



Press release

International Conference || From Slavery to Movement and Policies

165 years since the abolition of Roma slavery in Romania

The Roma Education Fund, the Civic Platform Aresel, Roma Entrepreneurship Development Initiative – REDI and the European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture – ERIAC are inviting all interested anti-discrimination activists, supporters of the equal rights movements, representatives of the media and the general public to an international conference titled „***From Slavery to Movement and Policies***”, which is scheduled to take place online on February the 20th, at 19:00, Romanian time (EET/UTC + 2).

The event is organized on the 165th anniversary of the liberation from slavery of the Roma ethnics in Romania.

We are honored to mention, among the guests and speakers who will be participating in the online debates, Mrs. *Anca Dragu*, President of the Romanian Senate, His Excellency *Andrew Noble*, ambassador of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to Romania, as well as *Lord Simon Woolley of Woodford*, equal rights activist and president of British organization Operation Black Vote.

The conference will be moderated by Roma rights activist *Zeljko Jovanovic*, director of Roma Initiatives Office – Open Society Foundations and Chair of the ERIAC board, who will be joined by dr. *Ciprian Necula*, founder of the Aresel Platform and Executive chair of Roma Education Fund Foundation, by the art historian and contemporary art curator *Tímea Junghaus*, executive director ERIAC, by *dr. Sergiu Nistor*, advisor to the President of Romania, and by a representative of the *African American Movements* from the USA.

On February the 20th 1856, the infamous institution of Roma slavery was ended in the Romanian Principalities, with the enactment of the „Legislation for the emancipation of all Gypsies in the Romanian Principality”. With the final act of abolition, almost 250,000 Roma slaves became legally free, after almost 500 years in slavery.

During the conference, we intend to take on important topics, such as the economic and social consequences of slavery, the political decisions (or lack thereof) and the much needed measures required for the inclusion of the Roma population and for the deterrence of racist attitudes and behavior, considering that such phenomena, in the case of Eastern European Roma, have been seeing a concerning and constant increase since the breakout of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The conference will be streamed live on the Facebook pages of the organizers and on the Facebook event page (<https://fb.me/e/3eb7iJayX>), where the video feed can be viewed, shared or otherwise disseminated.