NEWS

Bulgaria: Roma murdered in racist attack

By ERRC

Shumen, Bulgaria: Romani father of three murdered in racist attack by ‘Great Monk’ on a mission “to burn mosques and kill gypsies.”

In an act of racist terror, two Roma brothers were attacked by a knife-wielding assailant who bore down on them shouting that he that he had come from “Arabia to set fire to mosques and kill gypsies”. Twenty-eight-year-old Mitko Boyanov died from stab wounds in hospital on Saturday, 12 May.

Read more here.
Roma denied official minority status in Switzerland

By Swissinfo

The Swiss government has denied the Roma community in Switzerland recognition as a national minority.

Two Swiss Roma organisations had requested this status under the Council of Europe’s Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

It was the first such application since Switzerland ratified the convention in 1998. Switzerland recognises its national linguistic minorities, the members of the Jewish community and the Swiss Yenish and Sinti/Manouche as national minorities.

The Federal Council said on Friday it considers the Roma minority as an integral part of Swiss society but determined the group did not meet the criteria to obtain national minority status.

Read more here.

Romani community member David Beňák now director of the Czech Govt Agency for Social Inclusion

By Romea.cz

As of yesterday, the director of the Czech Government Agency for Social Inclusion is David Beňák, previously vice-minister for the Human Rights Section at the Office of the Government. He will take over the job after its having been entrusted to acting director Radka Soukupová for the last seven months.

Beňák is succeeding the previous director, Radek Jiránek, who became the third director of the Agency on 5 June 2015 after Martin Šimáček. Czech Human Rights Minister Jiří Dienstbier removed Šimáček after six years running the project.

Read more here.
Segre says will oppose special Roma laws

By ANSA

Holocaust survivor and Life Senator Liliana Segre said Tuesday she would oppose special laws on Roma with all her strength. "I refuse to think that our democratic civilisation may be tainted by special laws," said Segre. "If it happens I will oppose it with all my strength". Anti-migrant League leader and Interior Minister Matteo salvini has vowed to close all of Italy's Roma and Sinti camps.

Read more [here](#).

'Treated like dogs': Italy's Roma minority on society's fringe

By The BBC

"I feel 100% Italian, but I regret being born here. We are being treated like dogs, and it's not fair," says Zanepa Mehmeti, who is 23.

She belongs to the Roma (Gypsy) community, Italy's largest ethnic minority that numbers up to 180,000. But lately the whole idea of what it means to be Italian for people like her has been called into question.

The new Interior Minister, Matteo Salvini, pledged this month to carry out a census of the Roma people, to find out "who and how many are here". Italy's most prominent right-wing populist went on to joke: "Unfortunately, those who have Italian citizenship, we have to keep - because we can't expel them."

Read more [here](#).
Ukraine's Roma community targeted by far-right violence

By The DW

Ukraine's Roma community has increasingly become victim to ultranationalist gang violence. The latest attack — the sixth in the country in just two months — has left one person dead and several others injured.

For decades during the summer, Roma have been staying in forest camps in central and western Ukraine as they seek part-time work. At one such settlement on the outskirts of the city of Lviv, a popular tourist destination, a seemingly normal day turned deadly on the evening of June 23.

Read more here.

Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte dismisses Roma census proposal as 'unconstitutional'

By The DW

The Italian prime minister’s comments come after far-right Interior Minister Matteo Salvini announced plans for a Roma census. Salvini defended the census and tried to shift the focus to the protection of Roma children.

Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte on Tuesday criticized Interior Minister Matteo Salvini’s plans to create a Roma "register."

"No one is planning to create files or conduct a census on the basis of ethnicity, which would be unconstitutional because it is clearly discriminatory," Conte said in a statement Tuesday.

Read more here.
Gypsy writer Damian Le Bas on the prejudice against Travellers

*By The Guardian*

Le Bas, who grew up in a Gypsy family, set out to visit the stopping places in Britain where his ancestors rested – and to challenge discrimination along the way.

Le Bas is wearily familiar with the casual racism towards the ethnic minority of Gypsies and Travellers. As the former editor of the Travellers’ Times, he devoted himself to defending the different Roma communities, particularly after news stories about Gypsy criminality or disputes when Travellers settled in villages. He found this “exhausting and demoralising”, and wanted to explore both his own roots and the history of Gypsies in Britain, so his road trip began.

Read more [here](#).

Czech court acquits police officer, says use of force against Romani harvester was legal, state to appeal

*By Romea.cz*

The use by police of a collapsible truncheon against a harvester of legally-grown technical hemp from a field in the Česká Lípa district was not criminal, according to a court in Česká Lípa that acquitted the officer on 14 June. The defendant had faced up to five years in prison for abusing his powers.

State prosecutor Martin Tvrdík had proposed the defendant be given a suspended sentence and immediately appealed the ruling. The 36-year-old officer denied having proceeded illegally.

Judge Milan Vencl agreed. "I did not arrive at the conclusion that this use of force contravened the Police Act," the judge said.

Read more [here](#).
Young Gypsies and Travellers launch activist network at Appleby fair

By The Travellers’ Times

The European Roma Rights Centre with the support of YTT at Travellers’ Times launch Roma Rights Defenders, a European Romani activist network to challenge racism.

Appleby Horse Fair is the largest annual gathering of Gypsies and Travellers anywhere in the world. This made it the perfect place for the European Roma Rights Centre to launch their Roma Rights Defenders initiative in the UK.

Roma Rights Defenders is a pan-European activist network made up of Romani Gypsies, Travellers and others of all ages who are mobilising both online and on the ground to stand in solidarity and challenge racism.

Read more [here](#).

Local businessman shoots and kills 13-year-old Roma girl in Amfissa, Central Greece

By keeptalkinggreece

A local businessman shot and killed a 13-year-old girl in the Roma settlement by the town of Amfissa, Central Greece, short after 8 o’clock on Monday evening. The 34-year-old perpetrator is at large still Tuesday noon.

Tension in the area is high as locals fear of revenge and members of the Roma community have already set the perpetrator’s car on fire and damaged his shop.

According to media reports, the shooter is a local man, a butcher, living in the village Viniani near the Roma settlement, while his shop is in the town of Amfissa.

Read more [here](#).
Stateless Roma in Albania held back by marginalisation and discrimination

By ERRC

Negative stereotypes, marginalisation and discrimination are making Roma vulnerable to the risks of statelessness in Albania, according to a new report released today by the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC), the European Network on Statelessness (ENS), the Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion (ISI), and the Tirana Legal Aid Society (TLAS). The research was published today at an event in Tirana attended by government ministers, UN officials, and Romani people affected by the risk of statelessness.

Read more [here](#).

Life Of Romani People - A Photographic Exhibition

By histoire-immigration

Guided by a lecturer, discover the exhibition Romani Worlds Photographs, an historical expose on the people formerly called "gypsies".

What does photography say about Roma, Sinti or Kale people? This exhibition proposes a two-fold answer: an anthropological approach for understanding the history of stereotypes associated with these nomad peoples and a series of photos by Mathieu Pernot entitled Les Gorgan, depicting a family followed by the photographer for over twenty years.

The Palais de la Porte Dorée is an exceptional Art Deco complex built for the International Colonial Exhibition of 1931. The Palace has housed since 2007 a museum devoted to the history of immigration in France.

Read more [here](#).
Persecution of the Roma brings shame on Europe

By The Guardian

‘The majority [of Roma] should be delivered back to the borders,” thundered the interior minister. “We are not here to welcome these people.”

That interior minister was not Matteo Salvini, leader of Italy’s far-right Lega, in his rant against the Roma, when he called for “a mass cleansing, street by street, piazza by piazza, and neighbourhood by neighbourhood”. It was Manuel Valls, France’s socialist interior minister in 2013, justifying the policy that Salvini now demands – the mass expulsion of Roma from their camps. The Roma, Valls claimed, “Have lifestyles that are very different from ours and are clearly in confrontation” with French values.

Read more here.

Camp cleared as Italy's far-right puts spotlight on Roma community

By Reuters

It may be a coincidence, but Rome’s city authorities are clearing 450 people out of an official Roma camp weeks after the new far-right interior minister, Matteo Salvini, said Italy’s Roma should be counted and, if they are foreign, expelled.

The authorities say the clearance is routine; that the lease for the land has expired and it has tried without success to get the residents, also known as “gypsies” or “nomads”, to move elsewhere, including to migrant shelters.

Read more here.
Police chiefs call for more Gypsy and Traveller camps

*By The Week*

Police chiefs are calling for the creation of new permanent and transit sites for the Traveller community across the UK.

The Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) and the National Police Chiefs’ Council (NPCC) say there is an “urgent need to significantly increase” the number of encampments in order to reduce illegal sites.

A joint statement by the two organisations said: “The police are not in the business of providing accommodation, but this is such a crucial issue for the Gypsy and Traveller community that encouraging its provision has become part of the NPCC focus.

Read more [here](#).

No homeland, no hope – Europe's Roma are back in the firing line

*By The Guardian*

Matteo Salvini’s anti-Roma vitriol is the latest example of the shameful persecution of the biggest ethnic minority in Europe.

“Hey, Gypsy woman! Look into your crystal ball,” sang 1960s crooner Ricky Nelson while pondering his romantic future. Few of today’s Roma are under any illusions about what lies ahead, and it’s certainly not romantic. Comments from Italy’s new interior minister, Matteo Salvini, have caused a minor stir. He’s commissioned a “census” of Italy’s 130,000 Roma and hopes to expel the foreign ones, admitting he’s “unfortunately” powerless to do anything about Italy’s indigenous Roma.

Read more [here](#).
Anti-Roma pogroms in Ukraine: on C14 and tolerating terror

By ERRC

Three anti-Roma pogroms within a month mark a worrying escalation of racist violence by neo-fascist militias in Ukraine, and evidence of official collusion is a deeply sinister added element. The European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) has expressed its deep concern at the lax response from law enforcement agencies to racially motivated violence, which renders minorities even more vulnerable, and besmirches the image political leaders in Kyiv strive to cultivate of a tolerant, forward-looking nation.

The U.S. Embassy in Ukraine called on law enforcement officers to investigate the recent attacks on Roma and tweeted the following: “No one in Ukraine should live in fear because of who they are. We urge law enforcement to investigate recent attacks on Roma. Justice and Tolerance for minority communities are key in the new Ukraine.”

Read more here.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND EVENTS

ERIO participates to the public consultation on early school dropouts among Roma

On June 4, 2018, ERIO participated in the public consultation hosted by the EESC and entitled “Adressing early school leaving amongst the Roma: the current situation and the way forward”. The event gathered stakeholders from European institutions and civil society such as the Roma Education Fund or the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA).
The main objectives were first to evaluate the state of play of education of Roma in Europe and to present the root causes of early school leaving among Roma. Main causes addressed were the spatial segregation of Roma who live in camps far away from the schools with bad connections in-between, the self-confidence and motivation of Roma which is weakened due to their social exclusion and the pressure from Roma to get employed as soon as possible to earn a living for their family.

Second objective was to give recommendations and best practices to combat early school leaving. Various programs launched by civil society organisations were presented such as the INSCHOOL program or the CEDEFOP’s VET toolkit. Participants also encouraged the European Commission to do more, notably by monitoring the implementation of the NRIS more closely and by tackling anti-Gypsyism in education.

Despite some progress, participants also highlighted that the overall target to reduce early school dropouts to 10% in the EU is far from being achieved for Roma (68% in 2018) and that Roma child are often in classes that do not correspond to their age.

**Amalipe Conference on the state of Roma educational integration**

On May 14, 2018, the Center for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance “Amalipe” and the National Network of children organized in Sofia a conference entitled *The state of Roma educational integration: from the innovative model to the innovative school.*

Key messages from the conference were:

- The need of restarting of the process of desegregation in education, an investment in early childhood development (including removing fees for kindergartens) and an impressive consensus on the main conclusions and recommendations for chapter “Education” in the Civil Society Monitoring Report about the implementation of Bulgarian NRIS characterized the conference.
• Unprecedented attendance of diplomats and political figures on high level positions marked the forum. All stakeholders – Ministry of Education, national ombudsman, managing authorities of the key operational programs, municipalities and around 200 school principals were in the room. As result the forum brought positive outcomes

A detailed report of the conference can be found [here](#).

**Equinet Conference: Investing in Equality**

On Friday, 1 June 2018, Equinet is organising a conference entitled *Investing in Equality*.

Equinet, European Network of Equality Bodies, brings together 46 organizations from 34 European countries, which are empowered to counteract discrimination as national equality bodies across a range of grounds including age, disability, gender, race or ethnic origin, religion or belief, and sexual orientation.

This Equinet conference is convened to address challenges to equality, discuss European-level solutions and identify the role equality bodies can play in these, in particular:

• The place of equality and non-discrimination as fundamental horizontal values in the next EU MFF and the contribution of EU funds to equality and non-discrimination;
• Ways to ensure political commitment to equality and non-discrimination at all levels;
• The role of equality legislation, ways to ensure optimal implementation of existing legislation and the need for completing the legal framework for equality
• The role of strong, independent equality bodies in safeguarding the value of equality.

More detail and registration link can be found [here](#).
