



European Roma Information Office

ERIO Newsletter

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NEWS

New exhibition of photos from Roma youngsters in Glasgow helps show the whole picture



By Scottish Daily Record

An exhibition of photographs from Roma youngsters opens today, giving a fascinating window on to their community.

About 5000 Roma live in Scotland, including people from Romania, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria and Poland, and 90 per cent have settled in Glasgow's Govanhill.

Read more [here](#).

How is Roma activist art challenging stereotypes?



By Aljazeera

Roma often experience hate and social exclusion, but many Roma artists - especially women - are using their work to fight sexism, racism, and discrimination.

Formed by a group of Roma actresses in 2014, the troupe's performance explores and busts stereotypes about Roma women and culture, challenging perceptions held both within and outside the community. The theatre company's founders invented the term "Giuvlipen" because there was no previous Romani word for feminism.

Read more [here](#).

Romaphobia. The last acceptable racism?



By Political Critique

Romaphobia is one of the last acceptable forms of racism. It is acceptable in as much as it is palatable or understandable given the overwhelmingly negative attitudes towards Roma across Europe. Recent research by the World Bank explored social exclusion and attitudes towards certain groups in society with Roma communities across Europe, even generating negative attitudes comparable to paedophiles and drug takers in some states.

Read more [here](#).

Unemployment keeps Kosovo's Roma on the margins



By Deutsche Welle

For Roma in Europe's youngest state, discrimination and a lack of opportunity have created a sense of hopelessness and driven many to look for work abroad. Morgan Meaker reports from the western Balkans. On the outskirts of Montenegro's capital Podgorica, 2,000 people from Kosovo's Roma minority still live in exile after fleeing conflict in the 1990s. The Council of Europe has called this place a ghetto, labelling living conditions as remote and substandard.

Read more [here](#).

Roma and African Americans share a common struggle



By The Guardian

The impetus to kill and chain Roma and African American bodies remains one of the appalling facets of how the criminalization and demonization of these peoples have historically translated into action. For example, in Romania, Levente, a 21-year-old Roma man, was recently shot dead by a police officer in front of two Roma kids, aged 10 and 14.

Read more [here](#).

Romania confronted with overcrowded prisons, discrimination, domestic violence - Amnesty



By SeeNews

Roma people and sexual minorities continue to experience systemic discrimination in Romania, according to the report of the non-governmental organisation focusing on human rights. In February, the European Commission stated that the risk of living in poverty was almost three times higher for Roma than for the rest of the population.

Read more [here](#).

Kosovo's Roma still endure prejudice and aftermath of toxic UN camps



By The Irish Times

In response to a complaint from 138 former residents of the camps, a UN advisory panel found in 2016 that Unmik “violated their human rights by placing them . . . in camps on land known to be highly contaminated, by not providing them with timely information about the health risks or the required

medical treatment, as well as by failing to relocate them to a safe location.”

Last May, UN secretary-general António Guterres expressed “profound regret for the suffering endured” by camp residents, but stopped short of an apology or promise of compensation.

Read more [here](#).

Warning to the elderly: Roma gypsies said to be targeting the old and vulnerable at DART stations



By The Liberal

There were a number of reports that a Roma teenage gypsy girl is targeting the elderly and vulnerable on the DART between train stations once the doors shut. It’s alleged that the girl is trying to sell packets of tissues to passengers.

One reader of The Liberal said: “It was shocking, the elderly lady had to take out her purse and give the girl a few euro. You could see she was very intimidated but quite honestly I was afraid to do anything myself as the Roma girl looked very aggressive”.

Read more [here](#).

Germans for centuries, but still considered outsiders



By The Local Germany

Monday marks 75 years since the Nazi genocide against Sinti and Roma started. These communities struggled for decades for official recognition of that crime and still live with daily prejudice.

The ancestors of Silas Kropf were deemed racially inferior by the Nazi regime, and at least 35 of them were captured by SS soldiers and deported to concentration camps. His great grandparents and grandfather, who lived in a village near Frankfurt, spent years in hiding to evade deportation. The 23-year old Kropf, who is currently studying at Frankfurt University, was born four decades after the fall of the Nazi regime, but his life has nonetheless been shaped by his family’s Holocaust experience.

Read more [here](#).

Rome adopts new plan for integrating Roma people with support from EU funds



By Eurocities

Rome adopted a new Roma Plan in May 2017. The Plan aims to support Roma people to leave the encampments and integrate into the labour market and in society by improving their access to education, employment, housing and healthcare. The Roma Plan includes actions for labour market activation, professional training and services for housing inclusion.

About 4,500 Roma people live in Rome in temporary dwellings (encampments). They receive welfare benefits under the form of free basic housing and utilities. These services are so far provided for free, regardless of the residents' contributing capacity and their eligibility. The city council of Rome decided in 2016 to support the integration of Roma people, in particular by facilitating their access to housing, employment, healthcare and education with the ultimate aim to close the encampments in which they currently live. A Roma Plan was adopted in May 2017 and sets to:

- map and do a census of the Roma people living in encampments
- gradually close down the encampments
- support the housing inclusion of the Roma community
- promote the inclusion of Roma people into the local labour market
- facilitate the access of Roma people to education and healthcare

To benefit from the support foreseen for them under this plan, Roma families must sign an agreement with the city, which sets out their rights and obligations. This agreement defines the commitment between the Roma beneficiaries and the city of Rome, and requires to individuals and families to actively take part to the plan's activities, including vocational training, job inclusion, support to rent, compulsory schooling of children, compliance with the law. These conditions must be fulfilled to be eligible for support.

The Roma Plan aims to support the integration of almost 2,000 Roma people. The expected results are:

- the gradual closure of the encampments
- the prevention of the formation of new informal dwellings
- an increase in the capacity of local institutions to implement inclusive policies for Roma

The Roma Plan of Rome is an integrated project requiring institutional collaboration between different local services and different organisations working on social integration on the ground. The project will be gradually implemented, starting with the closing of the encampments of Monachina, Barbuta and Castel Romano during the period of 2018-2021. The intervention is co-financed from the multi-fund national operational programme NOP Metropolitan Cities (combining ESF and ERDF funding) with a budget of €3.8 million. Additional funding is made available from the city's budget from the resources initially earmarked to maintain the camps that will now be used to support inclusion in employment and housing.

Read more [here](#).

Stop stealing our identity - say New Zealand Romani campaigners



By The Travellers Times

Romani Gypsies are campaigning against the theft and misuse of their identity by the organisers of a commercial event for New Zealand's growing hippy 'van and truck culture', and have written to the country's Minister for Ethnic Communities to ask her to intervene.

The campaigners believe that the use of 'Gypsy' in 'The Original Gypsy Fair', a commercial event which is part of the New Zealand van and truck culture circuit - which is run by businessman Jim Banks - trivialises and appropriates their culture, heritage and identity, and is a form of "romantic racism".

Read more [here](#).

Discrimination against Roma remains widespread in Slovakia says Amnesty International report



By The Slovak Spectator

The report points to discrimination against Roma in Slovakia, systemic segregation of Roma children in education and Slovakia's complaint against mandatory refugee relocation quotas.

The world is reaping the terrifying consequences of hate-filled rhetoric that threatens to normalise massive discrimination against marginalised groups, Amnesty International (AI) warned on February 22nd as it launched its annual assessment of human rights.

"Last year our world was immersed in crises, with prominent leaders offering us a nightmarish vision of a society blinded by hatred and fear," said Salil Shetty, Secretary General of Amnesty International. "This emboldened those who promote bigotry, but it inspired far more people to campaign for a more hopeful future."

The report, The State of the World's Human Rights, covers 159 countries and delivers an analysis of the state of human rights in the world today.

In the section on Slovakia AI points to discrimination of Roma, systemic segregation of Roma children in education and Slovakia's complaint against mandatory refugee relocation quotas.

"The discrimination against Roma remained widespread," reads the report.

It recalls that the European Commission continued an infringement procedure against Slovakia for systematic discrimination and segregation of Roma children in schools. Slovakia also failed to address the systemic over-representation of Roma children in special schools and classes for children with mild disabilities. Mainstream primary schools lacked the human and financial resources to tackle the segregation of Roma pupils

Read more [here](#).

Europe's most hated in pursuit of a better future in the UK



By Minority Rights

Tessa Polovina interned for MRG's Publications department. Here she reports back from a UK conference on Roma rights.

For Roma people in Eastern and Central Europe segregation starts early – they are practically born into discrimination, violence and hostility. It is not unusual for them to live in settlements with no running water or electricity and to receive substandard education, if any at all. Living on the margins of society, some Roma may be lured into organised crime, while children are vulnerable to exploitation and trafficking. In the midst of anti-Roma sentiment across Europe, many of them have decided to try to stop the cycle of abuse and exploitation by coming to the UK. The first Roma arrived in the UK in the early 1990s from Eastern Europe in the wake of the fall of communism. However, the majority now living in the UK arrived from Central and Eastern Europe as economic migrants following the accession to the EU in 2004 and 2007.

In an attempt to learn more about their life in UK and whether anything has changed for the better, in December 2017 I attended a conference titled "Rights, Equalities and Future Roma Voices" organised by the National Roma Network, a partnership of voluntary and community organisations, Roma community groups and individuals, government representatives, statutory organisations, universities and researchers. The Network strives to support Roma integration into UK society. It is also a platform that enables their voices to be heard and give them a say in policymaking.

There I was lucky to meet Mr Petr Torak, founder and chief executive of COMPAS, a charitable organisation established in 2010 in Peterborough. Their overarching goal is to promote community cohesion by offering complementary education and organising community events in order to tackle social isolation and celebrate diversity

Read more [here](#).

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND EVENTS

Roma Youth: Searching for sustainable and meaningful participation



By Council of Europe

The meeting will gather around 20 representatives of formal and informal Roma youth networks, organisations and youth-led structures with the aim to build synergies within the Roma youth movement and to develop strategic orientations for working effectively towards greater and meaningful participation of Roma youth at all levels, including with the Council of Europe

structures.

Read more [here](#).