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ERTF Update

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Political Developments

European Roma and Travellers Forum

ERTF criticises “Gypsy” exhibition

23 March 2007

In a public statement the European Roma and Travellers Forum criticised the planning and conception of an exhibition on the topic of Roma by the historic museum of the city of Luxembourg in the context of “Luxembourg-City: Cultural capital of Europe 2007”.

The exhibition will be displayed at the historic museum of the city of Luxembourg from 24 March to 21 October 2007 and later in Luxembourg’s partner city Sibiu in Romania.

“The European Roma and Travellers Forum expresses its dissent with the organisation of an exhibition “Watch out, gypsies! The story of a misunderstanding” by the Luxembourg-City History Museum in cooperation with the Museum Astra in Sibiu/Romania.

This exhibition is currently shown at the Luxembourg-City Museum in the context of Luxembourg City: Cultural capital of Europe 2007 and will, later this year, be presented in Sibiu/Romania, Luxembourg’s partner city for this year.

The European Roma and Travellers Forum which represents Romani interests at European level criticises the fact that this exhibition has been conceived and implemented without the participation of Roma organisations and their representatives.

The mere choice of the title and the use of the word “gypsies” throughout the whole exhibition constitute a provocation against Romani people who in 1971 at their first World Congress after WWII expressed their wish to be called Roma.

Also, a centuries-old history of discrimination and persecution of Romani people which culminated in a genocide under National-Socialism can hardly be labelled as a simple “misunderstanding”.

The concentration on traditional roles and cultural taboos among Roma can easily be seen as an act of voyeurism, a conception which is further conveyed by the use of attributes such as “elusive”, “nomadic” and “strange”. This focus entails the additional risk of further strengthening popular beliefs and stereotypes about Roma as an archaic, backward people “which refuses to integrate”.

The Forum understands that it has been the intention of the organisers to question prejudices about the perceived other. However, it strongly disagrees if Roma are misused for this purpose.

Roma have their own culture, history and identity. It belongs to them as to any people to decide over their presentation in public.

Through bypassing the official representatives of the Roma the organisers carry on a tradition of alienating and excluding Roma.

The European Roma and Travellers Forum calls on the organisers to step back from their current approach and give Romani interest representations the possibility to review a concept which may cause further harm to Roma.

The European Roma and Travellers Forum is the European-level Romani interest representation which gathers Europe’s main international Roma organisations and more than 1,500 member organisations from most of the Council of Europe member states. In December 2004, the Forum signed a partnership agreement with the Council of Europe which provides for special relations between both organisations.”

More information about the exhibition:
http://www.musee-hist.lu/Expositions_temporaires.html

Council of Europe

European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance

40 measures for combating racism at school

Strasbourg, 21.03.2007 - On the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) published a Recommendation on combating racism and racial discrimination in and through school education:

“The Recommendation on combating racism and racial discrimination in and through school education asks governments to review the situation of children from minority groups in the school system, and put in place policies to deal with the problems these children face. The Recommendation also proposes to establish a system to monitor and sanction racist incidents and raise awareness about the issue. Teaching staff should be trained to work in a multicultural environment and respond adequately to the needs of pupils from different backgrounds. “Quality education, which is compulsory and equally accessible to all, is the key to combating racism and racial discrimination in our societies” said the Chair of ECRI, Eva Smith Asmussen.” (ECRI Press Release)

The text of the recommendation is available in Pdf-format at:
http://www.coe.int/t/e/human_rights/ecri/1-ecri/3-general_themes/1-policy_recommendations/recommendation_n10/eng-recommendation%20nr%2010.pdf

Reports

International Organisations

United Nations

UN Special Representative in Kosovo addresses Security Council

19 March 2007

On Monday 19 March, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General in Kosovo Joachim Rucker presented an update on the situation in Kosovo. The report of the UN Secretary General notes "a relatively small number of potentially destabilizing incidents" and a significant drop of "ethnically motivated incidents" by 70 percent in 2006.

The report refers to a very small number of so-called minority returns. Accordingly, 1,608 people among which 593 Kosovo Serbs returned voluntarily to Kosovo in 2006.

Inversely, 3,598 people were forcibly returned to Kosovo. According to the report, another 90,000 people will be subject to forced repatriation. Competencies in this field are currently being transferred to the Kosovo institutions.

The report does not contain any assessment of the situation of non-Albanian communities in Kosovo. The only group which is explicitly mentioned are Kosovo Serbs.

The report criticises the "maximum exposure" of so-called interethnic crime in Serbian media.

The report can be downloaded at:
<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N07/252/54/PDF/N0725254.pdf?OpenElement>

Situation of Hungarian Roma addressed by the Human Rights Council

20 March 2007

In her report to the Council, the Independent Expert of the UN Gay McDougall said that during her recent visit to Hungary, she found the situation of the Roma people to be dire, and she called on the Government to introduce affirmative action, aggressively enforce school de-segregation and to offer other financial and policy commitments.

In response, Hungary's delegate Dora Blaszek said that although her country acknowledged that much remained to be done, it was confident that some of the institutions and mechanisms it had established to deal with such problems were examples of best practice.

The report by the independent expert is available at:
<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G07/100/83/PDF/G0710083.pdf?OpenElement>

Source: UN Press release

Minority Rights Group International

Roma most discriminated group in Europe

Minority Rights Group International (MRG) has just released its new report “State of the World Minorities’ 2007”.

The organisation notes that “Roma remain the most excluded and vulnerable group in Europe” explaining that “Roma remain severely disadvantaged in key areas of public and private life, such as housing, employment, education and health services. They are also frequently the targets of racism by law enforcement officials and non-governmental actors.”

The organisation particularly points out at the forced sterilisation of Romani women in the Czech Republic and in Slovakia and at the recurrence of forced evictions in countries such as Bulgaria, Italy, Romania, Russia, and Turkey.

It also underlines that Roma are disadvantaged by the provision of the citizenship law in Macedonia which sets as a condition for citizenship to have a permanent source of income.

MRG finally expresses its concerns that Kosovo Roma as well as other smaller minority communities from Kosovo have not been included in the status negotiations process:

“MRG expressed concern that the needs of other smaller minorities - including the Roma and Turks - have been side-lined under the new proposals [by the UN Special Envoy, Martti Ahtisaari]. These communities had effectively been marginalized from the UN discussions on the future of Kosovo. There are fears that if a new constitution is rushed through a matter of months, they would be excluded again.”

The report can be downloaded at:
<http://www.minorityrights.org/admin/Download/pdf/SWM2007.pdf>

European Roma Rights Centre/Centre for Housing Rights and Evictions

ERRC and COHRE concerned about Romanian Draft Law on Housing

16 March 2007

The European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) and the Centre for Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE) have written to the Romanian authorities presenting their concerns in relation to the draft of a “Law regarding the relations between owners and tenants and the obligations incumbent on them with regard to housing management and maintenance”.

The full text of the letter is available at:
<http://www.errc.org/db/02/1B/m0000021B.pdf>

News digest

Countries

Europe

Ongoing struggle for equality

15 March 2007

Racist discrimination - ugly reality in the EU. Two generations of gypsy representatives take part in the fourth of five 'Crossed Portraits', a series marking 50 years of the EU. 2007 is the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All. A European Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) was created in Vienna at the beginning of the month, complementing the work of the European Union Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia founded in 1998. The gypsy community is the EU's most important minority and they are struggling hard to put an end to prejudice.

January's Eurobarometer, dedicated especially to the issue of discrimination in honour of the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All, says that two-thirds of Europeans see discrimination based on ethnic origin as the most wide-spread form in the Union. Also, although 65% of Europeans believe that the presence of different ethnic origins can enrich national culture, 64% believe that ethnic discrimination has increased in the last 5 years. The study also shows that most Europeans believe that gypsies are at a social disadvantage, although the percentages vary from country to country.

Gypsy politician No. 1

In the midst of an office stuffed full of books and documents evidencing decades of struggle for equality, 64 year-old Juan de Dios Ramírez-Heredia, president of the Unión Romaní (a federation of Spanish Gypsy associations), recounts a fact which changed his life: his mother made a decision which was unusual at the time, especially in gypsy families, and allowed him to study. 'I still do not know why she, who was illiterate, decided that I should go on studying, but that was a decisive point in my life,' says the Spanish co-founding representative of the former European Monitoring Centre on Racism.

Whilst the Treaty of Rome was being signed in 1957, the lower classes of Franco's Andalusia did not hear anything from outside. During the dictatorship's harshest years, 'we did not know anything about political life on the other side of the border.' What the Spanish gypsies did know was that they were persecuted by the Guardia Civil, the national police force at the time, as well as by a major part of the population for purely ethnic reasons.

However things have improved for the gypsy population in the decades since then. 'We started off from such a low point. We had to do a lot to overcome that. Despite coming so far, there is still a lot of work to do and many attitudes to change, both on the part of gypsies and of non-gypsies,' says Ramírez-Heredia.

The ex-Euro MP complains about the role of institutions in the struggle of his people; after him, there were no more gypsies in Parliament until the current term which includes two female Hungarian MEPs who are ethnically from the Roma minority, Lívía Járóka and Viktória Mohacsi.

Woman, Gypsy, Activist!

Manuela Fernández, 28, is an exception to the traditional image of the gypsy in Spain and Europe: she is a gypsy who has completed higher education. She grew up in the controversial La Mina neighbourhood, considered by many to be one of the most socially deprived neighbourhoods around Barcelona. Now Manuela is about to complete her second degree and become a technical expert in the Integral Plan of the Gypsy Population in Catalonia (2005-2008), as well as heading projects involving European gypsies for the Catalanian Government.

Manuela Fernández was influenced to study by her father, a self-educated gypsy, at a time when almost no one else around her even reached secondary education. She says this trend is changing as young people today have different role-models. 'If being a woman and a gypsy is normally an obstacle, having an education has made it an advantage. I have my job because I'm a gypsy and I have associations with that world,' she explains.

Through her work she sees how there is a true European gypsy movement throughout the whole of Europe. 'Young gypsies have international protection and at many meetings the common language, Romani, is used,' she says. On an institutional level, she believes that 'they invest a lot of money in projects for the gypsy population, but this has not had a real impact on European gypsy communities, due, amongst other things, to a lack of follow-ups after grants being awarded.'

For this reason, in order to continue evolving as a people and as European citizens, it is necessary to implement effective intercultural dialogue and increased political participation of the gypsy population, either through their own parties or through established parties. But they have to 'really participate, not just do it for show.'

Eva Queralt

Source: [cafebabel.com](http://www.cafebabel.com)
<http://www.cafebabel.com/en/article.asp?T=T&Id=10367>

Austrian Foreign Ministers asks the EU to do more for the Roma

21 March 2007

In a press release published on the occasion of the International Day against Racial Discrimination, the Austrian Foreign Minister, Ursula Plassnik, said that the European Union needs to step up its efforts to improve the situation of Roma in Europe.

"We still have to do a lot in the EU in order to make it possible for all its citizens to experience the European Union as a community of solidarity", Plassnik said referring to Europe's Roma population.

She noticed that further efforts were required in order to integrate Roma into society and underlined the need to cooperate with the representatives of Roma in order to achieve rapid progress in terms of access of Roma to housing, health care, education and work. She also asked for more resolute action against racist violence against Roma and immigrants from third countries.

The full text of the press release is available at:
http://www.bmaa.gv.at/view.php3?f_id=12777&LNG=de&version=

Joaquín Cortés defiende que los gitanos no son una minoría en Europa, “somos una mayoría de 15 millones”

21 de marzo de 2007

El bailarín y coreógrafo regresa a Madrid con 'Mi soledad' después de acudir en noviembre al Parlamento Europeo para defender los derechos de su pueblo

El bailarín y coreógrafo Joaquín Cortés regresa a Madrid con el espectáculo *Mi soledad* después de acudir en noviembre al Parlamento Europeo para defender los derechos del pueblo gitano, sobre el que hoy afirmó: "No somos una minoría en Europa, somos una mayoría de 15 millones". Cortés se presenta del 28 de marzo al 15 de abril en el Teatro Gran Vía, un regreso a Madrid por partida doble, pues vuelve con *Mi soledad*, que presentó hace un año en el Palacio de Vistalegre, y se sube a un teatro de la ciudad, algo que no ocurría desde hace cinco años.

"Siempre te apetece volver a casa. Madrid es donde me he criado, en el barrio de Lavapiés, y quería reencontrarme con mi público, mis amigos y mi familia en un teatro, algo que me trae muchos recuerdos de mis orígenes en un tablao. Voy a estar muy cerca del público", aclaró el bailarín y coreógrafo.

El diez por ciento de la recaudación de la taquilla de esta temporada se destinará a ayudar al pueblo romaní en Kosovo, a través de la Fundación Cultural Joaquín Cortés, el primer paso en los proyectos que tiene el coreógrafo, quien quiere colaborar con el Parlamento Europeo para hacer programas en el futuro de apoyo a los gitanos.

Cortés visitó el Parlamento Europeo el pasado mes de noviembre, donde defendió los derechos de su pueblo y se entrevistó con diversas personalidades y eurodiputados. "Es una lástima la imagen que hay de mi cultura, los gitanos no son gente que roba", declaró el artista, quien insistió en que "lo más importante es dar otra imagen del pueblo gitano", donde hay profesionales y artistas de los que no se habla, que son "invisibles".

Fuente: Estrella Digital

<http://www.estrelladigital.es/a1.asp?sec=cul&fech=21/03/2007&name=cortes#>

Czech Republic

UN Demands Results on Racism in the Czech Republic

19 March 2007

The UN has just let the Czech government know, loud and clear, that it is failing in the basic job of preventing racial discrimination - and the country had better start cleaning up its act quick.

The recommendations made last week by the UN Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) to the Czech government are significant not only because of their lack of "wiggle room", but because they require the government to report back to the Committee within *one year* - instead of the usual five - on four key areas: adoption of the Anti-Discrimination Act, reparations to victims of coercive sterilization, ending segregated education, and establishing an "institution...to receive complaints of racial discrimination." Human rights advocates now have a significant tool at their disposal for leveraging real change in the near term.

The recommendation to "take strong action, without further delay, to acknowledge the harm done to the victims" of coercive sterilization comes on the heels of last year's recommendations by the UN Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which called for "urgent action to implement the recommendations of the [Czech

Ombudsman” on this issue. Even more importantly, the CERD recommendations emphasize that the harm must be acknowledged regardless of when it occurred, whether before 1991 as part of state policy to promote sterilization as birth control or afterwards when that policy was rescinded. The irreversible effects on the victims, after all, have been the same regardless of when their rights were violated.

CERD not only told the government it is failing in its obligations concerning Roma people’s disproportionate vulnerability to evictions - as last year’s removal of Roma families from the town of Vsetin demonstrates - but rebuked the government’s attempt to excuse itself: “The Committee reminds the State party that it may not invoke the provisions of its internal law as a justification for its failure to implement the Convention [on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination]... .” In other words, the executive branch cannot plead “municipal autonomy” as the reason it has not protected the right to housing for the most vulnerable on its territory.

The Committee also reported that the Czech Republic “does not seem to fully acknowledge” the existence of segregated education in the country, and that is putting it mildly. Being forced into the European Court for Human Rights over this issue - a final verdict on the matter will be issued by the Grand Chamber this summer - seems to have provoked deep hostility at the Ministry. When in Geneva for the government’s testimony to the Committee, I was amazed to hear the Czech Education Ministry representative insist that the Czech education system has “never been segregated” and that its “conscience is clear” in this respect, despite a decade of reports that approximately 70 % of Roma children in the Czech Republic are maneuvered into “special schools” for remedial education. It got even worse when the representative went on to speak in stereotypical terms of the Roma’s “talent for singing and dancing.” Unfortunately, this particular official’s approach is the norm, and her performance at the UN was a graphic example of how many in charge of developing policy here simply do not understand racism and discrimination or why they are deleterious to democracy. There is indeed an educational gap to fill here, and it is at the ministerial level.

CERD’s recommendations regarding neo-Nazi concerts on Czech territory are also welcome guidance. The Committee’s meaning is crystal clear: Racist concerts are to be “prevented, prosecuted, and punished.” The usual approach of the authorities to gatherings of this sort is to allow them and then analyze them to determine whether they have crossed the line - but human rights conventions and laws do not exist so we can “categorize” various kinds of abuses. They exist to prevent the ills they describe - in this case, racism. The call for a “proactive and vigorous policy to ensure that such concerts do not take place” could not be clearer.

Pressure from this report may have been a factor last Wednesday when PM Topolánek finally said Jiří Čunek - the Regional Development Minister responsible for the Vsetin deportations during his time as mayor there - should leave the government. Even though the PM stopped short of dismissing him outright, the fact that the light bulb of Čunek’s political liability finally became radioactive enough for Topolánek to respond is a welcome sign. The question now is whether he is capable of responding to the UN’s recommendations concerning discrimination in time to make the most of the Czech EU presidency in 2009, when the country will arguably be in the international spotlight in a way it has never been before. It will indeed be difficult for the Czech government to press forward its human rights agenda with regard to Belarus, Cuba, or other totalitarian states without addressing its own human rights failings first, especially such egregious matters as the coercive sterilization of Romani women or its delay in adopting the Anti-Discrimination Act as per its EU obligations.

As UN CERD has just pointed out, the clock is ticking.

Gwendolyn Albert

The author is a member of the Czech Government Human Rights Council representing civil society and Director of Women's Initiatives for the Peacework Development Fund.

Source: Prague Daily Monitor
<http://launch.praguemonitor.com/en/46/opinion/3296/>

The full texts of the CERD and CEDAW recommendations are available at:
<http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cerd/docs/CERD.C.CZE.CO.7.pdf>
<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N06/480/60/PDF/N0648060.pdf?OpenElement>

The full text of the Czech Ombudsman's statement on coercive sterilizations can be downloaded at: <http://www.ochrance.cz/documents/doc1142289721.pdf>

Roms de Vsetin, quelle vie dans la périphérie ?

14 mars 2007

Octobre 2006. Jiri Cunek, chrétien démocrate, actuel vice Premier ministre et ministre de l'Aménagement territorial, est alors maire de la ville de Vsetin dans l'est du pays en Moravie du nord. La municipalité décide le déménagement de familles roms qui habitaient le centre de la ville dans un immeuble en piteux état. Quelques unes de ces familles ont été envoyées dans la région de Jesenice non loin de Vsetin, mais la plupart d'entre elles doivent aller à la périphérie de Vsetin dans des sortes de préfabriqués en tôle. Levée de boucliers des associations Roms et de droit de l'homme. Certains parlent même d'un ghetto rom à l'entrée de Vsetin. Et ces derniers temps, on a beaucoup reparlé de cette situation. La ministre vert sans portefeuille Dzamila Stehlikova a proposé le 19 février dernier d'indemniser ces Roms à hauteur de 1,5 million de couronnes. Proposition refusée par Jiri Cunek, désormais ministre.

Ce qui frappe tout de suite, ce sont les couleurs vives des nouvelles habitations. Rouge feu, jaune, vert. Les deux immeubles en tôle qui sont dressés semble-t-il au milieu de nulle part, se voient de loin. Nous sommes à deux kilomètres du centre de Vsetin sur les hauteurs de la ville. Les voitures vont et viennent sans cesse et peu de bus desservent l'endroit. Une femme âgée dit qu'elle doit aller faire ses courses à pieds au centre alors qu'elle a des problèmes de jambes. Les enfants jouent en face des habitations entre un terrain vague et un parking. Quand on pose la question aux jeunes Roms qui bavardent au milieu des voitures s'ils ont des bonnes conditions de logements, la réponse semble aller de soi...

« Bien sûr que nous ne sommes pas contents, c'est vraiment pas bien ici. Ma chambre ne me satisfait pas du tout. Ce n'est qu'un container ici, en fait c'est pourri. Il fait froid, c'est mal isolé. Ce n'est fait pour y vivre ou y habiter. Et en plus c'est cher. »

A l'intérieur, c'est effectivement le manque d'isolation que l'on remarque. Tout résonne dans les escaliers, les murs, c'est de la tôle. Et dans les appartements, au premier abord, cela semble propre et plutôt confortable. Mais en plein hiver, les familles qui y vivent voient les choses autrement. Comme Adela, 20 ans, qui vit là depuis quatre mois avec les six autres membres de sa famille dans un petit F2:

« Ici il fait toujours froid. La petite est toujours malade. Et c'est petit pour nous tous. Et sur le mur, ça prend l'humidité, donc c'est tout moisi et donc ça sent mauvais. Avant on habitait vers l'hôpital au centre. C'était bien, j'étais habituée. J'y ai vécu 18 ans avec mes parents.. »

Les 210 habitants environ des immeubles se font discrets sur le prix exact qu'ils payent. Mais chez Adela, le loyer atteint plus de 7000 couronnes, sans les charges. Un prix élevé pour ce type de logement à Vsetin.

Un peu à l'écart à derrière les deux bâtiments se dressent une partie des locaux de l'association Diakona. Une association qui organise des actions notamment pour les personnes âgées mais vient aussi en aide aux Roms pour favoriser leur intégration. Notamment en organisant des activités pour les jeunes.

Dan Zarsky en est son directeur. Le terme de ghetto pour l'endroit ne le dérange pas. Pour lui ghetto désigne un lieu où vivent des personnes de même condition. Et s'il trouve la situation complexe, pour autant le logement proposé vaut mieux que le précédent.

« Ces appartements sont très petits pour beaucoup de locataires. La surface n'est pas grande bien sûr. Ce n'est pas optimal. Je crains que malgré tout les gens s'y habituent et s'y sentent de mieux en mieux. Mais je dois dire qu'ici sous plusieurs aspects c'est beaucoup mieux qu'avant. Par exemple là-bas, ils avaient une douche pour quinze personnes. Ici chaque appartement en a une. Ils ont l'électricité, l'eau et même la télévision. Donc oui cela s'est amélioré. »

Et le directeur de Diakona à Vsetin insiste sur une difficulté propre à la ville qui ralentit l'intégration de ces populations:

« Cette situation est nouvelle pour les familles roms comme pour nous. Simplement parce qu'avant on ne pouvait pas travailler avec l'ensemble de la communauté. Mais si vous voulez mon avis, ce sera pire encore car il est difficile de trouver une solution pour intégrer ces personnes. En partie parce que contrairement au reste de la République tchèque, à Vsetin, les enfants parlent principalement la langue romani avant d'aller à l'école. »

La solution de ces logements en tôle annoncée comme temporaire semble vouloir perdurer. Et dans le centre de Vsetin, les anciens logements des Roms ont été rasés. Au grand dam de ces familles qui y ont vécu une grande partie de leur vie. Et la bataille interne au gouvernement sur la question de l'indemnisation montre combien cette question reste délicate.

Luc Camilleri

Source: Czech Radio 7, Radio Prague
<http://www.radio.cz/fr/article/89308>

France

Pour la Halde, le refus de scolarisation d'enfants rom à Béziers est discriminatoire 14 mars 2007

Le maire UMP de Béziers, Raymond Couderc a refusé de scolariser 14 enfants rom dans une de ses écoles primaires. Dans un courrier adressé à la Haute Autorité de lutte contre les discriminations et pour l'égalité (Halde), il a motivé son refus par "un problème de domiciliation des familles de ces enfants sur le territoire communal". Selon la mairie, ces familles résideraient sur un terrain inondable. "Compte tenu du risque encouru", le maire avait déclaré ne pas pouvoir prendre de mesure "de nature à encourager la pérennisation de leur implantation". "Les réglementations concernant l'inscription à l'école et celles relatives à l'urbanisme et la sécurité publique sont nettement distinctes. Cette situation caractérise un détournement de pouvoir", souligne la Halde dont la délibération a été diffusée par la Cimade. Puisque le refus ne vise que les enfants rom, il est "discriminatoire", a encore estimé la Halde. Le 1er septembre 2006, deux familles avaient déposé un référé auprès du tribunal administratif de Montpellier : à travers des ordonnances du 25 septembre et 20 novembre 2006, celui-ci avait suspendu les décisions de refus de scolarisation. Après un pourvoi en cassation rejeté le maire s'est finalement conformé à l'obligation de scolarisation.

Source : Localitis.info

Un mort, deux blessés dans un bidonville à Saint-Denis

13 mars 2007

Rom . Un incendie d'origine accidentelle a fait un mort et deux blessés graves ce week-end, à Saint-Denis (Seine-Saint-Denis).

« Les trois jeunes hommes s'étaient retrouvés samedi soir dans la cabane de la victime pour faire la fête », raconte Joan Rodriguez, responsable de l'association Coup de main, qui travaille depuis plusieurs années en région parisienne auprès des populations rom. Selon les premiers éléments de l'enquête, ces jeunes, originaires de Roumanie et résidant dans le bidonville de la rue André-Campra, à Saint-Denis (Seine-Saint-Denis), avaient consommé de l'alcool. Ils n'auraient pas vu le feu partir d'une bougie, précise la police. La cabane s'est rapidement embrasée, détruisant une trentaine d'abris de fortune. Ldes victimes, âgée approximativement de vingt-cinq ans, a succombé à ses blessures. Les deux autres sont dans un état grave, le pronostic vital de l'une d'elles, brûlée à 50 %, étant engagé.

« Les conditions de vie sur le camp sont déplorables. Il n'y a ni eau, ni sanitaires, ni électricité, ni ramassage des poubelles, qui s'entassent, depuis un an, en plus de la ferraille récupérée pour être revendue. C'est une situation très difficile à gérer », explique Joan Rodriguez.

« Ce drame est la conséquence du refus de l'État de prendre ses responsabilités dans l'accueil des Rom en Île-de-France », affirme la mairie de Saint-Denis qui dit avoir « averti, comme d'autres communes, et à plusieurs reprises, le ministère de l'Intérieur ainsi que les préfets régionaux et départementaux. Un groupe de travail devait être mis en place en 2003 par le préfet de la Seine-Saint-Denis. Nous sommes en 2007, il ne s'est toujours pas réuni ! » déplore la commune qui affirme ne plus pouvoir « faire face seule à cette situation ». Cinq camps de Rom sont identifiés sur Saint-Denis. Celui de la rue André-Campra rassemblait entre 200, selon la police, et 500 personnes, d'après Joan Rodriguez.

« Le terrain sur lequel le camp est installé appartient à RFF, précise la mairie. Une décision de justice, datant d'octobre dernier, a prononcé l'expulsion du lieu avec concours de la force publique. Le problème, c'est que la préfecture a, jusqu'à aujourd'hui, refusé de la faire exécuter car il aurait fallu qu'elle trouve une solution de relogement. Mais dans la mesure où elle considère que ces populations sont des touristes »...

Cyrille Poy

Source: L'humanité

http://www.humanite.presse.fr/popup_print.php3?id_article=847602

Germany/Romania

Deported Roma asylum seeker commits suicide after five years at Bucharest airport

In 2002, the Mogos family had been forcibly repatriated from Germany on the basis of a readmission agreement between Germany and Romania and refused to leave the airport.

In 2003, the European Roma Right Centre brought the case to the attention of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human rights:

http://lists.errc.org/publications/legal/CRC-Germany_Dec_2004.doc

The case was also brought to the European Court for Human Rights:
<http://www.echr.coe.int/Eng/Press/2005/Oct/ChamberjudgmentMogovRomania131005.htm>
<http://www.echr.coe.int/fr/Press/2005/oct/Arr%C3%AAtdechambreMogoscRoumanie131005.htm>

Bukarest: Abgeschobener staatenloser Rumäne begeht Selbstmord

17. März 2007

Ein vor fünf Jahren aus Deutschland abgeschobener staatenloser Rumäne hat sich in Bukarest das Leben genommen. Er lebte seit der Abschiebung seiner Familie in der so genannten neutralen Zone des dortigen Flughafens.

Bukarest - Marin Mogos, der mit seiner Frau und zwei Kindern im Transitzentrum des internationalen Flughafens lebte, habe sich in einem Zimmer mit einem Drahtseil erhängt, berichtete die rumänische Nachrichtenagentur Mediafax.

Die Familie Mogos hatte gegen ihre Abschiebung beim Europäischen Gerichtshof für Menschenrechte in Straßburg geklagt, doch war die Klage 2004 abgewiesen worden. Seit ihrer Abschiebung hatte es die Familie abgelehnt, rumänischen Boden zu betreten und lebte daher in der so genannten neutralen Zone des Flughafens. In Straßburg hatte Mogos den rumänischen Staat unter anderem wegen Verweigerung des Rechts auf Bewegungsfreiheit verklagt. Das Gericht befand aber, dass niemand die Familie daran hindere, das Transitzentrum zu verlassen. Die Familie gehört zu mehreren hundert Rumänen, die in den 90er Jahren nach Deutschland gezogen waren und dort die rumänische Staatsbürgerschaft abgelegt hatten, ohne aber danach in Deutschland eingebürgert zu werden. Dennoch wurden viele von diesen Staatenlosen nach Rumänien abgeschoben, nachdem Bukarest sich bereit erklärt hatte, sie wieder aufzunehmen. Das entsprechende deutsch-rumänische Abkommen sah aber vor, dass diese Rückkehr in die Heimat auf freiwilliger Basis der Betroffenen erfolgen sollte.

Quelle: Die Zeit

<http://www.zeit.de/news/artikel/2007/03/17/96183.xml>

Sinucidere în centrul de tranzit al Aeroportului Henry Coandă

17 martie 2007

A renunțat la cetățenia română, a trăit cinci ani într-o cămăruță dintr-un aeroport, iar în această dimineață și-a luat viața.

Este povestea tragică a unui apatrid care, după ce a fost expulzat din Germania, a trăit împreună cu familia în centrul de tranzit al Aeroportului Internațional Henry Coandă. Bărbatul a refuzat să reprimească cetățenia română, în speranța că se va putea întoarce în Germania. A dat în judecată statul român și a pierdut toate procesele.

Marin Mogoș a fost găsit spânzurat în această dimineață. Eforturile medicilor de a-l resuscita au fost inutile. S-a stins după cinci ani trăiți într-o cămăruță, fără a mai fi demult cetățeanul vreunei țări.

Rudele bărbatului și-au vărsat disperarea asupra personalului Centrului de Tranzit din Aeroportul Henry Coandă.

Marin Mogoș, soția lui și doi dintre copiii au fost expulzați din Germania încă din martie 2002. Deși ar fi putut oricând să primească din nou cetățenia română și să intre în țară, au preferat să trăiască în centrul de tranzit, în speranța că se vor putea reîntoarce în Germania. Familia

Mogoş a reclamat statul român la Curtea Europeană a Drepturilor Omului pentru tratamente inumane sau degradante, încălcarea dreptului la libertate și siguranță, a dreptului la libera circulație și a celui de a nu fi supus la un tratament discriminatoriu. A pierdut toate procesele. Acum familia lui intenționează să dea statul român în judecată pentru crimă.

Sursa: Pro Tv

<http://www.protv.ro/stiri/social/sinucidere-in-centrul-de-tranzit-al-aeroportului-henry-coanda.html>

Serbia/Kosovo

Haxhi Zylfi Merxha re-elected at the head of the Rromani party

20 March 2007

The Unified Rromani Party of Kosovo held its elections assembly on 18th of March 2007 in Prizren. Mr. Haxhi Zylfi Merxha was reelected at the head of the party.

Prizren. The Unified Rromani Democratic Party of Kosovo held its presidium's election meeting in Prizren. The delegates discussed three items of the agenda. At the beginning of the meeting Mr. Haxhi Sylfi Merxha was presented as the unique candidate at the presidency of the party and was elected unanimously by the participants.

The assembly then proceeded with the election of the 11 local delegates of the party. The candidates were elected as heads of the local branches of the Unified Rromani Party of Kosovo. The third item of the agenda highlighted the difficult situation of the Rroms in Kosovo, especially in terms of economic situation and unemployment.

Answering the questions, Mr. Merxha declared among others: "We should work together for the education of our children. Education is the only way through which we could achieve progress. We believe that in September Kosovo will obtain full independence, something that we, the Rroms, wish as well. As Kosovars, we want to lead Kosovo by ourselves, without the international presence".

He further answered questions on the return of refugees: "No European country will deplace Rroms by force. We will protect them. Only those Rroms who wish to do so can return to Kosovo, but we have to guarantee work, integration in Kosovar society and normal living conditions". Mr. Zafir Berisha, from the Democratic Party of Kosovo, an ancient commander of the Kosovo Liberation Army, attended the meeting as a guest.

Rroms from Northern Kosovo and those from the enclaves, areas where a large part of the Rromani population is living today, was not present at the meeting.
Kujtim Pacaku

Source: Nevipe Kosov@/Courier des Balkans

http://rroma.courriers.info/spip.php?page=article&id_article=242&lang=en

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 Toraue
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.

Part-time assistants on Social Cohesion and Culture

The European Roma and Travellers Forum is looking for part-time assistants to support the work of its directorates for Social Cohesion (Romania) and Culture (Poland).

Under the direction of the directors of the directorates the assistants will be in charge of following up on any important developments in their field and assure a smooth communication flow between the directorates, the Forum's delegates and the Forum's central offices. They will also support the directors in administrative tasks and provide logistic support to the organisation of meetings.

Minimum requirements:

- Undergraduate studies in a relevant field such as social sciences, law or economics
- Good knowledge and experience on Roma issues
- Experience in drafting and writing of reports
- Administrative and logistic skills
- Good knowledge of English and Romani compulsory

The positions are on a consultancy basis (300 Euros per month) and do not constitute a full-time employment.

Interested persons should send their application (letter of motivation plus CV) to the

ERTF Secretariat at: ertf@ertf.org

For further information:
European Roma and Travellers Forum
Tel.: + 33 3 90 21 53 50

Established in 2004, the European Roma and Travellers Forum is the European-level Roma interest representation which gathers Roma 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 any 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.