Why Roma and not Gypsy or Tsiganes

- The word Roma is an ancient Romany word meaning ‘human being” and has been the preferred designation of Roma civic organizations in Romania since 1919 and in Europe since 1971 adopted by the 1st Congress of International Romani Union.
- “Tsigan” – from the Greek athinganoi (1068), monastery Mountain of Athos (untouchables).
- The word “tsigan”, on the other hand, is associated in the collective memory of the Roma with the slavery that existed in Romania from 1385 to 1856, and also the forced deportations in WW2.
First gatherings of Romani Women

Congress of Roma, Sevilla, Spain, May 1994

✓ informal group of RW present at the congress
✓ manifest of RW

“Give a chance to RW to be fully responsible for their cultural roles and traditional values also when this constitute obstacles in women’s emancipation”

Hearing of the Council of Europe Permanent Committee for Equality between Men and Women, Strasbourg, September 1995

“Development of RW should be in harmony with the most positive traditional values and respecting their vision on life and the world”
OSI RPP International Conference of RW, Budapest, June 1998
✓ marked the beginning of communication at regional level
✓ we realized the different level of mobilization at nat. level
✓ analyzed the cultural values from women's rights perspective
✓ launched the idea of a international org. of RW but decision to try to work together first and afterwards establish it
✓ starting point for creation of Roma Women Initiative in 1999, afterwards Joint Romani Women Initiative

Romanian Roma Women Association International Conference on Public Policies and RW in CEE, Bucharest, December 1999
✓ first discussion on public policies and RW
✓ Declaration of conference with main messages: inclusion of RW issues in the national strategies for Roma and the importance of relation between RW and mainstream feminist movements
✓ it was underlined the racism and discrimination in connection with gender inequalities
Romani women and United Nations

- Delegation of 6 RW to World Conference against Racism, Xenophobia and Intolerance (Durban, 2001)
- Presence of RW to CEDAW reporting
- RW as part of the UN Expert Group on Intersectionality between Race and gender discrimination (Zagreb, 2000)

Texts and reports

- Declaration of World Conference against Racism, Xenophobia and Intolerance makes reference to the different ways in which women and girls suffer the racism (no special reference to RW)

Comm. on Elimination of Racial Discrimination
- General Recc. XXV/2000 on gender dimension of racial discrimination
- General Recc. XXVII/2000 on discrimination of women – reference to double discrimination of RW in access to health and education

Comm. on Discrimination against Women
- Art 2f: states should take measures to modify or annulate laws, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women
- Recommendations for states on RW issues: Germany, Spain, Croatia, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Czech rep., Hungary

http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/
Romani women and Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)

- Support the presence of RW to its meetings on Roma and Sinti and gender and human dimension annual meetings
- Mainstream gender in projects: Roma and Stability Pact, Roma Use your Ballot wisely, Gender dimension of Roma movement (women and men at same table)
- Organized 1st roundtable between Romani women and men on Romani affairs and the gender equality, Warsaw 2006 and on anti trafficking Belgrade 2005
- Supported project in communities on early marriages

Texts and reports
- OSCE Action Plan for Roma and Sinti includes recommendations specially for RW and promotes gender equality as principle in policies for Roma
- OSCE Action Plan to Combat Traffic against human beings includes RW as vulnerable groups
- OSCE Action Plan on Gender Equality, no provisions on minority or Romani women
Romani Women and Council of Europe

- Supported the creation of International Roma Women Network (IRWN) and is continuing its support.
- European Roma and Travelers Forum as policy of electing national delegates – 30% RW, IRWN part of ERTF.

Texts and reports:
- First reports on the situation of RW in Europe, 1999 and 2001 (author N. Bitu) and afterwards RW issues permanent on the agenda of the Specialist Group and Division for Roma/Gypsy questions.
- Report on RW and access to health care in cooperation with OSCE and EUMC (author Anna Pomykala).
- Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1203/1993 on Gypsies in Europe – reference to special attention to the education of RW and mothers with their children.
- ECRI General Policy Recommendation no 3 Combating Racism and Intolerance against Roma/ Gypsies – makes reference to the special attention to be given to RW as subjects to double discrimination.
- Support for organizing the series of International Conferences for Romani Women in Europe supported also by member states: Stockholm and Athens together with FRA.
Romani women and European Union

✓ Hearings, round tables within European Parliament (OSI RPP and JRWI)
✓ Internships of RW in the European Commission (OSI RPP)
✓ 2 Hungarian RW – European parliamentarians

Texts and reports
✓ European Parliament Resolution on Roma in EU – no reference to RW except the issue of sterilization
✓ Presence of gender equality in the platform for Roman inclusion
European Union

Fundamental Rights Agency

- Contribution to the meetings of different Romani European women’s networks
- Joint Declaration of Romani women activists, Bucharest 2006 (one of the most advanced texts)

“Roma women acknowledge the existence of double standards in the movement for the protection of Roma rights. Double standards should not exist. You cannot fight racism in the majority society while you are discriminating within your own community”.

- II nd EU Summit – Roundtable on Romani women
Romani women and Open Society Institute

Roma women initiative (under Network Women Program)

- 1999 – 2005
- European and national leadership training for RW
- International advocacy
- Support networking
- Summer schools on gender
- Forum of RW, Budapest 2003 – Decade of Roma Inclusion

Reports

- A Place at policy table - results of the Forum of RW
- Fact Sheets of RW and employment – regional + 11 countries in SEE
- Report on RW and UN – history and results of RW presence at UN
Decade of Roma Inclusion

✓ gender equality an horizontal approach, it should be reflected in all areas of the national plans with precise indicators;
✓ National action plans from Macedonia, Montenegro, Croatia, Hungary and Romania has some provisions on area of education and health
✓ No sensitivity on gender equality from officials in charge of the Decade or from Romani activists monitoring the Decade
✓ National initiatives to push this: Macedonia and Serbia
Joint Romani Women Initiative (under Roma Initiatives Office) 2006 – 2007
✓ Close cooperation with RPP
✓ International and national advocacy
✓ Gender trainings at national level
✓ Network of 12 National focal points
✓ Monitor the Decade of Roma Inclusion from gender perspective

Roma Participation Program (1998 – 2007)
✓ Capacity building for RW lead NGOs
✓ International and national advocacy
✓ Mainstreaming RW: internships in European Commission and in other trainings and programs
✓ RW interns in the office
International Romani Women Network

- Established in April 2003
- A network of Romani women from East and West Europe
- Active in the European Forum for Roma and Travelers
- Not so active in the last 2 years as a voice
- Internal problems
- Member of the European Women Lobby
Federation of Kalé, Manoush, Romani & Sinté Women

- Based in France with membership from France, Spain, UK and other countries
- Core of women voluntarily working for the federation
Challenges of Romani feminism today

- Finding a space to express feminism in an environment marked by racism against Roma
- Ethnic identity versus gender identity
- Construction of Romani people from a feminist perspective
- Hierarchy of the human rights issues