

The Evening Gazette apologise publicly to the Roma minority for having published the article “Beware in Bucharest” on 11.04.2006, which promotes a behaviour aiming to prejudice the dignity of Roma minority and creates a hostile, degrading, humiliating or offending atmosphere against Roma in Romania.

Romani CRISS Response in regard to the “Beware in Bucharest” Gazette Article posted on April 11

The article presents the recommendations of a Middlesbrough football team fan for the supporters which will come to Romania at the Middlesbrough – Steaua football match, in the UEFA Cup semi-finals, scheduled on April 20: *"Gypsy gangs are planning to go to Bucharest on April 20... My sister-in-law Carmen has told me there are a lot of Gypsies heading to Bucharest. I don't think it will be a problem in terms of fighting - its pickpockets"*.

Roma Center for Social Intervention and Studies - Romani CRISS protest publicly against this article that sends a discriminatory message towards Roma in Romania. It is inadmissible that such articles still exist in the United Kingdom, a country with one of the oldest tradition in the world of democratic governing.

Despite the European initiatives on combating racism in sports, such as the case of UEFA, the Evening Gazette understands to contribute to the perpetuation and strengthening of stereotypes and prejudices against Roma.

It is unacceptable and, in the same time, illegal, to generalise in such manner and to say that all Roma heading to Bucharest to support the Steaua football team or from other reasons are there because of “pickpockets”. According to the 2002 official census, there are 535,140 Roma people in Romania, all ROMANIAN citizens, with the same rights as all Romanian citizens, including the right to go to the capital of the country.

Moreover, we hold the view that the Evening Gazette, if not wanting to become an advocate for anti-racism, it should at least refrain from committing acts that lead to the spreading and intensifying of racism, meaning that it should merely abide by the current laws.

Romani CRISS is a Bucharest-based non-governmental organization, established on April 4, 1993, which defends and promotes the human rights of Roma in Romania. Romani CRISS provides legal assistance in cases of abuse and works to combat and prevent racial discrimination against Roma in all areas of public life, including the fields of education, employment, housing, and health.

CRISS promotes the concept of Roma as a people of Europe whose rights must be respected, protected, and promoted by nation-states and the international community alike.

Romani CRISS
19, Buzesti St., 1st District, Bucharest, Romania
Tel/ fax: +40 21 231 41 44/ 310 70 70
Email: office@romanicriss.org
Web: www.romanicriss.org