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# Council of Europe Launches Month-Long Roma Rights Campaign

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# The Council of Europe launches its "Opre Roma!" campaign, marking a month-long drive to celebrate Roma culture and combat systemic discrimination. Events in 30 countries are spanning International Roma Day highlighting community resilience.

Despite decades of advocacy, Roma communities continue to face significant socio-economic challenges. Research indicates that over 80% live in poverty, with life expectancy significantly lower than non-Roma Europeans.

Persistent issues of segregated schooling and discrimination remain major concerns for human rights advocates. The CoE's campaign, timed to coincide with International Roma Day on 8 April, represents a significant effort to highlight the cultural contributions and persistent struggles of Roma people.

The initiative's name, "Stand up, Roma!" is rooted in historical activism, tracing back to the First World Romani Congress in 1971 when Roma leaders first united to demand recognition and self-determination.




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Senior officials have organised a series of events designed to promote dialogue and understanding. A high-level meeting in Strasbourg brought together Roma and Traveller organisations with policymakers to discuss critical sustainability challenges.

Additionally, a youth seminar featuring 35 young leaders from 21 countries aims to develop strategies for combating stereotypes and empowering communities.

International Roma Day will feature a commemorative ceremony at the Council of Europe headquarters, with parallel events planned across 30 member states.

Rights Commissioner Michael O'Flaherty emphasised the importance of continued commitment to Roma rights, noting that meaningful change requires active engagement.

Željko Jovanović, Director of the Open Society Roma Initiatives Office, noted: "Our leaders must share more than words. They must act to lift the underprivileged"

Patricia Caro Maya, a Spanish MEP and Roma rights advocate, stressed that "antigypsyism is a political issue requiring institutional commitment," urging EU leaders to move beyond rhetoric.

For details on events, visit the Opre Roma! 2025 Calendar.

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Image from https://www.sherwood.it/