

Are Roma a Nation or an Ethnic Community?

Írta: Administrator

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Romanihood" or the Roma movement begins with the establishment of the first Roma Congress in 1971 near London (Orpington) where 23 representatives from nine countries attended. The greatest achievements of the Roma movement are visible from the first congress in which for the first-time debates were implemented for social problems of the Roma, education, language, culture, and war crimes. In the first Congress also the anthem was adopted "Gelem Gelem" by Zarko Jovanovic, the Roma flag which represents the Roma as their national symbol and the use of the term "Roma" (In Romanes "man"). In addition to the first congress, seven more congresses followed with the same model, discussing the major problems that Roma face in Europe.

As a promised product of the congresses the International Romani Union was established, which stood for recognition of Roma as a national minority in European countries, adopted a declaration of Roma the non-territorial nation and an action plan for the construction of the Roma nation. According to the European developments and the constant oppression by European nations to Roma, it is clear that the global trends and centers of power downplayed the political influence of the congress. The "Romanihood" after a good start in 1971, in the late 80's lost its track of joint action for a common European Roma agenda of interests as trans-national community. The universality of Roma identity as shown in almost all the European countries hinders the visibility and decreases the opportunity for a joint agenda of Roma because Roma are minority in all the European states and democracy is a game of numbers.

Today, Roma as an ideal social solution consider the collective advocacy, which is conducted through institutions of non-governmental nature, while at the individual level, the Roma have their representatives in the governmental bodies and members of legislation who lack of understanding the interests of their people and work to maximize the personal interests. In anticipation of a better and stable life Roma hope that the European Union will respond or to include Roma in the processes and high politics of the Union. However, Roma have always been a scapegoat for the failure of European policies, and they are targeted through media, feeding the public with stereotypes and prejudices, in an attempt to justify failures of policies towards Roma.

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