

# **ROMA CIVIC ASSOCIATION**

**(Roma Polgári Tömörülés)**



# **RPT**

*“The future is in our legacy”*

Roma Civic Association

Budapest, 2015

Photography

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## Foreword from the President

*Dear Friend!*

I would like to thank you that you show interest in our work. I have been an active member of the Roma public life since 1989. As the leader of Roma Self-Government of Budapest, I have been representing 150-200,000 Roma people in the capital since March, 2007. I'm representing a new line and change.

In my opinion, in the following years the RCA has to emphasize the importance of public politics and cultural interest protection giving up the recent years of approach. As I see the regime change has not taken into consideration the cultural interests and interest protection of the Roma. Renewal is required, in addition to recognize the merits of the past.

The RCA counts on each member of the Roma society. In our work we count on every Roma and non-Roma people, who is ready to take steps to the interest of their happiness and feel responsibility for the community they live in. That is why we emphasize that social responsibility is not one-sided, not just the majority's social issue, but an equal partnership where there is no hierarchy.

We strive to achieve change by our programs where the previous institutional attempts were failed. The RCA initiates clear, transparent, clean programs. The road which leads to the significant changes we would like to achieve has to be taken by carefully planned and thought through small steps. The openness, transparency and accountability of our work are very important for us.

I believe that the development of our country is served best by the path, which helps the integration of Roma in the 21st century. This is the bridge, the common value, the common purpose that inseparably binds us. The change should begin in the minds and hearts, because all this can be the gold cover of real change. We say that if more and more people realize that “the future is in our legacy”, we have already taken a big step forward on the road, which serves the welfare of Roma and non-Roma. That's what we believe in and drives us every day.

In the spirit of these thoughts, I welcome in admiration every fellow citizen to our events and their dedicated work to support our common future.

# Plight of the Roma in Europe

## Migration problems

The Romas have been migrating across Europe for centuries and now form the biggest ethnic minority in the European Union. There is no precise data on the total population because registration by ethnicity is forbidden in many countries, for example in Hungary as well. However, it is estimated that there are about 10 million Roma across Europe.

Most Roma migrants originate from central and eastern Europe. Westward migration of Roma - especially to Spain, France and Italy - has increased in recent years, since the EU expanded its borders in 2004 and 2007 to include states from the former Soviet bloc. Their biggest community is still in Romania and Bulgaria.

Under EU law, citizens are free to move anywhere in the union and stay for up to three months. After that, they must have found work or be paying into a social security system. Many do not and are frequently marginalised in their host EU countries.

## What challenges do they face?

Across Europe, the Roma face greater social exclusion than any other community, especially when it comes to getting jobs and access to education, health care and other public services. The United Nations and Brussels voiced concerns over a parallel made recently, between emigration and crime. Backlash against immigration spreads in Europe. There have been fears of xenophobic sentiments.

With anti-immigrant sentiment rising in Europe, some countries are placing new restrictions on



French police evacuate Roma families from an illegal camp in Mons en Baroeul, near Lille, northern France, August 26, 2010. (Photo: REUTERS / )



French President Nicolas Sarkozy butted heads with EU leaders, calling comparisons between his Roma deportations and WWII expulsions 'outrageous.(Photo: Philippe Wojazer, Reuters, Agence France-Presse; with files from The Daily Telegraph)



ethnic groups like the Roma. France has been urged about 8,000 Roma migrants to go back to their native countries from illegal camps.

In an EU without borders, the Gypsy problem grows into a problem without borders too. And its solution should be a common demonstration of solidarity.

## Plight of the Roma in Hungary

The Hungarian Roma issue is not an immigration problem. First Roma groups of families appeared and settled down in Hungary in the 14th and 15th centuries. Most of them are Hungarian citizens, they speak Hungarian as mother language, only a small percent of the community speaks gipsy language.

With Hungary in the depths of economic despair, its Roma minority has become an easy target for many people's resentments. The economic crisis in Hungary rising ethnic tensions threaten to plunge the country into a social crisis as well.

Roma people continue to face high rate of unemployment and discrimination in access to employment. Many Roma workers are unskilled laborers, particularly working in constructions, who likely be disproportionately hit by the economic turmoil.

Prejudice against them is high and many of them live in deep, long-term poverty and on social security, so it's easy to turn the majority against them.



Heading up the racist rhetoric is the far-right Jobbik party. The group, along with its paramilitary organization called the Hungarian Guard, has launched a campaign against what it refers to as “Roma crime.”

The Hungarian government has made some efforts to address the issues of the social marginalization suffered by the Roma, not enough has been done and whatever programs are in place are not sufficiently funded.



## Roma Civic Association

*Roma Polgári Tömörülés (RPT)*

### Introduction

The Roma Civic Association (RCA) is a nonprofit, non-governmental organization representing the interests of the Roma and other underprivileged people in Budapest and nation wide. It was a huge turning point in the life of the organization, when the president of the Roma Civic Association – Istvan Makai, was reelected for the president of the Roma Self-Government of Budapest. Istvan Makai’s personality indicated a new direction and turning point not only in the life of the Roma Civic Association, but the whole Hungarian minority politics.

The RCA is dedicated to change the current Roma politics to responsible, professional representation. We focus on burning issues and making serious progress in relation to social integration. Our goal is to gain the acceptance and the confidence of the wider local community and to create a more co-operative environment. We would like to express our motivation by participating actively and contributing positively to our community, through our experiences and involvement in local and national politics.

At the RCA, Roma and non-Roma work hard to symbolize the spirit of hope, to improve communities and to make Hungary a better place to live. The Hungarian Roma issue is not simply the question of poverty; such solutions should not be simply reduced to the level of social aids.

The members of the Hungarian Roma society primarily need equal opportunities, not aids. The best recipe for integration is to encourage education, vocational training and to create a wide range of job opportunities. In the last 20 years the members of the Roma society couldn’t take their part from these wide ranges of opportunities. This is how the Roma became the members of a group where they have to face with stereotypes and exclusion.



The problem is huge. We cannot allow the gap to further deepen between the different groups of the society. We, the members and the supporters of the Roma Civic Association and all those who share our ideas about universal and civic values, we are desperate to reach our goals step by step. We believe, in the unity of people of good will and decent. We believe that we the Roma and non Roma are equal citizens of Hungary, we can create a peaceful, emerging country, which is proud of it's values and communities

We believe that we already have to start it now, because the future is in our legacy.

Without the knowledge of the Roma culture and society it is impossible to create successful programs. The RCA initiate clear, transparent and clean programs that are eligible, traceable by a monitoring system. We emphasize that social responsibility is not only the majority's responsibility but an equal partnership where there is no place for hierarchy. The accumulated problems and tensions need many small and carefully planned steps.





## István Makai

He has been a Roma politician and active leader of his community since 1989. He graduated from The Századvég Academy of Politics. He has also been President of the Roma Civic Association since 2000. He was elected as president of the Roma Self-Government of Budapest in 2007, representing the Roma population of Budapest which is an estimated 150-200,000 people.



Istvan Makai, a Roma-Hungarian politician, for first time in history of Budapest and Hungary, announced he is running for mayor of Budapest. The candidates needed 28,150 nominations to qualify. István Makai and the RCA gathered more than 15,000 nominations. Although Mr. Makai was not able to overcome the heightened threshold of becoming a nominee, he accomplished historic things. He delivered his messages to hundreds of people. His mission is clearer than ever before and the path will be easier with the experience he has gained.

Istvan Tarlos, the mayor of Budapest, nominated Istvan Makai in 2011 to be the the Commissioner of Roma Affairs of Budapest.

### *“Common Future, Common Sense”*



## Our Vision



### *Common past – common future*

We are ready to admit our mistakes and we feel our responsibility in the current situation. We have to learn from the past, but the time has come to turn over a new leaf. The way to success is absolute commitment.

### *New direction*

The Roma question is not an ethnic question. It is a very complex, strategic, economic issue on national level. The future of Hungary is finally in our hands.

### *We, the people*

We intend to involve as many Roma people as possible in our programs as one of our aims is to promote their participation in the development of initiatives and programs that are related to their welfare. Social responsibility is the duty of the entire community. We strongly encourage and count on the entire community and each citizen who feels responsibility towards others and the society.



### *New communication is needed*

The RCA realized the great need to inform, sensitize and mobilize the local community towards the adaptation of a positive attitude concerning the Roma population.



### *Bipartisan position*

Our rule is to stay independent, and keep our eye on the benefit of the entire society. The Roma community has been a victim of political games and power demonstration for too long. Transparent programs and clear monitoring systems are essential. The need for real change should come from the hearts and minds of the people.



### *Civic values*

The integration of the Roma is through providing opportunities to improve their quality of life. The integration of the Roma should start by providing opportunities so the quality of life can improve. Roma needs more opportunity and trust – not more aids. We are dedicated to help people assist themselves as well as each other.



## Behind the Scenes

The RPT could not been able to achieve serious results without a committed and talented staff. The team had an average age of 25, who had less than one year to write history.

### The Staff



Eszter Eva Nagy - campaign manager

Eszter was inspired to run the campaign by her previous experiences in the United States, where she worked as a volunteer for the election campaign of President Barack Obama.



Péter Wendl - chief of staff

Péter has earned his first experiences in politics from an internship in the US Capitol, 2008. He is an advocate supporter of catalyzing positive social change in Hungary.



Zoltán Hamza - communications chief, spokesman

Zoltán is a manager, who guides the professional career of popular Hungarian artists in the entertainment industry.



Zsuzsanna Fátyol  
Roma programs and outreach

Éva Dancs  
office manager





## Consultants

Our professional campaign strategy and communication were built and delivered by Imagine Creative Consulting Ltd ([www.imaginegroup.hu](http://www.imaginegroup.hu)).



László Gyarmati

a recognized political consultant and media strategist  
he is responsible for the campaign strategy and message



Krisztina Gyarmati

a professional advertising consultant  
she is responsible for creating our offline and online marketing materials  
from concept through completion

## The RCA's Advisory Councils

Roma Civic Association's work is supported by three Advisory Councils.

The Socio - Economic Advisory Council, the Arts and Cultural Advisory Board and the Intellectuals Advisory Board. The members of these three Councils are businessmen, public figures, Kossuth and Prima Primissima winner artists and other persons who think it is crucial to improve the mood of the public.

The RCA has two Godwill Ambassadors: Ferenc Sánta Jr., Liszt, Kossuth and Prima Primissima prize winner violinist and Ferenc Molnár "Caramel", singer.





## The European Model of Roma Integration

We, the people working for the Roma Civic Association, believe that the integration of the Roma is in the interest of the whole society. The situation of the Roma is not only a question of poverty, but also an economical and strategical issue.

We believe that supporting the Roma to join middle class is the only way of Roma integration. Training and employment of underprivileged people, the support of their integration is an unexploited opportunity for the whole economy.

We believe that giving financial support is not the solution; we have to focus on creating more jobs, where the underprivileged get more confidence and opportunity for work. Work is what gets people closer to their goals.

For complex challenges we offer complex solutions. The Roma Civic Association’s suggestion is the four pillar „European Model of Roma Integration”. The goal of the Model is to promote effectively the integration of the Roma in the field of education, training and employment.



## Pillar 1 - Consortium

### *Roma Integration Consortium*

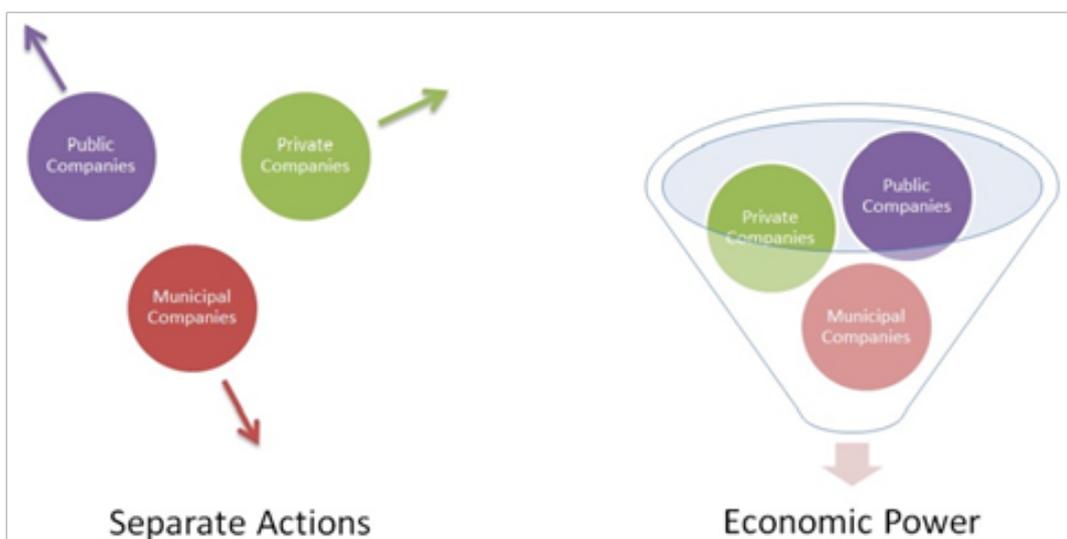
The participants of the economic life are willing to join their forces to integrate the Roma. With the leadership of the Roma Civic Association the Roma Integrational Consortium was established. Several companies from the private and public sector joined the Consortium to share their resources.

The Roma Civic Association itself – as a non-profit organization – has no independent economic power. The Consortium – with more than 100 members at the moment - accumulate significant amount of knowledge, experience and resources to be capable of handling large-scale economic tasks. With this reliable and diverse background the Consortium is ready to cooperate with each other and take orders from other companies.

This program based on long-term commitment and can bring significant results without additional resources.

In order to achieve the common goals the Roma Integration Consortium has certain commitments:

- the Roma employment rate should reflect the Roma population ratio
- members will spend the incoming extra profits to help the Roma integration in the field education, employment, housing





## Pillar 2 - Mentor Program

Applicants may have good skills, but without certain key competencies they easily drop behind.

Their skills diminish when unemployed for a longer period. Many have become so discouraged and disappointed that they no longer put in enough effort. Lack of information or internet access are also major problems. The Mentor Program is a complex skill development and integrating service. This program provides equal opportunities for hardworking, committed people, with special attention to real market needs and individual capabilities.

Our mentors collect the manpower needs of the companies and train the applicants for the job vacancy.

### *Elements of the program:*

#### 1) Personal database

Our computer registered database collects the personal data, educational and other qualifications, knowledge skills, abilities of the applicants. Based on these information and their personal expectations we provide career guidance.

#### 2) Job database

This database collects the manpower needs of the member companies, with detailed information about the job requirements (knowledge, skills and personality characteristics). In order to get specific details, we work together with the HR departments.

#### 3) Coordination of „supply and demand”

Based on the companies’ manpower needs, our skill and ability tests will select the best suitable applicants. If additional training or personal development needed, we create an individual development plan.

#### 4) Individual Development Plan

The individual development plan is a complex strategy with steps and deadlines. It is based on the combination of the capabilities and personal goals of the applicants, and the requirements of a particular job. The development is monitored and evaluated.



The elements of the development plan as required:

- vocational training
- language courses, computer skills
- personality skills training
- coaching
- etc.

5) Workplace integration, follow-up

After the applicants begin to work, the mentors collect feedbacks from both sides. Further mentoring is available if necessary.

Corporate benefits of the Mentor Program

Our program is like a quality assurance system. The people we recommend will more likely to fit the position, because we know both sides well. This way the company saves time and money. The model reduces the risk of probationary time failure and employee turnover.

### **Pillar 3 - Temporary Employment Agency**

Long-term unemployed, underprivileged people face a number of hurdles while looking for a job. Companies are wary to hire long-term unemployed. The longer people are out of a job, the less attractive they become to companies that often find themselves deluged with resumes these days even when they only have a few job openings. Roma people often experience discrimination and mistrust as well. Employee turnover increases the costs so employers see these people as risk not as opportunity.

The Temporary Employment Agency can be a good solution for all of these problems. The companies don't need to handle the administration costs and risks, and we guarantee that the job will be done by someone. The emphasis is on the work performance. This concept is economically advantageous, increase the confidence and willingness of cooperation.



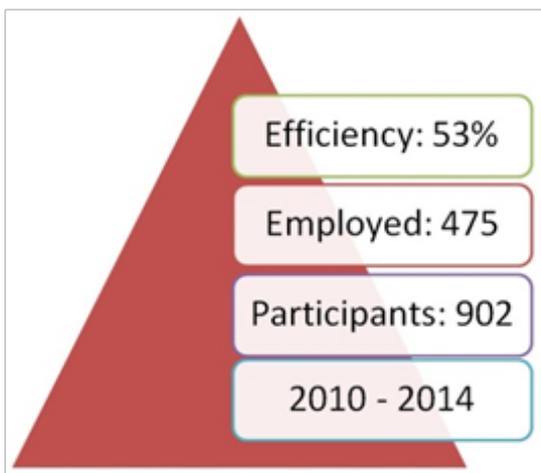
## Pillar 4 - Roma Credit Union

Our goal with a Roma Credit Union is to provide credit and financial services to underprivileged people. We also offer services intended to support community development, startup companies and small businesses. While the mentor program helps to develop new skills and build up a career plan, the Roma Credit Union offers the financial support to start a new life.

Other goal is to prevent usury. Lot of families run out of money by the end of the month, and they are forced to loan money with excessed interest rates. It is a vicious circle, a very common thing especially on the countryside. Our competitive rates can be an alternative way to these families to avoid the debt trap.

The uniqueness of the European Model of Roma Integration is the coherence of the 4 pillars. It is beneficial to all of the participants, works without additional resources, good for the whole community, and provides a long-term solution for the integration of the Roma and disadvantaged people.

Our results speak for themselves. Out of 900 people more than half of them managed to get back to the labor market. This is 53% effectiveness, without any additional resources or funds.





## The Historic Announcement

One of the most important events of our organization was held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July in 2010 at the Almássy square. On this day president István Makai made his historic announcement that he wants to run for Mayor of Budapest as the first Roma in Hungary’s history.

Despite of the blazing sun after the speech and the announcement hundreds of people gathered to enjoy the good atmosphere which was provided by LL Junior, Tamara Bencsik, Ferenc Molnár „Caramel”, Viktor Király and many other performers.

The RCA’s nominee wants to represent every people, who stand on the side of hope and change. In the past years so much tension piled up in the Hungarian society and for a long time it seemed there is no understanding, co-operation and honor but ignorance, antagonism and hatred. Fortunately at the last election this Spring a new era has come. It is inevitable, that Roma should recognize they have made mistakes as well and therefore have to take an active part in this new era. Makai alludes to the election in the spring of 2010. “I see the lights of a new age that let us to leave behind every mistake, sin and despondency of the last 20 years. The embourgeoisement of the Roma is the only way of integration which could lead us out from this dead-end street” - he added. This is the Hungarian society’s stake. He said, that he doesn’t want aids he wants more jobs, quality education, more confidence and bigger opportunities.

**A KÖZÖS JÖVŐ  
FŐPOLGÁRMESTER-JELÖLTJE:  
MAKAI ISTVÁN**

**Nekünk kell megtennünk.  
Neked kell megtenned.**

 **Roma  
Polgári  
Tömörülés**



## The Roma Civic Association’s victory in 2010

### *Minority self-government election: István Makai remains the leader of the Roma Self-Government of Budapest*

The civic unity achieved victory in Budapest!

In the year 2011 the local minority elections broke the 62-year-old rule of the left orientated Roma organizations. An era ended where all the steps were made in order to look good on the record instead of real work done. The RCA and its allies scored undoubted victory.

The Roma population of Budapest proved again that they support progress and hope, and they proved that they prefer tangible results, professional politics rather than ideological programs. In the second round of the elections, the Roma constituents of Budapest gave confidence for the Roma Civic Association. With this the Roma Civic Association (RCA) wrote history – the Roma Civic Association is the first organization, who could keep the leadership of the Roma Self-government of Budapest (RSGB) in two following terms.

Based on the results István Makai remains the president of the RSGB, so in the future he and his team continue the representation of about 200.000 Roma citizens in Budapest. Besides the Roma Self-Government of Hungary (RSGH) the RSGB is the most influential organization.

The Roma Civic Association promises that the Roma Self-Government of Budapest will be lead collectively together with the district’s minority self-governments and Roma organizations; the RCA continues the active and professional work for the integration of Roma. The RCA asks and expects all the actors who are interested in issues regarding to Roma community to share their professional opinion.

We gratefully thank the support of the Roma and non Roma population of Budapest. We believe that the Roma issue is not just a set of problems, but a matter which we should find solutions for together. We believe the confidence that has been given to us helps us to overcome the difficulties and we will be able to move towards solutions. We know that the road to success is long and bumpy, but the Roma Civic Association keeps on working day by day in the spirit of our credo: “The future is in our legacy!”

Because of the fact that the RCA could only set up its campaign staff and provide the conditions for effective and intensive work in 2010, the results reflect the hard work of that one year.



## Campaign of the Common Future

The campaign existed mostly on paper till January 2010. We had no campaign office, no staff, no website, no email addresses, a logo or even clear strategy. We had to build up the whole campaign from scratch in months. The Roma Civic Association had no previous name ID in the media or among people.

But we had one thing: the strong desire to raise the voices of Roma and underprivileged people and give them back the hope in a better future.

**In less than one year the Roma Civic Association has built a campaign up and running.**

- campaign office in the heart of Budapest
- staff of 7
- logo: 
- website: [www.rptinfo.hu](http://www.rptinfo.hu)
-  <http://www.facebook.com/rptinfo>
- strategy and message
- volunteers
- media coverage, several press conferences
- 2 big events and many smaller ones

## More active role, the second most influential organization

RCA conducted an intensive campaign and mobilization among the Roma communities. With its trustworthy objective and message it has significantly increased the socio-political activity of the Roma. Compared to 2006, in 2010 the number of registrations of the minority voters list increased by 30%, while the number of voters increased by 50%.

As a result of a short, one-year work the RCA could become the second most influential organization nationwide, the organization earned 10,124 more votes than Orbán Kolompár (RSGH's president). The Roma Civic Association successfully turned to Roma and non-Roma voters to support of the civic side and the fight of István Tarlós who was running for mayor of Budapest.



## Results on the minority elections in 2014

The Roma Civic Association, despite the significant legislative changes, decided to run as an independent entity (no coalition) on the local minority elections.

The workers of the Roma Civic Association has decided that in Roma politics change is needed. We need trustworthy and reliable Roma leaders. Leaders who are exclusively support their community and do lobbying for them. This is why the RCA decided to run on its own and refused to form any colations for the elections.

RCA remained the second strongest and most influential organisation. As István Makai cannot hold a mandate at both the Roma Self-Government of Budapest and the Roma Self-Government of Hungary, he stepped down in Budapest and started working for the Roma community in opposition at the Roma Self-Government of Hungary.





## „The Future is in Our Legacy!” gala dinner

„The Future is in our legacy” – the credo of our Organisation derives from István Makai. We use this sentence in many ways inside the office and outside as well. This is what connects us with co-workers, volunteers, helpers and friends.

In 2009, the Roma Self-Government of Budapest led by István Makai founded the award: “The Future is in Our Legacy!”. Ever since then the award goes to individuals, companies, leaders of companies who have made significant steps to help the Roma to integrate. They provide working possibilities for the marginalized people and support us morally, professionally and financially.

The award went to the following persons:

### 2013

- Aleksandr SAMULEWICZ, CEO - Philip Morris Magyarország Kft.
- KÁLLAI Ernő, minority ombudsman
- 100 member Gypsy Orchestra

### 2012

- dr. SCHMIDT Mária, CEO - House of Terror
- MEZEI István, manager - Roma-Hungarian National Football League
- BÁN Tamás, chair of the board - BVK Holding

### 2011

- TÖRÖCSKEI István, CEO - Államadósság Kezelő Központ
- VARGA József, MP at the Hungarian Parliament
- SNÉTBERGER Ferenc, guitarist/composer

### 2010

- Eleni TSAKOPOULOS KOUNALAKIS, US ambassador to Hungary
- TARLÓS István, mayor of Budapest
- MOLNÁR Ferenc “Caramel”, singer/performer

### 2009

- Dr. KOCSIS István, CEO - BKV Zrt.
- Dr. Bencze József, captain of the Hungarian Police
- ifj. SÁNTHA Ferenc, violinist



## István Makai is the Commissioner of Roma Affairs of Budapest (2011-2014)

István Makai was appointed for Commissioner of Roma Affairs by István Tarlós, the mayor of Budapest said Mária Szűcs Somlyó, the communications chief of the Municipality of Budapest.

The president of the Roma Self-Government of Budapest (RSG) and the Roma Civic Association (RCA) begins his work from the 1st of March. His mandate is for an indefinite period and he carries out his duties with no payment.



Mária Szűcs Somlyó announced: István Tarlós, mayor of Budapest, wants to handle Roma integration as a priority of Budapest; this is why he appointed István Makai for this post.

The Commissioner is responsible for: “The preparation, collection, prioritization of those questions and problems which are closely connected to the living conditions and integration of Roma in Budapest. The Commissioner will have a right to comment on issues and make proposals too.”- said by the communication chief in her statement.

As the result of the elections in 2011, István Makai started his second term as the president of the Roma Self-government of Budapest. He is also the leader of the RCA, which became the second strongest Roma civic organization this year.

## Centre for Roma History and Culture

### *The beginnings...*

In 2012, NÉMETH Győzőné and NÉMETH Zoltán donated the building to our organisation. We have started later on the renewing process.



Our organisations would not be able to fund the whole construction. Funders have joined the initiative and with their help the building was ready to serve its purpose by July 2014.



### *The mission of the Centre*

The centre aims to depict the Roma culture and the traditional Roma professions with a special focus on the Roma Holocaust.

It is planned to serve a complex informing purpose. It is not only the non-Roma who needs to know the history but the Roma as well.

Self determination starts with getting to know our own roots.



### *Room 1 Holocaust Memorial and interactive Roma History*

Today nobody could deny the fact that the Roma Holocaust has occurred. We declare this as a violent attack against humanity. We know that in World War II genocide was ruthless in Hungary as well. According to documents and the survivors' stories more than 3000 Roma men, women and children were executed in concentration camps. The documentation of the Holocaust Memorial Room helps the commemoration and depicts the refusal of this genocide.

### *Room 2 Fine art and literature*

We feel that the old traditional Roma values fade away, our respected older generation dies out, the old tales vanish and new stories seldomly reborn. In Hungary there are many institutions where fine art creation gets the attention what they would deserve. This Centre aims to give the pride for these masterpieces and also able to help the teachers in education.



This room is able to depict masterpieces from the previous masters or contemporary art. Poets can showcase their poems and novels in this room.

### *Room 3 Roma handicrafts and professions*

There are still professions that are practiced in our age. Regular live presentations can help of these professions to reborn and be popular again. Such as: rug and basket weaving, ironsmith, toy and furniture making... etc. It would be possible to teach these professions with authentic tools.

## **Tom Lantos Institute paid a visit to our Centre**





## ROMA MATRIX



Mutual Action Targeting  
Racism, Intolerance  
and Xenophobia

Roma MATRIX is a European project which is combating racism, intolerance and xenophobia towards Roma and to working to increase integration, through a programme of action across Europe.

Roma MATRIX is a partnership of 20 organisations in 10 EU member states. The project will run for two years. It started in April 2013 and runs until March 2015. It is co-funded by the European Union's Fundamental Rights and Citizenship Programme.

Roma MATRIX is a cross-sector partnership: it includes local and regional authorities, non-governmental organisations, the private sector and two universities. The partnership includes Roma-led organisations and Roma staff working in other organisations to shape the direction of the work.

There are 13 activities in Roma MATRIX across four main areas of work and each organisation is focusing on different aspects of the project in their region.

Roma Civic Association is one of the partner organizations in Roma MATRIX located in Budapest, Hungary. We are a non-profit, non-governmental organization representing the interests of the Roma and other marginalized people in Budapest and nationwide.

- Integration workshops for children, young people and parents
- Activities for kids dropped out of schools
- Employment programmes
- Cross-community mediation
- Promoting positive images of Roma
- Sharing and learning good practices



### Integration workshops

A We have selected schools in Budapest and selected 20 classes. The target age group is 7th and 8th graders. This is the moment when the pupils need to decide on their future. This program tries to give help for them in this matter. We focus on kids exceptionally who does not have sufficient parental background. The parents do not have the knowledge, or the experience to help their children.

This program consists of 2 class room activity. At the first workshop we have an orientation using non-formal education. We discuss the meaning of these words: learning, chance, tolerant. In the meantime the facilitator gathers information on the students' interests. Based on these information



the facilitator prepares herself for the second workshop. She explains those professions that could be interesting for the students.

The 20 groups of children are evaluated by their activity and drawing contest. The winner class can get tickets to a Caramel concert (famous Hungarian-Roma performer).

Those children who do not attend school regularly or not at all were reached by other ways. With the partnership of Kapocs Foundation we provided one-to-one counselling and group workshops. The nature of problems were so different from each other. Sometimes it was necessary to involve parents as well to handle certain situations. Therefore parents were also actively taking part in our workshops.

For older children employment, family and drug prevention are real problems. It is not possible to give answers randomly. We need to give a constant support and background for the ones in need.

## Employment

Roma Civic Association has developed a program where companies are being helped with their HR fluctuations and the job seekers can find easier jobs at the same time. We put together a database. This database holds all the information of our registered clients. This helps us to pair up everyone's experiences and skill with the job vacancies.



We helped marginalized people to secure employment with a full-time working mentor and 2 different booklets. One booklet was written to help the job seekers and the other one gives useful information for companies.

The mentor works not only the client's CV but helps to have a successful job interview and to secure their job on the long run. This is a complex and time consuming task where empathy and patience are key. In many cases we need to help people who have been jobless for years.

On the other hand we were able to put together a consortium of companies. They are willing to employ Roma and marginalized people and also trying to create an employee friendly atmosphere not to mention the fact that they support the work of our mentor after the mentee got in contract with the company.



## Cross-community mediation

With the help of Magyarországi Cigányok Demokratikus Szövetsége XIII. ker. Ifjúsági Tagszövetség (MCDSZ) organisation we have completed several activities in order to build bridges between communities.

We have organized a 3 day training with the cooperation of a local police department and the local authority. This was a special conference where participants were Roma and non-Roma from the neighborhood. They were listening together crime prevention presentations and the police held an interactive program as well.. In workshops they were discussing crimes that are mostly common. Crimes that happen in schools at families and during leisure time. They were evaluating approaches in order to avoid or even prevent these to occur.

At international children’s day we have invited Roma and non-Roma children for a whole day long open-air-program. This program was primarily designed for families. We have reached out to the parents through the children. The programs were organized for the children mainly: face painting, skills competition, sport meets and a spectacular police self-defense show. Children has come with their parents. We were facilitating various conversations among them in everyday topics. We have organized afternoon school to help the kids who failed in some of their classes and they need to have the exams once more. In this afternoon school teachers were also holding classes for kindergarden children to prepare them for elementary school.

We have closed this activity with a fest. But we only provided the venue and set the date. The children were organizing the event. They figured out who is going to do what. They were planing and carrying out the event. The guests were their parents.

We have organized a drug prevention day. We asked the children to draw. We gave the topic: Fight against drug addiction and abuse. We wanted to know what does this mean for them. How do they think we should fight against drug addiction? We commemorated the 70th anniversary of the Holocaust. We were focusing on the Roma Holocaust, the Roma victims of the Holocaust and their families. There we played a movie and lit candles.



We have organized a festival for nationalities. It was a big cooking contest. Smaller teams were cooking Roma and Hungarian foods for 500 people. Apart from the ingredients all the tools were brought to the contest by the people. Eating was of course for free. Participants could get to know different types of foods.



## Positive Roma Image Campaign

All the partners had to create visual information on Roma in a way that we can fight against stereotypes. The aim was to create a counterpole to the bad imagery present in everyday media. We had to try to show the real, heterogeneous side of Roma people.

We have created a series of short films. 19 people were interviewed. They only share one thing in common: they all claim themselves Roma. We tried to pick persons who can talk about their life and what does it take to be a Hungarian Roma in their own smaller and broader communities. Plumber, lawyer, cook, gardener, 3rd grader, mother, university student... to mention some of them. You can watch all the movies on [www.romamatrix.eu](http://www.romamatrix.eu).

We have one headshot of everyone. These are printed in 60x60 cm with their own small stories. These are in Hungarian and English. These posters are a travelling exhibition that will be depicted in bigger companies, exhibition halls and also Embassies.







## Roma Fellowship Program at U.S. Embassy Budapest

The aim of the program is to provide the participants with linguistic and professional experiences which will add to their future career opportunities. Serving as an “introductory professionalization course”, the fellowship aims to develop basic skills that potential employers consider beneficial. The Embassy is committed to ensure a fair and transparent selection process.

The program is designed for recently graduated Roma university or college students who must be Hungarian citizens.

The duration of the fellowship program is two months. Elements of the fellowship program includes general orientation on the Embassy’s daily work, life coaching training, job-seeking and employment-related counseling, training in networking, public affairs, business processes and business operation, public speaking, and professional ethics, as well as financial training, researching and writing exercises, organizational tasks and networking duties. In addition to enhancing various employment-related skills, potential benefits for the fellow is obtaining a written evaluation assessing his/her performance as well as a certificate acknowledging the fellow’s service within the Embassy, and potential letters of recommendation.

Roma Civic Association is the organisation since 2014 that carries out the administrative duties of this program helping this way the best implementation of the program.

## Skopje 2015

A MAKAI Istvan led delegation visited Macedonia 28-30 April, 2015. The delegation consisted of CEOs who are committed to employing Roma. During their visit MAKAI Istvan had meetings with the EU Delegation in Skopje.

Mr. MAKAI met Nafi Szaracsin, roma thematic expert at the EU delegation of Skopje and Kamilla Duda-Kawecka political councillor to talk over the issues of the Roma in the Republic of Macedonia and in Hungary.

On the 30<sup>th</sup>, April the delegation had a meeting with Suto Orizari and were being interviewed by the SUTEL Romani language television. Meri Janevszka, financial director and Sali Ibrahim chief-editor invited them to a local school.



## Common Future Events

### Share a Table Roma-Hungarian Lunch

May 25th, 2010

Despite the pouring rain several hundreds of people gathered to listen Istvan Makai’s speech and enjoy a portion of gulyás soup. The major goal of the event was to facilitate talks between the Roma and non-Roma population.

“We should dare to dream about a common future...” emphasized Istvan Makai in his speech. In this common future everybody has a role and this role has no skin color. Everybody should be evaluated by his or her achievements and values said the president of the RPT. We believe that the tensions can only be reduced by the embourgeoisement of the Romas.

Afterwards many famous singer and musician entertained the audience.



**Múltunk közös lemeze a jövőben is!**  
A rendezvény **INGYENES!**

**ÜLJÜNK EGY ASZTALHOZ!**  
**ROMA-MAGYAR KÖZÖS EBÉD**

**Május 15. 12 óra, Felvonulási tér**

**Egy jóízű találkozás: várunk!**

**Amit kínálunk:**  
közös asztal és egy tál gulyás.

**Aki főzi:**  
Kovács Lázár

**A kik fűszerezik:**  
Caramel, Ifj. Sánta Ferenc és népi zenekara,  
Tóth Vera, Bartók Eszter, L.L. Junior, Gomes Team,  
Brazil Kulturális Központ és még sokan mások.

**RPT** Roma Polgári Tömörülés  
Infóvonal: (06-1) 789-0517  
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## The Day of our Common Future A Tasty Encounter

July 3rd, 2010

On a sunny afternoon Istvan Makai announced that he wants to run for mayor of Budapest representing roma and non-roma citizens of Budapest. The announcement was followed by applause from the crowd swinging Hungarian, Roma and RPT flags.

“I want to represent the people who stand on the side of hope and change.” said Istvan Makai. In the past years so much tension piled up in the Hungarian society and for a long time it seemed there is no understanding, co-operation and honor but ignorance, antagonism and hatred. Fortunately at the last election this Spring a new era has come.

It is inevitable, Istvan Makai added, that Romas should recognize they have made mistakes as well and therefore have to take an active part in this new era. The embourgeoisement of the Romas is the only way of integration which could lead us out from this dead-end street. This is all the Hungarian society’s stake.

The image shows two promotional posters for an event. The left poster features a photograph of two young children, a girl and a boy, looking towards the camera. The text on the poster includes the RPT logo, the title 'A KÖZÖS JÖVŐ NAPJA Egy jóízű találkozás', and the date and location '2010. július 3. 12 óra, VII. Almássy tér'. A diagonal banner in the top right corner says 'JÓ PROGRAM kiscsalnak és nagynak'. The right poster is a purple and white flyer with a map of the event location. It includes the title 'Egy jóízű találkozás: várunk!', a list of activities 'Amit kínálunk: Ingyenes programok, egy pár virsli és egy meglepetés!', the host 'Házigazdánk: Makai István, az RPT elnöke', and the performers 'Fellépnek: Molnár Ferenc „Caramel”, Király Viktor, L.L. Junior, Nagy Laci (Gitano), Románi Raza, Lakatos Krisztián, Ifj. Sánta Ferenc, Menyhért Vivien, Gómes Team Tánciskola és további meglepetés sztárvendégek'. At the bottom, it says 'Múltunk közös lesz a jövőben is!' and provides contact information: 'Infóvonal: (06-1) 789-0517 www.rptinfo.hu'.



Múltunk  
közös lesz  
a jövőben is!

# Július 3.

**JÓ  
PROGRAM**  
Kicsiknek és nagyoknak

## A KÖZÖS JÖVŐ NAPJA Egy jóízű találkozás



Tegyük meg közösen az első lépést! Akik velünk tartanak: Makai István, Molnár Ferenc „Caramel”, Király Viktor, L.L. Junior, Nagy Laci (Gitano), Romani Raza, Lakatos Krisztián, ifj. Sánta Ferenc, Menyhért Vivien, Gomes Team Tánciskola és további meglepetés sztárvendégek. Vendégeinket ingyenes programokkal és egy pár virslivel várjuk. Bővebb információ: (06-1) 789-0517, [www.rptinfo.hu](http://www.rptinfo.hu)

**Találkozunk a VII. ker. Almássy téren, 2010. július 3-án 12 órakor!**



## Roma Beauty Contest 2012

We organized this event in order to show to the public the values and beauty of the women belonging to the Roma community. The jury had Roma and non-Roma members, who have already made their achievements thanks to their hard working. The chair of the jury was MAKAI István, the president of the Roma Self-government of Budapest.

MENYHÉRT Vivien was chosen by the Jury in 2012 as Miss Roma. The 1<sup>st</sup> runner-up was KISS Hajnalka, the 2<sup>nd</sup> runner-up was VIRTYÓ Alexandra. Roma and non-Roma both joined this event and helped th realization financially as well. They all share and belive our credo: “The Future is in our legacy!”



photo: MTI

Miss Roma earns not only the pride but many commitments as well. She was to serve as a goodwill ambassador to the Roma. She performed her dance choreography at the 100 member Gypsy Orchestra’s Christmas tour in Budapest, Debrecen, Kaposvár and Pécs.

She accompanied us while giving away the food packages before Christmas to the needy.





## Roma Hungarian Blood Donation Day

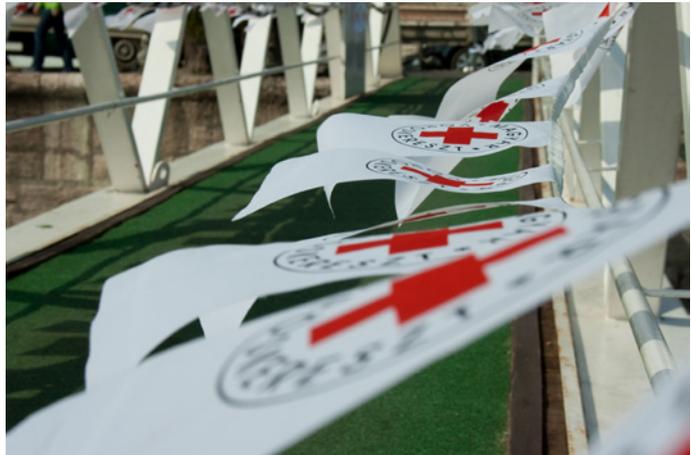


“Today I would like to create a tradition!” said Dr. György Habsburg in his opening remarks on April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2010 at the Roma Hungarian Blood Donation Day organised for the second time. The event was held again on board of Europa Boat with the support of many celebrity, sportsmen and businessmen.

István Makai pointed out after the Hungarian and the Roma Anthem was played that co-operation and mutual aims are crucial. The most important value is help. We are helping others regardless their skin colour. We rather act then talk.

The US Ambassador to Budapest Eleni Tsakopoulos Kounalakis attended the event and donated blood. Andrea Zsádon, Tibor Szolnok actors, Zoltán Mága, ifj. Sánta Ferenc violinists, LL Junior, Pápai Joci and Ferenc Molnár “Caramel” came and supported the cause with their presence.





## Eye to Eye pilot program

The Roma Self-Government of Budapest launched this pilot program with 3 primary schools in Budapest, in the Spring of 2010.

The purpose of this program is to emphasize the importance of learning and to eliminate violence, discrimination among children, teachers and parents.

Roma Civic Association joined this initiative with the goodwill ambassador Ferenc Molnár Caramel.

More and more schools struggle with violence, racism and hate speech. Children, parents and teachers do not know each others' culture and traditions. In many cases this leads to conflicts. These issues are hard to tackle and the teachers have limited possibilities. This is where NGOs play an important role.

We picked schools where Roma and non-Roma children were almost equally presented. Children were proactive and enthusiastic. During workshops the children asked questions. The interactivity helped the pupils to find out the importance of learning and being tolerant.





## Eye to Eye - in pictures



Molnár Ferenc “Caramel” az RTL Klub Üzenet c. kisfilmben:  
<http://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=142926075751500>

## István Makai and Caramel in Devecser

István Makai and Ferenc Molnár Caramel summarized their visit to Devecser in shock and sorrow. They have met several families and made discussions with. The red sludge disaster made several families homeless and they suffered severe injuries. The household appliances donated by [www.returnmarket.com/](http://www.returnmarket.com/) were handed out to the families who needed.

After the visit in Devecser Makai said “we cannot talk about who needs help here. Everybody is in need of help. We could help 37 families. This is nothing what remained to be done by the government and the ones who cased this disaster.”





## Charity

We have visited children who spend the Holidays away from home at hospitals. We have given presents to these children in the Madarász utcai Gyermek Hospital and the Children Centre in Fót.



## Together we can do it!

We have helped Szinti, who is waiting for a very expensive surgery so she could be just as normal as the other children with the same age as hers.

The Lakatos Menyhért Elementary School gathered PET caps and Ferenc Molnár Caramel donated caps with his signature for an auction.

