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GYPSY POPULATIONS AND THEIR MOVEMENTS WITHIN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE
AND TOWARDS SOME OECD COUNTRIES

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SUMMARY

The long history of the Gypsies dates from their probable origins in India before the 10th century, to their appearance in South-eastern Europe towards the end of the 13th century, and finally to the present where they number six to eight million in Central and Eastern Europe and just over a million in Western Europe. Following the Second World War, in which more than half a million Gypsies were victims, the essential problem became the search for a place of asylum and work in the West, yet this search has been hindered by growing difficulties. Since the fall of the Communist regimes of the East, most western countries no longer feel that refugee status for Gypsies is justified.

The author describes the main demographic characteristics of the Gypsy minorities in each country of residence in Central and Eastern Europe (Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania, former Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, former USSR, former Yugoslavia). The paper then analyses policy evolution with regard to Gypsies, which in the early stages was highly influenced by the predominance of the Soviet model. This model was characterised by assimilation and modernisation but found itself thwarted by the logic of nationality specificity.

The employment problems facing Gypsies are quite serious: their level of qualification tends to be low and unemployment is very high, and their degrading social situation reflects this. The author examines the problems tied to education (illiteracy is high) and housing (ghettos and social exclusion). The large majority of Gypsies nevertheless seek to integrate themselves, but are often confronted with suspicion, hostility and racism.

The present situation of the Gypsies is paradoxical: on the one hand, they are recognised on the international level but, on the other, they are dependent on the goodwill of their country of origin; and this in a climate characterised today by xenophobia. The granting of the status of national minority is, in this respect, fundamental. Furthermore, given the degree of marginalisation of the majority of Gypsies, a targeted policy is required. Still, Gypsies are not isolated from the rest of society and it is essential that the measures adopted be part of an effort to rebuild the social links between all citizens.

**GYPSY POPULATIONS AND THEIR MOVEMENTS WITHIN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE
AND TOWARDS SOME OECD COUNTRIES**

Introduction

1. Since the end of the 1980s western media have been looking very closely at the westward migration of eastern European Gypsies, speculating about the reasons for a movement variously referred to as an exodus, a "massive invasion", a "flood-tide". The Gypsies, who had suffered for so long under the Communist yoke, seized the chance, when the Iron Curtain fell, to escape from an existence in which they were relegated to the margin of society and stripped of human dignity. Public opinion in the West was alerted by accounts of the pogroms to which Gypsies had fallen victim, witnesses testified to the horror they were subjected to in their daily lives, and international organisations flew to their defence. But now that Central and Eastern Europe has made the change-over to democratic government, the western countries are less generous in granting asylum, and precautions are being taken at frontiers in an effort to stem the flow of economic refugees. The tendency is now towards initiatives promoting repatriation and reintegration in the country of origin.

2. What will be the consequences of this reversal of policy? Will the six or eight million Gypsies of Central and Eastern Europe (there are one million in the West) benefit, or will they, on the contrary, be victimised? Are they doomed to be pushed backwards and forwards between one part of Europe that rejects them and another in which they are ill-treated? Will they ever be able to flourish in countries which accept them as rightful citizens?

3. This report aims to provide answers to these questions. Part 1 gives an account of the the changes in the situation of central and eastern European Gypsies since World War II, followed by a look at contemporary East-West Gypsy migrations and current trends. It then considers, in the light of that examination, the prospects for the Gypsy peoples of Central and Eastern Europe. In fact, understanding of the Gypsies' situation is fragmentary, based as it is on socio-political considerations and a few statistics. The most widespread view of Gypsy peoples can be summarised as follows: an ethnic minority, a mixture of ethnic groups, a disadvantaged social group, a people whose way of life sets them apart. The few facts and figures available are conflicting. Studies are insufficiently rigorous, insufficiently nuanced. Governments have covered up or defused situations that do not show them in the best light. Pressure groups have exaggerated or blackened the picture. This report is a first attempt to gather all information together and present it in such a way as to take the heat out of the debate.

1. Migrations

1.1. The historical and sociological background

4. Linguistic and anthropological studies point to the likely origin of Gypsies in north-western India. They left there for the Middle East some time in the Xth century, probably under the pressure of Islamic invasions. By the XIIIth century A.D. they reached Asia Minor, at the time Byzantine. The presence of Gypsies in Crete was attested in 1322. Half a century later, they had settled in several places in the Peloponnese. The Greeks called them "Atsingani"* by allusion to a heretic sect from Asia Minor whose members were reputed to be sorcerers and magicians. They no doubt resided in Greece for a long time, as all the dialects spoken today by the Gypsies of the *Diaspora* bear witness to the deep influence of medieval Greek.

5. The expansion in south-east Europe was gradual. It seems likely that it started as the result of a need to find new economic opportunities; the Gypsies also probably wanted to escape the smouldering conflict between the Byzantines and the Ottoman Empire. It is known that there were Gypsies, blacksmiths and saddlers, in Serbia in 1348. Others had arrived in Wallachia by the middle of the XIVth century, only to be enslaved by the prince of that country.

6. The Gypsy peoples spread across Europe in three great waves. The first migration began with the journeys of groups led by young men who assumed the titles borne by the aristocrats of the day. In 1416 one such group arrived at Brasov, in Transylvania. The following year other groups crossed Hungary and Bohemia to visit the Hanseatic towns and the cities in the centre of Germany. France was reached in August 1419. By the beginning of the XVth century, Gypsies were moving freely around the British Isles and the Scandinavian countries. They came to Poland from two different directions. The first route, from the south, was followed by groups from Hungary and the Romanian principalities from 1428 onward. The second, from the west, was taken by other groups fleeing from Germany. Gypsies first came to Russia towards 1501, probably from Wallachia. Others left Poland some time later and entered the Ukraine (see map of Gypsy migrations).

* For Gypsies, the issue of ethnic designations goes back to a complex system of identification, inherited in part from India's caste system and influenced by the history of the relationships maintained with the host societies. The appellation, in Gypsy tongue -- Romanichib -- or vernacular refer to a particular profession, religion, life style, and an attachment to a territory. In this report reference is made to the existence of Tchurara (from the Romanian *tchurar* = sieve), of the Kelderari or Kalderasha (from the Romanian *caldera* = cauldron), of the Lovara (from the Hungarian *lo* = horse), of the XoraXane Roma (Moslem Roms, from *xoraxaj* = turk) of the Yerlii (name of the largest Gypsy community in Bulgaria derived from a word of Turkish origin which means "native") of the Polska Roma (Polish Roma), of the Bergitka Roma (Roma from mountain regions), of the Gurbeti (Serbian or Bosnian nomadic Moslem Gypsies, usually working as tin-makers), of the Boiash (Gypsies of Romanian tongue living in Hungary). It should be noted that the ethnonym Roma (plural of *Rom*, man in Romanichib) gradually imposes itself. In the text, the plural variant "Roms" is also used as a synonym of "Gypsies".

7. Certain groups continued a nomadic way of life as itinerant traders offering goods and services, or as casual workers in places and at times where labour supply and demand were erratic. Others tended to settle, becoming artisans creating objects useful to an agrarian society. Sons often followed the same trade as their father. Sooner or later, some of them began to move to countries other than the one where they had been born. The nomadic and settled ways of life seem not to have been mutually exclusive. Rather, they were particularly suited to making the best of opportunities in territories where mobility in any case had an essential role to play. The regulatory mechanisms that operated in each case were somewhat akin. Sometimes demographic expansion, shortage of resources or the need to escape conflicts led to dispersion. Sometimes the needs of the family or the group, or some temporary circumstance (for instance, plentiful availability of work) prompted the Gypsies to settle for a while.

8. But the Gypsies also had to take account of circumstances forced upon them. Little by little European governments, like local authorities before them, became more and more intolerant of these people whose movements were suspect, and repressive laws were enacted. The result was either settlement on a massive scale, as in the Iberian peninsula, or the dispersion or exclusion of Gypsy groups, as in France and the Netherlands. At the time many Gypsy families retreated to Germany, which until the time of the French Revolution was made up of many small independent states which, though they had repressive laws, did not really have the means to enforce them in an organised manner. In order to survive, the Gypsies had to adapt and through this adaptation, permanent acculturation was brought to a fine art.

9. Repressive measures by governments were enforced very early in the West, and gradually spread to Central Europe. Bohemia, Hungary and Slovakia, which for a long time welcomed Gypsies, began to enact repressive legislation from the beginning of the XVIIIth century. Queen Maria-Theresa, and afterwards her nephew the Emperor Joseph II, adopted a paternalistic, assimilationist policy, forcing the Gypsy population to settle, introducing compulsory schooling for Gypsy children away from their family background, banning everything that had to do with the distinctive Gypsy culture -- language, clothing, music -- and barring Gypsies from certain occupations. Many Gypsies were deported as "new Hungarians" to Transylvania.

10. There was a heavy concentration of Gypsies in the Balkans, where Turkish influence remained strong and the agrarian society into which the Gypsies fitted so well still flourished. Gypsy communities there developed without too many constraints. But in the Romanian principalities of Moldavia, Wallachia and Bessarabia, slavery, which had already been attested in the XIVth century, persisted until the mid-XIXth century. The Gypsies living there, born into slavery, nevertheless did not form a single, homogeneous class but were divided into three groups, depending on their masters' rank. There were the slaves of the royal family (the most well-to-do group, who were relatively free to move around and were sometimes allowed to work for themselves); the slaves of the clergy; and the slaves of the nobility. Slaves were subject to the penal law of the principality in which they lived; they could be given away, sold or bartered, but their masters did not have the power of life or death over them.

Insert Map on Gypsies migration

Some Gypsies were put to farm the land, but most of them had to work at one of many crafts or as domestic servants. Some, in order to escape from slavery, fled to other countries such as southern Hungary, Serbia, Albania and Bulgaria.

11. The second wave of Gypsy migration was linked to the gradual abolition of slavery in the Romanian principalities between 1837 and 1861. The nomadic Gypsies, notably the Kalderasha and the Tchurara paved the way for other Transylvanian Roms, in particular the Lovaro. The vanguard of this new wave arrived in Germany, Belgium and France in 1866, followed by Roms from the Balkans (mostly trainers of performing bears). All these groups travelled about for decades, meeting one another time and again along the routes they blazed for themselves, and spending longer periods in one or other country. In 1911 a further large-scale wave arrived, this time of Kalderasha Roms who, although originally from Romania, were culturally influenced by a long sojourn in Russia.

12. Gypsy migrations thus came about both as the outcome of dynamic change in order to adapt to new circumstances and as a response to historical opportunities. They led those who took part in them to form a mosaic of very different groups whose characteristic traits were acquired gradually and haphazardly through repeated encounters among themselves or with other societies. The groups differed widely: as to their way of life (nomadic, semi-settled or settled); as to their religion (Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, or Moslem); as to their language (deeply divided into a multitude of dialects, or reduced -- as a consequence of assimilationist policies -- to little more than an argot, sometimes purely and simply borrowed from the ethnic community among whom a particular group lived); as to their cultural identity (given its full expression as that of a group apart, or picked up from a kindred group, or changing to suit circumstances); as to the ways they earned a living (by attracting custom and trading, but also by working for wages and through farming). What with having to preserve a community life on which their social structure depended, and having to cope as best they could with rejection, the Gypsies developed -- depending on circumstances and piecemeal factors -- strategies of many different kinds which made them stand out to a greater or lesser extent in the countries in which they lived.

1.2 Contemporary migrations

1.2.1. Background

13. The Gypsies suffered particularly in World War II. Because they were scattered throughout so many countries and were so diverse socially and culturally that their ethnic identity was unclear, and in the absence of any powerful pro-Gypsy lobby, data on the genocide of Gypsies are incomplete. But it is now generally agreed that between 500 000 and 600 000 Gypsies perished during the war. Some died in concentration camps (the earliest internments were in Dashau in 1936). Others died when they were deported, notably in Transnistria. Thousands were massacred in their villages -- in Poland (at Wolyn and in the Carpathians), in the Ukraine, and in Croatia. In the Baltic countries virtually the whole of the local Gypsy population was wiped out. Of the Gypsies living in Bohemia-Moravia, half fled to Slovakia when the country was occupied by the Germans; those who remained behind were decimated. Almost

everywhere, conditions of imprisonment were so harsh that mortality was high. Some Gypsies who managed not to be caught joined the resistance, and died fighting for the freedom of the community as a whole, particularly in Slovakia and in the Balkans (see Table 1).

Table 1. **The Gypsy holocaust in some central and eastern European countries***

Country	Population in 1939	Estimated number of deaths	Source of estimations on deaths
Bohemia	13 000	6 500	(Horvathova)
Croatia	28 500	28 000	(Uhlik)
Estonia	1 000	1 000	Estimate
Hungary	100 000	28 000	Nacizmus Uldzötteinen Bizottsaga
Latvia	5 000	2 500	(Kochanowski)
Lithuania	1 000	1 000	Estimate
Poland	50 000	35 000	Estimate
Romania	300 000	36 000	Romanian War Crimes Commission
Serbia	60 000	12 000	Estimate
Slovakia	80 000	1 000	Estimate
USSR	200 000	30 000	Estimate

* According to estimates collected by D. Kenrick and G. Puxon (1974).

14. Post-war territorial delimitations led to some Gypsy population movements. Roms from Istria, settled in Venezia-Giulia, chose to go to Italy once the major part of this region was ceded to Yugoslavia in 1945. Since then, after first travelling as far as Emilia-Romagna, they changed the pattern of their journeys, travelling around only in the three Venezie. On the other hand, some Moslem Roms, fleeing the civil war in Greece at the end of the 1940s, settled in Bulgaria, in villages around Pleven. In Czechoslovakia the government considered settling some of the Slovak Gypsies, who had suffered less than others during the war, on the territory from which the Sudeten German population had been expelled. There were Gypsies among the refugees from central and eastern Europe who over the years migrated to the West, particularly via Vienna because there were humanitarian organisations

there. In 1956, for example, when the Russians invaded Hungary, western frontiers were temporarily opened and Lovara Roms from Papa in Hungary seized the opportunity to take refuge in Austria.

1.2.2. Working in the West

15. Migratory flows, principally of Yugoslav Gypsies, intensified from 1960 onward as demand for unskilled labour in Western Europe increased. Unauthorised at first, migration was regulated by the Yugoslav authorities beginning in 1965; passport rules were relaxed and recruitment of Yugoslav workers was permitted. In 1970, expatriation formalities were simplified, making it possible to enter the western European countries simply with a tourist visa valid for three months, and many clandestine workers took advantage of this to regularise their situation. The influx mainly affected Austria (53 000 immigrants), Germany (10 000), Italy (between 10 000 and 30 000) and France (about 10 000). The Gypsies among the immigrants came mainly from the poorest parts of Yugoslavia -- Serbia, Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina. They did not constitute a homogeneous social group. Some came to the West with completed work contracts; others took their chance. Some lived by their wits. The following pattern is typical: a man, usually young, arrives with the idea of finding a paid job or perhaps earning a living through his usual occupation (say, as a musician or as a silversmith). His first plan is to stay only long enough to be able to return in a better situation to Yugoslavia. Then, however, the need for more money prompts him to return to the West, this time accompanied by his wife, to work for a longer period. He can usually find a job, his wife may find an activity that brings in a little extra money. The children are left behind in Yugoslavia, with their grandparents.

16. Sooner or later, the family is reunited in the immigration country. The house built in the home village with the money earned abroad is no longer used. Children born in the host country sometimes acquire a new nationality. Links with the country of origin weaken, becoming more of a symbolic nature; funerals and other family occasions may still take place there, and some young men return to do their military service. Plans of return migration though not abandoned, begin to fade.

17. Alongside this immigration pattern, which is no different for Gypsies than for any other group (only with the exception that the bigger the ethnic group concerned, the easier it is to maintain the old values), other more noticeable movements developed. By the second half of the 1970s the western European countries found themselves having to cope with another wave of migrants -- Bosnian Roms, the so-called XoraXane. They usually entered into Western Europe through Italy, moving on to France and Spain, to Germany, to the Netherlands, and to Belgium, travelling throughout all these countries. The XoraXane, who had no residence permits and often no papers at all, lived mainly by begging. Some of them turned to petty crime -- theft, housebreaking, prostitution. In 1977 about 500 of them were allowed to settle legally in the Netherlands, under an integration scheme run by the *Vereniging Nederlandse Gemeenten*. Denmark took similar action to settle nomads in the early 1980s.

1.2.3 Asylum seekers

a) Yugoslavian Gypsies

18. From 1987 on, several thousand Macedonian Roms began trying to find a better life in Germany. Most of them applied for asylum with the status of political refugees. That flow, swelled by asylum seekers from other Yugoslav republics, rapidly grew. Roms from Skopje, Kumanovo, Bitola, Prilep, Strumica and Ohrid flooded into Germany, usually by train from Nis to Dusseldorf. There are now about 10 000 of them (2 600 in Dusseldorf, 2 000 in Mainz, 1 700 in Essen, 1 500 in Frankfurt, 1 200 in Stuttgart, 1 000 in Mannheim, 800 in Köln). These Gypsies chose Germany because they hoped to find a better life there -- better housing, better education, higher status, a job. Some of them placed their hopes on being able to take advantage of the asylum seeking procedure, under which an applicant is allowed to work while awaiting the decision and is paid a small allowance. Certain of their spokesmen, evoking the Nazi genocide, claimed a moral right to reparation.

19. Disappointment, however, was awaiting them. The immigrants had no papers, no visa, no particular skills; they could bring no evidence of any real political threat in the country whence they came. The central government in Bonn said the matter did not fall under their jurisdiction and passed it on to the *Länder*. But some *Land* governments refused to give the Gypsies residence permits. Some (Nordrhein-Westfalen, for instance) offered to pay for repatriation and reintegration in the country of origin. The city of Köln set up a scheme to integrate 100 Gypsies (there were 800 applicants). Certain Gypsy leaders then began to claim that because of their nomad culture the Roms have no country they can call their own, only Europe, and that they therefore have a right, collectively, to settle wherever they want. So far, however, neither the Federal government nor the *Länder* are prepared to grant them that right.

b) Bulgarian Gypsies

20. As the 1990s began there was unrest among Gypsies all over Central and Eastern Europe. Czech, Hungarian, Polish, Bulgarian and Romanian Gypsies, mingling with other eastern European asylum seekers, migrated to Western Europe. Several thousand Roms left Poland, heading for Germany, Scandinavia and the United States. Romani Unia (see below paragraph 87) sources believe that some 50 000 Gypsies were on the move. A small number of Polish Gypsies applied for political asylum in Spain and settled in Bilbao (87 of them later accepted the offer of a reintegration scheme in Poland). Other Gypsies scattered through France, Belgium and the Netherlands. Bulgarian Gypsy immigration increased in the autumn of 1989, when Communism gave way to democratic government. Frontier controls at that time were fairly lax, and some Gypsy nomad families left Bulgaria for Germany, the Benelux countries and Scandinavia. Most of them were Kalderasha Roms who relied on their kinship with Yugoslav Roms from the same ethnic community to cross to the West in small numbers.

21. Most of the Bulgarian Gypsies, however, wanting to leave the country could not rely on any such ethnic relationship. They sought to leave for Germany via the former Socialist countries which did not require visas for Bulgarians. Very often they broke their journey in Polish or Czechoslovakian

camps near the German frontier. On arrival in Germany, they would engage in informal trading activities while their applications for political asylum were being processed. If their applications were refused (as they often were), the Gypsies would return to Bulgaria with enough resources (foreign currency and goods) to be able to live. Other Bulgarian Gypsies (the Yerlii, for instance) took undeclared seasonal jobs, mostly in the construction industry, in neighbouring countries -- Greece, Cyprus and Turkey. Turkey is a particularly attractive destination for the XoraXane Roma, who speak Turkish and often, even when they live in Bulgaria, still think of themselves as a Turkish ethnic group. The Yerlii also set up trading links with the former Yugoslavia (before the outbreak of war) and with eastern Germany (before reunification), exporting Bulgarian products in large quantities for payment in foreign currency. The Lovara, on the other hand (the only group able to travel outside Bulgaria when it was under Communist rule) settled in eastern Germany and prospered in trading.

c) Romanian Gypsies

22. One element of the third wave of Gypsy migration to the West which attracted a great deal of attention from the media was the massive outflow of Roms from Romania, which began as a slow trickle immediately following the fall of the Iron Curtain. Looking at the dates of arrival in France of Gypsy refugees from Romania, it can be seen that many arrived in 1981 and 1982, and more in 1987 and 1988. But these arrivals attracted no attention. The mass migration of Gypsies truly increased only in 1990, when the Ceaucescu regime collapsed. Gypsies mingled with the mainstream of Romanian refugees, many of them of German or Hungarian origin, flooding to the West. In May 1990 some 700 Romanian refugees, most of them Gypsies, were housed in barracks in East Berlin, and another 2 000, again mostly Gypsies, camped around the railway station at Dresden. In July, 5 750 Romanians applied for asylum in the Federal Republic of Germany. In a reception centre in Lebach, in the Saar 1 400 Gypsies were housed. In August, several hundred Romanians (among them many Gypsies from Transylvania) were halted at the Czechoslovak-German border. Czechoslovakia was the next country to restrict the entry of Romanian refugees, and about a hundred of them were sent back across the border into Hungary. In October, Budapest, in its turn, tightened entry controls and expelled some would-be refugees. Austria strengthened its frontier police, introduced a visa requirement for tourists from Romania and Turkey and expelled 7 000 asylum seekers whose application had been refused.

23. In 1990, when Romanian Gypsies were travelling the length and breadth of Poland, the government brought back compulsory visas and obliged travellers to change US\$ 10 a day. Those measures were gradually relaxed as time passed. Currently, Romanians entering Poland as tourists must show that they have US\$20 for each day of their stay. Poland is still important as a country of transit for Romanians seeking to enter Germany, who are often exploited by smugglers offering to get them across the border. Many refugees enter Germany by crossing the Oder. In 1991, 8 500 Romanians were intercepted at the Polish-German border. According to official sources, 4 500 more were arrested between 1 January and 15 March 1992; 12 450 Romanians are said to have tried to enter Germany illegally during the first half of 1992. Like Hungary and Czechoslovakia, Poland signed an agreement with Germany, designed "to counter crime and illegal immigration from the East", which directly targets Romanians and nationals of the former Soviet Union.

24. The majority of Gypsies from Romania (most of whom came from Transylvania) tried to enter Germany. Between 1989 and 1991, Germany took in some 140 000 Romanians, including 35 000 ethnic Germans (*Aussiedler*) and roughly 21 000 Gypsies. In 1992, another 103 787 Romanians (50 or 60 per cent of whom were thought to be Gypsies) applied for political asylum. Altogether, the Gypsies taken in by Germany alone, over four years, probably numbered nearly 70 000. Acts of discrimination against immigrants, especially those from South-East Asia, and also against Gypsies, were to flare in Rostock, Hagen, Lebach, Bottrop, Herford, Essen, Leipzig and elsewhere. On 24 September 1992 an agreement was signed in Bucharest by the Ministers of the Interior of Germany and of Romania. It stipulates that nationals of either signatory country whose application for asylum in the other country is refused are to be sent back to the country from which they came, even when there is some doubt as to their nationality. The agreement came into force on 1 November 1992. Since then and until the end of 1993, some 23 000 Romanians are believed to have been officially expelled. The German Government has set aside DM 30 million to fund a five-year reintegration programme to cover the cost of repatriation, training in the country of origin, housing benefits and assistance in finding a job. In fact, a significant part of this sum has been targeted to the financing of three training centres that will admit candidates of unspecified ethnic origin already having a good level of schooling (in Arad, Sibiu and Timisoara).

25. In France, 3 312 applications by Romanians for political asylum were registered in 1990 and a further 2 486 in 1991. In the absence of any statistical breakdown, it is not known how many of these were Gypsies. In November 1991, several hundred Gypsies were living in Roubaix, fifty others settled in Toulouse, but were expelled in December 1992 by order of the *Préfecture*. Between 800 and 1 000 Gypsies are living in a makeshift camp in Nanterre. Some 1 500 Romanian Gypsies, mostly from Timis, are thought to have taken refuge in France. Deportations were reported early in 1993. New arrivals, however, are being reported by airport and frontier police in Alsace and in Lorraine. The number of Romanian Gypsies living in Italy is not known, although most of the Romanians seeking asylum in south-western Europe transited through that country. About 450 Romanian Gypsies are currently living in Spain (according to the *Comission Catolica Española de Migraciones*), and "Keree Amende", an association set up in Antwerp to defend the rights of the Gypsies, estimates the number of those who have applied for political asylum in Belgium to be 1 000. In February 1994, the foreign ministers of France and Romania are to have signed a repatriation agreement concerning Romanian nationals in an irregular situation in France. Similar agreements are to be reached with Sweden, Austria, Poland and the Czech Republic.

1.3. Current trends

26. Before Communist governments in Central and Eastern Europe collapsed, it was relatively easy for asylum seekers from those countries to obtain political refugee status or, if not that, at least a temporary residence permit. That trend has now been reversed. Some western countries (the Netherlands, for example) do not hesitate to deport asylum seekers whose application is refused. Others, like Germany, are tightening laws and regulations. Almost all the western countries are taking steps to close their frontiers to illegal immigrants. Migrants who have been refused asylum in one country may well apply to another. This pattern of migrant movements from one frontier to the

next is developing at a time when more and more people are seeking to leave the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Most Gypsy asylum seekers plead that their living conditions have worsened since the collapse of the Communist regimes. In Romania, for instance, racism has sparked off local conflicts and Gypsies have been victimised. In June 1990, when the miners descended on Bucharest, there were violent scenes in which Gypsies were harassed and their homes destroyed. Many Gypsies are excluded from the labour market and their dignity as human beings is repeatedly violated. Extreme right wing political movements, supported by some parts of the media, incite strong feelings against the Gypsies. But while there is certainly discrimination, there is no open political persecution. For that reason, it is increasingly frequent for applications by Gypsies for political asylum to be refused.

27. Many of the Romanian Gypsies who have come over to the West or are in transit in Central European countries have to live by their own means or by begging if they are not entitled to any form of income support -- a situation that fuels xenophobia and ill feeling in western European countries. And in addition to the westward flows, there are other migrant movements, towards south-eastern Europe. Romanian Gypsies are settling in Bulgaria, establishing trading links with Turkey or finding seasonal work in northern Greece. On their travels they may well meet other Roms trading between Albania and Turkey (hardly any Albanian Gypsies seem to have sought asylum in the West -- at most a hundred or so in France, and a few others in Italy). It seems likely, therefore, that Gypsies are moving around the Balkans again in order to support themselves.

28. It is tempting to consider the westward flows in the same economic perspective and to assume that when they head west the Gypsies are expecting to earn some money on the underground economy or to claim the benefits granted to asylum seekers. They are indeed accused of this. The charge has to be looked at very carefully. The westward migration of Romanian Gypsies has to be seen in the context of a massive exodus of minority ethnic groups seeking to reach certain countries (Germany, Hungary, Israel) which offer them safeguards. It is not impossible that this was inciting Gypsies and other Romanian nationals to do the same at a time when a crackdown by the Ceaucescu regime prevented them from leaving the country. Western propaganda during the Cold War was probably another contributory factor in that those outside the West thought it to be a paradise. In fact, the reasons that impelled the Gypsies to leave were many and varied. Some were seeking political asylum so as to escape from the ethnic discrimination which they themselves, or their family members, were suffering; others wanted to make a little money by doing business and then return home; others again were trying to escape a life of abject poverty and had no intention of ever returning. The absence of reliable information and the tendency to generalise are not conducive to a calm assessment of the real situation in individual cases.

29. It is by no means easy to estimate the number of Gypsies involved in the East-West migratory movements that began in the early 1960s; it seems likely that there were somewhere between 200 000 and 280 000 of them, most of whom settled in countries nearest to the former Eastern Bloc (Germany, Austria and Italy, together, probably have at least 170 000 Gypsies living on their territory). Is this migration likely to continue and spread? The movements that have succeeded one another are attributable to a variety of different

reasons. The Gypsy populations concerned differ, as do the ways in which they have sought to integrate in the West. Unskilled workers from Yugoslavia (Gurbeti and Kalderasha from Serbia, Boiash from Voivodina) integrated with no great difficulty. Bosnian XoraXane who came to trade in the West, were followed by asylum seekers from Macedonia*, however Gypsies also came from Poland and Romania; these later arrivals were much more conspicuous and sometimes were admitted, but most often they were not. It must not be forgotten that all these movements coincided more or less with the much larger general exodus of nationals of central and eastern European countries towards the West.

30. The HCR estimates that about half a million people have fled the battle zones in the former Yugoslavia. Though the number of Gypsies among them is unknown, it is probably large, judging from the information that is available. In the space of a single year, about 30 000 Gypsies, some refugees from Bosnia, others coming from Serbia on tourist visas, are believed to have sought refuge in Austria. Others are perhaps attempting to enter Hungary, Italy, or reach Germany or some other western country. It is said that Gypsies in Serbia, Bosnia and Croatia are being forcibly enlisted and sent to the front line; that families have been expelled after having all their belongings seized; and that massacres have been committed in a number of places.

31. Other forms of discrimination -- juridical, economic or social -- have been reported elsewhere. But will this mean more massive departures to the West? The Gypsy migrant stock is large (between six and eight million). If movements attributable to the conflict in Yugoslavia are not taken into consideration the index of Gypsy emigration from Central and Eastern Europe is probably somewhere between 2.5 and 4.6 for 1 000 inhabitants (this figure being the ratio of the total number involved in the 1960-92 flows to the estimated total Gypsy population). The number of Gypsy migrants, in real terms, would then be well below that of other migrants from central and eastern European countries (of which Germany, with several million refugees over the past forty years, has probably taken in the largest number, while Austria has given asylum to 100 000 applicants over the past twelve years); moreover, the Gypsy peoples probably have a tendency to migrate much less than the rest of the population of Central and Eastern Europe as a whole, for which the emigration index for the period 1946-1982 has been estimated at 8.4 per 1 000. (Chesnais, 1991).

2. The situation of the Gypsies in Eastern Europe

2.1. Demographic data

32. The demographic profile of the Gypsy peoples is unclear, for many reasons. On the one hand, there are their sociological and cultural traits (whether they are nomadic or have settled, whether they speak the Gypsy

* "Any references in the present document to States, entities or territories which do not belong to the OECD shall neither imply their recognition by OECD Member States nor approval by OECD Member States of the designations used in the document".

language or some other, whether or not they are visible). On the other hand, there are the differing criteria and political angles of those gathering the information. The picture conjured up by those statistics and demographic surveys which are available is one of a population unable to break away from its marginal status: high birth and death rates; an age pyramid in which young people and children are preponderant (half the Gypsy population is under 20 years old); serious health problems due to poor hygiene, undernourishment and a life-style which exposes them to all kinds of weather. Gypsies are most numerous in the areas that are least developed or hardest hit by the economic crisis: Slovakia (especially eastern Slovakia); Macedonia; Kosovo; Voivodina; eastern Hungary. The information deals only with Gypsies identified as such (by the authorities, in particular) and it is gathered in the light of criteria that take virtually no account of the values of the surveyed.

2.1.1. Population censuses and geographical distribution

a) Albania

33. Gypsies are in no way acknowledged to be a distinctive part of Albanian society. They live all over the country. As elsewhere, heterogeneity is the rule. Some are Moslems, others are Catholic or Orthodox. Some have intermarried with other sections of the Albanian population. Some have adopted Albanian as their mother tongue. Settlement was already well advanced even before World War II, and today almost all Gypsies in urban areas probably live there permanently. According to a report on eastern European minorities compiled in December 1991, there are not many Gypsies in Albania (*Report on Eastern Europe*, 1991). Another source estimates their numbers at some 5 000 (Poulton, 1991). The Council of Europe (February 1993) quotes much higher figures: between 80 000 and 100 000 Gypsies (that is to say, between 2.7 and 3.5 per cent of the total population of Albania).

b) Bulgaria

34. Demographic data on Bulgarian Gypsies are hard to obtain and unreliable. National census figures are for 1934 and 1956 81 000 and 194 098 respectively. On the occasion of the 1976 census, 373 200 people are supposed to have stated they were Gypsies. Since the Communist party leaders mistrusted these figures, the Ministry of the Interior carried out another census in 1980, which counted 523 510 Gypsies. In January 1989, a further census, again organised by the Ministry of the Interior, arrived at a figure of 576 927 for the Gypsy population (around 6 per cent of the total population of Bulgaria). Finally, yet another count by the Ministry of the Interior in May 1992 came up with a figure of 553 466. The 1989 census was a tailpiece to the forcible "Bulgarisation" of the Turkish minority (which includes many Gypsies). The 1992 count was not complete, since it gave no statistics for Sofia (city), Velciko Târnovo or Targovichte, though the three together had a Gypsy population of 75 915 in 1989. A comparison of the 1989 and 1992 figures shows how unreliable some of them are (from Marouchiakova and Popov). In view of the shortcomings of the official statistics, it is necessary to look elsewhere. It would appear that 800 000 would be a more realistic figure (from Marouchiakova and Popov; Simonov, 1990). According to these statistics, the Gypsies account for 8.9 per cent of the total population of Bulgaria.

35. Most Bulgarian Gypsies are Moslems; a minority are Orthodox Christians. Gypsy communities are many and diverse and are found all over the country except in the mountainous regions (the Rodopes in the south-west and the departments of Galbrovo and Lovetech in the north). They usually live in close-knit communities in their own neighbourhood (the *mahala*) on the edge of a village or, in the cities, in ghettos. Every Bulgarian town has at least one Gypsy *mahala*. Sanitation is often deplorable. The biggest ghettos are in the north-west (at Vidin and Lom, on the banks of the Danube; at Choumen, in the north-east; at Bourgas, on the Black Sea). At Sliven, in the south-east, more than a third of the 100 000 inhabitants are Gypsies. Plovdiv and Pazardijk, in central Bulgaria, each has a very large urban ghetto, and social tensions run high. The capital, Sofia, has a dozen or so Gypsy *mahalas*. According to the records of the former Central Committee of the Communist Party, in the 1970s, 49 per cent of Gypsies lived in 547 urban ghettos. In certain villages (in the regions of Razzrad and Targovichte in the north-east and of Sliven and Yambol in the south-east) virtually all the inhabitants are Gypsies

c) Hungary

36. According to estimates published by the Council of Europe in 1993, Gypsies in Hungary number between 550 000 and 600 000. Other sources (from Daroczi) put the figure even higher, at between 600 000 and 800 000. If these estimates are correct, Gypsies account for between 5 per cent and 8 per cent of the total population of Hungary. The population censuses carried out each decade by the country's Central Statistics Office give no very clear idea either of the size of the Gypsy population as a proportion of Hungary's total population, or of its demographic profile. The 1990 census, based on a restrictive definition (Gypsies consider themselves to be a clearly defined ethnic group) recorded 142 683 Gypsies in the country, of whom 48 072 declared Romanichib to be their mother tongue. Had the same method been adopted for the 1980 census, the corresponding figures would have been 6 404 people considering themselves to be Gypsies -- yet 27 915 spoke the Gypsy language as their mother tongue. The 1970 census, for which another definition had been adopted (a person was defined a Gypsy by his or her entourage) arrived at the figure of 320 000, of whom 34 957 declared Romanichib to be their mother tongue. According to a recent sociological study (Kocsis, 1989), the Gypsy population has grown for a century -- 64 948 in 1893, 325 000 in 1978, 380 000 in 1984, 404 461 in 1986. Today it accounts for just over 4 per cent of the total population of Hungary (compared with 1 per cent in 1863, 3 per cent in 1978 and 3.5 per cent in 1984 -- see Table 2).

37. In Hungary, Gypsies are very unevenly distributed geographically. There are very few of them in western Transdanubia (towards the frontier with Austria), whereas they are said to be densely concentrated in the central and eastern parts of the country, and also, as can be seen in the map and table taken from Kocsis' 1989 study, in southern Transdanubia (notably in the counties of Borsod-Abauj-Zemplin and Nograd). About 80 per cent of all Gypsies probably live in villages, and the other 20 per cent in Budapest or in provincial towns (including Miskolc, the biggest industrial town in the north of the country).

Table 2. Changes in the numbers of Gypsies in the different parts of Hungary (1893, 1978, 1984, 1986)

	<u>Number of Gypsies</u>			
	1893	1978	1984	1986
Great Plain	28 277	99 000	113 031	121 739
Northern Hungary	14 309	89 000	109 584	112 203
Budapest and county of Pest	4 056	50 000	63 456	74 912
Transdanubia	18 306	87 000	93 929	95 607
Total	64 948	325 000	380 000	404 461

Source: Kocsis, 1989.

d) Poland

38. In the past half-century Poland's Gypsy population has twice been dramatically reduced: first, by the extermination of three-quarters of its members when the country was under Nazi rule; second, by the departure of several thousand refugees in the 1980s (when, according to the Polish delegates to the IVth World Congress of Roms held in Warsaw in April 1990, more than half of the Gypsy population left the country). It is believed that there are now no more than 25 000 or 30 000 Gypsies in Poland -- and perhaps only 15 000. This remaining population consists of four main groups: the Kalderasha, the Lovara, the Polska Roma and the Bergitka Roma. The latter live among the non-Gypsy population in the Carpathians, in the south of the country, though a few of them moved away in the 1950s to Nowa Huta, near Cracow, and to Silesia. The others used to be nomads but are now settled in various parts of the country. Poland has become one of the main transit countries through which eastern European migrants pass on their way to the West.

e) Romania

39. Of all the countries of Europe, Romania is probably the one in which the greatest number of Gypsies live. The available statistics differ. The official census figures are probably underestimates (the January 1992 census arrives at a figure of 409 723 Gypsies, accounting for 1.8 per cent of the total population; another census fifteen years earlier put the Gypsy population at 227 398). On the other hand, the figures sometimes put forward in the media or by a handful of Gypsy militants may well be exaggeratedly high (it is not unusual for a figure of 3 or even 5 million to be claimed). According to information provided by the Ethnic Federation of Romanian Roms,

Gypsies in Romania number about 2.5 million (a little more than 10 per cent of the total population of the country). This figure is itself sometimes questioned by well-informed specialists, who put the Gypsy population at 1.5 million. An order of magnitude is given which covers (with the usual grey areas) the different component parts of the Gypsy population, some of whose members -- perhaps indeed many of them -- conceal their Gypsy origin, claiming instead to be Romanian, Hungarian or Turkish.

40. In a recent thorough analysis, Elena Zamfir and Catalin Zamfir (1993) estimate that the proportion of Romania's Gypsy population which still follows the traditional way of life, or something very close to it, probably numbers about 1 010 000 people (i.e. 4.6 per cent of the total population). According to the study, even when only the "visible" part of the Gypsy population is taken into account, it constitutes Romania's second largest minority, after the Hungarians (7.1 per cent). If the true facts (which are highly complex and extremely hard to assess) were known, the Gypsies, rather than the Hungarians, might well prove to be Romania's largest minority group.

41. The dispute over figures immediately makes clear just how difficult it is to specify exactly who is a Gypsy, and also to find out what the Gypsies themselves feel about the question, scattered as they are throughout Romania. The bulk of them (some 500 000 or 600 000) live in Bucharest, the capital city, whose total population is estimated at 3 million. Around the capital and elsewhere in Wallachia other Gypsies live in often quite homogeneous rural communities where the chief activities are farming and related occupations. Similar Gypsy villages and huts are to be found all over the country. It seems, however, that the Gypsy communities in Transylvania are very different from one another and from their non-Gypsy neighbours, and stand out in that their life-style, work, and dress make them easily recognisable. This is probably because traces of regional particularities which have been cultivated over the centuries still remain. Transylvania did not become part of Romania until 1918. Separated from Moldavia to the east by the Carpathian mountain range and Wallachia to the south, it was for a long time under the rule of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, whereas the other regions of Romania developed under the shadow of the Ottoman Empire.

f) The Czech and Slovak Republics

42. It is difficult to arrive at any clear idea of the number of Gypsies living in the former Czechoslovakia. The Council of Europe estimates that there are between 250 000 and 300 000 of them in the Czech Republic, and between 480 000 and 520 000 others in the Republic of Slovakia. According to a local authority census carried out in 1989, there were 400 000 Gypsies in the country at that time (145 738 in the Czech republic, 253 943 in the Slovak republic). The 1991 census, which allowed Gypsies to declare themselves as such, produced a very low figure which did not reflect the facts: a total of 114 116, made up of 33 489 in the Czech republic and 80 627 in the Slovak republic. In earlier censuses Gypsies tended rather to declare themselves as being Slovak (74.8 per cent of them in 1970), Hungarian (16.1 per cent), Czech (6.2 per cent) or Ruthene (1 per cent). Statistics from all sources show that the demographic growth of the Gypsy population increased rapidly in the Czech and Slovak Republics (see Table 3).

Table 3. **Estimated numbers of Gypsies in the Czech and Slovak Republics (1921-1991) according to various sources**

Year	Czech republic	Slovak republic	Source
1921	61	7 967	Census
1930	227	31 188	Census
1947	16 752	84 438	Ministry of Interior
1966	56 519	165 006	Local authorities
1970	60 279	159 275	Census
1980	88 587	199 853	Census
	107 193	202 405	Local authorities
1989	145 738	253 943	Local authorities
1991	33 489	80 627	Census

43. The Gypsies are scattered all over both republics. Some regional traits are noteworthy. On Czech territory, most Gypsies (80.8 per cent of them) live in urban areas, to a greater extent even than the Czechs themselves (69 per cent at present, compared with 62 per cent in 1970). Gypsies, however, are not well housed. In Slovakia, urbanisation has been slower (40 per cent in 1980, compared with 31 per cent in 1970). In the eastern part of the Slovak republic, where the largest number of Gypsies has traditionally lived (200 000, according to some sources), they account for 7.7 per cent of the population, compared with 2.9 per cent in central Slovakia and 2.6 per cent in western Slovakia. In the Czech Republic, only northern Bohemia has a sizeable share of Gypsies (2.07 per cent of the total population in that region of the country). (See map).

g) Former USSR (CIS)

44. Four general population censuses have been organised in the Soviet Union since the Second World War, Gypsies being recorded as members of a nation without their own administrative territory. In 1959, they reportedly numbered 132 000. In 1970, the figure went up to 175 000. Nine years later, it was 209 000. In 1989, the 250 000 persons who considered themselves Gypsies were separated as follows: 152 890 in the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR), 47 908 in the Ukraine, 11 517 in Moldavia, 10 762 in Byelorussia, 7 165 in Kazakhstan, 7 044 in Latvia and 2 718 in Lithuania.

Insert Map

According to the 1989 census, the Gypsy nation accounted for 0.08 per cent of the former USSR's total population. These figures show at least as much progress in the Gypsies' ethnic awareness as in their numbers, which rose by 32.6 per cent from 1959 to 1970, by 19.6 per cent from 1970 to 1979 and by 21 per cent from 1979 to 1989. However, these numbers do not give a clear idea of a population which was already estimated to have a population of about 478 000 in 1959 (Puxon, 1975), and which may exceed half a million today (or 0.2 per cent of the total population, most of them probably living in the European part of the former USSR).

h) Former Yugoslavia

45. The 1948, 1953, 1961, 1971 and 1981 censuses resulted in respective totals of 72 736, 84 713, 31 674, 78 485 and 168 197 persons who said they were Gypsies. In 1948, Yugoslavia's Gypsies officially represented 0.5 per cent of the country's total population; this proportion scarcely changed in 1953 but dropped to 0.2 per cent in 1961 and then rose again to 0.4 per cent in 1971 and 0.7 per cent in 1981. The actual number of Gypsies is clearly underestimated. These figures reflect rather the fluctuations in ethnic awareness. The majority of Gypsies say they are Serbs, Macedonians, Hungarians, Romanians, Albanians or Moslems, depending on the current political and social context. The data compiled during the 1981 census show that Gypsies are heavily concentrated in the least developed regions which had long been occupied by the Turks, i.e. Macedonia and Kosovo. However, the majority of Gypsies reportedly live in Serbia. The town of Suto Orizari in the suburbs of Skopje in Macedonia has a Gypsy population of 35 000. Large communities live in and around Belgrade, in Nis and Sarajevo. In Slovenia, Croatia and Voivodina, Gypsies are quite separate from the rest of the population. Elsewhere it is the spoken language which differentiates them from the other inhabitants. In regions with a Romanian majority, even the language is no longer a distinctive feature. How then is it possible to assess the size of the Gypsy population in the former Yugoslav republics? By all indicators their numbers are greater than in the various censuses. For instance, in connection with the 1953 census, Vukanovic (1963) puts the actual number of Gypsies at 160 000 (or almost double the official figure).

46. The 1991 census of the Serbian population gives a figure of 230 000 Gypsies (or more than twice that for 1981). Available studies suggest that there could be between 600 000 and over a million Gypsies in former Yugoslavia. Various recent *Romani Unia* publications (1992) quote the following figures:

- Serbia-Montenegro: 600 000 (including over 120 000 in Kosovo)
- Bosnia-Herzegovina: 80 000
- Croatia: 40 000
- Macedonia: 100 000.

Slovenia reportedly has 8 000 to 10 000 Gypsies.

2.1.2. Demographic structure

47. The Gypsy population is very young. The censuses in Czechoslovakia (1980) and Hungary (1990) point to a progressive decrease in the number of women within the Gypsy population: women reportedly account for 49.1 per cent

of the total Gypsy population in the Czech Republic, and in Slovakia for 49.2 per cent. All research work shows that Gypsy families have similar characteristics: an extended family structure (a large number of individuals belonging to different generations living together), early marriages, a large number of children, many unmarried couples, mothers who give birth to their first child at an early age and a high infant mortality rate.

2.2 Trends in the policy towards Gypsies

2.2.1. The Soviet line

48. Owing to the Soviet Union's predominance over the eastern and central European countries for forty years or so, national governments kept to the Moscow policy line.

49. Lenin wanted the proletariat to triumph as much over nations as over other classes. However, since he saw in nations a force that could be harnessed, he defended the right of peoples to self-determination as much as the unity of the proletariat. Gypsies, who occupied only a minor place on the ethnic front, were to be involved in the systems set up by the Soviet Union. In 1925, the All-Gypsy Union of Russia was set up with the aim of "unifying and organising the masses of Gypsy workers resident within Russia defending and organising their interests, improving their cultural level and organising mutual aid" (Art. 5 of the Statutes). At the same time a large group of Gypsies submitted an application for aid for the creation of a *kolkhoz* in the Ukraine. Similar initiatives taken by Gypsies sympathetic towards the new regime met with success in Byelorussia and in the northern Caucasus.

50. Various kinds of aid were recommended to convert the Gypsies from an itinerant to a settled life. A Decree was published on 1 October 1926 for the allocation of land on a priority basis to Gypsies wishing to settle down. In 1927, an appeal drafted in Romanichib by the All-Gypsy Union urged the Gypsy population to abandon their travels for a settled life. Other initiatives on the cultural side showed that the Gypsies were in fact considered to be a national minority. Three schools using the Gypsy tongue as a teaching language were opened in Moscow. In 1927, "*Romani Zorya*" (Gypsy Dawn), the first Gypsy language magazine, was published; it changed its name to "*Nevo Drom*" (New Route) in 1930. The first Gypsy theatre, known as the "Romen Theatre", was opened in Moscow in January 1931. In the 1930s, a large volume of literature in the Gypsy language was published throughout the Soviet Union. Unfortunately these developments did not alter life for the mass of Gypsies. Stalin struck them off the list of national minorities, as they hardly complied with his definition of such entities, i.e. a stable community with historical roots, a community in terms of language, psychological characteristics, territory and economic life that was reflected in a common culture. All the Gypsy institutions disappeared, and the All-Gypsy Union was disbanded; only the "Romen Theatre" survived. Under a law passed in 1956, the nomadic way of life was strictly prohibited and local authorities had to find work for itinerant Gypsies. About 8 per cent of the community, however, managed to stay on the roads by occasionally working for the *kolkhoz* at certain times of the year and by continuing to peddle their traditional wares, without any objection from the authorities. In 1958, some Gypsies left Russia for Poland; others emigrated

to Kazakhstan where the checks on nomads were not so strict. Since then, it seems that the schooling of Gypsy children has made notable progress. But the use of Russian has not been to the detriment of the Gypsy language (74 per cent of Gypsies who described themselves as such in the 1979 census said that Romanichib was their mother tongue, as compared with 59 per cent in the 1959 census). A number of Gypsy cultural organisations have been set up since 1988. At the end of the 1980s the Gypsies were officially recognised as a national minority of Indian origin.

2.2.2. Situation in the central and eastern European countries

a) Natural assimilation

51. The assimilation and modernisation policy of the USSR was to be exported to its satellite countries. But, whereas in Russia the "Gypsy" stereotype was quite positive and connected with a long tradition of song and music that was very much in fashion with the Czarist nobility and then the intelligentsia, Gypsies were regarded in central and eastern European countries mainly as a poor, inferior section of society (Danciu, 1982, 1983). The Gypsies suffered terribly, too, in the Second World War. When the Communist regimes were being set up, the policy objective was to eliminate the relics of the past. The Gypsy way of life was seen by the new leaders as a reminder of a primitive state in man. The plan was for the material poverty of the Gypsies gradually to disappear as a matter of course as they were incorporated in the socialist production system. The State showed special concern for the humblest of them. In Hungary, Gypsies were left out when agriculture was reformed and were granted no land. But they were encouraged to work in factories. In Romania, some Gypsies climbed the ladder in government departments or the Communist Party. Others took on local responsibilities. Many Gypsies showed no resistance to joining the big collective farms. Gypsy schools were opened in Bulgaria, and here again Gypsies moved into political life and into every level of economic activity. Broadly speaking, the people's democracies ensured that Gypsies had the same legal rights as other citizens.

b) Forced immersion

52. Bulgaria went even further and recognised Gypsies as a minority. Two hundred Gypsy clubs and groups were founded in the country. A "Romen Theatre" opened its doors in Sofia in 1947. Six groups of dancers and singers toured the country. But the "Romen Theatre" did not last long and was closed in 1951. From 1953 to the start of 1954, 194 Gypsy clubs and groups were disbanded. The last musical ensemble disappeared in 1954. Pressure was exerted to have the term "Gypsy" eliminated from the list of recognised nationalities and to "Bulgarise" Turkish Gypsies. Nomadism was banned by Decree of the Council of Ministers in 1958. Itinerant and semi-nomadic Gypsies were made to settle in villages.

53. Throughout Central and Eastern Europe it was taken for granted, when Communist government took over, that Gypsies would be assimilated as a matter of course. Politically, a citizen's ethnic origin was not important. But it did become so again in the mid-1950s as Communism assumed national characteristics and other central and eastern European countries aligned their policy with regard to Gypsies on that of Bulgaria.

54. In Czechoslovakia, Law 74/158 of 1958 on the settlement of nomads was applied harshly. Persistent nomads were liable to a six-month to three-year prison sentence. Forcible assimilation through the dispersal of communities, compulsory schooling, military service and enrolment in nationalised firms was programmed (see Maria, 1966).

55. In Hungary, the Nationalities Department in the Ministry of Culture started to address the Gypsy problem in 1957. But, on 20 June 1961, the Hungarian Communist Party's Central Committee refused to grant the Gypsy population the status of "ethnic group". Efforts were made, however, particularly in housing, to improve the situation of Gypsies, for whom 2 170 dwellings were built between 1965 and 1967.

56. In Poland, an aid programme for Gypsies drawn up in 1952 provided for aid as regards education, health, creative artistic and musical activities, settlement on State-owned land, training in farming and other work, social security coverage, help with the purchase of cattle and machinery. Only 25 per cent of Gypsies agreed to settle at that time. The very harsh winter of 1964 brought some Gypsies to the end of their tether, reducing them to begging and pilfering to such a point that the general public and the provincial authorities became exasperated and the government decided to apply the 1952 resolutions to the letter. Co-ordination committees for the settlement of Gypsies were set up in all the Voivodships and all the districts. This policy dealt a heavy blow to nomadism, though it could not quite put an end to it.

57. In Romania, too, the authorities started to discourage nomadism in the mid-1950s. It was not until about 20 years later that a virtual ban was enforced as a result of constant harassment by the police (although in 1983 30 per cent of Gypsies were still regarded as nomads or semi-nomads). In the meantime, a number of itinerant families had been settled on the outskirts of towns. The Gypsy problem did not really emerge until the rise of nationalism in the mid-1960s. The existence of Gypsies was denied. Speaking of it was tantamount to defending racism, and photographing Gypsies was prohibited.

c) The logic of nationality (ethnic origin)

58. Assimilation policies did not put a stop to the economic and social inequalities of earlier times. It was increasingly obvious that the advancement of the Gypsies also depended on the recognition of a cultural dimension and on combating deep-rooted prejudices among the rest of the population. In addition, now that many Gypsies were holding down a regular job, a Gypsy middle class emerged, torn between material success and cultural insecurity. In 1963, a Gypsy educational and cultural association was set up on the initiative of the local authorities in Tarnow in south-eastern Poland.

59. In Czechoslovakia, as the "socialism with a human face" movement took off in the late 1960s, the policy of assimilating the Gypsies marked time. In 1968, a Gypsy Cultural Association was set up in Slovakia. It was followed the year after by the creation of the Gypsy Union in the Czech Republic. These two associations were to attract almost 20 000 members. Musical and folk groups appeared all over the country and an initial standardised version of a written Gypsy language was devised. But in 1973 both associations were

dissolved by the Communist Party on the grounds that Gypsies did not have the status of a national minority. The programme whereby the teaching of the Gypsy language was to be introduced in schools was abandoned. A new, so-called "social integration" policy was conducted by the authorities but encountered stubborn resistance within the administration and the population. There was protest in some quarters that the Gypsies were "the Communists' favourites, rolling in social benefits, allowances and subsidies" (Sebkova, 1992). Then, at the end of the 1970s, uproar broke out about the paid sterilisation of Gypsy women, which was denounced by Charter 77, as was the practice of taking children away from their families and placing them in institutions. Gypsies in Slovakia and the Czech Republic had to wait until 1991 to obtain the status of a national minority.

60. In 1974, a Hungarian Gypsy Advisory Council similar to the one which had operated between 1958 and 1960 was again set up. Five years later, the Hungarian Communist Party's Central Committee decided to recognise Gypsies as an "ethnic group"; this allowed them to be organised nationally, but did not give them the rights granted by the law to national minorities (which include the right to be taught in one's mother tongue at school and to use it in both spoken and written dealings with officialdom). A Gypsy Council and a Cultural Federation were set up in 1986, but the Gypsies are still awaiting recognition as a national minority.

61. In former Yugoslavia, which many authors long regarded as the country with the most Gypsies, ethnic awareness of Gypsies was strong, upheld by associations such as "*Phralipe*" (Fraternity) in Skopje and by well-known intellectuals such as the poet Slobodan Berkerski, a member of the Yugoslav Communist Party's Central Committee. The Gypsies' national awareness was roused by the 1971 population census. By 1976 they were claiming recognition as a national minority within the Yugoslav Federation, and were awarded this status in 1981. Romanichib was introduced in State schools in 1983, and used in a dozen or so primary schools for the first four years of schooling. A weekly television programme in the Gypsy language began to be broadcast by the Pristina station in Kosovo in February 1982. The Serbs may well have wanted the Gypsies on their side in their conflict with the Albanians in Kosovo, and this may explain their openness towards the Gypsies. However the federated republics did not follow the central government line and this greatly limited the scope of recognition at federal level. Only Bosnia-Herzegovina acknowledged the Gypsies as a national minority in 1985. Macedonia was to follow suit seven years later (in an effort to discourage the Gypsies from siding with the Albanians).

62. In Romania, the fall of the Ceausescu regime released feelings that had been pent up for a long time. The Gypsies were acknowledged by the new Romanian Constitution to be a national minority. They were entitled to be represented as an independent political force in the Bucharest Parliament in the same way as the Hungarian, German, Bulgarian and other national minorities. The authorities took initiatives in the education and cultural fields. Gypsy political parties were set up by intellectuals, trade unionists and businessmen who no longer had to keep their Gypsy origins a secret. But this was a late occurrence, at a time when the economic and social system was foundering and in the very early stages of a democratisation process which still has not yet settled on new social structures.

2.3. Economic situation

2.3.1. The Communist period

63. It was by joining the labour force that Gypsies were to be able to leave what was considered a primitive way of life behind them and blend with the majority of the population. After 40 years of communism Gypsies have emerged as intellectuals, trade unionists, and members of an industrial and agricultural working class. Yet the entire ethnic group did not develop as a harmonious whole. Social stratification has become more complex, but many more Gypsies now find themselves marginalised. This is ascribable to many factors: the fact that Gypsies are a heterogeneous group in the first place, lack of vocational training, and the persistence of ethnic discrimination.

64. From the economic viewpoint, it can be said that the Communist period speeded up the formation of a large Gypsy proletariat, usually stuck in unskilled, low-level jobs which, although they did temporarily provide virtually full employment -- especially for men -- put the Gypsies at a disadvantage on the labour market where, sooner or later, the most highly-skilled would inevitably sweep the field. When the effects of the world crisis started to be felt in eastern Europe in the 1980s, the Gypsies were the first to be affected, although as much because they were seen as Gypsies as because of their lack of skills. On the other hand, the Communist system had not managed to eradicate certain kinds of behaviour common to many Gypsies, and in particular had allowed some self-employed trades which met local needs to continue, so that the Gypsy commercial know-how may well blossom once again if the opportunity arises. Surprisingly, though, no real progress towards the establishment of a middle class can be perceived, even after four decades.

2.3.2. The Post-Communist period

65. The Gypsies' situation with regard to employment is difficult. Their place in economic life has become increasingly insecure as a result of the economic crisis, the privatisation of land, the shutdown of technologically obsolete basic industries and the lay-off of the least skilled workers. In many places competition for jobs looks like inter-ethnic competition; when applicants have the same skills, ethnic minority members are turned down and preference is given to the dominant ethnic group. In Hungary, unemployment among Gypsies has risen alarmingly. In 1970, 85 per cent of male Gypsies of working age did have some kind of a job, though 15 per cent of heads of household had to depend on the earnings of other family members and there was endemic unemployment (at a monthly average rate of 11 per cent, with peaks of 30 per cent in winter). Today 60 to 70 per cent of Gypsies of working age are reportedly jobless, against a national average of 10 per cent. For males of working age, the employment/unemployment ratio has been quite simply reversed within the space of ten years.

66. The 1992 survey conducted in Romania by Elena and Catalin Zamfir (1993) showed that 80 per cent of the adult Gypsy population had no skills. Of those who had, only 1.8 per cent had a medium or high level of skills; three-quarters of qualified persons were specialised in occupations geared to the modern economy; others were in a traditional activity. Over 50 per cent of the persons in the sample were out of work (only 3 per cent were drawing unemployment benefits) and 5 per cent were retired. 23 per cent were employers

or employees; 17 per cent were self-employed. The situation was much worse for women than men: around 87 per cent of women (58 per cent of men) had no skills; the activities of 10 per cent of women (34 per cent of men) were geared to the modern economy; 0.6 per cent of women (7.3 per cent of men) had a traditional skill. Therefore, about 70 per cent of women were out of work (and of these only 2 per cent received unemployment benefits). It is simply difficult to extrapolate these characteristics to Romania's Gypsy population as a whole, especially as a very high proportion (probably over one million people) is integrated in Romanian society with no claim to a particular identity. However, in a country where the economy is particularly affected by the crisis, those who are seen as Gypsies are a particularly vulnerable group. The current changes in production methods do not bode well for the future either. Before the 1989 revolution, 48 to 50 per cent of Gypsy workers were employed in agriculture. But they were the main losers in agricultural reform (redistribution of land), and now they are being fired by the new owners.

67. In Bulgaria, the unemployment rate is 60 per cent for Gypsies in the urban ghettos, and even higher in country districts. In former Yugoslavia, the unemployment rate for the Gypsy community was already the country's highest in 1988 (between 60 and 80 per cent). The situation has only deteriorated since then. Data are lacking for the Czech and Slovak Republics, but the point made by the available information is the same, i.e. Gypsies in eastern Slovakia and, generally speaking, in all the urban ghettos in Slovakia and the Czech Republic are hardest hit by unemployment. The situation of young people starting off in working life is bleak. In a great many cases, all they have to live on are family allowances and short-term unemployment benefits paid by the State. About 80 000 Gypsies were living under the poverty threshold on the eve of the "velvet revolution" in November 1989. This figure could only have risen since then.

68. Understandably, therefore, many Gypsies are considering the possibility of migrating to richer parts of the world, away from a region where it is becoming harder and harder to make a living. But, for the time being, not more than 4.6 per cent of Gypsies emigrate, a percentage well below that for the central and eastern European population as a whole. This is probably because their lack of skills precludes any hope of finding a job in the West and their lack of money prevents them from undertaking the journey. Hard hit by the crisis, in the hope of escaping from it soon, Gypsies (or rather, some of them) are reportedly having to rely on exploiting the human rights loophole. Admittedly current economic trends do provide openings for those who seize their opportunities as nomads. Polish Gypsies are doing a brisk trade in electrical household appliances. Other families are going back to their traditional crafts. In Bulgaria, where nomadism is still banned, some former nomad groups have nevertheless gone back to travelling around in spring and summer, plying their ancestral crafts: some repair copper pots and pans, while others put on shows in regions travelled by their forebears. Many Gypsies, too, are deserting the cities for the country in the hope of escaping poverty and unemployment and of going into farming. However, they have little chance of obtaining farm land unless they have some capital.

69. In a number of countries, the seasonal migrations which still persisted under the old regime continue, and are now much farther afield. Gypsies are travelling to the Middle East and southern Europe to work on farms or in the construction industry. More and more groups of musicians are touring western

Europe. Trade in second-hand goods -- furniture, scrap, old clothes -- is taking off again. Gathering medicinal plants, wild fruit or mushrooms can be profitable. Peddling of cigarettes, razor blades, medicines and gadgets is common. There is brisk small-scale trade in which goods bought cheap are resold at a high price, and also trade in currency. Gypsies are increasingly active in the informal economy. But activities of this kind are extremely precarious, only just on the right side of the law, and do not provide primary social security coverage. Alongside these hand-to-mouth occupations, other trading activities are being developed at both national and international levels. Goods are bought in large quantities in one country and sold in another; nationals of one country sell their currency in another. Trading networks are being built up between Romania and Hungary; Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey; Bulgaria and former Yugoslavia.

70. Certainly the current political circumstances (end of the Cold War) and the scarcity of stable jobs are conducive to mobility. But the travellers do not form a homogeneous category. Of these, some moved around a great deal already, even under the Communist regime. Others, because they have kept up old cultural and social patterns, can resume a traditional way of life without undue difficulty. And then there are all those who have no choice but to try their luck. Extensive family ties are useful too, for the solidarity they generate, for finding out where the opportunities lie and for raising funds to set up small businesses -- though not all Gypsies are able to build up the necessary connections for material success. And many who have lost their family's traditional skills cannot go back to the old way of life. In other words, social stratification among Gypsies is bound to become even more complex in the future.

71. Alongside the many of their kind who are jobless, some Gypsies can still work at the menial jobs (such as repairing roads). But even here they are now up against competition from non-Gypsies who are after the same jobs for lack of anything better. Other Gypsies are self-employed on a small scale (sale of flowers, craftwork, taxi drivers, etc.). Many go into the informal sector with varying fortunes; a small number do well. Replacement incomes are not enough to provide a decent standard of living, especially for large families where those of working age are unemployed. The high inflation all over eastern and central Europe compounds the difficulties of those who have to live on fixed benefits, and as time goes on the number of those being left aside may rise. Delinquency could also get much worse. It is already on the increase in the Czech, Slovak and Bulgarian urban ghettos. In Hungary, 60 per cent of those in prison are reportedly Gypsies.

2.4 Social situation

72. Two indicators will be considered for the Communist and post-Communist periods: education and housing.

2.4.1. Education

a) The Communist period

73. If one compares the educational levels of the economically-active Yugoslav population in 1989 with those of Gypsies of working age, one sees the

extent to which equality between the two citizen groups existed merely on paper. With the recognition of Gypsies as a national minority by the federal government in 1981, schools began teaching in Romanichib. But the results in 1989 were scarcely better than in 1973, when most Gypsy children did not even complete their primary schooling. A quarter of all Gypsies were functionally illiterate in 1989; 67 per cent were not up to primary level, and fewer than 10 per cent went any further. But these figures referred to the part of the population considered to be Gypsies. In fact, 70 to 80 per cent of Gypsies in Yugoslavia are probably functionally illiterate (source: Romani Unia). The only bright spot is that the number of university graduates risen quite considerably over 40 years: 172 Gypsy graduates in 1989, against a mere score in 1953.

74. In Czechoslovakia, too, the educational level of Gypsies is low as compared with that of the population as a whole. Many Gypsy children, considered incapable of keeping up at primary school, are sent to special schools: in 1980, 81 per cent of Gypsy children attended an ordinary primary school; in 1985, the proportion had fallen to 71 per cent. According to school statistics, the number of Gypsy children in special schools went up from 17 per cent in 1980 to 27 per cent in 1985 (from Květa Kalibova).

75. In Bulgaria, special boarding schools for Gypsy children were set up in 1964. Ten years later, there were 145 institutions of this kind, attended by 10 000 children. Only primary education was provided; on leaving school, the pupils were sent to apprenticeship centres or were helped to continue their technical studies. It also seems that an effort was made to get young Gypsies into university, which contributed to the creation of an intellectual class. A Gypsy university élite also grew up in Romania where, as in Bulgaria, the educational level of Gypsies may well be rather higher than in other central and eastern European countries. But although 4.5 per cent of adult Gypsies in Romania received a higher education, the fact remains that 19 per cent of adult men and 27 per cent of adult women are practically functionally illiterate. Even in the former USSR it seems that despite the authorities' efforts, a large number of Gypsies are still illiterate.

76. In Hungary, the truancy rate among Gypsy children fell between 1945 and 1960, from 40 to 6 per cent in the case of Hungarian speakers, from 70 to 17 per cent for Romanichib speakers and from 70 to 10 per cent for Romanian speakers. Nevertheless, in 1971 39 per cent of the total Gypsy population was still functionally illiterate. The reasons for this situation are complex, bearing as they do on Gypsy society, on the organisation of the educational system in general and on relations between the Gypsies and the ethnic majority. Traditionally, young people learned their parents' occupations without leaving the family circle where children remained quite late and could develop at their own pace until their brief adolescence ended and marital or economic responsibilities were taken on (participating in seasonal work, etc.). Compulsory schooling interfered with the Gypsy way of life. This was compounded by a series of handicaps. Few Gypsy children had the kind of home background which enabled them to acquire a well-attuned maturity, and they therefore had to catch up with the rest of the class in their first school year. The mother tongue, even when similar to the native language, was not taught at school; Gypsy children had to make an additional learning effort and parents often could not help. That they had difficulty in adapting to this

different cultural system was often seen as a sign of mental deficiency and many of them ended up in special classes. School is a factor in social change, but it can also perpetuate -- and even accentuate -- a social handicap. Unskilled and illiterate parents are little inclined to encourage their children to stay at school or pay for them to do so. Even if they were so inclined, often they cannot afford books and other necessities, so their children are looked down on and are stigmatised by the other pupils and teachers. In their turn, the young people who left school had no choice but to take an unskilled, low paying job.

This situation was worse where large numbers of Gypsies were concentrated (major urban ghettos) or in the majority (in Hungary, 73.2 per cent of Gypsy children were in village schools, compared to 48.1 per cent of the total school population).

b) Post-Communist period

77. The survey by E. and C. Zamfir (1993) shows that the educational level of the new generation of Gypsy children is lower than their parents'. 40 per cent of eight-year olds have reportedly never been to school or have stopped attending school. Their chances of finding a job are seriously compromised, while the traditional occupation cannot absorb the rapidly growing labour force. Even the possibility of a modern style of communication (by means of the written word, drawings, etc.) with the other members of society is jeopardised. Without any doubt the improvement of educational standards is one of the major difficulties confronting both Gypsies and societies in central and eastern Europe. Governments have begun addressing the problem. In Romania, classes in the Gypsy language have opened, on an experimental basis, in Bucharest, Tirgu-Mures and Bacau on an experimental basis. In Bulgaria, in December 1991, optional courses of four hours of Romanichib a week in schools were authorised by an Order of the Council of Ministers, but much remains to be done.

2.4.2. Housing

78. Accommodation for Gypsies varies widely and reflects the different levels of economic and social integration. The majority of Gypsies, however, live in their own neighbourhoods, on the outskirts of villages (sometimes a stream has to be crossed to reach them) or in urban ghettos. Well-off, well-integrated Gypsies sometimes live among other citizens without anything distinguishing them from their neighbours. In the Bulgarian countryside, Gypsies live all together in their own neighbourhood, which differs little from that of non-Gypsies; while it may be poorer and less well-equipped, the standard of living there is infinitely better than in the urban ghettos. In the 1970s, 49 per cent of Bulgarian Gypsies lived in 547 urban ghettos. In 1978, the Bulgarian Communist Party's Central Committee decided to demolish the ghettos and rehouse occupants in flats. But the decision remained very much a dead letter. Some ghettos (for instance, Stolipinovo, in Plovdiv) still house several thousand Gypsies who live in unimaginable squalor and are a constant source of social tension.

79. In Hungary, a number of administrative measures to improve housing for Gypsies were decreed in 1964. Land for development was granted free of charge by the authorities, as well as exemption from the registration charge for purchased land, and low-interest loans for the purchase or construction of

accommodation for those able to show evidence that they had regular work. The 1971 census showed that two-thirds of the dwellings occupied by Gypsies were not up to the minimum standards: they were made of dried mud or blocks, included various kinds of salvaged materials, had no sanitation, drinking water, gas or electricity; moreover, they were almost always far from any developed area and from educational, health and administrative facilities.

80. In the early 1980s, 40 per cent of the Gypsy population was still living in separate neighbourhoods and 30 per cent in urban ghettos. The programme for demolishing shantytowns was carried out selectively (the families who complied most closely with the selection criteria got out, while often the poorest families remained), preventing temporary improvements in the districts that were targeted for demolition. At the end of the 1970s, financial difficulties brought the programme to a halt; it had already been badly managed due to the indifference shown by many local authorities. The displacement of families was often not for the better, as they were shifted into old houses, barns or barracks which were in no manner up to the required standards. Furthermore, new ghettos were formed to the extent that, although the new housing was technically better, it was located outside the urban perimeter and traditional community life could not be maintained. Material comforts do not make up for the social desegregation caused by unsuitable architectural projects (as witnessed in other countries, and particularly in Romania).

81. Housing undoubtedly reflects the deterioration in economic conditions as much as social exclusion. E. and C. Zamfir (1993) believe that the situation will worsen in the coming years and that action must be taken urgently. In western Europe, experience has shown that the advancement of Gypsies depends above all on resolving housing problems, with the wishes of those concerned being taken into account.

2.5. An ill treated group

82. Information collected by human rights associations (Helsinki Watch, *International Helsinki Federation*, International Federation of the Human Rights and by Romani Unia points to at least 50 cases of serious attacks against Gypsies in a number of central and eastern European countries in the last three years. Thirty-four Gypsies have been killed in inter-ethnic incidents in Czechoslovakia and Hungary. 300 or more Gypsy homes have been set on fire in Poland, Hungary and Romania. Except in Czechoslovakia, national authorities have never acted firmly against such acts. Violent incidents involving the police have taken place in Bulgaria, in the urban ghettos of Stolipinova in Plovdiv and Pazardijk. The democratisation of governments in eastern Europe has been accompanied by outbreaks of inter-ethnic violence, sometimes -- though not always -- directed at the Gypsies. Surely there must be several reasons for these incidents. Violence in the urban ghettos can be easily explained, if the explosive mix of housing difficulties, unemployment and the deterioration of sanitary conditions is considered.

83. Racism and ultra-nationalism also play an important role. In Romania, the extreme right, with the support of television, has turned the Gypsy into the perfect scapegoat. "He has been portrayed as a speculator (though protected by the police), as an anarchist, a thrower of Molotov cocktails at

peaceful demonstrations, and as a petty thief and tramp who gives an unflattering image of Romania to people abroad. This image has been built up subtly, so that many Romanians have come to believe that it is really the Gypsies who are responsible for their troubles" (Michailescu, 1991). For years, the Communist regime had forbidden any reference to Gypsies. They were seen, but officially did not exist. The inevitable frictions between the different life-styles were repressed. And yet tension was building up as a result of forced settlement and incorporation in the socialist production system, all of which have contributed to make more conspicuous a whole section of the population which had previously been tolerated despite all the ills it was blamed for.

84. The idea that a country has to protect itself against an "unassimilatable horde" whose increasing demographic weight would lead to a passive invasion, is gaining. Demands for the setting up of an official *apartheid* system are being made in some quarters. In Slovakia, municipalities have taken various restrictive measures towards Gypsies. The Parliament of Bratislava had to cancel an ordinance by the city of Spisské Pohradie which introduced a curfew for Gypsies and authorised the police authorities to search the apartments occupied by their families. In the Czech Republic, many Gypsies originating from Slovakia are threatened with repatriation if they do not succeed in proving their Czech citizenship under a law (40/992) which, without explicitly naming them, concerns them especially.

85. Even though Gypsies *en masse* are being rejected (though this rejection has more to do with the idea other people have of them), the vast majority of them want to be integrated while developing their own particular form of cultural expression. Some have acquired experience in public management. One town in Macedonia, Suto Orizari (35 000 inhabitants) has been run for decades by a town council whose members are all Gypsies. In Hungary, in the Baranja mining district, a number of district council seats were allocated to Gypsies in the 1970s. In the 1980s, the Gypsies of Miskolc rebelled against a project to rehouse them away from an urban network. Non-Gypsy intellectuals in Budapest helped create an "anti-ghetto movement", astutely emphasising that what the Gypsies were claiming for themselves would be good for the town's underprivileged Hungarian population too. In an openly racist political context, the movement has contributed to the development of local democracy. It is not only its strategy but also its convictions that open it up to the problems of non-Gypsies and Gypsies, combining political opposition with more traditional collective decision-making. Its leader, Aladar Horvath, founded in 1989 the Phralipe Organisation, an umbrella organisation whose aim is to defend the interests of the Gypsy minorities and which today has 84 member associations throughout Hungary. Today there are now over 180 Hungarian Gypsy organisations, but the dispersion of their forces is great. A "Gypsy Parliament" is doing its best to pull them together so that it can establish a claim to be the single voice speaking for the Gypsies in negotiations with the authorities. In 1993 there were only three Gypsies in the Hungarian Parliament. The Law 7 July 1993 on the rights of national and ethnic minorities offers a legal framework for the cultural emancipation of Gypsies in Hungary. Nevertheless, their geographic dispersion and the heterogeneous policies of the authorities do not allow them to take full advantage of a law that sets out the autonomy of minorities on the local and national levels.

86. The scope for action resulting from the 1989 Romanian revolution allowed a number of Gypsy political parties to emerge, reflecting the wide diversity of this ethnic group: the Democratic Union of Romanian Roms (Bucharest); the Democratic Party of Free Roms (Sfintu Gheorghe); the Party of the Democratic Union of Romanian Roms (Rimnicu Vilcea); the Gypsy Party of Romania (Sibiu); the Free and Democratic Union of Romanian Roms (Cluj); the Christian Democratic Party of Romanian Roms (Cluj), and others. In addition to these political parties, there are also many cultural associations. An appeal for unity was launched at Tirgu-Mures in March 1990. The following month, efforts to bring political and non-political Gypsy associations together were crowned when the General Union of Romanian Roms was formed. The Union was officially founded on 13 May 1990 at the congress held in Timisoara (18 of the 23 associations which attended joined). The Union was superseded the following year by the Ethnic Federation of Romanian Roms, which since then has been seeking to co-ordinate its members' political, social and cultural activities.

87. Political forces are building up everywhere among Gypsies in Central and Eastern Europe, though progress is slow. There are Gypsy members of parliament, but only a few. The majority of Gypsies do not vote for Gypsy politicians, probably because they do not believe in the effectiveness of this form of exposure. Yet Gypsy organisations are being set up and are informing the world at large about local situations. At the same time they are encouraging various initiatives on the intellectual front, seeking, among other things, to standardise the Gypsy language and cultivate an awareness of Gypsy history. The biggest organisation, Romani Unia, started out as an International Gypsy Committee, formed in 1967. Its drive and representativeness have been demonstrated at four world congresses held in 1971 (London), 1978 (Geneva), 1981 (Göttingen), 1990 (Warsaw). It has had consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council since 1979. A "European Parliament", to which about 50 Gypsy organisations from 14 countries belong, was set up in Budapest in August 1992. Because they have little political support from any country, Gypsy organisations see in international institutions, particularly in Europe, a guarantee of their rights. Since 1969, the Council of Europe and other institutions have adopted various resolutions and recommendations paving the way for an egalitarian policy; these include:

- Resolution 125 (1981) of the Council of Europe on the role and responsibility of regional authorities in regard to the cultural and social problems of populations of nomadic origin.
- Recommendation No. R (1983) of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to the Member States on stateless nomads and nomads of undetermined nationality.
- Resolution of 24 May 1984 adopted by the European Parliament on the situation of Gypsies in the Community.
- Resolution of 22 May 1989 of the Council of Ministers of Education meeting under the Council concerning the schooling of Gypsies and travellers (89/C153/02).

-- Resolution of 5 March 1992 on the protection of Roms (Gypsies) adopted by the Commission of Human Rights of the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

-- Recommendation 1203 (1993) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on Gypsies in Europe.

88. Resolution 125, of the Council of Europe particularly recommends the establishment of a legal instrument guaranteeing that nomads will be able to obtain identity papers enabling them to travel through all Member States. It also invites governments to recognise Gypsies as an ethnic minority. The European Parliament, in its 1984 Resolution, urges the EC Commission to work out ways of providing for an itinerant travel visa which could be issued when requirements for the granting of a nationality are not met. The resolution of the Council and the Ministers of Education meeting under the Council on 22 May 1989 raises a series of measures that aim to "encourage innovative initiatives in education, to propose and support positive and adopted actions in so as to assure the application of the resolutions, to make widely known the results and lessons which emanate, and to encourage the sharing of experience. As a follow-up to such a programme, the Commission has developed a budgetary category for inter-cultural education. Several projects on the sharing of experience and on teaching instruments as well as networks of pilot projects concerning Gypsy associations or the schooling of Gypsies are supported by Community funds. It should also be noted that the Commission supports various training and placement projects for Gypsies in Western countries within the programmes against poverty. The CSCE (Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe) is working on raising the status of Gypsies, as regards education, vocational training, health, culture and other areas. The Charter for Regional and Minority Languages, adopted on 24 June 1992 by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, and the Resolution on the Protection of Roms (Gypsies) adopted by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights aim to contribute to reinforcing a jurisprudence favourable to the Gypsy cause.

3. Prospects

89. The Gypsies' present situation is paradoxical. On the one hand, their advancement on the international level as a simultaneously trans-frontier and settled ethnic minority is helping them to become a part of the emerging Europe. We are far removed from the old imageries which depict Gypsies as eternal, carefree wanderers or as opportunists cashing in on the possibilities offered by a particular regime. Needs as regards education, health, employment and citizenship have been acknowledged. On the other hand, Gypsies as individuals, whether or not they claim to belong to an ethnic minority, depend on the goodwill of the country in which they live in a climate now heavy with xenophobia, particularly at the local level which is, after all, the level at which decisions concerning them are or are not put into effect.

90. Looking at policy towards Gypsies in Central and Eastern Europe since World War II, the picture that emerges is a contrasting one. Forcible assimilation policy during the Communist period took into account neither the Gypsies' own aspirations nor inter-ethnic prejudices. It did nevertheless accelerate the adaptation of Gypsies to contemporary society at a time when

their traditional activities were declining. Their life-style has begun to resemble that of non-Gypsies, though usually with some time lag. This trend is likely to continue in the long term. For instance, according to demographic projections, the birth-rate among Gypsies will ultimately align with that of the population as a whole and the evolution of the age pyramid will be similar for both groups. Progress in improving housing has been made. The opening-up of the employment market to Gypsies has raised their standard of living. Social welfare policy, sometimes giving priority to those in greatest need, has contributed to their well-being in many cases. A Gypsy middle class has emerged, numbering among its members not only wage earners and salaried employees but intellectuals -- something which in Western Europe has hardly happened at all yet.

91. Nonetheless, many factors contribute to a continuing marginalisation of the Gypsies, geographically, socially and mentally. Not enough consideration is being given to their economic capabilities; much of the housing provided for former nomads is unsuitable; at the local level, obstacles (bureaucratic as well as psychological) abound; resources are scarce. The hand-to-mouth manner in which many Gypsies have to live contrasts sharply with the real progress that has been made. In such a context, only the most resourceful have been able to achieve above-average stability in living standards, whether in a traditional or modern life-style. Recognition as a "minority nation", to allow the Gypsies to develop their own specific culture (provided funds were available) would certainly have been a good thing in the eastern European context. Except in Yugoslavia, however, it has not been forthcoming.

92. Successful change-over to a market economy and to democracy are the new goals of central and eastern European societies. But the transition period is bringing hardship, and there is nothing to suggest the future of these societies is inexorably settled. Though Gypsies are often referred to as the "casualties" in the changes currently taking place, nevertheless, as we have seen, in a situation which is difficult for all eastern Europeans some Gypsy communities have adjusted more easily than others to new conditions. Clearly, economic opportunities have to be sought in a global context and not just in a single area; the quest involves society as a whole and embraces both migration and local integration. As throughout the past Gypsies -- even though they are scattered and made up of a multitude of different groups -- are a constituent part of the society in which they live. They must be given the means of advancement, as a group and as individuals. In this sense, national minority status represents a foundation stone. But it would be unrealistic and dangerous to sever the Gypsies from the rest of the population. It is society as a whole which is being transformed in Central and Eastern Europe, and is being swept by a wave of nationalism and inter-ethnic strife. Governments must do their utmost to restore social harmony among all sections of the community and work for the good of society as well as for the advancement of ethnic minorities. Otherwise things will continue as before, with the most resourceful gaining and the weakest becoming weaker.

93. The majority of Gypsies have been pushed so far out on the fringes of society that a policy catering for their specific needs is nevertheless required. Action must be taken on two fronts; no single development strategy can suit all circumstances. At the macro-social level, it will probably be necessary to take a series of general economic, cultural, educational and

social measures to enable Gypsies to take their place in society, while at the same time preserving their identity as do other groups. The media could help here by waging a campaign against prejudice and making the general public aware of the sub-human condition to which some Gypsies have been reduced. At the micro-social level, local development projects could involve Gypsies, without neglecting inter-ethnic considerations. Non-governmental organisations are already working at the grassroots along these lines. They know their action will take time. Private institutions and public funding are helping their work. But an immense amount still remains to be done. Helping the Gypsies must be seen not as pouring out money to support an exotic minority, but as contributing to the harmonious development of contemporary society as a whole by paying special attention to one of its constituent parts. It is in this spirit and with appropriate control measures that plans to repatriate refugees whose applications for asylum have been turned down should be conceived. Again, no development policy can be based solely on frontier controls and repatriation.

94. Various measures could contribute to development, especially as regards training and assistance in financing. Gypsy and non-Gypsy experts would be trained in a centres specialised in the creation, execution and evaluation of development projects that take into account the cultural dimension and its influence on economic production. Development plans that explicitly affect the Gypsy community would be elaborated within regional consortium. In this framework, special attention -- although not exclusive -- would be given to sectors in economic crisis in which Gypsies have been largely employed and to the prevention of ethnic exclusion in reconversion programmes. At the local level, the search for a framework and adequate financing of development initiatives would be encouraged. To this end, a list of NGOs likely to contribute to the development of the Gypsy economy would be drawn, kept up to date and sent to creators of the projects. Gypsy representatives or officials would be directly associated at different levels of decision making. Finally, all the measures put into place would be subject to regular evaluation.

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