

Roma Task Force

Meeting Details
<i>02.08.2024 - Next meeting planned for September 20, 2024</i>
<i>10.00 am</i>
<i>“Roma Voice” Coalition</i> <i>INTERSOS Moldova</i>
<u>allamarin7@yahoo.com</u> <u>liaison.moldova@intersos.org</u>
Agenda
Agenda: 1. CVR notification regarding the legislative changes to Law no. 270/2008 regarding asylum in the Republic of Moldova. 2. Implementation of the project on integration and social cohesion in the North of the Republic of Moldova, by the WeWorld organization. 3. Activities dedicated to the European Day of Commemoration of the Victims of the Holocaust against the Roma during the Second World War. 4. Presentation of the information regarding the Bessarabian Roma Holocaust in Bug. 5. AOB.
Participants

<i>INTERSOS Moldova</i> <i>Tarna Rom</i> <i>UNHCR</i>	<i>Roma Voice Coalition</i> <i>OHCHR</i> <i>Agency for Interethnic Relations</i>	<i>Ministry of Education and Research</i> <i>Roma Women Platform ROMNI</i> <i>Association Porojan</i>	<i>We World</i> <i>International Organisation for Migration (IOM)</i> <i>General Inspectorate for Migration</i>
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Summary of discussions and agreements/ action points

Agenda	Discussion
<p>1. CVR notification regarding the legislative changes to Law no. 270/2008 regarding asylum in the Republic of Moldova.</p> <p>Cristina Sîrbu Co-Chair Roma Task Force, Head of Communication & Advocacy <i>INTERSOS Moldova</i></p> <p>Ion Duminica Executive Director <i>Porojan Association</i></p>	<p>Cristina Sîrbu, co-chair of the Task Force on behalf of Intersos Moldova, welcomed everybody, presented the Agenda of the meeting and asked if anyone wanted to add another item to the agenda.</p> <p>Ion Duminica stated that the Roma Voice Coalition promotes Roma policies by monitoring and improving legislation. In this sense, the CVR is suggesting amendments for the Law 270-2008 regarding asylum in the Republic of Moldova. These amendments have been published on the Civil Government website and aim to clarify and improve the legislative framework to better reflect the needs of Roma. For example, the term "accommodation center" was proposed to be replaced with "early placement center" to avoid confusion. Other amendments include redefining the term "family member" to be more accessible and to include extended</p>

Sorina Pînzaru
OHCHR

Ion Duminica
Executive Director
Porojan Association

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Cristina Sîrbu
Co-Chair Roma Task Force,
Head of Communication & Advocacy
INTERSOS Moldova

Ion Duminica
Executive Director
Porojan Association

families, specific to Roma culture. Additionally, the inclusion of a schooling package for children and ensuring equitable access to education was proposed. Ion Duminica emphasized the importance of clear terms and an equitable approach in the legislative process.

Ms. Pinzaru asked if it is specified somewhere which relatives are included in the category of relative of IV degree.

According to Mr. Duminica, if you specify the degree of kinship 1-4, you will find each degree of kinship (1, 2, 3, 4) clearly defined online. These degrees are well-known and do not require specific legislation. Family members include the spouse and unmarried children under 18 years old, whether from marriage and outside of marriage.

Ms. Pinzaru asked if specifying the degrees of kinship 1-4 in the law will make it harder for readers to understand, suggesting it should be more accessible.

Mr. Ion Duminică said that those reading the amendment and working in social protection are familiar with the terms of kinship degrees 1-4, so they are accessible.

Cristina Sîrbu said that they are not in a position to comment on the validity of the amendments, but she asked if kinship degrees 1-4 include adopted children.

Ion Duminică said this detail should be added.

Cristina Sîrbu
Co-Chair Roma Task Force,
Head of Communication & Advocacy
INTERSOS Moldova

Ivan Duminica
Head of the Interethnic Relations Department
Ministry of Education and Research

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Executive Director
Porojan Association

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Cristina Sîrbu said that while kinship degrees 1-4 are comprehensive and useful in forms, they can also lead to legal interpretation issues, potentially having both positive and negative impacts.

Dr. Hab. Ivan Duminică said that modifications should clarify the role of the Ministry of Education and Research, as the role of the Ministry is to ensure educational access and cannot manage additional needs like clothing or food. He suggested discussing these issues separately with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection to avoid conflicting responsibilities and ensure clarity in implementation.

Ion Duminica asked who is responsible for providing clothing, school supplies, and other necessities for Roma refugees if they have access to education.

Ivan Duminica said that while they ensure Roma children attend school, they rely on partners for clothing and other needs, as the ministry cannot provide these resources.

Ion Duminica said that we need to include school supplies in the reception conditions, as currently, the law only covers accommodation and food. The Ministry of Education should recognize that refugee children are not in the same situation as other children in Moldova and need additional support, such as literacy courses and material assistance. Equal access is not enough; we must ensure they receive adequate support to overcome their unique challenges.

Ivan Duminică said that the issue is solvable. The instructions have been modified according to the proposals from the Roma Voice Coalition, including Roma refugees. Therefore, this article is not applicable and should be removed.

	<p>Also, Ivan Duminică suggested replacing the Ministry of Education with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection in the article. He proposed focusing on issues like clothing, as the Ministry of Education is already covered by the new instructions.</p>
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2. Implementation of the project on integration and social cohesion in the North of the Republic of Moldova, by the WeWorld organization.

Fede
Gender Protection Officer
WeWorld

Cristina Sîrbu
Co-Chair Roma Task Force,
Head of Communication & Advocacy
INTERSOS Moldova

Ivan Duminica
Head of the Interethnic Relations Department
Ministry of Education and Research

Fede Bagolin shared information about a new project for the social integration of Roma families. They plan to set up three community spaces in Otaci, Edinet and Soroca, launching in October. The project includes non-formal education, recreational activities, and mental health support. They aim to engage different communities, including Moldovan and Ukrainian families, while being sensitive to their needs. The team will collaborate with local authorities and partners. They are currently hiring coordinators and other staff, emphasizing the importance of understanding and respecting the Roma culture to ensure effective integration and support.

Cristina Sirbu thanked Fede for the presentation and emphasized the importance of the project. She appreciated the coordinated and culturally sensitive approach and highlighted the need for staff training on Roma history and culture to avoid unconscious biases. Cristina shared her own experience with Roma communities, noting the risk of stereotypes creating barriers. She expressed happiness that these considerations were included in the project plan.

Ivan Duminica said that the Ministry of Education and Research is finalizing a curriculum on the history and culture of the Roma for grades 5 to 9. This will provide educational support, and materials will be available in multiple languages, including Romanian, Russian and Romani. This will prevent the need for teachers to search for materials themselves, allowing them to focus on teaching.

Cristina Sîrbu
Co-Chair Roma Task Force,
Head of Communication & Advocacy
INTERSOS Moldova

Cristina Sîrbu praised the development of the curriculum for grades 5-9, calling it a significant step forward. She expressed happiness about the progress and congratulated the team for their work on the course, eagerly awaiting official approval.

3. Activities dedicated to the European Day of Commemoration of the Victims of the Holocaust against the Roma during the Second World War.

Cristina Sîrbu
Co-Chair Roma Task Force,
Head of Communication & Advocacy
INTERSOS Moldova

Cristina Sirbu highlighted the significance of activities marking the European day of commemoration for Roma Holocaust victims. She mentioned the 80th anniversary of the extermination of 2,897 Roma people at Auschwitz and the broader impact on the Roma community during WWII. Ms. Sirbu emphasized the need for educational and cultural events to honor the victims and called for a National Day of Commemoration in Moldova, aligning with European countries. She invited participants to a commemorative event at the Visterniceni train station, a historical deportation site, featuring speeches and a recital by the Moldova National Youth Orchestra.

4. Presentation of the information regarding the Bessarabian Roma Holocaust in Bug.

Ion Duminica
Executive Director
Porojan Association

Ion Duminică discussed various aspects of Roma history and culture, highlighting both the positive elements and the tragedies that have marked their existence. He mentioned that in the interwar period, Roma people were often represented in an exotic and romantic light, being used as a tourist brand by the Romanian state. Images of Roma women selling flowers and nomadic Roma caravans were popular, but these coexisted with negative stereotypes, such as the depiction of Roma as wild or criminal. Mr. Duminică spoke about how Roma were described in magazines and documents, noting that these images predominated, affecting the general perception of the Roma community.

He also highlighted the significant contributions of Roma to Romanian culture, including in music, through famous lăutari (traditional musicians) and Roma composers. Additionally, he mentioned the efforts of Roma emancipation and organization during the interwar period, such as the first national congress of Roma in 1933 and the publication of the first Roma newspaper, "O Rom". However, Duminică emphasized that negative stereotypes and marginalization often prevailed, hindering the recognition of the positive contributions of Roma to Romanian society.

The psychological crisis of Roma affected by the war and Holocaust is profound. In 1941, Roma tried to comply with the laws and leadership of the country but were persecuted like Jews. Roma, like Jews, were deported to the territory between the Dniester and Bug River, where they suffered inhumane conditions and exterminations. About 25,000 Roma were deported, many of whom died from hunger, cold, and typhus. This genocide has been ignored in history textbooks, highlighting the need for recognition and commemoration.

Cristina Șirbu
Co-Chair Roma Task Force,
Head of Communication & Advocacy
INTERSOS Moldova

Cristina Șirbu thanked Mr. Duminica for the presentation. She mentioned that "The Invisible Tragedy: The Holocaust of Roma Women at the Bug River" exhibition will be available today, in cooperation with the Roma Women Platform ROMNI.

<p>Alberto Tonon Disability Inclusion Specialist / AAP TF co-lead <i>UNHCR Moldova</i></p>	<p>Mr. Tonon mentioned they are finalizing the report from the Roma Conference held in April and will share it with the group early next week. There will be an opportunity for everyone to comment and provide input on the document.</p>
<p>Cristina Sîrbu Co-Chair Roma Task Force, Head of Communication & Advocacy <i>INTERSOS Moldova</i></p>	<p>Cristina Sîrbu wrapped up the meeting, thanked everybody for their active participation and expressed hope to have all the decision makers present at this meeting - participating in all the further RTF meetings.</p>