

#EuropeTogether



# THE MILESTONES IN OUR FIGHT AGAINST ANTI-GYPSYISM



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**"I Unia si kerdi opral o respekto karing  
o manushipen, i slobodia, i demokracia, o  
jekhipe, i kris thaj i pakiv palal e manushikane  
chachimata, vi palal e chachimata e  
manushenge andar  
e minoritetura.**

**Kadala simbolura si sajekh savorre themenge  
and-e jekh komuniteto kaj o pluralismo,  
i bi-diskriminacia, i tolerancia, o chachipe,  
o jekhetanipe thaj jekhipe mashkar e dzuvlja  
thaj e mursh si e maj importanto."**

*Article 2 of the Lisbon Treaty in Romani language*





**"The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities.**

**These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail."**

*Article 2 of the Lisbon Treaty*

**“Europe had a duty  
to be an example  
of democracy and  
respect for human  
rights.”**

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# PREFACE

We, the Socialists and Democrats Group (S&D)<sup>1</sup>, the second biggest political group in the European Parliament (EP), have been fighting for a European society where concepts such as equality, non-discrimination, and solidarity are made a reality.

We are fighting for a European society in which fundamental human rights do not only exist on paper. A European society in which democracy is secured. A Europe in which the UN Sustainable Development Goals are reached, thereby creating a sustainable, happy and healthy society.

We believe that all the people are born equal and human rights are inalienable. However, most of the Roma living in the European Union (EU) are still being deprived of their rights. Therefore, we have committed ourselves to fight for the realisation of the values compiled in our Treaties and to ensure that the achievements of our EU project are *enjoyed by all its citizens, equally.*

In 2014, we chose our member, Soraya Post MEP, to be our Roma spokesperson and following her initiative, we launched our *fight against anti-Gypsyism, the root cause of the discrimination and marginalisation that Roma people have suffered in Europe for centuries.* We, as a Group, stood behind Soraya Post to achieve two historic resolutions on anti-Gypsyism, adopted in 2015 and 2017, that have paved the way towards a Europe where there is full emancipation of the Roma, where they can be equal citizens with equal rights, allowing them to fulfil their true potential.

In this booklet, we highlight the milestones in our fight against anti-Gypsyism presenting our two resolutions, our work within the European Parliament to reform its Rules of Procedure, our cooperation

with the European Council in this area, and our collaboration with the European Commission for an enhanced continuation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies after 2020. We have been able to achieve this progress thanks to the support of civil society.

We also provide an overview of our non-legislative efforts, such as the commemoration of the Roma Holocaust, the annual Roma Week initiated by Soraya Post, our major events and our Roma traineeship programme.

Finally, we present expert opinions on the importance of fighting anti-Gypsyism, introducing a small number of committed individuals who champion for an equal Europe on a daily basis.

We would like to express our gratitude towards the politicians who are taking their human rights responsibilities seriously. To the NGOs that raise their voices against injustice and are key for a secure democracy, and to all citizens working towards a more sustainable Europe.

It is only with our joint commitment that we can create a Europe that we are proud of. In the words of Simone Veil, the first female president of the European Parliament:

**"Europe had a duty to be an example of democracy and respect for human rights."<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu/mission-vision-values>

<sup>2</sup> A quote from Simone Veil.

# **FOREWORDS**



### **Soraya Post**

Human Rights Activist,  
MEP from the Swedish  
Feminist Initiative,  
Roma Spokesperson of  
the S&D group

**Only when I got aware of my rights and could enjoy them as a citizen, could I also enjoy the obligations which come from being part of a society.**

In 2012, the EU received the Nobel Peace Prize for having "contributed to the advancement of peace and reconciliation, democracy, and human rights in Europe."<sup>3</sup>

Have we, as a society, really deserved this prize? Are we really dedicated to safeguarding the enjoyment of human rights for everybody in Europe? As for reconciliation: have we done or have we shown the will to do enough to create trust within our societies? I don't think so.

Almost 70 years ago, with the birth of the idea of European integration, the aim was to bring peace to Europe, to create freedom and prosperity for its citizens. The way most of the Roma live in Europe today cannot be called free or prosperous. They are denied their basic human rights in every way.

I often say that I was born condemned. That I have been deprived of my human rights since the day I was born, and that I have been looked down on and judged in all areas of my life as a second-class citizen.

Anti-Gypsyism thrives in all walks of life – from education to employment, from access to information to access to justice, from our cradles to our graves, in the denial of our history and the deprivation of our future. It is not about poverty, it is about the denial of our human rights. Roma citizens in many parts of Europe live under a form of apartheid.

Thus, when I started my work in the European Parliament, my first goal was to achieve the official recognition of the existence of anti-Gypsyism, to get its definition adopted, and then to officially recognise the Roma Holocaust; all of which we achieved in 2015 with the adoption of the resolution *on the occasion of International Roma Day - anti-Gypsyism in Europe and EU recognition of the memorial day of the Roma genocide during World War II*.

As a next step, I drafted my report on the *Fundamental rights aspects of Roma integration in the EU: fighting anti-Gypsyism*, which was adopted by the European Parliament at the end of October 2017 with an overwhelming majority. In this report, we listed demands and recommendations on what to do in each and every possible area. We also highlighted that the most important issue is to remedy the root cause, anti-Gypsyism, and to create trust between the majority society and the Roma.

I am happy that I have managed to raise the awareness of all the mainstream political groups in the European Parliament about the unacceptable situation of the Roma, and that they have supported me in my fight against anti-Gypsyism.

I, as a politician and as a Roma citizen, believe that it is the responsibility of all the governments in the member states to take equal care of all their citizens and to safeguard non-discrimination for everybody.

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/peace/laureates/2012/](https://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2012/)



### **Claude Moraes**

MEP, Chair of the European Parliament Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee, and former S&D LIBE spokesperson

## **From the horrors of the Second World War and the Holocaust, the Roma and Sinti communities in Europe have faced, and continue to face, discrimination, which needs to be tackled**

This is a highly important publication by Soraya Post MEP, the S&D Group Roma spokesperson, which brings together key experts to renew and refresh our approach to the Roma and Sinti situation across the EU. It addresses anti-Gypsyism and forms of racism directed against Roma and Sinti, which have continued to prevail against one of the key minorities in Europe today. The importance of this publication centres around ten key 'demands' and a narrative which explains both the continuing challenges and achievements in relation to the struggle against anti-Gypsyism in all its forms.

During my time at the European Parliament and as an NGO activist, I have seen the conflict within this issue. On the one hand, there is the idea that the EU is a union of values and having core principles. Yet on the other, there is often a toleration of the deep-seated discrimination against the Roma and Sinti communities within the EU.

In that time, I have seen and been involved in many legislative measures such as the Race Equality Directive and the Council Framework Decision on anti-racism. As well as the many budgetary and integration measures aimed at working with Roma communities for better integration, anti-poverty and anti-discrimination solutions.

However, as Soraya Post and the other key experts have set out, it is even more so vital to improve the situation of Roma communities, as thus far only some of the key measures have been somewhat successful. We must use all our tools at our disposal within the EU institutions, and at national, regional and local level. In addition to our work with NGOs and activists. However, what is required to bring all of these elements together is a holistic approach underlined by clear political leadership.

From the horrors of the Second World War and the Holocaust, the Roma and Sinti communities in Europe have faced, and continue to face, discrimination, which needs to be tackled. What is essential, however, and what is supported by my political group and the experts who are writing in this publication, is a renewed effort to tackle this discrimination, with new ideas and a determination to properly implement the existing laws and measures designed to tackle anti-Gypsyism.

If we follow the message in this publication, it will bring us closer towards an EU of values, in tackling one of the EU's greatest human rights issues - the phenomenon of anti-Gypsyism.



### **Frans Timmermans**

First Vice-President of the European Commission responsible for Better Regulation, Interinstitutional Relations, the Rule of Law and the Charter of Fundamental Rights

## The European Union is built on core values that help us prevent our societies from ever facing such dark times again

Anti-Gypsyism – a form of racism directed against Roma and Sinti – is not a new phenomenon.

For centuries, European societies have closed their eyes to discrimination against its Roma and Sinti populations that appeared in many different ways: the allocation of separated compounds to stay, distinguishing personal documents, prohibition to enter certain areas, enslavement, special schools with lower curricula, and the forced sterilisation of women to name just a few striking examples.

All this discrimination, culminated in the holocaust during WWII, and initiated by a totalitarian regime created an atmosphere of fear and obedience that made this mass murder possible. Among the millions of victims, the Roma were one of the largest victim groups, with 500.000 murdered for being who they are. Almost a third of the European Roma were murdered and hundreds of thousands were humiliated, imprisoned and deprived of any rights in those darkest days of European history.

The European Union is built on core values that help us prevent our societies from ever facing such dark times again. Equality of nations, people and the respect for human dignity are among the core values. No individual is better or worse than another because of differences in religion, belief, sexual orientation, gender, age, disability or ethnicity. I very much appreciate this publication on fundamental rights aspects in Roma integration and fighting anti-Gypsyism, as the situation for Roma people in Europe is still far from acceptable.

The European Commission has initiated a process of targeted Roma inclusion policies through the EU Framework for national Roma integration strategies. However, we observe that anti-Gypsyism is still very widespread in our societies and that member states are not yet doing enough to end segregation for instance in housing and schools. I am fully committed to fight against any such forms of discrimination of Roma.



### **TANJA FAJON**

MEP, Vice President of the S&D Group and Chair of the Working Group on Extremism, Populism, Nationalism and Xenophobia

## **True reconciliation cannot be achieved by denying the past**

Roma across Europe face structural discrimination and racism despite the fact that we have EU legislation in place combatting racism and xenophobia. In particular, in the last few years, hate speech in the European Parliament and elsewhere has got louder, and hate crime in EU member states more frequent. Europe's old demons are making a come-back and we must confront them.

Roma people are systematically denied their fundamental rights and are excluded from education, healthcare, housing, and the labour market. They experience multiple discrimination and marginalisation despite all the legislation, action plans and national strategies adopted by EU member states. The European Commission has been continuously active on Roma issues since 2010; the Fundamental Rights Agency has done a lot of research and conducted regular surveys to measure the effectiveness of Roma integration policies. Nevertheless, in spite of all these efforts, there is still widespread and severe anti-Gypsyism in the EU.

Hate speech that was unthinkable in the past is now gaining popularity and continues to infiltrate mainstream political movements, exploiting the fears of the most vulnerable as a recipe for a supposed electoral success. Our S&D Working Group on Extremism, Populism, Nationalism and Xenophobia has continued to carry out extensive monitoring of this phenomenon in the European Parliament and in the Member States.

As Desmond Tutu said, "there is no future without forgiveness". True reconciliation cannot be achieved by denying the past. If our societies are to move forward and become truly inclusive and tolerant we must first expose the atrocities committed in the past.

That is why the S&D Group, following on MEP Soraya Post's initiative, has been calling on the European Council to appoint a special advisor on anti-Gypsyism at a governmental level to define and monitor measures on the fight against anti-Gypsyism. We advocated for setting up National Truth and Reconciliation Commission's at national and EU level to acknowledge the persecution, exclusion and disownment of the Roma throughout the centuries, to document this in an official white paper, and to make their history become part of the curriculum in schools.

We think it is high time to bring an end to repressive measures that have historically been associated with anti-Gypsyism, such as restrictions on free movement, restricted access to education and employment, and bans on begging. The forced evictions from EU member states must end and actions must be undertaken to ensure respect of international and EU human rights guidelines while using EU and member state funding to provide adequate alternative housing.

The true measure of a democracy is how we represent our minorities' interests. As we approach the end of the legislature and the European election of 2019, let us not forget that the representation of minority communities carries important symbolic and normative implications relative to the legitimacy of political parties and more broadly of the entire political system. In an era of increasing disaffection with traditional party politics, our political parties risk further isolation from citizens if their membership profiles diverge from the image the party hopes to project. In democratic countries, political institutions continue to face calls to reflect the diversity of their populations.

The current lack of diversity in the European Parliament sends a message of exclusion and signals a democratic deficit. We, as a political group in the European Parliament and as a political party, must do much more in ensuring ethnic and racial diversity and representation in the EU institutions.

The S&D Group in the European Parliament and the Party of European Socialists (PES) member parties remain firmly committed to an inclusive campaign ahead of the 2019 European election.

We want to ensure that our MEPs and Commissioners fully embrace diversity and represent all groups within our diverse European society. On the initiative of the S&D Group from October 2013, the PES Presidency adopted the declaration "Striving for a fair representation of people with an ethnic or migrant background".

Intra-party dynamics, candidate selection procedures and their placement on the electable places on the lists are highly significant for minority representation. As a parliamentary group in the European Parliament, we have been calling on our sister parties to make more efforts in this area and further increase the number of candidates with a minority background on electable places on the lists.

# LEGISLATIVE ACHIEVEMENTS

The turn of the century has seen an unprecedented increase in the interest of EU public administrations towards Roma rights, having its first EU-related peak in 2011 with the launch of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies. The primary focus of the Framework and that of the National Roma Integration Strategies (NRIS) was poverty reduction, the socio-economic integration of the Roma and the development of education, employment, health and housing related policies and financial instruments.

It was not until a few years later that the term '**anti-Gypsyism**' was widely and systematically used. The fight led by Soraya Post for the **European Parliament resolution on the occasion of International Roma Day – anti-Gypsyism in Europe and EU recognition of the memorial day of the Roma genocide during World War II (2015/2615(RSP))<sup>4</sup>** represented a breakthrough in April 2015 being the first EU document dedicating several paragraphs to the introduction and definition of anti-Gypsyism and also to the recognition and commemoration of the Roma Holocaust, also known as Porrajmos or Samudaripen, one of the most horrific, yet often forgotten attempts to exterminate the Roma population of Europe.

The Slovak presidency of the European Council with its **conclusions on Accelerating the Process of Roma Integration 8 December 2016<sup>5</sup>** has been instrumental in our fight for Holocaust remembrance, urging member states to "recognise and commemorate the victims of the Roma genocide that took place during World War II, in accordance with their national practices", and to "fight all forms of racism against Roma, sometimes referred to as anti-Gypsyism, as it is a root

cause of their social exclusion and discrimination".

It is only due to intensive lobbying from several actors that these sentences found their place in the final version of the Council conclusions. Now, we expect the EU member states to be consequent enough to follow up their conclusions with concrete measures to fight anti-Gypsyism and to organise official Roma Holocaust commemorations on 2 August from now on.

It was the European Parliament, however, which took the lead and gave authorisation to MEP Soraya Post in 2017 to draw up the first, full-fledged **report on the fundamental rights aspects in Roma integration in the EU: fighting anti-Gypsyism (2017/2038(INI))**. A two-third majority of the Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) adopted the report on 25 October 2017.

**"Now it is up to the member states, the European Commission and EU institutions to take the required measures."**

<sup>4</sup> The resolution can be found at <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-%2f%2fEP%2f%2fNONSGML%2bTA%2bP8-TA-2015-0095%2b0%2bDOC%2bPDF%2bV0%2f%2fEN>

<sup>5</sup> <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14294-2016-INIT/en/pdf>

What do we mean by anti-Gypsyism? In our long and hard fight for the recognition of anti-Gypsyism as a specific form of racism and the root cause of the discrimination and marginalisation that Roma people have suffered in many European countries for centuries, we have encountered several difficulties.

The first one was to come up with a **definition**, which highlights the manifold aspects of anti-Gypsyism but also goes beyond the poverty-related focus of previous efforts. After due consideration, we have adopted the definition of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), according to which:

**"anti-Gypsyism is a specific form of racism, an ideology founded on racial superiority, a form of dehumanisation and institutional racism nurtured by historical discrimination, which is expressed, among others, by violence, hate speech, exploitation, stigmatisation and the most blatant kind of discrimination".<sup>6</sup>**

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<sup>6</sup> ECRI's General Policy Recommendation No. 13 on Combating Anti-Gypsyism and Discrimination against Roma.

However, definitions are often difficult to grasp, therefore, in the explanatory statement of her draft report on *fundamental rights aspects in Roma integration in the EU: fighting anti-Gypsyism* (2017/2038(INI)), MEP Soraya Post provided a more tangible explanation of the term:

**We demand nothing more, but also nothing less for the Roma people<sup>7</sup>, than we demand for the majority society.**

**The Roma have been treated unthinkably and unacceptably for centuries.**

**They have been deprived of their human rights. They have been enslaved, disowned, persecuted, exterminated, and not even the emancipation of our societies resulted in putting an end to societal anti-Gypsyism. Anti-Gypsyism is the belief that Roma are inferior, capable of less, having no prospect or will to catch up with the non-Roma, unfit to be good citizens of the countries they have been living for centuries; and anti-Gypsyism is also the actions built on this belief.**

**How does anti-Gypsyism look in practice?** According to stereotypes, if Roma are begging, they do it in a gang as criminals or they are in this situation because they are innately lazy. If Roma parents have a blond child, they must be kidnappers. If their children do not attend school, it is because they cannot stand discipline and are free spirits. If they are forced to live in a segregated Roma camp without drinking water, sanitation, heating and infested by rats, that is ok, as they are used to living like this. And when their houses are demolished without alternative housing being provided, that is also acceptable; they can live in the cold, their skin is thicker.

**We are raised and taught to think like this and to join the socially accepted, politically institutionalised process of dehumanisation.**

**It is not only anti-Gypsyism taking form in our feelings that matters, but also the words through which it manifests itself. The Roma should not be treated as vulnerable people. If people are deprived of their fundamental human rights and denied equal treatment, access to welfare, services, information, it is not they, who are vulnerable, but rather the structures established and maintained by those in power are discriminatory and render them vulnerable.**

**We demand the paternalistic treatment of the Roma, both verbally and in action, stop. And as words do matter, we demand a shift also in the way we communicate about them. For Roma people to be included or integrated, they should be able to access and enjoy their fundamental human rights. Nothing more, yet nothing less.**

**After a very long delay, politicians have to take equal responsibility for their Roma citizens. Otherwise, political rhetoric featuring hate speech and scapegoating will further contaminate our societies, which most of us still hope will be based on the values of respect, tolerance and openness.<sup>8</sup>**

<sup>7</sup> The word 'Roma' is used as an umbrella term which includes different related groups throughout Europe, whether sedentary or not, such as Roma, Travellers, Sinti, Manouches, Kalés, Romanichels, Boyash, Ashkalis, Égyptiens, Yéniches, Doms and Loms, that may be diverse in culture and lifestyles;

<sup>8</sup> Excerpt from the explanatory statement of MEP Soraya Post's report on fundamental rights aspects in Roma integration in the EU: fighting anti-Gypsyism (2017/2038(INI)). You can find the report at <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-%2f%2fEP%2f%2fTEXT%2bREPORT%2bA8-20170294%2b0%2bDOC%2bXML%2bV0%2f%2fEN&language=EN> For the entire resolution, please, visit <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-%2f%2fEP%2f%2fTEXT%2bTA%2bP8-TA-2017-0413%2b0%2bDOC%2bXML%2bV0%2f%2fEN&language=EN>

Nevertheless, having a definition is barely enough without the provision of **practical and effective measures and tools to fight anti-Gypsyism**. Therefore, as a result of intensive preparation and negotiations with a wide range of stakeholders, MEP Post delivered twelve pages of demands and recommendations towards member states, the European Commission and other EU actors, among them were the following:

- ➔ we demand the setting up of **Truth and Reconciliation Commissions** at member states and at EU level to acknowledge the persecution, exclusion and disownment of Roma throughout history, to document these in an official white paper and to make the history of Roma part of the curricula in schools, which is crucial for creating trust;
- ➔ we demand **active, meaningful participation for Roma** at all levels;
- ➔ we call on the **Court of Auditors to check the performance of EU programmes**, as they seem to fail to reach out to the most disadvantaged;
- ➔ we ask for the **robust monitoring of EU programmes** to safeguard their inclusiveness and non-discrimination;
- ➔ we ask for **clear condemnation and sanctioning of anti-Roma hate speech** in member states and also in the European Parliament;
- ➔ we ask for **a civil society monitoring and reporting call concerning hate speech and hate crime** in member states;
- ➔ we call on member states to **end statelessness** of the Roma people who have been living on their territories for decades and to **stop discriminatory birth registration**;
- ➔ we call for **compensation for Roma women having been subject to forced sterilisation**;
- ➔ we call on member states to **investigate, without delay, unlawful removals of Roma children** from their parents and to prevent any such future cases;
- ➔ we call on member states to **guarantee that Roma people are equal before the law**, also by providing mandatory, human rights-based and service-oriented **training to law enforcement officers and officials at all levels of their judicial system**;
- ➔ we call for **desegregation measures** to ensure equal treatment of Roma **in the field of education, employment, health and housing, and fundamental rights trainings for duty-bearers**;
- ➔ we demand **more power and resources for equality bodies** to be able to monitor and act on cases of anti-Gypsyism;
- ➔ we call for mandatory **training for those who work in public broadcasting** and media to raise their awareness on the challenges and discrimination that Roma people face;
- ➔ we call for **the continuation of an improved EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies after 2020**, building on the findings and recommendations of the Court of Auditors, the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA), NGOs and watchdog organisations, and other relevant stakeholders;
- ➔ we call on the European Commission for **the introduction of anti-discrimination indicators in the field of education, employment, housing and health**, as anti-Gypsyism undermines the successful implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategies;
- ➔ we call on the European Commission to **treat anti-Gypsyism as a horizontal issue** and develop, in partnership with member states, the FRA and NGOs an **inventory of practical steps to combat anti-Gypsyism**;
- ➔ we call for a **Commissioner-level project team on Roma issues** and for extra **European Commission staff to fight anti-Gypsyism** and raise awareness of the Roma Holocaust;
- ➔ we call on the Commission to apply a **working definition of anti-Gypsyism** and disseminate it to member states;
- ➔ we call on all political groups in the European Parliament and political parties in the member states to **respect the revised charter of European political parties for a non-racist society**, and to **condemn and sanction hate speech**.

A couple of months after the adoption of the resolution in question, some crucial thoughts remain:

**Will member states follow any of the European Parliament recommendations and take the listed demands relating to the fight against anti-Gypsyism seriously?**

In addition, since the role of the European Commission has been vital in the process:

**Will the European Commission continue the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies after 2020, and if yes, will they place anti-Gypsyism in its focus in addition to social inclusion and treat anti-Gypsyism as a horizontal issue?**

## **"Their hate is so strong that they do not respect the democratic rules of the European Parliament."<sup>10</sup>**

There are still some challenging battles ahead of us. One of our recent struggles, and so-far failed hopes, are related to **the newly reinforced Rules of Procedure (RoP) of the European Parliament**, whose drafting work and negotiations were led by MEP Richard Corbett, and was adopted in January 2017.

According to the RoP, in parliamentary debates, Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) should not use defamatory, racist or xenophobic language or behaviour, but instead their conduct should be "characterised by mutual respect, be based on the values and principles laid down in the Treaties, and particularly in the Charter of Fundamental Rights...".<sup>9</sup> If they do not follow this rule, MEPs have to face certain measures (described at length in Rules 165, 166 and 167):

- ➡ they can be called to order,
- ➡ if they repeat the offence, it will be recorded in the minutes of the debate,
- ➡ if the disturbance continues or if the offence has been considered as very serious, the MEP may be denied the right to speak or could be excluded from the meeting room,

- ➡ the presiding officer of the debate can also decide to interrupt the live broadcasting of the sitting and/or order the deletion of the defamatory speech from the audio-visual record,
- ➡ and he/she can suspend or close the sitting in order to restore order.

In serious cases of disorder, different penalties, based on the seriousness and the exact nature of the offence, can apply in the form of:

- ➡ a reprimand,
- ➡ a loss of the daily subsistence allowance for a period between 2 and 30 days (previously it was between 2 and 10 days),
- ➡ a temporary suspension from participation in all or some of the activities of the European Parliament for a period between 2 and 30 days (previously it was between 2 and 10 consecutive days), or
- ➡ the prohibition of the MEP to represent the European Parliament at an inter-parliamentary delegation, conference or any inter-institutional forum for up to 1 year.

<sup>9</sup> Rule 11 of the Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament:  
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+RULES-EP+20170116+RULE-011+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN&navigationBar=YES>

<sup>10</sup> A quote from Soraya Post

In case of repeated offences, and lack of obeying the call to order, penalties may be doubled.

Thus, the rules to fight against anti-Gypsyism, taking the form of hate speech, are in force. However, they still do not stop MEPs from inciting hatred or using words to dehumanise – often in the name of free speech.

On the one hand, a lot depends on the personal judgement of the presiding official, who might not feel that a certain choice of words constitutes defamatory language, and therefore might decide not to call an MEP to order, although for several other MEPs present at the debate, the thin line might have already been crossed. On the other hand, populist MEPs seem to benefit from exercising hate speech by showing that they do not care if they are excluded from the meeting room or if they lose a couple of thousands of euros.

Why we need the EU framework  
for National Roma Integration  
Strategies after 2020 - anti-  
Gypsyism in numbers

# **NEXT STEPS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST ANTI-GYPSYISM**

Even a quick glimpse at the available reports produced by EU institutions, such as the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), NGOs and watchdog organisations, will demonstrate how bleak the life of most Roma people in Europe is and how limited their life prospects are.

The data below has been gathered from diverse fields, ranging from access to education to the limbo of statelessness, from present-day injustice to historic discrimination. All of this reveals that member state governments have not taken their human rights related responsibilities seriously. The data shows that there has been persistent and structural

Still, we are convinced that the EU Framework is the way out of this unacceptable segregation. However, it has to be reshaped and upscaled<sup>12</sup>.

**"It also shows a failure of the EU as a project "founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities."<sup>11</sup>"**

anti-Gypsyism at all levels of the European society for centuries. It also highlights that however unconscious and unintentional, both member state and EU programmes and funds are discriminatory, since they do not take into account the challenges and the realities of most of the Roma, as citizens of Europe, therefore, they do not close the gap between the Roma and the non-Roma.

<sup>11</sup> Article 2 of the Lisbon Treaty: <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%206655%202008%20INIT>

<sup>12</sup> All the data are taken from the report on fundamental rights aspects in Roma integration in the EU: fighting anti-Gypsyism (2017/2038(INI)), drafted by MEP Soraya Post: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-%2fEP%2fTEXT%2bREPORT%2bA8-2017-0294%2b0%2bDOC%2bXML%2bV0%2fEN&language=EN>

## Poverty

**80%**

of Roma parents and their children surveyed, live at risk of poverty - compared to 17% of the general population.



Every third Roma child is at risk of going to bed hungry at least once a month.



In Bulgaria, as of February 2016, there were 514 demolition orders issued against residential buildings, with Roma-owned buildings constituting 97% of these. In the cases of executed orders (201), the Roma were not provided with any alternative accommodation, and were left homeless as a result. The demolitions in the Roma settlements took place en masse. The Roma were not given notice of the exact date of execution of the orders and most of them were not able to remove their furniture and personal belongings. Some of them also lost identity and other personal documents.



In recent years in Slovakia, 14 walls and barriers were erected to segregate Roma from the rest of the society.

## Housing



Every third Roma household surveyed lives in a house without tap water; every other Roma family lives without a toilet, shower or bathroom inside their dwelling; every fifth household has a house with a leaking roof, damp walls and foundation or rotting window frames.



40% of Roma surveyed have to climb over fences, cross highways or be confronted by stray dogs while trying to get daily water, which often has not been tested for safety and is exposed to contaminants. The burden of fetching water falls mostly on women and girls.



Thousands of Roma families live in segregated camps cut off from basic services in Italy, where living conditions are overwhelmingly substandard and unsuitable for human habitation, such as near waste dumps and airport runways, which breach both national housing regulations as well as international standards.



Discrimination in the rental sector has forced some 100000 Roma into 4000 substandard hostels and dormitories in the Czech Republic, where they are charged up to three times the market value of an ordinary flat by slumlords.



In France, more than 10000 Roma (over six in 10 Roma families, including elderly people and young children) were forcibly evicted from their homes in 2016 - some multiple times - mostly in the middle of winter, without the provision of alternative housing.

## Access to health



Research in Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, Hungary and the Czech Republic put Roma infant mortality rates at 2 to 6 times higher than those for the general population.



Roma have a life expectancy of 10 years less than the average European.



Several hospitals in Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria contain segregated and substandard maternity wards, and Romani women patients are subject to racial and physical abuse when giving birth.

## Access to education



47% of Roma children do not attend early childhood education.



School segregation is a shameful reality across Europe. For the academic year 2016/2017 in the Czech Republic, Roma pupils accounted for 3.7% of all pupils at all elementary schools, while they make up 30.9% of all pupils being taught according to curricula for children living with mild mental disabilities.

# 20%

Recent research shows that 20% of Roma in the Czech Republic and Slovakia have attended a school or a classroom that is both special and composed of solely or mainly Roma; a similar pattern has appeared elsewhere, including in France, Greece, and Bulgaria. Every second Roma in Hungary and Slovakia has been attending a regular school or classroom composed of solely or mainly Roma; the picture in Greece, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, France and Romania is not much different.

## Access to employment



In Sweden in 2010, 80% of Roma people were unemployed.



In Spain, 38.5% of Roma are in paid employment, while the majority population reaches a proportion of 83.6%.



63% of young Roma aged 16-24 were not employed, nor were they in education or training at the time of the EU MIDIS II survey, compared with the 12% EU average of the NEET rate for the same age group.

## Statelessness and lack of personal identity documents



As a consequence of the Balkan war, a large number of Roma in Italy are stateless or at risk of statelessness. Thousands of Roma children born in Italy are facing the limbo of legal invisibility and are without basic rights, even though their families have been living in Italy for decades.



In Romania, around 15000 Roma people are estimated to live without birth certificates resulting in not having the right to identity and to effective recognition of citizenship.

## Access to justice and fair policing



Roma women have for decades been subjected to forced sterilisation in the Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Slovakia and Sweden. Several governments have yet to establish a compensation mechanism and acknowledge that sterilisation of Romani women without their informed consent has been systemic and state-supported prior to 1990, and that it persisted into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.



Bulgarian Roma are twice as likely as non-Roma to report being abused in police stations, a figure which rises to 70% for Roma minors.



Many Roma victims of violence surveyed in Romania said that filing a complaint would be both burdensome and futile due to racism and discrimination at every level of the process.

## Hate speech and hate crimes



Roma are victims of violent attacks and intimidation by neo-Nazi and far-right groups, as well as anti-Roma protests across Europe. In the Czech Republic, 32% of Roma have been subjected to hate speech and violence; two thirds of victims never reported these crimes.

## The historic data we rarely hear about

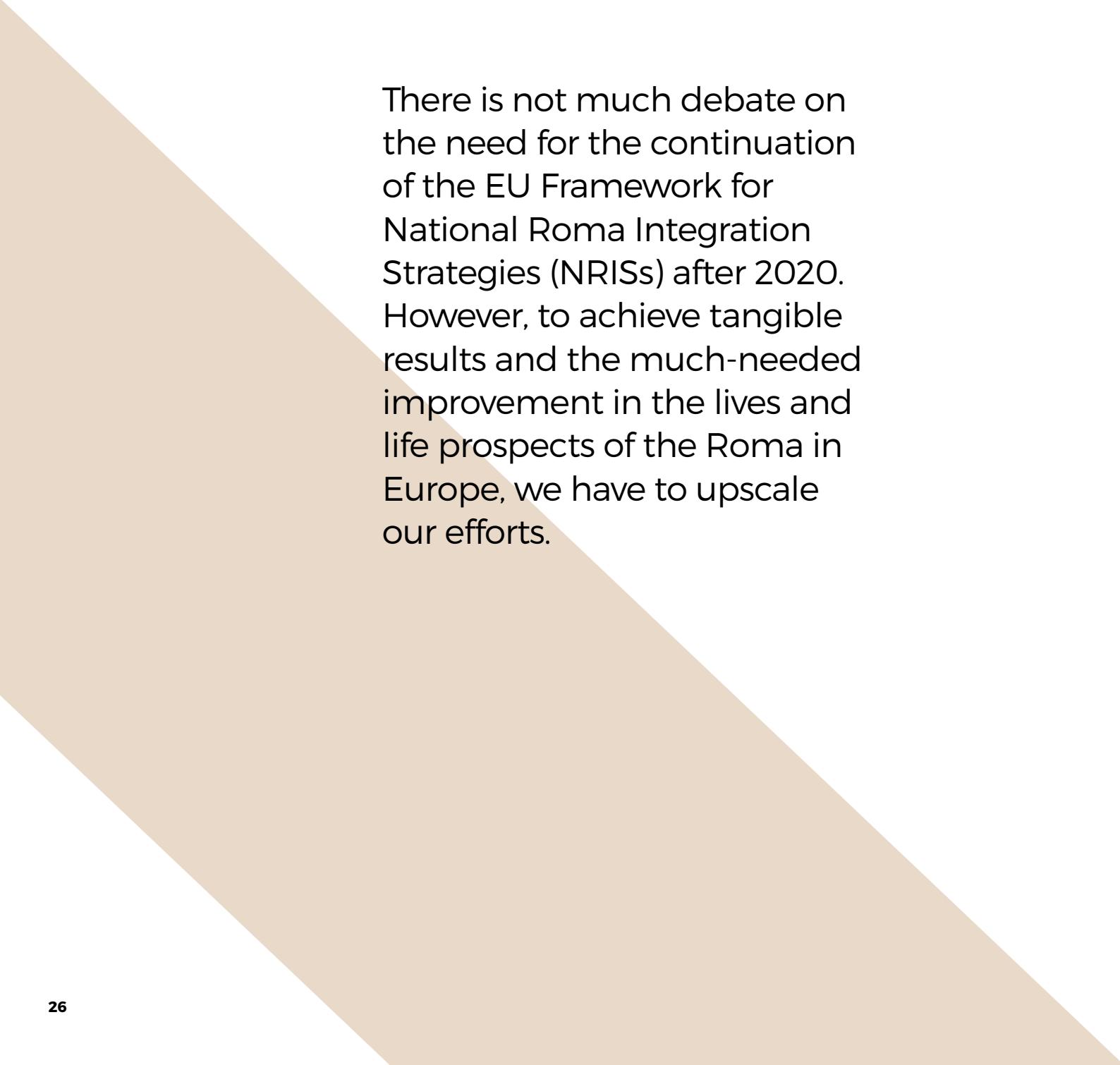


25-50% of the Roma community in Europe was killed in the Holocaust.



Roma Holocaust victims still have not been duly compensated in several EU countries.

# OUR 10 DEMANDS



There is not much debate on the need for the continuation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies (NRISs) after 2020. However, to achieve tangible results and the much-needed improvement in the lives and life prospects of the Roma in Europe, we have to upscale our efforts.

Thus, we believe that the European Commission needs to

- 1. be ambitious** to take the long-awaited steps through which centuries of denial of human rights can be put an end to;
- 2. be attentive** and build on the numerous findings and recommendations of the European Parliament, the Court of Auditors, the FRA, NGOs, watchdog organisations and all relevant stakeholders, to have an improved, updated and more comprehensive approach;
- 3. be mindful** of the destructive effects of anti-Gypsyism, and therefore place it in the focus of the post-2020 EU Framework in addition to social inclusion, and to introduce anti-discrimination indicators in the fields of education, training, employment, housing, health, access to justice and equality before the law;
- 4. be inclusive** and have continuous, close consultations with Roma experts and representatives in order to get to know the challenges of the Roma people and to avoid the creation of discriminatory EU funds and programmes, or that of those that do not reach out to the Roma;
- 5. be thorough** and do research into successful local programmes and practices, which could be then developed into an inventory of practical steps for member states to combat anti-Gypsyism;

**6. be demanding** and set concrete deadlines for measurable goals and targets that member states should achieve when drafting their National Roma Integration Strategies;

**7. be meticulous** when doing monitoring in order to quickly detect why certain programmes do not reach their intended goals and to identify which strategies and actions can improve the situation on the field;

**8. be determined** to understand the importance of building trust between the Roma and the non-Roma, and to take steps to develop it, as without trust we can only make temporary progress in certain areas;

**9. be empowering** and provide opportunities for Roma to know and exercise their equal rights, and to end their identity insecurity fuelled by centuries of anti-Gypsyism;

**10. be not only the guardian of the Treaties but also that of the citizens of the EU**, all of whom must be equally entitled to enjoy the rights and opportunities established by our Treaties.

The European Parliament's resolution *on fundamental rights aspects in Roma integration in the EU: fighting anti-Gypsyism* could work well as an EU Action Plan, but also for member states, and – if accompanied by concrete targets – could be the basis of the post-2020 EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies.

**"It is also essential in order to realise the project that the EU is meant to be – an area and society "in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail<sup>13</sup>".**

**This should be enjoyed by all its citizens. Without exception.**

<sup>13</sup> Article 2 of the Lisbon Treaty: <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%206655%202008%20INIT>

# **THE RECOGNITION AND COMMEMORATION OF THE ROMA HOLOCAUST**

Throughout the centuries, there have only been a couple of countries, where the sufferings of the Roma, caused by their having been victims of age-long persecution, enslavement and attempts of extermination, have been acknowledged, and a public apology has been offered.

Having been subject to such grave othering and dehumanisation, the Roma have long been fighting, mostly unsuccessfully, for the recognition of their history, particularly for the horrific crimes committed against them during World War II. Although these crimes were carried out at the same period by the same perpetrators, the Roma are still overwhelmingly denied having been victims of the Holocaust.

An estimated 500,000 – 1 million Roma were murdered in the Holocaust, however, during the Nuremberg trials nobody was tried for having sent Roma people to the gas chambers or executed in front of a firing squad. In fact, there were no Roma witnesses called to the tribunal at all.

1982 saw the first official recognition of the Roma Holocaust by the then German chancellor Helmut Schmidt. Despite this, it was not until 2001 that the permanent exhibition of

*The Destruction of the European Roma* was presented in Auschwitz, and the first memorial site in Berlin was not displayed until 2012.

Unfortunately, these historic acts have not brought about a Europe-wide recognition of the Roma having been victims of crimes against humanity. Each year on 27 January, the International Holocaust Remembrance Day speeches of the EU and member state leaders fail to mention the Roma, and thereby add one more year to the decades of this saddening and intolerable example of Holocaust denial.

2018 has seen a substantial change in the commemorations taking place in the European Parliament, where, for the first time, there was also a Roma exhibition opened in the framework of the official ceremony<sup>15</sup>. At the event, three Roma speakers delivered speeches, among them Soraya Post MEP, who initiated the joint commemorations and had continued negotiations with the cabinet of the President of the European Parliament for months. The exhibition was developed by the Central Council of the German Sinti and Roma<sup>16</sup>, which has been pioneering in the fight for the recognition of the Roma Holocaust.

**"The memories have not faded... Nothing can or should be forgotten.<sup>14</sup>"**

**Although carried out in the same period by the same perpetrators, the Roma are still overwhelmingly denied having been victims of the Holocaust.**



Soraya Post MEP delivers her speech at the International Holocaust Remembrance Day commemorations in the European Parliament on 24.01.2018

<sup>14</sup> A quote from Simone Veil.

<sup>15</sup> Video of the European Parliament's commemoration of the Holocaust Remembrance Day <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/eu-affairs/20180122STO92208/the-european-parliament-commemorates-holocaust-victims>

<sup>16</sup> Information on the Central Council of the German Sinti and Roma can be found here: <http://zentralrat.sintiundroma.de>



## European Parliament commemorates Roma Holocaust

**Article from:**

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/241118>

For the first time, European Parliament includes Roma victims in Holocaust Remembrance Day event. Roma still suffer discrimination today.

**Holocaust remembrance – we cannot stay silent again**

By Soraya Post | 19 Jan 2018

**DISCLAIMER:** All opinions in this column reflect the views of the author(s), not of EURACTIV.com PLC.

A Roma Holocaust survivor has called for greater recognition of the massacre of the Roma during the holocaust. Credit: Soraya Post/EurActiv.com

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**Article from:**

<https://www.euractiv.com/section/global-europe/opinion/holocaust-remembrance-we-cannot-stay-silent-again/>



31.01.2018 - OPINIÓN

### En memoria del Holocausto: no podemos callarnos de nuevo

Por Soraya Post

En el Día Internacional de Conmemoración en Memoria de las Víctimas del Holocausto, el 27 de enero, recordamos y honramos a todas las personas—niñas, niños, mujeres y hombres de cualquier edad—que fueron torturadas y asesinadas por los nazis durante el Holocausto y restablecemos nuestro compromiso de luchar contra el antisemitismo, el antitanismo, el racismo y otros formas de intolerancia. Nunca podemos olvidar este brutal genocidio y el sufrimiento y el dolor que ha causado a sus víctimas, a sus familias y a nuestras sociedades.

Durante el Holocausto, un total de 11 millones de personas fueron asesinadas en campos de concentración en Europa por el régimen nazi. Los nazis persiguieron, torturaron, encarcelaron y asesinaron a todas esas personas a quienes consideraban "inferiores" a los alemanes. El mayor grupo de víctimas fue el Pueblo Judío: 6 millones de personas fueron asesinadas por los nazis en los campos de concentración, dos tercios de la población judía en Europa.



**Article from:**

<http://www.unionromani.org/notis/2018/noti2018-01-31.htm>

The European Commission, under the leadership of Vera Jourova, Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, has also taken significant steps towards the goal of commemorating all the victims of the Holocaust by organising a one-day training on Holocaust Remembrance for EU-officials and opening the exhibition *Racial Diagnosis: Gypsy*<sup>17</sup>. Sadly, however, the press statement of President Juncker<sup>18</sup> on the same occasion has not met the minimum requirements of a non-discriminatory Holocaust Remembrance speech.

Since history is vital in shaping identity, mainstream societies' refusal to acknowledge the persecution of the Roma has resulted in lack of

trust between the Roma and the non-Roma people in Europe. We strongly believe in the importance of establishing ***Truth and Reconciliation Commissions*** at member state and EU level, of officially documenting the historic rights violations and making the history of Roma part of the curricula in schools.

Mainstream societies would benefit just as much from such efforts as the Roma minority; and indirectly, such an endeavour could contribute to fostering values of diversity, social justice and solidarity, which are desperately needed in Europe today - where extreme right parties go from strength to strength and neo-Nazis are back marching on our streets.



Romani Rose and Soraya Post discussing the exhibition *Racial Diagnosis: Gypsy* during the commemorations of the International Holocaust Remembrance Day organised by the European Commission



Vera Jourova (in the middle) listening to Romani Rose's speech at the same event on 30.01.2018

<sup>17</sup> The exhibition in the European Commission was prepared by the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma as well.

<sup>18</sup> [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_STATEMENT-18-393\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STATEMENT-18-393_en.htm)

# OUR ANNUAL ROMA WEEK

A year after the adoption of the *European Parliament resolution on the occasion of International Roma Day*<sup>19</sup>, a group of MEPs led by Soraya Post MEP joined forces to organise the first Roma Week in the European Parliament in 2016. The aim was to commemorate the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the **First World Romani Congress** and to consolidate the commitment of the European Parliament and other institutions to fight against anti-Gypsyism.

The Congress, taking place on 8 April in 1971, marked an important moment in the history of the Roma, when the Roma flag and the anthem *Gelem, Gelem* were agreed upon to represent the Roma as united people and the terms "Rom" and "Romani" were adopted as official designations of the Roma people. From this event on, there have been several occasions at which Roma from all over Europe joined to fight for their equal rights to be guaranteed and for their culture, language and traditions to be respected.

The European Parliament's Roma Week aims to demonstrate that anti-Gypsyism is "incompatible with the norms and values of the European Union and constitutes a major obstacle to the successful social integration of Roma and to ensuring full respect for their human rights"<sup>20</sup>.

In order to offer solutions to anti-Gypsyism, 20 MEPs<sup>21</sup> from 7 political groups and 10 member states contributed to the first Roma week in 2016 hosting conferences, workshops, breakfast debates, exhibitions and film screenings. All the events were organised with the active involvement of partner NGOs, such as the Open Society European Policy Institute, the European Roma Grassroots Organization, the European Network Against Racism, ternYpe International Roma Youth Network, Fundación Secretariado Gitano, the European Union of Jewish Students, the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma, the European Youth Forum and the Roma Press Center. The EP's Anti-Racism and Diversity Intergroup (ARDI) carried out the coordination of the events<sup>22</sup>.

The Roma Week of 2017 received patronage of both the European Parliament and the European Commission. Several institutions, among them OSCE/ODIHR, FRA, UNDP and the World Bank, showed great interest

in co-hosting events and further NGOs joined the list of organisers, such as the European Roma Rights Centre and Roma Active Albania. Furthermore, the week was complemented by the EU Roma Integration Award ceremony of the European Commission Directorate-General European Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations.

The main aim of the second Roma Week was, on the one hand, to facilitate capacity building, networking and advocacy for Roma activists, and on the other hand, to provide input for the mid-term review of the EU Roma Framework with a view to the post-2020 process and to offer policy recommendations for decision-makers.

Roma Week 2018 aims to build on the work done during previous Roma Weeks and on the proposals and demands of the already mentioned report<sup>25</sup> of Soraya Post MEP. The hosts of the planned series of events intend to shed light on the various forms of structural discrimination existing in and outside of the EU, and to highlight the promising policies and programmes existing at local, regional, national and international levels to address anti-Gypsyism. Similarly to the previous years, a wide range of NGOs will participate in the organisation and running of the events, together with the Municipality of Anderlecht, Brussels.



The S&D group hosted a unique event on *Remembering the past and vindicating forgotten victims: Exchange of views with Holocaust survivors*, which provided an opportunity for participants to listen to the testimonies of two Holocaust survivors, Rita Prigmore<sup>23</sup> and Zoni Weisz<sup>24</sup>, and the contributions of Thomas Hammarberg, Romani Rose, Miranda Vuolastranta, Tiina Astola, and Mirjam Karoly. The event was moderated Ms Tanja Fajon. 29.03.2017



<sup>19</sup> The resolution can be found at <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-%2f%2fEP%2f%2fNONSGML%2bTA%2bP8-TA-2015-0095%2b0%2bDOC%2bPDF%2bV0%2f%2fEN>

<sup>20</sup> Paragraph 1 of the resolution <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P8-TA-2015-0095>

<sup>21</sup> Soraya Post (S&D), Brando Benifei (S&D), Fabio Massimo Castaldo (EFDD), Bodil Valero (Greens/EFA), Damian Drăghici (S&D), Cornelia Ernst (GUE/NGL), Fredrick Federley (ALDE), Laura Ferrara (EFDD), Marina Albiol Guzmán (GUE/NGL), Benedek Jávor (Greens/EFA), Sajjad Karim (ECR), Barbara Lochbihler (Greens/EFA), Claude Moraes (S&D), Peter Niedermüller (S&D), Tania González Peñas (GUE/NGL), Iratxe García Pérez (S&D), Sirpa Pietikäinen (EPP), Terry Reintke (Greens/EFA), Barbara Spinelli (GUE/NGL) and Tomáš Zdechovský (EPP)

<sup>22</sup> The ARDI intergroup's work is coordinated by Alfiaz Vaiyi. The website of the intergroup is: <https://www.ardi-ep.eu>

<sup>23</sup> An interview with Ms Prigmore is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d9Kdg9i7dw>

<sup>24</sup> Mr Zoni Weisz is talking about his Holocaust memories here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h9SrM4IC1kw>

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-%2f%2fEP%2f%2fTEXT%2bREPORT%2bA8-2017-0294%2b0%2bDOC%2bXML%2bV0%2f%2fEN&language=EN>

# OUR ROMA-RELATED EVENTS



Aside from our annual Roma Week, our MEPs keep Roma issues on the agenda by organising events in and outside of the European Parliament and by raising awareness of the worrying trends in Europe and proposing solutions.

One of the most active MEPs in this regard is Péter Niedermüller, who has consistently represented the rights and interests of the Roma people during his mandate, working on issues such as discrimination, segregation in education and access to housing. He organised several events, both cultural and policy-oriented, to raise awareness of the plight of Roma people. He also actively participated in featuring Roma issues in Parliament's thematic and horizontal fundamental rights resolutions, as well as posing several questions to the European Commission on Roma rights infringements in several member states.

Damian Draghici is another of our group's MEPs who has shared with us his personal motivation and drive: "I came into the European Parliament with the hope and desire to contribute to changing the way the Roma community is perceived in Europe. Through all the events that I organised during the last years, I have always focused on stretching out our Roma values, with an accent on the Roma communities from my home country, Romania, such as: *Proud to be Roma, Roma Youth Empowerment, the Situation of Romanian Roma* etc. I have also tried to share with the others my own life experience in order to motivate the young ones: *from Beggar to MEP*, and to make it clear that we, the Roma people, have a strong commitment to honouring and valorising our cultural heritage. I am glad that I have succeeded in some good things, through which I have made clear, every time, the vision and approach to reduce the gaps between the Roma minority and the rest of the population."

To follow up on the launch of our fight against anti-Gypsyism in 2015, the S&D organised several events in 2016 and 2017, such as the conference on *Taking forward the fight against anti-Gypsyism* in the spring of 2016, through which we called on the European Commission and

national governments to take effective actions to combat anti-Gypsyism and to recognise and commemorate the Roma Holocaust. With our *Young people and Europe's Roma strategy* event in autumn 2016, we pushed the European Council to make improvements to the lives of Roma people a standing priority. Finally, last October, we attempted to influence the future of the EU Framework for NRISs by organising a high-level event with the title: "*Do we tackle anti-Gypsyism effectively in the National Roma Strategies and in the EU Framework?*"

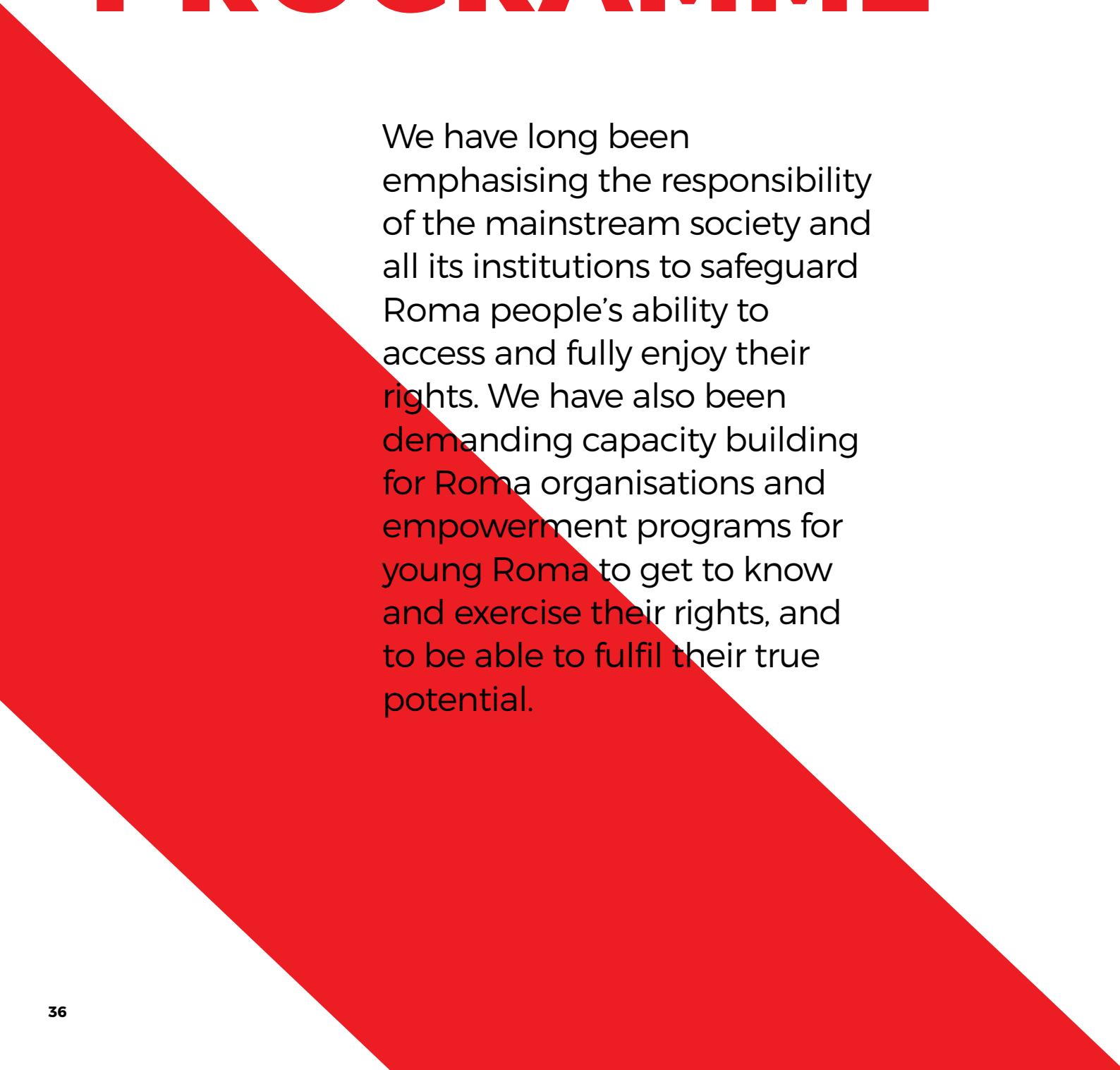
Picture on the left: Péter Niedermüller with a delegation of students and teachers of Dr. Ambékár school, MEP Roza Thun and film director Stefan Ludwig

Picture on the right: Damian Draghici opening his conference on *Anti-Gypsyism: a lost cause?* in 2016



Launching S&D's fight against anti-Gypsyism in the European Parliament on 25.03.2015 in the presence of Miritza Lundberg, violinist, Raymond Gurême, Holocaust survivor, Henri Malosse, the former President of the European Economic and Social Committee and Thomas Hammarberg, former Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights

# **THE S&D ROMA TRAINEESHIP PROGRAMME**



We have long been emphasising the responsibility of the mainstream society and all its institutions to safeguard Roma people's ability to access and fully enjoy their rights. We have also been demanding capacity building for Roma organisations and empowerment programs for young Roma to get to know and exercise their rights, and to be able to fulfil their true potential.

Most of the Roma have been deprived of their rights for far too long. They have been excluded from education and employment, blamed for their impoverished status, scolded for their life choices, and used repeatedly as scapegoats for whatever political propaganda of governments and governing powers. The only time Roma have de facto the same rights, and awaken an increasing interest in the political elite, is when it comes to elections.

The shameful tradition of "buying votes" is a well-known phenomenon in several European countries. The price of votes depends on the state of deprivation and hopelessness of the Roma people in question. Sometimes it is a couple of euros; in other cases, it is logs to be used for heating. Often, it is also the threat of losing their jobs if their vote is not cast as instructed. For this reason, it is essential that mainstream political parties reach out to Roma people and empower them to run as candidates at all the different levels of public administration and as campaigners.

It would be untrue to say that there are no Roma people in politics; however, for the majority of Roma people, widespread exclusion from education and employment has fostered limited possibility or opportunity to gain political ambition. Daily survival is often the main drive in the life of many Roma people. Therefore, an active reach-out would be vital from the part of political parties.

The S&D Group does not only fight for Roma rights, but also recruits Roma as politicians and provides empowerment programmes for young Roma. Since 2010, the Group has been running its Roma traineeship programme, enabling young Roma to gain an insight into the work of European institutions and policy-making processes. So far, 22 trainees, from 12 countries, including EU accession countries, have successfully completed their 3-month traineeship programme in the Group's diverse units. We are intrigued to see how many will continue to be interested in taking up a post in political parties.

# We have tried to find out how they were influenced by their traineeship and what they think of anti-Gypsyism:



**Nicoleta Calin**

**It was such a privilege for me to be part of this Group.**

Being accepted as a trainee in the S&D Working group on extremism, populism, nationalism and xenophobia was a dream come true for a graduate of International Relations and European Studies, like me. I had studied and read about the European Institutions but being there and seeing how things really work was captivating and exciting. I was happy to postpone my master's programme in order not to lose the opportunity of spending three months in the European Parliament. It was such a privilege for me to be part of this Group.

The three months there were full of unforgettable moments and events such as the terrorist attack in Brussels (close to the European Parliament), the protests organised by the S&D which I participated in (including "No more walls in Europe"), the various conferences on extremism, nationalism, populism and xenophobia involving the refugees and minorities which I attended, all of which definitely have had a role in reshaping

the way I see and think about these issues.

Concretely, after the traineeship, I developed a Facebook group "Roma Press Review", which summarises daily news about Roma people worldwide. This is because I learned that information sharing is the key for solving most of the world's issues. The scope of this page is to raise awareness through information highlighting news and events about Roma people around the world.

Furthermore, my thesis "*Is the anti-Gypsy sentiment fuelled by sensationalism? a content analysis of the portrayal of Romanian Roma immigrants in Italy and France in the international media coverage after EU accession!*" was mostly influenced by the insights that I received attending the fascinating debates and discussions inside the European Parliament.



**Rafael Carmona Fernandez**

It is not possible to understand the paintings of Monet or Picasso, the music of Tchaikovsky, Chopin or Goran Bregović, the operas of Bizet, Puccini or Verdi, the poetry of Baudelaire or Lorca, the films of Kusturica, the violin, the guitar, romanticism, flamenco, without recognising the Roma influence on European culture. We, Roma, are part of Europe's cultural roots and shared values.

**We, Roma, are part of Europe's cultural roots and shared values.**



**Tomáš Ščuka**

**I realised also that policies coming from Brussels fight against anti-Gypsyism and segregation at local level too.**

I am a young Roma who graduated from the Security and Legal Studies Department of the Police Academy in Prague. I was a trainee in the S&D group in 2014. I am currently working on a short-term assignment at the European Commission's DG Joint Research Centre doing research and analytical work on social inclusion for marginalised communities, such as the Roma.

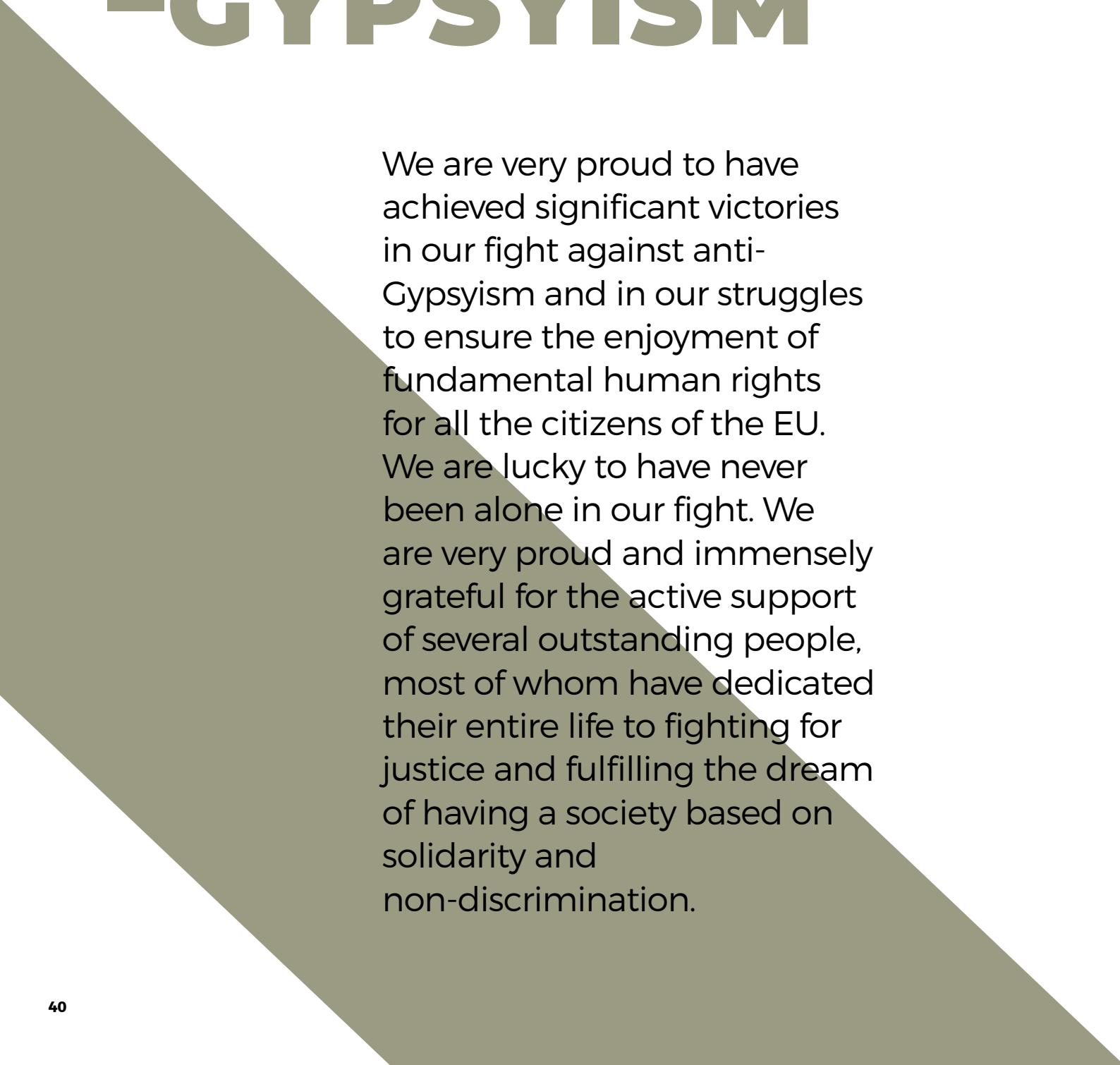
During my traineeship, I learned about how European institutions, policy-making and policy measures work. The European policy environment showed me how important the European Union is for the member states.

I realised also that policies coming from Brussels fight against anti-Gypsyism and segregation at local level too. I also discovered that at the international level we still have many guarantees in the field of human rights, which we do not have at member state level.

This internship was a great opportunity for my personal development and for my professional career. It was very enriching and it opened the door for me to apply for other European job opportunities.

I can strongly recommend this traineeship to everyone who is interested to understand how essential the European Union is for us as a society.

# **EXPERTS ON THE FIGHT AGAINST ANTI- GYPSYISM**



We are very proud to have achieved significant victories in our fight against anti-Gypsyism and in our struggles to ensure the enjoyment of fundamental human rights for all the citizens of the EU. We are lucky to have never been alone in our fight. We are very proud and immensely grateful for the active support of several outstanding people, most of whom have dedicated their entire life to fighting for justice and fulfilling the dream of having a society based on solidarity and non-discrimination.

## The following exceptional people are six of our much-appreciated allies:



**Thomas Hammarberg**  
Human Rights Defender,  
Former Council of Europe  
Commissioner for Human  
Rights

**No country  
can any longer  
pretend that  
justice has been  
made for this  
minority.**

**Prejudices against the Roma are still widespread and continue to fuel discrimination and hate crimes. This is why it is particularly important that politicians and other opinion makers avoid any rhetoric which feeds the continued stigmatisation of Roma communities.**

We must remember that only a few thousand Roma in Germany survived the Holocaust and the concentration camps. They faced enormous difficulties when trying to rebuild their lives, having lost so many of their family members and relatives, and having had their properties destroyed or confiscated. Many of them had their health ruined. When some of them tried to obtain compensation, their claims were rejected, for years.

We must also recognise that for these survivors no justice came with the post-Hitler era. Significantly, the mass killing of the Roma people was not an issue at the Nürnberg trial. The genocide of the Roma – *Samudaripe or Porrajmos* – was hardly recognised in the public discourse. We should be aware that the same denial of the mass murder and other crimes against the Roma by fascist groups in other parts of Europe was typical at the time. Up to now, very little has been done to recognise these historic facts.

The history goes back several hundred years, in fact ever since the various Roma groups arrived in Europe following the long migration from India. The methods of repression have varied between enslavement, enforced assimilation, expulsion, internment and mass killings. Roma people have been victims of racism and a whole system of prejudices. They have been seen as unreliable, dangerous, criminal, and undesirable. They have been used as scapegoats when things went wrong and the locals did not want to take responsibility. This is the very nature of anti-Gypsyism.

To put an end, at long last, to the systematic discrimination of the Roma is one of the most urgent human rights challenges in Europe today. No country can any longer pretend that justice has been made for this minority.

It is indeed positive, therefore, that the European Parliament has begun to take this issue seriously. Member governments should follow suit. Moreover, when doing so they must listen carefully to the advice of the Roma communities and the local civil society organisations.



### **Romani Rose**

Human Rights Activist,  
Chair of the Central Council  
of German Sinti and Roma

**Historical remembrance always implies lived responsibility for the present.**

Over 500,000 Sinti and Roma fell victim to the state organised Holocaust in Nazi occupied Europe: a crime against humanity, which was only recognised in 1982 by the German government. The National socialist regime collectively and definitively denied the right of existence to the members of our minority on the basis of an inhuman racial ideology, simply because they had been born Sinti or Roma. As a result of this, anti-Gypsyism remained powerful and effective until today, often shaping the institutional and societal attitudes and behaviours. The civil rights movement of Sinti and Roma achieved to break the power of interpretation of the former perpetrators, and to raise awareness about our history.

When we remember the Holocaust and Nazi crimes today – more than 70 years after the end of the war – we must work for the rule of law and a strong democracy at the same time. Historical remembrance always implies lived responsibility for the present.

Today, Sinti and Roma, as well as Jews and other minorities, such as refugees and migrants face new dimensions of violent nationalism and racism. We witness how nationalist and right wing populist movements continue to push for a division of Europe and undermine the European values. It is our common task in Europe and its member states to sanction the still existing anti-Gypsyism as much as we ban anti-Semitism.

We all know that anti-Semitism, like anti-Gypsyism, is first directed against minorities, but that it is essentially aimed at destroying democracy and our common European values. The civil rights work of Sinti and Roma is an important contribution not only for our minority, but rather to all of society and for democracy in Europe at large.



### **Mirjam-Angela Karoly**

Former Chief of the OSCE Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues (2013-2017);  
Acting Director of the Vienna-based NGO Romano Centro

**Fighting anti-Gypsyism is a precondition for inclusive democratic societies.**

Anti-Gypsyism is manifested by the injustice enforced on many European citizens, on daily basis. It is manifested by a mayor denying access to water to a community because of its race, by a police officer using degrading language for the community they should serve and protect, by law-makers abstaining from bringing justice to women who have been victims of forced and coercive sterilisation, by a doctor refusing to treat a person because of their skin colour, by a teacher denying a child access to quality education, or by a prosecutor or judge failing to investigate and adjudicate hate crimes against Roma.

Anti-Gypsyist attitudes are widely dispersed through social media and continue to be reinforced by hate speech expressed by public figures and the media. Non-recognition of anti-Gypsyism is characterised by lack of empathy for children who are prevented a better future in today's Europe, or the lack of recognition for wrongdoing of past human rights abuses and the Nazi genocide.

Recognising anti-Gypsyism is key for realising equal rights and opportunities for Roma, it is a precondition for inclusive democratic societies. The call of the international community and civil society to prioritise the fight against anti-Gypsyism has to be fully translated into national policies.

As a strategic goal, it opens Europe to the opportunity of harvesting the great potential of millions of people and using the intelligence, creativity and solidarity of many talented Roma women and men who are willing and ready to contribute.

**Věra Jourová**

European Commissioner  
for Justice, Consumers and  
Gender Equality

**Although the situation will not change overnight, let me voice the hope that with an open mindset, the right leadership and with the help of the Roma community, we will change Europe for the better.**

The European Union was built on the core values that include the respect for human dignity, equality and the respect of human rights. Our European values include explicitly also the protection of the rights of persons belonging to minorities, and the prohibition from all forms of discrimination.

Roma have been living in Europe for more than 700 years, contributing to Europe's cultural and linguistic richness. Roma form an important share of the EU population, yet surveys of the Fundamental Rights Agency confirm widespread discrimination and marginalisation of Roma in European societies. It is therefore of paramount importance to ensure that Roma are treated throughout the EU like any other citizen with equal access to all fundamental rights as enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

It is in this context that the European Commission takes a strong stance against any form of intolerance, manifestation of racism or xenophobia, including anti-Gypsyism, which covers a wide spectrum of prejudices: from discrimination to hostile anti-Roma rhetoric, also present in the political discourse, to individual or concerted acts of open violence against Roma people.

The European Commission established with the EU Framework for National Roma Integration strategies a holistic approach, which ranges from ensuring enforcement of EU legislation, such as the Racial Equality Directive and the Framework Decision on fighting racism and xenophobia, to the use of all available policy, legal and financial instruments in support of Roma inclusion. Fighting against discrimination and anti-Gypsyism must go hand in hand with fighting social and economic exclusion of Roma.

EU member states are key players, together with other partners. To this end, an EU network of National Roma Contact Points has been established, as well as EU High-Level Groups on Non-discrimination, Equality and Diversity and on combating racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance to exchange and develop best practice. A meeting of the latter in December 2017 was devoted to particularities of anti-Gypsyism as a specific form of racism against Roma. The European Commission also agreed on a Code of Conduct with major social media platforms to counter illegal online hate speech.

Although the situation will not change overnight, let me voice the hope that with an open mindset, the right leadership and with the help of the Roma community, we will change Europe for the better.



### **Violeta Naydenova**

Senior policy analyst  
on Roma and Anti-  
discrimination of the Open  
Society European Policy  
Institute

**European  
policymakers  
need to realise  
that the EU  
Framework  
alone will not  
remove the  
centuries-old  
and very deep  
institutional  
and societal  
racism.**

In the fight against anti-Gypsyism, it is essential to understand its root cause. Anti-Roma repression dates back to the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Roma people entered Europe and the rulers of that time used executions, slavery, prohibition to speak the Roma language and mass murders to control them,<sup>26</sup> laying down the foundation of today's anti-Gypsyism. The Roma travelled because they had to survive, living at the margins of the society. They were pushed into a vicious circle of poverty, exclusion and segregation.

The EU put forward a specific policy framework in 2011<sup>27</sup> with the aim of improving the situation of the Roma. However, socio-economic inclusion will not be achieved so long as the deeply rooted racism in societies and institutions is not addressed at EU level as well. A report from 2017 illustrates that Roma are even more segregated, discriminated against and hated in Europe now than in 2011.<sup>28</sup>

Still the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary<sup>29</sup> continue to place a disproportionately high number of Roma children in schools for the mentally disabled, while Italy<sup>30</sup> has been investing millions of euros in building mono-ethnic Roma segregated camps.

These institutional actions against Roma<sup>31</sup> are in breach of EU's anti-discrimination legislation. European policymakers need to realise that the EU Framework alone will not remove the centuries-old and very deep institutional and societal racism. The nature and depth of anti-Gypsyism needs to be acknowledged and understood by all relevant policy makers and by European societies.

Thanks to the work of the European Parliament, in collaboration with Roma and non-Roma civil society organisations, anti-Gypsyism has been recognised in parliamentary resolutions in 2015<sup>32</sup> and in 2017<sup>33</sup>. It is now up to the European Commission and member states to follow the Parliament's example, in order to give fair chance to every Roma child in Europe to live a life free from discrimination. In the post 2020 EU Roma Framework, the European Commission should ask every government to develop specific policy measures and funding to tackle anti-Gypsyism in the priority areas of education, employment, healthcare and housing. Most vitally, European leaders must communicate that the Roma are Europeans, who deserve the rights and respect of their fellow citizens.

<sup>26</sup> [https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/roma/histoCulture\\_en.asp](https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/roma/histoCulture_en.asp)

<sup>27</sup> file:///C:/Users/vnaydenova/Downloads/COMM\_Framework\_roma\_strategies\_EN.pdf

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/sites/default/files/revisiting-eu-roma-framework-20170607.pdf>

<sup>29</sup> See: Headline 5. Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality: [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_MEMO-16-1823\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-16-1823_en.htm)

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/europe-and-central-asia/italy/report-italy/>

<sup>31</sup> [https://www.ceps.eu/system/files/RR2017-08\\_AntiGypsyism.pdf](https://www.ceps.eu/system/files/RR2017-08_AntiGypsyism.pdf)

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&language=EN&reference=P8-TA-2015-0095>

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P8-TA-2017-0413+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>



### **Anastasia Crickley**

Chairperson of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

**Hundreds of years of oppression won't be eliminated overnight but targets need timelines and to be ambitious.**

As Chairperson of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and as a campaigner of nearly forty years for Traveller and Roma rights in Ireland, Europe and beyond I cannot but be clear about the persistent, unique and unrelenting discrimination experienced by Roma and Traveller women, children and men. This racism, through which its victims are often blamed for the multifaceted discriminations imposed on them, fits very well all dimensions of Article I International Convention for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination which describes racial discrimination as being either or both on purpose or in effect. Its uniqueness is well described as anti-Gypsyism.

CERD reviews over the eight years of my membership, of each and every state where there are Roma and Traveller populations focus on the discriminations they experience and the often stark differentials between their education, employment, housing and health including length of life chances, and those of the rest of the population. Reverse differentials emerge with regard to prison populations which reveal concerns also regarding who gets sent to prison, for what, and for how long. Ongoing issues remain in every state regarding relations and trust between police and all sectors involved in the administration of justice.

These do not help in addressing the increasing hate crime and hate speech against Roma although there are also examples of some good practice.

The 2011 EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020 and the annual assessments of national strategies by the European Commission, more recently supported by the Roma Civil Monitor project, provide a useful starting point. This is reinforced by the evidence of the Fundamental Rights Agency's EU Midis and other studies which indicate among other things that 80% of Roma interviewed were at risk of poverty (EU average 17%).

During the past decade some progress has been made and clear Roma and Traveller leader voices have demanded their right to shape and inform it.

However, much remains to be done, there is no room for complacency, and one size does not fit all.

Making rights a realisable reality demands knowing something of the number of people whose rights have been abused so good disaggregated data with human rights collection and use standards is required. Political leaders need to not only refrain from the discriminatory remarks some are still capable of making, they also need to publicly endorse the contributions of Roma and Travellers to society and acknowledge their long marginalisation and suffering. Awareness raising for officials, who in the end are the duty bearers responsible for ensuring rights, needs to be comprehensive and accompanied by mandatory anti-racist training at all pre-service, and continuous professional development levels.

The particular forms of anti-Gypsyism experienced by Roma and Traveller women needs to be named and the women supported to reach their potential through Special Measures and Positive Action as recommended by both CERD and the EU. Hundreds of years of oppression won't be eliminated overnight but targets need timelines and to be ambitious - I'm tired of talk of the Roma classroom assistant, why not the Roma teacher and teacher of teachers. And why are we talking only of an Integration Strategy? There can be no hierarchies of oppression and there is a need for a fair and just integration or mobility strategy for Roma who have moved into the EU area or want to move within it. Many others have been part of European countries for centuries so the real issues are racism without which there can be no integration, and inclusion rather than marginalisation and impoverishment.

Reflecting this the Irish Strategy is called the National Traveller Roma Inclusion Strategy but here as elsewhere results require resources as well as resolution. I look forward to working here and in Europe, also in essential solidarity with others committed to eliminating racism in all its forms, towards making the next decade one when we make real progress overall particularly for Roma and Traveller inclusion.

# EASY-TO-READ

There are around 10 million Roma people in Europe.  
Roma people face a lot of **injustice**.  
Injustice is when you do not get the rights you deserve.

Many Roma children go to **segregated schools**.  
In these segregated schools  
Roma children attain little knowledge  
and are treated badly.

A lot of Roma people are unemployed.  
A lot of Roma people face **discrimination**  
when they want to find a job.

Discrimination means that you are treated unfairly  
or that you do not get the same chances as others.

A lot of Roma people live a shorter life than most people.  
Many Roma people face discrimination  
when they go to see the doctor.

Many Roma people are very poor.  
Many Roma people do not have a comfortable house.  
They do not have a bathroom and do not have tap water.  
Some Roma people go to bed hungry.

Roma people face injustice and discrimination  
because of **anti-Gypsyism**.

# VERSION



Anti-Gypsyism is when somebody thinks

- that Roma people are not as clever as others,
- that Roma people are not as hard-working as others,
- that Roma people deserve less than others.

It is important that we fight against anti-Gypsyism.

The **European Parliament** fights against anti-Gypsyism.

In the European Parliament there are politicians from all the **member states** of the **European Union**.

The European Union is a group of 28 countries.

We call these countries member states.

They have joined together to be stronger politically and economically.

The politicians in the European Parliament make important laws about how to fight anti-Gypsyism.

They make laws in different fields:

- laws to stop discrimination in all the areas of life
- laws to stop **hate speech**

Hate speech is speech attacking a group of people or their members.

- laws to commemorate the Roma **genocide**

Genocide is a systematic and widespread murder of a group of people.

One of the political groups of the European Parliament is the group of the **Socialists and the Democrats** (in short, S&D).

**Soraya Post** is a politician from **Sweden**.

Sweden is one of the 28 member states in the European Union.

Soraya Post works in the S&D group.

She works hard to fight anti-Gypsyism.

She initiated a lot of laws to fight anti-Gypsyism.

Soraya Post also started the **Roma Week**

in the European Parliament.

During the Roma Week we talk about discrimination.

We also talk about how to stop discrimination.

The S&D group organises many events

about how to fight anti-Gypsyism.

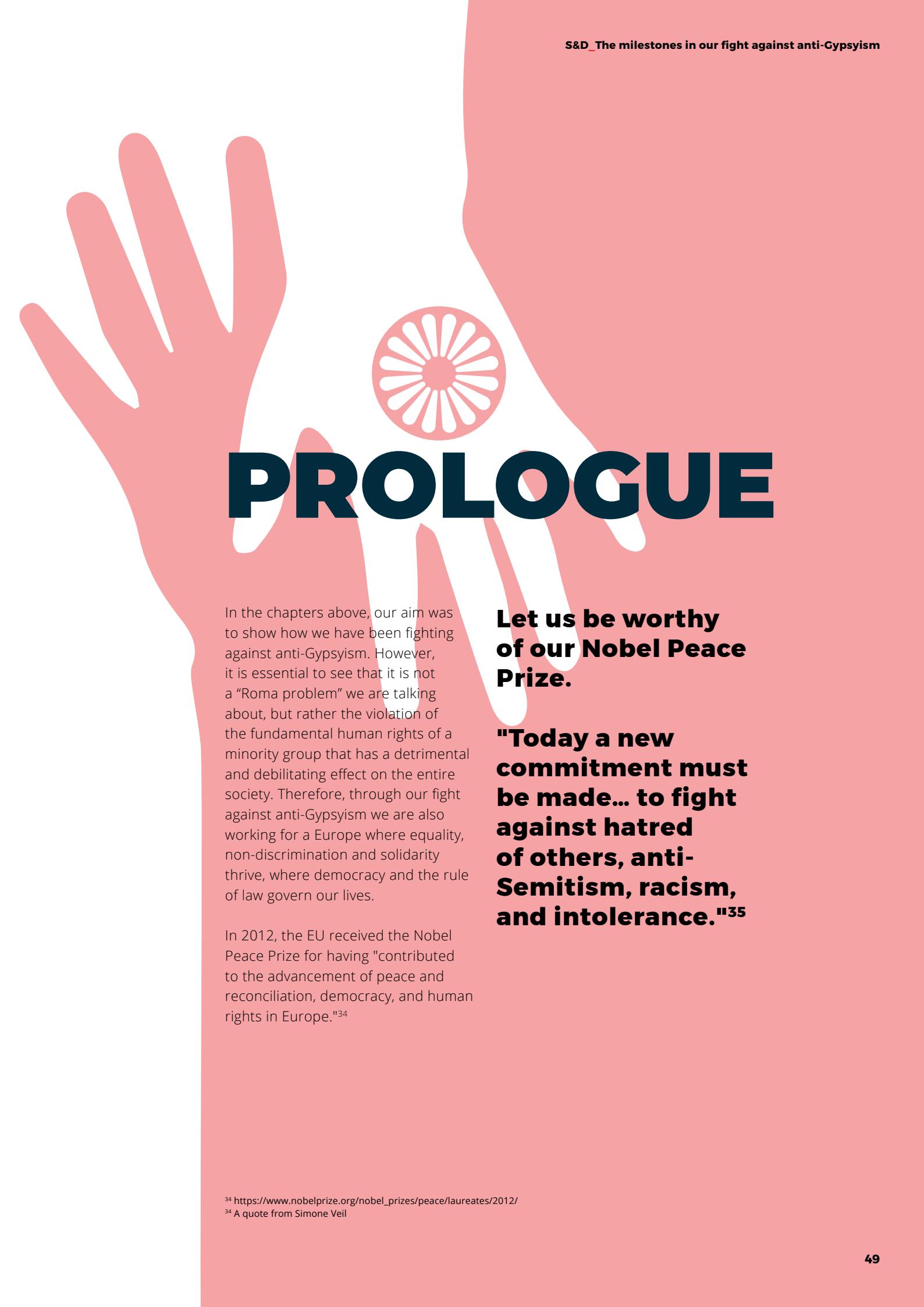
The S&D group offers education opportunities  
for young Roma people.

These young Roma people stay  
in the European Parliament for 3 months.

The S&D group gets a lot of help from different people  
to fight against injustice and discrimination.

It is important that a lot of people work together  
to stop anti-Gypsyism.

It is essential that Roma people enjoy the same rights  
as all the other people in the European Union.



# PROLOGUE

In the chapters above, our aim was to show how we have been fighting against anti-Gypsyism. However, it is essential to see that it is not a "Roma problem" we are talking about, but rather the violation of the fundamental human rights of a minority group that has a detrimental and debilitating effect on the entire society. Therefore, through our fight against anti-Gypsyism we are also working for a Europe where equality, non-discrimination and solidarity thrive, where democracy and the rule of law govern our lives.

In 2012, the EU received the Nobel Peace Prize for having "contributed to the advancement of peace and reconciliation, democracy, and human rights in Europe."<sup>34</sup>

**Let us be worthy  
of our Nobel Peace  
Prize.**

**"Today a new  
commitment must  
be made... to fight  
against hatred  
of others, anti-  
Semitism, racism,  
and intolerance."<sup>35</sup>**

<sup>34</sup> [https://www.nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/peace/laureates/2012/](https://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2012/)

<sup>34</sup> A quote from Simone Veil

# ABBREVIATIONS

<b>EP</b>	European Parliament
<b>MEP</b>	Member of the European Parliament
<b>S&amp;D</b>	Socialists and Democrats Group in the European Parliament
<b>ARDI</b>	European Parliament Anti-Racism and Diversity Intergroup
<b>RoP</b>	Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament
<b>PES</b>	Party of European Socialists
<b>NRISS</b>	EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies
<b>FRA</b>	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
<b>EU MIDIS</b>	European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey
<b>ECRI</b>	European Commission against Racism and Intolerance
<b>OSCE/ODIHR</b>	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>CERD</b>	United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

# CREDITS



This publication has been edited by Rita Fóber, policy adviser and Soraya Post MEP

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