



ERGO Network Annual Public Conference

Roma access to mainstream education

19 November 2019

10.00 - 13.00

Representation of the State of Baden-Württemberg to the EU

Rue Belliard 60-62

Speakers' biographies

Hon. Romeo Franz MEP

Member of the European Parliament, Germany, Greens/EFA Group



Romeo Franz joined the European Parliament as a member in 2018 and was re-elected in 2019, being the first Sinto from Germany elected to the European Parliament. Mr Franz is the first Vice-Chair of the Culture and Education Committee, a substitute member on the Committees for Employment and Social Affairs and the Committee for Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs. He is also the Chair of the Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo EP Delegation, and Co-President of the European Parliament Anti-Racism Diversity Intergroup. Since 2014, Romeo Franz has been Managing Director of the Hildegard Lagrenne Foundation, and has been involved work on the civil rights of people with Romani backgrounds (Sinti and Roma) for more than 20 years.

Hon. Peter Pollák MEP

Member of the European Parliament, Slovakia, EPP Group



Mgr. Peter Pollák, PhD, is a Slovak politician, part of the OLaNO political party (Ordinary People and Independent Personalities). In the parliamentary election of 2012, he was elected to the Slovak National Council as the first Deputy of Roma origin. In the meantime, he also served as the Slovak Government plenipotentiary for Roma communities. Before entering politics, he worked as Roma activist, trying to bring a positive change to Roma people lives, whose voice is often omitted. While working as University lecturer, he also focused on fighting extremism and radicalisation. As a newly elected MEP, he is a full member of the CULT Committee and

substitute member of the REGI Committee. He is also the 2nd Vice-President of the EP-Russia Delegation. The priorities of his mandate are ensuring equality for all, including the most disadvantaged people such as Roma, reducing regional disparities, fighting against extremism, discrimination, and corruption.

Soraya Post

Board Member, ERGO Network



In the European Parliament elections of 2014, Soraya Post became the European Parliament's first elected member of the Swedish Feminist Initiative, as well as the first Romani woman in Swedish history to be chosen as a candidate for a political party. One of her priorities is to raise awareness about antigypsyism. Ms Post was also a co-president of the Anti-Racism and Diversity Intergroup of the

European Parliament. She has a background as a Roma rights activist, focusing on the empowerment of Romani women and the self-determination of the Romani society. Ms Post has founded the International Roma Women's network, where she has been President, she is one of the founders of the European Roma and Travellers Forum, where she has been vice-president, and is part of the Board of ERGO Network.

Kadrin Hasanov

Integro Association (ERGO member), Bulgaria



Kadrin Hasanov joined the Roma movement in 2006, when he joined the Integro Association. Kadrin has a Bachelor of History, but working in the civic sector is his calling. At the beginning of his career, Kadrin Hasanov coordinated Integro's youth program, and later he became program coordinator for Local Development. He specializes in community work at local level and local development. Parallel to his work in Integro Association in the period 2007 – 2013, he worked as a municipal expert on ethnic issues in Razgrad Municipality. At the moment, he is actively working with both local communities and municipalities. Since 2015, he has actively supported municipalities in developing inclusive policies for the Roma, and developing social inclusion projects through operational programs. He has participated in a number of studies by ERGO Network, related to youth unemployment, antigypsyism, education, implementation of CLLD approach and others.

Zuzana Havírová

Roma Advocacy Research Centre (ERGO member), Slovakia



Zuzana Havírová received her master's degree in social work at the University of Constantine the Philosopher in Nitra in 2006. As a member of the New Roma Generation NGO she participated in drafting proposals of state minority policies (2006). In 2011, Zuzana started working with CVEK, particularly on projects concerned with inclusive education of Romani children. In 2013, she was focused on introducing affirmative action targeting Roma high-school and university students. She has made a professional fellowship about Community Organizing in Chicago in 2015. She is author of first research study about segregation of Romani students at the secondary schools in Slovakia. She is also author of many academic articles about education. Apart from that, she is currently a PhD. candidate at Constantine The Philosopher University in Nitra and chair of Roma Advocacy and Research Centre in Skalica, that is member of ERGO Network.

Aurora Ailincăi

Deputy Head of Division, Roma and Travellers Team, Council of Europe



Aurora Ailincăi joined the Council of Europe in 2003, in the Directorate of Education, where she was responsible for inclusive intercultural education. In 2007, she was observer for the elections in Kosovo, with a special focus on Kosovar IDPs and refugees voting from Serbia. Between 2008 and 2010, she was responsible for the implementation of a project on inclusive education for Ashkali, Roma and Egyptian minorities in the context of the education reform in Kosovo. Between 2009 and 2011, she was visiting lecturer at the University of French Guyana, teaching the design of programmes in multi-ethnic and multi-cultural contexts, and the creation of networks and partnerships. From 2011 to 2018, she was the Head of the Strategic Partnerships Unit in the Roma and Travellers Division. She holds a Master's Degree in Political Sciences and European Studies at Sorbonne University in Paris, and a PhD in educational sciences from the University of Strasbourg, the latter focusing on school mediation and related challenges, in view of existing inequalities and structural barriers in the education system. Her areas of research focus on policies and practices in inclusive education, school, and cultural mediation.

Szabolcs Schmidt

Head of Non-Discrimination and Roma Coordination Unit, DG Justice and Consumers



Szabolcs Schmidt graduated from the Budapest University of Economic Sciences with a specialisation in external economic relations. He accumulated professional and managerial experience both in the corporate and in the public sector with postings in Germany, Hungary and Poland, where he got engaged at an early stage with the European reunification process that materialized with the 2004 enlargement of the European Union. Within the European Commission services, he worked in the areas of external and enlargement policies, cohesion policy and transport policy, since 2005 with managerial duties. Since 2017 holds the position of Head of Unit for Non-discrimination and Roma coordination of the European Commission, responsible for ensuring the appropriate implementation of the European Union's legislation in the area of equality and for its further development, as well as for promoting best practices in this area through non-binding instruments such as the 2018 Commission Recommendation on Standards for Equality Bodies, the Diversity Charter, the EU List of Actions on LGBTI equality or the EU Framework on National Roma Integration Strategies.

Alen Tahiri

Director, Office for Human Rights and National Minorities, Government of the Republic of Croatia



Alen Tahiri was born in Zagreb in 1977. A graduate of the Faculty of Political Sciences at the Zagreb University, with an MA in Security Policy of the Republic of Croatia. He is currently a PhD student at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, with particular interest in Roma persecution in Croatia during the Second World War. He joined the Croatian Government Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities in 2007, and since May 2018 he is the director of the Office.

Jamen Gabriela Hrahaňová

Director, ERGO Network



Ms Hrahaňová joined ERGO Network in 2011. After years working in the civil society sector, she was employed as a Director of the Roma Office for the Council for Roma Minority Affairs in the Czech Republic. She was involved in the Czech Presidency of the European Union, and organized the first EU Roma Platform. She ran two times as a candidate for local elections in the Prague municipality. She established the digital platform RomaReact.org and is one of the initiators of the Alliance against Antigypsyism. She is a board member of RomMedia Foundation and, until June 2017, she was a member of the Advisory Panel to the director of the Fundamental Rights Agency. She holds an MA in International Relations and Diplomacy.