



**VIII GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING
OF THE EUROPEAN ROMA INSTITUTE FOR ARTS AND CULTURE (ERiac)**

29 November 2025

HYBRID MEETING

Bucharest, Romania & Online via Zoom Platform

MINUTES

Participants:

ERiac PAKIV board attendees (in person):

Mensur Haliti, Chair of the PAKIV Board
Dijana Pavlovic, Deputy chair of the PAKIV Board
Ismael Cortes

Bravalipe academy members attending in person:

Jake Bowers, Dezső Máté, Bajsa Arifovska, Carol Silverman, Rafael Buhigas Jiménez, Raul Carstocea, Pierre Chopinauld, Vera Lacková

Barvalipe academy members attending online:

Colin Clark, Sami Mustafa

In person attendees (ERiac members):

Adrian Tudor, Ahmad Asaad, Alexandru Zamfir, Anabel Carballo Mesa, Anastasiia Tambovtseva, Andra Draghiciu, Angela Maria Arbelaez, Anneke Steinman, Anina Ciuciu, Anora Draghiciu, Bela Varadi, Dalibor Tanic, Delia Madalina Grigore, Demila Durmis, Dezdemonia Kovacs, Diana Sima, Eray Fidan, Edel Brady, Eduard Orbocea, Elzbieta Mirga Wojtowicz, Eriketa Kocollari, Francisk Perona Cortes, Fabian Sanchez Garcia, Fatos Kaytan, Florian Scheiben, Francisca Perona Cortes, Gopalas Michailovskis, Isaura Dryma, Izabela Tiberiade, Jake Bowers, Kateryina Kulykovska, Kerestely Szinai, Lary Cowan, Luisella Pavan Woolfe, Maria Bogdan, Marina Roselle, Mibanks, Migel Angle Rubio, Mihaela Zatreanu, Mikulas Lakatos, Monika Mitrovic, Noell Maggini, Paula Diaz Reyes, Pierre Chopinauld, Piotr Marciniel, Rafael Buhigas Jimenez, Raul Carstocea, Sabina Kucera, Sead Kazanxhiu, Sead Memeti, Sejhan Jasarov, Selahetin Kryezi, Selma Selman, Silvia Bencini, Tetiana Storozhko, Umtata Tybora, Vera Lackova, Vladimir Suraru, Zita Moldovan.

Online attendees- zoom log in (ERiac members):

Ivan Perianez Bolano, Cecile Hobe, Beata Hock, Jan Selling, Camilla Salvatore, Cristian Padure, Miki, Dragan Ristic, Eva Figueroa, Maria Nistor

Honorary guests:

Sonja Licht, Board member of Roma Foundation for Europe

Eleni Tsetsekou, Head of Roma and Traveller Team, Council of Europe

ERiac management and team (in person attendance):

Timea Junghaus, Executive Director; Anna Mirga Kruszelnicka, Deputy Director; Neven Mesec, Finance Manager; Bratislav Mitrovic, ERiac Serbia Executive Director; Gabor Feher, Nadja Greku, Petro Rusanienko, Livia Marschall, Roxy Munrose, Bianca Stanea, Adelina Miron, Emese Molnar, Radu Sticlea, Arta Rexhepi

MINUTES OF THE ERiac GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OPENING AND REFLECTION 2025

Opening remarks

In his opening remarks, Mensur Haliti, chair of the ERiac PAKIV Board, reaffirmed his strong personal commitment to ERiac and its future development. He stated clearly that he will do his utmost to bring the organization to the next level and to ensure long-term sustainability and impact. He emphasized the importance of strengthening ERiac's work at the local level, underlining cultural diplomacy as a key strategic tool for achieving meaningful and lasting change within Roma communities and beyond. Mensur Haliti assigned Anna Mirga-Kruszelnicka to chair the General Assembly and assigned Nadja Greku as the minute-taker.

Eleni Tsetsekoi, Head of Roma and Travellers Division, Council of Europe focused her remarks on restoring pride within Roma communities and reaffirming the values underpinning ERiac's mission. She emphasized that the 2018 Memorandum of Understanding is not merely a formal document, but a living promise that must be honored through concrete action. She highlighted that in 2025 ERiac stood united in commemorating the Roma Holocaust, strengthening education initiatives, protecting the transnational Roma language, and shaping fair and responsible media narratives. She stressed the importance of Roma stories being told with dignity and truth, noting that the partnership between ERiac and the Council of Europe ensures that Roma culture, rights, and dignity are present in spaces where decisions are made. She underlined that real change begins at home, through the empowerment of local leaders and communities, and stated clearly that the ERiac as an institution must continue and endure. Members were encouraged to bring ERiac developed content into schools in their respective, to promote Roma language initiatives, and to build alliances across all ERiac member states. She emphasized the need for more Roma creatives and affirmed that ERiac's membership is the foundation where this potential can grow. Concluding, she highlighted that ERiac's greatest strength lies in its members, with the Council of Europe acting as an amplifier that translates cultural work into political change.

Timea Junghaus, ERiac executive director, provided a comprehensive overview of ERiac's institutional stability and achievements. She confirmed that all major donors have renewed their political and financial commitment to ERiac. Following a rigorous audit, the Council of Europe confirmed its continued support, while the Roma Foundation for Europe reaffirmed its partnership through a formal Letter of Intent. Additionally, the German Federal Foreign Office invited ERiac to apply for international funding. She announced that in January, ERiac successfully completed its application to the European Commission, securing the renewal of the multi-year cooperation agreement *ERiacNET4EU*. She emphasized that ERiac is essential, credible, and strategically necessary for Europe today. She commended ERiac's 190 members for their conscientious and principled engagement, reminding them of the organization's founding values. Highlighting 2025 as a year of historic cultural achievement, she noted that the *RomaniPEN*, building on ERiac's language initiative, has opened a pathway toward joining PEN International. In the field of film, she highlighted the work of Sami Mustafa and Vera Lacková, who established lasting connections

at Cannes, and the development of ERIAC's curated Roma film pitch deck, aligning Roma creative ambitions with international standards and shaping future cinematic impact. She further announced that ERIAC Romania has secured Swiss funding, operated by the Romanian Ministry of Labour, for a 36-month period made possible through advocacy by the Roma Foundation for Europe and REDI. She emphasized that ERIAC's regional structures are growing stronger beyond Belgrade and Berlin. She concluded by thanking the membership, partners, and ERIAC team for their dedication and cooperation, noting the successful development and approval of ERIAC's Strategic Plan during the year. Special appreciation was extended to Anna, as well as to the Council of Europe Roma team and all member organizations involved in jointly developing grant proposals. She closed by emphasizing that together, ERIAC carries both the responsibility and the privilege of shaping the cultural future of Roma in Europe.

Introduction of the new PAKIV Board members and Barvalipe Academy members

Anna Mirga-Kruszelnicka, Deputy Director of ERIAC, formally welcomed the newly appointed members of the PAKIV Board: Mensur Haliti, Chair of the Board; Dijana Pavlović, Deputy Chair of the Board; Bjørn Berge; Dr Ismael Cortés; and Dr Ionaida Costache. She also welcomed the new members of the Barvalipe Academy: Avni Mustafa, Bajsa Arifovska, Colin Clark, Patricia Cara Majo, Isaac Blake, Sami Mustafa, Carol Silverman, Rafael Buhigas Jiménez, Israel Galván de los Reyes, Jake Bowers (Chair of the Academy), Dezső Máté (Deputy Chair), Raul Carstocea, Pierre Chopinauld, Vera Lacková, and Nedjo Osman.

ERiac membership report

Petro Rusanienko, Community Coordinator of ERIAC, presented an overview of ERIAC's membership developments during the reporting year. In total, 220 membership applications were received, of which 190 were approved, including both individual and organizational members. Of the current membership, 52% are women and 69% identify as Roma. Financial contributions from members increased by 8% in 2025, reflecting strengthened engagement and commitment. In terms of thematic distribution, 49% of members are active in the Arts and Culture section, 19% in History and Commemoration, 7% in the Romani Language section, 11% in Media and Information, and 14% in Research, Publication, and Knowledge Production. Members were encouraged to actively participate in meetings of the Romani Language Initiative and to engage in learning Romanes. Petro Rusanienko also introduced the newly appointed section coordinators: Miguel Ángel Vargas (Arts and Culture), Dalibor Tanić (Media and Information), Maria Bogdan (Research and Publication), Gopalas Michailovskis (History and Commemoration), and Mihaela Zatreanu (Romani Language). Finally, he announced the opening of the **ERiac membership call** for 2026, which will open on **15 December 2025** and close on **31 January 2026**.

Presentation of the ERIAC Narrative and Financial Report 2025

Anna Mirga-Kruszelnicka, Deputy Director of ERIAC, presented the ERIAC 2025 Activities Report, structured around the organization's four strategic priorities.

Strategic Priority I - Cultural Diplomacy: Under the strategic priority of cultural diplomacy, ERIAC enabled and achieved significant results. A new generation of Roma talent was fostered through the Villa Romana Residency Programme, alongside the introduction of a new ERIAC–DAAD Arts and Media Residency Programme. ERIAC continued to engage with the most prestigious international cultural spaces, including the Milan Triennale, where the first-ever Roma Pavilion was established, and supported Roma participation at the 18th Istanbul Biennial. ERIAC also became a sister organization to the Berlin Biennale, opening the exhibition *Holding Ground: Crafting New Paths in a Changing World* . On 8 April, ERIAC supported the finissage of Delaine Le Bas's exhibition *Romani Embassy* and underlined the importance of establishing the Romani

PEN Initiative. ERIAC secured a strong presence at major European film festivals, developed *Amaro Kino*, a travelling short-film programme presented at international festivals, and advanced the ERIAC Film Pitch Deck to support Roma filmmakers and align creative ambitions with international industry standards.

Strategic Priority II - Roma History and Language Education: Anna Mirga-Kruszelnicka highlighted the work implemented under the International Cultural Outreach Programme 2025, supported by the German Federal Foreign Office. The first five chapters of *Romani Chib* at B2 level were developed, and a Roma Language Conference was successfully hosted. Two major publications were produced: *Racism and Romani Studies*, a special issue of the *Critical Romani Studies Journal*, and *Racism and Romani Studies*, an edited volume forthcoming with Springer. She also highlighted the EU–Council of Europe Joint Programme on Roma Memory, including the *Roma Art of Resistance* event, panel discussions, masterclasses, and training sessions for public authorities. Achievements under the *Jekhipe* project were presented, including the high-level event on Roma history and culture in school curricula held in April 2025 in Brussels; communication guidelines on the promotion of Roma identity, history, and culture; a study visit on Roma culture, identity, and history; the 16 May social media campaign; the International Romani Language Day event; research fellowships on AI and antigypsyism, the Roma civil rights movement, and cultural history; and a series of masterclasses. The work of the Roman Leadership Academy was highlighted, as well as ERIAC’s contributions to initiatives led by the Roma Education Fund (REF) and the Roma Foundation for Europe (RFE), aimed at strengthening leadership and pride among young Roma.

Strategic Priority III - Pride and Identity: Under the third strategic priority, Anna Mirga-Kruszelnicka highlighted the WOMNET 2025 event and the launch of the podcast *Roma Youth for Holocaust Remembrance*, which reached approximately 400,000 views. She underlined the importance of the Fortunoff Archive partnership and the fellowships implemented under this framework. Through *ERIACNET4EU*, ERIAC continued to support grassroots initiatives through grants, delivered five capacity-building trainings, and organized an online training titled *Romani Past, Europe’s Future: Why Embracing Europe’s Largest Ethnic Minority Matters*. A position paper titled *Advancing Romani Media Representation and Production in Europe and Beyond* was developed and published, alongside regular thematic section meetings. The extension of *ERIACNET4EU* by the European Commission was confirmed. She also noted a continued upward trend in ERIAC’s social media reach and engagement.

Strategic Priority IV - Institutional Stability and Development: The fourth strategic priority focused on institutional stability and development, ensuring ERIAC’s long-term sustainability and operational resilience.

Financial Report

Neven Mesec, Finance Manager, presented the 2025 Financial Report. He highlighted the successful completion of external audits and the ongoing audit processes. He presented ERIAC’s fundraising efforts and achievements, emphasizing that ERIAC remains financially resilient and does not rely on a single donor, contributing to institutional stability. Expenditure by strategic pillar in 2025 was presented as follows: 27% allocated to infrastructure, 13% to general costs, 19% to pride and identity, 21% to Roma history and language education, and 20% to institutional development.

ERiac Serbia Report

Bratislav Mitrović, Executive Director of ERIAC Serbia, presented the report on ERIAC Serbia’s activities. Under infrastructure development, ERIAC Serbia signed Memoranda of Understanding with the Staro Sajmište Memorial and the Museum of Genocide Victims. Advocacy efforts were undertaken to ensure that the planned Specialized Exhibition in Serbia includes a Roma Pavilion

and additional Roma-focused spaces and activities, noting that further fundraising is required. ERIAC Serbia regularly hosted visits by cultural institutions and showcased the ongoing exhibition on the Roma Holocaust in Serbia and the former Yugoslav region. Diplomatic and advocacy efforts included meetings with officials and ambassadors from various countries. Social media engagement continued to grow steadily. Under Roma history and language education, he noted that the current political situation in Serbia has slowed down the implementation of initiatives aimed at integrating Roma history into school curricula. ERIAC Serbia participated in the Donja Gradina Conference on WWII victims in the Independent State of Croatia and inclusive remembrance culture. Under pride and identity, the Dušan Jovanović Memorial Plaque was installed in a local park, which was subsequently renamed in his memory. ERIAC Serbia hosted training sessions for public administration servants on recognizing and combating anti-Roma racism, with more than 150 participants, in cooperation with the Regional School of Public Administration. ERIAC Serbia supported nine young Roma through media mentorships in major regional media outlets, secured participation of two Roma creatives in the Sarajevo Film Festival Talents programme, and hosted a digital literacy bootcamp. ERIAC Serbia also introduced pop-up exhibitions, bringing exhibitions to spaces beyond the ERIAC gallery, including Smederevo, Kostolac, and Novi Sad, with plans to continue this approach with future exhibitions. The organization co-hosted film screenings and discussions addressing Roma-related themes and collaborated with Gypsy Kings by Diego Baliardo to promote Roma excellence and expand outreach. Under institutional development, multiple grant applications were submitted in 2025, three were approved, and several remain pending. Continuous engagement with potential donors and outreach to prospective new members were also reported.

Presentation of the new Strategy 2026–2030 and Activity Plan for 2026 proposal

Anna Mirga-Kruszelnicka presented the ERIAC Strategy for the period 2026–2030, outlining the inclusive drafting process, which involved consultation with members, feedback collection, assessment, and final drafting. She emphasized the need for ERIAC to operate closer to Roma communities. The Strategy was approved by the Board in September 2025 at the XVII Board Meeting.

The four strategic pillars were introduced:

Strategic Pillar I: Strengthening Ethnic Pride and Belonging among Roma. This pillar focuses on strengthening cultural literacy and awareness, using innovative methodologies to boost Roma pride, documenting and commemorating local histories, and engaging diverse artistic genres to reflect the richness of Roma cultures.

Strategic Pillar II: Roma History and Language Education. Building on previous work, this pillar aims to position ERIAC as a reference organization for Roma history and language education for Roma communities, member states, intergovernmental organizations, and academic institutions. It emphasizes community cultural literacy, intellectual innovation through cooperation, and the promotion, use, and relearning of a common Romani language.

Strategic Pillar III: Cultural Diplomacy. This pillar seeks to upscale Roma talent, visibility, and recognition in arts and culture through cultural diplomacy. It includes rebalancing investment priorities across artistic genres, supporting a new generation of Roma creatives, building broad alliances, and strengthening democratic values through arts and culture.

Strategic Pillar IV: Institutional Development and Partnerships. This pillar focuses on consolidating partnerships and closer alignment with the Council of Europe, the European Union, and the Roma Foundation for Europe; strengthening membership engagement; exploring entrepreneurial opportunities; and investing in human resources. A transversal objective was introduced, addressing opportunities and risks related to artificial intelligence and emerging technologies. Key activities and initiatives supporting all four strategic pillars were highlighted.

Working Group and Plenary Discussions

ERiac Members' input on the three main strategic objectives of the ERiac Strategy 2026–2030. Participants were divided into three working groups. The main findings, as presented by the group rapporteurs, are summarized below.

Group I: Cultural Diplomacy, Report by Dezdemona Kovacs

The group emphasized the importance of developing and renaming archives and improving access to them. It proposed stronger engagement with mainstream cultural and digital platforms, including representatives from companies such as Amazon, Netflix, and Kindle, as well as outreach to Silicon Valley actors to address AI bias and online racism. Cultural diplomacy was framed as cultural mainstreaming, with suggestions including mainstream formats such as Roma-focused dating shows, puppet theatre, animation, anime, stand-up comedy, comic books, and travelling performances. The group highlighted the value of traditional storytelling, music recordings, crafts, and the development of children's and graphic literature. Broadcasting ERiac podcasts and events on television and expanding live performances, including travelling quartets, were also proposed. The group further noted the importance of exploring Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) frameworks, including tax-exemption schemes available in some countries.

Group II: Roma History and Language, Report by Eriketa Kocollari and Mihaela Zatreanu

This group proposed exploring the inclusion of the Romani language on digital learning platforms such as Duolingo and the use of AI tools, including subtitles in Romanes. Additional proposals included educating influencers on Roma history and language, developing a Roma fashion brand as a vehicle for visibility, and balancing respect for national specificities with transnational exchange through ERiac as a shared platform.

Group III: Pride and Identity, Report by Mikuláš Lakatoš

The group proposed strengthening Roma visibility in mainstream media and exploring the establishment of a European Roma media or broadcasting platform. Reflections were shared on the relationship between pride and arrogance, emphasizing the need for internal reflection and community readiness to work together. Music was highlighted as a powerful tool for community cohesion. The group stressed the importance of recognizing internal diversity, using collective social identity to uplift individual identities, and ensuring the sustainability of cultural activities and funding. It was suggested that, alongside EU funding, greater attention should be given to national-level public support.

Plenary Discussion

During the plenary discussion, several key points were raised:

- **Miguel Angel Vargas** emphasized the need to establish archives and to decenter Roma cultural work from exclusively Roma-focused narratives toward broader, mainstream topics.
- **Dezső Máté** proposed the introduction of an award recognizing Roma elders.
- **Dijana Pavlovic** highlighted the importance of using existing data and research on pride and identity, rather than relying solely on new data collection, noting the wealth of previous projects and archives. She also stressed that ERiac meetings should move beyond “wish lists” and focus on *how* activities are implemented, not only *what* is planned.
- **Raul Carstocea** emphasized the strategic importance of teacher training, noting that teachers can introduce Roma history and culture into classrooms even while formal curriculum reforms are pending.
- **Sead Memeti** underlined the importance of openness and avoiding discussions on Roma culture being limited to Roma audiences only. He stressed the need for non-Roma

communities to be engaged as co-creators, warned against elitism, and encouraged a stronger focus on children's books, manga, and accessible cultural formats.

- **Dalibor Tanic** emphasized prioritizing a smaller number of concrete, achievable actions over an expansive list of ideas.

Conclusions and closing

The Chair encouraged ERIAC members to continue their active engagement, contributions, and support to ERIAC's work and objectives. The meeting was then formally closed.



Chair of the General Assembly: Anna Mirga Kruszelnicka, Deputy Director, ERIAC



Appointed minute taker: Nadja Greku, Program Manager, ERIAC Serbia