

## **Unequal citizenship and transnational mobilisation of Polish, Czech and Ukrainian Roma in the face of the war in Ukraine**

Public reactions in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine in both Poland and the Czech Republic were unprecedented. The arrival of thousands of Ukrainian refugees led to an unparalleled grassroots mobilisation of both societies to help the refugees. However, certain important phenomena in the observed process remained in the shadows. Firstly, Ukraine is not an ethnically and culturally monolithic country and not all refugees reflected the emerging racialised and gendered ideal of the Ukrainian refugee. Secondly, people fleeing the war who did not fit this model, such as Ukrainian Roma – faced discrimination on their refugee journey.

In this project, we focus on their situation, as well as on the Czech (and Slovak) and Polish Roma, who provided aid to Ukrainian Roma from the first days of the ongoing war, and whose contribution to refugee assistance is nevertheless in danger of being undermined by the homogenising discursive practices of talking about Polish/Czech aid. This potentially undermines their already unequal social and political status as citizens, further questioning their belonging. Therefore, the project not only brings to the fore the unequal nature of citizenship in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), but also how antigypsyism (i.e. normalised and accepted form of racism towards Roma) affects the refugees' reception.

The project is being carried out in two countries by Roma–non-Roma research teams from the Czechia and Poland and aims to shed light on non-obvious actors in the process, to problematise otherwise dominant and homogenising narratives of 'Polish' or 'Czech' aid to Ukrainian refugees. This project therefore aims not only to document the situation of Ukrainian, Polish and Czech Roma in the context of the war in Ukraine, but will also answer broader questions about the experiences of Roma refugees fleeing the country (and why it is different from that of other refugees), through the lens of Critical Citizenship Studies. Additionally, and building on this literature, we see the ethnic mobilisation of Roma in the face of war as a continuation of their struggle for an equal social and political position in Central and Eastern Europe. Methodologically, the work of the research teams is primarily based on ethnographic methods and draws on their long experience of conducting ethnographic research with Roma in different countries. The project will also involve people who support Roma refugees from Ukraine on a daily basis, as well as Roma refugees from Ukraine themselves.

The researchers aim to take a critical look at the consequences of intersecting categories of citizenship and racial hierarchies in the context of forced migration in Poland, Czechia and Ukraine, and at the enactments of citizenship through which Roma resist further marginalisation. In addition to contributing to the development of Critical Citizenship Studies, this project also advances the discussion in the field of Critical Romani Studies and Critical Migration and Race Studies in Central and Eastern Europe.