



18 April 2006

Gypsies want to come to Bucharest

„Gypsy gangs are planning to go to Bucharest on April 20”, writes Evening Gazette in UK, in an article with the title “Beware in Bucharest”, posted on April 11, 2006,”¹[1].

The article presents the recommendations of a Middlesbrough football team fan for the supporters which will come to Romania for the Middlesbrough – Steaua football game, in the UEFA Cup semi-finals, scheduled 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 most lasting democratic governing in the world.

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

The unprofessional, stereotypic and discriminatory association of Roma with pick pocketing is not a one time event in the British press. 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 consider that the Evening Gazette, if not wanting to become an advocate for anti-racism, at least it should refrain from committing acts that lead to the spreading and intensifying of racism, meaning that it should just abide by the current laws.

In addition, Romani CRISS will inform the relevant institutions on combating racism, both in the United Kingdom and Romania, in respect to the present matter.

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[1] See article at: http://www.gazettelive.co.uk/news/news/tm_objectid=16932167%26method=full%26siteid=109975-name_page.html