

The August 2016 edition of the newsletter covers the following issues:

- **Brexit and the implications for Roma (and all EU nationals) living in the UK; including the video of the recent public meeting organised by Migrant Rights Network with leading legal and migration rights experts**
- **London Borough of Brent and the denial of rights to work to Romania Roma**
- **Roma children and a decline in their eligibility for free school meals; a research report**
- **Rough sleeping Roma in City of Westminster (London); a research report**
- **Roma and the criminal justice system; a policy briefing**
- **Roma Support Group – two jobs advertised, closing date Wednesday 31 August**
- **Roma Support Group – latest training event on Tuesday 11 October**
- **European Commission’s assessment of the UK government’s Roma integration measures**
- **Fundamental Rights Agency 2016 report on the European Union**
- **Romed mediators’ training handbook**
- **Anti-Roma violence in Lille and some English football supporters; statement from ERRC and FARE**
- **Romani language lessons.....**



[August 2016 newsletter](#)

[Welcome from Roma Support Group](#)

We want to bring you information, reflections, arguments and discussion about the issues that face Roma communities in the UK. The Roma Support Group has developed over the last 18 years into a major service agency

working for and with Roma communities, mainly in London. We run advice and advocacy sessions; education support programmes (including early years support) for children and families; a Roma Support and Engagement Programme (including tailored staff training); and an arts and culture programme. RSG has been able to develop work on Roma advocacy and mediation, community engagement, and also in policy and information provision. This e-bulletin is one manifestation of these developments.

For more information about Roma Support Group, go to our website <http://romasupportgroup.org.uk/> and look at the 'projects' pages.

Contact us via:

andy@romasupportgroup.org.uk

BREXIT

Statement from Roma Support Group, Chair of the Trustees and Chief Executive:

This is a difficult time. The majority of people in the UK have said that they want to leave the European Union. This will have an impact on the Roma communities throughout the UK. Roma families have made contributions to this country for many years; through their work and their payment of taxes. Whether they have been born in the UK, or are nationals from other EU countries, Roma women, men and children have rights to live here and to work here. These rights still exist. They can only be removed by an act of Parliament. These rights enable Roma to live and work in the UK, to have their families and dependants with them in the UK, to live in safety – free from harassment – in the UK and for them and their children to use public services (schools and health services) just as any of other UK citizen can do. None of this is changing at present. If and when it does change all Roma communities in the UK will be aware. We ask you to be vigilant for yourselves, and for others. Do not take any hasty decisions. You have every right to live and work and be happy in the UK. Exercise your rights.”

Roza Kotowicz, Chair
Sylvia Ingmire, Chief Executive

30 June 2016

Brexit information: Roma Support Group

Information on the implications of Brexit is continually posted on the Roma Support Group website at:

http://romasupportgroup.org.uk/?page_id=4574

Brexit information: Migrants Rights Network

Migrants Rights Network hosted a public meeting on “Brexit Q&A: What next for EU nationals in the UK?” on 15 July 2016. The speakers on the panel were:

- Chair: Ismail Einashe (journalist, associate director Warscapes)
- Stephen Peers (Professor in Law, Essex University): “Overview of the process of EU withdrawal and the rights of EU nationals in the UK”
- Colin Yeo (Barrister, Free Movement blog): “Practical steps to take for EU nationals living in the UK”
- Matthew Yates (Director, AIRE Centre): “Protection against deportation and removal of EU nationals from the UK”
- Samia Badani (Director Campaigns, New Europeans): “Implications for employment rights and access to public services for EU nationals post-Brexit”

Each speaker spoke for just ten minutes and then the audience asked questions. It’s an excellent summary of what rights EU nationals resident in the UK have now, and the possible range of implications of Brexit. Watch it here.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Doi3KYfkbp8&spfreload=5>

Brexit fallout: Anti-migrant attacks surge in the UK

Ethnic Roma say their community now lives in fear amid rising xenophobic violence after UK vote to leave the EU.

Al-Jazeera, 25 July 2016:

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/07/brexit-fallout-anti-migrant-attacks-surge-uk-160725130134736.html>

Brexit Resources: How to make a permanent residence application (Colin Yeo, Free Movement blog)

We have encouraged Roma who have been in the UK for over five years to consider confirming their presence to apply for permanent residence. Our friends at the AIRE Centre have run workshops about permanent residence throughout the country. And now one of the most attentive and informed lawyers, Colin Yeo, has written a blog which clearly and carefully explains how to make an application.

The contents are:

- What is permanent residence?
- How do I get permanent residence?
- Automatic nature of permanent residence
- Combining different qualifying activities for permanent residence
- Residence prior to the Citizens Directive
- Retained rights for EU citizens and family members
- Permanent residence not necessarily permanent
- Making a permanent residence application
 - Do I need to use the official EEA(PR) form to apply for permanent residence?
 - What evidence do I need to include in a permanent residence application?
- Naturalisation as a British citizen
- What should I do if my permanent residence application is refused?

- EU free movement: guide to making an application in the UK

Read Colin's guidance and blog here.

<https://www.freemovement.org.uk/how-to-make-a-permanent-residence-application/>

LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT; THE METROPOLITAN POLICE AND THE ROMANIAN POLICE; UKBA AND "ROMANIAN ROMA": THE USE OF PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDERS (PSPOs)

Roma and other migrant workers are being denied the right to work in two neighbourhoods of Brent. And Romanian police are working alongside UK Visas & Immigration staff in Brent at the same time. This briefing paper has been prepared by Roma Support Group and the AIRE Centre to explore the why the right to work is being denied. And how the removal of EU migrants workers is already being explored by local agencies; is this a sign of things to come? Read the full 12 page report here.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2lw1_Krq5gneDhWYzhOZ1U2VXM/view

FREE SCHOOL MEALS AND ROMA CHILDREN IN ENGLISH SCHOOLS; a recent review of statistics from twenty local authorities in England

Many Roma families, if they are short of work and unable to sustain themselves, have known that their children will not be made to suffer at school. The children will have free school meals as the family are receiving a particular qualifying benefit; and the school will be able to claim additional funding under the Pupil Premium scheme. Thanks to a series of Freedom of Information requests, we are now able to describe the most recent trends throughout England. It seems that Roma children have experienced a sudden decline in being eligible for free school meals – and so their schools are denied additional funds to support newly arriving children, and children with

particular language needs. This decline is not matched by any new found wealth which has been suddenly enjoyed by Roma families. This leads us to believe that the decline in eligibility is due to the impact of benefit changes since 2014 which have been sharply felt across England by Roma families. Read the full report here.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2lw1_Krq5gnS3pqSGRnb0xRYjQ/view

[ROUGH SLEEPING ROMA IN THE CITY OF WESTMINSTER \(London\); a research report](#)

This report was prepared by the Roma Support Group on behalf of St Mungo's and Westminster City Council. It presents the findings of research carried out with Roma migrants sleeping rough in Westminster, including interviews with 64 Roma rough sleepers. The report offers recommendations for the Greater London Authority, Westminster City Council and homelessness organisations in order to improve engagement with Roma rough sleepers and reduce rough sleeping in Westminster.

https://drive.google.com/a/romasupportgroup.org.uk/file/d/0B2lw1_Krq5gndGphTTY3TnlBTnM/view

ROMA AND THE UK CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

[Lammy Review of BAME representation in the Criminal Justice System: a submission from Roma Support Group](#)

We have provided the most up to date summary of evidence we are aware of about Roma men and women are treated by the courts and the prison system in the UK. The submission concludes by saying:

Based on this evidence, Roma Support Group therefore request that the review consider the following issues in relation to Roma within the criminal justice system:

- A lack of data monitoring of both Gypsy and Traveller as well as Roma individuals within the criminal justice system has led to a lack of measures to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations as required by the Equality Act 2010. Indeed the Department for Education took the step of disaggregating its data on Gypsy/Roma pupils in the 2015/16 school census to gain a clearer picture of school populations.
- The need to investigate the use of disproportionate sentences for young female Roma as has come to light in our partnership work with youth offending teams.
- The need for greater consideration of the particular vulnerabilities of both Roma women and young offenders.
- Greater consideration of the causes of offending within Roma communities; with a specific focus on the prevalence of petty criminality and how repeat offending may be leading to higher numbers of custodial sentences.
- The need for greater cultural competence within all areas of the criminal justice system including, police, courts and prison services.
- The need to prevent the isolation of Roma within prisons based on their linguistic and cultural differences.
- The need to investigate racist treatment from both staff and fellow prisoners.
- Greater research and commitment to support initiatives based on reducing reoffending both for adult and young Roma offenders.

Read the full briefing here.

https://drive.google.com/a/romasupportgroup.org.uk/file/d/0B2lw1_Krq5gnd21uMkc2NUx4bVk/view

Roma Support Group: jobs

- **Campaigning and advocacy worker**

- **Education/young person's advocacy worker**

Two jobs are being advertised at RSG. One job is full time (35 hours a week) to work as a campaigning and advocacy worker. The other is part time (21 hours a week) to work as an advocacy worker on the education aspiration project – particularly working with young Roma (age 7 – 18) as an advocate in the education system.

Details of the two posts, and application forms are available here.

The closing date to receive applications is Wednesday 31 August at 5pm.

http://romasupportgroup.org.uk/?page_id=91

Roma Support Group: training

Tuesday 11 October: **working with Roma in health context**. 10am – 4pm. At Amnesty International offices, Shoreditch, London.

For more information, see here.

<http://romasupportgroup.org.uk/?p=4011>

European Commission's verdict on the UK government's policies to support Roma integration, 2016

https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2lw1_Krq5gnOHgwODITUWxTbHc/view

Every year, the European Commission assessed the progress of all 28 member states on how they are making progress to achieve 'Roma integration'. You can read their short, five page summary of their assessment of the whole of the EU here. We know that the UK government had decided five years ago not to adopt a 'National Roma Integration Strategy'. Instead, it had successfully lobbied Europe to allow member states to adapt existing integration policies, to achieve Roma integration. We are leaving aside what the Europe means by

“Roma (and Gypsy and Traveller in the UK context) integration”; but we think it important that a relatively independent assessment of the UK government track record is given some publicity. There seems to have been complete silence about this in the mainstream press in the UK.

And the judgement is pretty damning. You can read it here (pages 92 and 93):

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma-report-2016_en.pdf

The summary of the European Commission findings are:

The mainstream approaches have not demonstrated sufficient impact on improving the situation of Roma. Targeted measures could be further exploited by also using the existing possibilities under the ESIF funds. Scaling up the existing initiatives implemented throughout the UK should also be explored. Cooperation between national and local authorities needs to be addressed, as well as the involvement of Roma in the design, implementation and monitoring of relevant measures. Evidence gathering should also be developed to enable the assessment of the impact of the measures.

Fundamental Rights report 2016 (Fundamental Rights Agency)

The Fundamental Rights Report 2016 summarises and analyses major developments, and gives the opinions of FRA, in the fundamental rights field in the European Union between January and December 2015. Noting both progress made and persisting obstacles, it provides insights into the main issues shaping fundamental rights debates across the EU.

There is a 12 page section on Roma rights and the FRA’s view Roma integration measures (pp 99-116). The FRA summarises this section by saying:

“Discrimination and anti-Gypsyism continue to affect the lives of many of the EU’s estimated six million Roma. Fundamental rights violations hampering Roma integration made headlines in 2015. Several EU Member States thus strengthened the implementation of their national Roma integration strategies

(NRISs) by focusing on local level actions and developing monitoring mechanisms. Member States also increasingly acknowledged the distinct challenges Roma women face. Roma from central and eastern European countries residing in western EU Member States also received attention in 2015, as practices to improve local-level integration of different Roma groups were discussed regarding the right to freedom of movement and the transnational cooperation on integration measures.”

The FRA concludes with a number of recommendations for EU member states, which presently includes the UK (p112):

- Specific measures to combat Roma discrimination and anti-Gypsyism
- Specific measures to benefit Roma women and girls, or measures to combat intersectional discrimination
- Support exchanges between regions and local authorities of Roma EU citizens’ states of origin, and states of residence
- Public authorities at a local level to take measures to improve community cohesion and trust with local residents (Roma and non-Roma), through local engagement programmes
- Develop expertise and the structures to actively monitor the success, or otherwise, of Roma integration strategies, nationally and at a local level

See the report here.

http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2016-fundamental-rights-report-2016-0_en.pdf

Romed mediators’ handbook; a Council of Europe and European Union joint programme

Some might say that this is another product of the “Roma industry”; how the bureaucracy re-invents itself to co-opt the struggle for Roma rights. Others might find some useful insights for developing Roma women and men’s expertise to achieve Roma voice. The foreward explains its purpose:

“This handbook is intended for trainers who followed a course of training for trainers in the framework of the ROMED1 programme. It contains the key information trainers need for the delivery of the ROMED1 training. The content of the materials is to be adapted to the specific context in the countries involved and to the profile of the mediators participating in the training, particularly as concerns the terminology used. The handbook also contains the handouts to be distributed to mediators during the training.”

Have a look at the 127 pages here.

<http://coe-romed.org/sites/default/files/documentation/ROMED1%20Trainers%27%20Handbook.pdf>

Hate crime and Roma: English supporters in Lille

Channel 4’s report on events in Lille, 28 June 2016; some England supporters and their racist - including anti-Roma - and violent behaviours

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wO_Un-IKwPM&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=ERRC+%26+FARE+Network+Take+Further+Action+...&utm_source=YMLP&utm_term=...

This has led to the European Roma Rights Centre and FARE (the anti-racist football fans European network) to issue a call to the public prosecutors in Lille and Nice. For more details, see here.

<http://www.errc.org/article/errc--fare-network-take-further-action-against-racist-england-football-fans/4501>

Romani language lessons: YouTube channel

A self-publishing initiative from Jan Kurpiel in Sheffield. Jan has uploaded a series of two minute videos with a range of introductions to the Romani language – as he says, of an Eastern Slovakian dialect. The current programmes include

- Introductions; about yourself; where you live and where you are from
- Phrases and conversations in school
- Food
- Colours
- And questions....
- Most recently, the first Romani to Mandarin live interpretation

Take a look here.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4yZ-Hh3pL58>

Views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily suggest that they are in accordance with the trustees of the Roma Support Group