

Presentation



Each year the Fundación Secretariado Gitano (FSG) publishes its Annual Activities Report. This year's 2005 edition focuses on an important year for the Roma community both in Spain and throughout all of Europe during which important advances made have been further consolidated. It has also been a year of arduous but fruitful work for the Foundation in its ongoing effort to meet and develop the objectives set back at the very beginning, four decades ago, which can be summarised as improving the living standards of the Roma community, encouraging its participation as full-fledged citizens and promoting recognition and support of its culture.

In the European context, the year 2005 kicked off with an encouraging line of action over the medium term in eight Central and Eastern European countries, i.e. the Decade of Roma Inclusion (2005-2015). Additionally there were other institutional initiatives which raise our hopes that the Roma community is gaining relative weight on the EU political agenda.

On the national level, the party now in government is starting to fulfil some of the electoral promises made (some proposed by the FSG) among which special mention should be made of the constitution of the State Council of the Roma People which is planned to commence operation in 2006.

These and other relevant events in the institutional context are summarised (following the section focusing on FSG institutional information) in the chapter on the Status of the Roma commu-

nity and the FSG in 2005. Following is the activities report itself with a complete description of the lines of work implemented by the organisation's different work areas (more specific information on the work undertaken by the territorial delegations can be found in their own Annual Reports, one of which is published by each community in which our organisation is operating).

Once again we would stress the success of the Acceder Employment Programme-ESF 2000-2006 which has been acknowledged in a number of different fora as an example of "Best Practices" and which now boasts a total of 28,231 users and over 20,217 labour contracts. We would also highlight the second consecutive year of the FSG's implementation of the campaign to improve the social image of the Roma community and on this occasion the slogan is "Our prejudices are the voices of others".

And lastly, we must recognise and express our appreciation for the role that an increasing number of organisations and institutions are playing by supporting our activities and contributing to this joint project. And also the essential work undertaken by the Foundation's workers who, on behalf of the Board of Trustees, I would like to thank for their marvellous work once again this year. Among them, a very special thanks goes to José Manuel Fresno García who, for more than 20 years, was the Managing Director of the Secretariado Gitano and who embarked upon a new profession in the month of April.

Pedro Puente Fernández / President

