



European Dialogue

Annual Report 2005/2006

*Promoting human rights, access to justice, race equality,
conflict resolution and democratic institution building*

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Welcome to European Dialogue's Annual Report, which covers the period from April 2005 – April 2006. We hope that you find this report of our activities and developments of the organisation of interest. Further information about our work can be found at www.europeandialogue.org

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ED supporting inclusive, culturally sensitive education for Roma

Mission

European Dialogue is a UK-based independent organisation with an international focus which works to secure the implementation of human rights and grass roots, participatory democracy in an integrated Europe and its neighbours within the region.

European Dialogue works to engage and support excluded communities and vulnerable minorities in their struggle to combat discrimination, racism and exclusive nationalism, in the interests of justice, social cohesion, sustainable security and global responsibility.

European Dialogue is a company limited by guarantee and is applying for charitable status.

Constitutional aims

1. To encourage, advance and promote by debate, conferences, meetings and publishing or disseminating in written or spoken form or otherwise for the benefit of the public a dialogue about the future of Europe and neighbouring regions in its cultural, social, environmental, economic and other dimensions.
2. To organise educational and training activities about the benefits to the public of a Europe based on peace, racial and ethnic harmony, cultural diversity, social justice and environmental sustainability.
3. To organise projects and activities which will directly benefit and relieve those suffering from conflict, ethnic or cultural discrimination, economic disadvantage or environmental degradation.

Programmes

Roma Rights: To combat discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and to support initiatives, which empower the Roma community to participate equally in civil and political life.

Russia and the Caucasus: To promote human rights, to develop a multi-ethnic democratic society, and to support regional dialogue, conciliation and stability.

Balkan Peace and Integration: To support civic initiatives to guarantee and further peace, human rights, democracy and stability in the former Yugoslavia.

Future of Europe: To promote active, civic participation in European integration; and to support democratic institution building, accountability and transparency.

Personnel

Jeanette Buirski, Programme Director
 Andy Roberts, Finance Manager
 Lyubomir Lazarov, Project Officer
 Elizabeth Campling, Project Officer
 Girina Holland, Project Officer (until December 2005)
 Julia Breeze, Admin and Finance Assistant
 Ingrid Maygibo, Admin and Finance Assistant (until January 2006)

Interns and volunteers

Kimber Barcant, IT support
 Joe Buirski, Workers Beer coordinator
 Alison Philips, Project support
 Bea Randall, Project support
 Vandna Synghal, Project support
 Romy Danflous, Project support
 Nancy Holden, Project support
 Yeliz Osman, Project support
 Ruth Grove White, Project support

Consultants

Dr Robin Oakley, Consultant on racial equality and minority issues
 Peter Mercer, President of East Anglian Gypsy Council
 Arthur Ivatts, former Chief Inspector of Education for Gypsy/Traveller children in UK
 Chris Taylor, Former Chief Inspector at the Metropolitan Police
 John Slater, Former Chief Inspector at the Metropolitan Police
 Tony Cross, Former Chief Inspector at the Metropolitan Police
 Makhan Bajwa, Director, Greenwich Racial Equality Council
 William Ekinu, Equalities Officer, Greenwich Racial Equality Council
 Nicky Torode, expert on Roma in Russia
 Robert Hutley, Former Justice's Chief Executive for Devon and Cornwall

Council Members

Michael Smart, Chair
 Alan Sealy, Secretary
 Michael Newman
 Maria Anteric
 Pat Scarborough

Board Members

Alan Sealy, Director
 Michael Smart, Director
 Michael Newman, Director
 Andy Roberts, Secretary



Adam Oakley, 2005

ED combating discrimination and social exclusion of Roma

Partners

Bogazici University, Turkey
 Center for Interethnic Cooperation, Russia
 Devon Racial Equality Council, UK
 Greenwich Racial Equality Council, UK
 Pavee Point, Ireland
 Poradna – The Centre for Civil and Human Rights, Slovakia
 Romani Baht Foundation, Bulgaria
 Roma Lom Foundation, Bulgaria
 Romani CRISS, Romania
 Roma Ural, Russia

Donors

European Dialogue would like to thank the following for supporting our work in 2005/2006.
 AW60 Trust
 Barrow Cadbury Trust
 Big Lottery
 DG Social Affairs, Employment and Equal Opportunities (European Commission)
 European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (European Commission)
 Global Opportunities Fund (FCO)
 OSCE ODHHR

Membership

There are a variety of ways you can support European Dialogue, including joining our membership, volunteering in the office or volunteering as servers at music festivals.

European Dialogue has a small but loyal membership. We very much welcome new members. As a member you are invited to our Annual General Meeting and other events organised by European Dialogue. A copy of European Dialogue's Annual Report will be sent to you. You are also invited to join our email network where we will send you interesting reports and adverts for events related to our work.

 Individual membership ~ £20
 Concessions rate ~ £15
 Organisation membership ~ £30

For a membership form please contact
 European Dialogue at
info@europeandialogue.org

Internships

Over the years many people of all ages and backgrounds have volunteered for European Dialogue. We can offer relevant NGO and office based experience – including project support, fund-raising and events organisation. You will be working as part of a small team in a friendly environment. We prefer volunteers/interns to commit to at least one day per week, preferably two, and preferably for a minimum of three months. Travel (within London) and lunch expenses will be covered.

If you are interested in volunteering please contact European Dialogue at info@europeandialogue.org

Volunteering at music festivals

If you are interested in volunteering for a shorter period and have FUN! at the same time then volunteering at music festivals may be for you. The Workers Beer Company (WBC) runs beer tents at music festivals during the summer, including Glastonbury, Homelands and Reading. The WBC recruits servers from the voluntary sector who donate their time in exchange for money for their organisation. The server has free entry to the festival, and is provided with free food and drink.

 We usually start recruiting from February,
 so if you are interested please contact
 European Dialogue at
info@europeandialogue.org



ED promoting respect for human rights in Turkey's criminal justice system

Over this past year European Dialogue has looked back on its achievements and considered how best to consolidate these into a sustainable and effective organisation. A grant from the Barrow Cadbury Trust for our own capacity building and development has given us a great opportunity to assess our strengths and weaknesses, and to address where and how to offer our skills and experience, mainly in Central and Eastern Europe and the Balkans, in a changing world.

The basis for the grant from Barrow Cadbury is the quality of our project work; this is something that all contributors – partners, staff, Council, consultants – should take credit for. The policies and partnerships we have made are strong and productive, and a firm basis for future work.

The summary of our strategic review is included in this Annual Report on page 4, and we very much welcome our supporters comments. In particular, we value your comments about our application for charitable status. We will still be able to campaign for policy change, but it will open doors to more funding possibilities, and help to clarify our legal status, for example with the European Union and Foundations.

We have also made significant impact in terms of policy. For example, the *Roma Rights and Access to Justice in Europe (RrAJE) programme* which promoted minority integration at the local level, is now being discussed by the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) as a model for community regeneration in Pakistan.

Our *PRIMER project* in Bulgaria, which promotes full access and achievement in mainstream education for Roma children has been accepted as a positive policy framework by the Bulgarian Deputy Minister of Education in charge of minority education. We are now applying for funding to extend this model to Macedonia and Serbia, both post-conflict societies in which Roma are severely marginalised and are often IDPs.

We must thank Lyubomir Lazarov who as the project officer has managed the *PRIMER project* with skill and understanding, and thank our Roma partners – the Romany Baht Foundation and the Roma Lom Foundation, for their excellent support and good work.

As regards our extension of work into the Balkans, we also aim to work, depending on funding, on a project in Bosnia to assist with developing a National Roma Strategy and Action Plan. Our partners are hCa Tuzla – (our old hCa network colleagues), SaE Roma and the Roma Council.

We were sorry to say good-bye to Girina Holland in December who had done an excellent job of project management on the project *Ethnic Minorities and Access to Justice in the Russian Federation* – a difficult country to work in, and on a difficult issue.

There is an excellent publication with many positive recommendations from this project, and from a workshop on Roma–Police Relations in Moscow in partnership with the OSCE. We would like to continue to promote community engagement and participation in developing co-operation between police and ethnic minorities in the interests of human rights and security. However, the recent legislation making it difficult for outside NGOs, particularly ‘human rights NGOs’ to work inside Russia has given cause for concern.

Our *Access to Justice in Turkey project*, which ended early 2006, successfully worked with all levels of the criminal justice system to explore policy and practice in fulfilling international human rights standards, and we will endeavour to build upon this work with Taciser Belge, based in Istanbul, and Andy Roberts who managed the project in London.

We have often been asked ‘why don’t you bring the *RrAJE programme* back home’. We think what they mean is – why don’t you work more with the British Gypsy and Traveller communities, using the experience and expertise of Roma partners and UK-based training and education opportunities, to build the capacity of Gypsies and Travellers to address their extreme marginalisation.

One major interesting feature of the *TRAILER project*, and the OSCE work, is the identity of potential partners within the UK Gypsy and Traveller community which might benefit from capacity building in order to take their valuable work forward. This will be a goal of European Dialogue in the coming year.

Finally, thanks to the Council, staff, consultants and volunteers for their support, and we look forward to taking European Dialogue forward over the next year. A particular thank you to Andy Roberts for his financial management.

Jeanette Buirski, Programme Director

Strategic Objectives 2006 – 2009

1. We will respond to societies in crisis or conflict. Acting in areas of transition, including post-conflict situations, offers fluidity and opportunities to pioneer **new approaches to resolve conflict** and promote security through promotion of human rights and equality of opportunity, citizenship and participatory democracy.
2. We will continue to work with the **most vulnerable in society**, in particular ethnic minorities and women and children, to promote the effective realisation of their human rights and active participatory citizenship.
3. We will **promote human and minority rights** but recognise the differences within communities including age, gender, educational, economic and geographical variations to which our projects are sensitive and where we emphasise working with the most vulnerable.
4. We will respond to needs and **pilot high quality projects** with civil society actors and governmental institutions, primarily at local and regional level, to combat discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity, participatory democracy and social justice in practical and constructive ways. These projects are designed strategically; they are valuable in themselves but also valuable in influencing local and central government policy, programming and human rights.
5. We will emphasise our areas of expertise in particular in forming **genuine enduring partnerships** based on common human rights values (not financial opportunities), inter-personal relationships, and transparency that the flexibility of our small size brings.
6. We will **concentrate on our core strengths** of access to education, community policing/access to justice, integrated community development, and the practical realisation of rights locally. We will work through transnational partnerships that give and receive knowledge and share decision-making through programming, analysis and policy formation based on local and international knowledge.
7. We will use the **knowledge of local partners** and local experts, and offer flexible and appropriate consultancy and expertise from the UK to strengthen the capacity of partners and partnerships to develop good policy and practice in the implementation of human rights and international standards.
8. We will promote **community engagement** in policy development and implementation as a key factor for minority empowerment and sustainability. The full and equal participation of the community ensures that the lessons learnt and models developed are owned locally and can be embraced with pride and enthusiasm by the host communities.
9. We will offer **capacity building and training** in meeting EU, Council of Europe and other international standards in public service delivery for NGOs, public service providers, and criminal justice institutions, including the police.
10. We will **disseminate and share the lessons learnt** from these local models of best policy and practice in

the equal delivery of rights and services in order to empower and integrate minorities both nationally and internationally.

11. We will **advocate policies** which show proven ability to address inequality and exclusion, aiming to inform change in governmental and intergovernmental policy, where possible through alliances.

Goals 2006 – 2009

1. ED to be a **charitable organisation**, with a strengthened management body, Council/Trustees, and Advisory Board with international participation.
2. ED to have **piloted projects** based upon its key models of integrated Roma/minority community development, race equality in education, and access to justice, in a range of countries where there is an identifiable need, and within the OSCE region. These key regions will include the Balkans, both Decade and non-Decade countries, and Central Asian former Republics.
3. ED to have established **strategic partnerships and alliances** with Roma and other relevant NGOs in current and candidate EU member states to develop and implement key strategic programmes on empowerment and community development in preparation for accessing EU funding for development.
4. ED to have developed a programme in partnership with other relevant bodies to establish an **'access to justice programme'** focusing on community empowerment and engagement.
5. ED to have developed a programme in partnership with other relevant bodies to establish an **'access to education' programme**, focusing on community engagement and empowerment.
6. ED to have established **on-going and improved relationships**, including influencing and working with the European Commission, Council of Europe and other European institutions, as well as strengthened partnership with the OSCE and other international organisations.
7. ED will **strengthen its programme to ensure that partners can develop** policy initiatives and advocate for the implementation of that policy locally, centrally and internationally.
8. ED to have developed a **capacity building programme** to address UK Gypsy and Traveller exclusion in the UK, linking these issues into European networks.
9. ED will promote the development of **staff and resources** adequate for effective implementation of the strategy, to ensure a continuity and diversity of personnel and financial resources.
10. ED will **support its own website, publish reports and develop other communication and dissemination channels**, to raise our profile and to make links and exchange experience with relevant NGOs and academic institutions in the UK.

The complete version of the Strategic Review will be made available on European Dialogue's website www.europeandialogue.org



Ethnic Minorities and Access to Justice in the Russian Federation (EMAJ), a Russian–British partnership project, which was carried out over a period of two and a half years, was concluded in December 2005. The project's main goal was to foster trust and dialogue between the police and ethnic minorities and to create the basis for a long-term partnership at the local level through which current problems in relationship between the police and ethnic minorities could be jointly addressed and resolved.

The project worked in four Russian cities/regions: Samara Oblast, Moscow, Ekaterinburg and Krasnodar Krai, and had the active involvement of police officers, ethnic minority representatives and regional authority officials. The Center for Interethnic Cooperation (Moscow), the Ekaterinburg National Cultural Autonomy of Roma – Roma Ural (Ekaterinburg) and European Dialogue (London), coordinated the project, and worked in close cooperation with the Ministry for Internal Affairs.

Building trust, dialogue and partnerships

The EMAJ project was developed on the basis of building an ethos of mutual respect and non-confrontation between the police and ethnic minority representatives. The coordinators of the project recognised that the way forward in order to develop working relationships between the police and ethnic minority representatives was to overcome prejudices and to work in a constructive manner. The project also engaged the support of local and regional authorities to strengthen the process of cooperation and partnership building.

Training

The project delivered training seminars for the local and regional police and ethnic minority representatives from the four cities/regions. The training was designed by Russian trainers and experts, and UK experts – two former senior police officers from the London Metropolitan Police, together with two experts on community development from the Racial Equality Council in the Greenwich district of London – participated in the training.

This was seen by many as an historic event as it was the very first time for ethnic minority representatives and the police to engage in a training setting, in a non-confrontational manner and in constructive dialogue. There were initial separate sessions for the police, focusing on operational procedures for gaining trust and working with communities, and application of international policing standards within the Russian context, while the ethnic minority representatives focused on how to strengthen eth-

Building trust, dialogue and partnerships between ethnic minorities and police

minority organisations to become stronger representative agencies of their communities, and constructive and equal partners of public authorities. The joint sessions that followed provided the participants the opportunity to reflect on negative stereotypes; to identify the main problems and possible solutions to overcome these problems; and to agree on priority areas for cooperation and to discuss concrete steps for action.

UK study visit

From each city/region of the project, a group made up of ethnic minority representatives, police and regional authority officials came on a study visit to London to gain first-hand experiences of best examples of UK policy and practice in ethnic-minority police cooperation. The visit was hosted by Greenwich Racial Equality Council who introduced the group to partnership structures between ethnic minorities, the police and the local authority in Greenwich and city-wide. The group also visited Scotland Yard and other policing institutions, including London's Police Training Academy, to find out about London Metropolitan Police's race equality and diversity strategy.

Microprojects

The project provided financial support for the implementation of one-off small projects to be developed by the participants in each of the four cities/regions. These projects aimed to build cooperation between ethnic minorities and the police, and provided the opportunity for the participants to apply their knowledge and skills gained during the training seminars.

Dissemination and institutionalisation

Police, ethnic minority leaders and local/regional authority officials from over twenty regions of the Russian Federation, representatives from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry for Regional Development and the Ministry for External Affairs as well as a number of international experts attended a dissemination conference to promote good practice examples of police-ethnic minority cooperation in Russia, especially from, but not only, the project's four cities/regions.

Recommendations for regional as well as federal level action were discussed and agreed, and later sent for approval to the Office of the Prime Minister. They and the project's methodology are explained in further depth in a manual, *Ethnic Minorities and Access to Justice in the Russian Federation – Cooperation between Ethnic Minorities and the Police at Local Level* which is available to download in English and Russian from European Dialogue's website www.europeandialogue.org

Human rights become a focus for police and judiciary in Turkey

Turkey's police, judiciary and NGO representatives all came together for the first time for a human rights training programme organised by European Dialogue and Istanbul's Bogazici University.

The project *Access to Justice in Turkey* consisted of a series of training seminars that created a forum for professionals to come together in dialogue to understand better their common goals as well as conflicts. The programme successfully raised awareness of human rights and gave participants the opportunity to raise personal and collective standards of behaviour.

The Turkish-British project concluded in March after beginning a year earlier in January 2005. The training was based on the articles of the European Convention of Human Rights and was supported by the Turkish Ministry of the Interior and Ministry of Justice. Following the official launch in Istanbul, regional seminars took place in Erzurum, Antalya and Izmir.

Significantly, this is the first time that judges, prosecutors, police and the gendarmerie, government representatives, lawyers and NGOs discussed issues of justice together. They openly acknowledged that there is a lack of communication and coordination among the different sectors and that each of their responsibilities in the administration of justice are not defined clearly enough. The group came to appreciate how continuous professional training, not widely delivered in Turkey, is a valuable and essential means to address challenges.

Furthermore, the training comes at a time when Turkey is trying to rebuild its reputation. The country has applied to join the European Union and is awaiting a decision amid controversy over its human rights record. The training addressed the participants' knowledge of human rights and helped foster an understanding that implementation of human rights would strengthen Turkey and not weaken it.

Training

Regional seminars covering 25 cities in Turkey followed the initial training in Istanbul. The training was very dynamic and required participants to be actively involved. In some exercises, groups made up of the different professionals were given real life scenarios and asked to present their understanding of potential problems and possible solutions. Discussions and materials were used to explore themes such as the use of force by the State, prohibition of torture, the right to liberty and the right to a fair trial. A mock hearing of the European Court of Human Rights was simulated at the end of each seminar, where a complex situation was presented to the participants who took up the various prosecuting, defending and judging roles.



Breaking down barriers

The police unexpectedly invited NGO representatives on a tour of a police training school, laboratory and detention centre – which gave the NGOs an unusual first-hand opportunity to observe police culture and training for the first time. This was very progressive as participants themselves acknowledged in the training sessions that there is a need to build bridges and foster cooperation, especially between NGOs and public authorities.

In fact, a resounding sentiment among the majority of participants was that communication between stakeholders of the justice system has to be continuously maintained so that problems of legislation and implementation can be drawn out and addressed. Moreover, everybody strongly agreed that higher level judges should take part in future training programmes.

Visiting the UK – a new perspective

In May 2005, a group of participating police and gendarmerie and another group of judges and prosecutors came to London for two separate study visits. Each group visited relevant organisations to observe how some aspects of the law might be similar in Turkey and the UK while procedures and models might vary.

The UK visits proved fruitful because both groups attended separate debriefing sessions back in Istanbul and made critical comparisons and shared valuable insights. The police felt Turkish laws are too complex and difficult to enforce. They also felt that their job descriptions are inadequate and they identified areas of change that would strengthen their function as police. The judges felt that UK training for judges and prosecutors is very effective. They were also particularly impressed with the active role of NGOs in providing constructive criticism – a key element lacking in Turkey.

Reform

Several suggestions for improvements and reforms were drawn out from the visits to the UK. Participants appreciated that if human rights standards are to improve in Turkey, then strong relations between civil society and police and gendarmerie must be fostered.

Publication for the future

The project team have produced *Access to Justice: Continuous Professional Development Human Rights Training Programme*, a publication that explores the problematic areas of the Turkish Justice System where Turkish law and its implementation are separate. The principles of the ECHR are thoroughly discussed and mock cases and questions are included to aid future training programmes.



Models of good policy and practice in implementing desegregated, inclusive and intercultural education for almost 1600 Roma children in pre and primary schools in the Fakulteta district of Sofia and the town of Lom have been developed by European Dialogue in partnership with Roma NGOs – Romani Baht Foundation and Roma Lom Foundation have developed

The PRIMER project is now in its second year of implementation and has received a very good mid-term evaluation,

"PRIMER is a well designed and a well executed pilot programme. A common vision underpins the partnership and project staff who are conscientious and carefully selected from the most competent and experienced Roma and non-Roma in this complex field."

The Bulgarian Ministry of Education has recognised the achievements of the project and is developing a national strategy for Roma education based upon the PRIMER educational models.

PRIMER's principles

Local Roma education teams, composed of Roma parents, teachers, education experts, community workers and representatives from the local municipalities, have been set up. Through a wide consultative process they have specified three basic principles for the development of the local educational models:

1. Supporting the existing desegregation process through implementation of intercultural education in the mixed schools located in the neighbourhoods – as a guarantee for protection from assimilation and for using ethno-cultural diversity as a tool for education in human rights and common values for all pupils.
2. Provision of quality education for Roma children irrespective of where they live, and respecting the rights of parental choice – the (over) 300 all-Roma ghetto schools in Bulgaria are not going to close overnight. However, migration from the countryside and population growth means that even the poor quality ghetto schools cannot accommodate all Roma children, as in Fakulteta.
3. Implementing a community development approach. The local NGOs – Romany Baht and Roma Lom – are working deep in the communities to respond to the specific needs in each project site, to promote better community awareness of the need and value of education, and to promote the involvement of all stakeholders in the process of improvement in the quality of education for all Roma children, including the poorest and most marginalised.

Promoting inclusive, culturally sensitive education for Roma

Achievements

Since the start of the project enrolment and attendance of Roma children in the targeted schools has improved. This is due to promoting the involvement of parents in the schools in parent-teachers' associations; engaging the use of teaching assistants to support the children; making improvements to the school environment; and working in the communities to encourage parents to send their children to school.

Some of the important outcomes at the end of the first educational year are:

- 80 children (from 160) prepared for school during the PRIMER Summer School and enrolled in first grade. The Summer School was organised because in every new educational year the 75th school (the only school in the Fakulteta) enrol only 80 children in Pre-School from about 200. For the other children there are no classrooms.
- 23 children who have never been to school enrolled in the first grade.
- 3 children with disabilities are visiting the community school.
- About 50% average increase in attendance of the children from the project schools.
- Reduction by half of premature departure from primary school and in the number of children repeating a year in the school.
- Establishment of 5 resource centres in the project schools with educational materials and books.
- All the schools have access to computers/internet.
- 2 classrooms renovated, and a day centre for day work for children who have never been to school in Fakulteta – Sofia has been established.

Building upon our successes

European Dialogue is keen to build upon the experiences and successes of the PRIMER project. The Bulgarian partners will apply to the Roma Education Fund to provide further support for their work. Unfortunately, European Dialogue was unable to seek an extension to the funding from the Big Lottery since Bulgaria is a 2007 accession country and is now excluded from their funding.

However, European Dialogue has submitted an application to develop a similar project in Macedonia and Serbia where Roma children face similar problems to accessing inclusive and culturally sensitive education.

Ensuring effective implementation of national anti-discrimination legislation

European Dialogue in partnership with Romani Baht Foundation (Bulgaria), Pavee Point (Ireland), Romani CRISS (Romania), Poradna – The Centre for Civil and Human Rights (Slovakia) and Devon Racial Equality Council (UK) has successfully completed the first year of the *TRAILER Project – Traveller and Roma Action for the Implementation of Legal and Equality Rights*. This is a transnational project aiming to improve access to justice and to promote social inclusion for Roma and Travellers in Bulgaria, Ireland, Romania, Slovakia and the UK.

Raising awareness of rights and the law

Raising awareness of the rights and provisions of anti-discrimination legislation is very necessary since the law is relatively new, especially in Bulgaria, Romania and Slovakia and therefore there is a lack of knowledge of the law and what constitutes a violation of the law; a denial that discrimination exists; in-depth prejudices against Roma and Travellers; and disbelief amongst the Roma and Traveller communities that the law can do anything for them.

Training workshops involving the participation of NGOs, activists, service providers and legal practitioners have been held. These have included presentations on national anti-discrimination law vs. a vs. the EU Race Equality Directives; brainstorming on issues concerning discrimination; case studies on discriminatory incidents and actual legal cases of Roma discrimination; and role play on how to gather evidence for court procedures.

To consolidate the learning the partners will produce and disseminate practice manuals providing comprehensive information on the provisions of the law and practical information on how NGOs and activists can use the law to combat discrimination.

In Romania and Slovakia "know your rights" leaflets to enable Roma to learn more about the rights guaranteed by the law and to encourage those who have experienced discrimination to seek legal redress have been produced and distributed.

Monitoring, documentation and litigation

NGOs are playing a pivotal role in ensuring that anti-discrimination law is adequately applied as generally the specialised bodies are relatively weak and reluctant to take discrimination cases to court. Romani Baht, Romani CRISS and Poradna have been very active in monitoring discrimination against Roma in a variety of fields.



In Romania the project has supported Romani CRISS's network of human rights monitors who work throughout Romania to document incidents of discrimination and to provide free legal advice to victims of discrimination. The monitors notify Romani CRISS of the situation who then select Roma discrimination cases for the attention of the specialised anti-discrimination body.

In Slovakia, Poradna has undergone testing experiments (undercover investigations) to ensure that they have adequate evidence that discrimination has occurred to enable them to represent their clients in court.

Romani Baht and Poradna are amongst a number of NGOs in Bulgaria and Slovakia who are taking the lead in testing the anti-discrimination legislation. Another important achievement of the project is the development of case law on Roma discrimination, which will not only be of value in the country but also in other European countries. Case summaries will be documented in a database made available on European Dialogue's website and linked to the partners' websites for more comprehensive information.

Transnational exchanges

In 2005 the project team participated in study visits in Bucharest (Romania), Kosice (Slovakia) and Sofia (Bulgaria) to learn more about the state of the implementation of anti-discrimination legislation in relation to Roma. Visits were made to specialised bodies and other governmental bodies working in the field of non-discrimination and human rights. In Kosice the partners presented their work at Poradna's training workshop for NGOs.

The workshop participants found the international input very useful, and were encouraged to hear that the situation regarding Roma in other European countries is not so very different or worse than that of Slovakia. In 2006 visits will take place in Exeter (Devon – UK) and Dublin (Ireland).

Promoting effective implementation of the law

A report providing a comparative overview of the current state of the implementation of anti-discrimination legislation from the perspective of the partners will be produced. It will highlight the strengths and weakness of anti-discrimination legislation and its implementation – outline both the positive (innovative provisions and good practices) and negative aspects of the law, and make recommendations for legislative reform and improved implementation.



Policing and criminal justice: towards safety for multi-ethnic communities

The OSCE Contact Point for Roma and Sinti invited European Dialogue in 2004 to undertake a series of interconnected activities to promote the implementation of the policing chapter of the OSCE Action Plan for Roma/Sinti. These include the holding of country/regional based workshops in Poland, Russia, the Balkans and the UK to highlight the issues and identify examples of good practice regarding Roma–Police relations; the development of a model for systematic assessment of policing policy and practice in relation to Roma in Romania; and the production of a resource manual giving guidance and examples of good practice in the delivery of policing for multi-ethnic communities.

Moscow Workshop

A national-level workshop took place in Moscow in November 2005 to review current problems in relations between police and Roma in Russia, and to draw up recommendations and an action plan of how these problems can be addressed in relation to the policing chapter of the OSCE Action Plan. The European Dialogue project *Ethnic Minorities and Access to Justice in the Russian Federation* fed into this workshop by providing positive experiences and results in ethnic minority–police relations that were developed during the project.

This workshop was seen as a historic event in that Roma and police met for the purpose of listening and engaging with one another. Many came with great hope and high expectations, seeing the workshop as an opportunity to work towards bringing real changes to the situation of the Roma community in Russia.

Throughout the workshop discussions were open and constructive. The police appeared willing to engage and were united in their request to receive concrete proposals for action from the Roma participants. The Roma proposed the need to improve inter-cultural understanding by preparing audio, visual and text-based materials, and to carry out human rights training for the police.

A set of recommendations about how to continue to work to improve relations emerged from the workshop, including agreement for a Roma–police Commission/Working Group to be established made up of representatives from different police departments and the Roma community. This working group would meet regularly to discuss problems and together find appropriate solutions. It would also provide Roma with information about their rights and services available to them from the police.

The UK/Western Europe workshop

The workshop in the UK to address issues in relations between Roma/Gypsies/Travellers and the police in Western European countries is planned to take place in 2006. A steering group has been formed with the active participation of British Romany Gypsies.

The Romanian Strategic Police Initiative

In partnership with the OSCE ODIHR, the Romanian Government and the Roma NGO Romani CRISS, European Dialogue is supporting the assessment of current policing policy and practice in Romania in relation to international standards.

Chris Taylor and John Slater, former Chief Inspectors of the London Metropolitan Police working on behalf of European Dialogue, have worked with the Institute of Research and Criminality Prevention who have undertaken the assessment, with support from the Ministry of Administration and Interior (MAI) as signatories of a memorandum of understanding, along with the OSCE and Romani CRISS.

The project support has included a number of trainings and workshops with Roma communities, and briefings for senior police officers/managers on the expected impact and policy and practice implications of the assessment process. European Dialogue supports the full consultation of the Roma in this process.

At the May 2006 OSCE ODIHR conference in Bucharest, the initial findings were presented by Ms Margareta Flesner of the IRCP, and in a keynote speech, Mr Nita of MAI pledged full support for the assessment.

Policing and Roma: a resource manual

A resource manual containing key documents in the field of policing and Roma to support the implementation of the OSCE Action Plan for Roma and Sinti has been compiled by European Dialogue.

This manual outlines the OSCE Action Plan for Roma and Sinti, and covers such areas as human rights and the police; codes of practice for the police; police training; partnership building; European case-law on Roma and policing; and practical measures for improving relations between police and minorities.

The resource manual plus the reports of the workshops and other relevant documents regarding Roma and the police are available on European Dialogue’s website www.europeandialogue.org