

## Widening Country Inspiration Story

“Develop a strong, well-argued proposal that you are genuinely passionate about.”

**Name of the fellow:** Petr Nuska  
**Country of the host:** Slovakia (host)  
Portugal (secondment host)  
Czech Republic (non-academic placement host)  
**Project Acronym:** RomChords  
**Project start and end date:** 1.09.2024–31.03.2027  
**Type of MSCA, Horizon Europe:** Postdoctoral Fellowship



### What is your project about?

The RomChords project investigates the phenomenon of Romani chords, an exceptional yet unexamined means of harmonic accompaniment used by Romani musicians in Slovakia. Its innovative interdisciplinary methodology, which combines the musicological laboratory with the ethnographic field, is poised to reshape our understanding of the Romani musical tradition. The project enriches contemporary debates in music studies and challenges the primacy of Western music theory in our understanding of harmony.

### Why is your project important for society?

The RomChords project is a vital force in preserving Romani cultural heritage and dismantling stereotypes about the Roma, fostering a more inclusive appreciation of their rich culture. Through conferences, open-source data, museum exhibitions, and educational events, it engages the public, raising awareness about Romani culture. It drives collaboration among participating institutions, paving the way for future projects on Romani culture and inclusion. Ultimately, the project fuels societal acceptance and understanding of Romani culture,

contributing to a more equitable and diverse world.

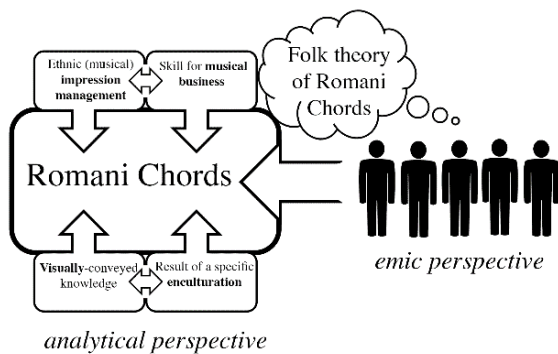
### Why did you choose a widening country as a host?

This was a deliberate decision since the idea behind my Postdoctoral Fellowships project was to immerse deeper into some understudied aspects of my previous research among Roma in Slovakia. On top of that, my primary host belongs to the world-top research institutions in the field of Romani studies. The decision to apply in a widening country was not motivated by more abundant funding opportunities. Rather, I have chosen a country that made the most sense for my research endeavours.

### How did you find your host organisation?

I knew their activities from my existing research networks. The fact that they have been doing cutting-edge research in Romani studies at not only a

European but even a global level was a deciding factor for my choice.



### What kind of support did you get?

I started my preparation by reviewing successful proposals provided by my colleagues. I also attended a couple of seminars organised by various institutions (namely, inspirational courses organised by Czech and Slovak National Contact Points (NCPs) and one amazing preparatory course put together by two Czech universities). I also watched a couple of recordings of similar past seminars (YouTube is a great resource). When drawing up the proposal, I asked for expert feedback on the excellence part from my provisional supervisors as well as peer researchers. As soon as the excellence section was settled, I sought for feedback on the impact and implementation sections and on the formal aspects of the proposal (the “MSCA language”) from the NCPs.

### Do you have a non-academic placement within your project? If you do, what is the purpose of the placement?

Yes, at the Museum of Romani Culture in Brno (Czech Republic), where I will work on an interactive exhibition based on the project’s findings. Its purpose is to present the phenomenon of Romani chords to a wider public.

### What tips can you give other researchers who would like to apply for MSCA?

Firstly, I would recommend developing a strong, well-argued proposal that you are genuinely passionate about. Secondly, do not underestimate the peculiarities of the “MSCA language.” Your excellent idea for a project might never get funded if you fail to “translate” it properly into this language. To succeed, do take your time to learn the basic “vocabulary” (i.e. have a proper comprehension of funder’s expectations) and make sure to ask for advice from “native speakers” (NCPs, former MSCA evaluators etc.).

More information on the project:



The Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) support researchers at all stage of their career across all disciplines. The MSCA also support cooperation between industry and academia and provide innovative trainings and career developments.

The MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships (PF) enable talented researchers to work on project in Europe and beyond. They aim at enhancing the innovative potential of postdoctoral researchers through advanced trainings, international and intersectoral mobility.

The MSCA-NET project is the MSCA NCP project to facilitate the transnational cooperation to achieve a consistent and harmonised level of NCP support. The scientific community can also profit from our project to support their MSCA application.

