

The history of the peoples of Roma, currently present in many European states and especially in the Balkans, is characterized by some constants that are not always positive, that have marked their life and their culture. The numerous persecutions, the various forms of marginalization, discrimination and an ancient mistrust born in the European Middle Ages have marked difficult and extreme living conditions (culminating in the Nazi project of their physical elimination together with the Jews), which they often put in second slowly the features of an ancient culture, which draws its origins probably from the Sanskrit civilization. After the Second World War a slow reconstruction of the identity of the Roma people began and the International Romani Union (IRU) was created in London in 1971, with the main objective of recognizing an identity and a cultural and linguistic heritage of the Rom, Nation without state and without territory. In this framework of revaluation of the Roma culture and with reference to the analysis of supporting actions in favour of these peoples, we find the essay edited by Elisabeta Osmanaj, particularly aimed at one of the fundamental rights, necessary for the recovery of an identity, namely the right to education. With specific reference to the situation in Albania, the author highlights the importance of education policies in applying strategies necessary to improve the living conditions of the Roma community

Elisabeta Osmanaj took a PhD at the State University of Tirana-Faculty of Social Sciences-Department of Labor and Social Policies. She is an associate professor at the Alexander Xhuvani University in Elbasan, where she teaches private and public law and EU institutions. It organizes national and international conferences, in which it is also a speaker of recognized competence and experience. She has been Head of Department of Social Sciences in Alexander Xhuvani since 2016. Her main research fields include Social Services in criminal justice and European Union's social policies. Her recent researches deal with minorities' rights in Albania, with a focus on the Roma community.

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Collana diretta da
GAETANO DAMMACCO

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Presentation: roms between discrimination and rights

The history of the peoples of Roma is characterized by some constants that are not always positive, that have marked their life and their culture. The numerous persecutions, the various forms of marginalization, discrimination and an ancient mistrust born in the European Middle Ages have marked difficult and extreme living conditions (culminating in the Nazi project of their physical elimination together with the Jews), which they often put in second slowly the features of an ancient culture, which draws its origins probably from the Sanskrit civilization.

After the Second World War, fortunately, a slow reconstruction of its own identity began, which generated a movement that developed during the first congress in 1971 in London in the creation of the International Romani Union (IRU). The primary objective of this Union is the recognition of an identity and a cultural and linguistic heritage of the Roma Nation, characterized by elements of great adaptability and especially by the fact that the Roma Nation has neither State nor territory. An element of the cultural flexibility of these peoples, present in all European countries and more widely in the Balkans, is represented by the adoption of the religion of the country of residence: so that in Western Europe the Roma are predominantly Catholic or Protestant, in Eastern Europe they are predominantly Orthodox and they are Muslims in southeastern Europe.

However, even today, despite the progress that has been made in terms of integration processes or the protection of personal rights and fundamental freedoms, the galaxy of minorities present mainly in the Balkans, Central Europe and Eastern Europe (but, their *diaspora* pushed them to the Americas and other continents) in fact lives in conditions of heavy social marginalization and poverty, still subject to discrimination (including racist) and clichés, also favored by the lack of reliable data relating to the people of Roma (both at European level and at the level of individual nations).

For example, in Italy, according to the result of a commission of inquiry of the Senate of the Italian Republic, the negative image of the Roma people is favored by begging, especially if entrusted to minors or very old women, which is also the consequence of a widespread mistrust, ignorance and the so-

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called “statistical prejudice”, which prevents a good part of the Roma people from carrying out a normal work activity. Yet, one cannot ignore, among other things, that among the Roma there are numerous famous personalities, who have achieved successes in the world of sport, art, poetry, music, sciences.

To demonstrate the growth of sensitivity towards the Roma world and the fact that knowledge of the culture and traditions of Rome are important for the integration process, there are numerous positive testimonies, such as the Memorial Day and the World Day of the Roma people and Sinto, the creation in Italy of the National Observatory on Roma and Sinti, the project of the Swedish government of integration of the Roma, the numerous Recommendations of the European Parliament, some regional laws of Italy, the world meetings of the IRU, which has among its objectives both the dissemination of promotion and knowledge of culture as a deterrent against discrimination and the cultural growth of those belonging to Roma. These are measures that, although not recent, are seen as elements of a slow but decisive process of emancipation of Rome from a past of marginalization. Of particular interest is the OSCE Report on the problems of the Roma and Sinti (06/09/1999), which promotes the rights of the Roma and Sinti through projects concerning political participation, education, housing issues, civil registration, the fight against racism and discrimination, including an action plan to improve their situation in the OSCE area.

This is an interesting reality, but still weak because (despite the progressive integration in France, Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands and other countries) the economic crisis and the prolonged migration crisis have led various EU member states to expel Balkan Roma families to the countries of origin. In this framework of reevaluation of the Roma culture and with reference to the analysis of supporting actions in favor of these peoples, we find the essay edited by Elisabeta Osmanaj, particularly aimed at one of the fundamental rights, necessary for the recovery of an identity, namely the right to education. With specific reference to the situation in Albania, the author highlights the importance of education policies in applying strategies necessary to improve the living conditions of the Roma community. The essay, in a strictly scientific manner and with clear language, examines the factors that prevent parents from helping their children and the reasons why girls abandon school at a specific age. Through a careful analysis, the study highlights the difficulties in implementing policies and strategies for institutional intervention and the educational difficulties of Roma families. The data analyzed were collected by target groups composed of Roma parents or through interviews with representatives of central and local governments.

The references to studies and literature (national and international) complete this important research, which offers not only elements for reflection but also concrete proposals to improve the protection of personal rights and

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the role of schools and public institutions in Albania. Finally, the fact that this essay looks towards Europe is also important, because, although it refers to the Albanian landscape, it inserts the educational answer for this specific problem as an element of sustainable development in the framework of Albania's integration into the European Union , in which the condition of Roma finds better protection within the framework of all human rights.

Gaetano Dammacco

List of abbreviations

UN	United Nations
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
CE	Council of Europe
UNICEF	
CERD	Committee of the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
INSTAT	
CDIME	Center for Documentation and Information on Minorities in Europe-Southeast Europe
CRS	
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
MoES	Ministry of Education and Science
SKAP	National Strategy for Pre-University Education
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.
IACPR	International Agreement on Civil and Political Rights
MoLSA	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs
REO	Regional Education Office
CESS	Center for Economic and Social Studies
ACHF	Assistance for Children Foundation (NGO)
CHWA	Children of the World and of Albania (NGO)
CoEas	
CDCC	Council for Cultural Co-operation
CEDS	Common Education Data Standards
MoH	Ministry of Health

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MoI	Ministry of Integration
MoPWTT	Ministry of Public Work, Transport and Telecommunications
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MoE	Ministry of Economy
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoTPNS	Ministry of Territory and Preservation of National Security

Preface

The study “The right of education of Roma community regarding the integration of Albania in European Union” aims to testify the importance of education of Roma community to a sustainable development of the country and of course even to the integration in EU, where the compliance of linguistic minorities plays a specific role to the framework of all human rights.

The goal of this study is to highlight the efficiency of policies undertaken by our country in attaining the appropriate strategies to improve life conditions of Roma community, focusing in education. In the center of this study stay the parents, regarding to the fundamental role they play in every child life but even as legal responsables of their own children. In fully details, in this study are analysed the factors that prevent parents from helping their children and reasons why female children abandon school at a specific age. Starting from these circumstances, the study is a reflection of parents` opinions, mothers and fathers about work, their role in educating their children, and the obstacles encountered in this process. The landscapes also complemented by the institutions` representative point of view on the implementation of strategies and policies in adapting the Roma community in our society. The findings of this study highlight the obstacles to the implementation of policies and strategies or the difficulties faced by children and Roma families in educating their children.

In this study is used the qualitative method to analyze data collected from target groups made of Roma`s parents or interviews of central and local governments` representatives but relying also to literature or studies consultation, national and international once, accomplished in this area.

From the data analysis it has come to the conclusion that parents play a very important role in educating their children sometimes even negatively not allowing them to attend educational institutions. The difficult economic situation forces Roma parents to use their children as a source of earning the living. The reason why Roma parents don`t have faith in educational system and believe that education serve nothing to their children is related with the low expectation they have from their own children.

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Even school (school leaders and teachers) plays an important role as well, it can create a more stimulating environment for Rom children, can establish frequent contact with the community and plays a more influential role in involving Roma children in school and extracurricular activities. Governmental policies should also be more focused on the implementation of the strategy, which places emphasis on pre-university education as a challenge not only for Albanian but also for European as well, supporting educational institutions in the infrastructure and educational material base.

Field of study and key words

Field of study: *Roma's children parents and their role in education, children education, and other factors that influence this process in the framework of Roma integration in Albania.*

Key words: *Roma community, Roma child, Education, Roma parents, integration, law*