

Call for papers for the workshop

The history of Romani women's activisms in Eastern Europe, 1945-1990s

at Prague, Hotel Belvedere (M. Horákové 19, Praha 7)

29-30 October 2026

This 1.5-day workshop convened by the Department of Romani Studies at the Faculty of Arts, Charles University, Prague, and the Romani Studies Program at Central European University, Vienna, and hosted by the Prague Center for Romani Histories at the Faculty of Arts, Charles University, Prague, addresses the variety of agendas and repertoires of Romani women activists/intellectuals engaged in a wide range of community and public activities in the region at local, national and transnational levels between the end of World War II and the 1990s.

The aftermath of the Holocaust brought about a new phase in Romani civil rights activism in both the Western and Eastern parts of a newly divided Europe. In the West activist/intellectuals were often confronted with the fact that while their governments acknowledged the crimes committed during National Socialism, the suffering of Roma remained unaddressed and legislation and institutional structures leading to the social exclusion of Roma remained for a long time unchanged. In Eastern Europe, the new People's Republics established in the late 1940s, officially committed to antiracism and class and gender equality, and placed the enhancement of the situation of the Roma on their national agendas. Their central policy documents often called specifically for the inclusion of Roma in the process of "building socialism" and "solving the G*psy question". Still, anti-Roma racism continued to influence both state politics and authorities' action as well as local sentiments.

The workshop "The history of Romani women's activisms in Eastern Europe, 1945-1990s" traces how Romani women in Eastern Europe, committed to the improvement of the living and working conditions of their communities, engaged with the new state-provided opportunities for participation and social mobility as both Roma and women and how they maneuvered hindrances in their local and national contexts. On a transnational scale, the project follows Eastern European Romani women's engagement with the international Romani civil rights movement in Western Europe on the rise from the 1970s. It aims to address Romani women's diverse engagements from a long-term, comparative, transnational perspective and from an intersectional approach, paying attention to how gender-, sexuality-, class-, and race/ethnicity-based difference shaped the positionality of Romani women actors and their agendas and repertoires.

The workshop aims to contribute to the global histories of social movements, including the histories of gender and women's activisms, by placing the so far under-researched endeavors of Romani women at the center of attention. By exploring their diverse public and community roles, it will contribute substantially to the current research on post-war Romani movements that has often overlooked especially the issues of gender and intersectionality.

We invite proposals for individual papers that explore the diverse social and political involvement of Romani women in improving the situation of their communities focusing on but not restricted to one of the following topics:

- Romani women's participation in and contribution to the emerging mixed-gender Romani national political movements and self-organisations and the transnational organization of Roma in Europe
- Synergies with and the involvement of Romani women in other national mass organisations, such as the women's councils, the Red Cross and trade union organisations, organisations aimed at the assistance of Holocaust survivors as well as the diverse organizations of the national communist and socialist workers' parties
- Romani women's participation in regional, cross-border initiatives, and transnational organizations
- Local level initiatives by Romani women, such as professional associations and neighbourhood or community-level initiatives among diverse groups of Roma aimed at improving their living and working conditions, access to services and infrastructures
- Romani women as actors and/or "objects" of state policies and state "care" on central, regional and local levels, including their participation in the state apparatus
- Romani girls and women's educational paths and professional careers: navigating school and adult education, and employment in state institutions and national enterprises, and/or working to improve the access of Roma (including Romani women) to education and employment
- The emergence of gender issues on the agendas of local, national or transnational Romani initiatives, organizations and movements
- Romani women's diverse (art) works reflecting on their lives and positions, their everyday realities as women and Roma, and/or the position of Roma in society between 1945 and the 1990s; their strategies of agency, resistance, mechanisms of solidarity and coping with anti-Roma racism and conservatism as well as their role in healing their Holocaust affected families

From the wide variety of sources available, we especially appreciate research working with ego documents. We also welcome contributions based on the analysis of photographs, artistic works and other visual materials.

Please send a **500-word abstract** and a **short academic CV** (max 500 words) **in one Word file** to romaniwomen.workshop.prague@gmail.com by **21 June 2026**. The proposal should include name, surname, current affiliation and contact details of the proponent.

Participants will be notified about the acceptance of their proposal by the end of July 2026. Paper drafts are expected to be sent to discussants by 9 October 2026.

Travel funding and accommodation will be available for the participants presenting at the workshop.

Scientific Committee: Margareta (Magda) Matache (Harvard University), Helena Sadílková (Charles University), Angéla Kóczé (Central European University), Eszter Varsa (Central European University).

Organizing Committee: Helena Sadílková (Charles University), Angéla Kóczé (Central European University), Eszter Varsa (Central European University)

Funding for the workshop is provided by the generous award of the Flax Foundation, Advancing Feminist and Inequality Research in Europe (<https://flax-foundation.net/>).