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Press release

Politicians' public discourse and ethnic discrimination: Roma's perspective

Today, Romani CRISS launched the “**Roma and the Public Discourse in Romania. Best Practice Guidelines**” publication and the “**Stereotypes, prejudices and ethnic discrimination: Roma's perspective**” research in the context of the International Human Rights Days. The press conference continued with the official opening of the **Human Rights Academy**, a training course implemented by Romani CRISS in partnership with Amnesty International and Harvard University FXB Center for Health and Human Rights.

“**Roma and the Public Discourse in Romania. Best Practice Guidelines** publication was conceived due a need of Romani CRISS foundation, as well as probably of many Roma ethnics, felt strongly in the last years to stop the denigrating bias against the Roma in the Romanian public space. We came to realise that we have to communicate to political leaders the legal and historical arguments on the negative consequences of the use of racist and xenophobic elements in the political and public discourse, at level of Romanian society, in general, but to offer concrete solutions to assure the human dignity of minority groups' members is respected” declared Magda Matache, executive director of Romani CRISS, about the publication.

“The words are important. This is a certainty which, unfortunately, doesn't appear in the Romanian public space and discriminatory statements remain unsanctioned. One should be aware that the words are the working tool of politicians, journalists and opinion leaders. Human rights have become the laic religion of our society and this is completely true” said the author of the guidelines, Prof. Phd Daniel Barbu.

http://www.romanicriss.org/PDF/Indrumar_de_adresare%20politicieni.pdf

The need for these guidelines is also visible in the “**Stereotypes, prejudices and ethnic discrimination: Roma's perspective**” research which shows that Roma believe that public persons' discriminatory behaviours and attitudes influence negatively the non-Roma's general attitude towards the Roma people.

The quantitative research, conducted at a national level, for a representative sample made up of 607 Roma adults, also reveals that the Roma participants in the study recognise in great measure that discriminatory situations that affect the Roma, HIV/AIDS infected people, LGBT, the elderly and pregnant women. The Roma feel most discriminated against when they apply for a job, or when they compare the remuneration they receive for their work to the remuneration that Romanians receive for theirs. Over a quarter of the interviewed Roma felt discriminated against when requesting medical assistance, emergency medical assistance, medical examination, medical treatment, or surgery. One out of ten respondents stated that their family doctor refused to offer them home medical assistance; and one out of twenty Roma declared that they were refused at home medical examination by the family doctor.

<http://www.romanicriss.org/PDF/Stereotipuri,%20prejudicati%20-%20perspectiva%20romilor%20cercetare%202011.pdf>

The two publications were released within the International Human Rights Day that Romani CRISS chose to celebrate with its partners and the 30 participants, during a week, at a Human Rights Academy, with Amnesty International and Harvard University FXB Center for Health and Human Rights. Other events scheduled this week as a debate at the Romanian Parliament with political parties on implementation of the Political Parties Charta for a non-Racist Society and a Video – conference at the USA Embassy in Bucharest with reverend Elbert Ransom, former assistant of Martin Luther King, attended by the participants of the Human Rights Academy.

For further information, please contact us.

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