

Media Relations Guide for the Roma

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contents

INTRODUCTION	1
part one	
BUILDING EFFECTIVE PRESS RELATIONS	3
part two	
BEING INTERVIEWED ON TELEVISION AND RADIO	9
part three	
HOW TO CAMPAIGN EFFECTIVELY USING THE MEDIA	14
part four	
TARGETING THE KEY PEOPLE	20
part five	
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR, PRESS RELEASES etc.	21
appendix	
STARTING MEDIA RELATIONS WORK, etc.	30
A WORD FROM THE AUTHORS	36
ABOUT ECWPNM	37

dear reader,

The idea for this Media Relations Guide was conceived at the international conference for Roma journalists and community leaders, organised by the Open Society Institute (Budapest) in Ohrid, Macedonia, February 1999. Discussions among the more than 80 participants from 20 European countries revealed that the post-communist era, instead of making the lives of the Roma easier, it placed them in a more tenuous position. They are exposed to more aggressive racism, prejudice, and discrimination. The mainstream media played (and still play) an important role in this process by portraying stereotypical perceptions of the Roma, often without having any direct contact with the population.

The discussions in Ohrid also disclosed that in daily life there is little direct contact between the Roma and non-Roma population. For example, research conducted by the Budapest Roma Press Center, whose director was present at the conference, showed that most non-Roma children never meet Roma students in school. This is despite the fact that over 10% of the children in the approximately 900 primary schools in Hungary are Roma. In 132 of these schools the Roma study in segregated classes. Further, a substantial majority of the society does not meet Roma at the workplace (almost 70% of working age Roma population remains outside the official labour market) or in their neighbourhoods. The situation is largely the same in all countries undergoing transition.

At the Ohrid conference I ran two sessions, one on 'access to the mainstream media' and the other on 'approaching donors'. Each session lasted for almost three hours. Questions poured out of the participants, many of them concerning very basic information such as 'what is the proper length of a press-release?', 'how often should we organise press-conferences?' and 'what is the best time to contact the media?'

The European Centre for War, Peace, and the News Media (ECWPNM) specialises in the education and training of journalists and minority organisations, with a particular accent on teaching minority organisations how to communicate with the media and place their information. Therefore, we decided to produce this Guide. We hope it will serve as a valuable and practical tool to help Roma organisations increase and improve their own efforts to work effectively with the mainstream media on behalf of their communities.

In order to produce as useful of a guide as possible, the ECWPNM conducted extensive research. The Centre confirmed the findings of the Ohrid conference: one of the most critical shortcomings within the Roma communities is in the area of media relations. Most Roma community organisations have neither a professional staff person working exclusively with the mainstream media nor staff

members with substantial training in public or media relations. This shortcoming allows the gap between the marginalised Roma community and the mainstream population to continue to grow. Meanwhile, ignorance and prejudice among the mainstream media fills the gap with distortions and stereotypes.

Our research confirmed suggestions made at the Ohrid conference: the Romani public sphere sorely needs press organisers. They need training in the most basic media relations skills of writing press releases and building lists of contacts among mainstream media organisations. A significant reason for the perpetuation of stereotypes surrounding the Roma is due to the lack of connections between the Romani communities and mainstream journalists. This makes the Romani community particularly vulnerable to the stereotyped and prejudiced approach by the mainstream media and the majority of society.

In this context, the ECWPNM approached the European Cultural Foundation (Amsterdam) and the Open Society Institute (Budapest) to provide funding for a project to improve the coverage of the Roma population within the mainstream media in countries in transition. The program was based on two critical initiatives:

- o Regional Media Relations Workshops for Roma Community Leaders, emphasising practical skills needed to increase Roma NGO access to mainstream media (held in Budapest April 20-24, 2001), and
- o Media Relations Training and Resource Guide for Roma Community Organisations, including specific tools, techniques, and materials to further increase Roma access to the media.

The Guide is now in front of you. We hope it will help Roma community leaders find the best way to approach the mainstream media and others who can help the Roma in sending out the right message about themselves to others.

We decided to produce the Guide in English, in modernised Romani (please see the note from the translator), as well as in Croatian (understood in FRY and Bosnia as well). This will enable as many Roma as possible to use this Guide.

We want to thank our Reporting Diversity Partners - The Centre for Independent Journalism in Budapest, Hungary, for helping us organise the two workshops for Roma leaders; the Roma Press Center in Budapest, for its brilliant data; Lesley Abdela and Tim Symonds the authors of this Guide; Gyula Vamosi for translating the Guide into Romani; and the European Cultural Foundation and OSI for making all this work possible.

Milica Pestic
Director
European Centre for War Peace and the News Media
Editor of the Media Relations Guide

part one

BUILDING EFFECTIVE PRESS RELATIONS

About 90% of all 'messages' about the world come to people through the Media.

Media coverage does two significant things. It

- o amplifies your message, and
- o spreads your message.

The result is publicity for your cause that is louder and more extensive than you can possibly manage alone.

A Two-Edged Sword

Working with media is like handling a two-edged sword. Handle it carelessly and you could cut your hand. Handling the media professionally will benefit your cause.

Media Is A Hungry Business

Newspapers, radio and television stations have big appetites. They are like lions in a zoo. They need feeding every day, even every hour. Their food is news and information. Where does this news and information come from? It does not originate inside a newspaper office or a broadcasting studio. Information has to come from the outside, through someone telephoning a journalist, or through the letter-box (a letter or press release), an e-mail or a fax.

A Limiting Factor

There is a limit to the amount of information the media can use. On the one hand journalists urgently need useful material from you. On the other hand, newspapers and the electronic media have limited space and time. You are in competition with everyone else who wants media coverage. Your material must be made more interesting to the journalists than other information reaching their ears and eyes.

Know Your Audience

Media carries messages to audiences. These audiences are not the same. All societies, minority or majority, are composed of many different elements. Majority societies divide into many different groups, based on ethnic origin, on

income, education and profession, or on interests such as sports, cooking or travel. Be specific in your message to catch the attention of each of these different sectors. This is called targeting. You have to employ different ways to get to your target. You need to know those different ways.

Targeting The Journalists

Targeting the right journalist and the right outlet for the story is essential. All newspapers and especially magazines have their own areas of interest. You can spend a lot of time sending a story to the wrong outlet if you do not study the newspaper or magazine first. The story of a famous Romani chef would be appropriate to a cookery magazine, a cookery TV programme or a 'Day In The Life of' feature and many people might want to read it. You could not get it on a sports programme - so you should not waste your time trying to interest a Sports editor.

The British Council with offices in most of the world's Capital cities has a Media relations guide for its own staff. The guide contains many sensible and practical tips. For example:

- o Cultivate your journalist contacts and get to know the angles that will appeal to them and their newspapers.
- o Build an on-going relationship. Keep in touch with journalists in a professional manner. This could include inviting them to occasions where there is no particular news item but helps them understand your situation better.
- o Do some research on journalists - try to read features they have published in the past year or two. It could give you useful clues about their work.
- o Suggest stories that include themes of cultural change such as 'Day In The Life of' pieces.
- o Be pro-active - organising an event with the appropriate Media or Press outlets in mind means you control the process rather than just react to a newspaper's or television station's agenda. Think over the news value in all your event planning and plan accordingly. Don't leave the Media angle to the very end of planning an event.

What Is News, What Is A Possible Feature?

There is a difference between a News story which is a one-off event happening immediately and an item of interest without the same urgency. Unless an immediate 'time-hook' can be developed, it is not news, but it may have potential for a feature story. TV and radio news can move faster than newspapers - you can be interviewed on radio and hear yourself 'on the air' two minutes later.

Value The Foreign Press And Media

Many of the new justice and equality laws in Central and Southern Europe come

from pressure from Western Europe and North America. Make sure you reach opinion leaders - journalists, civil servants, politicians - in the capitals and large cities of Western Europe and North America. You can reach international opinion leaders through the Herald Tribune, the Wall Street Journal, Time and Newsweek magazines. Sympathetic coverage in these outlets can bring pressure on governments in Central and Southern Europe to treat the Roma fairly. Go to a large newspaper shop in your region and write down the details of all the foreign newspapers and magazines on sale.

Know The Journalists' Needs

It is very easy to concentrate only on your own work and forget the pressures and deadlines on journalists. Journalists have to work to deadlines. A Sunday newspaper 'starts to roll' (prints) at the very latest around Saturday mid-day. Most of the Sunday newspaper has been 'put to bed' (completed) by Friday, with only some small changes possible later. The same is true of daily newspapers - their deadline is usually late afternoon of the previous day. Radio and television magazine programmes could require as much as a month's notification. Although television programmes have a much larger audience than radio, radio targets audiences better. Radio audiences are the largest between 0600 and 1000 and 1500-1900 hours.

The 'Little Black Book'

All journalists have their personal list of contacts on every subject that matters to them. This listing is often called 'the little black book'. It is central to a journalists' work. If they have to write a story and cannot find the right people to contact - quickly - they are lost. Contacts are especially important to foreign correspondents from the BBC and CNN and other international journalists. 'Little Black Books' are often passed from one journalist to the next. Find out the names of journalists who are important to your cause. It is essential you get your name and other important contact names into those 'little black books'. Keep them up-dated with any change in your own contact numbers. Foreign Embassies can be helpful in providing you with names of journalists from their countries.

The Relationship Between Newspapers, TV And Radio

Where do the television journalists get their ideas from? A large percentage of the timethese ideas come from daily or weekly newspapers. A story that appeared in the newspaper during the day often reappears on television that evening. If you know a news item or feature on the Roma is appearing in a newspaper or magazine, be 'pro-active:' inform your radio and television contacts and be ready to supply a spokesperson that evening.

News Agencies

News bureaux and wire services are major suppliers of news to national press, local newspapers, TV and radio. Organisations such as Associated Press, Agence Presse France, UPI and Press Association are quite large. Press agencies do not have many journalists and are always very happy to receive news, information and articles from any source. Most press agencies compile a diary of events taking place in the next few days. Send details of your event to the

agency over the weekend. If you can, supply press-quality photos, send them to the Photo Editor.

Roma Press Agency

There have been discussions in each country of Central and Southern Europe focusing on the establishment of a national Roma Press Agency. This would increase the flow of information from the Roma to the mainstream Media. One such example already in existence is the Roma Press Center in Budapest. E-mail romapres@elender.hu for more information.

'Finding Fame' In Your Local newspapers

Local newspapers are extremely important for minorities because they sell to the people who are right next to you. News at the local level is 'softer' than 'hard' national/international news. With a little thought, even a small event can be made newsworthy and interesting. Local newspapers like stories about people. This is known as 'human interest'. Local newspapers have a strong effect on their readers, and they love controversy. Send news of Roma events, write letters to the editors and make every effort to achieve a positive relationship with the editor and journalists. Invite them to Roma occasions as 'background' briefing, rather than expecting any immediate Press coverage. Remember that local newspapers probably only have one or two journalists and one photographer.

Young Journalists

Never overlook two important categories of journalists - the young journalists at the early stage of their career and freelance journalists. Young journalists are more likely to take care with their reporting and have more interest in the subjects they write about.

Freelance Journalists

Journalists who are self-employed are called freelance. The days when newspapers had large numbers of journalists working full-time have long gone. 20 years ago, in the West, some of the famous newspapers had more than 200 full-time journalists. Now they may employ just a quarter of that number. Most of the material used by newspapers comes from freelance journalists and contributors, sometimes called 'stringers'. Freelance journalists can be highly motivated. They are paid only for work they produce, so they are very interested in finding new stories. They may also sell the same story to several different newspapers and magazines, so they are doing some of your work for you. Look for names of journalists whose work appears occasionally in your target newspapers and magazines. These are probably freelance. Make a note of their names and their field of interest. Even freelance journalists specialise in one or possibly two subjects. Quite often freelance journalists are women because the work can fit in with other obligations. Some people believe women try to report a story more in a fairer manner than many male journalists.

The Female Resource

It is tempting to concentrate your news stories only on what Roma men are doing. Most Roma leaders are men. Men make a lot of the decisions. But the

western world has seen a remarkable increase in the number of women taking an active part in life outside the family. Women serve in Parliaments, they are top businesspeople and famous writers. There is probably a very large news resource among Roma women. Some Roma women are already elected to local government. Do not overlook these stories in your work with the media. Roma women are a major resource.

Women's Magazines

Women's magazines reach very large audiences. The readership is usually about 75% women and 25% men. If you want to offer a story to a magazine or newspaper, first make sure you are familiar with its style and content. In most instances it is a story with a strong human interest and emotional pull that has the best chance of publication.

Overlooked Media Outlets

There are hundreds of useful outlets that you will only come across by investigation. Everyone knows about local newspapers but are there free 'give-away' newspapers in your area? What about hospital radio (for patients), Armed Forces radio stations and magazines, monthly or quarterly specialist magazines - sports, fishing, travel? Do the many NGOs in your region produce newsletters? Church groups, women's groups, other voluntary groups?

Cultivating But Not Over-Watering Journalists

Farmers know it is important to leave the earth alone to allow the fertility to recover. In much the same way, allow your media contacts some space. If you are not in contact for two or three months, they will be happy to hear from you. If you send too much material, they may stop paying attention.

Do Not Just Sit Back

Don't just sit back - RESPOND! When the NATO bombing campaign began in Kosovo and Serbia, the Romani communities in those regions were surprised that the BBC World Service and other important media outlets did not come and ask them how the bombing would affect the Roma communities. It seemed they were invisible to the world's media. This was not a conspiracy against the Roma. In many respects it was poor journalism. Journalists reporting the war for the outside world did not see there was a valuable and important angle waiting for them. They did not have contact names and telephone numbers for Roma spokespeople in the Balkans in their 'black book' - their list of contacts on every conceivable subject. The lesson to learn from the Balkans war is - make sure all journalists get a good list of Roma contacts. You can always contact foreign embassies (British, German, French, Canadian etc) and ask for a list of journalists from their country reporting on your region.

Media Relations Training

'How To Change People's Perceptions About The Roma Community Through The Media': Find out where you can get further media relations training. This training is valuable to everyone. In April 2001 the European Cultural Foundation, Amsterdam, and the OSI, Budapest, sponsored two 2-day residential workshops on Media Relations for 25 Roma NGO men and women leaders from Central

and Southern Europe. The training was conducted by the European Centre For War, Peace And The News Media (ECWPNM) under the title 'How To Change People's Perceptions About The Roma Community Through The Media'. The workshops were hosted by the Centre For Independent Journalism in Budapest. Sessions covered the following topics:

- o Universal principles of campaigning, lobbying and persuading people to support your cause.
- o Who are the people that can change laws and help your community to achieve your goals? Who influences these people?
- o Creating events and stories that achieve good media coverage.
- o What is the job of the media?
- o What makes a topic interesting to the media?
- o How to give interviews to the media.
- o Organise your own media workshops.

In Summer 2001, a coalition of groups in the United Kingdom held a free one-day event at the University of London for minority organisations. The event was titled 'Your Voice In The Media.' Workshops included:

- o Putting forward a spokesperson to respond to the media.
- o Using radio and audio effectively.
- o Setting up a website and using it for information and publicity.

Why not organise a similar event in your locality? For advice, e-mail the ECWPNM at silica@gn.apc.org or telephone 0044 20 7435 9282.

part two

BEING INTERVIEWED ON TELEVISION OR RADIO

Preparation

Television and radio are the most important outlets for changing people's perceptions. It is amazing how fast you can learn to give good radio or television interviews. The rules are simple.

- o What two points do YOU want to make?
- o What are the obvious questions?
- o What is the nastiest question?
- o Expect 'open' questions: Who? What? Why? When? Where?

Most radio or TV interviews last a very short time, just a few minutes. In this respect they are very different from being interviewed by a newspaper journalist (which can take an hour or more).

Interviews can take place in the studio, at an event, on the street or anywhere the camera can go. Unless the interview has to occur outside, broadcasting companies prefer to interview at their studios. This allows the best technical quality and it is cheaper.

- o Be prepared to go to the studio even at very short notice. TV and radio stations may want you for programmes at any time of the day - very early in the morning, late at night, weekends.
- o Be punctual. If being interviewed on radio or television is important to you and your cause, be on time. Do not keep the interviewer waiting.
- o Ask how long the interview will last. A half hour programme means you can expand on something much more than in a three-minute piece.
- o Ask who else is being interviewed. It may help you decide your answers.
- o Men should not refuse some make-up. Usually it is just some powder. The bright lights of a television studio can make you look sweaty or 'washed out.'
- o Dress smartly. Look professional. You want to be taken seriously,

so wear clothes that give you an air of competence and authority. Viewers take you more seriously if you dress smartly and plainly. Wear solid, restrained colours. On the one hand try to avoid black or white clothing, on the other hand do not go to the opposite extreme. Avoid a 'coat of many colours' - detailed multi-coloured patterns or stripes. Your clothing or jewellery should not distract the attention of the viewers. Don't wear bright white shirts or blouses (try blue).

- o Women should avoid showing bare skin on necklines, shoulders, arms and legs.
- o Sit upright. Tilt a little forward. Do not lean backwards. Cross your legs at the ankle (not knee). Place your feet back under the chair, not stretched out.
- o Use your whole hand if you gesture, not just a finger.
- o Be lively - show enthusiasm for your subject. Speaking 'in a dead voice' turns the listener away. Look interested.
- o Look the interviewer in the eye. Do not let your eyes wander everywhere or you will look shifty or ill at ease. Look directly at other guests.
- o Keep still. Lots of movement, twisting fingers, tapping a pen, can distract the audience from what you are saying.

What To Say and How To Say It

- o Tell yourself a TV or radio interview is a conversation between two people, you and the interviewer. Don't think in terms of an audience of thousands. TV and radio are very personal. You will look and sound best if you imagine there is just your best friend listening to you.
- o Make your most important point as soon as possible. You may only have time for only two or three main points. This is much more the case of radio and television than newspaper interviews. Unless you are part of a studio discussion with other guests, most radio and television interviews are surprisingly short.
- o If necessary, arrive with the points written on a piece of paper or cue card. Glance at them but never read aloud straight from them. Interviewers say 'If it is read, it is dead.'
- o Keep answers short. Be brief and to the point. Viewers and listeners have very short attention spans. You may be more accustomed to being interviewed for a newspaper where time is not particularly short. Most television interviews last less than 2 minutes. Keep your answers focused, don't carry on speaking for more than 3 or 4 sentences. Giving

very long answers on TV and radio is the most common mistake. This is especially true if you are talking to the Western media - American news items can be as short as 10 or 11 seconds. How long the interview lasted is not the important point - the important point is what was finally broadcast.

- o Do not kill your audience with statistics. Avoid going into too much detail. Only use statistics for really important points.
- o Slow down your speech. Even though you know you only have a very short time or you may be feeling nervous, do not speak too fast. Speaking quite slowly gives the impression of deep thought. You know your subject, your audience may not. Slowing down your speech gives them a chance to think.
- o Keep in mind the person you are trying to persuade is the viewer, not the interviewer.
- o Keep in mind why you are there. Make a list of the 2 or 3 main points you want to get across in the interview. Try to use the very first question to turn the interview directly to your reason for being there.
- o Do not try to cover each point in too much depth or you will run out of time before you have made the two or three most important points. Think of examples to go with each of the points.
- o Examples are like painting a picture for the audience. They make the interview more alive.
- o If the interviewer is not very knowledgeable on the subject, do not allow this to spoil your interview, quickly lead with the questions you want asked. Ignore what you have been asked and say 'I'll try to come to your question in a minute, but I want to make two important points' - and go ahead and make them.
- o Stick to the script you have mentally prepared - getting your two or three important points across to the audience is the reason you are there.
- o Do not try to sound too imposing or you will alienate the audience.
- o Be topical. Make sure you have up-to-the-minute information on the subject of the interview. Build your own contacts and website list for discovering the right information fast. For example, the Internet Centre Anti-Racism Europe is on "<http://www.icare.to/>".
- o Never say modestly 'Of course I am not really knowledgeable on this' when it really is your subject because they will never interview you again. The station has invited you because you are believed to be the

best qualified to supply the information and comment needed.

- o Stick to the positive. Repeating negative images, however tempting, takes up time you could better use putting forward the positive. However, if something extremely negative has just occurred, you must respond to it.

- o Expect the unexpected. Trick questions are part of the media business. They add excitement and interest to an interview. Answer such questions as honestly and in as straightforward a way as you can.

- o Do not lose your temper or raise your voice, no matter how provocative the questions may be. It may make an exciting interview but it will not help your cause. You will look as though you have lost the argument.

- o Some interviewers, more often on TV than radio, try to 'attack' you because they think controversy makes a good interview. Do not take this personally, it is just their technique.

- o Never assume the interview has ended until you are completely away from the interviewer. Many people let their guard drop when they think the interview has finished, and say something they regret later.

- o End with a smile. However difficult the interview has been, or however serious the content of the interview, at the very end give a smile. This leaves a good impression. You do not have to say 'thank you' but of course you can.

- o Outside Broadcasts: If the TV interview is away from the TV studio, check the background. Try to choose the background. Stand in front of your campaign billboard or posters. Stand with one foot slightly in front of the other.

DO NOT:

- o Do not drink alcohol before an interview, even if the studio offers it to you, as they often do. In this situation alcohol can have an unexpected and uncontrolled effect.

- o Do not be intimidated by the interviewer. A few minutes later the same person might be drinking a cup of tea and preparing to interview someone else on a completely different subject.

- o Never lie - journalists will never forget you lied. Lies are also harder to remember next time. Resist the temptation to make an answer up - just say, 'I don't know' or 'I can get back to you on that.'

- o Do not try to be a comedian. Making a joke on television is for the

professionals. Under pressure spontaneous humour can go wrong. Trying to joke can also make you seem nervous.

Finally - Preparation, Preparation, Preparation.

It has become popular to emphasise something by repeating the word three times - so here goes: a successful interview requires 'Preparation, Preparation, Preparation.' A 3-minute television interview could take two or three days of preparation. It will be worth it. Good preparation also increases your confidence.

After It Is Over

If the programme has been recorded for broadcasting at a later date, and if you are happy with the interview, tell as many people as possible when it will be broadcast, including newspaper journalists and opinion leaders.

The 'Bread And Butter' Letter

The phrase 'bread and butter letter' means the polite thank-you letter when you have been someone's guest. Good Media relations means gaining a professional relationship with the people who matter to your cause. If you have been on a TV or radio programme, or a good feature has appeared in a newspaper or magazine, write a thank-you letter to the journalist or programme editor.

part three

HOW TO CAMPAIGN EFFECTIVELY USING THE MEDIA

Although achieving good media coverage is not easy there are well-trying rules. The most important is - Get your aims clear and define your message. In a crowded world messages have to be as clear and concise as a trumpet blast. Why is the Media so crucial to the Romani communities? For two main reasons:

- o Media coverage puts your subject on the public agenda and can help keep it there.
- o Repeated coverage of Roma issues raises public awareness and puts pressure on politicians and other decision-makers.

First, ask yourself 'What do you want to achieve?' It is amazing how many campaigns seem to have no clear purpose. Develop a clear and concise aim for your campaign.

- o Who do you need to target?
- o Who are the people or organisations you need to influence?

Experienced advertisers carefully track the way information about their products reaches our brains - how often we listen to the radio (and which programmes), watch television, read newspapers and magazines, and who influences us. Who are the people who can change laws or help you achieve your goals?

- o Policy-Makers
- o Members of Parliament
- o Local Councillors
- o Employers
- (List others)

Who influences these people?

- o Voters
- o Consumers (customers)
- o Opinion Leaders
- o Media

How do you reach these people? Which radio and TV programmes/newspapers/magazines do they listen to/watch/read?

The 'Persuadables'

Many experts believe that if you have limited financial resources, not enough time, not enough people helping in the campaigns, it is best to concentrate only on 'the persuadables' - people and organisations you believe are likely to listen to you sympathetically. This is known as 'persuading the persuadables'. Spending a lot of time trying to convert the hostile may not be the best use of your scarce resources.

Starting Off. Decide On Your Main Message.

Keep It Simple. You should be able to describe it in less than 8 or 10 words. If it is a health campaign, you could use the headline 'The Romani live an average of ten years less than Gadge.' Or, if it is a campaign to get more Roma elected to local council, 'Roma are 10% of the community but only 1% of the Town Hall.'

The 'Sixteen Times Principle' - Repetition And Reinforcement

Once you feel you have got the message right, repeat it time after time after time. Media relations has many similarities to advertising. Repetition and Reinforcement are the key. Don't wander 'off message.'

What Is The Message - What Is In It For THEM?

You achieve change when enough people are convinced they also want those changes. What are the advantages of your campaign to your target audiences? For example, a clean water campaign means:

- o Healthier environment for everyone and their families.
- o Extra votes for politicians - they gain votes because voters want a healthier environment for themselves and their families.
- o Better reputation for polluters (local industry?) who are prepared to clean up their practices and gain a better reputation with their clients and the government.
- o The national government look good in their own country and internationally.

Create A Fact Sheet - write (and keep up to date) a clear, simple one- or two-page sheet of facts and figures that back up your campaign message.

The Campaign Slogan

A good campaign slogan sticks in people's minds. It should be just a short phrase or sentence, ten words or less, such as the anti-racist slogan 'Live And Let Live.' Do not try to be humorous - it can go badly wrong. Because it is so important as the 'face' of your campaign, test the slogan out first among your friends. Ask them for their honest opinion.

Building A List Of Spokespeople

If a journalist says 'Do you have any other contacts I can talk to on this issue?' suggest names of people you know will communicate your message well.

How Do You Best Get People's Attention?

How do you get the best coverage, not only in terms of quantity but also the tone and style that favours your purposes?

What Type Of Events Attract Coverage?

- o Events involving celebrities
- o Controversial speeches
- o Sound-bites (short, memorable sentences)
- o Awards ceremonies
- o Publishing reports and surveys
- o Human interest stories
- o Relating a national story to your local area
- o Visually interesting events to attract the cameras
- o Action, not people sitting still

'Talking Heads'

Too many organisations hold conferences and hope television cameras will automatically arrive. Unfortunately this is far from true. Television requires colourful events, and particularly action. Most conferences are jokingly called 'Talking Heads' by television producers because people standing on a platform talking (and talking and talking) is not interesting television. This sort of coverage usually only occurs in dictatorships. Be imaginative.

Examples Of Successful Media Campaigns In The United Kingdom

When millions of Eritreans were starving because of drought and war, the international Aid campaign Oxfam arranged a photo-call in central London using big black horses and riders representing the 4 Biblical riders of the Apocalypse - each rider representing something terrible, including War, Disease, and in this case the most important, Hunger. Oxfam used this to deliver a petition to the British Prime Minister asking him to increase emergency aid to Eritrea - and it worked.

Another campaign took place when Sarajevo was being brutally bombarded by guns. When Sarajevo was being attacked a few years ago, the water system broke down. People were forced to drink contaminated water. As a protest, a group of British Members of Parliament and other campaigners took a large bottle of dirty water to give to the British Prime Minister, asking him to do something about Sarajevo.

When the campaign to get more women elected to the House of Commons wanted some publicity, they arranged for their annual conference to take place on a ship sailing from England to Denmark. This was irresistible to the television stations and the national newspapers who gave it excellent coverage.

'Washing Up'

After a campaign has finished there is the tendency to look ahead, without completing the 'washing up' of the campaign that has just ended. This is a mistake. You should finish off any business remaining from the campaign. This is sometimes called 'washing up' and is designed both to be polite but also business-like. Keep a list during the campaign of people you have promised things to (even things like someone's phone number) and follow up on these commitments. Often this opens the way for repeated events.

Disappointments

Because you will always be more enthusiastic about your cause than anyone in the media or political world, you will be disappointed quite a lot of the time. Disappointment, as they say in the United States, 'goes with the territory.' Fair play, justice, good ethnic relations, a better world and harmony between peoples are no easier to 'sell' than anything else. Selling is a hard job. You may get upset and certainly disappointed. Keep picking yourself up. Your cause is important. It may take ten years to achieve even half of your aims.

Who Said That? Compiling A List Of Quotes

Build a good list of positive quotes about the Roma. These can be quotes from senior politician such as Prime Ministers, or famous men and women - actors, writers, scientists, business leaders, educators. These quotes can be used in letters to editors, or letters to politicians. They can be used effectively in television, radio or newspaper interviews, or articles. Negative quotes can also be valuable. Collect negative quotes made by senior politicians or people writing in newspapers or speaking on television. Put these into a pamphlet. This pamphlet can be used to show reasonable people in the majority community how difficult life is for some Roma communities. The leaflet can be sent to the European Commission, the foreign Press, opinion leaders, to embarrass and shame the people who spoke the words, and to gather useful sympathy and understanding for your cause.

One Picture Is Worth 1000 Words

Photography is a powerful instrument in creating an image of a campaign, both positive and negative. You can see how powerful a photograph can be, especially when it is negative - the damage done by negative photos is very great. For example, anyone who knows the Roma realise the Roma have a high code of cleanliness or Roma communities would never have survived poor conditions. Yet photographs appear in local or national newspapers showing Roma camps with rubbish piled up everywhere. Think of a way to turn this around - hold an inexpensive campaign for clean water, for example. A photograph showing a group of Roma carrying a bottle of contaminated water to the Town Hall or Prime Minister's house from the land they are forced to live on speaks louder than 1000 words.

Build Strategic Alliances

Campaigns can be made even more effective by strategic alliances. There are many other organisations that campaign against racism and defend the legal rights of minorities. There are organisations which campaign against poverty,

including child poverty. There are organisations that campaign for the rights of women, including widows. There are organisations that campaign for the well-being of the elderly. There are organisations that campaign for the unemployed. Find out who runs their campaigns office - and ask to meet them.

Dream Time

Once a year dream up a really eye-catching campaign. This will help move your cause forward and remind the Media you and your cause exist. Examples of successful campaigns.

'Zi A Nechaj Zit' - Live And Let Live: A widely-praised large campaign called 'Live And Let Live' took place recently in Slovakia, a country where Roma have a particularly hard time. The Campaign involved:

- o 200 billboards around Slovakia
- o more than 100 TV spots on national television
- o 100,000 leaflets
- o 10,000 brochures
- o hundreds of posters for homes and offices and schools and libraries

The campaign was joined by 370 other groups on the streets of 79 Slovak cities for a March of Tolerance. More than 3000 people contacted 'Zi A Nechaj Zit.' For further information contact:

Ladislav Durkovic on:
tel. 00421 7 5542 2176,
fax.00421 7 5542 2176.
E-mail. durkovic@zanz.sk
Website. <http://www.zanz.sk/>

Ideas For Getting Media Coverage

Roma Press and Media Awards: One excellent way to recognise the best coverage of the Roma and Roma communities is to hold an annual Roma Press & Media Awards evening. This would usually be held in Capital city. It is possible that a major hotel would offer facilities at cost because the hotel would gain from publicity. The awards should be presented by a well-known person, possibly the Prime Minister or a famous film star. The awards should be judged by which programme or article most exemplifies the Roma and their hopes in a truly analytical way. Separate prizes or certificates should be awarded for accurate coverage of Roma matters in every media category:

- o National daily newspapers
- o National Sunday newspapers
- o Weekly local newspapers
- o Women's magazines
- o Student Newspapers
- o Business/Economics/Sports or other weekly or monthly magazines
- o National Radio and Television programmes

- o Local radio and television stations
- o Best photo in a local newspaper/national magazine/national press

These can also break down into sub-categories such as

- o Specialist Journalist of the Year
- o Young Journalist of the Year
- o Columnist of the Year
- o Freelance Journalist of the Year

Prizes should be small in value but visually interesting, like the famous Hollywood Oscars. Because the winners will be radio and TV producers, magazine and newspaper editors, the cost of the awards can be solicited from international corporations in telecommunications or perhaps an airline company like Lufthansa, Austrian Airways or British Airways. Journalists should be directly invited to send in samples of their year's coverage of Roma matters a month or two before the Awards Dinner, so the expert panel can judge the entries. Often the best time is Winter when journalists - like everyone else - appreciate something to break the monotony of short days and long cold nights.

Under the supervision of a centre for independent journalism, the awards should be judged by an independent panel of experienced editors, Roma community leaders, senior politicians and other opinion leaders.

Annual parade

Everyone knows Brazil's Mardi Gras, the annual, flamboyant parade through the streets of Rio de Janeiro. Visitors come from thousands of kilometres distance to join in and watch the parade. Why not develop a Roma Mardi Gras day in every part of Southern and Central Europe? The celebrations could include vehicles decorated with the unique and interesting history of the Roma and their survival as travellers. This would get national and international attention and could also be of interest to the country's Tourist Board.

Getting It Wrong. An Elephant Story.

It is easy to come up with an eye-catching new idea but not think it through. It is important to realise quite quickly that perhaps the idea you first had is not the one to proceed with. A political candidate in the rural county of Hertfordshire, England, owned a large area of land and some exotic animals, including two elephants. He thought it would attract the television cameras if he challenged his rival candidates to a duel on elephants. His campaign manager Lesley Abdela (co-author of this Guide) stopped this idea fast, and she was quite right to do so. The main election issues were agriculture and international trade. Riding an elephant can be a friendly and attractive image but it would have been a ridiculous and inappropriate image for seeking elected office, even though a duel on elephants would get lots of television coverage. What has duelling on an elephant to do with representing Hertfordshire in the European Parliament?

part four

TARGETING

Targeting is one of the most important skills in effective media relations. Targeting makes sure you prioritise. You will waste a lot of precious human, financial and time resources by not learning to target. Targeting is the process that enables you to identify

- o What are the key aims of your campaign?
- o Who are the key people you need to reach and influence?

Prioritise, Prioritise, Prioritise. Percentage Of Effort.

Prioritising means ranking which people, organisations and media programmes are most important to your cause - and how best to influence them. Some of your ideas will have high priority, some will have lower priority. Allocate your resources accordingly giving higher priority ideas get more time and more money. Lower priority ideas get less time and less money spent on them. This is called 'percentage of effort.'

Identifying Demographic Groups

Demographic groups are, for example, women, or people with good incomes, politicians and newspaper journalists on the Left of the political spectrum, or people under 35 years of age. Many people believe women are less confrontational than men. People under 35 would be a prime target for your campaigns. They are extremely persuadable, and they may not already view the Roma with the same stereotypes of the older generations.

The Persuadables

It may surprise you but your most important target is not the people who are completely and absolutely hostile to the Roma. Unless you have unlimited amounts of money, time and staff, do not try to change the minds of people, political parties or organisations deeply hostile to your cause. It is an unfortunate fact that such people are unlikely to change their minds. Use your limited resources on targets your message can influence. Your prime target will be 'the persuadables.' The Persuadables are the people or organisations likely to be in favour of your work. Trial and error will help you build a comprehensive list of these organisations and individuals.

part five

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Most local and national newspapers and magazines have a Letters To The Editor page. This is called 'free editorial' and it gives space to readers to express their own view on something that has just been published in the newspaper or magazine. Apart from the front page, the Letters are the most widely-read pages in local and national newspapers. You increase your chances of getting your letter published if you:

- o Keep letters short, between 200-400 words if possible. Editors like to publish as many letters on the page as possible.
- o Try to make the very first sentence catch the Editor's/readers' attention.
- o Use simple rather than complicated language.
- o Keep to just one or two main points rather than lots of different points.
- o Keep calm and reasonable rather than sarcastic and 'over the top' with anger.
- o Persist. If your letter is not published, keep writing. Your letter may not be published first time.
- o Keep looking for new outlets that publish readers' letters, such as the Women's Pages or foreign newspapers.
- o Type them for ease of reading, or write in ink very clearly.
- o Make sure a contact telephone number and address are included. Sometimes the newspaper wants to edit the letter and needs your approval.
- o If you are responding to a feature or a reader's letter in a newspaper or magazine, you can reinforce and amplify something positive in the previous article or letter counteract something negative in the article

or letter correct an error of fact.

If your letter appears, keep track of the Letters Page over the next few days in case someone publishes a response. This could give you the opportunity to get a further letter published, adding extra points you want to make.

Finally, photocopy and distribute as widely as possible any letter you get published. Send copies to everyone you feel should see it, including community representatives, journalists (it may cause them to write a feature), politicians, and other Roma activists.

There are useful small-circulation Letters Pages too, such as specialist newsletters put out by tenants associations, women's groups, Council newsletters, church groups and voluntary groups. Keep your eye open for these newspapers, and write to them with your own angles.

Op-Ed Features

Newspapers often offer space for guest editorials or comment pieces. These are usually 600-800 words. You may not get paid but it is still free editorial for your cause. A strong opinion piece has a better chance of being published. If the first newspaper does not publish it, send it to another.

Press Releases

Press releases are a vital source of news and events for journalists. Journalists rely on press releases. They need them for their work. Journalists do not make news or events, someone has to tell them. However, many journalists get ten or twenty press releases every day. You have to be professional in your use of press releases or you will waste your time.

Looking Professional: The press release should look professional. Print your own press release notepaper. Include the name of your organisation and full contact details including where you or someone else can be contacted (phone/fax/mobile) at all times, including weekends and evenings.

The Content: Start with the date the Press Release has been issued, so the journalists know it is fresh information. At the top, in the middle of the page, print one sentence in upper-case, describing the event in 5 or 6 words. This should be informative and catch the reader's attention. Also include:

- o Name of guest or speaker (if any).
- o Date/time/place of the event.
- o Interesting two or three sentences describing the event.
- o Who to contact any time of week or weekend, including evenings.
- o One or two extra pages can be added, with further material designed to interest and inform journalists.

The Lay-Out

Always put the most important information near the top (in case the journalist shortens the press release with a pair of scissors).

- o Number the pages.
- o Double-space sentences.
- o Do not make the press release long. Two pages is usually the maximum or no-one will read it. No matter how interesting the story may be, a press release of 10 pages is not likely to be read in a busy newspaper or TV office.

White Space: Leave a lot of 'white space' on the press release, parts of the page where you have written nothing. It gives the journalist space to write notes or extra ideas. Leave about 8 centimetres at the top and bottom of the first page and perhaps 4 centimetres at each side.

Finally, try not to be disappointed if your story is overtaken by a major news story breaking at the same time.

Setting The Agenda

Your constant aim in media relations is to set the agenda, not drift like a ship without a rudder. Like your campaigns, you can set the agenda through press releases. Some pegs to hang Press Releases on:

Special Dates: Editors like to know about special dates and anniversaries. It helps them build a feature or programme, both as a public service and for the interest of their audiences. Send the information on the special date or anniversary at least 4 weeks beforehand. You can suggest the approach or 'angle' they might use for a feature. Suggest Roma people they can speak to. Where possible, get quotes from appropriate people (if it is a political date, get a quote from a friendly politician) and opinion leaders about the special date or anniversary to include in the press release. To increase your chance of media coverage hold an event on the day that amplifies the anniversary.

Awareness Days

There are many 'Awareness Days.' For example, International Women's Day is on March 8 each year. If you can make these awareness days apply to your cause, it will increase your chance of publicity. You can also establish your own Awareness Day, perhaps celebrating a famous event in Roma history.

Overkill

A farmer allows the earth to rest because a period without growing a crop means the land can recover its vitality. This is called crop rotation. In some respects this is true of press releases. Unless you have specific events, allow a few weeks or even months to pass between sending press releases to the same journalists. Too much contact can have the wrong effect and make the journalist take your cause too much for granted. Not all your Press Release will get attention. Do not worry. Press releases are also reminders that you exist.

Press Kits

Press kits are folders that contain a good amount of basic information. Usually the press kit is enclosed in a printed folder attractive to the eye. These can be

placed on a table near the entrance of events such as press conferences. They can be given to anyone you decide is important to your cause, not just the media. The kit should contain information on how to contact the Roma, which NGOs work with the Roma, such as the OSI, ODIHR and ERRC, and useful statistics. It can contain copies of positive features from newspapers over the past year or two. It can include copies of speeches made by Roma representatives. Press kits can contain car bumper stickers, T-shirts, small interesting objects made by Roma, a map of the Roma communities in Southern and Central Europe, or a poster for the office wall. Photographs are an important part of the press kit. These should be professional both in quality and composition. Usually press photos are black-and-white, 15cms by 25cms. For television stations you can include good-quality 35mm colour slides. Try to supply different sets of photos and slides to different newspapers and television stations.

Press Conferences

We have all seen dramatic coverage of press conferences - a famous person such as the President of the United States standing on a platform with hundreds of photographers and eager journalists fighting to get closer. However, it is very difficult to get journalists to come to a press conference unless something dramatic has taken place. Clearly it can be disheartening if no-one arrives, after all your hard work.

Press conferences should be used only for significant events, called 'hard news'. More of your work will probably occur through constant contact with journalists and opinion leaders.

If you call a Press Conference:

- o Choose an accessible place for journalists. Journalists are busy (and possibly lazy), so this should not be far from the town centre.
- o It helps if the venue is itself interesting - a ship on the river, for example send a map with clear directions if the venue is difficult to locate provide a phone number journalists can call on the day of the press conference when you might be away from your office.
- o If you expect only a few journalists to arrive, do not choose a large room. Keep it intimate.

Late morning is the best time for press conference. You may provide some food and drink. Late morning conferences ensure evening newspapers as well as evening radio and television programmes can get their material back in time.

Send invitations to journalists at least one week in advance. Telephone them two days beforehand, to check they have received the information. If few journalists attend, telephone those who did not as soon as the press conference is over and report on the event in a lively and interesting way. If you have your own photographer, rush different photos to each journalist. This way you may

still get very good coverage the next day. If you expect Press photographers or radio and television interviews, arrange a separate session before the main event. This will ensure photographers and television presenters can do their job without interrupting the Conference itself. Ensure an attractive or interesting spot for the photo sessions, even creating a 'mini-studio' with flowers and posters or a banner. Be sure the photographers know the correct names and spelling. Many organisers believe a press conference should end after half an hour, when you will have given journalists the most important information. This means the conference ends with you still in command of the agenda. If the conference continues longer than 30 or 45 minutes, journalists could begin to ask wider questions than you want on this particular occasion.

Press Briefings

Press briefings are events where you call a number of journalists and give them background information to help them in their coverage of your subject. Most information can be sent by e-mail, fax or by letter - so why hold a Press Briefing? The answer is simple: you want to tell them something but you do not want anyone to know you told them. Briefings often enter a bizarre twilight world - a rather secretive temporary relationship between you and the journalist summed up in the following phrases:

Off The Record: By custom this describes information you give journalists which you tell them you do not want published. You say 'This piece of information is 'off the record.' Your problem is the journalist may break the custom and print what you say. It is best never to go 'off the record' if you can avoid it. The same with the phrase 'Just between us.' Journalists may pay no attention to that sort of 'agreement.'

Not For Attribution: This is a slightly safer trick of the trade. You provide the journalists with information but they agree not to identify the person giving them the information. For example, the journalists can say, 'A senior Roma community leader said.' but not mention that leader's name. This is fairly similar to 'Background Information' which also should not be attributed to anyone by name.

Deniability

The most bizarre development of all, increasingly used in the highly competitive world of American politics, is 'deniability.' You tell a journalist something contentious but say that if it is printed with your name on it, you will completely deny you said it.

Press Receptions

Press receptions are far more informal than press conferences and usually more casual and friendly. Journalists and opinion leaders, including politicians, meet other people in the setting you have arranged. It gives journalists an opportunity to meet people you want them to meet. Press receptions can be a good way to promote 'soft news', such as a visit by a well-known Roma from a nearby country. Other times it could be an historical date commemorated by a special gathering of Roma. Provide some soft and alcoholic drinks and light food

(something particularly) Roma. Sometimes you give something small (certainly not expensive) to the guests, perhaps a T-shirt. Send out printed invitations several weeks ahead and follow up with a phone call two or three days beforehand.

Surveys

Journalists love surveys. Do as many as you can. Any survey has a high chance of being published/broadcast by the Media. This applies just as much to a local survey as a national survey. For example, asking 300 Roma children what they want to be when they grow up could be an irresistible news item for newspapers and radio and television news. If you hold a survey among your community and find that 10 percent of the children want to be teachers when they grow up, 15 percent want to be farmers, 20 percent want to become lawyers, 8 percent want to be politicians - that's something newspapers will publish. A variation on this survey is to ask Roma parents what they want their children to become. Such surveys can be surprising, informative and excellent media relations. Accompany it with an attractive picture of Romani children.

The results of surveys should be widely distributed, to politicians at the local and national level, economic and political magazines, academics, journalists, local NGOs and campaign groups, women's groups etc.

Surveys can be used to uncover interesting information and to highlight a bad situation. Surveys can play an important role in changing people's understanding of the Roma experience. For example you might discover that seasonal Roma agricultural workers are paid only half the amount paid to other seasonal agricultural workers. A survey will highlight this unfair employment practice. It will gain understanding and sympathy for Roma communities facing hardship and discrimination.

Surveys can highlight the level of discrimination against minorities. Here is a recent survey on Roma in Britain in a book called 'Moving On: The Gypsies And Travelers Of Britain':

'The problems caused by poor sanitation, inadequate water supply and poverty, as well as the stress and fear that Gypsy families live under, cause a variety of problems we would be more familiar with in the less developed countries. The average life expectancy of a Gypsy is 48 years (non-Roma average well over 70 years); only two out of every 100 Gypsies reach the age of 65; Gypsy men die 10 years younger than non-Gypsy men; on average Gypsy women die 12 years earlier than non-Gypsy women; on average infant mortality rates for Travelers are some four times the national average; 35% of all Gypsy families had no means of receiving letters, which means that letters from clinics, hospitals, schools or employers do not reach people they are sent to.'

Facts like these are taken from surveys. They are extremely valuable because the information can be used in 'Letters To The Editor'. The results can add power to a press release designed to galvanise good people in the majority commu

nity and shame bad people. They can influence legislation and help involve international organisations such as the European Union.

The Importance Of Photographs

There is a saying 'one photo is worth a thousand words' and it is true. All Media relations activity should make good use of photography. You do not need to wait for them to send their own photographers because they may not have a photographer available. For example, if you organise an event on a Saturday, it is likely the local newspaper or even a national newspaper will send their only photographer to a sporting event. Many newspapers will accept good-quality, interesting photographs from you, if you get the photos to them in time for publication.

- o 'Faking It'

It is perfectly normal to stage an event hours or days ahead of the real event just to get the photographs in time for the newspapers.

- o Action Not Words

Photographs should show action rather than 'talking heads.' Think of a photo of a football team standing side by side - a bit boring? Compare that to a photo of a football being kicked at a goal, with the goalie diving to try to stop it. Which is the most interesting?

- o Think 'Campaign', Think 'Photo'

A Romani community decides there are not enough television programmes in their own language. They write a petition to the Government Minister asking for more programmes in Roma. They go to the Minister's building to hand in the petition BUT they take two or three (broken) television sets with them to show it is not worth having a television set unless there are some Romani programmes. A group of Roma carrying broken television sets into the building makes an excellent photo, much better than a few people holding a piece of paper.

You do not have to invent new ideas all the time. There are many excellent ideas from other campaigns. For example, if a Roma village does not have access to clean water, find a large glass bottle and fill it with the dirty water and take it to the Town Mayor or Ministry of Health. A photo of the people carrying a large bottle of this contaminated water into the Town Hall or the Ministry of Health will get a lot of attention and also generate a thousand words.

Very Boring Photos include:

- o Lots of people standing in a room staring at the camera.
- o One person talking to a group of people.
- o Someone sitting at a desk looking at a piece of paper or holding a telephone.
- o A group.

Postcard Polling. 'What Roma Want'

Much of the suspicion and hostility between people comes from a lack of knowledge of the other person - how they live, why they live the way they do, what they think, whether they are the same as me, whether they are different from me?

For example, for centuries women have felt that men do not properly understand them. They did not believe they 'had a voice.' The men never listened to them. The men had no idea what women really wanted in their lives.

Five years ago a campaign took place in the United Kingdom to find out 'what women want'. The campaign distributed millions of postcard asking women what they most wanted in life. Postcards were placed in hairdressers, cosmetic and clothes shops, in supermarkets, and distributed through women's organisations. The campaign got very wide coverage in the media and brought women's hopes and needs to the attention of millions of men and politicians. No-one had ever asked these questions before to such a large number of women.

One woman replied: 'I want an end to war, better education, freedom of speech, legalise recreational drugs, no censorship, tolerance between people, an end to ageism, racism, an end to starvation, an end to poverty, a more equitable society, better working conditions for people, happiness, more green spaces, better public transport, a more human system of justice, the right to be who you want to be, and a right to be where you want to be.'

Another said: 'I want less fighting in the world and more negotiation, which means less politics. There should be a desire to truly live more in peace and harmony instead of being motivated by greed, power and nationalistic interest.'

Another said: 'I want a healthy environment for everyone, that includes respect for other species - there is a Native Canadian saying 'En cha huna' which means 'It too has life.' We must start to recognise the value of life other than our own. Women must lead the way.'

Another said: 'I want to live in a society that judges women as people, not in stereotypes. Words like 'Prostitute' should be consigned to history. I want the right to grow old in dignity, not poverty.'

What do the Roma want? It could surprise and interest the Gadge. Why not conduct your own postcard polls once a year?

Living History

The history of all ethnic groups is extremely interesting, but very often the majority community knows very little about it because they are only taught their own history. Ignorance of other peoples makes it easy for negative stereotyping and hostility to continue generation after generation. Among the majority community, how many people - old, young, students, teachers, journalists - know much about the remarkable history of the Roma? The more they learn the more they

are likely to be interested and favourably inclined towards the modern Roma. The Economist magazine published a feature on the Roma recently. Here is an extract. Use it as the basis of a campaign to educate the majority communities on the amazing history of the Roma:

'According to Ian Hancock, a professor at the University of Texas, the latest research indicates the original Gypsies were a mix of Indian ethnic groups assembled in the early 11th Century as a military force to resist Islamic incursions. Romany developed in India as a military lingua franca with heavy Persian influences; the Romany word for a non-Gypsy, gadje, is derived from the Hindi word gajjha, meaning civilian. The first record of Gypsies in the West is in Constantinople in 1054; their first appearance in Europe proper came as military attachments to Ottoman armies.'

appendix

Starting Media Relations work

For effective media relations you need a written plan of activities you want to carry out, plus a business plan - scrambling here and there for money, spending your resources without a clear idea of why you are spending them, not allocating money where it can achieve the most, is a bad way to conduct your work. It will waste your limited cash, reduce your success, and irritate your sponsors.

Developing A Media Relations Plan

A media relations plan should answer the following questions:

- o What are the activities you expect to undertake?
- o When will each of these activities be completed?
- o How many staff/volunteers will you need to do the work?

Once you have produced the plan you may not have to alter it greatly but you should subject it to a critical review every few months.

From the start, you must be clear about your purpose and your needs.

- o How much money will you need to run a good media relations campaign over an initial period of, say, 3 years?
- o Can you itemise your needs?
- o Where will you get this money - what are the possible sources of financial support?
- o Do you have a good list of possible donors?
- o Do you understand the legal framework surrounding your work?
- o Do you have access to legal people who are knowledgeable about your field?
- o Do you have good strategic profile information regarding about the Roma and the majority communities in the country or region included in your work? This would include population, socio-economic detail, ethnicity, religion, unemployment/retirement, industry profile.
- o Do you know how people voted in local and national elections?
- o How comprehensive and up-to-date is your information on the

media outlets, including names of journalists and editors plus their telephone and fax numbers and e-mail addresses?

o Do you have detailed information on journalists' deadlines for receiving your copy?

o Do you have an advertising kit from local and national newspapers and magazines including charges and deadlines for placing advertisements?

o What will be your first steps? The Chinese say 'A journey of a thousand kilometres begins with one step.' One very early step is to build your Press list - every newspaper, magazine and Media programme of potential value to your cause, plus the names, phone numbers, e-mail addresses of journalists, and when, where, and how to contact them. Keep updating it - journalists move around. After that, start to build some campaigns to get good Media attention.

Endorsements

Just like any other group, the majority population is heavily influenced by opinion leaders. And just like any product for sale, your goals can get positive impact from endorsement by opinion leaders. Even politicians like to have famous footballers or actors endorsing them and their cause. Useful endorsements can come from organisations such as the European Commission, the UN, OSI, or famous television or movie personalities, top politicians, well-known writers and poets, business leaders. Build a list of quotes and endorsements from these people. Quotes are very useful to use in pamphlets and leaflets to give to journalists or use in television and radio interviews. Endorsements also help to reduce the confidence and determination of people who oppose you.

Know Your Enemy

There is also a school of thought that suggests you build up in-depth information on people and organisations that are hostile to Roma communities. If a political organisation is hostile to the Roma, how many paid-up members does that Party have - where do they receive their money from, what types of activities do they engage in? Your documentation should include a list of their strengths and weaknesses. Actively turn their weaknesses back on them - for example if they are aggressive and ready to break the law, your side can be portrayed in the Media as peaceful and law-abiding.

Websites

A website suggests you are up-to-date with modern technology even if most of your target audience does not have a word-processor. Websites cost very little to develop. At the least it should have a profile of your organisation, contact numbers, and be up-dated whenever you are conducting a campaign. If you want donations, make this clear and display bank-account details. Because many researchers, journalists, many schools and libraries have word-processors, you should ensure your website details are on all your literature. Photographs on websites should be downloadable. Creating a website needs an experienced

'eye.' For advice contact Aitchison Media And Development on e-mail: cathy@twiza.demon.co.uk.

Minorities And The Media

It is important that the media in all countries develop a strong ethical approach to race and minorities. Article 5 of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) says: 'States undertake to prohibit and eliminate racial discrimination in all its forms and to guarantee the right of everyone, without discrimination as to race, colour, or national or ethnic origin, to equality before the law.' Journalists should not be allowed to cause race hatred or incite violence through malicious reporting. Negative and provocative descriptions should be avoided by journalists or challenged every time they appear. These phrases include 'colour of skin,' 'Gypsy Mafia' and 'gangs of Gypsies.'

There should be strong enforceable national codes of ethics for ever one in journalism to follow. Check how strong the code is in your country, and work hard to make it stronger.

In many parts of the world there are some good journalism codes, in Asia for example, which include the following:

- o Generalised allegations casting doubts and aspersions on the patriotism and loyalty of any community should be avoided.
- o Journalists should always use cool and moderate language, especially in headlines.
- o When there is potential for communal tension, there should be a constant effort to investigate and expose the underlying causes (in Central and Southern Europe this would be to point out the lack of income, lack of social assistance, lack of land ownership suffered by many Roma).
- o Traditional newspaper standards of checking for accuracy should be applied with even greater rigour in any stories involving racial, religious or communal groups.
- o Statements should not be accepted at face value from any source, including official ones, and where necessary these should be accompanied in the news columns by corroboration and interpretation.

The UK's National Union of Journalists include the following guidelines in their Members' code:

- o Only mention someone's race or nationality if it is strictly relevant.
- o Resist the temptation to sensationalise issues that could harm race relations.

- o Seek to achieve wider and better coverage of minority affairs: social, political, cultural.
- o Seek to publish or broadcast material exposing the myths and lies of racist organisations and their anti-social behaviour.

Taking Court Action

Using the Courts has important advantages and also disadvantages. By bringing a case for libel or defamation against a person or a newspaper you can 'tie them up' for a year or more and make them think twice in the future about racist remarks or other unacceptable behaviour. On the other side, it is time-consuming for you, and can be expensive. But if you go ahead prepare the ground extremely well! Legal advice can be obtained from:

The European Roma Rights Centre
tel. 0036 1 413 2200
fax. 0036 1 413 2201
e-mail. errc@errc.org

Roma-To-Roma

The Roma are a multi-cultural people, with different religions, places of travel, cultures and languages. Roma communities openly admit they do not always co-operate well with each other, yet they face similar challenges and would benefit from regional and international co-operation between themselves. In the absence of information coming from the Roma, journalists may supply their own (not always positive, not always accurate) information, including information received from some biased police forces. Better cooperation between Romani communities and spokespeople would generate a Roma-To-Roma process of self-organisation, sustainable community development and participation in civil society. Regular networking meetings would serve at least three important purposes: first, enabling Roma and Roma-related groups to manage the internal multi-culturalism of Roma population; second, at a period of extensive economic, social, cultural and political change, to support the development of common interests for co-operation in key areas, including respect for Roma human rights; and third, to increase Roma representation in local and national political life.

The ODIHR has a programme to train and empower Roma and Sinti as activists and community workers. This includes the empowerment of Roma women. Contact the ODIHR on:

tel. 0048 22 520 06 00
fax 0048 22 520 06 05.
E-mail.office@odihhr.osce.waw.pl

Roma Photo Library

Each Roma community should have a collection of its own photos, available for a small fee or free to newspapers and television. If you have a suitable collection of press-quality photos of any aspects of Roma life, make sure you inform

journalists and photo editors of newspapers and television stations. The media relations person should have a regional or international list of any such sources. Very old 'archive' photos from the past can be popular and nostalgic. Present-day photos of Roma in new walks of life are also powerful imagery. The collection could also include video material though this often requires proper storage facilities, away from light and heat.

Community Radio

If your nation's laws allow you to set up your own community radio station (many governments still keep tight control over the people's airwaves) it has tremendous advantages. Having your own community radio, especially speech radio, not just music-only broadcasting, means you can communicate within your own communities and with the wider society. Community radio

- o Gives a 'public voice' to people who never had a voice before, addressing the audience in their own styles and dialects
- o Puts an end to minority groups feeling left out.
- o Can be a valuable source of material, ideas and programmes for mainstream Media and newspapers.
- o Is a breeding ground for journalists and broadcasters who can go on to jobs in mainstream media.

However, technology is moving fast from analogue to digital transmission. This would make equipment and present-day skills obsolete. You may decide that the Internet is your best route. For example, news-groups communicate experience quickly and cheaply to newcomers who want to get involved.

TV And Radio Advertising

Television and Radio make the audience feel they have met you in person. Both radio and television make a personal connection between the audience and your campaign. Television is a particularly good medium to convey your message. Anyone accustomed to paid television advertising by political candidates in the United States will know this can be very effective, though expensive. In some respects, campaigning for better relations between the Roma and majority communities in Central and Southern Europe is like a political campaign. If you can find the money to pay for television advertising as part of your Media Relations campaign, here are some formats. Like any advertising you achieve best results by repetition.

- o A 30-second compilation of a speech made by a Roma.
- o A 30-second compilation of a speech given by a well-known non-Roma endorsing the hopes of the Roma and encouraging friendly attitudes.

- o A close-up of a Roma (male or female) giving positive Roma views designed to appeal to the majority community.

It is entirely possible an advertising company in each of the countries of Central and Southern Europe would help in building TV advertising, possibly sponsoring it too.

Direct Mail

In 'paid advertising' terms, Direct Mail is probably the most cost-effective way to reach a carefully chosen audience. Sending a carefully-chosen message to individual groups of people - the elderly, farmers etc. - means you reach the right audience with the most appropriate leaflet. Direct mail will often get sponsors to cover the cost. The message should be simple and short, and the appearance eye-catching or it will be thrown away at once. Some campaigners print a calendar or useful local telephone numbers on the leaflet to lengthen its life in the target household.

a word from the authors

When invited by Milica Pesic, director of the ECWPNM to conduct Media workshops for Roma NGO leaders from Central and Southern Europe in Budapest two questions repeatedly arose: 'Why does the mass media present so little information about the Roma?' and 'Why are only negative images of Roma shown in the media?'

The answer is partially found in racism and bias and deference to authority in the media in Central and Southern Europe. This is also true anywhere in the world. To counter these images Roma communities must develop a professional relationship with the media. This will also help rebut errors of fact and exaggeration.

Some images seem positive but drown every other image you want to portray and develop. The story of Carmen gives a romantic view of Gypsy women. Carmen portrays them as temptresses, dark-haired, beautiful, dressed in shabby but flowing fabrics, swinging her hips. The reality is that within the Romani communities women have to live up to a great many expectations, including no sex before marriage. How would this image of Carmen help Roma women who want to become Local Councillors or Members of Parliament? It is the wrong image for achieving political office.

This guide gives you professional advice. We hope you will take these well-trying methods and adapt them in your community and country. More than any other minority in Central and Southern Europe, the Roma are between past and future. Keep in mind you are working to a long-term strategy. No matter how well you do on one television or one radio programme, or how positive a large feature in a major newspaper is, it will soon be forgotten. But it is like a drop of water in the Danube, part of a continuous flow towards your goal.

We wish all Roma a happy and successful future.

Lesley Abdela and Tim Symonds
Eyecatcher Training
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ecwpm

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

European Centre for War Peace and the News Media (ECWPNM) was set up to promote conflict resolution through diversity reporting in developing societies. Fair, accurate, sympathetic and in-depth reporting is vital in promoting understanding between different groups. Media has all too often been used as a weapon, promoting prejudice and discrimination. ECWPNM aims to change that and turn media into a tool for strengthening human rights and democracy.

We do this primarily through education and training of journalists, students of journalism, decision-makers and minority organisations, media or human rights and other minority organisations. A vital part of our training involves capacity building. In fact, our unique selling point is our comprehensive approach.

ECWPNM activities are divided into eight main areas:

- o Mid-Career Diversity Journalism Training and Professional Development
- o Diversity Reporting Initiatives (Cross-Ethnic Reporting and News Exchange)
- o Diversity Journalism Education and Curriculum Development
- o Media Assistance for Minority Groups
- o Media Monitoring for Program Development and Implementation
- o Production of Handbooks, Resource Manuals and Training Manuals
- o Fundraising Training
- o Post-Conflict Professional Development Promoting Reconciliation Through the Media

RDN Partners

Our methods are based on a strong grassroots approach. The spine of our activities is Reporting Diversity Network (RDN), an alliance of regional partners with whom we develop and implement our projects. The RDN grows with every new project. At present, its focus is on Central and Eastern Europe where media still plays a destructive role in exacerbating ethnic and religious conflict and violations of human and minority rights.

Albanian Media Institute (Tirana)
Association of Independent Electronic Media (Belgrade)
Center for Democracy and Human Rights (Podgorica)

Centre for Multicultural Understanding and Cooperation (Skopje)
Macedonian Press Center (Skopje)
Centre for Independent Journalism (Bucharest)
Centre for Independent Journalism (Budapest)
Independent Journalism Center (Lagos)
Independent Journalist Association of Serbia (Belgrade)
International Center for Education of Journalists (Zagreb)
International Federation of Journalists (Brussels)
Latvia University, Department of Journalism (Riga)
Media Development Centre (Sofia)
Media Plan Institute (Sarajevo)
Media Centre (Sarajevo)
National Press Institute (Moscow)
New York University, Center for War, Peace, and the News Media (New York)
Roma Press Centre (Budapest)
STINA News Agency (Split)
Vijesti Daily (Podgorica)

ECWPNM Track Record

International Resource Manual and Training Trainers Guide

We have produced an International Resource Manual and Training Trainers Guide for journalism educators and trainers. News organisations and journalists also use these manuals extensively. They include analysis and documentation of negative media roles and a unique collection of articles; professional tips and guidelines; media project reviews; as well as resources for additional information on how to improve reporting on diversity issues. Training Trainers Guide also includes modules for Reporting Diversity trainers. The success of these manuals was such that one of the authors was asked to give lectures based on the material for three months at the University of Toronto. BBC Training Centre has also used excerpts from the manuals in their training courses.

National Resource Manuals

Working with RDN partner organisations, we adapted the International Resource Manual for national use and translated it in seven countries (Albania, Macedonia, Bosnia, Hungary, Latvia, Romania and Russia). National editions also include material on diversity issues specific to each country, as well as extensive resource guides. We also translated the Training Trainers Guide into Bosnian (which can be used in Croatia and Yugoslavia as well). All our partners use the manuals in their training activities. The Danish School of Journalism in Lrhus and OSI Budapest have recently established South East European Network for Professionalisation of Media (SEENPM-a training network for South Eastern Europe). One of their activities is Reporting Diversity Training for which they use our trainers and manuals.

Reporting Diversity Initiatives

We also produced News Exchange Pilot Program, designed to enable exchange of information between journalists in South Eastern Europe. This

served as the basis for the successful application to the EC for a two-year Reporting Diversity Network Program. For six months we were producing a Reporting Diversity page for Brussels based newsletter Royaumont Newline. We organised and ran crisis reporting and cross-border initiatives with journalists in Albania, Macedonia and Montenegro just after the end of the NATO intervention in the FRY. We put together multi-ethnic teams of journalists who jointly covered stories that were very sensitive at the time. Topics included drug smuggling, white slavery trade and inter-ethnic relations. This project was a pilot for inter-ethnic reporting, and also served as a basis for the large EC grant.

Training Programs

We conducted and participated in a series of Reporting Diversity and related, workshops, seminars and briefings across the region, including training trainer workshops for developing special formats for using the RD manuals, professional workshops and conferences (see the list below). We participated in BBC Training Centre courses, as well as in workshops for community radios and minority community organisations, organised by Amarc International (an international association of community radios based in Sheffield). We also participated in, organised on our own, or jointly organised the following projects:

2001

- o Reporting Diversity in Macedonia, organised by ECWPNM, supported by IREX.
- o Seeing the Roma Media Relations Workshop in Budapest, Hungary, organised by ECWPNM, supported by the ECF and OSI.
- o Reporting Diversity Training Course in Belgrade, FRY, organised by ANEM, supported by the Government of Austria.

2000

- o Reporting Diversity Training Trainers Course in Budapest, Hungary; organised and financed by SEENPM.
- o Total Community Coverage in Skopje, Macedonia; organised by the ECWPNM, supported by Freedom Forum.
- o Radio Diversity Course (with the BBC) in Podgorica, Montenegro.
- o Teaching Tolerance Workshop in Temisoara, Romania; organised by IFJ, financed by the Council of Europe.

1999

- o "Covering Diversity" Seminar in Tirana, Albania; organised by the ECWPNM, financed by the EC.
- o Conference on Media and Conflict in Ohrid, Macedonia; organised by the ECWPNM and IFJ, supported by the EC.

Media Relations Guide for the Roma

- o Minorities and Media Seminar in Bucharest, Romania; organised by the ECWPNM, financed by Freedom Forum.
- o International Roma Media Conference in Ohrid, Macedonia; organised and financed by OSI Budapest.

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