Annual report 2011
To find out more about ERGO’s work, visit:
- www.ergonetwork.org for detailed information on our approach, advocacy and campaigns
- www.romareact.org is a global online community where Roma realities are shared
- www.ergonetwork.org/react shows all we did, achieved and learned during the REACT campaign
- Facebook: ERGO Network, RomaReact
Thank you

It is my pleasure to present you the Annual Report of ERGO Network for 2011; a year of interesting developments. In April, the European Commission launched the European Roma Framework Strategy that aims to focus on improving policy design and policy implementation in the Member States. This created expectations and new dynamics among the people and organisations involved in Roma inclusion. ERGO Network strongly believes that the Framework provides a chance for enhancing equal citizenship for Roma. However, if the root cause of Roma poverty and exclusion, thus anti-Gypsyism, is not taken into account, the EU Roma Framework will fail. As long as (Roma) populism still is beneficial for local politicians to be re-elected and widespread anti-Gypsyism is still taken for granted, it means that crucial mechanisms are lacking to allow the Roma to be full citizens in their respective countries. Also, ERGO sees that only few Roma organisations are able to participate in the policy dialogue. So far, European funding (ESF) did not contribute to a strong and independent Roma Civil Society. The situation is rather such that Roma organisations either focus on providing services, they are hesitant to speak up to their governments or struggle for survival and lack human capacity. Especially on local level, Roma need to be provided expertise, resources, skills and tools to enter into a dialogue with local authorities and to create the much needed bottom-up pressure in order to make Roma policies work. ERGO believes that only then the EU Roma Framework can lead to success in 2020.

At the beginning of 2012, Jan Marinus Wiersma decided to step back as Chair of ERGO Network which he had occupied since 2007. We thank him for his efforts in leading ERGO and for his constructive contribution to the European Advocacy work of ERGO. Until a new chair is found, Tanja Lubbers shall hold the position of interim Chair.
ERGO is a network which is connected to local Roma organisations, leaders and youth through its members and allies. Together we carry out activities with a common objective in various European countries, member states and accessing countries alike. ERGO’s core members are Policy Center for Roma and Minorities (PCRM) from Romania, Integro from Bulgaria and Roma Active Albania. We also cooperate closely with organisations – RROMA from Macedonia and EDROM from Turkey. In 2011 ERGO intensified the cooperation with the International Roma Youth Network ternYpe by signing a cooperation agreement. ternYpe co-organised the youth meeting on anti-Gypsyism in Krakow, Poland (see page 13 for more info on this meeting). We are continuously investing in enlarging our support base with members, partners and collaborators in other European countries to enlarge our scope and impact.
In November 2011, ERGO invited all members and partners to the Annual Members Platform Meeting which coincided with the final conference of the REACT campaign. Around 20 organisations participated in Brussels, among which there were a number of possible new members, like the members of the ternYpe network, Kaskosan from Hungary and Romodrom.

During the Members Platform meeting, ERGO shared its future policies and plans for cooperation with its members and partners. This was an opportunity for the participants to exchange experiences and information on advocacy and campaigning. ERGO also facilitated meetings with the representatives of the European Commission – DG Enlargement, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion and DG Education and Culture.

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**Gabriela Hrabanova** joined the ERGO team

As Director of the Czech Governmental Office for the Roma Minority, Gabriela was deeply involved in European Roma policymaking: she was behind the acceptance of the 10 Common Basic Principles for Roma Inclusion and organised the first meeting of the Roma Platform. Gabriela works as Policy Coordinator for ERGO Network and is currently developing the RomaReact umbrella campaign and the RomaReact.org online platform. Thanks to her work in the Roma movement, she has an impressive network that enables ERGO to ally with interesting and committed people.
Can you ... ?
Can you give ghetto children a different perspective on their future? And can you make politicians understand what this takes? How do bystanders react when Roma and non-Roma youngsters are in a street action together? And how do mayors react when a Roma community representative comes knocking on their door to lobby for a local action plan? How do the media report on these actions, and how can you beat them if they won’t join you?

From October 2010 to November 2011, ERGO and its members - Policy Center for Roma and Minorities (Romania), Integro Association (Bulgaria) and Roma Active Albania, carried out the campaign REACT as part of the EU Pilot Project “Pan-European Coordination of Roma Integration Methods”.

REACT explored effective campaign approaches, methods and tactics to tackle social exclusion of Europe’s largest minority by challenging negative prejudice against Roma people, inviting people to come closer, to deepen their understanding and to become involved in change. The REACT campaign reached out to citizens – Roma and non-Roma – to the media and to governments. REACT provided a framework, a central idea that empowerment, active participation and equal citizenship are keys to change. The Roma themselves – activists, youngsters, students, communities, parents and children, should take ownership as authors and performers of the campaign. REACT achieved this by mobilizing and empowering them and giving them the confidence and skills to act accordingly.

Positive reactions
At the closing seminar of the REACT campaign, on 29 November, 75 people participated. In his video message, the Director General Mr. Ahner from DG Regional Policy expressed his satisfaction and congratulated on the excellent results and achievements of the campaign. Mr. Jerzy Buzek, the President of the European Parliament, said in a letter that the campaign is “a crucial step towards understanding the situation of the Roma in Europe. It is a very important instrument for the promotion of effective integration and respect of the Roma in our European societies.”
**RAA:** Young Roma step into the public debate in Albania

Under the title, “Thank you, Mr. Mayor”, Roma Active Albania (RAA) combined youth driven campaign activities with advocacy actions that turned out to be a successful step in promoting cohesion in society as well as creating rare visibility of Roma in Albania’s public debate through their appearances on TV and other media. Roma youngsters connected with their non-Roma peers and got involved in public actions together, triggering the interest of their audiences.

**Hit charts**
The Albanian campaign was supported by Dr. Flori – a well known personality in Albania – who lent his voice together with three young Roma musicians to RAA’s campaign and recorded “The World is not Black and White”, which tells how Albanians complain of being discriminated abroad, but do the same at home. After the release of the song, RAA received numerous invitations from TV-channels to discuss the song’s message.

**Integro:** Creating bottom-up advocacy pressure through campaigning

In Bulgaria, Integro Association tested how effective long-term intervention can be achieved by imposing pressure on local authorities to act and by imposing bottom-up pressure of people advocating for inclusion. Under the title “Thank you, Mayor!” local activists were mobilized in 14 municipalities. 12 of them managed to create local Roma inclusion strategies in partnership with local administrations. This conveyed a message that cities can achieve much more when the Roma are regarded equal citizens and when problems are not bemoaned, but solved.

**Mayor-to-mayor**
The mayor of Kavarna played a special role in the “Thank you, Mayor!” campaign. He promotes equal citizenship for the Roma and shared his experiences with integrating the Roma in Kavarna during a series of mayor-to-mayor exchanges. His message boosted the campaign and involved local authorities in a real debate on Roma integration. The actual implementation of commitments will have to be proven in the coming years, but an important first step is made.
In Romania, Policy Center for Roma and Minorities (PCRM) made a very strong appeal to governments using the Ferentari ghetto in Bucharest as a showcase, presenting a living example and type of intervention to policymakers that can bring about real change. An Alternative Education Club was set up in the neighbourhood school. Ferentari conceals an urban ghetto where poverty, criminality, and lack of perspective rule. This social time bomb hugely impacts the quarter’s children and youth – for them even the aspiration of a normal live is often unimaginable.

The Alternative Education Club and the web of activities around it do not just reach the children and community of Ferentari, they also served as a powerful communication tool in the REACT campaign. The Club is something people can see, feel and connect to, that evokes a certain emotion, seduces them to become involved and recruits them as messengers. Crucially, visits of policymakers or the involvement of public figures (like famous musicians, sports celebrities or ambassadors) are a lever to attract media attention. The live dynamic of a positive development against the background of the dismal conditions in the Ferentari ghetto were instrumental in reaching the media and the general public, but also in building partnerships with stakeholders and public personalities and in creating commitments of policymakers and public administrations. The Club thus became the message and the medium capable of mobilizing a wide range of people.
European reality today is one of widespread and sometimes very strong anti-Roma sentiment. If you really want to reach people you have to be prepared to confront negative reactions, indifferent audiences and possibly disappointing outcomes. Therefore, combating exclusion and discrimination of Roma requires innovative, experimental approaches rather than conventional campaigning logic.

**While implementing REACT, these are the main lessons we learned:**

- **No need to simplify**: the aim is not to just send a message, but to challenge people to think again and commit themselves to action.
- **“Positives” carry a campaign**: positive examples, tactics and messages challenge existing prejudices of Roma in unexpected ways.
- **Find the right messenger**: who delivers your message can be equally important as the message itself.
- **Mobilisation is key**: it makes sense to go the extra mile to empower communities and activists or to create strategic partnerships.
- **Respond to dynamics and opportunities**: REACT was not centrally led, this enabled partners to suit their activities to the dynamic context in their countries.
- **Local focus makes sense**: effective national advocacy efforts strongly correlate with local involvement.
- **Get the media to move along**: to target media for public campaigning on Roma is anything but obvious, though indispensible.

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**Totonel**

Totonel, a nine-year-old Roma boy in the Ferentari ghetto, is the main character in the documentary made by Strada Film and award-winning director Alexander Nanau. The story about Totonel’s live, his troubled environment, with his mother in prison, regular drug users around him and his joy in the Alternative Education Club will not be easily forgotten by any spectator. The documentary was successfully pitched at the IDFA festival and awarded a price by the Sundance Film Festival. The documentary is expected to be released autumn 2012.
ERGO Network is a dynamic European organisation and functions as a liaison between Roma organisations and decision makers, European policymakers and local administrations. Through its members and allies, ERGO Network is strongly connected to grassroots Roma: Roma organisations, leaders, women and youth. ERGO is well equipped to bridge the gap between the local and European level and to make the voice of Roma heard in Europe. Also, based on the information gathered by our members and allies, we feed-in to the policy debate on Roma Active Citizenship and Empowerment by organizing meetings, drafting position papers and by conducting case studies.

ERGO network is frequently invited as speaker to international meetings, such as the OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting and the EU Roma Platform meeting. At the same time, we never refrain to raise our voice, for example, at the protest organised at the Council of Europe youth meeting, where all international stakeholders were asked to take a clear stand against the rise of anti-Gypsyism and violence across Europe.

Also, we offer and encourage exchange between members of ERGO and other stakeholders (Civil Society organizations, EC representatives, MEP’s) and enhance debate on policy developments and monitoring between them. For instance, ERGO facilitated Roma women to participate in the UNHCR expert meeting on health in Brussels, which set the basis for the later established UN working group on Roma health.

ERGO Annual report 2011
Launch of the EU Roma Framework Strategy

In April 2011, the European Commission launched the European Roma Framework Strategy - a result of intensive lobbying together with the European Roma Policy Coalition (ERPC, see box). ERGO Network welcomes the initiative of the Commission to encourage Member States to draft and implement national Roma integration strategies and to monitor the implementation of those strategies till 2020. However, as we made clear in the description of our advocacy efforts, promoting social inclusion cannot lead to genuine success if it is not coupled with effective measures to tackle discrimination and anti-Gypsyism. Also, greater efforts should be put into involving and capacitating Roma civil society to take on a genuine role in the policymaking process. Only then ERGO believes that the EU Roma Framework can lead to success in 2020.

ERGO and the ERPC

ERGO network works closely with the members of the European Roma Policy Coalition (ERPC) which was established in 2007 with the aim to advocate the adoption of a European Strategy for Roma Inclusion. Due to the lobby of the ERPC, the European Commission launched the EU Roma Framework Strategy in 2011, which is a remarkable achievement.

Last year ERGO Network held the position of chair (till March) and co-chair (April till October). Together we drafted and presented comprehensive input papers for a reorganised EU Roma Platform and for the assessment of the National Roma Integration Strategies by the European Commission. Also, the ERPC together with the Decade Secretariat organised and facilitated the voice of the Roma Civil Society before the EU Roma Platform meetings in April and November 2011.
ERGO invested in Turkish Roma civil society by supporting EDROM and its activities. EDROM further built the “Thrace” Network, consisting of 11 local organisations and groups that voice the interest of Roma on local level. They became an example of effective regional cooperation for Roma grassroots organisations. The Marmara region and the Aegean region are setting up similar structures based on the experiences of the “Thrace” Network.

In 2011, ERGO particularly focused on the empowerment of Roma youth and women and involved Mustafa Jakupov from RROMA Macedonia to coach the youth organisations being united in the Turkish Roma Youth Network (TRY). This network has taken shape over the last period and has been involved in different common actions and trainings, as well as local activities. The TRY network unites youth groups from Hatay, Edirne and Dikili, who managed to involve a growing number of youths and are successfully formulating and acting upon topics defined by the grassroots youth groups.

Involving women in the Roma movement in Turkey has proven to be challenging. Nonetheless, by focusing on young, educated and active women, a step forward has been made. With the support of the IPA Roma Women Empowerment Campaign a network was established called ÇİKA (derived from “Çingene Kadımlar”, meaning “Roma women” in Turkish) where young Roma women take ownership and get involved in raising awareness on stereotyping, anti-Gypsyism and equal citizenship through creative campaign activities and actions.
**RROMA: Leading the fight against HIV/AIDS**

Partner organization RROMA from Kratovo, Macedonia is supported by the MTV Staying Alive Foundation to implement a creative campaign on HIV/AIDS and STDs. The campaign will improve knowledge and awareness on the topic and promote positive values about the Roma community through promoting active youngsters as agents of change. The activities in the campaign are based on creativity and using social media: creative actions, video, theatre, role-play, comic drawing, awareness workshops and data research. Parallel with the campaign, RROMA is working on creating a youth advocacy network by uniting youth from 22 municipalities till 2014. The work already started by training six young people to become advocacy officers and to get into direct partnership with the municipalities by signing memorandums for cooperation and to work together with the authorities on elaborating local youth action plans.

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**Young Roma Professionals trained by ternYpe**

As part of the capacity building programme for Young Roma Professionals (YRPs) a working meeting on anti-Gypsyism was organised in cooperation with ternYpe. Together with regular members of the Roma Youth Network ternYpe, 8 YPRs participated in the meeting that took place in Krakow, Poland. The aim of the meeting, which coincided with the commemoration days in Auschwitz, was to create broader awareness on anti-Gypsyism mechanisms and to help the YRPs in developing methods and strategies to address this. The programme included various discussions about the Holocaust, the backgrounds, and the mechanisms of exclusion, racism and anti-Gypsyism, with a special focus on its importance for the present. The working meeting increased the awareness and understanding of the YRPs and their skills to develop strategies and methods for youth work in their respective countries.
This paragraph provides a summary from ERGO Network’s Annual Report 2011, namely the Balance Sheet and the Profit and Loss Account, an Auditor’s Report as well as donations received in 2011. The figures are derived from the annual report 2011, which has been issued by BDO Audit & Assurance B.V. Maastricht-Airport.

### SUMMARY BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2011 (IN EUROS)

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<th>ASSETS</th>
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<th>31 December 2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fixed assets</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Intangible fixed assets</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Other</td>
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<td><strong>Current assets</strong></td>
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<td>Inventories and work in progress</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Non-concluded projects</td>
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<td>603,463</td>
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<td>• Other receivables and prepaid income</td>
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<td><strong>Total assets</strong></td>
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<td>1,154,248</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>EQUITY AND LIABILITIES</th>
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<th>31 December 2010</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Equity</strong></td>
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<td>Reserve</td>
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<td>Taxes and social security premiums</td>
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<td>Advance subsidies</td>
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<td>Other liabilities and accrued expenses</td>
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<td>875,933</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total liabilities</strong></td>
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**Donors and supporters in 2011**
Auditor’s report

In accordance with your instructions, we have compiled the financial statements 2011 of Stichting ERGO Network, which comprise the balance sheet as at 31 December 2011, 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 2011
BDO Audit & Assurance B.V.
on its behalf,  
Drs. M.M.G. Mans RA

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**SUMMARY PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT 2011**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2010</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Net sales</td>
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<td>Revenue not project related</td>
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<td>272</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not project related result</td>
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<td>272</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gross operating result</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total operating expenses</td>
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<td>Operating result</td>
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<td>Financial income and expense</td>
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<td>Result</td>
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<td>15.896</td>
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**Donation awarded in 2011**

The Foundation has received a contribution from The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Matra Programme and Human Rights) and ICCO for implementation the programme “Strengthening the Roma Voice” in Albania, Macedonia, Turkey and for the ERGO Network. From the European Commission the Foundation has received a contribution of 0,3 million euro for the “Pilot project Pan-European Coordination of Roma Integration Methods – information and Awareness Raising – REACT!: Make Europe an equal place for Roma”. For the implementation of the action entitled: European Campaign of Roma Women started on 30 November 2011 and ending 29 November 2013 the European Commission has contributed a total amount of 0,2 million euro.
As a network, ERGO intends to bring together all people and organisations dedicated to enhancing Roma active citizenship and fighting anti-Gypsyism and to involve them in our activities. Therefore, ERGO developed the RomaReact campaign, which is built on the success of REACT and contains a mixture of innovative, low-threshold activities, coupling social media with outreach activities and events on local and national level, owned by the Roma themselves. RomaReact is centred around an interactive multimedia mapping platform (www.romareact.org) engaging both Roma and non-Roma to share Roma realities and to challenge stereotypes and prejudices. After the testing phase, the campaign is open to all organisations and people that are interested to step into the public debate on Roma issues.

One of the activities visualised through RomaReact is the Roma Women Empowerment Campaign “Our Place, Our Space, Our Case” supported by the IPA programme and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The campaign empowers Roma women to take control of their own lives by becoming visible agents of change within their communities and by raising their voices to influence policies and programmes affecting them.

One of our main challenges for the coming year is to involve people in the European advocacy, especially now that national Roma integration strategies are developed. There is a huge need for monitoring the quality of the implementation of Roma policies at national and local level. ERGO wants to facilitate the information flow from local level in order to give meaningful input to the assessment of the implementation of these national strategies.

We are looking forward to cooperating with you!