

THE GYPSY MINORITY IN ROMANIA: A STUDY IN MARGINALITY

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La minorité tsigane en Roumanie: une étude dans la marginalité. Les études sociales présentent souvent les tsiganes comme un groupe défavorisé avec un niveau de vie relativement faible et accès réduit au système de santé. Les tsiganes en Roumanie n'en représentent pas une exception et cet étude examine la situation du groupe minoritaire, se référant particulièrement à la période de transition caractérisée par des majeures innovations politiques et améliorations matérielles, surtout à cause d'un gros revenu européen. Certainement il y a une discrimination évidente contre les tsiganes, ce qui rend l'article à envisager la marginalité comme contingente, systémique et collatérale. Mais, il est aussi argumenté le fait qu'il existe un élément de l'auto-exclusion, parce que, pendant que beaucoup d'éléments des tsiganes ont été assimilés sans cesse avec succès, un important élément résiduel insiste sur la préservation des éléments 'd'identité' impliquant la séparation de la culture populaire en termes de la modernisation de l'éthique et de l'état de droit. Sur cette base, il est argumenté le fait que les programmes d'amélioration devraient considérer comme complémentaires les deux aspects du problème à l'aide de quelques programmes qui intensifient l'intégration sociale et économique pour les tsiganes et encouragent cette communauté variée à développer le niveau de compréhension conformément aux normes culturelles de la citoyenneté et de la société civile. Un rôle particulier envisage l'éducation qui est fondamentale pour que les jeunes tsiganes puissent efficacement concurrencer sur le marché du travail. Une évaluation nationale – se basant essentiellement sur des données officielles – est complétée par une étude de cas de la région Banat, montrant en détail comment les programmes ont été complétés par l'activité du secteur ONG.

INTRODUCTION

Among the problems of integrating the former communist countries of East Central Europe into the EU, ethnic issues rank high, particularly in the highly fragmented Carpathian basin where ethnic diversity has complicated the emergence of nation states: both the large Hungarian state in the context of the Habsburg Empire (1867–1918) and the smaller post-Trianon successor states (Poulton 1991; Kocsis 1994, 2000, 2001). This paper deals with Romania where, despite significant improvements in the use of minority languages, the Gypsy community still encounters significant discrimination which arises to some extent from self-exclusion as the integration of the better-educated Gypsies reinforces the poverty of the remaining 'core element' who retains a traditional approach to life (including the instinct for a nomadic lifestyle) in preference to securing their own territory as settled communities and families interacting harmoniously with other groups (Crețan 1999). The Gypsy 'culture of survival' – standing as one of Romania's many 'sub-histories' – features a nation with Indian origins living in exile in Europe where a certain freedom of cultural expression and resistance to assimilation has been bought at the price of official attitudes, fluctuating between ambivalent toleration and oppressive discrimination, linked with the political goal of social cohesion for either multi-national empires or nation states alike (Fraser 1994). They have arguably paid a high price for their 'freedom' to be different: a separateness maintained in diverse physical environments and historical eras (Ely 1964). This can be seen even in their name since despite their own identity as Gypsies – which has applied

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through the ages – these ‘nomads of the plains’ have been labelled in less-flattering ways by host nations ranging from the Greek term ‘atsinganos’ or ‘atsinkanos’ linked with fourteenth century India; ‘Tigani’ or ‘Zigeuner’ – with many other variants – relating to a long ‘sejour’ in Persia; and ‘Egyptians’ reflecting their former residence in Little Egypt – the bend of Pelopones near Mount Gype from which the English term ‘gypsy’ is derived (Humeau 1992, p.6).

The problems are by no means confined to Romania (and neighbouring states) since the EU accession process has gradually lowered the barriers to migration and brought many Romanian Gypsies to the streets of Western Europe where aggressive begging and other forms of criminality have done little to enhance the country’s image as a successful transition economy: while the overall scale of Romanian migration to Western Europe during 2007 (with a significant Gypsy component) has caused member states to consider restrictions, including a proposed moratorium in Spain. Gypsies’ activities in Italy culminating in a murder charge in Rome for Romulus Mailat, a member of the Gypsy community from Avrig near Sibiu, has prompted consideration new powers for Italian local authorities to expel EU citizens. Thus the outstanding issue of Gypsies’ welfare and integration is an important issue in social geography, with the Gypsies in general widely portrayed as a disadvantaged group suffering relatively low living standards (Gheorghe & Liegeios 1996; Stiftung 2003); while the Gypsies of Romania are no exception (Cherată 1998; Năstasă 2001; Zamfir & Preda 2002).

In this study we first provide a historical context covering the salient features of the last two centuries which have seen great changes in socioeconomic fortunes and political subordination. While discrimination is undeniable, the Gypsies for their part have maintained what they see as their own identity – notwithstanding the perception of such a separatist stance as a rejection of self-improvement through regular work and education; aggravated by reluctance to comply with such normal conventions such as carrying an identity card (*buletin*) without which it is not possible in today’s Romania to legally obtain employment or cast a vote. We attempt to conceptualise Gypsy marginality which constitutes an important part of the ‘poverty problem’ accompanying Romania’s transition from communism to EU accession before examining recent government and civil society responses to the experiences of the transition years which have registered some progress towards integration in the light of Europe’s insistence on a stronger commitment to Gypsies’ welfare. We focus on the crucial matter of education and examine the policy initiatives of the last 15 years and the Gypsies response, with particular reference to Banat since this ethnically-diverse part of western Romania has a distinguished record for social integration, as the lead author has demonstrated (Crețan 2003, 2006), to the point where it may provide a model for progress in other parts of the country.

HISTORICAL SUMMARY

The Gypsies appeared in Romania by 1348 (but only after 1386 in Transylvania, then part of the Hungarian Kingdom) and despite enjoying a degree of autonomy under their own leaders, feudal pressures eventually forced them into a high level of dependency and Habsburg documents of 1712 show the Gypsies as serfs belonging to landowners and monastic communities, with particular aptitude in metalworking (copper and gold) (Crețan 2002, p. 461). They tended to adopt a nomadic lifestyle in the summer months, with permission granted by their lords, while using ‘specific quarters’ during the winter when they became sedentary. Feudal control afforded protection but assimilation was resisted although the use of both their mother tongue and their traditional clothing was forbidden. In 1761 Habsburg Empress Maria Theresa imposed the first settlement law on these ‘New Hungarians’ who were expected to build proper houses (replacing traditional tents) and then, more radically in 1773, she ordered that all Gypsy children over five years of age be taken from their parents and cared for by

non-Gypsy families (often in distant villages): although many were able to escape it is estimated that about a quarter of the Gypsies in Banat were assimilated as Germans by the end of the century (Achim 1998, p. 95). Moreover, in 1782, the next Habsburg head of state, Joseph II, issued an edict of 59 points including the requirement that Gypsy children attend school and church regularly although they continued to be denied their own language, costume and music; such were the negative perceptions of Gypsy culture which even included a propensity for cannibalism. However little progress was made because the relatively objective contemporary writings of Francesco Grisellini (ed. 1984) point to the perpetuation of a nomadic lifestyle; casting doubt on the accuracy of Johann Jakob Ehrler's estimate (first published in 1774) of 'some 5,000 gypsies' in Banat around 1770 according to the Habsburg Conscriptio (Ehrler 1982, pp. 44–5). The Gypsies were then just 1.3% of the population (compared with 2.0% for Jews, 2.5% for Bulgarians ('Carașoveni'), 13.0% for Germans, French and Italians, 24.0% for Serbs and 57.2% for Romanians. But this is almost certainly an underestimate since the enumerators would hardly have tracked down all the members of an essentially nomadic population.

Emancipation (*slobozenie*) came in 1848 in the Habsburg lands – a little ahead of the Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia in 1859 under Prince Alexander Ioan Cuza. However, rural Gypsies in Banat often remained in the vicinity of monasteries while some transferred to 'mahalele': poor residential areas on the edge of towns and villages. Although few had the resources to acquire houses in high-status residential areas, some – like Vasile Alecsandri, Gheorghe Asachi, Cezar Bolliac, Barbu Constantinescu and Mihail Kogălniceanu – were able to join the professions (including academic careers in history, literature and poetry). Meanwhile emigration became an option by the turn of the century and although many were subsequently expelled from the USA for criminality they could at least return with capital resources that set them apart from those who had stayed at home. In Germany, Chancellor Bismarck was quick to impose restrictions (Crowe, 1996) and in 1905, the scale of illegal camping and fishing, along with damage to the forests, was such as to require expulsion of all those who had arrived from the Habsburg Empire. It was a period of great economic progress when the Gypsies could take employment buy property and have their children educated (Tamaș 2001, p. 37) and it is a question for historical research why they did not take greater advantage of the opportunities available. Could it be that Gypsy culture was – and still is – so wedded to tradition that those who chose to integrate had little option but 'disappear' into mainstream society; leaving the visible Gypsy community – constantly augmented by early marriage and high natural increase – with distinct family and community values along with certain economic functions as blacksmiths and coppersmiths providing subsistence but hardly prosperity (Potra 1993, p. 108)?

In the inter-war period Gypsies' assimilation (which included greater use of the Romanian language) was balanced by moves towards autonomy at national and local levels, especially in the 1930s through newspapers such as 'Glasul Romilor' in Bucharest and 'Timpul' in Craiova; while G.A. Lazurica (a well-known Gypsy personality) founded a 'General Association of the Gypsy from Romania' in 1933 which proposed, amongst other things, a dedicated hospital and university solely for the Gypsy community (Chelcea 1944). However, such organisations were unable to consolidate, while Gypsy handicrafts became uncompetitive due to the development of factory industry. Fascism came to the fore as Hitler cancelled all the civil rights for the Gypsies in Germany and launched a strong racist policy, reflected later in Romania under dictatorship in 1940. Progress went into reverse the following year when Antonescu (seeking to marginalise undesirable minorities) used a secret Gypsy census as the basis for the massive deportation to the captured Soviet territory of Transnistria during 1942–1944. A total of some 20,000 Gypsies (4,000 of them from Banat) reached the Bug river area, but with neither work nor means of subsistence about half of them died. Despite poor organisation and the privations of war, the stark realities of ethnic cleansing and genocide cannot be denied. Equality after

the war resulted in discrimination being replaced by neglect since cultural development was compromised by the lack of education in the Gypsy language while the Gypsy failed to benefit from the land reform of 1946; and the Romanian Workers' Party (as the Communist Party was known at the time) did not recognise the Gypsy minority when it came to power in 1948. However there was no place for the General Union of Roma (Uniunea Generală a Romilor) – formerly the General Association of the Roma from Romania – although it had actually ceased to function in 1941.

THE COMMUNIST PERIOD. The Gypsies experienced mixed fortunes under communism. They suffered from the general confiscation of wealth through their significant holdings in gold, but the integration policies of the 1950s were not fully implemented and so there was no overwhelming pressure to settle. And when draconian measures were taken to stimulate a higher birth rate from 1967 family benefits were extremely helpful for traditionally large Gypsy families (typically rearing five or more children) and a relatively rapid growth in numbers was therefore well-supported. Again, although determined efforts were made during 1977–1983 to accelerate social and cultural development through education and settlement policies, resources were inadequate for radical rural reorganisation ('sistemizare') to be achieved by 1989 and Gypsy communities were not greatly disturbed. Had it gone ahead the Gypsies would almost certainly have gained from further replacement of 'contingency housing'. Indeed many Gypsies – like those in the Măguri community discussed below – had already been pleased to have their housing conditions improved under the cooperative farm system. Employment was found quite widely, albeit through unskilled work in the giant industrial enterprises or on socialist (state or cooperative) farms. And while there was low priority for specific Gypsy development policies they had the option of declaring themselves as Gypsies for census purposes from 1977; although the communist state insisted on the term 'țigani' (i.e. gypsies) and the generic term 'Roma' adopted in Western Europe from the 1970s could not be used officially until after the revolution. In addition they often faced discrimination by community élites and small minorities often felt isolated with reduced solidarity within their communities and family networks

THE POST-COMMUNIST PERIOD. Much greater research on social problems has reinforced popular perceptions of Gypsy marginality (Pons 1995; Martinez 1998). 'Their marginalisation by the society on which they live and their manner of obtaining the economic resources necessary for life are characteristics which set them apart as an anti-social ethnic group' (Costachie 1997, p. 112). However it all too easy to regard the Gypsies as a homogenous group. when in fact there are differences in language and also in occupations: as noted by Voiculescu (2002) in Sângeorgiu de Mureș where there are four groups differentiated according to residence, dress, employment and language (Romany, Romanian and Hungarian). Hence many Gypsies do not declare themselves as Gypsies for census purposes and the official figures are clearly under-estimates (Table 1); albeit with a growth of 134,000 (33.4%) during 1992–2002 while the total population of the country declined by 1.11mln. (-4.9%). Although the Gypsies have therefore increased their share from 1.76 to 2.47%, this remains a massive understatement when set against the World Bank estimate of some 2.0mln., while the Open Society Institute uses 1.9mln (Hoelscher 2007, p. 9). Such figures would produce a Gypsy population share of some ten percent – similar to Slovakia – and the largest proportion for any European country except Macedonia (11%): while Bulgaria's Gypsies constitute an estimated 8.5% followed by other transition states (mainly Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Montenegro and Serbia) with below five percent. However the size of the Gypsy community is a complex matter because our own estimates suggest that in 2002 there could have been a total of 600,000, taking into account those working abroad (80,000 in Germany, Italy and Spain) or living in remote places within Romania. Allowing for further growth since 2002 the present figure could therefore be 650,000. The much larger estimates may therefore embrace people with a Gypsy background who no longer wish to be part of an ethnic minority.

Table 1

Ethnic Structure of Romania 1992 and 2002.

	1992 Census		2002 Census		Difference
	Total th	Percent	Total th	Percent	
Total	22810.0	100.00	21698.8	100.00	-1111.2
Romanians	20408.5	89.47	19409.4	89.45	-999.1
Hungarians	1625.0	7.12	1434.4	6.61	-190.6
Gypsies	401.1	1.76	535.2	2.47	+134.1
Germans	119.5	0.52	60.1	0.28	-59.4
Ukrainians	65.8	0.29	61.1	0.28	-4.7
Others	190.1	0.83	198.6	0.91	+8.5

There are certainly large communities across the country that suffer poverty and exclusion which can be seen through deficiencies across four mutually-reinforcing domains: education, employment, health and housing. Indeed the early transition years made the situation even more difficult for the Gypsies due to the loss of employment and failure to benefit from land restitution (having no history of land ownership). Indeed “the loss of agricultural employment had an especially negative effect on the living standards, social status and inter-ethnic relations of Gypsies in rural areas” where two-thirds reside (Barany 2004, p. 259), while stealing from private farms was not tolerated as it often had been in the case of the former communist cooperatives. Exclusion from villages made for some resumption of an itinerant lifestyle or removal to squatter settlements close to the towns where most Gypsies lived in severe poverty: ‘finding fruit’ in the summer while ‘dying of starvation’ in the winter (Amelina *et al.* 2003, p. 183): searching garbage dumps to earn a few dollars recovering plastic crates, copper wire and scrap iron; ‘pursued by stray dogs, encircled by black flurries of crows. enveloped in the acrid stench of the refuse and stung by the winds of a Balkan winter’. A World Bank (2005) social mapping exercise revealed that most Gypsies live in the more developed communes and small towns with a high level of concentration in large communities of over 500 and average communities of 200–250 (the average for groups with more than 19 households being about 300).

Nucleation is increasing through a gradual transfer from rural areas to expanding communities on the edge of towns (though some are in apartment blocks in downtown areas) where much of the poverty now exists. These are also revealed by the mapping exercise (Fig. 1). The growth rate in some cases is considerable with a private census in Avrig revealing a growth from 150 at the 2002 census (albeit an understatement due to many absences abroad) to 1,500 in 2007, with absentees taken into account. Moreover there are some effectively autonomous communities with a long history of segregation that have been virtually abandoned by the local authority and where there is such a high level of non-documentation over personal papers and housing (including proof of home ownership and planning consent) that such areas can scarcely claim an official existence (Berescu & Celac 2006). Pustă Vale, a village of 1,600 Gypsies on the edge of Șimleu Silvaniei (in the Sălaj county of Transylvania) is seven kilometers from the town centre. This traditional community, where Romany dialects are spoken and the women wear traditional dress, has no running water, sewage or gas and 40% of households depend on social aid. It does not have its own budget and has been starved of funding, although on the other hand it makes no significant contribution to the local budget and almost a fifth of households operate without personal papers or proof that property is owned and was legally built. A single deputy on the town council may be consulted but has no voting rights (OSI EUMAP 2007, pp. 139–48). With complete residential segregation and only earth roads in the village and its approaches, the community has only one kiosk selling goods and has great difficulty getting help from the hospitable 10kms away which uses the poor state of the road and the lack of ambulances to decline help in emergencies: an all-too familiar scenario reflecting Gypsies’ disinclination to use regular medical services, which may involve a cost element while securing only substandard care (ERRC 2006).

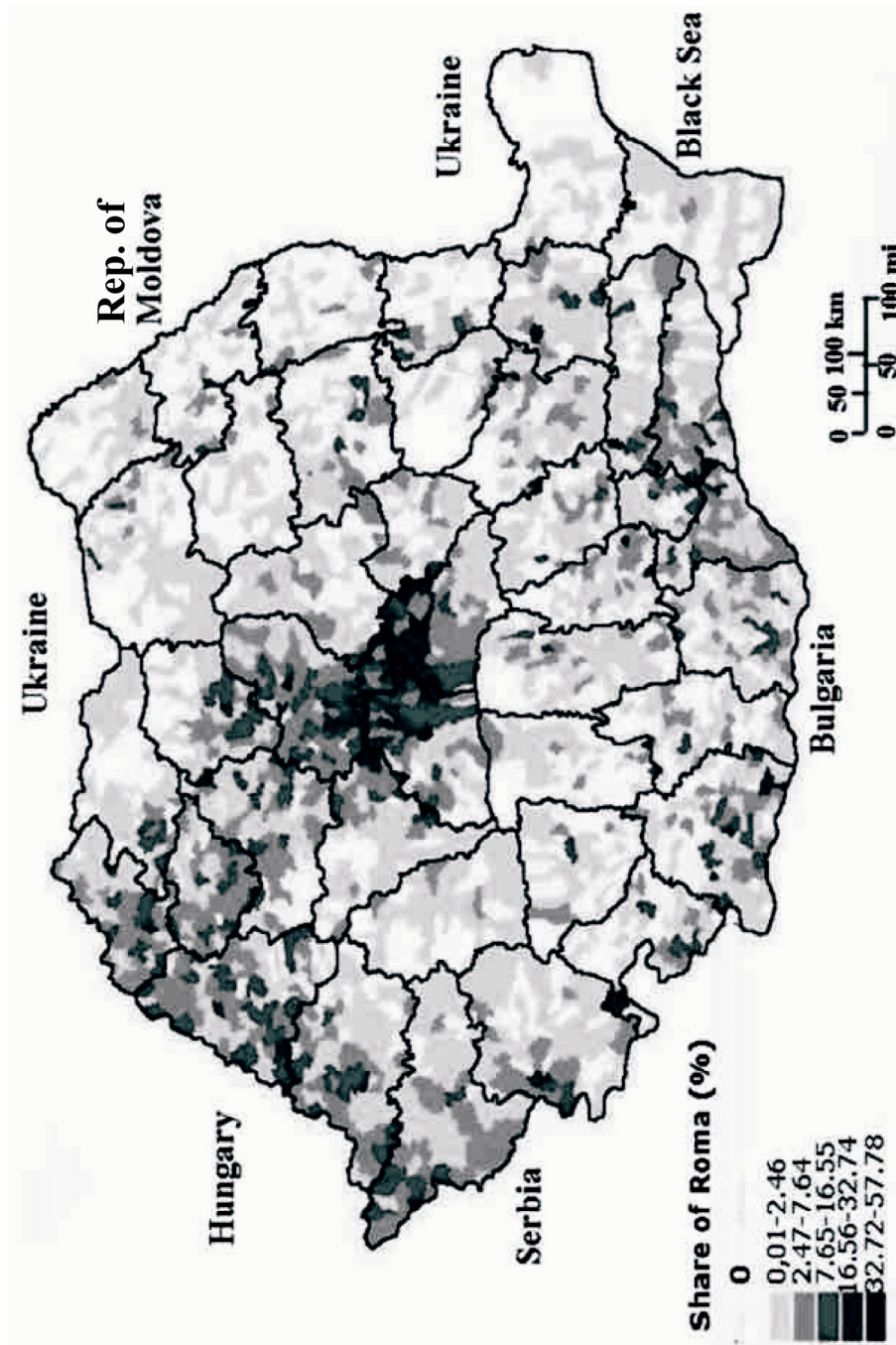


Fig. 1 – Distribution of tsiganes areas in Romania
(source: Romanian National Population Census, 2002).

Household surveys indicated an overall poverty rate of 76.4% in 1995 and 78.8% in 1997 compared with national average figures of 25.3% and 30.8% respectively. Only a fifth of Gypsies children attended kindergartens and in 1998 44% of the Gypsy population had not completed the basic eight-year schooling programme. The consequences can be seen in an extraordinarily high Gypsy illiteracy rate of 65 percent (while another 15% could only read with some difficulty and only 20% could read well). Poor awareness of the importance of education is highlighted by dropping-out in the later primary years (classes 5–8) arising to some extent by the tradition of child labour in rural areas (Dobraca 1994, p. 66). Gypsy education has long been a problem (Jigău & Surdu 2002) for in 2002 Gypsy pupils averaged only 6.8 years at school compared with 11.2 for the country as whole. Taking the population aged over 40 in 2007, 22.2% of non-Gypsies had attended a ‘liceu’ but only 2.2% of Gypsies (with figures of 8.2 and 0.6% for higher education). Taking the under 40s only 2.0% had not been the school but 20.9% for Gypsies (OSI EUMAP 2007, p. 41), There is also discrimination against girls who ‘tend to be socialized with a focus on preparation for marriage and childbearing’ (Hoelscher 2007, p.21); so they may only acquire basic literacy skills before being taken out of school in order to control their sexuality. In addition, although there is some stability through the absence of divorce, it is usual for girls to marry at the age of 10–11 and boys at 12–13. They are at risk through poor reproductive health; while Gypsy boys are disproportionately represented among the juvenile delinquent population.

With low educational standards, barriers are encountered in the labour market. Usually the Gypsies secure only the lowest-paid jobs because they lack professional training. Moreover many do not carry an identity card (‘buletin’) or work card (‘carte de muncă’) without which they are barred from legal employment and social benefits: thus early in the transition 60% of employed Gypsies worked for low wages on the black market (Zamfir & Zamfir 1993) while only 40% were legally employed. But the problem goes further because Hoelscher (2007) emphasises the importance of documentation without which children remain invisible with access to healthcare, education and social services severely impeded; also the multiple disadvantage linked with family and neighbourhood in general including a negative impact on children’s education which is the key to breaking the intergenerational transmission of poverty (see also Richardson *et al.* 2007). Meanwhile most Gypsies live in settlements with quasi-legal housing arrangements. Their ‘contingency’ housing often lacks basic utilities: 70% of households have no running water and 80% cannot afford drugs. In addition small minorities felt isolated and vulnerable to discrimination by community elites.

The situation could be linked with Gypsies apathy in the light of traditional self-exclusion, while mainstream society is at best ambivalent, especially in the context of post-communist welfare state retrenchment and when “faced with economic recessions and new problems of poverty and unemployment, governments reduced subsidies and entitlements, introduced means-testing of benefits to direct them toward the new poor, and privatized some welfare services” (Cook 2005, p. 101). It is also argued that all welfare states produce constituencies, including groups that enjoyed benefits as recipients under the comprehensive but low-provisioned welfare systems of communism, but evidently in Romania the representative institutions have not afforded the Gypsies adequate access. Thus, living on the edge of settlements and finding comfort in a daily routine of begging and petty theft, conflicts often developed with mainstream rural communities with the more shocking cases of violence often aggravated by earlier provocations (Năstasă & Salat 2003). For example tensions can easily mount through spontaneous migratory tendencies since large Gypsy groups may suddenly descend on a unsuspecting neighbourhood and erect shelters or buildings without authorisation (and possibly in violation of the zoning plans).

Localised pogroms were reported immediately after the revolution but, more seriously, ten Gypsy homes were burnt in Racşa (Oraşu Nou commune, Satu Mare county) in 1994, where those responsible were forced to rebuild. But the worst ethnic violence occurred in Hădăreni (Cheţani

commune in Mureș county) in September 1993 when an innocuous conversation between three young Gypsy men and a non-Gypsy woman sparked a series of arguments and confrontations: a Romanian man was stabbed (and later died) leading to a pogrom in which three Gypsies were killed while 13 houses were burnt and five others ransacked, with the police allegedly inciting further anti-Gypsy violence after they were called to the scene. Although several Romanians were jailed for murder and arson the sentences were considered light – and were subsequently reduced with compensation that (in one case) was greater than the sum received by the widow of one of the murdered Gypsies. Meanwhile, frustration in the towns created a ghetto mentality with the mayor of Piatra Neamț pressed at one stage into advocating the formation of a Gypsy ghetto under armed guard. And a similar call was made in Deva as recently as 2004 for ‘specially designated quarters’ for Gypsies. Moreover in Deva (and also Sibiu) in 2001 ‘Noua Dreaptă’ (New Right-Wing) organisations were blamed for graffiti advocating ‘Death to Gypsies’ to halt the ‘Romization of Romania’ with corresponding demands for action to outlaw such groups.

Some of the tensions were exported through the discovery of richer pickings abroad. Milder policing and the breakdown of informing networks linked with the state security made it easier for Gypsies to travel without documents. Slovakia became a particularly congenial environment since Gypsies could gain access by taking ‘greenways’ through the forests via Ukraine or by bribery at official border checkpoints. Migrants could be assisted by illegal networks involving contact persons with knowledge of deserted houses – even caves – where temporary accommodation could be found and help provided in moving on (in some cases) to the Czech Republic, Germany and Poland. Those who emigrated typically became involved in highly organised ‘aggressive’ begging – reportedly ‘earning’ as much as \$1,000/person over two months (enough to subsist back in Romania for much of the year). And long before the incident in Rome in 2007, many cases of criminality and consequent repatriation among Romanian migrants in Central and Western Europe have been fairly attributed to Gypsy elements. However, while there is an obvious embarrassment in the undermining of the country’s image (as potential foreign investors see at first hand in their own countries the worst possible representation of Romanian society) the issue of Gypsy integration has become widely understood in EU countries and substantial funding for aid programmes has been provided. Since EU accession in 2007 Gypsies from Romania have attracted attention through informal camping – notably a ‘tabără’ (camp) for some 400 Gypsies in woods at Poll on the edge of Köln which ended after six months when the campers accepted free repatriation – and violence in Rome which brought the prospect of expulsion of black market workers (dismissed in some quarters as a politically-motivated threat by a weak Prodi government) and call in Romania for a boycott of Italian goods; finally resolved by a joint call for more Gypsies integration with EU help.

CONCEPTUALISING EXCLUSION AND MARGINALITY

Philo (2000, p. 751) explains how excluded individuals tend to ‘become unwelcome visitors within those spaces which come to be regarded as the loci of ‘mainstream’ social life’ such as middle class suburbs and prime public space. Sibley (1995) used psycho-analytical arguments about ‘self’ to create distance from all those perceived as alien ‘others’ transformed into socio-spatial configurations grounded in exclusion. ‘Others’ ‘enter the psyche as objects which create unease and discomfort’ (1998, p. 119). As the idea began to assume policy interest, Sibley (1981) anticipated a new tradition of research into excluded minorities through the study of Gypsies and travelling people in general; as reflected in EU projects referred to below. Recalling the work of Lawless *et al.* (1997) on labour markets, Sibley (1998, p. 119) argued that ‘unemployment and associated deprivations, particularly poor housing and inadequate education can, in combination, amount to a denial of citizenship’. While

national economies may 'serve adequately to integrate most of the population, there are some on the margins who are weakly connected to the economic system and need help' (Ibid.). However, 'the idea of an inclusionary society where involvement in the dominant economy (together with care for elderly and disabled) are the main policy objectives has to be examined critically' (Ibid.). Because of their strong sense of autonomy, nomadic Gypsies "have often sought peripheral locations on the edge of cities because in such locations they may be able to minimise the interference of social control agencies and to maintain their cultural separation from the defining [on-Gypsy] *gaje*" (Ibid., p. 120). Thus 'power relationships cannot be easily inferred from the facts of location or involvement in labour markets' (Ibid.), and there is a need to adopt other 'world views' through ethnography or participant observation.

Regarding problems for Gypsy marginalisation in Romania (Burtea 1996; Neculau & Ferreol 1996), the main focus may be placed on what is known as contingent marginality, arising through competitive activities in which Gypsies find themselves at a disadvantage on the free labour market through restriction to low income employments since they lack the qualifications and skills for effective competition; also information about work opportunities in neighbouring areas. While living standards are generally low, disadvantage is arguably greatest when a large number of children are looked after by a Gypsy mother who is widowed (or in some cases divorced). Most of the 'inactive' Gypsies aged under 18 years or over 65 live in poverty, with poverty rates increasing according to the number of children in the family. They suffer from a poor environment e.g. in the Cunți quarter of Timișoara where poor Gypsy families live on beside the Bega river, which is prone to flooding, while Romanians and Hungarians live higher up on the river terraces. And they are also socially and politically disadvantaged, linked with a belief that the local authorities in such communes at Comloșu Mare, Periam and Ticvanu Mare are reluctant to sell building land to Gypsy families, especially when the Gypsies have no council representatives and it is suspected that the land is sought only for speculation. Gender inequality arises through differences in access to employment and the wage levels available (Mehretu *et al.* 2000), while women may encounter further disadvantage if poor services in Gypsy quarters mean that households have to travel relatively long distances for shopping.

Systemic marginality is a socioeconomic condition of disadvantage constructed by incorrect non-market forces; also through traditional inter-ethnic relations (grounded in Gypsy exclusion) and fundamentally divergent value systems: hence systemic marginality applies to a group while contingent marginality applies to individuals. Meanwhile collateral marginality is derivative, arising from social or geographical proximity to people suffering contingent or systemic marginality. In this way, it is a study of unequal development in society and space. Most people living in such areas are threatened by alternative/cheap labour pools. Collateral marginality may also arise as an intermediary form (Mehretu *et al.* 2000, p. 91) e.g. when investors steer clear of Gypsy areas because of their perceived social or environmental contamination. For example, despite low taxes there is no interest to invest in the Bocșa's Godinova quarter because the local labour is unskilled and the area is environmentally degraded by tipping. Tension may easily arise if Gypsies are believed to harbour infectious diseases. In the Dâmbovița suburb of Timișoara, where the Gypsies make bricks on the edge at the lakeside, the children of mainstream families are forbidden by their parents to play with Gypsy children since the latter have no health insurance and are seen as a danger through habits such as washing fruit and vegetables in the dirty water of the lake. International aid for Gypsy communities could also be viewed with hostility by other ethnic groups living in their neighbourhoods) who consider that the Gypsies should do more to help themselves. Such feelings were evident in the towns of Arad, Caransebeș and Lugoj in 1990–1992 when aid was given to poor people who were mostly Gypsies.

Finally, self-exclusion is an important element in the whole syndrome of Gypsies deprivation based on rejection and non-compliance with certain forms of social participation (Stewart 1996). There

are disturbing attitudes to education (already mentioned) while the lack of social assistance for children not attending school is balanced by the preference of many parents to have their children beg in the cities or work from an early age in traditional occupations. There is also widespread resistance to the registration of births and marriages although without identity documents the Gypsies are excluded from legal employment and access to social services as well as passport and voting rights; yet quite apart from the element of cost there are complications that easily make these documentary deficiencies self-perpetuating. A mother wishing to register a birth cannot use the name of an absent father if she has no marriage certificate herself, while the procedure becomes more complex after one year especially because the certificate is only obtainable at the place of birth. Fortunately only a minority of Gypsies are in this predicament with police data for Banat and Crișana in 2006 revealing that 15.0% of Gypsies did not have an identity card, 10.8 percent had no birth certificate and 7.2 percent had no marriage certificate. And it is mainly older people who lack identity cards and marriage certificates although the registering of births seems to have become more lax with some 40% of those without a birth certificate being under 13 years of age.

POLICIES FOR INTEGRATION LINKED WITH EU ACCESSION

Important developments have occurred in part through the development of civil society in Romania and improvements in social security from which the Gypsies have drawn disproportionate benefit (minimum income guarantee and child allowance) along with days of casual work. But the influence of European institutions has been considerable in stimulating specific programmes to ameliorate Gypsy problems internationally through the EU (European Commission 1999; 2004) which has been extremely influential, in view of the lengthy accession process extending to 2007, and global institutions like the World Bank (Ringold 2000; Ringold *et al.* 2005) and UNDP (Ivanov 2002). The transnational dimension has been very useful in evaluating different combinations of policy responses (Hoelscher 2004). Considerable financial resources have been offered: (a) 1993–2000 €5.14mln (€0.64 p.a.) without Romanian government reciprocation; 2001–4 €30.50mln (€7.62p.a.) plus €6.23 (€1.56p.a.) from the Romanian government – total €36.73 (9.18). The EU also launched a programme for the education for the Gypsies' entire 'European Diaspora' and with PHARE support, a centre for ethnocultural diversity encouraged ethnic self-identification for the 2002 census while another organisation for social study and integration aimed at eliminating cultural stereotypes and all forms of discrimination partly through the mass-media (European Commission 2002). There was also \$0.99bln of help during 2000–4 for Gypsy children (UNICEF 1999); \$2.31mln from the Soros (Foundation for an Open Society) during 1997–2000 (\$0.58mln.p.a.) and \$0.98mln 2001–5 (\$0.20mln.p.a.) during 2001–5. The Soros Foundation has used gold stolen from Gypsy by Nazis to fund scholarships for Gypsy students (c.500 in 2001) – in Romania and other transition states. Some have participated in an intensive management course financed by the World Bank and the Ford Foundation. Moreover in 2003 George Soros gave \$30mln to a Gypsy Education Fund (which now has a total of \$43mln pledged) and followed this up by financing a World Bank Conference in Sofia (2005) to agree a 'Decade for Social Inclusion of Gypsies' across the region, to include Romania as well as Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovakia, with EU and World Bank participation.

The EU 'country report' on Romania in 2000 mentioned limited staffing and budgetary resources to support the Gypsies in contrast to faster progress in protecting other minorities under the 1999 amendments to the education law (providing for the use of minority languages at all levels of education – including the possibility of separate state universities). There was also concern from the Council of Europe over the provision of Gypsy schools on the basis of equal opportunity Government

action improved under the provisions of the 1999 Accession Partnership. Acknowledging problems relating to education, unemployment and criminality, the Romanian Government adopted a general PHARE-assisted 'Strategia pentru Îmbunătățirea Situației Romilor' in 2001. Specific actions followed immediately through a 'National Office for Gypsies' (subordinate to a Human Rights Commission within the Ministry of Culture) which quickly developed (under law 430/2001) into a national agency for Gypsies ('Agenția Națională pentru Romi': ANR)) responsible for monitoring, evaluation, planning and coordination; presently in the context of the national development plan for 2007–13 which means that a number of ministries (such as employment and social protection) need to consult Gypsies representatives while the ANR has the main responsibility for links with Gypsies NGOs and civil society. ANR also supports a consultative committee representing the relevant ministries and prescribes actions to be taken by each 'Biroul Județean pentru Romi' (BJR) working at the local level.

From 2002 there have been Gypsy councillors working within each county council and prefecture: collaborating with the police and labour organisations with the aim of enhancing the integration of Gypsy people: improving school attendance and labour market integration. A number of other policy initiatives have been taken. On employment ANR have introduced a Gypsy labour market ('Bursa locurilor de munca pentru Romi') geared to helping Gypsy (especially vulnerable categories: women and young people) to find work with a listing of employers with jobs on offer, although not all these places can be taken because the job seekers lack the required qualifications and also (in some cases) the necessary motivation and commitment for regular work. ANR went on to launch a programme of improvement in 2007 by financing BJR to help Gypsies acquire skills e.g. as construction workers, craftsmen (e.g. as tailors) or office managers. Local authorities must also appoint Gypsy experts where the Gypsy population in their area exceeds five percent. But although this is all very positive, there have been some criticisms of aid that has not been particularly effective (Anăstăsoaie & Târnovschi 2001). It is important to assess the problems realistically in the national context and through the relevant 'situational indices' summarised as (a) the economic and social issues; (b) the relations with central and local government including access to services; and (c) the implications for ethnic identity (Duminică *et al.* 2005). The programmes can then generate activities with results and effects with an observable impact over the longer term.

THE EDUCATION-EMPLOYMENT-HOUSING-HEALTH NEXUS. Proiectul Planului de Acțiune al Deceniului 2004 – for a decade of activity to increase inclusivity – fits in with continuing EU activity through a Monitoring and Advocacy Programme (EUMAP), which reported in 2001 and 2002 on the position of Gypsies in Central and East European Countries (as well as Gypsies and Muslims in Western Europe in 2002 and 2005). It also integrates with the international 2005–2015 programme already mentioned. The general aim is to combat poverty and social exclusion; recognising priority areas of housing (including infrastructure), employment, health and education; with the poverty level reduced to no more than 10%. As regards health the goal is improved access to health care: vaccination and other preventive measures including screening and monitoring of health status; also the elimination of tuberculosis (after Zamfir & Zamfir reported in 1993 that the incidence had declined by a tenth over the previous decade in Gypsy microzones with at least 100 people; while ANR also stated in 2006 that cases among Gypsies had declined by a quarter since 1993 to 21,200). Other health problems involve HIV cases with a 30% decline to 859 during 1993–2006, while hepatitis cases remained constant (c.15,000) and heart problems increased 13% to 32,140. The number of cases is probably greater because many Gypsies do not use the national health service but treat themselves using herbal remedies. But life expectancy is increasing – from 57 years in 1990 to 59 in 2002 (61 for women and 58 for men) due to an increase in hospital beds and doctors in Gypsy areas as well as NGO activity in distributing food and medicine (Gace & Vlădescu 2004).

Education. To achieve a finer focus we wish to proceed with an examination of these interrelated issues which place the spotlight firmly on Gypsy education which has often been very unsatisfactory. A typical case is the school of Bobești, a large Gypsy community in Glina commune on the edge of Bucharest where the majority of adults lack educational qualifications for steady work. During the 1990s 10% worked in the city while the rest received social aid and searched the rubbish dumps, although now half now have income from abroad. Although (unusually) almost all the Gypsy children attend school (accounting for 80% of all pupils) the school remained poorly-equipped (with no sports facilities) and results were poor (with an under-achievement rate of 8.8% for the primary cycle compared with 3.3% for Ilfov county as a whole) with no remedial facilities provided. So, after the revolution, Romanian parents (and some Gypsies) withdrew their children and either sent them to Ozana (across the Bucharest city boundary) or to a different school in Glina commune where the teaching was considered to be better (OSI EUMAP 2007, pp. 130–9). Since this is a typical situation, better education is particularly important in view of the relatively large number of young people in the Gypsy community: 24.0% of the population of Romania are under 18, but 43.6% for Gypsies (with corresponding figures of 26.6 and 29.1% for the 18–34 group; but 25.3 and 19.7% for the 35–54 group and 23.5 and 7.6% for people aged 55 and over (OSI/EUMAP 2007, p. 30). Literacy for Gypsies over 15 years of age was 69% in 2005 compared with 96% for Romanians in the vicinity (Ibid, p. 108) and predictably lower for the over 45s: 63% (95%) than the younger age groups: 71% for 15–34s (96%). Although young Gypsies are better educated than their parents there is still a gulf separating Gypsies from the rest of the population: according to OSI (2006): 23% of young people of school age do not attend (five percent nationally) and only five percent of Gypsies adults have high school education (70% nationally). This is very relevant to the labour market and an escape from poverty: about half the Gypsies of working age do not have a job (i.e. 50% unemployment compared with a national average of 15%); with a clear relationship between economic status of families and performance of children in school. Hence the current priority for better access to quality education; also an end to segregated schools and classes resulting in lower standards for Gypsies and a higher level of dropping-out (McDonald 1999; Gerganov *et al.* 2005).

Barriers were identified in the Ministry report ‘Școala la răscruce’ or schooling at the crossroads (2001) (OSI EUMAP 2007, pp. 100–123). Poverty correlates with low income/unemployment and poor educational achievement, but there are also discriminatory attitudes (Cozma *et al.* 2000); as well as problems of overcrowding in some Gypsies-only schools; poor buildings; and a shortage of qualified teachers (suggesting that incentives are needed to retain teachers in disadvantaged communities while many more Gypsies teachers should be trained). Links with the community are relatively poor, suggesting the need for decentralisation to allow more emphasis on local culture and minority issues in particular. Crucially, the Romany language should no longer be stigmatised: this matter was first addressed in 1992 and resulted in the appointment of a Romany language inspector (Gheorghe Sțărău) in the Ministry of Education with collaboration in 1998 to create teaching resources and manuals in the Romany language. At the same time, many Gypsies have only limited knowledge of Romanian – 44% of the Gypsies who declared themselves at the 2002 census speak the Romany language, but the UNDP revealed in 2001 that 63% of Gypsies speak Romany at home. Poor knowledge of Romanian is also seen as a major educational barrier which indicates the need for a bilingual approach. Thus after years of undue sensitivity over ethnic autonomy the way is now open for Gypsy-managed schools with bilingual education rather than Romanian-managed Gypsy segregated schools or Romanian majority schools lacking bilingual facilities. Meanwhile, more effort is needed to get the Gypsy into school with a focus on pre-school education: involving 66.1% of children for Romania in 2000–1 but only 20% for Gypsies. Thus most Gypsy children are starting school without prior experience of an educational environment, raising the possibility of ‘after school’ classes for the disadvantaged.

Hence the importance of making schools real agents of change: boosting school attendance with a priority to end longstanding segregation with substandard neighbourhood-based schools (including some mixed schools that become *de facto* Gypsy schools when non-Gypsy families move away or send their children to other schools) (ERRC 2005). It is also desirable to return to the mainstream, any children wrongly placed in special education (although this has sometimes offered short-term advantages in terms of school materials, meals and allowances). As regards older people, an interesting initiative taken during the 1990s involved illiterate young (married) women of Ivești (from cauldron maker families) who started a basic education programme at the local school initiated by the German foundation Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. From such experience emerged the idea of a second chance and such 'A Doua Șansă' programme was launched in 2000 on a pilot basis to help integrate Gypsy pupils with the backing of EU funds; based on effective liaison between the BJR, local experts and Gypsy teachers to ensure funding for students working at the school or at home. In response there has been new research financed by PHARE in 2000: 'Acces la educație pentru grupuri dezavantajate cu focalizare pe romi' which provided 200 Gypsy mediators for schools across the country linked with measures to improve access and eliminate segregated classes by 2008, with a focus on teaching materials, special needs, nursery attendance (with an annual increase of five percent) and community participation. Phase One in 2001 aimed at improved access in 10 pilot counties; followed on a larger scale at 108 pilot schools in 12 counties during 2003–6 (with a focus on teaching materials, special needs and community participation) with the other counties to be involved from 2004. Over the decade it is hoped to boost school attendance to 75% which could be regarded as an over-modest objective.

AN IMPROVING SITUATION. Figures from OSI EUMAP (2007) show that whereas 15% of Gypsies were not carrying an identity card in 1995 there were just nine percent in 2000; while the proportion of married Gypsies without a marriage certificate fell from over ten percent to just seven percent. but in some areas it is much higher with 30% recorded by a local census carried out in the town of Avrig; so it may be necessary to take special measures of the kind adopted in Dolj county in Oltenia where a mobile office visited the communes with the greatest problems. Progress over social inclusion is also reported by the Ministry of Labour, Social Solidarity and Family (2006). For the period 2002–2006 the proportion of families living in poverty fell from 60% to 45% compared with national rates of 33% and 29% percent respectively which show the gap narrowing from 182% to 136% of the national rate. The goal is now 10% for the end of the decade which should even closer to the national average. OSI EUMAP (2007) also found that 45% of Gypsies consider themselves Romanianised in the sense that they embrace Romanian culture. And the Gypsies seem to be catching up on the rest of the population in terms of employment rates rising from 39 to 48% during 1996–2001 and they earn the same as the mainstream population after allowing for their generally poorer qualifications. Indeed "if the health and schooling of Gypsies were to improve to the extent that employment prospects increase with human capital, they might move out of poverty without having to deal with discrimination in earnings" (Mete *et al.* 2003, p.43). Clearly labour market programmes must reach the all the unemployed Gypsies – with a focus on such matters as business training with access to micro-finance and start-up grants – so that in all communities the unemployment rate can be reduced to 15% by the end of the Gypsies decade. But in general it may be desirable to target poor communities where Gypsies are over-represented in order to avoid further marginalisation by singling out the group explicitly. Meanwhile, some Gypsies became well-integrated into Western business, like the Novacovici family with their summer palace in Buziaș (Timiș county) supported by a network of flower shops in Sweden.

Education. Attendance is improving with 129,000 Gypsy pupils in 1989–90 rising to 250,000 in 2006–7 (OSI EUMAP 2007, p.34) but in 2005 the 76% of Gypsies 7–15 year olds registered compared with 94% for the majority population living in Gypsy areas. Schools are showing signs of improvement. At Bobești (already mentioned) a second Romany-speaking teacher is now employed and aid was sought under the 2005 PHARE programme 'Access la educație pentru grupuri

dezavantajate' to develop as a magnet for Gypsy children. Meanwhile Pustă Vale, on the edge of Șimleu Silvaniei (already described), was endowed with a new school in 2006 which brought a great improvement on the previous situation when the older children had to walk 14kms each day to a school in Cehei where the Gypsy pupils were taught in a separate and much inferior building. Progress has been made very widely in securing better buildings (including new classroom furniture and toilets) and well as teaching equipment and materials. A World Bank programme to 'reintegrate' parents in school activities has produced some positive results with parents once apathetic over their children's education now prepared to encourage cultural projects (including theatre groups performing for mixed audiences) and install home computers. For 16–19 year olds the gap in participation was much greater at 17 and 69% (a ratio of 1:4) and worse still at the tertiary level with one percent and five percent (Ibid). But action is being taken at these higher levels. Reserved places have been made available at universities from 1993–4, while Ordinance 2134 of 2000 requires that three places should be provided for young Gypsies in each university faculty, without fees or entrance examinations. With 1,667 faculties (across the public sector – private universities are not involved) this means a total of 5,000 places, although the take-up is only around 49 percent: some 500 enrolments each year with means 2,000 places over four years, with the greatest interest in Bucharest and Craiova. A similar scheme operates in the high schools with some 10,000 free places in 3,820 schools: in this case the take-up is much higher at 70 percent and in some institutions like Jean Monnet in Bucharest young Gypsy students account for over half the total students. The Second Chance programme, piloted from 2000, involves special classes at high schools as well as workshops held at conferences such as the thrice-yearly Gypsy meetings. New skills have enabled adult Gypsies to take jobs in computing, call centres as well as traditional trades such as tailoring.

Housing. The Gypsies continue to identify themselves prominently through crude 'contingency' housing, while the squalid nature of dedicated apartment blocks attracts accusations of neglect by the authorities when taxes and fuel bills go unpaid. In the Gypsies quarter of Huși 80 families (about 1,000 people) feel 'abandoned' by the authorities – with water available only by taking buckets from a fountain and refuse collection denied (i.e. no container is provided). On the other hand affluent Gypsy families are able to buy modern domestic equipment and cars (even when their illiterate owners cannot obtain driving licences) and it is surprising to find a proliferation of Gypsy 'palace' (palaces) since 1989 through the construction of large houses – typically with three or four storeys – to accommodate extended families. Such buildings are not only large but are additionally conspicuous with towers covered with zinc-coated plate as a sign of wealth. It is reported that since 1994 over a hundred such 'palaces' have been built by the Gypsy coppersmiths of Ivești – a distinct group appointing their own 'bulibasha' – and many have moved into this so-called 'golden district' after buying land through companies concerned with gold and copper as well. But problems have arisen in all large Gypsy communities where building has taken place without the approval of the planning authority with demolition resulting in some cases, while lack of documentation furnishing proof of ownership has also caused some difficulty. In some ways the situation has become more difficult because whereas the communist system generally tolerated Gypsy non-compliance the property law of 1993 made no exception to the general requirement of documentary proof of ownership for land and buildings. There is still a reluctance to conform and a private census at Avrig revealed that 80% of property owners had no documents. Once again special measures may be needed along with clearer mechanisms for local authority accountability to ensure that Gypsy settlements become integral parts of municipal development plans with better resourcing of the local authorities involved.

Organisations. The Gypsies are organising themselves more effectively. In 1990 a movement for Gypsies emancipation was started under the leadership of the Democratic Union of Roma (Uniuna Democrată a Romilor) – which became the Roma Party (Partida Romilor) in 1992 – and the Roma Society ('Societatea Romilor') which collapsed through internal dissension in 1992. There were also

cultural organisations such as ‘Aven amentza’ (Cultural Foundation of Gypsies Emancipation), the General Union of Roma (‘Uniunea Generală a Romilor) and the Gypsy Women’s Organisation (‘Organizația Femeilor Țigănci). Meanwhile traditional leadership was manifested through the Cioabă and Rădulescu families in Sibiu. Indeed, Iulian Rădulescu – self-styled ‘emperor of all Gypsies’ – still seeks compensation for his deportation to Transnistria in 1942. However traditional leaders are not considered effective because authority is “rarely recognised beyond their extended families and the people who are keen to do business with them” (Barany 2004, p. 263). As regards the media, a Centre for Gypsy Social Studies launched ‘Gypsy News’ financed by the EU PHARE Programme to improve media presentation of Gypsy affairs and challenge the conventional stereotypes which help to perpetuate discrimination. Other initiatives include the newscast ‘Rromano Lil’ as well as a radio station and press agency reported in 2000; these services continue to operate although more Gypsy journalists are clearly needed. The Cațavencu Agency of Press Monitoring was set up by an NGO called the Resource Centre for Ethnocultural Diversity to use press and TV advertising to encourage Gypsy self-identification for the 2002 census.

On the political side, the situation is more problematic. An overarching Gypsy Federation emerged in 2001, but organisations are often dominated by their leaders due to low membership, although they seek enforcement of anti-discrimination laws, better education and employment opportunities, more positive media portrayal (with more dedicated radio and TV) and more effective welfare policies. There have been successes in local government, though parliamentary seats are difficult to secure because the modest vote (reflecting lack of confidence in Gypsy leaders who are seen as having access to money which is may be used for personal advantage) is been split between as many as five parties.. As a result Gypsy do not always support Gypsy parties and may gravitate towards the centre-left Party of Social Democracy in recognition of help from former president Iliescu over the privatisation of state-owned houses (although subsequent restitution legislation meant that these properties had to be given back to the pre-communist owners from whom they were abusively seized). At present there is strong support for the Democratic Party, perceived as the strongest party at present (attracting 80 percent of Gypsies votes in the 2007 European election) but the turnout is relatively poor. During the 1990s there was one Gypsy member in each of the two parliamentary chambers (Chamber of Deputies and the Senate) but only the one senator from 2000 when the Gypsy vote was too small to elect a deputy, although in 2007 the Gypsies (through Partidul Romilor Pro Europa) only narrowly failed to claim the seat in the European Parliament for registered ethnic minority voters. At the local level the situation was better during 2004–8 with 54 mayors (involving 12 towns in Wallachia and 42 communes mainly in the same area) and 134 councillors elected not only in the south (Bucharest, Dolj, Giurgiu, Mehedinți and Teleorman counties) but also in Moldavia (Bacău), Transylvania (Mureș and Sibiu) and the west (Arad and Bihor), And while most sit on commune councils there is a presence in such towns as Alexandria, Arad, Bucharest, Craiova, Giurgiu, Oradea and Sibiu, where the Gypsies interest is also advanced by the requirement that a local authority appoint a Gypsy expert where the Gypsy element exceeds five percent of the total population

Inter-Ethnic Relations. Barometers of Gypsy inclusion (CNCD 2004; FSD 2007) show that prejudice is still widespread. But Gypsy infractions are reported to have fallen by a fifth over the past decade, although the prevalence of crime is still twice as high among Gypsies than Romanians (three times in the case of Hungarians). Compared with 12,880 Gypsies infractions in 1995 the police reported only 4,921 cases in 2005. Moreover, research shows that some public prejudice is unfounded: although the Gypsies stronghold of Ferentari in south Bucharest is perceived an area prone to crime although the rate is actually no greater than the average and interviews show that residents had witnessed relatively few incidents (Dumitrache & Dumbrăveanu 1998, pp. 61–67). Some outstanding cases are being resolved, including the Hădăreni incident since 2005–2007 saw the conclusion of two legal actions: one by the Romanian authorities confirming an earlier decision that the Romanians

responsible should to pay compensation and to have their houses seized in the process (although the houses have not yet been taken) and another by the European Court of Human Rights (started in 2000) required the Romanian government to pay €500,000 to the Gypsy victims. This money has now been paid while the housing problem has been tackled (though not yet completely resolved) by construction of a new apartment block to cover the houses destroyed and others that were built without proper authority. Meanwhile the National Agency for the Gypsies (replacing the Department of Gypsy Affairs in 2004) has been joined by the NGO 'Partners for Local Development Foundation' over community projects to improve relations (e.g. in health and education in 2005).

BANAT CASE STUDY. This study is undertaken to gain a fuller picture of the actions being taken with regard to official programmes advanced through the BJR with the additional support provided by the NGO sector to enhance economic and social integration among a diverse Gypsy community. The regional distribution (Table 2) shows relatively large Gypsy shares in Central region (3.96%) and the North West region (3.50) followed by the South West (2.58) – and the West (2.47) which includes the Banat counties of Arad, Caraș-Severin and Timiș as well as Hunedoara county which has not been investigated. In a region of great ethnic diversity the Gypsies are now the second largest minority group (after the Hungarians) (Table 3). In lowland Banat, Gypsies typically account for 5–15% of individual village communities (rather more in the vicinity of monasteries) and might constitute a large majority in some special cases like Măguri near Lugoj where most Romanians moved into the town selling off their houses and gardens to the Gypsies. Other concentrations are to be found at Covăsiņ, Sântana and Șiria at the edge of the Zarand Mountains in Arad county (also the Micălaca area of Arad city); the western edge of Caraș-Severin county (Ticvanu Mare and Vrani near Oravița) as well as the Bocșa-Reșița industrial area; and the south-central and northwestern parts of Timiș county with strong Gypsy communities in Comloșu Mare, Lenauheim, Sânpetru Mare and Topolovățu Mare near the towns of Timișoara and Jimbolia. As is the case nationally there is a need for greater integration (through the education system), higher employment and reduced criminality, although there has been little violence (or the daubing of slogans) thanks to the social harmony arising from the tradition of a multi-ethnic society which – along with a westerly location – contributes to the attractiveness of Banat for foreign investment (Popa & Sârbovan-Ancuța 1999). This, in turn, makes for better employment opportunities for the local Gypsies even though most secure only the lowest-paid jobs because they lack professional training. The Gypsies have some cultural organisation through the newspaper 'O glas al rromengo' ('The Voice of the Gypsies') launched in Timișoara in 1990 as a supplement of 'Baricada'. But they are still relatively inactive politically: although 8,213 votes cast in the parliamentary elections of 2004 (for Gypsy parties and others) was a substantial increase on 5,533 votes recorded in 2000, it was still barely a quarter of the 34,900 Gypsies on the voting register (compared with a 50% level of participation by Romanians and 75% for Hungarians).

Table 2

Regional distribution of Gypsies 1992 and 2002.

	1992 Census		2002 Census		Difference
	Total th	Percent	Total th	Percent	
Bucharest	22.1	1.8	39.3	2.72	+17.2
Central	73.3	3.80	93.1	3.96	+19.8
North East	27.2	1.72	46.9	1.22	+19.7
North West	82.0	3.42	97.0	3.50	+15.0
South	83.1	2.80	98.5	2.91	+13.4
South East	37.0	1.60	49.6	1.70	+12.6
South West	43.2	2.40	62.3	2.58	+19.1
West	33.2	1.41	48.5	2.47	+15.3
Total	401.1	1.76	535.2	2.47	+134.1

Table 3

Ethnic Structure of West Region 1992 and 2002.

	1992 Census		2002		Difference
	Total th	Percent	Total th	Percent	
Total	2298.0	100.00	2168.7	100.00	-129.3
Romanians	1710.1	74.40	1689.4	86.25	-20.7
Hungarians	161.0	7.00	131.1	6.09	-29.9
Gypsies	33.2	1.41	48.5	2.47	+15.3
Germans	65.7	2.86	27.1	1.38	-38.6
Serbs	27.0	1.17	26.6	1.05	- 0.4
Others	30.0	1.30	26.0	1.00	-4.0

Local Authorities. The county administrations have now been strengthened by the opening of a BJR (with the recommended level of staffing involving six persons) while experts are in place at the local level where many towns qualify for at least one expert e.g. Curtici in Arad county, Bocşa in Caraş-Severin and Deta, Lugoj, Recaş and Sânnicolau Mare in Timiş. However in the interim a number of temporary volunteers were needed (including some Romanians) to make up the numbers. A problem has been finding Gypsies who have the necessary qualifications e.g. Timiş could not employ any Gypsy specialists until 2006 (since no candidates came forward with the high school qualifications required) but five Gypsy volunteers were taken on and each one operated for a time as an expert. The situation in Arad has also improved recently where most of the initial temporary staff were replaced by five graduates from university faculties (including three from Sântana-Şiria area which means they have good knowledge of local poverty problems). The requirements are quite stringent with the experts needing a university degree, knowledge of a foreign language (preferably English), contacts with Gypsy communities through questionnaire or field study, a year's experience in Gypsy projects (mainly relating to EU funding) and the ability to help Gypsy in such domains as computer literacy, language skills and clerical work. There have also been some financial constraints and mediators have sometimes been used on a temporary basis. However, the situation is now satisfactory.

Employment. The number of Gypsies in local government has increased as more young Gypsy students have completed their high school and faculty education in the county towns of the region and have been helped by Gypsy politicians and intellectuals to take administrative jobs mainly in the BJR. But more finance is needed for work programmes which might, for example, train more social and medical assistants, while more could be done to cope with depressed, high unemployment areas in the main towns (Arad, Lugoj and Timişoara) and other places with a high Gypsy percentage. There are problems in the town of Sântana (Arad county) where Gypsy, constituting a third of the population, suffer from a particularly high level of unemployment and a high incidence of tuberculosis. BJR volunteers have been able to offer training to over a third of the population but many can do no better than take casual work – with payment on a daily basis – in agriculture and construction. As elsewhere in Romania young Gypsy have gone abroad in search of work but a proportion have sunk into criminality and have been repatriated. The NGO Association of Gypsy Women has also been very innovative in working with the local authority in Giarmata and Sântana in a programme that has secured PHARE finance for 24 houses and also obtained 10 ha of land to provide small plots for Gypsy families interested in growing vegetables. The local authorities provided the land for subdivision. At this point it is worth mentioning that the French government has financed a programme to settle repatriated Gypsies on small farms and provide livestock; although it remains to be seen if these enterprises will be viable and if the Gypsies will adjust to a life in farming in spite of the attractions of high salaries in other EU countries. Documentation again enters the picture through the 'carte de muncă' or work card; as well discrimination arising from a prison sentence or repatriation

for infraction abroad (hence the need for incentives to encourage employers to recruit such people). Not all projects succeed however: the Recitrave project run in Timisoara during 2000–2002 with European money for professional training and social reintegration did not succeed in placing any of the trainees. And while the Gypsies ‘Access’ Association cooperated with the Town Hall of Jimbolia over three-month training courses in 2002, preparing some 35 men and women for work in furniture and tailoring, most have since emigrated to Germany (although this was not necessarily a bad outcome). Better practical programmes are needed with greater amounts of EU money accessed.

Environmental and Housing Improvements. As local budgets increase – especially in the large towns, helped by local taxation of foreign companies – there is more being allocated to housing subsidies and assistance over clothing, winter heating and medicines. A substantial environmental improvement was made to roads and bridges in Gypsy areas, notably in the Gypsy district of Bocșa along with lighting for isolated streets. However a problem remains over garbage – left strewn around their houses and springs – partly because the council does not have enough vehicles to cover all streets regularly, but also because some Gypsy families refuse to put their refuse in bins. In the case of the periodic flooding of Gypsy homes in the Cunți area of Timișoara (and consequent temporary evacuations) the municipality is implementing a project (2007–2010) to contain the river channel. But more needs to be done to cope with depressed, high unemployment areas in the main towns and other places with a high Gypsy percentage e.g. depressed areas in Timișoara with high Gypsy unemployment like Luna (near the brewery) and Fratelia (close to the southern railway station). Over housing a negative picture has been coloured by local authority evictions from houses that were entered illegally and the Gypsy occupiers have lacked proof of ownership. New Gypsy ‘palaces’, built in Lugoj and elsewhere, are generally approved by the planning process but some were built illegally in Timișoara after a spontaneous migration to Strada Constantin Diaconovici Loga, with subsequent demolition generating diplomatic fall-out in the case of some individuals with double (Romanian-French) citizenship. Fiscal checks on sources of wealth have also raised tension. And in Arad some buildings listed as architectural monuments have been embellished with unapproved balconies and columns that have needed removal. On the other hand many Gypsy families were able to obtain cheap houses in the period 1990–1992 when German families emigrated; while the law on social housing (1992) allowed Gypsies access to nationalised properties (which enhanced President Iliescu’s popularity for a time, as already noted). Allocation of substandard properties (e.g. not resistant to earthquake hazards) have also created difficulties but there is still a legal requirement to provide low-rent social housing is needed for poor Gypsy families (and others) with an income of less than €100/month.

Education. Coordinated by a Gypsy school inspector in each county, integration projects seek to improve school attendance. In Timiș county has an inspector looking after all special Gypsy ethnic classes which are provided in parts of Deta, Jimbolia, Lugoj (Măguri), Recaș and Timișoara (Fratelia and Mehala) as well as the villages of Chevereșu Mare, Comloșu Mare and Lenauheim involving 2,000 pupils and 32 teachers. Despite some incidence of theft these schools are no longer segregated as was the case during 1990–1992 when other ethnic groups stayed away. The work extends into higher education. Since Timișoara Technical College works on a ‘Second Chance’ project with the high school ‘Școala Auto’ where most pupils are Gypsies who graduate as motor mechanics. The university free places scheme does not operate as successfully as elsewhere: young Gypsy are considered to be too proud to accept charity (a situation that is also reported from Sibiu). But the NGO sector is particularly important and involves a wide spread of activities – some complementing official projects in education e.g. Foundation Center Education 2000 financed by a Gypsy NGO called Matra to seek ‘Equal Chances for Gypsy Children in Education’ in five high schools in Timiș while the Intercultural Institute in Timișoara has European (Socrates-Comenius) funding for its ‘Eurrom’ project training teachers to work with Gypsy children. Meanwhile, the Association of Gypsy Women has tried to improve the standard of teaching for Gypsy pupils and improve school attendance: in the latter case

bounties of €100 are offered to each Gypsy pupil completing their primary (eight year) schooling; attracting some envy from non-Gypsy pupils who would like to see other NGOs helping them in the same way! Also the county school inspectors cooperate with the Association over Gypsy pupil-teacher ratios, year by year, and arrange financial support for problem families (which reach €100/month for pupils who make good progress with their studies). On the whole, education programmes are working quite well with visible progress over the past decade.

Health and Welfare is another concern in view of the very poor access to doctors and hospitals in many rural areas; moreover pharmacies are very limited and free pills for some conditions are available only for a few days each month before supplies are exhausted. Efforts are being made to provide one Gypsy doctor for each 1,000 Gypsy citizens which twice as good as the national average. Health authority campaigns are trying to prevent infectious diseases among Gypsy communities – especially in the Cunți area of Timisoara and the communes of Banloc and Săcălaz – where outbreaks of hepatitis, syphilis and tuberculosis have occurred in recent years. The national strategy also involves social mediators operating in Gypsy communities and seven mediators, trained by the Ministry for Health & Families, now work in each of the three Banat counties looking after elderly people. As regards broader welfare matters there is a national system of minimum income guarantee along with child allowances (€30/month per child) as already mentioned, while other measures are gradually being taken at the local level with the launch of a training partnership by Timișoara Town Hall; while there is also some psychological counseling to help poor families access charitable sources to cope with their shortages of clothing, food and medicines.

However the NGO sector is again very active. The Banat Christian Community helps Gypsies with food and clothing at major Christian gatherings. And with encouragement from the Association of Gypsy Students, useful work is being done by Parudimos: a student NGO staffed by many Gypsy volunteers and involved in cultural and economic activities for young Gypsies e.g. festivals of song and dance; assistance for students over accommodation plus free food in social canteens; and integration into the world of work with part-time work during the period of study and full-time jobs after graduation. Parudimos has also collaborated with Radio Timișoara – since 2003 – over weekly one-hour Romani language programmes that are actually initiated by Gypsy students to include Gypsy family documentaries (both rich and poor), live Gypsy festival broadcasts, traditional skills (livestock breeding and copper working) and political interviews. The Christian Gypsy Democratic Union arranged with the Timiș Prefecture to celebrate an International Gypsy Day in 2001 (continued each year since) through musical events in churches. Parudimos have also been contracted by the local labour and social security office to help establish a network of employers ready to accept Gypsy workers (and generally requiring only basic qualifications). The Cultural Social Association for Gypsies in Banat (CSA) and Parudimos have worked with the police and reintegration service in an ‘Equal Chances’ project (launched in 2004) to integrate young Gypsies released from prison. This approach was strengthened in 2005 when CSA and the police were joined by Timiș CC, Timișoara Town Hall, West University (Department of Sociology and Psychology) and the St Peter and Paul Humanitarian Association to provide social and educational programmes for some 260 Gypsies still in prison. In addition CSA have undertaken sustainable development projects for Gypsies while the Parudimos ‘Investment in the Future’ programme has trained 14 young Gypsies for community development and fund raising.

The Măguri Community. One of the largest Gypsy communities in Banat is Măguri (previously known as Săndălac) seven kilometres south of Lugoj but within its urban territory today, although the Gypsy community developed in the Habsburg period when they worked in the town (the German Lugosch) but were not allowed to live in it before 1918. Along with many of the Romanians, some Gypsy subsequently moved into three areas of the town under Romanian administration – Casztela,

Mondial (near a factory of that name working marble) and Naimontelep – while their houses in Măguri were taken over by Gypsies coming in from the surrounding hill country and other in-migrants built new wooden houses which are a distinct legacy from this period. But there was further exclusion under the Antonescu wartime regime of 1940–1994 which has made Măguri a much larger – and now relatively exclusive – Gypsy community (although a few of the more affluent Gypsy families moved back into town after the war). Whereas there were 335 Gypsies in the village in 1900 (40 percent of the total) there were 577 in 2002 (80 percent) with 15 percent Romanian (including some assimilated Gypsy families) and less than five percent Hungarian, although the latter are actually Hungarian speaking Romani who settled in the late nineteenth century. Relations between the three groups are good as is generally the case in Banat. With a mixture of traditional skills (as blacksmiths, brickmakers and musicians) and new occupations (technicians and construction/environment workers) only five percent of the working-age population have waged employment: two in a local Romanian-owned shop while others commute into the centre of the town. However many are self-employed (commonly one person in each family) as singers who earn a considerable income, through performing at weddings and festivals. Other income is obtained from selling flowers, black market ('la negru') labour in the building industry or activity abroad. But there is still a high level of dependence on social security and more effort is needed on the part of the Timiș BJR and the Lugoj council (on which there has been a Gypsy representative since 2004). And the challenge extends to education because although all local schools (including the 'gymnasium') teach through the medium of the Gypsy language although only half the children of school age actually attend (while only a few attend colleges and professional schools in the towns).

The community is quite poor and has been unable to take full advantage of restitution legislation. Although some land has been returned other claims are impeded through a lack of documentation (even identity cards) while some families do not even have proof of home ownership. Services are provided by the town of Lugoj, apart from roads and gas pipes which are the responsibility of Timiș CC (Pandele 2002). While electricity is available many households have been cut-off for non-payment of bills; this prevents access to television and popular local programmes such as Europa Nova Lugoj. There is no gas supply and consequently families have to collect wood for their stoves which are the sole source of heating (though some firewood is provided by the local authority and distributed by NGOs). Roads have been poor until recently and there is no bus service. Hospital services are largely centralised in the town, although a small local hospital (with few facilities) remains in Măguri. However use of Lugoj hospitals by Gypsy women from Măguri since 1990 has made for a great improvement in care and constitutes emancipation of a kind. 170 of a total of 230 houses accommodate Gypsy families with five to seven members with the larger tending to poorer and less well educated. However only about 25 wooden houses remain and the condition of the majority is satisfactory. Social housing has brought some improvements since several homes previously inhabited by Romanian families who went abroad were made available at low cost. There is a gradient from the large brick-built tile-faced houses in the centre with 7–10 rooms and high levels of car ownership and the poor one-room cabins on the periphery that lack even an electricity supply. But better housing is not always the top priority and some families with relatively poor accommodation invest in gold and run second-hand Mercedes cars. Socially the community had some unity through participation in long-established festivals when traditional costume is still worn: 'Zăpostul' in March marks the end of winter while a festival for children goes along with the religious feast of St Mary in mid-August and there is a the ball ('Balul romilor') in October.

The local authority has been active in securing PHARE funding for the local infrastructure. €12mln was spent during 2002–6 on a new road to the town centre (and the improvement of the old one), along with refurbishment of the school and the 'Cămin cultural'. And Romanian government funding had provided piped water, sewerage, a TV cable and a heating installation for the Orthodox

church. There is also space available for a hundred new houses on the edge of the village which are intended for the rehousing of existing families and also to accommodate more incomers. Some NGOs, with both Gypsy and Romanian workers, provide support for the Măguri Gypsies (including the distribution of food and clothing, as well as the firewood already mentioned: the Lugoj-based Hope Angels Foundation and the Charity Association from the Lugoj Uniate/Greek-Catholic diocese; also the Bethany Social Services Foundation and the Parudimos Association from Timișoara. In particular Parudimos has helped to train Rome teenagers to work in aspects of community development as part of county networks to improve inter-ethnic relations, school attendance, health education and cultural development. There has been some improvement in the sense that over 50 children now attend school

A questionnaire survey among 300 children and 170 parents revealed the depth of traditional family life and reliance on the judgement of the older people. As a result the state appears as an alien institution that may provide benefits occasionally needed on an emergency basis but without requiring the obligation to cooperate with basic bureaucratic requirements: an outlook that was sustainable under communism to the point where few can see the need to change their habits now, even though the health services are no longer free (since drugs have to be paid for) and those who work abroad are not normally insured against hospital treatment at home. Thus only the younger people become aware of the need for integration into mainstream society including conformity with legal requirements (e.g. over proper documentation) in return for the right to enjoy state benefits. Most high school graduates appreciate the benefit of basic education, which is encouraging for the next Gypsy generation, even if additional workplace skills are needed as a qualification for finding work abroad. However neglect of basic skills at a time when the labour market demands high qualifications is now placing most Gypsy families at a more serious disadvantage. About half the families now live comfortably through money sent from Germany, Italy and Spain; while 30% have no regular income and depend on social security through 'community social assistance': a special programme for Gypsy launched by Lugoj Town Hall in 2005–2006. But poverty remains a problem for the 20% with income from local employment since wages are low for unskilled work and hardly meet the needs of families with three or four children; which affects education since school books have to be shared. However local education has improved through school modernisation with computers and new furniture and also the completion of a new 'Centre for Gypsy Social Assistance' offering 60 places for extra school classes to counter dropping-out; also computer facilities to help children keep in touch with parents working abroad; free xerox facilities; and a games room.

CONCLUSION

The integration of Gypsies is a social problem with deep historical roots and one which shows a consistent pattern of marginality. It is also relevant to ask to what extent the Gypsies have tacitly encouraged or acquiesced in their marginalisation as a means of preserving elements in their traditional culture; although it is also evident that governments have been unable to resource policies of social inclusion consistently and have – at times – sought radical and inhumane solutions. Meanwhile, the perception of the Gypsies as a disruptive minority responsible for disproportionate levels of criminality is not wholly unjustified and forms part of the wider problem of self-exclusion; although it has to be recognised that substantial numbers of Gypsies are continually joining mainstream society and tacitly relinquishing their old affiliations which means that the visible Gypsy community is almost by definition deprived and underprivileged: instinctively falling back on a traditional practice of compensating for marginality by cultural identity and family cohesion in order to survive in a climate of discrimination which has certainly increased – albeit unintentionally – since 1989; while the strategy is widely perceived by others as a perverse resistance to meaningful connection with mainstream society

and government. But limited resources have blunted even the most well-meaning efforts to improve welfare and the post-communist years have seen a measure of welfare retrenchment and the expanding Gypsy organisations have lacked the resources to make a significant impact.

However now that the European concept of an inclusive society cannot now accept Gypsy marginalisation, policies must be adopted and prosecuted to a successful conclusion. With adequate resources now available after several years of sustained economic growth (which has also transformed the labour market) it is now imperative that the historic problem of marginality should be addressed with priority for the disproportionately large younger generation. While traditional values and practices will be difficult to break down there are signs that many Gypsy families are now trying to balance the maintenance of their cultural identity with more meaningful inclusion in a wider society. So it is important that the new generation should be encouraged to extend this compromise between modern and traditional values. Hence the appropriate emphasis on young Gypsy to seek employment and also to take up places in high schools and universities (where attendance has traditionally been very low on account of the preference for handicraft work). The paper has also outlined the increasing role of national and local government; also the scope for practical training by ANR institutions and experienced NGOs according to the programme for community development launched under the Lisbon Agenda. Indeed, the substantial input by NGOs in such areas as health and education is making it easier for the Gypsies to help themselves in a situation where the performance of dedicated political parties is disappointing. There is certainly considerable potential here since OSI have drawn attention to a lack of capacity in accessing European funding and other weaknesses including premises that have inadequate space and are poorly located. Further momentum is being generated by designation of 2005–2015 as the ‘decade of Gypsy inclusion’ with priority for education, health, employment and housing/infrastructure, And while Romania accommodates the presidency for this initiative within the ANR (in view of its large Gypsy population) the Institute for Life Quality Research (Institutul pentru Cercetarea Calității Vieții: ICCV) has extended its activity to ensure that Gypsy projects are included in virtually all its 20 projects concerned with these four interrelated priorities

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