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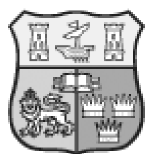
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HALF-IN, HALF-OUT: ROMA AND NON-ROMA ROMANIANS WITH LIMITED RIGHTS WORKING AND TRAVELLING IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

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Acronyms

A-2 | Bulgaria and Romania

A-8 | Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Slovenia, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Estonia and Hungary

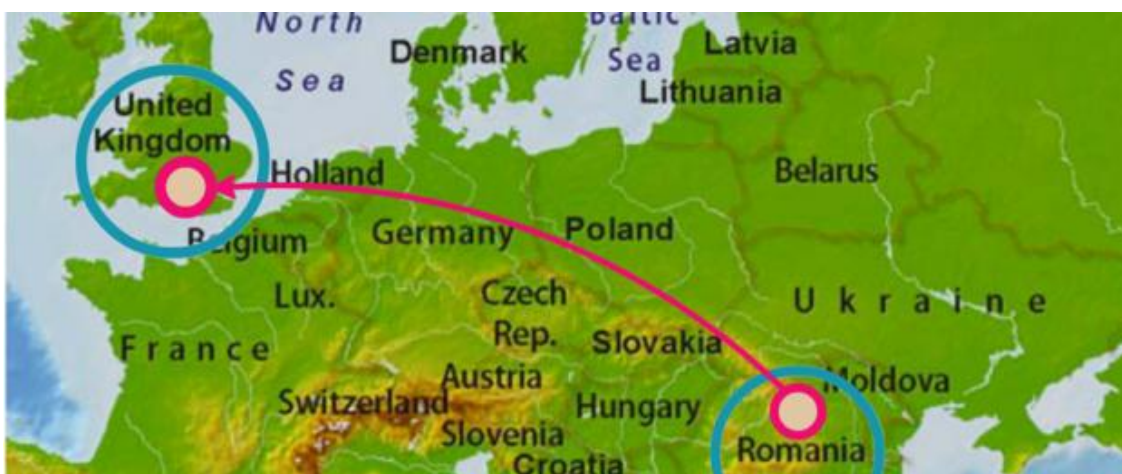
ASBO | Anti-Social Behaviour Order

EC | European Commission

EU | European Union

UK | United Kingdom

WP3 | Working Package 3 (INTEGRIM)



Abstract – January 2007, was a turning point for Romania and certain changes have taken place during the six years since its integration in the European Union (EU). This working paper addresses some of the key issues in relation to the process of Europeanisation that have affected the patterns in the everyday lives of Roma and non-Roma community travelling to live and work in London in the past seven years. In the context of Romania's accession to the European Union, this paper shows that 'being European' applies differently to citizens of old vs. new member states. The paper also analyses critically public perceptions, political and media class-based discourses practiced in old EU member states to show how these backlash against new EU member states' citizens, such as Romanian Roma and non-Roma. Findings reveal paradoxes – the utopian dream that all European citizens should have free-movement in the EU fades away in the face of everyday life of the Romanian citizens abroad. More so, this fundamental right has been denied to those who represent the concept of Europeaness, the Roma people. January 2014 however, starts a new phase for Romanian citizens, but their rights to free-movemnet are threatened in the uncertain future as new reforms of the EU Treaty are proposed to make the fundamental freedom of movement in Europe, less free.

Keywords: Romania, Romanian Roma, London, Europeanisation, mobility, work, European Union (EU) accession, United Kingdom (UK).

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Introduction[1]

The year 2007, was unique in the history of Romania for two reasons. In January 2007, Romania joined the European Union (EU) and in the same year Sibiu, a Transylvanian city, was named the European Capital of Culture.[2] According to the concept behind the 'Cultural City tradition' (Verstraete 2010: 2), every year a designated city in Europe is the showcase of culture. Namely, they showcase to visitors from Europe and to the rest of the world the respective city's and country's cultural heritage. This yearly event offers opportunities for movement of people – virtually and physically, information, services and capital within the free, borderless Europe. Inherent of the idea behind a European Community is the 'recognition of all EU citizens moving freely within the territory of the Member States' (Verstraete 2010: 4). In reality though, the equal opportunities of free movement within the EU and management of working migrant flows travelling from the lower-income to the higher-income countries, dissipates in the face of 'stringent national regulations that are concerning migrant labor, reuniting families and acquiring citizenship' (Verstraete 2010: 5).

Since 2007 however, Romanian citizens faced restrictions in terms of limited work and rights of residence on the territory of all EU old member states, except in Finland and Sweden where Romanians were given unrestricted access to the labour market (Kaneff and Pine 2011). Due to the worsening economic climate in the EU since 2008, certain old EU member states have introduced quotas to protect their own labour market against the incoming citizens from the new member states. The political, public and media discourses in host countries, such as the United Kingdom (UK) have been used as tools to infringe upon the EU citizens' rights of free movement and work in the EU, which backlash on the Roma discourses in home countries.

More explicitly, from the evidence used to back up this argument it appears that certain EU nationals are considered more European than others. In this respect, the Roma communities across Europe and more specifically Romanian Roma are viewed as non-

[1] This working paper is a fragment of a more comprehensive study or even an introduction to an on-going study of the Romanian community in London, which I carried out since early 2011.

[2] Sibiu and Luxembourg shared this status in that year.

Europeans and thus exclusivist strategies are applied against their rights of free of movement in Europe. In one way, this sounds paradoxical because for centuries Roma ethnos have lived a nomadic way of life, in Europe. In many ways though, the range of evidence reveals that they are being excluded from sharing the sense of belonging to a European identity with the rest of European community. Also, it reveals that Romanian government has not made visible progress to include the Roma minority in the mainstream society despite the pressures coming from the European Commission (EC).

This working paper tackles aspects of the seven-year long transition and integration of Romanians (as an individual group[3]) travelling to work with limited rights in a labour market of an old EU member state, like the UK. The aim is to assess how public, social and political discourses focusing on immigration rather than on the rights of free movement in the EU, coupled with media discourses pitching against these Romanian citizens (Roma and non-Roma) contribute to their negative perception both abroad and in their home country. The paper draws on media articles targeting the Romanian citizens within the European community, as well as Romanian media targeting Romanian Roma at home.

The themes arising from this analysis set the tone for concluding that the main paradoxes highlight how Roma people are denied the central concept of a European citizen – to travel freely in Europe; and that Romanian Roma are being racialised in their home country as a backlash of the class-based discrimination of the Romanian citizens (Roma and non-Roma) migrating to and working in other EU countries. Therefore, questions for reflection on such paradoxes, silences and denials are in order to signpost to those areas lacking firm responses from member states' own governments as well as EU institutions involved in the European integration of Romanians in the EU. It is to this first phase of integration, Romania's accession to the EU, that the paper now turns.

[3] This analysis is concerned with the experiences of Romanian migrants on the UK labour market rather than with Romania's integration (as a nation state) into the EU. Perhaps, a further two-level analysis would tackle the latter also, by analysing critically the utopian dream of free mobility for all European citizens on the backdrop of selective inclusive and exclusive measures carried out by old EU member states against new ones.

Romania's accession to the EU

This section aims to analyse the contribution of European integration process to the mobility and work practices of Romanian citizens in Europe, especially after Romania's accession to the EU in 2007. More specifically, it discusses the context in which Romania entered the EU, i.e. under the seven-year transitional period with its distinctive phases ('2-plus-3-plus-2') and then it enquires what Europeanisation means for Romanian citizens, Roma and non-Roma. In short, it highlights mobility and work patterns of Romanian citizens on the European territory since they have been granted 'free travel' within the EU.

Olsen argues that Europeanisation is an intertwining process geared towards: a) growth of the European identity, b) formation and enlargement of the EU, and c) exporting European powers behind its continental borders (Olsen 2002). Olsen (2002) also suggests that in theorising about the European institutional dynamics one should ask: *what*, *how* and *why* changes take place? Indeed Olsen (2002) sets challenges for further research when approaching the *why*-question, but for the purpose of this working paper, the focus will be on *what changes* and *how* European integration took place, in the case of Romania's accession.

In 2004, the fifth enlargement of EU included a new wave of eight[4] Central and Eastern European states, plus Malta and Cyprus. At that time, Romania and Bulgaria were not invited. On the basis that these two countries would form the future external borders of the EU, they were prompted to give evidence of security measures taken to protect the EU's economic area in order to join the EU (Velikov 2003). In other words, these two countries needed first to secure their external borders against those who, 'as non-EU citizens, posed a threat to this borderless territory'. But, according to EC's security criteria this was not met in 2004 (Verstraete 2010).

Bojkov (2004) presents another side of this argument. He argues that at the time, due to their geographical position in the South-Eastern Europe region, the EU considered Bulgaria's and Romania's integration non-essential. Furthermore, he argues that by not inviting the two countries, Bulgaria and Romania were 'neither here, nor there' in the

[4] This expansion included Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Slovenia, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Estonia and Hungary. In the scholarly literature and official documents these are often referred to as the A-8 countries.

European politics of that time (Bojkov 2004). In other words, they were neither integrated in the newly enlarged EU nor forming an integral part of the countries in the South-Eastern Europe region.

Nevertheless in 2007, Bulgaria and Romania joined the EU.[5] However, the seven-year transition period imposed by the EC included temporary work restrictions against Bulgarians and Romanians travelling to work in several EU member states.[6] These restrictions on working and travelling rights in other EU countries will stay in place until January 2014 when the transition period will have ended. So far, Romania was half-in, half-out of the EU.

While Romanian nationals are waiting for restrictions to be lifted, those travelling abroad under these restrictions to countries like the United Kingdom, are currently vulnerable to illegality[7], escalating debts, poverty, abuse, civil charges (e.g. ASBO's[8] against Romanians seeking day labour), sentences and the risk of being in this country with expired documents. There are also Romanians registered in the top two (out of four) occupational jobs in the UK, but according to the Migration Advisory Committee they represent an anomaly. Both trends though, represent a function of the labour market restrictions against A-2 when compared with the A-8 countries (Somerville 2009). Moreover, these trends may also indicate that this heterogeneous wave of migrants, labelled as 'Eastern Europeans' migrate for different reasons and time periods. In the migration literature, researchers have identified movements of Romanians to the UK as 'circular' and 'shuttling' in the sense that they either come for unknown periods of time or they shuttle between Romania and the UK (Somerville 2009: 5).

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[5] In the context of the 2007 EU accession process, Bulgaria and Romania are named A-2 countries.

[6] Finland and Sweden were the only two old member states that opened their labour markets to Romanians from the beginning. Others (e.g. Spain) have opened theirs gradually, but revoked this right due to economic crises.

[7] Romanian migrants become subject to a fine when they are in another EU country for more than three months without registering with the local authorities (town hall, police station). Since 2007, this often happened when Romanian nationals documents expired because the ex-UKBA kept their longer than 6 months when applying for accession work permits.

[8] Anti-Social Behaviour Orders

However, the patterns of migration may change over time due to one important drive, the diaspora in the host country, e.g. the UK (Massey, Arango, Hugo, Kouaouci, Pellegrino and Taylor 1993)[9]; most likely in 2014, when the transitional controls will end and if more Romanian migrants will head to the UK, the Romanian diaspora will grow making it possible to sponsor future arrivals from Romania (Collier 2013). In other words, with migration from Romania growing, so its diaspora will, and conversely. But, by comparison to other Diasporas in the UK from Central and Eastern Europe, the Romanian diaspora is much smaller. The next sub-section analysis shows how Europeanisation translates into the Romanian citizens' and especially Roma's everyday practices, such as mobility and work beyond the borders of their home countries.

Europeanisation in Romanian citizens' patterns of everyday life

Michel de Certeau's (1983) concept of "everyday life" refers to *practices* of *everyday mobility*, which in most part for Romanian citizens means making their own 'space' within the places designed by the strong and the powerful EU citizens. Certeau's study on *The Practice of Everyday Life*, proposed the hypothesis that practices are the texts of everyday life.

Roman explains that:

> *For Certeau, everyday life is like a war of tactics … fought by the weak against the great and well organised military strategy of the powerful. … everyday life is a continuous process of conflict, resistance, challenge an negotiation, whereby the powerful construct place where they can exercise their power – cities, workplaces, and houses – while the weak make their own 'spaces' within those places.*
> *(Certeau 1983).*

The powerful ones, in my estimation, are the privileged, the white propertied European citizens travelling within the borderless Europe as cultural tourists or business people. In contrast, the people from lower income EU countries 'often prefer to travel in the direction opposite the capital, making use of existing networks of labor movement into Europe rather than seeking rights and prosperity at home' (Verstraete 2010: 11). Seen in this light, free mobility for some European citizens is possible at the expense of others 'forced to move around as migrants' (Verstraete 2010: 94). The working migrants travel in response to the demand for low skilled seasonal workers. In other words, they

[9] See also (Carrington 1996)

practice a form of *demand mobility*, which ‘results from there being greater demand for some kinds of labour and a shrinking demand for others and not from the openness of the society’ (Drislane and Parkinson 2002a). This kind of mobility is different from social mobility, which is an ‘upward or downward movement within a stratification system’(Drislane and Parkinson 2002b).

In theory, the neoliberal European ideology and consensus theory safeguard the idealised notion of a free and unified Europe and ‘claim that broad equality of opportunity exists (or should exist) in modern [European] societies’ (Buchanan 2010). According to this theory, ‘the acceptance of the EU charter of Fundamental Rights at the summit in Nice 2000, affirmed the human face of Europe: besides a common market where competition thrives and free trade reigns, Europe increasingly stands for pluralism, tolerance, solidarity, peace and *equality’* (Verstraete 2010: 9). Thus, theoretically, having acquired European citizenship – Romanians should have equal rights to move freely in Europe, work and settle anywhere within the European Union. In the real world however, the work restrictions still exist despite their transitory nature, i.e. according to the Treaty of Nice they should have been ceased in 2011. The on-going inequality is evident also from the recent statements given at the beginning of 2012 by the representatives of the old member states (the UK, Ireland, France, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Belgium), which have confirmed that access to the labour markets will remain closed to Bulgarians and Romanians till 31 December 2013 (Insight 2012). Based on this evidence, one asks if indeed people, objects, images, capital flows as its creators imagined it, ‘freely across borders’ (Berezin 2003).

The expulsions and repatriations of Romanian Roma from Italy and France have opened up the question on the status of Romanian citizens in the EU (Mădroane 2012). Examples come from Berlusconi’s government, ‘which targeted Roma living in ‘nomad camps’ through the finger printing initiative’ (Vermeersch 2011: 96). In August 2010, the French Government, ‘repatriated’ 86 Roma back to Romania on the pretext that they removed them from the inhumane living conditions in France (Olson 2012). Lastly, from the extreme right, racist attitude against Roma in Switzerland expressed in the weekly magazine *Die Weltwoche*, it becomes evident that the situation is more serious than initially thought. Italy, France and Switzerland, breached the very ‘enactment of European citizenship’ in terms of free mobility for *all* Europeans, and encroached on the

rights of Roma whose territorial independence and mobility are the very symbol of Europeanness (Olson 2012: 77).

Given the evidence highlighted afore, it is no surprise that in a time when the economic crises in Europe coupled with the transitional controls has escalated the harsh treatment against Romanian migrants in the old members states. Therefore, I see two distinct and related problems with the process of integration, and the labour market restriction, which create non-equal citizenship status for migrants from Eastern Europe: a) because Romanians were not given equal rights to work as with the other EU citizens, and b) because the Roma Romanians were not allowed to work, move freely and/or settle in Europe without being labelled and treated as the 'Roma problem in Europe', the 'public enemy of Italy' (Sigona 2007) or the 'thieves coming to steal and run' (Gut and Kälin 2012).

Perception vs. Cultural Differences: How did we arrive here?

The underlying reason for treating the national (Romanian) and ethnic (Roma) minority in a way that creates difference rather than unity among Romanian citizens is perhaps founded on the 'selective inclusion or exclusion of new elements, such as "Europeanness", and the strategic nature of their reification in identity politics' (Mădroane 2012: 104). Mădroane argues that such identity politics reflected in the Romanian media reinforce a Romanian identity associated with the negative image of *ţigan/Other* and, by implication sharing the European racist attitudes towards ethnic groups of Roma (Mădroane 2012). Europe-wide media fuels negative anti-Romanian feelings in the old members states. In 2011, Spanish government has introduced new legislation to protect its job market from Romanians seeking work in Spain. In 2012, the Swiss government has introduced new quotas for the EU citizens of the eight new members states.[10]

In the UK for example, the sensationalist media, misrepresents Romanian citizens in scandalous headlines as beggars and prostitutes invading London before the 2012

[10] These are the countries of the 2004 accession wave to the EU: Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Slovenia, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Estonia and Hungary. The controversial legislation of the Swiss Government has been 'invoked under a safeguard clause of a bilateral treaty between the EU and Switzerland for the free movement of people'. For more information see (Swissinfo.ch 2012)

Olympics (Dawar 2012). The rethoric is that Romanian citizens travel to the UK (or other parts of Europe) purposefully to either steal the jobs of the British or beg and sleep roughly in London. And as of this week however, the UK Prime Minister, Mr. David Cameron, calls for new reforms of the Freedom of Movement Treaty in Europe, in order to clamp down on free movement within EU of citizens from new member states *(Cameron 2013).* It is worthy to note that these new reforms will target all law-abiding migrants, such as Bulgarians and Romanians, and not targeting specific groups, like the Roma. Mr. Cameron's proposal resonates with politicians in other old member states, who promised to take a similar stance in making freedom of movement in Europe less free *(Cameron 2013).* Once again, these inconsistent European politics of movement indicate that 'the discursive and visual realizations of Europe have been contradictory and socially uneven as well' (Verstraete 2010: 152). In short, there are tensions, on the one hand, between how the majority Romanian population perceives its Roma minority. On the other, the citizens' perception in the old member states of the citizens from new member states.

In what follows, a brief explanation is provided linking Western with Romanian public and mainstream media debates on the Roma to illustrate how together they collide in producing certain discourses that feed onto each other: a) the UK (and EU-wide) class-based discriminating public and media discourses against Romanian Roma and non-Roma abroad, which backlashes on b) the Romanian media and public pitching against the Romanian Roma in Romania. In short, the ripple effects come from the centre (the old member states like the UK) and backlash into the periferic new EU member states (like Romania), and fragments the majority and minority population in the latter.

The 2012 report by OECD[11] however, shows that out of 289,000 Romanians who entered the UK in 2010, 24,600 were students (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development 2012). And according to the 2011 Census, there were 94,000 Romanians registered in the UK, and almost half (44,848) living in London boroughs. Furthermore, the Department for Work and Pensions indicate that from the total number of Romanian migrants who entered the UK in 2011 only a small number (12,814) of Romanian migrants were employed or self-employed, and a very small proportion

[11]For statistics on how many Romanians have emigrated to work in countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) see, *International Migration Outlook 2012*.

(1,582) were working within qualified positions, i.e. business, financial services or in receipt of vocational training, work experience, and student internships. The disparity between the actual number of Romanians entering the UK and the small proportion of those on legal work permits indicate that whilst under transitional controls and after the three months residence period has ended the Romanian community (Roma and non-Roma) has very few options. They could become unemployed and homeless, return to Romania or travel to work in other parts of Europe. Thus, those trapped to remain and live at the limits of subsistence in the UK are forced to find alternatives, some choosing to work nights illegally in the hidden sectors, such as fruit and vegetable markets or street sex work, while others (mostly men) as day labourers. This consequence is most likely a function of the labour market restrictions that Romanians have faced since 2007, but when UK mainstream media targets Romanians (e.g. Roma and non-Roma day labourers in North London) it singles out this vulnerable section of the community reporting on how badly Romanians fare in the UK.

Despite that fact, in January 2013, the British Office for National Statistics shows that a high proportion of Romanian residents in the UK were employed or self-employed as doctors (2,000) or registered as students (6,000).[12] These statistics suggest that Romanians are as welcomed to work in highly skilled sectors as any other professionals, but it may mean that the perception of Eastern Europeans in the UK as low-skilled workers counts more than the cultural and race differences. Yet, the attitude of the UK public is very unfavourable towards migrants from Romania (and Bulgaria). The YouGov/Sunday Times poll published in February 2013 shows that 48% of the respondents are in favour of limiting the rights of free movement of Bulgarians and Romanians wishing to travel and work in the UK, even if that would mean breaking EU laws. From an artistic perspective, Dan Perjovski's *(2013)* schematic representation reveals the prevaling negative discourse in the British media and the public's unwelcoming attitude in the context of limiting Romanians' and Bulgarians' rights to work in the UK, after January 2014.

[12] For a detailed breakdown see Census Update January 2013, Office for National Statistics.

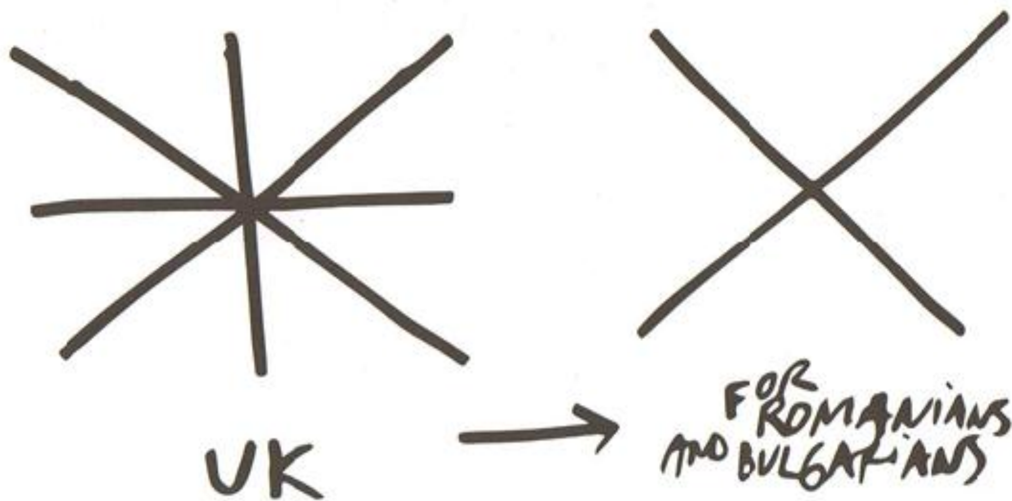

Figure 1.0 depicts the UK public's unwelcoming attitude towards Bulgarians and Romanians living and working in the UK as revealed in the YouGov/Sunday Times poll published in February 2013 & mentioned above[13]

Nevertheless, this is the first half the problem. The second half comes, Vermeersch argues, from the considerable gaps between the highly educated elites in Europe and their under-educated co-citizens, between citizens and non-citizens, between those who benefit from economic progress and those who face poverty, unemployment and discrimination' (Vermeersch 2009: 18). One example is the Roma people who despite their European citizenship often are perceived as non-Europeans, and their mobility as problematic for Europe (Vermeersch 2009). Similar to several other researchers of this topic, Vermeersch views that the European integration policies pose to a large extent few 'problems that need serious consideration' (Vermeersch 2009 pp. 20-21). First, countries like Bulgaria and Romania were allowed to enter the EU despite the irregularities beyond the supposedly implemented measure, which caused reforms and programmes to remain unfinished prior to their accession to the EU. This highlights that Europeanisation has its limits on the policies regarding protection of minorities in the newly accessing countries, like Romania.

Thus, the second half of the problem is a top-down one. Following Romania's accession to the 2007, the EU institutions that initiated Roma protection programmes have failed to ensure that Romanian government responded quick enough to protect its Roma ethnic

[13] *Drawing by Dan Perjovski ('Unframed', Kiasna Museum, Helsinki, 2013). Graphics by C. Luchian, UK.*

group from being targeted by media and public rhetoric, at home. Vermeersch further argues that the 'Roma should not be regarded solely as Europeans (a term that would not mean much to most Roma), but first and foremost as citizens of their own states, or at least as European co-citizens' (Vermeersch 2009: 21). Put differently, Romanian Roma would benefit of protection from discrimination and inclusion in Europe if they were seen and treated in equal terms with the majority of Romania's citizens (Vermeersch 2009).

The manner in which such inclusion is planned out needs careful consideration. Vermeersch explains that if too much emphasis is put on the role of European integration as a kind of 'Roma policy', instead of Europe-wide policies among the national governments, the dangers are: a) that it may shift dramatically the way Roma mobility is perceived EU-wide, which has been already compromised by Italy, France and other states; and b) it may reinforce boundaries between Roma communities and the rest of the population within a nation-state (Vermeersch 2011: 97). In other words, if support from the EC is exclusively targeted at Roma this may be perceived wrongly at both levels (European and local) to the extent that other social groups continue to exclude Roma from their mainstream societies, on the basis that Roma are a burden and not co-citizens with equal rights. This is the ripple effect mentioned earlier and its consequences.

Vermeersch (2011) warned against the kind of ripple effects that other researchers (Mădroane 2012) discovered one year later when she analysed how Romanian media discourses discriminate between the Romanian majority and the Roma minority. Mădroane explains how one Romanian newspaper (Jurnalul National) practiced a one-month discursive campaign on reparing the 'damage' produced to Romania's image in the EU by the confusion between the words Roma (with its negative conotation) and Romanian, and proposed as the official term, *Ţigan* in order to dissociate from the negative image that Roma allegedly has created for Romanians. With its 'deliberative rhetoric' (Walton 2007) based on 'ethno-cultural elements', the newspaper produced a 'cleavage' within the Romanian majority's perception of themselves as different from the Romanian Roma ethinc group (Mădroane 2012: 103), i.e. viewing themselves as the in-group ('us') sharing a set of common features and similarities (origins, history,

tradition) with the out-group ('them'), but distinct from them, and 'often subjected to 'othering'(Mădroane 2012: 103).[14]

By juxtaposing the two, the negative perception of Romanian (Roma and non-Roma) migrants abroad with the negative perception of Romanian Roma in Romania, one sees that, on one hand, the negative perception surges from the class-based (and not cultural and racial) discrimination by the British citizens against Romanians abroad; and on the other hand, it is a matter of racialising and scapegoating the Romanian Roma in their home country, by the Romanian majority viewing them as *Ţigan/Other* and attempting to dissociate itself from that distorted negative image.

The European Community and Roma Mobility within the EU

The Free Movement Directive of EU applies since April 2006 (Vermeersch 2011). It stipulates that any EU citizen travelling with valid documents has the right to reside in another member state of the EU for up to three months, and they can stay longer if they have health insurance and enough financial means to live without applying for social benefits in the destination member state. Vermeersch thinks that those Roma people travelling within the EU (mostly coming from Central and Eastern Europe) are doing as the EU directive stipulates, namely they take the opportunities offered to find equal rights and prosperity abroad. Some plan to live there for longer than three months and others go back and forth, but there are no exact figures on the ethnicity of the labour migrants shuttling east-west-east (Vermeersch 2011). Despite the lack of reliable figures, Roma are consistently targeted as 'if they are a vast group that will "overrun" the west' (Vermeersch 2011: 93). Such metaphors, Vermeersch argues, open the door to politicians exploiting the situation and acting as Berlusconi did (in 2007) and Sarkozy (in 2010), (as other politicians have done previously[15]) using it as pretext for Roma expulsion (Vermeersch 2011). This evidence therefore shows that Roma mobility in Europe is tackled on pretexts such as increasing security and reducing crime (as

[14] This discursive practices of the media are called 'construal of collective identities' by scholars such as (Van Dijk 2000) (Triandaffylidou 2003) (Wodak 2009)

[15] 'France had been sending Romanian and Bulgarian citizens back home even before 2010. In 2009, the French government already deported about 9,000 Roma to Romania and Bulgaria, and other Western European countries (Italy, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, and the United Kingdom) have for a number of years also pursued targeted return campaigns'. "Huub van Baar: Expulsion Fever in Europe. The Case of the Roma", Peter Vermeersch (2010). Nationalities Blog, http://bit.ly/1eFivQS [Accessed 19 April 2012]

Sarkozy defended his anti-Roma campaign) at the cost of criminalised Roma groups from the Eastern Europe.

Indeed, from the Roma people's perspective, the 'European politics of mobility becomes very personal indeed' when all eyes in Europe are frowned upon them for being the beggars and children thieves (how non-Roma Romanian citizens see Roma Romanian living in the UK (ProTV 2012); or child-abductors (as in the very recent global headline of Roma family abducting a little blonde girl, that was not Roma looking); or the nomads who come to Switzerland to steal and run (Gut and Kälin 2012). In contrast, the same pairs of eyes are closed to the barriers the Roma face in host countries in accessing employment due to lack of language skills (Vermeersch 2011). Vermeersch argues that as long as the EU policies aimed at improving the situation of Roma in Europe in general and the problem of Roma mobility in particular, through the lens of increasing security and control the European institutions will be faced with decades of defeat in this area (Vermeersch 2011). Moreover, it may aggravate the Roma situation by pushing these people more and more to the margins. In the Roma peoples' case, expulsion policies will not compel Romania to take control of its Roma population. On the contrary, it produces a ripple effect of stigmatisation and scapegoating of Roma by the non-Roma population through sharing the racist Western European values exported to Romania so that the gap deepens between minority and majority.

This debate raises wider questions, on one hand about the idealised 'concept of Europe as a space of unlimited mobility [which] has always presupposed a linkage between mobility and belonging to a place, disembedding and embedding, self and other' (Verstraete 2010: 6), and on the other hand, about the social category of the 'idealised European citizen [who] is someone with a thin connection to any single place – a rootless, flexible, highly educated, and well-travelled cosmopolitan, capable of maintaing long-distance and virtual relations without looking to the nation-state for protection' (Verstraete 2010: 6). Both concepts are questionable because it seems that 'mobilities in Europe may be differentially produced' and reflected in the contrast between the myth of free mobility and the realities of Romanian Roma and non-Roma mobility in Europe.

Paradoxes emerge at this point that indicate ‘how idealising notions of communal mobility aim to contain deterritorialised citizenry and are thus closely related – often for the sake of exclusion – to the concept of other kinds of (trans-) European movements, such as unwanted – and preferably detected-migration’ (Verstraete 2010: 6). In this category of migratory people, Verstraete (2010) includes those who travel in the opposite direction of capital from lower income countries like Romania, ‘making use of existing networks of labour movement into Europe rather than seeking rights and prosperity at home’ (Verstraete 2010: 11). Thus, in contrast to the idealised notion of European citizen, the people from lower income countries like Romania receive from the European institutions differential ‘distribution of justice, welfare and the benefits of mobility’ (Verstraete 2010). The case of Romanians illustrates the discrepancy between the ideal and reality of mobility in Europe. One argues that the European integration with its European institutions and policies will not indicate any positive contributions to the everyday lives Romanian citizens and Roma as long as restrictions to the labour market will be maintained against Romanian citizens who continue to face discrimination, deal with precarity and being deterritorialised.

Where to from here?

Before concluding this working paper, brief reference to findings from a group of researchers of this topic is due, in particular Memo’s criticisms against the ‘EU strategies and policies targeting Roma over the last years. According to Memo, not only that evidence on improving the socio-economic situation of this social group is missing, e.g. lack of better housing, but also, that the gap between the majority population and Roma is growing’ (Memo 2011: 3). This is most disconcerting, Nicolae Gheorghe explains, because the political ‘redefinition’ of Roma identity and issues ‘shifts the debate about Romani issues from one level to the other (from a ‘Roma problem’, to a ‘European problem’, to a ‘Romanian problem’), without concretely tackling the needs of this social group’ (Memo 2011: 3).

As Mădroane explains:

> *The Roma have intensified their efforts to refashion themselves as a „European nation”. Yet, through the converging actions and practices of old European nations, they are constantly excluded from the very Europeanness they reclaim in the name of justice and reparation*. (Mădroane 2012: 117)

Based on the evidence reviewed so far, the following main themes indicate that:

- Reinforcing differences *among* Romanian citizens portrays a skewed process of Europeanization, a paradox in which 'some identities are more shared than others' within the European society. Hence, why support from the European institutions is imperative for the role they have in putting pressure on governments (e.g. Romanian) to make sure that they take responsibility for *all* their citizens.
- Romania and Bulgaria did not fully meet the European Commision's requirements before entering the EU. Thus, both countries faced difficulties in adapting to the transition period following accession to the EU, in 2007.
- Equally, the European institutions failed to implement policies such as those protecting the minorities and making sure that national governments take responsibility for all their citizens in regards to their education, social care and integration of minorites in the mainstream society. This has proved extremely difficult for the Romanian government as its largest minority, the Roma population, has often been the target of exclusionist manouvers.
- Paradoxically, in the popular imagination the Roma are seen as nomadic travellers who are mobile and ignore borders. Seen in this way, mobility becomes one of the central characteristics of the Roma as expressed in the old nomadic way of life of Roma which links to travelling in either permanent or transit sites (Ureche and Franks 2007). In a way, it might be argued that the Roma represent the essence of Europeanness. In this sense 'movement across borders has become at once the key characteristic of and a limit to collective membership to Europe' (Verstraete 2010: 11).
- The examples of French and Italian governments clearly illustrate that Roma peoples' rights to travel freely in Europe have been infringed upon despite the rethoric of a unified EU and the neoliberal myth of an unlimited movement. The utopian dream of the borderless Europe fades away in the face of realities surrounding the displaced Romanian citizens, and Roma specifically, the latter who should be seen as the archetypal Europeans if one took Europeanness for what it is, but clearly they are not accepted as such.

The key concept, the fundamental right to freedom of movement in Europe, which is at the heart of a European citizen's life, has been denied to the most archetypal of the

Europeans, the Roma people. But, if Roma people who 'voluntarily or not – have come to symbolise mobility and territorial independence as core values in their enactment of European citizenship' (Olson 2012: 77), and if such values are not acceptable as the image of Europeaness, then how could the 'ideal European citizen' (Verstraete 2010: 8) floating freely without any ties to the land or to the local Europeans maintain the specificity of Europeaness? and how could the Europeanisation integrate Romanian Roma and non-Roma alike? It is only when we will be able to answer such questions that we will gain understanding of the differences that exist between the ideals and realities of mobility in Europe.

Finally, improved perception of Romanian Roma abroad, should start at home, i.e. Romanian government needs to tackle firmly the differential treatment by the majority of population against the Roma communities beginning at the local level and creatively applying different strategies to local circumstances. That, Vermeersch argues, could only become successful if the majority of Romanian population is encouraged and supported to participate. One argues that, at the Romanian state and EU institutional levels this would be a win-win-win policy. First win, would make Romanian Roma and non-Roma communities live and work as one people, sharing a sense of belonging, and implicitly that of being European. Second, the centuries-old right of the Roma people of moving freely in Europe would be returned to them, and accordingly lead to a more positive perception of the Roma Romanians and that of Romanian migrants (generally) travelling in other EU countries. Third win, at the European level, the 'Roma mobility problem' would be regarded as 'tackled' in accordance with EU policies and appropriately spent funds (Vermeersch 2011).

This paper concludes by reflecting on the next period, as Romania approaches the ending of a seven-year long transition and facing the beginning of a new phase for its citizens, Roma and non-Roma alike. It is timely, to ponder on how the changes in the rights of free movement will be implemented in the old member states of the EU to allow Romanians (and Bulgarians) the equal working and travelling rights as well as equal citizenship. More so, by following the past few months' prevailing political discourses in the UK, the 'puzzle-problem' regarding the Freedom of Movement Treaty and full working rights entitled to Romanians is if this change will actually remain a

fundamental freedom, or because of the future proposed reforms of the EU Treaty, will include unwelcoming measures to make free movement in Europe less free after 2014.

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