



2.1 Some Facts About Roma



1. Who are Roma people?

Who are the Roma?
Roma are the largest group of ethnic people in Europe. There are about 8-12 million Romas living all around the world. Roma are also called Gypsies but some of them don't like themselves called Gypsy. Roma means people in Romanes.

• Roma are a distinct ethnic group of people.

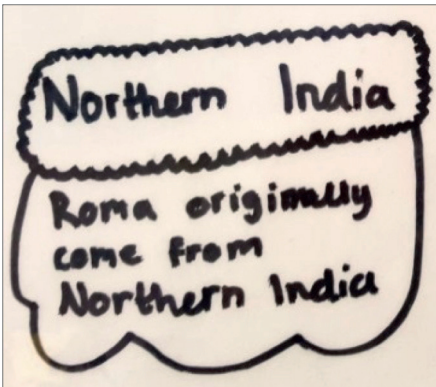
Roma are the largest ethnic minority in Europe

Roma used to be respected and honoured as master craftsmen, such as basket, brick and pot makers and metal workers. They travelled to sell their crafts, which meant they were not tied to a specific place.



Roma used to travel in groups of caravans ('tabor' in Roma language), pulled by horses.

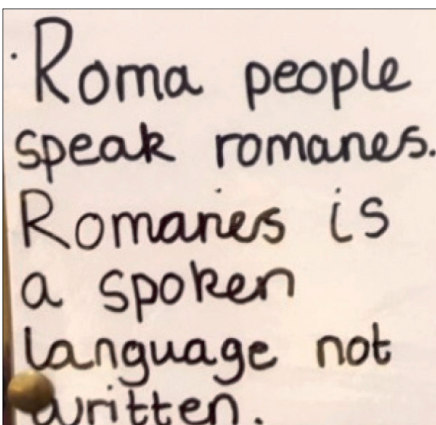
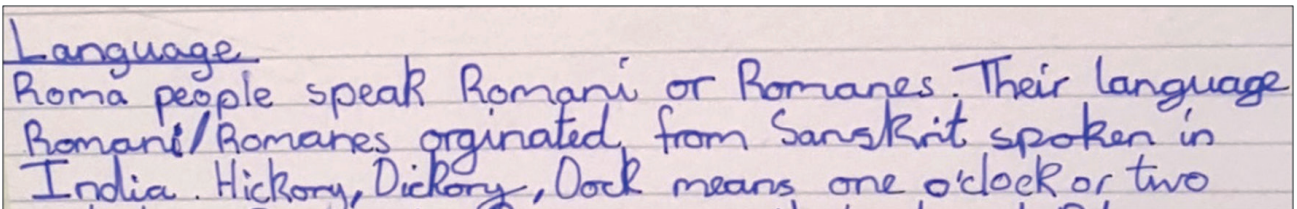
Following enforced settlement in the 1960s in Central/Eastern Europe, the majority of Roma no longer travel and most live in permanent housing.



2. Where do Roma people come from?

1000 - 1100 A.D. Roma left Northern India and migrated through Asia and into Europe. Some left the main group and went north to Armenia or south to Egypt.

Roma do not have a nation state but are citizens of the countries they settled in, and/or born in.



3. What language/s do Roma people speak?

Although Roma people speak Romanes, Roma from different countries speak the indigenous language of the country they live in. They also speak different regional Romanes dialects depending on where they live in their country of origin.

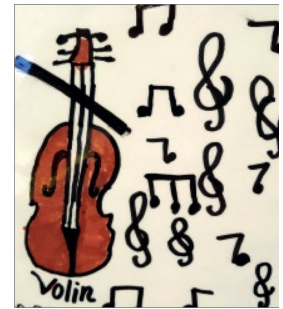
4. Roma identity

In Romanes Roma means "people".

The word "Gypsy" was erroneously adopted in mid-16th Century by Europeans as it was believed that Roma came from Egypt due to their features.

Roma are not a homogenous group of people (meaning they do not have one single cultural identity).

Roma communities have rich regional diverse cultures and traditions depending on where they live.



For Roma, music and dance are a very important aspect of their identity and it was, and still is for some Roma, a way to earn a livelihood.

5. Important dates

The Roma flag was adopted on the 8th April 1971

The Roma flag was adopted on 8th April 1971 at the first Romani World Congress in London. This is known as Roma Nation Day (8th April).



The flag colours represent Blue for the sky, Green for the land and the Red Wheel signifies movement and progress.

The month of June is known as Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month (GRTHM) in the UK.

Blue : Sky
Green : Land
Red : Wheel



On 2nd August 1944, 2,987 Roma were killed in Auschwitz (a German Nazi Concentration Camp in Poland). This is known as Roma Genocide Remembrance Day and there is a memorial stone in Hyde Park to commemorate it.

Detention camp, Olunin, Poland 1942
©Robert Dawson Collection, RSG



6. Roma discrimination

Roma have a shared history of discrimination, persecution and exclusion.

Roma were enslaved, most notably in Romania where slavery was only abolished in 1856.

Roma people were victims of Nazi occupation and their allies in WWII and over 500,000 Roma were killed.

German Sinti family, horse sellers © Robert Dawson Collection, RSG

7. Roma celebrities

Elvis Presley, singer and actor (1935-1977)

Charlie Chaplin, actor and film-maker (1889-1977)

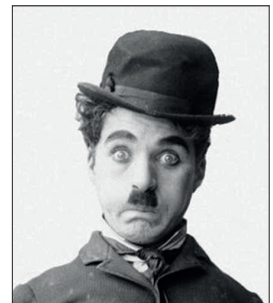
Django Reinhardt, musician (1910-1953)

Eric Cantona, footballer (1966-now)

Livia Jaroka, politician (1974-now)

Ricardo Quaresma, footballer (1983-now)

Bronislawa Wajs (known as Papusza), poet (1908-1987)



Charlie Chaplin



Papusza

Film: '7 Things You Should Know About Roma',

<http://www.errc.org/video/7-things-you-should-know-about-roma-people>