Looking ahead

ERGO Network proudly announces that we signed a 4-year Framework Partnership Agreement with DG Employment that allows investing more intensively in our network, in bringing together the (pro) Roma Civil Society organisations at EU level and increase fact-finding activities on grassroots level. Next year we will focus on ensuring participation of Roma in the policy process, as we believe that without including the most crucial stakeholders, the Roma themselves, the European Commission and governments can neither build a lasting solution nor be sincerely accountable towards their Roma fellow citizens.

The election to the European Parliament will mark next five years of ‘European’ reality. Engagement of our network needs to be even stronger with the increasing popularity of the far right political parties. The campaign ‘Romani Resistance’ will not mark only the 70’s anniversary of the revolt of Roma in Auschwitz Birkenau and their further elimination on the 2nd August, but will also mobilise Roma to participate in the election. Furthermore, the 25 years of the fall of Berlin wall will help us to strengthen the call to end the segregation of Roma across Europe in the Wall Free Europe Campaign.

Wall Free Europe campaign

In 2014, the 25th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin wall will be commemorated. This is considered a symbolic date that sparked a new, enlarged Europe based on fundamental European values: democracy, human rights and social inclusion. Since the fall of the Berlin wall, new walls have been erected in Europe to segregate Roma citizens. Mental walls in people’s mind also constitute invisible but strong barriers to integration and active citizenship of Roma people and social inclusion. ERGO and its members therefore launched the Wall Free Europe campaign that aims to end the Roma Apartheid in Europe through visualising and raising awareness about the existing walls that divide Roma and non-Roma. ERGO Network calls for the removal of the walls through a number of stepping stone actions during 2014.

Join us and be a hero!
Europe is facing a true challenge to respond to the growing extremism against Roma and other minority groups that is now accelerating due to the current crisis. Besides an economic crisis, caused by economic mismanagement and weak political leadership – we are facing political and moral crisis. The EU is built by people who experienced the tragedy of World War II and who believed that interstate cooperation could be a valve to avoid tensions that trigger hate and violence. Now we face a harshening atmosphere we realise that the European values and principles are not obvious anymore. New political and public commitment needs to be discovered to avoid the tensions will further accelerate.

We observe that the most vulnerable of society are hit hardest by the economic decline and that Roma are further pushed out from mainstream society, which makes them easy targets for populism and hate. Roma are the poorest, biggest and most disliked ethnic minority in their countries and at the European level. This dimension of deeply-rooted anti-Gypsyism is largely overlooked by European policy makers and is one of the root-causes of the failure of European funding to bring the necessary change on the ground. As a result, thousands of Roma communities are cut off from all opportunities and hope for change. Many Roma live in places with no economic prospect and rudimental living conditions. Due to lack of capacity of local authorities and NGOs to access EU funding, these places are not reached, while massive investments are needed to provide them with hope for a better future and dignity to become respected citizens in their country.

ERGO sees that policies targeting Roma are caught in two parallel processes: The one focusing on Social Inclusion that invests in improvement to access to services such as education and health, but fail because of systemic failures caused by a deeply ingrained institutional racism. The other focussing on human rights and anti-discrimination by seeking remedies in applying legal directives and measures, but that fail to make a case because of lack of evidence and forceful political will.

Therefor ERGO is constantly seeking dialogue with policies makers, politicians, experts and other actors to engage in the debate to acknowledge that Roma targeting policies and programmes need a serious reform.
ERGO Network brings together over 25 Roma organisations through joint networking, advocacy and campaigning. In the past year we extended our membership base with a great number of members and allies from across Europe. ERGO Network aims to make the voice of its members and allies heard in Europe. We try to bridge the gap between Roma realities on the ground and the ‘Brussels’ reality by visualising the circumstances Roma encounter daily. Based on the information gathered through our members and allies, we advocate for better policies and programmes for Roma to create favourable conditions to better benefit from opportunities offered to them.

The interests, background and focus of ERGO Network members differ. Therefore we are developing different kinds of approaches to provide them all with relevant information and joint activities in order to further build the network relations with them and among them.

We invest in mobilising and capacitating Roma Civil Society actors to become stakeholders towards the European and national institutions. At this moment a consultative structure is lacking, while in the current policy landscape, well-prepared, efficient and knowledgeable players are needed to take a key role in the policy process. We are appreciated for our role facilitating actors to come together and enhancing a policy dialogue among them.

ERGO Network is well positioned in the larger European environment and has established relationships with intergovernmental organisations. Increased ErGo membership can be either core or allied members, assembled together in ERGO Network’s Members Platform. Core members are represented in the Advisory Council, which has the prerogative to propose board members and is involved in strategic discussions. Allied members have the possibility to apply for full membership.

**Increased ERGO membership**

Through its members, ERGO Network is connected to over hundred Roma communities. Thanks to increased visibility and a more active profile, the number of ERGO members has grown rapidly during 2013. ERGO Network now has over 25 members from across Europe. The enlarged membership base enables us to create even stronger links between Roma from the ground and the EU level representatives. Organisations

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**Activists meet EU-level officials**

On 25-26 November the annual ERGO Network Platform Meeting was held in Brussels. The meeting brought together 50 representatives from more than twenty-five organizations. It was for the first time that such a large number of ERGO members joined together in a common meeting. Besides the exchange of inspiring initiatives and future plans, the most important result of the meeting was the direct communication between activists and EU-level officials.

A public event was organized in cooperation with the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Foundation Centre. The event provided an insight in the impact of the crisis on Roma. Also as working meeting was organised between ERGO members and representatives from the European Commission to explore the Commission’s “Community-Led Local Development” tool for EU funding. The Platform Meeting was closed with a public workshop organized by ERGO together with DG Enlargement and the European Women’s Lobby. Here, participants and external guests were given a sense of the implementation of the “Our Place, Our Space, Our Case” campaign.
**European Advocacy**

In the past year, ERGO Network invested further to function as an interlocker between (local) Roma NGOs and the ‘Brussels’ reality in order to make Roma voice heard on the European level. ERGO holds a strong position in the European field, working in close cooperation with European institutions (European Commission, European Parliament and Member State’s representations), governments, IGOs, NGOs and external experts.

We organised meetings to jointly prepare with Roma Civil Society organisations ahead of important European events, such as the EU Roma Platform meeting. Also, we took the role of the secretariat of the European Policy Coalition (ERPC). This gives us leverage at EU level and triggered interest among EU level organisations, such as Eurocities, Eurochild and European Foundation Centre, to work closely together.

**Meeting the Commissioner in the village of Bodvalenke**

ERGO was invited to participate in an unique advocacy event in the Bodvalenke Fresco village, Hungary, where Commissioner László Andor and Hungarian politicians where present. The organiser, Eszter Pastor, brought these high level politicians to the ‘reality’ on the ground, organising a tour through the village, an open air event and a round table in the village hall where Commissioner Andor responded to questions of Roma activists without the usual protocol. ERGO presented there the ‘Urgent joint appeal for a Roma Community Programme’, that was supported by three MEPs and signed up by almost 400 people at the online petition.

**‘Roma Inclusion, do you know, do you care’**

Under the umbrella ‘Roma Inclusion, do you know, do you care’, ERGO mobilised Roma (NGOs) to draft the paper Minimum measures for Roma participation’ that was launched as a petition addressing the European Commission. The petition was signed up by over 650 people and handed over to Mr Dominque Befrom DG EMPL. The petition asked the European Commission to have special measures in place, like an EU led Roma Fund, the use of existing EU financial mechanisms (like CLLD and global grants) and applying the European Code of Conduct for Partnership, which is a guideline drafted by the EC for MS how to involve stakeholders in the (EU) policy process.

**“We Block” provides and alternative to violence**

In a number of counties, the despair about the effects of the economic crisis leads to scapegoating Roma as deviant citizens. Extremist groups express their anti-Roma sentiment openly during demonstrations and events. Ostrava, Czech Republic, is one of the roughest towns of all when it comes to the aggression of the extreme right at demonstrations. ERGO member Konexe reacted to the demonstrations with a number of events, such as interactive workshops with children, cultural assemblies featuring music performances and exhibitions. The purpose is to transform the energy of these situations, to create an oasis, to declare that we can all live together joyfully, without fear. A specific aspect of this Czech movement against Gypsyism is the strength of its community work and the activation of local Romani communities. They travel to the Romani community one or two days in advance of an event, and actively discuss about the possible options for the demonstration and the protection of local residents. As such Roma communities are involved from the basis of the crisis at hand and can take up an influencing role themselveslevel and triggered interest among EU level organisations, such as Eurocities, Eurochild and European Foundation Centre, to work closely together.

**Forced evictions in France reached record number**

The French government has failed to end the vicious circle of repeated forced evictions of Roma which have now reached record numbers. In most cases they take place in a climate of hostility with no alternative housing proposed. Roma continue to be driven out of their homes, without being appropriately consulted and informed. Often, they are left with no choice but to seek shelter in informal settlements elsewhere. The French government must respect its international commitments and implement effective protection measures against the practice of forced evictions. La Voix des Roms is an organization established in 2005 in order to give a voice to Roma who have taken the initiatives to talk about them. La Voix des Roms activists play a key role in the negotiations with local governments and finding solutions for Roma groups and individuals whose rights are violated.

**Preparatory meeting EU Roma platform meeting**

ERGO Network invested further to function as an interlocker between (local) Roma NGOs and the ‘Brussels’ reality in order to make their voice heard on the European level. Ahead of EU Platform Meeting in June we organised a preparatory meeting with Roma Civil Society, preparing common actions and messages to be delivered. The main message was directed to Vivinna Reding the vice-president of the European Commission, asking her to stop the discrimination of Roma in Europe, based on the petition implemented Amnesty International that was strongly supported by ERGO, ERGO’s Young...
Throughout 2013 ERGO has continued to work as one of the back-bone organisations of the ERPc. In the position of secretariat, ERGO has ensured the continuation of actions on EU policy making events.

ERGO organised a number of meetings in its office to discuss the (co-)work with Brussels based members. Besides, ERGO took the lead on the Working Group on Roma Participation which aims to facilitate involvement and participation of Roma organisations in EU policy making and monitoring. In this role, ERGO has facilitated the participation of Roma (NGOs) in the EU Roma Platform Meeting in June under the banner “Roma exclusion in Europe”.

High level discussion on Roma participation

In June Vice-President Reding and Commissioner Andor invited the ERPc to discuss the implementation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020. This discussion took place in a good timing as the lack of progress in many Member States is a cause for alarm. Roma organizations are not taken serious in the development and implementation of EU policies. Despite the commitment to promote Roma inclusion at the level of European Union institutions, Roma communities within Member States continue to face increasing prejudice, discrimination, harassment and physical intimidation. “Too often EU funds actually contribute to widening rather than closing the gaps and inequalities” says Gabriela Hrabanova from ERGO Network. “Specific EU funds should be dedicated for Roma integration and empowerment, managed by the Commission and accessible for civil society providing long-term support for independent Roma NGOs and pro-Roma NGOs, networks and local groups and for local and regional development projects”. The capacity to absorb and manage EU funds available for Roma integration is weak, and the impact on Roma communities remains negligible. Roma exclusion continues unabated, and Roma participation at national and EU level remains conspicuously low.

ERPC calls on the European Commission to end “Roma Exclusion in Europe” and to ensure greater Roma participation and more effective measures to combat discrimination.

ERGO Genocide Remembrance with ternYpe

Knowledge and official recognition of the extermination of Roma during the Second World War is still very limited – especially among young Europeans including the Roma. For this reasons ternYpe organized its fourth consecutive international youth conference in Krakow and Auschwitz. The event brought together about 430 young Roma and non-Roma from over 20 countries. Together, they commemorated the liquidation of the “Gypsy camp” at Auschwitz-Birkenau on 2 August. The international conference and the two interactive workshop sessions did not focus only on the past. It also aimed to strengthen the engagement of Roma and non_Roma youth on the mechanisms of anti-Gypsyism and the current challenges of racism and hate speech. The participation of ERGO and the Young Roma Civic Journalists as media group has played important role in collecting information about the event and publishing it.

On the eve of the International Roma Day (8 April), Amnesty International launched the campaign “Human rights here, Roma rights now” and together with ERGO Network and its Young Roma Civic Journalist organised a flash mob stimulating the Roma evictions in front of the European Parliament. With the campaign people were asked to call on the EU Commissioner Viviane Reding to take stronger action to guarantee the compliance of member states with EU anti-discrimination law and uphold human rights for all. Within only 2 months time, an overwhelming number of signatures were collected; up to 93,165 people from around the world called on the European Commission to take action to end the continuing widespread discrimination faced by Roma people across Europe.

Ahead of the official moment at the EU Roma Platform for Roma Inclusion, when the signatures were handed over to Commissioner Reding, a common action was organized by Amnesty and ERGO Network. The ‘Start your day with justice and human rights’ breakfast in front of the Berlaymont building in Brussels provided an opportunity for Commission officials to meet Roma activists who have experienced human rights violations and highlight popular support for the cause. The breakfast was just another simple way to present our willingness for equality and to support the idea that everyone must have the chance to be heard, understood and accepted.
Increasing popularity of RomaReact.org

RomaReact.org is an international multimedia mapping platform that is collecting reports to visualize daily anti-Gypsyism towards decision makers and the general public as well as celebrating Romani life. It was launched in 2012 and has an increasing number of fans, users and visitors both on the website and the Facebook page.

Through RomaReact.org and the aligned Facebook page we succeeded to create a constant flow of information from the grassroots NGOs through articles, reports and news items. RomaReact has 1,000 unique monthly visitors and outreach of about 1,500 on Facebook posts and between 50 to 200 likes on the website for RomaReact articles. The intensive involvement of Young Roma Civic Journalists boosted the visibility, the average daily hits between June - December increased up to 5,587. This effect did not remain unnoticed in Brussels. The Commissioner Laszlo Andor congratulated the RomaReact.org team for their effort to build a large Roma community on the internet. He encouraged the exchange of content between him individually, his DG and the online Roma community site. In exchange RomaReact.org keeps its followers posted on exciting Roma events and projects endorsed by Commissioner Andor.

Contest “My story, my rights”

“We wanted to try to find a way to stop racism in the world, because it is not right that Roma people do not have the same rights as other people; we should be all equal” say Calin Denis and Danila Elena, winners of the art competition “My Story, My Rights”. The competition, jointly organized by ERGO Network and Amnesty International, aimed to explore Roma identity and aspirations, directly from young Roma themselves.

Entries came in different forms, including photography, video, comic strips and painting. Each story was authentic and unique, opening a window into the personal journey and life of a Roma artist/community. The competition received entries from all over Europe, of a very high standard. The entries provide an opportunity to better understand the reality and racism that Roma people face, as well as their hopes and dreams for themselves and for society at large. The winning entry by Calin Denis and Danila Elena, 17-year-old high school students from Oravita, Romania, is a painting of a Roma child holding a mirror that reflects the world around him. The painting shows people pointing at the child and addressing him with hurtful words. In contrast, the image also reveals the child’s dreams of one day becoming a famous musician, studying at a prestigious school, who will become a hero. About winning the competition, they said: “We are very happy that we won, we didn’t believe it at first because there were so many great photos. This experience has given us more confidence in our capabilities.”

Civic Journalists report from their localities

The RomaReact online platform functions on the basis of bottom up content building, which means that a wide network of people is needed that are committed and trained to report from their localities. In the framework of this campaign young Roma were trained to become Young Roma Civic Journalists (also called Reactors or Brokers).

Training through practice

In the initial period it was not easy to generate a lot of reports as most of the participants were missing the relevant skills as well as the self-esteem to write for public. ERGO offered them the skills and tools to step into the public debate on Roma and to advocate for change. They have received a number of trainings of which the first meeting took place in Brussels. Participants learned about the basis of civic journalism and EU advocacy and were prepared for the meetings in the European Parliament. In June a meeting was organized on identifying interesting issues, write quality stories and disseminate them through the appropriate channels like social media. This meeting was also important from the advocacy point of view as the participants were involved in the EU Roma Platform. The Young Roma Civic Journalists also took place at the international conference of ternYpe in Krakow (Poland). The three days gathering was a combination of interactive workshops, public conference and commemoration event on the 2nd of August in Auschwitz-Birkenau. The Young Roma Civic Journalists were playing an important role as a media group. During the training trajectory, they were, learning together to write a press release, engaging with the journalists of their nationalities and communicating the press outcomes in their languages. This role was also straighten during other ERGO events such as during the ERGO members’ Platform, where some of the civic journalist also played important role as speakers at the public meeting.

Establishing dialogue with European and national institutions

The project Young Roma Civic Advocates will, into 2014, serve as a follow-up of the activities with the Young Roma Civic Journalists. It will offer innovative, hands-on solutions for genuine civic participation of Roma and for enhancing public debate on Roma citizenship. Young Roma will be empowered to play a key role as Roma Civic Advocates to search cooperation with local...
Umbrella campaign enhances local impact

The past two years, ERGO and its member organisations implemented the umbrella campaign “Our Place, Our Space, Our Case”. The campaign stands for women that invite people to their place, who visualise their space and who formulate their case for improvement to relevant policy makers and stakeholders. Each participating organisation worked from the same basis, but each of the organisations gave shape to that concept in a way that is most relevant and effective in their countries. Experience has shown that if local activities are backed up by a larger ‘umbrella message’ it boosts the impact of the local initiatives and creates legitimacy. ERGO was the bonding factor within this campaign, providing the framework and general birds-eye view to establish a common voice when possible.

Roma women in the spotlight

Under the slogan “Our Place, Our Space, Our Case” Roma Active Albania organised the First Roma Women Congress. Up to 270 people attended the conference, including activists and high level representatives. The presence of these people who are active in the public arena ensured that the conference was carried to a higher leverage. The public attention that was generated had a very empowering effect. It was for the first time that such a large number of Roma women were gathered and their voice was listened to. Methods to share information with respect to their rights and the procedures to follow to claim these rights were exchanged. Encouraged by this, local activists formulated the demand for a better system of spreading information in the communities and especially among women who are depending on others to receive the information.

Input for public hearing in parliament

Despite the general increase in reports on the marginalisation, exclusion and discrimination of Roma in general, the position of Roma women remains unknown. As a response to that, Macedonian Roma girls were trained to conduct research in their own communities. This created openings for valuable information, but at the same time encouraged both men and women to speak openly about what is going on inside the family and the status of the Roma woman. Having Roma women to speak up and be part of a research is a big impact as such. The value of this research became clear when RROMA presented the findings of the research to the Commission for Gender Equality. The commission supported the results and drafted a recommendation letter to the Parliamentary Commission on Social Matters, which was followed by a hearing inside the parliament. The acceptance of

Roma women take ownership

In Turkey, the first independent Roma Women Network was established. This brought a new understanding to the classic Roma movement which was only represented by male political leaders. The Roma women network succeeded to get the attention of state institutions with research activities undertaken in the local communities. For example, the ‘Happily Married’ discussion based trainings give a direct opening for dialogue in Roma communities when discussing the role of women in the family and in society. As a result, the Roma Women Network was invited by the Turkish government to elaborate the Youth and Women part of the National Strategy on Roma. The prevention of early marriages and underage pregnancy, health and education of the Roma women will be one of the top topics in the strategy.

Effective local level lobby

The Roma women brokers in Bulgaria remained active on local level, where they strengthened their local NGOs. They established Roma women active groups that advocated for their problems with the local authorities and actively contributed to the local consultative and planning process related to Roma integration. Each of the women groups organised separate meetings with different stakeholders at local level responsible for child care and educational policies. The main goal of these meetings was to introduce the local stakeholders to the problems of the Roma families in early childhood development. The discussions and argumentation was based on a quick scan research on early childhood development that the women carried out in cooperation with the World Bank. The meetings proved effective, in Kubrat 8 Roma children were enrolled in a kindergarten that earlier refused to take Roma children. In Sandanski, the Roma women were involved in the local Roma integration council established by the municipality. And the women from Zavet identified Roma children that did not go regularly to school. They informed the schools, social services and municipal officials about these cases and under their insistence 6 children were re-enrolled in school while social services investigated cases and provided support for the families.
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)

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<th>ASSETS 31 December 2012</th>
<th>Fixed assets</th>
<th>Intangible fixed assets</th>
<th>Total assets</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current assets</th>
<th>• Inventories and work in progress, non-concluded projects</th>
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<tr>
<th>Receivables</th>
<th>• Other receivables</th>
<th>• Cash and Banks</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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**Total assets** 374.748,49

### Summary Profit and Loss Account 2012

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<tr>
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<th>Net sales</th>
<th>Revenue not project related</th>
<th>Total operating revenues</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2012</th>
<th>Total operating expenses</th>
<th>Gross operating result</th>
<th>Financial income and expense</th>
<th>Exceptional income/ expenses</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Donations awarded in 2012

The Foundation has received a contribution from The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Matra Turkey and Human Rights Campaign) and ICCD 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".

### Donors and supporters in 2012

European Roma Grassroots Organisations Network
European Commission Directorate General for Enlargement
European Commission Directorate General for Justice
European Commission Directorate General for Justice

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**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 regulations.

Maastricht-Airport, June 2012
BDO Audit & Assurance B.V. on its behalf,
Mr. drs. E. N. H. M. Lamkin RA/AA/FB