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ERTF Update

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Political Developments

European Roma and Travellers Forum

Successor states of the former Yugoslavia must assume responsibility over refugees (Press release)

Strasbourg, 10 May 2007. Further to information according to which the Bosnian authorities intend to put an end to temporary protection for Roma refugees from Kosovo, the president of the European Roma and Travellers Forum, Rudko Kawczynski, has called on the member states of the former Yugoslavia to assume the legacies of wars and ethnic cleansing.

Eight years after the end of the Kosovo conflict and twelve years after the Bosnian war several ten thousands of Roma refugees do not yet have their case settled. Many of them continue to live in refugee camps or makeshift houses and have only limited access to health, education and employment.

“Roma have been the main victims of the disintegration in the former Yugoslavia. It is now up to the successor states to take up their responsibility and provide the Roma refugees with the same conditions as to their other citizens,” the president of the Forum said.

Commenting on the current plans of the Bosnian authorities to force Kosovo Roma into applying for asylum, Kawczynski said that this decision was probably in breach with basic human rights principles. “A few years ago, we saw the same happening in Macedonia. Until today hardly any of the refugees who gave way to pressures of the Macedonian authorities has been granted asylum. Children and adults have spent years in limbo unable to integrate locally, but likewise unable to move abroad.”

In a letter to the Bosnian government, he also urged the Bosnian authorities to take into account the time spent in reception centres when considering applications for citizenship.

Kawczynski said that he was seriously concerned about the alleged plans of the Bosnian and Macedonian authorities to repatriate Roma to Kosovo as soon as the status issue is resolved. "Kosovo is an alien country, not the place these people left several years ago," the president of the Forum said.

"The persistence of a particular aggressive ethnic nationalism and the fact that war criminals continue to be celebrated as heroes puts a serious obstacle to refugee returns. We have to accept that Roma have been ethnically cleansed from Kosovo," Kawczynski said.

He said that it was a particular irony that the international community in both cases, Kosovo and Bosnia, continued to negotiate with the warring parties while disregarding the rights and legitimate concerns of the Roma.

International Organisations

Council of Europe

Committee of Ministers

The Committee of Ministers issues recommendations on minority protection in the Russian Federation

Strasbourg 2.5.2007 - The Committee of Ministers has just adopted a resolution on the protection of national minorities in the Russian Federation. This resolution contains conclusions and recommendations, highlighting positive developments but also a number of areas where further measures are needed to advance the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

The resolution is largely based on the corresponding Opinion of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention. The detailed Opinion of the Advisory Committee of independent experts, together with the comments by the government of the Russian Federation, are also available on line:

[http://www.coe.int/t/e/human_rights/minorities/2._framework_convention_\(monitoring\)/2._monitoring_mechanism/4._opinions_of_the_advisory_committee/1._country_specific_opinions/2._second_cycle/PDF_2nd_OP_RussianFederation_eng.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/e/human_rights/minorities/2._framework_convention_(monitoring)/2._monitoring_mechanism/4._opinions_of_the_advisory_committee/1._country_specific_opinions/2._second_cycle/PDF_2nd_OP_RussianFederation_eng.pdf)

Source: CM Press release

European Court of Human Rights

European Court of Human Rights Delivers Justice to Romani Victims after Seventeen Years

Budapest, Targu Mures, 27 April 2007

On 26 April 2007, the European Court of Human Rights delivered judgments in two cases concerning anti-Romani pogroms that took place in Romania at the beginning of the 1990s. The Romanian Government acknowledged responsibility for breaches of a number of articles of the European Convention on Human Rights, committed to paying considerable amounts of money as

damages and costs to the applicants, and undertook to implement measures aimed at improving living conditions and interethnic relations in the aggrieved communities. These judgments emphasize the failure of the Romanian judicial system to provide adequate redress to the victims of widespread ethnically-motivated violence that took place in Romania at the beginning of the 1990s. The European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) and Liga Pro Europa (LPE) assisted the applicants during domestic and international proceedings.

Gergely v. Romania, the first of the two cases, concerns incidents that took place in 1990 in which a non-Romani mob set on fire or otherwise destroyed several Romani houses in the village of Casinu Nou, Harghita County, and forced the Romani families to leave the village. The second case, *Kalanyos and Others v. Romania*, concerned similar incidents that took place in June 1991 in the neighboring village of Plaiesii de Sus.

It involved the brutal beating by a non-Romani mob of two Romani men who died subsequently because of the injuries sustained, and the systematic destruction of 28 Romani houses followed by the banishment of the Romani families from the village. In both cases, local authorities condoned or actively participated in the attacks. The official investigations into the incidents were superficial, failing to assign responsibility to the guilty individuals or provide relief to the victims. None of the victims ever received full compensation for the losses incurred.

In a rarely used procedure, the European Court of Human Rights struck the two cases out of its list of cases on the basis of unilateral statements made by the Romanian Government that contain a series of admissions and undertakings. Thus, the Romanian Government admitted that its agents were responsible for breaches of Article 3 (prohibition of torture), Article 6 (right to a fair trial), Article 8 (right to respect for private and family life), Article 13 (right to an effective remedy) and Article 14 (prohibition of discrimination) of the European Convention.

The Government stated that it "regret [ted] the failure of the criminal investigation to clarify fully the circumstances which led to the destruction of the applicants' home and possessions, which left them living in improper conditions, rendered difficult their possibility of filing a civil action for damages, as well as the exercise of their right to respect for home, private and family life. Furthermore, the Government expressed regret for the fact "that remedies for the enforcement of rights in the Convention generally lacked at the time when the applicants was seeking justice in domestic courts, and that certain remarks were made by some authorities as to the applicant's Roma origin."

In addition, the Government undertook to implement a series of measures aimed at improving interethnic relations as well as living conditions in the two communities. Finally, the Government committed to paying damages totaling 133,000 EUR to the four applicants in the two cases.

These judgments by the European Court of Human Rights deliver some reparation to four of the many victims of the pogroms in Casinu Nou and Plaiesii de Sus. Furthermore, these judgments confirm and strengthen the findings of the Court in a similar case, *Moldovan and Others v. Romania*, issued two years ago, which contained a damning indictment of the failure of the Romanian Government to investigate adequately another anti-Romani pogrom that took place in 1991.

Indeed, official investigations of an estimated thirty anti-Romani pogroms that took place in post-communist Romania, which resulted in several Romani deaths, destruction of Romani properties and displacement of entire Romani communities were largely cosmetic endeavors. They failed utterly to elucidate the circumstances of the attacks, bring the perpetrators to justice or provide redress to the victims. Moreover, due to the prevailing climate of impunity, in which such lax law enforcement results, racially-motivated attacks against Roma continue to occur with concerning frequency to the present day.

The ERRC and LPE underline that the Romanian government is now under an obligation to proceed swiftly to complying with the judgments and in this context to reopen the criminal files concerning the above mentioned two pogroms and compensate the rest of the Romani victims not included in the original applications filed with the European Court of Human Rights. The ERRC and LPE furthermore appeal to the Romanian Government to open the files concerning all pogroms of the 1990s, with a view to bringing all those responsible to justice, so that a dark chapter of Romania's recent history may be finally closed.

Read the full text of the judgments here: <http://cmiskp.echr.coe.int/tkp197/view.asp?item=5&portal=hbkm&action=html&highlight=ROMANIA&sessionid=9916573&skin=hudoc-en>

<http://cmiskp.echr.coe.int/tkp197/view.asp?item=6&portal=hbkm&action=html&highlight=ROMANIA&sessionid=9916573&skin=hudoc-en>

Source: ERRC Press release

Reports

NGOs

Bulgarian Helsinki Committee

Annual Human Rights report notes persisting discrimination against Roma

While noticing a slight improvement of the general human rights situation in 2006, the Bulgarian Human Rights Committee also noticed that the situation of some groups including ethnic minorities has even deteriorated.

The report includes a number of references to the situation of Roma including on issues such as police violence and desegregation. Its assessment of national policies to improve the situation of Roma is rather dim.

The report is available for download at:

http://www.bghelsinki.org/index.php?module=resources&lg=en&cat_id=24

European Roma Rights Centre

Roma Rights 4/2006: Romani Women's Rights Movement

The current issue of Roma Rights looks at the responses of Romani women to some of the human rights violations Romani women face. The Romani women's movement has evolved organically through the wider pursuit of Roma rights by Romani women and men over the years in response to the initial (and mostly continuing) lack of attention to women's issues on the part of the predominantly male "leaders"; some of whom viewed patriarchal traditions as integral components of Romani identity and culture. Romani women's first steps to speak out about their rights as women and to challenge the idea that certain practices are a part of Romani culture have often been met with criticism, rejection or have been simply ignored. The fact is that women's rights in all contexts tend to be a cause of controversy, but particularly when in juxtaposition with other characteristics such as race or ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, etc. This issue provides a few examples of current Romani women's actions and

reflections.

This issue includes the information listed below and is available from the ERRC web site at the links below:

Part one

<http://www.errc.org/db/02/38/m0000038.zip>

Part two

<http://www.errc.org/db/02/37/m0000037.zip>

Paper copies can be obtained by contacting the offices of the ERRC: office@errc.org.

Source: ERRC

Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Survey on poverty in British minority communities

According to a new study issued by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation poverty rate among ethnic minority groups in Britain is twice as much as for white people. The study shows that people belonging to ethnic minority communities are being overlooked for jobs and are being paid less, despite improvements in education and qualifications.

The study concentrates on Black and Asian communities in Great Britain and addresses the situation of Roma and Travellers only marginally.

It can be downloaded from the website of the foundation:

<http://www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop/eBooks/2006-ethnicity-poverty-UK.pdf>

Open Society Institute/Justice Initiative

New Book Examines Ethnic Profiling by Police

Study Focuses on Police Stops of Minorities in Bulgaria, Hungary and Spain

New York, April 19, 2007—The Open Society Justice Initiative today released a new book examining ethnic profiling by police in Europe. Ethnic profiling is a violation of fundamental human rights norms, but this widespread practice is little understood and concrete data are scarce.

"I Can Stop and Search Whoever I Want"—Police Stops of Ethnic Minorities in Bulgaria, Hungary and Spain fills major gaps in what is known about ethnic profiling by police—a practice that has not been expressly outlawed by any European government. Using quantitative data as well as interviews with police officers and members of minority groups, the book looks closely at the practice in Bulgaria, Hungary and Spain—three countries whose significant minority populations make them the face of a changing Europe.

"Ethnic profiling by police in Europe is only beginning to be acknowledged as a significant problem," said James A. Goldston, executive director of the Open Society Justice Initiative. "But the dynamics of the problem need to be understood before it can be effectively addressed. This study was designed to provide an educational foundation for action."

Combining statistical analyses, first-person accounts and policy recommendations, *"I Can Stop and Search Whoever I Want"* makes clear that ethnic profiling occurs in all three countries and is discriminatory and ineffective in combating crime. It recommends concrete steps to improve policing and curb this pernicious practice.

Source: Justice Initiative

An electronic version of the book is available for download at:
http://www.justiceinitiative.org/db/resource2?res_id=103735

News digest

Countries

Bulgaria

Bulgaria Invites Guests for a Day of Intense Democracy

7 May 2007

More than 200 Bulgarians participated in a Deliberative Poll to discuss policy regarding the Roma.

SOFIA, Bulgaria – With food, wine and ripples of laughter, more than 200 guests gathered for dinner at a Communist-era hotel on the edge of this capital for what seemed like a wedding party. Heckles pierced speeches, and the alcohol flowed.

One issue the Deliberative Poll covered was housing, since many of the Roma, like the girls above, live in cramped areas. But the gathering at the Park Hotel Moskva was part of an experiment in trying to reinvigorate the democratic process as the government struggles with declining voting numbers and waning interest in public affairs, while better informing leaders about how an educated public would lean on difficult decisions.

The process, devised by a Stanford professor, James S. Fishkin, harks back to classical Greek democratic ideals, bringing together a random representative group, deepening the individuals' knowledge of an issue and allowing them to debate it. Polls of the group before and after the process provide concrete measures of change for decision makers to study.

Called Deliberative Polling (the term has been trademarked), the process has been used by political groups and private companies, in places as far apart as Greece, China, Italy and Texas, and the European Union intends to use it before discussions on a new constitution this fall. But the debate here was the first try by a national government.

The question was one of the most intractable issues facing society here: how to improve the lives of Bulgaria's impoverished Roma, who make up around a tenth of the country's population of seven million. Most live in cramped neighborhoods outside the main towns and cities, a consequence of planning when the Communists were in power.

Prime Minister Sergei Stanishev pledged to use the results to shape policy. That was not a risk-free promise: just as citizens' assemblies in classical Athens voted to put Socrates to death, Bulgaria's poll risked producing some draconian measures.

The process began with an initial survey of 1,344 people, covering issues involving the Roma, as many Gypsies refer to themselves, in housing, crime and education. From those surveyed, 255

were selected for the meeting, held in mid-April. They received briefing materials, including proposals from political parties, the government and nongovernmental organizations. In Sofia, the day after their get-acquainted dinner, the participants gathered at the National Palace of Culture, a monolith that dominates a city center park, and divided into groups with trained moderators. Over two days, they debated with competing experts and politicians, posing questions they formed in the small groups.

“Instead of a self-selected group who have an agenda, this is a way of getting a representative group that can get informed and think through issues,” Professor Fishkin said. At the outset, the discussions tended to drift toward the extreme.

“They should be given just bread and water,” said Mariana Draganova, a woman in her mid-40s, who suggested that Roma families lose welfare payments if a relative were jailed. “And maybe when they come out of prison they will think about turning to crime again,” she said.

A man in the same group suggested all state benefits be cut for parents whose children skip school. One policy under discussion and advocated by a nationalist party proposed that all Roma neighborhoods be enclosed by high walls.

Six hours of the proceedings were broadcast on national television. When the debate was over, the participants were surveyed again. Those who thought “the Roma should live in separate Roma neighborhoods” declined to 21 percent from 43 percent. Those who wanted to see an increase in the number of Roma police officers rose to 52 percent from 32 percent. Those agreeing that “Roma schools should be closed and all the children should be transported by buses to their new school” rose to 66 percent from 42 percent.

The results were compiled by Professor Fishkin, on hand to help supervise the event, and his colleague Robert C. Luskin of the University of Texas. They appeared to indicate that most Bulgarians were more willing to support measures to integrate Roma into society, even though nationalist politicians use increasingly hostile language toward them.

“The general feeling from the debates,” Mr. Stanishev said, was that “there is a high level of tolerance, which is the most important condition for their integration.” He added, “It is much more difficult to gain confidence on the basis of something that has been decided in the party or in the institutions.”

But some say the process may not translate from a local, town hall, environment into the arena of national politics, which is more subject to the rigors of modern media campaigns, interest groups and lobbying.

To those who wonder if Deliberative Polling can represent “true democracy,” Professor Fishkin had this story. In a test in Zhejiang Province, in China, the polling was used to determine public attitudes toward spending priorities. Participants called for the townships’ public works budget to be spent on water treatment, not new roads, as public officials had originally suggested.

Impressed by the process, Jiang Zhaohua, the Communist Party official who authorized the exercise, suggested to Professor Fishkin that it was more democratic than the electoral process in the United States.

The professor recalled their exchange. “ ‘Tell me, Mr. Fishkin,’ Mr. Jiang asked me, ‘do you live in a swing state?’ To which I said ‘no.’ He then said, ‘is your Congressional district gerrymandered?’ It is. ‘You see,’ he continued, ‘your votes do not count!’ ”

In Greece, the former foreign minister and current opposition leader George Papandreou helped organize a Deliberative Poll to select a Socialist Party candidate for mayor in Maroussi, an Athens suburb where many of the 2004 Olympic events were held.

Local governments have also found it useful. The Italian region of Lazio, which incorporates Rome, used the process recently to determine health care priorities. Participants decided to scrap hospital beds and spend the savings on other hospital services.

In February, when parents in Northern Ireland were questioned about educational reforms, a majority of respondents showed after deliberating that they were in favor of closer cooperation between Roman Catholic and Protestant education systems. That debunked the long-held view that most parents wanted their children educated separately.

Some of the first experiments were in the private sector. In Texas, eight utility companies used the process between 1996 and 1998 to look at energy use and found support for developing renewable energy sources.

But the polls do not always predict accurately. In Australia in 1999, a Deliberative Poll held ahead of a referendum on the monarchy showed most participants favored a republic. But Australia voted to keep its ties with the queen. Professor Fishkin put that down to a “modern political television campaign.”

There are other notes of caution. Some observers here suggested that the atmosphere of a debate – in an official hall, with politicians on hand – meant that participants acted in a more broad-minded way, disguising prejudices they might express at home.

And a brief tour of the discussion groups in Sofia showed that the more gifted the speakers, the more they dominated the discussion. In Maroussi, the winner was the most self-assured speaker.

But that, too, harks back to ancient Greece. Plato mocked Athenian democracy as a tyranny of orators, not a redoubt of sound argument.

By Nicholas Wood

Source: The New York Times

http://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/07/world/europe/07bulgaria.html?_r=1&pagewanted=all&oref=slogin

Ethnic Conflict Grips Western Bulgarian Town

2 May 2007

A group of some 100 citizens of Roma origin tried to attack the town of Kyustendil after two Bulgarians first beat up some of their friends

Police at the western town of Kyustendil have prevented a large-scale ethnic conflict that could have ended in a bloodshed, Darik News reported.

Some 100 people of Roma origin were about to storm the town around noon, after some of their friends were assaulted.

Two Bulgarians riding in a car attacked several Roma, traveling in two carts and beat them up. Enraged by the assault, the relatives and friends of the attacked gathered with shovels and pitchforks and managed to find the attackers on the road leading to Kyustendil. They charged

at their car but police were quick to respond at the scene. They managed to break off the fight before anybody got hurt. The policemen didn't allow the Roma to proceed to the town of Kyustendil.

Police in the town say they would do their best to prevent further ethnic conflicts. Tsvetelin Kanchev, head of the Euroroma party has also arrived in the town to urge his people to cool off.

Source: Novinite
http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=80100

Czech Republic

Czech extreme nationalists march through Prague

Prague- Roughly 30 followers of the Czech extreme right National Party today marched through Prague in protest against the Sudeten German Landsmanschaft (SL) and what they call undeserved advantages for some population groups.

The police met at the Franz Kafka square and reached the office of the Sudeten German Landsmanschaft in Prague.

The police said that there were no incidents during the two-hour demonstration. The demonstrators carried Czech flags and banners saying "The deportation was right!", "Stop affirmative action!" and "We want justice, no advantages for Gypsies."

During their march, they chanted similar slogans and "Dzamilka is a racist." This hinted at cabinet member Dzamilka Stehlikova (Greens) who is in charge of ethnic affairs.

The activists created a symbolical train carriage into which they invited SL chairman Bernd Posselt. An activist had a box with Posselt's face on his head and the text "Heim ins Reich" (Back into the Reich, a slogan of the Czechoslovak Nazis in the 1930s) on his chest.

During his speech, Pavel Sedlacek from the National Party invited other people to the carriage. He named Environment Minister Martin Bursik (Greens), Foreign Minister Karel Schwarzenberg (for the Greens), Agriculture Minister Petr Gandalovic (Civic Democratic Party, ODS), former president Vaclav Havel and Olomouc Archbishop Jan Graubner.

"We would like to finish the deportation in the same way as it started," Sedlacek told journalists.

Some three million ethnic Germans were deported from Czechoslovakia after World War Two.

Source: Ceske Noviny

http://www.ceskenoviny.cz/news/index_view.php?id=251142

Estonia

Estland: Erstmals Denkmal für Roma und Sinti als Kriegsoffer aufgestellt

8. Mai 2007

Tallinn. In Estland ist ein Denkmal für die Roma und Sinti aufgestellt worden, die im Zweiten Weltkrieg im Vernichtungslager beim Ort Kalevi-Liiva nahe Tallinn von Faschisten ermordet worden waren.

Wie das estnische Fernsehen am Sonntag mitteilte, hatte die Zigeunergemeinde Estlands sechs Jahre lang Spenden für den Bau des Denkmals gesammelt und nach einem passenden Ort gesucht. Nach Angaben der Gemeinde waren in Estland etwa 2000 Roma und Sinti getötet worden.

Die Einweihung des Monuments - das erste Denkmal dieser Art in Estland - ist ein wichtiges Ereignis für die einheimischen Roma und Sinti.

In Kalevi-Liiva wurden während des Weltkriegs insgesamt 6000 Menschen - Juden aus Deutschland, der Tschechoslowakei und aus Polen sowie estnische Roma und Sinti getötet. Zuvor wurde in diesem Ort ein Denkmal für die im Vernichtungslager ermordeten Juden aufgestellt.

Quelle: RIA Novosti

<http://de.rian.ru/world/20070507/65004977.html>

France

Un bidonville en bout de ligne

28 avril 2007

Ce matin, je suis descendu au terminus de la ligne A. Station de métro Laurent Bonnevey. 5 minutes de marche suffisent pour rejoindre le bidonville de la rue Léon Blum à Villeurbanne.

430 tziganes, dont près de la moitié sont des enfants, habitent depuis septembre 2006 sur cette friche industrielle. A moins que ça ne soit depuis plus longtemps. Fort heureusement, 50 d'entre-eux viennent d'être logés dans divers foyers de la région. Une fois franchie la palissade qui sépare ce campement de la rue, un vieil homme barbu, les traits creusés par des années de soleil et de vie à la dure, vient me saluer. Puis il repart sans mot dire. Barrière linguistique. Dans ses grands yeux brillants, je ne lis que de la sympathie. D'autres Roms me font signe de la main. Des femmes me sourient et pouffent ensuite.

Des baraques de bois, de carton, de plastique et de lambeaux de panneaux publicitaires constituent un vrai village en réduction. Il y a une place centrale, des ruelles et même une espèce de rue principale. Les Roms de ce coin de Villeurbanne ne sont plus des gens du voyage. En Roumanie, ils habitent les villes et les villages (de Roms, bien souvent). Le voyage n'est plus dans leur culture. Ce qu'ils cherchent, c'est un toit et du travail. Enfin, je rencontre Johan -on le nommera ainsi- qui vit sur cette friche depuis novembre.

Depuis 10 ans en France, il parle presque parfaitement notre langue au contraire de la plupart de ses compatriotes. Johan, la trentaine, n'aime pas trop les journalistes. "Vous n'êtes pas au zoo", me décoche-t-il. Je prends sa flèche et la retourne contre lui : "Et vous non plus, je crois..." Sourires entendus des deux côtés. On entame le dialogue. "En France, déplore-t-il, il y a vraiment trop de racisme. C'est presque comme en Roumanie". Alors, je lui explique que montrer la situation de ce petit coin d'enfer pourrait peut-être aider (bien modestement) à accélérer sa disparition. Il en convient mais campe sur ses positions. Rien n'y fait, on ne fera pas d'interview. "En France, on a été trop mal accueillis." Johan glane quelques sous en faisant le manœuvre sur des chantiers. "C'est incroyable, ce sont les immigrés qui construisent vos maisons et vous, vous nous laissez dehors !" Embarrassé, je lui dit que c'est une vision caricaturale du pays. Mais comment raisonner un homme qui souffre ? Il conclut notre rencontre en m'apprenant qu'il partirait bientôt s'établir en Grande-Bretagne.

En grande discussion avec des habitants du bidonville, je vais à la rencontre d'André Gachet, chargé de mission de l'Association Lyonnaise pour l'insertion par le logement. Il m'explique la situation.

Au bidonville de Villeurbanne

De l'autre côté de la rue Léon Blum, un alignement de maison fait face au bidonville. Je sonne aux portes. Patricia Couvez m'ouvre la sienne. Tout de go, cette mère au foyer de 49 ans, prévient : "Je n'aime rien ici !". Elle loge à Villeurbanne depuis un mois seulement. Michel son mari, technicien à EDF, vient juste d'être muté dans la région. "Quand mon époux sera à la retraite, on retournera chez nous, dans le Nord ! Et on y restera !" Patricia ne travaille plus depuis qu'elle a quitté, dans le Nord, l'hôpital de soins palliatifs pour personnes âgées où elle était employée. Et la mobilité professionnelle de son époux, elle en a soupé.

"Mobilité ? Bof..."

Au départ, je ne cherchais que l'avis des voisins des Roms sur la proximité du bidonville. Patricia me confesse qu'elle plaint ses habitants. Plus. Elle les apprécie. L'histoire de ce peuple d'Europe de l'Est lui rappelle celle de sa famille.

Mes voisins les Roms

Et au moins, "eux, ils disent bonjour. Alors que les gens d'ici ne vous adressent même pas la parole !". Visiblement, Patricia a envie de parler et moi de l'écouter. Maman de quatre enfants, elle se fait du mouron pour ses petits déjà grands : deux d'entre-eux sont au chômage. Puis elle s'inquiète pour tout le monde : "Les gens sont renfermés sur eux-mêmes". Pour finir, elle ne fait pas confiance à nos dirigeants politiques parce que "droite ou gauche, quand ils sont au pouvoir, ils ne tiennent pas leurs promesses !" Mais Patricia vote et a toujours voté... à gauche. Ce qui ne l'empêche pas d'être toujours déçue... par la gauche. Et si Nicolas Sarkozy était élu ? "Je ne l'imagine même pas ! Il me fait peur." "On ne parle pas des humains comme il l'a fait. Karcher, racaille, tout ça..." Ségolène Royal ? "Elle n'est pas de droite. Elle se dit à gauche..." Kiwi, le chat, attire notre regard. Il saute par-dessus Taïga, une affectueuse femelle Saint-Bernard.

Patricia revendique sa culture ouvrière qui se caractérise par "l'ouverture aux autres mais surtout par la solidarité entre pauvres". Et question modestie des revenus, elle sait de quoi elle parle. "Après 25 ans de boîte", comme elle dit, son mari perçoit 2 025 euros net par mois. La mutuelle déduite, il ne reste plus que 1 400 euros pour vivre à quatre.

Ses deux derniers garçons habitent encore chez leurs parents. Malgré des formations professionnelles en informatique, ils ne trouvent pas d'emploi. "On ne fait pas de folies" croit-elle devoir ajouter. "Mais quand je vois ceux qui n'ont que le SMIC, je me dis qu'on n'est pas malheureux." Mais pas heureux non plus, je crois bien...

Karim El Hadj

Source: Champ libre/Le monde (blog)

<http://champlibre.blog.lemonde.fr/2007/04/28/un-bidonville-en-bout-de-ligne/>

Italy

Un camp de Roms incendié en Italie

26 avril 2007

Un camp de Roms a été détruit mercredi soir près d'Ascoli (centre) par un incendie probablement volontaire, deux jours après un accident de la route provoqué par l'un de ses habitants qui a tué quatre jeunes italiens, ont indiqué les pompiers jeudi. Plusieurs baraques en bois et roulottes, ainsi que trois véhicules et le mobilier qui se trouvait sur place ont été totalement détruits par les flammes, a indiqué un responsable des pompiers d'Ascoli.

"L'incendie est probablement volontaire, car les foyers étaient espacés par plusieurs dizaines de mètres", a ajouté ce responsable, précisant qu'aucun des Roms n'était présent sur place au moment de l'incendie.

L'accident de la route, causé lundi soir par un Rom de nationalité roumaine de 22 ans en état d'ébriété, a provoqué une vive émotion et avait fait craindre des représailles violentes contre le camp, situé à une vingtaine de kilomètres d'Ascoli et où vivaient une cinquantaine de personnes qui ont disparu depuis.

Les Roms avaient visiblement décidé d'abandonner le camp après l'accident par crainte de violences, ont indiqué les médias italiens. Les quatre jeunes tués dans l'accident, trois garçons et une fille, étaient âgés de 16 à 19 ans. Le jeune conducteur, arrêté lundi soir, est incarcéré et poursuivi pour homicide involontaire, conduite en état d'ivresse et outrage à la force publique.

En décembre 2006, des habitants d'une commune de la banlieue de Milan (nord) avaient incendié un camp de tentes destiné à des Tziganes qui venaient d'être expulsés d'un autre terrain. En mars 2006, le principal camp de Tziganes de Milan, où vivaient un millier de personnes, avait déjà été détruit par un incendie d'origine inexplicée.

Source : 7 sur 7

http://www.7sur7.be/hlms/cache/fr/det/art_445131.html

Il paese contro gli zingari: "Una tragedia annunciata"

25 aprile 2007

L'ultima proposta, solo l'ultima bizzarra proposta, prima della strage, era stata buttata lì l'inverno scorso, fine novembre, da Claudio Travanti, assessore all'ambiente del Comune di Ascoli: «Trasferiamo in uno dei casolari della Sentina le famiglie di nomadi che vivono ad Appignano». Doverosa precisazione: la Sentina è, da due anni, una riserva naturale regionale. Da proteggere e salvaguardare. Possibilmente. L'ultimo fatto di sangue, prima della strage compiuta da quel folle ubriaco sulla Provinciale 4, era invece accaduto domenica, quando un altro giovane slavo, un altro rom, aveva piantato un coltellata nel braccio di suo padre Said Ismet, macedone di 55 anni per una storia di soldi. Fatti, non chiacchiere.

Come fatti e non chiacchiere reclama a gran voce la gente che si accalca roteando nell'aria i pugni, ad Appignano. La gente che, in via Roma, fa la spola tra il municipio e la chiesa parrocchiale di San Giovanni Battista. E urla: «Da tempo temevamo il peggio. Questa è una strage annunciata. Il sindaco sta a guardare? Il sindaco vuole l'integrazione? Bene adesso ci pensiamo noi a integrarli. Se ne accorgeranno. Torneranno pure a farsi vedere da queste parti. Sono scappati subito lunedì sera. Con sei furgoni e tre auto, hanno mollato l'accampamento appena hanno saputo dell'incidente. Appena hanno saputo che era stato uno di loro. Nessuno li ha fermati, ma come è stato possibile? Vorrà dire che ci penseremo noi a fermarli».

Invano si forza di usare parole di pace, di riconciliazione, don Armeno Antonini, che oggi dovrà benedire le bare allineate di quattro ragazzi spazzati via senza un perché. Invano cerca di

dileguarsi tra la folla, lei, la principale accusata. La sindachessa di Rifondazione comunista, Maria Nazzarena Agostini. Che aveva persino messo a punto, un paio di mesi fa, un progetto di integrazione per i nomadi accampati alla porte del paese. Convinta, citiamo testualmente: «Che i rom siano una grande risorsa per Appignano».

Invece non dev'essere proprio così, se quel progetto, il progetto della sindachessa, i cittadini di Appignano, duemila anime che si trovano da sette anni con la vita avvelenata, non lo hanno nemmeno voluto vedere. Anzi lo hanno subito respinto al mittente. Raccogliendo firme, praticamente tutte le firme dei residenti. Bocciata quest'ansia d'integrazione, la gente ha anzi chiesto al sindaco di lasciare mano libera alle forze dell'ordine per sgomberare il campo di Valle Orta.

E ora? Ora dribbla la gente e le domande, in via Roma, la sindachessa sotto accusa. «Siamo tutti con le lacrime agli occhi per questa tragedia troppo grande per il nostro piccolo paese. Il dolore ha tante forme, e va rispettato. Da più di un anno cerchiamo una soluzione alternativa per la collocazione dei rom. Il problema esiste. Ma non è questo il momento di affrontarlo. Comprendo l'enorme dolore, ma sono sicura che la comunità locale saprà dare un segnale di civiltà». Già, civiltà.

«Si fa presto a parlare di civiltà - sbotta S. P., uno dei parenti delle giovani vittime - quando è stato proprio il Comune, sindaco in testa, a concedere tutto e più di tutto ai nomadi di Valle Orta. La luce, l'acqua, che, ovviamente, non hanno mai pagato e i cassonetti dell'immondizia che ovviamente non hanno mai usato perché buttano in giro tutto». Il resto sono cose risapute. «O almeno cose - dicono nel capannello di persone che si è radunato accanto al muretto dove si ritrovavano i ragazzi uccisi lunedì sera - che il sindaco dovrebbe sapere, visto che i rom qui si ubriacavano spesso. Visto che i furti nelle abitazioni sono aumentati. Visto che persino i contadini non ne possono più perché sono tra le vittime preferite dei dispetti dei nomadi: quando l'uva è matura loro arrivano la tagliano e la calpestano. E civiltà questa? Sono risorse per Appignano queste persone?»

«Il sindaco se ne deve andare - ribadisce un anziano - questa gente da anni non rispetta la legge, ci dà fastidio, entra nelle nostre case, molesta le ragazzine. Un bidello della nostra scuola è stato preso a schiaffi senza motivo dal padre di un ragazzino rom».

I racconti delle bravate dei nomadi, accampati nelle baracche di Valle Orta, si sprecano. È ancora fresco il ricordo di quando, per una zuffa nel campo, sono stati gli stessi rom a chiamare l'ambulanza, ma quando l'ambulanza è arrivata l'hanno presa a sassate. L'hanno distrutta, mettendo in fuga gli infermieri che erano arrivati per soccorrerli. Eppure. «Eppure - conclude amaramente uno dei ragazzi del muretto - è come se nessuno, fino a oggi, si fosse accorto di nulla. Come se i politici, tutti i politici avessero scoperto solo oggi, con questa tragedia, che c'erano dei nomadi che spadroneggiavano qui ad Appignano».

Gabriele Villa

Fonte: Il Giornale

<http://www.ilgiornale.it/a.pic1?ID=173418>

Walkie-talkie e mazze da baseball, girano in gruppo a bordo di un'auto: "Da domani presidio a Chiaravalle"

Ronde contro i rom a San Donato
30 aprile 2007

Torna alta la tensione contro i rom: ronde e, da domani, presidio attorno ai campi. Questa volta succede a Poasco, piccola frazione di San Donato Milanese, ma a ridosso di una serie di campi in territorio di Milano, tra cui quello di Chiaravalle. Da giorni i furti sono in netto aumento, e la gente ne dà la responsabilità ai rom. «Così - spiega il sindaco Achille Taverniti (centrosinistra) - ho fatto aumentare le pattuglie di polizia e carabinieri, e dopo mezzanotte anche la vigilanza privata. Il controllo sul territorio è alto, ora». Ma non abbastanza per qualcuno: da domenica scorsa, dopo un furto di gasolio a un camion, una ventina di cittadini ha dato vita a una ronda per le vie di Poasco. Girano a turno in automobile, armati di walkie-talkie, «ma non armati: se vediamo qualcosa di sospetto chiamiamo le forze dell'ordine» precisa uno di loro, Federico Calvo. Anche se più di un abitante giura di averli visti aggirarsi con mazze da baseball e bastoni e anche cani. E appena vedono un rom in atteggiamento sospetto intervengono: «Ne abbiamo anche inseguito qualcuno, ma la zona è piena di campi coltivati, scappano tutti lì e diventano introvabili». Venerdì sera qualcuno ha anche provato ad andare fino al campo di via delle Cascine, come per farsi giustizia, ma all'ultimo momento è arrivata la polizia a bloccarli.

Di certo non finisce qui. «Da domani partiremo col presidio del campo di Chiaravalle - dice Calvo - perché questa potrebbe essere un'altra Opera. Vogliamo fare pressioni perché gli zingari se ne vadano da qui, la situazione non è più sostenibile». Le ronde sono nate spontaneamente, senza appoggi politici, benché la Lega le guardi con simpatia e si dica pronta ad appoggiare l'iniziativa. Anche perché, a fine maggio, anche a San Donato si vota per il Comune: Taverniti si ricandida, e il tema della sicurezza terrà banco.

Luigi Bolognini

Fonte: Espresso

<http://espresso.repubblica.it/dettaglio-local/Ronde-contro-i-rom-a-San-Donato/1589487/6>

Germany

Rückkehr ins Ungewisse beendet Kirchenasyl

8. Mai 2007

Lünen. Wenn Hadjera Avdulji und ihre Tochter Sibel am Montag den Zug in Richtung Belgrad besteigen, endet ein intensiver Konflikt und ein 19-monatiges Kirchenasyl. Er endet unglücklich für die Flüchtlingsmutter aus dem Kosovo und ihre im Jahr 2000 in Lünen geborene Tochter.

Seit November 2005 war der damals 26-jährigen Frau und ihrer Tochter Kirchenasyl im evangelischen Gemeindezentrum Niederaden gewährt worden. Die Beiden gehören als Roma zu einer Volksgruppe, die im Kosovo-Krieg brutal verfolgt wurde. Im Kampf um ein Bleiberecht und den Kontakt zu den hier lebenden beiden Söhnen und ihrem Exmann, sprang die evangelische Gemeinde Horstmar ein, gab Schutzraum und soziale Unterstützung.

Aber auch das im April 2006 erteilte Besuchsrecht mit ihren Söhnen und der enge Kontakt von Sibel zu ihrem Vater, konnte die drohende Abschiebung nicht aufhalten. Die Voraussetzungen für ein Aufenthaltsrecht seien auch nach dem Bleiberechtserlass nicht gegeben, nahm Erster Beigeordneter Günter Klencz gestern auf Anfrage unserer Zeitung Stellung. Er verwies darauf, dass diese Auffassung der Petitionsausschuss des Landes NRW ausdrücklich bestätigt habe. Dabei sei auch das Besuchsrecht der Kinder in die Entscheidung einbezogen worden.

Dieses Familiengefüge wird nun zerrissen, die Tochter in eine fremde, ungewisse und arme Zukunft geschickt. Alle juristischen und politischen Wege seien ausgelotet, bedauert Pfarrer Volker Jeck, evangelischer Flüchtlingsbeauftragter.

Tatjana Gluth

Quelle: Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung

<http://www.waz.de/waz/waz.luenen.volltext.php?kennung=on2wrLOKStaLuenen39208&zulieferer=wr&kategorie=LOK&rubrik=Stadt®ion=Luenen&auftritt=WAZ&dbserver=1>

»Die Sinti und Roma haben keine Lobby« (Interview)

Härtefallregelung für Arbeitserlaubnis gilt nicht für alle Nachfahren von Opfern des Faschismus. Ein Gespräch mit Jan Sürig, Rechtsanwalt in Bremen.

Sie vertreten Zuwanderer der Sinti und Roma aus dem ehemaligen Jugoslawien, die darauf klagen, als Nachfahren von Opfern des deutschen Faschismus anerkannt zu werden. Warum ist das so wichtig?

Meine Mandanten wollen eine Arbeitserlaubnis ohne Vorrangprüfung erhalten. Mit einer Vorrangprüfung kontrolliert die Bundesagentur für Arbeit, ob ein Beschäftigungsangebot von einem Deutschen oder von Zuwanderern aus der Europäischen Union angenommen werden kann. Erst wenn dies nicht der Fall ist, erhält ein geduldeter Zuwanderer eine Arbeitserlaubnis. In der Dienstanweisung zu dieser Beschäftigungsverfahrensverordnung sind aber auch Härtefälle definiert. Jüdische Zuwanderer erhalten demnach eine solche Arbeitserlaubnis ohne die Vorrangprüfung.

Das ist auch in Ordnung, denn die Bundesrepublik Deutschland ist Rechtsnachfolgerin des »Dritten Reiches«. Wenn sie den Enkeln der NS-Verfolgten nun diese kleine Anerkennung zollt, bekennt sie sich damit zu ihrer historischen Verantwortung. Doch nicht nur die Juden, sondern auch die Sinti und Roma, wurden von den Schergen des NS-Regimes verfolgt. Auch ihre Nachkommen wollen deshalb »in den Genuß« dieser Härtefallregelung kommen. Das ist wichtig, denn in sämtlichen Rechtsverfahren, bei denen es um Aufenthaltserlaubnisse geht, wird den Betroffenen immer wieder vorgehalten, ihren Lebensunterhalt nicht durch eigene Arbeit zu sichern.

Die Dienstanweisung benennt aber ausdrücklich nur die jüdischen Zuwanderer?

Das ist richtig. Doch aus dem Gleichbehandlungsgebot des Grundgesetzes ergibt sich auch, daß niemand nur wegen seiner Herkunft benachteiligt oder diskriminiert werden darf. Eine Ungleichbehandlung ist nur zulässig, wenn es sachliche Gründe gibt. Bezüglich der Verfolgung von Sinti und Roma durch die Nazis ist ein solcher Grund nicht erkennbar. In dem jetzt verhandelten Fall geht es um eine Roma, die 1999 aus dem Kosovo nach Bremen kam. Es ist nicht nachvollziehbar, daß ihr die Ausländerbehörde die Härtefallregelung verweigert.

Mit welcher Begründung wurde der Antrag dann aber abgelehnt?

Mit der Begründung, daß diese Härtefallregelung nur sehr eng auszulegen sei. Sie beziehe sich eben nur auf die Juden, hieß es.

Dagegen haben Sie Widerspruch bei Innensenator Thomas Röwekamp (CDU) eingelegt. Doch auch der Senator hat Ihrem Antrag schließlich widersprochen. Wie begründete er seine Entscheidung?

Er meint, daß die Bildung einer Analogie zugunsten der Roma »willkürlich und abwegig« gewesen sei. Das finde ich empörend, denn mit dieser Formulierung wird das erlittene Unrecht der Sinti und Roma nachträglich einfach gezeugnet. Der Beamte, der das bearbeitet hat, hat

bezüglich seiner Wortwahl wohl nicht nachgedacht. Doch passiert so etwas nur dann, wenn einem das Unrecht dieser Verfolgung überhaupt nicht bewußt ist. Als Anwalt erlebe ich häufig, wie geduldete Ausländer durch die Behörden diskriminiert werden. Doch eine solche Formulierung, hätte selbst ich nicht erwartet.

Sehen Sie besondere Gründe, warum die Verfolgung der Sinti und Roma nur am Rande wahrgenommen oder wie jetzt in Bremen sogar geleugnet wird?

Die Roma und Sinti haben keine Lobby. Dazu kommt der insgesamt unsensible Umgang mit der eigenen Geschichte. Vielfach ist das bis heute von starker Verdrängung, aber auch von Diskriminierung geprägt. Gegen den Bescheid des Innensensors haben wir deshalb nun eine Klage beim Bremer Verwaltungsgericht eingereicht. Ähnliche Klagen sind in Oldenburg anhängig.

Ein Sprecher des Bremer Stadtamtes hat darauf verwiesen, daß die politische und rechtliche Verantwortung nicht in Bremen, sondern beim Gesetzgeber, also beim Bund liegt.

Das ist falsch, denn in Artikel 1 Absatz 3 des Grundgesetzes wird festgestellt, daß die beschriebenen Grundrechte nicht nur für die gesetzgebende, sondern auch für die vollziehende Gewalt, und auf allen staatlichen Ebenen, verbindlich sind. Auch der Innensensor wäre deshalb zur Einhaltung dieser Grundrechte verpflichtet gewesen.

Interview: Andreas Grünwald

Quelle: Junge Welt

<http://www.jungewelt.de/2007/05-07/056.php>

Hungary

Health-care reform needs programmes for the Roma, says health minister

28 April 2007

Budapest - Hungary's health-care reform needs to include programmes for the Roma to bring their life expectancy closer to the European Union average, the health minister said on Saturday in Nagykanizsa (SW), at an event marking the Day of Roma Culture.

Life expectancy in Hungary is six years lower on average than in the EU and the figure is even worse among the Roma, Agnes Horvath said.

The challenge therefore for the government in its health-care reform is to improve the living conditions, health education and health-awareness of the Roma population through complex programmes, she said.

Horvath noted that over the next few years 1.62 billion euros would be available for health-care development in EU funds and urged Roma communities to submit bids.

Hungary's Roma population is estimated between 450,000 and 600,000.

Source: MTI daily bulletin

<http://english.mti.hu/default.asp?menu=1&theme=2&cat=25&newsid=239075>

Romania

The family that never departs from the airport

29 April 2007

For most Romanians, the world has grown rapidly since their country joined the European Union. For the Mogos family, however, the horizons have never been narrower. Confined to a small room in the cargo area of Bucharest's Henri Coanda airport, they can see passengers and planes coming and going with increasing frequency as the former Soviet bloc country plays a growing part in the modern world.

For five years, Anisoara Mogos, 54, and three of her children - now all in their twenties - have lived in this dingy corner of the airport, a diplomatic no-man's-land, after a bizarre wrangle over a failed asylum claim. For most of that time her husband, Marin, 57, shared the small room with table, fridge and cooker, a small television and DVD player.

But earlier this month, despairing of ever escaping their legal limbo, he hanged himself. The day before, officials of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees had said they could not help him. Mrs Mogos said: "Marin gave up fighting when he realised there was no legal way to get out of this. He could not take it any more."

The family fled Romania seeking a better life in 1990, soon after the fall of the dictator, Nicolae Ceausescu. They renounced their citizenship in the hope that it would help them win asylum in Germany. They claimed that as gypsies they were persecuted and that their children would have no proper education or jobs. "In Germany we felt welcome, had found work and a home," said Mrs Mogos. She had a job as a cleaner and all her five children went to German schools.

But their asylum claim was rejected - along with the claims of 1,000 others who had also renounced Romanian citizenship. In 2002, they were told they would be repatriated. Two of their children, married to Germans, were allowed to stay, but Dorina, now 20, Gabriela, 23 and Gheorghe, 22, were seized with their parents and deported.

Most of the 1,000 returned to Romania agreed to accept a new status as "tolerated persons", with only limited access to state benefits and no guarantee of getting a new passport. But the Mogos family refused to accept that condition, which meant that, under Romanian law, they were not permitted to set foot beyond the airport. Nor, without passports, could they leave again for Germany. Mrs Mogos said: "If we accepted the offer to be a tolerated person it would mean we could never return to Germany, so we refused."

Since then, the family has been allowed to leave the airport only four times, on legal matters related to their attempt to return to Germany. An appeal to the European Court of Human Rights was rejected in 2004. Mrs Mogos said: "We wash in a sink. My children send us money for food from Germany. It is desolate and depressing. There is nothing to do all day."

But Nicolae Ene, the senior airport police officer, said: "They limit themselves by refusing any legal connection with the Romanian state. More than once we have brought in psychiatrists to help the family. We believe they simply do not want to get out of the situation."

Carmiola Ionescu

Source: Sunday Telegraph

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2007/04/29/wrefuge29.xml>

Roma wollen in Rumänien Begriff 'Zigeuner' aus Wörterbuch streichen lassen

30. April 2007

"Im Wörterbuch steht auch nicht, dass Rumänen hin und wieder stehlen." Mit dieser Argumentation versucht der Präsident der Roma in Rumänien, Nicolae Paun, zu erreichen, dass das Wort "Zigeuner" aus dem Nachschlagewerk gestrichen wird. Der Begriff sei eine Beleidigung für seine Minderheit, so Paun. So führe das Wörterbuch das Wort 'Zigeuner' sowohl als Bezeichnung für die Roma, als auch als 'Beiwort für eine Person mit schlechten Angewohnheiten'.

Quelle: Deutschlandradio

<http://www.dradio.de/kulturnachrichten/20070430140000/>

Serbia

Roma fend off "skinhead attack"

9 May 2007

A Roma leader asked authorities to provide better protection for his people after skinheads tried to assault their shanties.

Six young men, whom Roma described as Nazi skinheads, tried Monday night to climb over a wall to get into a shanty settlement on the outskirts of Zrenjanin, 45 miles north of Belgrade, Beta reported Tuesday.

Roma leader Afiz Ahmetov told reporters they succeeded in preventing skinheads from climbing the wall to enter their settlement.

Zeljko Strbac, a Zrenjanin police spokesman said patrol cars were called twice to come to the Gypsy settlement and one car with police officers stayed until Tuesday morning.

Feeling insecure, Romani children did not go to school and a number of people did not go to work.

On behalf of the 350 Roma, Ahmetov called on Zrenjanin authorities to increase security measures around the settlement and somehow improve their living conditions.

Source: B92

http://www.b92.net/eng/news/comments.php?nav_id=41135

Spain

Reconocimiento al pueblo gitano por su papel en el pasado y futuro de Navarra

27 de Abril de 2007

Un acto en el Salón del Trono del Palacio de Navarra ha servido para institucionalizar el 27 de abril como el «Día del gitano navarro»

El presidente del Gobierno foral, Miguel Sanz, reconoció «la importancia de la cultura gitana en la configuración de nuestra tierra» en una recepción ofrecida a miembros y representantes de asociaciones gitanas con motivo de la institucionalización del 27 de abril como el «Día del gitano navarro».

El Salón del Trono del Palacio de Navarra acogió la recepción oficial, a la que asistieron, entre otros, el consejero de Cultura, Juan Ramón Corpas; el presidente de la Federación de Asociaciones Gitanas «Gaz Kalo», José Jiménez; y Ricardo Hernández, quien intervino en representación de todas las asociaciones gitanas. La interpretación del himno de Navarra y del himno gitano «Yelem, Yelem» corrió a cargo de Paco Suárez y su grupo.

Sanz subrayó que éste es un acto sin precedentes en Navarra, cuyo objetivo es instituir a partir de hoy esta fecha, 27 de abril, como día del pueblo gitano en Navarra, «un día que pretende reconocer y agradecer el destacado papel de este pueblo, en el transcurso de nuestro pasado común y en el devenir de nuestro futuro».

En este sentido incidió en que «el pueblo gitano ha influido como pocos en la conformación de ese crisol que es la personalidad de Navarra, de España, y de la propia Europa».

Para enmarcar la relevancia de este momento, Sanz entregó a José Jiménez una reproducción facsímil del recibo emitido en el Palacio Real de Olite el 27 de abril de 1435, cuyo original se encuentra depositado en el Archivo General de Navarra, y que es el primer documento que atestigua la presencia del pueblo gitano en Navarra desde hace seis siglos.

Se trata de un recibo por una cantidad de 36 libras, mediante el cual la reina Blanca de Navarra paga a un grupo de gitanos por haber realizado una penitencia, posiblemente una peregrinación mandada por el Papa.

Por su parte José Jiménez entregó al presidente del Ejecutivo una bandera con el escudo de Navarra y la bandera gitana y un pañuelo rojo conmemorativo de esta fecha.

En el acto intervino también Ricardo Hernández quien destacó la aportación de los gitanos navarros a la «construcción de la sociedad plural en la que hoy se ha convertido Navarra».

Subrayó que el hecho de encontrarse en el Salón del Trono les ayuda a «tener presente que han quedado atrás los años de miserias, desgracias y persecuciones» a los que fueron sometidos los gitanos «por el simple hecho de ser diferentes», tras lo que recalcó que «hoy nos encontramos en el siglo XXI en una realidad cada vez más plural e intercultural y podemos mirar en cualquier dirección con esperanza porque somos ciudadanos de pleno derecho».

Asimismo deseó que el 27 de abril se convierta en «un día de acercamiento y de contacto entre culturas, de eliminación de barreras que impiden conocernos» y dijo que les gustaría «compartir con todos los ciudadanos el día de la comunidad gitana, porque hay una Navarra cali que es patrimonio de todos los navarros».

Recordó además que en abril del 2005 con motivo del Día Internacional el Pueblo Gitano la junta de portavoces del Parlamento foral aprobó una declaración política en la que se reconocía al pueblo gitano y su aportación y se comprometía a «velar por el cumplimiento de las leyes que favorezcan su integración e incorporación a los distintos ámbitos de la vida social».

Finalmente Hernández abogó por seguir caminando juntos «en el desarrollo y progreso de una sociedad tan plural y diversa como es de la Comunidad foral».

Entre los asistentes al acto se encontraban la parlamentaria europea Victoria Mohácsi y el ex diputado y ex europarlamentario Juan de Dios Ramírez Heredia, dos de los tres galardonados en la III edición de los Premios Gaz Kaló a la promoción de la cultura gitana. Junto a ellos ha sido reconocida la europarlamentaria Livia Járóka.

La entrega de estos premios tendrá lugar esta noche en el Teatro Gayarre de Pamplona. Tras la ceremonia el grupo «Las Damas del arte», dirigidas por Paco Suárez, ofrecerá su espectáculo. Estos premios internacionales tiene como objetivo reconocer y premiar a las personas que han contribuido con su labor a la difusión de la cultura en los distintos ámbitos, en esta ocasión en el de la política.

Fuente: Diario de Navarra

<http://www.diariodenavarra.es/actualidad/noticia.asp?not=2007042714162742&dia=20070427&seccion=navarra&seccion2=sociedad>

United Kingdom

Gypsy sites in East England subject to public opinion

8 May 2007

A public consultation on the number and distribution of additional caravan pitches for Gypsies and Travellers in the region was launched today by the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA).

It follows independent research published by the Department for Communities and Local Government and EERA in March, which found that the East of England needed 1,220 more caravan pitches for Gypsies and Travellers by 2011 and that the shortage of sites had contributed to the problem of unauthorised caravan pitches.

The consultation is part of a review being undertaken by the Assembly as a result of new planning policy issued by Government in 2006.

Views are being sought on two particular options:

. Option 1: pitches distributed in local council areas where research has identified need - 1216 additional caravan pitches in the East of England

. Option 2: based on option 1 but with a minimum of 15 pitches in every local council area across the region to provide a wider distribution and choice of accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers - 1220 additional caravan pitches in the East of England

The public consultation will also ask questions about how the additional pitches can be delivered and provision of short stay sites.

Councillor John Reynolds, Chair of EERA's Regional Planning Panel said: "Increasing the availability of legal caravan pitches will provide suitable places for Gypsies and Travellers to live and help tackle the problem of unauthorised sites, now and in years to come.

"This public consultation is a real chance for everyone in the settled and travelling communities in the East of England to learn more about the options on the table and to have their say on the number and distribution of these additional pitches."

Organisations and the public are being invited to respond to the 12-week consultation from members (More information and response forms are available at www.eera.gov.uk. All responses to the consultation must be submitted to EERA by 5pm on Tuesday, 31st July 2007).

Following consideration of the responses, the Assembly will publish its proposal for the number of pitches required in each local council area in Winter 2007/8. This will be subject to further public consultation before being finally determined by Government in 2009.

Local authorities are responsible for developing local plans and making decisions on suitable locations for Gypsy and Traveller sites in their own areas, following public consultation with their local communities.

Sites may be provided by Gypsies and Travellers, developers or local authorities.

Public information events are also being held across the region where members of the local community will have the opportunity to listen to presentations on the consultation and ask questions of Assembly representatives (see Notes to Editors for details).

Source: 24 dash

<http://www.24dash.com/localgovernment/20268.htm>

Gypsies lose high court battle over Olympic sites

4 May 2007

Two groups of Gypsies and Irish Travellers will be forced to move from their sites to make way for the Olympic village after losing a high court battle launched under the Human Rights Act. A judge ruled yesterday that though ordering the families to move to new caravan sites involved a "very significant interference" with their human rights, it was proportionate given the benefits of east London hosting the games in 2012.

Three mothers from the sites challenged a decision in December by Alistair Darling, the trade secretary, to confirm a London Development Agency (LDA) compulsory purchase order allowing it to bulldoze the sites at Clays Lane in Newham and Waterden Crescent in Hackney.

Lawyers for Lisa Smith, Mary Reilly and Julia Reilly said yesterday they were unlikely to appeal against Mr Justice Wyn Williams' ruling, although they would give full consideration to the judgment before making a final decision.

They had argued that the compulsory purchase order was an unlawful interference with the women's right to private and family life, as protected under article eight of the European convention on human rights.

It stipulates that a public authority cannot interfere with this right except in the interests of "national security, public safety, the economic wellbeing of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others".

Four generations of Tracie Giles's family have lived at Clays Lane over the past 36 years. Yesterday the mother of two described the outcome as an outrage, claiming work on the Olympic village was already causing "huge health problems".

"We are obviously devastated by the court's decision, and full of fear for the future," she said. "We don't even know that alternative sites will be ready for us by the time we are supposed to leave in July and August. We could end up living by the roadside." The Clays Lane residents are being asked to move to a local park they have described as "like a traffic island" and where they fear hostility from people angry at being deprived of their open space.

"It is outrageous that we are being forced to move in this way for the Olympics. Members of the wider local community would not be treated in this way," said Ms Giles. "It is because we are Travellers and Gypsies. At the moment the conditions we are living under, with the demolition

of buildings all round us to make way for the Olympic village, are causing huge health problems for everybody because of the dust and the dirt." Some 15 families live at the Clays Lane site, while 20 are based at Waterden Crescent and will have to move by December.

Representing the Travellers, Marc Willers said that the government had a duty under human rights laws to "protect the Gypsy way of life". He also claimed the government had failed to consider whether it was possible to develop the Olympic site without moving the families, but government lawyers said there was no question of the project being developed without the acquisition of both sites.

The judge said: "Unless a substantial proportion of the order lands (including the sites) was under the control of the LDA by mid-2007 the Olympic development would be put at risk." He added: "When a decision maker admits that his decision involves a very significant interference with the human rights of a group of people, the court has a duty to analyse rigorously the basis upon which that decision is said to be justified and proportionate. "Having subjected the decision to such rigorous assessment, I have reached the clear conclusion that the secretary of state's decision to confirm this compulsory purchase order is justified."

Debby Kennett, of the London Traveller and Gypsy Unit which supported the mothers, said she was concerned that the LDA had refused to give an undertaking not to evict the families unless there were alternative sites for them to go to. "It is disappointing that the families have been left in a position of enormous insecurity while the LDA timetable for providing alternative sites is continually slipping and slipping," she said.

Rachel Williams

Source: The Guardian

<http://society.guardian.co.uk/communities/story/0,,2072219,00.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 Toreau
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 Toraue
F - 67075 Strasbourg
Tel.: 00 33 3 90 21 53 50
e-mail: ertf@ertf.org

Letters of recommendation will be appreciated.

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.