



European Roma Information Office

8th April - International Roma Day: Still fighting for our Rights

**Press Release
07/04/2008**

The European Roma Information Office (ERIO) would like to join Roma communities throughout Europe in celebrating the 8th April, International Roma Day. On this day we unite with Roma communities around the world in celebrating the Roma culture and remembering the long fight of Roma for their recognition.

But the history of European Roma is not only one of their fight against racism and social exclusion. It is also a history of the development and consolidation of a non-territorial nation in Europe. Over the centuries, Roma language, tradition and culture have not only become a part but have enriched the European culture. Here, the resistance of Roma against the Nazi and other authoritarian regimes as contribution to the development and consolidation of peace and democracy in the European Union should be acknowledged.

An acknowledgment of Roma's contribution to the construction of a more democratic Europe is the last Resolution of the European Parliament of 31 January 2008 calling upon the European Commission to shape a Community Action Plan on Roma Inclusion. This would be a big step towards Roma inclusion. In 2008, declared by the European Commission as "European Year of the Intercultural Dialogue – 2008", the realisation of equal opportunities remains the goal for the largest parts of Roma. Given the extreme patterns of social exclusion and discrimination faced by Roma, they are not equal partners in such societal dialogue. This remains the main challenge for European institutions and especially for national governments. Nevertheless, ERIO believes that effective inclusion policies can be successful only with the full participation of Roma themselves whose fight for recognition and equality should be recognised on this International Roma Day.

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