

# Roma News Broad(en)cast: A manifesto for Media

## Rethinking practices of Roma news production & broadcast



This manifesto has been prepared as an action of the European project CoSpIRom (Common Spaces for the Integration of Roma). The project addresses the topic of supporting national or transnational projects on non-discrimination and Roma integration (REC-RDIS-DISC-AG-2017). The main objectives of the project are to:

- Promote common spaces as effective tools for fighting discrimination
- Confront stereotypes and discrimination practices enhancing positive images of both parts
- Challenge the symbolic boundaries
- Empower personal and collective identities of Roma people to promote skills acquisition and enhance citizenship
- Contribute to the improvement of national Roma Integration (and EU) strategies
- Document the particularities, exchange practices among the partners, and develop applicable tools to be used by the EU on similar issues

The main activities that have been accomplished concern the creation of common spaces of equal participation between:

- Young Roma/police, Media
- Roma young prisoners/police, prospective teachers
- Roma and non-Roma families

The Manifesto depicts the interaction between young Roma, people of the media and the research team after the three advocacy meetings that took place in each partner's country. The local experiences were exchanged amongst partners to result to their final form. This Manifesto is aiming to operate as a roadmap that could potentially raise awareness among people who are involved in news dissemination and the media, so as to avoid the reproduction of stereotypical ideas about them and help to create conditions of social justice.



## 1. The media need to acknowledge and not take advantage of their power

The media nowadays accumulate great power and at the same time, great responsibility for the reproduction and mitigation of social stereotypes. People of the media should become conscious of their role and rethink their responsibility towards issues of social cohesion, justice and citizenship.

## 2. Dealing with stigmatized and socially vulnerable people is an extremely fragile process

Roma stereotypical representation in public discourse/space creates significant obstacles to building relationships of mutual positive recognition between different communities' members.

The contact of different cultural groups usually is an acculturation process; a process through which the one who has the power makes the rules and 'constructs' the other in a way that serves the first's own enforcement needs. This procedure is against the development of mutual recognition and thus of social justice.

## 3. It is important for Roma citizens to be recognized as self-existent personalities

Roma citizens being perceived and represented as faceless members of a culturally cohesive group is opposed to the basic democratic demand for the recognition of each individual as a separate and autonomous person. Therefore, mentioning one's Roma identity in case of their negative behavior is unnecessary if not harmful.

## 4. Building bridges between Roma communities and the media

There is the need for meaningful communication and deeply recognition, of the reference community; not talk about them but **with them**.

It is important to build trust and empower people to develop dignity.

## 5. Make their voice heard

The media should create the conditions for the voices of persons from this marginalized group to be heard as an indication of inclusive practices.

As a matter of social justice, it is needed to create those conditions that the Roma can speak/ share their representations about their communities and about the other. Furthermore, the promotion of information concerning important moments in the history of the Roma, both internationally and at local level by the media is crucial (participation in the resistance, etc.).

## 6. Dissemination of success stories of Roma

Stories that challenge the dominant narrative about Roma should be fluently presented by media. It is crucial to be present and at the same time to reflect on these stories.

## 7. Acknowledgement of their own biases by people of the media

As all people, media people hold biases too. We discuss the need of reflecting on our bias and we stress the need of approaching it critically, accepting it and work on erasing it.

In the representation of Roma issues, many professionals are involved in providing information, apart from journalists; these people need too to be aware of the stereotypes they might be reproducing.



For example, cameramen need also to be educated about the way they take a picture and create representations of people and situations.

### **8. Critical approach to information sources**

The media should critically approach the sources of information so that the prejudices and stereotypes about the Roma are not reproduced.

It is important to negotiate the right ways in which the news should be disseminated.

### **9. Respect for personal data**

It is important to protect personal data for all citizens, and therefore for Roma, in the context of their equal treatment, as enshrined in the Constitution.

### **10. Attention to the trap of exoticism**

In some cases, it is attempted by the media to project positive images/representations of Roma, however, they are presented as an exotic group based on a perception on their way of life, connected to fun and party (glenti), dance, music, their habit to travel as an expression of freedom. These practices are ways of constructing the identity of the other and promoting discrimination that does not facilitate inclusion.

