

CONFERENCE INVITATION

Promoting Roma Culture and Identity through Participation

“Recognition of Roma culture and identity, a way to eliminate prejudices and discrimination”

Brussels, 29 June 2018

The European Roma Information Office (ERIO), in cooperation with the European Economic Social Committee and with the support of DG Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality of the European Commission, is organising a conference **“Promoting Roma culture and identity through participation”** which will be held on **29 June 2018** at the European Economic Social Committee, **EESC, Rue Belliard 99, 1040 Brussels (Room JDE63) from 09:00-16:30.**

Romani literature, music and art, together with Romani traditions, language and history form an integral part of European heritage. We invite you to reflect on the place of Roma in Europe, their contributions to European societies, and what it means to be Roma. Roma identity is firmly rooted in tradition, but one must not focus on the stereotypical image of the Roma. From the south of Spain to the east of Romania, the contribution of the Roma to European culture is undeniable.

However, we also need to confront reality; many Roma still face daily discrimination. Promoting Roma identity by raising awareness about Roma culture and history can help build intercultural dialogue and fight prejudices of Roma. Better representation of Roma’s contribution to European history and culture can lead to empowerment and also to social inclusion of Roma. Measures aimed at improving Roma’s access to basic rights in different sectors should not do so at the cost of assimilation. On the contrary, Europe’s cultural diversity characterizing European societies is something to be valued, preserved and celebrated as a source of enrichment in building an accepting EU where non-discrimination and respect for human rights prevails. Moreover, Roma inclusion and civic participation must be enhanced in addition to the empowerment, active involvement and necessary participation of Roma themselves, at all levels of policy development, decision-making and implementation of measures that have an impact on Roma. Through forcing a space for participation, it provides opportunity for many individuals and organization to participate in dialogue and the development of local and national policy, to promote Roma culture and identity but as well as to fight prejudices and discrimination.

The conference will explore to what extent non-discrimination provisions are sufficient to protect the cultural identity of Roma. The objectives are to:

- Promote more positive views of Roma in order to combat negative stereotypes and overcome stigma and discrimination of Roma
- Roma culture can contribute to open the eyes of people across Europe to the richness of its culture, and therefore to help with doing away with prejudices and stereotypes about Roma people
- Empower Roma by promoting the development of a proud sense of Roma identity/self-esteem to reduce discrimination and racism against this community
- Contribute to 2018 European Year of cultural heritage by promoting Roma culture and identity as part of European heritage
- Call for direct involvement of Roma in decision-making and policy development at local, national and EU levels as well as in the NGO/civil society sector as a key success factor.

The agenda will be available soon.

REGISTRATION:

For registration or any other queries, please contact: office@erionet.eu - Tel: +32 (2) 733 3462
Registration is open until **June 21 at 15:00pm (Brussels time).**

In order to register and enter the EESC building, please send us the following information:
name, surname, name of your organisation, ID number, nationality and country of residence.