

European  
Roma  
Grassroots  
Organisations  
Network

# Annual report 2012

**ERGO**  
Network



ROMAREACT

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European Day in Brussels with a group of Romani children first time visiting an EU institution

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## ERGO Online

To find out more about ERGO's work, visit:

- [www.ergonetwork.org](http://www.ergonetwork.org) for detailed information on our approach, advocacy and campaigns
- [www.RomaReact.org](http://www.RomaReact.org) is an online platform where Roma realities are shared
- Facebook: ERGO Network, RomaReact



# Struggling for dialogue



ROMA EXCLUSION IN EUROPE  
DO YOU KNOW, DO YOU CARE

Preface by **Ruus Dijksterhuis**,  
Executive Director ERGO Network

As no other, ERGO Network and its members experience that Roma inclusion is an uphill struggle. Although we look back on a successful year, in which we tested innovative approaches for Roma empowerment (like the RomaReact online and offline campaign) and continued to play an influential role in the European advocacy together with the European Roma Policy Coalition (ERPC), we observe that many of the grassroots oriented organizations we work with struggle for survival. The current funding landscape cripples them to play a forceful role.

Deeply-rooted anti-Gypsyism is largely overlooked by European policy makers and is the root-cause of the failure of European

funding to bring the necessary change in the field. The emphasis should be on enhancing mutual understanding and respect, instead of expecting Roma themselves to unilaterally change their culture and adapt. Both Roma and non-Roma must assume their responsibilities to act and effectively fight against anti-Gypsyism.

We will not succeed to bring the much needed change in society unless Roma are at the core of the policies targeting them! Only if Roma are participating as full citizens, they can create bottom-up pressure and take initiative and ownership in actions targeting them. My dream for 2013 is that we finally reach a dialogue with European and national institutions concerning the fundamental changes needed in order to enable Roma to achieve equal citizenship.

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## The Board of ERGO Network

**ERGO chair:** It is a great honour that Ana Oprisan, board member since 2010 accepted the position of Chair, actively contributing to the sustainability and development of ERGO.

**New ERGO board member:** Stanislav Daniel is a Studies Officer at the Roma Education Fund. We asked him about his motivation to join the board of ERGO. "Since its establishment,



ERGO has been one of the key players in advocating for Roma with its unique approach in combining grassroots organizations' expertise with skills and knowledge of international players. With the number of advocacy bodies getting smaller, those with know-how, like ERGO, should definitely continue doing their good job. And I am happy to be part of it."

# ERGO Network: changes and developments

ERGO Network brings together organisations from 15 countries in Europe that share our guiding principle: Roma themselves have to take an active role to achieve equal citizenship and to fight discrimination. We aim to bridge the gap between Roma realities on the ground and the ‘Brussels’ reality by visualising the circumstances Roma encounter daily.

As of 2012, ERGO moved office from Utrecht (NL) to Brussels. Being based in Brussels enables us to pro-actively lobby and advocate towards the European Commission and European Parliament. In reaching our goals we employ innovative, experimental projects in identifying effective approaches for equal citizenship, social inclusion and the fight against discrimination.

As a network we are well-connected and are partners of European and international organizations. ERGO is a strategic partner of the European Youth Network ternType and in our advocacy efforts we work closely with the European Roma Policy Coalition (ERPC) of which ERGO is a founding member. The online platform RomaReact is developed in cooperation with kaskosan.com. A number of our members developed informal European networks. For instance, Policy Center Romania functions as a consultative body with the Romanian Ministry in charge of European Funds, Integro Bulgaria has a seat in the governmental committee on Roma Inclusion and is involved in monitoring activities of Open Society Institute, Roma Active Albania has been Decade Watch for a number of years.

## Board members ERGO Network

Ana Oprisan	- Chair
Vacant	- Vice-chair
Karlien de Ruijter	- Treasurer
Tanja Lubbers	- Board member
Stanislav Daniel	- Board member

## Core staff

Ruus Dijksterhuis	- Executive Director
Gabriela Hrabanova	- Policy Coordinator
Jozef Pang	- Financial Controller, till September 2012
Paolo Ferraresi	- Financial Manager, from October 2012
Sana Lopez	- Programme Officer
Sanne van den Heuvel	- Programme Officer
Karolina Mirga	- Programme Coordinator, from September 2012

## Experts

Adriatik Hasantari	- Youth Coordinator
Valeriu Nicolae	- Advocacy Advisor
Gyula Vamosi	- Digital Expert
Tamas Dogi	- RomaReact website developer
Lavinia Banu	- Young Roma Professional
Nicolet Pennekamp	- Graphic designer





# RomaReact shapes the public debate on Roma inclusion



Built on the success of the REACT campaign, ERGO developed RomaReact, consisting of a mixture of innovative, low-threshold activities, coupling social media with offline outreach events.

Active Roma are trained to be Reactors that empower their communities by building skills, motivating each other to take responsibility and experiencing the power of a shared voice. The Reactors are trained

in digital democracy, internet skills and media outreach, who on their turn train peers and engage their communities in positive offline and online actions for equal citizenship. At the same time the campaign is a call to end discrimination and developing mutual trust and respect between Roma and non-Roma.



## A unique website generating a new source of data

The RomaReact campaign is centred around an interactive multimedia mapping platform ([www.RomaReact.org](http://www.RomaReact.org)) that is generating a new source of data based on the self-perceptions of Roma. It seeks social change by allowing a global online community of activists to commonly challenge stereotypes and prejudices. RomaReact mobilises young people to actively participate in society and become agents in their own lives.

Data about Roma inclusion – or rather, about Roma exclusion – has never been aggregated and visualized before by Roma

themselves. RomaReact.org is engaging both Roma and non-Roma to collect information that is important for assessing the impact of Roma inclusion policies. The information gathered on RomaReact.org helps to visualize daily anti-Gypsyism towards decision makers and the general public at the local and European level.



# People behind RomaReact

The content of the RomaReact website depends to a great extent on the active contribution of the Reactors. They generate first hand news reflecting the reality they are living in or what they are facing with in their field of work. They are in charge of posting engaging articles, shooting videos, taking photos and generating public debates among users. There is a group of about 10 Reactors working in each of the countries. Reactors Edvin Saliöv (MK) and Ozlem Anadol (TR) tell more about their involvement.

## What made you decide to become a Reactor?

Edvin explains: “I saw that Roma youngsters are not as active as other young people; it seems to me they are afraid to show their abilities and needs. Before, I was introvert myself but as a Reactor I have found the motivation to express myself.” Ozlem adds “I understood that I cannot stay silent against social exclusion, early marriages and the problems we are facing in education.”

## In what way do you believe Reactors can make a change?

“Reactors are spreading the problems through social media and in this way we can attract local authorities to make a change in our societies” says Ozlem. “If we involve many youngsters from different countries in our Reactor family we become a role model for our communities.”

## What do you see as the biggest challenge for RomaReact?

“We all have our ideas, but only if we work together, we can achieve our aim. It is the challenge to catch the interest of the Roma youngsters to join projects like these”, concludes Edvin.



Roma youngsters preparing for the flash mob

## Local websites increase visibility

What is very important in each campaign is generating visibility around the undertaken actions. The RomaReact platform is supported by a wide network of people that are committed and trained as civic journalists reporting from their localities. In each of the participating countries, localised versions are set up where stories are portrayed in the local language. Publishing local activities under the umbrella of a common international campaign generates exposure for the partners involved. It enhances media coverage and thus allows for pressure on other bodies in the field to get involved. Besides, it enables the partners to mutually inspire each other and design common activities in different countries.

# CONTEST: Make a Change (in the life of Roma)

RomaReact.org was proud to receive a donation from Neelie Kroes, Vice President of the EU in charge of the Digital Agenda. With the donation we launched an online video and photo contest for all who want to share Roma realities and to challenge stereotypes and prejudices that the Roma face today.

The contest was open for participants of all skill levels. Each participant got feedback and advice on interviewing techniques, video editing and the use of social media. A total of 43 photos and 18 videos were uploaded, from all over Europe.

The jury selected the artwork titled “Different taste, different ways” by Rambo Halilovic as first place winner in the photo category. His modern way of thinking gets spiced up with Romanipe which results in a playful but at the same time powerful message. First place winner in the video category was Alin Banu, who recorded the events of Roma families in Romania that violently got evicted from their homes by their non-Roma neighbours. The winners won a trip to Brussels to receive the cash prize and to join the existing group of Reactors in a 3-day training on video recording and video editing.



R. Halilovic - 1<sup>st</sup> place



Z. Babog - 2<sup>nd</sup> place



T. Georgiev - 3<sup>rd</sup> place

Winners photography category

## Mind the Gap – Digital Divide and Roma Empowerment

On the fourth of December ERGO organised the public event “bringing Roma realities to Brussels”, hosted by Ioan Enciu, member of the European Parliament. It was time to celebrate the winners of the contest “Make a change (in the life of Roma)”. During the meeting, the digital online platform and its mapping system were presented as well as the people behind its social networking. Mr. Ioan Enciu stressed the value of Roma participation. He called the majority of Roma panellists around the table “an example to follow in the future”.

Antoaneta Angelova-Krasteva, head of the Stakeholders Unit at DG Connect representing Neelie Kroes said: “Digital platforms such as RomaReact allow for a meaningful dialogue in a safe environment. This helps to have your voice better heard at the EU level. I would like to warmly congratulate you for this great initiative!”

# Digital skills and messaging as empowerment tools

The RomaReact platform has supported the Reactors in their work through a series of intensive trainings aimed to increase their digital, campaigning and advocacy skills. The localised RomaReact sites in Macedonia, Albania, Bulgaria and Turkey were the starting points of each training.

**RomaReact.mk:** A motivated group of youngsters used the RomaReact training to get hooked in online debates. They became professionally engaged with their blogs, Facebook and twitter accounts and have started sharing photos from their activities and thus attracting their peers to join them.

**RomaReact.al:** The Albanian youngsters are excellent in their public appearance. The “I React” videos with an explanation why they are part of the project were a great success. The personal stories about joining RomaReact showed to be a motivational factor for other youngsters.

**RomaReact.bg:** Some Romani women brokers learned for the first time about Facebook and Twitter at the RomaReact



training. After the first excitement to see their families online, worked together with the younger and more internet savvy Reactors on questions such as: “How to promote an event through internet?” and “How to record an event on video and report it?”

**Tr.RomaReact.org:** The digital literacy training in Turkey encouraged the youngsters to learn about the reality that Roma people face in other countries as well as across Turkey. The internet and social networking increased their potential for networking, community-building and keeping an eye on each others’ activities.

## Strategic partner ternYpe

ERGO is a strategic partner of ternYpe Roma Youth Network. This network gathers active Roma youngsters from 8 countries, of which a great number are also member of ERGO. We cooperate by co-organising meetings and joint fundraising activities. As a strategic partner of ERGO Network, ternYpe has actively contributed to increase the reach of the online platform through their member organisations and existing social network. In Germany and Spain Reactors were selected and trained to publish articles in national languages in order to generate a debate among young Roma in their countries.



# Roma women take control of their own lives



ERGO's Roma women empowerment campaign **Our Place, Our Space, Our Case** stands for women that

invite people to their "place", who visualise their "space" and who formulate their "case" to relevant policy makers and stakeholders. Together with our members in Albania, Bulgaria, Macedonia and Turkey we invest in the capacity of grassroots Roma women to gain strength and power to take control of their own lives by becoming visible agents of.

The activities focus on generating visibility of actions both within and outside the Roma community. The visibility is ensured through open letters, press releases and online activities. The online component on the Roma-React website enables us to digitally visualise our impact. The campaign is well-received. At the launch in Brussels, representatives of DG Regional Policy and DG Enlargement warmly welcomed the campaign and highlighted the potential it has in achieving tangible results in the

integration of Roma women.

Antoaneta Angelova-Krasteva opening the kick off meeting of the **Our Place, Our Space, Our Case** campaign



Photo: RROMA

Research among Romani women

## Macedonia: Roma girls meet with Parliamentary Commission for Gender Equality

ERGO member RROMA trained 25 Roma girls to conduct a research on the freedom of education among Roma girls, gender equality inside the Roma families and employment of Roma women. The research showed that the unequal position of Roma women starts in the family sphere and continues to follow them during their entire life. Unfortunately, the state institutions see the practices as part of the tradition of the Roma population and so they do not take the necessary steps to improve the situation. It was a great opportunity that Liljana Popovska, Chair of the Parliamentary Commission for Gender Equality was willing to meet the girls and talk about the results of the research. During the meeting it was agreed to organise a public hearing in the parliament to further discuss about the implementation of the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men and its implications for the Roma community. With the organisation of workshops and counselling programs Roma women and girls will be promoted as positive agents of change that critically monitor the implementation of the law.

## Bulgaria: Roma Women Brokers as advocating agents

A group of 9 women was trained to become Roma Women Brokers, who will act as intermediaries in the advocacy of Roma women towards their local authorities. The topics they deal with are backed up by a research among 240 women on factors hindering the early development of Roma children. To stimulate activism and engagement, Roma women are addressed with the message: “Mothers, you have the power to decide the future of your children”. Through local press conferences the attention of the general public is attracted and local authorities are encouraged to take action.

## Albania: Presenting strong and positive Roma women

With the organisation of the first Roma Women Congress, ERGO Member Roma Active Albania presented positive experiences and aspirations of young Roma women. The congress was well visited, including a number of high level representatives. Their presence was valuable, since it can carry such an event to a higher level and generate visibility. Still, despite the positive focus of the congress and the high number of participants, the event was poorly covered by the Albanian mainstream media. This confirmed the need for trainings and practice on media exposure.



## Turkey: Young Roma focus on public dialogue and innovative approaches

In the final year of the MATRA project (2009-2012) member organization EDROM established two independent networks: TRY (Turkish Roma Youths) and ÇİKA (Roma Women). Macedonian youth expert Mustafa Jakupov closely coached the network members with trainings on leadership, task division and ownership. ERGO staff member Gabriela Hrabanova provided training on digital literacy, civic journalism and campaigning.

In the frame of the RomaReact campaign 40 youths from Bulgaria, Macedonia, Albania and Turkey performed a flash-mob in the main street of Edirne, where they stripped off stereotypes publicly. An event like this shows how peer-to-peer learning and campaigning can come together in a productive and inspiring way. See the video from the flash mob <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vboFxO9H7yU>.



# ERGO's achievements: European advocacy

In 2012 ERGO continued its efforts to call for a structured dialogue on participation of Roma (NGOs) in the policy process. In the implementation of the EU Roma Framework and the National Roma Integration Strategies (NRIS) structured dialogue is paramount for

it to function properly. Together with its members and allies ERGO drafted recommendations on the lessons learned from the REACT campaign (2010-2011) as input for the desk officers from DG EMPL and DG REGIO for the negotiations on the operational programme 2014-2020.



Viviane Reding is opening the Extraordinary EU Roma Platform meeting

Despite effective advocacy strategies, we encountered difficulties to have the voice of Roma heard. The extraordinary meeting of the European Roma Platform lacked meaningful involvement of Roma civil society as panellists. It made clear that the European Commission refrains to absorb the available expertise of Roma to try to understand the reality in the field. As a reaction, ERGO presented a statement advocating for genuine Roma participation on the next EU Roma Platform.

## EU Policy Developments

2012 was the first year of implementation of the NRIS within the EU Roma Framework. The NRIS focuses mainly on aspects of inclusion, meaning access to education, employment, housing and health, but largely overlook the anti-discrimination and Roma participation aspect.

The preparation of the new programming period 2014-2020 was offering opportunities to influence the policy debate. The EC has come with some promising proposals for the new programming period like the decrease of the administrative burden for NGOs or more technical support for capacity building. But these are still not being decided on and are depending on the negotiations with the Member States.





Roma participants at the NGO preparatory meeting before the Extraordinary EU Roma Platform meeting

## A new momentum for the ERPC

The European Roma Policy Coalition (ERPC) is an informal gathering of Roma and pro-Roma organizations, like Amnesty International, ERRC, ENAR, OSI and ERIO. Its particular objective when founding the ERPC was to advocate for an EU Roma Policy Framework. With the introduction of the Framework – ultimately leading to the National Roma Integration Strategies – the ERPC entered into a new momentum. ERGO network chaired the strategic working group on the new role and focus of the coalition as a watchdog that critically follows how EU institutions perform in the Roma policy process. Meanwhile, ERPC will continue to call for institutional reform to involve more Roma expertise. In 2013, ERGO will take the role of secretariat and chair ERPC's working group on Roma Participation in order to feed-in the process of preparing for the EU Roma Platform in 2013.



## Roma café for debate on Roma realities and challenges

Roma café's provide an informal space where Roma realities are shared through exchange of facts, ideas and trends to feed the policy debate on Roma inclusion and citizenship. The Roma café is organised on a regular basis in Brussels for all who are working with or are interested in Roma issues and are eager to understand the cause better. Topics that are discussed are the empowerment of young Roma, the digital rise of Roma families, school segregation of Roma children and Roma women activism.

For ERGO Network it is crucially important to provide space in Brussels for Roma people to share their stories. During each Roma café, Roma personalities from all over Europe are invited as debate starters. While drinking a coffee, a custom of many Roma people, the moderated debate brings people closer together. It helps to understand better what challenges Roma are facing today with the intention to bring new thoughts into our lives, projects and policies.



Informal discussion after the Roma Café in Brussels

# Financial Paragraph

This paragraph provides a summary from ERGO Network's Annual Report 2012, namely the Balance Sheet and the Profit and Loss Account, an Auditor's Report as well as donations received in 2012. The figures are derived from the annual report 2012, which has been issued by BDO Audit & Assurance B.V. Maastricht-Airport.

## SUMMARY BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2012 (IN EUROS)

### ASSETS 31 December 2012

#### Fixed assets

Intangible fixed assets	3.107,84
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#### Current assets

• Inventories and work in progress, non-concluded projects	202.347,64
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#### Receivables

• Other receivables	-
• Cash and Banks	<u>169.293,01</u>

<b>Total assets</b>	<b>374.748,49</b>
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### EQUITY AND LIABILITIES 31 December 2012

#### Equity

Reserve	155.721,82
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#### Short-term liabilities

Creditors	38.904,18
Taxes and social security premiums	9.555,02
Advance subsidies	115.412,53
Other liabilities and accrued expenses	<u>55.154,94</u>

<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>374.748,49</b>
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## Donors and supporters in 2012





## SUMMARY PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT 2012

	2012
Net sales	628.821,78
Revenue not project related	1.613,52
<b>Total operating revenues</b>	<b>630.435,30</b>
<b>Total operating expenses</b>	<b>- 647.230,63</b>
<b>Gross operating result</b>	<b>-16.795,33</b>
Financial income and expense	-490,46
<b>Exceptional income/ expenses</b>	<b>16.541,77</b>
<b>Result</b>	<b>- 744,02</b>

### Donation awarded in 2012

The Foundation has received a contribution from The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Matra Turkey and Human Rights Campaign) and ICCO for implementation of "Roma React online platform" in Albania, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Turkey and for the ERGO Network. From the European Commission the Foundation has received a contribution from DG JUST as operational grant and from DG ENLARG for the Roma Women Empowerment campaign "Our Place, Our Space, Our Case".



## Auditor's report

In accordance with your instructions, we have compiled the financial statements 2012 of ERGO Network Foundation, which comprise the balance sheet as at 31 December 2012, the income statement for the year then ended and the notes.

### Management's responsibility

The distinctive feature of a compilation engagement is that we compile financial information based on information provided by management of the entity. Management is responsible for the accuracy and completeness of the information provided and the financial statements based thereon.

### Auditor's responsibility

Our responsibility is to perform the engagement in accordance with Dutch law, including the Rules of Professional Conduct and Practice issued by our professional organisation.

We have compiled the financial statements in accordance with the compilation engagement standard applicable to auditors. Our procedures were limited primarily to gathering, processing, classifying and summarising financial information. Furthermore, we have evaluated the appropriateness of accounting policies used in the compilation of the financial statements, based on the information provided by the company. These procedures do not provide assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement.

### Confirmation

Based on the information provided to us, we have compiled the financial statements in accordance with the applicable statutory rules and/or regulations.

Maastricht-Airport, June 2012

BDO Audit & Assurance B.V.

on its behalf,

Mr. drs. E. N. H. M. Lamkin RA/AA/FB

# Looking ahead

In the “European Year for Citizenship”, ERGO Network calls for promoting Roma inclusion from the angle of equal and active citizenship. The inclusion of Roma remains a litmus test for some of the core European values: democracy, human rights and social inclusion. Equal Roma rights and citizenship are high on the list of EU priorities, while in reality thousands of Roma communities are cut off from all opportunities and hope for change. On top of that, the current crisis pushes Roma further out of society – locked in their rural and urban ghetto’s, if not migrated to places with more opportunities- and makes them easy targets for populism and hate. The current policies and funding do not address sufficiently the complexity of Roma Inclusion. EU funding has not reached these places, while massive investments are needed for Roma to become respected citizens in their country.

Together with our members, ERGO Network will continue to advocate for improvement of policies and programmes targeting Roma. We will be louder in our efforts to create a sense of urgency. We will bring Roma to Brussels to shape the debate on Roma. On our online RomaReact platform we will involve people and stir debate and mobilise them to raise their voice – starting at the local level and reaching out to the international institutions.

## Join us!

Under the umbrella ‘Roma Inclusion, do you know, do you care’ ERGO is mobilising (pro) Roma organisations and people to join different advocacy events. We ask for measures making sure Roma are recognised as equal stakeholders in the policies and programmes targeting them and for funding opportunities for empowerment of independent (pro) Roma NGOs, networks and local groups.

Support our events at  
[www.ergonetwork.org](http://www.ergonetwork.org)



**ROMA EXCLUSION IN EUROPE  
DO YOU KNOW, DO YOU CARE**

