

Romani political representation in Central Europe. An historical survey

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The article traces the historical development of the institutionalisation of formal external Romani representation and administration in Central Europe at the local, regional and national levels from the fifteenth century to the present day in order to elucidate both the continuity and the change in this process. It argues that although we can see positive progressive quantitative as well as qualitative changes in the process of institutionalising Romani representation, several obstacles remain. It suggests that the major impediments to achieving legitimate Romani representation derive from three main sources. First, the non-democratic selection of Romani representatives—a practice that has persisted in the majority of Central European countries in some form for centuries; second, the dependence of governmental recognition of Romani representation on the willingness of the Romani representatives to co-operate or even collaborate largely according to the terms of those governments (a practice in effect since the inter-war times); and third, the curtailment of the autonomy of Romani organisations through their dependence on public or donor funding since the inter-war times.

Keywords: political representation, Central Europe, non-governmental organisations, political parties, advisory bodies, parliamentary representation, elections, coalition

Earlier versions of this article were presented at a Graduate Student Conference 'The Contours of Legitimacy in Central Europe: New Approaches in Graduate Studies', European Studies Centre, St. Antony's College, Oxford University, 24–6 May 2002 and at 'Nationalism, Identity and Regional Cooperation: Compatibilities and Incompatibilities', Special Convention, Centro per l'Europa Centro Orientale e Balcanica, in association with the Association for the Study of Nationalities, Bologna University, Forlì, Italy, 4–9 June 2002. I wish to thank Elena Marushiakova, Vesselin Popov, Thomas Acton, James Mayall, Peter Vermeersch, and the reviewers of *Romani Studies* for their comments on earlier drafts, Martin Kovats, Imre Vajda, Csaba Prónai, Éva Blénesi, and Michal Vašečka for providing additional information, and Jasmine Solomonescu and Duncan Alexander for language and style corrections.

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Romani Studies 5, Vol. 12, No. 2 (2002), 103–147. ISSN 1528-0478

Introduction

As post-1989 Central Europe slowly embraces the spirit of minority rights, the region is witnessing an unprecedented growth of local, national and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) claiming to represent the interests of the Romani people along with attempts to incorporate some kind of Romani consultative voice into governmental and inter-governmental institutions or/and to establish Romani consultative bodies at the governmental and inter-governmental levels. In short, the Roma themselves (or at least their committed minority, as no mass movement or even common identity exists as of yet) and various governmental authorities are trying to establish a legitimate Romani representation at all levels. This process is highly problematic. The regular electoral procedures by which popular legitimacy is usually achieved in individual countries cannot yet, for various reasons, be used to ensure adequate Romani representation, and no satisfactory alternative mechanism has been developed (for details see e.g. Barany 2001; Klímová 2001; Sobotka 2001; Vermeersch 2001). The goal of creating legitimate and effective Romani representation is nevertheless making its way to the forefront of political debates about Roma at both the national and international levels (see e.g. Project on Ethnic Relations 1999; Project on Ethnic Relations 2001a). It is described as the new 'hot issue'—but is it really as new as many claim? Although the dilemma of Romani representation is often debated as a contemporary problem, in fact, its roots go back centuries to the time when Roma arrived in Central Europe.

The following pages summarise the historical development of institutionalisation of formal external Romani representation and administration in Central Europe at the local, regional (referring to regions within countries, not trans-border) and national levels from the fifteenth century up to the present, in order to demonstrate the continuity and change in this process. The article argues that although we can see positive progressive quantitative as well as qualitative changes in the process of institutionalising Romani representation, some of the main problems of achieving legitimate Romani representation lie in (a) the continuity of non-democratic selection of Romani representatives, persisting in the majority of Central European countries in some form for centuries, (b) the continuous dependence of governmental recognition of Romani representation on the willingness of the Romani representatives to co-operate or even collaborate largely according to those governments' terms since the inter-war times, and (c) the curtailment of the

autonomy of Romani organisations through their dependence on public or donor funding since the inter-war times.

The term 'Roma' (and adjective 'Romani') is used in this article to refer to all members of the Romani ethnic community. Although from an ethnographic point of view this community is extremely diverse, comprised of "separate groupings, split in various ways into metagroups, groups and subgroups, each with their own ethnic and cultural features" (Marushiakova and Popov 2001: 33), political discourse and practice demonstrate a strong homogenising tendency, which is also evident in the increasing use of the term 'Roma' as the politically preferable umbrella designation, superior to the various appellations preferred by the individual groups and subgroups. National governments, intergovernmental organisations and non-Romani non-governmental organisations might in theory acknowledge the diversity of the Romani community, but in practice they tend to treat the Roma as a largely homogenous group. Within modern Romani politics, both the unifying and the individualising tendencies are discernible. While some Romani political (and religious) organisations (especially at the national and international level) bring together Roma from various groupings, some are still organised strictly around the sub-identities. The use of the term 'Roma' in this article is not meant to imply that such homogenisation is the correct approach; rather, the term is adopted simply for practical reasons in the absence of another more appropriate one. It should, however, be kept in mind that even when thus used, the term refers to a diverse community. The term 'Gypsy', often applied to Roma by mainstream society, is used in this article only for the sake of preserving the authenticity of the historical names of institutions.

Due to its limited scope, this article focuses mainly on the formal dimension of representation, describing the institutional arrangements available for Romani representation. The substantive dimension of representation, i.e. the evaluation of the goals of representation and the extent to which they have been achieved, requires further research and is addressed in this article only in passing. The level of analysis is local, regional and national. The lowest level encompassing the smallest social subdivisions such as families, extended families, bands, and communities is excluded from the analysis because no formal institutionalised structures for external representation exist at this level and because the current dearth of data and sources precludes, for the time being, any meaningful conclusions about continuity and change at this level. The international level is also excluded from this analysis

due to the limited scope of this article. For purposes of this article, 'Central Europe' refers to the countries of today's Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland, and Romania. While much broader definitions of Central Europe are possible, this narrow definition (encompassing countries with the most similar historical development of Romani representation) allows a more accurate regional generalisation. The focus is on external representation, i.e. representation in relations with the majority societies, and therefore internal arrangements for leadership and representation within the Romani community (such as the institution of 'Shero Rom' of the Polska Roma), which provide for a considerable internal authority but are never employed in relations with non-Romani world, are not considered. Administration arrangements are considered along with representation arrangements because at times it is impossible to separate these two.

Romani representation before the twentieth century

The first mechanisms for external Romani representation at the local, regional and national levels were most often connected to tax collection and the administration of law and order upon the initiative of non-Romani authorities. While at the level of bands (defined as units living or travelling together), some Roma themselves slowly started upon their arrival in Central Europe to institutionalise the positions of chief, elder, or mediator (e.g. *jude* and/or *voivod* in Hungary, Transylvania, Wallachia, and Moldova), in order to facilitate external representation in dealing with non-Romani authorities, institutionalisation at higher levels was usually encouraged by non-Romani authorities (Marushiakova and Popov 1997: 155–65; Achim 1998: 58–63). In this way, the post of 'bulibasha', the chief, co-ordinator and supervisor of all heads of Romani families and bands, became institutionalised in Moldova, Wallachia, Transylvania, and parts of Hungary, with significant political and judicial powers (including representation but excluding decision-making; Crowe 1996: 123; Achim 1998: 58–63). While originally these *bulibashas* were usually sanctioned (following an election in the community) or even appointed by the rulers, many groups have continued to elect them even in post-emancipation times (i.e. after 1861), when they were no longer vested with official power. In fact, *bulibashas* are still to be found in today's Romania and often enjoy considerable internal authority (Gjorgjevic 1929: 11–13; Achim 1998: 176–7). The story of this arrangement is, however, not only the story of a successful external creation of a post held by a member

of the Romani community. These *bulibashas* were for a significant amount of time only subordinates of non-Romani officials—the *cnezi* in Wallachia and Moldova or the Chief *Voivods* in Transylvania and Hungary who had greater administrative, judiciary and fiscal powers (Winstedt 1941: 52; Horváthova 1964: 101; Harmatta 1969: 88–9; Kaminski 1980: 120–1; Fraser 1992: 109; Crowe 1996: 70–1; Achim 1998: 58–63). This administration did not apply to the majority of Romani serfs who were privately owned. These privately owned Romani serfs were simply encouraged to choose representatives from their ranks; in other cases, they were assigned non-Romani overseers (Achim 1998: 58–63). Some authors argue that in the case of sedentary or settled Roma, external representation above the level of family or extended family was always institutionalised by non-Romani authorities who appointed local Romani representatives (Roma or non-Roma) because sedentary Roma did not develop their own system of representation similar to the *jude* system of nomadic Roma (Marushiakova and Popov 1997: 164).

In the Polish Commonwealth, the administration and tax-collecting arrangements were not dissimilar but, in addition, introduced a completely new phenomenon into Romani political organisation—the royalty—as the administrators and tax collectors began to be called Kings of Gypsies.¹ While the first two appointees might have themselves been Roma, the position was held most commonly by the Polish gentry until it ceased to exist with the end of the Polish Commonwealth at the end of the eighteenth century (for details see e.g. Kaminski 1980: 134–8, 365 n. 91; Ficowski 1991: 15–22; Crowe 1996: 152–5). While their influence on the internal organisation of the Roma does not appear to have been very strong, this externally introduced tradition of ‘electing’ Romani Kings has certainly taken firm roots among some Romani groups, with Romani Kings being elected or self-proclaimed and crowned in some countries (e.g. Czech Republic, Romania, and Bulgaria) even to this day (Liegeois 1976: ch. 4; Marushiakova and Popov 2000: 187; Olasi maji dva krale 2001: 1; Barany 2002: 184–5).

No formal mechanisms for Romani representation existed in the Czech lands, where the policy against Roma consisted chiefly of persecution from the end of the fifteenth century, followed by efforts towards assimilation from mid-eighteenth century onwards, or in Slovak and Hungarian lands under the assimilationist campaigns of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

1. Before this time the only known Gypsy King was King Zindelö, whose real existence is highly questionable (see e.g. Gronemeyer 1987: 28–30; Harmatta 1969: 87–8).

Some sources maintain that the first 'indigenous' attempts to institutionalise Romani representation at the national level in Central Europe occurred at the end of the nineteenth century in Kisfalú, near Kaschau (then part of the Hungarian Empire, now part of Slovakia), and took the form of a regularly-meeting permanent body, the Romani Congress (see *Gipsy Congress 1897*: 7; Puxon 1975: 4; Hancock 1991: 257; Hancock 1998: ch. 4, p. 5 and ch. 5, pp. 5–6). The reports of the first and only such congress are, however, highly dubious. From the available evidence it is uncertain whether any meeting actually took place and, if it did, whether it was not just a traditional meeting of one Romani sub-group held for the purpose of arranging marriage alliances and other affairs.

Romani representation in the inter-war period

A new stage in the development of Romani representation in Central Europe was marked by the establishment of social, cultural, and political Romani organisations, starting in Romania in the inter-war period. The first local association, the Society of New Peasant Brotherhood, was founded by a wealthy Romani peasant at Calbor (district of Fagaras) in 1926. This organisation tried to represent Romani interests by working towards improvement of living and cultural conditions of the Roma, by elevating their morale and ethnic awareness, and by publishing its own journal, *Neamul Tiganesc* (Puxon 1975: 42–5; Liegeois 1986: 145–6; Hancock 1991: 257–8; Fraser 1992: 316; Liegeois 1994: 251; Crowe 1996: 129–30). Other local and regional Romani societies followed in the 1930s (see Table 1 in the appendix). In addition, several nationwide bodies arose (see Table 1), but out of these, only the General Union of Roma in Romania (hereafter the Union) was relatively successful.² In the course of the 1930s, the Union established branches in almost all districts of Romania and held several national Congresses (Haley 1934; Achim 1998: sect. 4.2; The Archive of the Romanian Ministry of Interior). Although various local branches had often questioned their loyalty to the headquarters in Bucharest because they felt that its officials did not take sufficient interest in the issues seen as important by the local branches, nevertheless, the Union functioned quite successfully for some seven years until it was interrupted by

2. There were many problems with the functioning of this organisation, and its country-wide influence is also somewhat questionable. However, here we are measuring its success relative to the other Romani organisations.

events related to the Second World War (Achim 1998: sect. 4.2; The Archive of the Romanian Ministry of Interior). The Union's goal was to represent Romani interests by working towards social amelioration, the awakening of Romani national consciousness, and respect for Romani social and cultural rights (Liegeois 1986: 145–6; Liegeois 1994: 251).

Unlike the arrangements prior to the twentieth century, these 1930s organisations were created upon the initiative of Roma (Romani intellectuals and business elites). They were however not completely independent. All of them co-operated heavily with the Orthodox Church, and to a lesser extent with the Catholic Church as well. Besides these religious links, the Union also co-operated with state and local authorities, especially the police, in order to bring Roma to the meetings or to help solve internal problems with misuse of funds or undesirable propaganda. The co-operation of Romani organisations with political parties was forbidden by the state laws as well as by the Union's statutes, but this was not always strictly adhered to. The Union can be seen as an official external representative of Roma to the state authorities in the sense that the authorities tried to encourage its activities while discouraging those of rival organisations. It is important to note, however, that its activities had virtually no influence on the Romanian state policy towards the Roma. What the Union managed was to obtain from local authorities in Bucharest and Bessarabia land for Romani nomads to settle and some limited religious, educational, and health facilities (Achim 1998: sect. 4.2; The Archive of the Romanian Ministry of Interior). None of the other organisations achieved any representative position. Many of them could theoretically be considered financially independent as their finances came mostly from membership fees, subscriptions to their periodicals, and donations (The Archive of the Romanian Ministry of Interior). However, significant projects (such as the above-named social services) were achieved only through financing and support from non-Romani authorities (Achim 1998: sect. 4.2; The Archive of the Romanian Ministry of Interior).

There were no Romani social, cultural or political organisations in other Central European countries in the inter-war period, with the exception of some Romani theatrical, musical, dance and sports clubs and schools which sprang up in Slovakia under the auspices of a non-Romani society, the League for Cultural Uplifting of Gypsies, later renamed the Society for Studying and Solving of the Gypsy Question (for details about this society see e.g. Horváthová 1964: 168; Kaminski 1980: 162–3; Davidová 1969: 200–1; Crowe 1996: 46–7). This organisation was the first and perhaps only example

in Central Europe of a new Western European trend—the birth and growth of non-Romani NGOs that started to take an interest in the plight of Roma or were created directly to address the plight of Roma and lobby ‘on their behalf’. Although none of these organisations tried, directly or indirectly, to install structures for Romani representation, they contributed to the development and education of Romani intellectuals who later became Romani representatives. Some of the organisations also strove to represent the Roma to the authorities, either until such time as the Roma could do so for themselves, or in the long term (because they believed themselves to be better prepared for such a task). In Western Europe these organisations, which often had religious foundations, started to appear around the nineteenth century and tried to ‘uplift’ the Roma through sedentarisation and assimilation. As the Slovak example shows, the trend started to reach Central Europe in the interwar period but did not have a chance to develop much after WWII, when local authorities began to take over the assimilation and sedentarisation campaign.

As a different representational phenomenon in the inter-war period, the Office of the King of the Gypsies was revived in Poland, this time on the initiative of aspiring Gypsy Kings. During their reigns, some of them attempted to institutionalise new bodies such as the Gypsy Tribunal of King Michal II, the Great Council of Gypsies of King Vasil Kwiek, and a Cabinet of Ministers of King Janusz Kwiek. They were all largely ineffective and short-lived. Although all the Gypsy Kings claimed to be rulers of all the Gypsies in Poland, only Vasil Kwiek’s institution attempted to create a forum for negotiations between the various Romani groups in Poland. Yet Vasil’s rule was short and his power highly contested. Although initiated by Romani individuals, the Office of the Gypsy King was also not an independent Romani institution. The Kings were not directly controlled by the non-Romani authorities, but reportedly they obtained their privileged positions by offering co-operation and services to non-Romani authorities. This co-operation was most intimate in the case of Vasil Kwiek, who allegedly co-operated closely with the secret police. Two of the Polish Gypsy Kings—Baron Mathias Kwiek and Rudolf Kwiek (a self-appointed King of All the Gypsy Tribes in Europe and the Dictator and President of all Gypsies in the ‘General Governorship’³)—can also be considered as controlled by non-Romani authorities. The former

3. Poland excluding the areas incorporated into Germany after Hitler’s take-over of Poland.

allegedly co-operated closely with the secret police and declared himself and his people direct subjects to the Polish Government. The latter is reported to have collaborated directly and voluntarily with the non-Romani authorities in their attempt to eliminate the entire Romani nation save Rudolf Kwiek's own extended family (for details see e.g. Kaminski 1980: 172–91; Ficowski 1991: 35–8). The finances for the Office came also mostly from non-Romani authorities. Far from representing the interests of the Polish Roma, these self-styled Kings used their power mostly to oppress and exploit their subjects. They had no mandate from the Polish Roma (except their own sub-groups in some cases), only from non-Romani authorities who hoped to gain the possibility to investigate the Romani society and control its criminal behaviour more easily through these Kings (Thompson 1930; Soller 1938; Horváthova 1964: 66; Acton 1974: 102; Puxon 1975: 27–35; Liegeois 1976: 128–9; Kaminski 1980: 172–91; Ficowski 1991: 35–8; Hancock 1991: 259; Liegeois 1994: 250).

Romani representation between 1945 and 1989

The development of Romani social, cultural or political organisations, started in Romania in the interwar period, followed in other Central European countries only one to several decades after World War II. The General Union of Roma in Romania was revived after 1945 but functioned only until 1954 when the Romanian government banned Romani organisations (Barany 2002: 148). An exception was granted to a Romani cultural/neighbourhood association between 1983 and 1985 so that it could organise annual Romani festivals (Human Rights Watch 1991: 22). In Poland, where attempts to create nationwide organisation occurred in the inter-war period, no nationwide structures emerged in the 1945–1989 period. However, some new, mostly state-sponsored, cultural organisations were created at least at the local level (see Table 2) but not as representative or interest-representing structures (Ficowski 1956: 36–7; Bartosz 1994: 17–18). By contrast, in Hungary, a country with no pre-WWII history of modern political organisation, Roma were eventually successful in creating a nationwide (in claimed scope, not in actual membership) body, the Cultural Alliance of Hungarian Gypsies, although it was of short duration (1957–1961). This was not a thoroughly Romani body but partly a state institution whose constitution envisioned for the first time in Central Europe the input of Romani representatives in the development of policies to improve the opportunities and living conditions of the Roma (Kovats 2001a: 337; Stewart 2001: 75–80). In Czechoslovakia,

Romani leaders hoped for a similar development but attempts at creating any such organisation were blocked until the Prague Spring of 1968. Activism therefore occurred only individually and in a clandestine manner or through co-operation with non-Romani authorities in a cultural sphere or in conformity with Communist propaganda. As of 1969, two Romani organisations, the Union of the Gypsies–Roma of the Czech Republic and the Union of the Gypsies–Roma of Slovakia, were eventually allowed to exist as official representative and administrative (but not governmental) organs for the Romani population for a limited period of four years. They were controlled by the regime and had no significant political powers or resources to develop and implement a meaningful policy for the improvement of living conditions of Roma (Holomek 1969; Kaminski 1980: 199–202; Cibula 1986; Kalvoda 1991: 102; Jurová 1993: chs. 4 and 5; Davidová 1995: 192 and 203; Nečas 1997; Haišman 1999: 151; Guy 2001: 290, forthcoming; Barany 2002: 115–48; Mann 2000: 42). The initiative for the Hungarian Alliance as well as for the Czech and Slovak Unions came from Romani intellectuals who nominated and selected the officials who had to be approved by the Communist Party. The Unions held congresses and elections which, in accordance with the spirit of the time, were neither free nor fully democratic. The financial resources of the Unions came mostly from the state, although membership fees also provided limited income (Holomek 1969; Kaminski 1980: 199–202; Kalvoda 1991: 102; Jurová 1993: chs. 4 and 5; Davidová 1995: 192, 203; Haišman 1999: 151; Guy 2001: 290, 2002; Barany 2002: 115–48).

Shortly before the change of regime, Romani elites started to mobilise in Czechoslovakia and in Hungary. In Czechoslovakia they created an Informal Council of the Union of Roma in Czechoslovakia (1987–1989), which was received by the highest authorities of the country (such as the Secretary of the Communist Party) at several occasions and demanded that the Party addresses the problems of Romani inhabitants. As a result of these negotiations, a consultative forum of Romani representatives was to be established at a governmental level (Víšek 1999: 188–9; see also below). In Hungary, the Communist Party encouraged the establishment of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarian Gypsies (as of 1989) but an organisation called ‘Phralipe’ (also as of 1989) emerged almost immediately to counterbalance this body of officially sanctioned Romani politicians (Kovats 1998: 118–25). With the exception of *Phralipe*, the first independent Romani organisation, all Romani organisations that arose in Central Europe during the Communist period were either created in co-operation with non-Romani authorities or were

directly controlled by them, even though they managed at times to carry out some independent activities. They were also dependent on the authorities for most of their funding.

Another development characteristic of the period 1945–1989 was the establishment by several states of various committees and institutions whose main task was to administer Roma-specific policies for their assimilation into the society. The growth of these national institutions (listed in Table 3) reflected a desire to adopt more comprehensive policies on Roma. While in most cases there was not yet an attempt to institutionalise official Romani representation (Romani representatives remained excluded from the bodies), in some cases the tendency towards state-induced institutionalisation of official Romani representation, which became a prominent feature of the post-1989 period, is already discernible. In Czechoslovakia, before 1968 Romani representatives were invited to join some conferences and talks where the creation of national institutions and the country's policy on Roma was discussed. Some governmental officials even envisioned the creation of institutions in which Roma would themselves be involved, at least at the district level, and some even supported the idea of creating Romani regions with their own local self-governments. But in the end, Romani representatives were excluded from the created national bodies. They were invited to participate only in less significant bodies such as the Romanes commission of the Oriental Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences and some district offices, or to co-operate on a voluntary basis with the Ministry of Culture and Education (Jurová 1993: 32–92; Davidová 1995: 192; Nečas 1997: 78; Haišman 1999: 151–78). Between 1969 and 1973, as mentioned before, the Czech and Slovak Unions were allowed to exist as official representative and administrative non-governmental organs. Between 1969 and 1988 some limited involvement of 'trustworthy' and handpicked Romani individuals was encouraged in the local, municipal, district, and regional commissions for question of Gypsy inhabitants. In 1988, after the negotiations mentioned earlier in this article, the Czechoslovak Government suggested that the Ministry of Labour create the Council of Czechoslovak Roma as a consultative forum of Romani representatives. But this never happened, partly due to the regime change in 1989 (Jurová 1993: 32–92; Haišman 1999: 151–78; Víšek 1999: 188–9; Guy 2001: 290).

Hungary's approach follows a more progressive course, as Romani individuals were included in majority of the governmental bodies created to deal with Romani issues with the exception of the Interministerial Commission

of the Council of Ministers (1968–1984). Besides the already mentioned Cultural Alliance of Hungarian Gypsies (1957–1961), in 1974 there was an attempt to set up the Gypsy Alliance, which eventually failed for lack of political will. Between 1985 and 1989 the National Gypsy Councils were set up as political advisory bodies of locally based ‘trustworthy’ Gypsies (selected by the Secretariat of the People’s Patriotic Front, an umbrella organisation overseeing non-party and state institutions) to deal with social and political concerns. These bodies dealt with discrimination complaints and reported the failings of local authorities to the central government. With neither a popular mandate nor a budget of their own, they did not manage to exert much influence before the dissolution of the Communist system. In addition, in 1986 another Cultural Alliance of Hungarian Gypsies (which had no continuity with the 1957 Alliance of the same name) was set up, mainly to distribute public funding for promoting Romani cultural associations and events. Thus selected Romani representatives gained some control over the promotion of Romani culture. In 1987, the Gypsy Social, Cultural and Methodological Center was established, focusing mostly on social work for Romani families but also providing an institutional base for Romani individuals to analyse state policy towards their communities and generate ideas for change. The Center functions until today under a new name Romano Kher. With the exception of the first two Alliances (1957 and 1974), the initiative behind the creation of these institutions came mostly from the non-Romani authorities (Kovats 1998: 47, 56, 114–21, 2001a: 341, pers. comm.; Stewart 2001: 86). By contrast, Poland and Romania did not seek involvement of Romani representatives in their limited governmental bodies for administration of Romani policy (listed in Table 3).⁴

The Communist period also witnessed some limited Romani participation in mainstream political and administrative structures. Many Roma joined the ranks of the Communist Party and some achieved party positions at various levels. In Czechoslovakia, they even held some high positions in the Party Politburo. Although they were recruited to provide role models for their fellow Roma, they were not elected to their posts to represent Romani interests, sometimes rather the contrary. In fact, some of them were keen sup-

4. Nicolae Gheorghe, today the only full-time international Romani civil servant, who heads the Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues of the Organisation for Co-operation and Security in Europe, has worked with Romania’s Commission on Demography from 1976–1989. However, he was not hired as a Romani representative or expert.

porters of anti-Romani assimilationist policies (Barany 2002: 144–5). Some had, however, attempted to promote a degree of self-organisation among the Roma (e.g. Mária László in Hungary in the case of the 1961 Alliance or the leaders of the 1969 Czech and Slovak Unions) and to a certain extent are today seen as role models and forerunners for the post-1989 Romani political elite (Barany 2002: 148–9; Guy, forthcoming).

Romani representation between 1989 and 2002

After 1989, there has been an unprecedented boom in the creation of Romani associations, foundations and political parties throughout Central Europe (see Table 4). As many of these associations are short-lived and their numbers tend to fluctuate highly, compiling a comprehensive list is of limited value.⁵ For the purposes of this article, it suffices to say that there are some 120 registered Romani associations and foundations in the Czech Republic, 280 in Hungary, six to ten in Poland, 150 in Romania, and almost fifty in Slovakia (Open Society Institute EU Accession Monitoring Program 2001; Vašečka 2001; Tabajdi 2002). The majority of these receive some public funding. Others function unregistered. Most of them are rather small, operate only locally or regionally, and concentrate on cultural or social service activities. Only a few have as their main goal the promotion of civil and political rights of Roma, including the right to political self-determination and self-representation (Gheorghe 2002). In addition after 1989, for the first time in Central European history, Roma were allowed and able to establish their own political parties (see Table 4). Today there are three registered and several unregistered Romani parties in the Czech Republic, some ten to fifteen parties in Hungary, over ten in Romania, and eighteen registered parties in Slovakia. There are none in Poland (Open Society Institute EU Accession Monitoring Program 2001; Tabajdi 2002; Vašečka 2001). The growth dynamics of Romani parties in the region is typified by the case of Slovakia, as illustrated in Table 5. However, none of the Romani parties in Central Europe manages to achieve enough electoral support to gain parliamentary representation. In the Czech Republic and in Poland, demographics clearly preclude the possibility of

5. Such an exercise would also require extensive research whose result is unlikely to warrant the energy spent. Sources differ greatly on the numbers of organisations in each country, even when comparing information presented by various ministries in a particular country. For an illustration of this problem, see e.g. Šiklová (1999: 278).

passing the hurdle of 5 per cent electoral support necessary for achieving parliamentary representation, but even in countries with a larger percentage of Romani population, Romani parties fail to attract a sufficient amount of votes for a variety of reasons. The demographic limitations are illustrated in Table 6 and further discussions of the factors accounting for the electoral failure of Romani parties can be found e.g. in Barany 2001; Klímová 2001. In some instances Romani parties have joined together to form or attempt to form electoral coalitions and umbrella organizations for the purpose of gaining parliamentary representation, but so far their efforts have been in vain (e.g. 1994 Roma Parliament Electoral Alliance in Hungary and 1996 Highest Council of Roma in Poland, Barany 2002: 232). The outcome for the most ambitious electoral Romani coalition to date, formed in Slovakia for the 2002 elections, remains to be seen. The agreement about the coalition, which is to be formed around the oldest and most consolidated Romani party—the Romani Civic Initiative (ROI)—was initially signed by thirteen Romani political parties and twenty-five Romani NGOs in October 2000, with more joining at a later date. Only one Romani political subject (Romani Initiative of Slovakia) has abstained from the agreement (Vašečka 2001).

The list of Romani MPs elected since 1989 is provided in Table 7. In Romania a seat in the Lower Chamber of the Parliament has, since 1990, been reserved for the Romani party that gets the highest electoral support. The Romani Party (*Partida Romilor*) has held this seat since 1990. At the moment Romania is the only Central European country to reserve seats for minority groups, although this option is currently being debated in Hungary. In recent years, a few Romani parties have managed to gain seats in various national parliaments by forming coalitions with mainstream parties. In the 1990 elections in Czechoslovakia, five Romani MPs from ROI gained seats in the Czech National Council for the Civic Forum (OF) coalition and one gained a seat in the Slovak National Council for the Slovak counterpart of OF, the coalition entitled Public Against Violence (VPN). Another Romani candidate of VPN/ROI was also elected for the Chamber of People in the Federal Assembly. In the 1990 Hungarian elections, two Romani MPs from the *Phralipe* organisation gained seats for the Liberal Party, and one of the two was re-elected in 1994. In the 2002 Hungarian elections, three Romani MPs from Lungo Drom National Gypsy and Civic Alliance gained seats for *Fidesz* (the Hungarian Civic Party in coalition with the Hungarian Democratic Forum). This coalition agreement outlined extensive co-operation in the pre- as well as post-election period and envisioned an institutional reform of Roma-spe-

cific institutions dependent on Fidesz's electoral victory, which did not occur (see Fidesz–MDF–Lungo Drom Co-operation Agreement).

In the 2000 Romanian elections, a Romani MP from the Romani Party gained a seat (in addition to the reserved one) through a coalition agreement with the Party of Social Democracy in Romania (PDSR). This coalition agreement also guaranteed the Romani Party the posts of Adviser on National Minorities Issues in the Presidency Office and the Head of the Office for Romani Issues with the title of the Sub-Secretary of the State at the Ministry of Public Information. As part of the agreement, one or two Romani experts were to be hired in all local councils where PDSR gained important positions, leading to the creation of over 150 such posts after the elections. In addition, some Romani candidates managed to gain seats by running on the lists of mainstream parties. The 1990 Czechoslovak elections resulted in one Romani MP in the Czech National Council for the Communist Party and one for the Self-Governing Democracy Movement/Association for Moravia and Silesia, plus one Romani MP for the Chamber of People and one for the Slovak section of the Chamber of Nations for the Communist Party. The 1992 Czech elections produced one Romani MP for the Left Bloc, the 1998 Czech elections one Romani MP for Union of Freedom, the 1990 Hungarian elections one Romani MP for the Hungarian Socialist Party (co-opted only in 1992), the 1994 Hungarian elections one Romani MP for the Hungarian Socialist Party (who however died shortly after the elections), and the 2002 Hungarian elections one Romani MP for the Socialist Party. The Polish Roma have never had parliamentary representation and the Slovak Roma have not achieved it since 1992,⁶ although Romani representatives appeared on the candidate lists of mainstream parties in both these countries. The Czech Roma failed to secure representation in the 2002 elections for the first time since 1990. Currently there are six Romani MPs in Central Europe. Five of them were elected on the list of a mainstream party through a coalition agreement: one in Romania and four in Hungary. The sixth holds a reserved seat in Romania. A further slight increase in the number of current MPs may occur after the upcoming Slovak parliamentary elections in September 2002. Overall, the numbers of Roma elected to national legislatures on mainstream party tickets have been minimal and, in the case of the Czech Republic and Slovakia, in decline since the early 1990s (Klímová 2001; Open Society Insti-

6. Although only a fatal automobile accident immediately before the elections prevented Jan Kompus from the *Romani Civic Initiative* of Slovakia from gaining a parliamentary seat on the list of the Movement for Democratic Slovakia in 1998 (Barany 2001).

tute EU Accession Monitoring Program 2001; Project on Ethnic Relations 2001b; Vermeersch 2001; Barany 2002: 232–9; Gheorghe 2002).

Many of the existing Romani MPs and advisors feel that they do not have a sufficient voice or adequate powers to influence policy in any significant way. Some of them attribute their political impotence to their lack of previous political experience and difficulty in formulating well-defined goals; most, however, attribute it to the prejudiced and patronising or controlling attitudes of governments, government officials, and other MPs. Romani MPs (as well as advisors—see later in this article) report that they are not being perceived as serious political partners by other MPs and governmental officials and are therefore unable to create alliances. In addition, they feel that although they can participate through their presence and their right to vote, any suggestions they make are usually ignored. Some feel that they are simply expected to sanction governmental policies which are often contrary to Romani interests, as opposed to fully participating in decision-making and deliberations (Horváth 2001: 1 and 5; Project on Ethnic Relations 2001a: 22 and 29). Some limited success has nevertheless been reported. The former Czech Romani MP Monika Horáková (now Mihaličková) recently managed to introduce an amend to laws on education, thus reducing discrimination against graduates of special schools (a majority of whom are Romani). The amendment has since been adopted (Dženo Foundation 2002). The definition of what constitutes ‘Romani interests’ varies with each Romani official. The more integrationist ones demand the implementation of general human rights standards, the application of the laws and principles of democratic governance to the members of their communities, and the rejection of special measures that, in their opinion, segregate the Roma from the majority societies. Some believe that their role is to promote measures and programmes that will benefit the whole society, but emphasise that part of this role is to promote such measures and programmes from the point of view of Roma and with Romani concerns in mind. By contrast, others demand the implementation of special measures (for example in employment and education) and minority policies for Roma (Klímová 2001).

The situation is somewhat more encouraging at the local level (see Table 8). There are now Romani mayors and local councillors in all of the Central European countries except Poland. Some are elected as representatives of Romani parties, some as representatives of mainstream parties. The lowest number is in the Czech Republic, where there were only five Roma officials during the last election period—1998–2002 (Klímová 2001; Open Society

Institute EU Accession Monitoring Program 2001; Barany 2002: 238; Gheorghie 2002). One of the most successful instances of alliance-building for the purposes of winning seats in local elections occurred prior to the 1992 and 1996 local elections in Romania. In 1992, the Alianta Romilor (Romani Alliance) gained over 100 elected posts and in 1996, when the Romani Party formed an alliance with eleven other Romani organisations, 132 Roma were elected to posts as a result (Klímová 2001; Barany 2002: 238). While there is no visible progress in terms of parliamentary representation, at the local level Romani representatives have gradually improved their electoral record, especially in areas with substantial proportions of Romani voters. In Romania, for example, the number of elected Romani members of local councils grew from 106 in 1992 to 136 in 1996 and 160 (plus four county council members) in 2000 (Klímová 2001; Open Society Institute EU Accession Monitoring Program 2001: 415–16; Barany 2002: 239). Unlike the situation at the parliamentary level, at the local level, elected officials often feel that they are able to make a difference and report positive results (Klímová 2001).

Besides forming electoral coalitions, Romani parties and NGOs in some countries have attempted to unify into common bodies for the purposes of negotiations with government. Hungary seems to have the longest history of such attempts. After an unsuccessful campaign to create the Nationality and Self-Government Council of the Hungarian Gypsies, Roma Parliament emerged at the end of 1990 as an umbrella organisation, consisting of almost all Romani political organisations in Hungary. It managed to be a legitimate representative body of Hungarian Roma for almost two years. Its main demands were the respect for Romani culture and implementation of their minority rights, and it acted as the main Romani representative for the Minorities Roundtable which was set up in 1991 to negotiate with the newly created Office for National and Ethnic Minorities. Despite initial successes in gaining the government's support for minority rights and self-government, the Roma Parliament's influence in governmental spheres diminished by 1993, by which time these concepts (minority rights and self-government) had been interpreted and applied in a way unacceptable to the Roma Parliament. Its sole representativity was challenged by newly created organisations such as the Interest Alliance of Gypsy Organisations (as of mid-1990), the Roma Forum (as of the end of 1991) and the 'Coexistence' Alliance of Hungarian Gypsies (as of 1992), which also started negotiations with the government about future policies towards Roma. Eventually Roma Parliament became excluded from formal political life. One more attempt to create a united front

for the purposes of negotiations with the government came in 1993 with the National Council of Romani Organisations created from some fifteen umbrella organisations. It was, however, short-lived: by the 1994 general elections most Council member organisations split in order to harness support from mainstream political parties. In 1994, there were again two unsuccessful (short-lived) attempts to set up a negotiating Romani body for the new government—Roma Roundtable and Roma Conciliation Council. After 1995, the National Gypsy Self-Government (see later in this article), dominated by the Lungo Drom organisation, became the main partner in negotiations with the government. An attempt to counteract this supremacy in the form of the 1995 National Alliance of Gypsy Minority Self-Government Representatives was again unsuccessful (Kovats 1998: Chs. 11 and 12). Finally, a somewhat larger representativity was ensured through two new consultative arrangements set up in late 1990s—Council for Romani Arts and Culture, made up of twelve Romani artists from different disciplines, and Roma Civil Forum, with representatives from the twelve most important Romani organisations. Each of these organisations held regular consultations with the Office for National and Ethnic Minorities (Project on Ethnic Relations 1999: 14–17). Following the 2002 elections, a new Roma Coordination Council has been created to increase the number of representative institutions for Roma (Kovats, pers. comm.).

In Romania, several collaboration successes were achieved since 1997—the year the Romani Party, the Romani NGO Center for Social Intervention and Studies (CRISS), and the Aven Amentza Foundation signed a collaboration agreement Framework Convention for the realisation of the common objectives of Roma during a five-year period. In 1999, the Romani Party, CRISS, and almost eighty other Romani organizations and local Romani leaders further created a sixteen-member Working Group of Romani Associations (GLAR) in order to co-operate with the Romanian government's Department for the Protection of National Minorities. This group received some organisational help from the Project on Ethnic Relations (PER), which organised two meetings attended by Romani representatives and representatives from the European Commission and Council of Europe. The co-operation was eventually verified through signing a protocol of co-operation with the government and relates to proposals for developing a strategy that should improve the living conditions of Roma and implement practical methods for the protection of human and minority rights of the Roma as well as monitoring the development strategy and Romani participation in

all its stages. GLAR was also allowed to nominate eight Romani members to the Subcommission for Romani Issues in 1999 (see below). The new Romanian government (as of 2000) also agreed that the Framework Convention for Roma (an umbrella of five Romani organisations—the Romani Party, Romani CRISS, Aven Amentza, Community Development Agency Impreuna and SATRA/ASTRA—and the official partner of the government in the implementation of the 2001 Strategy) will participate in the Inter-Ministerial Subcommission for Roma and the Joint Committee of Implementation and Monitoring of the Strategy (Project on Ethnic Relations 1999: 14–17; Open Society Institute EU Accession Monitoring Program 2001: 423–5; Barany 2002: 232; see also below).

In Slovakia, the above-mentioned election coalition agreement and a working group of Roma forged at a meeting about migration organised by PER grew into an institutionalised body called the Parliament of Roma of the Slovak Republic, established at a congress in March 2001. The Parliament hoped to be the highest organ representing the Romani nation in Slovakia and the main negotiation partner of the Slovak government, which would suggest Romani candidates for the posts of the Plenipotentiary⁷ of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Romani Communities, Romani members of the Council for National Minorities, Council for NGOs and Gremium [Caucus] of the Third Sector. In May 2001, the Parliament incorporated further Romani bodies, which increased their number to 156 and made the Parliament the most representative Romani body in Slovakia. Internal problems have arisen since then and the Parliament has so far failed to play a significant role in negotiations with the Slovak government. Related to the Parliament was also the Romani Gremium of the Third Sector launched in 2000 in protest against the non-inclusive attitude of the mainstream Gremium of the Third Sector. It also failed to achieve any significant status (Open Society Institute EU Accession Monitoring Program 2001: 484–5; Vašečka 2001). The possibility of establishing a Romani Parliament has also been discussed in the Czech Republic but the debate is still at a very early stage (Holomek 2001: 2; Open Society Institute EU Accession Monitoring Program 2001: 163). Thus, no long-lasting Romani nationwide umbrella group, unitary organisation, or united political front has so far been achieved in any Central European country.

7. The term 'plenipotentiary' is used to denote a person who has been given full powers to represent their government or organisation on particular issues/business.

In addition to attempts to create Romani representation through participation in mainstream politics, one country of the region, Hungary, devised an alternative system of minority representation available to Roma for issues related to collective rights in the fields of education, media, culture, and the use of minority languages. The system is one of minority self-government at the local and national levels. Since 1994 there were three elections held for minority self-government in Hungary and an increasing number of local Romani assemblies were elected: 416 in 1994, and an additional 61 in the supplemental 1995 elections (held because some localities were not prepared in 1994), and 765 in 1998 (Barany 2001). Some of the elected self-governments have since ceased to exist. For example, by 1999 there were already only 759 Romani self-governments of the total of 1,369 of all self-governments (Project on Ethnic Relations 1999: 15). In 1995 and 1998, municipal self-governments elected National Gypsy Self-government, consisting of 53 members (the highest allowed number in the range of 13–53 specified by the 1993 Minorities Law). The minority self-governments' powers are restricted to consent rights over matters of education, culture, local media, Romani traditions, and the use of minority languages, and to consultation rights for other matters. At the local level the self-governments have the right to solicit information, submit initiatives relating to their minority to any public administrative authority, and establish educational and cultural institutions. *De jure* their consent is required for the adoption of local minority decrees and for the appointment of leaders to minority institutions; *de facto* the consent is often compelled. At the national level, the self-governments are entitled to express opinions on minority acts, statutes and decrees, participate in the professional supervision of minority education, and establish educational and cultural institutions (van Baalen 2000: 82–4; van der Stoep 2000: 136–41; Open Society Institute EU Accession Monitoring Program 2001: 250–2; Barany 2002: 326–8).

While on the one hand this system ensures wide participation of Roma (and other minorities) in public affairs (reportedly in 1999 more than 3,000 Romani representatives were taking part in the activities of the minority self-governments), on the other hand, it channels Romani representation into structures that are essentially consultative and allows the Hungarian government to deal exclusively with the National Gypsy Self-Government (dominated by one Romani organisation, Lungo Drom) and ignore alternative Romani organizations attempting to influence the country's policy on Roma. In addition, at the local level even the consultative role of the Gypsy

self-governments is often not taken seriously by some local mainstream governments, which do not take into consideration the opinions expressed by their representatives. Thus, although one might argue that there is a form of democratically elected Romani representation in Hungary, the representativity of this representation is questionable. As the election of the local minority self-governments is based on universal franchise rather than the ethnic identity of the voters, suspicions have been raised that many non-Roma participate in the elections and that in some localities they significantly influence the results. The estimates of the participation of Hungarian Roma in these elections are also rather low, e.g. only 8 per cent of the Roma in the country supposedly cast ballots in 1994 (van Baalen 2000: 82–4; van der Stoel 2000: 136–41; Open Society Institute EU Accession Monitoring Program 2001: 250–2; Barany 2002: 326–8; for a detailed critique of the Hungarian minority self-government system see e.g. Kovats 2001b).

Due mainly to the newly embraced spirit of minority rights, the post-1989 period in Central Europe also witnessed more serious attempts to incorporate some kind of Romani consultative voice into governmental institutions dealing with Roma, and there were even attempts at establishing Romani consultative governmental bodies (see Table 8). Today Poland remains the only Central European country without Roma-specific bodies at the national level, although its government is reportedly considering such a step. At the local level, non-Romani plenipotentiaries for Roma have been established in the city of Nowy Sacz and the province of Malopolska. Partly as a result of a foreign donors project, the Roma of the Nowy Sacz region are also represented by a Romani plenipotentiary at the Association of the Roma in the region (Open Society Institute EU Accession Monitoring Program 2001: 365). At present, Romania is the country with most Roma-specific institutions, ranging from the local level to the national level. The impact of these fledgling institutions remains to be seen. After experimenting with other arrangements, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Romania have all recently established Inter-departmental/ministerial commissions/subcommissions for Romani Affairs as the main co-ordinating advisory bodies (with the exception of Romania, where the main body is the Office for Roma). While in the Czech Republic there are now fourteen Romani members of the Commission, matched by twelve deputy ministers, in Hungary there is only one Romani member—the President of the National Gypsy Self-Government. In Slovakia there exists no specific Romani advisory body but plans for an Interministerial Commission on Romani Affairs are being discussed. At

the moment, three Romani representatives are members of the Council on National Minorities and Ethnic Groups, an advisory body on the development and implementation of minority policy. Slovakia and Hungary are the only countries in the region to have institutionalised one individual Romani representative who is mandated to act as an intermediary between Romani communities and the government—the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Romani Communities and Secretary of State for Gypsy Affairs in Hungary. Following the 2002 elections, Hungary also established the post of Personal Advisor to the Prime Minister on Romani Issues, held by a prominent Romani activist Aladar Horváth. All these Roma-specific institutions have only advisory and consultative functions, and policy decisions continue to be made by mainstream bodies (Barany 2002: 300–5; Ministry of Public Information of the Government of Romania 2001; Open Society Institute EU Accession Monitoring Program 2001; Tabajdi 2002; van Baalen 2000: 76–93; van der Stoel 2000: 142–52; Vašečka 2001 and personal communications with Peter Vermeersch, May 2002 and Martin Kovats, August 2002).

In addition to Roma-specific bodies (see Table 9), three Romani representatives in the Czech Republic are members of the advisory Council for National Minorities, and the forthcoming Romanian National Council for Prevention of Discrimination (to be established according to a 2000 ordinance) will also include Romani members. The Czech Romani MP for the period of 1998–2002 was a member of a standing parliamentary committee on human and minority rights and the two Romanian Romani MPs are members of the Committee for National Minorities in the Chamber of Deputies. Both the Czech Republic and Hungary have also established Romani co-ordinators at each relevant ministry; in some cases the co-ordinator is non-Romani but has a Romani assistant. In Hungary, these Romani civil servants are also employed at the local level, and the Czech Ministry of Labour employs Romani advisers or assistants at the district level. Following the 2002 elections, Hungary in addition plans to establish Romani integration sections at relevant ministries. The Czech Trade Inspection Office also hired Romani inspectors to investigate cases of discrimination. Although all countries in question have by now established the office of Ombudsman, so far it is only the Hungarian Ombudsman (whose office is the second oldest after the Polish) who has played an active and successful role in addressing abuses of rights. The Polish Ombudsman has addressed only few cases of discrimination against Roma to date and in all cases concluded that grounds

for discrimination could not be proven. The Romanian Ombudsman has also handled relatively few Romani cases: most often he has ruled that a case was not covered by his mandate and transferred it to another department. The Czech and Slovak Ombudsmen have been appointed only recently and records of their activities are therefore not yet available. In general, with the exception of Hungary, Roma are not well aware of the Ombudsman's office, and that office has not played a significant role in the protection of their rights (van Baalen 2000: 76–93; van der Stoel 2000: 142–52; Ministry of Public Information of the Government of Romania 2001; Open Society Institute EU Accession Monitoring Program 2001; Kovats, personal communication.)

The post-1989 period has also witnessed the growth of the so-called pro-Roma NGOs that are run by non-Roma but try to represent Romani interests in relations with authorities and execute projects for the improvement of educational, health and living standards of Roma at the local, national and international levels. In recent years, some of these NGOs have in fact started to take interest in the issue of Romani representation and have tried to promote Romani representation in various countries as well as internationally through leadership training and organisation of fora in which Romani leaders can either meet together to discuss common representation or meet with governmental representatives, non-Romani NGOs and experts to facilitate dialogue and co-operation. Although smaller training seminars have been organised by domestic NGOs such as the Slovak NOS Foundation for Civic Society or Hungarian Foundation for Self-Reliance, the most significant role is played by international NGOs, namely the US-based PER and the Budapest-based Open Society Institute (OSI). At the national level, PER has organised roundtables on a number of key issues, including Romani self-government in Hungary, political participation of the Roma in Hungary and Slovakia, governmental policies on Roma in Romania, the Roma-government debate over migration in Slovakia, and the role of Roma during the 2000 elections in Romania. As previously mentioned (see the discussion of the Parliament of Roma in Slovakia and GLAR above), one of the aims of these roundtables was to forge a more united Romani representation. The OSI operates several programmes aimed directly at building Romani representation and leadership (see Table 10). Additional support for building community centres and NGO leadership is given through national Soros (OSI) foundations (for details see the PER and OSI websites www.per-usa.org/roma.htm and www.osi.hu).

Conclusion

When we look at the historical development of the institutionalisation of formal external Romani representation and administration in Central Europe from the fifteenth century to the present, as outlined in this article, several major patterns of continuity and change emerge. The quantitative changes are most readily discernible. Firstly, the number of administrative and representative institutions for Roma created by non-Romani authorities is generally increasing, but the increase has not always been smooth and gradual. From the fifteenth century to the nineteenth century, there have been only isolated attempts to institutionalise Romani representation. In the first half of the twentieth century, no such attempts were initiated by the authorities. Between 1945 and 1989, a number of governmental institutions dealing with Romani issues emerged, but only a few of them survived after that period. During the first half of the 1990s, no governmental institutions dealing exclusively with Roma existed in Central Europe (with the exception of the surviving Cultural Alliance of Hungarian Gypsies), although a few governmental institutions dealing with minorities, including the Roma, were institutionalised. The majority of current Roma-specific institutions as well as those which deal significantly with Romani issues date from the late 1990s and early 2000s. Second, the number of ethnic Roma involved in governmental institutions for the Roma has been gradually increasing in all Central European countries except Poland. Under the pre-twentieth-century arrangements in Hungary, Transylvania, Wallachia, and Moldova, ethnic Roma were often employed as subordinates to non-Romani officials. In the Polish Commonwealth, on the other hand, only a minority of the Kings of Gypsies, if any, were ethnic representatives. In the 1945–1989 period, it was only Hungary that gave ethnic Romani representatives significant positions in the bodies dealing with Roma at the national level, although in Czechoslovakia some ethnic Romani representatives held assistant posts at the local level. After 1989 and especially since the end of the 1990s, ethnic Roma are significantly represented in the majority of national advisory bodies on Romani matters in those countries (where such bodies exist). Third, the number of representative institutions created by Roma has been gradually increasing since 1920s. The first attempts by the Roma to create their own representative bodies occurred in the inter-war period but were generally unsuccessful in the long run. Since 1945 there has been a gradual increase in the growth of Romani organisations claiming to represent Romani interests, and that growth intensified significantly after 1989. Fourth, the number of

Romani parties contesting elections has been gradually increasing since such parties were allowed in 1989. Fifth, the number of elected Romani MPs has been fluctuating from fourteen in 1990 to between six and seven in 2002, averaging three MPs between 1992 and 2002. Finally, the number of elected local officials of Romani origin has been gradually increasing since 1989, with the exception of Poland, for which such data is not available.

Several important qualitative changes have also been revealed. Firstly, there have been changes in the sources of initiatives for institutionalisation. In the pre-twentieth-century period, all the isolated attempts to institutionalise Romani representation derived from the initiative of non-Romani authorities. The first Romani attempts to create representative Romani organisations occurred in the inter-war period but, as we have seen, the bodies/organisations resulting from these efforts were all short-lived. During the inter-war period, although non-Romani authorities were uninterested in fostering Romani representation, yet they partially supported some of the Romani efforts towards this end. Between 1945 and 1989, Roma and non-Romani authorities alike undertook the creation of several new organisations. Non-Romani authorities concentrated mostly on creating governmental institutions to deal with Romani issues, while Roma individuals pushed for permission to establish their own organisations. In Hungary, non-Romani authorities went one step ahead of the other countries and, in addition to institutions dealing with Roma issues, also initiated Romani advisory and administrative bodies. They also tried to encourage Romani organisations to create a united representation but did so in a selective way, supporting only highly co-operative and highly moderate Romani leaders. After 1989, the Roma created an infinite number of their own organisations, usually with some financial help from the State, while at the same time urging non-Romani authorities to provide more governmental institutions in which Romani representatives could participate. Non-Romani authorities themselves initiated a number of Roma-specific governmental bodies as well as other institutions dealing significantly with Roma and other minorities and groups as part of their efforts to democratise and 'integrate into Europe.' In addition, as previously started regarding the case of Hungary prior to 1989, Central European governments have tried to encourage Romani organisations to create a united representation on government terms. Since 1989 several NGOs have also tried to promote Romani representation in the region through training, workshops, and roundtables. Second, the pattern of Romani participation in mainstream structures has changed over time. The

earliest information about the participation of Romani individuals in mainstream political or administrative structures comes from the Communist period and relates to individuals who participated by their own accord, not because of any ethnic mandate. After 1989, a number of Romani individuals have been appointed to posts in mainstream ministries and other governmental institutions at both the local and national levels, and ethnicity has been an important factor in their selection. Third, the purpose of Roma-specific institutions has changed over time. The motive for the first attempts to institutionalise Romani representation at governmental levels in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was a more efficient tax collection and a smoother administration of law and order. The governmental sanctioning of Gypsy Kings in inter-war Poland was spurred by the desire of non-Romani authorities to investigate Romani society and control its criminal behaviour. During the Communist period, Roma-specific institutions were designed mainly to administer policy pertaining to the Roma, especially in Czechoslovakia and Hungary. In Hungary, some institutions were also created for the purpose of controlling Romani attempts at self-organisation by channelling their quest for representative power into government-controlled bodies. After 1989, the dual purposes of administration and control are still at the heart of most Roma-specific institutions, in addition to the new need to conform to international requirements of collective minority representation rights.

Fourth, there have been some changes in the functions of Roma-specific institutions from administrative/representative to administrative to administrative/representative/policy advisory functions. The earliest pre-twentieth-century arrangements performed a mix of administrative and representative functions. In theory, the Polish inter-war arrangement entailed both of these functions; in practice, neither was performed. The Communist arrangements were in most cases purely administrative, with the exception of Hungary, where some degree of representation was allowed towards the end of the period. After 1989, alongside the administrative function the representative function became more heavily emphasised for certain Roma-specific institutions. In addition, for the first time in Central European history, Roma-specific institutions that served mainly to advise policy-makers were created. At present, no Roma-specific institution in Central Europe possesses ultimate policy-making and decision-making powers. Lastly, the influence of Romani representatives on governmental policies has changed in 1989 from non-existent/minimal to limited advisory. Before 1989, the influence of Romani representatives on governmental policies was non-

existent or at best minimal (acting mainly through individual connections with non-Romani officials). After 1989, Romani representatives have come to exert limited influence by several means: they participate in governmental advisory bodies and informal consultative arrangements with the government and lobby the Parliament through their own MPs. The fact remains, however, that most Romani MPs and advisors feel they do not have sufficient voice or powers to influence any significant policy changes.

Besides these changes, this article has also revealed great persistence in the way in which the recognition of 'independent' Romani representation is conditioned by non-Romani authorities. Since the inter-war times when Roma attempted for the first time to institutionalise their own representation, their recognition by non-Romani authorities has been dependent on the willingness of the Romani representatives to co-operate or even collaborate with the authorities, largely on those authorities' terms. This trend prevails even today, with moderate and co-operative Romani leaders being favoured in negotiations with the authorities over more radical and change-advocating leaders critical of government. So far it has proven impossible in any country to create a long-term united independent Romani representation which would be accepted as a main negotiation partner by the government, although some success (limited unification) has been achieved in Romania and temporarily also in Hungary.

In addition, some factors in the development of the institutionalisation of Romani representation have been subject to persistence and change. Firstly, although there have been some changes in degree, the dependence of Romani organisations on control by and support from non-Romani authorities has been a persistent feature since the inter-war years. Prior to 1989, there were virtually no independent Romani organisations. The only way such organisations could exist was with the political approval of non-Romani authorities, accompanied by some sort of financial or material support provided by those authorities in exchange for co-operation and often also non-Romani control. As of 1989, few truly financially and politically independent Romani organisations have come into being; the majority remains subject to some degree of control by non-Romani authorities or by donors who provide the organisations' funding. Secondly, some few promising experiments aside, the style of selection of Romani representatives for governmental institutions has been largely consistent since the pre-twentieth-century period. In most cases, Romani representatives have been handpicked by officials of the majority government and have received no popular mandate from the

Roma. The modalities of such selections have of course differed over time: prior to the twentieth century, representative positions at the highest levels were often awarded as noble privileges, while those at the lower levels were given in exchange for efficiency in tax collection and administration. In the inter-war period, they were given to self-proposed individuals in exchange for promises of co-operation. During the Communist period, loyalty to the Party was one of the main selection criteria. Since 1989, representatives for various advisory bodies are selected on the basis of personal skills and perceived ability to co-operate constructively with the government. The Czech Republic and Slovakia have openly pursued this undemocratic trend to this day, while Poland does not even provide Romani representation in governmental institutions.

Some preliminary steps away from this trend occurred recently in Hungary and Romania. Since 1994, Romani representatives in the Hungarian minority self-government are elected by popular vote (unfortunately not only by Romani voters), and since 1995 the elected President of the National Gypsy Self-Government represents Roma in the main co-ordinating organ for policy on Roma. Romani representatives in other Roma-specific bodies are, however, still handpicked and have no popular mandate, although some of them represent major Romani civic organisations. In Romania, as of 1999 GLAR was allowed to nominate Romani members to the governmental Subcommission for Romani Issues. Although these representatives did not have a popular mandate from the Romani population at large, they had a mandate from almost eighty Romani organisations including the Romani Party, whose officials were elected. As of 2000, a majority of officials in Roma-specific institutions in Romania have been nominated by the Romani Party, which gained the highest amount of votes in the parliamentary elections. Thus, they have at least an indirect popular mandate (although it is derived from a very small percentage of the Romani population, as the Romani turnout at the elections was very low). Besides the Romani Party, four other Romani organisations have been accepted as the official partners of the government in the implementation of the 2001 Strategy on Roma and are supposed to participate in some advisory governmental bodies. In reality, these bodies are allegedly dominated by delegates from the Romani Party.

The tentative conclusion we can draw from this historical survey is that the continuity of non-democratic selection of Romani representatives, persisting in the majority of countries at least in some form from the pre-twentieth-

century period until today, as well as the persistence of governmental recognition of Romani representation being conditioned by the willingness of the Romani representatives to co-operate or even collaborate largely on the governments' terms, along with the continuous dependence, since the inter-war years, of Romani organisations on public or donor funding (and consequently their control by these bodies) might well be some of the main obstacles to achieving legitimate and effective Romani representation, offsetting the positive progressive quantitative and qualitative changes identified in this article. Such a tentative hypothesis, however, requires further empirical scrutiny. As the data and ideas presented in this article form a part of ongoing research, the author would welcome comments and criticism.

Appendix

Note: Unless stated otherwise, the information in these tables is taken from the references cited in the article.

TABLE 1. First social, cultural and political Romani organisations in Central Europe—Inter-war period in Romania

The first documented local Romani association—Society of New Peasant Brotherhood at Calbor (district Fagaras) as of 1926, publishing the journal *Neamul Tigănesc* (Gypsy People or Nation; sometimes incorrectly translated as 'Gypsy Family')

Other local and regional Romani societies in the late 1920s–1930s:

1. Society of Roma of Sercaia
3. Fagaras funeral society
4. *Junimea Muzicală* (uniting Romani violin players and working for social emancipation of Roma in Bucharest)
5. The union of Romani chimney-sweepers in Craiova, Oltenia
6. Society for Mutual Assistance in Corabia, Oltenia
7. An Oltenian Romani association (publishing newspapers *Timpul* and *O Rom*)

Organisations aspiring to be nationwide:

1. *General Association of the Gypsies in Romania*
 3. *General Union of the Roma in Romania* (publishing the periodicals *O Rom*, *Glasul Romilor*)
 4. *Redemption of the Romani Men and Women in Romania*
 5. *Citizens Association of Roma in Romania*
-

TABLE 2. Romani organisations (1945–1989; until the regime change in Central Europe)

Czechoslovakia

- Union of the Gypsies-Roma of the Czech Republic (1969–1973, periodical *Romano Lil*, co-operative Nevo Drom, cultural groups)
- Union of the Gypsies-Roma of Slovakia (1969–1973, periodical *Romen*, co-operative Butiker, cultural groups)
- Informal Council of the Union of Roma in Czechoslovakia (1987–1989)

Hungary

- Cultural Alliance of Hungarian Gypsies (1957–1961)
- Democratic Alliance of Hungarian Gypsies (as of 1989)
- Phralipe (as of 1989)

Poland

- Society of Settled Gypsies of Walbrzych (est. 1952)
- Cultural organisations as of mid-1960s (e.g. Tarnów, Gdańsk, Olsztyn and Andrychow)
- Polish Romani Association in Łódź (as of the 1960s)

Romania

- General Union of Roma in Romania (1946–1954)
 - Romani cultural/neighbourhood association (1983–1985)
-

Note: Excluding purely cultural groups and sport clubs that existed in Central Europe throughout the period.

TABLE 3. Governmental institutions dealing with Romani issues (1945–1989; until the regime change in Central Europe)

Czechoslovakia

- Interministerial Commission for the Solution of Questions Related to Housing and Social Situation of Gypsy Population (1949–1951)
- Romanes Commission at the Oriental Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences (est. 1953)^a
- Special Section for Gypsy Affairs of the Ministry of Interior (est. around 1955)
- Commission for Gypsy Affairs of Ministry of Interior (est. around 1957)
- Permanent Commissions for Care and Re-Education of Gypsies^b
- Expert Commission of the Ministry of Culture and Education (1959–1962)

- Expert Commission of the Slovak National Council's Department for Education and Culture (est. 1960)
- Governmental Council for Questions of the Gypsy Population (1965–68)
- Governmental Commission for Questions of Gypsy Inhabitants in Slovakia (1966–1968, 1969–1991)^c
- Czech Governmental Commission for Questions of the Gypsy Inhabitants (1969–1988)
- Local, municipal, district and regional commissions for questions of the Gypsy inhabitants (1969–1988)
- Council of Czechoslovak Roma (suggested in 1988)^d

Hungary

- Cultural Alliance of Hungarian Gypsies (1957–1961)
- Interministerial Commission of the Council of Ministers (1968–1984)
- Gypsy Alliance (1974)^e
- National Gypsy Councils (1985–1989)
- Cultural Alliance of Hungarian Gypsies (1986–mid-1990s)^f
- Gypsy Social, Cultural and Methodological Center (as of 1987, later renamed to Romano Kher)
- Scientific Council for the Co-ordination of Gypsy Research at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (1982–1985)^a

Poland

- A Special Committee of the Ministry of Public Administration (around 1949–1950)
- Office for Gypsy Affairs under the Ministry of Internal Affairs' Department of Social Administration (1952–1989)

Romania

- Local committees of the Commission on Demography (1976–1989)

^a These institutions were part of the state's official structures but were not government institutions *per se*. They included some Romani representatives.

^b Planned to be established after 1958 at all regional, district and local municipal offices in areas with a large Romani population, but did not come into being.

^c Re-instituted in 1969 after the federalisation of Czechoslovakia.

^d The Czechoslovak Government suggested that the Ministry of Labour create such a Council, composed of Romani representatives, yet this did not happen, partly due to the regime change in 1989. In the case of Czechoslovakia, the large number of governmental institutions mirrors the fight for competences over the Romani issue between various ministries. Most of these bodies were short-lived and ineffective.

^e This organisation existed only briefly and only on paper as no sufficient political will was mustered to support it.

^f Having no continuity with the 1957 Alliance of the same name.

TABLE 4. Romani organisations (1989–2002; after the regime change in Central Europe)

Czechoslovakia (1989–1992)

- 44 Romani organisations registered in 1989
- One registered Romani party in the Czech Republic: Romani Civic Initiative (as of 1989)
- Six registered Romani Parties in Slovakia (see Table 5)

Czech Republic (1993–2002)

- 120 registered Romani organisations (2000)
- Three registered Romani political parties and movements: Roma Civic Initiative, Movement of Engaged Roma, and Coexistence^a
- Additional parties active at some point: Romani Christian and Democratic Party, Party of Citizens of Romani Nationality of Northern Bohemia Region, Roma National Congress, Czech National and Romani Movement in the Czech Republic, Democratic Alliance of Roma in the Czech Republic

Hungary

- 280 registered Romani organisations (2000)
- 10–15 Romani political parties (2000)

Poland

- Six Romani associations (2000)

Romania

- Some 150 Romani organisations (NGOs and parties) registered (2000)
- Some eleven Romani parties contested 2000 local elections (Alianta pentru Unitatea Romilor, Comunitatea Etniei Romilor din Romania, Organizatia Nationala a Romilor, Asociatia Sociala Culturala a Romilor, Liga Romilor din Clisura Dunarii, Partidul Romilor Caramidari, Uniunea Democratica a Romilor si Lautarilor-Armanis, Asociatia Nationala a Romilor, Asociatia Democrata a Romilor, the Romani Party and the Christian Center of Roma from Romania) with the 2 last contesting also general elections

Slovakia (1993–2002)

- 1999–59 Romani associations
 - 2001–46 associations and 3 foundations^b
 - 18 political parties registered in 2002 (see Table 5 for details) and some unregistered
-

Note: Excludes purely cultural groups and sport clubs.

^aActivities of the latter two have been intermittent, according to the registration update on 18 April 2002 from the Czech Ministry of Interior; see www.mvcr.cz/seznam.html.

^bThe database of registered Romani and pro-Romani organisations in Slovakia, updated on 19 March 2002, however lists over 200 organisations, out of which around 40 are sport clubs. See www.civil.gov.sk.

TABLE 5. Chronology of existing Romani parties in Slovakia (1990–2001)

Founded	Party name
1990	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strana integrácie Rómov na Slovensku (SIR)—Party for Integration of Roma in Slovakia 2. Strana ochrany práv Rómov na Slovensku (SOPR)—Party for the Protection of Rights of Roma in Slovakia (original name until 1997 Strana demokratickej únie Rómov na Slovensku—Party of Democratic Union of Roma in Slovakia) 3. Rómska občianska iniciatíva SR (ROISR)—Romani Civic Initiative of the Slovak Republic
1991	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strana sociálnej demokracie Rómov na Slovensku (SSDR)—Party of Social Democracy of Roma in Slovakia
1992	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Únia Rómskej občianskej iniciatívy v SR (Ú-ROI)—Union of Romani Civic Initiative in the Slovak Republic 2. Rómsky kongres Slovenskej republiky (RKSR)—Romani Congress of the Slovak Republic
1993	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demokratické hnutie Rómov v Slovenskej republike (DHR)—Democratic Movement of Roma in the Slovak Republic
1994	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strana Rómov Slovenska (SRóS)—Party of Roma of Slovakia 2. Rómska národnostná strana (RNS)—Romani National Party 3. Strana rómskych demokratov v Slovenskej republike (SRD)—Party of Romani Democrats in the Slovak Republic
1995	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demokratická aliancia Rómov v SR (DAR)—Democratic Alliance of Roma in the Slovak Republic
1996	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rómska iniciatíva Slovenska (RIS)—Romani Initiative of Slovakia (original name until 2000—Rómska inteligencia za spolunažívanie v Slovenskej republike—Romani Intelligentsia for Coexistence in the Slovak Republic)
1997	None
1998	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maďarské demokratické hnutie Rómov v Slovenskej republike (MDHR)—Hungarian Democratic Movement of Roma in the Slovak Republic (original name until 1999—Rómske kresťanské demokratické hnutie v Slovenskej republike—Romani Christian Democratic Movement in the Slovak Republic)
1999	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strana demokratickej jednoty Rómov (SDJR)—Party of Democratic Unity of Roma

- 2000
1. Rómske kresťanské demokratické hnutie v Slovenskej republike (RKDH)—Romani Christian Democratic Movement in the Slovak Republic
 2. Hnutie olašských Rómov Slovenska (HORS)—Movement of Vlach Roma of Slovakia
 3. Strana rómskej koalície v Slovenskej republike (SRK)—Party of Romani Coalition in the Slovak Republic (outgrowth of Romani Intelligentsia for Coexistence in the Slovak Republic)
- 2001
1. Rómska občianska jednota Slovenskej republiky (ROJ SR)—Romani Civic Unity of the Slovak Republic

Source: Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic, Database of registered political parties and movements, updated 19 March 2002, www.civil.gov.sk/POLIT/strany.htm.

TABLE 6. Estimates of Romani populations in some European countries

Country	Number of Roma ^a	% of total population
<i>Czech Republic</i>		
1991 census	32,903	0.3
2001 census	11,859	0.1
Other estimates	150–300,000	up to 2.9
<i>Hungary</i>		
1990 census	14,268	1.3
Other estimates	550–800,000	2.5–7.8
<i>Poland</i>		
	15–60,000	up to 0.16
<i>Romania</i>		
1991 census	409,700	1.8
Other estimates	1.8–2.5 million	up to 10.8
<i>Slovakia</i>		
1991 census	80,600	1.5
2001 census	89,920	1.7
Other estimates	480–520,000	up to 9.8

^aThese statistics are compiled from different sources, some of which cite precise figures for the census data while others round these figures up.

Sources: Czech Statistical Office 2002; Liegeois and Gheorghe 1995: 7; Minority Rights Group International 1997; Open Society Institute EU Accession Monitoring Program 2001; Roming 1999: 57; Satava 1994.

TABLE 7. Elected Romani MPs (1990–2002)

Czechoslovakia (1990–1992)

- Seven in the Czech National Council: five on the list of Civic Forum (in coalition with Romani Civic Initiative—ROI)—Dezider Balog, Ondrej Gina, Karel Holomek, Zdeněk Guži, Milan Tatár, one on the list of Communist Party—Ladislav Body, one on the list of Self-governing Democracy Movement/Association for Moravia and Silesia (HSD/SMS)—Vladimír Seman
- One in the Slovak National Council on the list of Public Against Violence (VPN, in coalition with ROI)^a—Anna Koptová
- Federal Assembly: two in the Chamber of People (Slovak vote)—Gejza Adam (VPN) and Vincent Danihel (Communist Party), one^b in the Slovak section of the Chamber of Nations—Karol Zeman (Communist Party)
- Czech Republic (1993–2006)
- 1992–1994 Ladislav Body for the Left Bloc, 1996–1998 Ladislav Body for the Left Bloc, 1998–2002 Monika Horáková for Union of Freedom
- 2002–2006 None

Hungary

- 1990–1994: Two for the Liberal Party (coalition with Phralipe)—Antonia Haga and Aladar Horváth and one for the Hungarian Socialist Party—Tamas Peli^c
- 1994–1998: one for the Liberal Party (coalition with Phralipe)—Antonia Haga and one for the Hungarian Socialist Party—Tamas Peli^d
- 1998–2002: No Romani MPs
- 2002–2006: three for Fidesz (Hungarian Civic Party, coalition with Lungo Drom National Gypsy and Civic Alliance and the Hungarian Democratic Forum)—Flórián Farkas, József Varga and Mihály Lukács and one for the Hungarian Socialist Party—László Teleki

Poland

- No declared Romani MP, although in 1991 and 1993 candidates stood for elections

Romania

- As of 1990 one seat in the Lower Chamber of the Parliament reserved for a Romani MP held by: 1990–1992 Gheorghe Raducanu, 1992–1996 Gheorghe Raducanu, 1996–2000 Madalin Voicu, 2000–2004 Nicolae Paun
- 2000–2004 one for the Party of Social Democracy in Romania (coalition with the Romani Party)—Madalin Voicu

Slovakia

- No MPs since 1992

^aThe Slovak counterpart of Civic Forum.

^bThere was no Romani activist in the Czech section of the Chamber of Nations, but a non-Romani politician Klara Samkova (Civic Forum) was sometimes considered as such due to her strong affiliations with ROI.

^cCo-opted in 1992.

^dDied shortly after elections.

TABLE 8. Elected Romani mayors and local councilors (1990–2002)

Czechoslovakia (1990–1992)

Not documented

Czech Republic (1993–2002)

Estimated several (at most five) mayors and local councilors, not documented

Hungary

Significant numbers (separate from the minority councilors) but not documented

Poland

None documented in city councils, commune councils or provincial administrations

Romania

- 1996–2000: at least two Romani mayors
- 2000–2004: around 150 local district councillors from the Romani Party, some more (about ten) from three other Romani parties, four county councillors

Slovakia

1998–2002: six mayors and 56 local councillors elected from Romani political parties

TABLE 9. Roma-specific governmental institutions (1989–2002; after the regime change in Central Europe)

Czechoslovakia (1989–1992)

None

Czech Republic (1993–2002)

Inter-Ministerial Commission for Roma Community Affairs (as of 1997, in 2001 the name changed to Governmental Council for Roma Community Affairs)^a

Hungary

- Cultural Alliance of Hungarian Gypsies (1986-mid-1990s)
- Romano Kher (as of 1987)
- Inter-Departmental Committee on Romani Affairs of the Office for National and Ethnic Minorities (as of 1999)^b
- Gandhi Public Foundation (as of 1994) and Public Foundation for Hungarian Roma (as of 1995)^c
- Local Gypsy self-governments (as of 1994)
- National Gypsy Self-Government (as of 1995)
- Co-ordination Council for Gypsy Affairs (1995–1999)^d
- Roma Programme Committee (1996–1999)
- Council for Romani Arts and Culture (as of late 1990s)
- Roma Civil Forum (as of late 1990s)
- National Romani Information and Cultural Centre^e (as of 1998)
- Roma Coordination Council (as of 2002)^f
- Secretary of State for Gypsy Affairs (as of 2002)^g
- Personal Advisor to the Prime Minister on Romani Issues (as of 2002)
- Romani integration sections at relevant ministries (planned as of 2002)

Poland

- Non-Romani Assistant to the Plenipotentiary for Romani issues at the city council of Nowy Sacz^h (as of 2000),
- One non-Romani officer on Roma at the Division of National Minorities of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration (as of 2000)

Romania

- Romani experts of the Department for the Protection of National Minorities DPNM (1997–2000)
- National Office for Roma within DPNM (1998–2000)ⁱ
- Interministerial Subcommission for Roma of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on National Minorities (1998–2000)^j
- (Romani) Adviser on National Minorities Issues in the Presidency Office (as of 2000)

- Office for Roma of the Department for Interethnic Relations (as of 2000)^k
- Interministerial Subcommission for Roma (as of 2000)
- Partnership Fund for the Roma (as of 2001)
- Joint Committee of Implementation and Monitoring^l
- Ministerial Commissions on Roma at each relevant ministry^m
- County offices on Romaⁿ
- Local experts on Romani Affairs
- Commission of Project Evaluation
- Local level Joint Work Groups^o

Slovakia

Commissioner for Citizens Requiring Special Assistance (1995–1998), Special Subcommittee for Roma of the Parliamentary Human Rights Committee, Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Romani Communities (as of 1999)

^a Headed by Commissioner for Human Rights, composed of twelve deputy ministers and Romani representatives (six as of 1997, twelve as of 1998 and fourteen as of 2001).

^b Roma represented only by the President of the National Gypsy Self-Government.

^c Both have Romani board members.

^d Includes representatives of Romani organisations and of relevant ministries.

^e Run by the National Gypsy Self-Government.

^f Chaired by the Prime Minister.

^g Held by the Socialist Party Romani MP and Vice-president of the National Gypsy Self-government Laszlo Teleki.

^h Appointed by the city council and by a plenipotentiary of the Roma at the Association of the Roma in Nowy Sacz region.

ⁱ First headed by a Romani representative Vasile Burtea but soon replaced with ethnic Romanian Don Oprescu.

^j Included eight Romani representatives nominated by GLAR.

^k Headed by a representative of the Romani Party, Ivan Gheorghe, Deputy State Secretary.

^l Composed of State Secretaries in the ministries responsible for the application of the Strategy, and Romani leaders from the *Framework Roma Convention*, presided by the State Secretary for Inter-ethnic relations, with the State Undersecretary for Roma as its executive secretary and National Office for Roma as its executive body.

^m Composed of experts from departments and from the *Framework Roma Convention* and independent experts.

ⁿ Have three to four members, one of which needs to be Romani.

^o Includes representatives of county bureaus for Roma or Romani councillors, NGOs and elected Romani representatives.

TABLE 10. Governmental institutions dealing significantly with Romani issues (1989–2002; after the regime change in Central Europe)

Czechoslovakia (1989–1992)

None

Czech Republic (1993–2002)

- Council for Human Rights (as of 1999) headed by the Commissioner for Human Rights
- Council for National Minorities (as of 1994, has three Romani representatives)
- Public Defender of Rights (Ombudsman, as of 2000)
- Roma co-ordinator at each relevant ministry (often non-Romani, only their assistants are Romani, since 1997)
- Romani inspectors at the Czech Trade Inspection (since 1997)
- Romani advisers or assistants of the Ministry of Labour at district level (since 1997)

Hungary

- Office for National and Ethnic Minorities (as of 1990)
- Parliamentary Commissioner for Ethnic and National Minorities (Minorities Ombudsman, as of 1993)
- Institute for the Study of Ethnic-National Minorities of HAS (as of 1996)^a
- Public Foundation for National and Ethnic Minorities in Hungary (as of 1995)
- Romani civil servants at each ministry at both local and national levels

Poland

- Commissioner for Citizen's Rights (Ombudsman, as of 1987)
- Senior Specialist for the Rights of Aliens and National and Ethnic Minorities (as of 1998)
- Sejm Committee on National and Ethnic Minorities (as of 1989)
- Interdepartmental Group for National Minorities (as of 1997)
- Division of National Minorities of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration (as of 2000)
- Department of National Minorities Culture of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage (as of 1994 formally, before informally)
- Department for General Education and Supervision of the Ministry of National Education (as of 1999 concentrating also on Roma)
- Advisors and Plenipotentiaries for National Minorities in Podkarpackie, Małopolska, Pomorze and Lubelszczyzna (as of 2000)

Romania

- Council for National Minorities (1993–1996)
- Department for the Protection of National Minorities (1997–2000)

- Ombudsman (as of 1997)
- Inter-Ministerial Committee on National Minorities (1998–2000)
- National Council for Prevention of Discrimination (to be established according to a 2000 ordinance)
- Committee for National Minorities in the Chamber of Deputies

Slovakia

- Governmental Advisory Council for Minorities (1990–1993)
- Deputy Prime Minister for Human Rights, Minorities and Regional Development (as of 1998)
- Governmental Council for National Minorities and Ethnic Groups (as of 1993)^b
- Parliamentary Committee for Human Rights and Minorities (as of 1999)
- Ombudsman (as of 2002)

^a Not a governmental institution *per se*.

^b Advisory body into which fourteen minority associations, including two Romani (*Romani Intelligentsia for Coexistence* and *Romani Civic Initiative*), can nominate members.

TABLE 11. OSI programmes aimed directly at building Romani representation and leadership

Name of the programme	Purpose
Local Government and Public Service Reform Initiative (LGI) Roma Public Administration Training Program	To enable elected Romani leadership in Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic to participate more effectively in local government councils
Roma Participation Project ^a	To provide institutional support, funding and training to grass-roots Romani NGOs engaged in advocacy on behalf of their local communities
Roma Political Leadership Program	To promote the participation of young Roma in the Czech Republic and Hungary ^b in national political life by providing them with the theoretical background and practical skills to serve as credible candidates for elective office

^a Unlike the other two programmes, this one is a long-term permanent institution.

^b As well as Bulgaria.

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