



North Brunswick Model United
Nations Conference 2026

Social, Cultural, and Humanitarian Committee (SOCHUM)



Chair: Annika Agshiker
Co-Chairs: Davinder Singh, Ojas Shrivastava, Moksha Yarlagadda



Letter to the Delegates,

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the seventh annual North Brunswick Township High School Model United Nations conference! My name is Annika Agshiker, and I will be your Chair for the Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee (SOCHUM). I am currently a sophomore at NBTHS and first joined Model UN in my freshman year. MUN has become an avenue for me to explore my interests in foreign affairs and become a more confident public speaker, all things I hope you will be able to gain from this conference. Outside of debate, I am a competitive swimmer and dancer, and love travelling and trying new cuisines. Your first co-chair is Davinder, a junior at NBTHS who has been doing MUN since his sophomore year. Outside of MUN, Davinder participates in DECA and wrestling and loves to travel. Your next co-chair is Ojas, a sophomore at NBTHS who has been doing MUN since his freshman year. Outside of MUN, Ojas plays volleyball and band, and loves astronomy. Your final co-chair is Moksha, a freshman at NBTHS who is in her first year of MUN. She enjoys playing golf and loves to read.

This committee will be addressing the ongoing marginalization of ethnic minorities in Eastern Europe. This issue is deeply rooted in history, yet remains urgently relevant today, affecting communities such as the Roma, Jews, Crimean Tartars, and Bosniaks. The persecution of ethnic minorities in Eastern Europe spans centuries, from the expulsion and enslavement of Roma communities to the mass atrocities committed under Adolf Hitler during the Holocaust. Although World War II ended, discrimination persisted through the Soviet era and continues today in the form of segregation, poverty, hate crimes, and political exclusion. Delegates, you must move beyond merely recognizing injustice and develop realistic, enforceable solutions that promote accountability, inclusion, and long-term stability, while understanding both the historical causes and the modern realities of this situation. It is expected that delegates will come prepared and motivated to debate the topics discussed in this background guide and any crisis events that arise due to the actions throughout the committee.

Delegates are not *necessarily* expected to reenact actions taken by their assigned country; they are expected to represent their country faithfully and are encouraged to be creative to make this committee enjoyable. We wish you all the best and look forward to seeing you at our conference in March! If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact me.

Warmest regards,

Annika Agshiker

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Structure and Procedure

The committee will run on extended Moderated Caucus: the default shall be a Moderated Caucus with one minute speaking times. The chair will recognize delegates wishing to speak, and motions will be entertained after each speech has elapsed. For procedural matters, a simple majority of 50% + 1 will be required and each delegate must vote either in favor or against, no abstentions will be entertained. No pre-set time limits on speeches are established; this determination, as well as any other particulars of procedure, is left to the discretion of the committee or the chair, as appropriate. The chair shall have final authority on all procedural questions, and will occasionally entertain appeals.

The following is a list of standard procedures that all committees must follow:

Unmoderated Caucus | The committee may choose to move into unmoderated caucus for a certain length of time, in which delegates may move freely about the room and speak to each other without direction from the Chair. However, it will be at the Chair's discretion to prohibit unmoderated caucus at certain times during committee.

Point of Order | A Point of Order may not interrupt a speaker and can be raised when the delegate believes the rules of procedure have been violated. The chair will stop the proceedings of the committee and ask the delegate to provide warranted arguments as to which rules of procedure has been violated.

Point of Personal Privilege | A Point of Personal Privilege may be raised when a delegate's ability to participate in debate is impaired for any physical or logistical reasons (for instance, if the speaker is not audible). This point may interrupt a speech, and the dais will immediately try to resolve the difficulty.

Point of Parliamentary Inquiry | This point may be raised by a delegate who wishes to clarify any rule of procedure with the Chair. It may not interrupt a speaker, and a delegate rising to this point may not make any substantive statements or arguments.

Point of Information | As the name suggests, this point may be raised by a delegate to bring substantive information to the notice. It may not interrupt a speaker, and must contain only a



statement of some new fact that may have relevance to debate. Arguments and analyses may not be made by delegates rising to this point. A point of information may also be used to ask questions of a speaker on the general speakers list.

Motions | Motions control the flow of debate. A delegate may make a motion when the chair opens the floor for points or motions. Motions require a vote to pass. Procedural motions, unless mentioned otherwise, require a simple majority to pass.

Motion for Moderated Caucus | This motion begins a moderated caucus, and must specify the topic, the time per speaker, and the total time for the proposed caucus.

Motion for an Unmoderated Caucus | This motion moves the committee into unmoderated caucus, during which lobbying and drafting of resolutions may take place. It must specify the duration of the caucus.

Motion to Suspend Debate | This motion suspends debate for a stipulated amount of time.

Motion to Adjourn | This motion brings the committee's deliberation to an end, and is only admissible when suggested by the Chair.

Motion to Introduce Documents | A successful motion to introduce essentially puts the document on the floor to be debated by the committee. The sponsor of the document will be asked to read the document and then, if deemed appropriate, the Chair will entertain a moderated caucus on the topic.

Motion to Divide the Question | This motion may be made by a delegate to split a document into its component clauses for the purpose of voting. This may be done when a delegate feels that there is significant support for some clauses of the document, but not for the complete document.

Motion for a Roll Call Vote | A delegate may move to have the vote conducted in alphabetical order.

Motion for Speakers For and Against | If it would help the proceedings of the committee, a delegate may motion for speakers for and against a document.



Amendments | After the first draft of a committee document has been introduced, delegates may move to amend particular clauses of the draft. If the amendment is supported by all the sponsors of the documents, it passes as a friendly amendment.

Committee Documents represent the product of the committee's deliberations and their collective decisions.

Between Delegates | Delegates can pass notes freely to other delegates within the committee or speak to other delegates during the unmoderated caucus. However, talking during another delegate's speech is not permitted.

To the Chair/Dias | Delegates may also communicate with the Chair through notes. Delegates should feel free to write any questions or comments to the Chair that may improve the committee experience.

Members of the committee may take any of the following actions through private notes:

Between Delegates | Delegates should feel free to write personal notes to their fellow committee members. We ask that these notes pertain to the business of the committee.

To the Chair | Delegates may also write to the Chair with questions regarding procedural issues of the committee, as well as a wide range of personal inquiries. Delegates should feel free to write to the Chair on any issue that would improve the committee experience. This could range from a clarification of portfolio powers to substantive questions.



Topic: Addressing the Mistreatment of Ethnic Minorities in Eastern Europe

Introduction

Ethnic diversity has been a defining feature of the political, cultural, and social landscape of Eastern Europe for centuries. Borders have shifted repeatedly due to war, imperial collapse, and political realignments, such as following World War I, World War II, and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. As a result, many ethnic groups today live as minorities outside of what they consider their homelands.

While Eastern Europe has made significant strides in democratic reform and human rights protections since the end of the Cold War, there remains great concern regarding discrimination, political exclusion, language restrictions, violence, and economic marginalization affecting minority populations. This has resulted in low graduation and high poverty rates within minority communities, such as the Romani, as well as rising reports of hate crimes with little police action. The lack of support these minorities receive from their own governments has led many to further isolate themselves, living in their own settlements or villages. Unfortunately, even isolation has not been enough to stop intimidation and violence, as was the case in October 2021 when far-right protesters attempted to set fire to a Romani community in Northern Ukraine.

Delegates on this committee face the task of examining the root causes of minority mistreatment, assessing international legal protections, and developing policy solutions to reduce social disparities, promote stability and peaceful coexistence, while ensuring their policies can be implemented in communities that may be resistant to change.

Historical Background

The mistreatment of ethnic minorities in Eastern Europe has been an issue with deep historical ties, caused by political upheaval, ancient conflict, and unstable borders. Roma, along with several other ethnic minorities, began arriving in Europe sometime in the 14th century, emigrating from India due to famine, disputes, and Mongol invasions. As Roma and other minority groups traveled towards Eastern Europe, they were faced with severe hostility because of their unfamiliar nomadic lifestyle, foreign language, and darker skin tone. By the 1400s, the various ethnic minority groups were met with discriminatory laws and became the target of relentless persecution for centuries. Many kingdoms banished Roma from their borders, an example being when Austria issued expulsion orders in the 1500s, stating that offering Roma food and shelter was a crime. Certain cities in Germany had execution laws that if Roma were caught, they would be executed without a trial. In other regions, particularly present-day Romania and Moldova, Roma were enslaved for hundreds of years, where they were forced to serve nobles or the state. Other minority groups, such as the Armenians and the Jews, were also challenged with harsh limitations, such as being coerced into trades or not given



permission to own land. Rather than being welcomed into society, these ethnic minorities were frequently shut out and forced into seclusion.

Ethnic minorities were subjected to extreme persecution during the Holocaust. Hitler's ideology, based on extreme nationalism, racism, and a desire to wipe away any group he deemed inferior to German society, led to the genocide of millions. The Roma were categorized as "racially inferior" compared to Hitler's definition of the Aryan race - people of Northern European ancestry, whom he believed were the most superior and "pure." They were subjected to various forms of torture, including being worked and starved to death, medical experimentation, and mass executions. Adolf Hitler's racial views led to the execution of 98% of the 140,000 Roma under the Nazi Regime. Jews also faced a similar horrifying fate. About 6 million Jews were killed in ghettos, massacres, and concentration camps. Inside the camps, victims were burdened with forced labor, starvation, disease, and inhumane living conditions. Millions of victims were murdered in gas chambers, while the rest were worked and or starved to death. Several European countries, including Romania, Hungary, and Slovakia, participated in these acts of brutality, wiping out entire communities of people.

Even after the end of Hitler's regime, the hardships of minority groups, especially the Roma community, continued and were often ignored. Roma survivors were denied reparations and not officially considered victims of the Holocaust and Nazi genocide until decades later, as compared to Jews, who were universally recognized nearly immediately. Roma faced further discrimination and poverty throughout the Soviet era, where state policies pushed them into exclusion from education, housing, and political opportunities, while forcing them to cooperate with assimilation policies such as mandatory labor, school attendance, and resettlement. In Eastern Europe, anti-Roma sentiment persisted, and discrimination in housing, police brutality, and school segregation became typical. The fall of Communism in the 1990s did not improve the situation, and to the present day, many Roma communities are still severely disadvantaged. On May 3rd, 2025, the Gaši's, a Romani family living in Tavnik, Serbia, were brutally attacked by a mob of nearly twenty people. The mob set fire to the family's home with them still inside, shouting ethnic slurs and subjecting the family to physical violence, even assaulting their ten-month-old infant. The following day, the Gaši family expressed their fear to the local police station and asked whether it was safe to return home. Despite the clear danger, the police instructed the family to go home.

Past UN Action

The United Nations has done crucial work in ensuring the rights of underrepresented ethnic minorities in Eastern Europe. The UN Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has been involved in initiatives to promote the inclusion and protect the rights of the Roma community in Eastern Europe. This has been done through the One UN Joint Action "Cross-river Support to Human Rights," which provides mediators to assist the Romani people in improving their quality of life. The aim is to ensure greater access to services throughout the Transnistria region. Mediators have accompanied displaced



Romani people to obtain proper identification by navigating through bureaucracy and the social systems. Mediators have additionally helped initiate local community projects, enabling the development of adequate infrastructure, including schools and homes, in large Roma communities. With 90% of mediators being Romani and 50% being women, Roma community mediators helped improve access to public services across the Republic of Moldova. This program, along with many others across Eastern Europe, provided the Roma Community with greater access to education, healthcare, legal documentation, and employment. Over 70% of Romani participants have found jobs.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the UN played a crucial role in the aftermath of the 1995 Dayton Peace Agreement. The Dayton Peace Agreement was a 1995 accord that officially ended the Bosnian War and established a new framework for Bosnia and Herzegovina's constitution. Before the Dayton Peace Agreement, the Romani People suffered persecution in the Bosnian War of 1992-1995. During the war, an ethnic cleansing against minorities was highly present. Some results of the war were statelessness and displacement of the Romani people living in or near Bosnia and Herzegovina. The UN Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH) was established in December 1995 to contribute to the rule of law by rebuilding the International Civilian Police Force, which hired individuals from underrepresented ethnicities, and by establishing a more multicultural police force, thereby decreasing persecution and violence within the region. UNMIBH worked to support the return of refugees, promote human rights, and rebuild the infrastructure and economy for a safer Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The work of the UN is often intertwined with that of NGOs or non-governmental organizations. In Romania, the Centrul Romilor pentru Politici de Sănătate (Roma Center for Health Policies), also known as SASTIPEN, founded in 2007, is a non-governmental organization that strives to address the persecution of the Romani people in the health and medical industries within Eastern Europe. The Roma Center for Health Policies works in partnership with the World Health Organization, the National Institute of Public Health, and the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies through projects, campaigns, and training to achieve a fair and equal healthcare system for Roma. In 2024, SASTIPEN and the National Institute of Public Health collaborated on a joint program to train 32 officials from the Ministry of Health to prevent discrimination in public medical settings. Following an advocacy campaign, the Ministry of Health officially recognized SASTIPEN as a partner in managing the national health mediation program. Likewise, the ShowUp4Health program is an initiative of the European Commission that aims to address social and environmental health issues within Roma Communities. Another NGO is PECAO (Peer Education to Counter Antigypsyist Online Hate Speech), which helped combat hate speech against Romani people online. PECAO developed a "Hate Speech Toolkit" to help peer educators recognize hate speech and its negative effects. It monitors and uses peer education to identify and report online anti-Roma hate speech or discourse.

In Kosovo, the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) was established by the UN Security Council in 1999. After the Kosovo War of 1998-1999,



several ethnic Roma and other minorities faced harsh realities, including violence, displacement, and discrimination from Albanians. Roma communities were heavily targeted for being accomplices with Serbians in looting Albanian property and transporting stolen goods, making them seem more complicit. Roma were exploited by the Serbians for forced labor and violence, causing them to be removed from their homes and forced into refugee camps. The UN formed the UNMIK which included people of many ethnic backgrounds working together to facilitate peace, protect human rights, and force the entry of a new constitution for the autonomy of the country of Kosovo on 15 June 2008. The constitution helped establish a government and a political process for Kosovo's future status. The constitution helped ensure the right to life and protection, the right to liberty, the right to security, freedom of speech, the right to a fair trial, and a greater number of human rights. It helped establish stability and a legislative assembly, with an executive branch, for a temporary administration. Additionally, in Ukraine, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has issued Human Rights Monitoring Reports documenting abuses against minorities in Crimea. Since the annexation of Crimea by Russia, ethnic Crimeans, Tartars, and Ukrainians have faced suppression and persecution. The UN has also passed Resolution 68/262 in 2014, which affirmed the Crimean referendum to be invalid and Ukrainian sovereignty within its internationally recognized borders, including Crimea.

Current Events

The marginalisation of Romani communities in Eastern Europe is both longstanding and ongoing. Centuries of exclusion, social segregation, and racist policies have resulted in persistent poverty, educational inequality, and housing insecurity. Large-scale poverty surveys from the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights consistently report that a significant proportion of Roma live at or below poverty thresholds. Recent statistics indicate that Roma households are 4 times more likely than the European average to lack access to basic amenities, such as water and electricity. Roma children are disproportionately educated in segregated or low-quality environments. This leads to reduced job opportunities across generations. About 12% of Roma aged 18-24 completed upper-secondary education in a 2014 survey across 11 EU member states, and as few as 1% attended university in some areas. Recent events further exacerbate these structural disadvantages. In 2025, municipal authorities in Sofia, Bulgaria, demolished Roma settlements. This left families without alternative housing and, in some instances, disregarded regional court rulings. Human rights groups, such as the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, identified these actions as indicative of systemic failure rather than isolated incidents.

Jewish communities across Eastern Europe continue to face antisemitic remarks and aggression, from vandalism of monuments to spikes in online and in-person harassment that have reached unprecedented levels, surpassing all previous annual records kept by monitoring organizations. This uptick has prompted policy responses at national and continental levels. Jewish community organisations, like the European Jewish Congress, as well as EU agencies such as the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, have seen rising incident cases



and call for more vigorous hate crime enforcement, more education efforts, and legal protections for cultural areas through legislation.

Since the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation in 2014, Crimean Tatars have come forward to report ongoing arrests, harassment, and restriction of their cultural and religious rights. As of May 2025, Russia had illegally imprisoned 223 people in occupied Crimea on ethnic, spiritual, and political grounds, and a report from the Crimean Tatar Resource Center (CTRC) from August 2025 further breaks down cases of political persecution since 2014, accumulating to a total of over 430 cases. United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Missions have documented cases of arbitrary detention, independent media repression, and intimidation of the leaders of the Tatar community. The UN has repeatedly raised concerns in the UN General Assembly and the International Court of Justice that the situation of Crimean Tatars requires urgent attention and that their elementary rights should be guaranteed by international law.

Lastly, the Bosniak population in Bosnia and Herzegovina faces renewed tensions due to political instability and nationalist rhetoric. Recent actions by the authorities in Republika Srpska, including challenges to the central government's authority, have heightened concerns over the peace established by the Dayton Accords. The United Nations, along with NATO and the European Union, has warned that such moves undermine Bosnia's constitutional framework and pose a threat to ethnic coexistence. For Bosniak communities, these political developments present ongoing risks to their security and equality within Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Questions to Address

How can national governments hold each other accountable for the treatment of ethnic minorities in their respective nations?

What role do the EU, OSCE, and the Council of Europe play in addressing minority rights?

How can states balance national unity with minority rights?

What mechanisms ensure the enforcement of minority protections?

Which NGOs can help build understanding across cultures in Eastern Europe?

What NGOs can be utilized to provide minority communities with adequate resources (such as food, personal care items, etc.)?

How can the UN ensure victims of hate crimes feel comfortable coming forward?

What action should be taken against nations that fail to address and prosecute hate crimes?



How can local governments be better set up to deal with racial tension?

In what states are rising nationalist political movements putting immigrant communities under increasing pressure?

How can community-level reconciliation efforts be best facilitated?

How can minority political representation be expanded?

What steps can be taken to help stateless ethnic minorities obtain citizenship?

Can implicit-bias training be utilized in Eastern European police forces?

What can be learned from history to prevent further ostracization of Romani communities in Eastern European nations?

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