

Pristina Declaration

Pristina, November 27, 2015

We, the group of regional and international Roma activists and experts gathered to participate at the first regional summit in the Balkans to consider the human rights of Roma under the title of

Perspective from the ground: Opportunities for Roma Inclusion in the Western Balkans

held from November 25 to 27, 2015 in Pristina, Kosovo,

want to raise a concern over a hastily developing Antigypsyism as a very dangerous form of racism and human rights violations against the Roma communities across Europe. The resentment manifested in all areas of public life is seriously pushing Roma to the margins of the societies. Moreover, Antigypsyism today, presents a danger to many Roma lives.

Therefore, we call upon the governments, international, intergovernmental and civil society organizations to thoroughly apply principles of non-discrimination and Equality when working and acting on promotion and respect of Roma rights and fighting Antigypsyism in Western Balkans,

We call on robust fight against Antigypsyism in every sphere of life.

Hence, We as participants at this summit continue to remain committed in promoting and respecting the Declaration principles in our everyday work in future.

1. We reaffirm the principle of the universality of human rights as described in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 1 of which proclaims that “all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights” without exception.
2. We will promote and affirm the principle of non-discrimination, which requires that human rights apply equally to every human being without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, birth and other status.
3. We affirm and defend the human right of every person, regardless of ethnic origin, to participate fully, equally and openly in every part of life without fear of physical harm or discrimination. These rights are a fundamental part of international law and are safeguarded by a variety of international instruments to which Western Balkan countries are signatories.
4. We acknowledge and affirm that Roma are a legitimate part of all national cultures in all societies, including Western Balkan societies. We acknowledge and affirm that Roma do not pose any threat to their societies, but on the contrary, they enrich the societies they live in. We acknowledge and affirm that existing prejudice and stereotypes against Roma are real threats to democratic societies. Intolerance and discrimination are regrettably present in all countries, including the countries of the Western Balkans.
6. We will work to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence in the Western Balkan

countries by ensuring both adequate legal prohibitions and the consistent use of effective enforcement mechanisms to guard against and respond to such acts.

7. We recognize that the rule of law and healthy democratic institutions are vital for the full protection and enjoyment of all human rights. We recognize that many Western Balkan countries are democracies in transition, and are emerging from difficult circumstances. We will work to strengthen democratic development and the creation of open societies in the Western Balkan countries and support their greater integration into Europe.
8. We will encourage and work with the governments of the Western Balkan countries to achieve equal rights and afford equal opportunities to all people, regardless of ethnic origin. We call on the elected and other government officials of all Western Balkan countries to demonstrate leadership in their societies by working to end discrimination by both words and actions. We condemn all negative statements made by political leaders that negate the existence of indigenous Roma, which characterize them as a social problem or which seek to blame Roma themselves for the hatred and violence directed at them by others.

Signature list of the Roma Human Rights Organizations:

European Centre for Minority Issues, Kosovo
Civil Rights Defenders
Roma S.O.S, Macedonia
Roma Coordinator Association, Serbia
Ververipen, Rroms for the Diversity, Spain
Disutni Albania, Albania
Sunita Memetovic, Sweden
Ion Liviu Iulian, Romania
Roma Youth Centre, Macedonia
Adem Ademi, Macedonia
Otaharin, Bosnia and Herzegovina
E Romani Glinda, Sweden
Kosovo Agency for Democracy and Development, Kosovo
Roma NGO Vitez, Bosnia and Herzegovina
OFER, Serbia
Mimoza Gavrani, Kosovo
Roma Youth Centre, Macedonia
Institute of Romani Culture (IRCA), Albania
Zero Discrimination Association, Turkey
Ushten, Albania
RROGRAEK, Kosovo
Radio Patrin, Netherlands
Romtega, Kosovo
LRER, Albania