



**Romani CRISS**

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **2009 – The Year of Reinvented Extremism in Europe**

On the occasion of December 10<sup>th</sup> - the Human Rights Day, Romani CRISS reminds the Romanian and European authorities that protection of fundamental rights must be consolidated and arguments to this end is represented by the organisation's short report containing brief presentation of human rights violation cases in 2009.

The day of December 10<sup>th</sup> marks the 61<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the UN Assembly's adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Although the "respectable age" of this fundamental document in the field of human rights should represent, for all of us, a happy occasion, unfortunately, there is also a moment to ascertain that serious issues still exist in Romania in what regards observance of the Declaration.

Along the years, Romani CRISS organization brought to the public attention numerous cases of human rights violations faced by the Roma community. Thus, to mark the December 10<sup>th</sup>, Romani CRISS chose to raise again the discussion upon infringement of fundamental rights in a year scared by extremism, acts of violence and inter-ethnic conflicts.

In a context of amplification of extremist acts against Roma people in several European states, such as Italy, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary, the hate crimes against the Roma increased in intensity also in Romania. New form appeared, such as protocols imposed by local authorities to Roma communities, protocols even accepted by the entire local community (*"if a man is to marry a woman from another village, the woman may live in the locality where the man is living (Sanmartin locality), but if the woman marries a man from a different village, then she should go and live there"* – excerpts of the Sanmartin Protocol, 8.06.2009, the Mayor's office in Sanmartin, Harghita county).

The Roma community continues to face also segregation in education or housing, discrimination in employment, access to public health-care or the right to human dignity. The "traditional" phenomena of disproportionate use of force in Police or Gendarmerie interventions when in Roma communities continues to take place, despite the numerous cases reported by Romani CRISS in the last years.

Even though Romania has adopted legislation in the field of human rights and non-discrimination, its enforcement is still marked by inconsistency, institutional incoherence and lack of active involvement of relevant authorities, lack of political actors and without guarantees of clear and transparent procedures.

Perhaps the recent enforcement of the Lisbon Treaty and the introduction of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights into the European primary law will determine Romania and other countries to take measures against acts of discrimination or abuse committed by institutional representatives.

**For details regarding cases of human rights violations, please see the attached report.**

For other information, please contact the human rights department of Romani CRISS, tel +40 21 210 7070.