

2011

Combating Discrimination Against the Roma in Europe: Why Current Strategies Aren't Working and What Can Be Done

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Recommended Citation

Rosenfield, Erica (2011) "Combating Discrimination Against the Roma in Europe: Why Current Strategies Aren't Working and What Can Be Done," *Human Rights & Human Welfare*: Vol. 11: Iss. 1, Article 24. Available at: <https://digitalcommons.du.edu/hrhw/vol11/iss1/24>



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Combating Discrimination Against the Roma in Europe: Why Current Strategies Aren't Working and What Can Be Done

Abstract

In the summer of 2010, the forced expulsion of many Roma from Western to Eastern Europe captured headlines and world attention, yet this practice simply represented the latest manifestation of anti-Roma sentiment in Europe. Indeed, the Roma—numbering over ten million across Europe, making them the continent's largest minority—face discrimination in housing, education, healthcare, employment, and law enforcement; widespread prejudice against this group shows no evidence of receding. There is, however, certainly no shortage of national and supranational policies aiming to promote inclusion and equality for the Roma.

Keywords

Human rights, Europe, European Union, Roma, Minority rights, Discrimination, Civil rights

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Combating Discrimination against the Roma in Europe: Why Current Strategies Aren't Working and What Can Be Done

By Erica Rosenfield

We have set our sights high, but the goal is simple: let us ensure that Roma enjoy the same rights and opportunities as anyone else. Roma are no different from anyone else. Give them a chance to study and they will learn. Give them a chance to find a job and they will work...

-Viviane Reding, Vice-President of the European Commission responsible for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship, Córdoba, 8 April 2010

Introduction

In the summer of 2010, the forced expulsion of many Roma from Western to Eastern Europe captured headlines and world attention, yet this practice simply represented the latest manifestation of anti-Roma sentiment in Europe. Indeed, the Roma—numbering over ten million across Europe, making them the continent's largest minority—face discrimination in housing, education, healthcare, employment, and law enforcement; widespread prejudice against this group shows no evidence of receding. There is, however, certainly no shortage of national and supranational policies aiming to promote inclusion and equality for the Roma. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)'s *Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area*, the *Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015*, and the European Union's (EU) *Common Basic Principles for Roma Inclusion* are but three examples. A number of major legal developments at the EU level have also addressed Roma rights violations, particularly in the area of childhood education. However, progress has stalled and many Roma have not experienced any tangible improvements in their lives—despite earnest attempts by EU policy-makers. In essence, the Roma are caught in a classic vicious cycle: as more programs are designed and implemented specifically for them, their stigmatization and isolation increases; yet if no such programs are devised, their suffering will continue unabated (Nicolae and Slavik 2007). After providing a brief overview of the current state of Roma rights, this essay will argue that there are three major obstacles which stand in the way of full Roma equality: insufficient data on the current status of the Roma; the absence of a Roma civil rights movement; and the continuous prejudices of the non-Roma, which have not received enough attention in current policies. Only by addressing all three of these issues simultaneously can the human rights of the Roma be fully realized.

Setting the Scene: Anti-Roma Discrimination in Europe

In direct contravention of EU principles such as the protection of minorities and the prohibition of discrimination, the Roma continue to experience a multitude of human rights violations. The use of disproportionate force against the Roma by police officers across Europe is widespread. Obtaining legal residences with secure living conditions remains problematic, and forced evictions, inadequate alternative housing, deficiencies in civil and voter registration, and educational segregation also continue to plague the Roma community. Roma are fully absent from the work forces of many major sectors, especially white-collar areas, and research from the European Roma Rights Centre indicates that 64 percent of working-age Roma have experienced

discrimination in employment. Most commonly, Roma are rejected from employment opportunities because they can be visibly identified as belonging to this group (The Glass Box 2007). When asked if they could name an organization that would help them if they had been discriminated against, 86 percent of Roma surveyed by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights could not name any (European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey 2009). In addition, 69 percent of Roma respondents considered discrimination on the basis of ethnicity to be widespread in their country, and a further 25 percent of Roma respondents were victims of personal crime (including assaults, threats, and serious harassment) at least once in the previous twelve months. Between 65 and 100 percent of Roma, depending on the country surveyed, did not report this personal victimization to the police, citing doubt in the ability of the police to remedy the situation. Equally concerning as societal prejudice is the expression of this prejudice in the political sphere. As economic conditions have deteriorated across Europe, members of extreme-right political groups with anti-Roma agendas have gained popularity and have won seats in national parliaments, signaling their viability in mainstream politics. In sum, prejudice against the Roma is a deeply ingrained structural feature of European society, and negative myths about the Roma are ubiquitous and permeate the fabric of everyday life.

The Roma “Data Deficit”

The first major barrier to greater Roma equality and inclusion in Europe is a lack of reliable and authoritative data on the socioeconomic standing of the Roma. There are virtually no countries in the European Union that collect data that is disaggregated for ethnic group affiliation. Simply put, European censuses generally do not divide populations by ethnicity; instead, all citizens are grouped together, resulting in a complete lack of statistical indicators on the social, political, and economic status of the Roma. This shortage of disaggregated data allows policymakers to ignore, to be unaware of, or to deny the existence of ongoing injustices endured by the Roma. As argued in the Open Society Institute’s *No Data – No Progress* report, the almost complete unavailability of reliable statistics on issues such as Roma employment and incarceration rates makes it impossible to measure if positive initiatives, such as the *Decade of Roma Inclusion*, are spurring on any sort of meaningful change. To cite one example, there is no statistical information available on primary school completion rates for Roma children in two-thirds of the countries participating in the *Decade* (McDonald and Negrin 2010, 10). This so-called “data deficit” must be resolved before any other outstanding issues are addressed. Without authoritative indicators of progress, state implementation of EU-wide directives cannot be properly measured and evaluated, and European politicians and policy-makers will not be able to determine with any degree of certainty whether or not the initiatives are, in fact, meeting their stated goals.

A Fledgling Civil Rights Movement

The shortage of empirical data on the well-being of the Roma is the first obstacle to be addressed if Roma rights are to be taken seriously. A second major hindrance to genuine progress on Roma rights is the lack of a cohesive Roma civil rights movement. Throughout history, marginalized minorities able to organize themselves politically and to advocate for their own rights have had the most success in combating discrimination and fostering social inclusion. In the *Report on Roma Education Today: From Slavery to Segregation and Beyond*, author Jack Greenberg—a professor of law at Columbia University who once headed the NAACP Legal Defense Fund and argued the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* case in 1954—makes this case convincingly. Greenberg explores the parallels between the educational segregation of Roma children and the earlier experiences of

African-Americans in the United States, and concludes that a vibrant civil rights movement provided the impetus, more than anything else, for the granting of full equality to African-Americans. In the absence of a comparable Roma civil rights movement, Greenberg doubts that meaningful advances in Roma rights will be achieved.

Although there are obvious differences between the plight of the Roma today and the earlier suffering of African-Americans, the need for organized political mobilization remains clear. A plethora of transnational advocacy networks and human rights-oriented NGOs across Europe have taken up the cause of Roma rights and have made significant legal advances on behalf of the Roma. Moreover, some Roma have been elected to governments in Central and Eastern Europe. These efforts need to be matched, however, with robust collective organization and the emergence of Roma leaders who can act as representatives of their population and can provide an official point of contact between national leaders and the Roma community. Dusan Ristic, a Romani artist and activist from Serbia, argues this point clearly: “On a larger level, the Romani movement does not exist. To the extent that the movement does exist at the European level, it is full of outside influences...It is time to start to build the Romani movement from the bottom up, with our own initiatives and resources” (Sigona and Trehan 2009; 63). The *Roma Diplomacy* program is a promising initiative in this regard; it trains well-educated and successful Roma men and women in diplomacy and community advocacy (Nicolae and Slavik 2007). However, until the political organization of this minority is more cohesive and widespread across Europe, it remains doubtful that progress on Roma rights will be durable and long-lasting.

Persistent Prejudice

In addition to a dearth of disaggregated data and the absence of a cohesive Roma civil rights movement, the lack of attention paid to the entrenched discriminatory attitudes of non-Roma is hampering efforts toward Roma equality and inclusion. In essence, current policy initiatives aimed at promoting and enhancing Roma rights neglect, or do not sufficiently attend to the prejudices of the non-Roma. This is arguably the greatest and most intransigent obstacle that needs to be overcome if real change is to occur. A number of surveys and studies have documented and exposed the overt intolerance exhibited by many Europeans toward the Roma. For instance, research conducted by the Open Society Institute in Central Europe revealed that “non-Roma respondents consistently expressed negative views of the Roma overall, describing the Roma as dishonest, aggressive, unhygienic, lacking work ethic, unemployed, poorly educated, and prone to criminality” (*Open Society Institute*, 2005). Furthermore, most non-Roma respondents insisted that their attitudes toward the Roma were not the result of stereotypes or racism, but rather stemmed from the behavior and traits of the Roma themselves. This panoply of negative perceptions is consistent and common across Europe. The EU Minorities and Discrimination Survey (EU-MIDIS), conducted from May to July 2008, asked Roma in several Central and Eastern European states about their experiences with discrimination in nine different subject areas, including: employment; housing; social services; and banking. Importantly, of all the minorities that were surveyed for the EU-MIDIS project (including North Africans, Turkish, former Yugoslavians, Sub-Saharan Africans and others), the Roma reported the highest overall levels of discrimination. On average, every second Roma respondent reported being discriminated against at least once in the previous year on the basis of their ethnicity.

Conclusion

It is clear that any top-down, government-sponsored initiative for improving the situation of the Roma will be met with resistance at the local level because of deep-rooted and widespread intolerance. Indeed, this is precisely what is occurring today in Europe. Persistent discrimination at the local level is inhibiting the effective implementation of national and supranational policies aimed at ameliorating the lives of the Roma. The principal dilemma for Roma rights advocates and policy-makers is therefore the following: How can European societies rid themselves of prejudicial attitudes toward the Roma, or at the very least, suppress such negative attitudes so that the Roma can enjoy equal rights? Without addressing this key question, visible and enduring positive changes will not occur, despite the best efforts of EU bureaucrats and Roma rights activists. It is thus apparent that any strategy to improve the human rights of the Roma should be multi-faceted. It must include the aforementioned three ideas: rigorous data collection on the social, political, and economic status of the Roma; the emergence of a Roma-led civil rights movement; and the tackling of non-Roma prejudice. On this last point, a variety of strategies can be adopted. Complete educational desegregation can be accompanied by the amendment of elementary and high school curricula to include tolerance, multiculturalism, and the history and culture of the Roma. Financial penalties can be imposed on those who blatantly discriminate in employment, housing, and healthcare, and police forces can be provided with training on culturally-sensitive approaches to the Roma. Countries in which institutional and systemic discrimination persists can be fined by the European Union or denied some of the privileges that EU membership confers. Only by concurrently addressing ingrained European prejudices, collecting data, and promoting political mobilization can the plight of the Roma be assuaged — anything short of this will only perpetuate the status quo.

Annotated Bibliography

Atanasoski, Neda. 2009. "Roma Rights on the World Wide Web: The Role of Internet Technologies in Shaping Minority and Human Rights Discourses in Post-Socialist Central and Eastern Europe." *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 12 (2):205-218.

Annotation: In this article, Neda Atanasoski analyzes the relationship between internet technologies, human rights discourse, and post-socialist transition. She suggests that although the internet has brought the struggle of the Roma to the fore, many Roma themselves are unable to avail themselves of online resources. Indeed, because of the combination of a proliferation of online resources about the Roma and the inability of many Roma to access the internet (owing primarily to widespread poverty), they have become 'virtual' subjects of rights. Atanasoski is also highly critical of Western European governments, and argues that their concern about the human rights of the Roma is exceeded by their desire to prevent the Roma of Central and Eastern Europe from seeking asylum in the West. This article is innovative in its subject matter, yet the connection between the role of the internet and the supposed hypocrisy of Western governments is unclear.

Cahn, Claude 2003. "Racial Preference, Racial Exclusion: Administrative Efforts to Enforce the Separation of Roma and Non-Roma in Europe through Migration Controls." *European Journal of Migration and Law* 5 (4):479-490.

Annotation: Claude Cahn, former programmes director of the European Roma Rights Center, examines the way in which the Roma have become the central focus of migration politics in Western Europe. He argues that forced expulsion stemming from long-standing discrimination constitutes the core of European policies towards the Roma. Cahn explains that the concepts of itinerancy and ethnicity have become increasingly linked in European migration policies, and explores why numerous European states have hampered the ability of refugees to claim asylum within their borders. He argues that migration should be re-framed as a fact and not as a problem in European politics, and calls for greater legal protection for the Roma and for refugees. It should be noted that because this article was written in 2004, some of the information is no longer pertinent; however, forced expulsions of the Roma continue to occur, and as a result, this article is useful in providing legal and historical context for this practice.

Cahn, Claude and Elspeth Guild. 2008. "Recent Migration of Roma in Europe." The Hague: OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities. 1-86. Available Online: http://www.coe.int/t/commissioner/Activities/themes/RomaMigration_2009_en.pdf

Annotation: This report aims to assist Council of Europe Member States and Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) participating states in formulating policies to meet the needs of Romani migrants. The authors attempt to balance the oft-competing demands of managing the flow of migrants with respecting human rights. The stated objective of the report is to determine which legal measures exist to provide security for Roma migrants. However, the article also explores the interaction between anti-discrimination law and migration policies. The report includes a brief summary of Romani history in Europe, followed by two broad sections: the first analyzes the European legal and policy framework on migration and discrimination, and the second looks at Roma access to education, employment, health care, and housing within the context of migration. Written in 2008, this report is relatively recent, and is useful for those seeking a detailed description and analysis of Roma migration issues in Europe.

Corsi, Marcella, Chiara Crepaldi, Manuela Samek Lodovici, Paolo Boccagni, and Cristina Vasilescu. 2008. "Ethnic Minority and Roma Women in Europe: A Case for Gender Equality?" European Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity. Available Online: www.ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=4833&langId=en.

Annotation: This European Commission-sponsored report explores the extent to which ethnic minority and Roma women are discriminated against in daily life across Europe. The socio-economic conditions and perspectives of ethnic minority and Roma females are presented, and disadvantages in terms of education, healthcare, housing, employment, financial services, and social benefits analyzed. The principal legislative and policy responses that have been adopted at the national level across Europe are also described, and various examples of good practices provided. Importantly, this report addresses the reality that Roma women are not solely discriminated against by the non-Roma population, but also by their male counterparts. The patriarchal culture and family structure of many Roma

communities is assessed alongside external sources of discrimination. By delving into the social structure of the Roma community itself, this report goes beyond typical assessments of non-Roma prejudice and explores how male Roma attitudes are hampering opportunities for Roma girls and women in all facets of life.

European Roma Rights Centre. 2008. "Security a la Italiana: Fingerprinting, Extreme Violence and Harassment of Roma in Italy." Budapest. Available Online: http://www.errc.org/en-research-and-advocacy-reports-intro-details.php?article_id=3050

Annotation: This report, commissioned by the European Roma Rights Centre but undertaken in conjunction with a variety of human rights organizations (including the Open Society Institute and the Center on Housing Rights and Evictions), describes the upsurge in anti-Romani sentiment in Italy since 2008. The implications of Romani migration in the EU are explored within the context of rising violence against the Roma in Italy. Changes in the Italian social and political climate are also described in an attempt to understand why violent and racist attacks against Roma, by both state and non-state actors, have become a structural reality in this Western European nation. This report is useful for those seeking first-hand documentation of recent human rights abuses against the Roma in Italy. In addition, the report demonstrates that discrimination against the Roma is not limited to Central and Eastern Europe, but rather is a pan-European phenomenon.

------. 2007. "The Glass Box: Exclusion of Roma from Employment." Budapest. Available Online: <http://www.erionet.org/site/upload/publications/reports/Glassbox-report.pdf>

Annotation: This report uses empirical research from Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia to document ongoing employment discrimination against the Roma. Adapting the ubiquitous "glass ceiling" metaphor, the report argues that all Roma are constrained by an invisible "glass box" which restricts their upward mobility and hinders their ability to find gainful employment in fields not connected to the delivery of services for other Romani people. The report notes that there is a complete absence of Roma from many sectors of employment, such as white-collar jobs. Moreover, 64 percent of working-age Romani interviewed by the European Roma Rights Centre reported experiencing direct discrimination in employment, particularly in the job search and in recruitment phases. This report provides a comprehensive overview of Roma exclusion from employment and uses authoritative data to substantiate its claims, rendering it a useful resource for those seeking information on the Roma and employment rights.

Farkas, Lilla. 2007. "Segregation of Roma Children in Education: Addressing Structural Discrimination Through the Race Equality Directive." European Commission. Available Online: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=518&langId=en&furtherPubs=yes>.

Annotation: This report, written primarily from a legal perspective, offers suggestions on how to tackle the educational segregation of Roma children. Farkas argues that the Racial Equality Directive (RED)—the principal legal instrument used to combat discrimination in EU Member States—is an effective tool to combat segregation in domestic courts as well as

in the European Court of Justice. Owing to the high level of protection afforded to minorities by the RED in the field of education, Farkas suggests that it should be employed to remedy the human rights abuses faced by Romani children. Focusing on structural and institutional discrimination, Farkas also describes the effects of harassment and victimization, as well as a lack of minority language and integrative education on Romani children. Although heavy in legal concepts, this report is accessible, well-researched, and useful for anyone searching for an understanding of educational segregation and the legal tools available to remedy this ongoing human rights issue.

Goldston, James A. 2010. "The Struggle for Roma Rights: Arguments that Have Worked." *Human Rights Quarterly* 32 (2):311-325.

Annotation: In this article, James Goldston examines the legal arguments that have been successful in advancing the cause of Roma rights in courtrooms across Europe. He suggests that process-based claims (those related to obligations, burdens of proof, and refutable presumptions), arguments based on factual evidence, and arguments that address systemic problems have been the most effective in protecting and promoting the human rights of the Roma. Goldston gives examples of cases at the national and supranational level that have been successful because of these arguments, and lauds the legal progress that has been achieved in the past decade. However, he argues that a disconnect exists between legal outcomes and reality—while significant advances have been made in courtrooms, they have not yet been translated by European parliaments and local governments into specific policies that benefit the Roma. Although this article focuses primarily on legal concepts, it is accessible and succinctly captures the ongoing struggle to convert legal advances into positive changes at the local level.

-----, 2002. "Roma Rights, Roma Wrongs." *Foreign Affairs* 81:146-162.

Annotation: This article presents a broad overview of Romani history and human rights abuses in Europe. Written before several Central and Eastern European countries were admitted to the European Union, this article is slightly outdated; however, much of the information and insights offered are still pertinent today. For instance, Goldston describes the convergence of two trends—the assertion of Roma rights and European integration—and discusses the ways in which EU accession has spurred changes in individual governmental policies toward the Roma. He also explains why minority rights play such a central role in the process of European integration, and comments on the increasing use of legal means by the Roma to remedy abuses such as segregated schooling and police brutality. Although this piece offers only a cursory look at a variety of issues pertaining to the Roma, it is nevertheless useful for anyone seeking a broader historical overview of the Roma in Europe and is an introduction to key concepts and themes.

Greenberg, Jack. 2010. "Report on Roma Education Today: From Slavery to Segregation and Beyond." *Columbia Law Review* 110:919-1348.

Annotation: In this 84-page report, Jack Greenberg—a professor of law at Columbia University who once headed the NAACP Legal Defense Fund and argued the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* case in 1954—explores the educational segregation of Roma children in Central and Eastern Europe. Greenberg draws parallels between the experiences of the Roma today and the earlier experiences of African Americans in the United States. He argues that American desegregation was largely made possible due to a vibrant civil rights movement, and he laments that no such civil rights movement exists in the Roma community. Greenberg also explores the demography and history of the Roma, and investigates the possibility of a Roma civil rights movement forming in this region. This report is authoritative and highly detailed, and would be of use to anyone seeking to understand the social, political, and legal issues surrounding the educational segregation of the Roma in Europe.

Guglielmo, Rachel, and Timothy William Waters. 2005. "Migrating Towards Minority Status: Shifting European Policy Towards Roma." *Journal of Common Market Studies* 43 (4):763-786.

Annotation: In this article, authors Guglielmo and Waters describe how communities of Roma across Europe have been moving from migrant to minority status. This has corresponded with a shift in European policy away from concern about Roma migration and towards an emphasis on human rights. Although EU politicians and policy-makers remain concerned about the impacts of westward migration, they have nevertheless recognized (at least on a rhetorical level) that this concern cannot override respect for minority rights, particularly as it pertains to the Roma. The authors explain how the EU commitment to 'common values' propelled the development of an internal approach to minority protection, and argue for the integration of the Roma into Europe as minorities and not as migrants because of the legal protection afforded to official minority groups. This article thoroughly traces recent policy developments in the EU towards migration, minorities, and the Roma, and is therefore a useful tool for those who wish to understand the evolution of EU policy in these fields.

Guy, Will, ed. 2001. *Between Past and Future: the Roma of Central and Eastern Europe*. Hertfordshire, UK: University of Hertfordshire Press.

Annotation: In this collection of scholarly essays, three broad themes are explored in great detail: European policy towards the Roma in the past and the present; the International Romani Union; and the diversity of the Romani experience across Europe. Specifically, many of the essays address the impact of the end of Communist rule on the political and economic well-being of the Roma. Editor Will Guy also emphasizes the importance of understanding European history in analyses of the Roma's current situation. A combination of history and policy makes this book useful for anyone seeking to understand how the Roma have become Europe's largest and most marginalized minority group, and for determining solutions at the national and transnational levels to improve the lives of the Roma.

Henrard, Kristin. 2003. "The Building Blocks for an Emerging Regime for the Protection of a Controversial Case of Cultural Diversity: The Roma." *International Journal on Minority & Group Rights* 10 (3):183-201.

Annotation: In this article, Kristin Henrard explores the extent to which individual human rights and general minority rights contribute to the promotion and protection of the cultural diversity of the Roma in Europe. Using the equality principle, the prohibition of discrimination, and the protection of the right to life as guiding legal frameworks (as outlined in the European Convention on Human Rights), Henrard analyzes the way in which individual human rights protect the Roma and their distinct traditions. Cultural rights and minority rights are similarly examined, and the trend toward Roma-specific norms and standards is expounded upon. For those unfamiliar with international human rights law, this article may be slightly challenging, as certain terms and concepts are not defined but used repeatedly. Nevertheless, the article provides a comprehensive overview of developments in the field of human rights law that have benefited the Roma, and is useful for those seeking to understand the intersection between the law and Roma rights.

Hollo, Lanna. 2006. *Equality for Roma in Europe: A Roadmap for Action*. Brussels: Open Society Institute. Available Online: http://www.erionet.org/site/upload/publications/reports/equality_2006.pdf.

Annotation: This report, produced in part by the European Roma Information Office, identifies the cultural, policy, and legislative changes that need to occur at the national and European level in order for genuine progress in the realm of Roma rights to materialize. The first part of the report summarizes the principal factors that have impeded progress, and the second part provides recommendations to national governments and EU institutions. The report argues that a discrepancy exists between the political agenda across Europe and political will; in other words, while the EU has dedicated a significant amount of resources to this issue, life has not improved for many Roma at the local level because of widespread anti-Gypsyism and deeply entrenched institutional discrimination. This report is comprehensive, accessible, and useful for those who wish to understand what has been done and what still needs to be done in order to achieve Roma equality in Europe.

Ivanov, Andrey. 2006. "At Risk: Roma and the Displaced in Southeast Europe." Bratislava: United Nations Development Programme. Available Online: <http://europeandcis.undp.org/poverty/show/1F1720E9-F203-1EE9-BC7AE7B9E8FA04E4>

Annotation: This United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report builds upon the 2003 "Avoiding the Dependency Trap" regional report on Roma in Central Europe, and uses quantitative data from cross-country surveys to analyze the situation of the Roma. The report is divided into two main sections: one that focuses on the Roma, and the other which focuses on refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). The conceptual focus of this report is vulnerability, and the exposure of Roma and displaced persons to various vulnerability risks constitutes the core of the UNDP's analysis. The specific determinants of vulnerability (such as poverty, lack of educational opportunities, social exclusion, etc.) are

outlined for each group, and the report concludes with a set of group-specific policy recommendations. Heavy in statistical analysis, this report is useful for those looking for authoritative empirical findings regarding the human rights issues faced by the Roma.

McDonald, Christina and Katy Negrin. 2010. “No Data - No Progress: Data Collection in Countries Participating in the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015.” New York: Open Society Foundations. Available Online :
http://www.soros.org/initiatives/roma/articles_publications/publications/no-data-no-progress-20100628/no-data-no-progress-20100628.pdf.

Annotation: This report, commissioned by the Open Society Institute, assesses the interim progress made by the twelve states participating in the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015. As the title of the report suggests, the largest obstacle to conducting a comprehensive assessment of how governments are complying with their Decade commitments is the lack of data about Roma communities. For instance, two thirds of participating states do not have any information on primary school completion rates for Roma children. There are virtually no countries in the European Union that collect data that is disaggregated for ethnic group affiliation—as such, the report offers 11 concrete measures that can be undertaken by policy-makers in the next 18 months to address the Roma data deficit. This report is useful for those seeking information on data collection as it pertains to the Roma. For specific details about the Roma policies of various Central and Eastern European states, the longer “No Data-No Progress Country Findings” report should be consulted.

Müller, Stephan and Zeljko Jovanovic. 2010. “Pathways to Progress? The European Union and Roma Inclusion in the Western Balkans.” Open Society Institute. Available Online :
http://www.soros.org/initiatives/roma/articles_publications/publications/european-exclusion-20100402/pathways-progress-20100402.pdf

Annotation: Using the ongoing accession process of the Western Balkan nations as a frame of reference, this report analyzes the approach of the European Commission toward Roma integration. The socio-economic standing of the Roma in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia is assessed, and developments at the European level are enumerated. The report argues that unless the European Commission develops and implements a sustainable long-term strategy toward Roma inclusion in the Western Balkans, the situation for this persecuted group will continue to deteriorate. Although this report utilizes a significant amount of EU-specific terminology that may be confusing to readers unfamiliar with the bureaucratic structure of the EU, it is nevertheless useful as a regional study and as a guide as to how the accession process can promote the human rights of the Roma.

Nicolae, Valeriu, and Hannah Slavik, eds. 2007. *Roma Diplomacy*. New York: International Debate Education Association.

Annotation: The publication of this anthology arose from a long-term training program for Roma-rights activists from 2005 to 2006 entitled “The Roma Diplomacy Project.” This project specifically targeted young Roma “elites”—well-educated and successful Roma who are actively working in Roma national institutions, international organizations, and NGOs. The essays in this volume address the reality that European initiatives aiming to improve the social inclusion of Roma have focused almost exclusively on the elements of the Roma population that fit into negative stereotypes (*i.e.*, people who are uneducated, unskilled, unemployed, poor, etc.) By targeting programs to this population, the stigma attached to the Roma population has increased and successful Roma have often felt compelled to conceal their ethnic identity. This book tackles these issues directly, and includes research by programme participants and essays by academics working in the field of Roma rights. It is of use to anyone searching for well-researched alternative policy solutions for the Roma population of Europe.

O’Nions, Helen. 2010. "Different and Unequal: The Educational Segregation of Roma Pupils in Europe." *Intercultural Education* 21 (1):1-13.

Annotation: In this article, Helen O’Nions analyzes the European Court of Human Rights’ (ECHR) landmark ruling in 2007 regarding segregated schooling and human rights for the Roma, and uses this case to convincingly appeal for intercultural educational curricula across Europe. The ruling, which O’Nions describes in great detail, states that the policy of educational segregation for Roma children is contrary to the human right to enjoy an education. The segregation of Roma students to poorly-funded separate schools is one of the major human rights abuses faced by this group, yet there is a legal framework firmly in place that calls for an end to this practice, O’Nions is hopeful that genuine progress can be achieved in Roma childhood education. The author also delves into the importance of mother-tongue instruction, and outlines recent progress in the European Union in the educational realm. This article is helpful for anyone interested in educational policy towards the Roma and recent legal developments in this field.

------. 2007. *Minority Rights Protection in International Law: The Roma of Europe*. Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Limited.

Annotation: In this book, Helen O’Nions explores the social and political struggles faced by the Roma in Europe from a primarily legal perspective. She argues that the democratic legitimacy of a state can be measured in large part by the degree to which minority rights are respected. In the European case, the treatment of the Roma is often the best ‘litmus test’ for democratic legitimacy. She argues that individual human rights have often been inaccessible for the Roma people, and cites segregated schooling and systemic discrimination as evidence of this. As a result of the inability of many European states to guarantee individual human rights to the Roma, debate has re-emerged over the usefulness of group rights. Although the focus of this book is predominantly on legal practice, it is a useful resource for anyone seeking a preliminary understanding of the plight of the Roma in Europe, and as a detailed analysis of minority rights protection for this persecuted group.

Open Society Foundations. 2005. "Current Attitudes Toward the Roma in Central Europe: A Report of Research with non-Roma and Roma Respondents." Available Online: http://www.soros.org/initiatives/roma/articles_publications/publications/attitudes_20050901/romasurvey_2005.pdf

Annotation: This report, undertaken by the Roma Initiatives Department of the Open Society Institute, explores the attitudes of the general non-Roma and Roma population toward Roma integration and broader social, political, and economic issues. The objective of the report is to understand the drivers of attitudes and perceptions amongst these populations, with the aim of informing policy-makers across Central and Eastern Europe. In order to do so, eight focus groups were conducted in nine countries in June 2005: Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, and Slovakia. Overall, both the Roma and non-Roma respondents were very pessimistic about the current situation in their countries, and non-Roma respondents were prone to blaming the Roma themselves for their poor quality of life. Although this report does not provide an analysis of the results of the focus groups, it is nonetheless helpful in gaining a sense of current Roma and non-Roma attitudes towards the plight of the Romani people.

Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. 2008. "Implementation of the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti Within the OSCE Area." 2008. Warsaw. Available Online: http://www.osce.org/publications/odihhr/2008/09/33130_1186_en.pdf

Annotation: This report, produced in 2008 by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, analyzes the extent to which participating states have implemented the 2003 Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area. The categories positive change, visible progress, breakthrough, no change, and negative trend are used to describe states' implementation of policies in fields such as access to education, socio-economic issues, racism and discrimination, and participation in public and political life. The report notes that while positive change has been observed in the development of national strategies for improving the situation of the Roma, states across Europe are nevertheless struggling to translate national policies into specific action at the local level. This report is beneficial for anyone searching for an understanding of human rights abuses faced by the Roma, and the action taken by European states in the past seven years to address these problems.

Pogány, István. 2004. "Refashioning Rights in Central and Eastern Europe: Some Implications for the Region's Roma." *European Public Law* 10 (1):85-105.

Annotation: István Pogány, a professor of law at the University of Warwick, describes how the post-Communist transition has affected the Roma across Central and Eastern Europe. He argues that the transition from Communism to democracy in the early 1990s has paradoxically worsened the situation of the Roma. Whereas the majority of the Roma were able to benefit from a variety of social and economic rights under Communism (including the rights to work, housing, healthcare, and education), many Roma found themselves unable to avail themselves of such rights in the post-Communist climate of rising

unemployment and living costs. Pogány suggests that the marginalization of the Roma has increased since 1990 in both social and economic terms, resulting in the inability of the Roma to take advantage of new rights and freedoms. This article is beneficial for those seeking to understand how political developments at the state level impacted the Roma populations of Central and Eastern Europe during the tumultuous period of post-Communist transition.

Sigona, Nando, and Nidhi Trehan, eds. 2009. *Romani Politics in Contemporary Europe: Poverty, Ethnic Mobilization, and the Neoliberal Order*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Annotation: This anthology explores two broad themes: the Romani political space in Europe, and domestic perspectives on Roma policy. It is a comparative study of both national and transnational policies towards the Romani people, with an emphasis on the consequences of European integration for the Roma. Many of the essays argue that while European integration has opened up new avenues for the respect and promotion of Roma human rights, this process has simultaneously exacerbated well-established patterns of persecution. Indeed, the construction of the European Union has had contradictory effects on the Roma people, which is a major focus of this collection. For instance, despite being European citizens (by virtue of being citizens of Member States), Romani people continue to be deprived of many basic rights in all facets of life. This book is particularly instructive for those seeking a theoretical, as well as a practical, understanding of the current state of Romani affairs across Europe.

Sobotka, Eva. 2003. "Romani Migration in the 1990s: Perspectives on Dynamic, Interpretation and Policy." *Romani Studies* 13 (2):79-121.

Annotation: In this article, Eva Sobotka attempts to dispel misconceptions about Romani migration during the 1990s by chronologically ordering the migration of Roma and policies developed during this time period. Migration policy development and its effect on the migration of the Roma are explored, and various 'push' and 'pull' factors are identified. Sobotka argues that theorists and practitioners place too much emphasis on 'push' factors, such as human rights abuses and social exclusion, as the cause of Roma migration. Instead, she suggests that 'pull' factors such as economic opportunity and the presence of Romani diasporas in the West play an equally important, if not greater, role in spurring Roma movement across Europe. Sobotka also assesses the tension that often arises between the motives of migrants and national migration policies. This article is helpful for those interested in how the Roma affect migration policy and how migration policy in turn affects the Roma.

Stauber, Roni, and Raphael Vago, eds. 2007. *The Roma: A Minority in Europe: Historical, Political and Social Perspectives*. Budapest: Central European University Press.

Annotation: This anthology is a summary of research presented at the first international conference in Israel on the Roma, which took place at Tel Aviv University in 2002. The

essays largely focus on the history of Roma persecution in Europe. Issues explored include questions of ethnic definition and the construction of ethno-national identity, as well as the treatment of Roma citizens in post-Communist settings. While the majority of the essays in this collection are of a historical nature, the last two chapters are devoted to contemporary Roma policy formation and human rights. The effects of the expansion of the European Union on the Roma are explored, and Roma political and social activism is addressed. This book is useful for those interested in WWII-era policies toward the Roma and for those searching for in-depth information about the history of the Roma in Europe. It is less practical for those seeking to understand present-day policy issues surrounding the Roma.

Swimelar, Safia. 2008. "The Making of Minority Rights Norms in the Context of EU Enlargement: The Czech Republic and the Roma." *International Journal of Human Rights* 12 (4):505-527.

Annotation: In this essay, Safia Swimelar explores the development of the Czech Republic's minority rights regime, specifically as it pertains to the Roma, in the period of post-Communist transition and accession to the European Union. Swimelar primarily focuses on the process of domestic human rights norm socialization, and describes how international norms have affected internal policy and politics in the Czech Republic. The author traces the historical processes that led from a complete denial by the Czech government concerning the marginalized status of the Roma as a problem in the early 1990s, to the institutionalization and acceptance at the political level of minority rights norms by the time of EU accession in 2004. Relying heavily on political theory, this article may be challenging for those unfamiliar with this field; however, Swimelar clearly explains her theoretical approaches and offers important insights on the way in which minority rights become entrenched in a nation.

Ram, Melanie H. 2010. "Interests, Norms and Advocacy: Explaining the Emergence of the Roma onto the EU's Agenda." *Ethnopolitics* 9 (2):197-217.

Annotation: In this article, Melanie Ram investigates how the Roma gained international attention and rose to the top of the agenda of EU policy-makers in the last twenty years. The role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and the Roma themselves in bringing attention to the Roma of Central and Eastern Europe is explored, and the importance of transnational advocacy networks is emphasized. The author argues that a network of international and domestic advocacy organizations emerged in the 1990s and played a significant role in propelling Roma issues onto the EU agenda. Ram also examines why the EU made improving the circumstances of the Roma a precondition for Union membership. The convergence of EU interest in stemming illegal migration and in increasing support for human rights norms is provided as a potential answer. This article is beneficial for those seeking to understand how the issue of Roma rights gained prominence in the EU—a fact that many now take for granted.

Vermeersch, Peter and Melanie H. Ram. 2009. "The Roma," inn *Minority Rights in Central and Eastern Europe*, ed. B. Rechel. New York: Routledge.

Annotation: In this essay, authors Vermeersch and Ram focus on six broad themes: the current situation of the Roma; the policy responses toward Roma of new European Union (EU) member states; Roma political mobilization; the notion of EU conditionality (*i.e.*, insisting on greater respect for human rights of minority groups as a precondition for entry into the EU); the degree to which various policy initiatives towards the Roma have been implemented across Europe; and perspectives for the future. The authors argue that although Roma activism has increased in recent years and there has been a proliferation of human rights NGOs across Europe, this mobilization has not been matched by significant Roma political participation. While the arguments presented in this essay are not new, the way in which the six themes are presented and connected is innovative and thought-provoking.