

## **ERIO at the Expert Meeting on Roma and Travellers**

Vienna, 13/06/2008 – ERIO executive director Ivan Ivanov took part the experts meeting on Roma and Travellers in Vienna on June 13<sup>th</sup>. The event was organised by the EU Fundamental Rights Agency and brought together Roma and non-Roma experts from Europe to discuss housing issues facing Roma in the EU member states. Participants included representatives of OSCE/ODIHR Roma and Sinti contact point, Council of Europe, ERRC, ERTF and ERPC. The meeting was the launch of an FRA project for a comprehensive study on housing and the initiation of consultation for the study. Experts presented their initiatives on Roma with particular regard to housing. Roma housing issues in Italy and other countries, the issues leading to barriers to access to adequate housing and the international standards on the rights to housing not respected by some member states were all discussed. The availability of data as one of the key elements in the process of ensuring housing for these in need was also discussed.

## **EADHR Conference in Paris dedicated a panel to Roma**

Paris, 14/06/2008 – On June 14<sup>th</sup> the European Association for the Defence of Human Rights (EADHR) held a conference on “Development of an International network for Intervention at European Level” in Paris. The conference was attended by network members of EADHR and leading human rights experts. Executive director of ERIO Ivan Ivanov was invited as a keynote speaker on the Roma panel. Mr Ivanov said that the situation for Roma the new member states had not changed since their accession. These Roma will however benefit from being covered by EU anti-discrimination legislation as well as future Roma related policies. The EU should urgently review its existing policies to identify the aspects which prevent Roma from benefiting, update their approach towards the issue of Roma and ensure the involvement of Roma in the policy making process. The President of the EADHR, Mr. Pierre Barge, expressed his concerns over recent developments regarding Roma in Italy. He said that latent racism is widespread and that EU should strengthen its migration policy. The Roma situation is alarming and their rights must be respected. There should not be categorisation of rights, Roma rights are as important as anybody else’s human rights.

## **ERIO Executive Director meets with the Director of DG ESA of the European Commission**

Brussels, 17/06/2008 – On June 17<sup>th</sup> the Executive Director of ERIO, Mr Ivan Ivanov, met with the Director of DG Employment and Social Affairs (ESA) of the European Commission, Mr. Van Der Pas. The meeting was also attended by Mr Stafan Olson, head of anti-discrimination unit in DG (EAS). During the meeting Mr. Ivanov presented the work of the his organisation under the Roma network project supported by the Commission since early 2008. The main focus of the discussion was on ERIO’s position regarding European Roma Policy and the Commission’s approach to the Roma issues in the Union. Mr. Ivanov stressed that there is a need for further development of the European legal framework on anti-discrimination, as well as for a comprehensive Roma policy which should ensure equality and social inclusion in all policy fields. In addition, he stated that Roma should not be only passive beneficiaries of such a policy but also to be given the responsibility for the design of this policy and be

involved in the implementation. Mr. Van Der Pas said that it was not enough to have written policies or legislation if Roma are not the driven force to make these policies work and push for their effective realisation. He added also that funding was currently available and that we should search for a break-through in order to ensure real change in the Roma communities and that Roma should play an active role.

### **ERIO seminar on multiple discrimination fully participated**

Brussels, 19/06/2008 – The ERIO seminar organised on June 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> on discrimination on multiple grounds is being fully participated in to capacity. EU Commission and Parliament officers, representatives from Dutch, British and Belgian NGOs, politicians and other committed participants are discussing the state of multiple discrimination in Europe and how to tackle the problem by legal and operational means. Full information on the seminar will be disseminated with our next e-news issue.

### **Hearing in Brussels on the Roma situation in Europe**

Brussels, 16/06/08 – The context created around the issue of Romanian immigrants in Italy triggered a European debate on immigration in EU member states. The discussions in the European Parliament had as topic the directive on freedom of movement and its interpretation by certain community governments. MEP Adina Valean (ALDE, PNL), rapporteur of the European Parliament for the implementation of the Directive on freedom of movement for citizens, stated that the current crisis related to the Roma situation in Europe might be caused by a "too broad interpretation" of the directive on freedom of movement. "We are now assessing the implementation of the directive on freedom of movement by the member states and anything that transgresses it should be notified to the European Court of Justice. I am afraid that these crises seen in various parts of Europe come from a too broad interpretation of the directive. This is why I think we should assess the situation and try to clarify this", said, Alina Valean, vice-president of ALDE.

Read more on [http://www.divers.ro/opinii\\_en?wid=37649&func=viewSubmission&sid=8808](http://www.divers.ro/opinii_en?wid=37649&func=viewSubmission&sid=8808)

### **Brussels pledges bill against all forms of discrimination**

Strasbourg, 17/06/2008 – The European Commission has made another u-turn in its plans to boost EU anti-discrimination rules, pledging to put forward a complex bill ruling out unfair treatment of citizens on all grounds, including sexual orientation and age. The shift was announced by Commissioner Jacques Barrot at a hearing in the European Parliament's civil liberties committee in Strasbourg on Monday (16 June). Some MEPs are happy the Commission has changed its mind on discrimination bill: "All discrimination is serious, and deserves to be fought with the same determination," Mr Barrot told MEPs, adding that the EU executive had asked his colleague, social affairs commissioner Vladimir Spidla to "draw up a proposal for a cross-cutting directive". The new bill, set to be unveiled on 2 July, will "aim at combating all the forms of discrimination referred to in Article 13 of the Treaty," meaning on the grounds of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. Mr Barrot specifically pointed out that the legislation will also tackle homophobia, urging MEPs to support the commission in its attempt to push the bill through, as it would need a unanimous support from member states. It is the second time within a few months that the commission has changed its approach to the anti-discrimination law, which would expand the EU's protection against discrimination beyond the workplace - to which it is currently limited. The new bill would also attempt to protect against discrimination that occurs during the provision of goods and services. In April, some officials revealed that the forthcoming bill would only cover discrimination against

disabled people, reportedly due to concerns by businesses in some countries that more expansive EU rules would lead to costly lawsuits. The move was strongly criticised by liberal and left-leaning political parties in the European Parliament. Monday's announcement by Mr Barrot was welcomed by several MEPs.

Source: [www.euobserver.com](http://www.euobserver.com)

### **US State Dept says Montenegro backsliding in fight against human trafficking**

Washington, 17/06/08 – Montenegro has been downgraded on the US State Department's 8th annual Trafficking in Persons Report. The report separates the world's countries into 4 tiers and Montenegro slipped from the second to the third tier this year. While there is no indication that the country is in imminent danger of sliding into the fourth tier along with Burma, Moldova, North Korea and Syria (in addition to ten others) it was listed behind tier 2 countries such as Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Mongolia and Uganda. According to the report, "Montenegro is primarily a transit country for the trafficking of women and girls to Western Europe for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation. In 2007, there were no reports of Montenegrins being trafficked to other countries. There were a small number of cases in which women and girls were trafficked into Montenegro. Women and girls from Serbia, Kosovo, Bosnia - Herzegovina, Moldova, Romania, Ukraine, and Russia are trafficked across Montenegro to Western European countries. Official statistics noted that one Montenegrin woman was trafficked within the country for sexual exploitation". The report's authors display a bit of cultural naiveté or intellectual disingenuousness, however, when they write, "Children are coerced into begging," in Montenegro. "Adults inducing children to beg for money occurs in Montenegro and could be considered a form of trafficking under Article 444 but it is not recognised as such by Montenegrin authorities". One can certainly see children begging in the streets of Podgorica on any given day but the vast majority of them (if not all of them) are Roma. Whether those Roma children are Montenegrin citizens or refugees is not clear but the Roma are a notoriously difficult people to integrate into any society and begging in the streets is a way of life for many of them.

Read more on <http://www.themontenegrotimes.com/mnt/20080617682/Feature/US-State-Dept-says-Montenegro-backsliding-in-fight-against-human-trafficking.html>

### **Bulgaria improving in fight against people trafficking – US state dept**

Washington, 17/06/08 – Bulgaria does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of people trafficking but is making significant efforts to do so, according to the United States state department 2008 report to congress on people trafficking. The report, released on June 8, classified Bulgaria as a "tier 2" country, ranking below tier 1 countries that fully comply but above countries classified as failing to make significant efforts. "Bulgaria is a source, transit, and, to a lesser extent, a destination country for men, women, and children from Moldova, Romania, Russia, Ukraine, Armenia, Lebanon, and Uzbekistan trafficked to and through Bulgaria to Germany, Switzerland, Norway, Italy, the Netherlands, Greece, Turkey, Belgium, France, Spain, Austria, the Czech Republic, Poland, and Macedonia for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation and forced labour," the report said. About a third of the trafficking victims identified were Roma women and children. Roma children are trafficked within Bulgaria and to Austria, Italy, and other West European countries for purposes of forced begging and petty theft, according to the report.

Read more on [http://www.sofiaecho.com/article/bulgaria-improving-in-fight-against-people-trafficking-us-state-dept/id\\_29984/catid\\_66](http://www.sofiaecho.com/article/bulgaria-improving-in-fight-against-people-trafficking-us-state-dept/id_29984/catid_66)

## **Ombudsman says local government welfare policies discriminate against Roma**

Budapest, 17/06/08 – The decision of several Hungarian local governments to tie a person's right to benefits to doing paid work discriminates against minorities such as the Roma, said the ombudsman for minority rights on Tuesday. Erno Kallai told a news conference that the local government decree in several towns in the north-eastern Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County not only knowingly broke the law and the constitution but was also discriminative. Kallai, summing up the results of an investigation by his office, argued that the initiative to force jobless people to work for their benefits presented a grave danger to deeply impoverished people, many of whom are Roma.

Source: MTI

## **Call for applications: Training Seminar on Forced Migration, Minorities and Human Rights, Berlin, 3-7.9.2008/8-12.10.2008**

Please note: We can only accept applications from Austria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Serbia and Turkey. The seminar is funded by: "Remembrance and Future Fund" and the European Commission. Deadline for Application September Seminar : 8 August 2008. Deadline for Application October Seminar: 8 September 2008.

Read more on <http://www.network-migration.org/doks/CFA9-08.pdf>

## **SALTO Report On Roma Youth Inclusion within Youth in Action Programme!**

Please find on:

[http://groups.google.com/group/Romano\\_Liloro/browse\\_thread/thread/7a2cd01561b36dec?hl](http://groups.google.com/group/Romano_Liloro/browse_thread/thread/7a2cd01561b36dec?hl)

a new report on the Roma youth inclusion within the European Commission's Youth in Action programme and the the statement from Roma organisations that attended the Roma youth round table in April 2008. The report offers practical ways and different solutions for action which should be taken from the National Agencies to encourage more youth work projects with Roma communities. The report was compiled during an internship at the SALTO Cultural Diversity Resource Centre and it is a continuation of the statement of the Roma youth round table, which was held in Budapest in April, 2008.

## **REF Vacancies: Consultants for Carrying out the REF's Independent Institutional Evaluation**

The Roma Education Fund (REF) is seeking two consultants with international experience to carry out its independent institutional evaluation. One of the consultants will review the REF's project portfolio and technical assistance program, and the other its institutional set-up.

The Terms of Reference (TOR) of the assignment which describes the modalities of the assignment can be downloaded from the link given below. The assignment is expected to start in July 2008 and completed in September 2008. Interested applicants are encouraged to submit a Concept Note (not longer than 2 pages) along the lines described in the TOR by June 30, 2008.

Read more on [http://groups.google.com/group/Romano\\_Liloro/browse\\_thread/thread/a4158c8177e24b35?hl](http://groups.google.com/group/Romano_Liloro/browse_thread/thread/a4158c8177e24b35?hl)

## Study session: Roma youth participation - The way forward

Please find the call for participants for the next activity of the Forum of European Roma Young People on [http://groups.google.com/group/Roma\\_Files/browse\\_thread/thread/ecce5630b5d447b?hl](http://groups.google.com/group/Roma_Files/browse_thread/thread/ecce5630b5d447b?hl)

Please note that the deadline for application forms is 1 July 2008. For any questions please contact [ferypsession@yahoo.com](mailto:ferypsession@yahoo.com)



The European Roma Information Office (ERIO) is an international advocacy organization, which promotes political and public discussion on Roma issues by providing factual and in-dept information on a range of policy issues to the European Union institutions, Roma civil organizations, governmental authorities and inter-governmental bodies. ERIO cooperates with a network

of a large number of organizations and acts to combat racial discrimination and social exclusion through awareness raising, lobbying and policy development.

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