

Report
on
EUROPEAN WORKSHOP
ON ROMA-POLICE RELATIONS

Turvey, Bedfordshire, UK

4–6 March 1999

organised by
EUROPEAN DIALOGUE

on behalf of
EAST ANGLIAN GYPSY COUNCIL & EQUALITIES ASSOCIATES

in association with
Romani CRISS, European Roma Rights Centre, Project on Ethnic Relations,
Council of Europe, UK Department for International Development

CONTENTS

PREFACE: OCTOBER 2002	3
1. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW	4-6
2. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS	7-9
3. LIST OF KEY ISSUES IDENTIFIED	10
4. REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS	11-15
5. CONCLUSIONS OF WORKSHOP	16-17
6. LIST OF PRESENTATIONS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS	18-19
7. ANNEX: EXAMPLES OF PRACTICAL INITIATIVES	20-59

PREFACE: OCTOBER 2002

The European Workshop on Roma-Police Relations, held at Turvey in the UK in March 1999, was a pioneering event initiated by a team led by Peter Mercer - President of the East Anglian Gypsy Council and a member of the Parliament of the International Romani Union. It brought together, for the first time on a European level, representatives of the Police and Roma communities to examine the reasons for the tensions and conflicts in their relationships, and to explore possible solutions. Despite the controversial nature of the subject, and some heated debates during the three-day event, the workshop was considered to be successful by the participants as a first step towards achieving these objectives.

The report that follows was drawn up to provide a brief summary of the proceedings of the Workshop. Now attached to it are a number of papers presented at the workshop which illustrate some of the practical measures that can be taken to improve relations between Roma and the police - covering areas such as dialogue, consultation, training, and cooperation on specific projects.

As the original report indicates, the participants in the Workshop were keen for a programme of follow-up activity to be developed. Despite initial efforts, it did not prove possible to secure funding to develop a programme focussing on policing alone. However, the UK Department for International Development (DFID), one of the original funders of the Workshop, agreed to support a more broadly-based programme, which was eventually launched in February 2001 as the three-year "Roma Rights and Access to Justice in Europe" (RrAJE) Programme. This focussed more generally on Roma empowerment and on the development of integrated, multi-agency strategies at the local level - with policing and community safety issues being addressed within this broader context.

Now that more than three years have passed since the 'Turvey Workshop', renewed efforts are being made to explore the possibility of a follow-up programme of some kind. These have been stimulated by a number of factors, which include: (a) the persistence of problems in relations between police and Roma in many parts of Europe; (b) the need to disseminate some of the more recent practical initiatives designed to address these problems; and (c) the need to draw in to the process, areas such as the Balkans and the Russian Federation which were not previously involved. In these circumstances, it has been decided to make this newly edited version of the original report available once again, together with some of the papers which are likely to be of most practical benefit.

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1. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

This report provides a short summary of the proceedings of the European Workshop on Relations between Roma and the Police, held from 4-6 March 1999 at Turvey, Bedfordshire, UK.

The workshop was organised by the UK-based NGO European Dialogue, on behalf of the East Anglian Gypsy Council and Equalities Associates (formerly the Home Office Specialist Support Unit for Police Training on Community and Race Relations). Peter Mercer (President of EAGC), Jerome Mack (Managing Director of Equalities Associates) and Robin Oakley (Consultant to the Council of Europe) acted as Convenors, with the support of Jeanette Buirski (Director of European Dialogue). Nicolae Gheorghe, Coordinator of Romani CRISS, Romania (subsequently Adviser on Roma/Sinti Issues to OSCE), acted as Adviser to the Convenors.

The event was held with the support of the European Roma Rights Centre, the Project on Ethnic Relations, the Council of Europe and the UK Department for International Development. The funding and other assistance provided by these organisations is gratefully acknowledged.

The objectives of the workshop were as follows:

- To develop a shared understanding of problems in relations between police and Roma communities in Europe, on which solutions to these problems can be based.
- To share experience of practical measures for improving relations between police and Roma communities, which can be used by participants to develop initiatives in their own countries, especially in Central/Eastern Europe.
- To identify principles and examples of good practice, which can form the basis for a report for dissemination across Europe.
- To develop strategies for promoting the implementation of good practice, at both national and European levels.

Participants were drawn from across Europe, though primarily from Central/Eastern Europe. Three categories of participants were invited: leading members of Roma communities, senior police officials, and representatives from projects already active in this field. Police and Roma delegates from Central/Eastern European countries had mostly been sponsored by local British Know-How Fund offices. Overall, the following twelve countries were represented: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Italy, The Netherlands, Poland, Republic of Ireland, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, and the United Kingdom. Altogether the workshop was attended by 39 participants, together with staff of European Dialogue and interpreters (primarily for English-Romanes translation).

The workshop was conducted at Equalities Associates' residential training centre at The Laws Hotel, Turvey. Around half of the delegates were accommodated at the training centre, and the other half at a hotel in the nearby town of Bedford.

On the first day, the programme opened with a presentation on the legal and human rights framework within which relations between Roma communities and the police need to be addressed. Delegates emphasised the serious gap that often existed between international documents and actual practice 'on the ground'. Following further presentations by the main partner organisations (ERRC, PER and the Council of Europe), there was an exchange of views on the nature and causes of problems in Roma/police relations, leading to identification of the key issues that needed to be addressed. A list of the main issues identified is included in this report. The final session of the day was devoted to consideration of the need for a strategic response to these issues. Presentations were made on the 'Rotterdam Charter': "Policing for a Multi-Ethnic Society", which sets out elements of such a response, and on the programme of action developed by the Hungarian National Police.

The second day was mainly devoted to exchange of views and experience in small working groups, leading to identification of principles and examples of good practice. The first working group addressed "Implementation of the Law and Policing Standards"; the second "Building Bridges between Roma and the Police"; and the third "Training and Recruitment". These groups provided an opportunity for individual participants to present projects or other initiatives with which they had been involved. The final session was devoted to receiving reports back from each of the groups, followed by general discussion of their conclusions. A list of papers and other documents presented at the workshop is included in this report, as are the conclusions of the three working groups.

The third day opened with a debate on whether it would be appropriate to formulate a specific charter on the subject of police/Roma relations, to be derived from the original 'Rotterdam Charter'. While it was acknowledged that there were some special features of relations between Roma and the police, there were also seen to be disadvantages in separating this relationship out for special attention. It was also felt that there were major differences between the situation in different countries. A widespread feeling was that it would be better to make use of the Rotterdam Charter in its existing form, and to apply and adapt it to the circumstances of the individual country or region.

Working groups then considered the specific roles of Roma, police and NGOs in implementing good practice in police/Roma relations. The police group viewed the challenge in pragmatic terms, and wished to move quickly to implement the Charter in their organisations, although cautioning that they themselves were not of sufficiently senior rank to do so directly. The Roma group were more cautious, and sought clarification on the nature of Charter; they also felt it was important to consult widely among Roma communities about the Charter and how to use it, before taking any action. The NGO group saw itself as a mediator rather than an interest group so far as the Charter was concerned, and viewed its role as one of providing stimulation, monitoring and support.

The concluding sessions of the workshop considered practical actions for the way forward. It was suggested that participants should promote consultation about use of the Rotterdam Charter in their own individual countries, and that translation into national languages and into Romanes should be arranged. The conclusions of these consultations could be reported to a follow-up meeting of the workshop participants at a later stage. Meanwhile a steering group, consisting of the convenors and main partner organisations, should meet in order to plan a programme of follow-up activities and to consider how further funding support could be obtained. Possibilities such as regional or subject-specific meetings (e.g. on training) were raised. Existing participants should be kept in touch with developments, but it would also be necessary to involve a wider range of people, particularly from countries not so far represented.

Overall, it may be said that, to judge from the feedback received from participants, this workshop was felt to be a very successful pioneering event. It laid important foundations for

future work in a field in which there continue to be serious problems of racism, injustice and conflict. The workshop demonstrated that, by bringing together experienced practitioners from the various sectors in a positive and informal atmosphere, it was possible for them to express strong views frankly and openly, as a means to enhancing understanding and mutual respect. It demonstrated the potential for constructive dialogue, for innovative approaches, and for cooperation at both the local and transnational levels.

More specifically, the workshop took crucial steps towards achieving all four of the objectives set out above, although much follow-up work is needed. Among the most important conclusions were: (a) the need for police to acknowledge the problem; (b) the need for a strategic response; (c) the need for partnership between police and Roma communities in finding solutions; and (d) the need to build stronger Roma associations that can both maintain the pressure for, and contribute to, the necessary change. The steering group will now carry the responsibility for identifying ways to take this initial work forward.

2. WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

ORGANISERS

Peter Mercer, President, East Anglian Gypsy Council, Peterborough, United Kingdom.
Dr Robin Oakley, Independent Consultant, London, United Kingdom.
Jerome Mack, Director, Equalities Associates, Bedfordshire, United Kingdom.
Jeanette Buirski, Project Coordinator, European Dialogue, London, United Kingdom.
Nicolae Gheorghe, Rromani CRISS, Romania; Advisor on Roma and Sinti Issues, OSCE ODIHR, Warsaw, Poland.

FUNDERS/PARTNERS

Francoise Kempf, Assistant Coordinator of Activities on Roma/Gypsies, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, France.
Dr Ferenc Mélykúti, Head of Budapest Office, Project on Ethnic Relations, Hungary.
Jud Nirenberg, Roma Participation Programme, Open Society Institute, Budapest, Hungary.
Alicia Teruel Perez, Staff Attorney, European Roma Rights Centre, Budapest, Hungary.

ROMA DELEGATES

Nora Costache, Young Generation Society of Roma, Bucharest, Romania.
Agnes Daroczi, Romedica Foundation, Budapest, Hungary.
Karel Holomek, Helsinki Citizens Assembly Roma Section, Brno, Czech Republic.
Tibor Horvath, Roma Youth and Children of Slovakia, Kosice, Slovakia.
Anton Karagjozov, Foundation for Regional Development 'Roma', Stolipinovo, Plovdiv, Bulgaria.
Roman Kwiatkowski, Roma People Association in Poland, Oswiecim, Poland.
Miroslav Lacko, Office for Protection of the Legal Rights of Minorities, Kosice, Slovakia.
Dr Santino Spinelli, THEM ROMANO, Lanciano, Italy.
Costel Vasile, Young Generation Society of Roma, Bucharest, Romania.
Miroslav Zima, Roma DROM Centre, Brno, Czech Republic.

POLICE DELEGATES

Dr Klara Csanyi, Office of Social Relations & Communication, Ministry of Interior, Budapest, Hungary.
Major Stanislav Daniel, Ministerial Advisor on Police and Roma Affairs, Interior Ministry, Prague, Czech Republic.
Michal Dunda, President of District Police Court, Kosice, Slovakia.
Julian Eales, Cambridgeshire Constabulary, United Kingdom.
Silviu Erusencu, Institute for Crime Research and Prevention, Inspectorate General of Police, Bucharest, Romania.
Joaquin Goma, Department for International Cooperation, Directorate General of Police, Madrid, Spain.
Jozef Petras, Vice President of District Police Court, Bratislava, Slovakia.
Stefan Pop, Inspectorate General of Police, Sibiu, Romania.
Malgorzata Puzio, Bureau for the Coordination of Crime Prevention, National Police, Warsaw, Poland.
Chief Inspector Chris Taylor, Community Safety and Partnership Branch, Metropolitan Police, London, United Kingdom.

Rinus Visser, Coordinator, Rotterdam Charter Foundation, Rotterdam-Rijnmond Police, Netherlands.

David Winsor, Assistant Chief Constable, Cambridgeshire Constabulary, United Kingdom.

PROJECT DELEGATES

Anastasia Critchley, Pavee Point Travellers Centre, Dublin, Ireland.

Savelina Danova, Human Rights Project, Sofia, Bulgaria.

Carles Descalzi, Coordinator of NAPAP Project, UNESCO Centre of Catalonia, Barcelona, Spain.

Judit Komaromi, Nograd County Project, Hungary.

John O'Connell, Irish Travellers Organisation, Dublin, Ireland.

Sarlota Pufflerova, Minority Rights Group-Slovakia, Foundation for Democracy, Bratislava, Slovakia.

Dr Ilona Tomova, Inter-Ethnic Initiative, Sofia, Bulgaria.

SPECIALIST SUPPORT

Dr Thomas Acton, Principal Lecturer in Romani Studies, University of Greenwich, London, United Kingdom.

Donald Kenrick, Vice President, Romany Institute, London, United Kingdom.

3. KEY ISSUES

(as identified by workshop participants)

- Police must implement law against discrimination/violence effectively
- Need to register incidents to demonstrate existence of problem
- Are the laws adequate?
- Importance of preventative work/education
- Police role is repressive, rather than a service to protect all citizens
- Police stereotype Roma as outsiders/criminals
- Need for police training on human rights/ Roma issues
- Police harassment of Roma is normal in some countries
- Lack of trust/hostility towards Police among Roma
- Need complaints/ inspection systems + public accountability
- Absence of effective sanctions against Police abuse
- Roma need education to know their rights
- Also need resources/trained lawyers to provide access to rights
- Roma not willing to become Police officers
- Need positive action to recruit Roma into Police organisations
- Lack of a strategic approach to address the issues
- Absence of commitment at the political level
- Media exacerbate the problems
- Need mechanisms for Police/Roma communication/cooperation

4. REPORTS OF WORKING GROUPS

1. BUILDING BRIDGES BETWEEN CITIZENS AND POLICE

The subgroup on 'building bridges between citizens and police' first focused on examining goals of increased communication which both police and Romani communities can agree to.

For police, while Roma do not want to be seen as potential informants, it is clearly easier to investigate a crime in a community which views police as a service provider and not an enemy. For Roma it is important to find ways of preventing and addressing police abuse of power and to assure Roma the same assistance from police as other citizens. Trust needs to be built on both sides, and stereotypes in the minds of the police broken. There is a need to work together to inform Roma of their civic rights. There is also need to raise the level of professionalism in the police. Some participants suggested that one aim of Roma-Police co-operation may be to increase the number of Roma in the police force, but the group was unable to agree on this goal. One participant also noted that the common occurrence of discrimination against individuals because they come from a 'criminal families' or 'criminal neighbourhoods' and wondered if addressing this issue would fit with the discussion. Most of the group found that the topic to lie strictly within the responsibility of the court and did not see it as anything that Roma NGOs and police should work together on.

Possible projects for addressing some of the above issues were proposed:

- Police and Roma NGOs should co-operate on events, publications, and other activities to inform citizens of their basic legal rights.
- 'Street law' seminars done in co-operation between authorities and Roma NGOs were mentioned towards the same goal.
- Meetings and workshops should be held to bring together police and Roma NGOs. This can be an important step in building trust. Further, meetings can be regular forums for discussion of possible abuse of power or community tensions. This would help in the area of rights abuses and make it easier for police to deal pro-actively with potential police-community problems.
- Visits by Roma to police offices or stations, and visits by police to the offices of the Roma NGOs during special 'open houses' were proposed as a means of building dialogue - again meant to lower tensions and to inform.
- Roma NGOs should organise, in co-operation with the authorities, training for police to help sensitise police to racism. Training should be held at all ranks/levels. This work could lead to less abuses of force and to lessening of stereotypes.
- Some participants recommended the use of psychological testing to screen police recruits for inappropriate attitudes. The group agreed that while such testing might be helpful, it cannot replace training for police in anti-discrimination.
- One participant produced a 'year zero' training programme for Roma interested in attending the police academy. The group was overall unable to reach a decision on the appropriateness of this sort of project, although it seems appropriate to the Roma in the Czech Republic, where such an initiative now takes place.

In conclusion, there seemed to be a consensus within the group that among the goals the need to prevent and seek retribution against acts of police abuse of power or lack of professionalism is of key importance. It was also felt by most Roma participants that while measures to increase Roma-Police co-operation are valuable ideas, they can never replace the need for support to Roma NGOs which are capable of carrying out civil rights advocacy, training and affordable legal services.

2. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LAW AND POLICE STANDARDS

Conclusions of Working Group

1. We see a very clear different perspective of the situation depending on the point of view used to focus on the issue - Police or Roma community. Acknowledging the situation would be the first step to be taken to resolve the problem.
2. The identification of the Roma community. The non-Roma population sees them as perpetrators when in fact they are also victims. This would have a relation for instance with immigration regulations. When members of the Roma community decide to emigrate to a country the application of the immigration law to Roma is a more stringent, and they are seen more like criminals by the recipient country.
3. We had an intensive discussion about whether Roma have the status of an ethnic or national minority, but we did not reach agreement.
4. Setting and implementing standards of conduct is not just a problem belonging to the police, but also to society in general and in particular of the world criminal legal system.
5. Monitoring and accountancy to the public. On this particular point we had presentations from the three police Delegations:
 - The British delegation pointed out the extreme importance of involving the community, the social and educational services, other public authorities, and the local council in the developing of any kind of social program. For instance they referred the example to 'Lay Visitors': through periodical visits to the places of custody, the community controls the standards of such places.
 - The Slovak delegation referred to the fact that the Ministry of Interior would decide, on misbehaviour by a police officer, whether to prosecute the police officer or whether to dismiss the action against him.
 - The Romanian delegation explained that the Roma policy has changed in the last few years, from an exclusion policy to an inclusion policy.
6. We had a very intensive debate about the confidentiality of the information to be used in statistics. Whether is useful or detriment for the aim to be sought. There were two different views about whether it is useful or detrimental. On one hand there were people who considered that declaration of your ethnic origin should be a matter of personal choice, and it could be used to stigmatise Roma as a whole group as criminals. On the other hand there were people who considered that, provided that the information was kept confidential, it could be useful for internal purposes and just linked to specific cases.
7. There is a problem for the police to accept that a case is a racist-motivated crime.

8. We also discussed the appropriateness of having specific regulations relating to violence against Roma. There were again two different options: one was to have a rule which specified aggravated circumstances in general, and the other to have a specific regulation for Roma.
9. Police should be trained in international standards, acknowledging the legislation in force in the respective country.
10. Documenting cases of violation of human rights against Roma should help for the eradication of such violations.

Rapporteur: Alicia Teruel Perez

3. TRAINING AND RECRUITMENT

First of all each participant presented their own situation regarding training police on minority issues. These presentations showed that there are significant differences between countries on the grounds of political and economic background and national traditions, which are reflected in the police and in their training activities. Nevertheless, we succeeded in reaching some conclusions. It was acknowledged that there is a need to improve multiethnic/diversity/minority training in the police. We reckoned that prejudices and stereotypes exist on both sides. So, in order to make an improvement, we need to consider the following points:

- a. Training must be comprehensive in time and in issues. By time we mean that it has to be planned well in advance in order to sensitise policemen towards minority issues. By issues we mean that it should cover other important fields – social, psychological.
- b. We should use the integrated approach in setting up and managing the training, meaning that the most important areas should complement each other. These areas should include senior officers establishing contacts with minority communities, identifying Roma leaders and educators for the training programmes. It is important to involve the minorities throughout the training process.
- c. NGOs play a key role in liaison between the police and minority communities.
- d. Exchange of experience should be facilitated through NGOs among eastern European countries as well as between eastern and western European Countries.

2. We then reviewed the recruitment policies of the countries concerned. In general we concluded that the Roma are under-represented in police forces and there is a need to improve recruitment policy and methods. In order to improve the recruitment of Roma into police forces some proposals were made:

- a. Make recruitment campaigns more efficient, making sure that they reach the minority groups.
- b. Instead of lowering standards/entrance requirement, specific programmes should be established to assist Roma to get the necessary skills in order to reach the standard.
- c. Involve Roma organisations in recruitment – it is important to eliminate or to decrease unwillingness of Roma to join police forces.
- d. We also found that the Roma's usual disadvantaged economic and educational status is reflected in the police and may emerge as a hindering factor in their recruitment and promotion.
- e. Consequently, police should co-operate from time to time with any relevant governmental and non-governmental body to carry out its programme of recruitment.

4. THE ROLE OF NGOS IN IMPLEMENTING GOOD PRACTICES

The discussion started with a review of the points made by the rapporteurs of the three working groups of the previous day.

The first conclusion drawn by the participants was that working on Roma-police relations should be done in a partnership context in which human rights NGO's often play the important role of mediator or facilitator. These partnerships relations should involve the police, the Romani community, the NGO's, the local authorities and all their services dealing with the overall situation of the Roma/Gypsies, i.e. health, social affairs, education, etc.

It appeared clear to the participants that this role of intermediary played by the NGO's is a difficult one, as they have to find a balanced position simultaneously with a critical attitude. As for their relations with the Romani community, they can help to enhance its visibility, but must be careful not to be perceived as patronising. With regard to the majority population, they should have a role of education, awareness-raising and providing unbiased information.

The NGOs and the police:

The principle for working with the police could be summarised as follows 'Stimulate, contribute and monitor'. Concretely, the role of NGO's could consist in the following actions: raise awareness within the police forces about human rights issues and the treatment of minorities:

- prepare training material for the police in the field of ethnic relations;
- provide expertise;
- organise consultations between the Romani community and the police;
- promote the introduction of good practice;
- facilitate the exchange of experiences and monitor the evolution of the work.

In addition to this constructive and pro-active approach, the NGO's play the main role when pressure has to be put on the state authorities and make public the case of police violence or mistreatments with regard to the Roma community. They can then be seen as a catalyst which often pushes the authorities to react in an appropriate manner to cases of police brutality. Very often too, they are the main support for Roma in the criminal justice system, i.e. they provide legal aid and are linked with the international human rights standards at domestic level. Also they participate in the processes of monitoring the compliance of the commitments of States in international bodies.

The NGOs and the Romani communities:

In addition to the monitoring of the respect for human rights and international commitments, the NGO's have a role to play in explaining to the Romani community that the police are not only in charge of ensuring order but are also a provider of services. Therefore, they have been made more aware of the dual nature of the police and about their rights. Human rights NGO's can support the Romani NGO's establish links with other non-Romani NGO'S and, at the same time, raise awareness among the latter about the situation of the Roma.

The NGOs and the society at large:

The essence of the human rights NGO'S is to contribute to the fight against prejudices and racism. They have a pedagogical role to play towards the majority population.

First of all, they can influence the media, raising awareness of the situation of the Roma and their position as victims more than perpetrators. It has to be borne in mind that they are key to a change in the relation between Police and Roma which involves a change of the perception by the majority of the Roma as a criminal group. In particular, the NGOs can monitor the perception by the media and the police information services of data on criminality mentioning the ethnic origin of the perpetrators. Here again, they can organise debates, round-tables to sensitise the media and prepare teaching materials. They can also elaborate their own communication strategies with regard to the general public, and inform the media and the public about cases of mistreatment of Roma (taking into account that these cases are usually only known by specialist bodies and restricted human rights circles).

In Roma-Police relations, the human rights NGOs are the external actor which guarantees that the necessary connections are established, the processes of communication are facilitated, and the evolution of these relations are monitored.

Rapporteur: Savelina Danova

5. CONCLUSIONS OF WORKSHOP

1. Roma communities across Europe continue to face hostility, discrimination and disadvantage, as they have done for centuries. Their access to justice, employment, education and institutionalised power generally is severely limited. Circumstances vary between individual countries, but overall there are similar factors and processes which result in Europe's longest-established ethnic minority being also its most excluded. In Central and Eastern Europe in particular, the situation has deteriorated dramatically since the collapse of communist regimes. There is an urgent need for a new vision, and for innovative strategies to realise this.
2. The role of the police in this situation is crucial. Currently policing is all too often experienced by Roma as the repressive arm of an exclusionary state, failing to protect Roma against discrimination and ethnic violence, and subjecting Roma to abuse and violations of their human rights. Negative stereotyping of Roma as outsiders and criminals is pervasive among police, as it is in society generally. The police need to rise above such tendencies: they need to provide protection and equal treatment to citizens of all ethnic groups, and in accordance with the highest professional standards of public service. Minorities in particular need to be able to rely on the police to treat them fairly and with respect, and to combat all forms of racism and discrimination effectively. Because of their unique powers, and their high-profile visibility, the police have a major responsibility to help ensure that all ethnic groups form an equal and integral part of our modern democratic societies.
3. Despite recognising continuing shortfalls in police performance as measured against standards of law and human rights, the workshop also identified some positive developments and examples of good practice. These were of various kinds, and from different countries, though many took the form of initiatives on police training. It was clear, however, that in many countries there was an absence of effective systems for investigating complaints, for monitoring police behaviour and for ensuring public accountability. There was also a lack of established mechanisms for communication and cooperation between the police and Roma communities. Given the low level of trust and confidence in the police common among the Roma population, it was hardly surprising that recruitment of Roma into the police across Europe was almost non-existent.
4. In their deliberations, the workshop participants repeatedly stressed a number of pre-conditions for any initiatives in this field to be successful. The four main preconditions were as follows:
 - A clear acknowledgement of the problem at the highest political and organisational levels, and a public commitment that it will be addressed;
 - A strategic approach to tackle the problem, involving coordinated actions to achieve organisational change, rather than piecemeal initiatives;
 - Partnerships at all levels and at all stages between Roma communities, the police and NGOs for undertaking work in this field;
 - A strengthening of Roma associations so that they are able to contribute more effectively to the process of change.
5. The workshop participants considered the relevance of the 'Rotterdam Charter': "Policing for a Multi-Ethnic Society", and whether a specifically Roma-oriented version of this should be produced. There was concern that a Roma-specific charter might be counter-productive, through promoting the idea of a generic 'Roma problem'. Instead, many felt

that the Charter should be promoted as a general framework of guiding principles, which could be adapted to different national or local circumstances, and within which priorities for Roma communities could be identified. These would need to be determined through extensive consultation and discussion amongst Roma at local and national levels. The case for a Roma-specific document could be reconsidered in the light of these consultations.

6. It was therefore recommended that, as the initial stage of a follow-up process, participants should return to their own countries and localities, and undertake two kinds of actions. The first would be to explore ways to implement the kinds of ideas and examples of good practice that had been presented at the workshop. The second would be to promote discussion amongst police officials and Roma communities about the content of the Rotterdam Charter and how it might best be used to improve Roma/police relations. As a pre-requisite for these consultations, the Charter should be translated into national languages (where this had not already been done) and into *Romanes*. It was also recommended that the results of these discussions should be reported back to a second European-level meeting, at which the original participants could be joined by others from a wider range of countries and organisations.
7. In order to facilitate and support this process, it was agreed that a Steering Group should be formed, consisting of the convenors of the Workshop, together with representatives of the main partner organisations. This group would meet at an early opportunity, and undertake the following tasks:
 - To explore what transnational support might be needed for local-level consultations and how this could be provided;
 - To explore possible ways to formally support the initial network that had been established among workshop participants;
 - To liaise regarding the publication and dissemination of the workshop report;
 - To develop proposals for a major follow-on programme of European/regional-level activities in this field, together with the possibilities for funding of such activities;
 - To prepare plans for a second workshop/conference, to receive reports of the local consultations and consider proposals for further activities;
 - To consider the future administrative support structure required to sustain the above activities, and how it might best be provided.

6. LIST OF PRESENTATIONS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS

Oral presentations focussing on relations between Roma and the Police were made, or documents submitted, on the following subjects:

1. 'The Legal and Human Rights Framework': by Alicia Teruel Perez, European Roma Rights Centre
2. 'Overview on the Practices of Handling Minority Affairs by the Police in Hungary': by Dr. Klara Csanyi, Ministry of the Interior, Hungary
3. 'Police-Community Partnerships: A Training Series, May 1998-99': by Dr. Ferenc Mélykúti, Project on Ethnic Relations, Hungary
4. 'Roma Rights and Police work: the Role of the Human Rights Project': by Savelina Danova, Human Rights Project, Bulgaria
5. 'Training of Teachers and Students from Military Schools in Understanding and Tolerance towards Ethnic and Religious Differences and Work with Roma': by Dr. Ilona Tomova, Inter-Ethnic Initiative, Bulgaria
6. 'Training and Other Activities on Police/Roma Relations in Romania Sponsored by the Council of Europe': by Dr. Robin Oakley, Independent Consultant, UK
7. 'The Improvement of the Relation between Local Police Representatives and Inhabitants in the Nationally Mixed Territory of Slovakia': by Dr. Sarlota Pufflerova, MRG Slovakia
8. 'Activities of the Romani Cultural and Educational Centre in Brno': by Miroslav Zima, DROM-Romani Centre, Brno, Czech Republic
9. 'Police Training on Gypsy/Traveller Issues in Britain': by Peter Mercer, East Anglian Gypsy Council and Robin Oakley, Independent Consultant, UK
10. 'The NAPAP Project 'NGOs and Police Against Prejudice' in Catalonia': by Carles Descalzi, UNESCO Centre for Human Rights, Barcelona
11. 'The Institute for Crime Research and Prevention, Romania': by Silviu Erusencu, Inspectorate-General of Police, Romania
12. "Round Table Series in Romania": by Jennifer Tanaka, Romani CRISS, Bucharest
13. "Projects in Sibiu County, Romania": by Stefan Pop, Crime Prevention Department, Sibiu Police, Romania
14. "Projects of the Ministry of the Interior, Czech Republic": by Major Stanislas Daniel, Adviser on Minority Issues to the Minister, Czech Republic
15. "Activities of the Foundation for Regional Development: Roma": by Anton Karagjozov, Plovdiv, Bulgaria

16. "Building Bridges between Roma and the Police": by Joachin Goma, Directorate-General of Police, Madrid
17. "Building Bridges Between Citizens and Police: Points for Discussion": by Jud Nirenberg, Roma Participation Programme, Open Society Institute, Budapest
18. "The Situation Regarding Participation of Romany in Police Bodies": by Karel Holomek, Moravian Romany Association, Brno, Czech Republic
19. "The Friendly Officer Project in Romania": by Costel Vasile, Young Generation of Roma Society, Romania

Other Documents Presented

20. "The Rotterdam Charter: Policing for a Multi-Ethnic Society", Rotterdam Charter Foundation, RADAR, Rotterdam, Netherlands, 1997
21. Robin Oakley, "Practical Measures for Improving Relations between Ethnic Minorities and the Police", Paper presented to Council of Europe/CLRAE Round Table on 'The Situation of Roma/Gypsies in Municipalities', Ploiesti, Romania, 28-29 November 1996
22. Robin Oakley, "Police Training Concerning Migrants and National Minorities", in Human Rights and the Police, Council of Europe, 1997

7. ANNEX

EXAMPLES OF PRACTICAL INITIATIVES

Bulgaria

1. "Roma Rights and Police work: the Role of the Human Rights Project", Savelina Danova, Human Rights Project, Bulgaria
2. "Training of Teachers and Students from Military Schools in Understanding and Tolerance towards Ethnic and Religious Differences and Work with Roma", Dr Ilona Tomova, Inter-Ethnic Initiative, Bulgaria

Czech Republic

3. "Activities of the Romani Cultural and Educational Centre in Brno", Miroslav Zima, DROM-Romani Centre, Brno, Czech Republic

Hungary

4. "Overview on the Practices of Handling Minority Affairs by the Police in Hungary", by Dr Klara Csanyi, Ministry of Interior, Hungary
5. "Police-Community Partnerships: A Training Series, May 1998-1999", Dr Ferenc Mélykuti, Project on Ethnic Relations, Budapest

Romania

6. "Training and Other Activities on Police/Roma Relations in Romania Sponsored by the Council of Europe", Dr Robin Oakley, Independent Consultant UK
7. "Initiatives of Romani CRISS, Romania", Jennifer Tanaka, Romani CRISS, Bucharest

Slovakia

8. "The Improvement of the Relation between Local Police Representatives and Inhabitants in the Nationally Mixed Territory of Slovakia", Dr Sarlota Pufflerova, MRG Slovakia

United Kingdom

9. "Police Training on Gypsy/Traveller Issues in Britain", Peter Mercer, East Anglian Gypsy Council, & Robin Oakley, Independent Consultant, UK

ROMA RIGHTS AND POLICE WORK: THE ROLE OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS PROJECT

Savelina Danova
Director, Human Rights Project, Bulgaria

Background

Police violence against Roma has been a predominant concern as regards the human rights situation of this minority group in the years of the democratic transformation of Bulgarian society. Consistent monitoring on the incidence of police abuse of Roman rights started in 1992 when the Human Rights Project was founded in Bulgaria. Since that time there has been an increasing number of independent reports by domestic and international human rights groups on the daily occurrence of torture and ill-treatment of Roma by law-enforcement officers in Bulgaria. Illegal actions of law-enforcement officers towards Roma are demonstrated in the use of excessive physical force during detention for the purposes of extorting evidence; unjustified use of firearms; home searches conducted without any search warrants; destruction of private property; and threats to the personal security of individuals who had complained against the police to the competent authorities. This problem is further increased by the impunity of police officers who have committed human rights violations. The prompt and impartial investigation into reports of such acts is prevented by the lack of a mechanism independent from the police structures for reviewing complaints against police brutality.

Interaction between the police and the Human Rights Project

In the early 1990s the problem of police brutality was not part of the public discourse about the observation of human rights. The work of the Human Rights Project and a few other domestic groups which publicised cases of police misconduct had been considered by the official authorities tendentious and undermining the international respect of the country. In June 1994 the HRP hosted the first International seminar on police brutality in the region, which had been an attempt to initiate a dialogue with the police on this problem. There followed an effective hindrance on the part of the police, which refused to participate, denouncing the title of the seminar as prejudiced.

In the following years the HRP continued to publicise cases of police abuse against Roma and to pressure the competent authorities to enforce the law and prevent further violations. Over this period we have reached a new phase in the process of communication with the police: we started to receive official answers to most of our inquiries about signals of police misconduct. These assured us that "the impartial check into the signals did not establish illegal actions of law enforcement officers".

In the course of our work to prevent police brutality and find remedy for the victims, we have adopted different approaches. One approach is to put pressure on the government through publicity of the human rights abuses against Roma at the domestic and international level. Examples are: letter campaigns to the competent institutions of the Bulgarian state, and reports to the independent international human rights organisations such as Amnesty International, the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, Human Rights Watch and others. Another strategy is the litigation on cases of ill-treatment by police. Parallel to the pursuit of judicial solution, we have also tried the alternative path of dialogue through direct

contacts with representatives of the police headquarters and their regional offices to bring up the issue of police abuse and to promote observance of the law in the police work.

The Project "Avoiding Conflicts: Interaction between the Police and the Romani Community Based on Respect for Human Rights"

In 1996 and 1997 the HRP was able to make a difference in the pattern of interaction between the police and the civil organisations. On our initiative and with the support of the Council of Europe, we have organised a series of round table discussions with the police under the general topic "Avoiding Conflicts: Interaction between the Police and the Romani Community Based on Respect for Human Rights". The meetings which took place in the cities of Sliven, Pazardjik, Montana, Stara Zagora and Shumen, were attended by participants from the Bulgarian Interior Ministry, the Directorate of the National Police and regional police departments from the respective cities. The main focus of these meetings were the topics: *International Standards for Human Rights and the Police Work; The Work of the HRP on Monitoring and Reporting Human Rights Abuse Against Roma; and The Role of the Information Centres of the Ministry of Interior for Prevention of Ethnic Tensions.*

At these meetings the representatives of the human rights NGOs stressed that minority groups in each country represent the most vulnerable part of society, and the functioning of the law-enforcement institutions has crucial impact on the general climate of respect for minority rights. When the institutions which are authorised to guard public order and the rights of the citizens act in such a manner as to tolerate violence against members of the minorities, they dangerously set a pattern to be replicated by the other members of society.

The reports about human rights violations against Roma in Bulgaria, including police violence, and the lack of adequate response of the law-enforcement officials to these incidents, raises serious concerns as to the observance of the international human rights standards by Bulgarian police. The HRP insisted that the officers from the police should be trained to work with ethnic minorities and proposed to co-operate with the Directorate of National Police in organising seminars for human rights training of police officers. We have received agreement in principle on the part of the police, and communication on this matter is underway.

Another poignant issue which we focused on in the discussion with the representatives of the Ministry of the Interior was the practice of the police press centres to give publicise the ethnic origin of perpetrators of crimes when they are Roma, through the daily police bulletins which are sent to the media. Ethnic categorisation of crime, apart from being outspokenly racist, when coupled with the manipulative coverage of the news about Roma in the mainstream newspapers, creates a favourable environment for stigmatising the whole community.

The discussions in Montana, Stara Zagora and Shumen were also attended by some of the victims of police abuse who presented their cases before the police officials. The latter committed themselves to a more objective investigation into the signals of police misconduct and to conducting checks together with representatives of the Human Rights Project. We had been assured that the police will publicise the information about the disciplinary and penal measures that have been undertaken against police responsible for violation of the law, and that the representatives of the HRP will be allowed access to the local police departments for the purposes of gathering information on signals of human rights violations.

Assessment of the Project

The round table discussions with the Bulgarian police have been a means of advocating Roma rights that have fulfilled certain goals. The fact that we were able to convince the police to change their policy of communicating with us indirectly via statements in the media or letters, and instead to become an active participant in a dialogue, is significant. It is a manifestation of their acknowledgement of the right of an independent agent, outside the state apparatus, to observe their performance and demand accountability. The meetings with the police contributed to the legitimacy of the HRP as a monitor of the human rights situation of Roma in Bulgaria, and they established a model of collaboration between the state and a non-governmental organisation for the pursuit of certain goals important for the whole society.

These fora, on the other hand, also have their limitations. They did not lead to an immediate effect in combating the problem of police brutality. On the contrary, the information received by the HRP following each of the meetings has been ambiguous. At certain places we were informed that Romas had not been harassed any more by the police. There were signals, however, that ill-treatment continued after our meetings and it was compounded by intimidation of Roma who wanted to complain. In general, on no occasion has the number of human rights violations committed by police officers against Roma dropped noticeably. Nor has the number of letters from the police informing us that our claims concerning misconduct of officers from the police are untrue decreased in any significant fashion.

The important thing for us, however, is that the initiative of gathering the police, the Roma and the human rights advocates at the round table has fostered an environment in which a favourable change for the cause of human rights can be felt. A doubtless result has been the legitimisation of the dialogue with the authorities as a means of seeking solutions to the problems.

Follow-up work

The latest initiative of the HRP which aims at finding an adequate means for coping with police violence has been the policy paper "For Equal Participation of Roma in the Public Life of Bulgaria". This document, prepared with the large participation of Roma organisations throughout the country, contains proposals to the Bulgarian government for the solution of the Roma problem in the country. A basic concept of this paper is that Roma face discrimination in all spheres of social life, which is the core problem to be solved by the state before all.

The document identifies police violence towards Roma as one of the most serious manifestations of discrimination. It proposes the establishment by a Law of a state body, independent from the police organs, with a central and local committee for reviewing complaints against police officers. The members must represent adequately the ethnic structure of the population in the region, to be competent and neutral, and not be police employees. The minimum prerogatives that these committees should have include: approaching the prosecutorial organs in cases of criminal offences; appealing judicial acts; receiving information from the prosecutors' offices about the results of the investigation or the check-up; giving recommendations to the respective organs for a just remedy of the victims; participating as a Public Prosecutor in the penal procedure; and having the right to establish and sanction offences in compliance with the Administrative Offences and Penalties Act.

The future efforts of the HRP will be targeted at advocating legislative changes that will allow for the constitution of specialised state bodies for fighting discrimination on an ethnic basis, including a special organ for reviewing of complaints against the police.

AN EXAMPLE OF POLICE TRAINING IN BULGARIA

(Training of Teachers and Students from Police Schools in Understanding and Tolerance towards Ethnic and Religious Differences and Work with Roma)

**Dr Ilona Tomova
Inter-Ethnic Initiative, Sofia**

Origin of the Initiative

In the beginning of the 1990s there were several serious incidents between Roma and police, including violent police actions in Roma neighbourhoods (the most extreme being the police action in the Roma neighbourhood in Pazardzik). M. Ivanov, the President's Advisor on the ethnic issues, held a series of talks with the Minister of Interior and with the Director of the Central Bulgarian Police Headquarters regarding the problems of relations between police and Roma. The major conclusion of these talks was that the negative stereotypes of the police towards the Roma were even stronger than the average for the country, and that they led to discriminative actions against Roma. On the basis of these conclusions, the need was formulated to start training of officers and policemen for work with the representatives of this ethnic group.

The Ministry of Interior gave its consent for the preparation of two educational modules for the training of trainers and teachers in military schools on:

- *Social and Psychological Problems of Intergroup Relations;*
- *The Roma in Bulgaria: Problems in Police Work with Roma.*

The major objective was to make these modules useful for the future work of the participants in the training. The project was initiated by the Inter-Ethnic Initiative for Human Rights Foundation. Dr. Ilona Tomova prepared the educational modules and presented them to the teaching staff of the military schools in Dolni Bogorov (a village near Sofia), Pazardzik and Kazanluk, as well as to one of the regular classes in the School for Military Officers in Kazanluk.

A team of psychiatrists and psychologists prepared another parallel module for work with policemen in a post-traumatic condition. The IEI Foundation provided the initial financial and organisational support for the preparation of this module, as well as for the meetings with officials from the Police Headquarters and for the presentation of the module at a seminar with psychologists working for the Ministry of Interior. The following stage of the team's work - individual work with police - was carried out without direct assistance and participation of the IEI Foundation.

As stated in the above, for a period of nearly two years the IEI Foundation was basically involved in training of teachers from military schools. This training focussed on the following: positive models of relations with minority representatives; sensitisation of future policemen about their own prejudices and discriminative tendencies; and changing their negative attitude towards the representatives of the biggest minority groups in Bulgaria and towards the Roma in particular.

Aims and Objectives of the Training

1. To enlarge the mainstream educational curriculum of the military schools with more comprehensive knowledge about the social and psychological mechanisms of intergroup

relations (processes of identification - personal and group; categorisation, stereotypes and prejudices, discrimination).

2. With the help of new teaching methods, to make the participants in the training more sensitive about their own negative stereotypes and prejudices towards the various minority communities in Bulgaria and towards Gypsies in particular, as well as about the influence of those prejudices on the policeman's work and his/her professionalism.
3. To discuss together the typical models of improper relations between police and Roma (as well as between police and representatives of the Muslim communities) and to try to find more adequate models for these relations.
4. To provide objective and unbiased information about the different Roma groups, their culture and social status, their problems and their strategies for problem resolution - thus increasing the police officers' understanding, acceptance and empathy towards the Roma;
5. To create motivation for the teachers in military schools to include these training modules (or parts of them) in their teaching practice.

Implementation

Ilona Tomova carried out three five-day training seminars with teachers, and one five-day training seminar with students in military schools. The seminars consisted of the following. In the first sessions all the participants filled in tests which helped to get a picture of their own prejudices and biases against Roma, Bulgarian Turks and Pomaks (Bulgarian Muslims). This was followed by two days of work on sensitisation of the participants about the extent of risks and harm done to the personality and the professionalism of the policeman by negative stereotypes and discriminatory actions against minority representatives. We discussed the typical mistakes and the deterioration in the quality of the policeman's professional work in the following fields: in crime investigation in cases when there are Roma suspects, in arresting Roma suspects, in the work with victims of violence, in crime prevention, and in operational work in Roma neighbourhoods. We discussed the necessity to change the police image and tasks - from a government instrument for repression into an institution for defence and promotion of civil rights and interests.

The second part of the training seminar was focused on additional information about the various Roma subgroups in Bulgaria: their culture and way of life, and the social and economic changes that took place within these subgroups in the past few years and their basic strategies for problem resolution. We focused on the typical possibilities for conflict in Roma neighbourhoods and discussed alternatives for problem solving. The participants worked in small groups on solving different conflict cases. The attempt to use the method of role-play proved to be unsuccessful - the participants made fun of each other, refused to play female roles and Gypsies, and two of them even started fighting.

This module also included preparation of policemen for participation in advisory councils for problem solution in their work with the Roma community. The participants had the opportunity to share their police experience of work with Roma, to analyse typical cases of conflicts between police and Roma, and the various options for their successful resolution.

The training seminar with students from military schools had an experimental character. It was aiming at selection of information for a course of lectures, as well as at experimenting with different role games, analysis of conflict cases, and diagnostic and projective tests. It also provided the opportunity for individual work on the emotional and moral problems of particular students in relation to their own prejudices and any tendencies to aggressive and

discriminative attitudes towards the Roma. The results of my observations and conclusions after the seminar were submitted to the teaching staff of the military school in Kazanluk at the last teaching session.

Assessment

After the end of the seminar in Dolni Bogorov, my report on its results was prepared together with the evaluation of the head of staff of the military school. Then we organised two working meetings with the Director of the Police Headquarters, the Head of the Education and Professional Qualification Department at the Police Headquarters, and the Rector of the Military High School at the Ministry of Interior. They all expressed their readiness for future cooperation in the following spheres: organisation of training seminars for teachers from the rest of the military schools in the country; training seminars with students in military schools; organisation of seminars on additional qualification for active officers and policemen working with Roma; and preparation of training modules for the students in the Military High School at the Ministry of Interior.

On the initiative of the Police Headquarters all the teachers from the military schools in Sofia and Pazardzik who participated in the training on the two modules filled in questionnaires for evaluation of the following:

- The necessity for additional knowledge about the social and psychological problems of the intergroup relations;
- The influence of the prejudices against particular social groups upon the quality of police work;
- Typical improper models of relations between the police and the representatives of the Roma and the Muslim communities;
- The necessity for extra knowledge about the ethnic and religious minority communities in Bulgaria;
- The quality and effectiveness of the training module suggested by the IEI Foundation;
- The readiness of teachers from the military schools to include the whole training module or parts of it in their teaching work;
- Recommendations for additional improvements of the training module.

According to this evaluation only three of those interviewed (teachers in martial arts and shooting) declared that they find this training module inappropriate for the military school curriculum. All the rest pointed out the necessity to overcome the lack of actual information about the minority communities. They also pointed to the need to acquire practical skills for self-reflection, for analysis of one's own prejudices towards minorities, and for a better understanding of one's own behaviour and the typical mistakes that could be made in the relations with minority representatives. The teachers in psychology, moral philosophy and crime studies gave the highest evaluation of the suggested training module and expressed readiness to include it in their teaching work. The rest of the teachers declared that they would use parts of it in their work.

There were extremely interesting and controversial results from the work with the cadets. In the beginning they expressed in an open and emotional manner their negative attitude towards the Roma who they definitely considered criminals. All the attempts at direct change in their attitude towards Gypsies, through presentation of new unbiased information about the latter, proved to be unsuccessful because of their total rejection or misinterpretation. It was the story about the damaging effects on the psyche and the personality of warders in the fascist concentration camps in the Second World War, and of American officers in the Vietnam War, that for the first time made them stop interrupting the lecturer and arguing with her in an aggressive manner. This reaction was followed by confusion and dismay. The cadets hardly managed to cope with the role games and the work in small groups on analysis

of conflict situations with Roma. They themselves were disappointed with their work during the classes and started more frequently to seek individual contact with the lecturer. Many cadets asked for advice on whether to continue their police training. They expressed fear that they would not be able to overcome their negative attitude towards the Roma (and in some cases towards Bulgarian Turks) or that they would be forced to treat the latter badly just in order to keep on good terms with their colleagues. They felt unable to influence the existing situation of total dehumanisation of Gypsies in the police-stations, and of violence and aggression against representatives of other minority communities (homosexuals, drug-addicts, etc.) as well. They were looking for "prescriptions" for behaviour in Gypsy neighbourhoods which were expected to be both non-discriminatory and adequate to their professional duties. They even shared personal problems, and problems concerning their family life. It turned out that many of them needed serious psychological support for overcoming the stress that came as a result of this short training.

Difficulties and how they were overcome

There was a tendency in the beginning of each seminar towards rejection of information presented by the lecturer with the following typical explanations:

- The lecturer is not involved in the system of the Ministry of Interior and does not have a real idea about the "war of Gypsies against the police";
- The lecturer has only the positive experience from her sociological work with Gypsies and is not familiar with their "dark side";
- When changing the policeman's attitude and "firmness" towards criminals, we put the policemen's life and professionalism to risk.

Undoubtedly, in the beginning even the fact that the lecturer was a woman had a negative reception. In accordance with usual experience, by the end of the second day these "protests" had calmed down, and the mutual trust between the lecturer and the audience sharply increased.

The deterioration in the social and the economic situation in Bulgaria, the political crisis in 1996 and the beginning of 1997, and the personnel changes in the police and in the governments, all put the project work in the background for a long period of time. My contacts with high officials from the Police Headquarters and the Ministry of Interior were also hampered by the fact that I have stopped working in the Presidency since January 1997. In the meantime I started giving lectures at Sofia University and was involved in various other projects of the IEI Foundation. I participated in several meetings with officers from the Police Headquarters. At these meetings we again discussed our mutual willingness for future cooperation on the project, although without any practical planning of activities in this respect.

ACTIVITIES OF THE ROMA-DROM CENTRE, BRNO, CZECH REPUBLIC

Miroslav Zima, Director

The Cultural and Educational Centre was established through the initiative of the Municipality of Brno - North District in 1989. Its original purpose was to solve the fundamental problems that Romani children and youth have to face. This aim was achieved at different levels of satisfaction, mainly depending on the activities of the Centre's Director and those of the founding organisations. At the time of its foundation, the Centre was a unique and original project, calling for a delicate and creative approach.

In 1995 requirements were set to find a more complex solution to the problems, to expand the field of action of the KVS (Cultural and Educational Centre) and increase its influence on the Romani society. After consulting with pedagogic and social workers, Romani organisations and other specialists in this field, we concluded that at present, the KVS can help to solve two basic problems:

- Education
- Offers of free-time activities

They are reflected by the function of the Cultural and Educational Centre (KVS):

1. Supplementary Educational Establishment
2. Offers of free-time activities
3. Counselling and Information Centre for parents

(A summary on the activities of the Romani Centre is available in the leaflet entitled DROM - Romské Středisko.)

Since 1 January 1999 the Centre is an independent legal body with a new name: DROM - Romani Centre. One of the aims of the Counselling and Information Centre was to establish co-operation with different institutions in Brno, including the police. With this intention in mind, we addressed the City Police and the Czech State Police and by virtue of these dialogues, the following basic priorities were set:

1. Winning Romani citizens to join the police forces
2. Exchanging information on the movement of extremist groups in Brno and its surroundings
3. Communication between the police and Romani community

1. Winning Romani citizens to join the police forces

To date our efforts are almost fruitless. Only one Roma has been enrolled at the City Police in Brno, whilst the Czech State Police has so far enrolled no one. Applicants did not succeed mainly due to inadequate education and bad criminal integrity. Also, the salaries of policemen are not very attractive to Romani candidates. At the end of our discussion we achieved a common conclusion that the present generation of young Romani in Brno cannot produce any delegate who could meet the requirements set for working as a police constable. This is also due to the fact that Roma are not convinced of the importance of this profession and they think that the appointment of Romani police constables is not beneficial to their communities. Assuming that the candidate effectively masters his duties as keeper

of law and order, he will also need the courage to defend his job before people from his own community.

Solutions to these problems at the City and Czech Police forces differ. Due to the fact that the young Romani generation cannot produce adequate candidates for work in police forces, the City Police are aiming their efforts particularly at children aged 7 and 10 years in a project called MISE ('Mission Project'). The essence of the project is that the City Police send delegates into the world of Romani children in order to increase their interest in the work of the police forces and therefore motivating them towards achieving a better education and criminal integrity. This is expected to eliminate barriers for the prospective engagement of Roma in the police service.

Project MISE is not meant to disclose teenage criminality. On the contrary, it is trying to prevent children and teenagers from indulging in criminal offences. Through Romani children, the police can have closer contact with Romani/Gypsy communities. Children make gradual acquaintance with the legal environment, and this can help strengthen their sense of law and order in the society. The team entrusted with the implementation of the project is made up of one City Police constable, one worker from the Romani Centre and one teacher. With the help of pedagogical workers at elementary schools in Brno, we select from among the most problematic children those with a natural and strong sense of leadership. Children selected to participate in Project MISE are gradually taught the rules of policing, legal awareness, self-defence and much more.

At present about 15 children are engaged in Project MISE and they meet regularly in the premises of the City Police. Their club activity is aimed at solving behavioural problems both from the points of view of the child as victim of criminal offences and the child as a potential perpetrator.

Field work is part of the duties of the police constable working with Romani children on Project MISE. In contrast to common police methodology, this 'missionary-constable' has to be more open to the Romani community in order to carry out his work properly. We are convinced that working with Romani children on Project MISE will help overcome current barriers existing between police and Romani communities. We would like the majority of Roma to know this constable, who therefore visits discotheques and parks where most young Roma entertain themselves and relax. We would like this constable to gradually become an visible and accepted part of the Roma authoritative environment. This will help to establish better communication and to understand the complexity of Romani-Police relationships.

2. Exchanging information on the movement of extremist groups in Brno and its surroundings

Contact has been established with the specialist police officer in the Czech State Police who is engaged in monitoring the activities of extremist groups. There are bilateral exchanges of information on planned or expected events organised by skinheads, etc.

3. Communication between the police and Romani community

As Director of the Romani Centre, I am in constant contact with delegates of the police forces to discuss procedures for solving many common tasks.

I have asked the Secondary Police Training School in Brno to help find a common solution to the problem of communication between police officers and the members of the Romani/Gypsy communities. First we carried out negotiations with workers from the Department of Psychology. At the opening meetings I pointed to the fact that the police and

Roma have a lot in common: uniformed policemen are immediately identified by the general public, so are Roma. The policemen's advantage is that they do not have to wear uniforms when they are off duty, while Roma cannot rid themselves of their skins. We jointly concluded that there is a lack of mutual exchange of information, and policemen lack readiness to work with ethnic minority. In Spring 1997, I was invited to the Secondary Police Training School to witness a mock training/model situation. At present it is a common form of teaching at Police Training Schools.

Since 1997 this modern teaching method is employed to teach subjects such as the keeping of law and order, patrolling, point-duty, criminology and law. During model set-ups, cadets learn such things as how to check a person's identity, how to write complaints, how to arrest and detain suspects of criminal offences, how to deal with traffic offences, how to handle crime victims, etc. Experiences hereby acquired can be of great help in solving real life situations. Cadets play the roles of policemen and the public. Sometimes they use professional actors in more realistic set-ups or analyse video films of real police actions.

The subject of the model set-up which I was invited to observe was the announcement of bad news (accidents, death) by a police patrol to the victim's family. One student talked of his practical experience when he had to inform a Romani family of their son's accident. Since the family could not cope with the bad news, they responded with aggression. Thus, I was engaged in discussion with workers of the Secondary Police Training School. We agreed that using Romani actors on these model situations could help to better the Roma-Police relationship. However, we are aware of the fact that we have to face this challenge with great care. Very often we need to demonstrate problematic aspects of the Romani character. Playing this character can be, for the Romani actor, a difficult and sometimes painful experience. I welcome the experience of other countries where similar methods involving ethnic minorities are used.

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OVERVIEW ON THE PRACTICES OF HANDLING MINORITY AFFAIRS BY THE POLICE IN HUNGARY

Dr Klára Csányi
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As in other Central and Eastern European countries, the police had been operating in Hungary as one of the mysterious power enforcement organisations serving political powers prior to the change of regime. The public security function was mixed with the political suppression function in its activities. Its main responsibility was to serve the internal order and security of the political system. The satisfaction of the need of the population for security was a requirement of the police to a small extent only. Politics decided what kind of security the country needed, the persons who needed to be protected, and by what means and methods. The issue of police treatment of minorities, mostly the issue of gypsies, existed solely as a criminological problem.

After the change of political regime, the image of the police changed gradually and substantially from 1990. The police identified itself as an open, transparent, security-providing organisation keeping the demands of the population in mind and co-operating with the communities of the population.

As a natural part of the conscious change of philosophy by the police, relations with various communities of the citizens, including the gypsy community, were initiated in accordance with the requirements of this citizen-friendly image.

The gypsy community is the largest minority in Hungary, estimated at around 500,000 persons according to a 1994 study of the Sociological Research Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Science, thus making up 5 per cent of the total population. From the point of view of the police, the gypsy community is the most significant ethnic minority among the thirteen indigenous national minorities in Hungary. This is justified only partly by the fact that this is a minority apparently differing from the majority society on the basis of its racial features. It weighs a lot more that the majority of members of this minority are in a situation of multiple disadvantage: they experience crime as victims, and due in part to their social status they are (according to certain sociological surveys) over-represented themselves in criminal activity - and they are also encumbered by the prejudices of many centuries.

Roma in Hungary are forced into a marginal position in society, just like in other countries. Their members are among the poorest layer, struggling with the most difficulties, having contact with the police more often than average, and becoming the victims of police abuse more often than average. While measures discriminating against the gypsies were less known to the public in the past, the instances which have surfaced after 1990 have received wide publicity. Certain players in the evolving political democracy have - through rather one-sided presentation of cases on some occasions - often presented the police rather negatively. The police have been portrayed as building their own citizen-friendly image and dedicated to substantial change, yet as still struggling with the problems of transition, and still an organisation tending towards violence and discrimination.

As a consequence, as Hungary establishes itself as a fully functioning constitutional state, the relationship between the police and Roma has become one of the touchstones of political democracy in today's Hungary.

I.

Reflection of international norms related to the handling of minority affairs, anti-discrimination regulations in the Hungarian legal system, the system of institutions serving protecting minorities

1. The fundamental principles crystallised in international law, among them the right to equal treatment due to every human being, or in other words, the principle of equality in front of the law, are set forth in the Constitution of the Republic of Hungary among the fundamental rights.

The Republic of Hungary has acceded to international conventions declaring human rights and prohibiting adverse discrimination. In addition to international conventions, the norms and recommendations of various European institutions primarily the European Commission, the European Parliament - are respected.

2. In order to protect the rights of national and ethnic minorities and to prohibit adverse discrimination, our national legislation has chosen a peculiar solution being unique in Europe. There is no separate act - either blanket type or specific - in the Hungarian legal system prohibiting racial discrimination. The various branches of law address the prohibition of adverse discrimination, and also the procedures and sanctions, in their specific areas of legislation.

However, a separate act regulates the rights of national and ethnic minorities, and another act establishes the post of minority ombudsman to protect their constitutional rights. Also in a manner that may be regarded as peculiar, a wide range of state (governmental) measures have been introduced to facilitate the elimination of inequalities of opportunity.

The peculiarities of the legal system mentioned above obviously affect the relation between the police and the Romany minority communities. Therefore, their major characteristics will be illustrated.

2.1 The Hungarian Parliament adopted the Act on the Rights of national and ethnic minorities in 1993. This stipulates the prohibition of adverse discrimination with respect to a more narrow scope of subject - indigenous minorities in Hungary - compared to the general provisions prohibiting discrimination in the Constitution.

- The framers have in the Act acknowledged that in addition to the majority of Hungarian population, there are other groups in Hungary which may be - precisely identified - distinguished on a national or ethnic basis, and have set forth the notion of national or ethnic minority in the Act:

"national and ethnic minority is every group residing within the territory of the Republic of Hungary for at least a decade that is in a quantitative minority within the population of the state, members of which are Hungarian citizens and are distinguished from the rest of the population by their own language and culture, traditions, and displaying a conscience of interdependence aiming at the expression and protection of all the above and the interest of their historically established communities."

- According to the Act, the following qualify in Hungary as indigenous groups: the Bulgarian, the Romany, the Greek, the Croatian, the Polish, the German, the Armenian, the Romanian, the Ruthene, the Slovak, the Serb, the Slovenian and the Ukrainian - a total of 13 minorities.

- The Act declares free expression of identity. That is, it states: **"undertaking and expression of affiliation with any national, ethnic group is the exclusive and unalienable right of the individual."**
- The Act provides for increased data-security with regard to affiliation with a minority group, since the corresponding information is classified as personal data. **"No one may be obliged to give a statement in the issue of affiliation with a minority group"** - stipulates the Act, which at the same time means that not even the police may request or use discrimination referring to ethnic affiliation in the files of proceedings or in criminal statistics.
- As a community right of minorities, the Act offers the opportunity to establish local and national self-governments, and with respect to the culture and education of minorities it provides for self-rule. These self-governmental organisations provide for local and national minority interest representation as well. This allows, among other things, for the police to establish partnerships with respect to the prevention and resolution of conflicts. Minority self-governments have been elected in 1994-1995 and 1998-1999.

2.2 In accord with the provision of the Act on the Commissioner of the Parliament on Citizen's Rights (1993), the Parliament may also elect a separate Commissioner for the protection of certain constitutional rights, who will have independent authority for action in the particular field of expertise. The Act on national and ethnic minorities provided for the election of an independent commissioner of the Parliament, the Commissioner of the Parliament on National and Ethnic Minorities for the Protection of Minority Rights. The Minority Ombudsman began operating on 1 July 1995.

2.3 Provisions for addressing the racial motive in the circumstances of crime had been added to the Penal Code in the course of its modification in 1996, in accordance with international norms.

2.4 The Police Act adopted in 1994 stipulates that it is a fundamental obligation of the police to respect human dignity and to protect human rights, and provides options for legal remedies related to actions of the police.

2.5 It is an important rule in the case of crimes committed by policemen/policewomen to have the proceedings conducted by an independent organisation, i.e. the public prosecutor's office, and to have a court reach a verdict.

The legal background fundamentally determining the relations between the police and the Roma, and the handling of minority affairs by the police, had been established in Hungary by the mid 1990s. The institutions guarantee legitimate operation on the one hand, and allow for the establishment and maintenance of a harmonic relation - primarily by methods of communication and co-operation.

II.

Changes in application of law by the police in connection with the Romany, characteristic features of the handling of minority affairs by the police

Conscious treatment of minority affairs, within a framework of human rights and minority law, has a history of a few years only in the practices of the Hungarian police.

1. Prior to the change of political regime, the police had dealt with the case of Roma as a criminal problem arising within the scope of an ethnic group struggling with difficulties of social integration. The stereotype nurtured by prejudices, that is, combating the criminal disposition attributed to the Roma on an ethnic basis, was defined as a priority by the police. Organisational provisions too had been designed for functions aiming at the detection and prevention of "gypsy crimes", e.g. the system of so-called gypsy line-managers and the network of informers aimed at the prevention of crime.

A sharp dividing line in application of law by the police in connection with the Roma was the year 1990. In-house home affairs norms ordering police tasks on the basis of political decisions designed to "facilitate the social assimilation" of the Romany population and to prevent and detect "gypsy crimes" more effectively were annulled. Home affairs directives relating to criminal statistics were also modified, eliminating the separate collection of data concerning gypsy offenders and the corresponding databases.

By the annulment and simultaneous disclosure of in-house directives referred to above (considered as 'classified' even in the previous social regime), the practices conflicting with international norms and with the Constitution have been eliminated. These practices had institutionalised adverse discrimination against the Romany minority by the police.

2. The warnings and experiences of Western European police organisations assisting the transformation of the Hungarian police have from the outset focused attention on the importance of the minority problem, and have aided the development of solutions appropriate to Hungarian circumstances to a significant extent.

3. As the constitutional state was established, the norms regulating the operation of the police have gradually evolved from Acts to internal regulations, and they include the requirements and practical operating procedures for discrimination-free application of the law.

3.1 The Police Act stipulates that the police in the course of the fulfilment of their responsibilities shall co-operate with the citizens and their communities on the one hand, and shall support the voluntary activities of the communities of the citizens aiming at the improvement of public security on the other.

3.2 The Commander of the National Police has prohibited the specification of ethnic affiliation for the description of the appearance of unidentified offenders in police announcements, unless the case involves a specifically ethnically-motivated crime in which the ethnic background of the parties is relevant.

3.3 The Commander of the National Police has also adopted measures regarding both the investigation and the reporting to the national police headquarters of the grievances of members of the Romany minority objecting to police actions.

4. The police have initiated contacts with Romany interest-protecting and interest-representing organisations and with civil organisations protecting human and minority rights. These are organisations that have contributed a great deal to publicity in the press about actions against members of the Romany minority in the application of the law by the police, and thus to increased public awareness.

5. The establishment of Romany minority self-governments in 1994-95 was a milestone in the relationship of the police and the Roma.

5.1 The National Police Headquarters established contact with the National Romany Minority Self-Government in 1995, shortly after its election. Following the establishment of contacts, the regular exchange of views developed nation-wide: the Commander of the National Police stipulated the obligation for regular communication by county headquarters as well. Following the gradual establishment of the county offices of Romany self-governments (national and settlement minority self-governments having been elected in accordance with the Minority Act), they constitute the partner organisations for the police headquarters.

5.2 The nation-wide requirement for uniform relations with the Romany minority, and the need for a comprehensive overview of the situation, called for an organisation at both the Ministry of the Interior and the National Police Headquarters which would be in possession of all the necessary information.

A minority contact network has gradually been established at the territorial agencies of the police too. This function is mostly fulfilled by units dealing with crime prevention and building of social relations.

5.3 With a view to promoting harmonious, conflict-free relations between the police and the Romany minority, the police headquarters of one of the counties with a higher-than-average Romany population ratio - the county of Nograd - initiated an experimental solution. Within the framework of the social public security and crime prevention programme of the county, a separate minority protection scheme has been designed in collaboration with the county Romany self-governments and with the Romany representatives of settlement self-governments. The substantial elements of the minority protection scheme include the following: joint familiarisation with the techniques of conflict prevention and conflict reduction; initiatives for altering social circumstances that increase the probability of criminality; and measures to address the higher tendency for Romany children to become victims and criminals through age-group-specific programmes.

Following the assessment of the minority protection scheme in the county of Nograd, the National Police Headquarters reached the conclusion that it has matured sufficiently to be spread nation-wide, and its application in other counties will be centrally supported.

6. The National Police Headquarters established contact with foreign non-governmental organisations (NGOs), foundations primarily acting in new democracies and which address the resolution of ethnic conflicts.

Two organisations should be noted in particular, both of which have been acting in Hungary for a long period of time to improve the relationship of the police and the Romany.

The Partners Hungary Foundation has undertaken an important role by arranging conflict prevention and conflict management training sessions, and by developing and participating in the implementation of the minority protection scheme in the County of Nograd. Whereas the PER (Project on Ethnic Relations) Foundation has organised training courses preparing for community-oriented police activities. Both organisations offer substantial financial assistance for the programmes undertaken.

The relationship between the police and the Roma has undergone substantial changes after the change of political regime. The institutional discrimination displayed on behalf of the police has been replaced by the demands for partnership co-operation aiming at the prevention of conflicts and the effective resolution of conflicts that have

developed. This is also accepted by the Romany self-governmental agencies and the civil organisations.

As a consequence of this ongoing communication, of the increase in partnerships, and of social publicity, the number of proceedings relating to discrimination in application of the law by the police arising from prejudice has decreased significantly if compared with the early 1990s.

III.

Anti-discrimination programmes of the Ministry of the Interior and the Police

The Government decided in 1995 that the handling of the complex problems of the Roma, the facilitation of their social integration and the reduction of inequalities of opportunity called for co-ordination of state functions. It obliged the various Departments to identify actions within their respective areas following the completion of an analysis of the situation. It subsequently approved a medium-range action plan for the improvement of the living conditions of the Roma in the summer of 1997, as a result of the synthesis of such analyses.

The action plan of the Government contains specific programmes for the elimination of discrimination bred by prejudices against the Roma, which may be observed in application of the law by the police.

The starting point of programmes for fighting discrimination, which may be observed in application of the law by the police, is constituted by a sociological survey commissioned by the Minister of the Interior in 1996-1997. This was based on a sample of 1,530 persons representing the staff of the police on the views and attitudes of policemen/policewomen towards the Roma, including the relation of the Roma to crime, and on the possibilities for and obstacles to discrimination-free police actions.

Experiences from the survey attested that the Roma issue is a pressing concern of policemen/policewomen. Their views on Roma correspond in general to the image of Roma in the majority society. The composition of these views reflects the layers of the majority society: nearly two-thirds of the police staff have no prejudices against the Roma, and are empathic or tolerant; while one-third do have prejudices, including a relatively small proportion who display an extremely negative attitude towards Roma.

The survey has also shown that policemen/policewomen in Budapest - regardless of the ratio of Romany population within their operational district, and therefore of the frequency of contacts with them - are more tolerant and patient than those in the provinces. Therefore, the conclusion may be drawn that the way of life in the city, with its related recognition of diverse personalities, tends to develop prejudices less than that of a more closed rural police experience where greater significance is attributed to local public opinion.

Experiences of the sociological survey, proposals made by organisations protecting Roma and other rights, and the previous efforts of the police thus all converged. Now the Government has deemed the following solutions as the key actions that are practicable and promise long-term success:

- Adding a subject and an educational methodology to the training of the police: to prepare prospective policemen/policewomen for fair and discrimination-free treatment of persons affiliated with the minorities; to introduce them to the basics of socio-psychology of inter-group relations; and to deepen the sense of the importance of a human rights approach

which is indispensable for policemen/policewomen acting under the circumstances of the constitutional state.

- Development of the organisation of the police in a direction so that fair and discrimination-free police behaviour is compatible with ongoing control.
- Improvement of co-operation between the police and the local community, and in particular the minority self-governments, with regard to the various modes of conflict prevention and conflict reduction.

Following the change of image of the police during the early years following the change of political regime, the importance of dealing with minority affairs, including the need for harmonic relations between the police and the Romany minority, is now integrated into the thinking of the police. The Ministry of the Interior and the police have played an initiating role in resolving conflicts, in exploring the causes of discrimination in police actions, and in the establishment of partnership co-operation with the Romany organisations. The requirements of a constitutional state are to be achieved through the modernisation of police training, the improvement of the civil control of police activities, and the implementation of operating methods which keep the need of communities for security in mind.

POLICE-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS: A TRAINING SERIES, MAY 1998-1999

*(Initiated and organised by PER in co-operation with
the Southern Police Institute at the University of Louisville in Kentucky)*

Dr Ferenc Mélykúti
Project on Ethnic Relations, Budapest, Hungary

Origins and Genesis of the Project

A police force is the most visible symbol of government and the most apparent embodiment of state authority. Its function or malfunction demonstrates most obviously to the public the capability or incapability of a new democratic system to adapt and react to challenges of a rapidly changing society. Its failure or indolence to reform and modernise itself can exert a negative radiating effect on other spheres of the society while its progress may play a catalytic role in strengthening institutions and atmosphere of a constitutional state.

The Project on Ethnic Relations (PER) has built upon the experience and success of the first police training project based on co-operative efforts between PER and the Southern Police Institute (SPI) initiated in 1994 and training courses held subsequently in Romania (1) when the concept of a Hungarian-American co-operation concerning police training and police treatment of minorities began to emerge. Nevertheless, it was obvious from the beginning that a Hungarian project must consider and integrate the specifics of the Hungarian situation.

PER usually targets and operates on the policy- and decision-making levels - not excluding in some cases regional and community level actions - trying to suggest, introduce and to have adopted new ideas, concepts, approaches and policies. That was the case concerning the Hungarian police training project, as well.

Consultation and contacts were initiated by PER/Budapest with the Hungarian National Police Force (HNP) in July 1996 to familiarise them with the idea of a training project that puts the stress on community policing and relations with minorities, and to obtain the support of the leadership of HNP for elaborating and implementing such a project. Communication and meeting with General Sándor Pintér, chief commander of HNP when PER/Budapest offered PER's assistance in the process of democratising and reforming HNP, led to a fact-finding and project conceptualising mission. This was organised by PER and commissioned later that year from SPI, represented by Prof. Deborah G. Wilson, Assistant University Provost, University of Louisville and Michael Berkow, Chief, Coachella Police Department. The mission resulted in a comprehensive, in-depth report prepared by December 1996 that screened HNP also from the perspective of launching a co-operative project and that made several recommendations. (This report's Hungarian translation was included in a textbook published in 1997 used by police schools in training new police officers in police-minority relations.) SPI and PER also consulted with Roma leaders and other relevant bodies of the Hungarian government like the Ministry of Interior, the Office for Ethnic and National Minorities and the Prime Minister's Office to get their advice and support for the project. It was also found that it would more suitable and efficient, as well as more "acceptable" to participants, if **minority aspects** of the project would be "**packaged**" and presented in the framework of more general concepts like democratisation or community oriented policing.

A meeting with Dr. Ferenc Bánfi, Chief of Nograd County Police, who later was promoted to become deputy chief of HNP responsible for public safety and who was the "inventor" and the most enthusiastic supporter of community policing philosophy and practice in Hungary, contributed to tuning/defining the project further. "The Nograd safety program" which was

conceived by him and contains most important components of established and institutionalised community-police relations, became a key element of the joint project and served as a model to be demonstrated to and followed by other regions in Hungary.

Consequently, efforts and plans of the government and HNP coincided with the aim of the project. This helped to ensure institutional support throughout the project since the project itself was built on the changing philosophy of policing in Hungary, which was demonstrated by the fact that the Nograd safety program - also with the "backing" of PER/SPI mission" - became a part of the mid-term government program on the improvement of the situation of the Roma community. This fortunate and positive interaction of goals and philosophies made it possible that the project could be continued, and would continue to enjoy the same support even when the whole leadership of HNP was reshuffled/replaced after general elections in the summer of 1998.

Aims and Objectives of the Project

Differently from the Romanian project, it was decided that considering the specifics and development status of the Hungarian situation, the main emphasis of the project will be put on community policing more than general elements of policing in a democratic state.

The main goal of the training sessions was to familiarise approximately 200 police leaders (some 50 of them in each of the four sessions) who occupy strategic positions in HNP with the philosophy and practice of community policing, to facilitate democratisation of HNP including the respect for human and minority rights.

The series of seminars were designed to assist HNP in the introduction and implementation of community-oriented policing and to establish professional relationships and contacts which would contribute to the success of this national program. Practical information and strategies, based on practical experience, were to be presented by U.S. police commanders - who also had extensive experience in teaching and lecturing - who have implemented community policing in their jurisdictions. Stress was to be placed on creating and maintaining positive police-community partnerships which are key in implementing community-oriented policing, with the aim of strengthening, propagating and disseminating these among police chiefs. The positive Hungarian example of Nograd county's policing philosophy and strategy was to be incorporated, discussed and demonstrated to the participants as an example of implementing community-oriented policing in Hungary.

Implementation of the Project

After two years of preparatory ground work (close co-operation, contacts and continuous consultation among HNP's public safety department, Major Irén Sárközi, manager of the program from HNP, Prof. Deborah G. Wilson and Dr. Ferenc Mélykuti, PER/Budapest financed and assisted by PER), the first round of training on community policing that was co-organised by PER and the University of Louisville was held in the regional centre of the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) in Budapest between 25 and 29 May 1998. This was followed by two similar courses that year. The last/closing session will be held between 25-29 May 1999. Each session was held by two instructors-police officers of the Southern Police Institute and financed by a grant from the U.S. Department of State. Each course is opened by highest ranking leaders of HNP and the organisers (for example, in May 1998, General Laszlo Forgacs, Chief of Hungarian National Police Force (NPF), Teddy Taylor, chief consul of US Embassy in Budapest, Dr. Ferenc Bánfi, deputy chief of NPF, Prof. Deborah G. Wilson, manager of the training of UL and Dr. Ferenc Mélykuti, representative of PER in Budapest) to demonstrate commitment of HNP's leadership to police reform which had a very positive effect on the audience of police officers.

Forty-nine high ranking police officers participated in this first training, including deputy chiefs of the counties responsible for public safety, public safety officers from the National Headquarters of NPF and educators from both the police secondary school and the police college.

The second round of training was extended to senior Hungarian police chiefs between September 28 and October 2, 1998. Though, after general elections held last May, new political leaders of the new government completely reshuffled the senior leadership of Hungarian National Police Force (NPF), PER was very pleased to learn and witness that new heads of HNP were very supportive of continuing our joint program. They were committed to continuing efforts in enhancing effectiveness of the police, of which community policing can be one of the best approaches and means in times when the rates of criminality have been dramatically increasing as a result of processes of a rapidly changing society.

Forty-six high ranking police officers participated in the second training including chiefs of the Budapest districts and chiefs of "county capitals" (largest provincial cities), the chief of the "Danube Water Police", officials of NHP's public safety department, and teachers from the police secondary school.

In the third session, held on November 16-20 1998, 49 chiefs of smaller cities took part with some educators from police schools (during the closing session to be held this May the audience will be similar).

Every session was started by a speech/lecture by one of the leaders of HNP (heads or deputy heads of HNP to demonstrate the commitment of HNP leadership to community policing, as well as to give weight and support for the objectives of the project. The five day session consisted of the following modules and topics: review and comparison of US and Hungarian police activities and their effectiveness; traditional model of policing; definition of community policing; community partnerships; understanding neighbourhoods; problem-solving; evaluation and assessment; managing change; strategic planning; making community policing work; role of officers of different areas. On the last day a police officer or the Chief together with a Roma representative of the consultative council from Nograd county joined to inform participants how their model of community policing was set up, how it had been functioning and in what ways it facilitated the communication and co-operation between police and the Roma minority. This element helped to fill the whole project with "even more life", and the packaging of the Roma issue in the context of community policing as a policy and strategic issue of policing helped commanders in getting more emphatic and open to the Roma issue itself, which, if it stood alone, may have generated reluctance in some of the participants.

Training has been adapted throughout the project cycle to reflect experience of earlier sessions and remarks of participants. For modelling and case studies, it used Hungarian examples and cases as well.

Evaluation of the Sessions

Sessions were evaluated by participants filling evaluation sheets both on instructors and issues of substance.

In general, training sessions were valued very positively by participants. Statements confirm that despite differences in legal systems and the organisation of the police in the two countries, participants obtained a lot of useful information and knowledge that could be utilised in their practical, everyday work of policing. One of the participants wrote that "I would like to use these presentations as a model I would like to follow in my future work as a police commander". It contributed to the effectiveness of the training to a great extent that

American trainers used as many Hungarian cases as possible and induced real interaction, genuine exchange of thoughts and co-operative work during the sessions.

The training was highly appreciated by both the participants and officials of HNP and the Ministry of Interior, since it contributed to the effective integration and implementation of community policing principles, values, methods and practices into the daily operation of HNP through learning from the ups and downs of US experience - the real hands-on experience American police officers-trainers managed to share with the Hungarian audience. Participants understood and accepted that community policing, by making closer and permanent links to the community, can elevate the prestige of police and it can also make policing more effective in the long run. Principles, practices and techniques of community policing can and should also work towards the direction of building bridges to minority populations/communities by involving them both in the processes of planning, executing and evaluating police/safety measures and by ensuring their fair representations in the local police force concerned.

The four sessions will practically train the whole senior leadership of the Hungarian National Police Force coming from either the capital/headquarters or the counties. Dissemination of the philosophy and practice of community policing is/will be accomplished through a filtering-down effect, both from commanders to district/police officers, and by the inclusion of this concept and the majority of the training within the training curriculum of police schools through lecturers/teachers of these institutions who took part in the training. (The first 3-day in-service training session held by Hungarian trainers has already taken place in the basic training school of police, which was based and relied almost fully on the experience and knowledge transmitted by the project.)

The series of training courses have been assisting HNP to ensure that the approach of community policing will be accepted by more and more police officers and will be practiced all over the country as an integral part of HNP's philosophy and practice.

Lessons Learned

a. Careful identification of goals, thorough project preparation: Though preparatory phase of this project may seem too long, it must be noted that designing such a project must consider and adapt to the circumstances of a specific institutional and legal system, behavioural pattern, traditions that determine the functioning of organisations of the recipient country. Careful selection of objectives can prevent creating falsely oriented or irrational expectations. In the present case, the most important goal was not and could not be the duplication or copying of American examples. Obviously these cannot be transferred directly in most cases because of the difference in legal systems, customs and traditions, individual and social behaviour, as well as for purely economic/material reasons. But the utilisation and, if possible, adaptation of lessons learned in developing and managing community policing in the U.S. can be deployed in order to strengthen, develop and give full support to the already existing "plant" of community-oriented policing in Hungary. Another related dilemma is that standardisation of norms would require and tend to force us to search for general/universal solutions while applicability of those norms depend on the specific and differing conditions of the given country. Project preparation is also time-demanding since it must involve a number of players to make it successful, including government ministries/agencies, police, minority organisations, both on the local and national levels, executing (organising and training) institutions, etc.

b. Training method: Methodology is crucial for transferring information in an efficient manner. It can also be a side-product of the training course that it presents and teaches a training method that can be used by recipient organisations in future training activities. This

was stressed and mentioned by some Hungarian participants/police educators in the evaluation.

c. Flexibility/continuous adaptation and multiplication factor: Feedback from participants should be required and integrated as soon as and to the greatest extent possible, to fine-tune the project through its cycle and to tailor it even closer to the needs of participants. Dissemination and implementation of ideas and practice need a multiplication factor that is built on institutional backing to be generated and ensured right from the beginning, and on securing channels of dissemination (education, training, press, etc.), as well as on training and convincing "disseminators".

Footnote

(1) The Report on the Romanian training series, *Building Romanian Democracy: the Police and Ethnic Minorities*, can be obtained from PER/Bucharest Office, or from PER at 15 Chambers Street, Princeton, New Jersey, USA 08542-3707.

TRAINING & OTHER ACTIVITIES ON POLICE/ROMA RELATIONS IN ROMANIA SPONSORED BY THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

**Dr Robin Oakley
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Introduction

The main aim of this paper is to provide a description of a three-day training workshop for senior Romanian police managers on relations with Roma communities, sponsored by the Council of Europe and held at the Police Further Training College in Bucharest in November 1996. The background to this workshop is also described, as well as a subsequent initiative on strategy development also sponsored by the Council of Europe.

The participants in the training workshop were central staff and selected regional officers of the recently-formed Crime Prevention Service, which forms part of the General Inspectorate of Police within the Ministry of the Interior of the Government of Romania. The Crime Prevention Service has particular responsibility for addressing police-Roma relations in Romania.

The training workshop was conducted by a team of four people with special expertise in the field of police-minority relations. It consisted of two senior police officers and two civilian experts, one of each from Britain and The Netherlands (Supt. David Collins and Dr Robin Oakley; and Commissioner Stoffer van Dijk and Mr Jan van Kooten). The aim was to exchange experience of methods of improving police-minority relations, and also to demonstrate the kind of approach which would be used in conducting police training on these issues in Britain and the Netherlands.

The Context

The training workshop took place in the context of ongoing transformation of the police structure in Romania from a repressive state apparatus to a modern professional police organisation. It also took place against a background of continuing concern among human rights organisations and other NGOs over acts of hostility and violence against Roma in Romania - including incidents of brutality by the police.

Details of the situation in Romania have been documented by a variety of local and international organisations, including by the European Roma Rights Centre in its report *Sudden Rage at Dawn*. The ERRC report acknowledges that since the early 1990s there have been fewer incidents of serious communal violence against Roma, and also acknowledges that the police have begun to address these problems. However, it expresses strong concern that past incidents have not been properly investigated and that many identified perpetrators have yet to be brought to justice. It also expresses concern that the new policing approach, focussing on 'crime prevention', seems to be connected with the increasing phenomenon of 'police raids' being carried out in Romani settlement areas, often with little or no public explanation.

The Council of Europe, in its report on *The Situation of Gypsies in Europe*, has identified this type of situation as presenting challenges across Central and Eastern Europe more generally and has developed a programme of activities on Roma/Gypsy affairs. Parallel to this, policing issues have been addressed within the programme of work of the European Committee on Migration (CDMG), which sponsored the production of the practical guidance booklet entitled *Police Training Concerning Migrants and Ethnic Relations*.

As the consultant for the production of this guidance booklet, Robin Oakley was asked by the Council of Europe Coordinator for Roma/Gypsy Affairs to contribute to a one-week 'course-seminar' in Romania on "The Prevention of Violence in Inter-Ethnic and Inter-Communal Relations". This event was organised by the Romanian National Police and the Council for National Minorities jointly with the Netherlands Helsinki Committee, and held at Tirgu-Mures in February 1996. Following this event, he recommended the provision of more direct assistance to the Romanian police specifically on practical methods for improving police-minority relations.

Pioneer work in this direction had already been moving forward in Romania. First of all, the research-based NGO, 'Rromani CRISS', has been active in promoting 'Round Table' discussions involving police, Romani community leaders and others. Secondly, the American-backed 'Project on Ethnic Relations' (PER) has undertaken several police training programmes, and was instrumental in the establishment of the Crime Prevention Service in 1994. Thirdly, the Crime Prevention Service (CPS) itself has introduced relevant initiatives: including a group violence prevention programme, and multi-agency crime prevention projects in Brasov, Sibiu and other localities. Finally, the NGO 'Young Generation of Roma Society' has also been active in cooperating with the CPS, and has developed a 'Friendly Officer Project' in which in several parts of Romania meetings have been held at local level to bring together members of local communities and local police. The purpose of the Council of Europe-sponsored training workshop, therefore, was to help strengthen and build on this foundation, and to identify ways in which it could be extended.

Design and Delivery

The formal aim of the workshop was for officers of the Crime Prevention Service to have the opportunity to work together with experts nominated by the Council of Europe, and to identify ways in which police relationships with minority, and in particular Roma/Gypsy, communities could be strengthened.

As already noted, the underlying approach was that the design of the workshop should provide for an 'exchange of experience' between the Council of Europe team and officers of the Crime Prevention service. The opening day of the workshop was therefore devoted to presentations followed by discussion, with initial presentations being made on the work of the Crime Prevention Service. These covered both central strategy and briefings on initiatives at county level. They were followed by further presentations made by the visiting experts, who shared their experience of methods used for improving police-minority relations in their own countries, especially through training and other forms of practical cooperation at local level. Reference was also made to the framework of actions set out in the Rotterdam Charter "Policing for a Multi-Ethnic Society", in whose formulation several delegates from Romania had been involved.

A second feature of the underlying approach was that it should involve an exchange of views between police participants and members of Romani communities, in order to hear their concerns and suggestions, and to jointly identify possible methods of practical cooperation. The second day was therefore devoted to achieving this objective, using a combination of plenary sessions and small group discussions. Participants included representatives of Rromani CRISS, the Young Generation of Roma Society, the Roma Party of Romania (both its leader and regional delegates), and several other Romani and human rights organisations, as well as the Member of Parliament representing the Roma minority. The subjects discussed included the purpose and conduct of police 'raids', the handling of crime statistics relating to Roma, problems of stereotyping, the disciplining of police officers, and methods for building bridges between Roma and the police. Although at times there was some heated debate, the general view was that the day had been very useful in improving

mutual understanding, developing ideas, and establishing new contacts. In particular, the leader of the Roma party offered his county-level structure as a framework for police-Roma communication and partnership.

The third day, involving a morning session only, began with reflection on the previous day's discussions. This was led by Jan van Kooten, an experienced trainer from the Anne Frank Foundation, who demonstrated various techniques to motivate active participation, and drew out a range of perspectives on the debates of the preceding day. Not surprisingly, these were rather mixed, with some participants feeling very positive, and others more hesitant or cynical about making progress in police/Roma relations. The two British/Dutch police officers then made a major contribution. They shared how both the British and Dutch police had been through similar difficulties in relations with minorities, but through dialogue and partnership had now been able to make significant improvements. They responded to numerous questions about the practical ways in which this had been done, and how the trust and cooperation of minorities had been achieved. Coming from fellow-police officers, this information was far more impactful than it would have been from civilians or academic experts alone.

Appraisal

The workshop was evidently well-received both by the head of the Crime Prevention Service, and the participants generally, and achieved the immediate aims which had been set. Given the sensitive subject-matter of the workshop, and the fact that it was being led by foreign 'experts', the following features of the design appear to have been of particular importance:

- a) The adoption of an approach based on the idea of an 'exchange of experience', rather than any attempt by the British and Dutch visitors to claim superior authority or the ability to know best how to solve Romania's problems.
- b) The involvement of two police officers in the team of four, which gave high credibility to the input from the Council of Europe team, and created an opportunity for open, equal and potentially highly impactful sharing of experience with fellow professionals in Romania.
- c) The introduction of participative training methods (demonstrated by an experienced trainer) rather than reliance on formal presentations and exchanges of opinion alone, with the benefit of increasing the engagement of participants in a learning process at both cognitive and affective levels.
- d) The allocation of a full day to structured interaction between police and guests from Roma communities, which allowed time for exploration of sensitive issues at a personal level in small group and informal settings, as well as opportunities to reach agreement on ideas to develop practical cooperation.
- e) The allocation of a three-day period for the workshop as a whole, which allowed the necessary time for addressing the key tasks of sharing professional experience and of consulting with minority communities, together with subsequent reflection and the consolidation of learning and other outcomes.

The Way Forward

The need for workshops of this kind in Romania was readily apparent from the three days' proceedings. Police experience of dealing with ethnic issues (and especially those relating to Roma) in accordance with modern professional and democratic policing methods is still

limited. The formation of the Crime Prevention Service permits, in theory, the establishment of a cadre within the police organisation which can develop specialist capabilities in this field, with the role of carrying out preventive activities. Realising this potential, however, is a major challenge, requiring leadership, resources, personnel and also, of course, staff training.

Since the workshop was held, these activities have been continuing under the leadership of the Director of the Crime Prevention Service, Major Ioneta Vintileanu. The Crime Prevention Service is fortunate to be led by an officer who appears to have an appreciation of these needs and a commitment to face the practical challenges involved in meeting them. She has welcomed cooperation with the Council of Europe, and with the Project on Ethnic Relations and other international organisations, and she has also established partnerships with Roma-based NGOs in Romania. Important initiatives are now being developed under her leadership at county level.

However, it is not only the Crime Prevention Service that must address these issues, but also the Romanian Police as a whole. Following the workshop, Dr Robin Oakley was asked by the Council of Europe to participate in a major 'Police Reform Assessment Exercise' being conducted by the Romania office of the Project on Ethnic Relations, in association with the University of Louisville, Kentucky USA. Working together with another senior British police officer, Superintendent Alan Radford of the Police Staff College at Bramshill, he conducted a needs assessment in the specific area of 'Community Partnerships and Ethnic Relations'.

A substantial report on this subject was produced in October 1997. It was based on two extended visits to Romania, involving meetings with senior police officials and government ministers, a high-profile consultation exercise with Roma organisations, and field visits to a number of different counties and localities. The report included a needs analysis, together with recommendations for an overall strategy and action plans for addressing community issues with particular reference to the Roma. Unfortunately it appears that, due to political and organisational changes, the Romanian police have not yet been able to make use of this report and the practical proposals contained in it. It is hoped that this situation may change in the near future.

ROUND TABLE SERIES IN ROMANIA: FOR THE PROMOTION OF TRUST AND COMMUNICATION IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND THE PREVENTION OF CRIMINALITY

Jennifer Tanaka
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Background to the project

In 1994, Romani CRISS launched the project '*Round Table Series for the Promotion of Trust and Communication in Local Communities and the Prevention of Criminality*'. The Project was co-financed by the EC Delegation PHARE Democracy Programme, Bucharest, 1995.

The initiative was a response to the outbreak of collective community violence against Roma in a number of villages and towns in Romania from 1990-1994, and the ongoing potential for inter-ethnic conflicts stemming from chronic community tensions. It may be mentioned that the large majority of some 30 community conflicts, resulting in the burning and destruction of Roma's homes, remained without legal follow-up, including the identification of the perpetrators, trial in a court of justice, and reparations for the victims.

Also, in terms of preventing community violence, over time, a trend was observed related to increased capacities of police to prevent violence, accompanied by the introduction of high profile, police and gendarme raids in Romani communities in different parts of the country. The raids were part of the Ministry of Interior actions for the prevention of violence and criminality, often carried out with unnecessary violence and aggression, and reported irregularities such as a lack of search warrants and the confiscation of goods.

It was suspected that the raids were a police response to complaints of the non-Roma residents that the police failed to 'do their job' in relation to supposed Romani criminal or 'anti-social' behaviour. Therefore, the introduction of these raids, with the use of many trucks, masked officers and dogs, was seen as an act of the police to display their efforts to prevent criminality. In addition to possible human rights violations, there were also concerns that such actions tend to reinforce negative stereotypes and mistrust on the part of the non-Roma.

The selection of localities for the round-tables took into consideration these post-community conflict situations, and later some localities where police raids had taken place. In addition, other conditions such as previously constructed dialogue with local authorities, and the presence of locally elected Romani counsellors also provided for positive conditions for developing more co-operative relations.

Aims and Objectives

Prevent the further outbreak of community violence, by providing a mechanism for mediation in situations of litigation and conflict, especially in those which imply families and social groups, including ethnic-cultural groups. This included mediation in disputes among Romani persons and families, and on the part of persons and families of the majority population in districts, villages, etc.

In the vast domain of crime prevention, the priority was to focus attention on infractions committed by groups, or in situations of conflicts between social groups.

To improve community relations, particularly through the

- *Promotion of better communication* among citizens, civic associations, government authorities and organs defending public order and the administration of justice;
- *Cultivation of trust* in relations between different social groups, and among ethnic-cultural groups.
- *The break down inter-community communication barriers*, in some of the situations, such as those related to criminality and violence.
- To facilitate the creation of a forum which may have the role of 'therapy'; of social communication.

Complementary concepts (and situations) to be explored in the context of the project included: collective violence; aggressive crowds; intra-community conflicts; and inter-ethnic conflicts.

Methods of Implementation

The primary method for implementing the project was to organise roundtable discussions in view of creating a more permanent structure amongst key local social and administrative actors. The 'roundtable' series was to be *ad hoc* and "open," with a flexible character with regards to the topic of discussion. This included, for example, local Roma involved in the conflicts; police; members of public administration (i.e. mayor, counsellors), public functionaries, in their official or private qualities; a variety of non-governmental organisations, especially local Romani organisations, and religious and church organisations; lawyers; central governmental representatives; and interested private persons.

The roundtables were to take place periodically according to a negotiated program or in crisis situations such as a possible violent conflict. In addition, smaller groups could be organised to discuss precise problems on a regular basis. As a flexible structure or initiative the roundtable was to serve as a crystallisation of the role of civil society, particularly in the domain of the prevention of criminality, which presents a danger to the public order and internal security of the country. In this sense, the roundtable was an alternative, complimentary civic working structure in relations with the police, public prosecutor and judicial bodies; local authorities and locally elected counsellors. Likewise, the idea was that alternative civic structures are able to compliment the strategies for the prevention of criminality elaborated at the level of central institutions, for the entire territory of the country.

It was made clear that the profile and scope of the roundtable structures were to avoid:

- Overlapping of structures; duplication of efforts; it is not a substitution for the attributes, responsibilities and activities of the state organs already functioning.
- A kind of "ethnic patronage" to the communities;
- The exaggeration of a civic organisation's role, in the detriment of normal activities of the police and other state organs, which have competence in the concerned domain.

Alternatively, the roundtable structures were to realise:

- A complimenting and co-ordination of resources (human, expertise, materials, finances);
- An "anchoring" of these civic initiatives to the formal structures, such as the local public administration.

CRISS's role in the local project activities included complimentary activities of mediation, such as negotiation, counselling, and arbitration. In some of the localities, CRISS also provided legal assistance for Romani families in some of the legal cases related to the conflicts. Parallel with these local-level activities, the project also involved the organisation of

anti-discrimination street protests for civic awareness raising; the organisation of press conferences to call for the administration of justice in unresolved cases, and the publicity of positive examples of co-operation; and the production and circulation of documents concerning the various issues of the project, at both national and international levels.

Difficulties during the course of the project

In discussing local problems and concerns, it was often the case that the issue of ethnically motivated violence and discrimination were not approached, while interventions focused mainly on poverty issues. Therefore, CRISS stressed a civil rights approach, at times playing an educational role over what may be considered discriminatory behaviour, and the need to respect the rule of law. At the same time, recognising the importance of community development needs, CRISS also assisted, over time, in the support of local initiatives such as schooling of Romani children, or income-generation in some localities.

Working in the communities where Romani victims had received humanitarian assistance following the destruction of their homes proved difficult, as attitudes and behaviours as 'clients' had been developed. While CRISS's approach sought to promote responsible citizenship amongst local Roma, therefore stressing that they are 'civil actors', not 'victims', this was particularly problematic in these communities.

In some situations, such as mediating the re-insertion of Roma who had been evicted from their villages during the conflicts, or stressing Roma's equal rights as citizens and residents in localities with community tensions, the need to regulate the legal status of some local Roma was also identified. Therefore, in some cases local administrative arrangements or working groups were made in view of obtaining residence permits, identification cards; birth certificates and construction authorisations for local Roma.

In the context of police efforts to build trust on the part of the majority populations, the techniques used were seen as increasing mistrust amongst Roma and non-Roma, by reinforcing negative stereotypes. Here especially, reference was made to the publication of crime statistics with the supposed Romani or 'tigani' ethnicity specified. In addition, press coverage of Roma-related issues were often seen as feeding mistrust, negative sentiments and even hostility among the majority population. Therefore CRISS organised press conferences on these themes of crime statistics, the ethnic designation as 'tigani', rather than Roma and the mass media coverage, and also supported a study on the mass media coverage of inter-ethnic community conflicts.

Outcomes

In terms of outcomes, the round-tables meant that there was increased dialogue amongst local Roma inhabitants and local authorities. In some of the localities and districts inhabited by Romani communities, a local 'contact point' was created to serve as a resource for addressing problems and issues arising in the community.

Romani participation, either in the form of a community leader, a type of mediator or as a local counsellor was important in terms of Romani representation. Likewise, active participation and involvement of Romani representatives, especially locally elected councillors, played an important role in terms of the sustainability and development of local partnerships. Where there was generally a lack of organisation and adequate self-representation amongst local Roma, the impact was also smaller and rather short-lived.

While improving trust between the police and Roma is a long term process, in some cases the improved communication and development of working partnerships, even within the scope of a particular problem, was an important step toward improving overall police-Roma

relations, and providing a model for co-operation. In addition, the attention brought to the police-Roma issues has also meant that over the years, CRISS has come in regular contact with representatives from General Police Department, and has benefited from their participation in other CRISS activities such as subsequent seminars, roundtable discussions and press conferences.

In some cases, the attention brought to the previous community violence, including police violence served as a kind of pressure on local authorities to refrain from tolerating or overlooking such behaviour, and it may be said that some became more open to co-operating with NGOs in addressing local problems. Also, the activities had an awareness-raising function amongst local Roma as well, who became more aware of their civil rights.

What lessons can be learned from the experience

- It was good to organise the round-tables in the respective community itself, which allowed for participation of locals, and a follow-up to the previous conflict. Likewise, in the process of communicating grievances and directions for improving community relations, the ability of CRISS to follow-up with possible resources for community development initiatives of local Roma was a useful tool during the process of negotiation.
- Promoting and strengthening local Romani representation and participation in local governance activities provides for a valuable 'partner' in addressing local problems, and improving community relations and communication. Likewise, local NGOs, especially Romani NGOs, also contribute to building more sustainable local structures or arrangements.
- From the perspective of post-conflict reconstruction and development, caution should be taken in terms of the way humanitarian assistance is distributed, as there is a risk of creating dependency that can be difficult to overcome in other development-related activities.
- Specialised training on the specific cultural and social issues of Romani communities should be organised for police officers, and other public administration officers, such as those in the Department of Labour and Social Protection, and Education (school inspectorate)
- In view of preventing violence and increasing trust between Roma and non-Roma, it is important to take into consideration issues such as the language employed by public officers, the negative effects of publishing ethnically specific crime statistics, and mass media coverage of Roma.
- There is also a need for basic civic education for both Roma and non-Roma.

THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE RELATION BETWEEN LOCAL POLICE REPRESENTATIVES AND INHABITANTS IN THE NATIONALLY MIXED TERRITORY OF SLOVAKIA

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A two year programme implemented from March 1994 to July 1995, financially supported by the British Government 'Know How Fund'.

Context

- Slovakia has a number of national minorities; the second largest is the Romany minority. The Romany population tends to suffer disproportionately from higher rates of poverty, unemployment, crime and disease.
- This is the result of a historical development and of irresponsible political solutions before and later, also after the year 1989.
- Compared with the criminality of the entire population of Slovakia, higher percentages of criminal acts are found among the Romany.
- This leads to racially determined attitudes of the public towards the Romany in some localities in Eastern Slovakia.
- The proposed solution was to reinforce the police protection.
- There is an implicit problem concerning police with confidence building measures according to the experience with the police in previous totalitarian regimes and its superior status.

The need

- To improve the relation and communication between local police representatives and inhabitants of all nationalities, accentuating the relations towards the Romany.
- To convince involved representatives of minorities and responsible state and self-governmental authorities representatives that repression is not the effective solution of this complex problem and to offer a usable strategy to solve the problem.

Objectives

- To propose a strategy of the promulgation of the policy of co-operation of all involved authorities and minority representatives at local, regional and governmental level.
- To implement this strategy by a team of experts (both British and Slovak).
- To develop a training programme based on British experience led by accredited trainers and to provide materials developed in co-operation of Slovak and British experts.
- To prepare a training manual.

- To create an effective personal network of involved experts, officials (police, self-government bodies) and non-official (minorities, non-governmental organisations) representatives of all levels.

Method

The project was conducted in three phases at three levels - local, regional and global.

Phase 1 Survey and needs analysis

Level: local

Start: first year

The aims of this Phase were:

- to monitor and to become fully familiar with the current situation in regions
- to analyse the cultural and communication difficulties experienced by minorities or police representatives
- to familiarise participants with history, culture, hierarchy of values of the Romany communities in Slovakia as well as with the experience of foreign colleagues - both representatives of police and minorities
- to provide participants with the general information concerning the origin, phases, and possible results of ethnic conflict and its prevention and resolution

Outcomes:

- a specification for content and format of the training programmes at all levels
- the pilot project conducted in a limited geographic area with mixed population
- 5 workshops, each 20-25 participants (consisting of 8-10 representatives of the Romany community, 7 representatives of local police, 3-4 representatives of local self-government authority) for 2-3 days in smaller towns in problematic regions - the number of participants is not including 4-6 (2-4 foreign) experts. The foreign experts took part in 2nd and 3rd workshops.
- a specification of material was produced (manual)
- a detailed plan for the subsequent Phases of the Project

Phase 2 Design of training materials and delivery mechanism

Level: regional

Start: second year

The aim of the Phase was to tailor-make the training to meet the needs established in Phase 1. The choice of the materials and methods of delivery had been linked with the individual experience of learners.

The Phase was conducted by the work of a faculty of training professionals familiar with work in this domain who had been advised by experts from a range of professional backgrounds and racial origin - both from Slovakia and Great Britain.

The content of training, although dependent on the findings of the Phase 1, was included such elements as positive thinking, active listening, effective presentation, public speaking, public hearing, conflict prevention and resolution, human rights, civil rights, etc.

Outcomes:

- testing and developing the model of a workshop at the regional level
- 3 workshops, each 15-20 participants (consisting of the same ratio of participants), with more experts (both British and Slovak) involved for 3 days, in regional towns
- providing participants with adequate knowledge and practical skills
- methodological feedback - if necessary, additional trailing of the modified material
- the preparation of the manual for training

Phase 3 Fully-developed, replicable course and material

Level: global

The aim was to undertake the one week training course based on training materials developed by British experts for teacher-trainers of the police force led by experts - both from Slovakia and Great Britain. At the beginning of this Phase, a trip of three Slovak police officers to Great Britain with programme relevant to project objectives had been organised by the British Home Office.

Outcomes:

- the one-week course on community policing with emphasis on new teaching methods, 22 Slovak participants (teacher-trainers of the special secondary schools for Slovak police force) led by experts from Great Britain and Slovakia
- the training material (translated to Slovak language)
- network of involved people at all levels (local, regional, global) representatives of minority communities, police, self-government bodies, experts
- database and background for further co-operation of all participants

Faculty The Project team in Slovakia was led by Sarlota Pufflerova, who conducted and co-ordinated all Phases of the work in co-operation with Robert Chalka from the Police Academy in Slovakia. In all Phases, the Project was assisted by members of the Foundation Citizen and Democracy, Minority Rights Group - Slovakia.

POLICE TRAINING ON GYPSY/TRAVELLER ISSUES IN BRITAIN

Peter Mercer & Robin Oakley

1. Gypsies and Travellers in Britain

1.1 Romany Gypsies have been present in Britain at least since the beginning of the sixteenth century. Along with the Jews, they are among the oldest of Britain's ethnic minorities, the majority of whom are of more recent origin and have arrived since the Second World War. Like the Jews, the Gypsies have a long history of persecution and social exclusion in Britain. Seen as extreme 'outsiders' and often as a threat, the treatment they have received at various times includes having been sold into slavery, sent out to British colonies, and hunted like wild animals.

1.2 Despite their social exclusion and intermittent persecution, for several hundred years Gypsies played an important role in the life of the English countryside. Travelling around local areas in caravans either on their own or as part of larger groups, they engaged in trades such as metal-working, horse-dealing and various forms of entertainment. They supplemented their income through seasonal work such as corn-harvesting and hop-picking. They maintained their traditional life-styles and cultural traditions, and managed their own affairs in independent family groups.

1.3 In the nineteenth century, changes linked to industrialisation began to disturb these established patterns, and rural sources of livelihood declined. Gypsies became increasingly dependent on the towns for paid work, and movement across long distances became common. However, at the same time, stopping-places in both rural and urban areas became more difficult to secure. Conflict with local residents and with the police became more frequent, with police and other local officials usually trying to force Gypsies and other travelling people (mainly of Irish origin) to 'move on'. Gypsies now came to be seen as a group that were in conflict with, rather than interdependent with, the settled population. During the twentieth century many Gypsies have discontinued the nomadic life, although others have maintained the travelling life-style and have attempted to resist the pressures of assimilation.

1.4 In 1960, the British Government for the first time introduced legislation in an attempt to regulate this conflict situation. The first Caravan Sites Act required that official planning permission was required if land was to be used by caravans. Then, following a nation-wide survey which established that there were at least 15,000 travelling people widely dispersed across Britain, many of whom suffered harassment and various other disadvantages, a new and more positive law was introduced. The second Caravan Sites Act of 1968 now placed a duty on local government to make sites available for travelling people. However, often because of pressure from the settled population, local councils were very slow and resistant about responding, and large numbers of travellers remained without proper access to sites.

1.5 In this situation, relations between travellers and the police and other authorities continued to be difficult. Then, during the 1980s, violent confrontations between the police and a new group of travellers - the 'New Age Travellers' - resulted in a much more repressive approach to travellers being adopted by central government. Under further legislation, the duty on local government to provide sites was removed, and the police were given strong legal powers to remove travellers from any land.

1.6 Although the police have expressed opposition to this legislation, it has greatly increased the potential for conflict between the police and travelling communities. This is simply the latest addition to a relationship which has always been a difficult one, with police officers (like the rest of the population) stereotyping Gypsies as criminals and untrustworthy, and Gypsies seeing the police as interfering and oppressive - and as untrustworthy also.

1.7 In many areas, there has been no special response by the police to this situation, and local police officers are expected to manage relations with Gypsies and Travellers as best they can and without any special support. Only in a few areas have special arrangements been made, sometimes with a local-level police officer being assigned special responsibility for traveller liaison, and sometimes with someone being appointed by the local council to undertake this task. In the town of Peterborough, Peter Mercer - himself a Romany Gypsy residing on an established site - has the role of Gypsy Liaison Officer for the local City Council. In this capacity he liaises not only with the local council but also with officers of Cambridgeshire Police, from the most junior ranks up to the level of Chief Constable. His activities include attending consultative meetings, advising police and other officials at all levels, assisting Gypsy/Traveller families in particular cases and dealing with neighbourhood disputes. As a result there are much more positive and effective relations between travelling people and the police in Peterborough than in most other areas of Britain.

1.8 Across Britain as a whole, however, police contact with Gypsies is usually very negative and unsuccessful, with Gypsies being dealt with only in public order situations or as suspected criminals. Police officers, like the rest of the population, are highly ignorant about gypsies and other travellers, and are very prejudiced against them. Their negative experiences of actual contact with Gypsies tends to exaggerate these attitudes further. This does not help to create a situation in which Gypsies can feel confident of receiving fair treatment from police, or a response which respects their distinct identity and is sensitive to their special needs. Today, however, the police in Britain increasingly aspire to standards both of high quality and of equality in their service provision to all sections of the community. And Gypsies (though not all travellers) are recognised as an ethnic group, and therefore protected against racial discrimination under the provisions of the Race Relations Act 1976 (although at present this does not normally cover actions taken by the police). There is therefore a need for increased awareness and understanding of issues relating to the Gypsy community on the part of police officers, a need which can be met through appropriate training.

2. Police Training On Minority Issues

2.1 Police training in Britain first began seriously to address issues concerning racism and ethnic minorities as a result of the report by Lord Scarman on the riots between police and black people which occurred in Brixton in South London in 1981. To progress his recommendation that all police officers should receive training on these subjects, a more detailed report was produced in 1983 by the national Police Training Council on *Community and Race Relations Training for the Police*. This set out the basic principles on which such training should be based, and the content of training that would be appropriate for officers of different ranks and roles. The report proposed that a specialist 'training support centre' should be established independently of the police service to assist with the development of such training. It also emphasised the need for substantial involvement of people from the minority communities in the planning and delivery of the training.

2.2 Progress was slow during the 1980s in introducing such training, for a variety of reasons. In 1989, however, a new 'Specialist Support Unit' (SSU) was set up with funding from the Home Office to replace the original one based at Brunel University. This was operated by a small specialist training company, Equalities Associates, which established a residential training centre at Turvey in Bedfordshire.

2.3 The new Unit was directed by Jerome Mack, a black American now living in England, who had previously been a chief of police and also a staff member of the US military's 'Equal Opportunities Management Institute'. He brought his experience, not just of training, but also of designing and implementing strategic approaches to tackling racism in major organisations. He put together a multi-racial team of eight, including two police officers, which combined core training skills with the ability to analyse the problem, develop strategies, write programmes and support materials, and establish cooperation with minority communities at the local level.

2.4 The basic strategy of the SSU, in a country with some 50 different police forces and 130,000 police officers, has been to make an impact on police training by means of 'training the trainers'. Specialist courses on 'community and race relations' (CRR) have been run regularly at the training centre at Turvey, the main trainers' course being of six weeks duration, along with shorter two-week courses e.g. for training managers. The 'graduates' of these courses are expected to return to their police forces either to deliver specially-designed one- or two-day local training packages, or to work with colleagues to integrate CRR issues into existing training courses. At the same time, staff of the SSU have working with national police training establishments to ensure that CRR issues are included in all core national training programmes - for recruits, for local supervisors and managers, at senior officer level, and of course in the basic training for police trainers.

2.5 The aim of this 'training for trainers' strategy has been to ensure that the police service across Britain has a sufficient body of trainers capable of delivering CRR training to all police staff. The trainers are provided with an in-depth understanding of the issues, sufficient for them to equip their colleagues with the ability to treat all sections of Britain's ethnically diverse community fairly and equally when carrying out their policing role. The trainers courses therefore explore in detail issues such as the nature of prejudice and discrimination, the history and manifestations of racism, how minority groups respond to dominance, the history of Britain's multi-cultural society, problems in cross-cultural communication, and so on. There is a strong focus on how to deal with these issues in the classroom. In the training programmes designed for the local-level, by contrast, the focus is strongly practical rather than theoretical. The emphasis is directly on policing tasks (such as conducting stops, searches and arrests, and investigating racially-motivated crime) and on knowledge about local situations and community groups.

2.6 Although the training programmes which have been run by the SSU have been very successful in training the trainers, the overall strategy has been more difficult to implement. Although some police forces have made good use of their specialist trainers, others have largely ignored them and failed to implement programmes at the local level. Often this seems to be because of lack of any clear policy commitment at the top of the organisation to address racial and minority issues. One of the main lessons of the SSU's experience has been that training alone is not sufficient to change the approach of the police organisation to these issues: it must be supported by a broader-based strategy for organisational change backed by policy commitment from the top.

2.7 It is hardly surprising that in Britain the main focus of training on CRR issues has been on the background and experience of the ethnic minorities of post-war immigrant origin. Thus, so far as racism is concerned, the focus has been on colour-based racism of colonial origin against 'black' people. And so far as cultural awareness is concerned, the focus has likewise been on increasing knowledge about the numerically largest groups, i.e. communities of South Asian, African and Caribbean origin. Smaller minority communities, including refugee groups and Gypsy/Traveller communities, have tended to receive far less emphasis within police training programmes.

3. Training on Gypsy/Traveller Issues

3.1 From the outset the Specialist Support Unit at Turvey identified police relations with Gypsy/Traveller communities as an important subject that should not be excluded from its training programmes. Although the number of Gypsies and other travellers might be small compared to other minorities, they are present in all police areas, and relations are marked by a serious lack of trust on both sides.

3.2 The police, of course, have a professional and legal responsibility to work in all sections of society, and to provide a fair and equal service regardless of ethnic background. Yet most police officers on training courses readily admit to being totally ignorant about the history and cultural background of Gypsy communities. They also admit to having strong prejudices against Gypsies, and to lacking confidence in being able to deal with them effectively when carrying out their policing roles. In these respects, they are probably no different from the rest of the *gorgio* population. Many officers were also of the opinion that prejudices against gypsies are more deep-seated than racial prejudice against minorities of post-war migrant origin, and more difficult to change on account of the power of the historical myths and the absence of inter-group personal contact. It is still generally acceptable to express prejudices about Gypsies openly in Britain, whereas it is no longer so about black people.

3.3 Several different approaches have been attempted to addressing Gypsy/Traveller issues in the SSU's training programmes. The first approach relied largely on the provision of information. An expert on the subject was invited to give a lecture on the history and culture of Gypsies and Travellers in Britain, and to respond to questions from students subsequently. However, although many found the lecture to be interesting, it did not really challenge their personal stereotypes and prejudices, which many felt could be illustrated and thus confirmed from experience.

3.4 The second approach that was tried focussed directly on these prejudices and stereotypes. An exercise was devised in which some students took the roles of Gypsies and Travellers, and some the roles of *gorgios*, while others acted as observers at a 'meeting' in which conflicting views were debated. This had more success in drawing out assumptions and stereotypes, and enabling officers to see the Gypsy/Traveller point of view. However, the exercise was felt to be rather artificial: it did not communicate authentic Gypsy/Traveller experience, and did not provide direct practical assistance on how to undertake routine police tasks with members of this group.

3.5 The current approach involves returning to the method of inviting a visiting presenter, but now a different type of person is involved and conducts the session in a different way. Peter Mercer, as this presenter, is not an academic expert, but a Romany Gypsy who combines living his everyday life on a traveller site with acting as Gypsy Liaison Officer for the local city Council. He is therefore able to speak from personal experience about all matters relating to Gypsy history and culture, while also having first-hand experience of working on behalf of his community in dealings with local government officials and the police.

3.6 Rather than providing a lecture on these subjects, he relies strongly on responding to questions that are in the minds of his police audience. At the outset of his session, the students discuss among themselves to prepare a set of questions they would like him to respond to. These are usually a mixture of requests for factual information about Gypsy culture, and for practical tips about how to communicate and work successfully with people from this community. In his opening remarks, Peter Mercer begins by outlining his personal background, and then widens this to providing a brief historical and cultural outline of the Gypsy/Traveller community in Britain. He stresses that he is doing this not to help the police catch criminals (which is their own job), but to enable them to understand and respect the

Gypsy community. He then turns to respond to and discuss the various questions that have been raised, which typically include such topics as names, family structure, relations between women and men, and many other aspects of Gypsy/Traveller life-style. Although the questions are usually put in good faith, he may often face what, from a Gypsy perspective, is a staggering catalogue of ignorance, stupidity and bigotry. He also encounters a lot of (apparently unconscious) arrogance, from the many police officers who feel they "already know all about the Gypsy criminal subculture".

3.7 To handle this type of situation as a trainer calls for special skills and personal qualities. The trainer must have high personal credibility, and be able to challenge ignorance and negative views while neither becoming defensive nor alienating the students. Peter Mercer's personal background, his wide knowledge and experience of practical community-level work, and his skills at handling this type of training session, are the reasons for his success. At present, there are few others in Britain who can deliver this type of session on Gypsy/Traveller issues successfully, and it is important that more people can be found who can do so in other police training programmes.

3.8 It is most important to appreciate, however, that in SSU training programmes a session on Gypsy/Traveller issues is never delivered in isolation. It always forms part of a set of sessions focussing on the different ethnic communities (including the dominant white community) which make up Britain's multi-cultural society. All these sessions are supported by a course handbook prepared by Robin Oakley which provides general background information on the various communities (including a chapter on Gypsy/Traveller communities). Moreover, they are also accompanied by other complementary sessions, including on the nature of prejudice and stereotyping, on ethnocentrism and cross-cultural understanding, and on more general problems in police-community relations. All these are essential for police officers to be able to benefit from the specific sessions focussing on Gypsy/Traveller issues. Without this wider background understanding of inter-group relations, the sessions focussed on particular groups are likely to fail.

3.9 Training inputs such as a described above are an important beginning, but there is still a long way to go in improving relations between police and Gypsy/Traveller communities. Within the SSU's police training programme, various initiatives involving other minority ethnic communities have been introduced. These include visits of police officers to community locations, and the 'host-family interface' in which police officers stay for a weekend in the home of an ethnic minority family. So far, these types of initiatives have not been extended to Gypsy/Traveller communities, as the gap in mutual trust remains far too wide. As has already been noted, training alone should not be expected to solve these problems anyway. The police service also needs to be active in other ways to build bridges with the Gypsy/Traveller community: it needs to rethink its whole attitude and approach to this community, and so be able to win greater cooperation and respect.

Note on Authors

Peter Mercer is Gypsy Liaison Officer for the City of Peterborough, President of the East Anglian Gypsy Council, and a leading member of numerous UK and international Romany/Gypsy organisations. Robin Oakley acted as Academic Adviser to the Specialist Support Unit for Police Training on Community and Race Relations, and now works as an independent consultant on racial and minority issues both in Britain and across Europe.