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Amnesty International

# MONTHLY ACTION

ACTIVISM TEAM, Amnesty International UK  
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## **HUMAN RIGHTS HERE. ROMA RIGHTS NOW!**

### **It's time for Europe to end discrimination against Roma**

Over 10 million Roma live across Europe – 6 million of them within the EU. They are the largest and one of the most disadvantaged minorities in the region. Discrimination over the centuries has pushed the great majority of Roma to the very margins of society – and it keeps them there.

From Italy to Hungary racially motivated violence, from isolated assaults to vigilante attacks targeting Roma individuals or communities, takes place in the context of an increase in stigmatising rhetoric by politicians and public figures.

From Serbia to Romania and France, thousands of Roma live in slums or camps in inadequate housing conditions and are vulnerable to forced evictions from their homes; from there, they can be relocated next to garbage dumps and polluted industrial areas on the outskirts of cities.

From the Czech Republic to Greece, Romani children are segregated in separate schools and classes. Their education and their employment prospects are limited from the age of five. Unable to find jobs millions of Roma cannot access better housing, afford medication, or pay the costs of their children's schooling. The cycle of discrimination and marginalisation continues as European policies and initiatives fall short of tackling anti-Roma discrimination and violence.

#### **Time for Europe to take a stand**

On 4 April, Amnesty International is launching a new global campaign to stop discrimination against Romani people in Europe. Many EU member states are failing to enforce – in policy and practice – not just international human rights standards, but also EU anti-discrimination law.

The European Commission has the competence – the responsibility and the obligation - to ensure compliance with this law and fight against the discrimination and violence that Roma face. The EU prides itself on being a Union founded on the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedom. This will continue to ring hollow for so long as millions of Roma - millions of EU citizens - are being denied their basic human rights as a result of discrimination.

We are therefore calling on the President of the European Commission to show leadership and enforce compliance of member states within the EU to its own anti-discrimination law and human rights standards.

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#### **CONTENTS**

- The guidance sheet
- Background information
- Sample petition

#### **GOT QUERIES OR WANT TO DO MORE?**

If you have any queries about this action and for updates on this case, please contact [activism@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:activism@amnesty.org.uk)  
Download this mailing at [www.amnesty.org.uk/localgroups](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/localgroups)

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Our main ask is in the form of a petition which Amnesty will be handing over in June 2013. This will be launched at the European Parliament at the beginning of April and there will be a series of events throughout Europe In April.

In the UK we will be getting this petition out to activists, encouraging them to raise awareness of discrimination against the Roma.

## TAKE ACTION

It's time to end Europe's shame; it's time for Europe to end discrimination against Roma. We are calling on the European Commission to measure up to its mandate: It must protect human rights. It must protect Roma lives from forced evictions, school segregation, hatred and violence. There must be no more double standards: European anti-discrimination legislation is no less binding than EU laws and regulations on trade, internal markets or other areas.

- **Roma Petition:** publicise the attached petition in your local area. Get as many signatures as you can and make sure you send it back to the UK Office at above address by **FRIDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> JUNE** in time for the handover.
- **Film screening:** we have a list of potential films that illustrate AI's concerns and present and Roma in an empathetic and humanising way. If interested, please contact [activism@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:activism@amnesty.org.uk)
- **Do something creative!** Maybe you can get people to sign a Roma "wheel". We have attached a template for this.

### The Roma Wheel

This wheel appears on the Romani flag which was created in 1933 and approved by the international representatives at the First World Romani Congress in 1971 in London. The flag consists of a background of blue and green, representing the heavens and earth, respectively and a 16-spoke red chakra, or spoked wheel, in the centre, representing the travelling tradition of the Romani people.

Although the flag itself is not recognised by all Roma people throughout Europe, we believe the wheel is a positive symbol itself - reclaiming the Romani heritage in a positive and joyful way.

### Materials to order

Roma A4 8-page briefing    DIG 028

Roma Stickers                DIG 033

Roma Mythbusters            DIG 037

Forced Evictions exhibition    DIG 029  
(the exhibition is on FE more widely but does include Roma images)

**The above materials can be ordered direct from TFS: 01788 545553.**

### New report

There is due to be a report launched on Roma in Romania at the end of April - look out for this on our website and take action there at [www.amnesty.org.uk/roma](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/roma)