

EUROPE FINALLY RECOGNIZES THAT BEING A ROMA IS A SUPERPOWER

On 100th anniversary of the First World Roma Congress, European societies celebrate the rich Roma culture and history and acknowledge the role of Roma in bringing the humanity closer together.



In April 2021, majority societies and public authorities come together in world-wide celebrations of the anniversary of the World Roma Congress. National Roma museums of history and culture, Roma contemporary galleries and theatres, Romani Studies University departments, local Roma cultural community centres (now in all regions of Europe), Roma historical institutions and monuments offer rich programming which will be streamed through Roma and majority broadcasting stations. The events can also be viewed through the popular Roma culture app, which now counts with around 50 million users.

For the anniversary, the EU, the CoE and the national government issued a joint statement, applauding Roma cultural contributions and stating that “being a Roma is a ‘superpower’ which helped to put humanity back on its tracks”. In the last decades, due to radical social, economic, climatic and technological changes, societies around the world became more fragmented, isolated and distanced.

The Roma communities were key in fighting this phenomenon by inspiring the majority society to embrace the centuries-old Roma cultural values and wisdom – power of community and solidarity, nurturing family relationships, hospitality, empathy, respect of diversity and importance of dialogue. At the time of rapid change, the adaptability, resilience and capacity to overcome obstacles became a symbol for modern social identity, making Roma the innovators of a new social contract. By introducing pedagogy of Roma culture, the majority society succeeded in reformulating its relationship towards each other. After centuries of discrimination, finally the majority societies embraced the Roma identity as something valuable and precious, and understood the Roma communities are not on the social periphery, but at its very center. In 2021, Roma cultural identity – radically diverse, cosmopolitan, resilient and adaptable – became the symbol of modernity, putting the Roma at the vanguard of social change.