



STATEMENT

ERIO together with the European Parliament celebrating the International Roma Day

Brussels, 5 April 2019

Ahead of the International Roma Day on 8 April, ERIO recalls that Roma remain the most discriminated and disadvantaged ethnic group in Europe. Their fundamental rights continue being violated and they still suffer from difficult access to quality education, housing, work and healthcare. On this day, ERIO renews its commitment to fight anti-Gypsyism and raise awareness of and safeguard the human rights of this community.

International Roma Day was officially declared in 1990 in Poland, during the fourth World Romani Congress, in honour of the first international meeting of Roma representatives on 7–12 April 1971 in London. It is also a day to celebrate Roma culture. As Ivan Ivanov, ERIO Executive Director says: *“The promotion of Roma culture and identity should be a key horizontal principle of the National Roma Integration Strategies. Promoting Roma identity by raising awareness about Roma culture and history can help build intercultural dialogue and fight prejudices of Roma.”* With the aim to promote Roma culture and identity, ERIO as one of the leading advocacy organization on Roma issues, makes history and sees its work rewarded, as for the first time the Roma flag will be displayed on the 8th of April in the European Parliament in Brussels.

We welcome that the highest institution of the European Union joined ERIO’s initiative and expresses its recognition and respect for this important date for the Roma community. The European Parliament will also greet the day with speeches of high level officials, including the Vice-President of the European Parliament Livia Járóká. At a crucial time, with the rise of nationalism and extreme right-wing parties across Europe, and weeks away from the European elections, these symbolic actions from the highest democratic institution in Europe to support and honour Roma are hailed.

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Note to the editor:

The European Roma Information Office (ERIO) is a European advocacy organisation which promotes political and public discussion on Roma issues by providing information to the EU institutions, civil society and governments. Through its wide network, it aims to combat racist discrimination against Roma through awareness raising, lobbying and policy development.

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