



European Roma Information Office

Human rights abuses and discrimination against Roma

2017

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EUROPEAN ROMA INFORMATION OFFICE

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This publication includes snapshots that are illustrations of human rights abuses and discrimination against Roma in EU member states and candidate countries. It is based on reliable sources, such as newspapers and NGOs websites. It includes only cases for which sources are available in English. The period covered is January-December 2017. It has been funded by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme of the European Union. The information contained in it does not necessarily reflect the position or opinion of the European Commission. JUST/2016/RDIS/OG/NETW/9965



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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Bulgaria

Brutal assault against Roma by police

On 13 April, two Roma men were brutally assaulted by Bulgarian police in the town of Bohot, Pleven Province in Bulgaria. The two men, a father and his son, were near their home collecting kindling in the forest. Some police officers noticed them and ordered to lie down on the ground. They started beating them up and kicking them.

The father, suffering from cardiac problems, died as a result of the assault. His son, seriously injured, sustained contusions and one arm and both ribs were broken.

Bulgarian police justified the assault, by stating that the two men were found in possession of alleged stolen pesticides and resisted arrest. They argued that the father underwent a heart attack, during his attempt to flee and not as a consequence of the assault. At the moment, the results of the autopsy are still not available.

In Bulgaria's Nova television station, Sirakov, former vice-deputy of the far-right, ethno-nationalist ATAKA party, known for his hostility against Roma, commented on the incident: "They weren't in their own woods. When a man is very sick, he doesn't go out to steal," implying that the father was responsible for his own death. He concluded by praising the police for "neutralising the two thieves, who were in compliant but eventually arrested".

Source:

- <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/world/bulgarian-police-assault-two-romani-men-one-of-whom-then-died>
- <http://www.errc.org/blog/roma-lives-matter-bulgarian-rom-killed-for-possession-of-pesticides/168>

Mass anti-Roma rally in Asenovgrad

On 2 July, an anti-Roma protest – the 5th organized in reaction to a group fight happening between local Roma and a canoe kayak team - escalated after hard-line protesters tried to break through the police roadblock protecting the Roma neighbourhood from the furious crowd.

The presence of the police helped avoiding a severe collision. Three people have been arrested and charged with hooliganism.

Sources:

- <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/migrant-hunter-arrested-after-anti-roma-rally-in-bulgaria-07-03-2017>
- <http://www.romea.cz/en/features-and-commentary/reportage/bulgaria-anti-roma-protests-continue-after-alleged-romani-attacks-on-teenagers>

Roma man sold as a slave in Bulgaria

At the beginning of September, in Bulgaria, a Roma man has been sold by a co-worker to the owner of a farm for 1,500€. He escaped and sought refuge with his former employer and informal foster family in the village of Maglen.

On 15 September, the “owner to be” went to retrieve him or get his money back. When he met resistance from the family, he fired an electroshock weapon at the group, knocking a man to the ground. The Roma man’s family members were taken into police custody for defending themselves and causing mild injuries to their aggressor and were released shortly after.

After this episode, a hateful video portraying the group of Roma men as the aggressors went viral in the country. On 21 September, a group of non-Roma protested in support of the “owner to be” in the context of a series of widespread anti-Roma protests across Bulgaria over the summer.

Sources:

<http://www.errc.org/blog/a-romani-man-has-been-sold-as-a-slave-in-bulgaria/189>

Czech Republic

Death threats against Roma celebrity

In February, Czech policemen are continuing to investigate death threats against the Roma singer Radek Banga; these threats appeared on his Facebook profile after he publicly criticized the success of the xenophobic band Ortel in a music competition.

Not only that, after the publication of Radek Banga's story by the ROMEA organization, racists have also attacked the ROMEA organization by threatening to set the office on fire; and they also threatened Radek Banga's brother. The criminal report has been shelved by police that stated it did not amount to felony. As a consequence, no prosecution under the Criminal code could be set out.

Source:

- <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/czech/czech-police-investigation-of-death-threats-against-romani-celebrity-continues-his-brother-targeted-also>
- <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/czech/gypsy-cz-faces-rasist-commentaries-fans-of-xenophobic-band-ortel-threaten-to-him-with-death-they-want-to-put-newsroom-romea>

Reviewed action plan to counter Roma discrimination

Ensuing from the case of D.H. and others v. Czech Republic (2007), in which the European Court of Human Rights acknowledged a violation under article 14 of the European Convention of Human Rights, an action plan was adopted by the Czech authorities in order to ensure equal opportunities in education for Roma. The most of Roma children were in fact considered as mental disable, only on the grounds of their ethnicity.

The latest revision of the action plan on February 2017 planned new workshops and trainings, in accordance with the latest communication of the Czech authorities. Among the new initiatives entering into force since 2017, the compulsory pre-school year for all children from the age of five has been possible thanks to the civil society contribution and parents' direct implication in denouncing cases of discrimination.

Sources:

- <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=09000016806f7a97>
- <http://european-implementation.net/ein-voices/2017/3/22/discrimination-against-roma-in-education-waiting-for-changes-on-the-ground>

Successful anti-discrimination litigation

In January, the Czech court reviews alleged racial discrimination against Roma pupils during first-grade enrolments at Pěší Primary School in Ostrava-Muglinov. Two incoming Roma first-graders were allegedly rejected by the school for enrolment for the 2014/2015 school year, because the school allegedly intended to limit the number of Roma children in the incoming first-grade cohort.

The school is alleged to have subjected the children to a knowledge test in order to further categorize them, because the capacity of the class for the first-graders was filled. Unfortunately, neither of the kids was able to complete and they have been rejected on that ground. Principal Kamil Krahula has rejected the lawsuit as unfounded.

In March 2017, the District Court Ostrava-Poruba decided that the elementary school discriminated against the Romani children based on their ethnicity through the enrolment criteria for the school. The Court stated that the school must apologize for discrimination to the two Romani boys.

Sources:

- <http://forumhr.eu/en/>
- <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/czech/czech-court-reviews-alleged-racial-discrimination-during-first-grade-enrollments>
- <http://www.errc.org/article/justice-served--romani-boys-denied-enrolment-in-school-win-case-in-czech-republic/4558>

Six years of prison for the arson of a Romani-occupied residential hotel

On April 2017, the Supreme Court of Czech Republic upheld a prison sentence of six years and nine months for Tomáš Kopecký, the man who headed an arson attack against a Romani-occupied residential hotel in the Czech town of Aš.

The residential hotel was dwelled by 18 Roma people, among whom some children. The occupants managed to extinguish the fire and nobody was harmed. Nevertheless, the Supreme Court confirmed the lower-instance Court sentence, by acknowledging an attempt of racially motivated murder.

The only remedy actually available to Tomáš Kopecký and his accomplice, Michal Poláček, who did not appeal the lower-instance decision, is the constitutional remedy. They both belong to a neo-Nazi group "Blood & Honour Division Bohemia". A third accomplice, responsible for the organisation of the plan, Jan Balík, was sentenced to 3 years and eight months.

Sources:

- <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/czech/czech-supreme-court-upholds-sentencing-for-neo-nazi-who-attempted-to-burn-18-romani-people-eight-of-them-children-to-death>
- http://world.einnews.com/article_detail/country/czech/374902138-czech-supreme-court-upholds-sentencing-for-neo-nazi-who-attempted-to-burn-18-romani-people-eight-of-them-children-to-death?vcode=cufp

34-year-old Roma shot dead in Chomutov

On 27 May 2017, a 34-year-old Roma was shot dead on Jirkovská Street in Chomutov. The tragic event took place outside the victim's home. While he was involved in a row with another Roma, the neighbour (a non-Roma man) started shooting at both, because he could not stand the noise. A criminal investigation is underway and the suspect, charged with murder, is currently kept in custody.

Sources:

- <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/czech/czech-republic-family-of-romani-man-shot-dead-in-chomutov-doesn-t-want-demonstrations>;
- <https://news-h24.com/czech-republic-family-of-romani-man-shot-dead-in-chomutov-doesnt-want-demonstrations/>.

Incitement to hate

On the 4 August, a video went viral on Facebook showing a man - probably the father - encouraging a little girl to bash a pillow with a baseball bat while imagining it to be a "Gypsy or a Muslim".

This episode represents a clear case of incitement to hate violence towards Roma and Muslim people. In September, the man was charged for committing felony incitement of hatred against a group or restriction of their rights and freedoms, and for endangering the upbringing of a child. He is facing up to three years in prison, if convicted.

Source:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=37p4BZ6xdnM>
- <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/czech/czech-video-goes-viral-of-man-telling-girl-to-beat-pillow-with-baseball-bat-and-imagine-it-s-a-gypsy-or-a-muslim>

- https://article.wn.com/view/2017/09/17/Czech_Police_charge_man_who_urged_daughter_to_practice_beati/

Man firing gas pistol while shouting "Gypsies, I'll shoot you all here!"

On 24 August, a drunken man started firing with a gas pistol within a residential hotel of the Radotín quarter, in Prague, shouting "Gypsies, I'll shoot you all here!". Luckily no one was physically harmed.

The 43 year-old man was arrested shortly after, suspected of felony rioting and reckless endangerment and faces up to two years in prison, if convicted.

Sources:

- <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/czech/czech-police-arrest-man-for-firing-gas-pistol-while-shouting-about-gypsies-2>

Audio recording documents real estate agent discrimination against Roma

In September, Romea.cz published a report about an audio recording attesting a common practice among Czech landlords: refusing *a priori* to lease apartment units to people of Roma origin.

After the report, Romea.cz received a new recording of a phone conversation between a social worker and an employee of a real estate company in Teplice. The conversation goes smoothly until the social worker says that the housing would be for a Roma family, when the employee of the agency refuses them by saying: "The owner does not want to lease any of those apartments [to Roma]" and that she "can't do anything about it."

Source:

- <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/czech/czech-republic-yet-another-audio-recording-documents-real-estate-agent-discrimination-against-roma>

Insulting remark of the Deputy Trade Minister on Facebook

In September, Karel Novotný, the Czech Deputy Trade Minister running for Parliament for the Czech Social Democratic Party (ČSSD) in the Ústecký Region, has posted on Facebook that Romani people are like jellyfish because they are "poisonous and useless". He will be losing 3 months of his salary as a result.

Sources:

- <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/czech/czech-deputy-trade-minister-s-pay-is-docked-after-posting-to-facebook-that-gypsies-are-like-jellyfish-poisonous-and-useless>
- <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/news/czech-deputy-minister?iid=1001>

Czech racists threaten online to kill children because they are of Arab and Romani origin

In November, a picture and names of teachers and first graders of a primary school in Teplice was published by a local newspaper. The photograph has been shared by many, accompanied with racist comments simply because the children are of Arab and Romani origin. These pupils were being referred to as terrorists and garbage on social media such as Facebook. Hateful comments and emails have been sent to the school as well.

Sources:

- <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/czech/czech-racists-threaten-online-to-kill-children-because-they-are-of-arab-and-romani-origin>

Denmark

Homeless Roma threaten to take Denmark to European Court of Human Rights

In August, several people have been fined by the police for begging and some of them have been expelled from the country.

The police have moved out 45 times to clear up homeless camps; 200 people have been charged for living there; 25 have been expelled having been stopped by the police multiple times.

“If they continue to terrorize us, we will complain about the situation to the European Court of Human Rights [...] All gypsies will send in complaints.” a Romanian Roma living in Copenhagen told TV2 News. In fact, since the majority of the beggars are of Roma origin, these evictions and expulsion affect them in particular and can therefore be declared discriminatory actions.

Source:

- <http://cphpost.dk/news/foreign-homeless-threaten-to-take-denmark-to-european-court-of-human-rights.html>

France

French court fines Jean-Marie Le Pen

A French appeals court has fined, again, the founder of the ultra-right party Front National (FN), Jean-Marie Le Pen, for the abusive remarks he made about Roma people back in 2013. Speaking at a political assembly in Nice in 2013, Le Pen warned residents that during the year to come the number of Roma people in France would increase by at least 50 000 and that their presence in the city would be "irritating and ... smelly". It is the ninth time since the early 1990s that Le Pen, who has repeatedly referred to the Holocaust as a "detail of history", has been convicted for racist or negationist statements.

Sources:

- <http://en.rfi.fr/france/20170228-jean-marie-le-pen-fined-roma-comment>
- <http://www.presstv.ir/Detail/2017/02/28/512390/France-National-Front-JeanMarie-Le-Pen-Roma>
- <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/world/french-court-fines-jean-marie-le-pen-for-abusive-remarks-about-romani-people-again>

Forced evictions and racist attacks

A new report issued by the French Ligue of human rights on February 2017 reported that 60% of Roma families were forcibly evicted by French authorities last year and forced to leave their dwellings. Additionally, it contended that most of these evictions were not the follow-up to a Court decision.

“France’s policy of ethnically targeted evictions creates cycles of repeat evictions and forced removals”, the report stated. Most of these evictions take place especially during winter months and Roma evicted are not provided with alternative housing solutions and they become homeless, as a result of this practice.

This situation does not comply with obligations France accepted under international and regional instruments it ratified. In addition, many cases of hate speech have been reported and several racist attacks occurred at the Anne Franck nursery school (suburb of Paris, Montreuil) on February 2017. “Filthy Jewish and Romani people” said the paintings on the front of the gate of Anne Franck nursery. All these episodes are the sign of an increased persecution against Roma community in France. Over the past five years almost 20000 Rom have been evicted in France.

Sources:

- <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/02/thousands-roma-homeless-france-2016-170207204706535.html>
- <http://ffm-online.org/2017/02/08/thousands-of-roma-made-homeless-in-france-in-2016/>
- <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/interactive/2017/02/roma-evictions-france-170208191011813.htm>

French journalist in jail for hate speech against Roma

The French journalist Rodolphe Crevelle was convicted to 6 months of jail and fined 20000 euros for inciting discrimination against Roma. The verdict was ensued on April 2017 and related some racist remarks showed up on the Petit journal Catalan, whose publisher has been fined and sentenced to two months prison. In this article, Crevelle referred to Roma as "former chicken thieves who abuse social contributions and welfare support today."

Sources:

- <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/world/france-journalist-sentenced-to-six-months-for-racist-articles-about-immigrants-from-the-maghreb-and-romani-people>

Greece

Racist shop owner who pushed with her foot a Roma girl sentenced

A racist shop owner woman pushed away a Roma accordion player girl aged 7 or 8 years with her foot on 17 September 2013 in Greece. A picture of the incident was published on Facebook and the woman has finally been sentenced to three months of imprisonment on suspension by the court of Athens on 15 December 2017.

Source:

- <http://www.keeptalkinggreece.com/2017/12/15/racist-woman-roma-girl/>

Hungary

Racial discrimination of Roma women in Budapest

In February, two Roma women were reportedly prohibited from crossing through a popular Budapest nightlife area on a late Saturday night unless accompanied by a security escort.

According to a post on one of the women's Facebook page, the two tried to cross through Gozsdu Udvar, but were approached by security guards who told them they could not proceed unless they would consent to being accompanied by guards. After they arrived at their destination they decide to ask the guards whether they had been accompanied because of their Roma origins. They informed the women "they had been instructed not to allow Roma people to move across the passage without an escort".

Gozsdu Udvar released a statement on its Facebook page Monday denying the women's allegations and questioning their credibility, and asserting that such an event could not have occurred since Gozsdu regularly accommodates foreigners.

Source:

- <http://budapestbeacon.com/news-in-brief/gozsdu-udvar-denies-denying-roma-entry-to-popular-budapest-nightlife-area/44359>

Hate crimes must not be tolerated

In January, the European Court of Human Rights has condemned Hungary for the facts that occurred in 2012 to Király and other Roma families.

During the 5 August 2012, more than 700 people related to far-right groups assisted to a demonstration in Devecser, a village in western Hungary. After the protest, they went to the area where Roma families were living and said phrases as "Gypsy criminals ...We will set your homes on fire ... You will burn inside your houses!", not only that, they also threw rocks at the houses. Meanwhile, the police did not intervene, just stood by watching.

The ECHR ruled that police had failed to protect the Roma that day and that Hungarian authorities failed to take sufficient action when investigating the "hateful and abusive" speeches given at the rally. The court also found the perpetrators of the crimes "remained virtually without legal consequences" — which, it added, could have been perceived by the public as the state's legitimization or tolerance of such abuse.

Sources:

- <http://www.europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?article40115>
- <http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:xuhioGJJDeEJ:hudo.c.echr.coe.int/app/conversion/pdf/%3Flibrary%3DECHR%26id%3D003-55993957074074%26filename%3DJudgment%2520Kir%25C3%25A1ly%2520and%2520D%25C3%25B6m%25C3%25B6t%25C3%25B6r%2520v.%2520Hungary%2520-%2520racist%2520abuse%2520during%2520anti-Roma%2520demonstration.pdf+%&cd=198&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=be>

New Supreme Court ruling recognising police failure in ensuring Roma protection against harassment by extremist groups

On February, the Hungarian Supreme Court threw out a ruling affirming police failure in providing an adequate protection for Roma community against harassment by extremist groups.

At the same time, however, it did not convict police for discriminations perpetrated against Roma, when levying fines on Roma people for legal offences.

Both rulings were ensued as a result of two suits initiated by the human rights group Civil Liberties Union (TASZ) about the episodes occurred in Gyöngyöspata village in spring 2011. Some paramilitary operations consisting in stage patrols, on the ground of an increased criminality, as well as training operations taking place close to Roma camps, forced Roma women and children to leave. The suit was filed by TASZ over police authorities' passivity.

Sources:

- <https://dailynewshungary.com/supreme-court-rules-police-roma-discrimination-case/+&cd=1&hl=fr&ct=clnk&gl=fr>

Romani man Wins European judgement against Hungary in police brutality case

The European Court of Human Rights has delivered on 6 November 2017 its judgement on a case brought before it by Hungarian Civil Liberties Union (HLCLU) and has found the police guilty of brutalising a Roma man in Hungary back in 2010 based on violation of discrimination and ill-treatment. The victim was given 10.000€ for damages and 4,724€ for costs and expenses.

Sources:

- <http://www.errc.org/article/romani-man-wins-european-judgement-against-hungary-in-police-brutality-case/4599>
- <http://www.adiveh.com/archives/4242>

Italy

Roma women locked in a recycling container

Three Lidl employees are under Italian prosecution for the facts occurred on 23 February. They locked two Roma women in a cage, they recorded and spread the video on social media. The two women were searching in the recycling container of the supermarket when the employees found them.

The leader of Italy's far-right Northern League party, Matteo Salvini, said the party would offer legal support to the men. Not only that, he also shared the video on his social media channels, saying: "I stand with the workers (I'll contact them to offer legal support) and not the rummaging Roma."

Sources:

- <http://www.thelocal.it/20170224/lidl-staff-lock-women-in-recycling-container>

Cruel evictions on the eve of the international Roma day

On 7 April, the police went to the Gianturco settlements in Naples to kick out all the Roma who had been living there for several years. They were forcibly evicted without any consultation or advice, and not given the time to bring all their belongings.

Some buses brought them to a segregated container camp "Via del riposo", which had already been targeted by arsonists for hate crimes. Many others stayed outside the settlement, with no place to go and spend the night. Italy has already a long list of breaches to European Union legislation for racial and ethnical discrimination.

The European Commission refuses to hold Italy to account, in spite of the overwhelming situation. Gianturco eviction is only the last tragic event occurring in a wider racist context.

Sources:

- <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2017/04/italy-forced-eviction-international-roma-day/>

Suspect arson kills two Roma children and their older sister

On 10 May, two Roma children aged 8 and 4 and their 20-year-old sister died in a suspect arson in Centocelle, near Rome. The camper where they lived with some of their relatives caught fire in the early morning of Wednesday.

A homicide probe has been opened since some traces of inflammable liquid were found outside the vehicle. The other members of the family managed to flee the flames. These latter have told the investigators that they had recently received threats. Prosecutors are investigating a possible arson.

Source:

- http://www.ansa.it/english/news/general_news/2017/05/10/two-girls-woman-die-in-rome-camper-fire-3_6229817a-f93f-458b-93d5-990859ca1780.html
- <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/world/italy-two-romani-children-and-their-older-sister-die-in-arson-attack>

Forced evictions in Italy

On 27 August a fire breaking out in the Cupa Perillo Roma camp in Naples destroyed the living places of about 50 people. Authorities and firemen arrived in time to help many children still surrounded by high flames and toxic smoke and to save a gas tank warehouse in the proximity of the camp from an explosion. In the aftermath of the fire, people were driving by the camp in cars and on motorcycles shouting "We'll burn you all!", raising the level of tension. Since then, many Roma families have been housed in the neighbourhood auditorium.

Back in July, the court of Naples issued a preventive seizure threatening to evict 630 Roma who have lived in the camp of Cupa Perillo for 20-30 years. Now, the municipality of Naples is offering makeshift accommodations in abandoned barracks as alternative and temporary housing solution to the camp until 31 December. It is not sure if all, or just part of them, will fit in the new area. Some Roma, supported by NGOs, have appealed to the Italian courts and are now addressing the European Court of Human Rights.

Source:

- <https://foreignpress83c.wordpress.com/2017/08/29/rogue-devastates-scampia-roma-camp-700-evacuated/>
- <http://www.errc.org/blog/forced-evictions-a-campaign-of-harassment-against-roma-in-italy/190>

Macedonia

Racist graffiti

In January, Swastikas and graffiti calling for “Death to Gypsies” appeared in a primary school ‘Georgi Sugarev’ in Bitola, where most of the students enrolled are of Roma origin.

The school has removed the graffiti from the doors and walls of the school. However, the perpetrator is still unknown.

Source:

- <http://www.errc.org/article/swastikas-and-fascist-graffiti-scrawled-on-school-in-bitola-macedonia/4546>

Roma death in a Macedonian prison under unclear circumstances

The European Roma Rights Centre reported the death of Andrias Redjepov, a 21-year-old Roma man, in KPU Idrizovo prison on 11 March 2017. The alleged cause of death, according to the media and to the prison staff, could be an overdose of methadone. Nevertheless, Andrias’ mother replied that her son was not a drug abuser and insisted that the violence carried out by the prison personnel would be the real cause of her son’s death. The dead prisoner’s sister also affirmed that there were no marks of violence over her brother’s body, since Andreas was on purpose beaten up on the neck, not to leave any sign. Nevertheless, a representative of the Roma community in Šuto Orizari, Gege Demirovski, said to have evidence that he was brutalised by the guards before passing away.

Prison authorities are accused of failing in providing adequate lifesaving medical attention, especially regarding the arrival of the ambulance, that came too late, probably because it was not called on time. According to the family, they also did not comply with the duty to notify Andrias’ death.

Prison authorities dismissed all the accusations, concerning the deferred call of the ambulance, withheld medical treatments and finally contended that the allegations of brutalisation were inconstant, since no mark of violence had been found on Andrias’ body.

Further investigation into this death’s cause is needed, since Macedonian legal system is notorious for being racist.

Source:

- <http://www.errc.org/article/young-romani-man-from-macedonian-prison-dies-under-suspicious-circumstances/4560>
- <http://www.balkan.eu.com/alert-for-violence-in-the-prisons-of-fyrom-the-death-of-a-21-year-old-remains-a-mystery/>
- <http://www.romatimes.news/index.php/en-us/nevipena/121-nevipe/1941-daid-21-years-old-romano-prisoner-in-prison-idrizovo,-which-are-the-causes-of-death,%20-investigation-is-starting>

Death of a Roma man in a Macedonian prison

Jusinov's death is the second case of a Romani person's death in a Macedonian prison on April 2017. Jusinov was 25 years old father of two children. He was detained at the KPD Shtip prison, where he was withheld some hours before his death. The day before his death, he went to the doctor as a result of a toothache and headaches. The doctor accused him to fake his condition, called him "bastard gypsy" and refused to treat him. Reliable sources affirm that Jusinov had been given some unlabelled pills by the prison's doctor on 17 March and that he had kept on taking them until the day he died. When Jusinov's brother went to prison, after being informed of his brother's death, he was prevented from seeing him and was threatened with physical violence, if he did not go away. He was then asked to return after five hours to take the body. The family noticed he had some swellings over his forehead.

Sources:

- <http://www.errc.org/article/another-romani-man-dies-in-macedonian-prison/4564>

Roma denied exit from Macedonia win discrimination case

Two Roma families returned to Macedonia after a failed asylum application in the EU, after which they were racially discriminated by being prohibited to use their ID cards to travel outside of the country, although they could travel to Serbia and other neighbouring countries as Macedonian citizen. The families were legally represented by the European Roma Rights Centre when they sued the Macedonian Ministry of Interior for violating their right to equal treatment and discrimination.

On the 11 September 2017, the court of Skopje II contended that there was a violation of the right to equal treatment and the families were given a total damage of 3,250€. This ruling was based on the fact that the Roma couples did not represent any threat to the public and the Ministry of Interior is not a key player in applying EU entry regulations while conducting border controls.

Source:

➤ https://www.ecoi.net/local_link/347740/491820_de.html

Montenegro

Muslim Roma Win Discrimination Case against Montenegro

The European Court of Human Rights has ruled on 6 December 2017 in favour of a Romani man and his family based on intersectional discrimination (race and religion). The family has been subjected to racial and religious slurs before they turned to the law. Neighbours have sent them death threats, painted graffiti on their doors, attacks on their cars and a gunfire towards their apartment.

Source:

- <http://www.errc.org/article/muslim-roma-win-discrimination-case-against-montenegro/4614>

Poland

Slovak Roma people prevented to fly to Canada at the airport of Warsaw

On 28 March, some Roma women from the town of Levoča attempted to fly to Canada, in order to visit their relatives. The nearest airport being in Poland, the women had no choice but take the flight from Warsaw airport. Here, the women were not even allowed to check-in and no further explanation was given on the grounds they were prevented to leave. The women complained that all their life savings were wasted, since the expenses for their tickets and visas amounted to 1700 Euros. They are attempting to be refunded and call for the Minister of foreign affairs' assistance. Since the airport is not in Slovakia, the Minister of foreign affairs has no authority over it, thus the Slovak embassy located on the other side of the border is filling a complaint against Poland.

Source:

- <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/world/slovak-romani-people-travelling-to-visit-relatives-not-allowed-on-planes-in-warsaw-some-have-lost-their-life-savings>

Romania

Therme Bucharest needs to pay moral damages for Roma discrimination

The wellness and spa complex “Therme Bucharest”, was found guilty of discrimination against Roma by the National Council for Combating Discrimination (CNCD) in May 2016. In October 2017, the wellness spa complex and its security firm received a fine of 6,549€ by a court decision for discrimination against two Roma that were not allowed to access the complex.

CNCD states that four individuals have submitted complaints based on being forced by 12 bodyguards to leave while they were in line at Therme.

Sources:

- <https://rroma.org/de/discrimination/>
- <https://www.romania-insider.com/therme-bucharest-damages-discrimination/>

Serbia

Roma couple brutally abused by police

On 16 May 2017, a Roma couple was abused by police in Belgrade after reporting that their car had been stolen. Yvan and Jelena went to Mladenovac police station on 21 April, from where they were driven in an unmarked car by some officers to an unknown place.

The couple was separated before the interrogation. Several officers tortured Yvan, kicked him in the stomach and put a plastic bag over his head, to force him to confess that he had stolen the car and that he was liable for insurance fraud. In the meanwhile, her wife stood outside where she had been harassed by another officer, who made comments about her ethnicity and religion.

The couple asked for a lawyer but their request was denied. They were threatened that a car was ready to take their 5 and 2-year-old girls away. Before leaving, they were forced to sign some documents they did not understand and finally were allowed to go home.

Sources:

- <http://www.errc.org/article/roma-tortured-by-police-in-belgrade-after-reporting-stolen-car/4576>
- <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/world/news-outlets-previously-reported-that-the-trump-administration-was-considering-clarke-to-lead-the-department-of-homeland-2>

Slovakia

Hate speech against Roma in political discourse

In January 2017, the Slovak Prime Minister, Robert Fico, spoke during a debate on a news station about Roma people discussing the fact that firms today have a problem finding employees in Slovakia. He declared: "we have a category of people here, and I am not speaking just about Gypsies, who do not want to work, who abuse the social welfare system, and who even bother the people next to whom they live. We are intervening against the people who are sucking this state dry".

Source:

- https://article.wn.com/view/2017/02/02/Slovak_Prime_Minister_refers_to_Romani_people_as_Gypsies_dur/

Abusive remarks about Roma people by Slovak MP

During an interview with the Frontinus radio station in Žilina, the Slovak MP Milan Mazurek made abusive remarks against the Roma. "We don't need to pour EUR 300 million for seven or eight years into just one community, to build playgrounds in the gypsy settlements so they can break the equipment, to build preschools so they can destroy them, we don't need to teach them to dance or to use a computer, we need to put them to work," he said. Then, he continued: "EUR 150 million will be used just for houses in those gypsy settlements, for people who have made no contributions to our culture, to our nation, or to our state budget - exactly the opposite, they have decided to live an asocial lifestyle and have sucked our social welfare system dry, ".

A detective of the National Criminal Agency (NAKA) began a criminal proceeding against him on the grounds of defamation, hatred incitement and people's threaten because of their ethnicity, nationality, colour... since January, NAKA took over the case. The radio station broadcasting the interview is undergoing troubles, too.

Sources:

- <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/world/slovak-neo-nazi-and-mp-milan-mazurek-prosecuted-for-racist-remarks-about-roma>
- https://article.wn.com/view/2017/03/21/Slovak_neoNazi_and_MP_Milan_Mazurek_prosecuted_for_racist_re/

Impediment of a salon sale to a Roma because of the neighbours' racist remarks

Dalibor Ferenc, a 22-year-old Roma hairdresser was offered the opportunity to buy a salon to run his business in the Žilina Region of Slovakia.

After a first deal, once Mr Ferenc met with the salon owner, the latter said he had already another candidate to whom he was going to lease the salon. "In my opinion, a role in the decision to say that to me was played by the fact that, allegedly, the tenant in the shop next door had declared that she would rather break her lease with him than have a 'black gypsy' next door" said Ferenc.

The salon owner said that the neighbour next door started complaining about the boy's Roma origin and threatened to break its lease. Actually, the building owner, contacted by ROMEA, said: "I don't know anybody like that. I have never spoken with a Mr Ferenc and from the beginning I have had only one sub-lessor". Nevertheless, Mr Ferenc still keeps some calls records proving the contrary.

Sources:

- <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/world/slovakia-sale-of-salon-to-hairdresser-underway-until-landlord-neighbors-see-he-is-romani>

Slovak MP charged with insulting Roma

Milan Mazurek, member of the Slovak fascist Kotleba-People's Party Our Slovakia (Lidová strana Naše Slovensko - LSNS), was charged for his xenophobic remarks on 28 April 2017. He was accused of insulting Roma and threatening people because of their ethnic group and race. One year ago, on a radio station programme, he referred to Roma "in terms of their alleged inadaptability, vandalism, violence and welfare enrolments, insulting them".

The radio station has already been fined 15000 euros for broadcasting Mazurek's statements, since dissemination of hate speech based on ethnicity is out of law.

Sources:

- <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/world/slovak-fascist-party-has-a-problem-a-second-mp-charged-with-insulting-romani-people-court-could-disband-it>

Video footage of Slovakian police's disproportionate intervention against Roma

On 24 May 2017, a video footage showing the brutal intervention of Slovakian police in Zborov went viral on the websites and social networks. The assault dated back to 16 April

2017. Reporter Štefan Dreveňák interviewed Roma residents of the town and published an article on 25 May.

According to eyewitnesses, a fight broke out between two sisters-in-law and then involved the male members of their family. One of the women called the police, that, once arrived, started beating up people all around without any reason.

"They beat me, my 14-year-old son, and my father-in-law too. He was standing there, and they began to beat him just for standing there" testified one of the witnesses. The child was finally released after his mother paid the police. A pregnant woman had not the same chance and was beaten to such a point that she fell down and fainted. Many elderly and children were injured.

Source:

- <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/world/slovakia-romani-residents-of-zborov-give-testimony-about-police-brutality>

Racist abuse against a Roma mother and her child

On 20 June 2017, a Roma mother was assaulted and racially abused with her child by three skinheads in the Slovak village of Snina. The three men showed up in her house, called her "filthy gypsy" and "whore", and one of them yelled at her: "I'm Hitler, I'm the boss here, I'm going to kill you all."

She managed to hide in the bathroom and was finally rescued by the quick intervention of police officers. The men continued to racially abuse her, even once caught by the police.

Source:

- <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/world/slovakia-three-skinheads-assault-romani-mother-and-her-children-with-racist-abuse>

Sweden

Ban on begging

In August, the municipal board in Vellinge has voted in favour of a ban on begging that would make the town the first in Sweden to do so.

“Human rights organizations had called for the Vellinge ban to be overturned, with the Civil Rights Defenders group arguing that it would in practice primarily impact homeless people belonging to the Roma minority, and was therefore discriminatory and in violation of the European Convention on Human Rights.”

The ban, for the moment, will no longer be able to go ahead following the latest decision.

Source:

- <http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=2054&artikel=6804227>
<https://www.liberties.eu/en/news/appeal-against-ban-on-beggingin-velling-municipality/13006>

Ukraine

Anti-Roma poster in Odessa

In January 2017, the Ukrainian city of Odessa has been flooded with posters featuring portraits of Roma splattered with blood and messages such as "Roma are bandits and murderers!" and "Don't forget Loshchynivka", a reference to a case in which a girl from that village was murdered in 2016 and a Roma man is suspected.

Police officers in Odessa are now gradually removing the posters, which are sparking pogroms against local Roma residents.

Source:

- <http://www.romea.cz/en/news/world/ukraine-odessa-is-flooded-with-anti-romani-posters>
- https://article.wn.com/view/2017/01/02/Ukraine_Odessa_is_flooded_with_anti_Romani_posters/