



European Roma Spirit Award 2016

PRESS RELEASE

BRATISLAVA, September 27, 2016

Association for Culture, Education and Communication (ACEC)

We know the Final Nominations of the first year of the European Roma Spirit Award 2016!

The nominations arrived from 23 European countries who decided to participate in the European Roma Spirit Award (ERSA) 2016 - an international award giving presentation of activities, projects and individuals that support integration of Roma in Europe and bring effective and functioning solutions to the issues faced by the Roma community.

"Nominations from 23 European countries were a great demonstration of exceptional projects and results of the work of organizations and individuals who contribute significantly to improving the situation of Roma in Europe. Preparatory and Organizing Committee had a very difficult task to choose the best ones," says the author of the project idea Ľubomíra Slušná-Franz, President of ACEC.

The Preparatory and Organizing Committee chose three final nominations out of all 65 received valid nominations in every one of the five categories:

- 1. Non-Governmental Organization:** Impreuna Agency for Community Development (Romania), Fundación Secretariado Gitano (Spain), NGO Young Roma – Herceg Novi (Montenegro)
- 2. Company, Organization & Employer:** Hospital network Antwerp (Belgium), The Roma Education Support Trust (Great Britain), Centrum for Education Development (Poland)
- 3. Media:** TV Šutel (Macedonia), Romea.cz (Czech Republic), Romani Union of Slovenia (Slovenia)
- 4. Municipality:** Spišský Hrhov (Slovakia), Berlin-Neukölln (Germany), Graz (Austria)
- 5. Personality:** Veiijo Baltzar (Finland), Ivailo Tournev (Bulgaria), Sabiha Suleiman (Greece)

"The first year of ERSA brings a fascinating diversity of fates of people who devoted their lives to the development of Roma situation in Europe. It points out not only the number of challenges faced by the Roma in Europe, but also an incredible creativity and invention that helps to improve the quality of lives of Roma in all areas. ERSA is also a practical materialization of the idea of the Council of Europe which says that Europe is the true homeland of the Roma and that Roma are the most real Europeans," stated Chairman of the Preparatory and Organizing Committee, sociologist Michal Vašečka.



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The laureates of the European Roma Spirit Award 2016 will be chosen by the International Jury of Experts. The members of the Jury include **Ms. Ethel Brooks** (Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences), **Mr. Andrzej Mirga** (Roma Education Fund), **Mr. Michael Kocáb** (activist, Czech Republic), and **Ms. Mirjam Karoly** (Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights). The Jury will be chaired by **Ms. Věra Jourová**, European Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality.

The European Roma Spirit Award 2016 gala evening and award ceremony will take place on Monday, October 10, 2016 in Bratislava, Slovakia on the occasion of the conference "Empowering Roma Youth as a Driver for Change", which is the official event of the SK PRES 2016. The award giving ceremony will be televised and it will be possible to live-stream it on www.romaspirit.eu.

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The European Roma Spirit Award was initiated by the Association for Culture, Education and Communication (ACEC) as a platform for highlighting positive contributions focused on the social inclusion of the Roma people. ERSA is a project contingent on the Roma Spirit project which has been initiated and successfully implemented in Slovak and Czech Republic since 2009. The project aims to promote active efforts in improving the situation and fostering social integration of the Roma. The aim of the project is to build respect, promote understanding and tolerance through public presentation of positive examples of sensitive integration and support for marginalized Roma minority.

The Association for Culture, Education, and Communication (ACEC) is a non-governmental organization which aims to create understanding, support international cultural exchange, broaden education and create opportunities for the future continuation of mutual communication. Since our inception in 1999, the Association has focused on current social affairs, aiming to enhance culture, support education, and deepen and strengthen communication within Slovakia and internationally.