

## **Press release: Stop to the pogroms against the Roma people in Bulgaria!**

### **First “Roma Pride” in Europe by the European Grassroots Antiracist Movement**

Europe, Thursday, September 29<sup>th</sup> 2011,

For some days, riots with a racist connotation are taking place in Bulgaria against Roma people. These riots are the most important troubles in the country for years. About 2,200 people, in about 20 cities around the country, including Sofia, have been involved in these acts of violence that started after a murder by an individual close to a local crime boss in Katunitsa.

In all the country, far right activists and hooligans are actively taking part in pogroms against Roma people, which may look like the continuation of the stigmatizations, the discriminations and the acts of violence Roma people have been victim of all over Europe for too many decades.

The same racist ideology is behind the building of walls to separated districts for Roma people in Romania or Slovakia, the racist murders in Hungary, or the brutal deportations from numerous countries.

The European Grassroots Antiracist Movement – EGAM strongly denounces these unacceptable racist acts.

EGAM has launched the first “Roma Pride” in Europe, which will take place this Saturday in numerous countries: Bulgaria, Romania, France, Italy, Norway, Denmark. In this context, the mobilization is even more meaningful.

Indeed, through the “Roma Pride”, we will speak out against the racism and discriminations Roma people are particularly victim of all over Europe.

We call on all the individuals who want to strongly speak out against the pogroms against Roma people in Bulgaria, who want to denounce the too long-lasting hatred against Roma people, who want to fight for equality of rights and equal enjoyment of rights, to join the “Roma Pride” this Saturday.

In a word, we will lead solidarity coalitions of the European Roma & antiracist civil societies and, more generally, of the whole European civil society against the pogroms in Bulgaria and against the racism and discriminations against Roma people in Europe.

The more we will be at the “Roma Pride”, the better we will be able to fight the far right movements in Bulgaria and, more generally, all the forces that spread hate speeches in Europe.

The more we will be at the “Roma Pride”, the better we will protect the individuals targeted by hate-motivated ideologies on our continent.

EGAM and all its Members throughout Europe call on the national and local authorities to react very shortly and very firmly to protect the individuals targeted by the racist attacks, and to prevent far right activists and hooligans from organizing these pogroms.

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The Members of EGAM are:

Mjaft! (Albania), ZARA – Zivilcourage und Anti-Rassismus-Arbeit & SOS Mitmensch (Austria), Kif Kif (Belgium), Youth Initiative for Human Rights (YIHR) – Bosnia (Bosnia), Bulgarian Helsinki Committee (Bulgaria), YIHR – Croatia (Croatia), SOS mod racism (Denmark), Estonian Institute for Human Rights (Estonia), Rasmus (Finland), SOS Racisme (France), Turkish Union in Berlin-Brandenburg (TBB) (Germany), Greek Forum for Migrants (Greece), TASZ – Civil Liberties Union & NEKI (Hungary), SOS Razzismo (Italy), YIHR – Kosovo (Kosovo), Latvian Center for Human Rights (Latvia), Moldovan Institute for Human Rights (Moldova), YIHR – Montenegro (Montenegro), Hi5 & Radar (Netherlands), Norwegian Center Against Racism (Norway), Open Republic (Poland), **Romani CRISS (Romania)**, YIHR – Serbia (Serbia), Ludia proti rasizmu (Slovakia), Ekvilib institute (Slovenia), SOS Racismo (Spain), Centrum mot rasism & the Antidiscriminations bureaus (Sweden), DurDe! (Turkey).