



Centre for Roma Studies and Cultural Relations

ROMA NEWSLETTER

Roma: Connecting with Indian Roots

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European Commissioners and Members of European Parliament visited Romani settlements in Slovakia

A delegation of Members of European Parliament from the Committee of Employment and Social Welfare, which was led by Slovak MEP, Lucie Duris Nicholsonova, visited the four Romani settlements in the east of Slovakia, including the Luník IX housing estate. The visit was meant to investigate the accessibility of education and employment for those living in Romani settlements as well as monitor how EU money is being used to achieve improvements in the living situations of marginalized Roma communities. The Head of the delegation observed that Slovakia has a serious problem with ensuring the fundamental human rights in the Romani settlements. The delegation also pointed out that the living conditions of Roma communities in Slovakia are horrible - women, men and many children are living in extreme poverty and their basic needs are not being met.

Read More at

<http://www.romea.cz/en/news/world/meps-who-visited-romani-settlements-in-slovakia-shocked-to-seeing-such-horrifying-living-conditions-in-the-eu>

Romeo Franz, Member of European Parliament, on Official Visit to Kosovo

The member of European Parliament, Romeo Franz, head of the European Parliament delegation on Stabilization and Association with Kosovo, paid a visit to Kosovo for discussing several issues including visa waiver, Kosovo-Belgrade dialogue, environment, etc. MEP Franz met Kosovan Parliamentarian of Romani origin Mr. Ercan Galushi and discussed the development of political strategies to improve situation of Roma community in Kosovo. He commended Mr. Galushi's efforts for fight against racism

and for equal opportunity. He further remarked that the current Kosovo government was much more open to the concerns of Kosovo Roma than the previous Thaci's government.

Read More at

<https://euromapress.com/romeo-franz-siem-diferetno-numa-sare-sijem-jekh/>

Museum Celebrates Barcelona's Disappearing Gypsy/Roma Heritage

The museum in Barcelona has been founded by the Gypsy cultural organization "Carabuts" and its President, Sam Garcia says, the aim of this initiative is to preserve the memory of the now-disparate and scattered community. The museum showcases the artifacts and photographs reflecting joys and sorrows of a Roma community persecuted in Spain ever since Catholic reconquest in 1492 when they were given 60 days to leave the country. He further added that the purpose of setting up this museum is to remove prevalent stereotype image of Roma and to educate people about the life of the Gypsies/ Roma who have been living in Spain for the last 600 years. That will help people understand the Romani culture better.

Read More at

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/nov/07/museum-celebrates-barcelona-disappearing-gypsy-heritage?fbclid=IwAR2XMNwfw1YOIDI6mBXDVmYLIBfzjNns8zr0ssRCoX0n73bYeullGPvz14>

The 'Gypsy Queen' of Norwood, Margaret Finch, Remains Mysterious

Margaret Finch does not appear in the historical record but to local people living in South London in the 17th and 18th centuries. Margaret Finch was a queen of Norwood and ruled a separate 'Queendom' in South London. She was elected to preside over a confederation of Roma tribes who were predominantly concentrated in Norwood where the community established its own parallel society. The Roma in Norwood unlike in other parts of the world were relatively well-off, viz. two Roma families - the Lees and the Coopers - enjoying much of the wealth circulating in the area. However, Roma communities unfortunately disappeared after the death of Finch in 1740. Finch's memory was kept alive by Victorian artist John McCallum, who in 1851 painted the Lychgate of St George's Parish Church in Beckenham where Finch was known to have been buried.

Read More at

<https://www.mylondon.news/news/nostalgia/18th-century-gypsy-queen-south-22091543?fbclid=IwAR0rzjailgpLOBSF16XJuQssimr87LiC58hLw4f7Cw2m-fPIBZx34RrMoEk>

The Documentary about Roma Screened at Czech Film Festival

A documentary film "How I Became a Partisan" (in Czech Language "Jak jsem se stala partyzánkou"), directed by Vera Lacková, was screened at the Jihlava International Festival of Documentary Film. The documentary shows many untold stories of the Second World War as well as reveals the troubled destinies of four Romani partisans. The filmmaker, Lackova who is of the Romani origin and her

grandfather was one such forgotten Romani partisan. She narrated the stories of the people, who despite being of a different ethnic origin, managed to join the fight against evil. The aim of this documentary is to break down the long-standing stereotype of Romani people and shows that the deeds of the Romani people go beyond the realm of ethnic minority history.

Read More at

<http://www.romea.cz/en/news/czech/how-i-became-a-partisan-vera-lackova-apos-s-documentary-about-romani-partisans-screened-at-czech-film-festival>

The Closure of One of the largest government-run camp known as ‘La Barbuta’ in Rome

Over 650 Romani families have been living in the nomad camp ‘La Barbuta’ in Rome, Italy since 2012. However in September, this year, the camp was closed and the last inhabitants evicted. This camp has a long history in Rome and is closely connected to the political situation there. Silvio Berlusconi, then Prime Minister of Italy in 2008 declared a State of Emergency for ‘nomads’. This decree gave arbitrary power to officials to deal with the camps and carry out the forced eviction. One Roma family appealed against this decree and the supreme administrative court ruled that the State of Emergency Decree was illegal in 2011. In 2015, the Court of Rome condemned the city for discriminating against Romani people by forcibly relocating them to the La Barbuta camp and pointed out that building the segregated housing for Roma in the deprived fringes of large cities amounts to racial segregation. Romani families who had been living in the camp were either homeless or had been forced to accept so-called ‘co-housing’; living with strangers in incredibly overcrowded conditions in substandard and dilapidated apartments.

Read More at

<http://www.errc.org/news/after-almost-a-decade-of-la-barbuta-what-next-for-roma>

The Interview of Renowned Romani Director, Actor and Screenwriter, Tony Gatlif

Born at a slum in Algeria at the end of the 1940s to a Kabyle father and a gypsy mother of Andalusian origin, Tony Gatlif is one of the sought after filmmakers, actors, directors and screenwriters who grew up with only films shown in his Algiers slum. Tony Gatlif explores the rich and complex trajectory of the Roma people and their history through his films including the celebrated movie Latcho Drom: an impressive musical journey from northern India to southern Spain, and Liberte: a film about the gypsy genocide. His films tirelessly bear witness to the little-known history of the Roma people.

Read More at

<https://www.franceculture.fr/emissions/le-cours-de-l-histoire/fou-d-histoire-tony-gatlif?fbclid=IwAR3vZOSbY1Q7Crww4xOYkMrxgkT-2mS8zxOyryunYfZzNTxluhy3JyBJOp0>

8th Virtual Lecture of Lecture Series Organized by CRSCR

Centre for Roma Studies and Cultural Relations (CRSCR)- ARSP organized the eighth virtual lecture on the topic “Diversity in Romani Communities: Challenges and Prejudices” on 29th October, 2021. The special

lecture was delivered by Mr. Demetrio Gómez, who said that India was a mother of Roma and broadly covered the social and political aspects of Roma community. He explained the Indian connection of Roma and their cultural diversity that evolved in three stages: the first from India, then in Balkan and subsequently in Europe.

Watch the Full Lecture at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x2XNtGokZMA&t=668s>

The Virtual Celebration of the World Day of Romani Language

National Centre of Roma Culture, Romania together with Centre for Roma Studies and Cultural Relations-Indian Council for International Co-operation, India organized a Virtual Conference to celebrate the World Day of Romani Language on the theme of “The Romani Language and Culture between European Stigma and Indian Legacy” on 8th November 2021. The conference offered the broader insight into Indian ancestry of Romani language and cultural rapprochement between Roma and their host countries. The academic session was moderated by Dr. Adrian Furtuna and welcome address delivered by Amb. Rajesh Sachdeva. Dr. Cristian PADURE talked about the classification of Romani language and dialects whereas, Zameer Anwar spelt out Sanskrit and other Middle Indo-Aryan languages are putative ancestor of Romani language and described the phonological, lexical and morphological analogy between Indic and Romani language. On the other hand, Dr. Aurore Tirard spoke about the impact of Balkan languages on Romani during their long stay in Balkan.

Watch the Full Lecture at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4HqqnqkpMWc&t=2335s>