



PRESS RELEASE

Roma women contribution to European cultural heritage

Brussels, 8 March 2018

On the occasion of the International Women's Day, the European Roma Information Office (ERIO) wishes to join women around the world, and in particular, Roma women in celebrating event – recognizing their many contributions and raise awareness about the specific challenges and inequalities faced by many women due to their gender, ethnicity, race, religion or age.

Gender inequality and ethnic discrimination are global concerns. While the ethnic gap between Roma and non-Roma yawns wide in key areas of life – education, employment, health and experiences of discrimination – the situation for Roma women is worse. Extreme poverty, exclusion, culture-based prejudices and discrimination burden Roma women even further. They are constantly deprived of their most basic rights including cultural rights.¹

Therefore, on this date, and in conjunction with the European Year of Cultural Heritage, ERIO pays tribute to Roma culture and history as a part of European Heritage, and remember the extraordinary achievements of Roma women who have taken a step forward, without leaving aside their most rooted customs, in order to vindicate their most basic rights as full citizens. Additionally, ERIO applauds the women of today who lead, inspire, and work to improve their communities, seek economic independence, reconciliation of private and professional life, equal representation, elimination of stereotypes, fundamental and cultural rights, and build peaceful and prosperous societies. Equal opportunities for success should not be limited by gender nor ethnicity. Gender does not define potential and discrimination only hold countries back.

As ERIO's Executive Director, Mr. Ivan Ivanov stated: *“ERIO remains committed to empowering Roma women and girls on achieving gender equality throughout Europe. We call on the European Commission to ensure that member states implement sufficient measures to address the problems faced by women, and with a special focus on Roma women. We also call on member states to ensure the participation of Roma women in the implementation and*

¹ Cultural rights are human rights that aim at assuring the enjoyment of culture and its components in conditions of equality, human dignity and non-discrimination. See UNESCO *Culture for Sustainable Development* available at <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/culture-and-development/the-future-we-want-the-role-of-culture/culture-and-human-rights/>

monitoring of the National Roma Integration Strategies, and to show greater commitment to the fight against discrimination and all forms of abuse suffered by Roma women and girls, in particular in the workplace, and which may be an obstacle to their equal access to economic and social opportunities.”

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Note to the editor:

The European Roma Information Office (ERIO) is an international 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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