NEWS

Roma lives matter: An interview with Robert Bu, Executive Director of EHO (1/05/2018)

By Eurodiaconia

Interview with Mr. Robert Bu, Executive Director of our Serbian member Ekumenska humanitarna organizacija (Ecumenical Humanitarian Organization)

In Serbia there is one of the biggest Roma communities in Europe. What do you think are the biggest challenges they are facing?

According to the latest census released in 2011, the Roma population of Serbia was counted as 147,604 (while unofficial sources estimate them to be 450,000). The estimated number represents over 2.1% (or 6%) of Serbia’s resident population.

Read more here.
Roma people are at home all around the world (1/05/2018)

By France24

How to celebrate the life of a Gypsy? That's the aim of a new exhibition here in Paris aiming to showcase the lives of the more appropriately named Roma people. They have settled mainly across Europe and the Americas, but came originally from northern India and Pakistan.

To chart their history, and what they have brought to society, the exhibition "Mondes Tsiganes", or "Gypsy World", has opened its doors at Paris's Museum of Immigration. We spoke to curator and historian Ilsen About.

Read more here.

Maynooth University Confers 24 Traveller And Roma Graduates (2/05/2018)

By Pavee Point

Maynooth University today confers 24 men and women from Traveller and Roma communities across Ireland as graduates of its Community Work in a Changing Ireland Level 7 Certificate programme.

Speaking at the ceremony Anastasia Crickley from the Department of Applied Social Studies commented: “In a context where fewer than 13% of Travellers complete second level education, and only 1% or fewer go on to gain third level degrees, this is a significant achievement for the students involved.

Read more here.

‘Urgent Interventions’ Needed on Traveller Mental Health (03/05/2018)

By Pavee Point

‘Travellers, whose suicide rates continue to be unacceptably high, deserve an urgent intervention from the State’ – the Joint Oireachtas Committee on the Future of Mental Health Care said in its interim report last month.
Today at Pavee Point we hosted Minister for Mental Health and Older People, Jim Daly, TD and explained to him what interventions we feel are necessary to impact positively on Traveller mental health.

Read more here.

Fighting stereotypes! (3/05/2018)

*By 360°*

Berlin. The 37-year-old lesbian artist and activist Sandra Selimović and role model in the Roma community, is interviewed by 360° le magazine LGBT Suisse: “Most of our texts speak about racism against the Roma, anticapitalism, refugees. The song "Opre Roma" is very personal: I’m talking about my own story, my belonging to the queer community, my lesbian identity. I say that I am proud to be Roma and all that I am too.”

Read more here and see the interview in French.

Roma Rights and the Next Generation: Alone and Together (4/05/2018)

*By Harvard FXB*

This spring semester Harvard FXB has sponsored or convened three events that brought students and Roma scholars together and suggested some possible future directions in the struggle for Roma rights and in Harvard FXB’s Roma research.

Read more here.

Czech Constitutional Court: Complaint against decision to buy pig farm on Romani genocide site is inadmissible (5/05/2018)

*By Romea.cz*

The Czech Constitutional Court has declared inadmissible a complaint filed with it against the decision by the Government to approve the purchase of the pig farm in Lety located on the site of a former concentration camp for Romani people. That means the complaint did not meet the requirements, neither in terms of content nor in terms of form, for the court to review it.
At Lety during WWII there was a concentration camp intended for Romani people in particular, and a remembrance site is now meant to be developed there. The motion to buy out the farm that was built on the site after the war was submitted to the cabinet by the Czech Culture Ministry, led by then-Czech Culture Minister Daniel Herman (Christian Democrats - KDU-ČSL).

Read more here.

Unwelcome Wherever I Go: A Focus Group with Romani Women with Disabilities in Novi Bečej, Serbia (5/05/2018)

By Portal o invalidnosti

The fifth in a series of focus groups, implemented by ...IZ KRUGA – VOJVODINA, was held in the Romani Women’s Association in Novi Bečej, Serbia, on 16 April.

The focus group was one of the organization’s activities within the framework of the ‘Supporting CSOs in straightening the provision of services to women and girl survivors of violence, specifically to marginalized groups of women, such as women with disabilities and survivors of rape and sexual assault’ project implemented in cooperation with UN Women.

Read more here.

Slovak appeals court says video of police abuse of Romani children must be admitted into evidence (7/05/2018)

By Romea.cz

A Slovak appeals court has overturned a second first-instance court verdict acquitting all 10 current and former police officers last year of abusing Romani children at a police station in the east of the country. The officers' humiliation of the children happened in 2009 and was recorded by the officers themselves, using their mobile phones.

The district court has refused to admit those recordings as the prosecution’s main evidence, justifying that decision by saying the footage was not taken in accordance with the law. The Regional Court in Košice has now instructed that the recording of the alleged humiliation of the Romani children be admitted as evidence during the district court’s review of the case.

Read more here.
Has the EU dropped Roma inclusion from ‘credible enlargement’ in the Western Balkans? (8/05/2018)

By ERRC

So, what’s goin’ on with Roma inclusion in the Western Balkans? And why has the issue been all but dropped from discussions about EU enlargement? The most recent statements from the European Commission have been upbeat about a bigger EU by 2025, praising progress, and calling ‘credible enlargement’ the key driver of transformation.

Read more here.

Czech Police apprehend youth who desecrated Romani genocide memorial (8/05/2018)

By Roma.cz

Detectives in Písek have managed to solve a case from February involving somebody placing a pig’s head at the memorial to the Holocaust and its Romani victims in the community of Lety u Písku. Detectives initially worked with a minimum of information, thoroughly investigating each clue and minor detail until they accessed more specific information for assessment.

Read more here.

Where next for migrant Roma communities post-Brexit? (9/05/2018)

By Open Democracy UK

The number of migrant Roma living in the UK is not known. Estimates by the Council of Europe put the figure at 225,000 Roma, which amounts to 0.36% of the entire population. The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, however, claims that the real figure is between 500,000 and 1,000,000, excluding indigenous Gypsies and Irish Travellers. In the wake of Brexit this group faces an uncertain future.

A recent report of the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) on ‘Roma communities and Brexit’ has highlighted what it called “a triple whammy of risks: uncertainty over their future legal status, rising concerns about hate crime, and a potential loss of EU funding for integration and support services”.

Read more here.
Perniciousness of racism and ableism in Ireland still continues (9/05/2018)

*By The Irish Times*

“Injury to one is injury to all.” These were the words of Ethel Brooks, Roma feminist and scholar, at Dublin Castle last month during the Bringing Human Rights Home for Travellers and Roma in Ireland conference.

Racism, coupled with ableism, usually infers people in need of fixing, with the apparatus of rehabilitation or assimilation. The management of a diverse reality and a pluralistic world view is deemed too problematic.

Read more [here](#).

Vaccination Awareness via Traveller Primary Health Care Projects (10/05/2018)

*By Pavee Point*

Travellers have a population demographic similar to developing countries: over 25% of the population are under the age of 15yrs with the highest population amongst the aged 0-4yrs category.

This coupled with the high infant mortality rates means it is imperative that Travellers are supported to make informed decisions about immunisation, including following through on all childhood vaccinations.

This has always been and will continue to be a key priority for Primary Health Care for Travellers Projects (PHCTP) across Ireland.

Read more [here](#).

'Alone at My Wedding' (11/05/2018)

*By The Hollywood Reporter*

Debuiting writer-director Marta Bergman screened her first feature, about a Romani woman who becomes a mail-order bride, in the ACID sidebar at Cannes.

In Marta Bergman’s heartfelt directorial debut, Alone at My Wedding (Seule a mon mariage), the wedding described in the title never happens, although being alone is very much what the movie is about.

Read more [here](#).
Camp of Roma people was burned in Lviv (11/05/2018)

*By 112international*

The settlement of Roma people near Rudne village in Lviv region was burned. This was reported on the website of Ukrainian Ombudsman Lyudmyla Denisova.

“According to the message we received from the public activists, on May 9, some unknown people burned Roma camp located near the Rudne village in Lviv region. As a result, the property of Roma people was damaged and they had to leave the location,” the message says.

In response to this, the Ombudsman directed a request to the National Police of Lviv region to take legal measures and ensure order and security in Rudne village.

Read more [here](#).

József "Choli" Daróczí has passed away (12/05/2018)

*By Romea.cz*

At the age of 79 the eminent Romani author, poet, journalist and teacher József Daróczí, known to his loved ones by the familiar Romani nickname "Choli", passed away in Hungary on 12 May 2018. Mr Daróczí, an all-around gifted artist and charismatic educator, was one of the most eminent Romani figures in Hungarian public life for decades.

Together with several other representatives of his generation Mr Daróczí was behind the birth of the Romani arts and literary elite in Hungary. He was born on 26 May 1939 in the Hungarian village of Bedő.

Read more [here](#).

US urges Ukrainian law enforcers to investigate attacks on Roma in Ukraine (14/05/2018)

*By The Kyiv Post*

The U.S. Embassy to Ukraine calls on law enforcement officers to investigate recent attacks on Roma.
“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,” the U.S. Embassy to Ukraine said on Twitter on May 12.

As reported, on the Internet there was a video of illegal actions of unknown persons against citizens, supposedly Roma, who were in the area of Lysa Hora. This video has become the basis for entering information into the Journal of the Unified Register of Applications and Communications of the Kyiv Police Department.

Read more [here](#).

**Narrow escape from a blazing camper-van (14/05/2018)**

*By ERRC*

A young Roma family had a lucky escape from their blazing camper-van after it was firebombed in a racist hate crime in Turin on the night of May 7. In an op-ed for Il Fatto Quotidiano, Romani activist Dijana Pavlovic asks who is worse: the criminal fascists who carried out the attack, or the ‘citizens’ who gathered to watch, film the event on their phones and mockingly bemoan that the ‘family did not burn’?

Read more [here](#) and see the [original article](#) in Italian.

**A look at the Finnish history of discrimination against minorities (15/05/2018)**

*By The Independent Barents Observer*

At the beginning of May, a seminar was held in Helsinki on the racist experiences both the Sámi, the Roma, the deaf and the disabled have gone through in Finland.

The groups have been forbidden to use their language, met structural discrimination and been ashamed of their identity or ethnicity, and these experiences are all shared by these minorities in Finland. This was spotlighted in the seminar Historical wrongdoings: How do we make amends for past injustices?

The Finnish League for Human Rights considered the seminar as historic, as there has never been such a deep-going discussion in Finland in which so many Finnish minorities would have reflected on their racist experiences together.

Read more [here](#).
American Holocaust Museum makes tough statement on anti-Semitism growth in Ukraine (15/05/2018)

By 112international

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) made a tough statement that condemns the growth of the anti-Semitism, violence toward the Romani, the activity of the Ukrainian Institute National Memory headed by Viatrovych as the press service of the museum reported.

Also, the USHMM expressed the deep concern about the recent manifestations of intolerance and anti-Semitism in Ukraine, including the violence toward the Romani communities in Kyiv and Lviv.

Read more here.

Canada grants former MEP Viktória Mohácsi political asylum (15/05/2018)

By ERRC

Six years on, the Canadian authorities have granted Viktória Mohácsi political asylum. The Roma rights activist, former Member of the European Parliament and ex-ERRC staffer, requested asylum back in 2012.

In 2002, Viktória was appointed by Bálint Magyar, then Hungarian Minister of Education, as Commissioner for the Integration of Roma and Disadvantaged Children. Between 2004 and 2009, Viktória represented Hungary in the ALDE group in European Parliament as a member of the now defunct Alliance of Free Democrats.

Read more here.

Roma resistance: End ethnic profiling & travel bans in Macedonia (16/05/2018)

By Travellers Times

Romani activist, Jonathan Lee reports on a small group of Roma in Macedonia who are bucking the trend and defying discrimination by winning a landmark legal case against border control authorities who had been ethnically profiling Roma at the Macedonian border for years.
Roma in Macedonia face widespread institutional racism and severe marginalisation from mainstream society. Roma unemployment is more than double the rate for non-Roma. They are much less likely to have access to medical care when they need it, and much more likely go to bed hungry at the end of the day. The gap between Roma and non-Roma in access to public services, housing, jobs and healthcare is growing.

Read more here.

State terror: romani children need protection from abuse in care homes (16/05/2018)

By ERRC

ERRC research and litigation has exposed the extent to which Romani children are taken away from their families, and how institutional racism and prejudice about so-called “Romani lifestyles” results in huge numbers of kids being placed in state-run care homes where there is precious little by way of care for these vulnerable youngsters. Worse still, these children too often find themselves exposed to abuse and exploitation.

Read more here.

A shooting in Poprad leaves two children hospitalised (17/05/2018)

By The Slovak Spectator

Two small Roma children had to be taken to Poprad hospital after somebody shot them in the town’s borough of Matejovce. The doctors had to remove bullets from their legs.

The case is already being investigated by the police, the TVnoviny.sk website reported.

“The police launched a criminal prosecution for the crime of bodily harm,” said Daniel Džobanik, spokesperson for the Prešov police, as quoted by the regional Korzár daily. “Since the investigation is underway we cannot provide more details.”

Read more here.
No prosecutions over Carrickmines fire that claimed lives of 10 people (17/05/2018)

By Independent.ie

The Director of Public Prosecutions decided that no prosecution will be brought against county council over the Carrickmines fire that claimed lives of 10 people, including five children and a pregnant woman. The deaths raised serious questions over how Traveller families were forced to live in cramped and unsafe conditions. Relatives of the 10 victims were angered at the delays in processing the case and holding the inquests into their deaths.

Read more here.

Italy's populists promise to kick out half a million migrants as they edge towards forming new government (18/05/2018)

By The Telegraph

Italy’s populist parties, which are expected to form a new government within days, have pledged to deport up to half a million migrants.

It notably called for the recruitment of more police, the building of new prisons and the clearing of illegal gypsy settlements in Italian towns and cities.

Read more here.

Who are the children in the Roma shantytowns? (18/05/2018)

By ERRC

Paris. Who are the children in the Roma shantytowns? Access to education for children living there is a major challenge for their integration and fundamental rights. In 2017, it is estimated that 16,000 people lived in slums in metropolitan France, including 8,000 to 10,000 children. Only 47% of them were in school between the ages of 12 and 18. For more, see UNICEF Enfants en bidonvilles.

Read more here and see the original in French here.
Traveller and Roma Pride 2018: Women’s Voices (29/05/2018)

By Pavee Point

To celebrate Traveller and Roma Pride Week, Pavee Point are highlighting women’s voices through a video series.

These videos feature four powerful Traveller and Roma women speaking about feminism, identity, community and their role models. Thank you to Rosaleen McDonagh, Tessa Collins, Dr. Ethel Brooks, and Gabi Muntean for sharing their experiences of breaking boundaries in their education and work.

Read more here.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND EVENTS

5th meeting of the EU High Level Group on Combating Racism and Xenophobia

The next plenary meeting of the EU High Level Group on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and other forms of intolerance, will be held in Brussels on 14 June 2018.

The High Level Group is intended as a platform to support EU and national efforts in ensuring effective implementation of relevant rules and in setting up effective policies to prevent and combat hate crime and hate speech. This is done by fostering thematic discussions on gaps, challenges and responses, promoting best practice exchange, developing guidance and strengthening cooperation and synergies between key stakeholders. More information on the High Level Group can be found here.

The plenary meeting of the High Level Group, which will be addressed by Commissioner Věra Jourová, will mainly focus on practices related to the investigation and prosecution of hate crime and hate speech.

The meeting will take place at the Charlemagne building, Rue de la Loi 170, 1000 Bruxelles. It is scheduled to start at 9:30 am and to finish at 5:30 pm.

Participants can register through the following link up until May 18, 2018.
Football unites, racism divides

On May, 23 2018, the European Parliament Anti-Racism and Diversity Intergroup (ARDI), along with the European Parliament Sports intergroup and the European Parliament Working Group on Antisemitism, is organising a conference entitled Football unites, racism divides. The conference will be held in the European Parliament from 12.00 to 15.30pm in room A5E2.

The European Economic and Social Committee is turning 60!

On the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), its president, Luca Jahier, organises a day of celebration on May, 24 2018.

Since 1958, the EESC, a consultative body, has sought to brought the voice of civil society to the European institutions.

In the morning, an extraordinary plenary session will be held in the Grand hemicyle of the European Parliament in the presence of Jean-Claude Juncker and Antonio Tajani.

In the evening, a cultural evening will take place at the Albert Hall Complex in Brussels.

A detailed program of the evening can be found here.

5th Meeting of the Council of Europe dialogue with roma and traveller civil society

The Council of Europe launches OPEN CALL for participation to the 5th Council of Europe Dialogue with Roma and Traveller civil society that will take place on 20-21 June 2018 in Strasbourg, France.

The 5th Dialogue meeting will concentrate on the issue of Roma and Traveller political participation with the aims of a) prioritising and giving visibility to the rights of Roma and Travellers to active political and public participation, b) highlighting the issue of political participation as a key parameter in the effort of tackling Roma and Traveller marginalisation, isolation and discrimination and c) increasing the capacity of Roma and Traveller NGOs to identify strategies and good practices that strengthen participation in the political and public sphere. Read more about the 5th Dialogue meeting here.

Expected Dialogue outcomes

- Better promotion of adequate and meaningful participation of Roma and Traveller women and youth in political or public life in any decision-making bodies;
- Higher visibility of good practices across member States;
Mapping of priority areas, key targets and effective strategies in enhancing and sustaining Roma and Traveller political participation which will be incorporated in the Council of Europe post-2019 agenda.

**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](#).

**Town Hall Discussion: Antidiscrimination & Equality law in Europe**

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 Town Hall Discussion, co-organised with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) – Regional Office for Europe, is an opportunity to make your voice heard. The adoption of a comprehensive EU Anti-discrimination Directive would strengthen protection against discrimination on the grounds of disability, age, religion or belief, and sexual orientation. If adopted, millions of Europeans would benefit!

More detail and registration link can be found [here](#).
5th OPRE Meeting (15/05/2018)

By Council of Europe

The 5th OPRE Platform was collaboratively organised with the 6th CoE-FRA-ENNHRI-EQUINET Collaborative Platform on Social and Economic Rights ("4Social Rights Platform") which was hosted by the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission in Belfast 15-16 May 2018.

The 1st Joint Meeting of the 4Social Rights and the “OPRE” platforms initiated a debate on the protection of the rights to accommodation of Travellers and the rights to housing of Roma and highlighted the human cost of evictions of both Travellers and Roma.

Read more here.

Euro Reps on Travellers and Roma meet in Belfast (17/05/2018)

By Pavee Point

The first joint meeting of the Collaborative Platform on Social and Economic Rights and the Operational Platform for Roma Equality took place this week at the initiative of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission.

The meeting was aimed to look at the protection of the rights to accommodation of Travellers and the rights to housing of Roma that are of joint interest to the two platforms. The issue of evictions of both Travellers and Roma was also addressed.

“This was an important opportunity to talk about trends and what is happening to Roma in Europe at this time,” said Gabi Muntean who attended from Pavee Point Roma Programme.

Read more here.