

Finland's Romani People

Finitiko romaseele



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The Roma today

Finland's Roma are a linguistic and cultural minority who have lived in the country for over 500 years. There are an estimated 10,000 Roma in Finland and about 3,000 Finnish Roma living in Sweden. The majority of Roma live in the cities of southern and western Finland, though there are Roma communities throughout the country. Like other Finns, most Roma belong to the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Some are also active members of the Pentecostal Movement and other nonconformist Christian denominations.

The Roma are Finnish citizens and enjoy full civil rights and are subject to the civic duties these entail. They have a strong cultural identity of their own but also emphatically regard themselves as Finns. Finnish Roma are actively involved in building Finnish society. Their participation in Finland's wars during 1939–1945 had a strong influence in shaping their national identity.

Finnish policy concerning minorities started to change at the end of the 1970s, with the enactment of the first anti-discrimination legislation. The assimilation policy of the early part of the century was abandoned and special measures were introduced to improve the economic, educational and social position of the Roma and Sami. The powerful structural changes that swept through Finnish society after the end of the Second World War undermined the traditional Roma means of livelihood. At the same time, general

welfare policy has improved and stabilised the living conditions of the Roma.

The Roma have preserved their own language and culture for hundreds of years, but in each period of their history they have faced different challenges. On average, they are in a weaker economic and social position compared to other Finns. Earlier, the Roma tended to be wary of education, as schools were one of the means used to assimilate them into the majority population. The constant lack of housing, too, made it difficult for decades for the Roma to attend schools. During the 1990s they began to take a more positive view of education – with having an education something to be

A Roma family enjoy traditional Finnish food.

Photo: Pekka Elomaa



proud of – and this has been influenced by the growing strength of Romani language and culture in Finnish society. State backing for the learning of Romani language and culture started in the 1980s.

Despite their equal legal status, the Roma have yet to achieve full equality in Finland. They continue to experience discrimination in the everyday lives. The general courts deal with cases of discrimination, but only a small fraction of actual cases involving discrimination in working and business life are ever brought before the courts.

The position of the Roma has nevertheless improved due to the combined efforts of the authorities and the Roma themselves. The majority population have learned to understand Romani customs and to respect Romani culture. The more positive climate has been influenced by the active work of the Romani organisations and the various forums and information sessions that have been arranged for the majority population. The Roma press and radio news service further enhance and develop the Romani language. The Roma are recognised among the majority population for their input into cultural life. In addition, the participation of the Roma in society has increased their interaction with the majority population.

It is considered important to develop cooperation between the different fields of administration to improve the situation of the Roma and to eradicate all forms of discrimination against them. In this it is essential to support the participation of the Roma population in society. Education lies at the heart of policy concerning minorities and is an effective means to prevent social exclusion among the Roma.



Family communality is integral to Romani culture.

Photo: Pekka Elomaa

The Roma and legislation

The acting principle of Finnish policy towards the Roma is to take account of the hopes and expectations of the Roma population in matters and measures concerning them.

A general change in attitudes was reflected in the 1995 reform of constitutional rights, which for the first time secured the position of the Roma in legislation. Under the 2000 reform of the Constitution: *"No one shall, without an acceptable reason, be treated differently from other persons on the ground of sex, age, origin, language, religion, conviction, opinion, health, disability or other reason that concerns his or her person."* Another important reform was the right of the Sami and Roma to maintain and develop their own language and culture. This was also bolstered by the Decree on Children's Daycare, which enabled support for Romani language and culture, and by the Basic Education Act, which confirmed the place of the Roma language as a mother tongue. The law mentions the right of the Roma to maintain and develop their own language and it obligates the public authorities to back this. This is a substantial support for improving the situation of the Roma.

The European Union (EU) also requires its member states to take measures to prevent ethnic and racial discrimination. Two Council of Europe treaties which came into force at the beginning of 1998 and which have been ratified by national legislation are milestones in strengthening the position of the Roma in Finland. In ratifying the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages Finland identified Romani as a non-territorial minority language, and in ratifying the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, Finland identified the Roma and the Sami as traditional national minorities. In 2004 the Equality Act came into force, which strengthened Finland's anti-discrimination legislation. The aim of the act is to promote and safeguard equality and boost the legal protection of people who are targets of discrimination. The law is based on the EU's directives on racism and workplace discrimination. It forbids both direct and indirect discrimination and applies to everyone in public and private activities covered by the act. The Equality Act saw the creation of a new legal rights agency, the office of Ombudsman for Minorities of the Discrimination Board. An important reform at the European level is Protocol 12 of the European Convention on Human Rights Human which broadens Article 13 of the Convention to cover all forms of discrimination.

The Office of the Ombudsman for Minorities was founded under the ordinances of the Ministry of Labour in 2002. The duties of the Ombudsman are to promote good ethnic relations and to monitor the situation and rights of foreigners and ethnic minorities.

The Ombudsman for Minorities is also tasked to oversee the fulfilment of the equal treatment of people regardless of their ethnic origin in cooperation with other authorities.

These legislative reforms, international treaties as well as the government action programme help develop the position of the Roma and promote good ethnic relations. This requires that attention is given to carrying out legislation. In reality, the laws that afford protection to the Roma are insufficient, as they encounter discrimination in their everyday lives. Romani women can be considered to suffer from double discrimination due to their sex and their ethnic background and related style of dress.

History

The Roma came to Finland via Sweden, the Baltic countries and Russia during the 16th century. Finland was at that time part of the Kingdom of Sweden. The attitude of the Swedish-Finnish authorities to the Roma was distinctly negative, and they were denied access to all church sacraments and services and to hospital care. The 'hanging law' of 1637 made it legal to kill any Roma found in the kingdom. During the 19th century, when Finland was a Grand Duchy of Russia, some effort was made to integrate Roma into society. Contact between the Roma and the majority population took place at grassroots level through commercial activity.

In the early 20th century, public opinion sought to assimilate the Roma into the majority population. The means used included taking Romani children into custody and placing them in children's homes. Assimilation continued to be the main aim of official policy until the middle of the century.

When Finland became independent in 1917 all population groups became Finnish citizens. At the same time, the cultural and linguistic rights of the Swedish speaking minority were guaranteed. The service of the Roma in the Finnish armed forces during the war years of 1939–1945 had a strong influence in shaping their Finnish

Up until the 1960s the Roma still lived a roving life. A horse and caravan were most valued possessions.

Photo: Advisory Board on Romani Affairs



identity. The Finnish Roma see themselves primarily as a national minority. They ground this in their having lived in Finland since the 16th century and having become deeply rooted in the country.

The 1970s to 1990s were a period of much activity in social, education and cultural policy that saw the start of a social awakening of the Roma, the development of Romani language and an improvement in their housing conditions.

Language and culture

The position of the Romani language in Finland has become noticeably weaker in the last 50 years. There are a number of reasons for this decline in the Romani language. One of them is generational change. The younger Roma do not have the same possibilities to learn Romani from their parents compared to when the Roma community was more integrated. Urbanisation has led to its dispersal as the extended family have given way to the smaller nuclear family, decreasing the interaction between generations. Romani is no longer used within the community to the extent that it was earlier when the Roma lived itinerantly.

Romani has been taught in primary schools since 1989. Recent decades have seen the development of teacher training courses in Romani, the production of Romani-medium teaching material and the efforts to encourage its use among the Roma through things such as summer schools. The holding of church services in Romani has also raised interest in the language among the Roma community. Similarly, articles in Romani in the Roma's newspapers and weekly radio news broadcasts in Romani have contributed to the modernisation of the language and its vocabulary.

Though Romani language and culture is protected by legislation, in practice the language is in danger of disappearing. According to a report carried out by the Romani Education Unit of the National Board of Education in 2002 only eight percent of Roma children attending primary school receive Romani lessons. The inclusion of Romani language teaching in schools should be guaranteed for all Roma children who want it, and under legislation local authorities are obliged to arrange it.



Roma culture centres on relationships and customs. It is based primarily in the environment of the community and the extended and near family. Culture is a system rooted in feelings concerning people's relationships and values. The Romani approach to life and the world around us is tinged by a powerful emotional sensibility. A belief in respect for one's elders prevails within the immediate and extended family. This is a main pillar in conserving the Romani culture. Respect for older people is shown in such things as proper dressing. The traditional style of dress of Romani women is an especially clear expression of identification with and commitment to the clan and its culture. Adulthood also signifies conformity with the customs of purity and other norms.

There is a clear division of roles among the Roma defining the duties of men and women. Men are to provide for their families, while women are to take care of children and the home. The Roma try to raise their children to be independent, have a sense of responsibility for their family and community and to come to understand and accept their own culture. Children are also required to have a sense of 'spiritual refinement' in their own manners and behaviour with others. In the words of an older Roma: 'A true Roma learns how to live in three ways – as a gentleman, a peasant and a Roma.'

A biding strength of the Roma is their ability to adapt to different conditions. Their educational ideals differ to some extent from usual Finnish ones. The aim of the Romani upbringing is to raise outgoing children with good social skills. Emotional warmth, close family ties and keeping in touch with other Roma are all highly valued qualities.

Living conditions

In the past the Roma lived an itinerant lifestyle in extended families. In addition to the father, mother and children, the extended family included grandparents and other relatives. Post-war structural change in Finnish society altered the living conditions of the Roma.

As recently as the 1960s the living conditions of the Roma were very poor. At the beginning of the 1970s the government had a separate allocation in the state budget for the



The Roma's common flag and anthem 'Gelem, Gelem!' was adopted in 1971, in London.

acquisition of homes for Romani people. Local authorities were supposed to build housing for Roma families and so make it easier for their children to attend school. Between 1975 and 1981 the living conditions of the Roma were improved through special government housing loans that provided subsidised loans to both local authorities and individual members of the Roma community.

Some features of Romani customs are reflected in their living conditions, many related problems arise out of ignorance of these customs. The Ministry of the Environment has produced a guide to increase information about the special features of Romani living conditions. The guide is designed to improve awareness among local authority housing officials and others about some of the main points about Romani culture. Local authorities are able to use special measures within their housing policies to support Romani people in getting accommodation. Regional advisory boards on Romani affairs and Romani con-

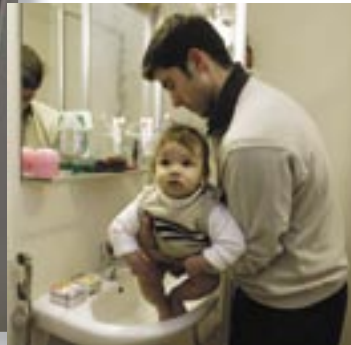
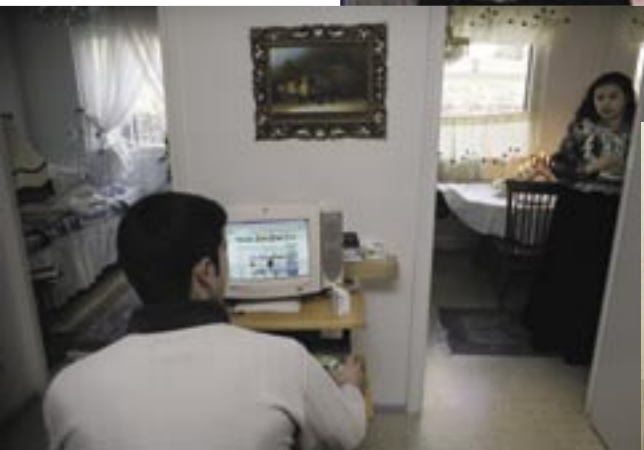
tact people in many municipalities are on hand to give information to local housing officials about various aspects of Romani living conditions.

On average the standard of accommodation is the same as that of the majority population living in the same type of housing. The prejudices of the majority population and the weaker economic position of the Roma make it hard for them to find accommodation on the private housing market. It is especially difficult for young adults

to get accommodation in the cities. The housing market has become much tighter throughout the country, and the transfer of local authority rented housing to private housing companies compounds the housing problems facing Romani people.



Photo: Pekka Elomaa



Social and health care services

Romani culture is marked by the strength of support and security provided by the family. A person is foremost part of the near family, wider family and community. This defines his or her attitude to sickness, health and death. Romani people will consider themselves healthy so long as whatever illnesses or handicaps they suffer do not pose too much of an obstacle. It is usual for the family to provide care for sick or disabled members in preference to institutional care.

The Roma need information about what social and health services are available and how they can be used. Social and health services need to take account of Romani culture and language. Both outpatient and inpatient care and treatment continue to be provided on the terms of the majority population. It is important that health care personnel are aware of the effects of Romani culture on healthcare, and a greater number of Romani people should be encouraged to work in the social and health sector.

It is important that health care personnel have a positive attitude, sense of cooperation and receptiveness concerning Romani people. For their part, the Roma hope that their cultural background is taken into account when they receive health care. Romani manners concerning hygiene and modesty, plus the importance of the family should be considered in the provision of healthcare. It is important that there is proper information about the distinctive characteristics of Romani culture. This can help increase Romani people's confidence in healthcare staff and create relations of trust.



Foto: Timo Korpela



Child daycare and school attendance

In 2000–2002 the Romani Education Unit of the National Board of Education carried out a wide ranging nationwide project on Romani primary education. According to the investigation, just two percent of Romani children go to preschool. The role of preschool is important for Romani children as it softens the culture shock of school and equips them with better linguistic tools to take part in school work. Local authorities and Romani organisations need to provide effective information for Romani parents about entitlement to preschool education for six year-olds. The development of early education for Romani children is being initiated through national and local programmes.

The Finnish spoken in Romani homes is often a mix of Finnish and Romani language, which is why the Finnish vocabulary of a Romani child is often limited compared to other children of the same age. The national early education and care programme has paid special attention to the Finnish and/or Swedish and Romani language development of Romani children. Inadequate mastery of both the Romani language and Finnish/Swedish language make them vulnerable to social exclusion. The onset of children's social exclusion has to be spotted and dealt with in good time.

Romani children's sense of identity can be bolstered at daycare, enabling them to express themselves in ways characteristic of their culture. Some Romani language and cultural songs and stories have been produced for use in early education and care. Educating

and training daycare staff can help them have a better grasp the specifics of Romani culture. The inclusion of Romani members of staff in child daycare has been shown to increase an atmosphere of tolerance and make Romani children feel more at home.

The school attendance of Romani children has improved but problems remain. Children may find that the cultural differences between home and school conflict, so it is important for children to do well at school that there is a positive interaction between the classroom and the home.

It is necessary to strengthen the trust of Romani parents in schools and teachers in order to further school attendance by Romani children. Communi-

*A teaching assistant instructs
third grade pupils.*

*Photo: Advisory Board on
Romani Affairs' archive.*



cations and training of attitudes need to be increased both in the home and at school. The participation of Romani parents in school activities creates a sense of cohesion and diminishes the chances of pupils feeling that there is a conflict between home and school. More efforts should be made by schools to support Romani children's cultural background.

Teacher training should raise minority awareness. The teaching material must include information of the Romani minority, their culture and history. The Roma pupils can be taught Romani as a mother tongue for two hours a week or, resources permitting, can receive full tuition in their own mother tongue. It is nowadays theoretically possible for school students to take their high school matriculation exams in Romani as a second mother tongue. In practice though, this has yet to be realised and constant efforts are needed to ensure the development of Romani language teaching.

Increasing numbers of young Romani people apply for further education. More of them nowadays attend vocational school, upper secondary school and university. It is especially important to encourage those who do not apply for further education after secondary school. Study guidance provided by secondary schools and counselling on further education available from employment offices play an important role in clarifying available study options for young Roma.



Early education for Romani children and work by the club provide support for child development.

Photo: Kuvataidetalli, Pori

Labour market training

Romani people work diversely in all professional fields – for instance as cooks, flight attendants, nurses, athletes, journalists, and so on. Traditional professions, as artists, horse breeders and artisans are still popular among the Roma. Employment authorities work in cooperation with the Romani community to provide vocational training for adults. This cooperation has increased the commitment to the common aim of reforming the traditional vocational structure to meet present day demands. The most popular fields of training nowadays are social welfare and healthcare, teacher training for teachers of Romani, training for youth instructors, information technology and music.

The projects have shown that the Roma population has become alert to the challenges brought about by changes in society. Vocational adult education has meant a general rise in the level of education among the Roma, and many are keen to take further vocational training. The projects have indicated that for some Roma training needs to start from the basics of

school and working life. Nevertheless, many skilled Roma experience severe difficulties when it comes to recruitment, as apprenticeships or traineeships are hard to come by due to employer prejudice. The Romani people continue to face greater exclusion from the jobs market than the majority population. It is a constant challenge to break down prejudices and allow Romani people equal opportunities to employment.



*Photo:
Timo
Korpela*



Photo: archive



Photo: Maria Friman

Participation and organisational activities

The development of the Romani people's own organisational activities raises the profile of the Roma and makes the wider society more likely to listen to their opinions. The efforts of the Advisory Board on Romani Affairs have led to the Roma becoming involved in decision making at national and local level in society. Local elections in recent years have seen several Romani representatives elected to their municipal councils and boards.

There are few national Romani organisations. The oldest is the Romano Mission, founded in 1906. This is a Christian organisation that provides social and child welfare services and runs a children's home and two foster homes. The Romano Mission works with the Evangelical Lutheran parishes to organise activities and church services in Romani. It publishes its own magazine five times a year, mainly in Finnish but with some material in Romani.

The Life and Light was founded in 1964. It publishes a quarterly magazine, mainly in Finnish but with articles in Romani. It also arranges various religious events, camps for children and young people, and seminars.

The Finnish Romani Society was founded in 1967. It concentrates on pursuing social questions, such as discrimination and human rights issues through political channels and the press.

Gypsies Future, a support group for young Roma, was set up in 1996 to provide support to Romani children brought up or still living in institutions and foster families.

In 1996 the Romani and Church Working Group was created to develop joint activities between the Roma and local parishes. It also aims to offer the Roma religious services, in Romani language. A part of the New Testament has been translated into Romani, and a recent activity has been to translate the Gospel According to St Luke and distribute it to Romani homes.



Photo: Kuvataidetalli, Pori

International cooperation and human rights

The United Nations, European Union, Council of Europe and other international organisations are paying increasing attention to the situation and protection of national minorities. Finnish Roma and national authorities are actively involved in this work. Finland aims to develop the cooperation between the Council of Europe, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the United Nations in issues concerning Roma minorities.

The Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs contributes financially to the work of the Council of Europe's Specialist Group on Roma/Gypsies (MG-S-ROM). The function of the Specialist Group is to monitor Romani education, housing, employment and social issues and prepare recommendations for the member states. It also investigates cases of discrimination and human rights violations.

Within the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Finland works for the development of a common EU viewpoint, which includes attention to Europe's Roma minority. The OSCE has a Roma Action Plan designed to improve the situation of member states and promote cooperation on Roma issues.

Within the EU, Finland has raised human rights issues related to Roma and has, for instance, influenced the drafting of guiding principles for improving the situation of the Roma population throughout Europe. These principles are to clarify Article 13 on discrimination in the Treaty of Amsterdam. At the request of the Commission the EU is preparing a study of the Roma in the enlarging Europe.

One of the main planks of the Finnish human rights policy is to support the development of equality for the Roma. The Advisory Board on Romani Affairs influences Finnish positions on human rights. The Advisory Board comments on country reports drawn up by Finland and in this way raises important matters for general European debate.

The Finnish and Swedish authorities and Romani organisations have been working together since 1969. The Nordic Council of



Photo: Kuvataidetalli, Pori

Ministers has also been involved in this cooperation. This is an important area of work, as some 3,000 Finnish-speaking Roma live in Sweden and there is a constant flow of migration between the two countries. The Roma's own Nordic Romani Council (Romernas Riksförbund) is based in Sweden.

President Tarja Halonen presented in 2001 an initiative to the General Assembly of the Council of Europe for the creation of a pan-European forum for Roma. Finland and France proposed that the Roma work actively on the forum to improve their situation. The forum is to be named the European Roma and Travellers Forum (ERTF) and it will work in conjunction with the Council of Europe with an independent NGO status. The Forum is assisted by a secretariat and its management bodies are the Plenary Assembly and the Executive Committee, which are elected for a period of four years. The populations of Roma and Travellers in the member states are represented at the Plenary Assembly through their national umbrella organisation, but during the first session of the Forum the Roma of a member state can be represented by some other national body on Roma affairs. The Forum takes part in European and international cooperation with the objective of promoting the fundamental human rights and freedoms of the Roma and Travellers. The aim is their integration into European societies, their involvement in societal life, and reduction of racism and discrimination. At the Forum the Roma's non-governmental organisations are for the first time officially involved in the decision-making concerning Roma issues.



Photo: Kuvataidetalli, Pori

The Advisory Board on Romani Affairs

The government set up the Advisory Board in conjunction with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health in 1956. It serves as a cooperative link between the Romani people in Finland and the public authorities. The Advisory Board is appointed every three years by the government. Half of the 18 members represent the Roma and the other half represent central government.

The duties of the Advisory Board include:

- monitoring and reporting to the authorities on the development of the Romani people's living conditions and opportunities for participation in society;
- taking initiatives to improve the economic, educational and social and cultural conditions of the Romani people and to promote the employment of Roma;
- working to end all forms of discrimination;
- furthering Romani language and culture;
- participating in international activities to improve the conditions for the Roma.

The Advisory Board has influenced developments in Finnish legislation and administration in areas that affect the Roma. It initiated the inclusion of the prohibition of racial discrimination into the Penal Code, and has paid special attention to the housing problem facing Romani people. One of the Advisory Board's significant achievements was the inclusion in 2000 of the mention of minorities in the Finnish Constitution.



A memorial in honour of Romani soldiers killed in Finnish wars 1939–1945 in Hietaniemi Cemetery in Helsinki.

Photo: Timo Korpela

Provincial Advisory Boards

There are four provincial advisory boards on Romani affairs, namely in conjunction with the State Provincial Offices of Southern Finland, Western Finland, Eastern Finland and of Oulu. The advisory boards act as inter-administrative bodies for the Romani population and the authorities. They work with both provincial and local authorities. The government made the provincial advisory boards a permanent fixture in 2004, following a six year trial period. They are entitled to propose candidates to sit on the national Advisory Board.

The provincial advisory boards have increased the participation of the Roma in decision making and the realisation of the principle of subsidiarity at local level. They have improved the possibilities to influence the situation at a grass-roots level to benefit the Roma. Their tasks include increasing the understanding of Romani culture, promoting equality and preventing discrimination. The provincial advisory boards can also run regional and local development projects for improving the situation of the Roma. One of the challenges for the development of the administration of Romani affairs is to increase the resources of the advisory boards, especially the secretarial posts of their main offices.



Photo: Timo Korpela

Points of emphasis

- increasing the participation of the Roma minority;
- inclusion of Romani language and culture in child daycare and schools;
- improving the educational level of the Roma;
- circulating information on social and healthcare issues and special features of Romani culture;
- on housing, providing information to State Provincial Offices and local authorities to help develop cooperation with Romani people;
- developing international cooperation in questions concerning the Roma.

The Romani Education Unit

The Romani Education Unit has operated at the National Board of Education since 1994. The work of the unit is financed with special funds set aside from the adult education appropriations of the national budget. The Romani Education Unit is functionally independent, and a management group with Romani representation directs its activities.

The work of the unit is based on the positions adopted by parliament, the government and the Ministry of Education on the development of Romani education and realising Romany culture. The education of linguistic and cultural minorities is also incorporated as a specific task area in the work programme of the National Board of Education.

The main work of the unit is the development and implementation of the nationwide education for the Romani population, and it aims to further Romani language and culture. The education unit also arranges conferences and information events for the Romani and majority population. The unit circulates information about its tasks and activities through a variety of publications, and provides expert and advisory services.



Photo: Kuvataidetalli, Pori

Activities of the Romani Education Unit:

- Producing teaching materials in Romani
- Starting professional training of Romani cultural coordinators
- Organising exhibitions and events on Romani culture
- Organising seminars on parenting and education, and on Romani language and culture
- Training cultural mediators
- Publication of a regular information bulletin (Latšo Diives)
- Organising information sessions and lectures for different target groups
- Participating in the DROM-EDU project (EU Comenius-2)
- Organising a national project on basic education

The Romani Language Board

The Research Institute for the Languages of Finland currently has two Romani language researchers, one of them a Roma. Their task is to conduct research concerning the structure and vocabulary of Romani as well as monitor and give observations on international minority language policy. The Research Institute arranges annual seminars on Romani in collaboration with the Advisory Board on Romani Affairs, the Romani Education Unit and Romani organisations. It aims to promote the development, standards and analysis of the Romani language. (www.kotus.fi)



*One of the strengths
of the Finnish Roma
is its cooperation with
the state authorities.
Meeting President
Tarja Halonen in
2002.*

*Photo: Advisory Board
on Romani Affairs
archive*

1540—

Development of the Roma's position in Finland

1540–1750 ≈ Exile and execution of Roma. The Evangelical Lutheran Church denies Roma the Sacraments and other services of the church.

1750–1850 ≈ Interlude of greater tolerance

1850–1900 ≈ Discrimination increases, including a vagrancy law concerning Roma

1900–1969 ≈ First report on the policy on Roma issues in 1901.
Assimilation policy introduced.

- In 1952 it is estimated that 1,000 Romani children are in need of places in children's homes. Children are forcibly placed in such homes.
- The drive for cultural assimilation means that Romani cannot be spoken in public.
- Roma organisations become active.

1970–1990 ≈

- The first law passed prohibiting discrimination.
- Social awakening of Roma.
- Period of social, educational and cultural policy measures.
Improvement in housing conditions, beginning of adult education.
Development of the Romani language and its teaching introduced in comprehensive schools.

1991 ≈ Increased international cooperation in issues concerning human rights of minorities.

- Majority population reassess the status of Roma.
- Roma's sense of identity strengthens.

1995 ≈ Constitutional amendment:

- Roma's rights to their own language and culture guaranteed.
- Educational legislation amended to allow the teaching of Romani as a mother tongue in schools and its use as a language of instruction.
- Support for Romani language and culture incorporated in the educational objectives of the Decree on Children's Daycare.
- Start of weekly national network radio news broadcasts.

- 1997** 🌀 Legislation extends the brief of the Research Institute for the Languages of Finland to cover research and standards of Romani.
Romani Language Board appointed.
- 1998** 🌀 Finland signs two important Council of Europe treaties on minority rights:
- the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages, concerning which Finland identifies Romani as a non-territorial minority language of Finland;
 - the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, concerning which Finland identifies the Romani people as a traditional minority.
- 1999** 🌀 Legislation on the Finnish Broadcasting Company amended to produce services in Sami, Romani and sign language.
Education legislation completely reformed:
- two hours a week of mother tongue instruction to be provided if there are at least four children in the group;
 - for minority language groups such as Sami, Romani and sign language it is possible to receive full instruction, resources permitting, in the mother tongue.
- 2000** 🌀 New Constitution takes effect:
- section 6 guarantees equality before the law
 - section 17.3 includes Roma's rights to develop and maintain their language and culture.
- 2001** 🌀 Government working group on Romani affairs proposes the permanent status of provincial advisory boards for Romani affairs and the creation of offices and secretaries for each of them.
- 2002** 🌀 Post of Ombudsman for Minority Affairs created under the ordinances of the Ministry of Labour, the tasks of which include monitoring the rights of the Roma population.
- 2004** 🌀 The government sets up four Provincial Advisory Boards for Romani affairs under the ordinances of the Provincial State Offices.
Equality Act comes into force.

Finitiko Romaseele

And i kaja brošurasi describuime o dživdipe thaj o statuso e Rhomengo and i Finlandia. E brošura si likhardi sar bi džanela pe thaj sikavela pe savorenge, majbut e medienge thaj e institucienge save si responsabilne pala e edukacia, so kerel pe sar bi o dživdipe e Rhomengo ovela so majfeder. Akava kotor si nakhado andar e englikani pe rhomani čhib.

Ande uprune Evropake, Nordicke phuvja, si 25 000 – 30 000 Rhoma, pal feri and i Finlandia si 10 000 Rhoma. Džikaj 3 000 Rhoma finlandicke dživin an Švedsko. Dži kav 1960 berše Finlandia sasa las cilo te asimiluil e Rhomen an dominantno, finlandicko populacia. Sar vakardol pe, e Rhomen si sar manušen (personen) pravo te dživin sar savorhe kaj dživin and i phuv thaj si len pravo te arakhen thaj te bararen piri kultura. E

dominantoo populacia trubul te mekel te e rhomani puranimata egzistuil thaj te respektuil e rhomani kultura thaj te valuil e rhomani historia, dekatar o vakti kana sesa and India, dži kav akanutnipe an Finlandia, prekal a Centralno Evropa thaj Švedsko.

E Rhoma and i Finlandia si len sa e civilne prava thaj sa o musaipe. Diskriminacia na tromal te kerdol kontra lende. Godoleske kaj e Rhoma dživin an čorhipe thaj bilačheder si lenge ekonomsko thaj socialno pozicia, von našti te siklion normalno sar e Finlandura. Godoleske e Rhoman si but pharipe pe bucako marketi.

Dekatar o dujto maripe lija te paruvel pe e socijalno struktura thaj e Rhomen te ovel majfeder than no so majanglal sasa len. E kherutni situacia bute dženengi majfeder si no kaj sasa majanglal thaj si but save dživin sar e gadže. E Rhoma dživin pe but thana an Finlandia. Von pestar vakaren sar kaj si vi Rhoma/Kaló-dialektura vi Finlandura. Von den pestar korkoronendar sar bi amalipe and Finlandia ovela so majfeder.

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Photo: Valfrid Åkerlund



Photo: Timo Korpela



A varekozom thana e čhavre sikljon piri rhomani čhib an škole. Von sikljon dui sahato and kurko pala a škola. E čhavre sikljon vare entuziasmosa. Len sikaven e Rhoma, save sasa len treningo thaj geja kerdol pe e majangluni pustak pala i rhomani čhib. E autoriterua an kaja phuv kerde buti tranda berš sarbie majpurane Rhoma sikljona. Akava treningo si kerdo kethane e Rhomenca thaj lenge organizaciencia an Finlandia.

E majbari rhomani governementicke officia si kerdini an 1956 berš thaj akava centralno-offisia an savo si vi Rhoma vi Gadže, kerel kethane buti e Ministeriosa pala socialikano thaj familiako pučipe. Akava officia paruvdilo an 1989 berš thaj akana si les sajekutno šariri savo kethane kerel buti maskar e Rhoma thaj autoritetura. Opaš džene save si representuime an kava than si andar e rhomane organizacie thaj opaš si reprezentuime katar e centralne autoritetura.



Photo: Timo Korpela



Photo: Timo Korpela

An 1992 berš si kerdini jek Institutia pala e edukacia thaj kultura thaj la finansiril e Ministerium pala e edukacia. Voj kerel buti sar bi so maj but džene sikljona, vazdel e rhomani chib thaj kultura thaj del informacie. Voj kerel bute vastenge harne kursura thaj seminaru vi e Rhomenge vi e Gadženge. Voj geja kerel buti sar bi resena e ekspertura save ka mažutin vi e autoritetunen, vi e sikavnen, studentunen.

Si panš nacionalne organizacie e Rhomen and Finlandia: Finlandiake organizacia pala e mišia maskar e Rroma, Finlandiako rhomano amalipe, Finlandiake organizacie pala e slobodno mišia maskar e Rhoma, Finlandiake organizacia pala e kontakto personen/ kethano butiako manusen thaj Finlandiake organizacia Rhomano anglipe/Gypsies Future. Akala organizacie si len aktivno than an Nordikani thaj Internacionalikane Romani thaj Gadženge organizacia.