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The 5th edition of the Dosta! Congress Prize

Strasbourg, 23.10.2015 - Four cities were honoured with the 5th edition of the Dosta! Congress Prize, an award that is given to municipalities every two years for their commitment to inclusion of Roma and Travellers. On the first place came Ghent (Belgium), tied on the 2nd place are ex-aequo Kragujevac (Serbia) and Reggio nell' Emilia (Italy). The 3rd place went to Madrid (Spain).

The *Dosta!* Congress Prize is awarded to municipalities and regions every two years since 2007. As a joint prize between the *Dosta!* Campaign of the Council of Europe and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, the prize is awarded during the sessions of the Congress.

1st place - City of Ghent (Belgium)

Starting from the rationale that education is the most important lever for a better future, the city bolstered its education activities for Roma and Travellers with a two-track project. The first initiative was the training of school mediators with an intra-European migration background, to overcome educational barriers for Roma families who settled down in Ghent.

The second initiative focussed on Travellers: A container classroom was set up, where short-term education is provided to the children in an interactive way, reaching 15 to 20 children per week.

2nd place ex-aequo - City of Kragujevac (Serbia)

The period before 3 years of age is critical for the development of the personality of a person and has a large influence on his/her health and social abilities later on in life. Kragujevac started a parenting programme to educate Roma parents about the importance of early childhood education and the role of learning and development by playing and reading, using toys, colouring books and games. Also, health, education and welfare authorities and civil society organisations received training and materials in order to mainstream early childhood education in their administration activities.

2nd place ex-aequo - City of Reggio nell' Emilia (Italy)

The historical institute of the city, in cooperation with the Social Service department, gave 860 students an introduction to the history and culture of Sinti and Roma, with a particular focus on the current situation and on the Porrajmos, the long forgotten tragedy of the Roma Genocide by the Nazis during World War II.

The course addressed the students' opinions and challenged their stereotypes surrounding the living conditions of Roma and Travellers in Europe. Among the various inputs was the documentary film "Men tincaraimi – Stories of the Porrajmos" and a five-day memory trip to Berlin, during which 250 students visited the former Nazi concentration camps.

3rd place - City of Madrid (Spain)

A group of the city's Roma mediators organized a series of workshops, debates and neighbourhood meetings to strengthen social inclusion within the local communities. They focussed on several aspects, such as education, health, gender equality, employment and peaceful co-existence in the neighbourhoods. In total, between 3500 and 4000 persons participated in the events in 2013 and 2014.

Jean-Claude Frécon, president of the Congress, Ulrich Bunjes, Special Representative of the Secretary General on Roma issues, and John Warmisham, the Congress Rapporteur on Roma, praised the winners for their initiatives. President Frécon stressed that "local and regional authorities, when working hand in hand with Roma and Traveller communities, can bring a real change for the better. I am happy to see here today, celebrating the Dosta!

prize, how concrete and beneficial this change can be.”

[Website of Dosta!](#)
[Website of Alliance](#)

The Congress has two chambers, the Chamber of Local Authorities and the Chamber of Regions. It brings together 324 full and 324 substitute members representing more than 200 000 European territorial communities.

President of the Congress: Jean-Claude Frécon (France, SOC), President of the Chamber of Local Authorities: Anders Knappe (Sweden, EPP/CCE), President of the Chamber of Regions: Gudrun Mosler-Törnström (Austria, SOC)

Political Groups: Socialist Group (SOC), Group of the European People's Party – Christian Democrats (EPP/CD), Independent and Liberal Democrat Group (ILDG), European Conservatives & Reformists Group (ECR)