

# Advancement of Roma culture



EXHIBIT "SHARING CULTURES, ROMA TODAY"

In an enlarged Europe, the Roma community is a very relevant sector of the population with approximately 10 million members. A significant proportion of the members of Europe's Roma ethnic minority remain immersed in a situation of social exclusion, subject to discrimination processes which limit the exercise of their rights and their access to resources and services, cultural included, which are readily available to the rest of Europe's citizens.

In Spain, Roma is the most important minority group and despite its nearly 600

years of history, its integration process cannot be described as satisfactory. In fact, the majority society is not fully aware of this co-existence nor of the contributions made by Roma culture to our common acquis. For this reason (and others) it is important to recognise and celebrate the existence of Roma culture.

In 2007, approximately **20,000 people** took part in our cultural activities organised in more than **20 locations** throughout all of Spain with a total of over **115 performances**.



BOOK "ROMA FAMILIES AT CHRISTMAS"

Activities can be broken down into the following groups:

- › Commemoration of International Roma Day (April 8th) in most of the Autonomous Communities.
- › Organisation of and participation in cultural weeks such as the V Roma Culture Week in Murcia or the celebration of the *Feria Chica Gitana* (Roma fair) in Merida.
- › Intercultural meetings and conferences at schools and other institutions.
- › Cinema-forum where films and documentaries are shown to work on interculturality and learn more about Roma history and culture.
- › Entertainment and sports activities: cultural visits, theatre, dance, photography, singing, percussion, football championships, story-telling, etc.
- › Cultural workshops.
- › Presentations related to the second stage of the Fundación Secretariado Gitano's awareness-raising campaign putting a special focus on Roma culture.
- › Debate and reflection seminars on the situation of the Roma community yesterday and today.
- › Participation in radio and television programmes.
- › Different publications: the magazine entitled *Gitanos, Pensamiento y Cultura* (Roma, Thought and Culture); the bulletin entitled *Los Gitanos en la Prensa* (Roma in the news) with a section focusing on culture; and a series of monographs such as cookbooks and other aspects of Roma culture.
- › Dissemination of Roma culture through the Fundación Secretariado Gitano's documentation centre.
- › Exhibits: "Sharing Cultures, Roma Today" and "Roma Women, Participating" the aim of which is to foster interculturality based on knowledge of the history and

Approximately 20,000 people took part in our cultural activities in 2007

culture of the Roma people with a view to favouring cross-cultural enrichment from a perspective free of any discriminatory attitudes and to showcase examples of Roma women's participation in education, employment, politics and art. In 2007 both exhibits gained notoriety as a work resource and have been made available to the public in many contexts throughout Spain.

Preparation of and participation in many of these activities had the backing of the resources and services of the FSG's Documentation Centre which has become a focal point for information and a benchmark for our entity and other institutions when putting together any sort of exhibit. The Centre handled a total of 636 in-person queries and requests for bibliography and

responded to information requests via telephone, post, e-mail and fax.

Through the Ministry of Culture's Action and Cultural Promotion assistance, in 2007 the FSG published the book entitled *Familias gitanas en Navidad, las costumbres y la tradición en hogares gitanos de España* (Roma families at Christmas, customs and traditions in Roma homes throughout Spain). This publication forms part of an FSG line of work focusing on the advancement of Roma culture. Its aim is to simply show examples of and share the customs of some Roma families during the Christmas season. It is a diverse collection which has enriched (or been enriched) by the most popular customs and traditions of each region.

A series of materials related to Roma culture has also been published:

- ▶ *Aprendemos Romanés* (Let's learn the Romany language) (FSG Zaragoza).



BOOK "SHARING ROMA RECIPES"



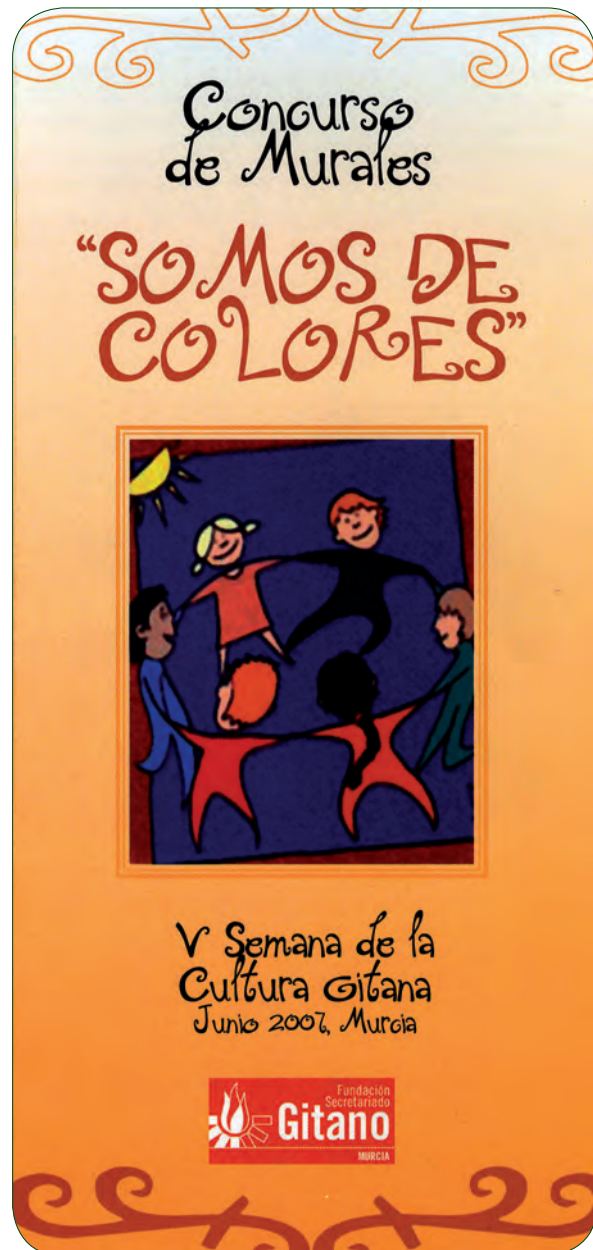
RIVER CEREMONY AT THE CELEBRATION OF INTERNATIONAL ROMA DAY

Teaching material for Roma language learning.

- › *Rromnâ = gitanas* (FSG Zaragoza). Gain insight into the “quejío” (heart-felt emotion) of the Roma women of Zaragoza through a series of poems.
- › *Tapas de Aragón*. Cookbook (FSG Zaragoza).
- › *Primeros platos sabrosos*. (Delicious first courses) Cookbook (FSG Zaragoza).
- › *Recetas gitanas. Pucheros para compartir* (Sharing Roma recipes) (FSG Murcia).

We should point out that these publications reflect the participation in the form of testimony and experiences of a number of Roma women and men who have taken part in the FSG’s activities and programmes in the different regions.

One of the most noteworthy aspects of these cultural advancement actions this year was their implementation in all of the towns and provinces where the FSG is established. In this connection it is fair to say that cultural advancement is an ongoing activity undertaken by team professionals who incorporate the promotion of Roma culture as a relevant activity among their work objectives. We would likewise point out that while these activities exclusively focus on cultural advancement there are also many others (educational, social-labour market integration, the advancement of young people and women, to name a few) where culture is a cross-cutting theme.



APRIL 8TH POSTER

“Cultural advancement is an ongoing activity for our team professionals”