

The Roma Minority in the Czech Republic: Scapegoats of Modern History?

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Abstract

In this paper I am focusing on the situation of Roma minority in the Czech Republic concerned with the high levels of social exclusion in many aspects of their lives. Among the main aims of the paper is to show that the current situation of Roma in the Czech Republic is not the question of mentality like the majority prefers to think, but the social pre-conditions, historical “heritage” and the changing economic situation in the country. Personally I am involved in the projects on communities’ inclusion on local and international levels both in the non-governmental and academic spheres; the Roma integration programs have been part of my professional activities. Such interdisciplinary approach can contribute from my point of view to more objective outcomes and more humane papers.

Keywords: social exclusion, scapegoat, anti-gypsyism, Roma people, Czech Republic

Introduction

These days Europe represents the Union of 27 member countries, vast lands and a common space where Europeans can practice their rights and move freely. For the rest of the World and for Europe itself this is a place of peace, stability, and rising standard of living. Europe promotes values like human rights, democracy and freedom but under this surface there still exists discrimination, nationalism and xenophobia – these altogether building the real picture of Europe today.

The rise in the levels of intolerance inside the communities towards some particular ethnic or other groups can be explained by the economic crisis in almost all the member states of the European Union and the aftermaths. However, such a situation is not something brand new and has been known throughout the history of mankind. Whenever a crisis situation or a natural disaster (famine, plague or invasion) emerges – the “scapegoat”, the weakest element of the community, is blamed and punished for the sins, crimes and sufferings of others, so the majority could feel more united and safe.

In his book Tom Douglas¹ develops and explains in details the *scapegoat* concept from religious to family contexts, showing to the reader that the blaming itself and the wish to transfer the blame have been always among us. He stresses that during the recent decades this social pattern has become widespread on a daily basis in society.

I do agree with Douglas and would like to add that more and more often one can hear such kind of statements from public: “I am not responsible for anything; all is caused by governments, politicians, companies, immigrants, gypsies...” It is not surprising that this behavioural model is easier to follow due to the fact that it is more convenient to blame others than to step in and take the responsibility for your own life, for the critical and conflict situations in the society. And in that way, scapegoating has always been present within the realities of our societies.

While preparing this paper I did a lot of research on the “scapegoating phenomenon” from the angles of religion, history, family, and public; and I can honestly say that this issue fascinates me as a researcher and motivates me as an educator to explain to the public and youth why some particular groups are being targeted and discriminated against by the majority.

In general, the scapegoating social behavioural pattern can be associated with choosing some particular people/group of people, who are weak or easy to be targeted as victims to transfer sins/frustration/stress/hate of the community/nation onto them. Thereby people who transfer it get rid of anxiety and stress, feel more secured and relaxed. Today, in terms of public scapegoats, different groups of society are targeted all over Europe: in Central Europe – immigrants and Roma people, in Northern Europe – immigrants, in the Balkan states – homosexual people.

One of the largest and more vulnerable minorities in Europe nowadays, being daily highly discriminated against and on a legal basis, is the Roma community. Estimated to be 12 million people² and being distributed all over Europe, they constitute a very diverse group in terms of religion, language, occupation, economic situation and ways of living. Notwithstanding being so different, the Roma community is generalized, stigmatized and connected with all the possible “evils” like crimes, drugs, prostitution, etc. Such a way of perceiving Roma in society led to the establishment and prospering of the anti-gypsyism in Europe.

¹ Tom Douglas, *Scapegoats: Transferring Blame*, New York 1995.

² Arno Tanner, Finnish Directorate of Immigration, *The Roma of Eastern Europe: Still Searching for Inclusion* (2005), more on <http://www.migrationinformation.org/feature/display.cfm?ID=308>, viewed on 12.08.2012.

Anti-gypsyism is a modern term related to the existence of prejudices and stereotypes in regard to the Roma minority. Furthermore, anti-gypsyism has become so casual and so normal in the behavior of the majority and in the statements of officials, media and police that this altogether leads to physical attacks and related violence towards the Roma members, strengthening even more the intolerance level in society.

Anti-gypsyism can be explained by the absence of will to recognize the history of the Roma minority in terms of previous slavery³ and suffering (including the genocide during World War II⁴), the unwillingness of the society and politicians to address the issue, which needs a humanitarian approach with understanding and patience. Sadly till now people all over Europe prefer not to see, not to think and not to imagine themselves in the situation of the Roma community members.

In many cases, entire Roma communities are living in inadequate conditions without access to water, electricity, sewerage and heating. To this should be added that after the fall of Communism the Roma community experienced great problems due to the unemployment and since then their situation has got very close to complete exclusion from decent work chances in the European Union. The Roma minority is being segregated and discriminated against at the highest level within every sphere: in education – by being denied access to schools, or being put in schools for children with mental disabilities or by being separated from the larger populations of students; in health – due to the absence of funds to pay the insurance and lack of the identification documents; in public services – due to the public sentiments and marginalized life style; and directly – by constructing walls between the Roma and the majority⁵.

This paper intends therefore to attract attention to the inhuman and frightening case of social exclusion of Roma minority in the Czech Republic as it occurs today, in the 21st century, in the very heart of Europe.

Research gaps

While analysing the dimensions and extent of social exclusion of the Roma community in the Czech Republic, one would be confronted with the lack of this “ethnically sensitive” data in public statistics. However, this situation is similar in a lot of European states.

Clear and up-to-date statistical figures are therefore important in order to be able to argue and prove a certain position in terms of the Roma situation in the country, in terms of discrimination cases and human rights of this minority group.

Another challenge can be linked with the exact number of the Roma population due to the fact that the Roma community members rarely affiliate themselves with the Roma nationality but with the nationality of the residence country or of the country of origin⁶. It is illegal nowadays to request nationality/ethnic specific data other than one’s declared nationality; this leads in its turn to the situation when only a small Roma population will actually declare Roma nationality.

³ By previous slavery I mean the enslaving of Roma people throughout history from the time of the Byzantine Empire to the second half of the 19th century (for example on the territory of Romania), when slavery was finally abolished.

⁴ By genocide of Roma people I mean the Porajmos as in the attempt made by Nazi Germany, the Independent State of Croatia, Horthy’s Hungary and their allies to exterminate the Romani people of Europe during World War II. The estimated number of killed varies from 200,000 to 1,500,000 people.

⁵ Details can be found as well on <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/feature-stories/europes-roma-community-still-facing-massive-discrimination-20090408>.

⁶ In cases when people were born in another country and then migrated to the current hosting country, for example Slovak Roma community members in the Czech Republic identify themselves as Slovaks not as Roma or Czechs.

These two factors can partially explain why according to Census 2001, the share of Roma minority was only 0.3%, which is approximately 12000 people, while the experts and non-governmental organizations estimate the number to be about 3% and 300000⁷ respectively.

To be able to have the overall picture of the Roma community situation in the Czech Republic in the author's point of view it is important to have at least a short overview of the historical background of their settlement in the Czech Lands from the moment of their arrival.

Historical overview of the Roma minority in the Czech Republic⁸

Many historians refer to the 14th and 15th centuries for the arrival of the Roma community to Central Europe and the Czech Lands in particular. This could be called the "Golden Age of Roma in Europe" as they were given protection and some privileges. Back to 1423, the Czech king Zikmund was stating that there should be no prejudices within his kingdom for "gypsies".

In 1427 the archbishop of Paris excommunicated the Roma from the Church and the attitude of the population dramatically changed; with this act the centuries of the cruel anti-Roma discrimination began and the persecution, tortures, execution of the members of the Roma community were not considered as a crime anymore.

The persecution stopped in the 18th century with the decree of Maria Theresa, whose purpose was to assimilate the Roma into the rest of the population. Among the forced assimilation measures were prohibition of nomadic life-style, separation and re-education of Roma children within the major population families. In the 21st century these measures got to be considered as violating human rights, but it is worth mentioning that these measures led to the overall assimilation of the Czech-Moravian Roma.

The 19th century and industrialization changed the whole society and its mentality; and the Roma population could not find the right place for themselves again. Before World War II, the majority of Roma was still illiterate, discriminated against and unmotivated to change their conditions. The greatest tragedy occurred under the Nazi regime when the original "Czech" Roma, assimilated at great cost, were almost exterminated⁹.

After the war many Roma migrated from Hungary, Slovakia and Romania to the Czech Lands for the open positions in the industrial sector; here they had to face the issues of language barriers, difference of mentalities, and segregation.

Within the majority of Czech society, the overestimation of the financial factors and the thought that only material conditions and given jobs would change the situation of Roma and their social behaviour led to the Roma society's degradation caused by the cultural shock in an unfamiliar place, by the elimination of traditions and values within the Roma community, and erosion of traditional family life.

It can be seen in the historical perspective through the centuries that Roma have represented an outcast population on the edge of social exclusion. The 20th century was of high importance and influenced the Roma situation dramatically by extermination of settled Roma during World War II, by the social engineering experiment of forced resettlement from rural areas and by the switch to the market economy, which led to greater unemployment among this social group.

⁷ Details can be found as well on <http://www.visegradinclusion.org/page/situation-of-roma-in-czech-republic:72/>, viewed on 01.08.2012;

⁸ The overview was carried out on the materials of research of Tomas Sirovatka, *The Challenge of Social Inclusion: Minorities and Marginalized Groups in Czech Society*, Brno 2006, materials on website <http://www.visegradinclusion.org/page/situation-of-roma-in-czech-republic:72/>, viewed on 25.07.2012, and on the website of Radio Prague and its pages on history of Roma in the Czech Republic: <http://romove.radio.cz/en/article/18913>, viewed on 01.05.2012.

⁹ According to experts only 10 percents of the Czech Roma survived the genocide during the World War II.

During the last decades the Roma have been viewed as a “weak element of the society”; therefore, the system of material support from the government’s side was initiated. From my point of view, this step has contributed to a reinforcement of the hostile sentiments on the part of the major society towards Roma. It is usually said that the transformation process brought new rights and freedom for people; I had rather insist that for the Roma community in the Czech Republic it made life and survival even harder.

Reality of the Roma population in the Czech Republic

Europe, which is generally so culturally and ethnically different, lately has witnessed a “minority trend” when the minority groups celebrate their difference, organize cultural festivals, maintain and preserve their heritage. The Roma minority faces totally different issues in the meantime. Why is that so?

Well, Roma as a minority group is not connected with one particular state, which could possibly in its turn assist, support, maintain and motivate the Roma population to preserve their culture, language and history.

Roma as a group of people, who have been living on the European territory for centuries, being citizens even in the official documents, still do not possess the same benefits as the major population. Why is this so?

Talking about Roma in the Czech Republic, Petr Mares¹⁰ states that the most disturbing fact is the absence of dialogue between the dominant population and Roma people. Moreover, people who speak about the Roma issue in the Czech Republic (academics, middle-class representatives) are usually of non-Roma origin, and have never experienced poverty, segregation, marginalization in their lives. I do agree with Mares in this; poor knowledge and coverage of the Roma situation cause inefficient policies and failures of integration and assistance programs designed for Roma.

Recent research of public opinion from May 2012¹¹ has shown that the majority of the Czech high school students do think that the Roma population is the biggest challenge for the Czech society nowadays. The research states that the negative attitudes have increased since 2009 threefold and has equaled 75 percent (negative perception of Roma people).¹² I would like to mention that such a situation is not surprising and just reflects the main trends in the Czech society, media and politics. It appears that what makes it difficult for the majority to understand the reality of the Roma population, and what makes it easy to blame and judge their “poor situation” is firstly the lack of will and knowledge about historical patterns and social processes.

In the minds of the majority all the “troubles” are caused by the trendy term “Roma mentality” and their incapability to work and integrate within the rest of the population. However, the reality is more sad and complex. It is not the mentality, but the social pattern of historical discrimination and exclusion over the centuries.

The exclusion of the Roma population presents a complex set of social problems, which are so interconnected that solving only one will not bring any progress and effective results in the long-term perspective. That is one of the explanations why a lot of Roma integration programs fail and do not bring even small changes to the community.

¹⁰ Petr Mares, *Social exclusion and social inclusion: the Czech perspective*, Brno 2006.

¹¹ Gwendolyn Albert, “Czech high school students said to be most exercised over co- existence with Romani people”, 2012, http://www.romea.cz/english/index.php?id=detail& detail=2007_3402, viewed on 15.08.2012.

¹² Interview with Ondrej Liska, Czech Politician, on Roma Integration, 2012, <http://www.soros.org/voices/interview-ondrej-liska-czech-politician-roma-integration>, viewed on 17.07.2012.

With the help of the research made by Simkova Ivana and Klicova Katerina¹³ on the living conditions and specifics of social exclusion of the Roma Community in the Czech Republic, I would try to present the social exclusion set, which the researchers found to be valuable. The studied dimensions were found relevant for the situation of the Roma population in the Czech Republic by comparing the social exclusion areas with the European Union inclusive policy.

Access to Education

Being an educator and a youth worker, I would like to state that in the long term perspective, education is one of the tools that has the potential to lead to the (re)construction of identity, to the greater integration and employment chances among youth. Education is not only the tool but an open space for interaction and socialization where a lot of social issues can be solved and overcome by youngsters and educators. The limited access or no access to education is one of the dimensions of the social exclusion.

According to the Research on Inter-Ethnic Relations¹⁴, carried out in 2002, 70% of Roma obtain elementary education, 21% - vocational training, 5% - high school and 2% - university degree. Why is this so?

Public opinion again reflects the Roma mentality problem and cultural specifics of children from this community because they are not able, on the same conditions as the majority, to enter elementary school, “all the time ill or absent from school”, and leave school early... With the knowledge of social patterns and of the Roma situation, one can consider “these cultural specifics” as the direct consequences of the segregated/marginalized community lifestyle of their parents and relatives.

How can you provide snacks for your child while in school and a place to do his/her homework afterwards when your whole family lives in poverty? How can you assist and help your child with homework when you are without education yourself? How can your children possibly know how to interact with other kids from the major population when from their birth they live within the isolated communities, avoided by the rest of the population on an everyday basis? How can your child be on time and attend school every day when there are only 2 buses from the place where you live? These questions can be raised further.

To sum up, Czech Elementary School welcomes children with a good command in language, additional skills and the full support of parents. By definition one can understand that Roma children do not fit into these conditions and, therefore, are unable to enter the education system as the major population does. As a consequence, Roma kids are distributed to segregated classes or schools with low-level curriculum better known as the schools for mental disabilities.¹⁵

“There has been virtually no change on the ground in the Czech Republic since the European Court of Human Rights found three years ago that the country had discriminated against Roma children by educating them in schools for children with mental disabilities.”¹⁶

¹³ Ivana Simikova, Katerina Klicova, Living conditions and specifics of social exclusion of the Roma Community in the Czech Republic, Brno 2006.

¹⁴ *Research on Inter-Ethnic Relations, Scientific Report*, Social Studies Department, Masaryk University, Brno 2002.

¹⁵ Details can be found as well on <http://www.soros.org/voices/what-we-learned-leicester-bringing-inclusive-education-roma-children-czech-republic>, viewed on 17.07.2012, and <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/report/czech-republic-must-eliminate-second-rate-education-for-roma-20100113>, viewed on 15.07.2012.

¹⁶ Thomas Hammarberg, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, http://www.coe.int/t/commissioner/news/2010/101122czechrepublic_EN.asp, 2010, viewed on 20.07.2012.

Tackling employability

In all the European countries the rate of unemployment among the Roma population is up to 46% in comparison with the rest of the population with 10%.¹⁷ According to statistics 90% of Roma population are unskilled workers, which can be explained by low levels of education and qualification. Before the economy transformation, Roma were employed in the industrial sector and when the market economy came – Roma were the first to be fired because of their “low skills”.

Experts and NGOs estimate that about 50% of the Roma population are in the condition of long-term unemployment for 10 and more years. Why is it important to mention long-term unemployment within the social exclusion set? First of all because the long-term unemployment leads to the dependence on state assistance, followed by the loss of confidence and motivation to change the situation, to break the circle of unemployment, and to losing of working skills and habits.

In their attempts to survive in the modern world, being unable in many cases to legally enter the labour market, Roma become involved into illegal activities and the grey economy which do not provide regular income, social service and protection.

In the Czech Republic official discrimination is prohibited on any basis, and the “low skills and lack of qualification” excuse is often used by the employers to reject “unwanted candidates”. While working with Roma population, cases of discrimination are often stated by the members of Roma community, which in their turn lead to unwillingness to try to find a work. However, it is not only the discrimination that influences non-acceptance of the potential Roma candidate for a job position.

When you were not working for a lot of years, when your community has no positive examples of working members – how can you know how to behave properly at the interview, how can you possess the necessary skills which are significant to enter the labour market? Inability of Roma applicants to present themselves in a good way in front of an employer makes the latter uninterested in hiring Roma in order not to deal with other related problems that can occur (training, adaptation, etc.).

Unsurprisingly, in the family with both parents unemployed/employed in the grey sector nobody can talk about the social habits transferred to the child, social skills gained by the child which all of which, after all, affect the whole generation. According to the Human Development Challenge of Roma Integration Research, 40% of Roma youth (15-29) has never worked, which makes this generation highly vulnerable in terms of their future.

How do Roma live?

In the first part of the paper I have tried to show that the “poor situation” of the Roma population is not something new for the Czech Republic; however, it is worth mentioning that the transformation period has deepened the existing historical poverty of segregated/marginalized classes and added more vulnerable groups to the ranks of “poor”.

Social assistance, which was designed with good intentions to help people “meet the ends”, while resolving the issues, is, first of all, a short-term measure, which does not help the long-term unemployed groups. With such a situation socially marginalized families and communities are caught in the debt circle, living on the edge of their capacities. And here comes the question: how can you control the situation and think of solutions – when the only thing you need to do for your family is to secure the payment of necessities by borrowing the next sum of money?

Poverty is not only about money and unemployment; poverty is a set of conditions in

¹⁷ Tomáš Sirovatka, Human Development Challenge of Roma Integration Research, Romany people in Czech Republic, Brno 2002.

which people exist for a period of time (sometimes even the whole life) and try to survive. That is another world, which the majority prefers not to see but to judge.

In the Czech Republic and Slovakia Roma have been living in/relocated to housing without access to clean water, without adequate sewage facilities and without infrastructure to secure the majority from “seeing” the Roma in their everyday lives. Such poor housing leads to poor health and short life expectancy, to subsequent discrimination on the labour market, and to subsequent unemployment/grey market involvement/illegal activities.

Once more – this is not the issue of mentality – these are the social conditions!

Segregated and marginalized

Although among the basic human needs there are the secure housing and the existence of housing as a shelter, for a lot of Roma this is pure luxury. In the Czech Republic the Roma population lives in the particular locations where they form the majority, which means that we are dealing with residential segregation. In the majority of cases they live in the old housing stock which the city council owns and (to be honest and objective) is not appropriate for living for the majority society.

For the Roma community family values and family bonds are of high importance, they cannot deny the family members and relatives when they are in need. This “closeness” influences to some extent living conditions (overcrowded flats) and lack or absence of private space for any member of the family. Even if at the beginning the Roma family stays in the same neighbourhood as the majority, when the first debts occur they would be forced to move to the “Roma locations”. These areas can be considered as by the government artificially formed enclaves¹⁸ or ghettos¹⁹ for the “weak elements” of the society. The flat owners misuse Roma’s lack of knowledge and education while performing official procedures, what leads to the formal agreement of Roma to be relocated.

The importance of social networks

Social networks have proved to be an important part of the everyday life of every person in this world, providing the space for socialization for their members, supporting and giving new ideas, reflecting on the problems and giving a hand when needed. As was mentioned in the historical overview of the Roma settlement on the territory of the Czech Lands, the social experiment and artificial social constructions implemented into the Roma community have had the most tragic impacts on the whole Roma identity and set of values.

Based on the family bonds and traditions, the communities of Roma were not used to mixing with each other because they were so different from each other in terms of traditions, values, language, religion, etc. Social engineering wanted this to be possible and people from different communities were mixed up, artificially united under one roof in enclaves/ghettos. Hostile to each other through centuries, and now forced to live together without the opportunity to change residence, people are unwilling to form any kind of network with each other and to be active in terms of social and public life. One of the local NGO working with Roma families²⁰ stated that people living in these localities live in a state of some kind of lethargy with the absence of hope and will to help themselves. They live with the basic needs, thinking only about tomorrow, in fear and permanent danger, feeling

¹⁸ By enclave I mean here a part of the city where the ethnic group lives, being surrounded by the area where the majority predominates.

¹⁹ By ghetto I mean here a part of the city, occupied by the particular ethnic group, that may be locked inside due to the social or economic reasons, or because it was forced by the majority or the government.

²⁰ *People in Need*, Social Integration program, <http://www.clovekvitisni.cz/index2.php?id=113>, viewed on 15.07.2012.

all the misery of life... Being involved in the social integration program myself, I can state that this kind of thinking is more than common.

One of the keys for the social inclusion is the ability to use the social networks; however, often when the priorities of the family and community on the whole are the basic needs, it is very difficult to be involved in any kind of social networks and social activities.

Once more, the Roma community is mainly based on family values and therefore the social networks and social assistance and social interactions are reduced to family and family members. Sadly and unfortunately family solidarity for these devastated communities in many cases plays the role “of a stone on the neck”, which will determine the whole extended family to sink; in other words, it would cause greater financial problems, deepening the poverty state and “killing” the ambitions of youngsters.

Abusing the services...

Being a scapegoat of the modern society, the Roma community is suspected of abusing the social system with all the possible social services and benefits. However, in the reality for the majority of Roma, who do not know of the possibility of using the system due to their poor education and lack of knowledge, due to the mistrust towards the government and the major population, and of course due to the spatial and social isolation, that is not the case.

Back to the social networks of the Roma community, a lot of services such as home nursing, elderly home care, kindergartens, are conducted by the members of the extended families in line with family traditions and values; therefore, they do not use the public services for this.

Why should we care?

The most important point of the social exclusion I wanted to highlight within this paper is its complexity in terms of numerous pre-conditions and factors interconnected with it; that in its turn makes it difficult to research, to find out the core elements for particular cases. It is, therefore, of high importance while working with the socially excluded groups/communities to be able to overview the whole “social exclusion set”²¹ presented by the most influential factors.

But why should we care about an individual who does not participate in the main activities of the society? For the majority of the society that is the first argument while tackling the issue of excluded and marginalized groups all over Europe. Such an attitude is provoked by the lack of knowledge, by the inability to see the overall picture of the situation and to adequately reflect on it. Educating the public in regard to this important issue should be one of the priorities of the universities, non-governmental organizations and governments themselves.

I partially agree with the arguments of Brian Barry on social exclusion in the society²². Barry states that social exclusion can be concerned with the violation of social justice in regard to equal opportunities, and in regard to political participation, which leads in its turn to the situation when the minority can not influence any events or change any patterns in the public and social life.

²¹ I use the term “social exclusion set” to depict the multi-essence of the exclusion processes in the communities. Close definitions in their meaning are the “cycle of social exclusion”, introduced by the Social Exclusion Unit in 2004, which can be found in “Breaking the Cycle: Taking Stock of Progress and Priorities for the Future”, report of the Social Exclusion Unit 2004 (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, London, UK), http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/cabinetoffice/social_exclusion_task_force/assets/publications_1997_to_2006/breaking_report.pdf, viewed on 11.07.2012.

²² Brian Barry, Social exclusion, social isolation and the distribution of income, Hills 2002.

Academic and public debates polemicize on Barry's statements, trying to work on the terms of social exclusion, social isolation, voluntary exclusion, etc. In this context the situation of the Roma minority cannot be associated with voluntary exclusion due to the fact that the majority of factors from the social exclusion set, presented by the author, are out of Roma control. Therefore, this kind of exclusion is indeed unjust, inhuman and violent from the author's point of view.

Is it healthy to maintain stratification in the society or can it be dangerous even for the majority? The human history provides us with a lot of examples of population stratifications in different societies; however, in the 21st century, boasting around the Globe about our modern values and humanity should not be an option.

The End?

Nowadays we believe, living in a secure and stable state, that if we pay taxes, work on a daily basis, vote and perform our responsibilities, that in case of social situations like the loss of job, individual/family crisis, disaster – the government will take care of us... However, when the issues related to your situation get complicated, the government would fail to address them efficiently.

The case of Roma population is just a “perfect example” of showing how the majority prefers not to see the problems, not to remember the historical and social patterns but to enjoy the short-term peace and stability.

One should not be surprised by the failures of the majority of integration and social assistance programs in connection to Roma population. If you take a heterogeneous community, artificially grouped in enclaves/ghettos with long-term unemployment, low education and qualification, add to this the discriminative and even xenophobic sentiments of the majority, stir it and you will get a perfect social exclusion set where the opportunities for the involved communities are blocked.

The situation of the Roma population has been connected with the whole future of their community, making it impossible for the youth to get up off their knees, to speak up and to try to change the situation. That is why it is of high importance for the majority to understand this challenge, to address the problem of the complexity of social exclusion, and to help the Roma community members to be included in the social and public life.