



JOURNALISM EXCELLENCE AWARDS

2025

**ETHICAL REPORTING ON ROMA AND TRAVELLERS AND COMBATING
RACISM AND ANTIGYPSYISM THROUGH THE MEDIA**



Roma and Travellers

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE



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About

The Journalism Excellence Awards are organised within the framework of the Council of Europe`s Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2020 - 2025), and as a continuation of the Awards launched in 2024 within the Joint EU-CoE EQUIROM Programme.

The aim is to promote a positive image in the media or raise awareness on specific issues affecting Roma and Traveller communities in Europe.

The duration of the competition was from 18 March to 30 April. The competition targeted active journalists, media professionals and journalism students from the Council of Europe Member States. Eligible content of their production needed to be objective, neutral, bias-free, or positively reporting on the key issues faced by Roma and Travellers.

Journalistic production considered for the Awards had been published between January 2020 and April 2025 and fell into one of the following categories:

- **Photojournalism Award** for using images to tell unbiased stories of Roma and Travellers, refraining from generalisation and stereotyping;
- **Investigative Journalism Award** for reporting on hardship of and exposing discrimination, unequal treatment, and human rights violations towards Roma and Travellers, as well as showcasing initiatives and promising or constructive practices tackling antigypsyism, racism and discrimination;
- **Best Interview Award** for conducting an interview on Roma and Traveller-related topics and/or broader issues linked to racism, particularly antigypsyism and discrimination, including with (famous) Roma and Traveller individuals;
- **Roma history and Holocaust remembrance Award** for reporting on commemoration events, memorial sites or pedagogical initiatives (or lack of) related to Roma and Travellers' history at large or specifically on the holocaust;
- **Young Journalists Award** for journalists under the age of 30 (at the time of application) reporting on human rights, or ethnic minorities and racialised groups.

The Selection Process

The Jury was composed of five individuals with recognised expertise and moral standing in the fields of Roma equality, anti-racism, including antigypsyism, and human rights, three of whom had documented expertise in journalism and media. The composition of the Jury was based on suggestions from the Council of Europe and the European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture (ERIAN), the European Platform of Regulatory Authorities (EPRA), and the Steering Committee on Media and Information Society (CDMSI).

The Jury examined each submission based on various criteria outlined in the competition regulations and selected one winner per category. The Jury also decided to award special mentions to some remarkable applications. This booklet presents the awarded candidates to recognise their work in the fields of Roma advocacy, anti-discrimination, and human rights.

All shortlisted applications are available at the Council of Europe website under the Roma & Travellers Division.



Photojournalism Award



Tamas MARKOS

Hungary/As If They Were Smiling

"Madalina, a 10-year-old girl who participated in a storytelling project we ran in her Roma community in Transylvania, looked at me one day and asked:

'Are you actually Hungarian or Roma?'

Instead of replying, I asked her: 'what do you think?'

She paused, then said:

'I think you are Hungarian on the outside, but Roma on the inside.'"

About the Awarded Material

"As If They Were Smiling" is a multimedia documentary created in close collaboration with a Roma family in Nyírvassvári, Hungary, using photographs, their spoken narratives, and artwork created by them to reflect their day-to-day lives — their joys, hardships, and visions for the future — all within the framework of the Kiútprogram (Way Out Programme), which supports social mobility through employment and micro-entrepreneurship.

About the Author

As a classical musician, Tamás Márkos spent 25 years in Hungary and the UK using music to support the communication and social development of children and young adults on the autism spectrum. Since 2020, he has worked as a documentary photographer and photojournalist for two Hungarian independent media outlets in Transylvania, Romania — Transtelex and UH.ro — while leading storytelling and photography workshops in Roma communities and mainstream schools.

Investigative Journalism Award



Vasileios KATSARAS

Greece/Entos Kadrou (In Frame)

“Antigypsyism is real, deep-rooted, persistent, and it permeates both society and state institutions. It is fueled by generalisations and instrumentalisation that only reinforce it further. The occasional positive counterexamples show that another reality is possible, but they also underline the core issue: the need for equal opportunities and genuine social inclusion.”

About the Awarded Material

The investigation sheds light on the lived experiences of Roma communities in Greece, highlighting the issue of antigypsyism through personal testimonies, expert insights, and official perspectives, while exposing the media-driven reproduction of stereotypes and advocating for change.

About the Author

Vasilis Katsaras is a journalist with nearly 25 years of experience in the media sector. He is editor-in-chief at the Greek public broadcaster ERT and the scriptwriter and curator of the investigative journalism programme ENTOS KADROU with Christina KALIMERI as the programme’s presenter. He holds a postgraduate degree in Public Discourse and Digital Media and has participated in academic research on journalism published in international journals and conferences.

The Best Interview Award

Simona JANIKOVA

Czech republic/

Roma Discrimination in Schools Leads to Lines at Job Centers, says Miroslav KLEMPAR

"I believe that honest journalistic work, where journalistic values such as curiosity, fairness and empathy are at a high level, can contribute to change."



About the Awarded Material

The article explores how the Czech education system continues to discriminate against Roma children by placing them disproportionately in "practical" schools, limiting their future opportunities. It highlights the long-term impact of this segregation, including high unemployment rates, and criticizes the Czech government for failing to implement meaningful reforms despite international pressure.

About the Author

I worked for almost ten years as an economic journalist at the national media Hospodářské noviny in Prague and in 2020 I returned to my home town Ostrava as a local correspondent. When my beloved son was born in 2022, I knew I would never return to daily news, so I decided to co-found regional medium Okraj, which brings slow, in-depth journalism where we also give voice to people who are barely heard in the media.

Special Jury Award



Mykola HOMANYUK

Ukraine/From a Pilfered Nail to a Stolen Tank: The Role of a Media Event in the Consolidation of the Ukrainian Political Nation

“Even negative stereotypes and biases can be used as a tool to combat negative stereotypes and biases.”

About the Awarded Material

As the story of a seized Russian tank were circulating on social media, a symbolical parallel to the story of pilfered nail emerged. Such media phenomenon consolidated a sense of Ukrainian national identity. Dynamics amid the Russian aggression in the media trigger emotional resonance, shape public narratives, and mobilise collective political actions. That illustrates how symbolic storytelling plays a crucial role in forging political unity during warfare.

About the Author

Mykola Homanyuk was born in Kakhovka, Ukraine. Currently, he is an associate professor at Kherson State University, where he teaches human geography and runs media-projects.

Young Journalists Award



Spela FERLIN

Slovenia/Lunik IX, Slovakia – Quality
Education Is the Only Way Out for Roma

“My work aims to show how marginalised groups live and how conditions affect their quality of life.”

About the Awarded Material

The piece portrays the harsh living conditions—dilapidated housing, lack of utilities, and environmental hardship—and showcases transformative community initiatives: volunteers supporting children’s learning, a Roma conservatory preserving cultural heritage, and structured programs for housing and employment. The piece underlines how quality education, cultural empowerment, and social support are essential in breaking the cycle of marginalization and offering real hope to Roma families

About the Author

Spela FERLIN is a dedicated young professional contributing to Slovenia's second largest newspaper, Dnevnik. Her core journalistic portfolio centers on issues affecting the Roma community and other marginalised groups, with a strong emphasis on their social conditions, and human rights.