



FSG' PRESS RELEASE (FSG)

April 8th, 2011

International Roma Day

The International Roma Day of 2011 is commemorated next 8 of April. On this occasion, as in previous years, the FSG has produced a commemorative poster to be distributed among Spanish and European entities. It also organises and supports several events, and similar initiatives are taking place increasingly often in many countries. On this occasion the FSG also disseminates an institutional statement to raise the awareness of the public authorities and the population in general on the situation of the Roma in Europe, highlighting again the advances and shortcomings in the process of social inclusion and access to full citizenship.

This celebration, which has a clear European dimension, has a special meaning in 2011, the year of the 40th anniversary of the Roma congress held in London on 8th April 1971, in which the Roma flag and anthem were instituted.

Furthermore, the European Commission will release the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies on 5th April. We hope that the next step will be the review of this EU Framework by the European Council in June, which will confer it a special institutional relevance.

This significant political context for the future of the European Roma population constitutes the follow-up to the high-level events initiated in 2008 with the organisation of the First European Roma Summit in Brussels and, in April 2010, the Second European Roma Summit in Cordoba. This context is also a response to different resolutions adopted by the European Parliament, including the one of 9th March on the EU Strategy on Roma inclusion. This resolution calls for the introduction of binding minimum standards at the EU level for the social inclusion of Roma people and demands an improved protection of the fundamental rights and a better use of European resources.



In line with many other civil society organisations in Europe, the Fundación Secretariado Gitano believes that the current context offers a unique opportunity to strengthen the political commitment of the European institutions and Member States, so that they promote the social inclusion of Roma, which remain one of the groups most affected by poverty and marginalisation, as well as the most discriminated in the whole Europe. The incidents that took place during the summer in France, when there were indiscriminate expulsions of Rumanian and Bulgarian Roma people (families, women, elderly people, children...) on the ground of their ethnic origin, still ring our ears.

Against this background, it is necessary to fully take advantage of all the available legal, political and economic instruments to end up with these discriminatory policies and close the gap between the Roma minority and the rest of European society. This requires the active involvement of all actors, including all administrations, whether at the European, Member State, regional and local levels, as well as civil society as a whole.

We cannot miss such a key moment for the full social integration and the institutional recognition of Roma people in Europe. As pointed out in the latest European Parliament resolution, we must act resolutely in areas such as education (the main guarantee for ensuring equal opportunities), employment (a key element for social inclusion) or housing (eradicating once and for all the curse of shanty towns). It is a crucial moment for the European Roma community, which brings favourable conditions to achieve within a decade a decisive impact towards the definitive and effective social inclusion of this community. It is up to all of us to take full advantage of these opportunities to make the most of the potential generated by the recent institutional developments in order to avoid that – as a consequence of the crisis and other priorities- they go unheeded.

Madrid, March 30th, 2011

More information:

On the website of the FSG we have enabled a section with all the relevant [information for the International Roma Day](#) (in Spanish), both from this year 2011 as from previous years (posters, press releases, links ...).