

**For the May 2016 edition of the newsletter, we are producing a special one-off issue to advertise the election for a Roma co-chair of the National Roma Network, organised by Migration Yorkshire.**



May 2016 special newsletter

### **Welcome from Roma Support Group**

We want to bring you information, reflections, arguments and discussion about the issues that face Roma communities in the UK. The Roma Support Group has developed over the last 18 years into a major service agency working for and with Roma communities, mainly in London. We run advice and advocacy sessions; education support programmes (including early years support) for children and families; a Roma Support and Engagement Programme (including tailored staff training); and an arts and culture programme. RSG has been able to develop work on Roma advocacy and mediation, community engagement, and also in policy and information provision. This e-bulletin is one manifestation of these developments.

For more information about Roma Support Group, go to our website <http://romasupportgroup.org.uk/> and look at the 'projects' pages.

Contact us via:

[andy@romasupportgroup.org.uk](mailto:andy@romasupportgroup.org.uk)

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### **What is the National Roma Network (NRN)?**

The National Roma Network is hosted by Migration Yorkshire. It has existed since 2012, and has generally met three times a year. At the beginning, the Network consisted mainly of local authority staff and civil servants. However,

over the last 12 months, the Network has been extended and now consists of Roma activists, members of Roma community groups, volunteers and staff from non-governmental organisations (NGOs), as well as workers from local councils, government departments and universities.

### **Purpose**

1. The purpose of the National Roma Network Forum (NRNF) is to improve migrant Roma integration across the UK for the benefit of all communities.

### **Core objective**

2. The NRNF's core objective include:
  - To enable and support a national strategic approach to migrant Roma integration in the UK
  - To ensure a more joined-up approach to migrant Roma integration across sectors including Central Government, Local Government, other statutory organisation, voluntary sector, Roma groups and individuals
  - To increase Roma participation and involvement in policy across the UK
  - To ensure a strong united voice in influencing policy and practice affecting migrant Roma at national and local level
  - To enable exchange of information and share good practice

### **Accountability and Key Relationships**

3. The Metropolitan Migration Foundation provides funding for Migration Yorkshire to develop and support the National Roma Network as determined in the funding agreement.
4. The National Roma Network Work Group (NRNWG) acts as an advisory group to the National Roma Network project.

### **Working Arrangements: Chairing Arrangements**

5. The Chair will be the Head of Migration Yorkshire and the Co-Chair will be a member of the migrant Roma community.

### **Membership**

6. The core membership of NRNF will include:
  - Voluntary and community sector
  - Roma community groups and individuals
  - Local Authorities
  - National Government departments
  - Other statutory organisation (health, education, police)
  - Universities and Researchers
  - Gypsy and Traveller groups and individuals
  - Funders

There is no limits to NRNF membership, however MY might need to restrict the number of people attending NRNF meetings due to venue capacity. This will be done in a way to ensure there is fair regional representation.

7. Further representation onto NRNF may be sought on an *ad hoc* basis. This will allow NRNF to respond flexibly to issues that arise.

### **Secretariat Support**

8. Secretariat and policy support will be provided by the Migration Yorkshire team.

### **Meeting Arrangements**

9. The NRN normally meets three times per year.

### **Travel Expenses**

10. Travel expenses are available for migrant Roma attendees described in the Travel Expenses Policy
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## **What will the co-chair of the National Roma Network do?**

The co-chair will be migrant Roma.

The role of the NRN Co-Chair is:

- To co-chair NRN Forum meetings and Working Group meetings alongside the Head of Migration Yorkshire;
- To represent the NRN nationally;
- To increase Roma participation and meaningful involvement in the NRN; and
- To help shape the direction of the NRN including setting agendas for the Forum and advising on other elements of the NRN as part of the Working Group.

The appointment is for the duration of the current NRN programme (until December 2018). The NRN Forum normally meets three times per year. In addition, a small working group also meets a minimum of three times per year for agenda planning and to drive forward work between NRN meetings. Meetings take place around the UK.

Please note there is no salary associated with this position, but Migration Yorkshire will cover reasonable travel costs to enable the Co-Chair to attend these meetings.

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## **Who is standing as the co-chair of the National Roma Network?**

Four people have been nominated by organisations affiliated to the National Roma Network. They are:

### **Liviu Dinu**

"Liviu studied Sociology at the Alexandru Ioan Cuza University, Faculty of Philosophy, Social and Political Sciences from Iasi. In 2013 he spent a year within the Roma Graduate Preparation Program within the Central European

University, Budapest. He recently graduated with an MSc in Ethnicity and Multiculturalism at the University of Bristol. His thesis explored the interaction of Roma migrants with education in the UK. Liviu joined SHUSU within the University of Salford in October 2015. His PhD Research Proposal aims to examine the social stigmatization and racialization of Roma migrants in relation to welfare conditionality arrangements and the impact of welfare conditionality on Roma migrants in UK. During his professional career in the last 16 years he has worked on various social intervention projects which have involved Roma populations. He is also a community advocate on the Supporting Roma Voice project funded jointly by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust and Metropolitan Migration Foundation.

Liviu is thoughtful speaker which a keen analysis of the issues faced by migrant Roma across the EU. He is very experienced in a range of fora and is well regarded within a number of networks across the EU."

### **Denisa Gannon**

"I work with Roma for very long time; I understand their issues, needs and the implications of our culture on day to day lives. I studied law and I am currently undergoing training at the Coventry Law Centre to become a solicitor, thanks to the Justice First Fellowship Scheme. I have started with family law (mainly domestic violence issues and care proceedings), then it will be housing and immigration. I also have experience of drafting recommendations for decision-makers in domestic and European institutions.

I have the skills of a leader; I care about my community and value my culture and roots of being a Roma woman. I am a brilliant role model to young Roma and a great ambassador for the Roma community – I deliver presentations to young Roma pupils with the aim to increase aspiration and training sessions to police, council and other professionals.

I also have other skills needed for Co–Chair of NRNF.

- Hardworking
- Approachable

- Attention to details
- Knowledge of law
- Research skills
- Ability to speak in diplomatic manner
- Treating everybody equally
- Listening to all opinions and arguments
- Ability to provide fair, independent judgment of situation"

### **Assen Savchev**

"I am Roma from Bulgaria moved to live and work in UK in 2010. I've got 20 years practical experience in Bulgaria in Roma Community Development and Inclusion, and last 10 years I've been Executive Director of one of the most successful NGO's (established and developed by Roma) in Europe, Roma-Lom foundation, which always was shown as an model of Roma community development.

I have got a very good educational background MA (management), including numerous specialised trainings on the issues of civil society and excluded groups especially Roma. I have got serious proven record of my skills for NGO's management, project design, planning, monitoring and evaluation, fundraising, facilitation, mentoring and training as well mediation between Roma communities. I have very good practical knowledge on the functioning of local and national civil organisations. My experience in the UK started since I arrived. I get involved in different levels with organisations like Roma Support Group, Equality, NFGLG and ACERT.

I am member of different working groups on GRT integration like:

GRT Education Stakeholder group, UK DfE;

GRT Liaison Group, UK DCLG;

APPG GRT,

Redbridge Equalities & Community Council,

At the moment I am community development worker of Luton Roma Trust."

## Mihai Tanase

"I belong to the Roma Gypsy community and I have been living in the UK for more than 10 years. I am passionate about helping others and raise awareness around issues affecting the community. I have taken part in Red Cross service users engagement activities and I am ready to do my part in supporting the community. I am very reliable, family orientated, enthusiastic, well-known and hardworking. I want to make a difference in the life of my society and impact on decisions made around us.

I believe in a positive future, I come from a family where my parents never had school and did not access health services. I have thankfully been educated in England and I believe that having a future aimed at equality for our community is the way forward. I would like to make sure that Roma people change for the better and that we continue to improve our lives and culture. I am determined to see this happen and feel that I have a great responsibility, I want my people to not feel as an outsider but as someone involved and active in society."

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## Who can vote?

Only members of migrant Roma communities in the UK can vote.

If you would like to take part in voting for the Roma Co-Chair of the NRN, you have to do so using the ballot paper. This is available by clicking [here](#). Please put a cross next to your preferred candidate and state your name, organisation and city/town underneath. Your details will be kept confidential, but we need it for your vote to be valid. Send your completed ballot paper as an email attachment to:

[Ewa.Jamroz@migrationyorkshire.org.uk](mailto:Ewa.Jamroz@migrationyorkshire.org.uk)

Each person can cast only one vote. If you vote for more than one candidate, or submit a blank or incomplete ballot paper, your vote will be

disregarded. **Send your vote in by 12 noon, Friday 13 May 2016.**

**If you have any questions, email [Ewa.Jamroz@migrationyorkshire.org.uk](mailto:Ewa.Jamroz@migrationyorkshire.org.uk) or ring Migration Yorkshire on 0113 395 2434**

Once the votes are counted, the candidate with the highest number of votes will be appointed as the Co-Chair of the NRN and the results of the voting will be announced to the members of the Network on Monday 23 May 2016.

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**Views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily suggest that they are in accordance with the trustees of the Roma Support Group**