

ERiac XIV BARVALIPE ACADEMY MEETING

June 30, 2025

Online

15:30 – 17:00 CET

MINUTES

Participants:

Barvalipe Academy:

Sami Mustafa

Avni Mustafa

Dezso Mate

Vera Lackova

Rafael Buhigas Jimenez

Pierre Chopinaud

Isaac Blake

Jake Bowers

ERiac Team:

Anna Mirga-Kruszelnicka

Petro Rusanienko

Claudiu Pamfil

Minute-taker: Petro Rusanienko

ERiac Strategy 2026–2030

The meeting commenced with a welcome and a clarification that the session would be recorded to support the preparation of official minutes. Anna introduced the draft of the ERIAC Strategy 2026–2030 as a condensed strategic framework (“theory of change”) designed to articulate the main priorities and directions, rather than a detailed operational plan.

Sami initiated the discussion by raising the importance of defining measurable objectives and questioned the extent to which the Academy could influence the strategy’s level of detail. Anna explained that the framework was intentionally broad to preserve flexibility in responding to rapidly shifting contexts, and that annual operational plans and budgets would be created each year to specify concrete activities.

Dezso emphasized the recognition of historical memory and the importance of including Roma elders and intellectuals as a strategic pillar. He proposed introducing a dedicated Lifetime Achievement Award to honor elders’ contributions alongside the Tajsa Prize. This proposal was strongly endorsed by several members, who viewed it as an important gesture bridging generations within the Roma movement.

Isaac expressed concern over the perception that visual arts might be deprioritized in favor of film and performing arts. Anna clarified that while significant progress in visual arts had been achieved, the strategy aims to replicate that success in less represented disciplines such as film, music, dance, theatre, and literature. She noted that ERIAC also plans to establish a Roma PEN Center to advance literature.

Pierre and others stressed the importance of leveraging social media and popular culture to counter disinformation and strengthen community narratives, particularly in the context of rising far-right propaganda. While there was broad agreement on this strategic priority, caution was advised to ensure ERIAC remains within its non-political mandate to avoid risks to funding.

Vera and Rafael raised concerns about the framing of “Roma Pride,” suggesting that for many Roma communities facing deep social exclusion, this concept may feel disconnected from their lived experiences. They recommended including terms like “diversity” and “plurality” to make the narrative more inclusive. Dezso additionally proposed using “memory reparations” rather than “reclaiming narratives” as a more empowering framing.

Sami highlighted the importance of clarifying ERIAC’s relationships with allied Roma organizations such as REF and REDI to avoid confusion over mandates and collaboration. Anna committed to sharing a written summary with all Academy members to explain these institutional relationships and ensure transparency.

The draft strategy was endorsed in principle by all present Academy members, with an agreement that the document would be refined to incorporate the comments and recommendations before submission to the ERIAC Board for further review.

ERAC General Assembly and Tajsja Prize

Petro presented an overview of the upcoming ERIAC General Assembly and Tajsja Prize Ceremony, scheduled for November 29, 2025, in Bucharest, Romania. He detailed the timeline:

- Arrival of participants on November 28, with a networking event (*Midnight Children*) in the afternoon.
- The General Assembly to take place on November 29 from 10:00 to 16:00, followed by a dinner and the Tajsja Prize Ceremony in the evening.
- Departure scheduled for November 30.

Key agenda points of the General Assembly will include:

- Membership results 2025
- ERIACNET4EU updates
- Narrative and Financial Report 2025
- Announcements of Board and Barvalipe Academy changes
- Discussion of the ERIAC Strategy 2026–2030

Regarding the Tajsja Prize, it was confirmed that:

- The prize is sponsored entirely by ERIAC associate membership contributions.
- The award will amount to €10,000.
- Nominations will open on August 11 and close on October 31.
- Self-nominations, past laureates, and members of the ERIAC Board and Barvalipe Academy will not be eligible.
- A jury composed of 1 Board member, 3 Barvalipe members, and the ERIAC Executive Director will select 5 finalists, to be announced on November 10.
- A final voting process involving all 5 Board members, all 15 Barvalipe members, and the Executive Director will determine the winner, who will be announced at the ceremony.

The introduction of a Lifetime Achievement Award for Roma elders was discussed with broad support, though it was noted that timelines are short to implement this already in 2025. The proposal will be explored further.

Members were invited to volunteer to serve on the Tajsja Prize jury and to actively promote the nomination call. A communications package will be prepared and distributed in August to support outreach.

ERACNET4EU Project Update

Claudiu presented an update on the ERIACNET4EU project, including:

- Membership figures reaching 191 members in 2025
- Distribution of €87,000 in grants to 17 member organizations

- Upcoming capacity-building activities and a training for public officials
- Development of a position paper on Roma media, to be finalized by early November

Deszso proposed including a training on ethical research and Roma knowledge production. The suggestion received positive feedback, and Claudiu encouraged all members to share ideas or volunteer as trainers or authors.

Isaac raised the importance of transparency and recommended issuing open calls for consultancy and authorship opportunities to avoid perceptions of exclusivity. The idea of involving Barvalipe Academy members in on-site visits to grantees' activities was also welcomed as a means of strengthening ERIAC's grassroots engagement. Though budgets are currently limited, the possibility of incorporating such visits in future project designs was noted.

Barvalipe Academy Engagement and Fundraising

The meeting concluded with reflections on Barvalipe Academy's ongoing engagement. Members were invited to support ERIAC in:

- Identifying fundraising opportunities and participating in proposal development
- Representing ERIAC at conferences and events
- Providing training and expertise in their fields
- Contributing to the forthcoming position paper on Roma media

Sami highlighted the need for clearer internal processes and communication when collaborating on fundraising proposals, to ensure all parties are informed of application statuses and next steps. Anna agreed this is an area to improve further.

Members expressed willingness to remain actively involved, provided roles, expectations, and time commitments are clearly defined.

Appointed Minute-taker: Petro Rusanienko

Signed by:

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Chair of the Barvalipe Academy: Jake Bowers

Signed by:

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