

International Conference

Roma as Integral Part of Society of Ukraine

Berlin, 14. June 2023, 9:00 – 16:00

Evangelische Akademie Berlin

With the possibility of online participation

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Background Note

Approximately 400.000 Roma lived in Ukraine before the full-scale invasion of Russia. It is estimated that 100.000, primarily women and children fled the country. An unknown number lives as Internally Displaced Persons in Ukraine.

Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, Roma stand with ethnic Ukrainians and the Ukrainian Government against the aggressor. Roma are defending the country as members of the Ukrainian Armed Forces (UAF) while others support the fight with different means such as organising and delivering humanitarian aid, collecting donations for UAF or promoting the Ukrainian cause at international level.

The contribution of Roma to the fight against the Russian aggression has been appreciated by authorities such as the Ukrainian Ministry of Defence or by media outlets in Ukraine.

The alliance of Roma in Ukraine with the government and the overall Ukrainian society is strong, despite the fact that Roma experienced discrimination and antigypsyism before the war and also since the war started, incidents of discrimination and antigypsyism became known.

In a war situation, minorities are at particular risk and are often discriminated in access to assistance or neglected in plannings for post-war situations. Therefore, it is important to promote in time the equal participation of Roma and to take measures to prevent (further) exclusion after the war.

Currently ongoing policy processes in Ukraine – either in the framework of the envisaged accession process to the European Union or in the framework of (planning) the reconstruction and recovery of Ukraine – provide for opportunities to ensure the equal participation of Roma and that they are considered an integral part of the society of Ukraine.

In particular the [Recovery Plan of Ukraine](#) and the [Concept of the State Targeted National and Cultural Program "Unity in Diversity" for the period up to 2034](#) are of relevance, but

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also the revision of the [Strategy to Promote the Rights and Opportunities of Persons Belonging to the Roma National Minority in Ukrainian Society Until 2030](#) “.

Roma civil society organisations appreciate the steps taken by the Ukrainian authorities and international community to address and improve the situation of Roma in Ukraine. They welcome that Ukrainian authorities also appreciate the contribution of Roma and other minorities in defending the country against Russian aggression.

Roma civil society organisations identify these policy processes as opportunities to address the needs of Roma in Ukraine, but they identify shortcomings too. Therefore, several civil society organisations developed in a common effort a position paper on the needs and concerns of Roma in Ukraine.

Objectives of the Conference

The conference brings together government representatives, representative of the Roma civil society and of intergovernmental and civil society organisations in order to discuss pathways how to achieve the inclusion of the needs and concerns of Roma in all relevant short-term and long-term policies.

Roma from Ukraine present their position and recommendations, but only the common effort of the Government of Ukraine, the Roma in Ukraine and of the international partners can achieve the equal participation of Roma.

Please register with [link](#) in order to participate in the conference. Online participation is possible. Conference languages: Ukrainian and English with simultaneous interpretation.

- Draft Agenda

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Draft Agenda

09.00 Arrival of participants

09.30 – 10.00 Opening Remarks: Roma As Integral Part of the Society of Ukraine

Mr Emran Elmazi, Head Documentation and Cultural Centre of the German Sinti and Roma

Dr Tobias Lindner, Minister of State, Federal Foreign Office Germany

H.E. Oleksii Makeiev, Ambassador of Ukraine to Germany

Ms Yulia Kondur, President of the International Charitable Organization "Roma women fund Chiricli" Ukraine

Dr Friederike Krippner, Director Evangelische Akademie Berlin

Moderator: Jonathan Mack, Central Council of German Sinti and Roma

10.00 – 10.15 Break

10.15 – 10.25 Setting the Scene: Roma in Ukraine and their Needs:

Mr. Volodymyr Yakovenko, ARCA: Presentation of Position of Roma Civil Society

10.25 – 11.30 Panel discussion 1: National Policies of Ukraine and Strengthening the Position of Roma in Ukraine

Keynote: Dr Ihor Lossovskiy, Deputy Head of the State Service of Ukraine for Ethnopolitics and Freedom of Conscience: National Policies of Ukraine

Mr Mykhailo Spasov, Representative of the Commissioner for Equal Rights and Freedoms of the Rights of National Minorities of Political and Religious Views, Ukraine (online)

Ms Valentyna Zolotarenko, Roma civil society: Needs of Romani women and children

Ms Eleonora Kulcsar, Head of the Charitable Fund "Blago": Roma IDP and their needs

Ms Evhinia Sadovska, Council of Europe, CoE activities for and with Roma during the Russian aggression (online)

Moderator: Martin Mühleck, DG NEAR, European Commission

11.30 – 11.45 Coffee Break

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11.45 – 13.00 Panel discussion 2: Roma, Ukraine and the European Union

Keynote: Ms Katarína Matherová, Deputy Director General European Commission DG (online)

Ms Yasmin Raya, Deputy Head of Unit Ukraine, Moldova, Black Sea cooperation, German Federal Foreign Office

Ms Gabriela Hrabanova, ERGO Network: the EU Framework and the fight against antigypsyism and its importance for Ukraine (online)

Mr Isak Skenderi, Voice of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians Kosovo: Roma in post-war situation and in the accession process to European Union: the experiences of Kosovo

Mr Yulian Kondur (Chirikli): Priorities of Roma in the accession process (online)

Ms Valerie Morrica, World Bank, Senior Social Development Specialist: World Bank and its activities with regard to Roma in Ukraine

Mr Myroslav Horvat, City Counsellor Uzhhorod, the perspective from the local level

Moderator: Stephan Müller, Central Council of German Sinti and Roma

13.00 – 14.15 Lunch Break

14.15 – 15.30 Panel discussion 3: Contribution of Civil Society

Ms Natalie Tomenko, ARCA: Expectations of the Roma civil society

N.N., Ukrainian Government: Expectations of the Government of Ukraine (online)

Ms Kateryna Rietz-Rakul, Director Ukraine Institute Berlin

Ms Anzhelika Bielova, Executive Director Voice of Romni, Ukraine

Dr Andrea Despot, Director Foundation EVZ: contribution of EVZ to Roma in Ukraine

Ms Anna Goos, Managing Director SODI International

Moderator: Jonathan Mack, Central Council of German Sinti and Roma

15.30 Closing remarks

Stephan Müller, Central Council of German Sinti and Roma

15.45 – 16:15 Informal conversations over coffee

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