



Center for Civil and Human Rights

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Introduction

Why does working at Poradňa as a Roma woman make sense to me?

I work as a coordinator of field monitoring in excluded Roma communities in Slovakia. In the past I worked in Poradňa as a field worker, but then I lived and worked abroad for four years. There I had the opportunity to see that it is possible to live without distinction and without prejudice. I perceived and felt that all minorities respect each other and do not feel hatred towards each other. Rather, they try to improve coexistence. Therefore, as a Roma woman, I felt safe there. Nobody stared at me because I had a different skin colour, nobody judged me because of my origin. But I decided to return home - to Slovakia. To my native country, where I was born. Because as they say, “there is no place like home.”

After coming back to Slovakia, I started working at Poradňa again.

In the excluded Roma communities, together with my two Roma women colleagues, we monitor human rights violations against Roma. In the field, we listen to the stories of people living in difficult living conditions. They tell us how society alienates them because of their origin, their race. They tell us that they experience discrimination. How they are refused service or asked for a club card in restaurants, bars or pubs.



How they experience shaming, or neglected health care in medical facilities. Roma women talk to us about maternity hospitals where there are still so-called Roma only rooms, how the medical staff scold them, insult them, just because of their Roma origin.



Why and what do I see as the meaning of our work?

My work consists of monitoring human rights violations in excluded Roma communities. In addition, I organize and am part of joint meetings with Roma women activists, with whom we have been cooperating for a long time at Poradňa. Together we are trying, among other things, to get the government to adopt a compensation law for all forcibly sterilised women. I believe that all women survivors will achieve it. Since my return, I perceive that the situation in excluded Roma communities has worsened in terms of human rights violations and discrimination. In many villages in eastern Slovakia there are purely Roma primary schools or classes. I see segregated schools as very bad for our children. They have limited opportunities to continue their education once they have finished, as they do not receive a quality education. When I was myself a pupil in primary school, I went to class with non-Roma classmates. They never made me feel that I was of Roma origin. They took me as a friend. Even the teachers didn't make differences between us. I am still in contact with some of my classmates today. I think that if our Roma children went to school together with non-Roma children, they would have the same opportunities to be educated. They would have a chance to achieve something in life, prejudices would be broken down and friendships would be formed between them. Work at Poradňa makes sense, it helps not only us - Roma, but also whole society. That is why I came back to continue this work. I am pleased that Roma are not afraid to stand up and defend themselves when their rights or the rights of their children are violated. I believe that one day our society will be free of prejudice and hatred. We will all be equal, no one will condemn anyone for their origin or race. We will all respect each other. We at Poradňa will continue to strive for this.

Agáta Duchoňová



Who we are

We are a non-governmental non-profit organization based in Košice. For more than 20 years our work has been devoted to the protection of human rights in Slovakia, with an emphasis on the protection of the rights of the Roma minority. We focus on issues of discrimination, police violence, protection of reproductive rights and specifically a topic of forced sterilizations of Roma women. We provide the necessary support to Roma, so they can effectively protect their human rights and the rights of others. We pay specific attention to support the activism of Roma women.

„Our vision is a society where minorities do not face discrimination, a society with respect for human rights of vulnerable groups, a society where legal tools on protection of human rights are effectively implemented and human rights violations are sanctioned and compensated.”

Within our work

- We conduct strategic litigation: in selected cases, given their broader strategic importance, we provide free legal representation and advice.
- We work closely with local Roma women activists and support their mobilization to protect the rights of the Roma minority, with emphasis on the rights of Roma women and their children.
- We conduct field monitoring with a focus on identifying cases of human rights violations.
- We propose and comment on legislative measures and promote systemic changes at the political level.
- We provide information to international institutions that oversee Slovakia's compliance with international human rights treaties.
- We carry out publishing and educational activities for various target groups.



Major milestones

2003: In cooperation with the international NGO Center for Reproductive Rights, we published a research report, [Body and Soul](#), documenting the practice of forced sterilization of Roma women in Slovakia and other violations of their reproductive rights.

2004: We contributed significantly to the introduction of informed consent for medical interventions into health care legislation in Slovakia.

2006: We achieved the first victory in the domestic courts in a case of discrimination against the Roma minority under the Anti-Discrimination Act. The defendants had to apologize for the discrimination.

2009: We achieved our [first victory](#) at the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg in favour of nine Roma women in the case of K.H. and others v. Slovak Republic concerning the violation of their rights by denying them full access to their medical records.

2011: We achieved [first victory](#) at the Strasbourg Court in favour of a forcibly sterilised Roma woman in the case of V.C. v. Slovak Republic.

2012: We achieved the first ever final [judgment](#) of the Slovak courts on the segregation of Roma children in the case of a school in Šarišské Michalany.

2016: We achieved our [first victory](#) in the Strasbourg Court regarding police violence against a Roma boy at a police station in the case Adam v. Slovak Republic.

2020: We achieved a landmark [judgment](#) at the Strasbourg Court in favour of two affected Roma who faced violence during a police raid in Moldava nad Bodvou in 2013. This contributed to the government's apology for this police raid in June 2021.

2021: We contributed significantly to the Slovak government's [apology](#) for the practice of forced sterilizations.

2022: We achieved a landmark [judgment](#) by the Supreme Court of the Slovak Republic, which ruled on the segregation of Roma children at an elementary school in the Stará Ľubovňa – district Podsadek.



2023: We achieved a landmark **judgment** regarding discrimination against Roma children in access to distance online education during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Awards of our work

In 2012, we received the annual **award** of the French Republic “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity” for our activities on the protection of human rights in Slovakia.

In 2013, the US Embassy in Slovakia **awarded** our cooperating lawyer Vanda Durbáková for her commitment to the protection of the human rights of the Roma minority with the title “Woman of Courage”.

In 2021, the Public Defender of Rights **awarded us** the “Ombudsman’s Thank You” award for our long-term contribution to the protection of the human rights of the Roma minority in Slovakia.

In 2022, we were awarded the Roma Spirit 2022 **award** in the category of Act of the Year for our successful litigation of the case of Roma children who were illegally educated in special classes of primary school in Hermanovce in Eastern Slovakia.

At the beginning of 2024, our lawyer Vanda Durbáková became a laureate of the prestigious Czech-Slovak **award** for inspiring female lawyers - FLAMMA.





Our work in 2022 and 2023

Protection from discrimination

We continued in our efforts to combat discrimination against Roma in our society. We monitored cases of discrimination against them in access to healthcare, education, housing and other areas of public life. In these areas, we provided free legal advice and, in selected cases, representation in court proceedings.



We paid special attention to the manifestations of multiple/intersectional discrimination against Roma women. Our aim was to provide discriminated Roma with the necessary support so that they could effectively defend themselves against discrimination. We also pursued legal proceedings for protection against discrimination on our own behalf by using the legal institute of *actio popularis*. We were practically the only domestic organisation in Slovakia to develop it in court practice. On the basis of the results of our legal work, we have promoted measures on the prevention of discrimination against Roma towards the responsible state authorities and international human rights bodies.

- We provided free legal representation in strategic court proceedings to 22 discriminated persons, including their representation before the Constitutional Court of the Slovak Republic and the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. Our goal was to improve access to justice in cases of discrimination, to encourage public discussion about discrimination against the Roma minority in Slovakia, and to motivate other discriminated persons to defend themselves legally.



- We provided free legal representation in a strategic criminal case to 5 Roma women who faced verbal abuse because of their Roma origin by a bus driver. Our aim was to improve access to justice in cases of racial discrimination that may amount to a racially motivated crime. At the same time, on the basis of our complaint, the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights, as the national equality body, defined the driver's actions as discrimination on the basis of ethnic origin in the form of harassment.

- On the basis of the so-called *actio popularis* lawsuits filed by us, we have conducted 5 strategic court proceedings challenging systemic manifestations of discrimination against the Roma minority, such as the segregation of Roma children in education or the segregation of Roma women on maternity wards of hospitals. Our aim is, among other things, to ensure that the responsible institutions take effective systemic measures to protect from and eliminate discrimination.

- On behalf of our clients, we have conducted two strategic court proceedings in which we addressed the shortcomings of the responsible state institutions in the implementation of the decisions of the UN Treaty monitoring bodies. The state continues to refuse to compensate affected individuals who have sought justice before these bodies. We have advocated that the Government of the Slovak Republic create a mechanism on the basis of which the affected persons would be compensated.

- In December 2022, we achieved a landmark [judgment](#) of the Supreme Court of the Slovak Republic, which ruled on the segregation of Roma children at a primary school in the municipal district of Stará Ľubovňa - Podsadek. The Supreme Court agreed with the opinion that the education of Roma children in an ethnically homogeneous school close to the local marginalised Roma community constitutes discrimination against them on the basis of ethnicity.



It confirmed the responsibility of the defendant State, represented by the Ministry of Education, and of the town of Stará Ľubovňa as the school's founder, which, in its view, had failed to take sufficient preventive measures to eliminate the discrimination against Roma children in question. According to the Supreme Court, the state institutions are responsible also for the segregation, which arose spontaneously and not with the purposeful intention of separating Roma children from majority children.

- In July 2023, we achieved another important [judgment](#) of the Supreme Court, which ruled on the segregation of Roma children at the primary school in Muránská Dlhá Lúka. With this decision, the court repeatedly confirmed that the education of Roma children in a Roma-only school is illegal and constitutes segregation. This is so even in cases where there was no purposeful separation of the children, but the segregation arose spontaneously, for example as a result of the parents' choice of school. At the same time, the Supreme Court reaffirmed the State's legal obligation to take effective measures to eliminate segregation..
- In February 2023, we achieved a landmark [judgment](#) of the Regional Court in Prešov, which finally ruled on the illegal education of three Roma children from Hermanovce in a local primary school in special classes for children with mild mental disabilities. In doing so, it upheld the judgment of the District Court in Prešov of November 2021. In addition to the school and the sued centre for special pedagogic counselling, the appeal court also confirmed the liability of the Ministry of Education for discriminating against the complainants. This is the first ever final decision of the Slovak courts in favour of Roma children who were illegally educated in the special education system in Slovakia.
- In November 2023, we achieved a landmark [judgment](#) of the District Court in Prešov in the case of segregation of Roma children at the primary school in a village Terňa.



It ruled that the segregation of Roma children at this school is due to the decisions taken by the defendant state institutions on the designation of a joint school district in the locality, as well as to their long-term inaction. The court ordered the defendants to take effective measures to remedy the unlawful situation at the school and to prevent segregation in the future. With this decision, the Slovak courts have for the first time ever obliged the responsible state institutions to develop a so-called desegregation plan and its subsequent implementation.

○ On the basis of the above-mentioned important judgments of national courts, we have advocated for systemic measures in relation to the responsible state institutions to eradicate segregation and other manifestations of discrimination against Roma children in the Slovak school system. We have initiated several [meetings](#) with the relevant institutions and commented on proposals of legislative measures in this area. The results of our strategic legal work have resonated strongly in the public and political debate. In September 2023, the European Parliament referred to the judgments we had achieved in the Supreme Court of the Slovak Republic regarding segregation in education in its resolution. It called on the European Commission and EU Member states to take effective measures to eliminate segregation of Roma children in education. The results of our strategic legal work in this area were also [reported](#) in the influential British newspaper The Guardian.

○ We have [advocated](#) that the European Union funds allocated for educational reforms should not deepen the existing segregation of Roma children in schools, but on the contrary should be used to eliminate and prevent it. In cooperation with the national equality body - the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights - we specifically [campaigned](#) against the Ministry of Education's plans to eliminate the problem of double-shift operation in Roma-only primary schools by further expanding them and deepening the segregation that already exists in them.

We have communicated the need to solve this problem through desegregation in accordance with EU law to the responsible state institutions and to the European Commission.



○ We have informed the UN Treaty monitoring bodies that oversee compliance with international human rights treaties by their signatory states, including Slovakia, about the ongoing discrimination against the Roma minority and the shortcomings in the implementation of the anti-discrimination legislation. We submitted our reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Committee against Torture (CAT). Some of these reports have been prepared in cooperation with our collaborating organisations Women's Circles and Fenestra. The Committees have taken much of our information into account in their recommendations to the Slovak Government.

○ We informed the UN Human Rights Council about discrimination against the Roma minority in the framework of the fourth cycle of the Universal Periodic Review of Slovakia (UPR) - the UN mechanism for assessing the observance of human rights in its member states. We prepared one of these reports with the collaborating organisation Women's Circles.



○ In communication with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, we advocated for changes in selected provisions of legislation with a discriminatory impact on disadvantaged Roma women and their children.

○ We have also advocated for measures to combat discrimination against the Roma minority towards other responsible institutions in Slovakia. We commented on the draft action plans of the Strategy for Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma until 2030 and advocated for it to take into account our proposed measures. We have also advocated for measures in this area in meetings with responsible institutions.

○ In cooperation with Minority Rights Group Europe (MRGE) and EPEKA, we published a report in October 2022 that provides an overview of the current manifestations of discrimination against Roma and the existing barriers to their access to justice in Slovakia and Slovenia. For the report, we developed a section on the situation in Slovakia. The published findings are based on our research.

○ We sent a number of submissions to the national equality body - the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights - with the aim of contributing to more frequent and effective use of its legal competences to address discrimination against the Roma minority. In January 2023, we held a [legal workshop](#) for lawyers from this institution and the Office of the Public Defender of Rights to share with them our experience in conducting strategic litigation in cases of discrimination against the Roma minority.

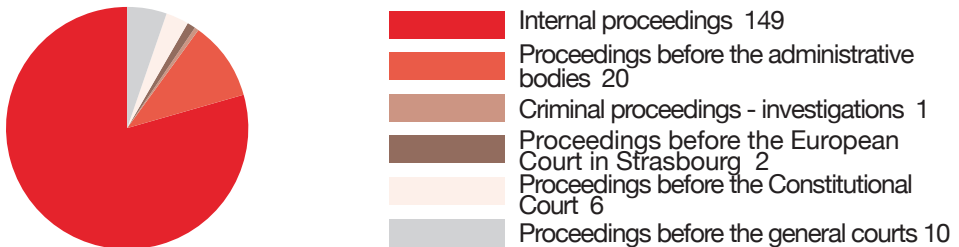




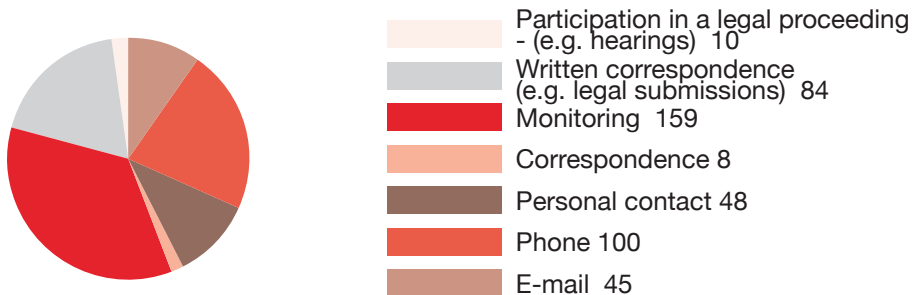
“The state, in cooperation with the municipality, must take effective measures (whether by legislative initiative, the creation of incentive conditions, or the formation of school districts) to prevent segregation, not just stand by and refer to the strict, often misinterpreted dictum of the law. The determining factor in any approach is the best interests of the child. It is in the interest of society as a whole that children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds grow up to be full members of that society, to which desegregation efforts in school education will make a significant contribution.”

An excerpt from the landmark decision of the Supreme Court of the Slovak Republic on the segregation of Roma children at the primary school in the municipal district of Stará Lubovňa – Podsadek

PROCEEDINGS WITHIN PROGRAMME



TYPES OF ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE PROGRAMME





Protection from police violence

We continued in our work to address the ill-treatment of Roma by police officers in marginalised communities. We monitored cases in this area and highlighted their ongoing occurrence. In selected cases, we provided legal assistance to victims so that they could defend themselves against police violence. On the basis of the results of our legal work, we advocated for measures against police violence against Roma towards the responsible state authorities and international human rights bodies. In particular, we have pointed out the ongoing shortcomings in the investigation of police violence by the responsible institution - the Office of the Inspection Service. We stressed that effective investigation of these cases is crucial for their overall eradication and prevention in our society.

- We provided free legal advice and representation in strategic legal proceedings to 16 victims, including the well-publicised cases of ill-treatment of Roma boys from Lunik IX at the police station in Košice in 2009, the police raid in Vrbnice in 2015 and police violence against Roma children in Krompachy during the pandemic in 2020. We provided legal assistance to the affected people during the investigation of their cases by the police inspection, as well as in proceedings before the Constitutional Court of the Slovak Republic and the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.
- In September 2022, we achieved an important [judgment](#) of the European Court of Human Rights in the case of P.H. v. Slovakia, which ruled on a serious violation of the rights of an underage Roma girl. In 2017, she suffered severe injuries after a fall from a window that occurred while she was detained at a police station. According to the European Court, the responsible state authorities did not sufficiently investigate the entire incident.



- In February 2023, we achieved an important [judgment](#) of the European Court of Human Rights in the case of M.B. and Others v. Slovakia (No. 2, which ruled on the violation of the rights of six Roma boys from Lunik IX who faced violence at the police station in Košice in 2009. The case was widely publicised and has long spurred public discussion in this area. According to the Strasbourg Court, the responsible state authorities violated both the victims' right to protection from police violence and their right to an effective investigation of that violence, including an investigation into its possible racial motive.

- In May 2023, we achieved a landmark judgment of the Constitutional Court of the Slovak Republic, which [ruled](#) on the violation of the rights of six Roma boys from Lunik IX who faced violence at a police station in Košice in 2009. The Constitutional Court found a violation of the complainants' right to protection against torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and discrimination. It also quashed the acquittals of the general courts of the police officers accused of violence against the complainants and returned the case to the general courts for further proceedings. The ruling in this case was preceded by the above mentioned judgment of the European Court of Human Rights, which ruled in February 2023 that the rights of the complainants had been violated.

○ On the basis of the European Court of Human Rights judgments we have achieved, we have **advocated** towards the Slovak Government and the responsible ministries for measures that would strengthen the quality and independence of police investigations into police violence and contribute to its effective prevention. In this regard, we have specifically emphasised the need for the Government to thoroughly implement the court judgments we have achieved. Together with collaborating organisations, the European Roma Rights Centre and the Forum for Human Rights, we submitted a joint **statement** to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, which monitors the implementation of the Strasbourg Court's judgments, in January 2023. In it, we pointed specifically to shortcomings in the implementation of the judgment we achieved in the case of R.R. and R.D. v. Slovak Republic, which the Strasbourg Court ruled in September 2020 on the violation of the rights of two Roma complainants of a widely publicised police raid in Moldava and Bodvou. We have also **informed** other international bodies about the ongoing short-comings in this area.

“I'm happy for all of us who were at the police station then and experienced it. And I am glad that the European Court has compensated us. I think it is important to defend ourselves against police violence, even if it took a lot of nerve and patience. I was very disappointed with the Slovak courts. I was around fifteen when I experienced it. I am now an adult and I have a son. I hope that this verdict will contribute to ensuring that something like this does not happen to him or anyone else in Slovakia.”

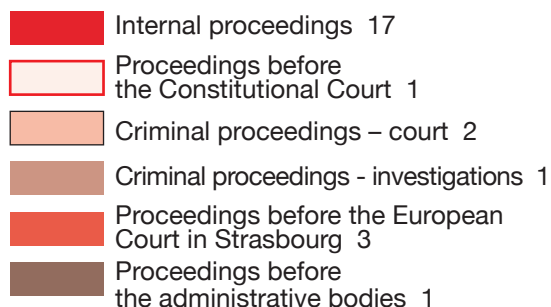
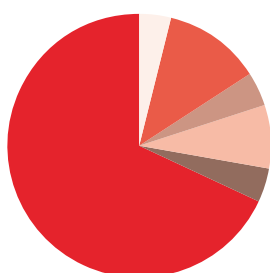
Reaction of one of the affected boys from Lunik IX, who faced violence at the police station in Košice in 2009 - to the Strasbourg court judgment that their rights had been violated.

“The results of the examination presented in the preceding paragraphs of this ruling have confirmed the validity of the complainants' allegations of deficiencies in the effectiveness of the investigation, since the essence

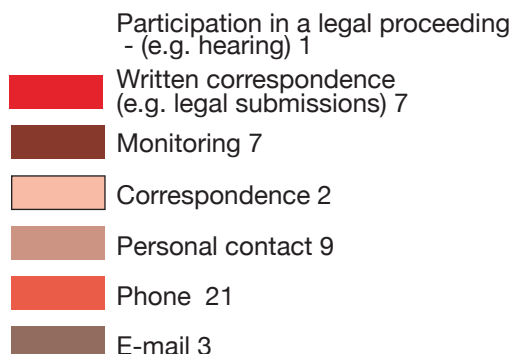
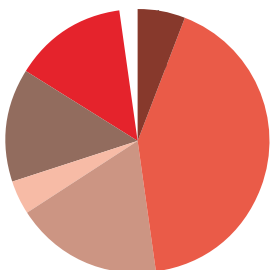
of the defects found at the judicial stage of the proceedings is the irregular application of the principle of the free evaluation of evidence, where the remedy for the effectiveness of the investigation by the general court is possible, through a rational, comprehensive and transparent analysis of all the evidence taken. For the above reasons... the Constitutional Court could not resign itself to the effective protection of the complainants' rights and it was its duty to complete it in accordance with the aim and purpose of the right to effective investigation, which, in addition to the individual protection of the rights of individuals, is of general societal significance."

Excerpt from the ruling of the Constitutional Court of the Slovak Republic, which ruled on the violation of the rights of six Roma boys from Lunik IX, who faced violence at the police station in Košice in 2009 v Košičiach

PROCEEDINGS WITHIN THE PROGRAMME



TYPES OF ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE PROGRAMME





Protection of reproductive rights

We have continued in our long-standing efforts to combat discrimination against Roma women in health care, such as manifestations of their segregation on maternity wards, racially motivated harassment and humiliation and neglect and abuse during child-birth. We monitored discrimination in this area. We pointed out that it remains common in many hospitals, particularly in eastern Slovakia, and emphasised its institutional nature. We also pointed out shortcomings related to obtaining informed consent and to making decisions about health care.



- We have intensively developed our long-standing advocacy activities towards the responsible state authorities in order to achieve effective access to justice for all forcibly sterilised Roma women. Following the government's [apology](#) for the practice of forced sterilizations of Roma women from November 2021, we have advocated for the adoption of legislation that would allow for forcibly sterilized Roma women to be adequately financially compensated. We have developed the [principles](#) on which such legislation should be based. We [commented](#) on a specific legislative proposal in this regard, which was discussed and approved in the first reading by the the Slovak parliament in May 2023. We promoted the need to adopt a quality legislative proposal also in [communication](#) with international institutions.



“We in our NGO Poradiňa appreciate the current efforts of the state authorities to finally draft legislation on compensation and fully support it. The adoption of this law can no longer be delayed. We call on the Government to draft the relevant legislation as soon as possible... The injured women must also be given support so that they can realistically obtain compensation. Securing justice for forcibly sterilized women is a matter of elementary justice and of coming to terms with a serious systemic violation of women’s rights. Support for this law should be a matter of course in a democratic society and must therefore go across the political spectrum.”

Statement by collaborating attorney Vanda Durbáková of 23 January 2023, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of our report Body and Soul, which documented the practice of forced sterilization of Roma women in Slovakia and brought it to the attention of the general public

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TYPES OF ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE PROGRAMME

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Cooperation with active Roma who are pursuing their rights

We continued in our cooperation with active Roma women from two localities in Eastern Slovakia. Together we met, planned and implemented our activities to protect the human rights of the Roma minority in various areas of public life. In cooperation with them, we monitored cases of discrimination against Roma in excluded communities. We jointly drew the attention of the responsible state authorities, international human rights bodies and the general public to the ongoing shortcomings in this regard through our communication with the media. We have paid close attention to the manifestations of discrimination against Roma women in the area of reproductive health care - including the issue of forced sterilisation of Roma women, which has still not been fully addressed by the responsible institutions in Slovakia. However, we also jointly addressed the issues of discrimination against Roma in access to housing and drinking water, and the segregation of Roma children in education.

- Together with Roma women, we continued to intensively promote justice for forcibly sterilized Roma women. We pushed for the adoption of legislation that would enable forcibly sterilised Roma women to be adequately financially compensated. The efforts of Roma women in this regard were personally **supported** by the President of the Slovak Republic, Zuzana Čaputová, in April 2022. These efforts contributed to the submission of a legislative proposal on compensation for forcibly sterilised women to the Slovak parliament in April 2023, which approved it in the first reading. We have also jointly **communicated** the need to eliminate a number of shortcomings in this proposal at meetings with members of the Slovak parliament and at meetings of parliamentary committees that discussed the proposal. Due to the early adjournment of the parliamentary session, the parliament did not discuss the proposal further. Together with Roma women, we pushed for the adoption of this legislation even after the formation of the new government in autumn 2023.



- We developed our cooperation with a group of forcibly sterilized Roma women from the Czech Republic. We organized joint [meetings](#) where we shared our experiences in advocating for justice for forcibly sterilized Roma women in both countries.
- Together with Roma women, we advocated for the rights of Roma minority in Slovakia towards international bodies. Roma women have personally [spoken out](#) about its ongoing discrimination at meetings of both the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The Committees have taken their information into account in their recommendations to the Slovak Government.
- The forcibly sterilized Roma women we cooperate with shared their stories for the documentary 'My Body, My Life', produced and [broadcast](#) by Slovak state television (RTVS). The film presents the long-standing efforts of active Roma women, in cooperation with our NGO, to seek apologies and compensation from the government for forcibly sterilized Roma women.
- Three Roma women activists became part of the team of our NGO Poradňa and significantly strengthened its capacity. In May 2022, our team was strengthened by two Roma women activists Nasta and Veronika, formerly members of a group we have been working with for years. In March 2023, our colleague Agáta returned to our team after several years abroad, coordinating our field monitoring and participating in the preparation of meetings with Roma activists.
- We worked with many other Roma activists from communities in eastern Slovakia. In December 2022, we organised a [training](#) for Roma activists to share our experience in promoting the human rights of Roma minority in Slovakia using legal means of protection.



“We know from our monitoring that in some state hospitals there are still only segregated Roma rooms. There we encounter discrimination. We have been fighting for change for many years, but the Slovak government does nothing. Many Roma girls still attend Roma-only schools or classes. Even the Slovak courts say that this is illegal. However, the state is doing nothing to change this. We Roma women still do not have good access to justice in cases of discrimination. We do not trust the courts. Court proceedings take too long. The courts don’t believe us.”

Excerpt from a statement made by Agata Duchoňová, a Roma activist and human rights monitor and coordinator in our NGO Poradňa, presenting at a meeting of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

“I gained new experiences, new information about discrimination. I learned new stories of people who have experienced discrimination.”

“When I need help, I know who to turn to.”

Feedback of Roma activists to the training on protection from discrimination that we organised for them in December 2022.



Discrimination in access to digital technologies

We have encouraged a public discussion on yet overlooked problem of discrimination against disadvantaged Roma as well as some other groups of the Slovak population, in access to digital technologies - specifically the internet, computers and smartphones. Limited access to these technologies or lack of skills in their use increasingly disadvantages them in various areas of life. During the pandemic of COVID-19, this issue has come to the fore particularly in relation to the unequal access of disadvantaged Roma children to distance learning via the internet, or the barriers of disadvantaged Roma or elderly people to registering for the COVID-19 vaccination via the internet. We have monitored cases in this area and have taken legal action in selected cases - in view of their wider strategic importance.

- In February 2023, we achieved a landmark [judgment](#) by the District Court in Prešov, in the case of a Roma child from a disadvantaged community in a village Jarovnice, who was discriminated against in access to education during the COVID-19 pandemic due to limited internet access and digital technologies. The court ruled that the defendant - the Ministry of Education, failed to provide her with equal access to online distance education during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is the first judgment of its kind not only in Slovakia, but also in Europe, which has highlighted the disadvantages in access to digital technologies and the internet faced by some groups in Slovak society, which have a broader systemic character.

“I decided to take the case to court because the Roma children were not taught during Covid pandemic and the school was not interested in them. Only once a week they brought them some worksheets. My granddaughter was a first grader. I didn't want her to forget what she had learned before. In my opinion, the school did not teach Roma children as it should have and I perceived it as discrimination. I am glad that the court gave me the truth.”

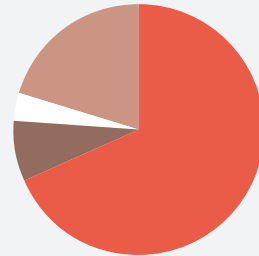
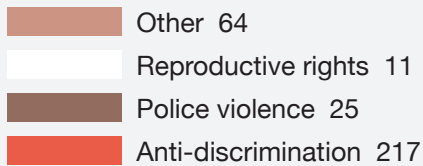
Reaction of Veronika Duždová, grandmother of a discriminated child, to the judgment of the District Court in Prešov



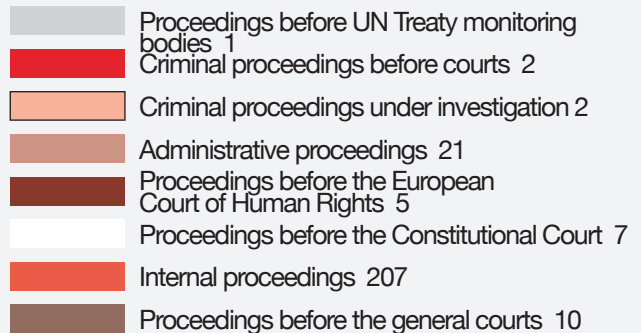
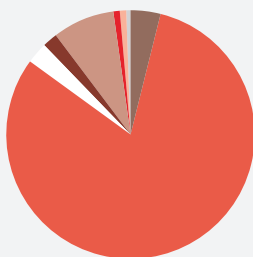
TOTAL STATISTICS OF OUR WORK FOR 2022-2023



PROCEDURES BY PROGRAMME



PROCEDURES BY TYPE





People of Poradňa

Vanda Durbáková – attorney and the statutory representative

Lenka Tóthová - office manager

Štefan Ivanco - programme coordinator

Agáta Duchoňová - Roma human rights monitor and coordinator

Nasťa Čonkova - Roma human rights monitor

Veronika Duždová - Roma human rights monitor

Lucia Havrilková – legal intern from the Faculty of Law, UPJŠ in Košice
(academic year 2023/2024)

Roma women activists cooperating on NGO's activities

Board

Michal Čermák – lawyer

Ruben Pellar – researcher and translator

Ingrid Giňová – Roma woman activist

Donors

In 2022 - 2023, our activities were financially supported mainly by:

Sigrid Rausing Trust

Active Citizens Fund – Slovakia that is financed from the Financial mechanism EEA 2014-2021.

The program is managed by the Ekopolis Foundation in partnership with the Open Society and Carpathian Foundation

European union

Open Society Foundations

Digital Freedom Fund

Individual donors, in particular by donating 2% of the tax assignment or through the portal darujme.sk

We would like to thank you to all those who financially and/or personally supported our work in 2022 – 2023. Thank you

How you can support us

- Regular or one-off financial contribution.
- Dedicating 2% of your taxes.

You can find more information about other support options on our website.



Financial report in Euro


INCOME	2022	2023
Income from other organizations/gifts/grants	94,486.53	108,099.74
Other gains/received gains from litigated court proceedings	0.00	14,750.00
2% tax assignation	696.55	1,015.67
Interests/exchange rate profit	6.09	582.76
Income from services provided	12,931.97	4,764.35
In total	108,121.14	129,212.52

COSTS	2022	2023
Office overheads, equipment and repairs	1371.24	2902.66
Telephone, internet and postal services	596.32	627.13
Rent and insurance	4013.75	5106.12
Salaries	44816.1	62922.73
Taxes and fees	168.66	79.34
Legal services - strategic litigation	20008.4	19731.39
Accountancy	1714	3495
Travel expenses	2833.5	3970.25
Educational activities (seminars, meetings, supervisions)	13491.28	7693.67
Publications (printing, graphic, authors fees)	4153.98	1822.18
Interpreting and translations	1780	0
PC software, website domain and webhosting, advertising	1415.34	563.74
In total	96362.57	108914.21

How you can support us

Regular or one-off financial contribution



 Dedication 2% of your taxes

You can find more information about other support options on our website

www.poradna-prava.sk