



**Panzberšenó kadalá le Historikané Lačharimatèñi Agorutnó e Themèsqo le Rromèngo ànd-i Evròpa 2013-2017 / 2013-2017: Quinquenio para la definitiva reparación histórica del Pueblo Gitano en Europa / 2013-2017: Quinquenni per a la definitiva reparació històrica del Poble Gitano en Europa / 2013-2017: Bost urteko behin betiko Konponketa historikoa European Roma / 2013-2017: Cinco anos para a reparación histórica definitiva dos Xitanos en Europa / 2013-2017: Pesë vjet për romët riparim historik në Roma in Evropë / 2013-2017: Fünf Jahre für die historische Wiedergutmachung der Roma in Europa / 2013-2017: Pet godinaza Konači papravak povijesnom Roma u Europa / 2013-2017: Pět let definitivní opravy historického Romů v Evropě / 2013-2017: Fem år til endelig reparation historiske Romaer i Europa / 2013-2017: Quinquennium for the definitive historical reparation of Roma people in Europe / 2013-2017: Pät' rokov definitivnu opravu historického Rómov v Európe / 2013-2017: Pet let za dokoučno popravilo starega Romov v Evropi / 2013-2017: Kvin Jaroj por definitiva riparo historica ciganj en Eŭropo / 2013-2017: Viis aastad lõplik remon ajalooline Roma Euroopas / 2013-2017: Viisi voutta lopullista korjausta historiallisa Roma Euroopassa / 2013-2017 : Quinquennat pour la réparation historique et définitive du peuple rom en Europe / 2013-2017: Vijf jaar voor de definitive reparative historische Roma in Europe / 2013-2017: Öt év az Európai Nép végleges történelmi jóvátételért / 2013-2017: Cinque anni per la riparazione storica definitiva dei Rom in Europa / 2013-2017: Quinque Annos definitivam instaurabo historica Roma in Europa / 2013-2017: Penkeri metai galautinio remonto istorinio romei Europoje / 2013-2017: Fen år for definitive reparasjon historiske Romá i Europa / 2013-2017: Pieć lat dla ostatecznej naprawy zabytkowego Romów w Europie / 2013-2017: Fem år för definitiv reparation historiska Romerna i Europa / 2013-2017: Cinci ani pentru reparatii definitive istoric romilor în Europa / 2013-2017: Πέντε χρόνια για την οριστική ιστορική αποκατάσταση των Ρομά στην Ευρώπη**

**EN**
**Trabajando desde 1972 por la dignidad, los derechos y las libertades**

- Premio Populares 1979 • Premio Nacional de Derechos Humanos 1999 • Premio Evens 1999  
 • Declarada de Utilidad Pública • Punto Focal en España de la Década para la Inclusión de los Romá  
 • Miembro de la Red Europea Contra el Racismo (ENAR) y de la Mesa Nacional de ENAR España





## 2013-2017: QUINQUENNIUM FOR THE DEFINITIVE HISTORICAL REPARATION OF ROMA PEOPLE IN EUROPE

### *Panzberśenθé kadalá le Historikané Lačharimatènqi Agorutnó e Themèsqo le Rromènqo ànd-i Evròpa 2013-2017*

**Background document for dissemination, analysis and discussion, formulated on the initiative of Asociación Nacional Presencia Gitana from Spain (°)**

*These people, constantly marginalized and threatened, have not received any compensation after the horrors suffered in the past (...). It is time to act. This injustice is growing day by day.*

Günter Grass, in an open letter addressed to the Federal Minister of the Interior of the German Government on November 2, 2010 (\*)

On December 31, 2010, the first decade of the century concluded. A decade that the Nobel Prize economist Paul Krugman defined as "the Big Zero", because, "after triggering a global economic collapse", in this decade "nothing good happened", since during its course "we achieved nothing and learned nothing" unless, perhaps, "our unwillingness to learn from our mistakes".

The persistence of the crisis, which emerged in the last years of the first decade of this century, in such a persistent and resistant way, has revealed systemic at the start of the second decade, and threatens to become endemic, opening abruptly in this living reality that we call Europe a dystopian convergence process of successive *glocalized* crisis, since the globality in which we live is real and makes sense only from the specific local areas.

About the major weaknesses that difficult and uncertain time in Europe shows, filled with bad omens and unwieldy paradoxes –since many aspects of what we call Western civilization are changing rapidly and brutally, in a society of "global risk", in the words of the German sociologist Ulrich Beck– today, more than ever, the future seems to be associated with uncertainty, disorientation and fear produced by the crisis, and the constant change which manifests itself even in the way of understanding Europe, which has become a problem. While the limits of what we recognize as possible break, priorities are altered and are accompanied by the loss of institutional legitimacy and discredit suffered by democratic forms, both due to the lack of stability of the ruling circles and even dignity of some sectors of the elite of the powers that be –nowadays less elitist and leaders, and more irresponsible and predatory– and the reduction and even the lack of nature-born talents, so disproportionate compared to their active presence at other less inclement periods.

Albert Einstein claimed (*How I see the world*) that "in times of crisis, only imagination is more important than knowledge". When ideas are scarce, it is necessary to appeal to the resilience –the

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(\*) Prince of Asturias Award for Literature in 1999 and the Nobel Prize for Literature the same year, Hidalgo Prize 1992 of Asociación Nacional Presencia Gitana and member of its Board since that date.



ability to withstand and recover to face problems—, the tenacity and responsible cooperation, and to shoot arrows of imagination to be successful in the future with imaginative ideas, germ of serious and relevant alternatives. We need to move, by challenging "revealed truths", the falsity of the supposed inability to transform the negativity of the inherited reality and the so-called objectivity as the support of the scientific condition of social knowledge, to be replaced by reflexivity and the necessity of mutual dependence, with solidarity as the only possible horizon of any personal achievement and the person as the sphere of respectable autonomy, but also of multilateral community accomplishment, since we are all human beings, equal in dignity.

To do this, denying the intellectual laziness, rampant mediocrity and conspiracy idiots, it would be necessary, as proposed by the Spanish historian Santos Juliá, to establish "a critical assessment in nothing complacent with what happened (...), that flees away from the *mea-culpa*, abhors the *stories* and tear the veils that hide the simple fact that we have lived well above our possibilities", in the middle of an inhuman nightmare that threatens large contingents of different disadvantaged and segregated significant minorities: "People in poverty or on the brink of being" (José Saramago *dixit*), eternal individuals suffering from lack of liberty, equality and fraternity, both during the hardest and inclement periods of the past and present, and the haughty and disproportionate times, with humiliation as a way of life, the hunger for bread and dignity, the dissolute ignorance, the absolute scarcity and the invincible misfortune of segregationist practices as a historically insurmountable socio-mental niche, amidst the neglect and intolerance that have converted the Roma into victims for centuries: cursed signs of the oppression as the story to which they were sentenced for the *crime* of being born and being different.

In this context, now more than ever, we have to take on the challenge-commitment to transform the inherited situation, seeking social progress from culture as a territory and ethics as a vector of any human process, inspired by the human rights and political and social pluralism. Armed with these values, and using the information as a hermeneutic tool to know —a knowledge distributed in network, so the personal ignorance is compensated by the impersonal wisdom— and to understand what is happening, we will be in a better position to survive, to cope with the negative aspects of reality and generate solutions that allow us to produce efficient surprises to transform, by being aware that today's new utopias may be tomorrow's reality.

From a Roma point of view, the crisis also requires to that significant part of the European citizenship, which is the *Them Rromanó* / Roma People —whose most accurate definition recognizes as a "Transnational Community with a multi-state basis"— to analyze its own situation, besides the majority society's, trying to provide alternatives to face and solve the problems identified, with the help of their talent, courage and determination that the severity of the occasion requires. From this perspective of shared co-responsibility, we dare to correct the economic diagnosis of Krugman, with which we began these reflections: we learn from our own mistakes and those of others, and we intend to contribute to their correction.

To our knowledge, the past decade brought an unprecedented historical opportunity to the Spanish Roma community, that their organizations have made possible during four years of intense, comprehensive, inclusive, critical, purposeful and full of hope work, by developing, in cooperation and synergy with the Government of the Nation, the ***Action Plan for the Development of the Roma population 2010-2012***. Pioneer in Spain and Europe, the plan is based on three moral axes, that can be extrapolated to all states in which Roma are secularly established:

*One) It is essential that public authorities are able to ensure the welfare of all citizens, by eliminating inequality and discrimination, and encouraging the participation in public life of all people, on equal terms.*

*Two) The Roma population, throughout its history, has been a victim of situations of inequality and discrimination, and still remains one of the most disadvantaged social groups, which are also affected by social exclusion processes.*

*Three) The recovery of the Memory of the Roma is pending, as well as the implementation of its historical reparation, by recognizing the contributions with which they have contributed to the majority societies, such as the Spanish one and, hence, the Pan-Europe's.*

Plan pioneer in Spain, as we said, and a reference for Europe and other continents where the Roma presence is confirmed, because it shares a unique cosmopolitan paradigmatic approach of the cultural, social and human otherness, since it gives the *Roma difference* a common framework and it recognizes the equal rights to the plurality of constituent elements of society, essentializing the differences and encouraging communalism. Moreover, and despite some limitations that can be overcome, repairable gaps, and certainly improvable aspects of the document, with the correction of inertia and obsolescence, **for the first time in the evolution of the old continent, a State commits to "implement the historical reparation" of its Roma citizens that had been secularly marginalized**; something the Asociación Nacional Presencia Gitana (*ab initio* involved in the whole process) urged the successive democratic governments since January 1976: two months after the death of the dictator Franco, the last but not the least conspicuous of the Roma pursuers.

As regards, therefore, the Spanish State, where Roma / Gypsies are fellow citizens with the Spanish *non-Roma* since the end of the immediate *prehistory* of its modern history –where 1499 marks the beginning, following the unification of the various kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula into the first European state–, the initiative that promotes this document has a more distant antecedent, and other more institutional, which is relatively close (\*\*), precursor in our own country of the "Action Plan implemented by the Spanish state for 2010-2012. We refer to the "*Manifesto of the Ombudsman of*

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(\*\*) The first formal proposal on this topic was issued to the authorities by our organization as a *State Emergency Plan for Spanish Roma Community*, presented to the government of the democratic transition, after Franco's death in January 1976. In the previous paragraph we refer to this plan, which was never addressed by that pre-democratic administration or by successive governments, already in democracy, that followed, even though Presencia Gitana repeatedly requested it, under the duties and responsibilities that the Spanish Constitution, adopted by the Congress of Deputies on October 31, 1978, attributed to the government. But the first formulation of this idea certainly precedes in time the dates that are mentioned here, since this idea is included in the statement of the statutory objectives of the association, in regard to the aims of Presencia Gitana, in terms of mission, since its founding on **February 15, 1972**. Among them, it is expressed specifically the double purpose of "**Strengthen the process of historical reparation and rehabilitation of the Roma community, projected to itself and to other regional and ethnic minorities, both within and outside of Spain, contributing to the common objectives of related and/or similar organizations, in Spain and abroad**", as well as "**to contribute, by a collective vocation of universal solidarity, to the understanding and social and citizen communication among men and women of all peoples, ethnic groups and cultures, as the basis of plural coexistence on the tolerance and respect, the justice and peace in dignity and freedom, beyond ideological, physical or mental boundaries**". These proposals are part of the ideology that our association has maintained in more than four decades of operation, as an inspiring *leitmotiv* for all the projects, activities and actions that we have designed and developed until today, and they were assumed, for the first time in the history of Spain by an institutional *corpus* of the Administration of the democratic and constitutional State (as we explain in the lines following the main text completing this note). Ultimately, the transnational and pan-European initiative that this paper discusses and proposes is based on them, in the thirteenth year of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which has been called, since its beginning, the *Century of Equality*.



*Spain and the Autonomous Parliamentary Commissioners*", signed by the Association of Ombudsmen on March 4, 1999, in the Fifth Centenary of the Pragmatic Sanction of Madrid <sup>(\*\*\*)</sup>. The *Manifesto*, on the initiative of Presencia Gitana, is a warning to the consciousness of governments and the majority citizenship, devoting the proposal that "both public institutions and social organizations promote initiatives to encourage harmony and coexistence activities (...), which is essential for the **reparation of historical injustices** committed against certain peoples and ethnicities, and to overcome the rhetorical formulations to achieve concrete tangible realities", for the purpose of "that Spanish society enters into the new millennium with the satisfaction of having repaired the injustices committed against minorities".

Once that hopeful momentum was relegated to oblivion, it is time to reactivate it, given the strength of the commitment of those responsible for the administration of the Spanish State, which took shape in the "Action Plan", setting a new time-line for the Spanish Gypsy Community, that can be extrapolated to other European countries. A time in which an exceptionally important period starts, for the Roma citizens in Europe: the so-called "*EU Framework 2020*" [Resolution of the European Parliament of 9 March 2011, on the EU strategy for the integration of the Roma population in a multi-level action plan, to ensure its socio-economic integration and its active inclusion, at a national and community level, to address the issues and find reliable and definitive solutions, within the framework of the implementation of the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy], where it can, and it should be included the **Quinquennium 2013-2017**.

**In 2017 it will be six hundred years from the beginning of the process which led to the spread and establishment of the consolidated Roma / Gypsy presence in Europe, after centuries of migration from India, their homeland, to the Mediterranean, between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries. 2017 emerges, therefore, as a decisive year for the *Rromá and-i Evròpa* / Gypsies in Europe. In this period, Europe will celebrate the sixth centenary of an important event, and will remember the circumstances that converged at the time, making the year 1417 a pivotal moment for the old continent and a key date for the Roma, which are natural born Europeans because they are European anticipators, before Europe became Europe.** On October 30, 1413, Sigismund of Luxembourg –Marquis of Brandenburg, thirtieth king of Hungary and Poland, the ruler of Bohemia, King of the Romans and Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire– urged to convene an Ecumenical Council, at the request of Pope John XXIII, to end the schism that was damaging the Western Church, with three popes –John XXIII, Gregory XII and Benedict XIII– competing the chair of St. Peter. Each claimed to govern the Catholic Church, excommunicating and fighting the others while, outside the walls of Rome, the *errors* against the Vatican dogma were disseminated.

Celebrated from 14 August 1414 to 22 April 1418 in the Italian city of Constance, under the tutelage of Sigismund against any avatar and overcoming countless incidences, repeated adjournments and suspensions, the Council tried to "*ad pacem, exaltationem et reformationem ecclesiae, ac tranquillitatem populi christiani*" / "attend to the peace, exaltation and reform of the church and to the quiet of the Christian people". In 1417, the Council of Bishops and clergy of Christendom elected Oddone Colonna, who ascended the papal throne under the name of Martin V. The agreement pacified the Church of Rome, promoted the progress of reforms and regained the internal order. This supposed the exaltation of the imperial prestige of the last monarch of the Luxembourg dynasty and his coronation as "Crusader King", by his struggles against the Turks and the speedy eradication of the sermons of the Czech theologian and reformer Jan Hus, contrary to the

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<sup>(\*\*\*)</sup> Signed by the Catholic Monarchs, it is the first of more than two hundred and fifty rules of all ranks, issued by public authorities in the five subsequent centuries in the history of Spain, aimed at eliminating the Roma otherness.



tenets of the Catholic religion, who was burned at the stake on July 6, 1415 in the same city of Constance, where the heresiarch had appeared confident with the safe conduct that his sentencing and imperial host had delivered him. With such merits, Sigismund gained his investiture as "head of Christendom".

The original four competing nations (Germany –Switzerland, Netherlands, Dalmatia, Croatia, Hungary, Bohemia, Poland and Scandinavia– France, England –with Wales and Ireland– and Italy –with Cyprus and Crete-), were joined by the Iberian kingdoms of Castile, Aragon, Navarre and Portugal. **Historical records keep documentary memory of the credentials or safe conducts that the Emperor delivered to some Roma families under its jurisdiction in the aforementioned year 1417. As a symbol of "gran perdonanza" ("big Pardon" of the Catholic Church), it authorized them to circulate on his Holy Roman Empire, and also to "stay and pass by" to other realms, such as France and northern Italy. Taking advantage of favorable circumstances, this kind of antecedent -more Rromano / Roma's way- of the right to free movement of persons accredited (that so many centuries later was imposed in the territory of the European Community), allowed an extraordinarily rapid and massive spread over the following decades. Documents and evidence collected over the archives and mentioned in historical annals attest the increasing presence of the Gypsy.**

During the sessions of the Council of Constance and during the long negotiations of Sigismund with the King of Aragon, as the monarch of the territories between Peñíscola and Avignon, Alfonso V (nicknamed "the Magnanimous") will show full agreement with the proposals and decisions of the Emperor regarding Roma, and it will facilitate, in 1515, the grant of a royal safe-conduct to Thomas Sabba, pilgrim to the supposed tomb of the apostle Saint Jacques in Iria Flavia (Galicia, Spain). On 12 January 1425 the king granted a safe-conduct to another Roma leader, "John of Egypt and those who will accompany him", "for him to be well treated and received, under penalty of our anger and indignation".

From the particular to the general, from the Iberian Peninsula to the European Union and the Pan-Europe, with the start of this year, third in the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a horizon is opened whose perspectives offer a historic opportunity: the ***QUINQUENNIUM 2013-2017 FOR THE DEFINITIVE HISTORICAL REPARATION OF THE ROMA IN EUROPE***.

Transnational community with a multi-state basis, a large proportion of the Roma minority suffers in countries where they are settled –in most cases they're coexisting without being integrated with the host populations– an unworthy, unfair, inequitable and intolerable situation, which today still remains and hasn't been repaired in most of the continent. This situation hurts and obstructs, here, there and everywhere, the daily lives of the vast majority of its citizens –*born Europeans*, as Günter Grass rightly calls them–; a population victimized by exclusion and segregation, marginalization and even self-marginalization, discrimination and even persecution, hatred and genocidal extermination. Resistance levels, social distance and the gap between the Roma and the standard average of the majority societies, prevent extension, enjoyment and exercise of their inherent rights as full citizens, that, for reasons of humanity and justice, they need –and deserve– to achieve urgently.

Therefore, it's imperative to redeem, at the European level, this *Bersa bibaxtalé* / unhappy and miserable years, an endless and infamous period, by overcoming the historical inhibition of those who were obliged to abolish it, but they didn't do it, due to the contempt and disinterest of the institutions and public opinion, or due to the interested oblivion or unpleasant minimization of the



problem by chroniclers and historians, provoking a maintained *memoricide* (this is how we define the *assassination of the memory*: not wanting to know and dodging or avoiding, once known, the transcendent importance of what happened, so that no one will worry). This terrible facts are stored in the pigsty of universal history of infamy, and that, with exceptions as honorable as insufficient, difficult, at this point in European history, the mandate, inexcusable for public authorities from all latitudes, whose compliance would allow the achievement of full citizenship of Roma from the perspective of the defense and promotion of the rights and freedoms which are inherent as people. It is necessary to finally obtain the amortization of this 500-year old debt and the historic Calvary, from the restorative compensation for damages inflicted on the Roma people: *Héjira desde siempre / por todos los caminos, / proscrito, / apátrida de todas las coronas, / acosado por toda la jauría, / vejado, / fustigado / por decretos / cincelados a punta de desprecio (Hegira for a long time / all along the roads, / outlaw, / stateless of all crowns, / harassed by the whole pack, / vexed, / whipped / by decrees / chiseled at the point of contempt)*, as the recently deceased poet, playwright and university professor of Granada, Gypsy and Spanish-European-universal, José Heredia Maya, wrote in some shocking Flamenco rhymes, in a poem that describes the anti-epic duel of Roma migration.

**It's essential to open a transnational and evolutionary process, collaborative and cumulative, interactive and summative, to complete and complement, flowing in parallel and in line with other experiences, purposes, programs and projects such as the "Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015" or the European framework for National Roma Integration Strategies until 2020, and the state plans to which we have referred. A process to achieve by 2017, having reached, in European countries on whose territory Roma citizens are living, these objectives:**

- **the statement and dissemination of a specific request for forgiveness to the contemporary descendants of the victims, from the institutional authorities that have been successors of the governments that persecuted the Roma / Gypsies at different times, as a first step leading to their historical reparation;**
- **the recognition by all States, in the transnational European forums (COUNCIL OF EUROPE, EUROPEAN UNION, OSCE ...) and international bodies of the United Nations (UN, UNESCO, WHO, ILO ...) of the *Them Rromanó* as a *Transnational Community with a multi-state basis*, with inalienable rights, protected by the laws and the authorities to maintain their identity, and to participate equally in the political, economic, social and cultural development of the countries in which their citizens live;**
- **the elimination of the social distance that keeps them away, segregated and discriminated compared to the standard average of the various states in which they live, through the implementation of comprehensive plans of sustained action, with the support of the social and structural funds in the EU countries, and budgets specifically allocated for non-EU countries;**
- **the culmination of the process that allows all Roma / Gypsies citizens to stop being considered as *social dependent handicapped*, in order to achieve the rank of full participants with shared co-responsibility for all aspects of daily life, in each of the countries in which they live, with the unavoidable contribution of the protagonists- recipients of Roma civil society and the organizations in which they are associated.**

Let us quote, in conclusion, the words spoken in 2011 by the Vice-President and Commissioner for Justice of the European Commission, Mrs. Viviane Reding, on the occasion of the presentation of the European Framework for the National Roma Integration Strategies:



***"Despite some good intentions from national politicians, too little has changed in the lives of most Roma over the last few years. Member States have a joint responsibility to put an end to Roma exclusion –from schools, jobs, healthcare and housing–. This is a serious challenge. That is why we are setting goals for Roma integration and why we now need a clear commitment from all capitals, regions and cities in Europe to put them into practice. Now is the time to move beyond good intentions and to take concrete actions." ...***

***Pero no nos perdamos en las sombras.***

***Si el silencio venció, aún late la palabra***

***(...) la palabra que tiene más alas que la historia.***

Antonio Hernández, *Nueva York después de muerto* [inédito, hasta 19.04.2013].

***(But let's not get lost in the shadows.***

***If silence won, the word still beats***

***(...) The word that has more wings than history.***

Antonio Hernández, *New York after death* [unpublished, until 19.04.2013]).

*Ta dikhás amén ! So be it!*

- (°) **Date of start of the Campaign: May 9, 2013, Day of Europe in the European Union  
Launch: May 21, 2013, World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and  
Development, designated by UNESCO in 2001**





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