

ROMA NEW MIGRANTS: Local Research in the U.K. and European Contexts

Edited by Marion Horton and John Grayson

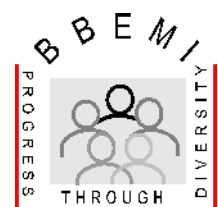


A Conference Report of
ROMA NEW MIGRANTS: A RESEARCH AND INFORMATION DAY
Burngreave Vestry Hall, Burngreave, Sheffield, Saturday March 8th 2008.
9.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.

Ad

Ed

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Barnsley Black and
Ethnic Minorities Initiative



Bystrany a village in Slovakia from which many Slovak Roma in Sheffield originate. Photograph Zuzana Znamenáčková

Engaged Research and the Conference

Marion Horton (AdEd Knowledge Company and chair of the Conference)

The Conference was organised by the AdEd Knowledge Company on behalf of BBEMI (Barnsley Black and Ethnic Minority Initiative), and funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The AdEd Knowledge Company is a new not for profit social enterprise for research and adult education, founded in 2006 and based in Sheffield which has as its aim 'Changing the World through Popular Adult Education'.

The partners in the Company have a long record of work with Gypsy and Traveller people in Yorkshire, and Roma in Hungary. I have researched health and site needs in Leeds, and with John Grayson was part of a team in 2006 / 7 which investigated Accommodation and Site Needs for Gypsies and Travellers for the local authorities in South Yorkshire. Part of this survey led us to meet Roma families in Rotherham and Sheffield. We (with Andrew Petrie) decided to undertake a separate piece of research jointly with the new Roma communities and to make it available to Roma groups for their use in lobbying and improving local conditions. We published a research report in 2007 the first in the North of England which surveyed recent Roma migration and settlement in South Yorkshire. As part of this research we organised an unusual 'focus group' in the Unity Centre in Rotherham which was a family celebration of Roma culture and music. This attracted over 70 Roma people. This research approach sums up the way we work – we work in solidarity with groups and we have rigorous research

methods which are based on trust and equality. We value and use the 'really useful knowledge' of the people we work with to contribute to processes which are aimed at 'changing the world'.

The Sheffield conference arose directly out of our experience and a growing climate of racism and intolerance in Yorkshire aimed at new arrivals and particularly migrant workers who had arrived since 2004. This was the first opportunity for researchers, local government workers, voluntary organisation projects and Roma and Gypsy and Traveller organisations to share their 'really useful' research and community knowledge.

We were amazed at the response to our idea and to the work of our administrator partner Janet Gold – over 80 people turned up on a Saturday morning to the Vestry Hall in Burngreave in Sheffield There were Roma professionals and local Sheffield Roma, people from South and West Yorkshire, and from the North West and Cheshire. News had spread about this unusual event and we had enquiries from different parts of the U.K. and from Hungary.

We felt that it was important to make available a reflection on the proceedings of the day (some context for the research, papers, presentations, and summaries) in a Report which could make our collective 'really useful knowledge' engage a wider audience. We hope you find it useful.

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History and Background:

The Gajo problem: By way of background

Thomas Acton, Professor of Romani Studies, University of Greenwich

A. Why I am the wrong speaker here

a) a tired old voice, - part of a “40 year failure to solve the Gypsy problem”, not the fresh eye government consultants seek but an accumulator of meaningless titles

b) a career mostly spent helping Roma/Gypsies/Travellers to deal with the government, not the other way round: a sociological gun-runner.

c) been doing it so long, I’ve forgotten what ordinary people don’t know

d) already getting criticism from Roma who’ve looked at the programme and said “What is he doing there when we should be there?”

e) Attempting the impossible: I developed a whole M.A. course to deal with what I have to tackle here in 25 minutes. It doesn’t work because the problem is not so much what you don’t know, as what you think you know which ain’t right. (e.g the concept of “True Gypsies”) A quick survey of Gypsy history will simply overlay, not replace your previous stereotypes.

So, if you think this will be a quick fix for your ignorance – you’re not only ignorant but lazy-minded, and probably semi-literate: the spoken word has always been more a tool of manipulation than communication; there is no substitute for serious, humble-minded diverse study – even if you are a Rom, Gypsy or Traveller yourself.

B. History

1. Who are Roma and where do they come from? Depends on what standpoint you are looking from.

- a) 19th century anthropological and linguist racism
- b) Traditional post/anti-racist standpoint (Fraser)
- c) challenged by revisionists – Willems, Mayall, Lucassen, Belton.
- d) a new synthesis as more Roma historians enter the field?

2) The new synthesis suggests a number of exoduses from India – Lom, Dom and Rom. Dom and Rom history suggests some kind of politico-military identity – but ALL big medieval armies were multicultural and socially stratified. Very diverse military formations probably only gelled as ethnic identities after its defeat.

3). Importance of academics themselves Romani in developing the new “late origin of Romani” theories – Nicolae Gheorghe, Ian Hancock,, Ken Lee, Ron Lee, plus current PhD students. BUT – it’s not just an academic phenomenon – the Romani and Traveller Family History Society has 600+ members and is not alone in the world.

4) Difference between Roma and English/ W.European Gypsies and Travellers, Romanichals Sinte and Roma, is rooted in history:

Different European regions – Iberia, NW, NE, Romania, Anatolia & Balkans, present dominant but overlapping adaptations to

- a) The catastrophe of the foundation of the Nation State.
- b) Effects of the steam engine in 19th century – collapse of chattel slavery and renewed migration. Constant layering of the Roma community, a process interrupted by the cold war 1946-89.

“Old” Roma communities in London: Kalderasha, Romungre, Cypriot Khorakhane, Rudari

C. “New Roma” since 1989

Some Communities:

Bosnian Chergashe

Polska Roma and Lovari

Kosovar Khorakhane + Albanian Roma

Slovakian Romungre

Romanian Roma

Bulgarian Khorakhane/Arlija Roma

D Some organisations:

Slovak, Bulgarian and Romanian Roma organisations: Lobbying and civil liberties approaches

Roma Support Group in London: A casework + cultural politics approach

Church groups: Pentecostal self-help

E What possibilities for coalition-building in the Future?

Have to be based on deconstruction of stereotypes, and realistic understanding of diverse cultural traditions. History is the key: hence the importance of Gypsy, Roma Traveller History Month (GRTHM)

Roma Research – the Context

Marion Horton and John Grayson (AdEd Knowledge Company)

There has been a great deal of interest in Migration in recent years both from researchers and policy makers. In Britain large numbers of migrant workers have arrived over the past five years. These migrant workers include refugees as well as European migrants and a large number of undocumented workers.

The arrival of significant numbers of Roma migrant workers with their families from CEE (Central and Eastern Europe) has attracted less attention from researchers and a very cautious response from policy makers.

The limited research which has been undertaken since 2000 has interestingly situated the migration of Roma in a European context.

Background to Roma migration in Europe since 1945

To some extent this fairly recent and relatively large scale Roma migration to Britain and Ireland has meant that the roots of the cross European nature of Roma migration has been neglected.

There seems to have been specific periods of Roma migration within Europe from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE).

- The Porrajmos (the 'great devouring', the Gypsy Holocaust) reduced populations of Roma in the CEE dramatically. Nazi persecution of Roma meant that those Roma who fled the Nazi Holocaust to 'safer' Northern and Western European countries opted to stay.
- Under Communism Roma were restricted in terms of movement to 'the West'. Nevertheless just like other non Roma people Roma 'escaped' to Germany, to Sweden, to Italy. Their 'diaspora' in this period between the 1950's and 1989, acted as a basis for future migrations with families reconstituting in the 1990's. Between 1970 and 1989 resident permits for Roma in Western and Northern Europe were relatively easy to acquire as 'political' migrants. (see Sobotka 2003) Within the Communist system there were Roma who migrated. A good example would be Romanian Roma who worked in the summer on farms in Poland and the then Czechoslovakia.

- After 1989 with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the later breakdown of Yugoslavia the 1990's witnessed a series of Roma migrations, which were part of a massive increase in movement of populations from CEE and the Balkans.

'In 1995 alone, the volume of 'income seeking travels' undertaken by CE Europeans was estimated at 25 – 30 million crossings, equaling the 'bread seeking' mass international migration from the region during the 30 years preceding the First World War' (Sobotka 2003 p 82)

Germany welcomed its East German population and its constitution guaranteed the right of return to Germans displaced by war. Polish Roma with family origins in Germany moved to Germany – almost 30,000 of them. They had a much more problematic welcome. In Rostock in 1992 Neo Nazis firebombed a hostel with 200 Roma residents. German politicians decided to limit returnees to more 'German' migrants. They pressed for 'readmission' agreements with Poland and more successfully in 1993 with Romania to deport Roma.

In the 1990's the main countries from which Roma asylum seekers to Western Europe originated were Bosnia, Macedonia and Romania reflecting the worsened conditions for Roma with the war torn disintegration of the former Yugoslavia. Estimates vary between 50 and 150,000 asylum applications.

Favoured countries were Italy, Austria, Germany and France, with smaller numbers in Sweden, Spain and the Netherlands Most although not all of these Roma migrants returned or were returned to their countries

In Romania in the 1990's it is estimated that there were over 30 pogroms (ethnic cleansing as we now describe it) against Roma in various parts of the country. As late as April 2007 the European Court of Human Rights was handing down judgments against the Romanian government for its negligence in taking action to prosecute those involved. In Poland at Mlawa in 1991 a virtual pogrom against Roma forced residents to flee and eventually arrive in London as asylum seekers. In other CEE countries the end of Communism significantly worsened the situation for Roma. The 'velvet' revolution in Czechoslovakia briefly changed official attitudes, as had the 1968 period, with Roma organisations emerging as part of the first coalition administration of Vlacev Havel. But attitudes changed, and racism against the Roma intensified. In 1993 with the separation of the Czech and Slovak republics many Roma were denied citizenship in the Czech lands and new waves of official state discrimination in education, housing and employment followed in both parts of the new states. In both Hungary and Slovakia the closure of coal and steel industries in the East of both countries led to mass unemployment for Roma – a situation which to a large extent continues today.

Increased racism and discrimination against Roma in CEE particularly in the Czech Republic and Slovakia continued through to the late 1990's. This situation produced migration of Roma into Western Europe and beyond to Canada and North America.

Background to recent Roma migration to Britain

Roma migration to the U.K. has been a very small but continuing feature of inward migration since 1945. Kenrick (1997) has documented the individual Romani families who have arrived in the U.K. since 1945. He points to particular periods when a significant number of Roma arrived. In 1956 Hungarian Roma arrived as part of the refugees fleeing the repression after the Hungarian Revolution of 1956.

‘The greater proportion of those who stayed were men and they have taken non-Romany wives while others have disappeared into the general population and so a new community has not been created’ (Kenrick 1997 p.108).

Bosnian and Serbian Gypsies (Serbaya Kalderash) found themselves in the U.K. in 1992, traveling and selling carpets. The wars in the former Yugoslavia meant that family members joined them. Their presence was highlighted by them being allocated housing in East London and their traditional begging transferred from the mosques of Bosnia to the London Underground. Kosovan Roma also fled to the U.K. fleeing the civil war and bombings. Small numbers became resident in South Yorkshire

In 1991 a virtual pogrom in the Polish town of Mlawa forced the emigration of Polish Roma. For the first time some chose to flee to the U.K. as asylum seekers.

‘At a peak in 1995 there were over 1000 Polish Gypsies in England’ (Kenrick 1997 p.109)

In 1997 1200 Czech Roma claimed asylum in Canada. When new visa requirements were introduced in Canada some 400 Czech and Slovak Roma with their 580 dependents sought asylum in the U.K. between February 1997 and January 1998. (Clark and Campbell 2000). The British press proclaimed a ‘gypsy invasion’. The British government introduced visa restrictions and set up desks in airports to prevent Roma travelling to the U.K. – measures which the British courts later ruled were in contravention of existing U.K. anti-discrimination laws.

Very few Roma were allowed to stay in the U.K. The British government took steps to refuse asylum and passed legislation to refuse appeals for asylum seekers to so called ‘white list’ and safe countries which by coincidence covered most of the countries from which Roma were arriving despite plenty of evidence of persecution in those countries.. 1365 Czech people the vast majority of whom were Roma applied for asylum in 2002 – only ten were given a right to remain. Mass expulsions of Roma many from Romania were filmed for the media at Stansted airport. All this a few months ahead of the 2004

accession of CEE countries at which point Roma would have EU rights of work and settlement in the U.K.

Just prior to the 2004 Enlargement of the EU, there was a local campaign in Sheffield where local supporters and the 'Sheffield Star' prevented the deportation of Frantisek Lagron a Czech Roma with his pregnant wife and three children only weeks before they would have been legally resident in Sheffield. (Sheffield Star 1st March and 25th March 2004).

Despite this open discrimination a family of Slovak Roma settled in Peterborough in this period. It was this family which became the basis for the later 2004/6 migration of Slovak Roma to Sheffield and South Yorkshire. (see paper in this report)

In 2005 East London local authorities were recruiting for workers to work with the substantial numbers of Polish Roma in East London. In Leeds in 2005 there were campaigns to ensure that Kosovan Roma, settled in the city, were not deported.

Roma Migration from Slovakia to South Yorkshire: the political, social and human background.

Zuzana Znamenáčková, Martin Marušák, and Leo Singer

Migration of Romani people from Bystrany (SK) to Sheffield (UK)

**Zuzana Znamenáčková, Dept of Romani Language, Charles University,
Prague**

Description of Romani community in Bystrany

Bystrany is a village near Spisska Nova Ves in Eastern Slovakia. There are 2780 inhabitants of which 1870 are Roma (in: Romano nevo ľil, 2003). The Romani settlement is situated 500 metres from the village. Roma live there in bad conditions isolated from their Slovaikan neighbours. There is no sewerage in the colony, and Roma have no water in their houses. There are just two wells for more than one thousand people.

There is almost 100 % unemployment amongst Romani people in Bystrany. The unemployment level amongst the non-Romani population is around 40 %.

There are two basic schools, which are divided into a Non-Romani basic school and a Romani basic school. All attempts by Roma to place their children in a school among gadze¹ have ended unsuccessfully.

Beginning of the migration, push and pull factors

When the Slovak Republic joined the EU in May 2004, the first Roma from Bystrany started to migrate to the UK. Amongst the first migrants were families which already had an experience of migration. Some of them had spent two years in the Netherlands, where they had been waiting for asylum. Others migrated to Belgium or France. The five families who had spent two years in the Netherlands had, in 2002, decided to go back to Slovakia.

Such bad living standards and the impossibility of getting a job in Eastern Slovakia were definitely some of the push factors of migration. Nevertheless this bad situation for the Roma is the case in almost all parts of Eastern Slovakia, but Roma started to migrate just from a few colonies. Another important push factor was a contact with one Romani family living in Peterborough, which gave the first Bystranian migrants „know-how“ on what to do after arriving to UK (how to find a job, accomodation etc.). This family went to UK in 1998 to apply for asylum. Some of the first Bystranian migrants were relatives of this family, so their first attempt to live in UK was successful. On the other side there were lots of migrants, who didn't have any contact in UK and their first attempts ended unsuccessfully.

¹ Gadzo – Non-romani person

The progress in migration between 2004 and 2007

The first year of migration (2004) was for many people very hard. In 2004 mainly men migrated by themselves and women stayed with children in Slovakia. It was a difficult period for both men and their families. The government office stopped support benefits for migrants' families, so women were allowed to claim just child benefits, which were very low (500 SK = £12 a month for one child). In the beginning also men were not able to earn enough money to support the family.

In 2005 the situation started to improve as a chain migration and family networks were extending. This year the number of migrants grew to 300. The families could afford to support more family members and step by step were inviting other Roma to the UK.

In 2006 the number increased to 500 migrants.

In 2007/2008 the number of migrants is up to 700² migrants.

Living and working in UK

Bystranian Roma live in two cities in UK. Most of them live in Sheffield and its surrounding area and about 80 Roma live in Peterborough. These two groups are in contact and they are informed what is happening in Peterborough or in Sheffield.

Men usually work in food processing (in bakeries, in fast foods or in factories) or as builders' labourers. Some of them work as supervisors; some of them work as manual workers. Most of the women stay at home with their children.

Romani identity

In the UK Roma usually hide their Romani origin. Particularly in offices or in schools they refer to themselves as Slovakian people. They are afraid of reactions from the majority population, so they don't want their origin to be exposed. Probably this is a result of their bad experiences with the Slovakian majority population. There still exists racism and discrimination, and stigmatization of Roma. Another factor which leads Roma to hide their identity is awareness of how the English Roma (Romanichels) are treated in the U.K. by the majority. The Bystranian Roma don't want to be connected with the English Roma, because they have heard the racist stereotypes about them - that they are known as a nomadic group, living in caravans, most of them are thieves and there is a higher level of criminality. Bystranian

² These numbers of migrants are just approximations - guesstimates, which I heard from Roma and from the office in Bystrany.

Roma seem to believe all the prejudicial stories and myths about the English Roma and do not want to be linked to them.

Interestingly is the Roma identification with Pakistani people in Sheffield. Bystranian Roma say that Pakistani people are Roma as well, who just don't want to be exposed. Bystranian Roma have noticed some similarities in both languages. For example they say they have the same words for hair (*bala*), eyes (*jakha*), up (*upre*), down (*tele*) etc. As well as the language they say they have noticed some similarities in the way of life of Roma and people with a Pakistani background.

There is one institution where Roma don't hide their origin and they are proud of it and that's a Pentecostal church of new born Christians (in Sheffield the Jesus Army). As well as its religious function, the church is a place for meeting other Bystranian Roma, for getting information about work, and the news from community. Therefore the church has clearly also social function for the Bystranian Roma.

Plans for the future

Most of the migrants are suspended between UK and Slovakia. They are saving the money to start a better life in Slovakia. Some of the families have recently bought houses in the village and especially in the summer months they go to Slovakia to repair their new houses or their old ones.

The migrants are obviously aware of better conditions in UK, but they say they would like to have the same possibility to get a job in Slovakia and stay in their home country. There are some families, which want to stay in UK and which don't visit Slovakia.

Other Slovak Roma in Sheffield

There are also migrants from Zehra and Pavlovce nad Uhom in Sheffield. The Slovak Roma from these three villages are usually in contact only in Pentecostal church activities. Outside church meetings there are traditional borders and social distance barriers. These villages have different social and cultural status in terms of Romani ritual purity, not unlike the historical ritually pure and ritually impure elements in the caste system of India. The borders among the Slovak Roma from these three villages can be crossed within the Pentecostal religion, however there are still some social rules about contact, which cannot be broken.

Sources:

Recorded interviews with the Bystranian Roma and my own „observation“

(visiting the Bystranian Roma in Slovak regularly from 2003 and from 2005 visiting Roma in Sheffield as well)

Roma riots in Slovakia 2004: reaction to neo-liberal reforms

Martin Marušák

and Leo Singer

Slovakia

'Parents don't let their children to go to school because they can't afford to pay the bus fare. The ones with usable shoes get to school walking. Although hungry, children are sent to school because their parents don't want to lose family allowances. I witnessed how a 7 years old girl collapsed from hunger... Any after-school activities are impossible. Children are hungry... These are families with three or four children and they even do not belong to the most 'backward' families.'

Nataša Bažová, Roma teacher assistant from Šarišské Michaľany

Roma Press Agency (RPA), 2004

1. Neo-liberal reforms of the social benefits provision

The link between the introduction of free market capitalism and social deprivation and frustration of Roma is obvious. I participated in a field research of Roma poverty in 2001 commissioned by the Slovakian ministry of employment. Almost 100% of the Roma interviewed in the country's most deprived region said that for them life was much better during 'socialism' before 1990.

At the end of 2003 in Slovakia 87,5% of Roma were unemployed, compared to 14,2% of the average unemployment.

The link between the implementation of free market reforms of the neo-liberal government (2002-2006) and the outbreak of social unrest in 2004 is even much more clear. In fact the spark of riots everywhere was the moment when Roma families received the new social benefits, often dramatically cut, in January 2004.

Let's have a look on what was the New Year's surprise that waited for them in the council social services departments:

BEFORE THE REFORM

Persons		Social benefits (in Sk) – year 2002				
	Number of children	Child allowance	Social benefits (min.)	TOTAL	Social benefits (max.)	TOTAL
Single	0	0	1 965	1 965	3 490	3 490
	+	1	830	2 715	4 240	5 070
		2	1 510	3 615	6 650	6 650
		4	3 100	5 185	9 810	9 810
		6	4 800	6 645	8 170	12 970
		9	7 200	8 985	10 510	17 710
Couple	0	0	3 340	3 340	5 930	5 930
	+	1	830	4 090	6 680	7 510
		2	1 510	4 990	7 580	9 090
		4	3 100	6 560	9 150	12 250
		6	4 800	8 020	10 610	15 410
		9	7 200	10 360	12 950	20 150

AFTER THE REFORM – BEGINNING 2004

Persons		Social benefits (in Sk) – year 2004				
	Number of children	Child allowance	Social benefits (min.)	TOTAL	Social benefits (max.)	TOTAL
Individual	0	0	1 500	1 500	3 280	3 280
	+	1	500	2 210	4 540	5 040
		2	1 000	2 210	4 540	5 540
		4	2 000	2 310	4 640	6 640
		6	3 000	3 410	5 740	8 740

	9	4 500	3 560	8 060	5 890	10 390
Couple	0	0	2 630	2 630	5 960	5 960
+	1	500	3 310	3 810	6 640	7 140
	2	1 000	3 310	4 310	6 640	7 640
	4	2 000	3 410	5 410	6 740	8 740
	6	3 000	4 510	7 510	7 840	10 840
	9	4 500	4 660	9 160	7 990	12 490

Persons		Social benefits – the difference after the reform							
		r.2004 – r.2002				r.2004 – r.2003			
	Number of children	Difference in social benefits (min.)	%	Difference in social benefits (max.)	%	Difference in social benefits (min.)	%	Difference in social benefits (max.)	%
Single	0	-465	-24	-210	-6	50	3	380	13
+	1	-835	-24	-30	-1	-340	-11	540	12
	2	-1 915	-37	-1 110	-17	-1 440	-31	-560	-9
	4	-3 975	-48	-3 170	-32	-3 540	-45	-2 660	-29
	6	-5 035	-44	-4 230	-33	-4 640	-42	-3 760	-30
	9	-8 125	-50	-7 320	-41	-7 790	-49	-6 910	-40
Couple	0	-710	-21	30	1	-270	-9	160	3
+	1	-1 110	-23	-370	-5	-690	-15	-260	-4
	2	-2 190	-34	-1 450	-16	-1 790	-29	-1 360	-15
	4	-4 250	-44	-3 510	-29	-3 890	-42	-3 460	-28
	6	-5 310	-41	-4 570	-30	-4 990	-40	-4 460	-29
	9	-8 400	-48	-7 660	-38	-8 140	-47	-5 210	-29

Persons	Social benefits – the difference without the activation benefits and inflation
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		r.2004 – r.2002							
	Number of children	Real social benefits 2002 (min.)	Real social benefits 2004 (min.)	Difference (min.)	%	Real social benefits 2002 (max.)	Real social benefits 2004 (max.)	Difference (max.)	%
Single	0	2 283	1 500	-783	-34	4 055	2 280	-1 775	-44
	+ 1	4 119	2 710	-1 409	-34	5 891	4 040	-1 851	-31
	2	5 955	3 210	-2 745	-46	7 727	4 540	-3 187	-41
	4	9 627	4 310	-5 317	-55	11 399	5 640	-5 759	-51
	6	13 299	6 410	-6 889	-52	15 071	7 740	-7 331	-49
	9	18 807	8 060	-10 747	-57	20 579	9 390	-11 189	-54
Couple	0	3 881	2 630	-1 251	-32	6 891	3 960	-2 931	-43
	+ 1	5 717	3 810	-1 907	-33	8 727	5 140	-3 587	-41
	2	7 553	4 310	-3 243	-43	10 563	5 640	-4 923	-47
	4	11 225	5 410	-5 815	-52	14 235	6 740	-7 495	-53
	6	14 897	7 510	-7 387	-50	17 906	8 840	-9 066	-51
	9	20 405	9 160	-11 245	-55	23 414	10 490	-12 924	-55

The price increase between 2002 and 2004 was 16.2 % (the National Office of Statistics).

2. The struggle in February/March

The first mass assemblies and demonstrations begin in Poprad, Pavlovce nad Uhom, Kráľovský Chlmec, Trebišov and Čaklov beginning February.

On 11th February first organised looting occurred in the town Levoča (80 participants)

During February and March protests in at least 42 towns and villages (the list of them is in your handouts).

(Poprad, Pavlovce nad Uhom, Kráľovský Chlmec, Košice, Trebišov, Hraňa, Nižný Žipov, Vranov nad Topľou, Michalovce, Šarovce, Šalov, Filakovo, Zvolen, Jasov, Humenné, Levoča, Spišské Podhradie, Kecerovce, Tornaľa, Revúca, Gemerská Ves, Hodejov, Rimavská Sobota, Revúca, Kokava nad Rimavicou,

Lomnička, Holíč, Blatná, Slavošovce, Roštár, Zamutov, Trenč, Moldava nad Bodvou, Giraltovec, Medzilaborce, Spišská Nová Ves, Čaklov, Turňa nad Bodvou, Bystrany, Novačany, Ďurkov)

Organised mass looting occurred in the following towns and villages: Levoča, Drahňov, Čierna nad Tisou, Trhovište, Hucín, Rimavská Sobota, Sačurov, Zemplín, Čaklov, Kameňany, Rovinka.

Protesting Roma were openly criticising the government's social reforms. At least on one demonstration slogans saying 'We have enough capitalism' were brought in. Some of the **common solutions** to the crisis demanded by Roma assemblies and petitions were:

- private firms should be supported to employ Roma;
- part of the work offered by the local council should lead to extra skills for the people involved, training of working habits etc.;
- support to Roma pupils who want to follow higher education.

Leadership

On February 21 the Roma parliament organised a big gathering of Roma leaders in Zvolen. Between 150 and 200 people came together. Several of them had never attended a meeting of the Roma parliament before. *"All participants came there with a big hope in their hearts to create concrete steps in solving the bad social situation of Roma which culminated in stealing and protests."* (Quote taken from one of the interviews).

A so-called crisis- or strike board was elected to co-ordinate the protests and the general strike. This board wrote the "Appeal to the inhabitants of the Slovak Republic, who are in need". With this appeal people were asked to show on 25th February openly their dissatisfaction with the new laws. Protesters shouldn't ask for more money but for work. "Labour, equality and bread" and "work, work, work" were chosen as the leading slogans for the demonstrations. The protest should be peaceful and legal.

Fights with police

The first documented clash with police happened in the village **Bystrany** on March 19th. A spontaneous rally of about 500 people was dispersed by the police and army unit using a helicopter to monitor the situation. They pushed the crowd away from the village into the Roma segregated settlement.

However much **more significant** was the confrontation in the town **Trebišov** on February 23rd where police attacked an illegal Roma demonstration. They succeeded to push the protesters out of the center using tear gas and water cannons. Roma defended throwing stones and bottles on the police. The next day early morning around 240 policemen attacked the settlement where the protesters lived. They were searching house by house, beating and arresting people. It took 12 hours. Then they enclosed the whole estate for a couple of days. One of the arrested men (Radoslav Puky) was found dead in a water ditch two weeks later. Police denies responsibility despite Roma witnesses saying the man was arrested and beaten by the special forces commando. Human rights NGOs such as International Helsinki Federation, Slovakian Helsinki Committee and People against Racism demanded for an independent investigation but they were refused.

This is a short piece from direct investigators from European Roma Rights Center who visited the place a few days later:

'The *ERRC* and the *CRRS* heard extensive and plausible allegations from Romani inhabitants of the Romani settlement in Trebišov that, beginning in the very early morning hours of February 24, several hundred masked police officers (two hundred and forty police officers, according to Director Mlynarik) raided the Romani settlement and began a police action that lasted throughout the course of the daylight hours of February 24. During the course of this action, officers reportedly:

- Indiscriminately entered the houses of a very large number of Roma, without showing any form of warrant or other authorisation, and often violently kicking in doors;
- Struck violently with truncheons and also kicked a large number of Romani individuals, both in houses and in the open in the settlement;
- Beat and verbally abused Romani women, minors, and people with physical and mental handicaps; and
- Used electric cattle prods on the head, arms, chest and legs of a number of Romani individuals, again both in houses and in the open in the settlement.

According to Director Mlynarik, twenty-six or twenty-seven Romani individuals were detained during the raid and remained in detention at the time of the interview, between noon and 1:30 PM on February 25. According to Director Mlynarik, these had been turned over to prosecution services in relation to the crimes listed above. According to Roma who had been detained and subsequently released (such persons were not accounted for by Director Mlynarik), more than forty persons had been seen in police detention, and nearly all of them had been physically abused while in custody. In particular, males had been ordered to strip to the waist, face a wall with their hands pressed against the wall, and had been struck repeatedly in the midriff by police officers with truncheons. In addition, officers had jumped on their lower legs/calves with their boots.

In addition to a number of adult males who alleged that police had physically abused them during the raid on February 24 (and who were in many cases able to show fresh visible linear bruises apparently caused by police truncheons), the *ERRC* and the *CRRS* also interviewed:

- 16-year-old D.N., a mentally handicapped youth who, according to his own testimony, had been beaten both in his home and in public by officers with truncheons, and had also been subjected to electric shocks to the head, arms, forehead and stomach from a cattle prod while lying face-down on

the floor of his home as well as in the yard in front of the apartment block where he lives with his family. D.N. had also been detained for approximately two hours, physically abused in custody and forced to sign a form prior to his release which he neither read nor had read to him, and of the contents of which he was ignorant;

- 16-year-old P.D., who testified that policemen used an electric truncheon against him. His mother, Ms B.D. witnessed the incident;
- 14-year-old A.B., whom officers reportedly struck in the back with a truncheon;
- 16-year-old J.K., whom police officers struck in the stomach and sides with truncheons until he vomited.
- Ms L.K., who testified that police beat her three minor sons, two of whom are mentally handicapped; and
- 17-year-old I.D., who is pregnant, was kicked by a police officer, while she was carrying a baby in her hands.'

Source: European Roma Rights Center

<http://www.errc.org/cikk.php?cikk=1884>

The determination of poor Roma and state brutal clamp down brought about **radicalisation** of Roma leaders. The same day, February 24th, Slovakian Roma Parliament (NGO) called for blockades of border crossings, highways and for a national protest at the Office of Government in Bratislava. The key oppositional leader Robert Fico (the prime minister of present government) warned from an 'Argentinian' scenario.

The same evening Slovakian government met at an emergency meeting. The result was largest mobilisation of police and army since the revolution against one-party system in 1989. Two thousand police and 650 army troops were mobilised. Vladimir Palko, minister of interior, said that 'water cannoons were used yesterday for the first time since the Revolution of 1989'.

- ☐ According to police sources during the riots over 200 Roma people were **arrested**, among them 111 women, and 42 were convicted.

3. What did Roma people gain from the struggle?

We must emphasize that the following concessions of the government were beneficial for all poor and excluded people in Slovakia, both Roma and white people!

- ☐ The activation benefits were increased from 1000 sk to 1500 Sk.
- ☐ Government provided subsidies for organisations or enterprises that create more than 100

new jobs.

- ☐ funded placement opportunities for everybody till 25 years of age instead of previous 20
- ☐ increased funding for enterprises and organisations employing disabled workers
- ☐ scholarships for students from poor families studying at high schools or colleges
- ☐ subsidies to schools for pupils' tools and meals so that poor children can afford to eat

And we should not forget about the new activation jobs. The government was forced to release funding to local governments in areas with the highest unemployment. Local authorities in turn provided new employment for long-term unemployed people, both Roma and non-Roma. In March 2004 Ludovit Kanik, the minister of employment, said that the government provided 40.000 new jobs. But at the same time there were 270.000 long-term unemployed people in the country. Let's have a look how were your chances if you lived in a small town or village in eastern Slovakia:

Village/Town	Number of long-term unemployed demanding jobs (mostly Roma people)	Number of persons accepted for council 'activation' jobs after the riots
Varhanovce	260	90
Jasov	545	45
Liptovsky Mikulas	300	45
Humenne	6969	914
Strane pod Tatrami	343	130
Tornala	2200	285
Svinica	135	53
Durkov	320	50
Pavlovce nad Uhom	1100	150

Source: RPA, RNL, March 2004

- ☐ In some of the above mentioned villages all claimants were Roma people.
- ☐ Most of the new jobs were short-term (for a few months) or part-time.
- ☐ **All these jobs were un-skilled and manual.**
- ☐ These figures clearly refute the widespread myth about 'the lazy Gypsies'.

Sources:

Roma Press Agency

Romano Nevo Lil

European Roma Rights Center

Labour, equality and bread: case study in Slovakia. SPOLU International Foundation, Netherlands 2004

The Office of Government of Slovak republic

National Office of Statistics

Roma migrants in the U.K. 2008 Papers describing present settlement, projects and issues

How UK policies implement the European Convention Framework on Human Rights in regards to its Roma immigrant and migrant community in relation to Citizenship Rights, Social Justice and Social Cohesion Florina Zoltan

As a proud British citizen I have to congratulate UK for its major results in regards to the implementation of the European Framework Convention:

As an accepted refugee in UK I will be always grateful for the life protection I found through being allowed to live in UK with my son:

But in the same time I have to recognise that as an educated refugee woman with an Romani ethnic background, as a widow and As a mother with responsibilities for a teenager future - I would like to draw under your attentions few disparities I found in relation to the implemented measures of the Framework Convention by the UK government in regards to Roma asylum seekers and refugee integration in the mainstream, (let alone the economic migrants)

When I am talking about the implementations of the Framework Convention I am talking about the strategies and tools addressed by UK policies and programmes to give access to Roma immigrant community to socio-economic integration, participation in decision making and consultancy to empower them in order to actively contribute to self development and to contribute to the development of UK society as active and reliable citizens.

As a British citizen is not a pleasure for me to criticise the social inclusion programmes addressed to asylum seekers and refugee social inclusion, but I believe that we all people which love this country have the duty to speak out the truth in order to contribute to the development of a fair and better society we all want to live in.

And I would like to resume myself to speak about the situation of Roma immigrant and migrant community in UK for which the UK social inclusion policies and programs are totally ineffective because simply it do not address the real problem, but further alienate the Roma community by isolating and making them dependent on state's benefits living no chance to self sustainability, social integration nor to contribution.

All the resources and the efforts allocated to Roma immigrant/migrant community access to inclusion and to social inclusion of Roma are actually ineffective as long as they are seen and are used as objects of the non-Roma programs and their voice is never taken into consideration.

I don't have to give you example of how Roma are objectified in the "social inclusion" industry, you all heard the multitudes of projects and programs detailed today here, where each individual and institutions involved in so called "Roma social inclusion and issues" actually are self-serving, addressing their own institutional interest and personal careers, but not the real needs and the priorities of the Roma Immigrant and migrant community.

I would like to take advantage of this rare opportunity to raise my voice as a Roma immigrant woman and mother and to bring under your attention the needs and the priorities of my community. In the mean time I would like also to remind you that conform with the UK 2 Report of the Framework Convention (responsibilities for which exercise report's writings were assumed by Race Equality Unit in the Home Office and by the London Department for Communities and Local Government - setting up specific committees on issues related to: Asylum Seekers and Refugees, Gypsies and Travellers, Ethnic minorities, and Labour and Race Equality in rural areas)

Firmly committed to the elimination of all forms of racism and to the development of policies which address racial discrimination, intolerance and violence - the United Kingdom Government engaged in a constructive dialogue "to create cohesive communities in which every individual, of whatever racial or ethnic origin, is able to fulfil his or her potential through the enjoyment of equal rights, opportunities and responsibilities" in order to tackle racial discrimination, to promote equality and integration of all in the UK.

Article 4:2 of the Framework Convention states, all members states have "to adopt, where necessary, adequate measures in order to promote, in all areas of economic, social, political and cultural life, full and effective equality between persons belonging to a national minority and those belonging to the majority. In this respect, they shall take due account of the specific conditions of the persons belonging to national minorities.

As the report 2 UK report sustain, The Race Relations Act (Amendment 2000), assert that "more than 40,000 public bodies in Great Britain are now subject to a statutory duty to promote racial equality", where the responsibility to enforce it became the duty of The Commission for Racial Equality.

If the UK Race Relation Act is respected and if it guarantee the implementation of the Framework Convention in regards to giving access to all minority groups, if those responsibilities are reinforced and effectively implemented by all local, regional and national bodies and if all ethnic groups are seen and encouraged to play an active part into the mainstream - then how is possible that the entire Roma immigrant and migrant community in UK still until today socially and economically excluded, marginalised and isolated from the mainstream? How is possible then that about 99% of the Roma immigrant and migrant community in UK is unemployed, majority surviving on state dependency?

Probably for the statutory and voluntary sector present hire today – I look as a rude and ungrateful Roma person (it became a "norm" already) whom do not appreciate the effort of the society to help us or I look as threatening instrument who want to destroy the "good" work done until now.

Taking into consideration the resources invested into the so called Roma community social inclusion – resources partly at least coming from the tax payer pocket and I think they have the right to know how their money are used, I am asking you to think about to what extend those statutory and voluntary sector programs are effective in addressing the social inclusion of Roma Gypsy and Travellers in UK? And how we measure the efficiency of those programs as long as Roma status remained the same as 10 years ago: unemployed and dependent on state's benefits?

As a UK citizen who what to contribute and participate into the society but which is always rejected from labour market do to its ethnic background, a widow and a mother which need to be a peer model for her son integration and as an educated individual with extensive experience in targeted

groups social inclusion, I had to ask myself many times in order to find an answer to the failure of the statutory and voluntary sector in terms of Roma immigrant and migrant community in UK.

Despite all arguments I came to the conclusion that:

Is not on the interest of the UK government to keep Roma immigrant and migrant community in poverty and exclusion – it cost the UK government a lot of economic, social and political resources;

Is not on the interest of the tax payer to invest their contribution into keeping Roma immigrant/migrant labour forces out of labour market – no tax payer is pleased to work hard and their contribution to be used to keep other people in resting at home.

Roma immigrant and migrant community in UK is a small community of around 60.000 members, which mean it can be easier integrated, but despite of this facts, Roma people have no access to socio-economic gains nor to make their voice to be heard.

Socio-economic disparities between Roma community, the mainstream and other ethnic minorities in UK is so big: there are no other ethnic or social group in the whole UK to have 99% of unemployment rate and what is even worst is that there is no other EU member state to equal the 99% unemployment of its Roma unemployment.

I am more than grateful to the organisers of this conference for the chance I have today to raise my voice in the name of Roma immigrant/migrant community in UK and to state publicly:

Is not in the intentions nor in the interests of Roma immigrant and migrant community in UK to live on the back of the society by surviving on state benefits. It never was our intentions nor our interest, but we were forced and condemned to exclusion, marginalisation and our contribution was not seen as a necessity.

I am hire today to make the statutory and voluntary bodies present to understand that we are not going to be silent anymore about our needs and priorities and our first and main priority: economic inclusion towards social inclusion which can be achieved just trough entering the labour market. Then our priority have to be understood as: work, work and work again!

Like every human being Roma immigrant community have its own aspirations and needs and in order to fulfil them we need to fulfil our duties towards ourselves, families and towards the society we live in where we need to play an active role as participatory citizens. As long as UK offered to me and to my community shelter protection when we were hunted and persecuted, then we- The Roma immigrant community have the duty and the right to contribute to the UK society.

We don't want the tax payer to pay anymore for our surviving in state dependency – those resources can be used for better causes, we do not want to be seen as takers anymore- we want to contribute to the society like anyone else as tax payers, we do not want to be the excluded and stigmatised ones anymore – but we want UK to be proud of having us as its citizens.

In order to achieve a “win-win” result we - the society as a whole and the Roma immigrant/migrant community – need positive strategies to open access to labour market and I believe its start have to come as an positive example from institutional labour market, where Roma community have the right to be represented as long as other ethnic communities are.

The political decisions makers have to re-address the social and economic integration of Roma marginalized immigrant community in UK, have to give access to Roma voices to defend their interests and to Roma community to participate into socio-economic life as active citizens. I highly regard the provision to labour market access as the way forward to ensure the Race Relation Act and the European Convention Framework are highly considered and practiced and just by practicing those laws Roma immigrant community can fully participate into the socio-economic life of UK as equal citizens in duties and rights.

Running after them with fruit and flowers: Roma families from CEE in Glasgow

Dr Colin Clark (Senior Lecturer in Sociology, University of Strathclyde)

In his series of slides Colin Clark investigates some of the prejudiced stereotyping of Roma people in Glasgow, particularly in the media. He looks at the nature of Roma migration and ways of countering racism against Roma migrants.

Slide 1

'Running after them with fruit and flowers': Roma families from CEE in Glasgow

Dr. Colin Clark
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University of Strathclyde, Glasgow

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Slide 3

'The voice of reason': *The Evening Times*



The image shows the front page of the Evening Times newspaper. The masthead 'Evening Times' is at the top left, with a '20p' price tag. Below it, there are several headlines: 'Fresh taste of French dressing' with a small photo of a woman, 'WHAT MUMS REALLY WANT' with a photo of a woman and child, and a large headline 'END OUR FEAR ON SOUTH SIDE STREETS' with a photo of a woman holding a trophy. At the bottom left, there is a small headline 'ALL EYES ON EUROPA!'.

Slide 4

Characterising place - 'Playground by day, battleground by night...' (Govanhill)



The photograph shows a wide residential street in Govanhill, Glasgow. The street is lined with multi-story tenement buildings made of light-colored stone or brick. There are bare trees on the left side of the street, and a street lamp is visible on the right. The sky is clear and blue.

Slide 5


The dangerous playground: 'Lost and abandoned children'



A photograph showing two young children standing on a playground structure. One child is wearing a light-colored jacket and dark pants, while the other is wearing a dark jacket and bright red pants. They are positioned on a circular platform supported by a central pole. The background shows a blue wall and some graffiti.

Slide 6

The forsaken battleground : 'Feral gangs on the rampage'



A photograph showing a person from behind, wearing a blue jacket with the word 'ITALIA' printed on the back and a white cap. They are standing in an urban environment with graffiti-covered walls. Another person is partially visible in the background.

Slide 7

The Romanian mafia: 'Muscling in on our Big Issue venders'




Slide 8


Misplaced Hospitality: 'Fruit and flowers...'

'There is something I don't quite get. What do we owe these people? Can someone explain that? Were the social workers running after them with fruit and flowers? What have they or will they do for us? I bet these people [Roma in Govanhill] get more from social services and the council and so on than the Scottish people. Frankly, it's vomit inducing...'

'MikeCraig' (mikecraig@hotmail.co.uk)
(online comment posted at 8.04pm on Friday 16 March, in response to an article in *The Evening Times* entitled 'Playground by day... battleground by night', published on 16-03-07)



Characterising people: 'There is a spectre...'




- In the Southside of Glasgow: Roma families from central and Eastern Europe who have settled in Govanhill
- The press construction: 'good' migrants (Poles) 'bad' migrants (Roma)

The allegations have come fast and furious...


- 'Anti-social behaviour' and 'medieval culture'
- 'Muscling' in on Big Issue vendors via organised crime networks
- Out on the streets selling 'fake gold' to the foolish and unwary
- Women and children are pick-pocketing in the centre of town
- 'Feral gangs' are roaming wild and rampaging in Govanhill
- A 'child-prostitution ring' involving 9 and 10 year old Roma girls
- 'Inter-ethnic' strain and 'racial violence' in the area
- Anti-racist article - author 'naïve' and 'middle-class!' (Adamson, 2007)

Knowledge as power: 'Milk and honey'



- Why research? Why networks? Social science research: to complicate and dissolve existing firm lines of demarcation
- To challenge existing power relations, the 'common sense' and the 'taken for granted'
- To get behind the simplistic imagery, the reductionist headlines and the crass commentary
- Why has the 'story' of migration - Roma migration - come to be dominated by images of an out-of-control set of western/northern immigration policies that act like a broken-down dam – trying, in hope, to hold back the huddled masses, blocking a plethora of lost souls, migrants, who are eager to make a transition from a land of poverty and hopelessness to one that only contains 'milk and honey'


Slide 11



Behind the mask: not just economics

- South to North - 'Even large differences in economic returns... are not sufficient to induce migration in most people' (Glover et al, 2001: 3)
- Virulent racism, exclusion and discrimination: lack of faith in 'democratic' institutions
- The Roma Decade (2005-15)
- The image of 'Roma migration'
- Migration trends, in truth, are as unpredictable as the Scottish weather


Slide 12



Past, present, future: 'people move on'

- Laurence Fontaine (1996) on early pedlars in Europe (17th/18th C)
- Steven Vertovec (2002) 'transnational migration networks'
- People who could not sustain themselves up in the alps and other remote locations and thus started to move (Seville to Lyon, Ghent to London), in order to sell, in order to live
- There is a contemporary point of comparison here to Roma migration and the transnational migration networks that are being formed in the 21st Century
- The reproduction of fluid migration patterns between these different countries, showing movement to be a constant process that helps maintain strong family networks

Managing movement: ‘a juggling act too far’?



- But - such processes cannot be assumed or indeed reified across an entire population group
- Looking across different time periods, it is evident that Roma migration has rarely been a simple response to economic hardships ‘at home’ and better opportunities ‘over there’
- Also, migration has not been a product of only persecution
- Not all Roma individuals/families are in a position to undertake such a juggling act of economic, social and legal transformations across borders
- What is remarkable, however, is the often ingenious entrepreneurialism that emerges out of extreme social exclusion and impossible odds (Mr Cina)

Integration not separation: ‘they look after their own’




- The role of the state, Local Authorities, City Councils: shaping opportunities, promoting inclusion?
- The consequences of different integration strategies of ‘host’ societies?
- Mobility can be made use of, as it often has before, in accommodating new opportunities within ‘free’ markets
- Families making a leap and struggling to find a foothold - an image that makes ‘news’ - the Roma as ‘ASBO people’
- Must not exaggerate the ‘separation’ – exclusion, ‘segregation’ can produce ‘problematic’ or ‘dangerous’ behaviour

**Characterising Roma migration patterns:
'always on the move'**



- Caricatures - 'mobile', 'unstable' or 'in transition'...
- Political and social marginalisation and policy measures that seek to promote integration
- This is starting to happen in Glasgow in relation to A8 country migration (Blake Stevenson CRCA, 2007)
- The ethnicisation of the 'Roma issue' and the poverty and exclusion endured
- Socio-economic and political realities: global labour markets and the uninterrupted movement of both labour and capital across Europe and beyond

**Countering racism, challenging 'blaming
the victim'**



- A depressing tradition of pouring scorn on 'bloody foreigners'
- Depressingly, political strategies seek to reduce and simplify social reality as a way to mobilise different (often vocal, reactionary) constituencies
- Essential to view recent waves of A8/Roma migration in its economic, social, political and human contexts
- An urgent need to escape the wildly inaccurate, inflammatory and paranoid political rhetoric that has been evident in the press
- This is not about 'running after them with fruit and flowers', merely extending a hand and looking for positive ways forward that ensure different communities can live and work together...

Moving On: The challenges ahead



- Where do we go from here?
- Clear tensions in the politics of devolution – Westminster and Holyrood ‘stushies’ on migration, immigration, dawn raids etc.
- Real community development work urgently required, connect with local anti-poverty and anti-racist alliances
- Extending a personal and collective hand – the responsibility of committed hospitality
- Ultimately a question of political will and resources?
- Can’t leave it to politicians, policy-makers or even engaged academics – agency needs to overcome structure, somehow

South Yorkshire and Roma Migration:

The European Roma of South Yorkshire

Marion Horton, John Grayson and Andrew Petrie

From Grayson J., Horton M. and Petrie A. 2007 'The European Roma of South Yorkshire' Sheffield: AdEdKnowledge Company

Recent history of Roma in South Yorkshire – the Barnsley case study

Prior to 2004 Barnsley had the largest number of Roma asylum seekers in the region, many of them were from later 2004 accession states and some of them have settled in the town. The research was not able to establish full details of Roma settlement throughout South Yorkshire, but Barnsley was used as a case study to demonstrate recent trends. The Slovak Roma were the main focus of research in the Rotherham and Sheffield areas.

Our research suggests that most of the Roma in Barnsley have merged successfully with local life although there is anecdotal evidence of local hostility. In 2003 there was a Bosnian Roma family and an Albanian Roma family living on the Westfield Council Estate in Worsborough. Hostility from residents on the estate resulted in the Bosnian Roma family being virtually 'stoned out' of the Estate by attacks on their home.

We established in 2006 that in Barnsley there were six Latvian Roma families settled in Barnsley town. They were originally asylum seekers but they registered after 2004. This group seemed to be committed to a 'settled' approach and sought and got regular schooling for their children. The families have been in Barnsley now for five or six years. There were also two Lithuanian Roma families who had been asylum seekers and were now registered workers, and living in council housing in the Athersley area of the borough.

There were, in Barnsley, three or four Slovak Roma families sharing very poor private accommodation in Goldthorpe. Two Romanian asylum seeker families, although new to Barnsley had been 'up and down the country' for 6 years. Their status has of course changed and they are now E.U. citizens. The

Romanian Roma tend not to put children in school and seem to be much more traditional 'travelling' Roma in their attitudes. They tend to 'disappear' from Barnsley for periods of time.

Many Roma moved from the war zone in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990's, the majority to Germany. Some have come to the U.K. and there have been campaigns to allow Kosovan Roma to stay in Yorkshire. Two Kosovan Roma households were in Barnsley during the research, each with an extended family of around eight people. One family had only recently arrived in the U.K. the other family had been in Barnsley for around seven to nine years. There was also one Bosnian Roma family who had been in the town for seven years as asylum seekers. Most Roma from the former Yugoslavia still have asylum seeker status, and again tend to disappear and to travel around the country for family or other Roma contacts. Children are only periodically in schools.

The Roma who are defined as asylum seekers in Barnsley have, like many of their compatriots, been threatened with deportation as 'failed' asylum seekers. Not surprisingly their 'home' countries who drove them out in 'ethnic cleansing campaigns' often refuse to accept them back and acknowledge them as residents.

Enlarging the E.U., Roma migrant workers in South Yorkshire

After April 2004 E.U. citizens from the ten new member countries of the European Union who wished to work in the U.K., had to register and pay a registration fee. There still seems to be confusion about the status of European Roma amongst some local authority and voluntary sector agencies. Our research suggests that public and voluntary services seem to have failed to recognise that Roma people from accession states ceased to be asylum seekers or refugees in April 2004. They are E.U. citizens legally entitled to live and work in the U.K., subject to some restrictions on entitlement to state benefits and housing, and are not refugees or asylum seekers. Some confusion has been caused by the fact that in some cases it is the local authority asylum teams who have a specific remit to work with Roma.

Certainly the new Slovak Roma migrant workers in Rotherham and Sheffield have established themselves in the local economy as hard working employees, and have been recruited into low paid jobs because they are willing workers. The people we interviewed for this report were attracted to work in England because of the country's multicultural reputation. Most interviewees nevertheless saw their future in Slovakia after a period of work in the U.K., and an improvement in the economy in Eastern Slovakia from where most of them come.

Community and political responses to the arrival of migrant workers in South Yorkshire have been mixed but Clive Betts, M.P. for Attercliffe in Sheffield, believes that the new migrant workers 'are having a positive impact on the South Yorkshire economy...and we have to ensure that local services such as schools can cope' (Sheffield Star 2006).

NUMBERS AND POPULATION

Between 2004 and 2006, 440 Slovaks have registered to work in Sheffield, 310 in Rotherham and 10 in Barnsley. Our research suggests the vast majority of these people were Roma (Sheffield Star 2006). There were 120 Czech registrations across the three South Yorkshire authorities excluding Doncaster, and 50 Hungarians in Sheffield. Some of these, particularly the Czech workers, may have been ethnic Roma, as with the much larger registration of Polish, Latvian and Lithuanian people, but we have no evidence on this. A few of the Slovaks were 'white' Slovaks; the precise ethnic make up is difficult because ethnicity is not monitored, only the nationality of migrant workers.

In practice South Yorkshire has become a base for migrant Slovak Roma workers and E.U. citizens, from three villages, (Bystrany, Pavlovce and Zehra) and a regional city centre (Kosice) in Eastern Slovakia. Student researchers from Charles University Romani Language Department in Prague, who were working with the Slovak Roma during our research, had established that the Roma migration was classic 'chain' migration. A Roma family had settled in Sheffield prior to 2004 and had contacted families and friends in their home area of Eastern Slovakia who gradually joined them after 2004. They in turn contacted other extended families in the particular villages and former industrial areas of Eastern Slovakia.

Exact numbers are, as with all research in this area difficult to estimate. Some families of Slovak Roma had moved from other areas within the U.K. (e.g. Bradford) in the last few months. This makes the South Yorkshire registration figures problematic, they could both exaggerate, and underestimate numbers.

Many Roma men did not register immediately on entry, but only after they found reliable employment. Families would join them, and wives and children would find employment, some we assume would not register but work in the sub-Region's informal economy. We interviewed one family whose 13 year old son had been employed on a local building site, being paid only £10 a day. They were concerned that there was no health and safety protection and that he had only a small amount of English language but they could not get a school place for him and his two young sisters. Slovak Roma were adamant that they sought accommodation only where they could work, which entails regular relocation.

The Slovak Roma migrant worker population is unusual in that families quickly join male members of families who find employment. This contrasts with non-Roma migrants from Central Europe who often are young, single and of course 'white' in appearance.

The 'guesstimates' we are proposing would be to assume a conservative figure of a household of 3 based on a male registration. This is based on the above hypothesis that our information from church membership and our interviews is valid in assuming, unlike other groups of migrant workers, that European Roma, and specifically Slovak Roma, have families joining male workers very soon after they have found employment. The estimates based on the WRS (Worker Registration Scheme) figures are only valid for April 2006, and do not assume either decline or growth in the period April to November 2006.

We have attempted to establish from our interviews and data from church membership, school rolls and other sources reasonable 'guesstimates'. Our findings have to be tentative because of straightforward conflicts in the data. For instance Travellers Education Service (TES) figures suggest a decline in children in Rotherham schools from a peak in 2005 and 2006. Church sources in Sheffield suggest continued inward migration with a possible peak in 2008. The estimate also does not attempt to capture household movement within South Yorkshire or movement from and to nearby authorities in the wider Region.

Based on the crude WRS figure, and our household size estimate, this would give the assumed figure for Slovak Roma households in South Yorkshire as:-

Sheffield 440 households 1320 people

Rotherham 310 household 930 people

Barnsley 10 households and 30 people

Estimating numbers is made difficult for exactly the same reasons as estimating resident Gypsies and Travellers. Slovak Roma are nervous of identifying their ethnicity because in their case they are viciously persecuted in their own country and there is abundant evidence that they face discrimination in South Yorkshire in the housing market and employment.

Another complication is that the WRS figures reported nationally conflict with data collected locally. Thus in the five months from 1st May to 30th September 2005 Barnsley MBC report registering 31 Slovaks, 43 Lithuanians, 6 Czechs, and 92 Latvians. We know from other sources that a proportion of all of these registrations would have been European Roma (Barnsley MBC 2006 p.10).

The Slovak Roma research

What did we find? Our Results from the Slovak Roma research

Private Sector housing

We were made aware of one private landlord in Sheffield who owns approximately 40 properties and the majority are rented to European Roma. He has established good relationships and we are led to believe is an example of good practice for his tenants. This contrasts sharply with our findings for Rotherham, Sheffield and Barnsley where we gathered evidence of very poor quality accommodation, exorbitant rents, bad landlord practice in terms of lack of tenancy agreements, bad tenancy agreements, poor response on repairs and maintenance. We heard of examples of systematic harassment of tenants. We found that Council departments responsible for regulation and monitoring of private sector landlords are at present failing to connect effectively with the sub-standard housing conditions that European Roma are at present forced to accept.

ACCESS TO SERVICES AND ADVICE

There seems little in the way of housing or council services, which offer pro-active advice or even are able to adequately respond to requests from European Roma. In Barnsley we did find a potential example of good practice aimed at migrant workers and all recent arrivals - the 'New Arrivals Handbook' and website (Barnsley MBC 2006). Unfortunately its potential did not extend to Slovak language versions.

Thus the main problem seems to be that even established advice networks in the statutory and voluntary sector have little material translated into Slovak or Romani and few interpreter services are available to communicate with customers.

Education and Health

We found evidence that the new situation with migrant workers had meant that schools were unable to offer schooling. Some adults we spoke to expressed a desire to learn English but could not find courses with places available to them. The health service has been slow to gear up for the impact of migrant workers.

RACISM AND HARASSMENT

We found that racial harassment was common both in Sheffield and Rotherham. This ranged from racially motivated attacks on property and people to families being literally driven out of council accommodation. We found widespread tension between young people, particularly between young Asian men and Roma. We heard that the police were slow and reluctant to respond to racially motivated incidents.

New European Migration – the Rotherham Experience

Zafar Saleem (Rotherham MBC)

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New European Migration – The Rotherham Experience

Zafar Saleem
Community Engagement & Cohesion
Manager, Rotherham MBC

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Slide 2




Overview

- EU Migration – the big picture
- EU Migration into Rotherham – What we know
- Characteristics of EU Migrants
- Roma Community in Rotherham
- Challenges & Implications
- Staying positive

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Facts about migration

- International migration is growing globally
- Long term migration to UK is increasing
(1997 = 320 000 : 2006 = 574 000)
- Out-migration is increasing
(but more slowly)
- Estimates suggest 3% of UK's GDP is attributable to migrants
- Total revenue from migrants in 2003/04 = £41.2 billion

(Source: Local Government Association, 2007)

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People have always migrated and migration is increasing


globally due to modern communication, transport, and

globalisation of business and trade.

Out migration - 10% of British born people live outside UK

Many local authorities are reporting that migration brings


benefits to their area, particularly in the economic sphere



Characteristics of EU A8 migrants in UK

- Mainly young
- Many have good English
- Good educational qualifications and work experience
- Here to meet demand for low-skilled workers
- Many stay for short periods
- Regular travel home (budget airlines)
- Some settling longer term
- Family groups increasing

Source: GOYH "Migrant workers: Meeting the challenge"
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Worker registration scheme shows that in Rotherham:

April 2006 – March 2007:

- 680 migrants
- 275 (40%) females and 405 (60%) males
- Most age 18 – 34
- 170 dependents – 90 under age 17
- 80 over age 17 (*caution – some of*

these are older children and spouses who may also have registered for work in their own right and be double Counted)

However – Rotherham’s Slovakian and Czech communities are often of Roma heritage so there are significant differences with other migrant groups due to history of discrimination, disadvantage and racism in their home countries (and in UK).

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Migration to Rotherham -Top 10 Countries

- Slovakia
- Czech Republic
- Poland
- Latvia
- Pakistan
- Iran
- Lithuania
- Zimbabwe
- India
- Iraq


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Migration from European A8 Countries – South Yorkshire Comparisons


Worker Registrations April 2006 to March 2007

	Czech Rep	Estonia	Hungary	Latvia	Lithuania	Poland	Slovakia	Slovenia	Total
Barnsley	5	5	0	35	10	330	10	0	395
Doncaster	20	0	10	50	55	910	130	0	1,175
Rotherham	15	0	5	25	50	365	220	0	680
Sheffield	35	0	25	20	50	490	215	0	835
Total	75	0	40	130	165	2,095	575	0	3,085


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Worker Registration Scheme – Statistics (April 06 – March 07)

- 680 Migrants
- 275 (40%) Female and 405 (60%) Male
- Most age 18-34
- 170 dependents
 - 90 under age 17
 - 80 over age 17

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The Roma Community in Rotherham

- Estimate 900 people* (300 men, 150 women, 450 children)
- Mainly Czech and Slovakian Roma people
- Main languages are Romani, Slovakian, Czech; some German, Hungarian, Polish
- Strong Roma identity with a rich history and culture

**Source: Unity Centre and other local sources*

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Top 10 migrant worker occupations in Rotherham:

- Factory worker (645)
- Kitchen and catering assistants (100)
- Food processing operative (fruit /veg) (95)
- Packer (75)
- Warehouse Operative (70)
- Food processing operative (meat) (35)
- Labourer, building (35)
- Cleaner, domestic staff (20)
- Care assistants and home carers (20)
- Sales and retail assistants (15)
- All Other Occupations (170)

Source: Worker Registration Scheme 2004 - 2007
www.rotherham.gov.uk



Research into way migrant workers are recruited by employers

in Y&H shows:

- Employers use same methods for UK and non-UK candidates

Internet – including job centre plus which is on web

agencies for specific sectors (food processing and

agriculture)

Word of mouth

(Source: GOYH)

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Roma community needs

Top 10 enquiries:

1. Translation
2. Racism/neighbour nuisance
3. Employment
4. Inland Revenue
5. School
6. Legal
7. DWP
8. Housing
9. Health
10. Home Office

Based on Unity Centre Research working with 400 (plus) Roma people

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The Roma community - implications

- Living mainly in Eastwood and Masbrough areas (areas of highest deprivation)
- In family groups - household size 4 to 20
- Main jobs - factory work (meat processing)
- Low levels of English language
- Lack of access to education and low levels of literacy
- Living in poor housing/overcrowding

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Household size – average household size estimated at 12 –

this is based on 6 adults- mum, dad, grandparents and

possibly uncle / other male, ie brother inlaw...

- this would then mean that at some point other family members

would come once the men had secured employment,

hence more men being in the household



Challenges – strategic level

- National/regional direction still at development stage – local approach
- Adequacy of population estimates
- Impact of population “churn” (turnover)
- Speed and flexibility of funding adjustments (Funding formulae based on 2004 population estimates)
- “Bend” provision and “Mainstream” E&D
- Impact on Targets (e.g. NRF, LAA, ECM)
- Impact on cohesion & community relations
- ECM agenda

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- General recognition that official population statistics on migration are inadequate and need to be improved, particularly at a local level

This means there is a lag between additional grant and immediate demands upon services

Funding formulae based on 2004 population estimates which predates EU A8 migration

“churn” = turnover of in and out migration – this can have a significant effect on services (e.g. education) and may be more important than overall numbers

Source for above; Local Govt Association and GOYH

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Current activity – examples:

- Developing Partnership approach
- Community Cohesion Partnership
- Advice and support from Unity Centre
- Welcome centre – schools
- Early Years project
- Housing survey - Eastwood and Springwell Gardens pathfinder
- Rotherham Diversity Festival

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Rotherham Diversity Festival 2007



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Areas for development - strategic

- Comprehensive needs assessment
- Impact on services assessment
- Coordinated integration strategy and welcome arrangements
- Communication/media strategy
- Support for community groups/networks
- Training for service providers

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Areas for development - service specific

- Promoting community cohesion
- Meeting education needs
- Interpretation, translation and ESOL
- Housing needs and overcrowding
- Engaging employers and training providers
- Community safety – preventative responses
- Health and social care needs

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Carrie Hedderwick Sheffield Issues

I work as a Housing Officer for Sheffield Council. I am not here in an official capacity but I need to give an idea as to how I have got to know many Slovak and Czech families. There are some people here today that I have got to know initially through work and this has developed into friendship and involvement in other activities, such as music and dance performances at Festivals, fund raising events, a family christening party, arranging some documentary film-making, getting an article together for a local community magazine etc

My day job is to inspect private rented accommodation when there are problems with the physical condition of the property. Usually, a tenant will contact our team with complaints about damp, mould, excess cold, failure of boilers, chronic disrepair – the tenant has had no, or little response or action from the landlord. We will then inspect the house and write to, phone and/or meet the landlord to explain what needs to be done. Ultimately we have enforcement powers to get certain works done. We also do pro-active surveys and inspections around the city to check on house conditions.

In March 2005, the Health Visitor in Tinsley, Julia, contacted our team as she was very concerned about housing conditions for some of the Slovak Roma families in Tinsley. We found that families were living in very poor quality housing. As the rents were very high and tenants' incomes were very low, one wage was not enough to cover the rent and all the household bills. The result was that there was serious overcrowding in many houses, meaning that toilet and washing facilities, and also sleeping arrangements were inadequate. At that point families did not know what benefits they were entitled to, and neither did half of the statutory and voluntary agencies – the Job Centre, the Housing Dept., the Benefits Agency etc. Three years later there is still some misunderstanding by some service providers.

As well as carrying out house inspections, our team started to run a weekly housing advice session at the Tinsley Advice Centre. This was good as there was other experienced workers on hand who could help with advice about immigration rights, benefits, schooling etc.

Problems developed unfortunately in Tinsley when some of the local youth started to seriously harass families to the extent that many families moved from Tinsley because they feared for their safety, and the police presence was not sufficient.

Many families started to settle in Burngreave, Firvale, Page Hall and also Firth Park. All these areas are more culturally diverse than Tinsley, so on the whole there has been less friction and harassment in these areas.

Further housing advice sessions were set up at Burngreave Community Action Forum (BCAF) – a few doors up from here. Again these proved very successful but people wanted to discuss a range of issues – not just to do with housing. These sessions included at various times – a bit of English learning, some advice and handouts from Sure Start who work with families with young children, a session with Bookstart – a project to encourage kids to enjoy books.

The key to these sessions was the fact that we had some funds to pay for interpreters.

Overall, as time went by, the main concern for council, health and other workers was the difficulty of co-ordination between local services, and the lack of foresight by the government to see that these new arrivals would need help in order to settle. The law as it stands, states that A8 migrants have no recourse to public funds until they have fulfilled a consecutive run of 50 weeks work under the Workers' Registration Scheme (WRS). We were told that funds were only available to councils for help with children in school, and for policing if there was evidence of public disorder.

Good and bad – Good first....

- Our Private Rented Standards team conducted a survey last spring to collect info about people's housing conditions and work situations. This included handing out translated advice leaflets about tenants' and landlords' rights and responsibilities. This survey has been useful to present local policy makers with statistics in order to press for better funding.
- Mediation Sheffield has done amazing work with no money, trying to ease some community tensions in the Page Hall area. This has since moved on to the setting up of regular English classes locally, and weekly Youth Club sessions.
- There is a project at SYAC for 16 – 18 year olds involving them in a huge range of activities where attendees are eligible for Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) - £30 per week.
- A dedicated worker is to be appointed by the council to work with new arrivals
- There is also supposed to be some extra funding to possibly help with interpreters at local advice centres.
- The Pakistani Advice Centre has been gallantly trying to help local Slovak families but without the funds, so far, to pay an interpreter
- Many local meetings have discussed ways of helping families to cope with complex employment and benefits systems.
- Some Slovak Roma families attended a meeting at the Town Hall recently to put their point of view to council staff and other service providers.
- Some churches have been helping families to cope with a wide range of problems.

- Many workers on the ground – especially the health visitors – have made huge efforts to engage with families, finding clothing, play equipment etc for children.
- Tinsley Nursery has employed a Slovak speaker to ensure that children feel comfortable and settle in.
- The Education Dept. has employed a Polish/Slovak speaker to help with home visits.
- Whiteways Junior School has also employed a Slovak speaker to help Slovak students.
- Several leaflets and a Welcome to Sheffield booklet have been translated into Slovak and other of the A8 languages.
- Slovak Roma musicians and dancers have emerged to the appreciation of local audiences.

And the bad –

- In housing there are still many houses that are in poor and dangerous condition
- Many landlords are charging prohibitively high rents – between £4 – 500 per month.
- Many landlords do not supply proper contact details, or a tenancy agreement or a rent book. The housing issues need to be discussed at a more focused session.
- There is still some hostility felt by some local people because of- 1) large numbers of children around during the day (this is mostly because there are not the school places, but can also be because kids have lost their school place if the family has gone back to Slovakia during term time) 2) There is the perception that houses are overcrowded - sometimes this is the case, and sometimes it is because there are a lot of visitors coming and going between houses. 3) Because most extended families are large, local people complain about levels of noise and the amount of waste generated. The excess waste that cannot fit into the wheelie bins will then not be taken away by the Waste Disposal service. This build up of rubbish then becomes a health hazard.
- Another area of concern for Slovak, and other A8, workers is the erratic nature of the work. People have to ring in each day to see if there is any work – often there is not, and this leads to all kinds of hardship through lack of money.
- The main work that Slovak workers have been doing is at local food processing firms, but most of this work is through agencies. Few people are employed directly by the businesses.
- There have been several reports of people within the agencies, asking for money from people looking for work. These back hand payments have meant that some established workers have lost work to the newcomers and this has often been before workers have completed their first year under the WRS.
- (Firms are paying below the minimum wage in some/many cases.

Reports to the Conference

A wide range of participants from the Conference gave short reports on work with Roma migrant workers and their families. In Sheffield there were reports from Cyril a Slovak Roma journalist, the Sheffield Mediation project, there were also contributions to the conference and workshops by workers in health particularly Health Visitors, who had themselves done survey work and assessment of needs amongst the Czech and Slovak Roma community. A project working with children at the Tinsley Green Nursery is also reported in:

Pearse S. and Skrinar H. 2008 'Engaging Slovak and Czech Roma Families in Nursery Education' in Appendix One in Hartley T. and Grayson J. 'Welcoming Migrant Workers? Work, Education and Community in South Yorkshire' pp28-32

Short reports were given on projects and surveys in Bradford. Slovak Roma families had settled in the

Local Bradford survey work appears in:

Bradford Central and Eastern European Working Group 2006 'A8 migration in Bradford: a template for action' January

Anderton A. 2006 'Bradford District European Forum: Consultation Report': Bradford: Communities of Interest June

In Other Parts of the North

West Yorkshire Information as well as national and international news and links is available on the informative website 'Gypsy, Roma Traveller Leeds' www.grtleeds.co.uk

In other parts of the U.K:

The Roma Support Group in London has been established for over 10 years. Their website gives details and has useful links for information on Roma in the U.K. and beyond www.romasupportgroup.org.uk

Further Reading: including References mentioned in the Report

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Ureche H. 2008 'Fair Comment: perspectives on offending and crime from the point of view of members of the Gypsy and Traveller and Roma communities' London: hu consulting

Key Books on British Roma (Gypsies and Travellers)

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Acton T.A. and Gallant D. 1997 'Romanichal Gypsies' London: Wayland Press

Clark C. and Greenfields M. 2006 'Here to Stay: the Gypsies and Travellers of Britain' Hatfield: UHP

Okely J. 1983 'The Traveller Gypsies' Cambridge: CUP

Recent Relevant Research from AdEd Company researchers:

Grayson J. 2008 Borders, Glass Floors and anti-racist Popular Adult Education in Mayo M. ed Adult Learning for Active Citizens Leicester NIACE (forthcoming)

Hartley T. and Grayson J. with Horton M., Porwich M., Skrinar H., Fortune-West R., Zwierzynski S. 2008 'Welcoming Migrant Workers? Work, Education and Community in South Yorkshire' Barnsley: Academy for Community Leaders and Take Part

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