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### Romani Teaching in Austria<sup>1</sup>

As in many other European countries Romani culture has received growing public attention in Austria as a consequence of the emancipation of the Roma, a process that intensified from the 1990s onwards. Roma NGOs aimed for the inclusion of their language and culture into the educational system, and this finally was guaranteed through the official recognition of the Roma as an Austrian national minority in 1993. From the beginning, Romani teaching initiatives were mainly politically based and did not really take the sociolinguistic situation of the Romani varieties spoken in Austria into account. Pedagogical considerations were even more sidelined in the process, or rather more or less neglected. The paper deals with Romani teaching in Austria in general with a special focus on the situation of Burgenland Romani, which is perceived as the indigenous or autochthonous Romani variety of Austria.

Keywords: Romani, language teaching, Austria

### *Poučevanje romskega jezika v Avstriji<sup>1</sup>*

Kot v številnih državah je romska kultura deležna vse večje pozornosti tudi v Avstriji, kar je posledica romskega osamosvajanja, ki se je še posebej okrepilo po letu 1990. Romske nevladne organizacije so si prizadevale za vključitev romskega jezika in kulture v izobraževalni sistem, kar je bilo zagotovljeno z uradnim priznanjem Romov kot avstrijske narodne manjšine v letu 1993. Pobude za poučevanje romskega jezika so bile že od vsega začetka politično motivirane in sploh niso upoštevale sociolingvističnega položaja različnih romskega jezika, ki jih govorijo Romi v Avstriji. Pedagoška mnenja so bila v tem procesu odrinjena oziroma bolj ali manj spregledana. Članek obravnava poučevanje romščine v Avstriji s posebnim ozirom na položaj romskega jezika na Gradiščanskem, ki v Avstriji velja za avtohtono različico romščine.

Gljučne besede: romski jezik, poučevanje jezikov, Avstrija

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## 1. Some General Remarks on Romani Teaching

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Romani has no tradition as a language of instruction and education and has, if at all, only peripheral functions in these contexts. The primary reason for this lies in the lack of a written tradition, which is the result of the marginalised existence of its speakers. Stigmatised and marginalised groups lack the political power necessary to create economic and cultural centres of power. Yet standards which are implemented and institutionalised as the common language of administration and education in the respective area of power through a working educational system, develop almost exclusively in such centres. Other varieties of the standard language as well as varieties of other languages are dominated by the standard and are usually excluded from the educational system. At most they serve marginal functions as a language of instruction, for instance as a means of teaching this standard to speakers of varieties that are divergent from the standard or other language varieties.

The situation of Romani as a teaching subject is similar. As stigmatised as its speakers, it has long been recognised as an independent language only by individual academics. Hence there is no recognition of this language in educational policies. To this day it is usually considered an educational obstacle rather than an educational subject. Only the self-organisation resulting from the emancipatory efforts of Roma, made in connection with the increased multilingualism and awareness of plurality witnessed in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, led to Romani being reluctantly recognised, even if only marginally, by the educational system.

Romani teaching is less an educational than a political concern.<sup>2</sup> NGOs often consider the integration of the history, culture and language of the groups they represent into the educational system to be an aspect of political emancipation relative to the majority population, their historiography, culture and language. Positive reactions to political demands for integration into the curriculum are usually declarative acts, which grant the Romani language a marginal role in the educational mainstream, a role that is usually connected to the teaching of Roma history and culture. Criteria ensuring the quality of the teaching content are, if considered at all, mostly subordinate to the fact that the teaching even takes place. The teaching of Romani is usually offered outside the curriculum as extracurricular voluntary classes and, depending on the general framework, strengthens the pupils' feelings of group identity, self-esteem and self-confidence. Although such activities are often considered to prevent language loss, it is much more realistic to assume a hampering, weakening or protracting of language loss

36 in this context. The motives are, as mentioned above, generally political and thus usually render the teaching of Romani resulting from such initiatives a symbolic act. The systematic use of Romani for the alphabetisation of children who are socialised with that language plays no role in the educational system – neither in Austria, nor anywhere else. This would represent the only sensible reason to include Romani in the standard curriculum from the very beginning.<sup>3</sup>

As is so often the case for dominated, non-standardised minority languages, the educational system is based on the dominant language(s) and is faced with diversity with regard to:

- ♦ the varieties and/or dialects of the minority language,
- ♦ the pupils' socialisation language and
- ♦ the pupils' multilingualism.

This diversity is often connected to:

- ♦ differences in each pupil's language competence and
- ♦ challenges ranging from differences to discrepancies in the parents' language attitudes.

Both the diversity outlined as well as the differences mentioned here are considered problematic, indeed even as learning barriers, against the background of a monolingual state school system.

## 2. Romani in the Austrian Educational System

The Austrian Roma are composed of different sub-groups, originating in three trans-European migration waves. The Sinti as well as the Burgenland Roma are considered the first immigrants. Both groups of speakers form, together with speakers of Lovara Romani, who arrived during the Vlach migration at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the so-called indigenous kinds of Roma who have been long-term residents in Austria. The east-west migration from the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century led to a significant increase in plurality. Since then, speakers of Arli, Gurbet and Kalderaš Romani, as well as members of other groups who enrich Austrian Romani and Austria's cultural diversity with their varieties, are considered Austrian Roma. These groups are multilingual. In addition to German and Romani, the language varieties of their countries of origin also influence their collective repertoire.<sup>4</sup>

The plurilingualism of children from the various Austrian Romani speaker communities is illustrated in a brief overview in the following table, which takes into account the differences in competence with regard to Romani and the respective socialisation language:<sup>5</sup>

**Table 1:** Plurilingualism and socialisation language of Roma children in Austria

SCENARIO	ROMANI	OTHER	GERMAN
01	•	–	–
02	•	+	–
03	•	•	–
04	–	•	–
05	+	•	–
06	•	•	+
07	•	–	+
08	•	+	+
09	–	•	+
10	+	•	+
11	–	•	•
12	+	•	•
13	•	–	•
14	•	+	•
15	+	+	•
16	–	+	•
17	+	–	•
18	–	–	•

‘other’ ... languages of the country of origin or international languages

- socialisation language / full competence
- + additional language / L2 / high competence
- marginal language / limited or almost no competence

Pupils without any competence in German, i.e., those fitting scenarios 1 to 5, are considered to be highly problematic by the Austrian educational system, as already suggested above. The fact that these pupils are usually the children of immigrants additionally exacerbates this situation. Their sociocultural background lacks prestige, and the socialisation language connected with it, as well as the language of their country of origin are hardly considered prestige

38 languages. They generally range at the stigmatised bottom end of the cultural significance scale for the vast majority of German-speaking Austrians. Due to the children's knowledge of German, scenarios 6 to 18 correspond to the monolingual orientation of the Austrian education system; the children are thus more or less integrated and part of the mainstream. However, their contribution to cultural diversity as well as the potential additional economic benefit deriving from this plurilingualism are largely ignored by the education system. This is an irresponsible attitude not only to the children's future, but also to Austria's intellectual resources.

Pupils competent in the so-called indigenous varieties (Burgenland, Sinti and Lovara Romani) mainly fit scenarios 17 and 18 in the table above. Scenario 13, bilingual socialisation in German and Romani, cannot be ruled out but is extremely rare as shown by the examples in scenarios 14 to 16 of a high competence in a language other than Romani and/or German.

- ♦ Burgenland Romani (or *Roman* as its speakers refer to it) primarily corresponds to scenario 18, socialisation in German with limited to no competence in Romani. A few exceptions correlate with scenario 17, socialisation in German and parallel acquisition of Romani whose functions are limited to only some private domains. Resulting the Burgenland Roma activists' self-organisation from the late 1980s onwards, Burgenland Romani became one of the most important identity markers for the majority of them. The subsequent language awareness caused its speakers to regard the decline in language use as a loss and the teaching of Romani became an important demand in the cultural political programme of their representative organisations.
- ♦ Sinti Romani also primarily reflects scenario 18, in some rare cases also scenario 17. Yet language attitudes are entirely different from those of the Burgenland Roma mentioned above. *Rómanes* or *Sintitikes*, as Sinti refer to their language, is – not exclusively but primarily for older speakers – a taboo in-group marker which must be protected from outsiders and which is hence best kept secret. Sinti Romani is therefore essentially “invisible” in public and hence also in the cultural and educational system.
- ♦ Lovara Romani speakers are faced with a scenario similar to that of Burgenland Roma and Sinti. Although one can assume that the number of competent older speakers and younger “exceptions” is higher than that of Burgenland Romani, there is still a strong tendency towards *de facto* German monolingualism with a residual competence in Romani. This in turn correlates with cases 17 and 18 in the above overview of language competence and socialisation language. While their situation is similar to that of the Sinti and Burgenland Roma, there are considerable differences in language attitudes: across the generations, Romani

is seen as a part of a romanticised past of *Romanšago*, of “true Romaniness,” and language shift is considered an irreversible process. Hence there are no serious initiatives promoting the teaching of Lovara Romani, although the variety has been codified in the context of the Austrian Romani Project.<sup>6</sup> Its public function is reduced to the presentation of the cultural heritage in songs, poems, stories, etc. in the “language” of the past.

While Roma pupils with an autochthonous background only correspond to two of the 18 model scenarios, pupils from non-autochthonous groups span the entire range. Without going into too much detail, the range of attitudes of speaker groups who (or rather whose ancestors) immigrated since the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century can be described as follows:

- ♦ If Romani dominates the daily routine of the (extended) family, then the situation can be described as language retention with hardly any awareness of the ethno-language. Language awareness of German, the dominant language, is prevalent as it offers the prospect of participating in the affluent society through access to the education system and integration into the labour market. Such communities have little interest in the teaching of Romani. Sometimes instruction of this kind is rejected on the grounds that the children can speak the language anyway and that Romani teaching would tie up resources, negatively influence their children’s education and consequently also their socio-economic chances.
- ♦ Given the necessary competence, Romani is consciously used in public by Roma NGOs or their representatives. This demonstrates the ethno-cultural identity within activities for socio-political emancipation and also serves the ethno-folkloristic requirements of the entertainment industry for maximum profit.<sup>7</sup> Language awareness with demands for Romani teaching often develops in such a context.<sup>8</sup>
- ♦ An on-going or completed language shift is often only regarded as a loss if those affected are close to or part of an NGO with a defined cultural awareness. This feeling of loss is often the origin of positive language awareness which subsequently results in language maintenance activities and the demands for Romani teaching, as was the case with Burgenland Romani.
- ♦ If speaker groups or their representatives are not close to any culturally active NGO during or after shifting from Romani to German in all private and everyday domains, then this shift only leads to individual cases of speakers wishing to preserve their Romani. It appears that socio-cultural assimilation is intuitively seen as a natural consequence of socio-economic integration. As with the case of the Lovara described above, Romani becomes an aspect of the past, the roots and the life in the country of their origin among these speaker

40 groups without any noteworthy function in their current situation. Romani teaching is seen as negligible in such framework conditions and is sometimes seen as a barrier to the children's future.

The differences in language attitude described above are the symptoms of a monolingual state education system and also highlight the problems experienced by speakers of minority languages who, due to the natural plurality of their language, are faced with the standard and standardisation visions of an education system based on homogeneity and uniformity.

The education system generally cannot cope at all if additional deficits in the pupils' social environment occur. Roma children who are socially marginalised due to persistent ethnic stigmatisation, and partly also due to their migrant status, often grow up in an illiterate environment, as do the children of socially marginalised non-Roma. Basic skills of educated social groups - literacy, books, reading aloud and reading to oneself are of lower importance in socially weaker groups, while being fostered and maintained in educated classes from a young age. The resulting deficit affects mainly but not exclusively plurilingual children of migrants who additionally often only have limited competence in German. To use ethnicity as an excuse or explanation for these deficits, as is often the case in the political context to simplify matters, is not only short-sighted but also discriminatory and degrading. It strips children of any chance to even approach equality in the educational system as anchored in their human rights.<sup>9</sup> Against the background outlined here it comes as no surprise that Austrian educational policies and their implementation focus primarily on autochthonous Burgenland Romani, which is threatened with extinction but which apparently has a geographically clearly delineated speaker community.

### 3. Romani Teaching in the Burgenland

The only formal judicial consequence for Austrian Romani subsequent to the recognition of the Roma as an Austrian ethnic group in 1993 is the 1998 amendment of the Minority Education Act for the Burgenland of 1994:<sup>10</sup>

#### 6. Section: Special Language Offers

§ 14. (1) In the Burgenland additional instruction in Croatian and Hungarian shall also be facilitated according to demand at school types not mentioned in Sections 2 to 4 especially for Austrian citizens of the Croatian or Hungarian ethnic groups. Similarly, additional instruction in Romanes shall be facilitated for the Burgenland Roma.



§ 14. (3) As defined by para. 1, Croatian, Hungarian and Romanes shall be offered at secondary schools [Ger. Hauptschulen, Sonderschulen, Polytechnischen Schulen, mittleren und höheren Schulen], special schools, as well as academies as a voluntary subject. [...]

7. Section: Education Supervisory Board

§ 15. The Burgenland Board of Education shall establish a department for the affairs [...] 4. of teaching Croatian, Hungarian and Romanes at other schools.

This statutory rule, naming Romanes three times, merely enables Romanes or Burgenland Romani to be taught as an additional subject in schools where the necessary initiative has been taken and where the number of children registering for a course is sufficient. As there are no supplementary rules on implementation or legal regulations, one may conclude that this statutory rule constitutes one of the aforementioned politically symbolic acts and that the necessary additional steps are, although not obstructed, left to chance. As suggested by the terms “additional” and “voluntary” subject, Burgenland Romani teaching is only possible within voluntary extracurricular classes. Given a sufficient number of registrations, these classes are always offered after regular classes. Due to the lack of trained teachers, of functioning infrastructure and of measures providing these general requirements, the organisation of voluntary extracurricular classes of this kind is always in the hands of a joint effort by individuals from the ethnic group and the education sector. It is thanks to just one individual initiative that Burgenland Romani is taught at all.

### 3.1 Burgenland Romani at School

The project “Codification and Didactisation of Roman” started in 1992. The origin of all teaching activities of Burgenland Romani, it is based on the initiative of an individual: Emmerich Gärtner-Horvath, at the time a member of Verein Roma in Oberwart / Felsőőr / Gornja Borta / Erba.<sup>11</sup> The resulting cooperation with linguists at the University of Graz led to the first teaching activities in 1997.<sup>12</sup> Participants in the extracurricular learning support course are offered a Burgenland Romani course as part of the recreation activities of Verein Roma. Yet it took another two years until administrative and other obstacles were overcome and the first classes in the form of voluntary extracurricular classes were offered at the local primary school. The model was soon expanded to include the local lower secondary school also and, more sustainably, the neighbouring primary school in Unterwart / Alsőőr / Tenu Erba. Here, the non-Roma expressed genuine interest in Burgenland Romani teaching. Unterwart is one of the last enclaves of the Burgenland with a relatively large proportion of Hungarian-speaking residents. Hence the strong Hungarian “flavour” of Burgenland Romani attracted both Hungarian teachers as well as Hungarian-speaking pupils to this rather unfamiliar and stigmatised language.



Despite the necessary legal framework being in place, the further dissemination of teaching activities of this kind at a school level still faces large obstacles. The non-existence of any implementation strategy on behalf of the school administration mentioned above, paired with the lack of interest and of efforts on behalf of public authorities and politics as well as of the Roma themselves, constitute probably the biggest challenge. The majority of proponents appears to consider the politically symbolic level as sufficient for any kind of teaching initiative. Moreover, the minimum number of pupils is often not reached, either because of years with low birth-rates or due to other additional classes being offered; this is summed up by the initiator of the teaching activities in an interview in the quarterly paper of Roma-Service (d|ROM|a 2011, 22):<sup>13</sup>

The success of language teaching at schools cannot be measured in numbers. Our experience over the past few years has shown that the original strategy of offering Roman teaching as voluntary extracurricular classes at as many schools as possible is not beneficial. Voluntary language classes in the afternoons cannot compete with football or dance classes.

The interview also hints that educational integration, independent of its quantity and quality, cannot guarantee the survival of Burgenland Romani, an endangered variety of a numerically small and, even within the European Roma society, isolated speaker community (ibid.):<sup>14</sup>

Another realisation of recent years is that one cannot preserve a language with language courses and language teaching at schools. This is the reason for our restructuring the Romani course in Deutsch Kaltenbrunn. Designed as a cooking class, it targets language instruction at families – we meet members of all generations, cook and speak Roman exclusively.

### 3.2 Extracurricular Teaching

Since Burgenland Romani teaching is carried by the bottom-up initiative of an NGO, the decline of voluntary extracurricular classes can fairly easily be compensated by offering extracurricular activities. This work is primarily done by the “RomBus”. The “Roma-Service” organisation took this into service in 2005 in order to take the activities, which from the beginning of the self-organisation process had been concentrated in and limited to the greater Oberwart area, into as many villages as possible with a Burgenland Roma population, thereby maximising the number of Burgenland Roma involved.

The RomBus initiative allows the Roma-Service to cover the entire area of the Burgenland as well as neighbouring regions. They regularly visit communities and families from the greater Vienna area to Prekmurje in Slovenia and from western

Hungary to the Burgenland's neighbouring provinces of Styria and Lower Austria. The RomBus is both a mobile service and support centre as well as a library and a classroom on wheels.<sup>15</sup> In addition to Roma-specific issues and support with administrative, social and political matters, the RomBus offers magazines, books, films and music and, when and where requested, the opportunity for organised, competent Burgenland Romani teaching. Such courses are usually centred around one family with neighbours, friends and also others interested in joining in. Burgenland Romani is used as the everyday language in these courses and also involves the elderly who are competent in the language. This ensures and increases language competence among younger Burgenland Roma while also transferring cultural and historical knowledge. The question as to what extent such courses can counteract the threat of language death remains unanswered. What is certain is that they make an essential and indispensable contribution to a positive Roma image, particularly among children and adolescents. Ethnic awareness and pride are essential for self-confidence and self-esteem, which are prerequisites for the successful socio-economic integration of young Roma.

## 4. Austrian Romani in the Education System

It was almost twenty years ago that the Roma were recognised as an Austrian ethnic group, yet today their language is barely present in the Austrian education system. Apart from the symbolic statutory basis in the Burgenland Minority Education Act and its virtually non-existent implementation as outlined above, Romani is only perceived marginally, if at all. Austria's commitments within the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) and the Council of Europe's Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (CRML) change little. The fact that Romani is in principle protected by the CRML as a Part II Language across the federal territory has so far been largely ignored. It remains questionable whether the recommendation of the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers of 11 March 2009<sup>16</sup> "[to] adopt a structured policy for the protection and promotion of all Part II languages, especially in Vienna, and create favourable conditions for their use in public life" (Council of Europe 2009) will ever be followed, in particular concerning Romani.

### 4.1 Romani in School Education

When looking at the situation in Vienna as mentioned in the recommendation, one finds four bodies which appear to be dealing with Romani activities as part of

44 general schooling: two for so-called native Romani teachers at the Vienna Board of Education and two Roma School Assistance bodies at “Romano Centro”.<sup>17</sup> Their tasks do not, however, as is often suggested, involve language teaching at all. The job description is that of integrating assistants using Romani, if they use it at all, as an auxiliary support. An online article on ORF.at (2009)<sup>18</sup> claimed that:

Teachers are time and again grateful for the help of so-called ‘native language teachers’ when talking with parents. They help overcome the cultural and linguistic barriers during conversations. [...] is one of two native Romani teachers in the whole of Vienna. It is not her job to teach the children accent-free German, but to establish good contacts with the children and families by transcending their differing language competences. [...] also accompanies Roma children into the classroom, and this is very well received by the teachers.

The term “native Romani teachers” in itself implies an occupation, namely language teaching, which is in no way performed.

The Roma school assistants’ job profile is similar to that of the native Romani teachers. The focus is on integration assistance and Romani is employed as a means of communication in conversations with Roma children and their parents.<sup>19</sup> Romano Centro and other Viennese Roma NGOs, moreover, cooperate regularly with schools which engage with the situation, history, culture and language of the Roma as part of school or class projects. Specific project activities regarding Romani are usually the exception, but in cases where there are Roma children at a Viennese primary school and the pupils’ plurilingualism is addressed, then Romani increasingly receives the attention it deserves.

The question of whether the results and experiences of the current “QualiRom” project will result in future Romani teaching activities at Viennese schools remains unanswered due to the situation described here. In any case, the project provides the basis for teaching Romani at a professional level, fulfilling present-day requirements.

## 4.2 QualiRom

The project “Quality Education in Romani for Europe” (QualiRom) implements the Curriculum Framework for Romani (CFR; see Council of Europe 2008) and the corresponding European Language Portfolio Models (ELPs) which relate to teaching and learning materials and tests them in the classroom. The CFR and ELPs were developed by the Council of Europe and are based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

All levels of the educational system apart from kindergarten and pre-school are involved in QualiRom. The CFR and ELPs are implemented for up to six Romani varieties at levels A1 to B2 of the CEFR at the primary, secondary and tertiary education levels. The implementation at the primary and secondary level occurs at selected schools in Finland, Austria, Serbia, Slovakia and in the Czech Republic. Courses for students and adults are developed at the University of Graz and are subsequently adopted by partner organisations and adapted to their requirements. All activities are carried out in cooperation with Roma teachers who are already active at the local level, as well as with local, regional and national education authorities. There are also plans within this context for the development of (further) training modules for teachers. Teachers and staff involved are trained, supervised and assessed by experts from the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) to ensure quality and professional standards.

QualiRom began its work on the 1 December 2010 and will run for a total of 36 months.<sup>20</sup>

### 4.3 Extracurricular Romani Teaching

Romano Centro offers, although irregularly, Romani courses for Roma and Gadže within its cultural work, teaching different varieties and dialects. Internationally spread varieties of the Kalderaš<sup>21</sup> and Lovara are most frequently used, with some courses being offered in Burgenland Romani. The aim of all courses is to provide an impression of Romani as a whole.

The Wiener Volkshochschulen also sometimes offer activities concerning Romani, but this is by no means language teaching as such but, despite ambitious aims, usually only provides superficial and stereotypical information on the language and culture of the Roma. The Volkshochschule der Burgenländischen Roma also offers some language-related activities, primarily regarding Burgenland Romani. This range of dedicated activities provides outsiders valuable insights into the sociocultural situation of Roma. Yet neither of these providers offers language courses in line with professional, current quality criteria.

The situation of Romani courses at universities is similar. Although adjusted to meet the institutional standards, Romani is mostly dealt with in the context of courses about the language and culture of the Roma. Examples are the universities of Innsbruck and Graz as well as the Burgenland University of Education with the latter focusing almost exclusively on the Burgenland Roma and Burgenland Romani. The Burgenland University of Education has also begun to discuss the regional Romani variety in their teacher training activities.

46 Their language workshops offer information and support regarding languages, in particular those of the Burgenland's ethnic groups including the Burgenland Roma (Phburg@nland 2012).

In addition to courses dealing scientifically with language history, structures, sociolinguistics, dialectology and contact phenomena, *treffpunkt sprachen*, the language centre at the University of Graz, offers Romani language courses. Although these courses are held irregularly and not as part of the normal programme with regard to the context of their implementation as well as their funding, they still conform to the standards of the CEFR.

## 5. Conclusion

The following list summarises the educational activities and initiatives concerning Austrian Romani that have been outlined:

- ♦ Burgenland Romani teaching as part of voluntary extracurricular classes,
- ♦ Burgenland Romani teaching at NGO level,
- ♦ Burgenland Romani information at the Burgenland University of Education ,
- ♦ Romani teaching at NGO level,
- ♦ Romani practice in the context of educational integration initiatives,
- ♦ Romani information as part of school projects,
- ♦ Romani information in adult education,
- ♦ Romani information at universities,
- ♦ Romani teaching at universities.

Comparing this list to the status before the recognition of the Roma as an ethnic group in 1992 reveals the progress that has been made.<sup>22</sup> Yet comparing the status quo to the framework conditions essential for the preservation of the language, the repeatedly mentioned symbolic character of Romani teaching activities in Austria becomes obvious. Although the emancipation of Romani as a counterweight to the official language, German, is utopian, there still is a chance to approach the status of other ethnic minority languages. Yet unlike Romani, these languages have a written tradition and have the status of national languages in some of Austria's neighbouring countries.

It is the task neither of a state nor of its administrative bodies to preserve the Romani language. The Roma have to make this decision themselves by using Romani in everyday life – or not using it. Yet it is a state's duty to create the

necessary framework conditions to guarantee all individual members of an ethnolinguistic minority the freedom to choose their ethnolanguage. This would, however, also require the necessary infrastructure in the education system, which does not exist in the case of Austrian Romani.

## 48 Notes

<sup>1</sup> The paper is based on a general account of Romani teaching written for the forthcoming European Yearbook of Minority Issues. Some of the considerations and tables presented here are taken from this paper (Halwachs forthcoming).

<sup>2</sup> This prioritisation of politics can be applied to the majority of European initiatives for the integration of indigenous minority languages in the educational system.

<sup>3</sup> Such an approach would also be in line with a UNESCO recommendation to alphabetise children in and with the help of their mother tongue (UNESCO 1953).

<sup>4</sup> A detailed account on Roma and Romani in Austria is provided by Halwachs (2005).

<sup>5</sup> This table formalises possible scenarios. The actual number is calculated by multiplying the 18 scenarios by the number of Romani varieties and other languages and their varieties which, depending on the classification, results in different, and a relatively large number of, possible scenarios.

<sup>6</sup> The Austrian Lovara Romani variety is, inter alia, documented in Cech & Heinschink (1999) and Cech et al. (2001, 2002).

<sup>7</sup> This is by no means to be considered illegitimate and is, despite often conforming to stereotypes, an essential contribution to the emancipation and integration of the Roma.

<sup>8</sup> Pragmatic-monetary language awareness deriving from the primarily language-based definition of the ethnic group in the Austrian Minority Law and the thereby resulting funding guidelines shall be mentioned but not addressed in this context. Such “awareness” and its general conditions are neither Romani-specific nor typically Austrian. It is a general phenomenon of national and supranational European minority politics.

<sup>9</sup> Against this background, activities such as the European Commissions Roma Strategy or rather the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020 should be questioned. Social questions should rather be addressed within a “social strategy”, thereby avoiding social problems which affect both the Roma and the non-Roma becoming ethnically charged and serving to boost negative Roma stereotypes, as this may contribute to increased discrimination.

<sup>10</sup> The legal text uses the general term *Romanes* which is used in the German-speaking world, but refers to *Roman* or *Burgenland Romani* as spoken in Burgenland.

<sup>11</sup> “Die Wart” with Oberwart at its centre is a Hungarian linguistic enclave, hence the toponyms are multilingual: German *Oberwart*, Hungarian *Felsőőr*; Croatian *Gornja Borta*, Romani *Erba*.

<sup>12</sup> The Burgenland Romani variety is documented, inter alia, in Halwachs et al. (1996), Halwachs et al. (1998), Halwachs et al. (2000) and Halwachs & Wogg (2002).

<sup>13</sup> In 2004 the activities regarding Romani teaching were transferred from “Verein Roma” to the then recently founded “Roma-Service” organisation. Led by Emmerich Gärtner-Horvath it is run by Roma and former researchers of the “Grazer Romani Projekt” in almost equal proportions.

<sup>14</sup> “A language that is only used at school is basically a dead language,” (Anonymous, southwest Hungary, second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century).



<sup>15</sup> Associating the “RomBus” with the stereotypical nomadism, as has indeed occurred, harms the emancipation efforts of the Roma as does the romanticisation of being a professional musician, which is time and again conveyed by, among others, representatives of the Roma themselves.

<sup>16</sup> Recommendation RecChl (2009)1 of the Committee of Ministers on the Application of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages by Austria.

<sup>17</sup> They are, as related to me, apparently because of political-personal animosities, not financed by the City of Vienna but, although not part of their portfolio, directly by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture (BM:UKK). This is not exclusive to the Roma: the vanity of activists, an overestimation of their own capabilities, a lack of judgement and disputes among representatives of minorities often stand in the way of purposeful work and are a welcome excuse which may be used by public authorities for their inactivity, instead of their attempting to create the constructive, basic prerequisites needed for the free choices of minority members. This phenomenon can be observed beyond Austria's national borders in the wider context of European minorities.

<sup>18</sup> This article deals with the trend-setting and award-winning LLP-Comenius project “INSETRom/Teacher In-Service Training for Roma Inclusion” (<http://www.iaie.org/insetrom/>).

<sup>19</sup> Such measures are in principle examples of good practice, to use an empty, frequently used European phrase, which by no means fulfil the actual requirements. They merely point at what would be required more comprehensively in order to improve the integration of Roma children from socially marginalised families into the school system (Romano Centro, 2012).

<sup>20</sup> The results will be published at the end of the project at <http://www.qualirom.uni-graz.at>. QualiRom is a project of the EU's Lifelong Learning Programme: Transversal Programme/KA2-Languages/511678-LLP-1-2010-1-AT-KA2-KA2MP. The Austrian activities are supported by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture (BM:UKK) and the Support for Ethnic Minorities of the Constitutional Office of the Federal Chancellery.

<sup>21</sup> The Kalderaš variety spoken in Vienna is documented in, inter alia, Fennesz-Juhasz et al. (2003a, 2003b) and in Heinschink et al. (2003).

<sup>22</sup> “Going from nothing to something is infinite.” (Anonymous, southwest Hungary, second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century).

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