

LETTER, February 10, 2022

To Whom It May Concern

I have been acquainted with Roma culture and the position of the Roma for more than 30 years. As a researcher, I made the survey 'The Educational Needs of the Roma Population' and worked on the Country Roma Advisory Board. I am also a producer of educational material for the linguistic and cultural minorities, e.g. Romani ABC and Romani grammatik books, and work as a national planner for special education. I worked for the International Romani Union - IRU - in the position of Trust of the Head of the Commissariat. I have worked in the structures of the national government, the European Union, the UN, and with NGOs on Roma issues.

At this moment, I am correcting one dissertation on Roma identity. On the subject of Roma identity, you cannot trace someone's Roma origin e.g. through online sites like Ancestry.com and Roma do not use official documents to verify their Roma origin. Some Roma do not want to be identified as Roma due to discrimination in the census, and some Roma lack all identity documents, even a birth certificate.

The term 'Roma' encompasses diverse groups, including Roma, Kalderash, Romanichal, Manush, Travellers, Ashkali, Sinti, Boyash, Kalè, Lovara, Rissende, Domare and Egyptians. The term Roma is the term commonly used also in many policy documents and discussions. The main population usually considers a person to be Romani if one of his or her parents/grandparents has a Roma background.

Sometimes a Roma community may deny a person membership in the Roma community, but the individual has the right to determine his or her ethnic identity already on the basis of UN documents. The Roma community can also look at a person's degree of 'romanibe' through knowledge of the orally transferred Roma culture and history, Romani language (multiple dialects), commitment to the Roma community and customs. Rain's grandfather was a Romani speaker. His grandson has a high degree of 'romanibe.'

In the past, endogamic families were favored in the Roma community, but now exogamous families have become more common. Marriage between a Roma man and a non-Roma woman has been easier to accept in the community than a

marriage between a Roma woman and a non-Roma man. Over time this is changing.

Co-operation with Roma Rain Lovell

I know Roma Rain Lovell as I work for the 50-year-old International Romani Union - IRU as Head of the Commissariat, 2019-2021. Rain Lovell is an IRU delegate in the United States and I worked closely with him.

Rain's late mother was a Roma (origins in Kalderash, Manush and Romanichal lines). The first two of those traveled through Europe to France. Over generations, many families from those lines moved to England and joined with the Romanichal clans. Rain's mother gave the son another name 'Lovell' which is the name of a prominent Roma family/band to recognize that association. To honour that it is natural for Rain to use his given Lovell name for Roma work.

Rain is a filmmaker and the executive director of the Global Indigenous Council. As executive director of an influential tribal rights organization Rain has a positive working relationship with many members of the U.S. Congress; he is a leader in those policy positions and implementing the manifesto.

The highly respected Rain Lovell has made a very significant contribution to Roma affairs in the United States.

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