

European Police and Minorities

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Police and minorities

- Policing in contemporary societies based on equality and non-discrimination is a cornerstone of democratic societies.
- As a reflection of ongoing immigration into the European Union and movement within and between Member States, as well as the presence of established national minorities, day to day policing in the EU has to increasingly work with diverse communities.

Police & minorities

- The relationships between police and ethnic and racial minorities present some of the more enduring and complex problems in policing throughout the world.
- Such relationships can be harmonious, but they often are problematic.
 - For example, minorities may be generally deprived of police protection and other services to which they are entitled. More specifically, police may refrain from addressing criminal behaviour (e.g., domestic violence) within a particular minority group because they believe that members of that group typically engage in such behaviour.
 - A more acute problem is direct conflict between police and minorities. On the part of police, conflict may take the form of harassment, brutality, or excessive enforcement.

The form of my presentation

- A. Brief presentation of some results of EU-wide survey to ask immigrant and ethnic minority groups about their experiences of being policed in everyday life.
- B. One key study of a good practice of policing Roma communities – Slovenia
- C. Short conclusion

A. European Union Minorities and
Discrimination Survey (EU-MIDIS) -
Police Stops and Minorities

European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey (EU-MIDIS) - **Police Stops and Minorities**

- European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) - EU-MIDIS, the first EU-wide survey to ask immigrant and ethnic minority groups about their experiences of discrimination and criminal victimisation in everyday life.
- In total 23.500 immigrant and ethnic minority people were surveyed in face-to-face questionnaire interviews in all 27 Member States of the EU during 2008. A further 5.000 people from the majority population living in the same areas as minorities were interviewed in ten Member States to allow for comparisons of results concerning some key questions.

EU-MIDIS – some results

- Minorities were stopped by the police more often than the majority groups living in the same neighborhoods in Belgium, Germany, Greece, Spain, France and Hungary.
- This was not the case in the Slovak Republic, Bulgaria, Italy or Romania.
- Some minority groups are particularly heavily policed – for example Roma respondents in Greece who were stopped by the police experienced on average nearly 6 stops in a 12 month period.

Discriminatory ethnic profiling

- The FRA's Guide explains when profiling that involves factors such as race, ethnicity and religion can be considered 'unlawful', and uses the term 'discriminatory ethnic profiling' to distinguish unlawful profiling practices from lawful uses of profiling.
 - Threatening an individual less favorably than others who are in a similar position e.g. by exercising police powers such as stop and search.
- More than 1 in 5 of all respondents surveyed indicated they considered they were stopped because of their ethnicity or immigrant background, namely Roma in Greece (39%) North Africans in Spain (31%) Roma in Hungary (24%), Sub-Saharan Africans in France (24%), and North Africans in Italy (21%).

Quality of police – minorities contacts

In relation to the last time they were stopped by the police, respondents were asked how respectful the police were when dealing with them.

Majority respondents tend to think that the police are respectful towards them, whereas more minority respondents indicate that the police are disrespectful.

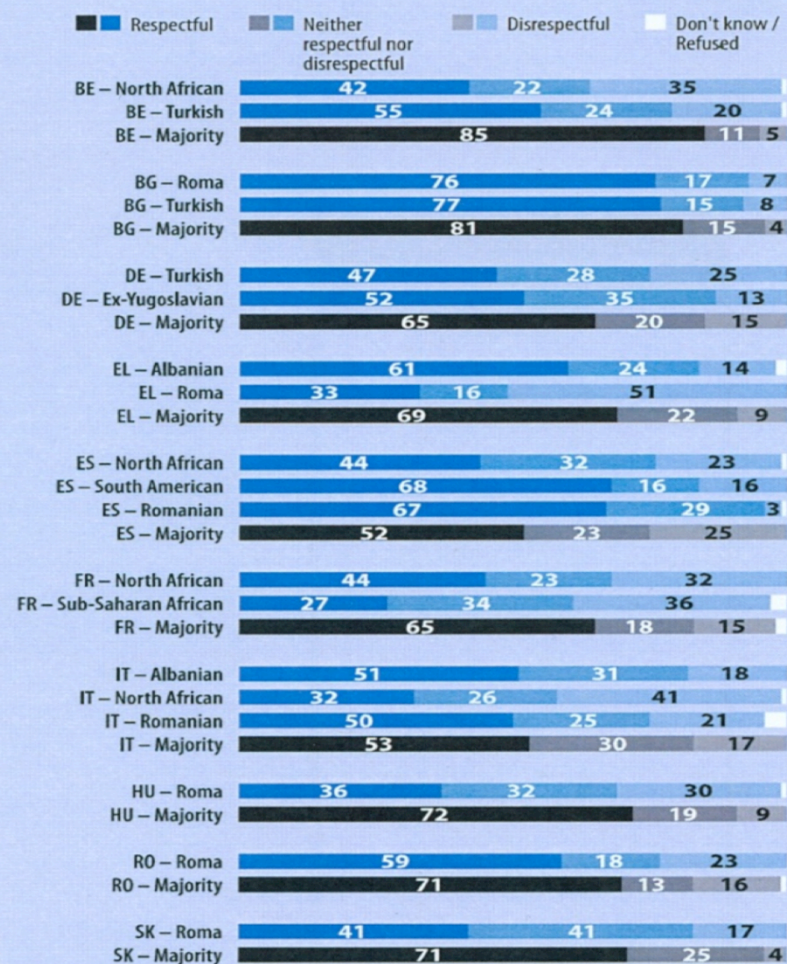
For example, in Belgium, 85% of majority population respondents considered that the police were respectful towards them during their last police stop, compared to 42% of North African respondents and 55% of Turkish respondents.

Source: FRA, EU-MIDIS, 2010

<http://fra.europa.eu/en/survey/2012/eu-midis-european-union-minorities-and-discrimination-survey>

Figure 6

How respectful the police were during the latest stop (%)



EU-MIDIS, question F8

Trust in police & minorities

The concept of police-community relations is not a new one for any democratic society.

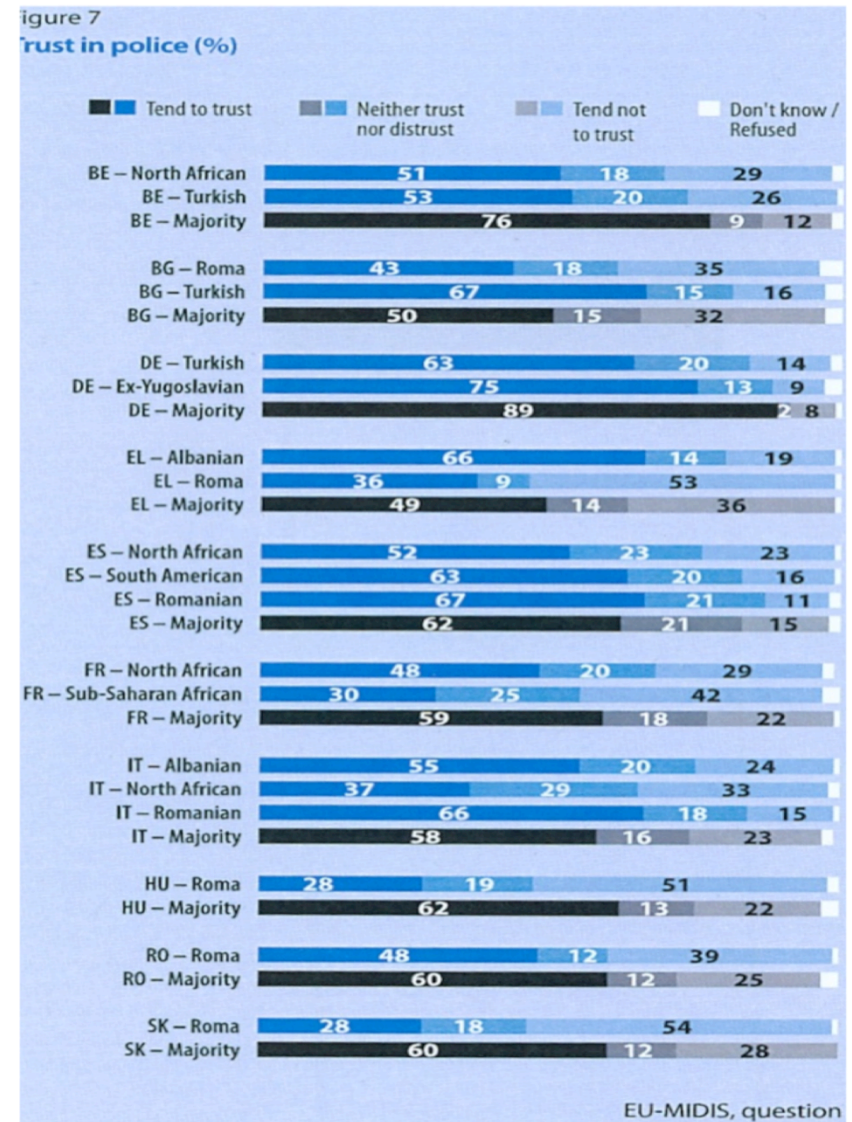
When Sir Robert Peel undertook reform of the London police with the Metropolitan Police Act of 1829, he emphasized that the police should work in cooperation with the people and officers should protect human rights, serve the needs, and earn the trust of the population they police.

It is the same also in these days. Democratic policing is closely associated with the notions of legitimacy, professionalism and accountability.

Sustained legitimacy, skilled professionalism, and effective accountability must exist before policing can be considered democratic; and all three are interdependent.

Source: FRA, EU-MIDIS, 2010

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Trust & ethnic profiling

- A clear pattern emerges when comparing results for overall levels of trust in the police with responses to the question that asked minorities whether they considered they were a victim of ethnic profiling during their last police stop;
 - 50% of respondents who were stopped by the police and *did not* consider it to be a result of ethnic profiling said they tended to generally trust the police, whereas 27% of respondents who were stopped by the police and *did* consider it to be a result of ethnic profiling said they tended to trust the police.
- Hence – a clear connection between perceptions of discriminatory treatment at the hands of the police and overall levels of trust in policing.

Source: FRA, EU-MIDIS, 2010

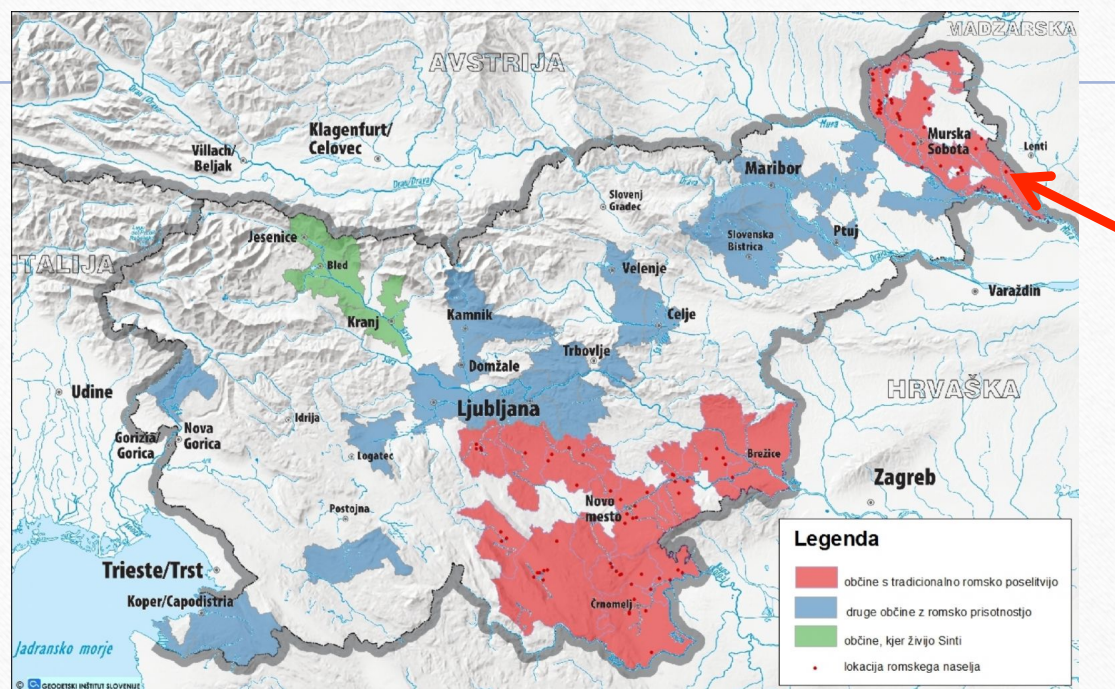
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Trust in police & minorities

- Every second minority victim of assault, threat or serious harassment said they did not report these incidents to the police because they were not confident the police would do anything about them.

B. Policing Roma in Slovenia – an
attempt for a different approach

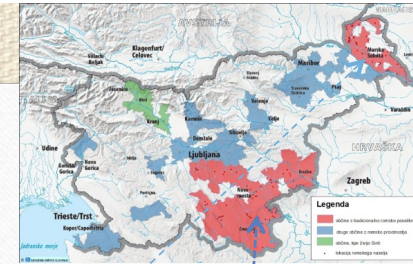
Roma in Slovenia



Izdelal: Geodetski inštitut Slovenije

Roma in Slovenia

- Experts believe that the true population numbers are between 7000 to 12,000 people which is less than 1% of the total population.
- Roma primarily live in one of the 130 settlements in the country, one-third of which are illegal by virtue of resting on private or municipal land.



Vs.



Police training goals on Roma issues

- The program involves the coming together of police with local and national Roma leaders, all aiming to address the public safety and policing needs of the Roma minority in the country.
- During 2-day-long training sessions, the police trainers reinforce prior entry-level training about human rights and multiculturalism and then bring in Roma leaders to teach police basic conversational Romani and Roma customs.
- The police in turn educate the Roma about their rights and responsibilities in a democratic national context, including what to expect from police in terms of safety, security, and the nature of criminal investigations.

Gathering information in the field



Learning the basics of Roma language



Training and dialogue



Dialog on a field



Informing of the Roma community about their rights and duties



Police training in numbers

- From 2003 to 2013, 1950 police officers went through the training programmes (25%)
- An average of Roma community members per training was 3
- There were also NGO's e.g. Amnesty international, local community representatives present at trainings

Evaluation of the training for police and Roma representatives

- Roma perspective on police:
 - Roma believe the program fostered progress in reducing community tension
 - One Roma informant explained that he had for the first time ever felt morally comfortable with helping the police apprehend a violent member of his community because **he believed that the police could now be trusted** to handle him fairly and according to the law.
 - Notably, three Roma leaders explained that of all governmental agencies and officials, the police were the most **fair and respectful** in dealing with them

Evaluation of the training for police and Roma representatives

- Overall, although some specific skills such as language, communication techniques, and cultural sensitivity were imparted to police through the training, the biggest boon to policing that the training offered was the relationship-building between the police and the Roma community.
- Examples have emerged that some Roma leaders who participated in the program have engaged in mediation-like activity with the police in order to respond to a variety of community tensions, from disputes over housing to intra-ethnic rivalry.

Lessons learned

- The police training program, though unable to solve all problems, makes a significant dent in the prejudice and injustice in a local and daily routine way.
- It directly acknowledges that the Roma communities have a right to live in the country and be a part of the political and social life of their local municipalities.
- As one police director explained, working with police–Roma relations has meant convincing the non-Roma local people to see the Roma as part of their municipalities, to break down some of the stereotypes that lead to the tensions and conflicts to which the police are called to respond.

The last slide 😊

- Conditions for successful implementation of community policing in the multicultural communities are multifaceted.
- First, the state and local governments are responsible for the legal protection of multicultural communities. Under this protection, the basic conditions for the preservation of the particular ethnic and cultural characteristics of minorities on the one hand, and sufficient integration into society on the other, are created.
- Second, the local level involvement especially of Roma municipality councilors in decision-making processes provides a good connection between a relatively closed community and the larger community in which they live.
- If we include projects for the empowerment of the minority communities carried out by local authorities, we are getting closer to success.
- All this is a necessary precondition for the training of police officers to work in a multicultural environment to be effective.

Need for more research?

- YES – to get more profound knowledge – e.g. the level and the sources of legitimacy of policing from the minorities point of view.

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- To implement the knowledge into day to day policing – a big gap between knowing and doing

Thank you; branko.lobnikar@fvv.uni-mb.si