

Roma Civil Society Forum on Ukraine

4 - 8 December 2022, Berlin (Germany)



REPORT

BACKGROUND

As known, Ukrainian Roma people remain one of the most vulnerable groups to discrimination. At the same time, in recent years, Ukraine has made significant progress in its efforts to respect the rights of representatives of the Roma community. First of all, this happened thanks to the strengthening of Roma NGOs and the Roma social movement. One of the most important on this path was work with youth, a significant part of which was undertaken by the NGO “ Youth Agency for the Advocacy of Roma Culture “ARCA”. It is worth noting the constant support of this work by German partners.

Russia's full-scale aggression against Ukraine in February 2022 changed all plans, significantly reduced opportunities, and put the Roma community on the verge of survival. Some activists ended up in the occupation, some moved to other, safer regions of the country, and some went abroad. Established connections were broken, some organizations and initiatives stopped their work, and public activists faced unexpected risks.

The idea of holding the Roma Civil Society Forum on Ukraine in Berlin (Germany) was the answer to all these challenges. The Forum run from the 4th to 8th of December 2022 and became a platform for youth, experts and artists of the Roma movement from Ukraine and other European countries involved in helping Roma from Ukraine.

Key representatives of Roma and (pro-)Roma civil society, politicians and various stakeholders gathered to create a coalition that will strengthen the equality, integration and participation of Ukrainian Roma in the European context. The Forum promotes European and national policies to be more inclusive and responsive to the current needs of the Ukrainian Roma.

Objectives of the Forum were:

- Networking and coalition-building: strengthen networking of Ukrainian Roma activists from Ukraine and in the diaspora across Europe;
- Strengthen cooperation between Ukrainian Roma civil society and (pro)Roma civil society in Europe that engage Ukrainian Roma refugees;
- Understanding / Monitoring and analysis: mapping and analysis the situation of Roma refugees, with a particular focus on children and young people; antigypsyism and the situation of refugees; how to monitor & document the situation in Ukraine and Europe (e.g. also media narratives)
- Sharing practices between Roma and (pro)Roma civic society, policy-makers and various stakeholders in order to facilitate discussions that foster mutual visions on further advocacy;

- Advocate the situation of Roma in Ukraine and of refugees from Ukraine across Europe; lobby participation of Roma civil society of Ukraine in policy making process on Reconstruction strategies on Ukraine.

The **Forum consisted** in 4 separate but connected by a common idea and goal of blocks:

Experts' Seminar "Roma in and from Ukraine: realities, challenges, perspectives" (4-8 December 2022): We build an exchange process, which allows participants to work on mapping the current situation and struggles that Roma communities in and out of Ukraine are facing because of the war. With the gained understanding of diverse experiences, we will be able to take practical steps for cooperation, advocacy, strengthening the political representation of Ukrainian Roma and building a diaspora network.

Conference "The Russian War against Ukraine and Its Consequences for Roma" (7 December 2022): We gather representatives of the Roma community in Ukraine, Roma refugees, decision-makers from Europe as well as civil society and think tanks to promote understanding that Roma are an integral part of Ukrainian society and that the international community, and Germany in particular, has an obligation to be an ally not only to Ukraine but also to Roma from Ukraine.

Documentary Theater Public Performance "From Home to Home" (8 December 2022): We aim to transfer the knowledge of how today's generations experience the trauma of the war in order to raise societies' awareness and influence decision-making processes. The performance is the first attempt to document and preserve the memory of the historical event taking place in Ukraine today, based on the testimonies of various female Roma and (pro-)Roma representatives.

Exhibition: "Catharsis" (7 December 2022): Our aim is to offer the path to healing traumatic experiences through visual expression using art therapy methods. We have created a safe space for ten young Ukrainian women, Roma and (pro-)Roma leaders who are not afraid to share their fears and losses, hopes and dreams during the ongoing war in Ukraine. The exhibition shows how much the "personal" can reflect the current political situation. Being a Ukrainian woman today requires a lot of psychological resilience to survive the war and at the same time believe in the future.

Organizers:

"Youth Agency for the Advocacy of Roma Culture "ARCA"

Roma non-governmental youth organisation that has been working in the public sector of Ukraine since 2018, focusing its efforts on developing the Roma youth movement, supporting and preserving Roma history and culture, and building intercultural dialogue in Ukraine.

“The Documentation and Cultural Center of German Sinti and Roma”

The center was founded in the early 1990s as a memorial to Sinti and Roma who were killed by the National Socialist Party. The work is aimed at the emancipation of the Roman minority and the confident treatment of members with their language, culture and identity. The Center is also a specialized academic institution for research and documentation of the 600-year (cultural) history of Sinti and Roma, for political and educational work against the anti-Gypsy movement, as well as for contemporary art and culture projects.

“The Central Council of German Sinti and Roma”

A independent umbrella organization of 17 national associations founded in 1982. The Human Rights Network, which represents the interests of German Sinti and Roma at the level of politics and civil rights, advocates for the equal participation of Sinti and Roma in politics and society, as well as for the protection and support of Sinti and Roma as a national minority.

Working language was English, sometimes with consecutive translation to Ukrainian (not all participants were enough good in English) providing by other participants, the Conference supported by simultanian translation English-Ukrainian.

Trainers:

Mariya Yasenovska, European Disability Forum

Kateryna Daineko, KRF Public Alternative

PARTICIPANTS

We invited our partners, well-known experts in the youth field, and also used the recommendations of our German partners.

General number of participants of **seminer** part were 28 people. Profile of the group of seminar: 10 participants were from Ukraine, the other 18 were from other European countries (UK, Germany, Poland, Romania, Czech Republic, Slovakia, North Macedonia, Finland, Moldova, Lithuania, Belgium) - at list 9 of them with Ukrainian background (migration after February 2022 and other reasons). The organizers were able to bring male participants from Ukraine with the support of the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine.

It was difficult to maintain a gender balance when holding the seminar, since martial law has been imposed in Ukraine and there is a general ban on the entry of men of conscription age abroad. 12 participants - men, 16 - women. The age balance: from 16 to 56 years old, but majority of them were younger then 35.

The participants had various experiences and varying degrees of immersion in the issues of the Roma community, and this was a conscious decision of the organizers. On the one hand, this is a challenge for the course, as "obvious" things had to be discussed and explained, on the other hand, it was a learning opportunity for the whole group in terms of understanding the context.

During the first part of the seminar's first day **theatre performance** participants - 7 persons and other invited persons joint to the introduction and getting know each other.

We had 7 **team representatives** (ARCA, Central Council of German Sinti and Roma, Documentation and Cultural Center of German Sinti and Roma) and 5 **media** persons.

All this participants became a part of the **Conference**, plus some invited speakers.

AGENDA DAY by DAYS

The programme of the Forum was designed according to the objectives defined and agreed by the organisers, donors and the team of trainers.

Day 1: Introduction, Getting to know each other, Mapping of the situation in Ukraine and around.

Some of the participants knew each other. But the getting-to-know stage created a relaxed atmosphere of communication and set everyone up for work. The participants got to know each other in an interactive way: a circle of names, names of organizations and countries, "Two truths and one lie about themselves", several tasks to find a line (by name, date of birth, and time of arrival to the city of the Forum).

Participants discussed their **expectations** from the Forum in groups. expectations mainly related to planning joint work, understanding one's role and opportunities, obtaining information about the situation of young Roma in Ukraine and abroad, as well as communicating with colleagues and friends. Some examples:

- *Create networking Chanel panel for us as platform - not only for Roma Organizations - for better cooperation + getting out of Roma bubble*
- *Get Really good and verified information about situation and how people can help from outside of Ukraine - because media is not doing enough*
- *How to educate people who want create content what is going on now from Roma perspective?*
- *Collaboration with mass media*
- *Possibilities of joint resistance to russian propaganda and hate speech*
- *What is being done in different countries to prevent discrimination*
- *What are the strategies in the countries neighboring Ukraine for working with refugees - and in particular Roma - there will be an advocacy session - during the program we will talk about the current situation, but in the session - about how to influence the formation of policies and strategies*
- *What are the current needs of young people who left Ukraine?*
- *How to use the current situation to build productive development policies and strengthen the youth sector - it is important for us to act today, not wait for completion?*
- *How situation could support consolidation of Roma youth movement?*
- *How Roma youth movement could change situation in Ukraine and Europe?*
- *Building up alliances - ego - ready for practical steps of cooperation*
- *How those who fled from Ukraine can help those who are staying in Ukraine?*
- *Personal stories/experiences - what you lived through after 24th*

All these expectations found a place in the Agenda of the event, which was presented after the discussion of expectations.

Everyone agreed on a short list of work rules (raise your hand, adhere to time frames, etc.).

The next part of the day consisted of an analysis of the current situation of young Roma in Ukraine and abroad (in Europe): barriers and opportunities. The work was carried out using the "World Cafe" method. The results of the groups are presented below.

Barriers Ukraine	Opportunities Ukraine
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Mobilization</i> - <i>International migration</i> - <i>Low level to education and segregation – emergent education</i> - <i>Poverty – unemployed, prices</i> - <i>Trauma, post-war syndrome</i> - <i>Lack of IDP, other documentations</i> - <i>Safety and security issues</i> - <i>Discrimination</i> - <i>Lack of human resources</i> - <i>Limited access to information (hat lines)</i> - <i>Substandard support</i> - <i>Energy problem</i> - <i>No internet</i> - <i>Lack of medicines in the occupied territory</i> - <i>Problem to access cash, ATMs not working</i> - <i>No mental health support</i> - <i>No Roma education found in Ukraine</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>To be heard</i> - <i>Access to international communities</i> - <i>ARCA</i> - <i>EVZ</i> - <i>Hose of Europe</i> - <i>ІЗОЛЯЦІЯ</i> - <i>There are new roma youth initiatives in humanitarian response to IDPs situation in Zakarpattia</i> - <i>To ask in ombuds person office</i> - <i>Cooperation with local authorities</i> - <i>Chiricli</i> - <i>Romania Cherchen</i> - <i>Romani Rota</i> - <i>Romano Than</i> - <i>Terne bersha</i> - <i>Govermrntal financial support for IDPs</i> - <i>International financial support for IDPs</i> - <i>Humanitarian aid</i> - <i>Council of Europe (office in Ukraine)</i>
Barriers Europe	Opportunities Europe
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Supervision on using donors money for support to Ukrainians in other states</i> - <i>Language and culture</i> - <i>Basic education</i> - <i>Social isolation in extended families</i> - <i>Fear of the unknown</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Hotline – Ukraine – Rome</i> - <i>ERGO – Network of NGOs</i> - <i>Religious organization</i> - <i>Romani Center Toward Dialogue Foundation</i> - <i>MD + RO – Nevo Parudimos + UK</i> - <i>Support for Holocaust Survivors in Ukraine</i>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Discrimination</i> - <i>Discriminatory practices border in Slovakia</i> - <i>Fear of being alone</i> - <i>Conservative mindset the community</i> - <i>National policies ignore youth other vulnerable groups</i> - <i>Lack of personal identification issued by a state</i> - <i>Lack of access to accommodation</i> - <i>Lack of access to health care</i> - <i>Lack of access to employment</i> - <i>Education certificates from Ukraine not recognized</i> - <i>Requalification is too difficult</i> - <i>Difficulties with Ukrainian (non-Roma) diaspora helping to integration new arrivals – not want to be associated with them</i> - <i>In the refugee camps? Roma are stigmatized as allegedly “not Ukrainian” or “not genuine refugees”</i> - <i>Antigypsyism</i> - <i>Emotional: mental health trauma, especially among more relocated people</i> - <i>Lack of understanding of the need to access mental health care</i> - <i>Skepticism of any external authorities</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>ERIAC – support to Roma artists</i> - <i>Helsinki Diakonis Institute</i> - <i>Language courses</i> - <i>Czech Republic – candidate online portal - mynatomame.cz</i> - <i>Central European University – assisting Roma students leaving Ukraine</i> - <i>ARESEL in Romania – helping of integration</i> - <i>VIDNOVA - co-founded by EVZ</i> - <i>International Red Cross gave new arrivals financial assistance</i> - <i>UN NCR - financial assistance to refugees</i> - <i>ROMA EXPO – Romanian – give humanitarian aid</i> - <i>Job centers (Germany)</i> - <i>ESC</i> - <i>Goethe institute</i>
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These materials became the basis for further discussions in the group and with experts, and planning joint actions.

Day 2: Surveys, Youth inflation to the situation - meetings with experts and discussions; Advocacy and Work with mass media

The day began with a discussion of **existing researches** conducted by Forum participants: the situation with the implementation of the right to education for young Roma in Ukraine, the situation of Roma refugees from Ukraine in Poland, the impact of the war on the observance of Roma rights in Ukraine. Participants in three groups discussed the research and the possibilities of its use with the authors (Volodymyr Yakovenko, Youth Agency for the Advocacy Roma Culture “ARCA”, Ukraine, Elżbieta

Mirga-Wójtowicz, Foundation Jaw Dikh, Poland, Yulian Kondur, Roma Women Fund Chirikli, Ukraine).

The next block was devoted to the **role of youth and youth participation** and was conducted in the format of a panel discussion. The participants were able to learn about the experience of different countries and work at different levels and ask their questions. From participants (Rebecca Fisch, Schüler Helfen Leben "SHL", Germany, Yanush Panchenko, Romano Than, Ukraine, Tetiana Storozko, Youth Agency for the Advocacy Roma Culture "ARCA", Ukraine, and Satu Florin, "Dikh he na Bister" Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative, Finland) and invited experts (Nataliia Shevchuk, National Youth Council of Ukraine "NYCU", Ukraine) acted as speakers.

Some **main remarks** about youth from Tetiana Storozko speech:

Overview State of affairs in Roma youth movement before the war

- *There are lots of gaps in national policies and programs - hard to call them inclusive*
- *Situation is relevant not exclusively for Roma youth in Ukraine - but for youth sector in general*
- *Want mention positive moments: number of factors, programs and existing opportunities that promoted development of Roma youth movement in Ukraine; experienced youth leaders working in different fields and with wide international connections*
- *Talking about people sitting in this room - yesterday was thinking - «last» generation of current Roma youth activists*

With the beginning of the war

- *Changing roles of young people inside their families and communities - more responsibilities but still*
- *Some became IDP's or refugees*
- *Some job and houses loses, difficulties with access to basic needs*
- *Yesterday were talking - without coverage basic needs - no discussions about self development and civil activities*

Active position - related to what said in the very beginning

- *Fundraising for communities - evacuation and urgent humanitarian support*
- *It's temporary measures - long term effect needed*
- *Activities in informational sphere - collecting stories and spreading narratives on national and international level*
- *Much more closer cooperation with European, international organizations, institutions*
- *Advocacy*

- *Peer to peer support - offers contracts - our team grow up 4 times*

Needs and importance of intersectional allies and cooperation

- *NYCUkraine*
- *Our experience cooperation with feminist initiatives*
- *With media groups*
- *Dhnb - retreat - public events*
- *Young people to be included in processes of planning and creation strategies and policies*

The next session was devoted to **advocacy**, as a method of solving the above-mentioned problems. Participants discussed their understanding of advocacy and developed schemes for advocacy campaigns on 3 issues.

I group

Problem: Language problem (transit, documenta, formal and every day communication)

Target:

- Ombudsman person office
- Ministry of internal affairs
- Roma organisations
- Translators

National authorities:

- Ministry of Education
- Office of the President
- National Police

Decision: Evolve translators; provide non-verbal communication; provide information in several languages (Ukrainian, Romani etc.)

Alliance:

- Roma organizations
- Migration organizations
- Amnesty International and Red Cross
- HIAS, ERRC, CoE, UN CEF

Our actions: Awareness raising; recommendation to governmental for national strategy

II group

Problem: Lack of clarity in procedure for fleeing Ukraine

Target:

- Ministry of Justice – migration service
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Ombudsman
- Governmental

Decision: Updation decision of the Governmental on the Rules on border for citizens of Ukraine

Alliance:

- National and local NGOs
- Ombudsman
- UNHCR
- FRA

Actions:

- Monitoring and data collection with retrospective perspective
- Letters
- Consultation meeting with governmental and stakeholders
- Media
- Achieving the goal

III group

Problem: language as a barrier in access to state\official services (all countries)

Target and dessigion:

NGOs – language courses, our mediator with state

Universities – courses

State – forms\ laptops\ information in difference lounges

Training for staff\ police\ volunteers\ translators

Media

- Local NGOs (+ Rome)
- Student's society
- Friendly polities
- Strong international support
- Experts

Research on positive examples

- e-mail to the targets with Research and Recommendation
- Open petition
- Involve media to address the problem
- Instagram campaign

Events (online\ offline at universities\ in the parliament)

The last session was devoted to discussing **media** work. It took place in 4 groups, in each of which there was at least one subject expert. the participants discussed their expectations from the media regarding the coverage of Roma issues and the current situation. The results of the discussion were revealed during the media meeting the next day and helped to create an in-depth discussion.

Day 3: Role of mass media, Combating Antigypsism, Networking - meetings with experts and discussions

The day was a continuation of the started discussions. We started with a meeting with representatives of various media. Participants (Gwendolyn Albert, Romea, Czech Republic, Olga Vesnianska, Press Office of the President of Ukraine, Ukraine, Tetiana Storozhko, Djanas Informational Platform, "ARCA", Ukraine) and guests (Robert Schwartz, Deutsche Welle, Germany, Claus Heinrich, Südwestfunk, Germany) acted as speakers. Moderated the discussion - Gilda Horvat, RomBlog, Austria. Some important remarks from presentations and discussions:

Main theses of presentations and discussions:

- *Journalism and activism must be separated. Activists think how to present, and journalists how to tell what happened. Journalists should look at the problem from the side of the community, as well as from the other side - from the side of organizations (networking)*
- *We need a tool to counter propaganda through the description of reality (reality). It was emphasized several times that propaganda can be countered with facts.*
- *There should be Roma ambassadors in the media.*
- *Using the example of the article in the Munich newspaper, which stigmatizes the Roma, we have to develop a strategy for countering similar cases: other facts, photos, materials.*
- *We have to understand how to deliver information to each community, use different languages and cultural features of these communities. For example, to explain something about the Czech Republic today, you need to have some theses about Czechoslovakia. People know very little about the Roma, so important events need to be explained.*
- *More than 80% of people read only the title. Also, the vast majority of people consume visual content rather than text.*
- *Our position should be non-aggressive and constructive.*
- *It is important for Roma organizations to communicate with journalists. Journalists are not interested in Roma topics.*
- *It is necessary to create more content that would be interesting not only to the Roma community (Roma youth), but also to other communities (youth).*
- *We need to tell real stories (texts, social media) about how the war affected our lives, projects, activities and opportunities. As a result, Roma youth will be more visible. An important role in documented history.*
- *The unpopularity of the Roma theme increased during the war, while the popularity of right-wing radical movements and individuals who committed attacks on the Roma grew. They get more platforms to express their opinions, including discriminatory ones.*
- *The task of the media is to record history and give hope.*

Some remarks about youth and media:

“Djanes” Informational Platform

*[“Djanes” Informational Platform](#) is a modern media established by the Youth Agency for the Advocacy of Roma Culture “ARCA” for dialogue, support and solidarity in Ukraine and abroad. Started as **pilot project** in 2020 by initiative of our volunteers. Very simple but quite successful. Thematic sections telling about history, culture, human rights sphere, existing opportunities for young Roma.*

Saw importance and high interest among audience - put a lot of efforts in development our team. It also grow up since the beginning. Changing focus with the beginning of the war. Keeping an eye on informational field we can observe Roma topic raised up from time to time and being misused in propaganda. That makes huge damage on perception Roma in Ukrainian society an on international arena. Even if from the first sight some images created in media might look in positive way.

That’s why for us was important to create reliable content which would tell narratives from Roma perspective.

What we are doing now? Were we moving now?

Ensuring coverage of the Roma topic in broader contexts in the Ukrainian and European information spaces. Raising public awareness about participation and levels of inclusion of the Roma communities in Ukrainian civil society; - especially in the context of current war circumstances - so they will not be forgotten when it will be over.

Counteractions and prevention of the speculations and misinformation on the topic of Roma in Russian propaganda that cause interethnic conflicts between different communities, as well as, inside of the Roma community (hate speech, hate crimes, incitement of violence), political and social destabilisation in the European society.

Initiation of media work with "unpopular" topics in the Roma civil society in Ukraine, which are sensitive but still have huge impact on community as itself, such as the patriarchal system inside the community and other

Besides informational work we have one more important task in our agenda Which is Support and professional development of young Roma journalists, bloggers and other content creators.

Also for us is important to keep our doors open and give space for Roma activists to raise their voice and share their messages and findings. So it wouldn’t be seen as

exclusively arca's media project, but rather a common space for communication and support.

Challenges and important things to be achieved

Networking on intersectional level with other important actors in informational field - not only in Roma topic.

Expanding the audience through cooperation with foreign media.

Need to get out of thematic informational bubble.

Next session was a meeting with **Mehmet Daimagüler**, Federal Government Commissioner against Antigypsyism and for the Life of the Sinti and Roma in Germany. His office was created 6 month ago: advisory position, not an executive body, can highlight topics and happenings. It is important that he recently visited Ukraine. The discussion was built around the work of the group that was presented by Volodymyr Yakovenko and Yulian Kondur, and the plans and possibilities of the office. Discussion was moderated by Stephan Müller, The Central Council of German Sinti and Roma.

Some remarks from Mr. Mehmet speech:

After 6 months of being in office, nobody managed to answer a question - What does it mean to be recognized as a minority?

We need this kind of research from the past to understand and identify the steps we need to put.

Centers need to be established where organizations could work, women can work.

Last session of the day was a meeting with different German NGOs about possibility for **collaboration and networking**. Our guests were Saskia Heller, Liberale Moderne, Gösta Toft, Federal Union of European Nationalities "FUEN", Verena Meier, Hilfsnetzwerk für NS Überlebende, Ulrike Posch, Solidaritätsdienst International "SODI", Timea Junghaus, European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture "ERAC". Discussion was moderated by Mariya Yassenovska, European Disability Forum. The discussion was based around the use of theater as a method of working with young people and supporting Roma artists, working with memory by preserving and documenting history, strategies for teaching new generations and capacity building.

After the meeting participants had a free time: to have a rest and to discovery the city.

Day 4: Conference and Exhibition

In the beginning of the day group of participants and organisers had an internal closed meeting with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They discussed next topics:

General needs:

- *Lobbying the interests of the Roma communities of Ukraine before our authorities*
- *Availability of an effective Roma strategy, which will be integrated into the country's recovery plans*
- *Involvement of experts from the Roma community*

Main issues:

- *Urgent: Dwelling; The need for a simplified system for obtaining documents (passportization) - Odesa Declaration, etc. Recommendations from the Council of Europe*
- *Human Rights: Antigypsyism; The situation before the war, which became the dynamics of the problem; Mass media - increase in the level of hate speech during Covid-19*
- *Education: 2 years of quarantine + 1 year of war + it is not known how much - a generation with a low level of education - will lead to marginalization*
- *Reconstruction: Programs for establishing social dialogue - different experiences - overcoming trauma - between generations; Currently - development of strategies*
- *Occupation: Reintegration - psychological, ideological, institutional; Loss of job, impossibility of receiving help in employment centers - due to bureaucracy and complexity of the system; Roma who did not have access to the banking system and received payments through the postman - remained without any payments during the occupation; Discrimination by state institutions; Searches, psychological pressure*
- *Young: Now - an active position - made it possible to establish a systematic work of community support at various levels (evacuation, humanitarian aid); It became possible thanks to the high level of development of civil society; The need to restore the youth part of the public sector Establishing infrastructure - physical (post-war period), investing in human resources; Prospect.*

In parallel the **Conference** "The Russian War against Ukraine and its Consequences for Roma" started. Format of the Conference was remounted - some speakers were online - and used three Panel Discussions. All speakers were foremost and influence experts from Roma community and/or in Roma issues in Ukraine and in Europe. The main topics of the Panels were: The position of Roma in the war against Ukraine; Roma refugees from Ukraine in Europe; Reconstructing Ukraine towards Roma Equality and Participation.

Some main points from the conversations and discussions during the Conference:

MAIN TASKS, ISSUES and IDEAS - Panel 1:

- *Get involved in the process of rebuilding Ukraine and world aid.*
- *Advocacy for the inclusion of the Roma topic at the national and international level.*
- *Check the inclusion of the topic in the National Reconstruction Plan.*
- *Formulate advocacy messages for the Roma.*
- *It is important to preserve historical memory and reflect on what happened.*
- *The current discrimination poses additional threats to the survival of the Roma community.*
- *A separate topic - Roma in the Armed Forces. Stories required for media promotion.*
- *The situation of the Roma in connection with the invasion worsens (100,000 Roma IDPs, problems with work, documents and obtaining status, it is difficult to get humanitarian aid and housing).*
- *Roma NGOs help the Roma the most.*
- *A separate challenge is the occupation, the lack of bank cards for pensioners. In particular, Artur was released without his consent and is known for volunteering for the Roma.*
- *It is necessary to research the problems of Roma women during the war: preparing for winter in the conditions of war, finding a new job or getting a new specialty, many are ready to receive psychological help if it is financially available, children do not have access to online education due to the lack of technical means and access to the internet*
- *An assessment of shelters and the condition of women who have gone abroad is needed. Now there is blatant segregation of living in shelters (Hungary), as well as discriminatory treatment when crossing the border. Almost all Roma want to return to Ukraine after the end of the war.*
- *It is expected that there will be a breakthrough in achieving gender equality among the Roma community, as many men who are currently unemployed are engaged in "domestic" work.*
- *Roma organizations provide assistance to IDPs (not only Roma) - such stories should be covered more.*

KEY PROBLEMS IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES - Panel 2:

ODIHR: report on Ukraine and 6 neighboring countries:

- *discrimination during the entire asylum procedure*
- *barriers to getting school education in a new place*
- *human trafficking and sexual exploitation*

Hungary:

The main problems are housing, work, inflation, education

Germany:

Hotline - language barrier, dissemination of information, communication with refugees.

Roma from Ukraine are not considered real refugees (perhaps they are citizens of other countries who are looking for a better life)

The problem with education is that children were not admitted to schools for education

Moldova:

- stereotype regarding Roma refugees, that Ukrainian Roma refugees are "inauthentic" (they basically know the language, have relatives, etc.)*
 - there are 4 segregated shelters for Roma refugees*
 - Moldova accepted almost 40,000 Roma refugees from Ukraine*
 - the problem of renting housing officially (with a lease agreement)*
- They are creating a Telegram channel for Roma refugees from Ukraine*

Czech Republic:

- the problem of dual citizenship of Roma from Ukraine - the inspection lasted two weeks, during which the refugees did not receive any assistance*
- Roma refugees were placed in camps in tarpaulin tents and in detention centers for illegal migrants*

OFFERS - Panel 3:

- Advantage of the term "modernization" rather than restoration, reconstruction, etc.*
- Do not overlook the western regions of Ukraine, as they were less affected by military operations, but received a lot of refugees, including Roma.*
- Compensation program for the payment of housing and communal services for those who shelter Roma immigrants.*
- Fixing the contribution of the Roma to the victory in the historical memory of the Ukrainian people (now primarily informational).*
- The Roma strategy until 2030 has 8 working groups, it is important to get involved in its detailing.*
- It is necessary to learn a lesson from all previous wars and restore Ukraine taking into account the needs of the Roma community (what to do with places of compact Roma residence).*
- Participate in the discussion of the draft law on national minorities.*
- Germany must take responsibility and advocate for the voice of the Roma to be heard.*

SITUATION WITH ROMA YOUTH:

ROMA ACTIVE LEADERS

We observed high level of self-organization of Ukrainian civil society. We can see it still now. And Roma youth sector. Wasn't an exception.

It testified how developed it was already when the war started.

- *Experienced youth leaders working in different fields and with wide international connections*
- *Talking about people sitting in this room - yesterday was thinking - «last» generation of current Roma youth activists*

FUNDS

Funds leaving - already feeling gaps.

Need to work on strategies which actions should be done to advocate for their returning or which alternatives we can find and propose for next generations.

NETWORKING AND COALITION BUILDING

- *As practice shows - to draw attention of our government we need support + lobbying of international actors - organizations and institutions*
- *We do have existing national Roma strategy, - still need to reconsider it and make it work - not stay on the paper*

STRATEGIES, POLICIES

- *Don't have to wait until the end of the war - will be late*
- *Strategies, policies and plans are being developed now*
- *Roma experts should be involved in this process now already - will not be forgotten after.*
- *Cooperation should be done on all levels and stages*

PRACTICAL STEPS

- *Development of Roma youth infrastructure, investment in human sources - to keep them working in this field*
- *After the victory - inclusion of young Roma experts in already existing programs - youth workers, agenda of youth centers*

PIECE BUILDING INSIDE SOCIETY AFTER THE VICTORY

There is little being talked about this now, but we already see the need:

- *Programs for establishing dialogue inside society after the victory - different experiences - overcoming trauma - between generations - tensions*
- *We were working a lot with preserving memory and commemoration of Roma who were victims of the genocide. Understanding how harmly influenced communication between generations because of it, we want to work on minimizing consequences of ongoing war*

The day ended with the opening of an **exhibition** of works by Roma women and activists of the Roma movement, which they made during ART therapy, - **“Catharsis”**. The key theme of the works was the war, and each work has its own

story, filled with personal experiences. Together with the curators of the exhibition, participants were able to immerse themselves in the experiences and emotions of female authors.

Day 5: Planing next steps, Meeting with EVZ, Evaluation and Clousing

The last day was emotionally and physically difficult for the participants. So, in particular, not everyone was able to come to the seminar on time. In particular, this is due to the large information load during the previous days, the departure of some of the participants and the lack of full free time.

The work began with **group discussions of further actions**, which took place in the format of free communication in the composition chosen by the participants.

The next stage was a **meeting with EVZ**. During the meeting, the possibilities of financial support for various initiatives were discussed, as well as the situation with the work of the Roma Educational Program, which was closed for Ukrainian participants. The result of the discussion was information about the fund's availability of funds for such activities for the next year, as well as the need to find a funds operator. The main idea was the creation of a separate initiative by Ukrainian Roma organizations that would undertake the administration of such a program.

The seminar ended with filling in **evaluation** form and a circle of impressions and results. It should be noted that the hundredth lap was very emotional. All participants wept and recalled their condition and actions in the early days and days of the full-scale invasion. The importance of meetings with old friends and partners for personal development and finding support in these stormy times, the opportunity to find new partners and new meanings in new circumstances, the prospects of inclusion in international activities and the importance of continuing to support youth and activists in Ukraine and beyond were noted. Networking was identified as one of the main assets of the Forum. It was obvious that such meetings were absolutely necessary to individually support activists and create an environment for the introduction of new ideas and initiatives.

At the end of the Forum, a **Theatrical Performance** was held, during which the history of Roma youth and activists at the beginning of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine was presented and discussed with the audience in an interactive form. The performance turned out to be very emotionally colored, touched everyone present and left an unforgettable impression. Activists of various theater initiatives from Ukraine acted as actresses, but they staged the performance itself in parallel with the seminar and conference.

EVALUATION of the seminar by participants:

The evaluation of the course by both trainer team and participants are very positive. The conclusions of the team of trainers is positive in terms of the implemented programme and cooperation within the team. We agree that the group dynamic was positive and the general atmosphere in the group was good for learning.

The vast majority of former participants rated the program positively a 11 participants, noting that it was logical, clear, smooth, well-designed and met or exceeded their expectations. *"An affordable and rich program that opened up new opportunities and provided new knowledge. Everything is wonderfully organized, easy and accessible."*

The participants especially emphasized the positive and favorable atmosphere of the Forum as a whole: *"I learned a lot, about structures, about current situation of Roma from and in Ukraine, about needs, ideas, ... The atmosphere in the group was strong, productive, very open and warm hearted."* Also, the general atmosphere contributed to productive work in groups, which enabled the participants to look at some problems from a completely different point of view, to exchange practical experience. Some participants created an *"initiative group"* for future joint work.

Most participants positively assessed all components of the program (1 - minimum, 5 - maximum):

	1	2	3	4	5
working in groups			2	6	7
communication with experts and assistants of the organization			1	4	10
conference		1	3	1	10
exhibition		2	1	2	10

Most of the negative reviews related to the place of training, in particular, to several places where the Forum was held.

The work of the trainers was highly appreciated and received positive feedback from the majority of participants, with the exception of 2 critical comments. One about the insufficient involvement of one of the facilitators, and the second about insufficient coordination of the work of small groups.

CONCLUSIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS

During follow-up with facilitators next points were mentioned as a conclusion.

The Forum program has been completed in full, but the following must be taken into account when planning such events:

- after the thematic blocks of the event, add reflexive groups to the program for discussing what was heard from experts and after working in groups;
- in the case of planning different activity formats (work in groups, discussions, meetings with experts, etc.), clearly draw a line both in the organization of the event and in relation to the topic of a separate activity in order to avoid duplication;
- plan at least 2 days of full-time work in groups on the issues of the event (not including teambuilding);
- if the event will last 5 or more days, provide free time for the participants;
- availability of simultaneous translation.

In addition, if there will be a certain number of participants who have experience in the occupation or in the zone of active hostilities, then the presence of a professional psychologist in the team of facilitators.

Also, if in the future the program of the event will include theatrical plays or performances on hot social topics, then do not plan them at the end of the event and talk about your impressions in reflective groups.

Potential future activities for ARCA and partners:

- Creation of a network for communication and exchange of experience and mutual support among forum participants.
- Regular meetings of network members in online format.
- Creation of coalitions of Roma and pro-Roma organizations in Ukraine.
- Study of the recovery (reconstruction) plan for the purpose of advocating the rights and interests of the Roma community.
- Study of the Association Agreement between the EU and Ukraine and the requirements for Ukraine's accession with the aim of advocating the rights and interests of the Roma community
- Carrying out strategic planning for ARKA: a) thematic blocks of future activities (Roma in Ukraine, Roma abroad, Roma perspective in the future, Roma and war); b) forms of activities (advocacy, education, involvement of youth, etc.). With a clear demarcation of areas of responsibility by team members.
- Deepening cooperation with German partners by: constant exchange of information; regular online meetings, holding joint events
- Creation of a communication strategy with communication and Roma experts.

- Development of short, clear and understandable messages (3-5 messages) for advocacy of the rights and interests of the Roma community both at the national and international level.
- Formulation of questions / conditions to the governments of Ukraine and Germany
- Creation of a short-term internship program for Roma and pro-Roma activists at partner European human rights organizations.
- Starting a discussion on the legitimization of right-wing radical movements after the war in order to minimize the negative consequences for minorities, in particular for Roma
- Documenting hate crimes and international crimes during the war on the territory of Ukraine.
- Dissemination of information about volunteer, humanitarian and military martyrdom of Ukrainian Roma during the war.

ANNEXES (list of the participants, the agenda etc):

List of participants on [Google drive](#)

Daily Agenda on [Google drive](#)

Detailed evaluation by participants on [Google drive](#)