

ERiac XII Barvalipe Academy Meeting

September 19, 2024

15:00 – 17:00 CET

ONLINE

MINUTES

Participants:

Barvalipe Academy:

- Maria Bogdan
- Miguel Angel Vargas
- Santino Spineli
- Delia Grigore
- Raul Carstocea
- Jana Horvathova
- Isaac Blake
- Sami Mustafa
- Iulius Rostas

ERiac team:

- Timea Junghaus, Executive Director
- Claudiu Pamfil
- Petro Rusanienko
- Adelina Miron

Minute-taker: Claudiu Pamfil

Welcome and Introductory Remarks

Claudiu Pamfil welcomed the Barvalipe Academy members and shared who else from ERiac team is present at the meeting. After he presented the agenda and the objectives of the meeting.

Maria Bogdan took the word and welcomed the Barvalipe Academy members.

Session 1: Presentation of ERIACNET4EU status

Claudiu Pamfil provided updates on the ERIACNET4EU project by sharing the activities that have been implemented so far, as well as those that still need to be organized by the end of this year, when the project is set to conclude.

The Barvalipe Academy members were informed that, to date, the following activities have been completed: The membership process was finalized, resulting in a total of 141 members. A regrantsing scheme was implemented, through which ERIAC is financing 9 of our members, with the total amount for all 9 organizations reaching €83,750. Thematic Section meetings were organized, where members learned about the opportunities offered by this project and ERIAC. They also had the chance to share their ideas and needs. Based on the feedback collected during these meetings, five capacity-building activities were organized, with a total of 95 participants. Another significant activity was a full-day Training Course on Romani Identity, History, and Culture, which was attended by around 70 participants.

The remaining activities to be implemented include ERIACWOMNET, an event dedicated to the women of our network, and the position paper, for which Raul Carstocea has agreed to contribute. Maria Bogdan and Hristo Kyuchukov will also be approached regarding their involvement. The final activity of the project will be the General Assembly, planned for December 5-6 in Berlin.

Session 1: ERIACNET4EU activities feedback

ERiac staff received feedback expressing concerns about the email communication with members who had not met their membership obligations. The mass email informing these individuals that they were no longer members was seen as impersonal, and it was suggested that future communications should be handled more sensitively. Specifically, it was recommended that individual emails be sent to maintain a respectful and supportive relationship with former members, particularly key Roma individuals who significantly contribute to the community.

Petro Rusanienko (ERiac staff) acknowledged the feedback and explained that using the CC field in the email was a mistake. He assured everyone that the team has learned from this and that it will not happen again in the future.

Another point of feedback concerned the in-kind contributions from members. It was emphasized that it is very important for ERIAC to properly collect and store all these materials and to create a plan for how these resources will be used.

Claudiu responded by stating that the team had discussed the in-kind contributions in internal meetings and divided responsibilities among ERIAC staff, so everyone knows what they should collect and how these materials can be utilized in the future. Timea provided additional details about ERIAC's storage room, noting that it is located in

central Berlin, near the office. The facility has 60 square meters of space and is heated, though unfortunately, it is not temperature-controlled.

Continuing the discussion on membership, Petro Rusanienko shared that ERIAC had 105 members in 2023, and the number has increased to 141 this year.

Another piece of feedback was that, after conducting capacity-building activities, it is important to ensure that all support materials, including Zoom recordings of the workshops, are made publicly available. It was also suggested that these materials should be republished from time to time to reach a wider audience. Claudiu informed the Barvalipe Academy that all materials from these activities are available on the ERIAC website and will remain accessible for anyone interested.

Lastly, the Barvalipe Academy raised concerns about ERIACWOMNET, suggesting that the target audience of the event should be communicated more clearly. They also raised the question of whether, in the future, similar activities should be organized for other groups, such as men, LGBTQ+ individuals, or people with disabilities.

Session 2: ERIAC strategy 2026 – 2030

The strategy discussion focused on ERIAC's long-term vision for the next five years, with particular attention to integrating new technologies, AI, and further development of the organization's cultural and educational pillars.

The potential role of AI in advancing Roma rights, history, and culture was discussed. Participants agreed that ERIAC should adopt a proactive stance toward AI and emerging technologies, ensuring that these tools are used to benefit Roma communities rather than being left behind. Delia and Maria supported the idea of embracing technology, emphasizing the need for training and education within the community on how to utilize AI for positive change.

Several participants, including Sami Mustafa, raised the importance of film in reaching broader audiences. There was consensus that film could be a powerful medium for amplifying Roma voices but that starting small with documentaries and short films would be more feasible for ERIAC given budget constraints. Isaac proposed that ERIAC should explore partnerships with major players in the film industry, like Netflix, and reach out to institutions for guidance and collaboration. He also suggested the creation of a European Roma Film Institution as a long-term goal.

The current focus on Roma history and language education was affirmed as a key part of the strategy. There was general agreement that this should continue, especially given recent achievements, such as upcoming book publications and ongoing curriculum development with the Council of Europe. Participants emphasized the importance of involving more Roma scholars in academia and addressing misinformation and stereotypes within academic institutions, especially in Eastern Europe, where the challenges are greater.

Session 3: ERIAC organ processes

Petro as a community coordinator shared with the participants of the meeting, the election process of the new Barvalipe Academy.

By October 22nd, the ERIAC board will have finalized the election of 7 new members to the Barvalipe Academy. These board-elected members will include 5 individuals who are non-reelectable, meaning they will be leaving their positions. While the board must elect 5 new members, Nedjo and Raul will continue in their roles, as their mandates can be renewed. This allows some continuity of institutional knowledge within the new Barvalipe Academy. The board's decision on the list of 7 members is expected by the October deadline.

In addition to the board-elected members, a separate election process will take place within the general membership, as the mandates of several membership-elected individuals are set to expire. Their mandates will expire on December 9, 2024, just a few days after the planned General Assembly on December 6th. To manage this, Petro will send out individual emails to all affected members, informing them of their respective mandate expirations and clarifying the upcoming steps. The General Assembly will serve as the moment to launch the new Barvalipe members. ERIAC is consulting with legal advisors to determine whether the new members can be announced before the official expiration of the current mandates. This would allow for a symbolic handover during the event, accompanied by the pledge ceremony, where the new members would receive a token of their new role within the Academy.

The handover ceremony and the pledge for the new Barvalipe Academy members are scheduled to take place on December 5th, with a continuation of discussions on strategy development on December 6th. During this period, ERIAC will also encourage current members to remain engaged in the organization through in-kind contributions, as their input will be valuable in shaping next year's strategy and operational plans. Members are invited to commit to supporting ERIAC by offering their expertise and feedback during the strategy development phase.

Furthermore, an internal election process will be initiated to elect the chair, deputy chair, and new PAKIV members. This will take place while the strategy is being written, with the goal of ensuring the organizational structure remains functional and aligned with ERIAC's ongoing goals.

In closing, the importance of being a member was reiterated, highlighting that while being part of the board, PAKIV, or Barvalipe Academy is an honor, the core value lies in being a dedicated member of the organization. Membership was emphasized as a long-term commitment to supporting ERIAC's mission and goals.

In the end of the meeting Delia mentioned a few words, stressing the dedication required from each member to do everything in their power for the betterment of the

organization. Timea thanked everyone for their contributions and wished them good health, expressing gratitude for their ongoing efforts and closed the meeting.

Signed by:



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Appointed Minute-taker: Claudiu Pamfil

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Chair of the Barvalipe Academy: Maria Bogdan

I hereby confirm the correctness of the above minutes of the meeting of the Barvalipe Academy.

In compliance with the ERIAC Statutes and the Rules of Procedure this Minutes are to be prepared, signed by the minute-taker and confirmed by the Chair of the Barvalipe Academy. The abridge version of these minutes shall be published on the web portal of the association.