



PRESS RELEASE

Building an inclusive Europe that embraces Roma culture

Brussels, 7 April 2017

Ahead of the International Roma Day on 8 April, ERIO would like to take this opportunity to celebrate Roma culture and traditions. The European Union prides itself on its rich, ethnically diverse landscape, which is also reflected in its motto, *United in Diversity*. In fact, Europe's vibrant cultural landscape continues to flourish due to the richness and diversity that the Roma community contributes to European society. Unfortunately, in the present-day climate of rampant nationalism and xenophobia, minorities are seen with increasing distrust. But peoples cannot exist in isolation, which is why ERIO calls on Roma to take pride in their identity and their culture, celebrate it and promote it.

ERIO would also like to take this opportunity to raise awareness with regard to the persistent discrimination the Roma continue to face in Europe. Anti-Gypsyism remains ever present and Roma continue to face systematic discrimination and numerous human rights violations. Although the Roma remain a vulnerable group across Europe, it is most reassuring to know that the values on which European diversity and inclusion are based are supported by policy measures and strategies that aim also to include the Roma, such as the National Roma Integration Strategies developed by Member States, the 2013 Recommendation on effective Roma integration measures in the Member States, or the most recent Conclusions on accelerating the process of Roma integration, adopted by the Council in 2016.

On this important day, in addition to celebrating Roma culture and identity, ERIO would like to reaffirm its commitment to fostering equality and inclusion. In light of this, ERIO's Executive Director, Ivan Ivanov, stresses that *"ERIO will continue to advance Roma identity and culture in the pursuit of fairness, social inclusion and mutual respect for all Europeans."*

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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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