



Romani CRISS

Roma Center for Social Intervention and Studies

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Annual Report 2006

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Presentation of Romani CRISS

Romani CRISS – Roma Center for Social Intervention and Studies is a non-governmental organisation that defends and promotes the rights of the Roma in Romania.

Romani CRISS provides legal assistance in cases of abuse and works to combat and prevent racial discrimination against Roma in all areas of public life, including the fields of education, employment, housing, and health.

Romani CRISS is a non-profit civic association established on April 4th, 1993. The founding members of the organization are: Roma Ethnic Federation (FER), Research Center of Roma/Gypsies from the Rene Descartes University in Paris, and the Sociology Institute of the Romanian Academy.

On the EU/US Summit from London, 18th of May 1998, Romani CRISS was awarded the award for Democracy and Civil Society, from the European Union and the United States of America.

Objective in 2006

1. To empower 5 Roma organisations at local level, organisations with which Romani CRISS has worked/ works in programs in the field of human rights, health, education and social.
2. To establish 5 regional community centres that would implement activities in the field of human rights, health, education and social.
3. To coordinate Romani CRISS' programs/ actions with the governmental, regional and European programs on long term (Decade of Roma Inclusion, European Roma and Traveller Forum, structural funds, Plan of Priorities)
4. To develop dialogue relations with mass media
5. To increase visibility of organisation and of successful programs

Departments and activities:

HUMAN RIGHTS

Human rights department. Priority fields of action:

- Combating abuses of law enforcement officials
- Ensuring adequate access to right to education (monitoring and litigating cases of violations of the rights in the field of education – such as cases of school segregation)
- Ensuring adequate access to right to adequate housing (monitoring and litigating cases of violations of housing rights)
- Combating limitation of access to public places on grounds of ethnicity
- Combating racism in mass media
- Combating extremism

Strategic lines of action

Conduct of law enforcement officials

Starting with the late 90s, the law enforcement officials' actions of torture, violence and abuse, especially the actions of the police officers and gendarmes, have become more numerous. The victims of these illegalities are mainly the Roma; some of the causes of this state of fact are the aggressors' stereotypes and racism, ensuring a state of impunity, as well as statute of disadvantage the Roma often have. Romani CRISS has constantly monitored such incidents, has drawn up monitoring reports, press releases and has supported legal actions. Through their nature and effects, these activities constitute a strategic line of action for Romani CRISS.

Bontida Case, Cluj County

On 03.08.2006, the police precinct in Bontida and representatives of Cluj Gendarmerie carried out an intervention in Bontida village, Cluj County. According to the Roma, 5 Roma individuals have been physically abused by the gendarmerie. Two of the five were minor of age. The 5 individuals have been conducted to the local police station; three of them claim having been beaten in the gendarmerie van, and the other two in the police station. So far, three of them have obtained medical certificates. They also claim that for the 30 minutes the two individuals were abused in the police station, the parents have not been permitted access to their minor children, despite legal obligation for the law enforcement officials to do so. Only afterwards, have the parents been granted access. Police head of Bontida village claims that the gendarmerie has stated that there had been no abuse.

The case has been documented by Romani CRISS, in partnership with Romano Suno. In this case, Romani CRISS contracted a lawyer and the victims pressed penal charges to the Prosecutor's Office within the Military Court of Law Cluj, against the gendarmes for the felony of abusive behaviour.

Reghin Case, Apalina neighbourhood

On 07.09.2006, as result of Police and Special Forces intervention in Apalina community, Reghin – Mures County, a number of 37 victims were identified, including 20 men and 17 women, 32 adults and 5 minors, 22 shot and 15 hit or gun threatened, 36 Roma and 1 Romanian. The case is being documented by Romani CRISS and Liga ProEuropa.

Following the letters no. 1022 and 1023 of 02.10.2006 sent by Romani CRISS to the Ministry of Administration and Interior, respectively to the Romanian General Police Inspectorate, in regard to the events of

07.09.2006 in Reghin, Mures County, the head of General Police Inspectorate asked for investigation of the presented facts, which resulted in, inter alia: "... it was ascertained that the responsible offices within the Mures County Police Inspectorate had managed the events *inadequately*, which led to taking measures which violated the current legal provisions and internal provisions. [...]The cases of excessive use of force are an exception and do not characterize the professional conduct of Romanian Police staff."

The Apalina case raised the protest of Viktória Mohácsi and Katalin Lévai, members of the European Parliament, who declared: "Members of the European Parliament are dismayed by such actions in total disregard of European legal and ethical minimum standards. Especially since the incident comes in a row of three similar human rights abuse cases registered during the past six months (*Pata Rat, Chitila and Oradea*) in Romania." The MEPs came to Reghin to monitor the case and held a press conference, to protest publicly.

In Apalina case, Romani CRISS has contracted two lawyers to represent the victims. At present, the dossier is on trial before the Prosecutor's office within the Targu Mures High Court of Law, a criminal investigation in which 22 Roma people have been already heard, out of the 49 persons who filed the criminal complaint.

Right to education

In 2006 Romani CRISS continued the activity of documenting and monitoring the cases of Roma children's segregation in schools in Romania. The first step towards this direction was done in March 2003, when Romani CRISS documented the Cehei case – Salaj County.

The cases of segregation in education are brought in the attention of the National Council for Combating Discrimination (NCCD), in order for them to sanction the doers of the discrimination deeds. In addition, Romani CRISS initiates legal actions for damages caused by illicit acts of segregation on ethnic grounds, in the field of education.

Dumbraveni case

On 8.10.2006, at the "Rom european" TV show broadcasted by TVR 1 TV station, at 11 a.m., it was reported a situation from the Dumbraveni locality, Sibiu County. There, Roma children are being moved from Theoretical High school (grades I-XII) to the local special school. Therefore, Romani CRISS carried out a field visit on 7-8 November 2006 in order to document the case and collect evidence necessary to mark out the differential treatment applied to the Roma pupils.

On November 8th 2006, Romani CRISS has the first meeting with the principal of the special school. In the meeting, they discussed about the methods and reasons of moving the Roma children from high school to the special school. The team from Romani CRISS also visited the classrooms where Roma children transferred from high school were learning. The discussions with the school principal revealed that children who failed to graduate the same class for 2-3 years in a row were tested by the commission set up by the Sibiu County School Inspectorate. Following the testing, the Commission decided whether the students have mental health problems and also whether to transfer the children to a special school, by issuing certificates showing they were children with special educational needs.

As result of the policy led by the local authorities, today at least over 90% of the people attending the special school are Roma and end up attending this school because they failed to graduate a class, not because they are students with special needs.

The Roma children who attend or used to attend Theoretical High school and their parents say that the teachers treat the Roma students differently in comparison to the majority students; the Roma children are placed in the last rows of the classroom, are not given attention, so they do not graduate the class and are transferred to the special school.

Considering the opinions of the Roma parents, as well as the statement of the special school management from Dumbraveni locality, Sibiu County, Romani CRISS requested the National Council for Combating Discrimination to start an investigation of this case to ascertain discrimination and sanction the responsible persons.

Right to housing

The right to housing constitutes a strategic line of action for the human rights department, as it can build upon the existent experience. Thus, the following types of abuse and discrimination are concerned: residential segregation, violation of right to private property, illegal forced evictions, precarious living condition, environmental racism, access to social housing, violation of

domicile, limitation of right to free movement, legal status of Roma houses. To this end, it is necessary to continue monitor the violation of right to housing, to initiate legal actions, when necessary, but also to consider training of local authorities' representatives in the field of non-discrimination.

Miercurea Ciuc case

Twelve Roma families (approximately 40-50 people) have been moved by the local City Hall from a building (subsequently demolished) in Miercurea Ciuc near the locality filtering station, „sharing” the same fence with it. The people live in 8 metallic barracks (provided by the Mayorality) and another 7 houses made of planks. The land has joint fence with the filtering station, on which warning plates about toxicity are posted.

In 2006, at the second monitoring visit and after a meeting with the local authorities, Romani CRISS team ascertained the situation was unchanged. In this case, Romani CRISS contracted a lawyer and filed a criminal complaint to the Miercurea Ciuc Court of Law against the Vice mayor S.D. for committing the felony stipulated in art. 247 and 248, index 1 of Criminal Code. By Decision no. 18.01.2006 on dossier no. 1843/P/2005, the Prosecutor's office of Miercurea Ciuc Court of Law ruled not to prosecute. On 31.01.2006 the Prosecutor's Office decision was appealed to the higher-hierarchical body. In Decision no. 47/II/2/2006 of 21.02.2006, The Prosecutor's Office ruled: „*Dismissal of complaint [...] as unfounded*”.

Thus, on 08.03.2006 a complaint against Decision no. 47/II/2/2006 of 21.02.2006 was lodged to the Miercurea Ciuc Court of Law, asking to annul the decision and to prosecute Vice-Mayor Szoke Domocos for the felony foreseen in art. 247, Criminal Code. In addition, on 23.03.2006, Romani CRISS lodged complaints to the Ministry of Environment and Waters Management, Directorate for the Protection of the Child, Public Health Directorate - Harghita, also communicated, in copy, to the Prefect's Office–Harghita, National Authority for the Protection of the Child's Rights, Ministry of Health and Agency for Environment Protection - Harghita.

The Ministry of Environment and Waters Management replied: “The Miercurea Ciuc City Hall hasn't asked the Harghita Agency for Environmental Protection any environment agreement to place there the metallic barracks, nor the 7 wooden houses. The emplacement is located in the recommended sanitary protection area of the filtering station. [...] The Harghita County Health Directorate has informed the Miercurea Ciuc City Hall about their obligation to conduct an impact study on health in regard to the filtering station and/ or **to change the emplacement location to an appropriate one.**”

Chitila case

On January 24th, 2006, six houses of Roma from Chitila neighbourhood – district 1, Bucharest, were demolished by the District 1 City Hall. Approximately 50 people were left without a home, at 15 Celsius degree below zero, and without being allowed to take back anything from their houses (their personal belongings – furniture, cloths, and electronic appliances were removed without the owners' signing any document).

Approximately 100 police officers, gendarmes, community police officers and Special Forces participated in the intervention and exerted acts of physical and psychical violence against the people whose houses had been demolished (2 persons were taken to the hospital by ambulance).

As result of the visit and documenting of the case, Romani CRISS considers the District 1 Mayorality's action to demolish the houses in Chitila neighbourhood on 24.01.2006 as illegal, based on the following arguments:

1) Although lawsuits regarding the property right upon the lands and houses in question were on trial before the Court of Law District 1, the District 1 Mayorality ignored the authority of the Court of Law and executed the action of demolishing the houses.

2) The process-verbals of 20.12.2005 informed about the destruction of the houses that was to take place until 03.01.2006. Inexplicably, the process-verbals were communicated on 16.01.2006, almost two weeks after the date mentioned as the houses demolition date. In two days since the Roma have been informed about the demolition, they appealed the process-verbals in question, contestation registration no. 1567/18.01.2006 submitted to the District 1 Mayorality.

3) The Roma houses were destroyed without any official communicate of the Mayor, therefore, with no possibilities of a judicial control to take place.

At present, two dossiers are before the courts of law in regard to ascertaining whether the legal requirements were fulfilled in terms of acquisitive prescription.

Combating limitation of access to public places on ethnic criteria

It is the merit of Romani CRISS to be the first organisation in Romania that approached this phenomenon systematically. Without combating this phenomenon (which is primary within the competence of State institutions), Romani CRISS brought it into public debate and in courts of law. We are in the stage when it is necessary and useful to carry out an evaluation of causes, manifestation and way to solve them. The process of monitoring and combating this phenomenon should continue, without being a strategic line of action.

Clubs Bavaria, Twice and Max Case - Bucharest

On 30.09.2006, Romani CRISS organized a testing action to prove discrimination in accessing public places. Thus, a group of 7 people intended to enter several Bucharest bars (respectively Bavaria, Twice and Maxx), but the bodyguards denied access on reasons such as need to show the student ID cards, previous reservations or saying that the bar “has the right to select their clients”.

The evidence gathered by Romani CRISS (declarations of the victims, witnesses, audio and video recordings) show that the bodyguards did nothing to prevent other two persons from Romani CRISS group to enter the bar; however, we have to mention that one of these two persons is a Roma person, but with a light complexion and the other is not Roma. One of the bodyguards even said that the “owner practices race hatred.”

Romani CRISS lodged complaints to the National Council for Combating Discrimination against all 3 bars. The cases were also presented by mass media.¹

SC Prod-Com Gilda SRL Case, Bacau locality

Mr. B.N. was subject of discriminatory treatment by a person waiting on a bar owned by SC PROD COM GILDA SRL. The discriminatory treatment consisted in the fact that Mr. B.N. was not served in the bar due to his affiliation to the Roma ethnicity.

Analyzing the Romani CRISS complaint, the Steering Board of the NCCD decided that the presented facts constituted acts of discrimination and sanctioned SC PROD COM GILDA SRL, through its administrated, Mr. L.V., with contraventional fine in amount of 1,000 RON.

Combating racism in mass media

Racism in mass media is an essential element in the human rights issue, considering mass media’s role of opinion setter. In addition, distorted and subjective coverage in relation to Roma leads to perpetuation and strengthening of stereotypes and prejudices against the Roma and could constitute a violation of the right to dignity. All these should be analysed in the context of freedom of speech, also and in terms of theoretical disputes regarding the relation between the right to freedom of speech and right to personal dignity. In the same time, the press could be a major ally in changing mentalities, as well as in implementing raising-awareness campaigns in terms of non-discrimination and human rights, as it is a potential factor of change.

On the occasion of the International Human Rights Day, Romani CRISS awarded the Award for Journalism – As result of launching this award on the International Roma Day and of monitoring the mass media, journalist Adrian Mogos was given the **Award for Professionalism in covering subjects related to Roma** and the National Television **the Award for Objectivity in shows about and with Roma**.

¹ The cases were presented at the “Rom European” show.

Romani CRISS vs. Anuntul Telefonic case

From 9th to 20th of August 2006, the site of “Anuntul Telefonic” – online ads posted ads that affected the dignity of Roma minority and created a degrading, humiliating and offensive atmosphere against this minority.

Thus, on 9th of August, the following ad was posted: “*Apartment on Aleea Livezilor, no Gypsies, quiet, with nice neighbours*”. Another article posted on 20th of August regarding the renting of an apartment said: “*I rent two-room apartment, [...] no Roma!!!...*”.

Analyzing the Romani CRISS complaint, the Steering Board of the NCCD decided that the presented facts represented acts of discrimination. Considering the diligences made with purpose of eliminating discriminatory ads on this site, the Board considered as inopportune to sanction the company, respectively SC Anuntul Telefonic SRL. The Board recommended the SC Anuntul Telefonic SRL to maintain the tool of adding ads, as it was modified, but to mention in the “site’s “terms of use” the interdiction of posting discriminatory ads.

Combating extremism

Considering the racist trends in extremist environments, it is necessary to evaluate their dimensions and dynamics. Depending on the results one could discuss upon defining the intervention method. One should consider the fact that the reverse of the intervention could also consist in self-victimisation and damnation from these environments. Monitoring of publications such as Romania Mare, Atac and Noua Dreapta is particularly relevant.

Noua Dreapta case

A series of articles that promoted a behaviour aiming to prejudice a person's dignity or to create an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offending atmosphere against Roma minority were posted on the www.nouadreapta.org site.

The article signed by T. I., “For how long will you stay away?” prejudices the Roma ethnicity dignity and incites to racial hatred. “*You stayed away and witnessed the Gypsy aggressions. You witnessed the violence, effrontery and delinquency of this ethnicity that prejudices dignity and endangers the majority population. How long will you put up with this humiliation?*”

Another article, written by N. C., with the title *We have had enough!* includes the following: “*We are fed up with bearing the Gypsy aggression! To this danger of death that threatens our existence as people itself, we have the holy duty to fire an alarm signal and take URGENT measures*”.

Through Decision no.271/ 12.09.2006, the Steering Board of the National Council for Combating Discrimination, as result of examining the complaint, the documents annexed to the folder and the current legislation, decides that the presented acts constitute discrimination, by affecting the dignity of persons of Roma origin and the publishing of these articles constitutes facts of discrimination, thus the writers of the articles and Noua Dreapta organisation are sanctioned by warning and fines.

On 28.04.2006, Romani CRISS lodged a criminal complaint against Noua Dreapta organization and Mr. T.I. (writer of the article). At present, the dossier is on trial before the Prosecutor’s office within the Bucharest High Court of Law, for the felony of nationalist-chauvinist propaganda and violation of certain provisions of G.O. 31/2002, with subsequent modifications and completions.

Training and empowerment of Roma young people in the field of anti-discrimination:

Five young Roma from Satu Mare, Bacau, Covasna, Timis and Bihor counties were trained as human right local monitors and another 10 were delivered perfecting training courses in the field of anti-discrimination and monitoring cases of human rights violation.

Through 5 training courses organised in different regions in Romania (Muntenia, Moldova, Banat, Dobrogea and Transilvania), approximately 115 people (representatives of NGOs, Roma

activists, Roma experts from municipalities) improved their knowledge on anti-discrimination legislation at national and international level.

Legal assistance

In 2006, Romani CRISS provided legal assistance to Roma ethnic citizens before the courts of law, the Prosecutor's offices or the National Council for Combating Discrimination, in cases of human rights violations. A number of 25 cases were assisted.

The following types of discrimination against Roma in Romania were identified through legal assistance and monitoring visits in 14 counties (Bihar, Timis, Cluj, Salaj, Neamt, Botosani, Constanta, Satu Mare, Gorj, Buzau, Iasi, Covasna, Brasov, Dolj, Mures) where cases of human rights violations were reported:

- police abuse, including torture in police custody
- segregation of Roma children in schools
- forced evictions and environmental racism
- abuse of public authorities' representatives
- abuse of security agents

Publications: "Annual report on human rights situation in Romania", in 2006
Report "Legal protection against discrimination and public policies on Roma"
„Organisational Management Guide", targeting both Roma and non-Roma NGOs

Lobby: 10 press releases, 2 public letters, 2 protest letters, 3 newsletters, 3 briefings on cases of human rights violations. The newsletters and press releases are posted by Romani CRISS on e-groups enlisting 2463 active members, including an e-group with 1378 journalists as members.

The National Council of Magistracy answered favourably to Romani CRISS' proposal to extend the training and perfecting courses for the magistrates, in regard to international legislation and national jurisprudence in the field of non-discrimination. Hence, the National Institute of Magistracy, Romani CRISS, the National Council for Combating Discrimination and the Center for Legal Resources signed a partnership in view of organising, in 2007, a number of 4 continuous training courses for magistrates (judges and prosecutors) in regard to legal aspects in the field of prevention and combating all forms of discrimination. The seminars will approach subjects such as national anti-discrimination legislation, international tools on combating discrimination, discrimination on the labour market, jurisprudential aspects. Per total, we estimate that approximately 100 magistrates will participate.

HEALTH

Health Department. Priority fields of action:

The programs on HEALTH implemented by Romani CRISS aim to improve the health condition of Roma communities' members in Romania. The action lines of these projects focus on the improvement of communication between medical authorities and Roma communities, as well as training Roma women with medium level of education in the field of health mediation.

Starting with 2001, Romani CRISS is the partner of the Ministry of Public Health in the process of implementing, monitoring and evaluating the health mediation program, as per the Agreement signed by Romani CRISS, Ministry of Public Health and OSCE/ODIHR – Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues, document signed in September 2001 and renewed in May 2005.

In 2006, the Health Department implemented two important projects whose general objectives were:

- improvement of the health mediation system initiated by Romani CRISS, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, in accordance to the mission of the organisation
- empowerment of the health mediators in their activities implemented for the benefit Roma communities.

Specific objectives in 2006

- To improve the strategic vision of the health mediation program
- To organise working meetings at local/ county level with representatives of Ministry of Health and of County Public Health Authorities (PHAs) in view of elaborating a joint plan of activities that support the improvement of health mediation system
- To organise five permanent regional centers that would monitor and evaluate the activity of the health mediators working in the County PHAs
- To write a newsletter for the health mediators active in the Ministry of Health's network
- To train trainers in the field of health mediation that would ensure the theoretical training process for future health mediators
- To ensure the training process for future health mediators at the request of County PHAs
- To re-activate the Ministerial Commission for Roma within the Ministry of Health that will contribute to the achievement of program's general objective

Results of the Health Department in 2006

1. Review of the Health department's strategic vision for 2006-2008
2. Training of 12 trainers in the field of health mediation
3. Organising and holding the public hearing "Health mediator between necessity and innovation", meeting organised in partnership with the Commission for Health and Family – Parliament of Romania
4. Training of 120 health mediators who will become active in Roma communities, as per Order 619/ 2002 issued by the Ministry of Public Health
5. Organising 21 roundtables at county level aiming at analysing the health mediation program implemented in accordance to Order 619/2002

6. Working meetings with representatives of central authorities (Ministry of Public Health) in view of improving the health mediation system
7. Field visits in the Roma communities in view of monitoring the health mediators' activity
8. Setting up six regional centers for monitoring and supporting the health mediators' activity (Gorj, Cluj, Vaslui, Covasna, Giurgiu counties and Bucharest)
9. Organising and implementing a health education campaign in Hadareni community, Mures county
10. Development of health education strategies for Roma communities in 30 localities from 6 counties – Giurgiu, Tulcea, Vaslui, Dambovita, Iasi and Suceava. – the strategy is adapted to the specificity of each Roma community.

The idea to establish centers to support the health mediators' activity started from analysing the evaluation report drawn by Maria Mailat, anthropologist and CITA evaluator. These centers have as main purpose the improvement and supporting of the health mediators' activity, mediators trained by Romani CRISS. In the same time, the centers are supposed to answer the question regarding the efficiency of the health mediators' activity in Roma communities in Romania and regarding the Roma's equal access to public health services. The regional coordinators will look at the health mediators' activity more in terms of human rights. Through these centers, Romani CRISS wants to be nearer to the health mediators' activity. As partners of the Ministry of Health, Romani CRISS is responsible for the theoretical training of future health mediators and for monitoring the activity of the health mediators who are employed by the County PHAs.

LOCATIONS:

Center in Cluj	Counties: Cluj, Alba, Arad, Timisoara, Bihor, Satu Mare, Maramures, Bistrita Nasaud, Salaj
Center in Gorj	Counties: Caras Severin, Mehedinti, Hunedoara, Gorj, Valcea, Olt, Dolj
Center in Covasna	Counties: Mures, Harghita, Brasov, Covasna, Sibiu
Center in Vaslui	Counties: Vaslui, Bacau, Neamt, Suceava, Botosani, Iasi
Center in Giurgiu	Counties: Teleorman, Giurgiu, Calarasi, Ilfov, Dambovita, Ialomita, Prahova, Arges.
Center in Bucharest	Counties: Buzau, Vrancea, Galati, Braila, Tulcea, Constanta,

Publications: the **Sastipen** magazine is a communication and continuous training tool for the health mediators. This magazine targets mainly the health mediators but the information provided is also useful to the County Public Health Authorities which are responsible, at county level, with the implementation of the health mediation program, as well as to NGOs and leaders who collaborate with the health mediators.

Lobby: the Ministerial Commission for Roma within the Ministry of Health was reactivated. From the perspective of the health mediation system, the Commission has a very important role because its members analyse and debate aspects related to the statute and activity of the Roma health mediators. The president of the Commission is Mr. Ervin Zoltan Syekely, Secretary of State for relation with the parliament and civil society, and the members are the personal adviser in the office of Ministry of Public Health, the personal adviser in the office of Mr. Syekely, a representative of the following: Policies, Strategy and Quality Management in Health General Directorate, Organising, Human Resources, Professional Development and Salary General Directorate, Public Health Authority, External Affairs and European Affairs General Directorate, as well as Romani CRISS and the National Agency for Roma, as permanent advisers.

EDUCATION

Education Department aims at developing the premises for quality education for Roma children and preservation of cultural identity, working on the improvement of Roma children access to education (pre-school, high school and universities), as well as on combating cases of segregation in education (along with the human rights department).

In 2006, in the field of education, Romani CRISS organised:

- 3 summer pre-schools for Roma children who were about to enrol in the 1st grade and have never attended pre-school. Beneficiaries: 65 children
- 1 summer school for Roma and non-Roma young people in view of improving communication and inter-relations, interculturality. Beneficiaries: 70 people
- 1 workshop for young Roma in view of strengthening the self-esteem. Beneficiaries: 60 people
- 1 training for trainers (Roma and non-Roma) on educational romanipen (Roma culture, traditions and history). Beneficiaries: 42 beneficiaries
- 1 perfecting course for Romani language teachers. Beneficiaries: 25 teachers
- Working meetings with representatives of non-governmental organisations and of institutions in order to elaborate a memorandum of collaboration for quality education for Roma children.

Romani CRISS implemented an information and counselling campaign for Roma students, youth and parents in 44 Roma communities from Bucharest and 10 counties (Braila, Botosani, Calarasi, Constanta, Covasna, Dambovita, Gorj, Neamt, Salaj, Vaslui) in regard to the affirmative measures in education.

A very important activity of this campaign was the establishment of 11 information and counselling centers/ office for Roma parents and pupils in regard to affirmative measures, in the 10 above-mentioned counties. At all times, in these centers, there is a counsellor providing information on Roma's enrolment in the primary, secondary and tertiary levels. The success of these centers is represented by counselling provided to **2567** Roma children and young people, as follows:

- General school level: counselling and enrolment in the 1st grade – **1211 children** (as result of the activity of the counselling centers and of the 3 summer pre-schools);
- High school level: **1051** students counselled in view of enrolment to high schools or vocational and art schools;
- University level: **88** Roma students enrolled in the university (according to the data received from the main university centers; in 2006, at level if entire country, 303 Roma young people were enlisted at university).

Publication:

“**Enrolment of high school Roma graduates at university on the subsidised places 2006**” – brochure that contains information regarding the enrolment at university on the subsidised places for Roma in the university centers in Bucharest, Cluj-Napoca, Tg. Mures and Timisoara.

“**High school enrolment for Roma children**” - flyer

Lobby: Official answer from the Ministry of Education and Research confirming that elements of Roma history will be including in the national curricula starting with school year 2007/ 2008.

The Memorandum of Cooperation on ensuring Roma children and youth's access to quality education in Romania, by school desegregation and promotion of education for identity was submitted for signing. The Memorandum is drawn up and undertaken by the Ministry of Education and Research, National Agency for Roma, National Council for Combating Discrimination, NGOs: Amare Romentza, Save the Children, Romani CRISS (signatory parties) and Project for Ethnic Relations, Intercultural Institute Timisoara and Ovidiu Rom (members in the working group), as well as by international bodies, such as OSCE/ODIHR and the Council of Europe.

SOCIAL

Social department implements activities in view of obtaining identity papers for Roma communities in Romania, by raising awareness among Roma community members in regard to importance and way to obtain identity papers, by involving local leaders in the information activities and by extreme intervention actions.

In 2005, Romani CRISS implemented the project "Roma citizens without identity. Equal access to resources". Although the project has ended, the technical assistance continued in 2006, as members of Roma communities in Bucharest still requested Romani CRISS for assistance in obtaining identity papers.

In addition, Romani CRISS is part of a consortium formed of Hulla & Co Human Dynamics KG, Community Development Agency "Impreuna", Business&Strategies in Europe SA (Belgium), European Centre for Minority Issues (Germany) and Hilfswerk Austria (Austria) which implement the project "Strengthening Capacity and Partnership Building to Improve Roma Condition and Perception". One of the project activities is to elaborate a methodology on obtaining civil status papers and identity papers.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Inter-departmental: **International Cooperation:** Romani CRISS aimed and aims to participate in the elaboration of policies for Roma at international level, by building partnerships/alliances, by providing information regarding the programs implemented by our organisation to various international partners/ donors, by encouraging and developing partnership relations between Roma NGOs and relevant actors from other countries.

Romani CRISS continued partnership with Fundacion Secretariado Gitano organisation from Spain in the implementation of two projects at international level, whose aim was to improve Roma's access on the labour market and on public health services. The implementation of these projects' activities took place simultaneous in the following countries: Spain, Hungary, Romania,

Northern Ireland, Czech Republic, Portugal, Italy, Greece, Slovakia, and Bulgaria. The partners involved exchanged good practices and developed collaboration and partnership relations.

In 2006, Romani CRISS built on the partnership with European Dialogue, by implementing the project on “Strategic Initiative on Roma and Police in Romania”, as well as the TRAILER project that aimed at improving the implementation of the anti-discrimination legislation in Romania by building capacity of Roma NGOs, activists and Roma individuals.

Lobby:

CEDAW

Romani CRISS and ERRC submitted a report on the situation of Romani women in Romania for consideration by the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). From 15 May – 2 June 2006, Romani CRISS participated in the Committee’s 35th Session, when Romania presented the sixth periodic report regarding the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (ratified by Romania in 1982) and reported on several breaches of the Convention in regard to Roma women in Romania.

The report and press release are available at www.romanicriss.org, section articles/ archive

European Commission

Romani CRISS and the Community Development Agency “Impreuna” submitted a Shadow report in regard to the Roma minority in Romania, to the European Commission 2006 Country report. The report shows that, in regard to human rights, the situation of Roma in Romania continues to be alarming: in particular, the Police violence and abuse, discrimination in the field of employment, abuse and discrimination in the field of housing, segregation in education and health constitute patterns of discrimination faced by the Roma every day. The report is available at www.romanicriss.org.

OSCE

The 2006 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting of the OSCE/ Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, on 2-13 October 2006. Romani CRISS was invited to present their statement on policing minorities and informed about the increased number of Police abuse cases in the Roma communities from Romania, Bulgaria or Macedonia in 2006. The drawn conclusion: it is of utmost necessity to work on preventive measures, to ensure to the highest degree possible that misbehaviour does not appear in practice. To this end, it should be made use of OSCE expertise and institutions and implement the OSCE Action Plan on Roma and Sinti.

On 4th of October 2006, within the OSCE meeting, Romani CRISS was co-organiser to the side-event “*The Gender Dimension of the Roma and Sinti Affairs: Traditions and change, Individual and Collective Human Rights, Gender Equality within Romani movement, including situation of Roma women as refugees*”.

Helsinki Commission

In June 2006, Romani CRISS participated in the meeting organized by the Helsinki Commission. Romani CRISS informed the Commission on the equal access to housing for Roma in Romania.

From Romani CRISS perspective, the most important problems of Roma in Romania in terms of housing are: the lack of property documents; evictions; patterns of discrimination or abuse.

European Parliament

On June 8th, Romani CRISS was partner in the round table debate "**How the EU membership will improve the Situation of Roma in Romania**", held in Brussels. The conference was organized by the Alliance Liberal Democrats for Europe in the European Parliament in cooperation with the National Liberal Party of Romania. Romani CRISS contributed with a statement on Roma situation in Romania, in terms of human rights.

Other activities:

- Marking out the important dates for Roma, by press releases and events (official reception, rally, public debate): International Roma Day (April 8th), Roma Slavery Abolition Jubilee in Romania (February 20th), Commemoration of the Holocaust (October 9th), Human Rights International Day (December 10th)

In the context of the "*International Roma Day*", Romani CRISS, in partnership with the United Nations Development Program Romania, the Press Monitoring Agency "Academia Catavencu" and the Civic Alliance of Roma from Romania and with the support of the Embassy of United States of America organized a reception to celebrate it.

The event was attended by over 100 people: ambassadors and counsellors from 15 embassies, representatives of Romanian Government and Parliament, as well as representatives of institutions and national and international organizations.

- Promoting the right to health. From 10 to 11 June 2006, the ***Health Fair – A different type of dialogue for health*** took place in Bucharest, at the initiative of the Foundation National Studies Center for Primary Care. The Health Fair tried to create a framework for a meeting and knowledge place for the people interested in the subject: family doctors and non-governmental organisations. Through this fair, Romani CRISS disseminated information about Roma and health and established contacts with the other organisations present, in view of possible joint projects.
- Participation in other events aiming at combating discrimination, in general: June 20th – International Refugee Day – press release; November 10th – mini-festival against various forms of discrimination and exclusion existent in the society.

DEPARTMENTS' CROSS CUTTING IN ROMANI CRISS

The departments within Romani CRISS are different as fields of action, but inter-linked as purpose.

- An example to this end is the project "Trust and respect among citizens in Hadareni locality", implemented in partnership with Chetani City Hall, Initiative Group in Hadareni locality, Chetani commune, Mures County and Pro Europa League.

The purpose of the project was to diminish the stereotypes, prejudices and practices that encourage discrimination, in Hadareni community and at level of certain public officers from local and county public institutions. The project targets the Roma, Romanian and Hungarian ethnic minority in Hadareni, Mures County.

Five training courses were organized for police officers (within the Ludus city Police), medical staff, teaching staff, local authorities and magistrates in Mures county in regard to the international systems of human rights protection and anti-discrimination legislation in Romania.

In addition, the local campaign "*Manusa Sasteveste! Oameni sanatosi! Egészséges emberek!*" ("Healthy people") was implemented on the topic of access and rights to public health services, prevention and combating discrimination in the field of health.

In the field of education, we organised another information campaign with the title "We have rights, we are equal. This is not a slogan – this is a reality!" Thus, the children attending Hadareni school were informed about the human rights and the rights of the child, about various aspects on inter-culturality, prejudices and stereotypes.

Few indicators of the project:

- In regard to the staff in local institutions - approximately 100 people (police officers, physicians, teachers, health mediators, magistrates, etc) participated in the working sessions on discrimination and prejudices
- In regard to joint actions of Roma, Romanians and Hungarians in Hadareni – approximately 80 children, 100 young people and 200 adults participated in the project actions (information campaigns, football match, discothèque, school fair)
- The support provided by institutions and organisations (although not planned in the project), which not only supported the community, but also became aware and interested in the problems of this community. Red Cross – Tg.Mures and SMURD joined us in the information campaigns.

- In the context of the *Human Rights International Day – 10th of December*, Romani CRISS and the National Council for Combating Discrimination, in partnership with the ACCEPT association, organized the roundtable "Year 2006: between respecting the equal treatment principle and discrimination".

The roundtable aimed at presenting and debating upon the human rights situation in 2006, in terms of anti-discrimination legislative framework, but also of equal treatment principle in regard to gender, sexual orientation, ethnic minorities, and disabilities.

The sessions focused on the following topics: How well are we defended against discrimination; progresses in the field of anti-discrimination; human rights and the LGBT community in Romania; equal opportunities for women and men at the work place; non-discrimination and the right to dignity for people with disabilities; Roma and human rights. Overview 2006.

The message of the Prime Minister at this meeting was: "Human rights are not a given. They are an asset we need to mobilize for in order to defend [...]. Second rank citizens must not exist in Romania."

Capacity building of organisations at local level

Twenty project managers (young Roma activists) were trained during 4 training modules: communication and public relations, fundraising, organisational management and project writing.

Eleven information and counselling offices in 10 counties were endowed with technical equipment, furniture and stationery, in order to achieve their mission of information and communication towards Roma parents and children in regard to the affirmative measures in education. A teacher, a representative of the local NGO or a representative of the parents' committee is working within each center.

Publications: Organisational Management Guide, targeting both Roma and non-Roma NGOs.

Human rights networks

Network of monitors

In 2002, at Romani CRISS' initiative, a monitoring network for combating discrimination against Roma was established in Romania, for the first time. The network was formed of 10 young Roma, from various counties of the country, with the purpose of documenting/ monitoring cases of human rights violations. In 2006, the network was enlarged to 15 human rights local monitors, members of the following organisations:

- Divano Romano Association
- Sanse Egale Association
- Romii Romascani Association
- Roma in Europe Association
- Ursari Roma's Association
- Ruhama Foundation
- Buzau Roma's Association
- CREDO Rom Star
- Rhoma Heart Ilo-Rrom
- „For our children” Roma Women Association
- “Amaro Suno” Young Roma Center in Craiova
- Romano Suno Association
- Roma ACCESS Association
- “Zurale Terne” Young Roma Association
- Parudimos Association

Network of lawyers

In 2006, Romani CRISS established a network of 15 lawyers in Romania, who had been trained to strategically represent cases of discrimination or abuse against Roma. The training course covered the following topics: domestic and international legal framework in the field of human rights and anti-discrimination; procedural aspects; case law; involvement of civil society in fighting against human rights abuses.

Romani CRISS is part of the Anti-discrimination informal group formed of the following organisations: Legal Resource Center, ACCEPT, Pro-Europe League, Institute for Public Policies, Apador CH, Open Society Foundation, Center Partnership for Equality.

PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED AND/ OR INITIATED BY ROMANI CRISS IN 2006

1. Monitoring Network for Combating Discrimination against Roma
2. Establishing and Capacitating a Human Rights Lawyers Network
3. Strategic Initiative on Roma and Policing in Romania
4. Training of Trainers in the Field of Health Mediation
5. Best Practice in Roma Health
6. Developing Management Capacity of Roma Organisations

7. Trust and Respect among Citizens in Hadareni Locality
8. Roma EDEM (education and employment)
9. Reduction of Reduction of Health Inequalities in the Roma Community
10. Trailer - Transnational Actions for the Development of Policy and/ or Legal Responses to the Fight against Discrimination on Grounds of Racial or Ethnic Origin, Religion of Beliefs, Disability, Age or Sexual Orientation
11. Need for Quality and Equality in Education
12. Steps towards Tolerance
13. Roma and Mass-Media: Training on Promoting and Respecting Human Rights
14. Education without Segregation for Roma Children
15. Improvement of Tuberculosis Control at High-risk Population Categories: “Fight against Tuberculosis in Roma Communities in Romania”

PARTNERS

- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Education and Research
- Ministry of Administration and Interior through the National Inspectorate for Public Registration, Institute for Crime Research and Prevention and the General Police Inspectorate
- OSCE/ODIHR – Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues
- National Council for Combating Discrimination
- Fundacion General Gitano
- Catholic Committee against Famine and for Development (CCFD)
- European Dialogue
- Danish Centre for Conflict Resolution
- Danish Institute for Human Rights
- Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE)
- Media Monitoring Agency
- ProEurope League
- “Amare Rromentza” Roma Center
- “Impreuna” Community Development Agency
- Timisoara Intercultural Institute
- Ovidiu Rom
- Save the Children
- PER Regional Center
- Local councils, prefect’s offices and Roma and non-Roma NGOs across the country

Romani CRISS is member of the Civil Alliance of Roma in Romania, whose purpose is to catalyse the Roma civil society sustained impact upon sustainable development of Roma communities. The Civic Alliance is formed of the following organisations: Romii Romascani – Bacau; ADCIA – Botosani; Equal Chances – Zalau; Amare Rromentza – Bucharest; Romani CRISS – Bucharest; Impreuna Agency – Bucharest; Parudimos – Timisoara; Romii Buzoieni – Buzau; Cultural Center O Del Amenca – Fetesti; ADOSER/S – Zalau; Roma ACCES – Constanta; Equal Chances for Women and Children – Zalau; Divano Romano – Botosani; AUR – Braila; Amaro Suno – Dolj; Pakiv Romania – Alba Iulia

FINANCERS

- Open Society Institute – Budapest, Roma Participation Program
- OSI - Human Rights and Governance Grants Program
- OSI-New York – Health Program
- PHARE Program 2003
- PHARE Program 2004
- Catholic Committee against Famine and for Development (CCFD)
- Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe/ ODIHR
- UNICEF
- AIDROM
- Roma Education Fund
- Trust for Civil Society in Central and Eastern Europe
- British Embassy in Bucharest
- German Embassy in Bucharest
- Royal Netherlands Embassy
- Royal Norwegian Ministry of External Affairs
- Danish Ministry of External Affairs, Danish Fund for Peace and Stability
- Ministry of Health through the Management Unit of the Global Fund Project and of the World Bank
- European Commission – EU Action Plan for Combating Discrimination (2001-2006)
- European Commission – DG Health and Consumer Protection

ROMANI CRISS IN PRESS AND INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL REPORTS

Romanian press, as well as international press covered the Romani CRISS activities. Even though not always, especially in Romania, the press presented the events in the same manner as the Romani CRISS' representatives, the following cases/ events were broadly covered:

- Forced eviction and demolishing of Roma houses in Chitila neighbourhood, Bucharest – January
- “Abolition of Slavery Jubilee” – 150 years since the abolition of Roma slavery in Romania – February
- Celebrating the International Roma Day – 8th of April
- Police abuse in Roma community from Apalina neighbourhood, Reghin, Mures County – September
- Awarding the award for objectivity in covering subjects related to Roma – December
- Limitation of Roma access to public places, respectively discothèques - December

Romani CRISS activity was acknowledged on international level too, by it being mentioned in various international reports. The actions in relation to which the organisation was singularised are:

- Provision of legal assistance, respectively hiring a lawyer in the case of deadly shooting of a 22year-old Roma by a policeman
- Reporting the excessive use of force and brutal treatment of police against Roma. The report mentions the cases of Gepiu, Bihor County, Bontida, Cluj County and Apalina – Reghin, Mures County
- Reporting the cases of forced evictions and demolition of Roma houses, along with the law enforcement officials' abuse (Case of Chitila, Bucharest, Piatra Neamt, Neamt County, Tulcea, Miercurea Ciuc, Harghita County and Pata Rat, Cluj County)
- Reporting cases of harassment and intimidation of human rights local monitors
- Extension of the number of counties monitored in terms of human rights respecting, from 10 to 15 counties.
- Continuation of partnership between Romani CRISS and the Ministry of Administration and Interior in regard to obtaining identity papers for members of Roma communities in 5 counties
- Monitoring cases of school segregation