



April 2017

This factsheet does not bind the Court and is not exhaustive

# Roma and Travellers

"[A]s a result of their turbulent history and constant uprooting the Roma have become a specific type of disadvantaged and vulnerable minority ... As the [European] Court [of Human Rights] has noted in previous cases, they therefore require special protection ..." (*D.H. and Others v. the Czech Republic*, application n° 57325/00, Grand Chamber judgment of 13 November 2007, § 182).

"[W]hereas Article 14 of the [European] Convention [on Human Rights] prohibits discrimination in the enjoyment of 'the rights and freedoms set forth in [the] Convention', Article 1 of Protocol No. 12 [to the Convention] extends the scope of protection to 'any right set forth by law'. It thus introduces a general prohibition of discrimination." (*Sejdić and Finci v. Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Grand Chamber judgment of 22 December, § 53).

## Right to life and prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment (Articles 2 and 3 of the Convention)

### Attacks by private individuals

#### Šečić v. Croatia

31 May 2007

The applicant, who was of Roma origin, was attacked by two unidentified men when collecting scrap metal in April 1999. They beat him with wooden planks and shouted racial abuse while two other men kept watch. Shortly afterwards the police arrived, interviewed people at the scene and made an unsuccessful search for the attackers. The applicant alleged, in particular, that the domestic authorities failed to undertake a serious and thorough investigation into the racist attack and that he suffered discrimination on the basis of his Roma origin.

Having considered all the material in its possession and the arguments put forward by the parties, the European Court of Human Rights considered that the failure of the State authorities to further the case or obtain any tangible evidence with a view of identifying and arresting the attackers over a prolonged period of time indicated that the investigation did not meet the requirements of Article 3 (prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment) of the European Convention on Human Rights. It therefore held that there had been a **violation of Article 3** concerning the lack of an effective investigation. The Court also found that there had been a **violation of Article 14** (prohibition of discrimination) of the Convention **in conjunction with Article 3** for the following reasons: the applicant's attackers were suspected of belonging to a group of skinheads, and it was in the nature of such groups to be governed by extremist and racist ideology; accordingly, knowing that the attack was probably the result of ethnic hatred, the police should not have allowed the investigation to drag on for more than seven years without taking any serious steps to identify or prosecute those responsible.

### **Angelova and Iliev v. Bulgaria**

26 July 2007

The applicants, mother and son, complained about the racially motivated killing of their respective son and brother by seven teenagers, and about the subsequent failure by the Bulgarian authorities to investigate and prosecute those responsible.

The Court held that there had been a procedural **violation of Article 2** (right to life) of the Convention, finding that the Bulgarian authorities had failed in their obligation under Article 2 to effectively investigate the applicants' relative's death promptly, expeditiously and with the required vigour, considering the racial motives of the attack and the need to maintain the confidence of minority groups in the ability of the authorities to protect them from the threat of racist violence. Further, noting in particular the widespread prejudices and violence against Roma during the relevant period and the need to reassert continuously society's condemnation of racism and to maintain the confidence of minorities in the authorities' ability to protect them from the threat of racist violence, the Court found that the authorities had failed to make the required distinction from other, non-racially motivated offences, which constituted unjustified treatment irreconcilable with Article 14 (prohibition of discrimination) of the Convention. The Court therefore held that there had been a **violation of Article 14 taken in conjunction with Article 2**.

### **Beganović v. Croatia**

25 June 2009

The applicant complained that following a violent attack against him, the domestic authorities had failed to carry out effective investigation and prosecution. He further alleged that both the attack and the subsequent proceedings showed that he had been discriminated against on account of his Roma origin.

The Court held that there had been a **violation of Article 3** (prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment) of the Convention, finding that the Croatian authorities' practices had not protected adequately the applicant from an act of serious violence and, together with the manner in which the criminal-law mechanisms had been implemented in the present case, had been defective. The Court further held that there had been **no violation of Article 14** (prohibition of discrimination) of the Convention **in conjunction with Article 3**, on account of the lack of evidence that the attack on the applicant had been racially motivated. The facts of the case had revealed that the applicant and his assailants had actually belonged to the same circle of friends, and there had been no indication that the applicant's race or ethnic origin had played a role in any of the incidents.

### **Koky and Others v. Slovakia**

12 June 2012

The applicants were ten Slovak nationals of Roma ethnic origin. In February 2002 several men armed with baseball bats and iron bars, shouting racist language, allegedly attacked their settlement following an incident in a bar when a non-Roma waitress refused to serve a drink to a Roma. The applicants alleged that they had been ill-treated and submitted that the Slovakian authorities had failed to carry out a prompt, impartial and effective investigation into the attack.

The Court held that the investigation into the incident at the applicants' settlement could not be considered as having been effective, in **violation of Article 3** (prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment) of the Convention. It found in particular that the authorities had not done everything that could have been expected to investigate the incident, in particular taking into account its racial overtones.

### Škorjanec v. Croatia

28 March 2017<sup>1</sup>

In June 2013, two men racially abused the applicant's partner on the basis of his Roma origin, before attacking both him and the applicant herself. The two assailants were prosecuted and convicted on charges that included a hate crime against the applicant's partner. However, the men were not charged for a racially motivated crime against the applicant herself. The authorities rejected her complaint of a hate crime, finding that there was no indication that the men had attacked her because of hatred towards Roma, as she is not of Roma origin. The applicant complained to the Court of a lack of an effective procedural response of the Croatian authorities in relation to a racially motivated act of violence against her.

The Court held that there had been a **violation of Article 3** (prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment) under its procedural aspect **in conjunction with Article 14** (prohibition of discrimination) of the Convention, finding that the Croatian authorities had failed in their obligations under the Convention when rejecting the applicant's criminal complaint without conducting further investigation prior to their decision. The Court noted in particular that, under Convention case law, a person may be a victim of a violent hate crime not only when they have been attacked because they themselves have a certain characteristic – but also when they are attacked because they have an actual or presumed association with another person, who has (or is perceived to have) that characteristic. States have an obligation to recognise both types as hate crimes, and investigate them accordingly. However, in this case the Croatian authorities had repeatedly failed to take the necessary care in identifying the violence against the applicant as a suspected hate crime.

#### **Similar cases:**

### Seidova v. Bulgaria

18 November 2010

### Dimitrova and Others v. Bulgaria

27 January 2011

### Balázs v. Hongrie

20 October 2015

#### **Pending application**

### Lakatošová and Lakatoš v. Slovakia (no. 655/16)

Application communicated to the Slovakian Government on 10 November 2016

This case concerns the fatal shooting of three and attempted murder of two Slovak nationals of Roma origin by an off-duty police officer.

The Court gave notice of the application to the Slovakian Government and put questions to the parties under Articles 2 (right to life), 13 (right to an effective remedy) and 14 (prohibition of discrimination) of the Convention.

## Attacks on Roma villages and destruction of houses and possessions

### Moldovan (no. 2) and Others v. Romania

12 July 2005

In September 1993 three Roma men were attacked in the village of Hădăreni by a large crowd of non-Roma villagers, including the local police commander and several officers: one burnt to death, the other two were beaten to death by the crowd. The applicants alleged that the police then encouraged the crowd to destroy other Roma properties: in

<sup>1</sup>. This judgment will become final in the circumstances set out in Article 44 § 2 (final judgments) of the [European Convention on Human Rights](#).

total 13 Roma houses in the village were completely destroyed. Hounded from their village and homes, the applicants were then obliged to live in crowded and unsuitable conditions – cellars, hen-houses, stables. Following criminal complaints brought by the applicants, some were awarded damages ten years later.

The Court could not examine the applicants' complaints about the destruction of their houses and possessions or their expulsion from the village, because those events took place in September 1993, before the ratification of the Convention by Romania in June 1994. However, it found violations concerning the complaints about the applicants' subsequent living conditions and noted that the applicants' ethnicity had been decisive in the excessive length and result of the domestic proceedings. In particular, the Court held that:

- there had been a **violation of Article 3** (prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment) of the Convention;
- there had been and was a continuing **violation of Article 8** (right to respect for private and family life and home) of the Convention;
- there had been **no violation of Article 6 § 1** (access to court) of the Convention;
- there had been a **violation of Article 6 § 1** (right to a fair trial) of the Convention on account of the length of the proceedings;
- there had been a **violation of Article 14** (prohibition of discrimination) of the Convention **taken in conjunction with Articles 6 § 1 and 8.**

See also: [Moldovan \(no. 1\) and Others v. Romania](#), judgment (friendly settlement) of 5 July 2005; [Lăcătuș and Others v. Romania](#), judgment of 13 November 2012 (concerned an attack on Roma homes in a village in September 1993 by a mob of non-Roma villagers and the local police, during which the applicants' common-law partner and father had been beaten to death by the crowd).

### **Gergely v. Romania and Kalanyos and Others v. Romania**

26 April 2007

These cases concerned the burning of houses belonging to Roma villagers by local population, the poor living conditions of the victims and the authorities' failure to prevent the attack and to carry out an adequate criminal investigation, depriving the applicants of their right to bring a civil action to establish liability and recover damages.

The Court decided to **strike** the applications **out of its list of cases** following a declaration by the Romanian Government, in which it recognised violations of Articles 3, 6, 8, 13 and 14 of the Convention and undertook to pay each of the applicants compensation, as well as to adopt several general measures involving the judicial system, the educational, social and housing programmes and aimed at fighting discrimination against the Roma in the county concerned, stimulating their participation in the economic, social, educational, cultural and political life of the local community, supporting positive changes in public opinion in their respect, as well as preventing and solving conflicts likely to generate violence.

See also: [Tănase and Others v. Romania](#), judgment (striking out) of 26 May 2009.

### **Costică Moldovan and Others v. Romania**

15 February 2011 (inadmissibility decision)

This case concerned difficulties with the execution<sup>2</sup> – general measures – of the *Moldovan (no. 2) and Others v. Romania* judgment of 12 July 2005 (see above).

The Court declared the application **inadmissible**. It noted in particular that it did not have jurisdiction to verify whether a Contracting State had complied with the obligations imposed on it by one of the Court's judgments.

See also: [Moldovan and Others v. Romania](#), inadmissibility decision of 17 April 2012.

<sup>2</sup>. Under Article 46 (binding force and execution of judgments) of the Convention, the Committee of Ministers (CM), the executive arm of the Council of Europe, supervises the execution of the Court's judgments. Further information on the execution process and on the state of execution in cases pending for supervision before the CM can be found on the Internet site of the Department for the execution of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights: [www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/execution/default\\_EN.asp?](http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/execution/default_EN.asp?)

### **Pending applications**

#### **Patrama v. Ukraine (no. 54476/14)**

Application communicated to the Ukrainian Government on 17 December 2015

This case concerns the applicant's allegation that State agents were involved in the destruction of a Roma encampment where she used to live and that there was no effective investigation in this connection.

The Court gave notice of the application to the Ukrainian Government and put questions to the parties under Articles 3 (prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment) and 14 (prohibition of discrimination) of the Convention and Article 1 (general prohibition of discrimination) of Protocol No. 12 to the Convention.

#### **Burlya and Others v. Ukraine (no. 3289/10)**

Application communicated to the Ukrainian Government on 11 February 2016

This case concerns the destruction of the applicants' homes in what they describe as an anti-Roma "pogrom".

The Court gave notice of the application to the Ukrainian Government and put questions to the parties under Articles 3 (prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment), 8 (right to respect for private and family life and home), 13 (right to an effective remedy), 14 (prohibition of discrimination) and 35 (admissibility criteria) of the Convention and Article 1 (protection of property) of Protocol No. 1 to the Convention.

### Bullet wounds during police questioning or attempted arrest

#### **Nachova and Others v. Bulgaria**

6 July 2005 (Grand Chamber)

This case concerned the killing of the applicants' relatives, both aged 21, by a military policeman who was trying to arrest them. The applicants alleged in particular that their relatives had been deprived of their lives in violation of Article 2 (right to life) of the Convention, as a result of deficient law and practice which permitted the use of lethal force without absolute necessity. They further alleged that prejudice and hostile attitudes towards people of Roma origin had played a decisive role in the events leading up to the shootings and the fact that no meaningful investigation had been carried out, relying on Article 14 (prohibition of discrimination) of the Convention in conjunction with Article 2.

The Court held that there had been a **violation of Article 2** (right to life) of the Convention in respect of the deaths of the applicants' relatives. It also held that there had been a **violation of Article 2** in that the authorities had failed to conduct an effective investigation into these deaths. As to whether the killings had been racially motivated, departing from the Chamber's approach<sup>3</sup>, the Grand Chamber did not find it established that racist attitudes had played a role in the applicants' relatives' deaths. It therefore held that there had been **no violation of Article 14** of the Convention **taken together** with the material limb of **Article 2**. Lastly, regarding whether there had been an adequate investigation into possible racist motives, the Grand Chamber found that the authorities had failed in their duty to take all possible steps to investigate whether or not discrimination may have played a role in the events, in **violation of Article 14 taken together with** the procedural limb of **Article 2**.

#### **Guerdner and Others v. France**

17 April 2014

This case concerned the death of a member of the applicants' family, who had been taken into police custody and was killed by a gendarme while attempting to escape.

The Court held that there had been **no violation of Article 2** (right to life) of the Convention with regard to the domestic legislative framework governing the use of force but that there had been a **violation of Article 2** on account of the use of lethal force.

<sup>3</sup>. *Natchova and Others v. Bulgaria*, judgment (Chamber) of 26 February 2004. On 21 May 2004, the Bulgarian Government requested that the case be referred to the Grand Chamber under Articles 43 of the Convention and 73 of the Rules of Court. The Grand Chamber Panel accepted the request on 7 July 2004.

It further found that there had been **no violation of Article 2** as regards the authorities' investigation into the death.

**Similar cases:**

**Vasil Sashov Petrov v. Bulgaria**

10 June 2010

**Soare and Others v. Romania**

22 February 2011

## Conditions of reception

**V.M. and Others v. Belgium (no. 60125/11)**

7 July 2015 – case referred to the Grand Chamber in December 2015

This case concerned the reception conditions of a family of Serbian nationals of Roma origin seeking asylum in Belgium. The applicants alleged in particular that they had been subjected to inhuman and degrading living conditions in Belgium that had, *inter alia*, caused the death of their eldest daughter.

The Grand Chamber held that the application should be **struck out of the Court's list** of cases pursuant to Article 37 (striking out applications) of the Convention. It found in particular that the applicants, who had returned to Serbia of their own volition, had not maintained contact with their lawyer. They had failed to keep her informed of their place of residence or to provide her with any other means of contacting them. There was however nothing to suggest that the precarious conditions in which the applicants had lived in Serbia had been such as to prevent them from maintaining some form of contact with their lawyer, if necessary through a third party, for such a long period. The Grand Chamber therefore considered that it could be concluded that the applicants had lost interest in the proceedings and no longer intended to pursue the application.

### Pending application

**Gjutaj and Others v. France (no. 63141/13)**

Application communicated to the French Government on 9 October 2013

The applicants, families consisting of couples with children aged one to eleven, allege in particular that their current emergency accommodation in tents does not meet the requirements of Article 3 (prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment) of the Convention, having regard in particular to their status as asylum seekers and the presence of a large number of minor children.

The Court gave notice of the application to the French Government and put questions to the parties under Article 3 (prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment) of the Convention.

## Death in a medico-social institution

**Center of Legal Resources on behalf of Valentin Câmpeanu v. Romania**

17 April 2014 (Grand Chamber)

This case concerned the death of a young man of Roma origin – who was HIV positive and suffering from a severe mental disability – in a psychiatric hospital. The application was lodged by a non-governmental organisation (NGO) on his behalf.

The Court found that, in the exceptional circumstances of the case, and bearing in mind the serious nature of the allegations, it was open to the NGO to act as a representative of the young man, even though the organisation was not itself a victim of the alleged violations of the Convention.

In this case the Court held that there had been a **violation of Article 2** (right to life) of the Convention, in both its substantive and its procedural aspects. It found in particular: that Valentin Câmpeanu had been placed in medical institutions which were not equipped to provide adequate care for his condition; that he had been transferred from one unit to

another without proper diagnosis; and, that the authorities had failed to ensure his appropriate treatment with antiretroviral medication. The authorities, aware of the difficult situation – lack of personnel, insufficient food and lack of heating – in the psychiatric hospital where he had been placed, had unreasonably put his life in danger. Furthermore, there had been no effective investigation into the circumstances of his death. The Court also found a **breach of Article 13** (right to an effective remedy) of the Convention **in conjunction with Article 2**, considering that the Romanian State had failed to provide an appropriate mechanism for redress to people with mental disabilities claiming to be victims under Article 2.

## Death in an arson attack

### Fedorchenko and Lozenko v. Ukraine

20 September 2012

The applicants complained in particular that five of their relatives had died in the fire of their house and that the State authorities had failed to conduct a thorough and effective investigation into the circumstances of their death and of a police major's involvement in the arson attack. They further alleged that that the crime had had racist motives due to their Romani ethnicity.

The Court found that the investigation of the applicants' relatives' deaths had not been effective and held that there had therefore been a **violation** of the procedural limb of **Article 2** (right to life) of the Convention. Further, in the absence of sufficient evidence, it held that there had been **no violation** of the substantive limb of **Article 2**. Lastly, noting in particular that there was no evidence that the authorities had conducted any investigation into the possible racist motives of the crime, the Court held that there had been a **violation of Article 14** (prohibition of discrimination) of the Convention **in conjunction with** the procedural aspect of **Article 2**.

## Death in police custody or in detention

### Anguelova v. Bulgaria

13 June 2002

This case concerned the death of the applicant's son, aged 17, while in police custody, following his arrest for attempted theft. The applicant alleged that her son died after being ill-treated by police officers, that the police failed to provide adequate medical treatment for his injuries, that the authorities failed to undertake an effective investigation, that her son's detention was unlawful, that she did not have an effective remedy and that there had been discrimination on the basis of her son's Roma (Gypsy) origin.

The Court held that there had been a **violation of Article 2** (right to life) of the Convention in respect of the death of the applicant's son, in respect of the Bulgarian authorities' failure to provide timely medical care, and in respect of the Bulgarian State's obligation to conduct an effective investigation. In particular, it found implausible the Bulgarian Government's explanation of the applicant's son's death and that the investigation had lacked objectivity and thoroughness, a fact which had decisively undermined its ability to establish the cause of the death and those responsible. The Court also held that there had been a **violation of Article 3** (prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment), a **violation of Article 5** (right to liberty and security) and a **violation of Article 13** (right to an effective remedy) of the Convention. Lastly, the Court held that there had been **no violation of Article 14** (prohibition of discrimination) of the Convention: the applicant's complaints that the police officers' and the investigating authorities' perception of her son as a Roma/Gypsy had been a decisive factor in their attitude and acts were based on serious arguments; it was unable, however, to reach the conclusion that proof beyond reasonable doubt had been established.

### Ognyanova and Choban v. Bulgaria

23 February 2006

The first applicant's *de facto* husband and second applicant's son – a Bulgarian national of Roma ethnic origin – was arrested on suspicion of having taken part in numerous thefts and burglaries and taken into custody. The next day, while he was being interviewed, he fell from a third floor window of the police station where he was being detained. He was taken to hospital and died the next day. The applicants alleged in particular that their relative had died as a result of his ill-treatment by the police while in custody and that the authorities had failed to conduct an effective investigation into the circumstances surrounding his death. They also complained that the impugned events had been the result of discriminatory attitudes towards people of Roma ethnic origin.

The Court held that there had been a **violation of Article 2** (right to life) of the Convention in respect of the applicants' relative's death, finding that the Bulgarian Government had not fully accounted for his death and injuries during his detention. It also held that there had been a **violation of Article 2** in that the Bulgarian authorities had failed to conduct an effective investigation into the death. The Court further held that there had been a **violation of Article 3** (prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment), a **violation of Article 5** (right to liberty and security) and a **violation of Article 13** (right to an effective remedy) of the Convention. Lastly, noting in particular that the materials in the case file contained no concrete indication that racist attitudes had played a role in the events at issue, the Court held that there had been **no violation of Article 14** (prohibition of discrimination) of the Convention.

### Mižigárová v. Slovakia

14 December 2010

This case concerned the death of a Roma man – the applicant's husband – during a police interrogation. He had been shot in the abdomen with the lieutenant's service pistol and the investigation concluded that he had forcibly taken the gun from the lieutenant and shot himself.

The Court held that there had been a **violation of Article 2** (right to life) of the Convention, finding that, even if he had committed suicide as alleged by the investigative authorities, they had been in violation of their obligation to take reasonable measures to protect his health and well-being while in police custody. It also found a **violation of Article 2** under its procedural limb, as no meaningful investigation had been conducted at the domestic level capable of establishing the true facts surrounding the death of the applicant's husband. The Court further held that there had been **no violation of Article 14** (prohibition of discrimination) of the Convention **taken in conjunction with Article 2**. It was in particular not persuaded that the objective evidence had been sufficiently strong in itself to suggest the existence of a racist motive for the incident.

### Ion Bălăsoiu v. Romania

17 February 2015

This case concerned the death in prison, at the age of eighteen, of a young man of Roma ethnic origin which, according to his father, had been the result of the ill-treatment to which he had been subjected two months earlier by police officers while being held in police custody.

The Court held that there had been **no violation of Article 2** (right to life) of the Convention. It also held that there had been **no violation of Article 3** (prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment) regarding the alleged ill-treatment but found a procedural **violation of Article 3** as regards the authorities' investigation into it. The Court lastly held that there had been **no violation of Article 14** (prohibition of discrimination) of the Convention **in conjunction with Article 3**.



**Similar cases:**

**[Velikova v. Bulgaria](#)**

18 May 2010

**[Kleyn and Aleksandrovich v. Russia](#)**

3 May 2012

## Expulsion

**[Sulejmanovic and Sultanovic and Sejdovic and Sulejmanovic v. Italy](#)**

8 November 2002 (friendly settlement)

This case concerned the expulsion of Roma gypsies and their minor children to Bosnia-Herzegovina, where they claimed they would be exposed to a risk of persecution.

The Court decided to **strike** the applications **out of its list of cases** following a friendly settlement in which the Italian Government had undertaken to revoke the deportation orders, to permit the applicants to enter Italy with their families and to issue them with leave to remain on humanitarian grounds. The Government had further undertaken to arrange for a temporary site to be provided pending a permanent solution, for children of school age to be allowed to attend school and, for one of the minor children – a Down's syndrome child, who had allegedly undergone heart surgery in Rome shortly before being deported – to receive the medical attention she needs.

## Forced sterilisations of Roma women

**[V.C. v. Slovakia \(no. 18968/07\)](#)**

8 November 2011

The applicant, of Roma ethnic origin, was sterilised in a public hospital without her full and informed consent, following the birth of her second child. She signed the consent form while still in labour, without understanding what was meant or that the process was irreversible, and after having been told that, if she had a third child, either she or the baby would die. She has since been ostracised by the Roma community and, now divorced, cites her infertility as one of the reasons for her separation from her ex-husband.

The Court found that the applicant must have experienced fear, anguish and feelings of inferiority as a result of her sterilisation, as well as the way in which she had been requested to agree to it. She had suffered physically and psychologically over a long period and also in terms of her relationship with her then husband and the Roma community. Although there was no proof that the medical staff concerned had intended to ill-treat her, they had acted with gross disregard to her right to autonomy and choice as a patient. Her sterilisation had therefore been in **violation of Article 3** (prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment) of the Convention. The Court further held that there had been **no violation of Article 3** as concerned the applicant's allegation that the investigation into her sterilisation had been inadequate. Lastly, the Court found a **violation of Article 8** (right to respect for private and family life) of the Convention concerning the lack of legal safeguards giving special consideration to her reproductive health as a Roma at that time.

**[N.B. v. Slovakia \(no. 29518/10\)](#)**

12 June 2012

In this case the applicant alleged that she had been sterilised without her full and informed consent in a public hospital in Slovakia.

The Court concluded that the sterilisation of the applicant had been in **violation of Article 3** (prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment) of the Convention. It further held that there had been **no violation of Article 3** as concerned the applicant's allegation that the investigation into her sterilisation had been inadequate. It lastly found a **violation of Article 8** (right to respect for private and family life) of the Convention.

### **I.G., M.K. and R.H. v. Slovakia (no. 15966/04)**

13 November 2012

This case concerned three women of Roma origin who complained in particular that they had been sterilised without their full and informed consent, that the authorities' ensuing investigation into their sterilisation had not been thorough, fair or effective and that their ethnic origin had played a decisive role in their sterilisation.

The Court held that there had been **two violations of Article 3** (prohibition of inhuman and degrading treatment) of the Convention, firstly on account of the first and second applicants' sterilisation, and secondly in respect of the first and second applicants' allegation that the investigation into their sterilisation had been inadequate. The Court further found a **violation of Article 8** (right to respect for private and family life) of the Convention in respect of the first and second applicants and **no violation of Article 13** (right to an effective remedy) of the Convention. As lastly regards the third applicant, the Court decided to **strike** the application **out of its list of cases**, under Article 37 § 1 (c) of the Convention.

See also:

- **R.K. v. the Czech Republic (no. 7883/08)**, decision (strike out) of 27 November 2012
- **G.H. v. Hungary (no. 54041/14)**, decision (inadmissibility) of 9 June 2015

## Police brutality

### **Bekos and Koutropoulos v. Greece**

13 December 2005

The applicants, two Greek nationals belonging to the Roma ethnic group, alleged in particular that they had been subjected to acts of police brutality while in police detention. They also complained that the authorities had failed to carry out an adequate investigation into the incident, and that the impugned events had been motivated by racial prejudice.

The Court held that there had been a **violation of Article 3** (prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment) of the Convention, finding that the serious physical harm suffered by the applicants at the hands of the police, as well as the feelings of fear, anguish and inferiority which the impugned treatment had produced in them, must have caused them suffering of sufficient severity for the acts of the police to be categorised as inhuman and degrading treatment. The Court also held that there had been a **violation of Article 3** on account of the lack of an effective investigation into the credible allegation made by the applicants that they had been ill-treated while in custody. The Court further held that there had been **no violation of Article 14** (prohibition of discrimination) of the Convention **taken together with Article 3** concerning the allegation that racist attitudes played a role in the applicants' treatment by the police. The Court lastly held that there had been a **violation of Article 14 taken together with Article 3** in that the authorities failed in their duty to take all possible steps to investigate whether or not discrimination might have played a role in the events at issue.

### **Jašar v. "The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"**

15 February 2007

The applicant, a Macedonian national of Roma ethnic origin, complained in particular about police brutality during his detention in police custody following a brawl in a bar and that the prosecuting authorities had failed to carry out an official investigation to identify and punish the police officers responsible for the ill-treatment he suffered.

Since the evidence before it did not enable the Court to find beyond all reasonable doubt that the applicant had been subjected to physical and mental ill-treatment while in police custody, the Court concluded that there had been **no violation of Article 3** (prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment) of the Convention on account of the alleged ill-treatment. The Court further held that there had been a **violation of**

**Article 3** on account of the lack of investigation into the allegations made by the applicant that he had been ill-treated by the police while in custody.

See also: [\*Dzeladinov and Others v. "The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"\*](#), judgment of 10 April 2008; [\*Sulejmanov v. "The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"\*](#), judgment of 24 April 2008.

### **Cobzaru v. Romania**

26 July 2007

The applicant alleged that he had been ill-treated by the police when he had gone to the local police station following an incident at his girlfriend's flat. He also complained that that ill-treatment and the refusal by the authorities to carry out a prompt, impartial and effective investigation into his allegations were due to his Roma origin.

The Court held that there had been a **violation of Article 3** (prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment) of the Convention concerning the ill-treatment of the applicant: it found that the Romanian Government had not satisfactorily established that the applicant's injuries had been caused otherwise than by the treatment inflicted on him while he was under police control at the police station and that those injuries had been the result of inhuman and degrading treatment. The Court further concluded that the Romanian authorities had failed to conduct a proper investigation into the applicant's allegations of ill-treatment, in **violation of Article 3**. It also found that the applicant had been denied an effective remedy in respect of his alleged ill-treatment by the police, in **violation of Article 13** (right to an effective remedy) of the Convention. Lastly, the Court held that the failure of the law enforcement agents to investigate possible racial motives in the applicant's ill-treatment combined with their attitude during the investigation had constituted discrimination in **violation of Article 14** (prohibition of discrimination) of the Convention **taken in conjunction with Articles 3 and 13**.

### **Petropoulou-Tsakiris v. Greece**

6 December 2007

The applicant, a Greek national of Roma ethnic origin, alleged that she had been the victim of police brutality, resulting in a miscarriage, and that the Greek authorities had failed to carry out an adequate investigation into her allegation. She further submitted that her Roma ethnic origin had influenced the attitude and behaviour of the police and judicial authorities.

The Court held that there had been **no violation of Article 3** (prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment) of the Convention concerning the alleged ill-treatment, since the evidence before it did not enable it to find beyond all reasonable doubt that the applicant's miscarriage had been the result of police brutality. The Court further held that there had been a **violation of Article 3** of the Convention on account of the lack of an effective investigation into the applicant's allegations. The Court lastly found that the failure of the Greek authorities to investigate possible racial motives behind the applicant's ill-treatment, combined with the generally partial attitude throughout the investigation, had constituted discrimination, in **violation of Article 14** (prohibition of discrimination) of the Convention **taken in conjunction with Article 3**.

### **Stoica v. Romania**

4 March 2008

During a clash between officials and a group of Roma, the 14-year-old applicant, a Romanian national of Roma origin, was allegedly beaten by a police officer despite a warning that he had recently undergone head surgery. The applicant alleged in particular that he had been ill-treated by the police and that the subsequent investigation into the incident had been inadequate. He also complained that the ill-treatment and decision not to prosecute the police officer who had beaten him had been motivated by racial prejudice.

The Court held that there had been a **violation of Article 3** (prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment) of the Convention, both under its procedural and its substantive limb: on the one hand, it found that the Romanian authorities had failed to conduct a

proper investigation into the applicant's allegations of ill-treatment; on the other hand, Romania had not satisfactorily established that the applicant's injuries had been caused otherwise than by the treatment inflicted on him by police officers. found that the applicant's injuries were the result of inhuman and degrading treatment and that there had been no proper investigation, The Court further held that there had been a **violation of Article 14** (prohibition of discrimination) of the Convention **taken in conjunction with Article 3**: neither the prosecutor in charge of the criminal investigation nor the Romanian Government could put forward any argument to show that the incident had been racially neutral; on the contrary, the evidence indicated that the police officers' behaviour had clearly been motivated by racism.

### **Adam v. Slovakia**

26 July 2016

This case concerned an allegation by a 16-year old Roma that he had been slapped in the face when being questioned by the police about a mugging and that the related investigation was inadequate.

The Court held that there had been **no violation of Article 3** (prohibition of inhuman and degrading treatment) of the Convention as concerned the applicant's allegation of having been slapped in police custody, and that there had been a **violation of Article 3** as concerned his complaint about the inadequate investigation into his allegation of ill-treatment. As concerned the merits of the applicant's allegation that he had been slapped by the police officers who had questioned him, the Court noted several elements casting doubt on his submissions and considered it plausible, as advanced by the Slovakian Government, that his injury – a swollen cheek – could have been caused while resisting arrest (as documented). However, as to the investigation into the alleged slapping, rather than investigating the applicant's allegations on their own initiative, the authorities seemed to have shifted the burden of pursuing his claims to the applicant himself. Nor had the authorities apparently taken any steps to eliminate the inconsistencies in the different versions as to the cause of the applicant's swollen cheek, to question or cross-examine certain witnesses, including the accused police officers and the doctor who had treated the applicant on his release, or to hold a face-to-face interview between him and those officers. Indeed, bearing in mind the sensitive nature of the situation concerning Roma in Slovakia at the time, the Court concluded that the authorities had not done all that could have been reasonably expected of them to investigate the applicant's allegations of ill-treatment.

See *also*, concerning minors: **Stefanou v. Greece**, judgment of 22 April 2010 (the Court held that there had been a violation of Article 3 of the Convention on account of the ill-treatment inflicted by the police); **Marinov v. Bulgaria**, judgment of 30 September 2010 (the Court held that there had been no violation of Article 3 on account of the alleged ill-treatment).

### ***Similar cases:***

#### **Carabulea v. Romania**

13 July 2010

#### **Borbála Kiss v. Hungary**

26 June 2012

#### **Ciorcan and Others v. Romania**

27 January 2015

#### **Boacă and Others v. Romania**

12 January 2016

#### **Gheorghită and Alexe v. Romania**

31 mai 2016

## Verbal abuse and threats

### [R.B. v. Hungary \(no. 64602/12\)](#)

12 April 2016

See below, under “Right to respect for private and family life and the home”.

## Prohibition of slavery and forced labour (Article 4 of the Convention)

---

### [M. and Others v. Italy and Bulgaria \(no. 40020/03\)](#)

31 July 2012

The applicants, of Roma origin and Bulgarian nationality, complained that, having arrived in Italy to find work, their daughter was detained by private individuals at gunpoint, was forced to work and steal, and sexually abused at the hands of a Roma family in a village. They also claimed that the Italian authorities had failed to investigate the events adequately.

The Court declared the applicants’ **complaints under Article 4** (prohibition of slavery and forced labour) **inadmissible** (manifestly ill-founded). It found that there had been no evidence supporting the complaint of human trafficking. However, it found that the Italian authorities had not effectively investigated the applicants’ complaints that their daughter, a minor at the time, had been repeatedly beaten and raped in the villa where she was kept. The Court therefore held that there had been a **violation of Article 3** (prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment) of the Convention under its procedural limb. The Court lastly held that there had been **no violation of Article 3** of the Convention in respect of the steps taken by the Italian authorities to release the first applicant.

## Right to liberty and security (Article 5 of the Convention)

---

### [Čonka v. Belgium](#)

5 February 2002

See below, under “Prohibition of collective expulsion of aliens”.

### [Seferovic v. Italy](#)

8 February 2011

This case mainly concerned the lawfulness of the detention of a woman from Bosnia and Herzegovina and of Roma ethnic origin pending her deportation from Italy. Her deportation and prior detention were ordered a few weeks after she had given birth to a child (who subsequently died at the hospital), despite the fact that Italian law prohibited the deportation of a woman within six months of giving birth. The applicant alleged that her detention in the holding centre had been unlawful and that no means had been available to her under Italian law by which to obtain redress.

The Court held that there had been a **violation of Article 5 § 1 (f) and Article 5 § 5** (right to liberty and security) of the Convention. Concerning the alleged unlawfulness of the applicant’s detention, it found that the Italian authorities, who had known about the birth, had not been empowered to place the application in detention. Further, as regards the alleged absence of means by which to obtain redress for the unlawful detention, the Court could only observe that no provision had existed in Italian law enabling the applicant to apply to the domestic authorities for compensation in respect of her unlawful detention.

## Right to a fair trial (Article 6 of the Convention)

---

### [K.H. and Others v. Slovakia \(no. 32881/04\)](#)

28 April 2009

See below, under “Right to respect for private and family life and home”.

### [Paraskeva Todorova v. Bulgaria](#)

25 March 2010

The applicant is a member of the Roma community. A district court sentenced her to three years’ imprisonment for fraud and refused to suspend the sentence. She appealed unsuccessfully to the higher courts. The applicant complained that she had been discriminated against on the ground of her membership of the Roma minority as a result of the reasons given for the domestic courts’ refusal to suspend her prison sentence. She further maintained that the Bulgarian courts had not been impartial as they had taken account of her ethnic origin when determining her sentence.

The Court held that there had been a **violation of Article 14** (prohibition of discrimination) **taken together with Article 6 § 1** (right to a fair trial) of the Convention. It found that the applicant had been subjected to a difference in treatment based on her ethnic origin, on account of the ambiguous reasoning of the domestic courts’ decision to impose immediate imprisonment. There had been no objective circumstance capable of justifying that situation. The Court stressed in that connection the seriousness of the facts complained of and made the point that stamping out racism was a priority in Europe’s multicultural societies and that equality of citizens before the law was enshrined in Bulgarian domestic legislation.

### **Pending application**

### [Hysenaj v. Albania \(no. 78961/11\)](#)

Application communicated to the Albanian Government on 16 March 2016

The applicant, who is of Roma origin, complains about the authorities’ failure to inform her of the progress of criminal proceedings against third parties who had set her home on fire, as a result of which she could not lodge a civil claim as the injured party in accordance with Article 62 of the Code of Criminal Procedure

The Court gave notice of the application to the Albanian Government and put questions to the parties under Articles 6 § 1 (right to a fair trial) and 14 (prohibition of discrimination) of the Convention.

## Right to respect for private and family life (Article 8 of the Convention)

---

### Way of life, forced evictions and alternative accommodation

### [Buckley v. the United Kingdom](#)

25 September 1996

The applicant submitted that since she was prevented from living in caravans on her own land with her family and from following a travelling life there had been, and continued to be, a violation of her right to respect for her private and family life and her home.

The Court held that there had been **no violation of Article 8** (right to respect for private and family life and home) of the Convention and **no violation of Article 14** (prohibition of discrimination) **taken in conjunction with Article 8**. It was satisfied that the authorities had weighed up the competing issues and given relevant and sufficient reasons for their decisions, namely that the measures were taken in the enforcement of planning controls for highway safety, the preservation of the environment and public health.

### [Chapman v. the United Kingdom, Coster v. the United Kingdom, Beard v. the United Kingdom, Lee v. the United Kingdom and Jane Smith v. the United Kingdom](#)

18 January 2001 (Grand Chamber)

The applicants complained in particular that measures taken against them to enforce planning measures concerning the occupation of their own land in their caravans violated Articles 8 (right to respect for private and family life and home) and 14 (prohibition of discrimination) of the Convention.

The Court held that there had been **no violation of Article 8** and **no violation of Article 14** of the Convention. It found in particular that the measures taken against the applicants were “in accordance with the law” and “pursued the legitimate aim” of preservation of the environment, the land in question being occupied without planning permission and in some cases on a Green Belt or Special Landscape area. Nor was the Court convinced that the UK (or any other of the Contracting States to the European Convention) was under an obligation to make available to the gypsy community an adequate number of suitably equipped sites, Article 8 not giving a right to be provided with a home.

### [Connors v. the United Kingdom](#)

27 May 2004

This case concerned the eviction of the applicant and his family from the local authority's gypsy site at Cottingley Springs in Leeds (England), where they had lived permanently for about 13 years, on the ground that they had misbehaved and caused considerable nuisance at the site.

The Court held that there had been a **violation of Article 8** (right to respect for private and family life and home) of the Convention, finding that the summary eviction had not been attended by the requisite procedural safeguards, namely the requirement to properly justify the serious interference with his rights. The Court observed in particular that the vulnerable position of gypsies as a minority meant that some special consideration had to be given to their needs and their different lifestyle both in the relevant regulatory framework and in reaching decisions in particular cases. To that extent, there was a positive obligation on the United Kingdom to facilitate the gypsy way of life.

### [Yordanova and Others v. Bulgaria](#)

24 April 2012

This case concerned the Bulgarian authorities' plan to evict Roma from a settlement situated on municipal land in an area of Sofia called Batalova Vodenitsa.

The Court held that **there would be a violation of Article 8** (right to private and family life) of the Convention **if the removal order were enforced**. It found in particular that the removal order had been based on a law, and reviewed under a decision-making procedure, neither of which required the authorities to balance the different interests involved.

### [Winterstein and Others v. France](#)

17 October 2013

This case concerned eviction proceedings brought against a number of traveller families who had been living in the same place for many years. The domestic courts issued orders for the families' eviction, on pain of penalty for non-compliance. Although the orders were not enforced, many of the families moved out. Only four families were provided with alternative accommodation in social housing; the so-called family sites where the remaining families were to be accommodated were not created. The applicants complained in particular that the order requiring them to vacate the land they had occupied for many years amounted to a violation of their right to respect for their private and family lives and their homes.

The Court held that there had been a **violation of Article 8** (right to respect for private and family life and home) of the Convention. It noted in particular that the courts,

despite acknowledging the lack of urgency and of any manifestly unlawful nuisance, had not taken into account the lengthy period for which the applicants had been settled, the municipal authorities' toleration of the situation, the right to housing, the provisions of Articles 3 and 8 of the Convention and the Court's case-law. The Court pointed out in that connection that numerous international and Council of Europe instruments stressed the need, in cases of forced eviction of Roma or travellers, to provide the persons concerned with alternative accommodation. The national authorities had to take into account the fact that such applicants belonged to a vulnerable minority; this implied paying special consideration to their needs and their different way of life when it came to devising solutions to the unlawful occupation of land or deciding on possible alternative accommodation<sup>4</sup>.

### **Bagdonavicius and Others v. Russia**

11 October 2016

This case concerned the demolition of houses and the forced eviction of people of Roma origin who lived in a village in the Kaliningrad Region. The applicants alleged in particular that their eviction and the demolition of their homes had infringed their right to respect for their private and family life and home. They also complained of a violation of their right to the peaceful enjoyment of their possessions. Lastly, they alleged that the interviews that some of them had had with the police had hindered the exercise of their right of individual application.

The Court held that there had been a **violation of Article 8** (right to respect for private and family life and the home) of the Convention, finding that the applicants had not, in the proceedings with regard to the demolition of their homes, had the benefit of an examination of the proportionality of the interference, in compliance with the requirements of Article 8, and that the national authorities had not conducted genuine consultations with the applicants about possible rehousing options, on the basis of their needs and prior to their forcible eviction. As to the applicants' allegation of proprietary interests with regard to their homes, the Court considered that these had not been sufficiently weighty and established to constitute a substantive interest and hence "possessions" within the meaning of Article 1 of Protocol No. 1 to the Convention. It therefore declared this part of the complaint **inadmissible**. Further, with regard to the destruction of moveable property during the operation to demolish the houses, the Court noted that the applicants had neither submitted a complaint nor applied to the national courts for compensation. It therefore **rejected** this part of the complaint for failure to exhaust the domestic remedies. Lastly, in the light of the case file, the Court held that the Russian authorities had not hindered the applicants in the exercise of their right of individual application. It consequently held that Russia had **not failed to comply with its obligations under Article 34** (right of individual application) of the Convention.

#### ***Similar cases:***

#### **Stenegry and Adam v. France**

22 May 2007 (inadmissibility decision)

#### **Farkas and Others v. Romania**

17 June 2014 (inadmissibility decision)

#### **Cazacliu and Others v. Romania**

4 April 2017 (inadmissibility decision)

#### **Pending applications**

#### **Hirtu and Others v. France (no. 24720/13)**

Application communicated to the French Government on 22 April 2014

This case concerns the forced eviction, in April 2013, of an unauthorised camp of Romanian Roma in the Paris region. The applicants complain in particular about the

<sup>4</sup>. See also the [judgment](#) on just satisfaction in this case delivered by the Court on 28 April 2016.



circumstances of their forced eviction from the land they were occupying with their caravans and their living conditions since then.

The Court gave notice of the application to the French Government and put questions to the parties under Articles 3 (prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment), 8 (right to respect for private and family life and home) and 13 (right to an effective remedy) of the Convention.

#### **Dimitrova and Others v. Bulgaria (no. 39084/10)**

Application communicated to the Bulgarian Government on 8 December 2014

This case concerns the forced eviction in December 2008 of three Roma families from the municipal dwellings in which they had been living for twenty years. Six applicants from the same family complain in particular about the State's failure to promptly provide them with shelter, which resulted in the death of a two-month-old baby. All applicants further submit that, during the eviction, representatives of the authorities verbally abused them and destroyed their homes, causing much distress to both the applicants and their children. They also complain about the poor living conditions in the shelter which was later provided to them.

The Court gave notice of the application to the Bulgarian Government and put questions to the parties under Articles 2 (right to life), 3 (prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment), 6 (right to a fair trial), 8 (right to respect for private and family life and home), 13 (right to an effective remedy), 14 (prohibition of discrimination) and 35 (admissibility criteria) of the Convention.

## Access to medical records

#### **K.H. and Others v. Slovakia (no. 32881/04)**

28 April 2009

The applicants are eight women of Roma origin who were treated at gynaecological and obstetrics departments in two hospitals in eastern Slovakia during their pregnancies and deliveries. Despite continuing attempts to conceive, none of the applicants has become pregnant since their last stay in the hospitals, when they delivered via caesarean section. The applicants suspected that the reason for their infertility might be that they were sterilised without their knowledge or consent during the operation.

The Court held that there had been a **violation of Article 8** (right to respect for private and family life) of the Convention, on account of the applicants not having been allowed to make photocopies of their medical records. It also found that there had been a violation of **Article 6 § 1** (access to court) of the Convention, on account of the impossibility for the applicants or their lawyers to obtain photocopies of their medical records having limited their effective access to court. Lastly, the Court held that there had been **no violation of Article 13** (right to an effective remedy) of the Convention **in combination with Article 8**, on account of Article 13 not guaranteeing a remedy to challenge a law itself.

## Ban on begging

#### **Pending application**

#### **Lacatus v. Switzerland (no. 14065/15)**

Application communicated to the Government of Switzerland on 11 February 2016

The applicant, a Romanian national belonging to the Roma community, was fined 500 Swiss Francs (CHF) for begging on the street in Geneva, pursuant to the Geneva criminal law which contains a blanket prohibition on begging.

The Court gave notice of the application to the Government of Switzerland and put questions to the parties under Articles 8 (right to respect for private life), 10 (freedom of expression) and 14 (prohibition of discrimination) of the Convention.

## Publications allegedly insulting to the Roma community

### Aksu v. Turkey

15 March 2012 (Grand Chamber)

The applicant, of Roma origin, alleged that three government-funded publications (a book about Roma and two dictionaries) included remarks and expressions that reflected anti-Roma sentiment.

The Court reiterated that discrimination within the meaning of Article 14 (prohibition of discrimination) of the Convention was to be understood as treating people in relevantly similar situations differently, without an objective or reasonable justification. However, The applicant had not managed to build a case to prove that the publications had a discriminatory intent or effect. The applicant's case did not therefore concern a difference of treatment and the Court decided to examine the case only under Article 8 (right to respect for private and family life) of the Convention.

In the applicant's case, the Court held that there had been **no violation of Article 8** (right to respect for private and family life) of the Convention, finding that neither the book nor the dictionaries were offensive to Roma. It found in particular that the Turkish authorities had taken all necessary steps to comply with their obligation under Article 8 to protect the applicant's effective right to respect for his private life as a member of the Roma community. It did mention, however, that it would have been preferable to label a second definition of the word "Gypsy" – "miserly" – in the dictionaries as "pejorative" or "insulting" rather than "metaphorical".

## Verbal abuse and threats

### R.B. v. Hungary (no. 64602/12)

12 April 2016

This case concerned the complaint by a woman of Roma origin that she had been subjected to racist insults and threats by participants in an anti-Roma march and that the authorities had failed to investigate the racist verbal abuse.

The Court held that there had been a **violation of Article 8** (right to respect for private life) of the Convention on account of the inadequate investigation into the applicant's allegations of racially motivated abuse. It considered in particular that, given that the insults and acts in question had taken place during an anti-Roma march and had come from a member of an extremely right-wing vigilante group, the authorities should have conducted the investigation in that specific context. However, they had failed to take all reasonable steps to establish the role of racist motives. At the same time, the Court declared **inadmissible** the complaint under **Article 8** concerning the authorities' inaction during the rallies as being manifestly ill-founded, coming to the conclusion that there had been no appearance of an unreasonable response by the police to the demonstrations. The Court also declared **inadmissible** the applicant's complaint under **Article 3** (prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment) of the Convention **read alone or in conjunction with Article 14** (prohibition of discrimination) as being manifestly ill-founded. While the right-wing groups had been present in her neighbourhood for several days, they had been continuously monitored by the police. No physical confrontation had taken place between the Roma inhabitants and the demonstrators. The statements and acts by one of the demonstrators, although openly discriminatory and performed in the context of marches with intolerant overtones, had not been so severe as to cause the kind of fear, anguish or feelings of inferiority that were necessary for a complaint to fall within the scope of Article 3.

### Király and Dömötör v. Hungary

17 January 2017

This case concerned an anti-Roma demonstration. The applicants – both of whom are of Roma origin – alleged that the police had failed to protect them from racist abuse during the demonstration and to properly investigate the incident.

The Court held that there had been a **violation of Article 8** (right to respect for private life) of the Convention. It found in particular that the Hungarian authorities' investigations into the incident had been limited. Namely, one of the investigations – concerning the speeches made during the demonstration – had not taken into account the specific context of the abuse and another – concerning the offence of violence against a group – had been slow and limited to acts of physical violence. The investigations had not therefore established the true and complex nature of the events. The cumulative effect of these shortcomings had meant that an openly racist demonstration, with sporadic acts of violence, had remained virtually without legal consequences. Indeed, the applicants' psychological integrity had not been effectively protected against what had amounted to nothing less than organised intimidation of the Roma community, by means of a paramilitary parade, verbal threats and speeches advocating a policy of racial segregation. The Court was concerned that this could be perceived by the public as the State's legitimisation and/or tolerance of such behaviour.

## Freedom of expression (Article 10 of the Convention)

---

### Le Pen v. France

28 February 2017 (decision on the admissibility)

This case concerned findings against the applicant by the courts in respect of certain remarks made by him in September 2012, during the Summer School of the *Front National*, a political movement which he founded and of which he is honorary president.

The Court declared the applicant's complaint under Article 10 (freedom of expression) of the Convention **inadmissible** as being manifestly ill-founded, finding in particular that his conviction for public insult directed at a group of persons on account of belonging to a given ethnic community was supported by relevant and sufficient reasons.

## Freedom of assembly and association (Article 11 of the Convention)

---

### Anti-Roma rallies and demonstrations

#### Vona v. Hungary

9 July 2013

This case concerned the dissolution of an association on account of the anti-Roma rallies and demonstrations organised by its movement.

The Court held that there had been **no violation of Article 11** (freedom of assembly and association) of the Convention. It recalled in particular that, as with political parties, the State was entitled to take preventive measures to protect democracy against associations if a sufficiently imminent prejudice to the rights of others undermined the fundamental values upon which a democratic society rested and functioned. In this case, a movement created by the applicant's association had led to demonstrations conveying a message of racial division, which, reminiscent of the Hungarian Nazi Movement (Arrow Cross), had had an intimidating effect on the Roma minority. Indeed, such paramilitary marches had gone beyond the mere expression of a disturbing or offensive idea, which is protected under the Convention, given the physical presence of a threatening group of organised activists. Therefore, the only way to effectively eliminate the threat posed by the movement had been to remove the organisational backup provided by the association.

## Prohibition order preventing Gypsy-Romany Fair from taking place

### [The Gypsy Council and Others v. the United Kingdom](#)

14 May 2002 (inadmissibility decision)

The first and second applicants are organisations representing the interests of the Gypsy-Romany community, of which the third and fourth applicants were members. The Horsmonden Horse Fair, a significant cultural and social event in the life of the Gypsy-Romany community in the United Kingdom, had been held every year at the Horsmonden Village Green for the last 50 years. In August 2000 the Borough Council decided to issue a prohibition order on the ground that the fair could result in serious disruption to the life of the community in the vicinity of the area where the fair was to take place. On 4 September 2000, having obtained the Secretary of State's approval, the Borough Council issued the prohibition order. Notwithstanding the prohibition order, the police gave consent to the conduct of a limited parade on 10 September 2000 in Horsmonden.

The Court declared the application **inadmissible** (manifestly ill-founded) under Article 11 of the Convention finding that, in the circumstances of the case, the response of the authorities had been proportionate, striking a fair balance between the rights of the applicants and those of the community in general. As to the necessity of the measure, the Court observed in particular that the exercise of the right to freedom of assembly is not absolute and where large gatherings are concerned the impact on the community as a whole may legitimately be taken into consideration. In the present case, the fair had been growing in size through the years and in 2000 the police had identified concerns about the disruption to the local community caused, *inter alia*, by the sheer volume of visitors, indiscriminate parking, littering, a background level of increased crime and road closures. Besides, the authorities made available a site some 20 miles from Horsmonden, where large numbers of persons could assemble without causing disruption. Moreover, the police permitted a limited procession to take place in Horsmonden.

## Protection of property (Article 1 of Protocol No. 1 to the Convention)

---

### Demolition of houses and forced eviction

#### [Bagdonavicius and Others v. Russia](#)

11 October 2016

See above, under "Right to respect for private and family and the home".

### Refusal to recognise validity of Roma marriage for purposes of establishing entitlement to survivor's pension

#### [Muñoz Díaz v. Spain](#)

8 December 2009

The applicant, a Spanish national belonging to the Roma community, married in 1971 according to the Roma community's own rites. Her husband, also a Spanish national and a member of that community, died in 2000. She then applied for a survivor's pension but it was refused. The applicant complained in particular about the authorities' refusal to grant her a survivor's pension on the ground that her marriage had no civil effects under Spanish law.

The Court held that there had been a **violation of Article 14** (prohibition of discrimination) of the Convention **taken together with Article 1** (protection of property) **of Protocol No. 1**, finding that it was disproportionate for the Spanish State,

which had provided the applicant and her family with health coverage and collected social security contributions from her husband for over 19 years, then to refuse to recognise her Roma marriage when it came to granting her a survivor's pension on her husband's death.

## Right to education (Article 2 of Protocol No. 1)

---

### Placement of Roma gypsy children in "special" schools

#### **D.H. and Others v. the Czech Republic**

13 November 2007 (Grand Chamber)

This case concerned 18 Roma children, all Czech nationals, who were placed in schools for children with special needs, including those with a mental or social handicap, from 1996 to 1999. The applicants claimed that a two-tier educational system was in place in which the segregation of Roma children into such schools – which followed a simplified curriculum – was quasi-automatic.

The Court noted in particular that, at the relevant time, the majority of children in special schools in the Czech Republic were of Roma origin. Roma children of average/above average intellect were often placed in those schools on the basis of psychological tests which were not adapted to people of their ethnic origin. The Court concluded that the law at that time had a disproportionately prejudicial effect on Roma children, in **violation of Article 14** (prohibition of discrimination) of the Convention **taken in conjunction with Article 2** (right to education) **of Protocol No. 1**.

#### **Sampanis and Others v. Greece**

5 June 2008

This case concerned the authorities' failure to provide schooling for the applicants' children during the 2004-2005 school year and their subsequent placement in special classes, in an annexe to the main Aspropyrgos primary school building, a measure which the applicants claimed was related to their Roma origin.

The Court noted that the Roma children were not suitably tested either initially, to see if they needed to go into the preparatory classes, or later, to see if they had progressed sufficiently to join the main school. It found a **violation of Article 14** (prohibition of discrimination) of the Convention **taken in conjunction with Article 2** (right to education) **of Protocol No. 1** concerning both the enrolment procedure and the placement of the children in special classes. The Court also held that there had been a **violation of Article 13** (right to an effective remedy) of the Convention, finding that the Greek Government had not adduced evidence of any effective remedy that the applicants could have used in order to secure redress for the alleged violation of Article 14 of the Convention taken together with Article 2 of Protocol No. 1.

#### **Oršuš and Others v. Croatia**

16 March 2010 (Grand Chamber)

This case concerned fifteen Croatians national of Roma origin who complained that they had been victims of racial discrimination during their school years in that they had been segregated into Roma-only classes and consequently suffered educational, psychological and emotional damage.

Even though the present case differed from *D.H. and Others v. the Czech Republic* (see above) in that it had not been a general policy in both schools to automatically place Roma pupils in separate classes, it was common ground that a number of European States encountered serious difficulties in providing adequate schooling for Roma children. In the instant case, the Court observed that only Roma children had been placed in the special classes in the schools concerned. The Croatian Government attributed the separation to the pupils' lack of proficiency in Croatian; however, the tests determining their placement in such classes did not focus specifically on language skills,

the educational programme subsequently followed did not target language problems and the children's progress was not clearly monitored. The placement of the applicants in Roma-only classes had therefore been unjustified, in **violation of Article 14** (prohibition of discrimination) of the Convention **taken in conjunction with Article 2** (right to education) **of Protocol No. 1**.

### **Horváth és Vadászi v. Hungary**

9 November 2010 (inadmissibility decision)

Both applicants were of Roma origin. Following their qualification by a county expert panel as having mild intellectual disabilities, which was confirmed by a second examination in 2000, they were placed in a special class of the local school, which they attended from 1994 until 2002. Before the Court, they complained that their placement in the special class was a discriminatory measure due to their Roma origin.

The Court declared the application **inadmissible** for the following reasons: the applicants had not made use in Hungary of a civil remedy under the Public Education Act and had therefore failed to exhaust the domestic remedies, one of the admissibility criteria required by Article 35 of the Convention; another part of their application did not comply with the six-month rule in Article 35 § 1 (admissibility criteria) of the Convention; the part of the application concerning allegations of racially motivated segregation or discrimination was also declared inadmissible for non-exhaustion of domestic remedies.

### **Sampani and Others v. Greece**

11 December 2012

This case concerned the provision of education for Roma children at the 12th Primary School in Aspropyrgos. The applicants were 140 Greek nationals from 38 families, all of Roma origin, who were living at the material time on the Psari authorised residential site near Aspropyrgos. 98 applicants were children aged from five and a half to 15, and 42 were their parents or guardians. Some of them were applicants in the case which gave rise to the judgment in *Sampanis and Others v. Greece* (see above).

The Court held that there had been a **violation of Article 14** (prohibition of discrimination) of the Convention **taken in conjunction with Article 2** (right to education) **of Protocol No. 1**. Noting in particular the lack of significant change since the *Sampanis and Others v. Greece* judgment of 5 June 2008 (see above), the Court found that Greece had not taken into account the particular needs of the Roma children of Psari as members of a disadvantaged group and that the operation between 2008 and 2010 of the 12th Primary School in Aspropyrgos, which was attended by Roma pupils only, had amounted to discrimination against the applicants.

Under **Article 46** (binding force and execution of judgments) of the Convention, the Court recommended that those of the applicants who were still of school age be enrolled at another State school and that those who had reached the age of majority be enrolled at "second chance schools" or adult education institutes set up by the Ministry of Education under the Lifelong Learning Programme.

### **Horváth and Kiss v. Hungary**

29 January 2013

This case concerned the complaints of two young men of Roma origin that their education in schools for the mentally disabled had been the result of misplacement and had amounted to discrimination.

The Court held that there had been a **violation of Article 14** (prohibition of discrimination) of the Convention **taken in conjunction with Article 2** (right to education) **of Protocol No. 1**. It underlined in particular that there was a long history of misplacement of Roma children in special schools in Hungary. The Court found that the applicants' schooling arrangement indicated that the authorities had failed to take into account their special needs as members of a disadvantaged group. As a result, the applicants had been isolated and had received an education which made their integration into majority society difficult.

### Lavida and Others v. Greece

28 May 2013

This case concerned the education of Roma children who were restricted to attending a primary school in which the only pupils were other Roma children.

The Court held that there had been a **violation of Article 14** (prohibition of discrimination) of the Convention **taken in conjunction with Article 2** (right to education) **of Protocol No. 1**, finding that the continuing nature of this situation and the State's refusal to take anti-segregation measures implied discrimination and a breach of the right to education.

#### **Pending application**

### Kósa v. Hungary (no. 53461/15)

Requête communiquée au gouvernement hongrois le 17 juin 2016

This application concerns the education of a Roma pupil in a school established by the Greek Catholic Church in a Roma neighbourhood.

The Court gave notice of the application to the Hungarian Government and put questions to the parties under Article 2 (right to education) of Protocol No. 1 to the Convention and Articles 14 (prohibition of discrimination) and 35 (admissibility criteria) of the Convention.

## Right to free elections (Article 3 of Protocol No. 1)

---

### Prohibition of a Rom from standing for election

### Sejdić and Finci v. Bosnia and Herzegovina

22 December 2009 (Grand Chamber)

The applicants – the first one of Roma origin and the second one a Jew – alleged that Bosnian law prevented them from running for the Presidency and the House of Peoples of the Parliamentary Assembly because of their ethnic origins.

The Court held that there had been a **violation of Article 14** (prohibition of discrimination) of the Convention **taken together with Article 3** (right to free elections) **of Protocol No. 1** and a **violation of Article 1** (general prohibition of discrimination) **of Protocol No. 12** to the Convention. It found discriminatory the constitutional arrangements, put in place by the Dayton Peace Agreement<sup>5</sup>, according to which only people declaring affiliation with Bosniacs, Croats or Serbs were eligible to stand for election to the tripartite State presidency and the second chamber of the State parliament.

## Freedom of movement (Article 2 of Protocol No. 4)

---

#### **Pending application**

### Balta v. France (no. 19462/12)

Application communicated to the French Government on 6 November 2015

This case concerns proceedings for the eviction of the applicant, a Romanian national of Roma ethnicity, from the dead-end street which he and several other people occupied in the municipal territory of Courneuve, in the Paris region. The applicant submits in particular that the legislative framework for the eviction of Travellers is in breach of the principle of non-discrimination in that it entails a restriction, on the basis of ethnicity, on freedom of movement.

---

<sup>5</sup>. On 14 December 1995 the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, ("the Dayton Peace Agreement") entered into force which put an end to the 1992-95 war in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Court gave notice of the application to the French Government and put questions to the parties under Article 2 (freedom of movement) of Protocol No. 4 to the Convention.

## Prohibition of collective expulsion of aliens (Article 4 of Protocol No. 4)

---

### Čonka v. Belgium

5 February 2002

The applicants, Slovakian nationals of Romany origin, said that they had fled from Slovakia where they had been subjected to racist assaults with the police refusing to intervene. They had been arrested with a view to their expulsion after they had been summoned to complete their asylum requests. The applicants complained, in particular, about the circumstances of their arrest and expulsion to Slovakia.

The Court held that there had been a **violation of Article 4** (prohibition of collective expulsion of aliens) **of Protocol No. 4** to the Convention, noting in particular that the expulsion procedure had not afforded sufficient guarantees demonstrating that the personal circumstances of each of those concerned had been genuinely and individually taken into account. In the Court's view, the procedure followed did not enable it to eliminate all doubt that the expulsion might have been collective, that doubt being reinforced by several factors: the political authorities had previously given instructions to the relevant authority for the implementation of operations of that kind; all the aliens concerned had been required to attend the police station at the same time; the orders served on them requiring them to leave the territory and for their arrest were couched in identical terms; it was very difficult for the aliens to contact a lawyer; the asylum procedure had not been completed.

In this case the Court also found a violation of **Article 5 §§ 1** (right to liberty and security) **and 4** (right to take proceedings by which lawfulness of detention shall be decided) of the Convention, and a **violation of Article 13** (right to an effective remedy) of the Convention **taken in conjunction with Article 4 of Protocol No. 4**. It further held that there had been **no violation of Article 5 § 2** (right to be informed of the reasons for arrest) and **no violation of Article 13** (right to an effective remedy) **taken in conjunction with Article 3** (prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment) of the Convention.

## Texts and documents

---

See in particular:

- the Council of Europe [webpage](#) on Roma
  - [Handbook on European non-discrimination law](#), European Union Fundamental Rights Agency / Council of Europe, 2010
  - [Handbook on European non-discrimination law: Case-law update July 2010-December 2011](#), European Union Fundamental Rights Agency / Council of Europe, 2012
- 

### Media Contact:

Tel.: +33 (0)3 90 21 42 08