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ERTF Update

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Political Developments

International Organisations

Council of Europe

Parliamentary Assembly

PACE calls for better protection for Roma

Strasbourg, 18 April 2007. At the end of its one-days debate on human rights and democracy in Europe the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted a resolution which asks for greater efforts for the integration of Roma and a better protection of their rights.

The full text of the resolution on Human rights is available at:
<http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=/Documents/AdoptedText/ta07/ERES1547.htm>

Greece must improve situation of Roma, Committee of Ministers says

Strasbourg, 17 April 2007. In his reply to the question by Latvia's socialist MP Boris Cilevics regarding the illegal evictions of Roma from Patras, the chair of the Committee of Ministers, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of San Marino, Fiorenzo Stolfi expressed his conviction for Greece to take the comments and recommendations of different Council of Europe bodies serious.

“The Committee of Ministers is closely monitoring the situation of the Roma in Greece. As the Commissioner for Human Rights pointed out in a letter to the Greek Minister of the Interior, evictions must be carried out only in exceptional circumstances and in a reasonable manner. The persons concerned should be allowed to challenge the eviction measure before the relevant courts.”, the Chair of the Committee of Ministers said.

He explained that the Committee of Ministers took note of the measures taken by the Greek authorities to redress the situation reported by the European Committee of Social Rights adding that he was convinced that the Greek will carefully consider the comments made by the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights and the European Committee of Social Rights and continue to take all the necessary measures to improve the living conditions of the Roma.

The full report of the Parliamentary Assembly session is available at:
<http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=/Documents/AdoptedText/ta07/ERES1547.htm>

Minority rights in Kosovo need to be protected, President of FCNM Advisory Committee says

Strasbourg, 18 April 2007. On the occasion of the Assembly debate on the state of human rights and democracy in Europe the President of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, Alan Philipps, asked for sustained attention to minority rights: “There are circumstances such as those in Kosovo, where we must remain vigilant and take measures to protect and promote the rights of all communities, whether they be ethnic Serbs, ethnic Albanians or members of vulnerable smaller communities such as the Roma,” Alan Philips said. Referring to the Advisory Committee’s report on the province he warned that “no one should become a second class citizen, no one should be denied access to good jobs and no one should live in fear of violence.”

The full text of the speech can be downloaded at:
http://www.coe.int/t/dc/files/pa_session/april_2007/20070418_disc_phillips_en.asp

The report of the Advisory Committee is available at:

http://www.coe.int/T/e/human_rights/Minorities/2._FRAMEWORK_CONVENTION_%28MONITORING%29/2._Monitoring_mechanism/4._Opinions_of_the_Advisory_Committee/1._Country_specific_opinions/1._First_cycle/1st_OP_Kosovo_eng.asp#TopOfPage

Fundamental Rights Agency

Consultation: Civil society organisations: Give your View!

Civil society organisations play a key role in promoting and protecting fundamental rights of people in the EU. The Fundamental Rights Agency wants to strengthen its cooperation with civil society and launches now a consultation with interested civil society organizations.

The FRA is in the process of identifying new areas of cooperation and mechanisms to promote dialogue with civil society, including through a Fundamental Rights Platform. We are inviting interested civil society organisations to give us feedback by filling in a questionnaire and send it back to us at civil-society@fra.europa.eu. You can respond in English, German or French.

Deadline for comments is 18 May 2007.

The Questionnaire is available at:

http://fra.europa.eu/fra/index.php?fuseaction=content.dsp_cat_content&catid=4625da012d8dc&contentid=4625e609f3348

Reports

NGOs

New report on situation of IDPs in Serbia

UNHCR together with the NGO Praxis has just released an update of its 2005 report “Analysis of the Situation of Internally Displaced Persons from Kosovo in Serbia and Montenegro: Law and Practice”. The organisations notice that the 206.879 IDPs from Kosovo who live in Serbia still face obstacles in the realization of basic rights.

The report particular points out at the situation situation of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian IDPs most of whom it notices “live in truly deplorable conditions, often well below the level of human dignity” and are frequently victims of discrimination. Accordingly, their situation has deteriorated over the last ten years. In addition, the report looks at the situation of forcibly repatriated people from Western Europe, in their majority Roma:

The report can be downloaded at: <http://www.swedishcommittee.se/pdf/gape.pdf>

SOS Racismo

El pueblo Gitano víctima de desigualdad y discriminación social

La Federación de Asociaciones de SOS Racismo ha publicado la duodécima edición del Informe Anual sobre el Racismo en el Estado Español. Referente a la situación del pueblo gitano el informe observa:

”Durante el último año, el colectivo gitano ha sido el más rechazado en el Estado español. Según los resultados de la encuesta del Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas (CIS), más del 40% de los españoles se molestarían “mucho” o “bastante” por tener por vecinos a familias gitanas, mientras que al 25% “no le gustaría” que sus hijos fueran a clase con niños y niñas gitanos.

La Comisión Europea contra el Racismo y la Intolerancia (ECRI) señaló en un informe cómo la juventud gitana - especialmente las niñas - abandona la escuela mucho antes que sus compañeros payos: el abandono escolar, el absentismo, el acceso a la educación preescolar, el analfabetismo entre la población adulta y la concentración de niños y niñas gitanas en escuelas que han manifestado resultados menos apreciables son los principales problemas del colectivo en relación a la educación.

Según datos de la Fundación Secretariado Gitano, la discriminación de este colectivo en el mundo laboral es todavía muy fuerte: en 2006, un 45,4% de los trabajadores gitanos aseguraron sentirse marginados en el lugar de trabajo.

Aunque no se dispone de cifras actualizadas, aproximadamente el 10% de la población gitana del Estado español vive en chabolas o en viviendas que no cumplen con los requisitos de habitabilidad.

En relación al ámbito de la sanidad, según la ECRI, el colectivo gitano sigue mostrando indicadores de salud más bajos respecto al resto de la población española: la esperanza de vida de la población gitana es de nueve años inferior a la del resto de la población y la mortalidad infantil es 1,4 veces superior.

Es cierto que un porcentaje del colectivo gitano vive en una situación y social precaria, pero no la mayoría. En realidad, los miembros de este colectivo que trabajan y no viven en una condición de marginalización social y habitacional, representan mucho más de la mitad de los 650.000 gitanos y gitanas del estado.

Como demuestran los resultados de las encuestas, estas personas no son visibles para una sociedad que mira a este colectivo a través de sus prejuicios y estereotipos, que representan el mayor obstáculo en la lucha contra la exclusión social del pueblo gitano. »

Se puede descargar el informe en :
<http://www.sosracisme.org/reflexions/informeannual.php>

News digest

Europe

EU agrees new race hatred law

20 April 2007

Incitement to racial hatred and xenophobia is to become a crime across the EU, although the long-fought agreement avoids singling out Holocaust denial and was watered down after differences between member states.

Six years of often fractious negotiations ended in Luxembourg yesterday with a compromise that struggled to balance freedom of expression with a tough stance on anti-semitism and other forms of racism and prejudice.

Justice ministers from all 27 EU countries agreed to punish incitement to hatred or violence against a group or a person that is based on colour, race, national or ethnic origin, by a sentence of between one and three years' jail.

But, disappointing anti-racism campaigners, Jewish groups and Germany, which holds the EU presidency, the law neither bans Holocaust denial as such, nor Nazi symbols. "Europe has a special historic responsibility to combat anti-semitism and it is a shame that the final version did not include this," said the European Jewish Congress.

Germany, France, Belgium, Austria, Spain and several eastern European countries have laws banning Holocaust denial. These laws will still apply. Britain, Ireland and the Nordic countries have always resisted such a law so as not to compromise academic or artistic freedom unless it specifically incites racial hatred.

There is no reference either to the mass killings of Armenians by the Ottoman Turks in 1915, which Armenians insist should be recognised as genocide. Turkey, a candidate for EU membership, had made clear it would object strongly to this.

The new EU legislation will need to be ratified by some national parliaments. It criminalises "publicly condoning, denying or grossly trivialising crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity

and war crimes ... when the conduct is carried out in a manner likely to incite to violence or hatred against a group or [group] member".

British officials insisted the EU provisions would mean no changes because UK domestic law, including the 2006 Religious and Racial Hatred Act, was tougher.

The final deal was only completed to the sound of bitter historical controversy, with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania pressed into dropping their demand for a reference to "Stalinist crimes" to balance the attention given the Nazi atrocities.

The EU justice commissioner, Franco Frattini, said the commission had agreed on public hearings in one of the Baltic states and Slovenia, on "the horrible crimes of the 20th century". He added: "The fact that the EU now has moral responsibility and not only on the economy, is demonstrated by initiatives like this."

Lady Ashton, Britain's constitutional affairs minister, said the decision struck the right balance between all the issues.

Ian Black

Source: The Guardian
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/eu/story/0,,2061767,00.html>

CE criticises Czechs, Slovaks for sluggish judiciary, Romany issue

18 April 2007

The Council of Europe (CE) report on the state of human rights in 46 CE member countries, which the CE Parliamentary Assembly discussed today, criticises the Czech Republic and Slovakia for a sluggish judiciary and bad treatment of Romanies.

CE principles require court proceedings to be not only just but also to last for a reasonable period. Delayed justice means denied justice, the report says.

Apart from Czechs and Slovaks, it also criticises other 19 countries in this respect, including France, Germany, Britain, Italy, Greece and Poland.

Cases of the forced resettlement of Romany families have been registered in a number of CE countries, the report says, naming the Czech Republic and Slovakia among the states involved. The report says that the European Human Rights Court has been assessing two serious complaints by Romanies. One concerns alleged discrimination of Romany children at Czech schools, the other points to the alleged sterilisation of Romany women without their knowledge or consent in Slovakia.

The report recalls that the CE's three priorities, which also apply to its approach to Romanies, are the protection of minorities, the fight against racism and intolerance, and the fight against ousting people to the margin of society.

The country the report criticised on most points is Russia.

Source: Prague Monitor/CTK
http://launch.praguemonitor.com/en/68/czech_national_news/5166/

Italian foreign labour article wins top EU prize

Italian journalist Fabrizio Gatti on April 16 won a prestigious European Union anti-discrimination prize for a feature on exploitation of foreign workers in southern Italy. The annual EU award honours journalists whose work contributes to a better understanding of diversity and discrimination in Europe.

An eight-member independent jury, including reporters and media specialists, rewarded Gatti's undercover story "I was a slave in Puglia," published in major Italian weekly news magazine L'Espresso, with a prize worth 4,500 Euro. The money is to be used to travel in Europe.

Gatti's feature describes the working conditions of foreign workers in the Italian region of Puglia, which the writer equates to modern slavery.

"Posing as a migrant worker, Gatti used thorough research and vivid narration to illustrate the difficult situation of Europe's second class citizens who experience severe discrimination based on their ethnic origin," the EU jury said.

Hungarian journalist Miklos Hargitai won the second prize for a feature on discrimination of ethnic minorities, focussing on Roma people. Petra Sjouwerman, a Belgian journalist covering Scandinavia, received the third prize for a story on the integration of autistic people at the workplace. Finnish journalist Henna Helne (28) received a special young journalists award.

EU Social Affairs Commissioner Vladimir Spidla said that the journalists' work showed "the urgent need to continue striving for diversity in society."

Print and online journalists in the EU handed in more than 500 articles covering issues of discrimination or diversity on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, age, gender, disability and sexual orientation.

Source: New Europe
http://www.neurope.eu/view_news.php?id=72842

Countries

Austria

"Bettlerinnen tun ja niemandem etwas" (Interview)

24. April 2007

Viele fühlen sich von BettlerInnen gestört und wollen sich nicht damit auseinandersetzen, dass es Armut gibt. "Doch im Grunde genommen", fragt Fevziye Bahar, die Sprecherin der Internationalen Roma Union, "wenn wer da sitzt und um Almosen bittet, wem tut er denn was?" Ein Interview von Kerstin Kellermann.

derStandard.at: In den U-Bahn Stationen sieht man immer wieder Frauen und Kinder, die um Unterstützung bitten. Gerade wird in Wien wieder ein Bettelverbot diskutiert. Wie stehen Sie dazu?

Fevziye Bahar: Wenn sich eine Frau auf die Straße setzt und stundenlang kniet, vor einem Fetzen Papier, auf dem "Bitte helft mir, meine Familie hungert" steht, und niemandem etwas tut, sehe ich keinen Handlungsbedarf Verbote auszusprechen. Das wurde auch im Gemeinderat diskutiert. Mit einem Bettelverbot kann man die Armut nicht aus der Welt schaffen. Um Almosen zu bitten, bedeutet arm zu sein. Die Verantwortlichen, sprich die PolitikerInnen,

machen es sich da ein bisschen zu leicht, denn die Roma wurden seit Jahrzehnten aufs Abstellgleis gestellt. Wenn wir schon im Jahr der Chancengleichheit leben, dann wäre es besser diese Leute in vernünftige, roma-konformen Projekten zu integrieren. Beispielsweise indem österreichische Firmen in Ost-Ländern Romas Arbeit geben.

derStandard.at: Sie sprechen es selbst an, dass viele der Bedürftigen, die man auf der Straße sieht, Roma sind.

Fevzije Bahar: Man muss das Kind beim Namen nennen. 90 Prozent der Leute, die auf der Straße um Geld fragen, sind Roma. Aber sie tun das nicht aus Jux und Tollerei, sondern aus ihrer Aussichtslosigkeit und Armut heraus. Man braucht ins ostslowakische Kosice zu fahren, um zu sehen, wie die Menschen dort leben. Das ist aber nicht nur in der Slowakei so, sondern in vielen Ländern. Beispielsweise im Schulsystem: Für die Romakinder gibt es nur Sonderschulen. Europa bekennt sich zur Kinderrechtsschutzkonvention. Warum passiert dann hier nichts? Nicht mit einem Verbot, sondern mit einem Gebot.

derStandard.at: Kommen auch organisierte Roma-Bettlergruppen nach Wien?

Fevzije Bahar: In Relation zu den vielen Roma-Familien, die nach Wien kommen, sind die so genannten organisierten Banden eine kleine Minderheit und in diesen Fällen macht die Exekutive, davon gehe ich aus, gute Arbeit. Man muss aber hinterfragen, warum die Roma ihre Kinder beziehungsweise ihre Töchter dem aussetzen. Die Armut zwingt die Roma aus ihren Herkunftsländern zu flüchten. Das bedeutet aber nicht, dass ich als Person, als Frau, als Romni oder als Sprecherin der "Internationalen Roma Union" das begrüße - im Gegenteil. Wenn Mädchen zur Prostitution gezwungen werden, dann sollte das von der Exekutive verfolgt werden. Aber das grundsätzliche Problem ist auf diese Weise nicht aus der Welt zu schaffen. Jetzt läuft es so, dass die Exekutive aufgegriffene Kinder in die Kriseninterventionsstelle der MA 11 bringt und die führt sie nach drei Tagen wieder zurück in ihre Länder. Gleichzeitig kommt wieder der nächste Schub Kinder.

derStandard.at: Wo sollte man Ihrer Meinung nach ansetzen?

Fevzije Bahar: Für Österreich ist es ganz wichtig mit einem Opferschutz-Zentrum zu beginnen. Wir brauchen einfach Räumlichkeiten. Man muss die Eltern vor Ort aufklären, was mit ihren Kinder passiert, und Projekte zwischen Österreich und den Herkunftsländern aufbauen, damit man ihnen dort Möglichkeiten anbietet. Ich habe mit sehr vielen Romafamilien hier gesprochen und die versicherten mir, wenn sie eine Arbeit in Rumänien oder Bulgarien hätten, würden sie niemals auf die Straße gehen. Ich verstehe schon, dass man nicht vier Millionen Roma aus Rumänien einen Neubeginn anbieten kann. Aber ich hatte mehrere Familien bei mir in den Beratungsstelle Internationale Romani Union und im Thara Haus, die in Österreich betteln, damit sie überhaupt den Winter überleben. Ein 13-jähriges Mädchen hatte einen Kreislaufkollaps, weil sie nichts gegessen hatte. Als wir 400 Euro für eine Familie zusammen brachten, sind die nach Hause gefahren. Jetzt habe ich von einem 17-jährigen Mädchen gehört, das gestohlen hat und einige Zeit im Gefängnis in Stein verbringen musste.

derStandard.at: Caritaspräsident Küberl meinte in der Pressestunde, dass es viele Leute nicht einmal aushalten BettlerInnen zu sehen.

Fevzije Bahar: Die Leute fühlen sich gestört in ihrem Leben, in ihrem Wohlergehen, im Wohlstand. Die Leute wollen sich nicht damit auseinandersetzen, dass es Armut gibt. Denn im Grunde genommen, wenn wer da sitzt und bettelt, wem tut er denn was? Um Unterstützung zu bitten ist keine Lösung auf die Dauer, aber man lässt dem Menschen ja auch keine Wahl. Was sollen sie denn tun, bitte? Keinem von diesen Leuten würde es einfallen zu sagen, komm her, hier hast du einen Arbeitsplatz, jetzt ganz abgesehen von den Arbeitsbewilligungen etc. Wir sind zu Wohlstand gekommen, weil wir andere Rahmenbedingungen hatten.

derStandard.at: Inwieweit sollte Österreich oder die EU hier tätig werden?

Fevzije Bahar: Man muss mit den Herkunftsländern zusammen arbeiten, wobei insbesondere die EU Druck machen sollte, damit vor Ort Rahmenbedingungen für die Roma geschaffen werden. In sinnvollen Projekten: Es hat keinen Sinn, Lernprojekte für Kinder zu machen, wenn sie kein Geld für Kleidung, Schulbücher oder ein Kipferl haben. Im Dezember war ich im Kosovo. Vor dem Krieg lebten dort 450.000 Roma, jetzt sind es 40.000. 80 Prozent der Familien haben keine Arbeit. Die Jugendlichen sind sehr motiviert in die Schule zu gehen, haben aber kein Geld für die Studiengebühren von 150 Euro im Jahr für die Hochschule. Die Caritas Schweiz unterstützt mit Stipendien, aber pro Kind nur ein einziges Mal.

Quelle: Der Standard
<http://derstandard.at/?url=/?id=2850751>

Canada/Hungary

Fearing no further immigration from Hungary Canada may end visa regime

23 April 2007

According to an article published by the internet portal *All Hungarian news* Canadian authorities currently consider to put an end to visa requirements for Hungarian citizens after putting down fears of a mass immigration of Hungarian Roma. *All Hungarian news* refers to statements by the Canadian Ambassador to Hungary, Robert Hage, according to which Canada is also examining the visa requirement for seven other new European Union member states.

Canada imposed visa requirements for Hungarian citizens in 2000 after several hundreds Hungarian Roma travelling to Canada had filed in asylum requests. "That year, most such requests were submitted by Hungarians, so Canada had no other choice but to introduce the visa requirement," is quoted by *All Hungarian news*. He further explained that hardly any Hungarians have asked for refugee status since that date adding.

According to *All Hungarian news*, the Canadian ambassador pointed out that Canada needs "to be sure that another wave of immigrants won't arrive" mentioning the recent arrival of Romani asylum seekers in Sweden. Hage said that Romani leaders were waiting for Canada to lift visa requirements "after those people were sent home".

Source: All Hungarian news
http://www.caboodle.hu/nc/news/news_archive/single_page/article/11/us_canada_m/?cHash=d6cd79dbd7

Finland

Racist crime rarely leads to conviction in Finland

26 April 2007

A racist crime rarely leads to a conviction in Finland.

According to a report compiled last year by the Police College of Finland, 669 crimes with a suspected racist motive were entered into the police data system in 2005. Half of the entries had been marked with a police racist crime code. The rest were discovered based on the classification system used by those compiling the report.

The compilers classified those incidents where people were subjected to crime because their skin colour, race, or ethnic origin was different from that of the offender as racist crimes. The classification is broader than the one used in the section of the criminal law that deals with racist crimes.

The Police College of Finland researchers did not look into how many of the reported racist crimes led to charges or a conviction in a court of law. This could not be directly read from the Statistics Finland judicial statistics for 2005, either. However, the idea of combining the two would be one way to observe how many crimes of a racist nature in general lead to a conviction in Finland on a yearly basis.

Helsingin Sanomat commissioned Statistics Finland to compile a list of all the convictions of crimes of a racist character in 2005, based on three articles of the Penal Code. These deal with inciting hatred against other ethnicities, discrimination on grounds of race or colour, and hardening a conviction because of the crime's racist nature.

The result was as was to be expected: in Finland as a whole, 25 individuals were convicted in 17 separate cases, based on the racism articles. Twelve of them received fines because of discrimination in some shape or form. Five charges of discrimination were dismissed. In a total of thirteen cases the judgement meted out was hardened because of the crime's racist nature.

Though the Police College of Finland report and the Statistics Finland survey on court judgements are not directly comparable, based on the two one can still draw the conclusion that the number of racist crimes committed in Finland far exceeds the number of convictions and sentences handed down. Since only five racist crime cases were dismissed by a court of law in 2005, it can be deduced that the majority of racist offences never reach the level of court proceedings.

According to the report, in Helsinki 175 criminal acts of a racist nature - more than anywhere else in the country - were reported to the police in 2005. The same year, only six individuals were convicted of such crimes in the Finnish capital. "These are hairy figures that call for further examination", says chief district prosecutor Heikki Poukka from the Helsinki District Prosecutor's office.

Chief Inspector Mia Poutanen from the Ministry of the Interior's Police Department says that majority of the crimes with a suspected racist motive reported to the police are assaults of various levels of severity, vandalism, defamation, and illegal threats. Of these, vandalism and minor assaults are the sort of crimes that are reported to police in far greater numbers than those that eventually lead to a court conviction.

Often such cases remain unsolved simply because the perpetrator is not caught. Another alternative path is that the parties concerned agree to a form of arbitration during the

investigation process, and the matter becomes the kind of offence that would not lead to court unless the victim specifically wishes.

Seven out of ten crimes with a racist motive take place against foreigners or persons of foreign background. In ten per cent of cases the victim was a member of the Roma minority. More than 85 per cent of those suspected of racially-motivated crimes were men, and of these men, nearly half were between the ages of 15 and 24. Half of the crimes listed took place in the southern provinces of Finland, where the bulk of the population who have moved here from abroad are to be found.

Source: Helsingin Sanomat

<http://www.hs.fi/english/article/Racist+crime+rarely+leads+to+conviction+in+Finland/1135226835748>

Spain

Ayer fue derribada la última chabola de 'La Cavaduca', en La Albericia

26 de abril de 2007

Desaparece un poblado provisional creado en 1982 para dar cobijo en precario a las familias gitanas que vivían en la zona, que sufrió una inundación

Santander. Hace 25 años la barriada santanderina de La Albericia sufrió graves inundaciones resultando afectados un grupo de vecinos gitanos. Para dar solución a su falta de vivienda se creó en la zona de La Cavaduca un asentamiento en precario y en viviendas prefabricadas. El Ayuntamiento cedió el terreno para estos vecinos santanderinos y el Ministerio de Obras Públicas instaló las viviendas prefabricadas. En 1987 el poblado estaba consolidado y durante años fue una zona oscura de la ciudad, dando al barrio problemas y convirtiéndose en un gueto. Durante mucho tiempo fue un foco de venta de droga. Ayer fue derribada la última chabola. La provisionalidad ha durado 25 años.

En la última legislatura, gracias al empeño de la concejal de Servicios Sociales, Encarnación Salmón, y al equipo de trabajadores de la Concejalía, junto con la ayuda de varias instituciones cántabras, se ha conseguido acabar con este asentamiento marginal y dar a los vecinos gitanos una vivienda digna, en régimen de alquiler o en propiedad, facilitándoles el acceso a créditos bancarios.

Vivieron 241 personas

En 'La Cavaduca' comenzarán a edificarse en breve pisos. Ninguna de las urbanizaciones llevará el nombre de 'La Cavaduca', que rememora malos tiempos, sino que recordarán, por ejemplo, que allí cerca hubo un campo de aviación. 'La Cavaduca' tiene 16.000 metros cuadrados, de los que 11.000 eran de propiedad municipal. En el núcleo de población gitana llegaron a vivir 52 unidades familiares y 241 habitantes de todas las edades. Cuando los servicios sociales municipales comenzaron a trabajar en el poblado, en 1995, se encontraron con grandes problemas sociosanitarios: no había luz ni agua y los niños estaban sin escolarizar. Fueron momentos duros de trabajo, con un amplio núcleo de población que vivía en una situación lamentable.

En 1999, el Ayuntamiento consiguió una subvención del Gobierno de Cantabria, que se empleó para realojar en pisos a las dos primeras familias gitanas. Y en el año 2000 se aprobó el Plan Integral para 'La Cavaduca', cuyo fin ha sido integrar en la sociedad a estos santanderinos de etnia gitana. Además, se elaboró un diagnóstico del estado personal, del estado de las casas del barrio (chavolas, caravanas, cobertizos...), del conflicto social que suponía el asentamiento y la necesidad urgente de realojar a estos vecinos en viviendas dignas.

Numerosos apoyos

Para erradicar La Cavaduca se contó con el apoyo de la parroquia del barrio, las asociaciones de vecinos, la asociación gitana Bastis Solidarias, que trabajaba en la zona, el Secretariado General del Pueblo Gitano y la experiencia de otras ciudades. Y, además, se buscó financiación para el realojo de la población, contado con el apoyo financiero del Gobierno de Cantabria, la Fundación Marcelino Botín y Caja Cantabria. En el período 2000-2005 se destinaron al plan de 'La Cavaduca' 3.358.900 euros, además de cinco pisos que ya eran de propiedad municipal. La Fundación Botín aportó 401.476 euros; Caja Cantabria 150.253 euros; el Gobierno de Cantabria 1.355.000 euros y el Ayuntamiento de Santander 1.452.226 euros.

A finales de 2005 se había conseguido el realojo de 36 familias gitanas, que pasaron a residir en viviendas municipales; en viviendas libres con alquiler subvencionado por el Ayuntamiento y en viviendas compradas por las familias gitanas con una aportación económica como ayuda para el pago de la hipoteca concedida por el banco. En 2006, el Plan Integral de La Cavaduca contó con 1.300.000 euros, de los que 30.000 euros procedieron de Caja Cantabria, 257.640 del Gobierno regional y 1.012.360 del Ayuntamiento.

Juan Carlos Flores-Gispert

Fuente: El diario montañés

http://www.eldiariomontanes.es/prensa/20070426/santander/ayer-derribada-ultima-chabola_20070426.html

Los gitanos gallegos llegan a la Universidad

22 de April de 2007

La escolarización de niños calés en primaria ya es de más del 90%, pero en secundaria apenas llega al 40%

Gitanos y universitarios. De entrada, la combinación parece tan difícil como querer mezclar aceite y agua. En Galicia, donde viven unos 9.000 gitanos, esa combinación resulta aún más extraña. Se cuentan con los dedos de una mano los calés gallegos que han hecho o hacen una carrera. La primera en abrir camino y acceder a la educación superior fue María José Jiménez Cortiñas (hace casi diez años aprobó la selectividad y se matriculó en Trabajo Social); le siguió su hermana Irene, profesora, y ahora es Zaida Jiménez Jiménez, de 19 años, la que ha tomado el relevo y estudia Educación Infantil. Puede haber algún caso más (los denominados gitanos invisibles, que estudian pero no han reconocido sus raíces públicamente), pero la cifra final de titulados gitanos sigue siendo minúscula.

«Para chegar á Universidade hai que motivar e reforzar ao alumno desde cuarto ou quinto de primaria, con 10 anos. A comunidade xitana vai moi rezagada nisto», explica Santiago González, coordinador en Galicia de la Fundación Secretariado General Gitano.

Aunque la escolarización de los niños calés ha mejorado mucho -se ha pasado del 65% a más del 90% en primaria, y de una presencia casi nula al 40% en infantil-, en secundaria la tasa apenas alcanza el 40%. «Aí está o problema. Moitos deixan os estudos entre os 12 e os 16 anos», apunta González. «O nivel de expectativas de éxito académico dos pais xitanos respecto dos fillos aínda é baixo e o tema cultural pesa. Moitos nenos convértense en adultos sen vivir a adolescencia, e comezan a traballar, casan e teñen fillos moi cedo», añade. «Cada paso es complicado, pero la mentalidad va cambiando», asegura Raúl Jiménez, presidente de la Federación Gallega de Asociaciones Gitanas. Y ese cambio ha empezado por las mujeres. De todos los gitanos titulados en España, sólo dos de cada diez son hombres. «A muller xitana é

máis consciente de que estudar lle dará prestixio, o seu lugar na sociedade actual. E transmitirán esa inqueda a os seus fillos e estes terán un maior nivel educativo», afirma Santiago González. «Las nuevas generaciones llegarán a más y en un futuro veremos también médicos gitanos, abogados gitanos y psicólogos gitanos», concluye Raúl Jiménez.

Susana Basterrechea

Fuente: La Voz de Galicia

http://www.lavozdeg Galicia.es/se_sociedad/noticia.jsp?CAT=105&TEXTO=5737761

Switzerland

Auf ständiger Durchreise leben

25. April 2007

Die Fahrenden, die sich in Bülachs Soliquartier einquartiert haben, wären gerne länger geblieben. Die Anwohner sind froh, dass sie gehen.

Zwölf Wagen von Fahrenden stehen seit Sonntag zuhinterst im Soliquartier, und es sind bei der Stadtpolizei schon Reklamationen eingegangen, die Durchreisenden hinterliessen Abfall. Auch verrichteten sie ihr Geschäft im Wald, sagen Anwohner. «Nur ein paar wenige von ihnen sind im Vorfeld zu mir gekommen und gaben sich als campierende Touristen aus», sagt der Pächter des Grundstücks, der sein Land den Fahrenden bis heute privat vermietet hat.

«Zigeuner» will niemand

Eine der Fahrenden gibt die Lüge ohne zu zögern zu, als sie danach gefragt wird: «Würden wir sagen, wir seien Zigeuner, könnten wir nirgends Halt machen.» «Wir würden auch gerne etwas länger bleiben», sagt ein Familienvater. Die Gruppe kommt aus Paris und will weiter durch die Schweiz ziehen, bevor sie nach Frankreich zurückkehrt.

Fahrende kämen etwa einmal im Jahr vorbei, sagt Enrico Rimann von der Stadtpolizei Bülach. Hielten sie sich auf privatem Grund auf, sei die Polizei nur für allfällige Klagen zuständig. Bleiben die Abfallsäcke heute also liegen, ist der Pächter dafür verantwortlich. Die Fahrenden wiederum bemängeln, dass es für sie hier nicht wie in anderen Ländern Plätze mit fließendem Wasser gäbe - und nur den Wald als Toilette.

Diana Frei

Quelle: Züricher Unterländer

<http://www.zuonline.ch/storyst/storyst.cfm?VID=9829>

United Kingdom

Olympic site Gypsies fight removal

25 April 2007

Families of Gypsies and Travellers launched a legal challenge today over plans to move them to make way for the Olympic village.

Their lawyers asked a high court judge to rule their human rights were being breached as the country prepares to host the 2012 Olympic Games in east London.

Three mothers are leading the fight against being moved to alternative sites so

that construction work can begin.

The campaigners include Lisa Smith and Mary Reilly who both have children at schools near the sites where they live. A third applicant, Julia Reilly, has three children and is registered disabled.

They are challenging the government's decision in December last year to confirm the London Development Agency (Lower Lea Valley, Olympic and Legacy) compulsory purchase order (CPO) for the land on which the caravan sites stand.

Marc Willers, appearing for the three women, argued the CPO was an unlawful interference with their right to private and family life, as protected under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

He told Mr Justice Williams, sitting at London's high court, that the secretary of state for trade and industry, who confirmed the CPO, was wrong to conclude that the interference occurring was "proportionate and justified".

Mr Willers contended fundamental rights were at stake, including not only the right to respect for home and family life but also respect for their traditional way of life.

The government was under a duty under human rights laws to "protect the Gypsy way of life", Mr Willers said.

There had been a failure to consider whether it was possible to develop the Olympic site while the families stayed put, he added.

Government lawyers said there was no question of the Olympics project being developed without acquisition of both sites where the families live and claim the Gypsy case is "ill-founded".

The hearing is expected to last three days.

Source: The Guardian

<http://society.guardian.co.uk/communities/news/0,,2065319,00.html>

Vacancies

Project Manager and Project Assistant

The European Roma and Travellers Forum is looking for a Project Manager and a Project Assistant to set up its new subsidiary in Brussels.

Job Description (Project Manager)

- in cooperation with the Secretariat of the Forum, set up and maintain a functional office in Brussels,
- establish and maintain good working relations with the European Commission, Parliament and other EU institutions and national government representations,
- liaise with the national member organizations and the Secretariat in Strasbourg and keep them informed about relevant developments affecting Roma at EU level,
- in cooperation with the ERTF Secretariat, draft regular reports on specific policy areas,
- in cooperation with the Secretariat and the network members issue policy recommendations to the EU institutions on specific policy areas and policies affecting Roma,
- establish and maintain good working relations with civil society organizations working in

Brussels, in particular with the Commission sponsored networks.

Requirements

- University degree in Social Sciences or Law,
- minimum of three years of experience in a similar position with a national NGO or public administration,
- knowledge and understanding of the situation of Roma in Europe,
- knowledge and understanding of EU politics, in particular on areas which particularly affect Roma,
- good communication and writing skills,
- professional fluency in English and good knowledge of Romani compulsory,
- additional language skills in particular of French will be considered as an asset.

Job Description (Project Assistant)

- assist the project manager in his/her daily duties,
- perform administrative tasks including book-keeping.

Requirements

- University degree in Social Sciences or Law or commensurate professional experience,
- professional fluency in English and good knowledge of Romani compulsory,
- additional language in particular of French and Dutch will be considered as an asset,
- flexibility and adaptability.

Candidates must be nationals of a Council of Europe member State and must be aged under 55 on the closing date of the vacancy notice.

Both positions are initially limited until 15 December 2007.

Applications

Interested persons should send their application together with a cover letter and CV outlining their interest and experience in English, French or Romani to:

European Roma and Travellers Forum
c/o Council of Europe
rue Tureau
F - 67075 Strasbourg

E-mail: ertf@ertf.org

Letters of recommendation from Roma or Traveller NGOs as well as of recommendation from a former employer will be appreciated.

Intern positions

The European Roma and Travellers Forum is looking for qualified interns to support the work of its Secretariat in Strasbourg.

Task description

- Assisting the secretariat's staff with administrative duties including correspondence and telephone call;
- Compiling information on the situation of Roma in particular countries;
- Assisting in the preparation and follow-up of meetings

Minimum requirements

- Undergraduate studies in a relevant field or commensurate professional experience
- Knowledge and interest in Romani and Human Rights issues
- Good knowledge of English and Romani
- Computer skills
- Flexibility and adaptability
- Previous experience in working with international organisations or national governments and knowledge of additional languages will be considered as an asset.

Applications

Interested persons should contact the ERTF Secretariat:

European Roma and Travellers Forum
c/o Council of Europe
rue Tureau
F - 67075 Strasbourg
Tel.: 00 33 3 90 21 53 50
e-mail: ertf@ertf.org
Letters of recommendation will be appreciated.

ERRC Vacancy Announcement: Programme Director

ERRC wishes to announce the vacancy of the post of ERRC Programme Director.

To access the ERRC application documents and relevant information for applying for the post, please follow this link: <http://www.errc.org/cikk.php?cikk=2742>.

You can search our website for information about the work of ERRC at <http://www.errc.org>.

Closing date for applications: 29 May (8.00 am Budapest time)

Interview date: Provisionally planned for 2 July 2007 in Budapest

You are kindly asked to send your application (letter of interest, application form, paper and the equal opportunities form; the latter is not obligatory) preferably by e-mail to dora.eke@errc.org.

Applications in other formats than outlined in the guidance notes will not be considered. Please ensure your e-mail has been received by requesting confirmation.

ERRC offers a competitive salary and benefits package based on experience, which is subject to negotiations.

We kindly ask you not to call for information before you are invited for an interview.

We wish you every success with your application and thank you for your interest in ERRC.

European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC)

Roma Education Fund Vacancy Announcement: Executive Director

Mr. Alexandre Marc, Executive Director of the Roma Education Fund (REF), has announced his decision to go back to the World Bank to take a new assignment. The REF Governing Board is eager to ensure continuity of the REF's ongoing actions and to provide for a smooth transition. It is inviting applications for the post of Executive Director, for candidates to succeed Mr. Alexander Marc.

The role of the Executive Director is to support and advise the REF Board in devising its policies, to manage REF programs, to manage the staff, and to raise funds. The Executive Director is accountable to the Governing Board.

Duties:

- Manage—and be accountable to the Governing Board for—the REF's operations, staff, and finances.
- Build and sustain a network of technical expertise on Roma education, so that this network is available to the REF and others.
- Develop strong collaborative links with all stakeholders, including those involved in the Decade of Roma Inclusion.
- Represent the REF externally.
- Advocate improved educational outcomes for Roma.
- Liaise with REF contributors and raise resources for the organization.
- Sustain the independence, objectivity, and integrity of the REF.

Profile

The successful applicant must have:

- The vision and drive to further develop the REF's activities.
- A successful track record of at least five years of managing staff, resources, and fiduciary responsibilities, preferably in a European multicultural environment.
- Experience with minority inclusion issues, programs, and projects, preferably involving Roma.
- Knowledge of education issues as they pertain to minorities.
- Ability to work effectively and sensitively with a very wide range of stakeholders, including: Roma people, Roma organizations, governments at all levels, international agencies, aid agencies, foundations, non-government and civil society organizations, and educational leaders.
- Familiarity with international organizations in Europe, especially the European Commission and the Council of Europe.
- Strong administrative and budgetary skills.
- Knowledge of the principles and techniques of grant administration.
- Excellent spoken and written English. Knowledge of other relevant European languages is desirable.
- Excellent public speaking and advocacy skills.

- The highest personal integrity.

Salary and Benefits: Commensurate with experience

Applicants should send a letter of interest, a statement (of up to 500 words) indicating the contribution they could make to the Roma Education Fund, a full CV, and the names of two references who may be contacted before interviews are held to:

Roma Education Fund
VÁCI UTCA 63
1056 BUDAPEST
HUNGARY

WWW.ROMAEDUCATIONFUND.ORG
PHONE: 36-1-235-8030
FAX: 36-1-235-8031
office@romaeducationfund.org

Deadline for applications: May 15, 2007

Roma Education Fund Vacancy Announcement: Program Officer

The REF is recruiting a program officer to be positioned in its head office in Budapest and covering south east European countries

Job description

The program officer will be responsible for developing and managing a country program in selected countries where REF is active, will participate in the strategic thinking on REF activity and directions, help develop REF procedures and programs.

More particularly the program officer will:

- Have specific responsibilities for the management of country programs for two or three countries of South East Europe. This activity will involve, review and assessment of grant proposals, following the grants through all the project cycle, coordinate with the REF country facilitators, identify and oversee research and policy development activities, conduct the policy dialogue with governments and NGO sector.
- Participate in REF communication activities, by attending conferences and seminars, prepare and present papers and contribute to the policy dialogue with partners
- Take part in monitoring visits to other countries
- Create and maintain an updated database of the stakeholders (governmental agencies, NGOs, international organizations, think tanks, research institutes) involved in education for Roma
- Ensure REF visibility in Roma Education related manifestations
- Maintain contacts with think tanks, research institutes, policy analysts involved in reforming educational system in the concerned countries and assure the REF approach in regard with education of Roma is considered

Qualification

- At least four years university degree in education, social science, economics, public administration, law.
- Experience in program management
- Speaking one of South East European language: Serb, Croat, Bosnian, Macedonian and English fluently and knowledge of Romanes would be preferable
- Experience in working on Roma issues, especially Roma education
- Strong analytical skills
- Ability to work in team in various contexts.

Please send letter of interest in English and CV with at least three references to Vbodoczky@romaeducationfund.org before May 18, 2007.

Detailed information on REF can be found at www.romaeducationfund.org.

Established in 2004, the European Roma and Travellers Forum is the European Romani interest representation which gathers Romani organisations from all over Europe. Its aim is to promote the effective exercise by Roma and Travellers of all human rights and fundamental freedoms as protected by the legal instruments of the Council of Europe and other international legal instruments. A partnership agreement with the Council of Europe gives the Forum a unique status and makes it a prime interlocutor for the Council of Europe and national governments on issues affecting Roma communities.

ERTF Update is an information bulletin on Roma issues. The views represented in the articles and comments do not necessarily represent the view of the European Roma and Travellers Forum. For reactions and comments please write to ertf@ertf.org.