

PRESS RELEASE

It's urgent to fight anti-Gypsyism and all forms of racism to avoid repeating the past

Brussels, 25 January 2019

Ahead of the International Holocaust Remembrance Day we would like to remember the millions of victims of the Nazi regime and those who lost their lives during the Holocaust. This dark time in history was mainly focused on a racist anti-Semitic politics that caused the death of millions of Jews. However, the often untold truth is that an estimate of 220.000 and 1.500.000¹ Roma and Sinti were also victims of the inhumane practices of the Nazi regime and went through terrible experiences such as medical experiments and mass killings. Today, ERIO wants to honour all the victims of the Holocaust and give a special commemoration to the Roma and Sinti that face ongoing discrimination and violence in different forms of anti-Gypsyism.

The Roma Holocaust should be a learning experience of the appalling consequences that come from discrimination, racism and hate. With the upcoming European elections, we need to join forces to combat the extreme right-wing political movements and parties that are growing and which normalise violence and hate-speech against migrants and minorities like Roma and Sinti and promote xenophobic and racist messages. *“Now more than ever, we need to strengthen our efforts and fight for an inclusive Europe, free of discrimination and anti-Gypsyism to avoid a repetition of the past”*, says Amet Jasar, ERIO's Board member.

We want to continue the fight against racial discrimination and anti-Gypsyism that keep putting Roma communities in a vulnerable position. We urge governments and civil society organisations to take action and promote inclusive practices that defend the human rights of all citizens, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, disability or sexual orientation.

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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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¹ Hancock, I. (2005) 'True Romanies and the Holocaust: A Re-evaluation and an overview', in *The Historiography of the Holocaust*, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 383-396.