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10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Dosta! Congress Prize for Municipalities

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**10 YEARS, 6 AWARD CEREMONIES, OVER 100 APPLICATIONS, 1 GOAL**

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### **The Dosta! campaign**

"Dosta!", a word meaning "enough" in the Western Balkan variant of the Romani language, is an awareness-raising campaign which aims at bringing non-Roma closer to Roma citizens. The goal of the Dosta! Campaign is to stop prejudices and stereotypes not by denouncing them but by breaking them down, showing who the Roma<sup>1</sup> really are. The campaign also aims at fighting discrimination and anti-Gypsyism, a specific form of racism. It raises awareness about Romani culture, language and history and the contribution of Roma to the European Cultural Heritage. Dosta! is a tool to go beyond prejudice, to meet the Roma and acknowledge their rights.

More info on the campaign at: [www.dosta.org](http://www.dosta.org)

### **The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe**

The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe is a pan-European political assembly that was established in 1994<sup>2</sup>. Its 648 members hold elective office and represent over 200,000 local and regional authorities from 47 Council of Europe member States. Its tasks are to promote and improve local and regional democracy and governance, according to the principles laid down in the European Charter of Local Self-Government.

The local and regional levels are decisive for the successful implementation of Roma Inclusion policies. In conjunction with the Dosta! Campaign, the Congress awards the Dosta! Congress Prize for Municipalities. More info about the Congress at: [www.coe.int/t/congress](http://www.coe.int/t/congress)

### **The Dosta! Congress Prize for Municipalities**

The Dosta! Congress Prize for Municipalities rewards biennially the distinguished efforts of municipalities or regions for their participatory and innovative work in combating anti-Gypsyism, while promoting the inclusion of Roma and Travellers in political and social life.

An international jury of six to seven members selects the winners after a call for application, keeping in mind the following criteria:

- Innovative projects aimed at improving the access of Roma to social and cultural rights;
- Projects promoting inter-ethnic dialogue and diversity in local community life;
- Projects raising public awareness on Romani culture and history or aimed at combating stereotypes and prejudice.

Read more: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/dosta-congress-prize?desktop=false>

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<sup>1</sup> The term "Roma" is used at the Council of Europe to encompass the wide diversity of the groups covered by the work of the Council of Europe in this field: on the one hand a) Roma, Sinti/Manush, Calé, Kaale, Romanichals, Boyash/Rudari; b) Balkan Egyptians (Egyptians and Ashkali); c) Eastern groups (Dom, Lom and Abdal); and, on the other hand, groups such as Travellers, Yenish, and the populations designated under the administrative term "Gens du voyage", as well as persons who identify themselves as Gypsies. The present is an explanatory footnote, not a definition of Roma and/or Travellers.

<sup>2</sup> However, the history of the Congress reflects 50 years of development of local and regional democracy in Europe. The Conference of Local Authorities of Europe held its first session in January 1957. In 1975, its remit was extended to include regions and it thus became the Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe. In 1979, it became the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, and in 1994 the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe.

## 10 years, 6 award ceremonies, over 100 applications and one purpose

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- 2007 -

1. **Vitez (Bosnia and Herzegovina)**
2. **Banja Luka (Bosnia and Herzegovina)**
3. **Novi Sad (Serbia)**

The Dosta! Congress Prize for Municipalities was for the first time awarded in 2007. Ten municipalities from South-eastern Europe had been pre-selected. The three winning municipalities had proven their commitment to promoting Roma political and social participation, as well as to combating discrimination. The municipalities were represented by a delegation consisting of mayors or local officials and projects implementers, some of them Roma.

Mr Skard, President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, highlighted at the Prize-Giving Ceremony the fact that the Romani culture is part of Europe's cultural heritage. This was exemplified by celebrated singer Ms Esmá Redžepova, who was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2003 and who sang together with the Teodosievski Ensemble a colourful Romani arrangement of the European Anthem.



## 10 years, 6 award ceremonies, over 100 applications and one purpose

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- 2009 -

1. **Mostar (Bosnia and Herzegovina) & Prijedor (Bosnia and Herzegovina) ex-aequo**
2. **Volos (Greece)**
3. **Lom (Bulgaria)**

In 2009, fourteen projects were pre-selected. The winning projects sought to improve Roma housing, health care, and the provision of counselling services. The projects endeavoured the creation of employment opportunities through vocational training and ensured the active participation of the Roma community and its representatives in municipal life. The municipality of Lom raised the competitive power of 20 active and 20 starting craftsmen from the Roma community in Lom by further extending their entrepreneurial skills, consulting and technical knowledge. The Centre for the support of the Roma living in the municipality of Volos was created in 2005 and its basic aim was the social inclusion of the Roma who were pushed to the margins of the local community. The city of Mostar gave direct support to the Association of Roma “Neretva- Mostar” that has been financed directly from the budget of the City of Mostar since 2004. 2009 was an important year for the development of the Dosta! Congress Prize for Municipalities. While the prize was originally envisaged for five countries from Southeastern Europe, Mr Micallef, President of the Congress, announced that the application for the prize in 2011 would be open to municipalities from all 47 member States.



## 10 years, 6 award ceremonies, over 100 applications and one purpose

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- 2011 -

1. **Jyväskylä (Finland) & Surčin, Belgrade (Serbia) ex-aequo**
2. **Southwark, Greater London (United Kingdom)**
3. **Autonomous Community of Madrid (Spain)**

In 2011, eight projects were pre-selected. The project developed by the municipality of Jyväskylä was implemented with the involvement of the Roma community, from its planning to its implementation. Moreover, a Roma community representative had developed the applied training programme. Surčin, Belgrade area, aimed at overcoming discrimination and social marginalization of the local Roma population by enhancing their pro-activeness in order to become “visible”. The Roma community benefited from this in a wide range of fields. Southwark’s project in Greater London established relationships with local authority services. The project reached out to socially excluded and mobile Roma and Traveller families with the aim of increasing parental understanding of children participation in education. The action of the Autonomous Community of Madrid resulted in identifying a permanent solution to the shanty-town problem in the neighbourhoods of Cañaveral, Santa Catalina, Mimbreras and Ventorro.



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- 2013 -

1. **Obrnice (Czech Republic)**
2. **Heraklion (Greece)**
3. **Kocaeli (Turkey)**

In 2013, eighteen municipalities from fifteen member States applied, of which twelve were preselected. The municipality of Obrnice used an integrated approach in the fields of education, housing and employment. The project was an example of peaceful co-habitation with no segregation and lower rates of criminality. The city of Heraklion implemented support actions, such as combating illiteracy of children and adults, organising seminars for mediators and establishing a socio-medical centre for Roma issues. Kocaeli distinguished itself for its varied campaign in the areas of education and culture. This project contributed to an intercultural dialogue between Roma and non-Roma. The jury consisted of different prominent stakeholders from the Council of Europe, from civil society (namely the European Roma and Travellers Forum) and included the French actress and film director, Ms Fanny Ardant, the good-will ambassador of the Dosta! campaign.



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- 2015 -

1. **Ghent (Belgium)**
2. **Kragujevac (Serbia) and Reggio Nell'Emilia (Italy) ex-aequo**
3. **Madrid (Spain)**

In 2015, almost thirty municipalities from eleven member States applied, of which twelve were pre-selected. The first prize was awarded to the municipality of Ghent due to its efforts regarding the access to education of Roma, Travellers and migrants. Ghent trained school mediators who had an intra-European migration background. "The main goal of these mediators is to function as a bridge between the children and their parents and the school team", said Ms Erika Mikova, mediator in a primary school. Kragujevac started a programme to educate parents about the importance of early childhood education. The project was successful in raising awareness on active parental education. Reggio Nell'Emilia, in co-operation with the city historical institute, gave students an introduction to the history and culture of Sinti and Roma, with a particular focus on the current situation and on the Roma Genocide perpetrated by the Nazis and their allies during World War II. Madrid's project focused on gender equality and social coexistence. The project was based on a networking plan for the promotion of Roma women in Madrid. Between 3,500 and 4,000 people participated in 2013 and 2014 in the locally organised events.



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- 2017 -

1. **Şişli (Turkey)**
2. **Volos (Greece)**
3. **Gliwice (Poland)**

In 2017, the Dosta! Congress Prize for Municipalities is awarded for the 6<sup>th</sup> time. This ceremony will mark the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this Prize. Over the past ten years, the prize has proven to be one of the most important platforms for the acknowledgement of Roma Inclusion initiatives at the local and regional level. Among the seven pre-selected municipalities this year, Şişli was awarded the first prize for its comprehensive measures that brought not only a variety of stakeholders to the discussion table, but also promoted active engagement through multiple actions. Volos was awarded the second prize. This is their second award and the only city so far that has received two Dosta! Congress Prizes. Through its 'role models' approach, the municipality was able to increase Roma participation in secondary education. Volos proves exceptional consistency in tackling anti-discrimination against Roma. The third prize was awarded to Gliwice for the successful implementation of an afterschool integration centre. A long-term approach is characteristic for all three projects, as well as their focus on education. The jury was in agreement with the municipalities' view that capacity building of Roma and Traveller children is essential for improving the situation of Roma and Travellers communities.





## Council of Europe's action towards Roma and Travellers at a glance

The Council of Europe was the first international organisation addressing Roma issues with the adoption of a first text by its **Parliamentary Assembly** in 1969. In the 1970s, the **Congress of Local and Regional Authorities** also included Roma on its agenda. Following its enlargement towards Eastern Europe, the Council of Europe started addressing Roma issues more systematically and set up a specific Division, as well as an intergovernmental committee of experts (now called **CAHROM**) which drafted a number of recommendations adopted by the Committee of Ministers.

Since the start of the **Decade for Roma Inclusion** in 2005, there has been an ever stronger development of European and national policy frameworks for the inclusion of Roma. The goal was to develop policy measures that would particularly target the areas of education, housing, employment and health, the four main pillars of the **EU Framework for Roma Integration Strategies** adopted in 2011.

Whilst some progress had been noticed, challenges concerning the human rights of Roma and their inclusion in societies remained high. In order to meet those needs, member States of the Council of Europe in October 2010 adopted the **Strasbourg Declaration on Roma**, identifying clear priorities for the Council of Europe in supporting national, as well as local and regional, authorities in their efforts to improve Roma inclusion. As a result of the adoption of the Strasbourg Declaration, an **online database on Roma and Traveller-related good policies and practices at European, national, regional and local levels** was established. Find the database at: [www.goodpracticeroma.ppa.coe.int/en](http://www.goodpracticeroma.ppa.coe.int/en)

To enhance the social inclusion of Roma and Travellers at local and regional level, the concept of the **European Alliance of Cities and Regions for the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers** was identified at the Summit of Mayors in September 2011. After drawing up a general framework for its objectives and its working methods, the Alliance was officially launched during the 24<sup>th</sup> Congress Session on 20 March 2013. In 2016, the Alliance adopted its Strategic Guidelines to provide guidance to participating cities and regions.

Since then, the Alliance has aimed to achieve the following objectives: a) To promote the exchange of know-how and good practices on Roma inclusion among participating cities and regions; b) To enable participating cities and regions to speak with one voice by providing a platform for advocating on issues concerning Roma inclusion at local and regional level.

The Alliance does so by organising national and international seminars for its participating cities and regions in order to facilitate the exchange of know-how and good practices. Today, the Alliance has 130 participants from 29 Council of Europe member States. Since 2013, the Alliance Secretariat has been in charge of organising the *Dosta! Congress Prize* together with the Congress.

Furthermore, the Alliance promotes the “**Declaration of Mayors and Elected Local and Regional Representatives of Council of Europe Member States against anti-Gypsyism**” which was endorsed in March 2017 at the 32<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe.

Both the Congress and the Alliance call on mayors and elected representatives of local and regional authorities to sign this Declaration and thereby to affirm their explicit opposition to anti-Gypsyism. So far around 110 municipalities and regions from 32 member states have signed the Declaration. For further information:

<http://www.roma-alliance.org/en/page/251-declaration-contre-l-antitsiganisme.html>

**Adopted by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe:**

**1981**

The role and responsibility of local and regional authorities in regard to the cultural and social problems of populations of nomadic origin [Resolution 125 \(1981\) of the CLRAE](#)

**1993**

Gypsies<sup>3</sup> in Europe: the role and responsibility of local and regional authorities [Resolution 249 \(1993\) of the CLRAE](#)

**1995**

Towards a Tolerant Europe: the contribution of Roma (Gypsies); [Recommendation 11 \(1995\) of the CLRAE](#); [Resolution 16 \(1995\) of the CLRAE](#)

**1997**

Towards a tolerant Europe: the contribution of Roma; [Resolution 44 \(1997\) of the CLRAE](#)

**2011**

The situation of Roma in Europe: a challenge for local and regional authorities [Recommendation 315 \(2011\) of the CLRAE](#); [Resolution 333 \(2011\) of the CLRAE](#)

**2014**

Empowering Roma youth through participation: effective policy design at local and regional levels [Recommendation 354 \(2014\) of the CLRAE](#); [Resolution 366\(2014\) of the CLRAE](#)

**2016**

The situation of Roma and Travellers in the context of rising extremism, xenophobia and the refugee crisis in Europe [Resolution 403 \(2016\) of the CLRAE, addressed to local and regional authorities](#)

**2017**

Declaration of mayors and elected representatives of local and regional authorities against anti-Gypsyism;  
[www.a.cs.coe.int/team81/congress\\_form/Inscriptions/Declaration\\_Against\\_anti\\_gypsyism.aspx](http://www.a.cs.coe.int/team81/congress_form/Inscriptions/Declaration_Against_anti_gypsyism.aspx)

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<sup>3</sup> The term “Gypsies” is no longer used in texts adopted by the Council of Europe. It was used at the time the text was adopted.