



The Romani People and the Life care on Earth, Common homeland of Everyone*

The children of the Earth are here for others.

Albert Einstein

Notice of the Present, Warning of the Future.

In the way of Miguel de Cervantes

The Roma People are originally from the Punjab, a region located between northwestern India and Pakistan (Punjab - Afghanistan - Kashmir - Sind *istan*), where five tributaries of the Indus River pass. Exiled from our cradle for various reasons and contrary to our social organization and our Romani identity, we began our oldest emigration in the third century after Christ. Wandering all over the Earth, scattered throughout the world, we settled in the old continent at the beginning of the second millennium, where in the present we constitute a people that lives in many and different nations of Europe and the entire planet.

Between 1417 and 1425 we arrived in the Iberian Peninsula, and we remained in Spain since before its constitution as the first modern state. Therefore, we have been in Spain for 600 years, where we represent 2.1% of the country's population (estimated at 47 million and 340 thousand inhabitants, according to data from 2020), so we are close to one million citizens, or maybe we have exceeded it. The analyses warn about the consequences of our situation of weakness and segregation, at a great distance from the non-Roma majority of society. Historically excluded and still marginalized, with respect to the much better living conditions of the majority population, a tremendous gap remains that must be repaid for restorative justice, and to reach the level of dignity that corresponds to us as human beings.

Born Europeans, before Europe was Europe, and Spanish, before Spain was configured as a nation, Roma people constitute a peculiar society, of unique rituals and traditions, values and customs, transmitted orally during generations; a homogeneous society within its diversity, where individualities are integrated into very numerous grouped families, which are related to each other above all by kinship ties.

This way of being that identifies us refers to a millenary culture, biophilic (lover of life), with great stability in relationships between people, empathetic and sensitive to the feelings of others, non-violent and creative. We are, as Johan Galtung defines us, “a people from all over the world, a people without wars; a people without land, but of the whole land; a people without borders”. Without a State or territory, we maintain a rich culture of *positive peace* (where justice is promoted and violence is minimized), in which aspects such as the meaning of life, social organization, work, language, traditions, law, spirituality, values and art are very present. Many of our cultural foundations are closely linked to Nature and the environment.

Peaceful and biophilic people, then, we have never waged war or coveted ownership of the land. By traveling and putting down roots all over the world, we fraternally share space and culture with other identities. Many of our professions have been oriented towards art, conservation and repair, as well as raising and caring for animals. Our love of Life accompanies our respectful and protective encounter with Nature, essential for the survival and well-being of all human beings.

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 • Miembro de la Red Europea Contra el Racismo (ENAR) •
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From the above, we can deduce that we deeply believe that pacifism and love of life can save Humanity and the other living beings with which we share Planet Earth, the common Homeland of All, interdependent. Such a deep and pure desire was symbolically reflected in our flag: the green of the land and fields, our bed –signifying the importance and value of the material elements, which must be respected– and the blue of the sky, our roof, which symbolizes the importance of moral and spiritual values; in the centre, a red wheel, emblem of our traveller, peaceful, borderless and fraternal character, which is also reflected in our hymn, “*Gelem, gelem*” (“I walked, I walked”), with which we remember the suffering of our People, while we sing for Peace throughout the World. Feelings that we reaffirm every April 8, International Romani Day, during the River Ceremony, commemorating that the waters of all rivers meet in the same sea, as our lives come together in the *sea* of living together, in the embrace of one same essential nature as human beings.

Our original name –*Romanó Them* / Romani People–, we can translate it as "People of free women and men": desire related to identity that is also highlighted in our institutional greeting: *Sastipén thaj Mestipén!* (Health and Freedom!). But what does Freedom imply? Looking for an answer, we can turn to the *United Nations Development Program* (UNDP), when, in 1994, defined the concept of Human Security, linking it to “*freedom from fear*” and “*freedom from needs*”, that is, to the freedom that implies overcoming the fear of what harms us, considering that we can avoid it if we have our daily needs covered and those that free us from misery. It will make possible another component of freedom, which the UNDP later incorporated –in 2005–: the “*freedom to live in dignity*”. This is how the verses of a soleá (flamenco singing) express it:

There is no Peace when there is injustice. / Justice is Dignity. / Without dignity it is not possible / living in freedom.

This human security based on Freedom is based, in turn, on seven factors closely linked to each other –among which several have a very close relationship with the protection of Nature–; factors that must be respected in order to avoid dire consequences:

1. *Economic security*, facing the threat of poverty
2. *Food security*, facing the threat of hunger
3. *Health safety*, facing the threat of injury and illness
4. *Environmental security*, facing the threat of pollution, deterioration of the environment and depletion of resources
5. *Personal security*, facing the threat of different forms of violence
6. *Communal security*, facing the threat against the presumed cultural integrity
7. *Political security*, facing the threat of political repression.

Paying our special attention to the environmental factor, as Romani People, we

MANIFEST our deep concern as Roma people for the negative impact of human beings on the biodiversity and ecosystems of Planet Earth, which all living beings share. It is about our Land-Homeland, “common home” of everyone. We do not have another one and we are putting it in serious danger. If we do not remedy it, the risk of a breakdown in the balance of energy, the climate and the environment, the economy, the social... is evident, perhaps even the ethical and spiritual, as a result of multiple causes and consequences, with a special impact on biodiversity and the most defenceless groups around the planet. There are multiple problems that science and environmental organizations have been warning us about, as well as the entities that work for Peace and Justice throughout the world, which coincide with those that have been established by the UN, in its Seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), to end poverty, protect the Planet and ensure prosperity for all the people who inhabit it. And it is well known that the insatiable greed of the economic elites –that try to impose production models, which benefit them compared to others, and



unsustainable consumption habits for the majority of the population– is at the base of these problems: climate change, loss of biodiversity, chemical and electromagnetic pollution, degradation of ecosystems and material cycles, air pollution, ocean acidification and water poisoning, deforestation and soil degradation, as well as the depletion of goods and resources, the accumulation of waste, the degradation of food and the impacts of all this on health. A devastating panorama of irreversible effects, if we do not remedy it.

Nature sends us warnings about the consequences of climate change for the health, livelihoods, food and homes of millions of people in the world; which, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), it is more deadly than the coronavirus. As we encounter the chain of catastrophic shocks, induced by extreme heat waves or the migrations of populations due to disasters, floods, droughts, forest fires or tropical cyclones, which challenge the systems and the sustainability of nature, and are already causing more than 250,000 deaths a year worldwide, it is urgent to act differently! Due to a sense of co-responsibility, which obliges us all, our conduct must be based on mutual support and solidarity, on education and the social bond between all human beings, without barriers of any kind, with absolute respect for Nature, the environment and Peace (understood as maximum justice, solidarity and cooperation).

It is urgent a profound change in our work, production and consumption models, to adapt them to the limits of ecosystems, taking into account fundamental ethical values such as equity and fraternity. It is about practicing a deep sense of social and ecological justice, which inhabits most human hearts. We have hope and trust in the good sense and goodness of each person.

There is much we can do to save our Planet, seriously injured. It is important to become aware of our situation, to think and act on a global level in what is necessary, and also at the local level of our communities, in the family and personally. Let's work to meet our authentic needs, but let's reduce the false needs, which are many. Let's avoid polluting our common home with the unnecessary. Let's stop harming our Planet, which does not belong to us: which has generously welcomed us, in which we are migrants, and which we share with the diversity of beings that all the others make up. Let's respect their natural cycles. Let us take care of this wonderful Good, which we borrow and which we must deliver to our daughters and sons in the best conditions. May it be this way generation after generation, knowing that the destiny of Humanity will be the one that all of us build together.

More than ever, we have a special responsibility and a moral obligation, which corresponds and obliges to all of us. At the Second International Congress for Peace in Europe (organized by Asociación Nacional Presencia Gitana, at the request of the International Romani Union, that took place in Vitoria-Gasteiz and Gernika-Lumo, from July 9 to 13th, 1996), Johan Galtung highlighted three values of the Romani People: empathy (understanding and solidarity), non-violence and creativity. We would like to share them with the whole Humanity to help save and protect our Planet and its ecosystems.

*** Manifiesto of a people that loves Life and Nature, addressed to their fellow species on the planet, whom they invite to work jointly –from now on, and without rest–, to prevent humanity from being past history.**

October 2nd, 2021, International Day of Non-Violence, proclaimed by the United Nations, in honour of Mahatma Gandhi, on the 138th anniversary of his birth.

ASOCIACIÓN NACIONAL PRESENCIA GITANA