



**PRESS RELEASE FROM THE ROMA PARTICIPATION GROUP
OF FUNDACIÓN SECRETARIADO GITANO**

International Roma Day – 8 April 2026

***It is a time for recognition, equality and
advancement***

Every 8 April we celebrate International Roma Day. A day to take pride in who we are, to remember where we come from and to continue fighting for where we want to go.

Last year we marked 600 years of the documented presence of the Roma on the Iberian Peninsula. And this year, in 2026, we want to continue moving forward from there. Our history is not just a figure; it lives on in our families, in our memory, in our culture, in our words, in our way of being in the world, and also in our way of resisting, of getting by, and of continuing to contribute to this society.

We have centuries of coexistence, presence and identity behind us. Yet, all too often we are still viewed as outsiders, through a narrow and unfair lens of who we are. It is not enough to say that the Roma people are part of Spain's history, if many of us continue to face more obstacles, fewer opportunities and greater inequality than the majority. That is why, on 8 April, we want to bring back to the table an essential and very important idea: "knowing is necessary, recognising is essential".

It is not enough for us to be mentioned from time to time. It is not enough for our contribution to be recognised only on designated days. We must move towards real equality, because even today, all too often, being Roma still means having to prove oneself more, starting from further behind.

That is why we believe the time has come to take a further step as a society. A genuine commitment to the recognition, equality and advancement of the Roma people.

And when we say this, we are not talking about something distant or complicated. We are not talking about paperwork, or offices, or difficult words. We are talking about our lives. About our families. About our children. About our elders. Our neighbourhoods. Our opportunities. Our right to live with dignity, respect and on an equal footing. We believe the time has come to move towards a clearer, firmer and more effective commitment. A commitment that goes beyond mere fine words, but truly helps to reduce inequalities and combat antigypsyism, which still today continues to shape too many life trajectories.

That is why we advocate the need to continue moving towards a comprehensive law in Spain that guarantees these principles and safeguards the rights of the Roma.

And we want to make this clear: when we advocate for a comprehensive law for the recognition, equality and advancement of the Roma, we are not talking about something distant. We are talking about a real commitment from the public authorities to our people.

A way of ensuring that, whoever is in power, the rights and equality of the Roma do not disappear from the political agenda nor continue to be relegated to the margins or to social affairs. Because to speak of the Roma people is also to speak of memory, of recognition, of culture, of dignity and of citizenship. And it is, of course, to speak of public policies, which remain necessary to guarantee real equality in areas such as education, employment or equal treatment. So that equality does not depend on luck, on postcode or on the weight that prejudice still carries in certain spaces.

And this is not just a matter for the Roma people; it is a matter for society as a whole. We do not want to walk this path alone without involving other stakeholders. Because a society that combats inequalities, that recognises its diversity, that better protects rights and that leaves no one behind, is a better society for everyone.

But we also want to make an important point: this journey cannot be undertaken without us all.

We Roma must continue to be the protagonists of our present and our future. We must continue to raise our voices, participate, propose, build and occupy with dignity the spaces that are rightfully ours. Because no one can define our needs, our aspirations and our priorities better than our own.

On 8 April, we want to celebrate who we are, honour those who came before us and reaffirm our commitment to what lies ahead.

We have come a long way. We have endured much. We have contributed much. And we are still here.

That is why, today, we say clearly and with hope: the time has come.

It is time for recognition, yes.

It is time for equality, too.

It is time for advancement, of course.

But, above all, it is time to take another step forward as a society.

Because Roma are not merely part of history.

We are the present, and we want to remain the future.

Sastipen thaj Mestipen – Health and Freedom

Opre Roma! – Up with the Roma People!

#RomaDay