

## ROMA LABELLING: POLICY AND ACADEMIA

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For centuries in different countries of Central, South-eastern and Eastern Europe groups of people have lived who are all called by their surrounding population with different appellations, which is usually translated into English as “Gypsies”. In the last quarter of a century, instead of these names, a new common designation has been established in the region’s public discourse, based on their self-appellation “Roma”. The processes of labelling and imposition of the new name on these communities did not stop in this region, and the label “Roma” is increasingly spreading in the remaining parts of Europe and even beyond. This process of imposing “from above” of a “politically correct” labelling, however, has led to, for some perhaps unexpectedly, to others predictably, an impact on the field. Some local communities labelled today “Roma” started to demonstrate publicly their reluctance to comply with the designation imposed on them from the “outside”.

The proposed article will reveal the historical sources of labelling of these communities and main dimensions of these contradictory processes. More generally the article will pose the question on the necessity for change in the relationship between academia on the one hand and the political ideology on the other. In other words, the question is about the main task and responsibility of academia – is it about examining the reality and bringing new knowledge, or presenting the reality according pre-defined norms?

*Key words:* Roma, Gypsy, Labelling, Policy, Academia

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## INTRODUCTION

For centuries in different countries of Central, South-eastern and Eastern Europe groups of people have lived who are all called by their surrounding population with different

appellations, based in most cases on the Byzantine “Αθίγγανοι/Atsinganoi”. Respective local designations in different languages were formerly automatically translated into English as “Gypsies”. In the last quarter of a century, instead of these names, a new common designation has been established in the region’s public discourse, namely their self-appellation “Roma”, which is considered to be politically correct. The processes of labelling and imposition of the new name on these communities did not stop in this region, and the label “Roma” is increasingly spreading in the remaining parts of Europe and even beyond. In many cases, however, this labelling does not take into account the self-identifications and the respective self-appellations of the individual communities in question. The process of labelling impacts more or less strongly the labelled communities themselves and leads to reactions and transformation that are numerous and varied across time and space and are dependent on various factors and circumstances (cf e.g. Podolinská, 2017: 146–180).

The Roma labelling processes provoke numerous research questions related to the transformation of the communities themselves caused by such “outside” interventions from the point of view of their historical development and of current appearances. May be one of the most important questions among them is connected to Roma activism in the past and even more today, in terms of individual national states as well as, and to a much higher degree with its transnational (most often European) dimensions. All these issues deserve a separate and comprehensive study. In this text, we will confine ourselves only to examining these processes in a historical plain and in two main discourses – the policy and the academic ones – which are to some extent (but not entirely) interconnected, and more specifically we will be focusing on the relationship and collision between both discourses.

Within this approach, the topic of Roma activism remains largely out of the study because in practice it is instrumentalised and realized mainly within these two main discourses. Today, in the political discourse, this realization takes place both through the direct participation of Roma in political life and (which is much more frequent and more effective) through the lobbying and advocacy of Roma activists in front of national and international institutions and donor organizations. In the academic discourse, this occurs both through the direct participation of Roma scholars and (which happens much more often) through non-Roma scholars who, in their quest for civil engagement, often subordinate the academic values in their research into the struggle in protecting the “Roma cause” (in the way each of them understands it).

It is clear from the beginning that the chosen approach cannot exhaust (even less to solve) the wide range of issues set out in this text but we still hope that it will be at least some basis from which the research will continue to develop in the future.

The specific reason for writing this article was from our side our recent archival research on the topic Roma Civic Emancipation between the Two World Wars, which reveals numerous previously unknown or underestimated materials in regards of the labelling of researched communities. From the other side, the reason was the repeatedly reoccurring discussions at the last few annual meetings and conferences of the Gypsy Lore Society about the use of the designations “Roma” or “Gypsies”, and the aim of the article is to contribute to future discussion by outlining the basic academic frames and dimensions of the issue.

# 1. THE POLICY DISCOURSE

## 1.1. Until 1989–1990

Since the Middle Ages Roma communities have lived in the region of Central, South-eastern and Eastern Europe, which, as said above have been designated with different names in the languages of the majority society in the region, which are usually translated into English (today's language of global academia) with the noun "Gypsies". Over time, and especially after World War I, when the old empires collapsed and new ethnic-nation states emerged in the region, some of these names turned into "official terms" and became political denominations of the Roma communities in their respective countries. Such denominations are "Αθιγγανοί/Atsinganoi" (Byzantine Empire, Greece), "Kıbtı" and "Çingene" (Ottoman Empire, Turkey), "Цигани/Tsigani" (Serbia, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia), "Cigani" (Yugoslavia), "Țigani" (Romania), "Zigeuner" (Austro-Hungarian Empire, Austria), "Cigányok" (Hungary), "Cikáni" and "Cigáni" (Czechoslovakia), "Cyganie" (Poland), "Цыгане/Tsygane" (Russian Empire, USSR), "Čigonai" (Lithuania), "Čigāni" (Latvia), "Mustalased" (Estonia), etc.

With the onset and development of the Roma emancipation movement, the issue of changing the public, official name of their communities came to the agenda. Already the very first historical evidence of the beginning of this movement, in the conditions of the Ottoman Empire, demonstrates a collision between the public labelling of the community by the macro-society and the wishes for own, emic and decent denomination (which is not always the same as the community respective endonym) of community representatives. An article published in 1867 in the Bulgarian newspaper "Macedonia", issued in Istanbul, entitled "Letter to the Editor" was written in response to the article by Editor-in-Chief Petko R. Slaveikov entitled "Циганите/Tsiganite" [The Gypsies] (Slaveikov, 1866: 2–3). The "Letter to the Editor" is signed by "Един египтянин/Edin egiuptianin" [One Egyptian] (Edin egiuptianin, 1867: 3). At that time, in a Bulgarian-language environment, Roma were named both "цигани/Tsigani" [Gypsies] and "гюпци/Giuptsi, агюпти/Agıupti, etc" [Egyptians] in different dialectal forms (cf the designations "Γύφτοι/Gıfti" in Greek-language environment and "Jevg" in the Albanian-environment). For the author of the article "Letter to the Editor", Ilija Naumchev of Prilep (present-day Republic of Macedonia), the preferred name for his community is "египтяни/Egiptiani" [Egyptians] because his whole thesis about the glorious history of his community is based on its origins from Ancient Egypt from where they brought the civilization to Ancient Greece (Marushiakova, Popov, 2017a: 34–35).

Another variant of opposing the label "цигани/Tsigani" [Gypsies] appears in the independent Bulgaria in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1901, the majority of Roma (Muslims and Nomads) were deprived of electoral rights, and in response a congress was convened in Sofia, which the press calls "цигански/tsiganski" [Gypsy], but the organizers themselves preferred the adjective "коптски/koptski", i.e. Coptic (Marushiakova, Popov, 2017a: 40–41). In this case, the community's preferred name is the same which was used for their designation by the administration of the Ottoman Empire, namely the "Kıbtı" (Marushiakova, Popov, 2001: 19), and the rationale behind is again the supposed Egyptian origin of the community.

The same rationale is embodied in the *Statute of the Egyptian Nation in the Town of Vidin* from 1910 (n.a., 1910), which is a statute of an organisation that was, in all likelihood, the first legally registered Roma civic organisation in the world

(Marushiakova, Popov, 2015a: 191–195). This Statute describes in detail the organisation’s public symbols, which are visible also on the stamp of the organisation. It is a circular stamp with the inscription “Coptic town hall in city of Vidin”. The stamp depicts St George on horseback with a spear in his hand, point stuck in a crocodile, and behind him a king’s daughter. As pointed out in the statute, the picture on the stamp illustrates “a girl who was doomed to be sacrificed to an animal, deified in Egypt, and who was rescued by St George in the same way as the people were saved from paganism” (n.a., 1910: 11–12).

In the period between the two world wars, the first attempts to change the official names of the community with its endonym (“Roma”) appeared too. From a chronological point of view, the first proposal for the official use of the name “Roma” was made in the USSR, by a non-Rom, namely by D. S. Savvov, who was employed at The People’s Commissariat for Education (known under abbreviation “Наркомпрос/ Narkompros”). In an article published in the Romani language journal “Романи зоря/Romani zoria” [Romani daybreak] in 1930, he wrote:

Тумэндэ исы пэскиро кхарибэ – “Ром”, история ракирла со рома выгынэ Индиятыр. Авэлас бы мишто тэххарэспэ “Индо-Ром”, а тэчнахарэнпэ “цыган”/ Tumende isy peskiro kkharibe – “Rom”, istoriia rakirla so roma vygyne Indiiatyr. Avelas by mishto tekkharespe “Indo-Rom”, a teknaqharenpe “tsygan” (Savvov, 1930: 9).  
[You have your own name – “Rom”, the history tells that Roma come from India. It would be good to call yourselves “Indo-Rom”, but you call yourself “tsigan”.]

This proposal, however, finds little resonance among the activists of the “Всероссийский союз цыган/ Vserossiiskii soiuz tsygan” [*All Russian Union of Gypsies*] which was founded in 1925 (initially in 1924, as “Союз цыган живущих в Москве и Московской губернии/ Soiuz tsygan zhivushchikh v Moskve i Moskovskoi gubernii” [Union of Gypsies living in the city of Moscow and the Moscow Gubernia]). They do not perceive the public denomination “цыгане/Tsygane” as insulting (as insulting is perceived the term “Фараоны/Faraony” – from Pharaoh), which is clearly seen from the article by the President of the Union, Andrey Taranov, “Дэшу-триту Октябрьско бэрш/ Deshu-tritu Oktiabr’sko bersh” [The Thirteenth Anniversary of October Revolution], which states:

Тагарискири Россия ... узбекэн кхардэ “сарты”, евreen “жиды”, украинцен “хохлы”, ромэн – “фараоны” и адякэ дурьдыр”/Tagariskiri Rossiia ... uzbeken kkharde “sarty”, evreen “zhidy”, ukrainsen “khokhly”, romen – “faraony” i adiake durydyr. (Taranov, 1930: 1)  
[The Imperial Russia... called the Uzbeks “Sarty”, the Jews “Zhidy”, the Ukrainians “Khokhly”, the Gypsies – “Pharaohs”<sup>1</sup> and so on.]

The only reverberation to the proposal for a new public community name (“Indo-Rom”) reappears in the 1930s, when at the time of funding the Gypsy Theater Romeni possible variants of its title were discussed. Among the proposals one can find also a version connected with term Indo-Rom, such as Indo-Romani Theatre or Indo-Romskiy or Indo Romenskiy theatre (Bessonov, 2013: 454). The term was also included in the sentence

1 All designations listed are pejorative names of the individual communities.

in which the founders of the theatre declared their “full readiness to participate in the merciless cleaning of Indo-Romen art” from the so-called “цыганщина/tsyganshchina”, which was considered to be degenerated by bourgeoisie kind of Roma art (O’Keeffe, 2013: 217).

An interesting variant of the reluctance to use the public name “Gypsies” (цыгане/Tsygane) during this period was expressed by the Tatar-speaking community Demirdzhi in Crimea:

In the Gypsy suburb [“цыганская слободка/tsyganskaia slobodka”] – is a holiday. Residents of this suburb received a room for establishing a *red corner* [красный уголок/krasnyi ugolok]<sup>2</sup>... Quickly the inhabitants of the Gypsy suburb, the “demerdzhi” (blacksmiths), as they call themselves, became attached to their clean, bright corner ... Letters begin to arrive: “Why it is called Gypsy [“цыганский/tsyganskii”]? Are we not “Demerdzhi”? Gypsies is a nickname imposed on us during our wandering life, during our lawlessness ... Gypsy suburb residents gathered in the evening on January 24 in their red corner, to discuss how to call it. They discussed long, and finally decided: we will ask the city council to give it the name “a demerdzhi corner” (V. D., 1928: 3).

Ultimately, a compromise solution was reached, and the authorities affirmed the name “The Gypsy red corner ‘the Demerdzhi’” (Useinov, 1928: 3).

In fact, there is a typical example of processes well-known also today for communities; Roma by origin, who have lost their Romani language and where the processes of adapting to the so-called “preferred ethnic identity” are flowing (public declaration or even experience of another, non-Roma ethnic identity) that may lead to the construction of a new ethnic entity, such as e.g. Balkan Egyptians (Marushiakova, Popov, 2016b: 17–18). As for Demirdzhi in Crimea, their descendants nowadays, along with other similar communities (former Gypsies), under the common name “Dayfa”/“Tayfa”, are nowadays an integral (albeit quite detached) part of the contemporary Crimean-Tatar nation (Marushiakova, Popov, 2004a: 150–157).

It should not be a surprise that it was in the early USSR that for the first time the issue of replacing the public name of the community with its ethnonym was raised. Similarly, it should not be a surprise that this was done by a non-Rom (there are other such cases in Roma history when innovative ideas are offered for the first time by non-Roma). For the first time in the early USSR, other concepts also emerged, which are particularly relevant today to modern Roma activism. Such is the case with the concept of anti-gypsyism as a state policy of structural discrimination that has defined the whole history of the Gypsies. For the first time this term was invented by Alexander German in 1928, and as a complete concept was developed by Alexander German and Grigory Lebedev in an article in the Komsomolskaya Pravda newspaper in 1929 (Holler, 2014: 84–88), and by Andrey Taranov, the former chairman of the All-Russian Union of Gypsies, who in 1931 placed as a particularly important task “the war against anti-Gypsyism” (Taranov, 1930: 1–3). It was also in the early USSR, when the issue was raised about specific problems of the Roma women and the need to achieve full female

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2 Красный уголок/krasnyi ugolok – literally “red corner”, originally used for designation of a small worship place in Orthodox homes; in Soviet times this was designation of space, most often special room used for cultural and propaganda activities.

equality, both in society and in the community, where their position was defined as “slave” (Grakhovskii, 1926: 2). In this respect, it should be noted that in the documents of the *All Russian Union of Gypsies*, one of the goals of the Union was the need to release women “from the yoke of family and man’s supremacy” (GARF, f. 1235, op. 1, d. 27, l. 94). Similarly, in Romani language journal “Нево Дром/Nevo Drom” the title of the programme article is “Джяла нэви романи джювли/ Dzhiala nevi romani dzhiuvli” [The new Romani woman is coming] (Dudarova, 1931: 23–24).

The first real debate among Roma activists about the public name of the community however, arose in Romania in the 1930s. It was connected with the establishment of their community organisations on a national level. The General Association of Gypsies in Romania [*Asociația Generală a țiganilor din România*] headed by Archimandrite Calinic (Ion Popp-Șerboianu), was created in the spring of 1933 in Bucharest. For the first time, the issue of the name of the community was raised in the appeal for establishing the Association “Către toți țiganii din România” [To All Gypsies in Romania], in which, although the address is “Frați țigani” [Gypsy Brothers], we found also a clarification “our Roma kin-folk or as we are called Gypsy” (Natasă, Varga, 2001: 96).

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of October 1933 in Bucharest another organization was created, namely the General Union of Roma in Romania [*Uniunii Generale a Romilor din România*]. The Executive President of new organisation was Gheorghe A. Lăzărescu-Lăzurică, proclaiming himself as *Voivode of the Roma in Romania*, and the Honorary President was Grigoraș Dinicu, a well-known musician (Achim, 2004: 154–155). Already in the Constitutive Act of Statute and Regulations of this Union it is noted that the organization will be actively promoting that “our fellow citizens do not to call us ‘țigani’, but ‘romi’ – our real name, meaning ‘human’, who loves freedom” (Natasă, Varga, 2001: 118) The rejection of the name “țigani” [Gypsies], loaded with negative connotations, and replacing it with “Roma” became an important aspect of the activities of the General Union of Roma. Soon after accepting the Constitutive Act of Statute and Regulations a public campaign in the country to promote this idea commenced. At meetings of the activists of the Union they explained: “The transition from Gypsies to Roma is through organization. If we organize ourselves, we will no longer be called Gypsies. The term Roma comes from the ‘liberty’ and means ‘to be good and honest’. The word țigan [Gypsies] comes from Greek and means ‘untouchable’. People unjustly call Roma Gypsies. People called Gypsies never existed anywhere.” (Klímová-Alexander, 2005: 202).

In the autumn of 1934, Gheorghe A. Lăzărescu-Lăzurică was ousted from the leadership of the Union by Vice-President Gheorghe Niculescu, the latter in November of the same year secured state recognition of the organisation as a legal entity. The General Association of the Gypsies in Romania, once again led by Archimandrite Calinic (Ion Pop-Șerboianu) and Gheorghe A. Lăzărescu-Lăzurică, also managed to obtain legal recognition in 1935 (Achim, 2004: 155–156). In this way both names became legitimized (“Roma” and “Gypsies” as well), but the official term in state and local administration documentations as well as in the public domain as a whole remains “Gypsies” [“Țigani”]. A certain breakthrough in this direction in the 1930s has only been found in some media (e.g. in the popular magazine “Realitatea Ilustrată”), where both names (“Țigani” and “Rom”) are used equally and with the same meaning (although the latter is used more rarely).

The same dual situation with the names “Roma” and “Gypsies” is repeated in Czechoslovakia after the Second World War. On 19<sup>th</sup> November 1968, the Ministry of the Interior of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic registered the Union of Gypsies –



Roma (*Zväz Cigánov – Rómov*) headed by Anton Facuna in Slovakia, and on May 30, 1969 the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Socialist Republic registered the Union of Gypsies – Roma (*Svaz Cikánů-Romů*) headed by Miroslav Holomek (Jurová, 1993; Davidová, 1995; Lhotka, 2000; Pavelčíková, 2004; Donert, 2017). Although the name ‘Roma’ (respectively “Rómovia” and “Romové” in Slovak and Czech) has been de facto made official through these legal registrations, solely the term “Gypsies” (respectively “Cikáni” and “Cigáni” in Czech and Slovak) remain in the mainstream public use. This public half-recognition of the name “Roma” continued until 1973, when both Unions were dissolved, and after then the only official public name remained “Gypsies” (in fact the term in use was “Citizens of Gypsy origin”).

The problem with the official name of Roma appeared in the late 1960s also in Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. At that time the Federation had a complex state legislation and hierarchic system, dividing the communities into three different categories – ethnic group, nationality, nation. In 1969 an article with an impressive title *Nismo cigani već nacija* [We are not Gypsies, but now a Nation] appeared in the *Večernje Novosti* [Evening News] newsletter in Belgrade, based on an interview with a Rom, Slobodan Berberski (with partisan nickname Lala), a Communist functionary of long standing, a Second World War resistance fighter as Political Commissar of a “чера/četa” [battalion] in the composition of the First Partisan Brigade of Šumadija (Stanković, 1983: 215). The article announced that Yugoslav Roma would create their own organization, which had the main aim to assist Roma to achieve the legal status of a “nation” instead of status “ethnic group”, as it was at that time, or to say it with the words of Berberski himself: “my people want that what others have received – the right to be a nation” (Kesser, 1969: 3).

On 20<sup>th</sup> of April 1969 in Belgrade the Roma Association [*Društvo Rom*] was established (Acković, 2001: 29) and soon after the process of building up branches in the various republics began. In separate towns creation of other Roma associations started (cultural, sports, etc.). In the 1970s over 60 Roma organizations existed and their number was constantly on the increase. This process was not developing smoothly, and at the outset there were controversies within the community itself whether it is necessary to change its legal status at all and the official name, as it is visible e.g. from the statement: “We, the Gypsies [Cigani], are part of this society, so we do not need a separate nation” (Ubavić, Kesser, 1969: 3), or from the article with the expressive title “What kind of ‘nation’ Berberski wants” (Jovanović, 1969: 3). Despite this resistance, a Founding Assembly was held in Belgrade on June 1, 1969, with 110 delegates, who adopted the programme documents of the Roma Association (Programme and Statutes) and its leadership was elected (Acković, 2001: 29). A special brochure issued on this occasion begins with a letter to the Yugoslav Party and State Chief, Josip Broz Tito, where it is written: “...We assure you, Comrade Tito, that our action is a profoundly progressive, deeply humane, natural expression of self-managing socialism ...” (n.a., 1969: 14).

At the state level, there was also a debate about the need to change the status of the Roma, as evidenced, for example, from the letter of the Slovenian party functionary Aleš Beber to the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, who proposes that Roma be granted the status of “nationality” and from the subsequent public debates (Acković, 2001: 117-119). The official legitimatization of the designation Roma (“Romi” in the then existing Serbo-Croatian language) appeared for the first time in the Census of the Population in 1991, when the term “nation” is used for all ethnic

communities (Acković, 1992: 11–23). In a sinister irony of fate, this happens just before the start of the breakup of Yugoslavia and there was no chance anymore to positively influence the Roma position in the society. In the subsequent wars and ethnic cleansing, many Roma were victims, especially in Kosovo after NATO aggression in 1999, and many of them still hold the vague IDP (internally displaced person) status in Serbia or are refugees in Western Europe (mainly in Germany) under a constant threat of being deported to Kosovo.

In the 1970s, the issue of the “Roma” designation arose already on the international level which was in direct connection with the First World Romani Congress in London in 1971. One can read that at this congress the International Romani Union (IRU) was established, which accepted national attributes such as usage of the common name “Roma” for all “Gypsies” around the world, the Roma flag and the Roma anthem. Even though the congress reports, which were published immediately after the Congress (Kenrick, 1971; Puxon, 1971), do not confirm completely these sacred mantras of contemporary Roma national ideology, they are uncritically reiterated not only in journalistic articles and different kinds of policy and “expert” reports, but also in numerous academic studies, published in many different languages (listing all these publications would exceed the volume of this article).

The Congress in London (more exactly in Orpington near London) was organised by Comité International Tsigane (International Gypsy Committee). In the published congress reports, both terms “Gypsies” and “Roma” are used on an equal footing. In both texts, however, the words “Gypsies” or “Gypsy People” are used, and only sporadically appear the appellation “Rom/Roma People” or “Romanies” (Kenrick, 1971: 101–108; Puxon, 1971: 192–197). In any case, neither in the text of Donald Kenrick (which in fact is a complete protocol of the congress activities and adopted decisions) nor in the text of Grattan Puxon (a famous Roma activist who continues to participate actively in the international Roma movement also nowadays), there is no single mention of discussion about a common name for the communities, let alone taking a decision on this issue. There is no mention of this also in the article by Slobodan Berberski, the elected President at the London Congress, on the occasion of his first anniversary, published in the newspaper “Borba”, the official body of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (Berberski, 1972: 12). Both terms (“Roma” and “Gypsies”), were used interchangeably, without opposing each other, also at the meetings of Social and Crimes Commission of the World Romani Congress in 1972 (Acton, 1972: 96–101).

In fact, Slobodan Berberski spoke for the first time in an interview, given about a month after the congress about a decision which supposedly was taken by the Congress in London to accept the common name “Roma” instead of “Gypsies”. In this interview he described very emotionally and not very clearly the debates and the voting of such a decision (Mladenović, 1971: 15). In our conversations with several participants in the Congress on this topic, their memories were not so categorical, they answered e.g. “this question was also being discussed”; “the participants spoke in different languages and did not always understand each other”, and none of them confirmed that there had been a vote and a decision taken. In fact, as already noted, the International Romani Union is set up de facto in 1978 (Acton, Klímová, 2001: 157–226; Kenrick, 2007: 126). At the First World Romani Congress in London, the following decision was made: “The next congress was to be held in Paris in 1973, if possible in the UNESCO building. The following congress would be in Yugoslavia in 1975. Mr. Vanko Rouda was elected as president of the permanent secretariat which would organize the next congress, with



Leulea Rouda and Grattan Puxon as joint secretaries. ... Dr. Jan Cibula was appointed representative of the WRC to the Human Rights Commission of UNO in Geneva.” (Kenrick, 1971: 105). However, the planned congresses in Paris and Belgrade were not held. In 1977, as a result of active lobbying activity of Dr. Jan Cibula in the United Nations’ structures in Geneva and with the active engagement of Indian diplomacy, the Sub-commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities of the Economic and Social Council’s Commission on Human Rights adopted a Resolution, asking all states to accord equal rights to “Roma (Gypsies)” (Kenrick, 2007: 284), i.e. for the first time then the name “Roma” gets some legalization on an international level.

In the academic literature, it is sometimes claimed that the International Romani Union was established just before the Second World Romani Congress (Acton, Ryder, 2013: 6), held in Geneva from April 8 to April 11, 1978. So far, however, no additional data, no documentary evidence has been provided, so it remains unclear whether there was any such preliminary meeting of Roma activists at all and who were the creators of the International Romani Union.

In the archives of the State Security in Bulgaria, however, an extensive report (Spravka, 1978) by “Secret collaborator Antonov” (agent’s nickname of Dimitar Golemanov from Sliven) has been preserved and recently made publicly accessible. It describes in detail the course of the Second World Romani Congress and sheds light on the events in question. From this description, it is clear that the issue of the creation of the International Romani Union was not discussed at the Congress; it was talked of it as something that exists, which is not questionable.

The participants in the Congress, who represented Comité International Tsigane from France (Vanko Rouda, Leulea Rouda, Matéo Maximoff, Vanya de Gila Kochanowski, Stevo Demeter, etc.) were de facto isolated and publicly accused of misappropriation of funds granted to compensate Holocaust victims. They in turn accused the organizers of the congress of “Communism and Yugoslavism” (Oshte svedeniia, 1979).

This situation is easily explained given the fact that the delegation from Yugoslavia was the most numerous (22 persons), their trip was supported by the state, and in fact, more than half of the participants in the congress (together with representatives from other countries - Germany, Denmark, Luxembourg, etc.) were from Yugoslavia (Spravka, 1978). That’s why the choice of the International Romani Union leadership is not surprising - President Dr. Jan Cibula, Vice President Shaip Jusuf from Yugoslavia and Secretary-General Grattan Puxon of Great Britain (Kenrick, 2007: 293). From now on, the old maxim is confirmed, that the history is written by the winners.

There is no evidence in materials from the Second World Romani Congress that the question about the name of the new organization and its name (International Romani Union) was raised at all. The designation “Roma” was not questioned in the discussions; it was accepted as an immutable fact. In this way, the International movement of communities, formerly referred to as “Gypsies”, becomes part of Roma national narrative, and in this discourse of analysis are inscribed besides the common name “Roma” also the other symbolic elements of the new Roma nation, in particular its flag and an anthem, and in this respect, the historical truth falls into the background. Everyone seems to have forgotten that at the First World Romani Congress was decided: “The melody of ‘Gelem, Gelem’ with new words by Jan Cibula and Jarko Jovanovic was adopted as the song of this Congress. ... It was decided to have an international competition for the words and music of an international Romani anthem.” (Kenrick,

1971: 105). At the Second World Romani Congress, however, the issue of anthem is no longer under discussion, and today, the song “Gelem, Gelem” with its text edited in the spirit of the Roma national ideology (with included topic of Roma genocide during World War II) is accepted as official Roma anthem by contemporary Roma activists, and respectively, this hymn is recognized as such in the contemporary public space.

Moreover, in the spirit of this new Roma national ideology a whole new national mythology about the origin of the song is currently conceived and developed, which traces the origin of the song in its author’s personal experience of Roma genocide (Matras, 2015: 32). What is often forgotten is that in the original lyrics of this song, which became popular worldwide from the movie *I Even Met Happy Gypsies* by Alexandar Petrović, there is no word about Roma genocide during the Second World War, as it is a folklore love song widely spread in the Balkans. It was recast in sake of Roma national idea, but still often continued to be performed as an anthem with folklore words (Marushiakova, Popov 1995: 10–21).

To say in brackets, a specific repercussion of the widespread acceptance of the “Roma anthem” in Hungary separate hymns appeared of Hungarian- and of Romanian-speaking “Gypsies”, namely a *Magyar Cigány himnusz* [Anthem of Hungarian Gypsies] in Hungarian (Cigány, 2018) and *Beás Cigányok himnusz* [Anthem of Beash Gypsies] in Romanian (Beás, 2018). The latter is a widespread traditional folk song among *Beash* in Central Europe (Kovalcsik, 1994: 20), which in the new social situation acquires new, symbolic dimensions, and becomes an important public attribute of community identity. The same process as in Hungary is also taking place in Croatia, (it is difficult to determine whether these are analogous, self-developing processes or a result of cross-border influences probably from Hungary to Croatia). There are many different versions of these anthems in both languages on the Internet but it should be noted that in the videos the performances are against the background of the Roma flag and/or Roma images, i.e. the Roma national ideology influence even those communities that distinguish themselves to a greater or lesser extent from the Roma. Naturally, in the text of the two anthems, the word Roma is not present. Similarly, representatives of the Bulgarian “Rudari” community (commonly perceived as “Gypsies” by the surrounding population) created two their own anthems. The first is related to the participation of their political party Rodolyubie 2000 [Love to Fatherland 2000] in the 2001 elections (Marushiakova, Popov, 2015b: 41), and the second one with their modern labour migrations abroad (Kopanarski himn, 2011). Both of these anthems are in their native Romanian language. However, unlike the case in Hungary and Croatia both anthems of Bulgarian “Rudari” community are without any Roma or Gypsy connections and their identity there is clearly expressed as a separate, clearly demarcated ethnic community of “Vlasi-Rudari” [Wallachians – Rudari].

In a similar way, as with the Roma anthem there is also an issue with Roma flag. For the first time, the “Gypsy flag” in a combination of two colours (blue and green, divided not horizontally but diagonally) was presented by the delegation of Comité International Tsigane at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg in 1969 (Puxon, 2000: 102). The choice of these colours is not a continuation of the tradition of the flag of the General Union of Roma in Romania, adopted at the congress in Bucharest in 1933, as it is sometimes written (Hancock, 2002: 120). The statute of the new organization, adopted at this congress in Bucharest, clearly states that the Union flag is: “... bearing the arms of the country and in one corner an embroidered design representing a violin, an anvil, a compass, and a trowel crossed with a hammer (Haley, 1934: 185; Natasă,

Varga, 2001: 121–122). Among decisions of the First World Romani Congress is recorded: “The blue and green flag was adopted as the flag of the World Romani movement. A red fire, wheel or thin stripe could be added in individual countries if desired.” (Kenrick, 1971: 105).

The red mark in the middle was added at the suggestion of Slobodan Berberski (Mladenović, 1971: 15), who wanted to include a red five-pointed star, a communist symbol that not all participants agreed on, so a compromise solution was made.

At the Second World Romani Congress, however, without any specific decision, an ancient Indian “chakra” was added in the centre of the Roma flag. As an official delegation from India was actively involved in the congress, and one of the main topics discussed at the congress itself was how Roma around the world can get the official status of an Indian national minority, the inclusion of this symbol (the red chakra) is fully understandable; and today this flag is accepted by everybody.

All of this development is completely legitimate. Every modern nation has, since its emergence, created its national history, which more or less became a fundamental national narrative. From this point of view it is clear that Roma cannot be any exception to other peoples in Europe. That is why both Roma activists and Roma scientists have the full right too to create their own national historical narrative (or, in other words their own national historical mythology) similarly to all other European nations. The interlacing of the efforts of activists and scholars in this direction is also quite legitimate, and it is well known from history of the emergence of modern nations in Central, South-eastern and Eastern Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The study of the origin and development of the Roma nation (Marushiakova, Popov, 2004b) is not the focus of our attention now. In this text we are not exploring the Roma master narrative; we are only tracing, on the basis of data gathered, the process that contributed to the imposing of the “Roma” label in the political and academic spheres.

After the Second World Romani Congress the new organization under the name Romani Union was accepted in 1979 as a member of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) with the status of a nongovernmental organization (Kenrick, 2007: 72), which in practice was the next step in promotion of the designation “Roma” internationally.

The third World Romany Congress was held in Göttingen, Germany, in May 1981. This was the only Congress of International Romani Union, which was attended not only by Roma, but also by Sinti, and a Sinti representative, namely, Romani Rose entered the new leadership (as a vice-president). Very soon after the congress, in 1982, the “Zentralrat Deutscher Sinti und Roma”, was established headed by Romani Rose, based in Heidelberg. Thus, the name “Sinti and Roma” was officially legalized in Germany, and in Austria at the same time the name “Roma and Sinti” came into official use. In May 1995, the “Zentralrat Deutscher Sinti und Roma” succeeded to achieve also recognition for “Sinti und Roma” as a national minority (Volksgruppe). Outside Germany and Austria, the designation “Sinti” is used only in the structures of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, where the *Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues* was established in 1994.

## 1.2. After 1989–1990

A serious breakthrough in the official use of the name “Roma” on a national level in the countries of Central, South-eastern and Eastern Europe came after the collapse of

communist regimes in the region in 1989–1990 and the break-down of the so-called socialist camp. The adoption of the designation “Roma” was considered to be “legitimacy of political correctness” (Petrova, 2003: 111) and perceived as an unavoidable part of the process of democratization and Euro-integration. The replacement of the old denomination “Gypsies” (in forms used in respective local languages) with the term “Roma” ran relatively fast and unproblematically, without big public debates, with only the exception of Romania, where such debates arise sporadically even today, the main reason for which is the mixing of the names “Roma” and “Romanians” abroad. The hopes that changing the name of the community will help to erase negative public attitudes have proved to be in vain, and now numerous examples for using the term “Roma” with discriminative connotations, such as graffiti “Romáci do plynu” [Roma into the gas in Czech] or “Ромите на сапун/Romite na sapun” [Roma into soap in Bulgarian], etc. could be pointed to. In the context of the transition to democracy in the countries of the region, the massive anti-Gypsy public attitudes, suppressed or at least not admitted to public expression by Communist regimes, not only did not diminish, but grew and gained new dimensions, and in spite of the change of the publicly used name of the community, greatly expanding and deepening (Marushiakova, Popov, 2013: 183–194).

An extremely important factor for the official acceptance of the name “Roma” and its usage in the public space (the acts of state and local authorities, the media, etc.) was the rapid development of the non-governmental sector, where the usage of the “politically correct” term “Roma” was considered mandatory. The aspirations for the integration of most of the countries of Central, South-eastern and Eastern Europe into the European Union (EU) proved to be of no less importance. In the negotiation during the pre- and after accession process to the EU, the use of the term “Roma” in all official documents (and in their coverage in the media) was also considered a mandatory sign of adherence to European norms and values by the political elite in the region and was adopted by all of them, with the exception of some extreme nationalist formations. This was considered to be a part of the price that was most willingly paid in order to become part of the EU, which was viewed as subscription for membership in the club of the rich.

Palpable, in countries in the region where NGO sector and in particular external donors’ activities were limited and European integration was not even set as a global strategic goal (Russian Federation and Belarus), these factors did not work. As a result, the issue of replacing the official terms (Цыгане, Цыганы/Tsygane, Tsygani) with “Roma” has not been put seriously on the agenda, including by the Roma themselves and their organizations, e.g. *Federal National Cultural Autonomy of the Russian Gypsies* (Федеральная Национально-Культурная Автономия Российских Цыган/Federal’naia Natsional’no-Kul’turnaia Avtonomiia Rossiiskikh Tsygan), which was created in November 1999 (registered in March 2000), and was one of the first national cultural autonomies (Marushiakova, Popov, 2018) preserved the term, which in other places was declared as politically incorrect and insulting.

The accession (or inclusion in the pre-accession process) of most of the countries of Central, South-eastern and Eastern Europe to the European Union impacted the European institutions and on the EU-wide labelling of communities, previously defined differently, e.g. in documents of Council of Europe as “Nomads” (1975), “populations of nomadic origin” (1981), “Gypsies and other travellers” (1983), “Gypsies” (1993), “Roma (Gypsies)” (1995), “Roma/Gypsies” (1998, 2000), “Roma/Gypsies and Travellers”

(2001), “Roma and Travellers” (between 2004 and 2010), and “Roma” since 2010 (Council of Europe, 2012). This process of European labelling, however, cannot be considered as completed, as seen e.g. from 2016 changing the name of the former “Ad Hoc Committee of Experts on Roma Issues” at the Council of Europe to the “Ad-hoc Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues” (CAHROM, 2016), and only the future will show how many times the official European label will be changed again.

The best illustration of the development of processes of European labelling can be found in attempts to determine the content of the term “Roma” reflected in publications of the European institutions (primarily the Council of Europe and later the European Commission too). In 1987 the Council of Europe published the book of Jean-Pierre Liégeois, entitled *Gypsies and Travellers*; in 1994 its second revised and supplemented edition was published under the title *Roma, Gypsies, Travellers*; in 2007 the third edition appeared, now under the name *Roma in Europe* (Liégeois, 1987, 1994, 2007). It is obvious that in the course of time the term “Roma” gained dominance, as a term considered to be politically correct (as the century old exonyms were declared offensive), and therefore as the only correct and admissible one. At the same time, however, it is obvious that this term is also problematic, thus gradually more and more documents of these two important European institutions start with a terminological clarification of what is meant by the politically correct term “Roma”, and usually each such document offers its own interpretation.

Thus, today we see a mechanical replacement of the previously used designations with the term “Roma” and the issue of appropriateness or inappropriateness of the politically correct terminology is not on the agenda. Instead of this, on the level of policies we are observing hectic attempts to bring together the different types of communities generally labelled as “Gypsies” (or corresponding designations) in the past under one umbrella term. It is enough to quote some of the latest (for the time being!) “official” definitions in order to obtain an idea about the lack of relevance to the objectively existing realities and accordingly to the academic knowledge too. A legitimate question logically arises, whether it is possible at all to have a successful realization of national and supranational policies if they are based on strategies and programmes, in which it is not clear who is the main target.

For instance, the Fundamental Rights Agency in 2010 defines: “The term ‘Roma’ is used as an umbrella term including groups of people who share more or less similar cultural characteristics, such as the Roma, Sinti, Travellers, Ashkali, and Kalé. These groups also share a history of persistent marginalization in European societies.” (Fundamental Rights Agency – FRA, 2010).

On the base of this definition the *EU Framework of National Roma Inclusion Strategies* from 2011 postulates: “The term ‘Roma’ is used – similarly to other political documents of the European Parliament and the European Council – as an umbrella which includes groups of people who have more or less similar cultural characteristics, such as Roma, Sinti, Travellers, Kalé, Gens du voyage, etc. whether sedentary or not.” (European Commission, 2011).

This definition is misleading because, for example, the Roma living in Central, South-eastern and Eastern Europe have much more “more or less similar cultural characteristics” with their surrounding population in the respective countries than with Sinti and Kalé in Western Europe or even more compared with the Irish and Scottish Travellers in United Kingdom and Ireland, and the “Gens de voyage” in France. It also remains unclear why no other nation in Europe is defined according to its cultural



characteristics (criterion, which opens the door for any free interpretations and disputes), and why it should be done only for Roma (whatever is meant by this term in this case).

In 2012 the European Commission started the process of implementation of the *EU Framework of National Roma Inclusion Strategies* and provided a new definition: “The term ‘Roma’ is used here, as well as by a number of international organizations and representatives of Roma groups in Europe, to refer to a number of different groups (such as Roma, Sinti, Kale, Gypsies, Romanichels, Boyash, Ashkali, Egyptians, Yenish, Dom, Lom) and also includes Travellers, without denying the specificities and varieties of lifestyles and situations of these groups.” (European Commission, 2012).

This definition includes even more communities such as *Dom* and *Lom* who live outside Europe, it brings no more accuracy in the issue, and on the contrary, it only further complicates it.

Neither better nor more precise is the definition in the *Declaration of the Committee of Ministers on the Rise of Anti-Gypsyism and Racist Violence against Roma in Europe*, adopted on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2012, and in *Descriptive Glossary of Terms Relating to Roma Issues*, published by the Council of Europe in the same year. It states: “The term ‘Roma’ used at the Council of Europe refers to Roma, Sinti, Kale and related groups in Europe, including Travellers and the Eastern groups (Dom and Lom), and covers the wide diversity of the groups concerned, including persons who identify themselves as ‘Gypsies’.” (Declaration, 2012; Council of Europe, 2012).

This definition is misleading too, because on the one hand it puts under the cover term “Roma” not only European “Gypsies”, but even more non-European communities, while at the same time it directly excludes large groups of European people who do not identify themselves as “Gypsies”, but their surrounding population considers them (and refers to them) as such.

However, the extensive scope of available designations of “Roma” does not end here. In 2015 CAHROM (Ad hoc Committee of experts on Roma issues) adopted a new definition, where there is a very important and substantial change – the “Roma” label has been replaced by a new one “Roma and Travellers”. This definition states: “The terms ‘Roma and Travellers’ are being used at the Council of Europe to encompass the wide diversity of the groups covered by the work of the Council of Europe in this field: on the one hand a) Roma, Sinti/Manush, Calé, Kaale, Romanichals, Boyash/Rudari; b) Balkan Egyptians (Egyptians and Ashkali); c) Eastern groups (Dom, Lom and Abdal); and, on the other hand, groups such as Travellers, Yenish, and the populations designated under the administrative term ‘Gens du voyage’, as well as persons who identify themselves as Gypsies.” (CAHROM, 2015).

As can be seen, the number of communities included under the term “Roma” continues to grow. In the case of the “Abdal” added here from Asia Minor their ethnic (Non-Roma) origin and identity of this community are again not taken into account. The two main criteria for defining somebody as “Roma” continues to be in use simultaneously: from one side, it is the Indian origin of the communities in question, and from other side, the nomadic way of life (current or led in the past).

If the second line continues its current expansion it is logical to expect that to the communities covered by the term “Roma” will be added to even more, and we will be obliged to call “Roma” also such communities as “Burakamin” from Japan, “Batwa/Abatwa/Abathwa” (Pygmies) from Rwanda, and “Midgaan/Madhiban” from Somali,



as proposed by some Roma activists in Turkey (Çingenelerin, 2009–2010), as well as many other nomadic and peripatetic populations from the whole world.

Other international institutions also strive to create their own definition of the term “Roma”. This was done recently in the definition offered by the Human Rights Council at the United Nations: “The term ‘Roma’ refers to heterogeneous groups, the members of which live in various countries under different social, economic, cultural and other conditions. The term ‘Roma’ thus does not denote a specific group but rather refers to the multifaceted Roma universe, which is comprised of groups and subgroups that overlap but are united by common historical roots, linguistic commonalities and a shared experience of discrimination in relation to majority groups. ‘Roma’ is therefore a multidimensional term that corresponds to the multiple and fluid nature of Roma identity.” (Report, 2015: 2). Based on this definition under the cover term “Roma” are included even more communities: “Roma groups are also present in Central Asian countries, where they are known collectively as Lyuli. While those groups are distinct from American and European Roma, they share the experience of exclusion and marginalization from local majority populations.” (Report, 2015: 3).

Adding to the criterion “shared experience of exclusion and marginalization” in this definition opens new horizons for expanding the scope of the term “Roma” and only the future will show how many communities (ethnic, religious, social, sexual, etc.) will be covered with this umbrella term. In any case, the trend of linking Roma with LGBTIQ community is already visible (see Ryder et al., 2015), and finds its expression in the NGO sector, e.g. in the grants of Community Youth Fellowships of the Open Society Foundations (Kanicsár, 2017), as well as in the International Roma LGBTIQ Conferences Series.

Compared with other international institutions and organizations, the approach of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe is distinguished by its pragmatism and the desire to avoid placing diverse communities under the label “Roma”. This can be seen not only in the name of the specialized department (Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues), which retains the name “Sinti” on equal footing with “Roma”, but also the most commonly used terminology “Roma and related groups/communities” – especially when it comes to the regions of South Caucasus and Central Asia. Moreover, instead of describing in detail the content of the common label following a more open interpretation is preferred: “The term ‘Roma’ is used in this paper as a common term for different ethnic groups of separate identities based on perceived similarities of their lifestyle, characteristics, occupations, appearance, and ethnic origin, resulting in similar treatment as a consequence of stereotypes and racial prejudices. The term and its scope should not be considered final.” (Consultation Meeting, 2016: 1).

The situation is further complicated by the fact that in recent years many European countries have “formalized” in various forms (through state regulations or approved by public usage) various other (apart from “Roma”) designations, e.g. “Sinti und Roma” in Germany, “Roma und Sinti” in Austria, “Jenische und Sinti” in Switzerland, “Rom, Sinti e Camminanti” in Italy, “Roma, Gypsy and Traveller communities” in the United Kingdom, “Romi i Egipćani” (Roma and Egyptians) in Montenegro, “Romët dhe Egjiptianët” (Roma and Egyptians) in Albania (legitimized in Law of Protection of National Minorities in 2017, where instead of the traditional Albanian name “Jevg” the new name “Egjiptiane” is used), “Romët, Ashkalitë dhe Egjiptianët” (Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians) in the Republic of Kosovo (included in the Constitution in 2008), “Romi,

Aškalije and Egipcáni” (Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians) in Serbia (legitimized by the Law on National Councils of National Minorities in 2014), “Цыгане/Tsygane” (Gypsies) in the Russian Federation (respectively Federal National Cultural Autonomy of the Russian Gypsies), etc.

Outside Europe, it is worth noting the specific situation in Brazil, where “Ciganos” is used as a general term, which includes two communities – “Calon” and “Roma”. Perhaps the most original solution to this terminological mess has been found in Spain, where the name “Roma” is widely used only in translations from Spanish to English, e.g. Union del Pueblo Gitano vs. Union Romani, or Asociacion de Mujeres Gitanas vs. Roma Women Association, i.e. “Roma” is perceived as the community name in English. The same approach was used also until recently in Hungary, e.g. Országos Cigány Önkormányzat vs. National Roma Self-Government.

The situation with designation “Roma” in Turkey is more specific. Turkey is geographically not a European country but geopolitically seeks (or at least declared this desire until recently) to become part of a united Europe. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, when the negotiations with the EU intensified and the Roma topic became current in Europe, the transition to designation ‘Roma’ (in Turkish in the form “Roman” for singular and “Romanlar” in plural) in the official documents and in the media from “Gypsies” (“Çingeneler”) was a relatively quick and painless process.

However, a heated public debate, arose between members of the community themselves, as some welcomed the new label “Roman”, but others (mostly those who have lost their Romani mother tongue and are completely or partially only Turkish-speaking), refuse to accept it and insist on the usage of the old name “Çingeneler” (Aksu, 2003; Çingenelerin, 2009–2010).

The imposition of the “Roma” label in Turkey has raised another issue – on the relationship between the three main Gypsy divisions “Dom – Lom – Rom”, whose representatives live nowadays in Turkey. Since Roma issues have become topical, dozens of Roma organizations have emerged but only one of them is created by Dom/Domlar (Diyarbakır Domlar ve Romanlar Kültür in Dayanışma Derneği) together with Roma (Diyarbakır, 2007). The explicit mentioning of the names of the two communities shows clearly that they distinguish from one another. As for Lom (called Poşa/Poşalar), they also set up their organizations, but as a separate community without any relations to “Roman” (Balyan, 2017).

In some of the definitions quoted above, under the “Roma” label is included also the Abdal community in Turkey. Abdals are population with unclear origin that made a living by begging. In our conversation with Abdals on the question about their relationship with “Roman” we received short and clear answer that “Roman” are “ayrı” (distinct, separate in Turkish). Mostly the Abdal themselves, however (with some exceptions) even do not know about their assignment to “Roman” and have no relationship with the rapidly developing Roma NGO sector in Turkey.

The further east from Europe, the more the problems with the label “Roma” appear. Since the collapse of the USSR in 1991, new independent states have emerged in the post-Soviet space, which are tied to the European institutions through various forms of participation in the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). In the new independent states in the region of the South Caucasus (Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan) and in Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan) there are communities on which the European institutions are also trying to impose the “Roma” label. This raises even

more questions about the inadequacy of such labelling, because the communities living in these regions, which are now subject to “Roma” labelling by European and international institutions, are many and diverse. There are representatives of the all three “Dom – Lom – Rom” subdivisions living in the South Caucasus region. The Lom division is represented by the community with the self-appellation “Lom” (or “Lomavtik”, with the Armenian suffix for plural). The Lom are also known there by the names given them by the surrounding Armenian population. In the past (until the 19<sup>th</sup> c.) such a designation was “Gnchu” or “Knchu”, but since then they are referred to as “Bosha” in Armenia and Georgia (in Georgia, because the Georgian language does not have a word for “Gypsies”, they use the loan blended term “Boshebi”), and they are bearers of preferred Armenian identity. The Dom division use the self-appellation *Dom*, but are referred to by their neighbours as “Garachi” or “Qaraçiler” in Azerbaijani, and they are with preferred Kurdish or Iranian identity. The Rom division here includes only relatively new migrants in the region who have settled here mainly during the existence of the USSR (Marushiakova, Popov, 2016a: 67–106).

In the countries of the Central Asia region, the diversity of communities identified by researchers as “Gypsy” and “Gypsy-like” is very large. The aggregation of Central Asian Gypsy and Gypsy-like communities can be represented schematically as follows:

1. Gypsy communities: “Lyuli/Jughi/Multoni/Ghurbat/Ghorbat” (self-appellation “Mughat”); 2. Intermediate communities: “Mazang”, “Tavoktarosh/Sogutarosh, Agha/Kashgar Lyuli”; 3. Gypsy-like communities: “Kavol”, “Chistoni”, “Parya”, “Balyuj” (Marushiakova, Popov, 2016a: 10).

The Gypsy-like communities are relatively new migrants in the region (18<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> century), coming from India and Afghanistan, and some of them (“Parya” and “Balyuj”) speak (or have spoken) of their dialects based on Indian languages, and others (“Kavol” and “Chistoni”) are Tadjik speaking. The Intermediate and Gypsy communities are Tadjik-speaking (only in some cases Uzbek-speaking), and they are with preferred (or at least publicly declared as it is in the case of “Mughat”) Tadjic (and only in some cases Uzbek) ethnic identity. All of these communities are largely “invisible” in the public domain, unlike the so-called “Lyuli” (in a Tadjik-linguistic environment called “Jughi”), with self-appellation “Mughat”, whose main occupation is begging, therefore also exactly for the local population they are considered to be the local “Gypsies” (Marushiakova, Popov, 2016a: 9–65).

What unites, in the discourse discussed in this text, all communities mentioned here from the regions of the South Caucasus and Central Asia, is the circumstance that they all have already gone through a first step of labelling and, in fact, the attempts to include them under the “Roma” label, is actually a second step in this regard. The first step was in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, after the inclusion of these regions in the composition of the Russian Empire in 18<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> centuries, when the scholars imposed on the respective communities the “Gypsies” label (“цыгане/Tsygane” in Russian). The very first scholar of Central Asian Gypsies, Alexandr Vilkins, had expressed doubts about the reasonability of linking “Lyuli” with Gypsies and preferred to designate them as “Борема/Bogema”, in analogy with “Bohémiens”, which is what the Gypsies were called in medieval France (Vil’kins, 1882).

Afterwards, however, all these communities in the regions of the South Caucasus and Central Asia defined in the general work of Kerope Patkanov (Patkanov, 1887) as “Gypsies” (цыгане/Tsygane), and this designation is included thereupon in all acts of the state and local authorities, including in the Population Censuses. This is continued

also by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), and even now, and not only in the Russian Federation but also in the newly independent states of Central Asia and South Caucasus, where the Russian designation “цыгане/Тsygane” is translated into local national languages (Marushiakova, Popov, 2016a).

In the new independent states in the regions of South Caucasus and Central Asia, the leading issues today are their national policies, where in the forefront are the problems of promoting new national ideologies. In this context, the local Gypsies' issues are put behind. Unlike in Europe, there is no “carrot and stick approach” of Euro-integration in play, and will not be even in the foreseeable future, thus compliance with European norms and values is in many cases only a formal one and is expressed only at international forums (at least in regards of “Gypsies”). A typical example in this respect is the reaction of the Director of the National Centre for Human Rights of Uzbekistan, who at the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting of the OSCE in his speech used the designation “Roma”, but with the explanation “Roma, known among local population as ‘Lyuli’”, and along with this, he underlines that “Roma” in Uzbekistan have no problems in regard to their human rights and did not experience any discrimination in any sphere (OSCE, 2015).

At first glance, the Roma labelling is imposed quite smoothly in countries of the South Caucasus. They are members of the Council of Europe and have their own representatives in the Ad hoc Committee of experts on Roma issues (CAHROM), and so far, they have not objected to the use of the umbrella appellation “Roma”. In Armenia, where in fact no Roma are living, in all official documents make the statement that currently “Lom” are almost completely socially and culturally integrated into the Armenian nation, and their ethnic identity is on the level of a subethnic or ethnographic group in the composition of the Armenian people (Marushiakova, Popov, 2016a: 94). In Georgia, which is home of Roma, Dom and Lom communities, in recent years several international meetings were held with representatives of European institutions devoted to the Roma issue, but in spite of special efforts, the local Dom and Lom took part in none of them. Even direct invitation directed to the representatives of Lom and Dom in Georgia made by NGO's and donors' organisations to engage in Roma projects were strongly rejected, as Lom and Dom categorically refuse to be regarded as and mixed with Roma.

International institutions, which for decades have been repeatedly trying to explain and describe the contents of the general label “Roma” under which they seek to insert the designations of different ethnic communities, are clearly aware of the problems that arise within this approach. Evidence of this is the last, still unpublished document entitled Descriptive Glossary of Terms Relating to Roma and Travellers of 2018. It repeats the definition adopted by CAHROM in 2015 (see above), but some additional clarifications are made: “It should also be underlined that this is a working terminology for the Council of Europe which does not represent necessarily a common position of the various groups the explanatory footnote refers to. The Council of Europe is well aware that Egyptians and most of Ashkali present in the Western Balkan region do not regard themselves as Roma but as a distinct ethnic group. Irish Travellers and Yenish do not share with Roma the same ethnic background. Similarly, Dom and Lom are “eastern cousins” of Roma living in South Caucasus and Turkey and they are not the same as Roma.” (Council of Europe, 2018).

While recognizing that it is about different ethnic communities, attempts to seek justification for inserting them under a common label continue: “Many of the

‘associated’ groups have often a mixed history or living experience with Roma; they are often associated by the majority under the term ‘gypsies’; frequently subjected to the same treatment, discrimination and hate crime/hate speech. A number of issues (higher level of poverty and exclusion, illiteracy, school drop outs, lower life expectancy, higher unemployment rate, early marriages, etc.) are also common to all these groups. Therefore, there is certain logic – independent from their ethnic background – to associate them with the work on Roma.” (ibid.).

It certainly will not be the last attempt in this direction, but how convincing the explanation for the necessity of such an approach sounds depends primarily on the reaction of Roma activists who must decide whether they agree their community be determined by characteristics which highlights their social and cultural marginalization.

## 2. ACADEMIA

In theory, the relationship between politics and the academia should be simple and clear – academia explores social and cultural phenomena, and politicians (on base of results of academic studies) determine the rules of their existence and functioning in the specific political, hence social and cultural context. In practice, however, at least in the sphere that interests us (imposing the label “Roma”), things are much more complicated and, in practice, these relations are rather reversed. In a historical and contemporary perspective as well, the leading role in the relationship policy vs academia is taken by policy; scholars present their opinions, and politicians can accept and apply them, or not. In the modern age, unfortunately, it is becoming more and more a common practice that policy determines the rules, and scholars through different mechanism are pushed to comply with them.

From this point of view, there are many and varied questions and even serious contradictions between the “Roma” label imposed and endorsed by politicians on the basis of a certain ideology (changing over time) on the one hand, and the scholars who study the communities in questions, on the other hand. This whole range of problems in the relationship between policy and academia can be grouped into two main subdivisions – firstly, problems related with gathering different communities under a common name, and second, problems related to the designation itself.

Traditionally the community of scholars of Gypsy-lore, as this field of study was called in the past, and of Romani studies, as it is called today for the sake of political correctness as imposed by policy, have studied in past and are studying also now all communities, labelled today with the umbrella term “Roma”. It is only logical that the scholars too are trying to discover characteristics that unite all the researched communities in question, which will help to define also their field of research. In fact, the roots of the controversies are in the lack of a clear answer to the question “Who are Roma?”, posed in academic discourse, which is a question without a single answer, or more precisely, different authors offer different interpretations of this question (Marushiakova, Popov, 2016b: 7-34).

Nearly all (may be only except Abdal) communities mentioned above in the past have been referred to in English as “Gypsies” (in translations of their local names). This is definitely not a fitting and accurate translation, and ultimately the scholars and politicians are lost in the translation. The designation “Gypsies” in the English-speaking world, including in the scholarly jargon is used to signify diverse nomadic communities



regardless of their ethnic origins and identity (Hancock, 2010: 95–96). In order to escape from this translation trap, more than decade ago a distinction between the terms “Gypsy 1” and “Gypsy 2” was introduced, as the umbrella term “Gypsy 2” is reflecting the common origins and underlying unity of the heterogeneous communities whose ancestors migrated millennium ago from the Indian subcontinent and opposed to “Gypsy 1”, a far looser term, describing not origin and ethnicity, but the “social phenomenon of communities of peripatetics or commercial nomads, irrespective of origin or language” (Matras, 2004: 55–56). We can see that the English term “Gypsies” is an umbrella term for two categories (Gypsy 1 and Gypsy 2), which are built on different criteria and which include more or less differentiated and detached, diverse communities.

On the one hand, these are communities with a common historical ethnic origin, which Ian Hancock (2002) calls “Romani people” or “Romanies” to avoid the usage of notion Roma in two meanings (broad and narrow). These communities represent a heterogeneous entity, and are detached at different levels. At the first level, this is the “Dom – Lom – Rom” division, which took place already in the Middle East during their migrations from the Indian subcontinent to Europe, and on the second level this is the division of the “Roma”, “Sinti”, “Manush”, “Calé”, “Kaale”, “Romanichals”, etc. which appears after they settled in Europe. The circle of scholars who are dealing mostly with these communities do not usually have a problem in accepting the label Roma as an umbrella term, as it is presupposed that all communities in question have a common origin and common language (used now or in the past). In the work of these authors and as well for authors who put the usage of a “politically correct term” over academic accuracy, we can find such definition as Finnish Roma for “Kaale”, Spanish Roma for “Calé” and even Roma for various Eastern communities of different kinds.

On the other hand, however, part of the research field of Romani studies’ scholars is the communities that were formed in the transition to the modern age, as a result of changing social and economic context. They are this part of the local population that was stigmatised because of their itinerant way of life, and through their academic and political and administrative labelling as “Gypsies” (Okely, 1983; Lucassen et al., 1998; Willems, 1998). In current of time parts of these communities often interconnected social, economically, politically, and even in a marital sense with “Romanies”. This distinction between the two categories (and even occasionally their mingling) in itself is not objectionable with regard to some communities living in Western Europe (Irish and Scottish Travellers, Yenish, Tater, etc.), but the very combination of the two distinct categories, originally under the label “Gypsies” and now under the “Roma” label, raises a number of issues.

Particularly visible (and totally unsuccessful, we would say) are attempts made by some scholars to accept the second category of communities which originate on the basis of the way of life as the leading one among communities labelled in the past as Gypsies and today as Roma, and to extend its scope through inclusion within it also the “Roma” that live in Central, South-eastern and Eastern Europe by rejecting their Indian origin and denying the existence of their language at all, and to limit their language to a set of Indian-language words borrowed from Indian merchants in the Middle Ages (Okely, 1983: 12). This eccentric concept introduced by the authors whose primary source of information are the communities of current or former commercial nomads (Gypsy 1) was surprisingly joined by authors, whose research is based on Roma communities (Gypsy 2) and who argue that “Roma” as ethnicity were constructed



as a result of political, administrative and academic labelling (Emigh, Szelényi, 2001; Szelényi, 2001; Surdu, Kovats, 2015; Surdu, 2015; Law, Kovats, 2018). This made the terminological and theoretical mess even bigger. The same can be said about the attempts to define the “Gypsy” category through certain cultural characteristics, e.g. through the highly controversial category “brotherhood” (Stewart, 1997, 2002). In conveying this approach to defining “Roma” in today’s political discourse, it led to no less absurd results. One illustrative example is the Bulgarian National Strategy which defines Roma as follows: “... the name *Roma* as a summary for Bulgarian citizens in a vulnerable socio-economic situation, who identified themselves as Roma, and citizens in a similar situation, whom the surrounding population defines as such, irrespective of their self-determination.” (Natsionalna strategiiia, 2011). In other words, these personalities who are not in vulnerable socio-economic situation, regardless of their self-consciousness, origin, mother tongue, etc., cannot be considered as Roma.

The integration of communities that originate in the first category (Gypsy 2), such as Romanichals in United Kingdom, into the category of communities formed on their way of life also cannot unite both categories without problems, even if these communities have acquired ethnic characteristics that allow them to be associated with “Romani people” (Mayall, 2004). Such unification leads to the contemporary absurd situation when the “Gypsy and Traveller Communities” in the United Kingdom and Ireland received legally granted status of an ethnic community, which however, they lose when adapting a sedentary lifestyle. If the specific way of life is considered to be the basis of the ethnic category, then the situation with Gypsies and Travellers in UK is even more perplexed – only about a quarter of them still live in “Gypsy sites” and even not all of them are still leading a nomadic lifestyle, and the remaining part of them lives sedentarily without differentiating themselves significantly in their lifestyle from the surrounding population (Smith and Greenfields, 2013).

Also, unpersuasive are the attempts to extend the scope of the category under consideration to communities living in other regions outside Europe, e.g. inclusion in the category “Gypsy” in many diverse communities around the whole world, bounded on the basis of their ability to live according to “optio tzigana” on “social pasture” (Günther, 2016). In this specific case, there is no other reason to label “Roma” (or Gypsies in this specific case) the “Gypsy and Gypsy-like communities” living in Central Asia, apart from more or less general social and/or cultural parameters and apart from labelling them “цыгане/Tsygane” (Gypsies) in the time of the Russian Empire. Not all of these communities are with an Indian origin, and the first (more or less certain) historical testimony of presence of some of them in the region is from the early 16<sup>th</sup> century (Marushiakova, Popov, 2016a: 25), i.e. from the time when Roma ancestors had already reached Europe.

Thus, in the end, it turns out that, at least at this stage, the metaphysical attempts to define the community which is today labelled “Roma” through the creation of clearly defined fixed social and/or cultural parameters, e.g. “nomadism”, “underclass”, “culture of poverty”, “brotherhood”, etc., prove to be unsuccessful and academically non-sense. The attempts to find a mutually acceptable definition by which the various communities could be united in political discourse under the label “Roma” in academia is in principle, unattainable, at least until the individual authors put different content into the main label categories used that are listed by different criteria.

Another circle of problems in this regard is connected with the umbrella appellation itself, which is used for the labelling of unity of diverse communities. The rationale for

the use of the common label “Roma” is based on the existing distinction between the two types of ethnonyms that oppose each other – the endonyms (ethnonym used by the community itself in its own language) and exonyms (ethnonym given to this community by its surrounding population in their respective languages). Undoubtedly, it is logical (and correct) to use the endonyms as public ethnonyms, but in life things are not so simple and unambiguous. This rule of principle, due to a number of historical and contemporary circumstances, is far from common and generally valid. It is sufficient to list only the member countries of the Council of Europe whose “official” name in English does not correspond to their endonyms (national names in their languages) – Germany (Deutschland), Finland (Suomi), Hungary (Magyarország), Albania (Shqipëri), Greece (Ελλάδα/Ellada), Georgia (Sakartvelo), Armenia (Hayastan). From this point of view, the reasoning of the Roma activists in the countries of Central, South-eastern and Eastern Europe that insist on the public use of “Roma” (in their local language versions) instead of “Gypsies” (in the local languages), because “we are calling ourself Roma” is not particularly convincing. Much more convincing in this direction appears the argument that the name “Gypsies” (in the local languages) has received already many negative connotations and in many cases, may reinforce anti-Roma stereotypes and public attitudes.

The problem with the supposedly unambiguously negative and therefore perceived insulting meaning of the designation “Gypsies” (in the local languages) is also not so simple and unambiguous. From one side, as pointed out above, the same negative connotations started to be discovered also in the word “Roma”. On the other hand, the very negative meaning of the term “Gypsies” (in the local languages) is also not so unambiguous and ubiquitous. In many cases, it is contextual, i.e. in certain situations it can have not only negative but also positive connotations. From this point of view, the situation varied in different countries and regions, and hardly anyone is in the position to present all possible options in this regard. So it is not accidental that the aforementioned language games are widespread, where “Roma” is used as a term of the English language and in the country the designation “Gypsies” in the local language is used (e.g. in Spain, Hungary, etc.). In other cases (for example, in Bulgaria), often the distinction is mainly in the sphere of public speech, and Roma activists themselves use the term “Roma” only in their public appearances (and of course when speaking Romanes), but in their daily communication in Bulgarian language they often prefer to use the word “Gypsies” [цигани/Tsigani], this is the case even more among ordinary Roma. We witnessed even cases when international students visited Roma neighbourhoods in Sofia, Bulgaria, and asked about Roma, were directed to the NGO office with the comment – “you say you would like to speak with Roma, so go there, they are Roma and we are Gypsies [цигани/Tsigani]”. We cannot help mentioning the cases where both terms “Roma” and “Gypsies” are in official use, as e.g. in the UK or where the name “Roma” is not used in the language of the macro-society at all, but only local variant of “Gypsies” [цыгане/Tsygane], e.g. in the Russian Federation. All of these examples show how unacceptable it is to make general conclusions based on a limited range of examples from one country or only from a particular Roma circle (e.g. from national and/or international Roma activists), even on issues that at least at first look seem indisputable. In view of all these circumstances, it should not be taken as surprising some seemingly blatant cases of open opposition by Roma themselves to their labelling with the term Roma, such as the creation in Romania (the country where the struggle to impose the designation “Roma” in the public space is probably the

strongest) of a group in the Internet that names itself *Lege pentru schimbarea denumirii de Rom in Țigan* – Bill for the change of the name “Roma” into “Țigan” (Lege, 2018). In fact, perhaps the only country in which Roma and their surrounding populations commonly use the name “Roma” in the language of the surrounding population in public is the Republic of Macedonia, but this has its own explanation. Until the creation of the new state after the break-up of the former Yugoslavia in Macedonian, the designation of Roma was not “Цигани/Tsigani”, which is a borrowing from Bulgarian and Serbian, but the designation was Gyupti (“Гюпти/Giupti”, “Гюпци/Giuptsi” and other similar variants); after the Balkan Egyptians took the road to creating their own detached ethnic community, there appeared a need for their differentiation from Roma. This was reflected in the imposition of two different public terms Roma and Egyptians; the latter is related to the formerly used umbrella term Gyupti which now appeared not appropriate for Roma.

The very opposition of endonym and exonym is not always so clearly distinct, especially looking at it historically. It seems unlikely that the medieval chroniclers who refer to the migrants coming from the Balkans (“Romanies” according to Ian Hancock’s terminology) with names such as “Zigeuner”, “Zingari”, etc., based on the appellation “Αθίγγανοι/Atsinganoi”, used in the Byzantine Empire, have learned this term from the Byzantine sources. It is much more likely that the “Romanies” themselves used the term “Αθίγγανοι/Atsinganoi” as the second endonym, through which they introduced themselves before the local population, and did not perceive this term as being wrong, pejorative or abusive. The explanation that the exonym “Țigan”, “Zigeuner”, etc. is a pejorative one and that is why it is needed to change it is also doubtful. It has some negative connotations, similarly to names of many other peoples (e.g. Slavic “Nemtsi/Nemtsy/Немци/Немцы” from “dumb”, even Slav, has possible originated from “slave”, etc.), but this negative sounding is not always perceived like this by the community itself. Just the opposite, even nowadays the notion *tsigania* (in meaning *Romanipen*, *Romipen*, *Romanimos*, etc. as quintessence of highest community values) is widely spread among several Roma groups, e.g. among “Kelderara” in the former USSR (Demeter, Demeter, 1990: 165), as well as the self-appellation “Rrom tsiganyako” (literarily “Gypsy Roma”, meaning “true, real Roma”) is used by their closely related groups that speak the New Vlax dialects of *Romanes*, who live in the territories of Bulgaria, Romania, the Republic of Moldavia and South-western Ukraine. The notion *tsigania* also has an ambivalent significance not only depending on the context, but also on the language used – in *Romanes* (i.e. within own community) it has a positive connotation, but using the language of the surrounding population the meaning is negative (i.e. the same as in the macro-society), e.g. using a Bulgarian language *tsigania*/цыгания can mean “mess”, “tasteless”, etc., and in Romania this term is often used for designation of a Roma settlement.

Somewhat similar is the case with the endonyms of the communities of “Calé” (Spain and Portugal), “Kaale” (Finland and Sweden), “Kale” (Wales), “Calon” (Brasil), etc., and this was the self-appellation of Sinti until the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Matras, 1999, 109–110). All of these ethnonyms are variants of the word “black”, but only in the case with the “Kaale” in Finland and Sweden it is possible that it is a translation from the Finnish term “Mustalais” of the same meaning (i.e., the exonym may have become an endonym in translation to *Romanes*, although it is also possible that the process was in the opposite direction and the endonym in translation became an exonym). However, much more are the variations in which communities themselves use this endonym without

their surrounding population having called them that way (“black” in their respective languages), i.e. it is quite likely that this ethnonym is much older than before the arrival of their ancestors in Western Europe.

All this indicates that the “Black” category does not always have negative connotations for communities in question. This is confirmed by many examples from folklore e.g. the beautiful girl in numerous folk songs is described as “čajorie calorie” (black girl), and also from Roma artistic creativity, e.g. a verse from the famous Roma poet Papusza (Bronislava Wais) in her poem *Ratfaté jasfá. So pať Saséndyr pšegijám apré Vótyrň 43 i 44 beršá* (Tears of Blood. What We Suffered Because of the Germans in Volhynia in '43 and '44) says: “bo me som rom kalo, rat ratestir čačuno” (because I am black Rom, from true blood) (Piesni Papuszy, 1956: 120–121). It is palpable that here the term “Black Rom” is used in positive manner, in the sense true, real Roma. In this sense, as a synonym of “true Romany Gypsy” is still used to this day the expression “kaulo ratti” (Black Blood) in the United Kingdom (Le Bas, 2018).

Here it is possible to mention a serious problem related to some modern interpretations linking the designation “black” (in the relevant languages in the region of Central, South-eastern and Eastern Europe) with the local Roma. In some cases (Lemon, 1995: 34–40), there are over-interpretations aimed at proving a preconceived thesis (in this case the thesis is that the attitude towards Roma in modern Russia is the same as the attitude towards blacks in the US), even though her Roma interlocutors themselves denied it. Such over-interpretation even reach curiosities such as proclamation the famous song “Очи черные/Ochi chiornye” [black Eyes] as expression of this attitude.

In other cases (Tiefenbacher, 2015; Grill, 2017), connecting the attribute black with negative attitudes towards Roma is based on rigorous research and correct assumptions, namely on the premise that the term “black” used in reference to Roma in some Central European countries over the last decades has strong negative connotations. The adoption of “external” (from the macro-society) stereotypes, attitudes, and labels by Roma themselves, their internalization and their transformation into “owns” is a well-known and also ambiguous process (*nb.* even in Slavic folklore “black” is not always with negative meaning; just the opposite, black eyes, hair or eyebrows of the girl is considered as a model of beauty). The problem here, however, has a much wider dimension and is rather of a methodological nature. Conclusions based on specific studies whose merits are unquestionable but limited in given spatial and temporal parameters, however, if placed in a more global context and generalized sounds one-sided and could not be accepted uncritically. Analyses of the meaning of categories “black” and “white” by and in regard of Roma need to be based not on a limited chronological period, but in a much wider cultural and historical context. The above examples clearly show that the categories of “black” and “white” are not unambiguous in different historical periods among different communities, designated by the label “Roma”, and differ in the specific context of their use. Naturally, the question arises what should be done in cases when there are examples which contradict and disprove the main conclusions and set theoretical concepts created on the basis of specific studies and inscribed into a specific theoretical conception. Should the very conclusions and the theoretical concepts set forth be changed (which happens relatively rarely), or should the examples that contradict the preliminary set of conclusions be discarded (which is a much more frequent phenomenon). (For more details on these issues see: Marushiakova, Popov, 2017b.)

In fact, the main question when speaking about usage of the umbrella appellation “Roma” in academia is why in practice some communities are deprived of the right to use in public their own self-appellation and this is done with reasoning based on political correctness and principle that self-description should be the leading principle on which a designation of one community needs be based. In this way the communities of Dom, Lom, Sinti, Manush, Calé, Kaale, Romanichals, Irish and Scottish Travellers, etc., whose self-designation is not “Roma”, and their members do not want to identify themselves with this ethnonym (or even they do not even know about its existence) are called “Roma”. In this case, there is a clear desire to bring under the label Roma all communities related to them in order to support policy towards their unification and publicly demonstrate their unity, while academic precision and emic attitudes are left behind. This problem is palpably evident (at least in some cases) for the international institutions that impose the umbrella appellation “Roma” on all these communities, so in the last of the Council of Europe documents presented above the following clarification appears: “... the explanatory footnote [explaining the content of the term ‘Roma’ – authors’ note] is NOT a definition. The Council of Europe respects the principle of Article 3.1 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities: ‘Every person belonging to a national minority shall have the right freely to choose to be treated or not to be treated as such and no disadvantage shall result from this choice or from the exercise of the rights which are connected to that choice.’” (Council of Europe, 2018). The extent to which this clarification will solve these problems is difficult to estimate, but judging by the results of institutional labelling so far, the chances are not very large.

The end point of this process of academic labelling because of non-academic reasons are cases, when each designation “Gypsies”, is automatically translated as “Roma” in translations in local languages. The only reason for this approach is based on a wrongly perceived political correctness – since the designations of “Roma” in local languages have been translated in the past into English as “Gypsies”, which is politically incorrect, now the term “Gypsies” in English must be translated into local languages with the term “Roma”. This, however, in practice means that not only the communities of the first category (of common origin), but also of the second category (differentiated on the basis of certain social and/or cultural characteristics, and on the first place on the basis of their nomadic way of life) are labelled Roma. In this way, the circle is closed, and all nomadic communities are labelled with the term “Roma”, formerly called “Gypsies”, and respectively now in the search for more precision, it is not necessary anymore to distinguish between “Gypsy 1” and “Gypsy 2” or “Roma 1” and “Roma 2”.

Moreover, this process reaches curious cases like the one in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, where, according our observations (without claims of completeness or representativeness), in recent years, the most frequently quoted and used as a source of data and for comparison is the book *The Traveller-Gypsies* (Okely, 1983), which has little relevance to study of ethnicity of local Roma, and in the translated works the word “Gypsies” (Okely, 1997) is automatically translated with “Roma” (Okely, 2003). How irrelevant to different realities could this approach be, is illustrated by a recent example of a public debate on Facebook between M. D. (determining himself as a “Rom”, a migrant from the Czech Republic in the United Kingdom) and Sh. C. (defining himself as belonging to “Gypsy & Traveller people in the UK”). For Sh. C. the most important are the Gypsy and Traveller sites, as places where their culture is preserved and determines their identity; for M. D. the most important thing that determines the



identity of the Roma (“that, what makes us Roma”) is the Indian origin, and Roma should live in the same houses as the surrounding population because the Gypsy sites are leading to social exclusion and are an obstacle to integration (Facebook, 2015). The paramount importance of the origin in determining the ethnicity of the Roma themselves is clearly visible in the texts of M.D. and the importance of way of life is the determiner for Sh. C. In the end, it turned out that a consensus is not possible, because both protagonists in this debate actually speak “different languages”, i.e. their views differ in regard to the basis of their communities’ identity and main cultural features.

From this point of view, the comparisons between Roma on the one hand and “Gypsy & Traveller people in the UK” on the other are just as academically justified as comparisons of Roma with every other European people and definitely to a much lesser extent than possible comparisons with their surrounding population in the countries of the Central, South-eastern and Eastern Europe, whose ethno-cultures have many more common features and characteristics than their “brothers” in the UK, described in the book of Judith Okely (Marushiakova, Popov, 2016c: 35–64).

The situations in which the purity and precision of academic discourse turn out to be subordinate to the leading policy labelling (or at least in accordance with it) are characteristic not only in “new Europe” countries but also in Western Europe. There, the picture is also very diverse and varies from country to country, e.g. in Germany, it is impossible to apply the label “Roma” to the local Sinti, whereas in Spain, specific bilingualism is used – when a text is written in Spanish, it usually uses the term “Gitanos” (not even the endonym “Calé”), but writings in English uses the word “Roma” (often with terminological explanations in the text). This approach is not more precise, and it comes to formulations that sound, mildly, quite odd, e.g. “the case studies of the Roma NGOs viz. Kale-Dor-Kayiko Association and Fundación Secretariado Gitano” (Dnyandev, 2017: 19).

In the region of Central, South-eastern and Eastern Europe, as said above, there is no particular problem with the former name “Gypsies” (in local languages) being replaced by “Roma” because the ethnonym of respective communities there is in fact “Roma”. Such replacement, however, is inappropriate in the case of historical texts where, in the interest of academic precision, it is more appropriate to use a designation corresponding to the historical period described (especially in quotations of historical documents) in order to avoid accusations in a secondary rewriting of history or in falsification of sources. Problems, however, arise when in studying of certain parts of the local Roma (by origin) which are undergoing the processes of the so-called ethnic mimicry, or of the so-called preferred ethnic identity, which in the final phase can lead to the formation of new ethnic communities (the most expressed forms these processes have achieved in the case of the Balkan Egyptians). About processes of ethnic mimicry and preferred ethnic identity we have written extensively elsewhere (Marushiakova, Popov, 2015b: 26–54), thus for the purpose of this text we will give only a brief explanation.

The phenomenon of ethnic mimicry means a public declaration of a non-Roma ethnic identity, preserving their real identity for use only in their environment. The reasons for these are the widespread negative attitudes and stereotypes regarding the “Gypsies” in the macro society, and also the desire to avoid some discriminatory policies and practices. This phenomenon affects the Population Censuses most frequently, as the most drastic case of census data mismatch with the real situation is in the Czech Republic, where in the Census of the population in 2011 only 12,852 people



declared themselves as “Roma”, unambiguously or in combination with another nationality (Český statistický úřad, 2011). In the countries of “old Europe”, this problem does not exist because of the fact that ethnic identity is considered sensitive information, and for this reason such information is generally not gathered even in the Population Census (with the exception of Great Britain and the Netherlands, where data about the communities with nomadic way of life are gathered on the grounds that this will help combat their discrimination). The phenomenon of ethnic mimicry creates serious problems only in political discourse, but it can be easily overcome in the field of academic research, as respondents usually do not hide their Roma identity, and there is no contradiction to the principle of self-identification.

More complicated is the case with preferred ethnic identity, i.e. when Roma people start to perceive themselves as non-Roma, which in fact represents an unfinished process of experiencing of another ethnic identity (e.g. Turkish, Romanian, Hungarian, etc.) due to a refusal to be accepted by their preferred community. The cases of preferred ethnic identity in the region of Central, South-eastern and Eastern Europe are many and varied, they are usually related to the change of their mother tongue and in some cases also with professed religion (Marushiakova, Popov, 2015b: 26–54), and should not be mixed with the civilian national identity perceived by the Roma in the countries of the region. Inclusion of these communities under the “Roma” label formally violates the principles of freedom of self-identification, but academic study of such communities is legitimate when accompanied by the necessary clarifications in the text. Such clarification may be based on historical sources or cultural characteristics, including even on described curiosities like, for example, the case encountered in Bulgaria (in city of Plovdiv), when even on the question about ethnic identity, asked in Romanes, the answer “I am a Turk” was given in the same language: “Me sim Turk” (Kenrick, 1966: 77).

In this series, the most complicated is the case with the Balkan Egyptians, where the process of building a new ethnic identity (which in fact means forming a “new” ethnic community different from Roma) has already acquired more or less completed forms, and this community is politically legitimized in the Republic of Kosovo and Albania. The explanations of the emergence of this new ethnic community by some authors (Dujzings, 1997: 194–222, claiming e.g. that Milosevic’s secret services are at its core) are burdened by geopolitical biases and are a classic example of dominance of civic engagement of the author over academic knowledge. It is known that as early as in the 1930s, the existence of two distinct communities in Albania, namely of “Roma” and “Jevg” was described (Mann, 1933: 2), i.e. the processes of formation of the Balkan Egyptians began even before Milosevic’s birth. Of course, it is not possible to cover within one article all the dimensions and variants of the relationship between the political and academic discourse, which are a large number (especially given the rapid development of interest in the “Roma topic” in the public space and in academia during the last quarter century) and extremely diverse and often are influencing each other. Nevertheless, some examples, as pointed out above, show that the political discourse is at the forefront, and academia is trying to find different forms and ways (sometimes even including self-censorship) in order to comply with policy (or at least not openly oppose it). This de facto subordinate stance of academic discourse (even if individual authors do not want to admit it to themselves) to political ideologies is manifested even in those cases where there is a clear contradiction between the two discourses (at least in cases where an academy seeks to objectively reflect existing realities).

This issue is closely connected also with the current trend towards engaged and community responsive scholarship, in which “civilly engaged scholars” are opposing the supporters of “pure science”. Such an opposition is artificial, because fields of social sciences and humanities always are civically engaged because they explore real social phenomena and processes, and therefore always have their own public impact (and no matter what the individual authors think about). It is naïve to think that the researcher’s civic engagement must be determined by the fact that he uses the “Roma” label for all communities formerly referred to as “Gypsy” and which are now included under the umbrella term “Roma” – if not for another reason, at least because this label is used first in the sphere of the so-called “Gypsy industry” and by politicians who want to practice social engineering for the Roma from the position “good white brothers”. It is even more naïve to measure this civic engagement by public activities in social networks and in all sorts of signing petitions, declarations, etc., the real civic engagement should be reflected in an individual scholar’s work.

Hardly anyone will disagree that academia needs to serve the benefit of society and communities. In the specific case of political and academic Roma labelling as discussed in the current text however, we encounter again a situation which is not so simple as appeared at first glance. The representatives of the academia have a choice between two kinds of engaged positions, expressed in labelling. Each labelling has its own impact and its usage can be based on different engagements and different understanding of community responsible scholarship. Some scholars who are engaged in supporting Roma national building, will perceptibly label all the communities related and non-related to Roma with this term. Others will choose another label, especially those who are engaged in supporting specific communities, in the first place, the numerous diverse nomadic communities included into the category of Gypsies 1, and today also labelled “Roma”, but also some communities who are from same origin, but are with non-Roma identity (Marushiakova, Popov, 2015b: 26–54). For some scholars, however, the real socially responsible engagement is to show the picture of history and current situation as diverse as it is in reality. How to proceed in each case is the responsibility and conscious decision of each individual scholar and it is not realistic to expect unanimous position. Any academic and civic position could be understood and used, especially if explained, but the worst cases are when individual scholars without considering all aspects of the issue are using labelling (and are following a trend) which is considered at a specific moment politically correct and in fact leads to dead end not only in academia, but in policy as well.

## CONCLUSION

In the title of a recently published article *Identifying of European Roma-Gypsy groups with the term “Roma”. Towards consensus?* (Klípa, 2016: 203–217) a question was posed, which perhaps encompasses the most recent and most significant issue in modern Romani studies, namely about its research subject, and what should be its designation. A separate question is whether the designation “Romani studies” is at all the best term for this academic field; here we have some (not insignificant) doubts, especially given what has been said above, because in practice this designation contributes to labelling various communities with the term “Roma”.

As it is clear from everything written above, the answer to this question is still

lacking, and we have no illusions about the possibility to reach at least some common ground for dialogue in this respect. Therefore, unfortunately, in the foreseeable future, we do not expect any consensus – neither in the political discourse nor in the academic one. In the sphere of policies towards Roma the things are constantly evolving, we see constant experimenting with new (or rediscovering forgotten old) variant solutions of the issues of Roma integration or inclusion against the backdrop of already visible failure of European and national policies in this regard with no optimistic signs for the future (Marushiakova, Popov, 2015c: 19–31).

No different is the situation in Romani studies, where it appears that achieving at least some basic consensus on defining the subject of study and on correct labelling of the communities in question is currently not only not possible but it is not realistic to expect this to happen soon. For academic knowledge, however, reaching a consensus is not mandatory, just on the contrary: enriching academic knowledge, in fact, requires a constant process of development, realized in a variety of forms, and academia is called upon to explore and reflect precisely this truly existing diversity rather than to attempt to construct it (including constructing the object of study).

For us a much more important question is whether the political discourse or the academic one should be a leading and decisive, and whether the civic engagement (i.e. ultimate adherence to certain ideological and political positions) of the authors should be manifested not only in life, but also need to express the civil engagement in their scholarly texts, leaving behind the academic norms and criteria. But this is a question to which each author should give their own answer, and accordingly to decide by themselves whether they will conform with definitions imposed by politicians in their own texts. In our firm belief, which was formed decades ago during the totalitarian communist regimes in Central, South-eastern and Eastern Europe, and (unfortunately) reinforced in the years of transition in conditions of European democracy, if the political ideology and public dictate dominate, this actually leads to the end of science.

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