

# Challenging chairs

E-mail interview and photo series by Marlies Pöschl

Photos by Marlies Pöschl



*Two of the participants from the United for Dignity conference agreed to share a bit about their lives with us.*

## Victoria Luca

### What was the biggest challenge you have faced in your life?

My biggest challenge was my childhood, having to beg in order to survive for another day, but God took me through all this. My mom put me in school, than I put my trust in God and he blessed me with wisdom and a new plan for my life. I had a dream of becoming a lawyer. That is what I am working on now.

### How would you describe your biggest success?

My biggest success was being accepted at the Central European University LLM Human Rights Programme.



## Karina Kristofova

### What was the biggest challenge you have faced in your life?

I am 25 years old so a lot of people may think my biggest challenge was to successfully complete college but it wasn't. My biggest challenge was to help my sister escape from her husband with whom she has two children. Their life was very stressful and poor and it caused stress for my whole family. The second problem was that as Roma people we have a very hard life in the Czech Republic. Even if we all are educated, it's a big problem to find a good job because of our ethnicity. So I decided to leave my country and move to Manchester, UK when I was 23. As the youngest person in our big family it was really hard for me ... looking for a job, starting work without speaking the language, paying the rent, living alone without my friends and family, etc. I remember that many times I wanted to go back to my family. But I have endured it all ... more than I thought I would. And this is my biggest challenge so far.

### How would you describe your biggest success?

I will continue with the story above. After two very hard years my sister and her children are finally here in Manchester with me. She has a good job and the children have friends. There is no longer stress with her husband or stress about how to pay the rent and bills or where to find money to feed the children. We all are satisfied now and I hope it will last forever, or better! :) So, this is my biggest success.

### Please add a short paragraph about you and your background, let's call it a mini-CV.

I am 25 years old and I am from a Roma family. My life is full of love, joy, full of good and "other" people, but sadness and loss as well — this is life. I would not change anything in my life. I like children and their sincerity and I hope I will work with children in the future. My biggest wish is for every child to be happy and secure. And I will try to help as many children and of course adult people as possible in my life. I think everybody should help their friends or family or strangers if they have the opportunity. The world is full of people who need help, even if it's only a hug or nice words, it helps. Just spread love and smile as much as possible. 😊

