



European Roma and Travellers Forum
c/o Council of Europe
F - 67 075 Strasbourg
Tel.: + 33 3 90 21 53 50
Fax: + 33 3 90 21 44 34
e-mail: ertf@ertf.org
www.ertf.org

ERTF Update

07/2007

02.04.07

Political Developments

European Roma and Travellers Forum

Stop Singling out Roma for Birth Control, ERTF Says (Press release)

Strasbourg, 28 March 2007: On the occasion of the organisation by the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) of an international conference called “Sharing best practices and tools in addressing the sexual and reproductive rights of the Roma” in Bratislava, the president of the European Roma and Travellers Forum, Rudko Kawczynski expressed concerns about the Federation’s plans and motives.

“I am utmost disgusted that IPPF had to choose Slovakia for the implementation of one of their pilot projects and as a place for today’s venue,” Rudko Kawczynski said reminding that Slovakia had just been under attacks over alleged forced sterilisations of Romani women and that the cases have still not been sufficiently clarified.

“Choosing Slovakia as a place for this conference and not even mentioning the irremediable damage done to Romani women and communities comes as an implicit approval of these policies,” Kawczynski said.

While specifying that he was not opposed to sexual education and family planning the president of the European Roma and Travellers Forum said that this should take place in the context of mainstreaming such as information about contraceptives being provided at schools.

“The racist character of this initiative becomes immediately apparent if you replace the word ‘Roma’ by ‘Jews’ or any other group. A programme aimed towards improving the access to contraceptives for the Hungarian minority in Slovakia would immediately provoke an outcry. If the same is done for Romani people almost everyone agrees that something needs to be done about their ‘uncontrolled’ growth,” Kawczynski said.

The aim of the conference was described by the organisers as “to define mechanisms, share experiences and best practices from different initiatives which could provide a basis for policymakers and civil society to address the needs and to promote the rights of Roma people.” More specifically, the organisers wanted to share the experiences of two pilot projects carried out in Slovakia and Hungary in the context of IPPF “Roma project” aimed “at providing accessible and high quality sexual and reproductive health services and sexuality education for Roma and other marginalized groups.”

The projects seem to receive funding from the European Commission.

The International Planned Parenthood Federation has been criticised for its close ties with the international eugenic movement. In 1939, the founder of the organisation, Margaret Sanger launched two “demonstration programs” in America’s south aimed to promote family planning among the black population. Sanger described the aims of the “Negro project” as follows: “We believe birth control knowledge brought to this group, is the most direct, constructive aid that can be given them to improve their immediate situation.” (Margaret Sanger, July 1939)

Spoločnosť pre plánované rodičovstvo, the Slovak partner of IPPF and implementing agency of the project, describes its rationale as follows: „The so-called Roma problem in Slovakia has a historical, cultural and social background extending beyond territorial boundaries of Slovakia. ... According to the analyses made at the meetings mentioned above, the high natality is one of the reasons why the existing situation is deteriorated. The high birthrate and multiparity result in children not being provided with health care, not obtaining adequate education and later in their lives, they are not able to acquit themselves well on the increasingly demanding labour market. A vicious circle arises, which continues to expand and brings about growing tension in the society.“

In the same way as the “Negro project”, IPPF’s Roma projects rely on the active support of so-called community leaders.

Kawczynski called on the EU Commission not to finance projects which single out Roma for birth control. “It is an irony that at a time where everyone is concerned about Europe’s declining population, Roma are singled out for programmes of population control. Instead of eliminating poverty these programmes seek to eliminate the poor, in particular, Roma.”

“Common wisdom teaches us that there is a close link between the material situation of a family and the number of children they have. If people increase their material well-being they tend to have fewer children. Roma are not any different from this,” the president of the European Roma and Travellers Forum said urging policy-makers to take resolute action to improve the living conditions of Roma.

The European Roma and Travellers Forum is the international 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.

Information about the conference:

<http://www.socialplatform.org/Events.asp?event=12285>

[http://cms.horus.be/files/99907/MediaArchive/Events/External_events/Agenda_Roma%20Conference%20\(IPPF%20EN\)_28-29March.pdf](http://cms.horus.be/files/99907/MediaArchive/Events/External_events/Agenda_Roma%20Conference%20(IPPF%20EN)_28-29March.pdf)

For further information about the “Negro Project” by the American Planned Parenthood Federation:

<http://www.plannedparenthood.org/about-us/who-we-are/margaret-sanger-planned-parenthood-founder.htm>

About the “Roma project” in Slovakia:

<http://www.rodicovstvo.sk/> (see: Strategic Plan 2005 - 2008)

About coercive sterilisations of Romani women in Slovakia:

http://www.reproductiverights.org/pub_bo_slovakia.html#report

www.csce.gov/index.cfm?Fuseaction=Files.Download&FileStore_id=647

Holocaust Memorial: German Government should not play out different victims against each other (Press release)

Strasbourg, 27 March 2007: Against the backdrop of the ongoing discussions surrounding the inscription of the planned central Holocaust memorial for Romani victims in Berlin, the president of the European Roma and Travellers Forum, Rudko Kawczynski, reiterated his demands to the German government to start with the quick realisation of the project.

“It is about time for Germany to finally take over its historic responsibility towards Sinti and Roma and start with the quick implementation of the planned project,” the president of the organisation, which represents the Romani interests at European level, said.

Regarding the demands of other groups of victims, Kawczynski said that he is well aware that the Nazis persecuted everyone who did not fit into their idea about a “true German”. “What is however particular about the persecution of Sinti and Roma is the fact that they were persecuted on racial grounds just as the Jews and persons of African descent,” Kawczynski said. “The National-Socialists created a whole science in order to determine the racial characteristics of the Roma. In contrast to the Jews even a person who had only one Rom among her grandparents was considered as a ‘gypsy half-breed’ and included into the extermination program of the National-Socialists,” Kawczynski explained.

As an outstanding example for the racist character of the National-Socialist persecution of Roma the president of the European Roma and Travellers Forum quoted the example of Sidonie Adlersburg, who was tracked down as a ten-year old at the house of her foster parents by the Austrian social services in 1943 and brought to her biological parents in Auschwitz, where she died shortly afterwards.

On these grounds Kawczynski supported the position of the German Federal Council of Sinti and Roma, who insists on the inscription to the memorial proposed by former German President, Roman Herzog, “The genocide against Sinti and Roma was carried for the same motives of the racial delusion, with the same determination and will to achieve a regular and complete extermination [of the Sinti and Roma] as it was done for the Jews.”

“I feel that the German Government consciously exploits the existing disagreement between different groups of victims in order not to become active,” Kawczynski said.

Over the last year, the European Roma and Travellers Forum has written repeatedly to the German Government and offered its mediation in the discussion about the inscription of the memorial. Last winter, the organization even offered to build a memorial under its own direction. Until today, the German Government has not reacted to this proposal.

The European-level interest representation finds an additional legitimacy of its approach in the fact that the genocide of the Sinti and Roma was not only an “inner-German affair”. “Most Roma who were murdered in the name of the National Socialist ideology lived outside Germany,” Kawczynski said. For this reason he considers it as an insult that the German federal government publicly dismissed the offer of his organization in her answer to a parliamentary question of the German Green party.

Europe celebrates its 50th birthday: For Roma no time to party (Press release)

Strasbourg, 25 March 2007: On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome which has laid the groundwork for the common Europe, the president of the European Roma and Travellers Forum, Rudko Kawczynski, said that for Roma Europe was still to be realised.

“Today, Europe celebrates, and as a genuinely European people which has suffered so much from wars in Europe Roma would be fools if they would not support the European idea.”, Kawczynski said. He pointed out that the European Union and the Commission as its executive arm have contributed a lot to improving the living conditions of Roma in the former communist states, but he underlined that still much has to be done until full equality is achieved.

“We are today witnessing the absurd situation where people have many rights on paper, but no means to actually achieve them,” Kawczynski said underlining that Roma are often unaware about their rights or the possibilities to report abuses. He also pointed out that the EU has created new divisions between Roma who are members of EU countries and those who are not.

The president of the European Roma and Travellers Forum quoted the cold welcome made to Roma refugees from the new member states. “As a result of their country becoming member of the EU, Roma are immediately forcibly repatriated even if everyone is aware that discrimination and Human rights violations against Roma continue unabated.”, he added.

Rudko Kawczynski also pointed out at the suicide of Marin Mogos, a deported Roma refugee, at the Bucharest airport where he had been staying five years out of fear of persecution in Romania. “It is a particular irony that this man died at the moment, when his country entered into the European Union and a few days ahead the celebrations.”, the president of the European Roma and Travellers Forum commented.

International Organisations

UN

UN Secretary General Submits Kosovo Report to Security Council

On 26 March 2007, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon conveyed the “Report of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-general on Kosovo’s Future Status” and the “Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo status settlement to the UN Security Council.

The documents include provisions on the “Rights of communities”. Accordingly, Roma together with other languages shall have the status of “languages in official use” (as opposed to the official languages of Kosovo which shall be Albanian and Serbian).

The proposal for the Kosovo constitution foresees Kosovo should “establish the constitutional, legal and institutional mechanisms for the promotion of the rights of all members of Communities and effective participation in political and decision-making processes”.

Minority communities shall have 20 reserved seats in the Kosovo Assembly of which one is reserved for Roma.

Other provisions regarding the rights of minorities concern education, police and justice. As most of these provisions such as the right to receive public education in their own language establish a threshold they will most likely have no effect for Roma and other, smaller minorities.

Many of the provisions do “focus ... on the particular needs and concerns of the Kosovo Kosovo Serb community, which shall have a high controlover its own affairs.” This includes the right to establish its own municipalities which will have “enhanced municipal competencies”. This includes a large autonomy in the field of education, police and public health. None of this is foreseen for Kosovo’s smaller communities including the Roma.

The documents are available at:

<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N07/272/23/PDF/N0727223.pdf?OpenElement>

<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N07/279/01/IMG/N0727901.pdf?OpenElement>

Reports

NGOs

Human Rights Watch

Human Rights Problems Facing Romani Women in Serbia Brought to the Attention of the UN Women’s Rights Committee

Budapest, Belgrade, March 22, 2007: The European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC), acting in partnership with Bibija, Eureka and Women’s Space, non-governmental organisations based in Serbia, submitted a parallel report to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The organisations highlighted issues of concern with respect to Romani women in Serbia in advance of the Committee’s review of Serbia’s compliance with the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women to take place in May 2007.

The report is based on research undertaken by the partners in 2006 and 2007, involving six Romani women researchers who documented human rights issues facing Romani women in Serbia. Deprivation of rights, especially in such areas as education, health care, and employment, incidence of domestic violence as well as racially-motivated abuse of Romani women, are amongst the main problems experienced by Romani women in Serbia. Romani women currently living in Serbia as internally displaced persons (IDPs) from Kosovo or recently returned to Serbia from Western European countries, Germany in particular, are exposed to particularly precarious circumstances.

The full report is available in English at the website of the European Roma Rights Centre:
<http://www.errc.org/db/02/1A/m0000021A.zip>.

International Helsinki Federation

World Report 2007

The International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights has just released its World Report 2007 covering events from 2006. "The 'Annual Report' focuses mainly on the state of civil and political rights in 39 of the 56 OSCE participating states, paying particular attention to developments in Central Asia, the Russian North Caucasus region, and Belarus, which are the IHF priority regions in 2006-7."

On five pages the situation of Roma in the OSCE region is highlighted.

The report is available for download at:

http://www.ihf-hr.org/documents/doc_summary.php?sec_id=3&d_id=4387

Survey on ethnic discrimination in Poland

The Polish section of the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights has just released a report on racial and ethnic discrimination in Poland. The report notes:

„Of the national and ethnic minorities residing in Poland, the situation of the Roma is most difficult. This group has an approximately 90% level of unemployment, which results in poverty, lack of medical care and generally bad living conditions. As a group, the Roma have the lowest level of education. Assistance programs implemented over the last few years have been improving the situation to a certain degree. However, more time is needed to bear out more quantifiable results of these programs (e.g. such as increased employment).

Unfortunately, instances of impermissible discrimination against the Roma by authorities still occur. Officials of gmina (county) Limanowa used funds from the government program for the Roma community to build a water supply system. However, water was not connected to Roma homes. Officials assumed the Roma would not pay for the water, so they did not build the connections.“

The report is available at: <http://www.hfhrpol.waw.pl/en/>

UNITED

UNITED for Intercultural Action, the European network against nationalism, racism, fascism and in support of migrants and refugees, has published its updated: "List of 8855 documented refugee deaths through 'Fortress Europe'".

http://www.unitedagainstracism.org/pdfs/actual_listofdeath.pdf

15 victims are identified as Roma.

The report does not include the 36 Roma refugees from Kosovo who died on 20 August 26, 1999 when their ship sank in the Adriatic

http://lists.errc.org/rr_nr3_1999/snap03.shtml

as well as of Marin Mogos who committed suicide in the transit zone of the Bucharest airport on 18 March 2007:

http://www.gardianul.ro/2007/03/19/linia_fierbintec5/un_apatrid_s_a_sinucis_ca_sa_nu_traiasca_in_rom_nia-s91730.html

News digest

Countries

Bulgaria

Bulgaria's Media and the Roma: Objectivity and stereotypes don't go hand in hand

2 April 2007

Ahead of April 8, World Day of the Roma, YANA MOYSEEVA examines the depiction of the Roma minority in the Bulgarian-language media.

On June 16 2006, an article in Bulgarian-language top circulation daily Trud read: "Two Roma men abducted a young girl". Headlines such as this are a common sight in Bulgarian tabloids like Trud. Three pages on, another article said that as of June 19, people would be able to send complaints to the ethics commissions of the electronic and print media if they had been offended by a media report. Trud is one of many broadcast and print media that have signed the Bulgarian media code of ethics. By having done so, one of the undertakings made was: "Respecting the right of everyone to live in safety, we will not publish any materials provoking or aggravating hatred, violence and any form of discrimination (article 2.5, paragraph 2.5.1 of the code). We will not specify the racial, religious, ethical background, sexual orientation, mental or physical condition, if these facts have no importance to the meaning of the information (article 2.5, paragraph 2.5.2 of the code)."

There is an obvious contradiction in the actions of this newspaper. On one page, it informs its readers of their new rights to report offensive material, when just three pages earlier it had specified the ethnic background of someone who allegedly had committed a crime. Inclusion of the detail appears to be a clear breach of article 2.5, paragraph 2.5.2 of the code of ethics that his/her paper had signed.

The incident is typical of the contradictions within many Bulgarian media - the desire to inform is there, but the skills to do so properly, not quite. Some Bulgarian media - mostly print - are serious cases in this respect.

After 44 years of a totalitarian regime, in 1989 Bulgaria pronounced itself a democracy. As in any other democratic country, freedom of speech was one of the most welcomed aspects of such a political system. But the media in Bulgaria adopted a somewhat twisted understanding of this concept. After almost half a century of communist-restricted media, journalists found themselves in a position where they could say absolutely anything. At the same time, there was no fear of the consequences either, given that there was little formal control of what was being said. Journalists who up to that point had a list of subjects deemed suitable for public airing, stepped into democracy with little knowledge of the obligations and responsibilities which free speech carries in established Western democracies. Balance,

objectivity and self-control meant little.

With the attraction of novelty, tabloids such as 24 Chassa and Trud became extremely popular thanks to sensationalistic techniques and “outrageous headlines ungarnished by facts”, in the phrase of post-communist media critic Bryon Scott. Journalists discovered a successful formula for selling copies and sales were all that mattered. The Roma minority, who suffered most heavily the economic consequences of the new system, soon became tsganite (the gypsies) in the media and the perception of them as a thorn in the side of society was aggravated. Headlines of the type “a Roma killed”, “a Roma raped” echoed the resonance of hate speech.

Some Bulgarian media, predominantly print, continue to rely on such sensationalistic headlines. As the Trud example demonstrates, publications regularly and tendentiously emphasise the ethnic background of a person where this has no relevance to the story. At the same time, when a crime has been committed by a non-Roma Bulgarian, headlines say something along the lines of “a man killed...” or “a man raped...” without specifying ethnic identity. In such cases sometimes it is hard not to ask oneself what is more important - that a man has been killed, or that the person who killed him was a Roma? The problem is being “ethnicised”, when it is in fact purely social.

The issue of hate speech, or language that promotes racism, discrimination and negative stereotypes, is constantly raised by human rights activists inside and outside Bulgaria. With very few exceptions, Roma people are usually portrayed as “the villains”. To Bulgarians, Roma are portrayed solely as people who steal, beg, attack, rape, kill, fight and sell drugs. Says Tema magazine journalist Kalin Purvanov, “the media simply multiply what people say about [the Roma] in everyday life. By this they don’t necessarily mean to incite further bad feelings, but they don’t do anything to refute the opinion either”.

So who monitors the language of the media and makes sure that there is at least some kind of balance in media reports? The answer is everyone and no one. The Ethics Code of the Bulgarian Media, The Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria, The Penal Code, the Commission for Electronic Media (CEM), The Commission for Protection against Discrimination, The Anti-Discrimination Act - they all are supposed to sanction incorrect used of language. But in reality, hardly any of these are ever seen to work.

According to Roma journalist Emilia Dancheva of Radio New Europe “if you want to complain of something that you feel personally affected by, you go to the Commission against Discrimination, they potentially take the case to court and then ... nothing happens. If no one yet has been punished, it means that someone is not doing their job properly”. In reality, the enforcement of legal standards in the case of the media, however, is obstructed by difficulty in providing adequate proof. The media get away with saying that a text was not intended as an insult, but on the contrary, provides objective information. No media or journalist has ever been found at fault by any of the existing controlling or legislative organs, according to a 2002 report by the ACCESS Foundation. Since then there have been an abundance of cases showing that the situation remains unchanged.

In the past more than two years, cable television channel Skat gained popularity with programmes like “Ataka” (which became the electronic mouthpiece of what later became the nationalistic party Ataka), “Between the Lines” and “All Bulgarians Together” were two of Skat’s programmes that were criticised for systematic incitement to hatred and ethnic intolerance. A relatively mild example of the language that was used on the shows is referring to the Roma as “the gypsies” and “the swarthy” by Ataka show presenter and later party leader and MP Volen Siderov. He is also known for extremist statements such as “Say NO to the tsganisation (gypsification) of Bulgaria” and “the gypsies are genocide to Bulgaria”.

Skat has been monitored by a number of human rights NGOs like the Bulgarian Helsinki

Committee (BHC) and CEM. CEM is supposed to impose sanctions in cases of hate speech used in the broadcast media. CEM has claimed that Skat has been sanctioned a number of times. But there has been little evidence of these sanctions (whether there were financial fines, orders to offer public apologies, or taking the channel off air for a period of time). The bottom line is that Skat and its programmes are still on air and the repertoire has in fact worsened. The channel continues to openly incite racism and discrimination against certain ethnic groups, such as the Roma and the Turkish minority.

Skat is an extreme example. Most media go as far as pointing out that a crime has been committed by a Roma, which expectedly, and maybe to a great extent subconsciously, creates a completely negative image of the Roma among Bulgarians. The fact that the voice of the Roma people themselves is hardly ever heard in the media does not help, especially of those who are any different to the generally negative stereotype of the Roma.

We hear about the Roma most often when there are bad news stories involving people of Roma origin. There are supposed to be certain journalistic standards about how to write and produce radio and television programmes in a multiethnic society. But generally, most Bulgarian print media condemn the Roma, while the broadcast media tend to be indifferent. Because by statute they are public broadcasters, Bulgarian National Television, and radio programmes Horizont and Hristo Botev are obliged by the Radio and Television Act to have some minority orientated programmes. Nonetheless, profit is a factor for them too, and ratings largely determine programming. Even though some Roma programmes do exist, they are fitted in less popular media outputs (such as Radio Hristo Botev, Radio New Europe, 7 Days TV) and less popular time slots.

Yuliana Metodieva, a journalist for the BHC's Obektiv magazine, says:

"The commercial media work in such a way as to appeal to the majority. What does the majority like? The 'black' Roma who steals and lives off of social benefits and - on the other side - the Bulgarian, who is the better one - an easy way to build up our own (Bulgarian) confidence. Bulgarian media need to realise that the Roma voice, the Roma journalists, and Roma subjects must not be separated. These are European standards."

The situation regarding existing print media for and by Roma is just as bad. Antonina Zhelyazkova of the International Centre for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations (IMIR) claims that there are a number of regional and national Roma newspapers. But practically, such publications are never seen on newspaper kiosks. Vassil Chaprazov, a Roma journalist and publisher of Roma newspaper Drom Dromendar and O Roma magazine, believes such Roma publications are hidden as soon as they are received from the distributor. "My newspaper and magazine only continue to survive because they are sponsored by the Soros foundation," he says.

The thought that someone would not want to even see Roma newspapers alongside Bulgarian papers is ludicrous and yet true. It speaks of a kind of extreme form of racism, which many Bulgarians would deny embracing. In this respect, it is probably not surprising that Roma journalists are so rarely to be seen or heard on mainstream media.

Emilia Dancheva, a Roma journalist at Radio New Europe, says "Everything is based on stereotypes. The Roma are looked at with mistrust, as non-professionals. Even if they want to prove that they too are skilled, the prejudices surrounding them don't allow them to do so." This comes as no surprise as an interview with young Roma students in journalism revealed how nervous they feel about the moment they have to start working in the media.

Hristina Georgieva (18) and her classmates are convinced that when, in a few months time, they take work placements at various media, they will be discriminated against in one way or

another. "Even though people will be nice to us, they will always have this thought in mind 'yes, but... she is Roma' and I know that this will show in one way or another," says Georgieva. But she and her classmates are determined to show all the willpower necessary to break stereotypes.

However, it should be noted that some media no longer rely on the sensationalistic technique to sell. According to the BHC's Metodieva, daily newspapers Dnevnik and Sega are positive examples of commercial print media which do not publish discriminatory texts and do publish more "Roma friendly" items. However, Metodieva says that initially these publications did have to overcome their own reluctance to write alongside Roma journalists. Metodieva says that to start with, this happened through financial persuasion. The World Bank organised a media sponsorship contest where the winning publication would be obliged to have pages where Roma journalists would write about Roma-related issues. As Metodieva says, even if money has to be the driving force (at least to begin with), what is important in due course is for more-objective and non-Roma-hostile texts to gradually become common.

Ivan Bedrov, a journalist at bTV (who is known for being ethnically tolerant) says "in the Bulgarian media now there is everything: just as the 'Roma beat to death a boy' story may be found, other publications give a fair and professional report".

This is an early stage of some kind of success. That some media will continue with sensational, artificial and exaggerated stories, is a fact. But it is vital to increase the number of media who, like bTV, BNT, Radio Hristo Botev, Radio New Europe, Dnevnik and Sega newspapers, offer a fair presentation of the Roma, or any other minority for that matter. The Bulgarian media face the challenge of promoting intercultural programming and "diversity reporting", in order to make media output appealing and suitable for a multicultural audience, such as that in Bulgaria. With help from the media that has already achieved a change of attitude, the image of Roma may eventually improve and with it, the opinions held by Bulgarians.

Yana Moyseeva

Source: The Sofia Echo

http://www.sofiaecho.com/article/reading-room-bulgarias-media-and-the-roma/id_21580/catid_29

Czech Republic

Czech Romanies angered by minister's statements

30 March 2007

Prague- Czech Romany activists are angered by Deputy Prime Minister Jiri Cunek's statements about Romanies and have asked Prime Minister Mirek Topolanek to publicly distance himself from the statements, chairman of the Dzeno association Ivan Vesely told CTK after a meeting of representatives of Romany organisations today.

Romanies are also considering other steps, he said.

In a statement they gave to CTK today representatives of 16 Romany organisations protest against Cunek's statements made in the tabloid daily Blesk today.

Asked whether other people would receive state subsidies similar to those received by Romanies Cunek said: "For this they would have to get sunburnt (alluding to Romanies' colour of skin), make a chaos in their families, put up fires on town squares and only then some politicians would say - they are really miserable people."

Regarding the allegation that most Romanies abuse welfare benefits, Cunek said: "I entered the government in the belief that I will manage to complicate the Czech social welfare system for the people who want to abuse it to such an extent that we will finally see hard-working Romanies."

Apart from Romanies, Cunek also verbally attacked Vietnamese. He told Blesk that the Czech financial police should be more tough and checks at Czech marketplaces should be more frequent.

"The pressure exerted on them is insufficient. We want to de facto eliminate those who push out honest traders from marketplaces," Cunek said.

According to the Romany activists, Cunek has crossed the limits of social acceptability by his statements.

They described his solution to the Romany problems as the "rise of clerical fascism in the Czech Republic."

Vesely said that a politician in advanced countries would have to leave his post for similar statements.

"In a standard democratic countries - Germany, Britain and America - it would not be possible for a deputy prime minister to speak in such a manner. It would be the reason, without any discussions, for the resignation from the government," Vesely said.

According to him, Cunek continues to use the "Vsetin vocabulary" in his government post. Last October, when Cunek was the mayor of the north Moravian town of Vsetin, the town authorities evicted Romanies from a dilapidated tenant house in the centre of the town with most of the families being moved to "container-type" houses at the town edges and the rest were sent to the Jesenik region where they were given several ramshackle houses that Romanies will have to repay for 20 years.

Cunek was sharply criticised for his move by Romanies and human rights activists.

The Czech government Council for Romany Issues recently demanded that Cunek stop working on his Romany integration plan.

"All council members are very concerned that Cunek is dealing with Romany problems. We will exert efforts to bring his activities to a halt. Cunek does not instill trust in any of us. On the contrary, we are very angry," council representatives told CTK this week.

Cunek, who is also local development minister, senator and chairman of the junior government Christian Democrats (KDU-CSL), has been charged by the police with accepting a 500,000-crown bribe in 2002 when he was Vsetin mayor.

The opposition demands his resignation from all government posts, but Topolaneck (Civic Democrats, ODS) said he would not force him to resign.

He added that Cunek, who has pleaded not guilty, would not resign on his own because he considers such a step tantamount to the admission of his guilt.

Source: CTK

http://www.ctk.cz/english/news/english_view.php?id=244573

Night club operator fined for refusing to attend to Romanies

28 March 2007

Olomouc- Jiri Ozdinec, a night club operator in Ostrava, North Moravia, must pay 5,000 Czech crowns as compensation to each of the three Romanies who were deliberately not attended to by the night club staff in 2001, the High Court in Olomouc ruled.

Besides, he has to send a written apology for the staff's conduct to each of them.

The Romanies had filed a complaint over the protection of personality against him as they felt discriminated against and their human dignity was offended.

Originally, the Ostrava regional court adjudged them an apology and a higher, 50,000-crown compensation, but Ozdinec had appealed the verdict.

The Romanies visited the night club along with their friends six years ago. The staff refused to attend to them, claiming that they did not have the club cards, without which they could not enter the night club.

However, shortly after their departure some of their friends who are not Romanies entered the night club without any problems. The non-Romanies did not have any club cards. The police, who came to the scene, found out that none of the guests had a club card.

Source: Ceske Noviny/ČTK

http://www.ceskenoviny.cz/news/index_view.php?id=244121

Czech courts proceed few racial discrimination cases - survey

27 March 2007

Prague- Czech courts proceeded only a handful of racial-motivated discrimination cases from 1989 to 2006 since a majority of similar cases do not reach them at all, it ensues from a survey of the most important lawsuits concerning unequal approach released today.

The survey was made out by five Czech NGOs for the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC).

The survey authors said most of the cases treated concerned access to services and employment, adding that discrimination was usually uncovered with the help of extras from NGOs.

Romanies usually sought protection under the Civic Code or the law on employment because the Czech Republic does not have an anti-discrimination law.

It was to pass it by May 2004 when it was admitted to the EU and it now faces sanctions for insufficient protection against unequal treatment.

The government is now preparing the relevant bill.

The survey contains cases in which Romanies were not allowed to enter discotheques and restaurants, were refused accommodation or a job.

In 2001 NGO activists together with a Romany volunteer filed a criminal complaint against a restaurant whose decoration included the statue of an antique god with a baseball bat and the inscription "For Gypsies."

"The called in policemen made it clear that they consider the matter unnecessary waste of time. They have known of the bat and it has not yet annoyed anyone," the activities wrote. The Romany volunteer filed a personality protection lawsuit against the firm in 2001.

Courts said, however, that the inscription was not pointed against any specific person, and therefore it could not offend the Romany.

The Supreme Court abrogated the verdict and returned the case for reappraisal.

The survey says that this has been the sole court case over racial harassment in services.

Source: Ceske Noviny/ČTK

http://www.ceskenoviny.cz/news/index_view.php?id=243922

France

Les gens du voyage demandent aux candidats d'abroger les lois "discriminatoires"

29 March 2007

Les gens du voyage entrent en campagne à leur tour. A quatre semaines de l'élection présidentielle, la communauté des gens du voyage a interpellé jeudi les candidats pour qu'ils s'engagent à mettre un terme à "l'apartheid juridique" dont ils se disent victimes, visant notamment la loi de 1969 dont ils réclament l'abrogation.

Cette communauté forte "de plus de 500.000 personnes vit dans des conditions inacceptables de discrimination et de rejet aggravées ces dernières années", a déploré lors d'une conférence de presse Michel Mombrun, président de la Fédération nationale des associations solidaires d'action avec les tsiganes et les gens du voyage (FNASAT).

Dressant un bilan sombre du statut des gens du voyage, la FNASAT et les associations présentes (Fondation Abbé Pierre, Ligue des droits de l'homme, La Vie du voyage) ont souligné combien les lois s'appliquant à cette communauté sont "discriminatoires et racistes" et en ont réclamé l'abrogation.

A titre d'exemple, la loi du 3 janvier 1969, "relative à l'exercice des activités ambulantes et au régime applicable aux personnes circulant en France sans domicile ni résidence fixe", leur impose de posséder un document (livret de circulation ou cahier) attestant de leur statut et nécessaire pour leurs démarches administratives, car il les rattache à une commune.

Or, dénoncent-ils, il faut qu'une personne soit présente sur la commune depuis plus de trois années consécutives pour s'inscrire sur les listes électorales et pouvoir voter. Exigé à partir de 16 ans, ce document implique qu'un jeune ne peut pas voter avant 19 ans, a déploré James Dubois, membre de la communauté et président de l'association "Gens du voyage".

"C'est un apartheid juridique", a dénoncé Daniel Botton de la FNASAT, soulignant que la nouvelle loi sur la prévention de la délinquance a aggravé la situation, avec la possibilité pour les préfets d'expulser les caravanes d'un terrain, sans le feu vert de la justice.

En terme d'habitat, les associations demandent aux candidats de reconnaître la caravane comme un logement, ce qui permettraient aux gens du voyage de "bénéficier des droits qui s'y rattachent" et notamment le récent droit opposable au logement, a rappelé M. Mombrun. Et

d'appeler à l'application ferme de la loi Besson de 2000 qui prévoit l'aménagement d'aires d'accueil dans les communes de plus de 5.000 habitants.

Seuls les candidats de la gauche, de l'extrême gauche et du centre ont répondu à ces demandes et les représentants de la socialiste Ségolène Royal et du centriste François Bayrou étaient présents jeudi à la conférence organisée par le collectif. Le maire PS de Bondy Gilbert Roger a martelé qu'il "faut garantir le respect de chaque citoyen", concédant qu'"il y a des efforts à faire".

Dépêchée par François Bayrou, Chérifa Adaïssi, maire adjointe de Blois en charge des relations avec les gens du voyage, a précisé que le candidat de l'UDF est pour la reconnaissance de la caravane comme logement et l'abrogation du livret périodique. "Il faut appliquer le droit commun pour que votre intégration soit réussie", a-t-elle conclu.

Source: AP/Nouvel Observateur

http://tempsreel.nouvelobs.com/depeches/politique/20070329.FAP2782/les_gens_du_voyage_demandent_aux_candidats_dabroger_les.html

Vers l'expulsion des Roms à Boulogne-sur-Mer ?

29 mars 2007

Le maire en a fait la demande au TGI de la ville. Il ne veut pas du campement de tentes qui existe actuellement

Depuis mardi 27 mars, une cinquantaine de personnes originaires de Roumanie campent non loin des anciens abattoirs de la ville d'où ils venaient d'être expulsés. Des travaux de démolition devaient débuter sur place et des propositions de relogement d'urgence ont été formulées aux familles roumaines qui ne les ont pas acceptées.

Démunies, elles se sont donc installées non loin de là sur une petite parcelle d'herbe avec des tentes de camping semblables à celles utilisées par les Enfants de Don Quichotte pour les SDF dans différentes villes de France.

Depuis mardi, le nombre de personnes présentes sur le site aurait tendance à croître. On compterait jusqu'à 80 personnes actuellement, ce qui inquiète le maire de la ville, Frédéric Cuvillier qui assure ne pouvoir leur proposer un logement qui ne soit pas temporaire ou un emploi.

Ce dernier a d'ailleurs fait une demande d'expulsion auprès du tribunal de grande instance de la ville. Administrativement toutefois la décision d'expulsion n'est pas facile à prendre car depuis le 1er janvier 2007, la Roumanie fait partie de l'Union Européenne.

Source : France 3

<http://nord-pas-de-calais-picardie.france3.fr/info/29551925-fr.php>

Germany

Schlägerei am Zirkus: Männer sind polizeibekannt

20. März 2007

Laupheim - Menschen aus der rechtsextremen Szene und eine Zirkusfamilie haben sich am Sonntag eine Schlägerei geliefert. Schauplatz war der obere Festplatz. Die sechs

mutmaßlichen Täter hatten zuvor Flugblätter verteilt und sich als Tierschützer ausgegeben. Die Polizei sucht dringend Zeugen.

Sonntagnachmittag, gegen 14.30 Uhr, in einer halben Stunde beginnt die Vorstellung. Aus der Sicht von Edmund Kaiser junior geschieht in den nächsten Minuten Folgendes: Am Fuß des Festplatzes haben sich mehrere junge Männer aufgestellt, sie verteilen Flugblätter, "Zirkus - Amusement auf Kosten der Tiere" sind sie überschrieben. Die Senior-Chefin ruft die Polizei an. Die Zirkusfamilie sieht ihr Hausrecht verletzt. Mit demonstrierenden Tierschützern habe man es öfter zu tun, sagt Sohn Edmund, aber was dann folgt, ist ihm noch nie untergekommen: Senior-Zirkusdirektor Edmund Kaiser geht auf die Männer zu und möchte ein Flugblatt haben. Da ruft ein Mann aus der Gruppe, "das ist einer von denen". Einer der "Flugblatt-Verteiler" wirft sich von hinten auf den Zirkusdirektor, hat sein Sohn beobachtet. Der 60-Jährige sei zu Boden gegangen, habe sich Prellungen und Schürfwunden zugezogen. Die drei Söhne eilen herbei. "Zehn Personen schlugen und traten aufeinander ein und erlitten hierbei teilweise auch leichtere Verletzungen", meldet der Polizeibericht. Die Polizeidirektion Biberach ermittelt nun gegen "sechs Personen, die offensichtlich Streit gesucht haben". Der Vorwurf lautet "gemeinschaftlich begangene gefährliche Körperverletzung".

Auf Nachfrage der SZ bestätigt der Polizei-Sprecher, dass es sich bei den angeblichen Tierschützern um "polizeibekannte Aktivisten aus der rechtsextremen Szene" handle; vier davon stammten aus der Laupheimer Gegend, zwei seien von auswärts angereist. Ob die Aktion auf dem Laupheimer Festplatz eine hausgemachte Idee einiger Weniger ist oder ob die rechte Szene insgesamt den Tierschutz als Plattform verwenden will, um Menschen anzusprechen - das müsse man erst noch ergründen.

Fakt ist, dass die auf dem Flugblatt angegebene Internet-Adresse - mit der Endung ".tl" für Ost-Timor - eventuelle Zweifel an einem rechtsextremen Hintergrund ausräumt. Die "Nationalen Sozialisten - AG Tierrecht", die sich als "unabhängiger Zweig innerhalb des nationalen Widerstands" verstehen, verkünden dort, sie wollten "Stimme und Fäuste gegen die Ausbeutung der Tierwelt erheben". "Jede Form des Aktivismus" werde toleriert. Unter den Zielen der "AG Tierrecht" wird unter anderem das "Verbot des religiösen Schächtens" und ein "Importverbot für koscheres Fleisch" angegeben. Kontaktadresse ist ein Postfach in Baden-Württemberg.

Ein ganz neues Phänomen

Rechtsextremismus und gewalttätiger Tierschutz, diese Kombination ist beim Landeskriminalamt in Stuttgart gänzlich unbekannt. "Das Phänomen ist neu", sagt der dortige Pressesprecher. Aufgrund besagter Homepage gebe es nun aber einen Anfangsverdacht auf verfassungsfeindliche Taten, das Amt werde Ermittlungen gegen die Betreiber einleiten. Allerdings werde es schwierig sein, die Homepage zu verbieten, weil sie nicht aus Deutschland stamme.

Zurück zur Schlägerei am Sonntag. Edmund Kaiser junior vermutet, dass es die Männer auf den Zirkus nicht wegen der Tiere abgesehen hatten - er kann belegen, dass das Kreisveterinäramt den Ernährungs- und Pflegezustand seines Tierbestands für "gut" befunden hat. Sondern: "Wir sind zwar keine Sinti und Roma, aber wir sind fahrendes Volk und mit unserer Familie reisen viele Nicht-Deutsche, die für uns arbeiten."

Er möchte nicht, dass in Laupheim öffentlich wird, wo der Zirkus als nächstes gastieren wird.

Quelle: Schwäbische Zeitung online
<http://www.szon.de/lokales/laupheim/stadt/200703200786.html>

Weitere Informationen: <http://www.redok.de/content/view/615/40/>

Hungary

Hungary closes Gypsy-majority school

29 March 2007

Local authorities in southeastern Hungary said they would close a middle school to avoid what they described as segregation of Gypsy students.

The Romany minority council and the pupils' parents submitted a petition asking authorities in the town of Szeged authorities to abolish Gypsy segregation. About 80 percent of the students in the school are Gypsies.

Szeged Deputy Mayor Laszlo Solymos said the middle school's 130 pupils will be placed in some 10 schools in the area, the Hungarian news agency MTI reported Thursday. Parents will be allowed to select a school they believe best fits the needs of their children.

Solymos said the Szeged government will provide support and help to the Gypsy pupils integrate into the local school system.

Szeged authorities said they hoped to get financial support from the Hungarian Education Ministry to help them transfer pupils and teachers to new schools, MTI said.

Source: 2007 UPI

<http://washingtontimes.com/upi/20070329-100439-5090r>

Italy

Deja incendio en Italia un bebé muerto y cuatro heridos

Martes, 27 de Marzo de 2007

El incendio inició esta madrugada por causas desconocidas en una choza construida por gitanos rumanos cerca de una planta de depuración.

Roma.- Una niña rumana de cinco meses de edad murió hoy y cuatro personas resultaron heridas a causa de un incendio suscitado en una choza ubicada en la localidad italiana de Follonica, región de Toscana (centro), confirmó el cuerpo de bomberos local.

Según las fuentes, el incendio inició esta madrugada por causas desconocidas en una choza construida por gitanos rumanos cerca de una planta de depuración, hiriendo de gravedad a cuatro personas.

Los bomberos dijeron que en total había 11 personas en la casa, entre ellas dos menores de edad, incluida la víctima mortal.

Los heridos fueron transportados a los hospitales de las localidades de Follonica y Grosseto, mientras las autoridades indagaban las causas del siniestro.

Fuente : El porvenir

http://www.elporvenir.com.mx/notas.asp?nota_id=122805

Romania

Roumanie 1951 : la grande rafle de Baragan

29 mars 2007

Dans la nuit du 18 au 19 juin 1951, 40 000 « ennemis du peuple » étaient raflés par les forces de police roumaines. Leur tort ? Etre frontaliers avec la Yougoslavie de Tito. Ils furent tous déportés dans le Baragan, une immense plaine désertique et dépeuplée, près de Slobozia. Une triste page de l'histoire de la Roumanie communiste.

Dans la nuit du 18 au 19 juin 1951, jour de la Pentecôte orthodoxe, des dizaines de milliers de soldats et policiers cernèrent et envahirent fermes, maisons et bâtiments dans les provinces du Banat (Timisoara, Caras Severin) et d'Olténie (Turnu-Severin), procédant à la plus grande rafle que la Roumanie ait connue, dont les victimes furent déportées à l'autre bout du pays, dans le Baragan.

Assez peu connue, même des Roumains, cette tragédie s'apparente à « la rafle du Vel d'hiv » menée par la police française à l'égard de la population juive de Paris, dans la nuit du 16 au 17 juillet 1942. Toutefois, celle-ci ne visait pas une ethnie mais une catégorie bien particulière de la population, « les ennemis du peuple ». Une définition large pour le régime communiste qui cherchait à renforcer son pouvoir en éliminant tout risque de contestation. Y figuraient aussi bien des personnes qualifiées d'agents de l'impérialisme, d'indésirables, d'anciens fonctionnaires de l'Etat et cadres de l'Armée, déjà épurés, des paysans aisés baptisés « chiubari » (« koulaks »), des propriétaires opposés à la confiscation de leurs terres, des industriels, d'anciens hommes d'affaires ayant eu des liens avec le monde occidental, des étrangers résidant dans la zone frontalière, des parents ou amis de Roumains ayant émigré illégalement ou suspectés d'aider la résistance anti-communiste, des réfugiés roumains de la Bessarabie que l'URSS venait d'arracher à la Roumanie, ou macédo-roumains de Grèce et de Yougoslavie, des Roumains d'origine allemande, des Serbes suspectés de « titisme »...

Au total, 12 700 familles, soit un peu plus de 40 000 personnes, hommes, femmes, enfants, vieillards, réveillés brutalement, n'eurent que quelques minutes pour réunir un peu de nourriture, des vêtements de rechange et furent poussées sans ménagement vers les gares les plus proches où on les embarqua dans des wagons à bestiaux ou de marchandises, sans qu'ils sachent où on les envoyait, ni la raison de leur déportation. Parmi elles, 27 000 Roumains de souche, 10 000 d'origine allemande, 3 000 d'autres nationalités, principalement serbe.

Antonescu avait déjà songé à y déporter les Tsiganes

L'opération avait été préparée dès la mi-mai et un périmètre arrêté : il s'agissait de ratisser la zone frontalière avec la Yougoslavie sur une profondeur de 25 à 35 km, pour en expurger tout « élément » jugé suspect idéologiquement. Depuis 1948, la frontière avec Belgrade était considérée et surveillée comme une frontière hostile, à la suite de la crise ayant éclaté entre Moscou et Tito. D'autre part, le Banat était la région où la collectivisation rencontrait la plus forte opposition, alors que les mouvements de résistance y atteignaient leur apogée.

Les autorités communistes avaient choisi d'envoyer la population déportée dans le Baragan, immense plaine désertique et dépeuplée, près de Slobozia, où l'air est irrespirable en été, la chaleur suffocante, la terre aride et recouverte de poussière, les paysages sans ombre, désespérants de monotonie, aujourd'hui entrecoupés de quelques champs de maïs et de tournesols. Le thermomètre y indique régulièrement 38 à 40 °C et est même monté à 45 °C dans le village de Ion Sion, pôle de la canicule en Roumanie. Une des communes voisines s'appelle Fierbinti... « Bouilli » et, autrefois, une auberge locale se vantait d'y servir des repas et des boissons chaudes, sans avoir besoin de les mettre sur le feu. L'automne, un vent sinistre balaie les grands espaces et l'hiver un froid terrible s'y installe, comparable à l'hiver

russe. En 1941, le maréchal Antonescu avait déjà songé à y déporter les Tsiganes afin de les utiliser pour des travaux agricoles et les isoler du reste de la population.

Les communistes voyaient plusieurs avantages au choix de cet endroit : tenir à l'écart et discrètement les personnes transférées tout en les surveillant facilement, les éloigner des endroits exposés du pays en les installant à proximité de la frontière soviétique. Et, comme pour le sinistre canal du Danube à la mer Noire, distant seulement d'une cinquantaine de kilomètres et dont le chantier allait bientôt commencer, avec des détenus politiques, utiliser de la main-d'œuvre à bon marché pour tenter de fertiliser une terre ingrate et attribuer ainsi au régime une autre grande « conquête » socialiste.

Les déportés arrivèrent après un voyage effroyable qui dura de dix à quatorze jours. On les laissa là, en pleine campagne, par une chaleur épouvantable, abandonnés à leur sort, « sous le bleu infini du ciel », comme l'écrivait plus tard une victime. On leur accorda un terrain de 2500 m² où ils pouvaient construire leur maison... et six clous, comme tout viatique, devant se débrouiller seul dans un univers hostile.

Dans un premier temps, ils vécurent dans des huttes à moitié enterrées, édifiant par la suite des chaumières à l'aide de briques de boue, de bouse de vache et de paille.

Soumis à la « rééducation » et aux travaux agricoles collectifs, ces « colons », qui n'avaient pas le droit de s'éloigner de plus de 15 km de leur résidence forcée furent regroupés dans 18 villages, pour la plupart aujourd'hui disparus, qu'ils bâtirent eux-mêmes. Certains moururent à la tâche ou à cause des conditions épouvantables de vie. Quelques-uns décidèrent de rester sur place et de ne pas regarder en arrière. Mais en 1956, quand des relations « fraternelles » furent rétablies entre Moscou et Tito, beaucoup saisirent l'autorisation de retourner chez eux, dans le Banat. Ils y découvrirent souvent leurs maisons dévastées, détruites ou bien occupées. Avant de revenir, plusieurs déterrèrent leurs morts pour les ramener avec eux. Dans le Baragan, il n'existait pas d'églises et il était inconcevable de laisser reposer des proches dans une terre qui n'avait pas été bénie par Dieu.

Source: Les Nouvelles de Roumanie/Courrier des Balkans
<http://balkans.courriers.info/article8010.html>

Slovakia

Slovak municipality to resettle Romany "ghetto" residents

26 March 2007

The city of Kosice wants to resettle families at the local Romany-inhabited housing estate Lunik IX in an effort to separate less adaptable residents and rent-defaulters from those who pay rents, Emilia Bujnakova from the City Hall has told CTK.

Those paying rents will gain better housing conditions. The city expects the resettle plan to make more families pay housing rents, Bujnakova said. The debt of Lunik IX rent-defaulters reaches 600,000 crowns a month.

"We'll divide local flats into three categories, distribute them among the local residents according to their social level, and adapt the level of our services accordingly," Bujnakova said. For example, the rent payers could receive more frequent supplies of water, which are now available for a mere four hours a day at the housing estate inhabited by 5,500 Romanies.

"If the flats are divided into different categories along with a different level of services, it would motivate the residents," says Jozef Cerven, a local priest. He says that more Romany families started paying for rents after the resettlement plan was announced. The resettlement of families will be impossible without the assistance of the police, Cerven admits.

Ladislav Sano, mayor of the neighbourhood where Lunik IX is situated, said he knows nothing about the resettlement plan. "If they started to move families, we'll probably defend ourselves in court," he said.

Lunik IX, which shelters the largest Romany community in Central Europe, has the character of a ghetto. Illegal drawing of energy is quite common among the locals. Several years ago the area was cut off from warm water supplies and thereby also from heating.

Source: Dzeno/CTK

http://www.romea.cz/english/index.php?id=detail&detail=2007_178

Slovenia

Laibacher Parlament beschloss Roma-Gesetz

30. März 2007

Regelt Rechtsstellung von Angehörigen der Volksgruppe in Slowenien - Gründung von Roma-Rat vorgesehen

Laibach - Das slowenische Parlament hat am Freitag das von der Regierung vorgeschlagene Gesetz zur Volksgruppe der Roma verabschiedet. Für das Gesetz stimmten 50 von 61 anwesenden Abgeordneten, 11 enthielten sich, Gegenstimmen gab es nicht. Das Gesetz soll die Rechtsstellung der Roma-Gemeinschaft in Slowenien regeln, wie es die Verfassung des Landes für ethnische Minderheiten verlangt.

Das Gesetz legt vor allem die Organisation der Roma auf nationaler und lokaler Ebene fest. So sieht es die Gründung eines Volksgruppenrates vor, der die Interessen der Roma gegenüber dem Staat vertreten soll. Der Rat soll sich vor allen mit Interessen, Rechten und dem Status der Roma beschäftigen und den Behörden Anregungen geben. Das Gremium soll 21 Mitglieder haben, 14 sollen vom nationalen slowenischen Roma-Verband bestellt werden und sieben von den lokalen selbstverwalteten Roma-Gemeinschaften. Der Rat soll aus dem Staatsbudget finanziert werden.

Die Zusammenstellung des Rats war in der Parlamentsdebatte der umstrittenste Punkt. Die Mitte-Links-Opposition befürchtet, dass die Verteilung der Sitze in der Roma-Vertretung eine Spaltung der Roma-Vertretungen verursachen könnte. Kürzlich waren Roma aus etlichen Gemeinden in der Dolenjska Region (Unterkrain) aus dem nationalen Verband ausgetreten und hatten eine eigene Gruppierung gebildet.

Die Regierung hatte das Gesetz im vergangenen November gebilligt. Es behandelt auch die Raumplanung der Roma-Siedlungen sowie Fragen der Ausbildung und der Beschäftigung. Der slowenische Roma-Verband begrüßte das Gesetz. Obmann Jozek Horvat Muc sagte im zuständigen Parlamentsausschuss, die Roma seien angesichts der jetzigen Situation der Intoleranz von der Notwendigkeit des Gesetzes überzeugt. Andererseits zeigten sich die aus dem Verband ausgetretenen Roma gegenüber dem Gesetz skeptisch. Dieses regle nicht die konkreten Rechte der Roma-Gemeinschaft, lautet einer der Vorwürfe.

Quelle: Der Standard/APA

<http://derstandard.at/?url=/?id=2826673>

Apoyo al pueblo gitano: El Parlamento de la región de Cataluña reconoce genocidio del pueblo gitano

30 de Marzo de 2007

El pleno del Parlament aprobó ayer una declaración de homenaje al pueblo gitano en la que en la que se reconoce que esta comunidad ha sido víctima de "un genocidio histórico y continuado" y se deplora el "maltrato y la discriminación" practicada contra los gitanos durante muchos siglos. Integrantes de esta comunidad siguieron desde la tribuna de invitados de la Cámara la lectura de la declaración.

En el texto se condenan las leyes antigitanas dictadas o secundadas por las instituciones catalanas a lo largo de la historia y se adquiere el compromiso de impulsar las políticas integradoras necesarias que permitan alcanzar la igualdad de oportunidades de los miembros del pueblo gitano. Además se hace un reconocimiento de sus propios rasgos culturales e identitarios y la necesidad de preservarlos.

Barcelona (España), 23 mar (EFE).- El Parlamento de Cataluña ha reconocido en una declaración institucional, pendiente de aprobación por todos los grupos en el pleno de el 27 y 28 de marzo, el genocidio del pueblo gitano cometido en esa región española.

Según informó hoy la Federación de Asociaciones Gitanas de Cataluña (FAGiC) en un comunicado, en este texto se reconoce por primera vez de manera institucional este genocidio histórico y continuado.

En el texto se considera que entre 1499 y 1783 se aprobaron en el actual territorio de Cataluña (nordeste de España) una docena de leyes que perseguían prohibir los rasgos de identidad y culturales de los gitanos para forzar su asimilación forzosa o su desaparición.

Añade que la corona catalano-aragonesa participó de esta política anti-gitana y que la represión se incrementó a partir del 30 de julio de 1749, con la llamada "Gran Batida", en la que el rey Fernando VI dictaminó una Real Orden en la que se emplazaba a encarcelar a todos los gitanos de los territorios bajo su reino.

Se calcula que 9.000 personas fueron recluidas en minas y presidios y que muchas de ellas murieron.

El texto establece que la intolerancia hacia este pueblo se incrementó con la Guerra Civil (1936-39) y la posterior dictadura franquista y que hasta la promulgación de la Constitución española, en 1978, no se puso fin a esta discriminación legal.

En la declaración se acepta que las consecuencias económicas, sociales y culturales de todas las leyes anti-gitanas se acusan todavía en la actualidad y que, son en buena medida, la causa de la desigualdad y las situaciones de discriminación del pueblo gitano.

Por todo ello, el Parlamento regional catalán afirma y reconoce al pueblo gitano residente en la España actual (su población se estima en unas 600.000 personas), y concretamente en Cataluña, como víctima de genocidio histórico y continuado.

Por último, se compromete a trabajar para que se lleven a cabo políticas incluyentes y para el reconocimiento y mantenimiento de sus rasgos culturales y de identidad.

El próximo 8 de abril se celebra el Día Internacional del Pueblo Gitano, una etnia conocida también como pueblo rom, roma o romaní, que está presente en todos los Estados de Europa y

en países americanos como Argentina, Brasil y Chile, y cuyo origen es hoy todavía objeto de controversia.

Durante siglos han sido víctimas de persecución política y religiosa, y se estima que entre 50.000 y 80.000 murieron en los hornos crematorios de la Alemania nazi durante la II Guerra Mundial (1939-45) en la última gran persecución contra los gitanos.

Fuente: El periodico

http://www.elperiodico.com/default.asp?idpublicacio_PK=46&idioma=CAS&idnoticia_PK=392723&idseccio_PK=1008

Switzerland

Switzerland Answers Racism Charges

28 March 2007

Switzerland has distanced itself from a hard-hitting report by Doudou Diène, the United Nations special rapporteur on racism, which accuses it of racist tendencies

The government said it would seriously examine the report on racism in Switzerland, which was presented at the Human Rights Council on Tuesday, and would step up efforts to combat racism and discrimination.

But it rejected Diene's use of "individual incidents to draw conclusions about the general dynamism of racism and xenophobia in the country as a whole".

In his full report, Diene maintains that "Switzerland has competent mechanisms and motivated officials with mandates to combat racism, but at the national level this reality is not recognised". He accuses the authorities of a lack of any "coherent and resolute political and legal strategy against racism and xenophobia".

For the Senegalese UN envoy this is caused by "deep-rooted cultural resistance within Swiss society to multiculturalism... especially where persons of southeastern European and non-European origin are concerned". He adds that racism has become an instrument in political debate.

In reaction, the government said it agreed that racism was a problem, "deploring the incidents mentioned by Mr Diène" and added that it was aware that more had to be done at the federal, cantonal and communal levels.

But it said the high percentage of foreigners living in Switzerland and the generally successful integration of foreign residents were signs of the country's openness.

It recalled that it was the Swiss public that had adopted the new asylum law, criticised by Diène, by a large majority.

"The government is convinced that the implementation of this law will in no way lead to discrimination," it added.

Anti-racism commission

The Federal Commission against Racism called on the government and the cantons to heed the report's recommendations, saying the UN envoy had touched on several burning issues.

Among his proposals, Diène had called for "a national programme of action against racism and xenophobia comprising national legislation... and a cultural and ethical strategy for the long-term construction of a multicultural society".

The commission is urging the government to set up a roundtable with the country's cantonal authorities every time such a report is published to follow up and properly implement recommendations.

In a separate development, 16 Swiss human rights organisations announced on Tuesday the launch of an anti-racism network to better coordinate the fight against xenophobia, discrimination and racism.

Source: Human Rights Tribune

http://www.humanrights-geneva.info/article.php3?id_article=1399

From the report:

"Most of the members of foreign communities and national minorities with whom the Special Rapporteur met stated, often with great emotion, that they experienced racism and discrimination on a daily basis and that there was an overall atmosphere of xenophobia; they expressed a feeling of loneliness within the population and their fear of certain institutions, particularly the police. The most affected communities and groups seem, at present, to be blacks, Jews, Travellers, asylum-seekers and Muslims or persons of Muslim culture."

The report is available at:

<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G07/105/58/PDF/G0710558.pdf?OpenElement>

Mit Sturmgewehr auf Wagen von Fahrenden geschossen

27. März 2007

Dies sei das zweite Mal innerhalb einer Woche, dass in diesem Saal ein junger Schweizer vor Gericht stehe, der mit seiner Dienstwaffe um sich geschossen habe, stellte der Referent Rolf Näf am Dienstagnachmittag als Vorbemerkung zur öffentlichen Urteilsberatung fest. Er sei der Überzeugung, dass es nie so weit gekommen wäre, wenn die Männer ihre Waffe nicht zu Hause im Schrank gehabt hätten.

Im Fall des knapp 22-jährigen Mannes aus dem Bezirk Horgen, dessen Tat am Montag am Zürcher Obergericht zweitinstanzlich verhandelt wurde, hat Oberrichter Naef gewiss recht. Der Angeklagte hatte in der Nacht auf den 1. Juli 2005 auf einem Standplatz von Fahrenden in Horgen aus einer Distanz von etwa 45 Metern neun Kugeln aus seinem auf Seriefuer eingestellten Sturmgewehr abgefeuert. Mit dem ersten Schuss traf er einen Wohnwagen, in dem zwei Personen schliefen. Drei weitere Projektile schlugen in einem nahen Geräteschuppen ein.

Vor der Vorinstanz hatte er erklärt, dass er in dem Wohnwagen jene Diebe vermutet habe, die ihm zwei Tage zuvor 200 Franken aus dem Auto gestohlen hätten. Er habe aber niemanden verletzen, sondern die «Zigeuner» bloss erschrecken und zur Abreise veranlassen wollen. Das Bezirksgericht Horgen verurteilte ihn in der Folge im Juli 2006 wegen der mehrfachen Gefährdung des Lebens zu zweieinhalb Jahren Gefängnis und Schadenersatz- und Genugtuungszahlungen sowie zur Übernahme der Gerichts- und Prozesskosten.

Dagegen legten sowohl die Staatsanwaltschaft als auch der Verurteilte Berufung ein. Unter dem Hinweis auf das fast noch jugendliche Alter zum Zeitpunkt der Tat, auf seine «offensichtliche

Unreife» und auf die ungünstigen Lebensumstände des Angeklagten als Scheidungskind mit Konzentrationsschwächen und ohne starke Vaterfigur versuchte der Verteidiger vor Obergericht eine bedingte Aussetzung der Gefängnisstrafe zu erreichen. Sein geständiger und reuiger Mandant habe inzwischen dem Alkohol und dem Cannabiskonsum abgeschworen und sei auf dem besten Weg in ein geordnetes Leben.

Die Staatsanwältin forderte dreieinhalb Jahre. Das Gericht entschied sich für einen mittleren Weg und erhöhte auf drei Jahre Freiheitsstrafe unter Abzug von 64 Tagen Untersuchungshaft. Von der Freiheitsstrafe werden 18 Monate bedingt auf drei Jahre erlassen. Der junge Mann habe sehr wohl um die möglichen Konsequenzen seines Tuns gewusst, waren sich die Richter einig, und sein Verschulden sei zu gross für eine bedingte Aussetzung der Strafe. Das Sturmgewehr musste er schon früher abgeben.

Quelle: Neue Züricher Zeitung
<http://www.nzz.ch/2007/03/27/zh/articleF1RDX.html>

Vacancies

Project Manager and Project Assistant

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

Job Description (Project Manager)

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

Requirements

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

Job Description (Project Assistant)

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

Requirements

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

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

Both positions are initially limited until 15 December 2007.

Applications

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

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

E-mail: ertf@ertf.org

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

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.