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Roma in Bulgaria

Katrina Butler

Introduction

This essay will look at the racialisation and segregation of the Romani gypsies that reside in Bulgaria. The essay will begin with examining the term 'gypsy', by exploring where it actually came from, and what the word means. Next it will go on to look at some of the words in the Bulgarian language that are associated with gypsies. The essay will go on to look at where the Roma gypsies originated from, and their journey that lead them to Bulgaria. Then it will examine the attitudes towards the Roma during communism compared to modern day, and how those attitudes have changed since the fall of communism, by looking at times when the Roma has been discriminated against in the media, as well as researching into the low employment levels of the Roma. The essay will then take a close look at the anti discrimination law that Bulgaria brought into play in 2003, and assess whether this has had any positive affect on the Roma. Next, the essay will move on to look at the educational experiences of the Roma in Bulgaria; it will research into the poor quality of education that they receive, and how they are shunned from mainstream education by being segregated into 'special' schools. As part of this analysis it will look at the lack of anything to do with their culture and background being taught, in addition to looking at how many Roma's proceed past primary school, how many go on to finish their education, and the reasons behind this. The essay will continue by looking at the crime surrounding the Roma gypsies, with reference to both the rate of crime committed by the Roma's themselves and crimes committed against them. The essay will focus specifically on racially motivated crimes, as well as examining negative and racist police behaviour and attitudes towards the Roma. Finally the essay will look briefly at the implications that this case study has in relation to certain countries, and will come to a conclusion that although there has been a slight improvement in attitudes towards the Roma gypsies, which is mainly due to the anti-discrimination law, there is still a lot of work to be done to integrate them successfully into modern day Bulgarian society.

Origins of the word 'Gypsy'

Before we examine the racialisation process surrounding the Roma gypsies in Bulgaria it is important to look at the term 'gypsy' itself. It originates from the term 'gipcyan' which is short for Egyptian, as it was believed by many that this is where the gypsies came from. The Minority Groups International defines the term 'gypsy' as a "Term used to denote ethnic groups formed by the dispersal of commercial, nomadic and other groups from within India from the tenth century". (Liegeois and Gheorghe 1995:6). There are several Bulgarian words for a gypsy. One of the more common ones is 'tsigani', with the female being a 'tsiganka', and a male a 'tsiganin'. Another, more offensive, word for a gypsy is 'mangao'. This means 'someone with a dark complexion'; it is very offensive and is often used in a derogatory fashion. The word comes from a tool used to blow fire on objects to make them burn, causing them to become covered in soot and become dark in colour.

It is believed that the first Roma gypsy groups came to Europe in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and the origin of them in Bulgaria is linked with their migration from India via Persia into Europe. Although in 1948 a Bulgarian Gypsy newspaper called the 'Romano-Esi' (Gypsy Voice) claimed that "our minority has lived in Bulgaria since the seventh century" (Ackerly 1948:158), research suggests a later settlement than this. The Bulgarian census in 2011 recorded that there were 325,343 people who identified 'Roma' as their ethnic group. (National Statistical Institute 2012:Unpaged). Therefore the Roma make up 4.7% of the total population. (Ivanov and Ilieva 2005:1). However, due to many Roma living rurally, it can be assumed that the number is significantly larger than that. Marushiakova and Popov estimated that "The number of people of Gypsy origin in Bulgaria can be defined approximately to 700-800,000." (1995:Unpaged). If Marushiakova and Popov's estimates were correct it would make Bulgaria the country with one of the relatively highest amounts of gypsy population. In addition to this, Barany states: "In north-eastern Bulgaria alone, there are nineteen distinctive Romani tribes with particular customs [and] traditional trades" (1998:313). From this we can see how the Roma have spread themselves across Bulgaria, bringing with them their own customs and culture.

Attitudes towards the Roma – Communism & Post Communism

Between 1944 and 1989, Bulgaria was known as 'The People's Republic of Bulgaria', and was governed by a Communist regime. It is interesting to compare the attitudes and treatment the Roma gypsies faced during this time in comparison to the modern day. During the rule of the communist parties, it was claimed by them that it was the duty of the state to take care of those groups of people who, as a result of 'capitalist exploitation' in the past, were now found to be living in 'social and cultural backwardness'. (Csepeli and Simon 2004:130). It is clear that the Roma gypsies fall into this category of people who had been exploited by 'capitalism' and it was claimed by the state that:

All citizens of the People's Republic of Bulgaria are equal before the law. No privileges or limitations of rights based on nationality, origin...race...social and material status are allowed. (Bokov 1981:196).

As well as this there is evidence of a Founding Fathers activist named Ali Tchaushev, who during the 1950's and 1960's established a number of Romani cultural associations in Shumen and the area surrounding there. (Marushiakova and Popov 2000). This gives the impression that things were only going to get better for the Roma in Bulgaria, since this claim that everyone was equal before the law meant that they were no longer going to be discriminated against for the colour of their skin, or from where they originated.

However, there is evidence that suggests that this was not the case. Although there were many promises made to help those who had treated badly prior to the communist regime, these promises were most definitely broken. We can see this clearly by looking at the work done by Csepeli and Simon. They state that:

Bulgaria adopted a strategy of strict repression in the 1950s, involving the sedentarisation of nomadic groups, closing down the Gypsy theatre and papers, banning the use of Romani and other expressions of ethnic identity. (2004:130).

Closing down the Roma's theatres and newspapers was not the only suppressing that was done by the communists. In addition to this during the repression in the 1950s, the Gypsy Cultural and Educational Society was dissolved as well as 194

local Romani organisations. The few Roma who tried to fight against this tyranny by continuing the organisations activities were imprisoned in 1958. (Barany 1998). From this we can see that instead of 'taking care' of those groups of people who had been exploited in the past, the state instead tried to suppress and eradicate the Roma's unique culture. On November 5th, 1958, the Fatherland Front stated, "Front activity must be doubled and trebled in order to do away...with the harmful residue of the past in the consciousness of...Gypsies". (Crowe 2007:22). Two months after this, the government issued Decree No. 258, which forbade Gypsy nomadism. In a letter following up to the decree in 1959, party leaders explained that it was intended to eliminate "travelling and begging in our country". (Zang 1991:61). Furthermore, according to an "Internal communist report...there were segregated Roma sections in 160 of Bulgaria's 237 cities and in 3,000 of its 5,846 villages". (Crowe 2007:22). From this we can see that the Roma were either forced, or felt pushed into segregating themselves from the rest of society in the majority of cities and villages in Bulgaria. A further example of the negative attitudes towards the Roma during communist times comes from a case study example. In 1971 Gratton Puxon, of The Minority Rights Group, "was among Roma refused service at a roadside restaurant". He goes on to state that "Our coach was forced to leave the centre of Sofia by a militia man shouting: Tsigani get out!" (Puxon 1980:12). This example shows how hostile people's attitudes could be towards the Roma during those times.

Some may have the impression that since the fall of communism in 1989 the situation of the Roma gypsies in Bulgaria would have improved vastly. However, it has been argued that this is not the case. Brearley believes that, "Discriminated against under communism, their plight has dramatically worsened since 1989" (2001:558). She argues that the reason for this can be attributed to the fact that under the communist rule, the intolerance for the Roma had been kept at bay by "strong centralised authority and by the institutions of a police state" (2001:591). Brearley goes on to state that, "Roma are the new scapegoat for post-communist society" (2001:558). From her statements we can clearly see that Brearley believes that the Roma's situation has not improved since the communist rule, instead she argues that it has worsened considerably.

Evidence, which lends support to Brearley's argument, comes from the government's response to the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) in 2003. The Bulgarian government stated that they are "aware of the existence of certain stereotypes and prejudices" (2003:34). However, they believe that they only 'sometimes' lead to acts of discrimination, and even then they are 'very isolated acts'. Interestingly, later in the same report the government admit that the "ECRI has correctly observed that members of the Roma community encounter "serious difficulties" "in many spheres of life". (2003:35). It could be argued that the government are contradicting themselves as acts of discrimination that are 'very isolated' would not create serious difficulties for the Roma in any spheres of their lives. This shows us that the government may not be ready to admit the reality of the Roma's situation in Bulgaria.

Crowe found that "In 1984, the government began to forbid the performance of Gypsy music throughout the country". (2007:26). This is comparable with a situation occurring in Bulgaria in the modern day. In March 2012, there was a video of children from a school in Bulgaria performing a choreographed routine to music by a Roma musician, Azis, which went viral on the Internet. This caused public outcry with parents asking for 'chalga' (Roma pop) to be banned in education. One newspapers reported it as 'scandalous Roma pop', (Novinite 2012:unpaged), with another stating that if there is not a stop put to this "Bulgaria gets a chalga-minded no-values generation". (Samokovska 2012:unpaged). These examples provide support for the

argument that the situation for gypsies has not improved since the communist regime, as people still associate the Roma's with having 'no values', label their music as 'scandalous', and look towards the prohibition of their music as an answer.

Another example which gives further support to Brearley's argument of the Roma's being the 'scapegoat for the post-communist society', come from a Bulgarian online news article 'Expired Medicines On Sale On Sofia Flea Market'. The article gives details on prescription drugs being sold when they are well past their sell by date. A quote from the article states that when the question is raised by journalists to "comment on the scandalous practice, one of the sellers says that the Roma are not buying but are supplying the drugs". (Novinite 2012:unpaged). This is yet another Bulgarian news article associating the word 'scandalous' with the Roma. The blame is placed at their feet by the media for the supplying of these out of date drugs, but in reality it would be quite difficult for the Roma to get their hands on such large amounts of prescription drugs.

Employment

An additional way of looking at how the Roma is treated in modern day society is by looking closely at their employment levels and the discriminations they face in the workplace.

Getting exact employment levels for Roma gypsies can be problematic as they often live in rural areas, and the majority of their work falls into the informal sector. However in 2002, Higgins and Ivanov conducted a survey to collect data on the employment issues surrounding the Roma. They found a 70% unemployment rate of the Roma's in Bulgaria. (2006:9). As well as this, in a piece of follow up research carried out in 2004 it was found that 55% of the Roma's stating that they were unemployed had not been employed since 1996 or earlier. (Higgins and Ivanov 2006:10). Participants in this survey were also asked 'Which of the following problems are seriously affecting you and your household'. They were asked to assess the magnitude of the problem on a scale of "1-3, 1 indicates 'a major problem,' 2 indicates 'this is a problem but not serious' and 3 indicates 'not a problem at all'" (Higgins and Ivanov 2006:8). When it came to the problem of 'Discrimination in access to employment' the response of the Roma's living in Bulgaria answered 1.4. This shows us that they find discrimination a serious problem when it comes to them trying to find a job. Furthermore the European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey found that two fifths of Roma's who had been looking for work in Bulgaria had been discriminated against in the past five years. (2009:161).

Another example of discrimination in the workplace comes from a case in 2006 where the Sofia City Court found an employer liable for race discrimination against a Romani job applicant. In 2004, Anguel Assenov placed a telephone enquiry about an advert for a job, he was told there were no requirements needed other than to be a male no older than 30. When Mr. Assenov enquired about his status as a Romani man, the person answering the call told him not to apply as no Roma would be hired. The court found the employer liable, and Mr. Assenov was awarded 600 Bulgarian Leva for non-pecuniary damages. (European Roma Rights Centre, ERRC, 2006:unpaged). All of the evidence presented so far shows us that even in modern day Bulgaria there is still a lot of negative, racist attitudes towards the Roma.

Anti-Discrimination Law

Bulgaria officially adopted the Anti-Discrimination Law on the 16th September 2003. This law banned discrimination of several types, including: race, gender, religion,

disability, age and sexual orientation. The law also established an anti-discrimination Commission with specialised subcommittees for racial and gender discrimination. It will consist of nine members, five of these will be elected by parliament and the final four are appointed by the President, the committee will have the power to investigate complaints and issue rulings, as well as to enforce substantial sanctions on perpetrators. The law also includes allowances so that more than one victim can join a complaint in cases where the discrimination harms more than one person. (ERRC 2003:unpaged). When speaking about the law, ERRC Executive Director Dimitrina Petrova stated that she believed the law had specific importance for the Roma, going on to say that, "It opens the door for the provision of real and significant remedies to Romani victims ...and moves Roma rights issues to a new level in Bulgaria." (Petrova in ERRC 2003:unpaged). However, Crowe believes that the Anti Discrimination Law has not in fact done much to help the Roma's situation at all, stating,

"In a systematic criminal justice system error affecting Roma... authorities consistently fail to adequately investigate allegations of both official and civilian racist abuse". (2007:17). Further support is given to Crowe's theory that the law is failing to support victims of discrimination by the European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey (EUMIDIS). It was found by this survey that when asked whether they knew of any organisation in Bulgaria that could offer support or advice to people who have been discriminated against, for whatever reason, 87% could not name any. (2009:158). It was also found that only 23% of the Roma participants were aware of the existence of the Anti Discrimination Law, and that 92% would not report discrimination and make use of it. (EUMIDIS 2009: 159 and 163). One of the reasons for this low level of reporting could be due to the fact that 83% of Roma's stated that they believed 'nothing would change' if they reported their discriminatory abuse. (2007:163). Another reason could be that they simply did not know where or how to report such incidents with 64% finding this to be the case. (2009:165). All of the above evidence shows us that on paper the Anti Discrimination Law of 2003 seemed that it was going to solve a lot of the Roma's problems when it came to facing discrimination, however, in reality it appears that possibly due to the rural living of the majority of the Roma it just has not reached them yet.

Educational Experiences

We will now look at the educational experiences of the Roma in Bulgaria. In 2007, the Monitoring Reports reported that only 71% of Roma are enrolled into primary education, compared with 94% of ethnic Bulgarians, as well as showing how only 6% of them make it to secondary education. In fact, Alexander found that the school dropout rate in Bulgaria before the 11th grade is 85% for Roma children, compared to 3.87% for children overall. (Alexander in Miskovic 2009:207). The most shocking number that Monitoring Reports gave details of was that 0.24% of Roma made it to higher education. (2007: 33 and 40). These figures show us how much the Roma do struggle within the education system, as very few of them even complete their primary education.

There have been many reasons attributed as to why Roma children do not continue as long, or do as well as other children in education. One of the key reasons why many Roma do not make it to secondary education, and often do not even complete their primary education, could be due to the fact that many of the Roma families rely on their children to labour for them, allowing them to have enough food to eat and survive. As Tomova states, "The principals were not obliged to provide social security coverage for children under the age of 16". (2005:14). This means that the children could find employment much easier as employers would want to pay as little money as possible for their workers, and so parents would rather more money coming into

the family than their children sat in education. Another reason for early dropout amongst the Roma females is due to the Roma tradition of marrying and starting a family very early in life. It is strongly believed by them that early marriages are often thought to be the strongest. It is also understood that the virginity of the girl is mandatory for a good marriage within these groups and the first menstruation of the girl is usually thought of as a sign that she is now mature enough and therefore must marry. (Tomova 2005:14). Furthermore, 85% of the Roma gypsies in Bulgaria do not speak Bulgarian fluently. (EUMIDIS 2009:175). This means that the majority of the Roma children do not come from Bulgarian speaking homes; this fact means that they entered into education absolutely not prepared to study. Not only did they have poor knowledge of Bulgarian, but also they had never been exposed to expectations close to those required in schools. As Tomova states, "They lacked many skills needed for successful learning of reading, writing and calculating". (2005:15).

In addition, the Romani parents may not feel that they want their child attending school because they are not taught enough about traditional Romani heritage. Tomova argues that "Multiculturalism and civic education are not enough developed". (2005:17). She goes on to say that "Despite some improvements in teaching materials, stereotyped and prejudiced descriptions of Roma still exist in some history and literature textbooks". (2005:17). This means that the Romani children would have to sit in the classrooms whilst they and their peers are being taught discriminatory and stereotypical images of people from their own culture.

As well as this, another reason why the Roma drop out of school is that when they do stay in education, they face discrimination. On April 29th 2004 Mrs. Angelova, a Romani woman from the town Shumen, testified that her six year old son David had been both physically and verbally abused by two workers in her sons kindergarten. One worker made racist statements such as "You are a nasty tribe" and "You are dirty and your mother is dirty, too". (ERRC 2004:unpaged). She also reportedly "slapped David on the back on several occasions and violently pulled his ears". (ERRC 2004:unpaged). When Mrs. Angelova complained about the treatment her son was getting she was told "she should send David to another kindergarten if she didn't like the one he attended". (ERRC 2004:unpaged). This kind of discrimination and racist treatment of Roma children could be accountable for the fact that just 16% of Roma children attended kindergarten in 2001. (Monitoring Reports 2007:33).

Another reason for why the Roma children fail to stay in education, or achieve very highly when attended school can be attributed to a different form of discrimination: segregation. As Miskovic argues, "There are two pressing issues in the education of Roma children: their routine relegation into special education classes and an extremely high school failure rate". (2009:204). School segregation of Roma children takes different forms, including putting Roma children into schools meant for the mentally disabled; separating Roma children into classes with programmes for the mentally disabled within the regular school; separating them in Roma-only classes within a regular mainstream schools; and maintaining Roma ghetto schools found in the ghetto or formed as a result of withdrawal of non-Roma children from Roma – majority schools. As O'Nions found, "The legal segregation of schooling for Romani children was abolished in 1992. Nevertheless... 'Gypsy-schools' continued to exist against the wishes of the vast majority of Bulgarian Roma." (2010:470). In November 2002 it was found that fifteen Romani students were prevented from applying to three separate schools in Sofia. The ERRC reported, "Administrators at the three schools reportedly obstructed the filing of enrolment applications by the parents of the fifteen Romani children". (2002:unpaged). The parents were also often prevented from entering the school grounds on several occasions, and if they were allowed into the school they were forced to leave by school personnel before they could submit the

applications for enrolment. Ultimately the parents managed to submit applications verbally to the directors of the schools, but “received immediate negative verbal responses to their applications”. (ERRC 2002:unpaged). They were either told that the school had reached its maximum amount of children, or that the Romani children were not allowed to apply to a school outside of the borough where they were registered. However, article 9 of the Bulgarian Law on Education provides for the free choice of school, no matter where the child resides. A further investigation found that while the Romani parents were stopped from enrolling their children, non-Romani children had been accepted without any problems. (ERRC 2002). This is a prime example of how ghetto schools are maintained, the Roma children have no choice but to attend Roma only schools as they are stopped from enrolling in mixed schools.

In 2003 the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) suggested in their executive summary that the “ECRI recommends combating the segregation of Roma children in schools”, (2003:6). The government responded by stating,

The fact that in some neighbourhoods in certain towns particular schools were attended predominantly by pupils of Roma origin was an unintended consequence of the administrative division of the school system. (ECRI 2003:31).

As well as this, further research by the European Roma Rights Centre and the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee in 2004 looking at 46 special schools found that 80=90% of students there were Roma. It was found that the official justification ranged “from lack of competence in the majority language, inadequate preparation for primary school or non-attendance in pre-school classes.” (O’Nions 2010:469). The above evidence shows us that the government seems to be making excuses for the segregation of the Roma when it comes to education, by claiming it was an ‘unintended consequence’ that the Roma children have been discriminated and separated, and by justifying the use of special schools mainly for Roma children because they had a ‘lack of competence in the majority language’. In fact, the Romani children struggling with Bulgarian could be eradicated if the integration of Roma children is encouraged within the education system. As the ERRC found, “Recent tests...demonstrated that, when placed in integrated education, Romani children achieve higher educational results.” (2007:10). They discovered that in four years Romani children within the integrated schools had accrued great advantages in school achievement when compared to their peers in the Roma only schools. For example in Bulgarian language, for the children in the Roma-only schools the average grade was 2.30, while in integrated schools for their Romani peers it was 4.05, on a grade scale in which 2 is the lowest and 6 is the highest. (ERRC 2007:10). These findings show us that Romani children achieve much higher inside integrated education, with the integrated students achieving almost double what the segregated students achieved.

Crime and Police Attitudes

We will now move on to look at the Romani experience when it comes to crime in Bulgaria. In 1991 it was found in a public opinion survey undertaken by the National Institute of Youth Studies that gypsies were “described by 89% of the respondents as thieves, by 76% as bullies, by 75% as black marketers and by 70% of them as liars”. (Crowe 2007:27). These figures show that the public’s opinion of the Roma gypsies was very low, and that over three quarters of the general public associated the Roma’s with being thieves. Mihail Ivanov, advisor on ethnic policies to former President Zhelyn Zhelev, believed that “25-28% of the crimes committed in Bulgaria

can be traced to Roma". (Crowe 2007:27). Further statistics around the time claimed that 80% of the inmates in Bulgaria's prisons were Roma gypsies. Looking at the modern day situation, it seems that the Romani are often still blamed for many crimes. The Sofia Echo, a Bulgarian newspaper, reported in 2010 about a large number of power grid cables being stolen, and quoted that: "The thefts are usually blamed on Roma". (2010:unpaged). It has also been argued that the majority of their homes are not legal. Minority Reports found that "Most of the houses in the segregated Roma neighbourhoods are "illegal", either outside the town boundaries or without appropriate authorisation papers." (2007:91). The report went on to describe the extent of illegal construction associated with Roma villages, which according to a survey from 2000 suggested that the amount of illegal construction "is approximately 70 per cent of all the real estate in Roma neighbourhoods nationwide. In some cities this share is higher, reaching 90–100 per cent". (Minority Reports 2007:91). A case study which gives further support to this research happened in 2005: a British couple built a holiday home in the village of Debelt, Bulgaria. When they returned to the house the following summer all that was left of the house were the foundations. It was reported locally that the rest of the building materials had been taken by the gypsies of a nearby settlement to be used to build their own houses.

Some may argue that this could be a case of a self-fulfilling prophecy. If the majority of the population believes the Romani people to be thieves or liars, and treat them as such then they may feel they have no other choice but to become these things. Furthermore it could be viewed that the reason why they have to resort to stealing materials from other peoples properties to build their own homes is due to the fact that they cannot find lawful employment because of the discrimination they face when looking for a job.

The Romani themselves are often victims of crimes, the majority of which are arguably racially motivated. The European Union and Minorities Discrimination Survey found that in 2009, out of all of the countries in the EU, Roma's in Bulgaria were the most likely to be the victim of an assault or serious threat involving violence. The survey went on to discover that out of all threats or assaults reported by participants, 50% of them felt that they had been racially motivated. (2009:167, 168). An example of a racially motivated attack happened in August 2007. In Samokov, a Romani teenager died during a fight. It was stated that the two groups of teenagers got into a verbal fight that then escalated into a brawl. The authorities in Samokov were quoted stating the 'incident in which the teenager was killed was not based on any ethnic prejudice'. (ERRC 2007:unpaged). However Mediapool, a Bulgarian news agency, quoted Hristo Monov stating the Bulgarian teenagers attacked the Romani youth because "they thought that Gypsies must not be let into the central part of the town". (ERRC 2007:unpaged). This is one of many pieces of evidence indicating that the police have a discriminatory attitude towards the Roma. Ivanov and Ilieva found that since 1992, both international and domestic NGO's have documented a regular pattern of police abuse of the Roma. These included "numerous cases of racist harassment and verbal abuse, [and] beating and shooting often resulting in serious injury or death,"(2005:18). They went on to discover that in between 1992 and 1998, at least fourteen Roma died after last being seen in the custody of the police or as a result of unlawful use of firearms by police officers, while many more suffered serious injury. It was also found that in 2001 alone, the police killed over ten people as a result of the use of excessive force, or firearms. Many of the fatalities were Roma. (Ivanov and Ilieva 2005). Infact, in 2003, the Bulgarian government admitted, "instances of excessive use of firearms have, regrettably been reported"(ECRI 2003:35). It comes with little surprise that the Roma have very little trust when it comes to the police. The EUMIDIS survey reported that out of all participants involved, none had reported harassment to the police. When questioned, the reason

given was 'they had no confidence in the police'. (2009:169-170). Furthermore, when questioned it was found that overall 57% of participants did not trust the police. (2009:171). This shows us that there is a large degree of distrust from the Roma when it comes to the police, even in modern society. This means that the statistics that are available on the number of crimes committed may be under representing the actual number of crimes happening due to unreporting because of this distrust. As well as this the evidence above suggests that the authorities, to a certain degree, are acting in a discriminatory way when it comes to the Roma.

Conclusion

In relation to the rest of the world, the research done on the Roma gypsies in Bulgaria could be indicative of the situations in nearby countries such as Greece, Serbia, Hungary and Romania. Although out of all of these countries Bulgaria does have the highest percentage of Roma residents, so arguably it could be thought that the findings in Bulgaria may be more extreme than in these other countries.

Overall we can see that there is still a large amount of hostility and negative attitudes residing in Bulgaria when it comes to the Roma gypsies. Although things may have improved slightly for the Romani people, in relation to the Anti Discrimination Law being adopted. For the first time the Roma are finding that they can be protected against discrimination and racism. However, the fact that the majority of the Roma population in Bulgaria reside in rural areas means that for the most part they are unaware of this new development that affects them. This means that they are unable to use it to their full advantage, and so presumably large amounts of discrimination are going unchallenged. When looking at the education system, the evidence found that integrated schools provide for a much higher level of achievement shows that they are the best option for improving the Romani children's quality of education. With more support being found for integration projects it seems that the future of Romani children's education is looking brighter. This in turn will affect their employability, hopefully with better qualifications the barrier between the Roma and employment will too be demolished. In relation to crime and police attitudes there is obviously a lot of work to be done to build up the level of trust towards the police, as well as stricter controls on firearms being needed inside the police force. In conclusion there is still a lot of work to be done before the Roma are accepted and integrated members of Bulgaria society.

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