



# CENTRE FOR ROMA STUDIE AND CULTURAL RELATIONS

**Antar Rashtriya Sahayog Parishad**



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## **Rights Groups Decry Lack of Roma MEPs amid Far-right Gains**

Six million Roma people living across the EU will have no direct voice in the new European Parliament. According to Roma rights organisations, it is a tremendous blow to Europe's largest ethnic minority. Ismael Cortés, an associate professor at the UNESCO Institute of Philosophy for Peace, noted that the European largest minority continued to be scapegoated and left without representation. He further pointed out that the absence of Roma MEPs could jeopardise efforts to deal with the challenges faced by Roma communities. In the absence of Roma's voice in the parliament, such issues would fall off the agenda. For many in Roma communities, it feels like an unwinnable battle, especially when it comes to the opaque selection process for EU candidates which critics have accused of reflecting and perpetuating systemic biases against minority groups.

**Read More at**

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/article/2024/jul/16/rights-groups-decry-lack-of-roma-meps-amid-far-right-gains>

## **Boos for Roma Singer at Coldplay Show in Bucharest, Romania**

The supremely popular Romani musician Babasha was invited by Chris Martin of Coldplay Band for a duet performance in Bucharest's National Arena. When Romani singer Babasha walked on stage in Bucharest in front of 50,000 people for a guest performance with Coldplay, the crowd reacted with boos. The singer stated that this was an act of racism for him being a Rom and manele, the genre of music he performs, is disparaged by many in Romania as the music of the lower classes and performed in the criminal milieu. Manele, mostly performed by Roma artists, blends folk music with modern electronic sounds in a manner not very different from turbofolk, popular in neighbouring Serbia, Greek skiladiko, or chalga in Bulgaria. This incident reignites Romania's racism debate and Zeljko Jovanovic, president of the Roma Foundation of Europe, said that Romania was the only country in Europe that treated Roma like slaves because of the history of 500 years of Roma slavery in Romania.

**Read More at**

<https://www.euronews.com/culture/2024/06/14/boos-for-roma-singer-at-coldplay-show-in-bucharest-spark-romanias-racism-debate>

## **The Fish Stinks from the Head: Anti-Gypsyism as Indicator for the Decline of Democracy**

The article by Orhan Tahir aims at addressing the deep-rooted anti-Gypsyism, racism and xenophobia which set the background for depriving the Roma of the opportunity to be represented in the newly elected European Parliament. He pointed out that the outcome of a long process of scapegoating and alienation undermined the right of Roma to determine who they were and who should represent them. The article indicates that there is the tendency for Roma to be removed from the category of ethnic or national groups and to be included in the category of marginalized social groups at EU level. It expresses anguish over the

absence of Roma representatives in European Parliament and the presence of people who dislike Roma in decision-making positions. It also argues that political exclusion of Roma in Europe would lead to their social exclusion. It supports the idea of Roma creating their own pan-European representative assembly in accordance with democratic principles.

**Read More at**

<https://shorturl.at/XLyBz>

### **EU Integration is a Common Path and Roma Cannot be Left Aside**

Foreign Minister of North Macedonia, Bujar Osmani, in his capacity as Co-Chair of the Berlin Process, delivered a speech in the ministerial meeting for Roma Integration held in digital format and hosted by Tirana. In his speech, he said that as countries aspiring for European Union membership, they must undertake an effective regional approach to Roma integration with visible progress in the areas of education, employment, health and housing for Roma communities. He expressed satisfaction with the progress achieved on the Declaration of the Western Balkan countries for integration of Roma.

**Read More at**

<https://shorturl.at/ynd1G>

### **Roma Must Work, Otherwise They won't Receive Benefits**

Labour Minister of Slovakia Erik Tomas said that they wanted to get as many Roma as possible to work. He further added that around 68,000 people have been without work for more than a year, some among them were lazy and did not want to work but abuse the social system. Minister proposed to introduce measures that would compel such people to work. Slovakia faces serious problem with people who have been out of work for more than a year and the percentage of such people reached 65.1 percent last year.

**Read More at**

<https://shorturl.at/CaQNu>

### **Ethel Brooks - First Female Professor of Roma Origin in the USA**

People of Roma origin often face racist prejudices that make it impossible for them to rise in the professional hierarchy. Racism is still part of the life of the Roma community wherever they live. Despite all odds, Ethel Brooks has come a long way to become a professor at Rutgers University in the state of New Jersey. Her

mother, aunts and uncles could not even attend school. Ethel's family is from Massachusetts and has been living in the United States for more than 200 years. About one million Roma live in the United States, but most Americans know nothing about this ethnic group. Some don't even know they exist and that they represent a very real community. However, many American TV comedies and films use stereotypes about Roma - for example, the clichés that Roma steal or that Roma women are sorcerers and witches. Ethel stated that in places where large groups of Roma lived, people are often racist against them.

**Read More at**

<https://shorturl.at/cK1uW>

### **From Gains to Losses: Roma Participation in the European Elections**

Centre for Roma Studies and Cultural Relations (CRSCR), Antar Rashtriya Sahayog Parishad (ARSP) hosted the Thirty-third Virtual Lecture of the Lecture Series on 4th July, 2024. Jamen Gabriela Hrabanova (Brussels, Belgium), Coordinator of the EU Roma Policy Coalition & Human Rights Activist delivered the lecture with focus on European Parliamentary Election and political pledges and challenges. She informed that Roma agenda had not been presented adequately in the political sphere, therefore, the civil society organization like European Roma Grassroots Organization (ERGO) has assumed the important role to bridge the gap between grassroot realities and policy making. Ms. Gabriela explained how Member of European Parliaments of Romani origin like Livia Jaroka, Peter Pollak, Romeo Franz and Patricia Caro Maya pushed the Roma agenda in European parliament in spite of their affiliations to different political parties.

**Watch Full Lecture at**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9WJCUarxfng&t=223s>

### **Civil protection, Monuments and Roma integration: Priorities of Slovak Government**

The Government Office in Slovakia stated that it would use European funds as effectively as possible and would focus on the restoration of cultural monuments because that would help in preserving cultural heritage and supporting tourism. The document, which has been approved by the government, expects employing of a good number of the members of marginalized Roma communities during the restoration of cultural heritage. It also recommended that the government should create conditions for development of national minorities in the area of preservation and development of their identity, language, culture and traditions.

**Read More at**

<https://shorturl.at/H1ysx>

## **Czech Govt Adopts Definition of Antigypsyism**

Czech Government Commissioner for Human Rights Klara Simackova Laurencikova said that adoption of the definition of antigypsyism was a step in the right direction of rejecting any and all biased and/or stereotyping treatment of the Romani minority. According to the definition supported by lawmakers in three subcommittees of the Chamber of Deputies, any kind of behaviour, gesture, speech which leads to the exclusion or marginalization of Romani people and to physical violence against them is termed as antigypsyism. Czech Government Commissioner for Roma Minority Affairs Lucie Fukova explained that the definition included a list of situations Romani men and women live with every day in shops, on public transport, at school, and when looking for housing or jobs. She further added that Romani people's social position was still far from ideal.

**Read More at**

**<https://shorturl.at/72XF6>**