURING THE COMMUNIST REGIME

As a result of the aforementioned processes and the measures taken by the state, the traditional differentiation of the Roma population was overlaid by additional layers of differentiation, some according to the criteria of modern society, and others created by the measures the state had taken against the Roma since 1939. This process, however, ground to a halt halfway through, because

the admission of the Roma to the modern world proved to be not simply a purely social issue, as the communists had thought, but also a cultural and political one, which the regime had not grasped. This is why the process of inclusion failed, and why today it appears that we will have to return to the point of departure and start the process of the inclusion of the Roma community all over again.

The Roma excluded from society by the measures taken by the 1939 to 1945 Slovak state gradually began to be included again after the war ended. Communist policy makers divided them into three groups: Roma living scattered and integrated among the majority population, Roma living on the edge of municipalities but maintaining contact with the majority, and finally Roma living isolated in settlements far from municipal boundaries with no contact with the majority population. This communist-era division survives today.

Roma living integrated and scattered among the majority were further divided according to the criteria of modern society:
• A small but significant class of Roma intelligentsia was created.
• A growing class of Roma arose, labeled "the socialist Roma middle class".[1] This class included unqualified but literate and partially assimilated Roma.
• The lowest class were Roma living in settlements, those standing outside society and its social structure.[2]

Segregated settlements regularly supported and reproduced the lowest Roma class due to the high birth rate of the Roma populations in these settlements. The Roma here lived in incredibly primitive social, cultural, and hygienic conditions despite the social and political measures taken. The communist regime was unable to solve the problem even

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by destroying these settlements and spreading the Roma across the country. The social exclusion of these people was so deep that not even the communist totalitarian state was able to keep them fully under control. The settlements were able to some extent to "hide" the Roma from the non-Roma, and their inhabitants also protected each other.

CHANGE IN STATE ROMA POLICY AFTER 1989: FROM EXTERNAL TO INTERNAL SOCIAL HELP

The artificial and forced interventions of "socialist engineers" into Roma issues ended suddenly in 1989. The Roma population was not prepared for such a sudden change, and was unable to cope with the demanding market and social environment. That the Roma were so unprepared was due to the fact that the level of emancipation that they had achieved during the communist regime had been thanks to help from outside the group, not to internal aid and self-development within the Roma community. If the advances recorded by the Roma had arisen from their motivation and efforts, they might not have been as spectacular, but they would have lasted longer and proven more resistant in the face of new rules of the game and changing external social conditions.

FROM SCATTER BACK TO CONCENTRATION

Unemployment among the Roma is today almost 100%. As a result, fewer and fewer Roma live individually among the majority population. If they are unable to pay their rent, they are moved into community housing, or themselves move back to rural areas or the settlements where they were born. The migration to settlements and the formation of Roma colonies in towns were triggered by the fear of being attacked by members of extremist groups, and were an attempt to "hide" from the threat. In the towns of eastern Slovakia, entire streets and neighborhoods inhabited exclusively by Roma have arisen. These are territorially and socially isolated places with above-average levels of social pathology, critical health situations, and gradually failing infrastructure. These newly arising concentrations of Roma throw together those who are accustomed to late 20th century civilization, and those who have just started the process of acclimatization. As a result, the standard of living of all Roma is gradually dropping to the lowest level in society, and the non-Roma behavior patterns that they have acquired are slowly being lost. The final result of this process will be the return of community-based living, the seclusion of these colonies from the non-Roma, and the growth of mistrust against them.

THE THREAT OF SOCIAL DEGRADATION

All of this is imperiling the ambitions and life opportunities of the recently formed Roma middle class. Unemployment is reducing their income to the level of lower class Roma living in settlements, i.e. to the level of welfare benefits. These people are trying to stave off sliding down the social ladder with all means at their disposal, including illegal ones. The fact is that the 1989 revolution caught the Roma middle class unprepared, and it crumbled together with the communist regime.

The non-Roma "middle" class formed during the communist regime is similarly exposed. However, the level of exposure is different – among the Roma, everyone is exposed to degradation, while among the non-

Roma only the unemployed have something to fear. The second difference is that the Roma middle class stands no chance of shaking the threat off – their low skills and their dark complexions are handicaps on the labor market. A major problem and challenge for the non-Roma population is not just the fate of people living in Roma settlements and urban colonies, but especially the fate of the children of the former Roma middle class. These are the children of people whom the communist regime elevated to the position of the Roma middle class, but who were unable to keep this position and thus give their children an opportunity of social advancement. The new Roma middle class (children with ambitions but without opportunities) might differ from the old Roma middle class (parents on whom ambitions and opportunities were virtually imposed, and who today have lost both) in that its position would be founded on modern education, practical or entrepreneurship skills – if only they had the chance to find a job.[3]

SOLIDARITY DENIED AND MULTIPLE EXCLUSION

The Roma were not the only ones caught unprepared by developments. Slovak society as a whole was equally unprepared to show civic solidarity. As a result, the majority population largely does not care about the miserable situation of the Roma. Instead of social solidarity, which would have demanded the provision of real help, Slovak society showed no interest in the fate of the Roma after the devastating floods in 1998, and part of the majority and its political representatives even labeled the Roma as freeloaders. The worst thing, however, has been the multiple exclusion of the Roma (economic, social, cultural, and political), which is growing steeply without drawing a protest or even the notice of the majority

society. Not even racially motivated attacks against the Roma have brought significant attention. This situation only began to change in the last two years after state institutions began to act.

THE WAY OUT: EMIGRATION

Many Roma have realized that their opportunities and the opportunities of their children have dramatically decreased in Slovakia. Their reactions to the changed situation have varied – some reacted by migrating to an EU country, hoping that the move would bring about a fundamental change in their lives and in the lives of their children. Others have concluded that although the chance of all Roma for a better life has decreased in Slovakia, the fortune of individuals may vary. And so they have become moneylenders, taking advantage of the poverty of other Roma. Among other things, migration has become a source of considerable income for them.

THE CAUSES[4] OF MASS ROMA MIGRATION (SUMMARY OF RESULTS OF RESEARCHES)

Decisions to migrate tend to be made if the following factors are present:
a) Deep structural causes that force people to act to change their situation, which they perceive as problematic. The result is not necessarily a decision to migrate; everything depends on the stimuli and conditions.
b) Stimuli that are strong enough for people to consider migration as a suitable solution to their complicated situation. The stimuli, as it has been mentioned, are not the real causes of migration, but can only contribute to the fact that under certain conditions

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the Roma community chooses migration as its strategy. Besides that, the stimuli depend on the situation, and are interchangeable, i.e. under different conditions, various factors can serve as stimuli.

c) Suitable conditions allowing the stimuli to acquire the necessary force as initiators of action.

An research on the causes of Roma migration from Slovakia to EU countries was conducted in 2000 at the initiative of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Bratislava (Vašečka, 2000). A similar research supported by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) was conducted in Warsaw by several Roma organizations (Červeňák, 2000). Another poll was conducted in Great Britain (Trojanová, 1999). The results of these polls show three categories of reasons for the Roma's migration to EU countries. Of course, these are not causes in the sense of causal relations, but merely the context in which the Roma decided to migrate.

ATTEMPTS TO IMPROVE
THE POST-1989 SITUATION

After 1989, the Roma's path to social emancipation and overcoming inequities became far more complicated. The opportunities available to the Roma after 1989 were gradually sealed off. The respondents of the aforementioned researches said they had been looking for opportunities to improve their situation, one of which was to migrate.

Another category of causes was distrust of the majority and its institutions, and a related feeling of discrimination, which the respondents cited as a major cause. Finally, the Roma cited contradictory role models, under the influence of whom some respondents behaved one way in public and another in private. This conflict caused respondents to reject adaptation or development strategies aimed at solving their complicated situation (e.g. retraining, increasing their qualifications, entrepreneurship, moving to find work, etc.), and led them to choose the traditional protective strategy of the Roma – mass migration.

Added to these stimuli was the fact that the Roma middle class formed during the communist regime, whose members represented the main body of migrants, was unable to defend its position in Slovakia's discriminatory environment without help from outside. Under these conditions, migration seemed the only sensible strategy for solving their problems.

Complicated Journey to Emancipation and Overcoming Inequities

When talking about the complicated path of the Roma to emancipation, we are referring to the social decline of that part of the Roma population that before 1989 had become part of Slovak society. We are also referring to the problems of those Roma whose process of adaptation to modern society halted after 1989. The Roma generally perceive this problem as ethnic discrimination, and only secondarily as a social and economic problem.

The housing situation of most Roma families worsened in the 1990s, Roma unemployment grew enormously, and the school system continued to reproduce a low level of education among the Roma. As a result, poverty, social disorganization, crime, and drug addiction increased among the Roma. The social exclusion of the Roma, and the social gap between the Roma minority and the majority population also grew, and interethnic relationships became increasingly radical. The Roma were forced out of all areas that under the changed economic and

social conditions became attractive to non-Roma for some reason.

The New Role of the State, and its Failure in Relation to the Roma

In general, the social cost of economic transformation among the Roma minority is extremely high. It has been further increased by the disintegration of the welfare system created by the communist regime, and the lack of interest in the fate of the Roma on the part of the state, which lasted until the late 1990s. The consequence has been the social degradation of the Roma and their inability to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the 1989 revolution. The ideology of social engineering, which shaped the development of the Roma through external help and state supervision, was in 1989 replaced by the philosophy that everyone is responsible for his own fate, which triggered the degradation of the Roma. It was never stressed that the principle of personal responsibility can only be applied in communities where the stronger are also responsible for the weaker.

The main failure of the state in connection with the Roma after 1989 was that the policy of Roma emancipation pursued by the former regime was not replaced by a new policy of emancipation in all areas (not just political, but also cultural, economic, and social). The result of this failure is a large middle class of Roma who are unable to help themselves.

Researches suggest that the mass migration of Roma was a reaction by the Roma middle class to the threats present in all walks of their lives, and to their exclusion from the opportunities created after 1989. Although this is just a hypothesis that cannot be confirmed, it is nevertheless an important clue as to what social interventions it should be focused on: those targeting the Roma who proved able over the past several decades to adapt to 20th century civilization, and who now face social and cultural decline if they do not receive aid.

Existing Threats – the Result of Restrictions and Discrimination against the Roma after 1989

The most important **restrictions** are those keeping many Roma unqualified and unemployed, and those reducing their chances of acquiring and keeping a flat. While the education and housing problems are quite well known, the most important phenomenon – Roma unemployment – is at the same time the least understood.

In the long term, Roma unemployment is due mainly to a reduction in jobs requiring low qualifications, the unsuitable system of educating Roma children and youth, and the indifference of Roma parents to the level of education acquired by their children. In the short term, high Roma unemployment is also related to the influx of cheap labor from Ukraine.

However, the essence of the problem, according to researches on the causes of migration, consists of three main factors:

1. **Complexion** – Many employers are prejudiced against the Roma, believing they are not reliable workers, and thus are unwilling to risk employing them. Fully 100% of respondents claimed to have been invited by employers to job interviews over the telephone, but that when they had shown up in person and had been found to be Roma, on the basis of their skin color, they had been told the position was taken.

2. **Inadequate system of welfare benefits** – There are many cases in which the total sum of welfare benefits in one family is so high that it is no longer worth it for any member of the family to work (i.e. the wage would be equivalent to the welfare

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benefits). The best solution for such families is to continue receiving the welfare benefits, and to work illegally (i.e. at "unofficial" jobs that are not taxed or reported to the state) at the same time.

3. **Discriminatory practices by non-Roma entrepreneurs in cooperation with the Roma** – The illegal short term employment of the Roma is an effective means for companies to cut costs at the expense of taxpayers.

It can be assumed that the Roma, who represent a source of seasonal, cheap, unskilled and illegally employable labor, encourage demand from employers, who benefit equally from this relationship. The fact remains, however, that illegal work by the Roma hurts the taxpayer in the short term, and the Roma themselves in the long term, because without official jobs they minimize their participation in the social and health insurance systems. The only solution is to reorganize the system of paying welfare benefits.

Discrimination against the Roma, and the fear that it causes, are among the greatest problems the minority faces. Most respondents mentioned discrimination as their main reason for emigration. To the Roma, the term "discrimination" has a very broad meaning: They say they are afraid of skinheads, of the state police, and of the authorities; they are afraid to leave the protective environment of the Roma community (they are not allowed to enter restaurants, they are afraid to travel on public transport, etc.); they are also afraid that something will happen to their children if they attend school beyond their street or neighborhood. The world is constantly full of threats for the Roma, who feel discriminated against and unequal.

The researches showed three forms of discrimination faced by the Roma in Slovakia.

1. **Latent structural discrimination** – This type of discrimination is not intentional and is very hard to prove. Administrative procedures and systems often discriminate despite being built on the civic principle. It may seem that if they are applied equally to all people, they are just.

2. **Ethnic discrimination** – This takes place above all on the symbolic level, especially in schools and when the Roma are treated as a stigmatized group. Discrimination in the school system results from the fact that Slovak culture is used as the standard teaching framework, even though to Roma children it represents a strange culture. On the other hand, in the target countries of the Roma migration, Roma children also visited schools that represented a strange culture, but neither the parents nor the children had a problem with it. It would be interesting to learn whether the Roma children were accepted by their peers and by the teachers, and how well they performed in the different educational systems.

Many respondents maintain that the bureaucrats and police in the target countries treated them as they would have anyone else. In Slovakia, conversely, the Roma feel stigmatized, a feeling justified by such events as attacks by police units on Roma settlements in the Žehra and Rudňany municipalities, or the treatment of Roma at police stations, including the torture and murder of a Roma man in police custody in 2001 (Červeňák, 2000, p. 19). The fact that few Roma are regularly employed, while so many are illegally employed, also shows that different criteria apply when it comes to hiring a Roma. The respondents in all researches universally maintain that the treatment they received in the target countries was completely different from what they were used to in Slovakia, and that they at last felt like human beings. One respondent said: "England must be gov-

erned by non-whites, [because] they treated us fairly."

On the other hand, it must be noted that the behavior of many Roma dependent on welfare handouts at state social welfare offices lacks even basic manners, as both Gabal and Vašečka have written in their works. Clerks have complained of curses, insults, aggressive behavior and threats.

Intervention is thus required in the field of communication and conflict management. Such training courses are provided to public administration staff, police, teachers, and similar professionals in many places around Slovakia. The level of coordination and consistency in these interventions may be another issue altogether, however.

3. **Positive discrimination** – Roma representatives categorically rejected this approach, pointing to bad experiences from the communist regime.

Need for Special Help

Many respondents said they had had problems finding jobs, even those who had more than elementary school education; many had also found their children placed in "special schools" for mentally handicapped students without any justification; others reported that "special classes" had been formed consisting only of Roma students. They also said it was very difficult to acquire a flat outside the purely Roma environment. The basic problem is thus how to overcome these handicaps without measures specially tailored to their needs.

The Roma don't seem to receive the desirable extent and quality of special help, help that would motivate them and not reward inactivity, and that would develop the internal potential of the minority.

Help from the majority population should come on two levels: removing all traces of discrimination, and providing special aid for Roma dependent on social benefits. These forms of help require programs on the local level, including projects to increase the majority's tolerance and acceptance of such help.

Unavailability of the Opportunities Created after 1989

Most Roma have not made use of the chances following the political change in 1989 to acquire new qualifications and skills. So far, the freedoms they have used the most have been those to travel and associate. The migration, however, showed the Roma that if freedom is not connected with relevant qualifications and skills, it does not contain real opportunities. In the research conducted in Slovakia (Vašečka, 2000), the respondents admitted this connection, but most considered leaving Slovakia for some EU country opportunity enough.

The main factor preventing the Roma from using the opportunities created after 1989 has been their low level of qualifications. This is due to the failure of the school system to respond properly to two contradictory facts. The first is that Roma children are taught in an environment dominated by ethnic Slovak culture, which for many of them is foreign. The second is that the Roma, as the answers of the respondents again demonstrated, generally do not want their children to study in Romany, while some do not even want their children to be taught about the Roma. Furthermore, as other researches show, the ambitions of Roma parents regarding their children usually end at the secondary school level, while for many, vocational education is sufficient. However, this level of education does not make it any easier to find a job. Thus far, the Slovak school system has not only

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failed to find a way to respond to these facts, but has placed far too many Roma children in "special schools" for the mentally handicapped, and has allowed many children to leave the school system with only elementary school education.

The Roma's lack of access to opportunities is also related to the fact that the emancipation of the Roma has halted in the field of overcoming their ethnic stigmatization. Before 1989, emancipation in this field was defined as having a chance to become a member of the "socialist country people", i.e. a kind of assimilation. After 1989 this changed (at least on the level of words) into the opportunity to become an equal citizen. The mass migration of the Roma to EU countries indicates that the Roma have not welcomed the changes in this field.

Two things impede Roma from becoming equal citizens of the state and not being perceived as Roma. The ineffaceable stigma of skin color leads to discrimination against them and forces them to the outskirts of society, because the ethnic Slovak majority has elevated the ethnic principle to the basis on which the state is built. Second, difficult living conditions also force Roma out of society. Both factors lead Roma to live in local Roma communities based on mutual help and protection. Emancipation on the basis of citizenship has evidently been postponed.

The shortcomings in the help extended from mainstream society and the state were identified by the respondents as consisting of indifference to their problems (in the better cases), or withholding resources available to other members of the municipality (in the worse cases). This is again related to discrimination, which seems to underlie every aspect of the Roma migration to EU countries and the Roma issue in general.

So far, the Roma have been unable to respond adequately to the opportunities and threats they face by themselves, without help from the majority population and the state. The formation of a new Roma middle class built on new foundations within the current generation of Roma youth is in jeopardy, while the reliance of the welfare-dependent lower classes of Roma on the state and their own Roma upper classes has increased. The lack of opportunities has led young, educated Roma to share the opinion of their parents that the Roma were better off before 1989. This means we must try to find and help those Roma children who have a chance of completing secondary school, to locate and acquire decent jobs.

Rejection of Development Strategies by Welfare-Dependent Roma

Speaking of the Roma minority rejecting one thing and preferring something else, we are referring to existing behavior models that individual Roma, through their daily social activities, continually confirm or change. We are not talking about the activity of some social construct above the level of the individual, such as a group or the entire minority itself.

When we speak of development strategies being rejected, we are also referring to behavior models or orientations that differ in the public sphere on the one hand, and in private on the other, and which the rest of society regards as the "hijacking" of funds intended for the protection of economically vulnerable people. Thanks to the traditional stigmatization of the Roma, these attitudes and behavior patterns are attributed to the entire Roma ethnic group, even though they are typical of ghetto cultures everywhere (Mareš, 2000, p. 175 – 184). Ethnicity can play an important role only in cases when the given ethnic group is stigmatized, which with the Roma is unfortunately the case.

Concerning the need for social security, some respondents view it as a set of measures taken by the state in keeping with its obligation towards its citizens. We cannot generalize from this opinion, on the basis of several interviews, and ascribe it to the entire community; however, it can be used to identify the causes of migration, the source of which lies within the Roma community, and to find appropriate measures to motivate the Roma to enter the labor market.

Social security from this viewpoint does not mean an opportunity to satisfy one's needs – it is regarded as a world that belongs to the state, a world without threats, and one that the state is obliged to provide to all citizens. According to some respondents, the state should ensure that people's basic needs are met, i.e. food, clothes, housing, health care, and essential, long term consumer goods. The state should also provide jobs. Social security, according to this view, is perceived as something constant, something that does not depend directly on one's efforts or the results of one's work. In this "world of the state", individual responsibility for one's successes or failures is rejected.

On the other hand, we cannot ignore the creativity and personal engagement with which these people began to secure their future by adopting protective strategies (migration, illegal labor, moving back to Roma settlements, etc.). When the Roma decide to migrate, they expose themselves and their families to increased risk. When they decide to work illegally, they are risking the consequences. It is important that they have not chosen the adaptation strategy of retraining or the development strategies of education and entrepreneurship. They apparently believe these approaches do not work (citing the failures of Roma entrepreneurs, and unemployment among young, educated Roma), or for various reasons do not feel they are important.

Thus, in the public sphere we may encounter demands for state-guaranteed security, while in the private sphere we may see personal engagement, and the willingness to risk uncertainty and failure. Again, on the one hand, one sees passivity and criticism of the state for not creating sufficient jobs and living conditions; and, on the other hand, distrust of retraining and other forms of adaptation requiring a change in lifestyle but not guaranteeing success. In the private sector one sees initiative and creativity in looking for additional income, whether this involves illegal activity or the generous welfare systems of EU countries.

The existence of such contradictory behavior patterns is due to the simultaneous influence of the communist regime (passivity) and the traditional Roma community (creativity). The Roma are also driven by external factors, which lead us to believe that the problem could be solved with a combination of external intervention and adequate labor projects.

Distrust Between the Roma and the Majority Population

Discussions of whether racial discrimination exists in Slovakia, and if so to what extent, lead nowhere, because posed in this form the problem is a political one. A much broader basis for interpreting and solving the issue is offered by the issue of trust, and the related statement that the "Roma issue" consists mainly in the distrust the Roma feel towards the majority population and its institutions, and vice versa – the majority population's distrust of the willingness of the Roma to respect rules, to work, etc. This distrust has prevented both sides from seeing things as they really are, and has blocked communication. Moreover, it has triggered feelings of discrimination and helplessness among the Roma.

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Distrust is related to discrimination, both open and latent. The relationship is both direct, as acts of open and latent discrimination encourage and strengthen distrust of the Roma, and indirect, as distrust itself warps perceptions of reality (in that the Roma are very sensitive to every step and action by the majority, and tend to connect these actions with racial violence, discrimination and persecution even if there is no basis for this connection). Discrimination may be unintentional, based on stereotypes, or institutional, as happens when civic and social justice principles are applied regardless of the historical handicaps of the Roma.

When trust is disturbed on both sides we can expect problems in mutual communication. The Roma can be expected to try and profit from everything the world of non-Roma institutions is able to provide, and at the same time to take advantage of its weaknesses. The non-Roma, on the other hand, can be expected to act with caution towards the Roma and to treat them with distrust.

STIMULI AND CONDITIONS OF ROMA MASS MIGRATION

Although the stimuli we identified are not the real and structural causes of the migration, it does not mean that we do not have to address them. On the contrary, they represent a clear opportunity to take operative measures especially on the local level, and to focus on solving complicated situations in other ways than migration.

Based on the researches that were conducted, we can infer that migration was adopted as a collective strategy by the Roma community under the influence of several stimuli, each of which acts under certain conditions that must be present for the stimulus to be effective. Only under these conditions does each

stimulus have the power to initiate this process. Such stimuli and conditions include racially motivated violence accompanied by a feeling of defenselessness, and the existence of a migration model accompanied by an informal information and help system within the Roma community.

RACIALLY MOTIVATED VIOLENCE AND FEELING OF DEFENSELESSNESS

The fear of violence has always been a strong stimulus of migration. Racially motivated violence takes two different forms: racially motivated physical attacks, and symbolic racial violence. The respondents spoke of racially motivated physical attacks in Slovakia, and about their fear of such violence. However, not one had been the victim of a racially motivated attack. Of course, this does not mean that the attacks do not happen: The most important fact is that these people were afraid it could happen to them or their children. What is more, racial violence seems far more threatening when seen through the haze of distrust, in which many otherwise innocent events are seen as racially motivated. People start to behave as if it actually occurred far more frequently than it does, and take decisions based on their fears.

EXISTENCE OF A MIGRATION MODEL, INFORMALLY PROVIDED INFORMATION AND HELP WITHIN THE ROMA COMMUNITY

Another stimulus of migration is the existence of a local model for solving problems through migration. The majority of local Roma live in community-type organizations. The positive experience of the entire community is drawn on, and the behavior of indi-

viduals copies the experience of the entire community (among the non-Roma, this accumulation and preservation function is performed by various institutions, such as libraries, schools, and civic organizations).

Thus it is that Roma who try a certain procedure and succeed (in this case, migrate successfully) report their success to everyone with whom they are connected by the bonds of mutual assistance, mutual values, and mutual fate. If any Roma kept such information for himself, he would be banished from the community, which protects him from the insecure and treacherous world of the non-Roma. Of course, the actions of these "successful" Roma are not limited to providing information, but may lead them to support the others in doing what they did and accomplishing their goals. To an outsider, this might seem an organized activity, but what we really have is the solution of one individual becoming a model for other community members. This casual information and help spreads through the information channels of the Roma community like a forest fire, becoming the spiritual property of the community – its "know-how". This can result in spontaneous, mass departures. Only later do people begin to behave in a calculating manner, or even to organize a community-wide movement.

Other researches (e.g. Osińska and Śliwińska, 1999) show that sharing information is a common feature also in non-Roma communities and welfare-dependent families. Ethnicity plays no role here.

CONCLUSION

The Roma minority at the moment depends on external help from the majority. This means that the minority is not capable of solving its own problems by itself.

The basic precondition for effective external help is that the majority regards helping as its duty and as the repayment of a debt to the minority, while the minority must accept the help offered without suspicion and distrust.

External help should thus focus on strengthening the Roma community's ability to emancipate itself. This calls for projects whose aim is to increase the human potential of individuals and the social potential of the minority as a whole.

The national government and regional and municipal administrations should reassess and step up their activities to remove latent ethnic discrimination, and to improve the living conditions of the Roma, especially in Roma settlements (in cooperation with the Roma). They should also strive to improve communication between the Roma and the non-Roma, to remove mutual prejudices, and improve the performance of municipal administrations.

In recent years, we have seen how EU countries gradually and successfully prevented the Roma from solving their complicated situation through migration. Naturally, this was legitimate. However, for Slovakia it means that the longer the state hesitates to solve the Roma issue, the greater the threat of political instability. The Roma may view a situation in which all opportunities are barred to them as threatening, which may make their collective behavior even less predicable than it is today.

ENDNOTES

1. We know a lot about the social structure of the traditional Roma community, but we have almost no information about the various social layers within the community. We can only guess at the changes that took place during

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their integration into society. Despite the fact that the author calls one of these Roma social classes "middle", this is not and never has been a proper middle class. In terms of overall society, for example, it has always been part of the lower class of society. Only a few people, collectively referred to as the Roma intelligentsia, could be considered truly middle class. However, from the viewpoint of the Roma community, the difference between the intelligentsia and the people living in poverty and exclusion in segregated Roma settlements and colonies is steadily increasing. Thus, when I call a certain group of people "the Roma middle class", I do so to point out a differentiation within the Roma minority that helps identify the causes of migration in the processes of social mobility and the differentiation of society.

2. The idea of the "Roma settlement" is, to a certain extent, a fiction. In one place such a settlement may consist of tumbledown shacks, in another beautiful houses that can't be distinguished from non-Roma houses. One place may be inhabited by several dozen people in a rural-type settlement, another may be home to a thousand or more inhabitants in an urban-type settlement. Some settlements are just continuations of villages, others consist of several houses right in the center of a village, while still others are completely segregated. Life in crowded urban-type settlements (one to three thousand inhabitants, such as Jarovnice) resembles life in the city in its anonymity and degree of individualization. Smaller rural-type settlements have kept their original protective function. Some anthropologists maintain that human relationships in both types of settlement are far stronger than relationships between the Roma who live in towns. Rural settlements protect the Roma from the outside world, and help them in need. The Roma share the status of the settlement, and in leaving it lose not only their collective position, but also their own position within the settlement. The usurer, for example, is a baron inside the settlement, and a nobody outside it. So why should they leave? As a matter of fact, they don't. On the contrary – some of those who left their settlements during the communist regime are coming back, as if they felt their luck was running out elsewhere.

3. Among the roughly 30 young, educated Roma author has met, only two had a regular job. Unless NGOs find some solution, the others will gradually lose their qualifications.

4. Local Roma communities and individual Roma families adopted migration (and not some other strategy) as a way of solving their problems under the influence of certain stimuli. However, this does not mean that these stimuli were the real causes of their migration. In other words, we have to differentiate between the causes, stimuli, and conditions of migration. The circumstances that for the Roma created a complicated situation that they had to solve are referred to as the **causes** of migration. The circumstances that initiated the migration as a reaction to the complicated situation – the "triggers" of the decision to migrate, but not the causes of the migration per se – are referred to as the **stimuli** of migration. Finally, the circumstances that allowed the migration to begin are the **conditions** of migration (they gave the stimuli the power to initiate action).

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MULTICULTURALISM AND INCLUSION AS SOLUTIONS TO THE ROMA ISSUE

(Parts 1, 2, 7, 8 and 9 were written by **K. Bezáková**; parts 3, 4, 5 and 6 by **J. Lajčáková**)

Summary: This chapter deals with multiculturalism, its history and the different forms it takes in the US, Canada, and Europe. It analyzes the basic ideas behind multiculturalism, and describes the nature of a multicultural society. The second part of the chapter notes the need for multicultural education at all schools, and describes the form and objectives such education might have, as well as the related changes that must occur in the current school system. The chapter at the same time highlights group-differentiated rights and the dangers of accommodating multicultural elements in society. In conclusion it analyzes multiculturalism in Slovakia, and the inclusion of multicultural education into the curricula of Slovak schools.

Key words: multiculturalism, multicultural society, multicultural upbringing and education, multicultural concept of citizenship, assimilation, segregation, integration, accommodation, inclusion, minority, tolerance, discrimination, cultural pluralism, attitude, prejudice.

INTRODUCTION

While multiculturalism is an increasingly popular term in Slovakia, it is explained and interpreted in different ways. One of the most common statements heard today is: "Slovakia is a multicultural country." The claim is based on the fact that several ethnic minorities live on Slovak territory.[1] Such statements involve simplifications of what the terms "multicultural" and "multiculturalism" truly express. The academic literature does not contain a single definition of this notion, or of the word "culture" from which it is derived. The meaning usually varies according to the environment, time, and country in which it is employed. For that reason, the term multiculturalism is used differently in Western Europe and overseas.

Understanding the ideas behind multiculturalism and its active presence in society should be part of Slovakia's integration to the EU. Besides bringing its legal and economic rules into line with European regulations, Slovakia will also have to change the attitudes and prejudices that prevent its citizens from understanding ethnic diversity as a natural and enriching aspect of every society. During this process Slovaks must understand that the Roma must be included in society.

In Western countries, the hypothesis of multiculturalism theorists that traditional, liberal, individual human rights codes are insufficient to ensure the real equality of all people is gaining increasing support. The multiculturalists are deserting traditional liberalism, and moving to what they call "group differentiated" rights, which they claim represent an effective way of ensuring the free-

dom and equality of members of minority cultures. This accommodating approach to cultural minorities gives them room to develop and, at the same time, prevent the rise of ethnically motivated violence. Countries that take such approaches towards their native Indian inhabitants, national and religious minorities, and immigrants have formed pluralistic societies, whose members find it far easier to achieve both legal and socio-economic equality with the majority population. Multiculturalism has thus become a very attractive avenue of approaching minority policy.

HISTORY OF MULTICULTURALISM, ITS FORMS AND SIGNIFICANCE

The concept of multiculturalism is becoming increasingly popular in Slovakia, not just among academics but also among influential politicians. The need for a multicultural approach to national and ethnic minorities, especially the Roma minority, is often emphasized in the context of Slovakia's integration to the EU. Unfortunately, the term "multiculturalism" and the institutional measures required to put it into practice are often only vaguely or wrongly grasped. Because experience to date with multiculturalism comes almost exclusively from Western liberal democracies, the notion has to be adapted to fit the Central European context.

THE US AND CANADA – THE HOME OF MULTICULTURALISM

The history of multiculturalism, and its different forms and interpretations, can best be approached through the examples of countries where the concept was developed, and where many theories, debates, and controversies on the topic have arisen – the US and Canada. Both are immigrant countries that

have had to accommodate cultural differences from their earliest history.

On their way to multiculturalism, both countries first had to go through policies of assimilation, integration, and segregation. Within these policies, the only principles, values and institutions acknowledged were those of the dominant culture. Each of these policies represented a certain relationship between the minorities and the majority. The first policy applied was that of assimilation, which tried to force the majority's culture, social standards, values, and institutions upon the minority in order to make it as similar to the majority as possible; in the ideal case, the minority's social and cultural patterns would be destroyed.

Starting in the mid-20th century, the principle of integration began to gain ground as a fusion of minority and majority cultures and the rise of a new cultural entity bearing signs of both original cultures. In America this phenomenon was called "the melting pot" (in which different cultures are "melted" together and a new composite emerges), the achievement of which was the proclaimed objective of American politics. However, this metaphor was just an ideal, as in reality the values and opinions of the dominant culture prevailed.

Segregation was yet another way of dealing with social and cultural differences. It is typified by compulsion and various "measures" forcing the majority and minority populations to live separately, in different ways and without mutual contact, in a situation where the minority culture is considered inferior or even dangerous. Such policies still exist in different forms and intensities.

THEORY OF CULTURAL PLURALISM

The notion of multiculturalism began to appear as an adjunct to the theory of cultural

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pluralism in the late 1960s. Its first roots were laid in North America, especially in the US, as a result of a large influx of immigrants after the Second World War and the attempts of the US to come to terms with the heritage of the original inhabitants. It was also triggered by the increased activism of various minorities (ethnic, sexual, religious, etc.) that were trying to emphasize their characteristics in order to secure representation in public institutions, the media, and schools, and to bolster their fight for civil rights, equality, and greater political autonomy (such as the Francophone inhabitants of Canada). For all of these reasons, the term "multiculturalism" in North America now covers a wide range of minority movements fighting for their rights and full integration into society (e.g. sexual minorities, handicapped people, etc.).

As indicated by Pavel Barša (1999), the 1980s in America were a period of constant struggle for those who did not belong to the group of "white, heterosexual, Anglo-Saxon, protestant, middle-class men", and who faced constant attempts to push them to the outskirts of American society. The outcome of this struggle was a situation in which anyone who belonged to an oppressed group gained a certain moral superiority and the ability to inflict collective guilt on everyone who belonged to the group of their oppressors. This attitude underpinned the political correctness movement that swept American universities. "Politically correct multiculturalists consider any reference to American culture and politics as a regression to the imperialism of the WASP (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant) ruling group, which forces its culture on everyone as the binding norm" (Barša, 1999, p. 21).

The notion of multiculturalism at this time was defined as the struggle for the social acceptance of difference. To counter its proponents and the political correctness move-ment, the equally dogmatic "patriotic correctness" movement arose. Its aim was to protect American unity based on a common culture that ought to be accepted by all groups as a generally binding norm. Eventually, both movements were criticized as counterproductive, given the obvious need for peaceful coexistence between mutually enriching and communicating minorities within one political community.

In Canada, the process leading to multiculturalism started as a consequence of the struggle of the Francophone inhabitants to strengthen biculturalism in the country's prevailingly Anglophone culture. In 1971, the Canadian government officially declared "the policy of multiculturalism within the policy of bilingualism", the aim of which was to take other ethnic minorities into account within the framework of two language cultures and one political unity. As indicated by Barša (1999), in practice this meant state support for the cultural activities of different ethnic groups on the one hand, and systematic assimilation within the English and French language framework on the other. Knowledge of either language was seen as a prerequisite for taking part in the economic and political life of Canadian society. On the one hand, during the 1990s, the view of multiculturalism broadened to include "the creation of a society more tolerant and inclusive of cultural and group differences in all social fields and institutions" (Barša, 1999, p. 22). On the other hand, this period also saw the polarization of French-English relationships due to the biculturalism dispute. Multiculturalism in Canada has in fact counterbalanced the rocky relationship between the French and the English. On the one hand, francophone inhabitants cannot challenge the concept because they would be accused of the same discrimination they blame on English-speaking Canadians. On the other hand, if the Anglophone side wanted to ac-

cuse the Francophone of intolerance, it would have to show exemplary tolerance itself. This is what makes the Canadian approach multicultural.

MULTICULTURALISM IN WESTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

The history and forms of multiculturalism in Western Europe have differed from those in North America. European countries began dealing with multiculturalism in the second half of the 20th century, in relation to an influx of cheap workers from non-European countries, the migration of ethnic groups, and the arrival of refugees. Equally important, after the adoption of the *General Declaration on Human Rights* (on which many constitutions are based) and other treaties (regulating the position of minorities, banning discrimination and protecting human rights), the minorities, refugees and other marginalized groups were able to refer to these documents and demand a full and equal position in society. Individual countries introduced different measures for the admission of immigrants, which bore marks of assimilation, integration, and segregation. The accepted starting point for European democracies became the British approach to cultural and group heterogeneity, known as "cultural pluralism", although without the traditional "hierarchical" attribute seen during the colonial era. Hierarchical cultural pluralism combined "the acknowledgment of cultural and group differences and the assumption of the inequality of the members of some of these groups, as reflected in their inferior socio-economic and political positions" (Barša, 1999, p. 221).

At the end of 1960s, the British government, besides tolerating cultural differences, also began enforcing the rule of individual equality, which was a significant step in terms of social democratic princi-ples. The change from hierarchical and conservative pluralism to egalitarian and liberal pluralism was the expression of a specific European form of multiculturalism. This official policy was also supported in the Netherlands and Sweden in eddition to Great Britain. Its common feature was "the unification between the acknowledgement of and public support for cultural and group differences, and respect for the equality of the members of all groups" (Barša, 1999, p. 222). This kind of multiculturalism gives cultural groups the opportunity "to develop their sovereignty within one political community and democratic state, provided they respect the fundamental constitutional rights and freedoms of all inhabitants and citizens of the given society, and none of the groups closes itself off from the others to such an extent that it does not leave room for internal disagreement, or a change in membership or individual contacts between the groups" (Barša, 1999, p. 233).

WHAT IS THE VALUE OF THE MULTICULTURAL CONCEPT OF CITIZENSHIP?

Defenses of multiculturalism are generally based on the fear that the power of the state and its dominant groups is able to erode minority cultures. But why else do minorities strive to preserve their own cultures? What legitimacy do these efforts have? The initial argument in favor of accommodating minority cultures is the value of belonging to a cultural group. Membership in a cultural group is an important asset, and at the same time is a relevant criterion for assessing the way advantages and rights are distributed in states (Kymlicka, 1989, p. 162 – 166). Being a part of a cultural group provides a significant structure for people's personalities, gives them content and identity, and connects them with a certain group of people (Parekh,

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2000, p. 156). Membership in a cultural group provides individuals with meaningful possibilities for leading their lives, building careers, or forming relationships (Margalit and Raz, 1995, p. 81 – 85).

In defending multiculturalism, theorist Charles Taylor focused on the idea that the acknowledgement of people's different cultural identities fulfills a vital human need. Public acknowledgment is necessary for our independent human existence. Failure to acknowledge the identities of members of cultural groups may, to a great extent, injure those who belong to discriminated minority cultures that have been denied equal respect (Taylor, 1994, p. 25). Individual freedom and prosperity largely depend on membership in a respected and evolving cultural group. If a certain group suffers discrimination, it is also harder for its members to make their marks (Raz, 1994, p. 159). In situations where the state's legal, social and economic institutional mechanisms are intended mainly for the majority population, it considerably reduces the chances of minority members to succeed in society. Integration into a different culture is a very difficult and long process requiring the transformation of the individual's identity (Raz, 1994, p. 88). When cultural assimilation is the precondition for minority group members to participate in society, these group members are also forced to transform the content of their own identities. On the level of the group, this may lead to the complete annihilation of the group's identity (Young, 1989, p. 272). The more different the minority culture is from the majority culture, the greater the disadvantage of the minority.

The purpose of group-differentiated rights, on the other hand, is to compensate these groups for the systematic disadvantages they face, and to allow them to achieve real equality. Such rights for cultural groups are not in conflict with the basic values of liberalism; on the contrary, they are a necessary prerequisite for securing the individual freedom and equality of all people. The point is that the equality of all people cannot be achieved by treating them identically; instead, a system of differentiation respecting the cultural specifics of minorities must be used (Kymlicka, 1995, p. 108 – 115). Multiculturalism is not about the uncritical acceptance of the majority culture, which is then used to evaluate the requirements of the minorities and to define their rights. Multiculturalism is about securing fair terms for the relationship between different cultural communities (Parekh, 2000, p. 13).[2] Which group-differentiated rights should be used to achieve these fair conditions?

TYPES OF GROUP-DIFFERENTIATED RIGHTS

One of the most frequently cited typologies of group-differentiated rights comes from the breakthrough work of multicultural theorist Will Kymlicka, published in 1995. Kymlicka presented three basic forms of group-differentiated rights: 1) political autonomy, or self-government rights; 2) multi-ethnic rights; and 3) rights to special political representation. However, the typology produced by Jacob Levy is far more detailed and more suitable for our purposes (Levy, 1997, p. 22 – 66). On the basis of moral and institutional similarities, Levy identified eight types of minority demands to be granted rights:

1. **Exceptions** from laws penalizing or burdening certain cultural practices. Laws that minorities demand exceptions from usually appear harmless at first sight, but in fact may prevent members of cultural minorities from freely practice their religion. The best-known examples are exceptions for Sikhs in Great Britain and in Canada.

In 1972, the British parliament adopted a law imposing the obligation to wear a helmet when riding a motorcycle. However, as wearing a turban is a significant part of the Sikhs' religion and traditions, they naturally objected to the law, saying a turban was just as safe as a helmet. They also noted that as they had fought for Britain in both world wars, and nobody had then objected that their turbans were not safe enough, they should have the right to ride a motorcycle without a helmet as well. The controversial law was duly amended in 1976, and Sikhs were exempted from the obligation.

In another case, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP, a federal police force) exempted Sikhs employees from having to wear a helmet while riding a motorcycle on the job, triggering an even more interesting debate. The wave of resentment against the exemption was led by arguments that the police should be neutral and free of any religious or ethnic manifestations; wearing a turban violated the non-religious nature of the RCMP, critics claimed. However, both the Canadian federal and supreme courts rejected this allegation, and acknowledged the right to wear a turban at work. Precisely because the RCMP is a national institution, the wearing of turbans should be seen as a symbol of Canada's multicultural identity, and not as damaging the professional integrity of the police. Moreover, nobody objects if police who practice the Christian faith wear wedding rings or the symbol of the cross. Laws requiring that helmets be worn in the police service clearly limit the possibilities of minority members to apply for such jobs. In other cases, orthodox Jews demanded to be allowed to wear the "yarmulke" when serving in the US Air Force, while Muslim girls requested permission to wear the "chador" when attend-ing public school in France (Parekh, 2000, p. 243 – 245).

2. **Financial benefits** and help in areas where the majority population does not require such help. These frequently include requests for subsidies for the development of and education in the language of the minority, the use of the minority language in communications with official bodies, funding for ethnic art, and other types of preferential treatment (e.g. in admitting students to universities and so on). The aim of such requirements is to surmount the obstacles that minority members face as a consequence of the implicit support of the state for majority culture. Multicultural theorists, unlike the supporters of affirmative action, argue that these policies should not be temporary but permanent.

3. **The right to self-government** for ethnic and national minorities. Requests to be granted the right to decide one's own fate are among the most frequent demands related to cultural rights. Such rights have granted in Slovenia, in the establishment of a federal unit in Catalonia, in reservations for Indian tribes in North America, and above-standard terms for Quebec in the Canadian federal system. National minorities frequently claim that self-government is necessary to ensure the free development of minority members. However, the right of national minorities to territorial autonomy has only very limited support in international law[3]. One of the possibilities for cultural accommodation is a federal system that includes a central government and several self-governing regions. As for territorially concentrated minorities, the borders of self-governing regions can be set so that the minority forms the majority in at least one of the regions (Kymlicka, 1995, p. 27 – 30).

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4. External rules affecting people or institutions that are not members of the minority, with the aim of protecting minority culture members. Examples of such external rules include the requirement that companies operating in Quebec and employing more than 50 employees use the French language in carrying out their activities. Another example is the right of Indian tribes to withhold from others the right to buy land in Indian reservations.

5. Acknowledgment and enforcement of traditional customary law by the state. A frequent argument in favor of the acknowledgment of minority customary law is that state law is not sufficiently culturally neutral. After all, it is unjust for people to have to obey an unknown body of law that is culturally foreign to them, and which they did not help to create. Examples are the acknowledgment of the customary criminal law of aborigine tribes in Australia and Indian tribes in the United States and Canada; Muslims in India follow a special code in the field of family law.

6. Requirements that **internal rules** be acknowledged that enable minorities to punish certain actions by members of the minority, or to banish members from the group if they break the group's informal internal rules. Examples here include the expulsion and disinheritance of Mennonites who marry outside the group. Many rules and standards that minority members follow do not have the weight of law, but represent the group's expectations regarding the behavior of its members. The community may punish violations of these rules by expelling the violator from the group. According to most democratic and liberal theories, such rules would be perceived as unjust if they were enforced by the state. For example, the state cannot withdraw people's citizenship arbitrarily; should the Catholic Church be allowed to do so? The acknowledgment of minority customary law opens up this controversial question – should the state tolerate the internal restrictions of certain groups even if they impair the individual rights of its members? As this question requires more detailed examination, author will deal with it in a separate section.

7. Ensuring **special representation** for minority members in institutions with executive and legislative powers. The aim of this special representation is to secure priorities and rights for minorities, to prevent discrimination, and to secure de facto equality with the majority population. Example of this approach include the reservation of three out of nine chairs on the tribunal of the Canadian Supreme Court, or the quota representation of Maori in the New Zealand parliament. A frequent objection to this form of cultural accommodation is that it assumes that the minority is unified, and ignores existing differences between the interests of individual minority members. However, if the democratic majority system is not sufficiently flexible to allow any representation of minority members, this objection loses its weight.

8. Requests for **symbolic acknowledgment** that confirm the equal status, value and existence of different cultural groups. Examples of this approach include finding agreement on the name of a state or region, acknowledging the national holidays of a minority group, or agreeing to include some non-majority events in the curricula of history courses. Demands for such forms of accommodation, while often played down, are very important. In meeting them the majority acknowledges that to be a full citizen one does not have to belong to the majority ethnic group.

RISKS OF MULTICULTURAL ACCOMMODATION

Even well intentioned cultural accommodations can imperil the individual rights of minority members. Chandran Kukathas argues that the key value of liberalism – tolerance – is reason enough to prefer a policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of cultural groups (Kukathas, 1997, p. 69 – 99). Michael Walzer, however, does not agree with this claim, and argues that the principle of non-interference can be applied only on the international level (Walzer, 1997, p. 105 – 111). Bikhu Parekh advises the majority to lead an intercultural dialogue with the minority on controversial cultural issues, such as polygamy or female circumcision. Both parties should present rational arguments as to why a certain practice is important or unacceptable to them (Parekh, 2000, p. 268). Ayelet Shachar approaches the issue in the most complex manner. He calls the phenomenon the **paradox of multicultural vulnerability**, which denotes a situation in which a well-intentioned accommodation of cultural differences is not able to protect the most sensitive cultural minority members. Shachar connects two almost incompatible things – multicultural principles and feminist criticism. In this way she creates a solid institutional legal solution based on the principle of joint governance. The system of joint governance allows individuals to simultaneously exist as citizens and as minority members. The laws to which they conform are not designed by the majority only, but also by members of their own group. Shachar developed a new model of common decision-making called **transformative accommodation (TA)**. The aim of TA is to provide an institutional basis for the ongoing dialogue between the state and its minorities, with a view to improving the situations of the most sensitive cultural group members. These members are perceived as holding multiple identities and affiliations with both sources of authority (the group and the state). The cultural groups thus interact equally and mutually influence each other.

The philosophical basis of this model includes three basic principles: 1) neither the state nor the group has a monopoly on deciding the affairs of the group; 2) clear choices must be defined – i.e. members of the minority must have the right to leave the group; and 3) each social arena should be divided into sub-areas (for example, criminal law should be divided into decisions on guilt and decisions on punishment). Division into sub-areas allows for a more sensitive distribution of power. This form of accommodation for cultural groups makes it possible to expose discriminatory internal standards to criticism from the inside, and thus to initiate a cultural change from the inside, which is always better than a forced change from the outside (Shachar, 2001, p. 117 – 145). TA can best be illustrated by an example. The division of criminal law into sub-areas occurs within the process of deciding on guilt or innocence, and if the defendant is found guilty, in deciding on a suitable punishment, protecting the public, and deterring or rehabilitating the convict. In Anglo-American law, decisions on guilt or innocence are within the competence of the jury, while punishment is meted out by the presiding judge.

Among other criticisms of the multicultural model of citizenship, the most commonly mentioned is the fear that this policy will weaken the social bond that connects all citizens to a single state. However, experience from Canada and Australia, which actively apply a policy of multiculturalism, shows a dramatic decline in discrimination and stereotyping of minority members, and an equally dramatic increase in the number of multicultural friendships and marriages (Kymlicka, 2001, p. 37). The multicultural approach to

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immigrant groups, which allows them to study both the official language and their mother tongues as well as preserve their ethnic traditions, has proven a far more effective form of integration than forced assimilation.

MULTICULTURALISM IN THE CENTRAL-EUROPEAN CONTEXT

A debate recently began among Central and Eastern European intellectuals on the possibilities of importing multiculturalism into this region to prevent ethnic conflicts and tensions from arising (Kymlicka and Opalski, 2001). Although many authors would welcome this solution, in essence they have agreed on four reservations or obstacles that either make this project impossible, or much harder to implement. These are:

1. The role of elites in defining and manipulating the demands of minorities in a way that does not reflect the real identity and interests of minority group members. A possible solution here would be to allow self-appointed minority leaders to run as candidates in free and equal elections. It is also necessary to critically examine whether the demands of minority leaders who reject minority rights and advocate greater support for integration or assimilation actually correspond with the interests of rank-and-file minority members.

2. The problem of intolerant minorities, i.e. situations in which intolerant minorities abuse their rights to oppress their own members.

3. The precondition for the application of minority rights is the completion of democratic consolidation. The fear exists not only that minority rights themselves could present a threat to minority members, but also that granting such rights might slow the process of democratization. However, it has to be understood that there are significant differences between individual countries in the region in terms of the degree of democratic consolidation. We could also argue that democratic consolidation and minority protection are complementary processes, in which each supports and deepens the other.

4. The fact that the territorial autonomy model may be inappropriate. Many fear that the specific nature of the Central-European region makes it impossible to apply a federal or quasi-federal system. Some argue that the region's ethnic groups are too scattered, making territorial autonomy impossible. Others object to the degree of distrust between the majority and the minority. Minority diasporas exist in the West as well; the problem is handled there on the basis of non-territorial principles in individual civic, political and cultural rights. The second objection, however, is far more grave. The region's majorities do not reject the idea of sharing power in itself, but rather the idea of sharing it with a disloyal minority. The minority can only prove its loyalty by relinquishing its demand that power be shared, and by trying to gain certain cultural rights instead (Kymlicka and Opalski, 2001, p. 347 – 369). However, "if minorities have to give up their demand for autonomy in order to be able to participate in political decision-making, then what demands remain for them to present?" (Kymlicka and Opalski, 2001, p. 367)

MULTICULTURALISM AND INCLUSION OF THE ROMA AS POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS FOR SLOVAKIA

Slovakia is not one of those democratic countries in which the ideology of multicul-

turalism plays an integral part. If we look at the history, present, and future of Slovakia, however, we see that institutionally it is almost inevitable that such a society will be formed. Here are three basic reasons why:

- from the historical viewpoint, Slovakia has experienced a certain traditional multiculturalism in the fact that Slovak culture has been formed and influenced by other cultures, a process that is still in progress (other European nations have had a similar experience);
- both now and throughout history, Slovakia has been the home of people of different ethnic origins, social status, religions and languages. They have influenced each other, and will continue to do so;
- from the viewpoint of Slovakia's EU integration, ethnic diversity will become an even more common part of everyday life, and every individual who belongs to an ethnic or national minority, or the majority, will be a part of this.

Changes in Slovak society, in order to advance it towards a multicultural society in the true sense of the word, must occur simultaneously on two levels, as follows.

CHANGES IN ATTITUDES AND VIEWS OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PEOPLE

This change requires a long and systematic process of education to teach people to accept differences. It is very difficult to get people who think "traditionally" to start thinking multiculturally. Many have a problem admitting that there are other cultures besides their own, or if they do admit the existence of other cultures, they consider them inferior to their own. This kind of ethnocentrism is the main barrier to mutual understanding and tolerance. Prejudices, stereotypes and the rejection of difference must be overcome by accepting the positive values of other religious, cultural, ethnic or other groups, which, far from representing a threat to the majority, are a source of creativity, self-recognition and enrichment. While prejudice is a natural human characteristic and cannot be eradicated, it is important to learn to distinguish and eliminate "harmful" prejudices from those that do not harm anyone. For this to happen, individuals must understand their own culture, values and behavior so they can gradually start perceiving and adopting the values and patterns of other cultures as well.

CHANGE IN INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES

This involves a change in institutional structures that allows minorities and their different cultures develop further. This kind of change must be preceded by legislation that enacts all of the rights, obligations, and democratic principles that contribute to equality and plurality without enforced dominance. Following this, the democratic government must take all appropriate steps to allow society to differentiate internally and create a suitable environment for enriching mutual communication. The government must also create facilities for the complete and equal participation of minority representatives in institutions at all levels of society. When political decisions are taken, state representatives must take into account the needs of all different cultural and social groups in society, and see that these needs are reflected. This change is in the hands of both the government and the national minorities.

As regards the Roma issue, multiculturalism seems to be philosophically and politically the most suitable approach. History has seen the failure of many "approaches" that, knowingly or unknowingly, attempting to solve the

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Roma issue. "Attempts to re-educate" the Roma have done nothing but "take their original values and standards from them, while not replacing them with new ones" (Barša, 1999, p. 271). All endeavors have been focused on making the Roma as similar to the dominant culture as possible.

If Slovakia wishes to be seen as a country open to multicultural approaches, both the majority population and the Roma minority must do their share of the work. A prerequisite of multiculturalism with the participation of the Roma is their inclusion into society. The democratic principles of equality, freedom, and solidarity do not allow anyone to be excluded from society. Groups feeling excluded wish to be included, which means that the majority first has to acknowledge the minority and adapt to its "different-ness". The first step on the way to inclusion is tolerance and the realization of the need to include the minority. The aforementioned facts suggest that society and politicians in Slovakia should strive to include the Roma fully while protecting their cultural differences, unless they violate Slovak law.

Pavel Barša (1999) speaks of three levels in the social system on which systematic steps must be taken leading to change and the creation of conditions for including the Roma: the cultural, educational, political, and socio-economical levels. Steps towards inclusion on the cultural level should lead to the cultural acknowledgment of the Roma by the public. Engagement of the Roma in the education system should ensure that their differences are accepted, and that changes occur to curricula, methods and texts in which the Roma are presented as a group equal to the dominant culture and the majority population.

As for the political level, conditions of equality should be created. Because, at the moment, the state and its institutions represent majority society in the minds of the Roma. Roma should be represented in the state administration, the political representation, and the decision-making process.

Socio-economic inclusion should equalize the opportunities of the Roma in the social and economic spheres, and create conditions for inclusion in areas that at present are areas of exclusion (employment, living conditions, etc.). Achieving change on these levels is a long and challenging process that needs the active participation of the Roma.

CHARACTERISTICS AND OBJECTIVES OF MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

Countries that claim to have a liberal-democratic regime should make multicultural education and upbringing part of the education system, with the state supporting its development. Multicultural upbringing in Europe started in the early 1980s through international organizations and institutions such as the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OCSE), the High Commissioner for National Minorities, and especially the Council of Europe (CE), which in its activities has gradually moved from educating those who are culturally different, to educating everyone with the aim of understanding differences and learning mutual appreciation and accepting the influence of different cultures. Despite the many recommendations and resolutions adopted by CE member states, few have actually been fully implemented.[4]

In general, multicultural education and upbringing have an interdisciplinary character in the building of a multicultural society. They include knowledge from various social and scientific disciplines, and therefore must be included in all subjects taught.

Multicultural education "helps overcome each culture's limitations, and helps people emerge from the shadow of the majority culture and see minority cultures as a natural part of the system" (Mistrík et al, 1999, p. 116). Erich Mistrík mentions three stages in the multicultural view of the world, and the educational goals resulting from this view that he wants to see achieved using multicultural education and upbringing (Mistrík et al, 1999). The first stage in multicultural understanding is tolerance, which, however, must be more than just a passive attitude, and must be based on actual understanding. The second stage is empathy, which includes an active attempt to feel the different attitudes of others and understand them. Care is the highest stage, meaning civic engagement and the active development of skills for protecting "the different". The ideal result of this process is a change in negative attitudes and the elimination of stereotypes. The main results achieved through multicultural education include the ability to understand not only the natural differences between individual cultures, but also the equality of their positions and contributions to world history, their mutual communication and dynamics in the course of history, and their influence on each other. People who have gone through multicultural education also have an ability to talk with and be open to other cultures, and to see the limitations of their own and of other cultures.

To achieve the goals of multicultural education, the education process has to be changed on three mutually connected levels:
1. the classroom level;
2. the school level;
3. the level of local, national and international institutions responsible for the school system.

Several areas within the three levels require a change towards multicultural education

and upbringing, and have been elaborated in detail in the academic literature. On the classroom level, change should include different curricula, texts and teaching aids that reflect the reality of the multicultural environment from different points of view (not just from the majority's viewpoint, as in the case of Slovak textbooks). These changes should lead from knowledge to building "a multicultural environment in which the members of different minorities have equal chances, and in which conditions exist for the full use of one's own cultural identity in communication with others and within the educational process" (Mistrík et al, 1999, p. 122).

Besides the contents of education, the way pupils are taught is also important. If non-interactive teaching methods are used, it is very hard to develop differences and create equality. Traditional teaching methods based on lecturing and doing individual exercises from textbooks must be changed to interactive methods. Students from different cultural environments have different study habits, which is why they require a different style of teaching[5]. The methods used should focus on developing the student's personality. In practice this means a change in education methods led from the front of the classroom accompanied by the passive reception of information, into a style of education that makes the student create and build knowledge and which, through social interaction, shapes his attitudes, morals, emotional qualities, and communication skills.

Making such changes would be useless unless they were accompanied by a change in the field of multicultural education of teacher's college students and teachers at schools. Students preparing to become teachers should be trained to teach in a culturally heterogeneous environment, and besides knowl-

edge of the different cultures they should also acquire skills that help them to create a tolerant environment and equality, to engage all students in the classroom, to eliminate prejudices and stereotypes, and finally to create conditions for mutual communication, cooperation, and spiritual enrichment from cultural differences.

Changes on the level of schools and institutions responsible for the education process should occur especially in the influence of these organizations on the multicultural environment. Schools should create conditions for equality and multicultural education (as part of taught subjects, further education of teachers, etc.), while cultural heterogeneity should be a source of enrichment in the education process, and not a problem that needs to be transformed into the shape of the dominant culture. The prerequisite is to stop marginalizing "different" children and to secure equal treatment for all. The school should not shun these activities, but should develop and support cooperation between teachers, parents, and the local community.

The local, national, and international institutions in charge of the school system are the basic pillar on which all teachers should be able to lean. However, the entire system must first realize the importance of reforming education in keeping with the needs of multicultural education. The strategies chosen should apply multicultural education and upbringing in individual subjects at all levels of schools. Research, methodical, and other special activities should focus on developing the mentioned areas, such as changing the curricula, goals, and methods of education, as well as the education of teachers and the terms used in textbooks.

MULTICULTURALISM AND MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION IN SLOVAKIA

The policy of multiculturalism and multicultural education in Slovakia is in its infancy. As the basis for our analysis of the present state of multiculturalism, we will look at two main documents that represent the direction of the government's policy in general, and of the Ministry of Education's policy of education and upbringing in particular. These are the *1998 Program Manifesto of the Slovak Government*, and the *National Program of Upbringing and Education in the Slovak Republic*.

The *1998 Program Manifesto of the Slovak Government*, in the section entitled *Democratic Rule of Law*, declares the need to create a legal framework eliminating all forms of discrimination, unemployment, and the exclusion of larger groups of people from the civilized environment, and on the contrary to create a society of freedom and solidarity based on mutual respect and tolerance, which pursuant to the Constitution does not allow any forms of racial or national hatred. As further stated in the program manifesto, no citizen of Slovakia can be disadvantaged for belonging to a national minority or ethnic group, and the government will support all forms of mutual respect between nationalities, as well as specific programs to integrate the Roma into society, to educate and raise Roma children, and support Roma employment.

The 1998 to 2002 Slovak government wrote that it considered national and ethnic diversity to be a historical and enriching fact, and promised to participate in creating a system of international human rights standards in-

cluding the rights of national minority members. In the *Upbringing and Education* chapter of the program manifesto, the government undertook to increase the level of education among national minority members to the national average, and to start preparing teachers for schools that teach in minority languages. As for culture, the government vowed to preserve and support cultural diversity, and to create conditions for the equal development of the cultures of national minorities and ethnic groups.

The *National Program of Upbringing and Education* proposes a system of conceptual and concrete changes that should be made in the school system during the next 20 years, which should help Slovakia to achieve the level of the most advanced countries in Europe and the world. The document is based on internationally accepted and ever-more widely used basic education system functions, such as "education teaching people openness and cooperation, allowing us to accept and respect the differences of other people, nations and cultures without feeling threatened, allowing us to live without confrontation and conflicts" (*Národný program výchovy...*, 2000, p. 69). The document emphasizes that the education objectives stipulated in Article 29 of the Agreement on the Rights of the Child should be respected,[6] which is the basis of educational programs and strategies for tolerance and understanding of national and other minorities. The basic principle expressed in the *National Program of Upbringing and Education* is the following: "we must prepare responsible citizens of an integrated Europe, i.e. we must increase mutual understanding, the comprehension of differences and equality in European culture, knowledge of and respect for historical and current socio-economic, cultural and political processes in Europe, and support for mutual values, tolerance, and inter-

national cooperation" (*Národný program výchovy...*, 2000, p. 18).

As for the national school system, the document speaks of "equal education chances for every citizen, and upbringing that teaches the value of coexistence between different ethnic groups, nationalities, and cultures based on the principle of universal values, of coexistence between EU countries, and on EU principles for the education of national and ethnic minority members" (*Národný program výchovy...*, 2000, p. 42). In relation to children from poorer social environments, especially Roma children, the document proposes to create, verify, and implement such modern features and programs of upbringing and education that will assist in their integration (see *Národný program výchovy...*, 2000 for details).

Both documents – the *Program Manifesto of the Slovak Government* and the *National Program of Upbringing and Education* – declare the need of tolerance, the need to ban discrimination and exclusion, and the need to respect and esteem others. All of these items are part of the ideology of multiculturalism and multicultural upbringing, although neither term was mentioned explicitly in the documents.

Multicultural education and upbringing have not yet been included in the Slovak education process. As Mistrík indicated (2001c), the curricula of elementary schools, especially in ethics and civics but to some extent also in history, geography and Slovak literature, might satisfy the goals of multicultural education, although it is up to the teacher whether he or she presents these topics in the "multicultural spirit", or as just another set of facts without explaining their meaning, context, and importance[7]. Aesthetics is one of the multicultural subjects taught at elementary

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schools (optional) because it deals with the art of different cultures.

As Mistrík (2001c) goes on to state, the situation is similar at the secondary school level. The curricula of subjects such as history, geography, and foreign languages include some multicultural education, but it depends on the teacher whether these elements are fully used or not. Only in the teaching of Slovak literature can one find explicit education leading to the understanding of the cultures of different regions, nations, and ethnic groups. Aesthetics and civics also include several topics that increase intercultural understanding (such as the history of art, social groups, sub-cultures, religions and so on); however, how they are taught again depends on the teacher.

Within the framework of university studies there is no independent program of Multicultural Education and Upbringing. Several universities have independent lectures on this topic, or incorporate multiculturalism into other subjects.[8] In connection with multicultural education and education to fight prejudice, several projects were carried out by state institutions or NGOs that could be considered the first concrete results in this area in Slovakia. For example, the Education Ministry in cooperation with the Kingdom of Sweden launched a project that resulted in the publishing and distribution of a book entitled *Katici, ty to zvládneš* ("Katici, You Can Do It") by the Swedish-Roma author Katarína Taikon.[9] The book is used in Slovak language, ethics, civics, and history lessons. It encourages discussion on topics such as human rights, tolerance, the coexistence of different cultures, and so on. The feedback the Education Ministry has re-

ceived so far on the use of the book shows a positive influence on students from both the Roma and non-Roma communities, including mutual accommodation, respect for differences, and the elimination of prejudices and stereotypes.

Another project with Education Ministry participation, which focused on elementary schools and the multicultural approach in education and upbringing, was the Phare project named *The Improvement of Educational Standards and the Teaching of Languages at Schools with a Minority Teaching Language, and the Establishment of an Educational, Informational, Documentary, Advisory and Consultation Center for the Roma Ethnic Minority*, which is part of the *Program of Tolerance Towards Minorities* coordinated in 2001 and 2002 by the Government Office Section of Human Rights and Minorities under the auspices of the Deputy Prime Minister for Human Rights, Minorities and Regional Development.

Some NGOs also provide grants or carry out projects promoting the social inclusion of the Roma, an improvement in the education process based on the multicultural approach, and an increase in tolerance and mutual communication, especially in locations with a high proportion of Roma. Various research and professional activities in multicultural education and the upbringing of Roma pupils are also performed at universities in Bratislava, Prešov, Banská Bystrica, and Nitra[10]. In this regard author would like to describe in more detail the TEMPUS project – *Multicultural Education: Teaching Materials, Preparation of Teachers* – which was coordinated by the Faculty of Education at Comenius University in Bratislava.

Box 1
Program of Tolerance Towards Minorities

In 1999, Slovakia was given the opportunity to prepare a project within the Phare program, whose main aim was to eliminate prejudices and stereotypes, to prevent discrimination, and to create a more tolerant and open society at all levels of the relationship to national minorities, especially to the Roma.

Objectives of the Program of Tolerance Towards Minorities

- To increase tolerance towards national minorities in the state administration, self-governments, and among Slovak people.
- To improve the position of national minorities by developing their education system with special emphasis on the Roma.

Sub-Projects in the Program of Tolerance Towards Minorities

1. Training program for local municipalities and opinion-formers
This project was started in April 2001 by the Sándor Márai foundation in southern Slovakia's Dunajská Streda, and was scheduled to end in November 2002. The aim of the one-week trainings in 55 locations in Slovakia with a high representation of Roma was to strengthen democracy and tolerance, to help remove prejudice, to prevent conflict within individual ethnic groups, and to strengthen cooperation between local municipalities, the Roma, the police and other opinion-forming people who participated in the training. The trainings usually focused on the following areas: communication, law application, conflict solution and prevention, project management, empathy, and cultural history, while taking into account the local situation and the needs of the participants.

2. Public information campaign about minorities in the electronic media
In December 2001, the *Tolerance: A Foreign Word?* project was launched by the Peter Hledík – Barok Film company. It, too, was scheduled to end in November 2002. The aim was to help create a more tolerant society, and to eliminate prejudices, stereotypes and communication barriers, by producing and broadcasting a series of 10 documentary films presenting national minorities and coexistence between them in Slovakia and Europe. The STV public channel showed the movies from August to September, 2002. The films were accompanied by TV debates on the issues presented in the movies. Repetitions of the movies and TV debates were scheduled for October through November 2002. An important part of the project was a communication campaign in the form of notices and commercial spots funded in cooperation with Phare and the Slovak Republic.

3. Improving education standards and the teaching of languages at schools that teach in a minority language, and the establishment of an Educational, Informational, Documentary, Advisory and Consultation Center for the Roma.
This project started in September 2001 thanks to an Irish contractor, FÁS International Consulting Ltd., and was due to end in September 2002. It consisted of three main components supporting multicultural education in the following areas:

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- Improving the learning and teaching of the Slovak language. Here, the project aimed to create modern, efficient and interactive materials and teaching techniques for the teaching of Slovak.
- Strengthening education in minority mother tongues. Here the aim was to prepare new approaches to education and the teaching of minority languages as a means of supporting multicultural education in schools.
- Establishing an Educational, Informational, Documentary, Advisory and Consultation Center for the Roma.

The aim of the third component was to prepare alternative curricula for children from socially and educationally handicapped environments, to prepare teachers and their assistants who work with students from such environments, and to establish an Educational, Informational, Documentary, Advisory, and Consultation Center for the Roma (hereafter "the Center") which was to become part of the Methodical Center in Prešov. It was intended especially for teachers from schools with a high proportion of Roma pupils, as well as for the wider Roma and non-Roma communities. As its name suggests, the Center will fulfill several functions.

Some 79 minority schools (i.e. schools which teach in the language of a national minority, schools teaching a national minority language, or schools with a high proportion of Roma students) joined the project. These schools received some material help in the form of teaching aids and technical equipment.

Box 2
Project TEMPUS – Multicultural Education: Teaching Materials and Preparation of Teachers

The *Multicultural Education: Teaching Materials and Preparation of Teachers* project was carried out from 2000 to 2001. It was funded by Phare, which also covers university projects under the TEMPUS umbrella. The project was carried out mainly by Slovak universities: the Faculty of Education at Comenius University (CU), which coordinated the project, as well as the CU Arts Faculty, the Arts Faculty of Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, and universities in Oulu (Finland), Paisley and Ayr (Scotland) and Leicester (England), which provided advice based on their own experiences.

Objectives of the project:
- To prepare documentation for Slovak universities which would allow them to provide intercultural skills to the students of pedagogical faculties.
- To prepare students so that after they start teaching they are able to lead their students towards tolerance and respect for the cultural differences of their classmates.

Main activities of the project:
- To prepare curricula for the multicultural education of teachers within their university studies, including standards for

the intercultural skills of the teacher. The curricula and standards were published as a whole in October 2000. More information about them can be obtained from the Ethics and Civics Department of the CU Faculty of Education in Bratislava. Even though the curricula's main target group is universities, it could also be used at lower school levels and in continuing education.

- Training materials for the multicultural education of teachers. The set of teaching texts was published in 2001 under the name *From Cultural Tolerance To-* *wards Cultural Identity* (Training Texts for Multicultural Education). These texts were prepared by the students of the CU Faculty of Education and the Arts Faculty of Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, under the guidance of their teachers. They created a unique set of texts based on active teaching and developing the intercultural skills of future teachers. An international conference was held at the end of the project whose aim was to present and disseminate the results of the project among teachers in Slovakia (Mistrík, 2000a, 2001c, 2001d).

CONCLUSION

In comparison with Western European countries, Central Europe is far behind in introducing the modern concept of multiculturalism. Present day Central Europe has the same problems (assimilation, integration, segregation) as the US and Western European counties had in the past. It is thus very important to learn from the mistakes of others and be inspired by their successes in order to find the quickest way to modern multiculturalism. This ideology represents a desirable and basically inevitable approach that all democratic countries including Slovakia should be taking in both their actions and thinking.

The ideology conforms to cultural pluralism and the principles of freedom, tolerance, equality, and the acceptance of individual differences. To create a multicultural society, it is not enough to declare equality and ban discrimination – what is needed is the will and active efforts of individuals to change their attitudes, opinions and prejudices, and above all the effort of major policymakers to change institutional structures to allow the active participation and equality of all. This policy cannot be implemented in only one direction, without the direct participation of minorities. It is needed to realize this also in Slovakia, especially in connection with the Roma. The high degree of social exclusion, the huge social gap between the Roma and the majority population, and their low degree of emancipation connected with their poverty, are preventing the creation of a functional multicultural society. The inclusion of the Roma into society is thus a vital and inseparable part of the creation of such a society.

The basic criteria that have to be met to create a multicultural society with the participation of the Roma are the following:
- mutual tolerance;
- mutual understanding and acceptance of differences;
- acceptance of the principle of equality on both sides;
- inclusion of the Roma on the cultural/educational, political, and socio-economic levels;

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- mutual adaptation by majority society to the Roma, and the Roma to majority society;
- creation of space for the inclusion of the Roma into society.

A necessary part of this process is reform of the education system to develop individual multicultural skills. For activities supporting multicultural education to become effective and used in the educational process, similar activities must be monitored in Slovakia and abroad, while mutual communication must be encouraged, knowledge and experience exchanged between local, national, and international institutions active in the field, and working teachers supplied with current information.

ENDNOTES

1. Given the existence of multiple national minorities in Slovakia, it would be more precise to speak of the country's multi-ethnicity; Slovakia's multiculturalism is linked to the existence of numerous local cultural groups whose composition is not necessarily identical with the ethnic differences in the given location.

2. However, multiculturalism is not identical with culturalism (or cultural relativism). Even though cultural scientists correctly assigned importance to the value of culture, they did not comprehend its real nature. Because they adopted an organic view of culture, they were unable to explain its changes and how some of its members were able to criticize it. The cultural scientists divided humanity into numerous cultural units, but were unable to provide a coherent explanation of why people from different cultures were able to communicate with each other, or to evaluate the habits and practices of other cultures (Parekh, 2000, p. 76 – 79).

3. The right to self-determination, according to the General Declaration of Human Rights, was granted according to the "salt water thesis" – i.e. only to former overseas colonies.

4. As noted by Peter Batelaan, information published by the Council of Europe rarely makes its way to schools, universities, and other institutions preparing future teachers (Batelaan, 1995).

5. Viktor Sekyta, for example, claims in the textbook *Education for Tolerance and Against Racism* that the monotonous presentation of teaching material by teachers is one of the main factors preventing Roma children from achieving better results. Roma children comprehend only one third of the information presented in this way, and thus fail to understand the whole. This results from the fact that Romany, along with other Indian languages, contains many interjections, onomatopoeias, and ambiguous words, so the meaning of entire sentences can only be understood when accompanied by intonation, gestures, mimicry and empathy, tools that the Roma use when communicating in Romany as well as in other languages. Good teachers capable of empathy and lively presentation of the material can teach Roma children far more regardless of which language they use (Sekyta, 1998).

6. Countries that have signed the *Agreement on the Rights of Child* agree in Article 29 that education should: "(…) strengthen esteem for human rights and fundamental freedoms…, focus on strengthening esteem for parents, one's own culture, language, values and the national values of the country of residence and the country of origin (…), prepare the child for a responsible life in a free society within a spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of the sexes and the friendship of all nations, ethnic, national and religious groups…" (*Národný program výchovy...*, 2000).

7. Only the most recent handbook for civics teachers explicitly presents the need to develop intercultural understanding and knowledge as one of the aims of this subject (Mistrík, 2001c). The civics textbook for students in the final (8th) year of elementary school includes the basics of law; one of the topics is devoted to equality and discrimination, and presents such notions as the right to equality and freedom from prejudice, direct and indirect discrimination, racism and so on.e and discrimination erand the country of origin (...ide a coherent explanation of why people

8. Lectures on multicultural education are part of the History of European Culture course taught in the European Studies program at the

Arts Faculty of Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra. Meanwhile, Comenius University's Faculties of Education and Arts have included lectures on multicultural education in their curricula as well. The situation at the Faculty of Education in Prešov (Mistrík, 2001c) is similar, while the Faculty of Education at Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica has introduced a Multicultural Education and Upbringing course for students preparing to be elementary school teachers. The project is supported by the Wide Open School Foundation (headquartered in central Slovakia's Žiar nad Hronom). The aim of the seminars is to inform students of the basic principles and pedagogical approaches that will allow them to satisfy the needs of students regardless of their ethnic origin, religion, sex, culture, and social background.

9. This book was distributed in Slovak and Hungarian through the Ministry of Education and district Slovak authorities to 367 kindergartens, 1,560 elementary schools, educational and psychological prevention centers, pedagogical-psychological advice bureaus, and leisure centers (Report of Deputy Education Minister László Szigeti within the framework of the international conference *Slovakia and the Roma: Partnership and Participation*, May 2, 2002.)

10. The CU Faculty of Education is doing research called *Research of Roma Education in the Slovak Republic*. Its Ethics and Civics Department, together with the Department of Teacher Training at the university in Oulu, Finland, published a book called *Culture and Multicultural Education*, one of the first special publications of its kind in Slovakia. The book was published within the *Multicultural Education* project, which was funded and organized by the Ján Hus Foundation in Bratislava from 1996 till 1998. The CU Arts Faculty also put out several publications, such as a training material for teaching faculty students called *Anti-Prejudice Education* and a material called *Multiculturalism, Interculturality, Transculturality*.

The Faculty of Education at Prešov University, in cooperation with the Wide Open School Foundation, is performing several research and project tasks such as *The Accelera-*

tion of Roma Pupils, Roma Assistants, and *The Reintegration of Roma Pupils from the Socially and Educationally Handicapped Environments of Special Schools into the Majority Population*. The Arts Faculty of Prešov University joined the Education Ministry's VEGA project called *On Issues of Inter-Ethnic Communication in Post-Communist Societies*, and published several books such as *The Roma in the Process of Cultural Change*, *On Some Displays of Intolerance*, and others.

The Education Faculty of Matej Bel University is running the *Step by Step* program funded by the Wide Open School Foundation and dealing with the education of teachers who teach in classrooms with many Roma pupils. The Arts Faculty of Matej Bel University is also cooperating on the *Tolerance and Intercultural Communication* project.

The Arts Faculty of Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra participated in the ERAZMUS international project, whose aim was to create a European multimedia knowledge bank that would facilitate mutual understanding of different cultures via the Internet. The faculty also took part in a grant task under the title *Formation of Civic Society in the Multicultural Environment of the Slovak Republic.*

(Report of Deputy Education Minister László Szigeti for the international conference *Slovakia and the Roma: Partnership and Participation*, May 2, 2002.)

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CONCLUSION

The *Global Report on Roma in Slovakia* and its authors have answered many challenging questions regarding the life of the Roma in Slovakia, and I hope that they have succeeded in showing the reader how complex the issue truly is. The book at the same time asks many new questions, and deepens understanding of the dilemmas that have agonized minority issues experts for ages. The solutions that individual authors present in their various areas are not likely to thrill policy makers. The *Global Report on Roma in Slovakia* notes that the main cause of most of the serious problems the Roma face is their deepening institutional and non-institutional segregation. Positive solutions of the "Roma issue" must start from the most demanding, unpopular, and difficult to grasp problem – the inclusion of the Roma into society, which must become the aim of both the minority and the majority.

The Roma issue in Slovakia is not exceptional, and one can find other countries, regions and communities that have similar problems. However, Slovakia must learn a lesson from the mistakes of others. If it does so, the solutions it produces could become an inspiration to others. But a basic question remains to be answered: "Is Slovak society both ready, able, and willing to address the issue?" The book you have in your hands shows that after many experiments, opinions on solutions to the Roma problem have stabilized, and the expert potential for social change is close to escape velocity.

The *Global Report on Roma in Slovakia* shows that a long-term, positive solution to the Roma issue cannot be found in an ethnically defined state, which is what Slovakia is. However, this is a structural problem that is also present in many Western countries. To paraphrase A. D. Smith (1995), nation and nationalism represent the only real socio-cultural framework of the modern world order, despite their ability to bring about general destruction. This does not mean that all majority populations of ethnically defined states are predisposed to extremism – the problem is the existence of "banal nationalism", or as M. Billig says, widespread nationalist practices whose roots penetrate deep into our everyday rituals and activities. Slovak society should prepare for changes that developed Western countries have already undergone, such as attempts to reconfigure collective identities in connection with globalization. Nobody is a member of just one collective – in reality we are a storehouse of identities, from which we choose the one that is required by, or the best suited to a particular situation. This ability, documented by anthropologists, to switch between individual components of the human personality may, under favorable conditions, help national and other collective identities to coexist, on both the global and local levels. In this kind of "switch-between" world, many problems related to the Roma would be far easier and less painful to solve, for both the majority and the Roma.

Many of the *Global Report's* authors write directly or indirectly of the need for tolerance, empathy, and solidarity if we are to see any fundamental changes in the Roma issue. Social solidarity is indeed a key precondition for preventing conflicts, reducing anomy (social breakdown and lawlessness), and increasing social cohesion. To paraphrase Hobbes, it is not clear whether cohesion is a product of the economic development of society and the prosperity that comes with it, or whether the modern social state is a product of a cohesive society based on shared values. From whatever direction one approaches the issue, increasing social cohesion, which has been badly damaged in post communist Slovakia, is a precondition of social development, qualitative change, and the solution of problems requiring universal consensus. The Roma issue, undoubtedly, is such a problem. The issue must also be examined from the other side – unless minority problems are solved, the cohesion of Slovak society cannot increase.

Another element that all chapters in the book have in common is a focus on coexistence between the Roma and the majority population. Coexistence is generally understood to mean the way of life of various populations and groups, which may differ in nationality, ethnicity, culture, religion, values, or lifestyles, but for whom social interaction and relationships are the basic manifestations of their common life. There are four different kinds of interaction: competition, conflict, accommodation, and assimilation. As for the coexistence of the Roma and the majority population in Slovakia, for more than 200 years the Roma have been assimilated, although in many cases also successfully accommodated. The post-1989 democratic process also created room for the two remaining processes that had not yet been seen – competition and conflict.

The relationships between the Roma and the majority population can take several forms. At present, Slovakia should consult some more general definitions, in order to understand which categories of relationships exist in this country:

Segregation is the physical or social separation of a category of people. Entire populations may be separated on the basis of their ethnic or social differences. Although ethnic groups occasionally separate from the majority population voluntarily, segregation is usually forced. In a segregated society, only certain forms of contact exist between individual groups. Members of the minority don't live where the majority does, don't visit the same organizations or attend the same schools, and don't use the same public services. Segregation that is based on unofficial social models, unlike segregation defined by law, is referred to as de facto segregation. Although de iure segregation (e.g. the former South Africa) is hard to find these days, ethnic ghettos and city neighborhoods still exist.

Assimilation is the process by which the minority gradually adopts the standards and values of the majority. The minority participates in the cultural and social life of the dominant population, and loses its characteristic features until it ceases to exist as a separate entity. Assimilation represents a change in values, religion, and language, whereby one group gobbles up the other. Sociologists define three stages of assimilation. The first is cultural assimilation, when a minority member or a stranger adopts the external characteristics of the dominant group's lifestyle, but remains a member of another group. The next stage is structural assimilation, which occurs when a person gains access to society, makes friends with members of the majority group, and gradually looses his/her bonds with the minority. The last

stage is assimilation by wedding, when minority members marry members of the dominant group. At this point, membership in the minority is lost completely.

Multiculturalism exists when various racial or ethnic groups live side by side, with each of them maintaining their own identity, language, and lifestyle, and their members keeping company primarily with members of their own group. At the same time, they take part in the economic and political system, as well as certain facets of common life and culture. None of the groups has special privileges or positions, and none accentuate their value system or lifestyle as any better than those of other groups.

The **melting pot** concept is typical of America. It simply mixes populations, different cultures, values, and habits together in order to create a new cultural hybrid. Although this concept was considered a good solution to racial and ethnic conflicts in the past, it is questionable whether the "melting pot" still exists, or whether it existed at all.

Based on this information, the attentive reader will surely be able to define the type of coexistence between the Roma and the majority in Slovakia. Non-institutional and informal segregation is becoming a reality especially for the Roma who live in Roma settlements; despite the overall democratization of society, the process of desegregation has not yet begun. To a large extent, most Roma living in Slovakia have been culturally assimilated, although the ensuing stages of assimilation have not yet been reached. It is likely that at the moment the process of Roma assimilation was in full swing, the majority yielded to "the racist paradox". This paradox occurs when the minority fulfills the original demand, but is nevertheless then rejected as a danger to the majority. In Slovakia, the majority originally demanded that the Roma fully adapt, but when several failed to do so, the majority then recanted and rejected them. The consequence of this behavior is the deepening social, cultural, symbolic, and spatial exclusion of the Roma, and their growing segregation.

The "racist paradox", first described by political scientist Rainer Bauböck (1994), is not after all a new phenomenon in Central Europe – the same "racist paradox" led to the slaughter of European Jews during the Second World War. German and other Central European communities demanded full assimilation from the Jews as a precondition of their possible integration into society; however, when this failed, especially in Germany, the majority felt menaced, and produced a new conspiracy theory to explain the processes taking place within the Jewish community.

However, German post-war history is also worth following in many respects. In Slovakia, which forms part of the same cultural and geographical space, the process of national self-identification is more an ethnic and cultural one than a civic and territorial one. The Slovak reality, just as the German, can be described as "Staatsnation" (self-determining political nation), rather than "Kulturnation" (broad cultural community). In Slovakia, the following holds true: the more the nation is identified with blood relationships and specific aspects of culture, the less room the state allows for cultural diversity. And, conversely, the more it identifies with spatial and liberal-democratic principles, the more room it offers to cultural diversity. In other words: The more universal the terms in which society is capable of defining its identity, the more different elements and groups it is capable of including. From this viewpoint, in introducing multiculturalism, countries that tend towards ethnic and cultural self identification (like Slovakia) are starting from a more difficult position

than those in which civic and territorial self-identification prevails. This also sets the boundaries of Roma minority integration in Slovakia, as well as the prevention of conflict in society.

Just as Germany, Slovakia too can overcome historical determinism; everything depends on how and whether it takes advantage of the opportunity provided. Shifting from a cultural definition of one's nation to a voluntary definition does not mean that one has to give up one's identity. The important thing is that one's nation professes universal values. According to the German sociologist Jürgen Habermas (1993), such values include the rule of law and democracy. Habermas' "constitutional patriotism", as the basis of loyalty to nation and state, for the first time gives countries like Slovakia the chance to bind people's national loyalty not to an ethnic and cultural homeland, but to a legal and political space defined by the universal principles of freedom and equality. Slovakia too, if it intends to succeed in integrating the Roma into society, should choose an "elective" (Ernst Renan) definition of nation that allows political and legal identity to be separated from ethnic and cultural membership.

According to Habermas, Slovak society needs a new partnership agreement. With the formation of a political Slovak nation, the Roma would cease to be "the most significant civilization challenge Slovakia faces", with all its grave social and economic consequences. On the other hand, if the current situation does not change, we can expect that over the next two decades, the Roma political scene will become more radical, and establish new internal and external relation-

ships. Considering the deepening social exclusion and marginalization of the Roma, one can even expect that, despite globalization, European integration, and the improvement of the Slovak economy, the gulf between the majority and the Roma will continue to deepen. The fate of the Roma will also be affected by the process of Roma national emancipation, as promoted by both majority population elites and foreign Roma elites, which can be expected to grow increasingly radical. This process will be very significant for the future of the Roma community. Even now, a new generation of young Roma leaders is growing up whose stances and opinions are bound to clash with those of the older (pre- and post November) generation, and it is not clear in which direction this new emancipated Roma elite will go. It may speed up the process of Roma integration, or, vice-versa, polarize society and radicalize the Roma's stance towards the majority.

The majority, of course, can intervene in this process. The reasons for intervention are not hard to find, regardless of the ideology of the political parties now in charge. One part of the political spectrum, which is based on the liberal concept of the state as a neutral guarantor of rights, may use pragmatic instead of moral arguments to accede to the demands of minorities. On the other hand, critics of the cultural neutrality of orthodox liberalism may maintain that if the state wants to ensure the equality and dignity of its citizens, including minority members, it must ensure public acknowledgement and security for minority cultures. Regardless of the reasoning, a direction must be set. I believe that the *Global Report on Roma in Slovakia* can help in this process.

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Katarína Bezáková (1975) graduated from the Faculty of Arts at Comenius University in Bratislava, majoring in ethnology. She then continued her studies at the Institute for International Relations and Law Approximation of the Law Faculty at Comenius University, and at Academia Istropolitana Nova – European Integration and Cooperation. Since 2000 she has worked at the Project Coordination Department of the Human and Minority Rights Section at the Government Office as a coordinator of Phare projects for the development of minorities.

Ján Cangár (1946) graduated from the Pedagogical Faculty in Nitra. Upon graduation after 1968, he was unable to work as a teacher. Since 1989 he has worked in the field of education. He cooperates with a number of NGOs, and works with the Slovak Government Representative for Roma Communities. He focuses on education issues, and helped to draft education concepts and the reform of the education system. Since 1994 he has been devoted to the education of the Roma, and since 1999 he has cooperated with the MEMO 98 media-monitoring group in examining the treatment of Roma issues. He has written and co-written a number of studies, i.e. *Nová koncepcia vyučovania dejepisu v základných a stredných školách* [A New Concept of Teaching History at Elementary and Secondary Schools], 1993; *Nová koncepcia vyučovania slovenského jazyka a literatúry v základnej strednej škole* [A New Concept of Teaching Slovak Language and Literature at Elementary and Secondary Schools], 1994; *Vzdelávanie národnostných menšín v Slovenskej republike* [Educating Minorities in Slovakia], 1996; *Menšiny vo vybraných médiách* [Minorities in Selected Media], 2001; *Rómovia v elektronických médiách 2000 – 2001* [Roma in the Electronic Media, 2000 – 2001], 2002. He has published a number of articles in academic journals. In 2002 his supplementary textbook for elementary and secondary schools, called *Ľudia z rodiny Rómov* [People from the Roma Family], was published as the first book in the INTERFACE international series.

Stanislav Cina (1972) studied at the Pedagogical Faculty in Nitra, majoring in teaching the earliest elementary school grades focusing on Roma culture. In his fourth year at university he started to teach the Roma language and Roma History and Traditions at the faculty under the auspices of the Roma Culture Department of the Pedagogical Faculty. He has worked at the faculty as an assistant lecturer since 1994. In 1995 he started working in Stropkov as a teacher at the Leisure Time Center, and as an external consultant on Roma language and Roma history at the detached office in Spišská Nová Ves. Since 2000 he has taught a preparatory Roma class of the Third Elementary School in Stropkov. He has authored a number of publications and articles in scholarly journals.

Ivana Černáková (1976) completed her bachelor studies at the Slovak Technical

University in Bratislava, majoring in the Technology of Environmental Protection. Since 2000 she has worked on the Management Board of the National Labor Bureau (NÚP), focusing on unemployment among the Roma and regional development.

Roman Džambazovič (1973) studied sociology at the Arts Faculty of Comenius University in Bratislava. He is a lecturer at the Sociology Department at the Arts Faculty of Comenius University, and is also working on his PhD in the same department. He works as a research fellow at the International Center for Family Research in Bratislava. He specializes in the sociology of social problems and the sociology of family, and also studies social inequalities, poverty, social exclusion, and marginalized groups. He has cooperated on many domestic and international projects, and coauthored a number of academic studies. In 2001 he worked at the Sociology Department and the Center for Comparative Research at Yale University in the US within the international project Poverty, Ethnicity and Gender in the Transition CEE Countries.

Marek Harakaľ (1974) graduated from the Faculty of Theology at Trnava University in Bratislava, majoring in philosophy and theology. Since 2000 he has been the manager of Roma programs at the Open Society Foundation, which supports NGOs working on projects and programs for the Roma.

Eva Haviarová (1976) studied Human Geography and Demography at the Natural Science Faculty of Comenius University in Bratislava. Between 2000 and 2001 she did a professional work placement at Charles University in Prague focused on demography. Since 2001 she has worked at the Department for Analyses and Planning of the Slovak Government Office. She is doing a part-time doctoral degree at the Geography

Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, the title of her thesis being *Spatial Differentiation, Demographic and Social Dimensions of the Life of the Roma in Slovakia*.

Daniela Hivešová-Šilanová (1952) is a writer, dramatist, director, and pedagogue. She has written 13 collections of poems and fairy tale books for children and adults. In 1984 she founded an ensemble of Roma poetry, songs and dances called *Romane čhaja le čhavenca* in Prešov. She was one of the intellectuals who promoted the establishment of the Secondary School of Arts and the Romathan Theatre, where she later worked as a pedagogue and dramatist. Currently she is the editor of the *Romano nevo ľil* periodical. She works in the Jekhetane – Together association, which publishes the *Romano nevo ľil*, and also specializes in presenting Roma art.

Ivan Hriczko (1980) studies at the Private Business Academy in Košice. In 1999 he finished the first year of the preparatory course for Roma journalists at the Center for Independent Journalism in Bratislava, and joined the team of TV Naša in Košice (later TV Global). Since 2002 he has managed the Roma Press Agency project.

Balázs Jarábik (1972) studied at the Arts Faculty of Comenius University in Bratislava, the ELTE University in Budapest, and Columbia University in New York. At the moment he works for Freedom House Slovakia and provides advisory services at the Center for Legal Analyses – Kalligram Foundation, dealing with minority legislation, anti-discrimination programs, and minority support programs.

Martina Jurásková (1979) studied at the Department of Sociology of Comenius University's Arts Faculty in Bratislava. In 2000 she cooperated with the SPACE Foundation

in a research project called *The Roma and the Labor Market.* Since 2001 she has worked at the Institute for Public Affairs as a research assistant, and since 2003 as coordinator of the Ethnic Minorities Program. She has participated in a number of research projects focused on the Roma. She has written and co-written a number of publications, studies and research reports. She specializes in poverty, social exclusion, and the underclass, relating especially to the Roma minority.

Milan Jurík (1978) graduated from the Evangelical Theological Faculty of Comenius University in Bratislava, where he now works as an assistant lecturer at the Department of Practical Theology. From 2000 to 2001, in cooperation with the SPACE Foundation, he participated in a field research project called *The Roma and the Labor Market*, conducted for the World Bank. Since 2001 he has worked in the Ecumenical Council of Churches in Slovakia within the Round Table grant program.

Anna Jurová (1953) studied History and German Language at the Arts Faculty of Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice, graduating in 1976. For three years she taught at the Secondary Agricultural School in Košice – Barca. From 1979 through 1986 she worked as an archivist at the State Regional Archives in Košice. Since 1986 she has worked at the Socio-Scientific Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Košice. As the institute specializes in minority research in Slovakia, she was involved in the "minority team" focusing on the socio-economic aspects of the development of the ethnically mixed districts in southern Slovakia. Since 1990 she has specialized in research of the Roma minority and its position after 1945, with an overview of the entire 20th century. In 1994 she defended her doctoral thesis, entitled *Vývoj riešenia rómskej problematiky na Slovensku v rokoch 1945 – 1969*

[The Development of Roma Issue Solutions in Slovakia from 1945 to 1969]. Besides writing a number of articles and participating in several events in Slovakia and abroad, she published the monographs *Vývoj rómskej problematiky na Slovensku po roku 1945* [Development of the Roma Issue in Slovakia after 1945], 1993; and *Rómska problematika 1945 – 1967* [The Roma Issue from 1945 to 1967], 1996.

Zuzana Kollárová (1964) studied Slovak language and literature and history at the Arts Faculty of Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Prešov, defending a diploma thesis entitled *K cigánskej otázke na Spiši v rokoch 1918 – 1945* [On the Gypsy Issue in the Spiš Region from 1918 to 1945]. From August 1988 until now she has worked at the State District Archives in Poprad. Her writings on regional history (mainly of the Spiš region, the history of the Roma, health care, culture, and archival work) have been published in Slovakia and abroad. She edited, wrote, or co-wrote the following publications: *Bibliografia Štátneho okresného archívu v Poprade* [Bibliography of the State District Archive in Poprad], 1994; *Podhorany* [The Municipality of Podhorany], 1998; *Dejiny Popradu* [History of Poprad], 1998; *Švábovce v toku dejín* [History of the Švábovce Municipality], 1998; *Veľká* [The Municipality of Veľká], 1998; *Sprievodca po slovenských archívoch* [Slovak Archives Guide], 1999; *Dejiny Ždiaru* [History of the Ždiar Region, 2000; *Šuňava* [Municipality of Šuňava], 2001; *Tatry a podtatranská oblasť* [The Tatras and the Sub-Tatras Region], 2001.

Stanislava Kompaníková (1977) studies sociology at the Arts Faculty of Comenius University in Bratislava. From 2000 to 2001 she participated in research by the World Bank and the SPACE Foundation entitled *The Roma and the Labor Market*, as well as research by the Institute for Public Affairs

and the UNDP called *The Roma Human Development Project.* In 2002 she was involved in research by the Institute for Public Affairs and Freedom House called *The Roma Before the 2002 Parliamentary Elections.*

Eva Končoková (1943) specializes in the education of pre-school and school-age children and adults over 30. Since 1994 she has cooperated with a number of NGOs; she is working on the internal reform of the school system, and is the administrator of the Open School Foundation. She is the executive director of the international *Step by Step Program* initiated by the Open Society Institute in New York. She cooperates with selected pre-school facilities, elementary schools and special elementary schools in creating an effective school model able to meet the requirements for the successful development of Roma pupils on a multicultural basis. She now coordinates several research projects aimed at the Roma minority. She has presented her professional experience in various domestic and international forums.

Alena Kotvanová (1961) graduated from the Prešov Arts Faculty of the Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice. From 1983 through 1990 she worked at the Slovak Academy of Sciences. Since 1996 she has worked as an analyst at the Slovak Institute of International Studies. She is the editor of *Ročenka zahraničnej politiky Slovenskej republiky* [Yearbook of Slovak Foreign Policy], the third volume of which was published in 2002. She works on projects aimed at preventing racially motivated conflicts in Slovakia.

Milan Kováč (1967) studied philosophy and history at the Arts Faculty of Comenius University in Bratislava. He later studied religion at the same university, and received his doctoral degree in 1999. Since 2002 he has been a senior lecturer of religion. He focuses on early religion systems and common religiosity. He has supervised a number of long-term research projects in Europe and Central America. In Slovakia he has worked on field research of common religiosity, superstitions and magic sayings. The last large project he supervised was The Religiosity of the Slovak Roma. He co-edited the books *Normatívni a žité náboženství* [Normative and Experienced Religion], 1999; *Na cestách za posvätnom* [Searching for Sanctity], 1999 and *Boh všetko vidí. Duchovný svet Rómov na Slovensku* [God Sees Everything: The Spiritual Life of the Slovak Roma], 2002. He co-wrote the book *Lacandónci – poslední praví Mayovia* [The Lacandons: The Last Genuine Mayas], 2001 and wrote the monograph *Slnko jaguára: Náboženský svet Olmekov, Mayov a Aztékov* [The Sun of the Jaguar: The Religious Life of the Olmecs, Mayas and Aztecs], 2002. He has been published in domestic and foreign academic journals, and has lectured at several universities abroad. He is now the head of the Section of Religious Studies at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of Comenius University in Bratislava.

Elena Kriglerová (1980) studies at the Department of Sociology of Comenius University in Bratislava. In 2000 she participated in the *Roma and the Labor Market* research conducted by the SPACE Foundation. Since 2001 she has worked as a research assistant at the Institute for Public Affairs in the Ethnic Minorities Program. Within this program she participated in several projects, such as the international comparative research *Roma Human Development Project*, and the *Rómovia pred parlamentnými voľbami 2002* [Roma before the 2002 Parliamentary Elections] research; she also co-wrote the book *Rómske hlasy* [Roma Voices], 2002. She now works as a fellow of the *Rómovia na Slovensku* [Roma in Slovakia] project conducted by

Bundeswehr University in Hamburg, Germany.

Zuzana Kumanová (1970) graduated from Comenius University in Bratislava, majoring in ethnology and philosophy. During her doctoral studies she completed a study stay at Charles University in Prague. Her PhD dissertation thesis was called *Rómska rodina (Na príklade prípadových štúdií príklade rodín v Plaveckom Štvrtku)* [The Roma Family: Examples of Case Studies of Families from Plavecký Štvrtok]. In 1998 she participated in the international project *Rómovia v strednej a východnej Európe – 1998/1999* [The Roma in Central and Eastern Europe – 1998/1999] conducted in the Néprajzi Museum in Budapest. She focuses on Roma studies and applied ethnology, and works in the non-profit sector.

Natália Kušnieriková (1964) is a project manager, instructor, and consultant for Partners for Democratic Change Slovakia. She studied ethnography at Comenius University in Bratislava. She has worked at the Historical Museum of the Slovak National Museum as a specialist and collection custodian (theatre and literature). She has worked in the third sector since 1996 in the fields of alternative approaches to conflict solving, communication, supporting coexistence between the minority and majority, and supporting ethnic tolerance. She is an external lecturer for intercultural communication, history, and the cultural traditions of the Roma minority at the Pedagogical Faculty of Comenius University, in the social work program. She has co-written a number of publications dealing with the aforementioned issues. She is a member of the Association of Slovak Mediators.

Jarmila Lajčáková (1978) is now in her fifth year of a sociology program at Comenius University in Bratislava. In 2000 she completed her bachelor studies at the Law Faculty of Comenius University in Bratislava, and in 2002 earned a Master of Laws degree at the Law Faculty of the University of Toronto. She specializes in international public law, particularly international human rights, international environmental law, and current multiculturalism theories. Besides her studies, she works as a consultant for the Section for Human Rights, Minorities and Regional Development at the Slovak Government Office, and cooperates with Transparency International Slovakia. She coauthored the article "Violation of Human Rights Through State Tolerance of Street-Level Bribery: Case Study, Slovakia" (*Buffalo Human Rights Law Review*, 2003).

Adriana Lamačková (1976), a lawyer, graduated from the Law Faculty of Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice. From 1999 to 2000 she participated in a program called *The Right to Each Day*, run by the Citizen and Democracy Foundation, Minority Rights Group – Slovakia. Since 2000 she has worked in the Section for Human Rights and Minorities of the Slovak Government Office, where she deals mainly with the prevention of discrimination in Slovakia. Since September 2001 she has been a postgraduate student at the Law Faculty of Charles University in Prague, engaged in constitutional law, international law, and European law. She has written and co-written a number of works dealing with human rights, and since 2001 has also been a lecturer.

Tibor Loran (1960) studied at Comenius University in Bratislava. After 1991 he was external director of the Office of the Slovak Roma Intelligentsia Association. From 1994 through 2000 he worked as a specialist at the Department for International School Systems of the State Pedagogical Institute in Bratislava, dealing with education and the social aspects of the Roma minority. He was also an external lecturer in social policy at the

Roma Culture Department of Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra. In 2000 he worked as a director of the State Local Authority in Košice – Lunik IX. He has authored a number of publications on socio-educational issues, the protection of human rights and freedoms, and state administration and self-government.

Mária Maczejková (1943) is a pedagogue, still working as a teacher at an elementary school and a special elementary school, and as an internal methodologist. She is the author of the "zero grade" project. She has cooperated in the preparation of supplementary textbooks for Roma pupils (*Romano hangoro*, 1993; *Genibarica*, 1993; *Amari abeceda* [Amari Alphabet], 1995). She is a member of the board of the Slovak UNICEF committee, and cooperates with Slovak and foreign NGOs.

Kristína Magdolenová (1964) graduated from Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Prešov, majoring in Slovak language and literature and history. In 1996 she started work as a journalist for the *Sme* daily, and later became editor-in-chief of the *Východoslovenské noviny* journal. Since 1996 she has worked on Roma issues, and in 2002 became the coordinator and executive director of the Roma Press Agency project in Košice.

Jozef Majchrák (1975) graduated from Trnava University, majoring in sociology with a specialization in political science. Since 1999 he has been pursuing his doctoral studies at the Faculty of Health and Social Work at Trnava University. He now works at the Institute for Public Affairs as the director of the Civil Society Program. He has been published in the daily and the scholarly press.

Marek Murín (1971) works at the Foreign Ministry, where he deals with human rights issues within the Council of Europe as well as migration issues. From 1996 to September 2000 he worked at the Slovak Embassy in Paris as a consul. His diploma thesis was called *Základné ľudské práva a slobody v ústavnoprávnom systéme Francúzska* [Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms in the French Constitutional System].

Alexander Mušinka (1969) is a cultural anthropologist who works as an assistant at Prešov University. He is also the coordinator of the Canadian-Slovak *Project Svinia*, within which he also coordinates the work of the Regional Center for Roma Issues in Prešov. He specializes in interethnic relations in Slovakia in the European context, focusing on the Ukrainian-Ruthenian and Roma communities. He has worked at the Ukraine Academy of Sciences in Kiev and at the Multicultural Society of Ontario in Toronto. He has published a number of works: *Florián Zapletal (1884 – 1969)*, 1998; *Rešov, dejiny obce a farnosti* [Rešov: History of the Municipality and the Parish], 1999; *Projekt Svinia a jeho vzdelávacie aktivity* [The Svinia Project and its Educational Activities], 2000; *Niekoľko poznámok k vybraným problémom etnicity Rómov na Slovensku* [Comments on Selected Issues in the Ethnicity of the Roma in Slovakia], 2000; *Význam terenního výzkumu při formování rozvojového projektu v romské osadě obce Svinia* [The Importance of Field Research in Forming the Development Project in the Roma Settlement of the Svinia Municipality], 2000; and *Projekt Svinia – Niekoľko poznámok k problematike integrácie Rómov* [The Svinia Project: Comments on the Issue of Roma Integration], 2000.

Karel A. Novák (1965) studied Roma studies and ethnology at Charles University in Prague. Since 1998 he has worked in various organizations in Slovakia, where he has participated in humanitarian, development, and research programs in Roma settlements. He

has also worked with the Man in Danger group, in the program of social fieldwork in excluded communities. On behalf of this organization he participated in several humanitarian missions (Great Britain, Slovakia, Kosovo). He now works for ETP Slovakia in the community program *Tvoj Spiš* [Your Spiš]. He is also a consultant for the Office of the Slovak Government Representative for Roma Communities in launching the social fieldwork program in Roma communities. He specializes in applied anthropology.

Valentina Petrus (1969) completed her studies at the Pedagogical Faculty of Comenius University in Bratislava, and then did her doctorate at the Criminal Law Department of Comenius University's Law Faculty. During her doctoral studies she cooperated with the InfoRoma Foundation on the UNHCR project in Slovakia as a legal counselor and a representative for asylum seekers and refugees in Slovakia. Since 2001 she has worked as a lawyer and project coordinator for the InfoRoma Foundation, and has dealt with human rights and migration with an emphasis on the Roma minority.

Jaroslav Pilát (1976) studied at the Law Faculty of Comenius University in Bratislava. He has cooperated with a number of NGOs (Gemma 93, the Permanent Conference of the Civic Institute). From June 2000 to September 2001 he worked at the Office of the Slovak Deputy Prime Minister for Economy, Ivan Mikloš, cooperating with the Government Representative for Decentralization and Reform of Public Administration; he focused on the reform of public administration and its legal aspects. Since September 2001 he has worked at the MESA 10 economic think tank as a legal analyst. He cooperates with the Union of Towns of the Slovak Republic. He has co-written several publications aimed at reform of public administration and elections to regional assem-

blies. He publishes articles on decentralization and the reform of public administration.

Peter Puliš (1979) graduated from the Department of Sociology at Comenius University in Bratislava. He has dealt with the transformation of social policy in Slovakia after 1989, women in politics, the economic situation and discrimination against the Roma in Slovakia, and rightist extremism in Slovakia. He cooperated with the SPACE Foundation in the research *Ženy v politike* [Women in Politics] and *Rómovia a trh práce* [Roma and the Labor Market]. He co-wrote the publications *Ženy v politike* [Women in Politics], 2000 and *Rómske hlasy* [Roma Voices], 2002. From 2001 to 2003 he worked at the Institute for Public Affairs in Bratislava as a research assistant in the Ethnic Minorities Program.

Iveta Radičová (1956) graduated from Comenius University in Bratislava. She specializes in social benefits policy in the context of social benefits expenditures during the transformation process. She is the executive director of the SPACE Foundation – the Center for Social Policy Analyses. She lectures on social science methodology and on current trends in social benefits analysis at the Political Science Department of Comenius University, at Masaryk University in the Czech town of Brno, at Academia Istropolitana Nova in Bratislava, and as a visiting professor at a number of universities abroad. She has authored a number of publications and studies, and also works as an expert in social benefits issues with the Council of Europe.

Ingrid Repová (1974) graduated from the Pedagogical Faculty of Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, majoring in continuing education aimed at the Roma community. She continued her studies in social work at the same university. Since 1998 she has worked as a project coordina-

tor with the InfoRoma Foundation. She specializes in information, counseling and advisory activities, and in community, health and education projects. She has co-written a number of publications, research projects, reports and papers on how to solve the problems of the Roma minority.

Silvia Rigová (1972) graduated from the Pedagogical Faculty of Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, majoring in teaching the lowest elementary school grades, and completed her doctorate at the Pedagogical Faculty of Comenius University in Bratislava. After graduation she taught first grade at elementary school. Since 1998 she has worked in the third sector as a coordinator of educational projects. She is now the director of the civic association Projekt Schola.

Eleonóra Sándor (1959) earned her university degree at the Department of Ethnography and Folklore Studies at Comenius University in Bratislava. From 1987 to 1990 she worked as an ethnographer in a museum. After a brief stint in the public sphere, she was involved in publishing until 1999. Besides a number of articles in Slovak and Hungarian periodicals, she co-wrote the anthology *Slovakia in the Sixth Year of* Transformation, 1996 and *The 1998 Slovak Elections: Who? Why? How?*, 1999, and co-wrote the documentary *The Rights of* Minorities, 2000. Since 1999 she has been the secretary of the Slovak Parliamentary Committee for Human Rights and Minorities.

Boris Strečanský (1967) graduated from Comenius University, majoring in philosophy and history. He is now the director of the Center for Philanthropy – ETP. Since 1999 he has been the co-director of the grant program *Your Country*, supporting the participation of citizens in public administration issues as well as the sustainability of the non-

profit sector. From 1993 to 1998 he worked for the University of Minnesota as a coordinator of the education program in Slovakia called Environmental Training Project. In 1995 he co-founded the ETP Foundation in Slovakia. As an instructor and consultant in evaluating grant and development programs, strategic planning, creation and management, he has worked in Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Moldavia, Ukraine, Macedonia, Georgia, Kosovo, Azerbaijan, and the Czech Republic.

Attila Szép (1966) graduated from Comenius University in Bratislava. From 1991 to 1992 he worked for the Slovak Government Office. He completed a study sojourn at George Washington University in the US, and earned his MA in political science at the Central European University in Budapest. He has worked for the Forum Institute in Bratislava. Since 2000 he has been the director of the Slovak Institute of International Studies.

Peter Šaško (1979) graduated from the Faculty of Medicine of Comenius University in Bratislava. During his studies he has worked externally for the foreign news desk of the *Pravda* daily, and in 2001 he participated in research on Roma settlements for the SPACE Foundation. He now works externally for the Metabolic Policlinic, where he worked on his thesis called *Výskyt kardiovaskulárnych ochorení v rodinách s familiárnou hypercholesterolémiou* [Incidence of Cardiovascular Disease in Families with Hypercholesterolemia]. This thesis was presented at the Faculty Conference in 2002.

Michal Šebesta (1978) studied political science at Comenius University in Bratislava, and is now pursuing a doctorate at Comenius entitled *The Political System and Ethnic Structure*. Since 1998 he has worked at the Slovak Government Office, since 1999 focusing on the problems of Roma communi-

ties. He has co-written a number of government papers on Roma communities, including *Vyhodnotenie aktivít vlády SR v oblasti riešenia problémov rómskych komunít za rok 2001* [Evaluation of Government Activities in Solving the Problems of Roma Communities for 2001], 2002; *Komplexný rozvojový program rómskych osád* [Complex Development Program for Roma Settlements], 2002; *Program sociálnych terénnych pracovníkov* [Social Field Workers Program], 2002. In 2001 he helped coordinate the research of the World Bank and the SPACE Foundation called *Rómovia a trh práce* [Roma and the Labor Market]. He wrote the empirical report from the Stará Ľubovňa district for Iveta Radičová's publication *Hic Sunt Romales* (2001). He participated in the research of the Institute for Public Affairs, the *Roma Human Development Project* in 2001, and in the research of the Institute for Public Affairs and Freedom House called *Rómovia pred parlamentnými voľbami 2002* [Roma Before the 2002 Parliamentary Elections] in 2002.

Ľudmila Šimčáková (1957) studied teaching at Comenius University in Bratislava. From 1986 to 1996 she worked at the Pedagogical Research Institute, later at the State Pedagogic Institute, specializing in pedagogy and didactics. Since 1996 she has worked at the Institute for Information and Prognoses in Education, where she heads the department for analyses and prognoses in regional education. She focuses on research of verbal communication, the overburdening of pupils, final school exams, kindergarten teachers, elementary and secondary schools in the transformation process, young people and democracy, and also pedagogical terminology. She now coordinates the international project *Vzdelávanie pre všetkých* [Education for All]. She has co-written six publications and more than 80 studies and articles. She has published the results of her work at conferences and symposiums in Slovakia and abroad.

Anna Tkáčová (1975) graduated from Trnava University in 1998, majoring in history. Since 2000 she has worked as a research fellow in the Socio-Scientific Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Košice, which focuses on research of minorities in Slovakia. In her research work she specializes in the Slovak Roma in the 18th and the 19th centuries. Since October 2000 she has been pursuing a doctoral degree at the Institute of History of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava. Among her major published works are the municipal monograph *Valaliky od najstarších čias po súčasnosť* [The Municipality of Valaliky from Ancient Times until Today], 1998, and studies on Roma issues in the 18th and the 19th centuries, published in the Internet journal of the Socio-Scientific Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences called *Človek a spoločnosť* [Man and Society] and in the anthology of the international conference called *Národ, spoločnosť, konfesia* [Nation, Society, Confession] held in Pilišská Čaba in June 2001.

Adrian Tokár (1976) graduated from the Law Faculty of Comenius University in Bratislava in 1999, whereupon he began work as a fellow at the European Parliament in Brussels. Since 2000 he has clerked at a lawyer's office in Bratislava, and has been a doctoral candidate at the Institute of State and Law at the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava, focused on the theory of law. He cooperates with the Center for Legal Analyses and the Kalligram Foundation, which specializes in human rights and rights of the minorities.

Zdeněk Uherek (1959) is the deputy director of the Institute of Ethnology of the Czech Academy of Sciences, and the chief of its Department of Ethnological Studies. He focuses on migrations and ethnic processes, lecturing on the theory of ethnicity and urban ethnology at Charles University, and migration theory and urban anthropology at

the University in Pilsen. He is a member of the academic council of the Arts Faculty of Charles University, a member of the Ethnological Institute at the Czech Academy of Sciences, and of the Institute of Ethnology at the Slovak Academy of Sciences. He is also a member of the editorial team of the *Czech Nation* and *Slovak Ethnography* journals, and a member of the commission of the Interior Minister of the Czech Republic for the integration of foreigners and relations between communities. He has conducted research in Central and Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and the Balkans.

Boris Vaňo (1955) graduated from the Economic University in Bratislava, and then pursued postgraduate studies in demography at Charles University in Prague. Until 1999 he worked at the Institute for Information Science and Statistics as a research fellow in the field of demography. Since 2000 he has been the director of the Demographic Research Center.

Imrich Vašečka (1947) is a lecturer at the Department of Social Benefits Policy and Social Work of the Social Sciences Faculty of Masaryk University in the Czech town of Brno. He is also an expert with the Slovak Union of Towns. He focuses on minorities, particularly in the Central European context, and on local social benefits policy. In 2000 he was the coordinator of the project *Prečo Rómovia migrujú zo Slovenska do krajín EÚ* [Why the Roma Migrate from Slovakia to EU Countries] (field research), sponsored by the International Organization for Migration. From 2000 to 2001 he was a member of the research team for the World Bank project in Slovakia called *Rómovia a trh práce* [The

Roma and the Labor Market]. In 2002 he was a member of the team that prepared a study for the Slovak Government Office called *Vízia vývoja Slovenskej republiky do roku 2020* [Vision on the Development of the Slovak Republic to 2020]. He is now researching welfare benefits policy focusing on the Roma population within the research plan of the Department for Social Studies at Masaryk University called *Marginalizované, menšinové a etnické skupiny* [Marginalized, Minority and Ethnic Groups].

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