

## PRESS RELEASE

### European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture (ERiac) hosts symposium at the Tensta Konsthall in Stockholm to protect the threatened Roma Cultural Heritage

The symposium, taking place in Tensta Konsthall on 28 November, is organized by the European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture (ERiac) – the first and only transnational, European-level organization working for the recognition of Roma arts and culture. The event is part of ERiac’s third international programming series titled the Roma Tangible Heritage Network, financed by German Federal Foreign Office. The project grew as a response to the European Commission’s “European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018”, which ERiac saw as failing to include the cultural heritage of Europe’s largest minority of 10-12 million Roma.

Roma people have been an integral part of the societies in Europe for over 600 years. Throughout this history they have made an immense contribution to national cultures while at the same time managing to preserve their own cultural heritage as a strategy of survival amidst a history of continuous persecution, discrimination and violence. Without protective institutions, Roma art and heritage is being appropriated by the majority societies without proper recognition of Roma cultural producers. There are no state or European level policies to counter this unjust process of cultural appropriation. The aim of the Roma Tangible Heritage Network is to reverse this development by mapping and promoting Roma cultural heritage and creating strategies for its documentation and future. The guiding ethos behind this mission is that there can be no real social inclusion without cultural inclusion.

In Stockholm, the specific aim is to create greater synergies between the North and the rest of Europe, by bringing together an international audience consisting of Roma communities, NGOs, researchers, artist and public institutions. With guests from Sweden, Norway and Finland, the participants will focus on mapping and discussing the future of Roma tangible heritage in Europe. Among the participants are Helene Öberg, State Secretary to the Swedish Minister for Culture and Democracy and the former Member of the European Parliament, Swedish feminist politician Soraya Post and many other prominent guests.

The methodology of the symposium will be based on a highly democratic approach that recognizes and validates the participants’ knowledge through active involvement. The discussions will focus on four central topics: imagining a transnational Roma museum, a Roma cultural heritage manifesto, what Europe can learn from the North, and the (re)-conceptualizing of Roma resistance. The day will also feature a presentation of *Katitzi*, the literary character created by the famous Swedish Roma human rights champion Katarina Taikon, presented by her daughter Angelica Ström and Maria Lind, Swedish curator.

#### About ERiac

The European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture, e.V. (ERiac) was officially established on 07 June 2017, in Berlin, Germany. The Institute is a joint initiative of the Council of Europe (CoE), the Open Society Foundations (OSF), and the Roma Leaders’ Initiative – the Alliance for the European Roma Institute. The Institute functions as a transnational creative hub, supporting the exchange of ideas across borders, cultural domains, and Romani identities. ERiac highlights the numerous and multifaceted contributes of Romani contributions to European culture, talent, success and achievement, as well as documents the historical experiences of Romani people across Europe.

“The Roma arts and culture gives me hope for the Europe of the future. Their culture is part of our European DNA. For centuries they created human links between the countries of Europe. Roma have never been tied by national borders. And at a time when nationalism is on the rise this is more precious than ever.” (German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas, 10 May, 2019)

Registration:

The Tangible Heritage Symposium will take place in Tensta Konsthall in Stockholm on 28 November 09.00-18:30. The event is free of charge but registration is necessary. You can register [here](#).

For registration and inquiries, contact:

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