



CENTRE FOR ROMA STUDIE AND CULTURAL RELATIONS

Antar Rashtriya Sahayog Parishad



ROMA NEWS LETTER

ISSUE: 44

Roma Connecting with Indians

New Delhi, 5th June, 2024

Pro-European Politicians Need Roma Voters

Excerpt from the opinion of Zeljko Jovanovic, the president of the Roma Foundation of Europe, were published by Server Politico.com concerning recently concluded European Parliament elections. Zeljko pointed out that if Roma are treated fairly they can play a pivotal role in shaping the future of European Union and strengthening its democratic foundation. Over six million Roma are part of EU countries population. In some EU countries, including Hungary, Bulgaria and Slovakia, Roma even make up about 10% of the total population. Moreover, there are twice – in some countries even three times – more Roma under the age of 15 than the majority population, which means that this community has a relatively high number of first-time voters. Zeljko Jovanovic also explained how pro-European politicians have remained silent when the far right attacked the Roma community. He added that pro-European politicians also avoid reaching out to Roma communities because they fear losing the votes of the majority population.

Read more at

<https://shorturl.at/S4Qn6>

Let's Get to Know Each Other: Campaign about the Presence of Roma in Polish Society

72% of Polish men and women do not know even a single person from the Roma community. The campaign, organized by W Towards Dialogu Foundation, aims at spreading awareness about Roma from the Internet to the streets of 15 Polish cities. This second edition of the social campaign focuses on improving the visibility of the Roma community and countering harmful stereotypes. "Let's get to know each other" campaign highlights the diversity and richness of Romani culture and traditions. The foundation also provides platform for interaction between Roma and members of majority society.

Read More at

<https://shorturl.at/dVQ0I>

European Watchdog Rebukes Italy over Treatment of Roma Minority

In response to a complaint filed the Amnesty international, the European Committee for Social Rights (ECSR), a body of the Council of Europe, concluded that Italy had violated the European Social Charter in regards to the housing rights of the Roma. According to Amnesty more than 15,000 out of the total population of about 140,000 Roma, live at shanty towns on the margins of big cities like Rome, Milan and Naples in Italy. The committee monitors compliance with the European Social Charter, a legally binding treaty ensuring the observance of the fundamental social and economic rights, including housing, employment and education. As Italy failed in protecting the housing rights of Roma, it is now required to take initiatives not only to ensure adequate and non-segregated housing for Roma, but to also provide remedies for long-awaited justice for Roma who experienced discrimination and segregation.

Read More at

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/european-watchdog-rebukes-italy-over-treatment-roma-minority-2024-05-13/>

Orban's New Challenger Targets Hungary's Roma Voters in EU Election Race

Peter Magyar, a political opponent of Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, took the rare step of calling on deprived Roma communities during a nationwide campaign tour of nearly 200 towns and villages for European Parliament (EP) election. His visit to Roma settlements would prove pivotal as he knows that support of Roma is essential to win elections in long run. The ruling Fidesz party has been enjoying the support of Roma and other poor section of society thanks to their cash support programmes. Peter Magyar told Reuters on the sidelines of a campaign that Roma were the largest minority but nobody has really cared about them for the last 34 years or since the fall of communism in 1989. He further added that there were welfare programs to help them but they were implemented only in few towns.

Read More at

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/orbans-new-challenger-targets-hungarys-roma-voters-eu-election-race-2024-06-04/>

Historic Slump: The European Parliament without Roma Representatives

It is for the first time since European Parliament elections in 2004 when the EU expanded to the East, there is no Roma elected representative in the European Parliament. There were several Roma candidates including David Benak, Ivana Batthyany and Jaroslav Miko from the Czech Republic, Peter Pollak and Dominik Lakatos from Slovakia, Bogdan Csaba from Hungary, Vanya Grigorova from Bulgaria and Dejan Stankovic Kralj from Belgium, however none of them succeeded. The European Parliament affects lives of Roma Communities, and without their representation, Roma have lost influence over political decisions that directly impact their lives. It is possible that the realization of Roma interests may be hindered and progress on key issues immensely affecting the lives of the communities may be thwarted.

Read More at

<https://shorturl.at/q7NpK>

Increase in Incidents Targeting Roma and Sinti in Germany

The latest report in 2023, published by the Anti-gypsyism Information and Reporting Center (MIA), reveals 1,233 anti-Gypsy incidents, which is almost double in number from the year before. Authors of the report admitted that increase in numbers was not necessarily on account of spike in anti-gypsyism but could also be owing to the rising awareness thus greater reporting of such incidents. The reported incidents include over 600 cases of contemptuous and prejudiced statements about Sinti and Roma and 502 cases of discrimination, 46 threats, 40 attacks, 27 incidents of property damage and ten cases of extreme violence.

The MIA report focuses on manifestations of anti-Gypsyism in the police department, as police officers were involved in 83 out of the 1,233 reported incidents.

Read More at

<https://shorturl.at/ar5M6>

Czech-Slovakian Miss Roma 2024

Czech-Slovak Miss Roma, hosted by actor Jan Čenský at the House of Culture in Hodonin, was sponsored by the Governor of the South Moravian Region Jan Grolich (KDU-ČSL), Senator Eva Rajchmanová (KDU-ČSL) and Member of Parliament Alena Schillerová (ANO). The pageant, organized by the association of Romiacz, aims to exhibit the beauty, talent and personality of young Roma girls from the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Twelve finalists, who were selected from over sixty applicants, competed for the title and presented themselves in five disciplines: a performance, an interview with a moderator, a promenade in swimsuits, a parade in party dresses and a Romani cardas. The winner was sixteen-year-old Martina Balazova from Liptovsky Mikulas and the first runner-up and the second runner-up were Klaudie Danisova from Prerov and Simona Misova from Liptovsky Mikulas accordingly.

Read More at

https://www.idnes.cz/zpravy/revue/spolecnost/cesko-slovenska-miss-roma-martina-balazova-romea-romska-kralovna-krasy.A240617_102232_lidicky_nh?

The Persistence of Anti-Gitanism (Anti-Gypsyism) in the Spanish System

Centre for Roma Studies and Cultural Relations (CRSCR), Antar-Rashtriya Sahayog Parishad (ARSP) hosted the Thirty-Two Virtual Lecture of the Lecture Series on the theme of “The Persistence of Anti-Gitanism (Anti-Gypsyism) in the Spanish System” on 28th May, 2024. The lecture, delivered by Ms. Sefora Vargas Martin, Lawyer and Writer (Spain), explored historically systematic persecution of Roma communities in Spain since 1499 CE when the first Antigypsyism law was enacted. She mentioned how Roma people were considered to be a problem to the political policies which aimed at the unification of the kingdom. Gypsy identity was criminalized to a point that their cultural manifestation and even their presence became unlawful, hence many of them were killed. Ms. Sefora also pointed out that Spanish Gypsies were only people in the world who were not allowed to speak their own language, so they lost their language. During the era of colonial expansionism, there was a gigantic need of workers, therefore, Gypsy people were forcefully taken to work and those who refused were incarcerated for many years only because of being Gitano/ Gypsies.

Watch Full Lecture at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XpGbshYycQE&t=608s>

The Roma Center together with Union des Roms de l'Ex-Yougoslavieen Diaspora (URYD) and other organizations of the Kosovar Roma Diaspora organized a commemorative event in the French city of Troyes to mark the 25th anniversary of the expulsion of the Roma from Kosovo. The ethnic cleansing of Roma in 1999 was not only the loss of people but also the loot and devastation of their property, especially their homes and businesses, perpetrated by members of the (Kosovo) Albanian population. Roma have been still struggling to take back their own properties but Kosovar government continues to ignore the issue. On the occasion, many representatives of the NGOs and community leaders spoke about the expulsion they themselves experienced. A video message came from Claude Kahn of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), provided details of violence faced by Roma during the Kosovo War and afterwards. In the video, he also mentioned about the establishment of the Kosovo Special Chambers in The Hague, where several high-profile actors from the ranks of the KLA are accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Read More at

<https://ran.eu.com/13-juni-gedenken-an-die-vertriebenen-roma-aus-dem-kosovo-im-kontext-von-transitional-justice/>

The Republic of Serbia as the Bearer of the Roma Media Strategy for all European Countries

The First Conference on media coverage of Roma issues was organized in Murska Sobota, Slovenia by the European Roma Union, Zvezda Romov Slovenia and Romik with the aim of persuading and engaging Roma youth in journalism. The conference was dedicated to the development of media strategy dealing with the position and issues of journalists covering issues of the Roma community in Europe. The Republic of Serbia leads the way through a large number of media programs and the engagement of young Roma men and women. Santino Spinelli, a musician and composer from Italy, emphasized the importance of promoting Roma culture, especially dance and music, in the media. During the conference, it was pointed out that the main issue faced by Roma in the media across Europe was lack of young Roma who want to engage in journalism.

Read More at

https://www.telegraf.rs/vesti/srbija/3895634-republika-srbija-kao-nosilac-medijske-romske-strategije-za-sve-evropske-zemlje?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAR3wHTCfFtFRh9E5EVd7LWuBCFxoOFlpWEW_4s2eyL3-yKOSVpdBWn1DEY_aem_VID9IIV5uKeQ0gigPu26jg