The present book proposes an inventory – historical and from an international legislative point of view – of the social inclusion and fundamental rights of Roma populations. The author notices: "the main problem concerning Roma minority rights is the strong anti-Roma prejudice prevailing in all European countries" (p.6). Since the eastward enlargement of the European Union, the social inclusion of the Roma population and the policies aimed at preventing discrimination became a European imperative. The recommendation was not left without an echo in Romania, although, beyond the European integration and the legislative prerogatives, mentalities and minority status are to be reconsidered. The book is structured in six parts: Introduction, History/Origins of the Roma, A Historically Discriminated Group, EU and the Roma, Accession Criteria and Policy and Conclusion.

Without entering into an in-depth analysis of some concepts defining the operational terms, the author establishes that the history of the Roma is full of oppression, segregation and discrimination (p.8). The affirmation is sustained by an inventory of historical, linguistic, literary, religious arguments, not excluding the short effervescence witnessed through elements of self-organization (the 1930's establishment of the journal Neamul Tiganesc – The Gypsy Clan, the General Association of Roma in Romania, Glasul Romilor – The Voice of the Roma, the newspaper O Rom). While the explanation of the etymology of the term "gypsy" is present, incidentally, the label of "Roma" itself is not addressed. A possible recommendation in this respect is the analysis of the changes of these references to this specific population outside the linguistic realm. Old and new labels operate now simultaneously, some are more manifestly cultural and, in this respect, have their international resistant prejudicial shadows (such as the "gypsies"), and others are more political and limited as "Roma" (although they do not succeed at all to escape the prejudicial realm). The complex social and political implications of this naming game are numerous (for example, is the Stabor a "Roma" or a traditional "gypsy" institution?)

The Second War World ended the rise of Roma self-organization throughout Europe. Nazi and communist policies alike strongly substantiate the affirmation according to which the Roma can be considered a historically discriminated group (p.24), and yet, it must be noted, the author does not operate any comparative analysis of minority oppression, in order to establish general or particular historical forms, frequently left out in such case studies.

The succession and sensitivity of terms envisions the difference between a first "gypsy / non-Roma" model, resistant to a certain mainstream cultural models with positive or negative stereotypes already implemented (in terms of occupation, life-style, ritual), and a new one, "Roma", the only one sustaining transformations at the political, social and cultural levels, attempting to function as an integrative mechanism, and representing more than a strategy of survival in interpretation (Rostas, 2000). Capitalizing these theoretical interpretations the author captures well the intensity of the terminological tempest, especially when she refers to the marginalisation, oppression, subjection to forced assimilation, discrimination, and the difference between Roma and non-Roma models of realigning with the "other".

The author shows the Roma populations gliding between an a-national status and the newer national one that "instead of finding a better life, the Roma found a continent, Europe, which at first seemed inviting, but it, within a short period of time, turned the Roma into a much hated and discriminated-against group of people" (p.53). This is a questionable affirmation from a historical standpoint and brings to the fore, in fact, the status of nomadic, a term reduced by the author merely to a vestment code and artistic abilities: "The colorful clothing that the Roma wear, the fact that they move around (nomads) and their rich culture of traditional folk songs and dancing, all run antithetical to the political life of the modern sovereignty of Romania". (p.53)

The book is organised didactically. The Romanian historical events after 1989 are discussed in it and follow the general destiny of minorities and in particular that of the Roma population, indicated correctly as the weaker member of Romanian society, in a fair characterization of the period 1990-1995 as one of community violence against Roma, which was a feature of life in Romania, on the basis of the identification of incidents remained unknown to the general public. The author explains that among the most important events in the history of violence against the Roma, there was the strange riot of February 1990, when the coal miners from Valea Jiului of Romania were called to Bucharest to defend the newly elected democratic government. "A large number of miners attacked the Roma minorities, an act of violence which was by no means provoked by the Roma." (p.25) Oana Oprean states that this case gained a lot of international attention and was covered in newspapers all over

Europe, but there were no reaction from the international political community. The events of March of 1990 in Targu Mures are presented in the same light, yet including the Roma into the equation of the Romanian–Hungarian ethnic conflict.

Bringing again the attention onto the situation of Roma populations in March 1990, Oana Oprean established that the lack of action taken by authorities since 1990 in order to mitigate the threats and violence against the Roma has proven the actual stance that the authorities have taken with regard to this minority. According to the author, between 1990 and 1995, there have been numerous instances where attacks were sparked by a crime committed by a Roma against a non-Roma person. As numerous examples are shown throughout the book, a small aggression can turn very quickly the non-Roma population onto the local Roma population (as happened in H?d?reni and in several other cities and villages in Romania).

The affirmations of the author are not always sustained by documents, NGO analyses, statistics or declarations of the authorities; for instance when she claims that non-Roma individuals are rarely, if ever, brought to justice for these attacks, even in cases where Roma have been fatally injured or even killed. In Romania, it is said in the book, the Roma population suffers from a broad spectrum of social disadvantages, and the population is subjected to social exclusion and marginalization as a result of racial discrimination, said to be three times higher than the national average. But how is that measured? The book offers no adequate substantiation. Apparently, the misperceptions from the non-Roma population towards the Roma in both Romania and Europe are simply denied and opposed by means of personal impressions concerning the Romanian and European authorities.

The conclusion of Oana Oprean is that despite some positive changes, such as the recognition of minority status, establishment of political parties and cultural organisations, and the publication of books and newspapers in their language, the Roma's problems in Romania have been particularly severe since the fall of communism, and the ascension to the EU has not done much to mitigate the problems or elevate the status of the Roma minority. However, one can easily illustrate though several political, cultural and social policies the efforts made for inclusion in Romania: the efforts to enrol Roma children into the pre-university school system; the efforts to raise awareness concerning the situation of Roma

young women, forcefully married at a very young age and retired from school, if ever registered; the guaranteed places for the Roma students within the state university system; the high visibility of the Roma artists – there are movies about and with Roma (see also the activity of Gadjo Dijlo); the promotion of various types of Roma music (from jazz and fiddle music to "manele"); the Roma poetry anthologies, etc. As a further token of the efforts of inclusion, there are also Roma–Romanian dictionaries and the possibility for Roma children to learn in primary school in their maternal language.

It is worth mentioning that Roma inclusion is still on the EU's agenda, both political and moral, with effects on the direct and opportunity costs measured in public budgets. The first European Summit concerning the Roma, underlined the EU's role in implementing Roma public policies based on structural funds and on their involvement in the management of EU Roma, a network of management authorities – sustaining also good governance.

Still, Oana Oprean correctly indentifies some of the weak points of the European construction, recommending that if the EU wants to be a true vehicle for social change, it should focus more upon persuading the Romanian government and exerting pressure on local governments to implement and follow through with their initiatives. But the truth of the matter is also that these modern initiatives might just not have the support and understanding of the majority of the Roma population, but just of a minority elite. The mentality of opportunity is not the modern mentality of rights and duties and it has, rather often, a short-circuiting effect on the inclusion initiatives, especially within the complex equation of migration, globalization, plus economic and financial crises.

There is still a romanticised view of the Roma population in Romanian culture, and there has been an analogous tradition in Europe too. Isabel Fonseca wrote in 1996 the marvellous book entitled Bury Me Standing, a reportage of the romantic journey of the European Roma population ("gypsy" she said, as it was accepted to say at the time) through history: holocaust, communism and post-communism included. The book was part of the genuine European effort to fight for minority rights and had the merit of inquiring into realities with both sensitivity and realism. The author tells the story of a girl burned because the locals

decided to burn down some houses. She does not shy away from child prostitution or children sniffing glue, while she keeps the human and romantic vibe of her story alive.

Nowadays this is endangered. The fledgling European anti-racism institutions have been silenced by more pressing “economic” concerns. We still remember Roma houses burned down in Italy, of all European countries. This kind of hideous racism is indeed increased by the on-going economic and financial crisis, while any good will is down to a lower level. Under these circumstances, the contribution of social sciences should attempt to better meet the expectations of the NGOs that should in turn network and cooperate more intensively.