

DON`T WORRY, BE A FRIEND OF ROMA WOMEN



DON`T WORRY, BE A ROMNJI - ROMA WOMAN

This slogan is still a dream, because in reality, the 21st century is still a time of discrimination for Roma all around the world, especially for Roma women.

They are the most marginalized people in Europe, even though Sinti and Roma are the largest minority in Europe and in most countries they are recognized as national minorities.

Even for the Roma women who are not visible as such, it is very difficult to be open about their heritage and identity in their everyday lives. They fear intersectional discrimination in the workplace, and reactions from their neighbors, their schools, and the friends of their children.

They deny their heritage and their identity, and their own children grow up conscious of this.

The Roma women who are visible experience rejection and discrimination on a daily basis, particularly in crucial areas of life such as health care provision, housing, education, and documentation.

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With these repeated experiences of discrimination, pressure, and fear, these women retreat into their own world. These feelings of futility and senselessness are transferred to their own children as well. As a result, women, mothers, youth, and children no longer want to participate either in the majority society or in the Roma movement.

Thus the slogan: **"Don't worry, be a Roma woman"** serves not just as a dream, but also as a goal:

- To encourage and assist these "invisible" women to live their own heritage and identity;
- To allow "visible" Roma women to live a life free from daily discrimination;
- To free both the invisible and the visible from passivity and engage them actively, positively, and constructively in the Roma women's movement, and put them on the path to future development.

To this end,
Your Romane Romnja

ROMANE ROMNJA - ROMA WOMEN

WHO WE ARE:

- Roma women who come from all walks of life;
- Roma women who are independent, non-partisan, and non-sectarian;
- A forum for the exchange of ideas and experiences;
- A network and an association of Roma women and women's groups in Germany and Europe;
- A group of active Roma women and women's groups that know that numerous questions of public life affect all women, irrespective of their background, their party, their faith, their occupation, or other factors.
- To call attention to and solve sociopolitical issues, such as the intersectional discrimination Roma women experience, women and women's groups founded the Initiative Romane Romnja to work together to raise awareness of the opinions and responsibilities of Roma women worldwide.

ROMANE ROMNJA - ROMA WOMEN

WHAT WE WANT:

- To address and articulate the concerns of Roma women in the areas of education, employment, family life, and society;
- To focus on the national as well as international level of Roma women's interests;
- To get involved in the political decision-making process;
- To make an impact on current policies;
- To make women's voices heard and increase their visibility;
- To offer seminars, workshops, exhibitions, and qualification trainings;
- Participation in discussions of current topics;
- A presence in the media;
- To facilitate networking among members;
- To promote and support political participation of Roma women through trainings;
- To promote and support the self-determination of Roma women;
- To point out the hurdles in the majority society as well as in the Roma community, and to help bring them down.

ROMANE ROMNJA - ROMA WOMEN

The contextual grounds for the work of Romane Romnja are:

- The intersectional discrimination of Roma women – as women in general and as Roma women in particular.
- Initially, some experience discrimination within their own ethnic group. It's not always pleasant to consciously engage oneself as a Sinti or Roma woman, and some old traditions are difficult to leave behind.
- And then there is the discrimination from outside. Many in the majority society have a certain image of a Roma woman, which nevertheless is not accurate for an entire ethnic group.
- Thus another of our goals is to bring women into the public sphere and into dialog, and to dispel such images.

The legal grounds for the work of Romane Romnja are:

- The definition of Gender Mainstreaming from 1988 by the Council of Europe;
- The Treaty of Amsterdam (Art. 2 of the EC Treaty and Art. 3 Para. 2 of the EC Treaty);
- The Women's Charter from 5 March 2010 by the European Commission;
- And, clearly, Art. 3 of the German Basic Law.

Unfortunately, this brochure cannot list all of the many supporters of this campaign.

The entire campaign, with all of its supporters, their statements, and their stories, can be found on our facebook page.

Please log on to Romane Romnja Kampagne.



ROMANE ROMNJA

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"Until Roma women take it upon themselves for their self-determination, there can be no progress.... That process has begun...and that's great!"

**Viktoria Mohacsi, Canada,
former Hungarian politician,
Member of the European Parliament
(2004-2009)**

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Photo: Laurence Chaperon

**"Love and friendship are like an echo:
you get as much back as you give."
(Alexander Herzen)**

**Serap Güler, German CDU politician,
Representative of the North Rhine-
Westphalia State Legislature**

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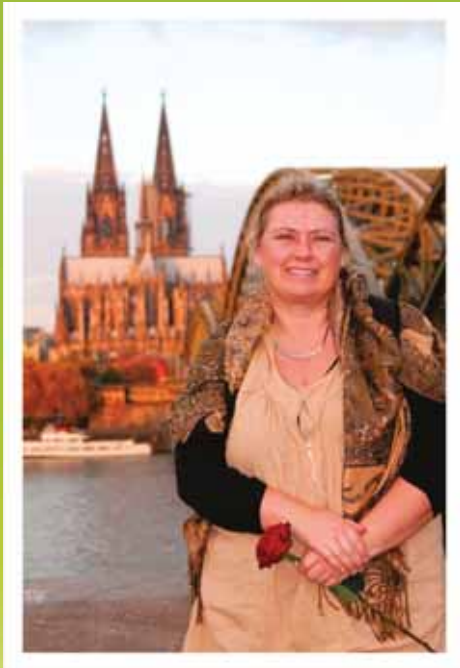


Photo: Dirk Bleicker/SPD Berlin

"For me, it is obvious that Roma women belong to our diverse society."

**Dr. Maja Lasic
Member of the Berlin SPD Committee**

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"I hope for more exchange between Roma and non-Roma."

**Karin Schmidt (Green Party) from the
Cologne-Kalk Municipal Council**

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“We are mothers, we are housewives, we are workers, we are craftswomen, we work in offices, and we are activists. We want to change the image, the image of the Roma woman as a beggar, a cheat, and a thief. There is also a different image of us Roma women!”

Roma Women's Network in Italy

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"I'm a woman with a memorable past, a marvelous present, and surely a surprising future."

**Jeanette Gönfors,
National Coordinator of "Against Racism,"
a program of the Finnish Red Cross
<http://eirasismille.fi/english>**

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Photo: Sabine Hauswirth

In a classroom, on the topic of the language and culture of the Roma:

"It is necessary to have a dialog, to have an exchange, to try to understand each other better."

Gilda Horvath, Teacher in Vienna

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"I'm happy that more and more Roma women are discovering the way for themselves to emancipation and education, and that there will be many more! 20 years ago, when I began my education, I was one of the few Roma women who had started down the path of higher education. A lot has happened in the past 20 years."

**Diana Kirilova, Graduate of the Sorbonne,
Doctorate in Cultural Anthropology**

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**"I hope for an end to marginalization and stigmatization!
Society needs more enlightenment!"**

Germaine Holden, Sintizza, Model, and Activist

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“We Sinti women differentiate ourselves from Roma women, but we have the same roots and the same goal with all women: respect and dignity for all women.”

The Sinti Women of Cologne

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“The path is the goal, but to walk the path alone is often very hard! Let’s create a great Roma women organization – then we will reach the goal!”

Ana & Sajma, Romane Romnja Activists

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A former asylum-seeker:

“For me, education was always important, as well as my language and my culture, but also an openness to new languages and cultures. All of this together has gotten me where I am today.”

**Nizaquete Bislimi, Attorney, Germany
(Specialization in Immigration Law, Asylum Application Law,
Family and Social Law)**

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Romane Romnja and Viktoria Mohacsi, Serap Güler, Dr. Maja Lasic, Karin Schmidt, ROWNI, Jeanette Gönfors, Gilda Horvath, Dr. Diana Kirilova, Germaine Holden, The Sinti Women of Cologne, Ana & Sajma, Nizaquete Bislimi

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Contact:

Romane Romnja

c/o Caritasverband für die Stadt Köln e.V.


Integrationsagentur


Betramstr. 12-22


Tel: +49 171 98 50 256

Email: romane.romnja@yahoo.de

Visit us on the web:

 Romane Romnja Aktivitäten

 Romane Romnja Kampagne

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