



Roma Political Leadership Academy

Sofia, Bulgaria
November 29—December 2, 2007

Conference Report

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NDI REGIONAL ROMA INITIATIVE

Despite advances in general living standards in Central and Eastern Europe in the years since the region began its democratic transition, Roma remain marginalized and victim to discrimination, social segregation, and poverty.

The persistent disparity between the improved living conditions in Central and Eastern Europe and the socioeconomic stagnation of Romani communities is in part due to the weak presence of Roma in elected bodies, political parties, and government institutions. To help governments develop solutions to benefit their Romani constituents, Roma must increase their political participation and representation to advance new and innovative policy solutions that will bring tangible benefits to their communities.

Since 2004, the National Democratic Institute (NDI) has conducted targeted assistance programs to help Romani political and civic activists in Bulgaria, Slovakia, and Romania enhance their skills through political leadership training. These monthly seminars help develop participants' abilities in advocacy, fundraising, strategic planning, communication, media relations, and election strategy. Participants include electoral candidates from mainstream and Romani parties, local government officials, and civic leaders committed to improving their skills in order to greater benefit the Romani community.

Through its work with the Romani community, NDI has achieved the following successes:

- NDI has increased ties between

Roma and representatives of mainstream political parties and institutions at all levels. Local elections in Bulgaria demonstrated an increased willingness by mainstream parties to field Romani candidates on their party lists. In Slovakia, mainstream parties such as the Slovak Democratic and Christian Union have created Romani advisory boards in their regional offices and incorporated Romani issues into their internal party training and orientation.

- As a primary component of its assistance, NDI has worked to build the capacity of Romani nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), including the Roma Civic Alliance (RCA) in Romania, and the Slovak NGO, the Roma Public Policy Institute (RPPI). In the fall of 2007, RPPI held a nationally covered press conference where it issued a first of its kind assessment report of the government's progress in implementing Roma-related policies. The government responded by issuing a midterm Roma strategy including many of RPPI's recommendations.

- After expanding its Roma assistance to Romania in 2006, NDI has further broadened the reach of the program to Kosovo, Macedonia, and Serbia with additional funds from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). In Serbia, NDI is conducting training

and strategic assistance to local Roma party branches, candidates for the Roma national minority council, and the NGO, League for the Decade of Roman Inclusion. In Kosovo, NDI provided election assistance to political parties representing the Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian (RAE) communities and will continue to provide assistance to their newly-elected MPs. In Macedonia, NDI is working with minority MPs including Roma on issues such as constituent relations.

Each year, NDI seeks to enhance this targeted assistance by hosting a regional training workshop. The Roma Political Leadership Academy provides advanced topical training to supplement the skills developed during in-country training, and serves as a forum for Roma from across the region to exchange information and ideas and to strengthen their collaboration. The Academy further facilitates dialogue between Romani activists and a diverse array of prominent members of governments, political parties, and civic organizations. Conversations begun at the Academy often result in sustained cooperation and communication long after participants have returned home.

From November 29 to December 2, 2007, NDI held its fourth annual Roma Political Leadership Academy in Sofia, Bulgaria. The conference, entitled *Acquiring and Retaining Positions of Influence*, featured panel discussions and training workshops on keeping in touch with constituents and the grassroots community, building leverage, effectively using positions to deliver positive change, using the media to promote policy ideas, and effectively negotiating with political party and government officials.



Electoral Systems

On the opening day of the Academy, Professor and Director of the Romanian watchdog NGO Pro Democracy Association Cristian Pirvulescu (*above, center*) outlined for participants the characteristics and differences of various electoral systems and the need to take these systems into consideration when designing election campaign strategy.

Drawing on concrete examples from Europe and North America, Pirvulescu discussed the impact of voting districts in majoritarian and proportional electoral systems. For example, while proportional systems allocate seats among a number of parties, majoritarian systems require a party to win an election outright to gain a seat. This in turn can create incentives for parties to try to gerrymander voting districts to ensure that they continue to receive a plurality of the vote. Pirvulescu also detailed the role of the electoral system in developing and sustaining a two or multi-party system, and the various manners in which votes are translated into parliamentary or local council seats.

The professor concluded his talk by stressing the important role that electoral systems play in determining means of minority representation, and the significant ramifications for Roma on whether they are better represented through Romani or mainstream political parties.

DAY 1: HOW TO ATTAIN OFFICE

The Academy commenced with a morning session dedicated to introducing participants to the situation of Roma in their respective countries, and their respective political or civic initiatives. The early exchange facilitated better understanding among participants of the differences in the situation of Roma across eastern Europe. For example, the disparate cases of Serbia and Kosovo where Roma are dispersed and somewhat more integrated linguistically with the mainstream population but have strong Romani political parties, compared to Slovakia, where Roma are more concentrated and segregated in eastern Slovakia, but more often run with mainstream, rather than Romani parties.

Following morning presentations, NDI-Bulgaria board member Nikolaj Kirilov and NDI program graduate Teodora Krumova, opened the Academy's first day of training workshops. The first day was devoted to building participant skills and strategies for gaining office, including negotiating positions on party lists and building leverage and credibility within the community. Kirilov, a municipal councilor in Lom, and Krumova, a leading member of the NGO Center *Amalipe*, discussed their experiences in building

leverage and visibility.

While Kirilov discussed how to overcome challenges presented by vote-buying, Krumova stressed the necessity of developing a visible constituent base to increase one's political credibility. She also urged participants to consider their current activities as an integral party of their future campaigns. Candidates should be able to point to a history of concrete accomplishments to demonstrate their ability to deliver and to differentiate them from their opponents' unsubstantiated promises.

After lunch, NDI-Romania Country Director Scott Andersen moderated a panel discussion on challenges to working with both mainstream and Romani political parties. Leader of the Bulgarian Romani party *Evrroma* Tsvetelin Kunchev shared his strategy in recent local elections, and ways of developing a message that resonates among Roma. Lucia Klapacova, Foreign Secretary of the Slovak Democratic and Christian Union, spoke frankly about the obstacles of mainstream party preconceptions of Roma and methods of surmounting them. Above all, she stressed the need for Roma to demonstrate their commitment to the party by working their way up through local party activism.



Romanian participant Iulian Paraschiv (*right*) questions panelist Bulgarian Romani party leader Tsvetelin Kunchev on the role of Romani parties in Bulgaria.



Scott Andersen (*center*) leads a panel discussion with SDKU Foreign Secretary Lucia Klapacova (*left*) and leader of Evroroma Tsvetelin Kunchev (*right*).

DAY 2: HOW TO RETAIN OFFICE

The second day of the Academy focused on skills to retain office, such as constituent outreach and media communication. NDI-Serbia Senior Program Coordinator Elmedin Kurtovic moderated a panel discussion on methods to ensure that, once having attained office, Roma use their position to deliver tangible results to their constituents. Panelists Ivan Sotirov, a Bulgarian MP from the Union of Democratic Forces, and Alexander Filipov, Bulgarian Deputy Minister of Disaster Management Policy, presented participants with examples of how they have used their positions to maintain open lines of communication with citizens and respond to their concerns. They also briefly discussed challenges to communication between mainstream officials and Roma, citing a need for better dialogue and increased outreach on both sides.

Gruia Bumbu, head of the Romanian National Agency for Roma, discussed his efforts to engage grassroots activists in developing and implementing new strategies targeting issues of concern to Roma. Indeed, in September 2007, Bumbu launched an initiative to revitalize the agency by gathering some 100 Romani activists in Sinaia for a weekend retreat

to brainstorm ideas for new programs.

Later, Bulgarian MP Snezhana Grozdilova gave a presentation on responding to constituents by first listening to their concerns. Grozdilova drew laughs of agreement when she said that politicians often talk too much and listen too little. She then took questions from participants on maintaining open lines of communication and responding effectively to the public's concerns.

Stano Daniel, a representative of the Slovak NGO Roma Public Policy Institute, subsequently shared what mechanisms Romani local councilors in Slovakia are using, such as municipal social enterprises, to help combat unemployment and economic underdevelopment in their communities. Daniel drew on his experience with RPPI, which has worked with NDI, to train and assist newly-elected local councilors throughout Slovakia in managing budgets and developing solutions to unemployment. He reminded participants that though these enterprises may not be ultimate or universal solutions, they represent small steps in the right direction and demonstrate to constituents the councilor's commitment to finding solutions.



Deputy Minister Alexander Filipov (left), and MP Ivan Sotirov (right) discuss staying in touch with the grassroots community with NDI moderator Elmedin Kurtovic (center).



NDI-Bulgaria Country Director Sevda Voynova introduces Bulgarian MP Snezhana Grozdilova, who highlighted means of constituent outreach.



Albanian participants Arben Kosturi and Bujar Taho question panelists on what they've done in office to be responsive to their constituents.

Message and Delivery: Promoting Policies Through the Media

In the final session of the Regional Academy, Bulgarian journalist Boyko Vassilev led participants in an intensive media training. Vassilev began by outlining a number of guidelines necessary for a successful media presence, including being aware of and avoiding jargon. He pointed out that, while most civic and political activists are accustomed to using a certain set of vocabulary to describe their activities, that same vocabulary will alienate and confuse much of



their intended audience. He also encouraged activists to use colorful examples and analogies to make their message more tangible.

Following his overview of media techniques, the multilingual Vassilev conducted mock interviews with participants on topics of their choice. He then critiqued both the content and delivery of their responses for the group, providing concrete analysis on their message and delivery.

SIMULATIONS: TRANSLATING KNOWLEDGE

This year, NDI interspersed its panel discussions and training sessions with exercises designed to challenge participants to apply the diverse information learned in topical workshops to real-life scenarios. These simulations actively involved trainees with each other and encouraged them to contribute their own insights and analysis to the regional conference. The addition of a competitive element to many of the exercises further enlivened participants through a learning-by-doing approach with their fellow participants.

Simulations this year included a negotiation exercise to build skills in developing successful arguments and anticipating counter-arguments while working with political parties and public officials, and a political scruples debate which encouraged wide-ranging discussions on ethical behavior in various challenging scenarios that participants would likely encounter either in public office or within their parties and civic organizations.

Concluding the first day, participants broke into groups to prepare for a mock negotiation. The exercise tested participants' skills in preparing for negotiations to gain a higher place on a party list, win inclusion in a mainstream party's electoral campaign, or secure appointment as a governmental advisor on Romani issues. Since successful negotiations often depend on anticipating counterarguments and offering answers that will undercut them, each group was given 20 minutes to prepare an argument for each side of the negotiation. Teams then reconvened and pairs negotiated their scenarios for their peers.



Counterclockwise from top: (1) Macedonian participants Martin and Ferki Demirovski debate Serbian participants Nebojsa Silistarevic and Antun Conka; (2) Romanians Florin Manole and Iulian Paraschiv hear out arguments by Slovaks Jarmila Vanova and Vlado Sendrei on why they should appoint a Romani advisor to the mayor's office; and (3) Bulgarian team members Milen Milanov, Zdravko Kotov, Maryana Borisova, and Atanas Stoyanov prepare their debate strategies.



INTO PRACTICAL POLITICAL STRATEGIES

In a second exercise, participants were asked to react to hypothetical political situations, such as compromising with a political opponent over legislation. Individuals within the group then shared how they would confront the situation, and their teammates voiced their support or suggested an alternative answer. Once teams cycled through each of the dilemmas, they debated those cases in which they could not achieve consensus.

Finally, to test participant knowledge of electoral systems and aid them in incorporating their newly-gained knowledge into a successful campaign strategy, participants worked in campaign teams to design a strategy for their candidate based on a given scenario. While all teams worked with the same candidate profile, they were each given different electoral systems. For example, one group sought to promote their candidate in a Romani party in elections governed by multimember districts and proportional representation; other teams strove to negotiate a place for their candidate on a mainstream party list, or navigate a win in a single-member district with winner-takes-all election rules. In addition to devising a winning strategy, teams had to convincingly argue their rationale and their strategy's ultimate success to their peers.

The simulations were well-received by participants, who encouraged more regular use of them in training seminars. NDI will continue to monitor participants' successes in their home countries as they seek to put into practice the skills and strategies gained during the Academy.

Clockwise from top: (1) Program Coordinator Iulian Stoian assists the Romanian team as they discuss the political scruples dilemmas distributed by Program Coordinator Tomas Hrustic; (2) Bulgarian and Macedonian participants disagree on how to handle a political situation presented by one of the case studies; and (3) Program Coordinator Elmedin Kurtovic explains the political scruples simulation exercise to Serb and Macedonian participants.



Appendix 1



Roma Political Leadership Academy *Acquiring and Retaining Positions of Influence* November 29-December 2, 2007 Rodina Hotel, Sofia, Bulgaria

Thursday, November 29

18:00-18:30 Cocktail and Hors d'oeuvres Reception

18:30 Opening Remarks and Dinner

Friday, November 30

9:00-10:30 Introduction to NDI's Roma Political Participation Program and Participant Introductions

Speaker: Megan Volk Unangst, NDI Washington Roma Program Manager

10:30-10:45 Coffee Break

Attaining Elected or Appointed Office

10:45-12:00 Getting Noticed: Building your Leverage and Visibility

*Speakers: Nikolaj Kirilov, Chair of the Municipal Council in Lom, Bulgaria and Teodora Krumova, Center for Inter-Ethnic Dialogue and Tolerance Amalipe
Moderator: Sevdalina Voynova, NDI Bulgaria Director*

12:00-1:00 Lunch

1:00-2:15 Specific Challenges to Working with Mainstream Parties and Roma Parties

*Speakers: Tsvetelin Kunev, leader of the Bulgarian Romani Party Evroroma and Lucia Klapacova, Foreign Secretary of the Slovak Democratic and Christian Union and Advisor to former Prime Minister Mikulas Dzurinda
Moderator: Scott Andersen, NDI Romania Director*

2:15-3:15 Electoral Systems and their Effect on Political Strategies for Roma

Presenter: Professor Cristian Pirvulescu, President of the Asociatia Pro Democratia in Romania

3:15-3:45 Coffee Break

3:45-4:45 Group Exercise I: Developing a Strategy for Political Positioning

Facilitator: Scott Andersen, NDI Romania Director and Iulian Stoian, NDI Romania Roma Program Coordinator

4:45-6:00 Group Exercise II: Negotiation Exercise

Appendix 1 cont'd...

Facilitators: Zuzana Dzurikova, NDI Slovakia Director and Alexandra Link, NDI Washington Program Assistant

- 7:00 Dinner
- 8:00 Neno Band Performance

Saturday, December 1

Retaining Elected or Appointed Office

- 9:00-10:30 Staying in Touch with the Priorities of the Grassroots Community
Panelists: Ivan Sotirov, Bulgarian MP from the Union of the Democratic Forces, Alexander Filipov, Deputy Minister of Disaster Management Policy, and Gruia Bumbu, Head of the National Agency for Roma in Romania
Moderator: Elmedin Kurtovic, NDI Serbia Roma Program Coordinator
- 10:30-10:45 Coffee Break
- 10:45-12:30 Helping Democracy Deliver: Using your Position to Promote Change
Moderator: Sevdalina Voynova, NDI Bulgaria Country Director
- Building Partnerships on Policy Initiatives
Presenter: Nigyar Sahlim, Bulgarian MP from the Movement for Rights and Freedoms
 - Fostering Development and Jobs on the Local Level
Presenter: Stanislav Daniel, Roma Public Policy Institute in Slovakia
- 12:30-1:45 Lunch
- 1:45-3:15 Using the Media to Promote Policy Ideas
Trainer: Boyko Vassilev, Journalist with Bulgarian National TV
- 3:15-3:30 Coffee Break
- 3:30-5:00 Political Scruples Group Exercise
Facilitator: Megan Volk Unangst, NDI Washington Roma Program Manager and Tomas Hrustic, NDI Slovakia Roma Program Coordinator
- 5:00-5:30 Closing Remarks
Speaker: Sevdalina Voynova, Director NDI Bulgaria
- 7:00 Dinner in Sofia

Sunday, December 2

- 9:30 – 11:30 Walk in Sofia/Participants depart

Appendix 2

2007 Roma Political Leadership Academy Guest List

Participants

Albania

Arben Kosturi is currently the Executive Director of the Romani association *Disutni Albania*. He is also the Regional Coordinator for the Albanian Association for Human Rights.

Bujar Taho is an attorney with the Apicella & Partners law firm in Tirana, and is also a faculty member at the Justiniani I Law School. Previously, he worked for the United Nations Development Program, and has been deeply involved in Romani issues at the national and international level throughout his professional life. He is a Fulbright scholar, and obtained an LLM degree in International and Comparative law from the University of Pittsburgh.

Bulgaria

Atanas Stoyanov, from the village of Kamen in the Veliko Tarnovo region, is currently studying Public Administration and Elementary School Pedagogy and English at Veliko Tarnovo University. He is a graduate of the ACCESS Foundation journalism course *Roma in Mainstream Media* and previously served as an intern at the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and reporter for *Evrocom* TV in Veliko Tarnovo from October 2006 to January 2007. Since October 2006, he has been working for the Center for Inter-Ethnic Dialogue and Tolerance *Amalipe*. In the last local elections, he ran as a candidate for municipal councilor for the Movement for Rights and Freedoms.

Maryana Borisova, from the town of Simitli, Blagoevgrad district (SW Bulgaria); fourth-year student in International Relations. She took part in the implementation of a project of Open Society in Blagoevgrad as head of "Education and work qualification for young Roma". She took part in local election campaigns as a volunteer. She recently established the first foundation for young Roma in Simitli.

Milen Milanov is from Sofia and is currently studying International Economic Relations. Milen serves as Coordinator of the Public Council *Kupate* for the implementation of the municipal strategy of the Decade of Roma Inclusion in Sofia, and is also a manager of the youth program *R.O.M.I.*

Zdravko Kotov is from Knezha, and previously served as an expert on Ethnic and Demographic Issues for the Knezha municipality. Since 2005, he has been working for the Program for the Development of the Rural Regions in the Pleven regional administration. In the last local elections, Zdravko ran as the mayoral candidate for MRF, and was ultimately elected as a municipal councilor.

Zina Tenekedzhieva is from Haskovo and graduated from the Medical College in Haskovo with a Social Activities Specialist degree, though she is currently studying for her Bachelor's Degree in Social Activities at Veliko Tarnovo University. Zina works at the Roma Culture and Inter-Cultural Education University Center as well as for *Drom Dromendar* weekly and has participated in numerous training seminars on antidiscrimination, gender equality, and political skills building. Additionally, she works for the NGO United Roma Union to raise the educational degree level reached by Romani students.

Kosovo

Memet Jashari is a member of the United Roma Party of Kosovo (PREBK) party presidency and is the Director of the NGO *Romano Gjivdipe*. Additionally, Memet is a member of the Committee for Communities in Ferizaj municipality where he has been active in the community for the past seven years.

Macedonia

Ferki Demirovski is a state advisor in the Ministry for Foreign Investments and is also pursuing a degree in Public Administration at the South East European University in Tetovo in western Macedonia. Ferki previously served as an externship officer for the European Roma Rights Center in Kosovo, and later as a Program Assistant with the Open Society Foundation. Additionally, he is an active member with *Romaversitas* in Skopje, an NGO supporting Romani university students across the country.

Martin Demirovski is currently a political advisor to Els de Groen, a Dutch Member of the European Parliament. Previously he has served as a Roma Officer to the OSCE mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina and a consultant to the

Appendix 2 cont'd...

OSCE-ODIHR in Warsaw. He began his involvement in the Roma movement as the founder of the first Roma youth organization in Macedonia *Anglunipe* and later as a local monitor for the European Roma Rights Center.

Romania

Felix-Emanuel Costache, from Craiova is studying Social Policies and Public Administration Sciences. Felix is the president of the Center for the Promotion of Roma Youth, and since 2006 has been a volunteer for various Roma NGOs throughout the county. Active in politics, Felix has been the Vice President of the Democratic Party Craiova branch since 2003, and was also the head of the party's 2004 referendum campaign in Craiova.

Ramona Adina Dita is from Craiova and is a graduate of the the Faculty of Theology with a Social Assistance specialization and holds a Master's degree in Project Management. She has been involved in a trainers program in the field of organizational management and inclusive education. Currently she is a program coordinator for the Association Vasiliada in Craiova, and is collaborating with the *Amaro Suna* Roma Youth Center. Ramona also works as a local coordinator of two Phare Roma projects.

Petre Florin Manole is from Amara, and a student in the History Faculty of the University of Bucharest. In the past, he has been a volunteer for the Roma Center for Public Policies *Averi Ametza* in Bucharest, a program coordinator at *Impreuna* Community Development Agency and a program assistant at the Media Monitoring Agency. Currently, he serves as the Program Coordinator at the Center for Roma Studies in Bucharest University. Most recently, he has waged a successful advocacy campaign that resulted in the establishment of the Governmental Commission for Studying Roma Slavery in Romania. He was also part of a campaign protesting racist remarks by Romania's President.

Roxana Oprica is a graduate of the National College of Arts in Iasi and currently a student at the Letters/Journalism Faculty at the University of Iasi. Previously, she has served as an educational councilor for Roma youth in Iasi and a county coordinator assistant for the national campaign Diversity – Another Chance for the Future. She is a member of the National Network of Roma Youth and Volunteer for the Community Association *Amaro Ilo* in Iasi.

Iulian Paraschiv is originally from Ialomita county and is currently studying Political Sciences in Bucharest. He has been involved in a number of training programs on political communication, electoral marketing, and local and regional development and served as a coordinator for the Roma Party's youth organization in Bucharest during the 2004 elections. Currently he is running for the European Parliament on behalf of the Roma Party *Pro Europa*, and this year was elected Vice President of the National Chamber of Roma Representatives in Romania.

Serbia

Antun Conka is a Vice President of the Vojvodina Province Commission for Roma integration and a member and co-founder of the Roma Party Presidency. In 2004, he was elected as a local councilor in Apatin. He currently works at the Publishing Company *NIU THEM* in Novi Sad and is a member of the European Roma Forum.

Piroska Kovacs is a Program Coordinator for the Roma Inclusion Office in Vojvodina. In 2006, as a Researcher of the European Roma Right Center, she authored a shadow report on the discrimination of Romani women in Serbia, which was presented in New York at the 38th session of the CEDAW Committee. She has also previously assisted with monitoring discrimination against Romani children in Vojvodina elementary schools. In addition to her native Hungarian, Piroska speaks Serbian, English, and German.

Nebojsa Silistarevic is a local councilor in Vranje and President of the NGO, Roma Culture Center with 11 years of experience in promoting Roma social, economic, and housing rights, education, health, and culture. Since 1997, he has served as the local coordinator for a number of nationwide projects including Young Activists Against Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Stereotypes, the Network of Monitors for Roma Children Rights, and Roma Women's Rights. As a local councilor, Nebojsa has initiated the establishment of a Roma office in the Vranje local government. He is currently working with the League for the Decade of Roma Inclusion to develop education and employment projects, and is also a member of the expert team in charge of developing a strategy plan for Vranje municipality

Zoran Simic is the Secretary General of the political party, Roma Union of Serbia (URS) and has been one of the party leaders in helping to organize and implement election campaigns for the 2007 parliamentary elections. In 2005, he helped to establish an office of court interpreters of the Romani language. He is currently working as an advisor for the country's Office for Human and Minority Rights on the Roma Decade action plans.

Appendix 2 cont'd... Slovakia

Mikulas Estocak is a Community and Social Work Assistant in Prešov. He has participated in several training programs run by organizations such as the Belgian Red Cross, Partners for Democratic Change, and USAID, regularly volunteers with a number of NGOs, and is active in the Boy Scouts. In October 2006, he moved to Great Britain with his family, where he gained work experience, improved his English, and developed contacts with representatives of the English Romani community. Following his recent return to Slovakia, he is returning to an active life in local politics.

Maria Husova is a Romani journalist and community organizer from Vranov nad Topľou. She has previously served as the coordinator of Project Interface, where she provided policymakers and government officials with information on the impact of policies on Roma communities and offered recommendations on ways to make them more effective. During the 2006 local elections, Maria assisted the mayoral candidate in her home town on his campaign.

Rudolf Pohlodko holds a degree in Pedagogical Studies and is currently involved in numerous projects in his neighborhood, Stará Tehelňa, which has one of the largest Roma communities in Slovakia. He is a mediator for the Roma Health initiative, and is active in several other educational projects targeting Roma. Rudolf currently serves as a Community and Social Work Assistant in Presov, where he works to mediate housing disputes and develop solutions to housing problems facing Roma.

Vladimir Sendrei is a well-known musician and Roma rights activist and currently heads the Information Advisory Center for Roma activities in Kokava nad Rimavicou. Vladimir regularly organizes Romani cultural festivals and events, and works closely with the NGO People Against Racism on their projects to combat discrimination. He is also active in local politics, and is a member of both the municipal Committee for Education and a network of regional Romani leaders.

Jarmila Vanova is the Editor-in-Chief of the Roma Press Agency and is active the Roma Women's Initiative and several NGOs, including We the Roma and Eben, where she coordinates various media projects and campaigns. Previously, Jarmila ran in the 2005 regional elections as a candidate for the Kosice region and provided assistance to several Romani candidates in their 2006 local election campaigns.

Guests & Trainers

Gruia Bumbu—President of the National Agency for Roma in Romania

Maya Cholakova—Director for Ethnic and Demographic Issues, the Bulgarian Council of Ministers

Stanislav Daniel—Roma Public Policy Institute

Alexander Filipov—Deputy Minister of Disaster Management Policy in Bulgaria

Michael Fritz—Representative of the United States Embassy and Mission Director for USAID in Bulgaria

Michael Guet—Head of the Roma and Travellers Division at the Council of Europe

Nikolaj Kirilov—Municipal Councilor in Lom, Bulgaria and a Member of NDI's Roma Advisory Board in Bulgaria

Lucia Klapacova—Foreign Secretary, Slovak Democratic and Christian Union, and Advisor to former Prime Minister Mikulas Dzurinda

Teodora Krumova—Member of the Bulgarian NGO, Center for Inter-Ethnic Dialogue and Tolerance *Analipe*

Tsvetelin Kanchev—Leader of the Bulgarian Romani political party *Evroroma*

Cristian Pirvulescu—President of Pro Democracy Association in Romania, Dean of the National School of Political Studies and Public Administration, and Founding Member of the Romanian Political Science Association

Alida Rizova—International Secretary, National Movement for Stability and Progress in Bulgaria

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Nigyar Sahlm—Member of Parliament, Movement for Rights and Freedoms in Bulgaria

Ivan Sotirov—Member of Parliament, Union of Democratic Forces in Bulgaria.

Boyko Vassilev—Journalist for Bulgarian National Television.

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Madalina Stancu – Romanian

Delia Gheorghiu – Romanian

Marek Travnicek – Slovak

Veronika Polakova – Slovak



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