



Journalism Excellence Awards

“ETHICAL REPORTING ON ROMA AND TRAVELLERS AND
COMBATING ANTIGYPSYISM THROUGH THE MEDIA”



Regulations

“Ethical reporting on Roma and Travellers¹ and combating antigypsyism through the media”

Article 1: The Awards

The Journalism Excellence Awards 2026 “Ethical reporting on Roma and Travellers and combating racism and antigypsyism through the media” called hereafter “Awards” is organised in the frame of the Council of Europe’s Strategy for Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2026 - 2030), initially launched within the framework of the Joint Programme EQUIROM (Equality and Freedom from Discrimination for Roma) funded by the European Union and the Council of Europe and implemented by the Council of Europe (2022 - 2024).

Article 2: Nature

The Awards shall consist of €10,000 in total, split in five different categories (€2,000 per award category). Award winners will also be awarded a diploma commending their outstanding contribution to the cause.

Article 3: Eligibility

1. Journalists and professional media representatives who are or have been active in the production of objective, neutral, “free of bias” or positive media reports on Roma and Traveller-related issues may be eligible to apply.
2. Journalists, media professionals² and students in journalism from Council of Europe member states are eligible to apply, provided they publish their work in Roma/ Traveller or mainstream media, or are part of the editorial teams of such outlets. The Award Secretariat reserves the right to request supporting documentation to verify applicants’ editorial independence and organisational structure.
3. Individuals and organisations who have previously received funding for the Awards 2024 and 2025 **are not eligible** to apply.

¹ The term “Roma and Travellers” is used at the Council of Europe to encompass the wide diversity of the groups covered by the work of the Council of Europe in this field: on the one hand a) Roma, Sinti/Manush, Calé, Kaale, Romanichals, Boyash/Rudari; b) Balkan Egyptians (Egyptians and Ashkali); c) Eastern groups (Dom, Lom and Abdal); and, on the other hand, groups such as Travellers, Yenish, and the populations designated under the administrative term “Gens du voyage”, as well as persons who identify themselves as Gypsies. The present is an explanatory footnote, not a definition of Roma and/or Travellers.

² Eligibility should be based on the professional journalism function, not on the organisation type. NGO and personal platforms can only qualify where there is a demonstrated newsroom, independent editorial process, and accountability standards consistent with established media practice.

4. By submitting the application, the applicants declare that they are not in any of the situations listed in the exclusion criteria below:
 - have been sentenced by final judgment on one or more of the following charges: participation in a criminal organisation, corruption, fraud, money laundering, terrorist financing, terrorist offences or offences linked to terrorist activities, child labour or trafficking in human beings;
 - are in a situation of bankruptcy, liquidation, termination of activity, insolvency or arrangement with creditors or any like situation arising from a procedure of the same kind, or are subject to a procedure of the same kind;
 - have received a judgment with res judicata force, finding an offence that affects their professional integrity or serious professional misconduct, including the offence of hate speech or hate crime;
 - do not comply with their obligations as regards payment of social security contributions, taxes and dues, according to the statutory provisions of their country of incorporation, establishment or residence;
 - are an entity created to circumvent tax, social or other legal obligations (empty shell company), have ever created or are in the process of creation of such an entity;
 - have been involved in mismanagement of the Council of Europe funds or public funds;
 - are or appear to be in a situation of conflict of interest;
 - are retired Council of Europe staff members or are staff members having benefitted from an early departure scheme;
 - are or if their owner(s) or executive officer(s), in the case of legal persons, are included in the lists of persons or entities subject to restrictive measures applied by the European Union (available at www.sanctionsmap.eu).

Article 4: Applications

1. The Secretariat responsible for the organisation of the Awards within the Council of Europe's Roma and Travellers Division will launch the call for applications for the Journalism Excellence Awards 2026 by publishing it as news item on the website and direct e-mailing to relevant networks and professionals.
2. Applications for the Awards must reach the Council of Europe Roma and Travellers Secretariat via the official email roma.team@coe.int with the e-mail subject line clearly indicating 'Journalism Excellence Awards 2026' by 6 April 2026, 23:59 CET.
3. Applications shall consist of journalistic contents that fall in one of the following categories produced and published between 1 January 2023 and 31 January 2026 by the date of application.
4. Applications from Roma and Traveller journalists and media professionals are particularly encouraged.
5. There shall be one application per applicant **only** (one category shall be chosen). The Jury will reserve the right to re-assign the application to the relevant category if needed.

Categories	Examples (non-exhaustive list) of technical details, formats accepted
<p>1. Photojournalism award: for using images to tell unbiased stories of Roma and Travellers, refraining from generalisation and stereotyping</p>	<p>Image quality and resolution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum resolution: 300 dpi for print-quality images • Recommended dimensions: at least 3000 px on the longest side • Images must be sharp, well-exposed, and free of heavy digital artifacts • RAW files may be requested for verification <p>File characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colour profile: sRGB or Adobe RGB • Acceptable levels of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Basic optimisation: cropping, colour correction, contrast adjustment</i> ○ <i><u>Prohibited: excessive manipulation, alteration of content, AI-generated imagery</u></i> <p>Ethical and editorial standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No staged or posed photos presented as documentary • Images must respect dignity, avoid stereotyping, and maintain unbiased representation • Captions must provide accurate context and avoid generalisations • Metadata must be preserved: EXIF, caption information, date/time, location (if appropriate)
<p>2. 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</p>	<p>Technical details</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Original investigative work supported by evidence (interviews, documents, data). • Clear verification process and transparent sourcing (anonymous sources allowed with justification). • Respect for ethical standards: dignity, informed consent, accuracy, no stereotyping. • Supporting materials may include: documents, datasets, audio/video evidence.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text should be clear and structured; audio/video must have intelligible sound and adequate quality. • Metadata (date, author, location) preserved where possible. <p>Accepted formats</p> <p>Written</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article, long-form investigation, feature, or series. • Formats: .pdf, .docx, .txt, link to published article. <p>Audio</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Radio report, podcast episode, audio documentary limited to 20 minutes. • Formats: .mp3, .wav, link to broadcaster/platform. <p>Video</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TV investigation, short documentary, web report. Videos formats limited to 30 minutes. • Formats: .mp4, .mov, .avi, link to video platform/cloud. <p>Multimedia / Digital</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interactive investigations, data-driven stories, mixed-media reports. • Formats: URL link or PDF export. <p>Other supporting documents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translation into English if the product is submitted in the original language. • Short note on methodology, context, impact, and list of contributors.
<p>3. 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 (prominent) Roma and Traveller individuals</p>	<p>Technical details</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview must demonstrate journalistic quality, clear questioning, and factual accuracy. • Respect for ethical standards: dignity, informed consent, and avoidance of stereotyping. • Contextual introduction explaining relevance to Roma and Traveller

	<p>issues or broader antigypsyism/racism topics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If edited, transitions must be transparent and fair, without altering meaning. • Audio/video should have clear sound; written interviews must be well-structured and accurately transcribed. • Metadata preserved where possible (date, interviewer, location/or platform). <p>Accepted formats</p> <p>Written interviews</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q&A format, narrative interview, or interview-based feature. • Formats: .pdf, .docx, .txt, link to published article. <p>Audio interviews</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Radio interview, podcast conversation, audio profile with limited duration of 20 min. • Formats: .mp3, .wav, link to broadcaster/platform. <p>Video Interviews</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TV studio interview, video report, documentary-style interview with limited duration to 20 min. • Formats: .mp4, .mov, .avi, link to video platform/cloud. <p>Other supporting material: Translation into English (if original is in another language).</p>
<p>4. Roma and Travellers' 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</p>	<p>Technical details</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting must focus on commemoration events, memorial sites, or educational/pedagogical initiatives linked to Roma and Travellers' history, including the Holocaust. • Clear historical context, accurate references, and respectful representation of sensitive topics. • Ethical reporting standards: dignity, factual accuracy, and avoidance of stereotyping or sensationalism.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If covering remembrance events, footage or descriptions should reflect faithful documentation of the event. • Audio/video must have clear sound and adequate quality; written pieces should be coherent and well-structured. • Preservation of basic metadata (date, author, location/event details) where possible. <p>Accepted Formats</p> <p>Written</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News report, feature story, historical article, illustrations/ infographics or event coverage. • Formats: .pdf, .docx, .txt, link to online publication. <p>Audio</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Radio segments, podcast episodes, interviews, or event coverage. • Formats: .mp3, .wav, link to broadcaster/platform. <p>Video</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event coverage, documentary segment, report from a memorial site, educational video. • Formats: .mp4, .mov, .avi, link to video platform/cloud. <p>Multimedia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interactive stories, photo-audio combinations, web-based historical narratives. • Formats: URL link or PDF export. <p>Other supporting material: Translation into English (if original is in another language).</p>
<p>5. Special 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</p>	<p>Technical details</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open to journalists under 30 years old at the time of application. • Reporting must focus on human rights, ethnic minorities, or racialised groups, including Roma and Travellers.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submissions should demonstrate journalistic accuracy, ethical reporting, and fair representation. • Clear sourcing and verification; respectful portrayal of individuals and communities. • Written/audio/video entries should be of adequate technical quality (clear sound, readable text, stable image if video). • Basic metadata retained where possible (date, author, publication/platform). <p>Accepted formats</p> <p>Written</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article, feature, opinion-supported-by-facts, or human rights report. • Formats: .pdf, .docx, .txt, link to original publication. <p>Audio</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Radio report, podcast episode, interview or audio story with limited duration to 20 minutes. • Formats: .mp3, .wav, link to broadcaster/platform. <p>Video</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video report, short documentary, interview, or field report with limited duration to 20 minutes. • Formats: .mp4, .mov, .avi, link to video platform/cloud. <p>Multimedia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interactive stories, mixed-media human rights reporting, photo-audio pieces. • Formats: URL link or PDF export. <p>Other supporting material: Translation into English (if original is in another language).</p>
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6. The Application form will be available on the Roma and Travellers website (www.coe.int/roma). Attached materials must be submitted in electronic format. Applicants are advised to send large files via services like WeTransfer or other digital solutions. The Secretariat reserves the right to ask for higher quality files in case the application is shortlisted.

7. The application form must be submitted **in English**. The application material (video, audio or text) can be submitted in local language accompanied with a good quality English translation or summary in English). In case of a video or audio in original language, the application must include a transcript (which can be AI-generated) with a summary of good quality in English.

Article 5: Jury

1. A Jury composed of up to six (6) individuals with recognised expertise in journalism and media and moral standing, including in the fields of Roma and Traveller equality, anti-racism including antigypsyism and human rights. The Council of Europe retains the flexibility to adjust the size of the Jury based on the availability of its members.
2. The Secretariat reserves the right to appoint a coordinator with specific duties among the Jury members.

Article 6 – Pre-selection and selection procedures

3. The applicants declare that they are not in a situation of a conflict of interests or a potential conflict of interest in relation to this procedure. They have been notified and understand that a conflict of interest may arise, in particular, from economic interests, political or national affinities, emotional or family ties or any other type of shared relationship or interest.
4. The Secretariat responsible for the organisation of the Awards will undertake the responsibility of pre-screening the applications to ensure compliance with the established rules. Subsequently, the pre-evaluated proposals received by the deadline set in Article 4.2 will be submitted to the member of the Jury.
5. Each member of the jury shall provide a ranking of applications in each category, based on the criteria list, and send them to the Secretariat within the set deadline.
6. On the basis of this, the Secretariat responsible for the organisation of the Awards shall transmit to the members of the jury a list of the applicants who have received the three highest scores for each category and have been pre-selected in conformity with the provisions of Article 6.3.
7. Each member of the jury shall then select (shortlist) from the list established in conformity with the provisions of Article 6.4, the three preferred applicants in each category, and award 3 points to the favourite, 2 to the second and 1 to the third. There shall be a quorum if four members of the jury are present or otherwise able to express their vote.
8. The applicants who have received the highest number of points per category will receive the award. In the event of a tie, a vote by simple majority will be taken in order to decide between the proposals with the highest number of points. In this case, the chair will have a casting vote.

Article 7: Criteria

The Jury will evaluate the applications based on two sets of criteria: general criteria (with a maximum attainable score of 25 points) and category-specific criteria (allowing for a maximum score of 15 points). The aggregate score for each application shall not exceed 40 points.

General Criteria:

1. Positive, balanced or unbiased reporting:

- Adherence to the objective of providing positive or unbiased reporting on Roma and Travellers and/or actively tackling biased or stereotypical representations. (5 points)

2. Educational Value:

- Contribution to educating the public on Roma and Traveller's concerns, culture, and language. (5 points)
- Raising awareness about racism, particularly antigypsyism, and discrimination. (5 points)

3. Journalistic Integrity:

- Adherence to ethical journalism standards. (5 points)
- Avoidance of clichés, stereotypes, content that fuels prejudice, discrimination, or hatred. (5 points)

Specific Criteria:

1. Photojournalism Award:

- Creativity and Aesthetic: Effective use of images to convey positive stories of Roma and Travellers, with attention to creativity and visual appeal. (5 points)
- Authenticity: Demonstration of genuine representation without resorting to stereotypes. (5 points)
- Impact: The ability of the photographs to evoke emotions and contribute to changing perceptions. (5 points)

2. Investigative Journalism Award:

- Thoroughness: Depth, originality, and thoroughness in reporting on hardship, unequal treatment, discrimination and/or human rights of Roma. (5 points)
- Impact: Demonstrated impact of the investigative work on raising awareness and promoting positive change. (5 points)
- Ethical Reporting: Adherence to ethical standards in investigative reporting. (5 points)

3. Best Interview Award:

- Insightful Questions: Effectiveness in asking insightful questions on Roma and Traveller-related topics. (5 points)
- Inclusivity: Sensitivity and inclusivity in interviewing Roma and Traveller individuals, including those who are famous. (5 points)
- Educational Value: The interview's contribution to informing the audience about Roma and Traveller history, culture, and contributions or promoting positive Roma role models. (5 points)

4. Roma and Travellers' history and Holocaust remembrance Award:

- Contribution to educating the public on Roma and Traveller's history, including the Roma Holocaust. (5 points)
- Making use of clear historical sources/ highlighting bibliography (5 points)
- Using infographics, illustrations, unbiased references. (5 points)

5. Special Young Journalists Award:

- Fresh Perspective: Demonstration of a fresh and innovative perspective on reporting. (5 points)

- Youth Engagement: Actively engaging with and accurately portraying the experiences of racialised people. (5 points)
- Quality of Storytelling: Skilful storytelling that captures the attention of a young audience. (5 points)

Article 8: Case of No Applications in a Category

1. Non-attribution of the award

The award may remain unassigned for that year if no suitable submissions are available.

2. Reallocation

The jury may reallocate the award budget to:

- another category with strong submissions, or
- a special mention addressing similar themes.

3. Jury-initiated special mention

The jury may create a Special Mention highlighting:

- an external publication or work published during the eligibility period,
- even if it was not formally submitted,
- provided permissions can be obtained from the author(s).

4. Merge with Another Category (if relevant)

If thematically justified, the jury may merge categories for that year (e.g., if only one of two related categories receives submissions).

Article 9: Award Ceremony

1. The Council of Europe will present the Awards to the Winners or their representatives during a ceremony scheduled to occur at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg on 18 June 2026, coinciding with the "No Hate Speech" Week. The Winners will be invited to attend the ceremony and will have the opportunity to personally receive the diploma commending their outstanding contribution to the cause.
2. Travel expenses and accommodation costs related to the participation in the ceremony will be borne by the Council of Europe (5 winners or their representatives).
3. The award payment will be disbursed to the winners' bank account within 80 days of the official Jury's decision announcement, contingent upon the receipt of the necessary bank details.
4. The Council of Europe reserves the right to use the winner's submitted materials for the purpose of promoting the awards and the outcomes of the Strategy for Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2026 - 2030).

Article 9: Intellectual property rights and obligations of the Award Winners

1. Applicants must be the sole authors of their work or one of the authors of the submitted work. For joint work, one person should apply on behalf of the group. Co-authors' names should be listed in the application form. If the submission wins, the award will be given to the person who submitted the application. The applicant must ensure to have the authorisation from the co-authors to apply.

Any use of AI generated texts, videos and images³ must be declared. Applicants must obtain the consent for the use of the photos, from the persons featured in them, in accordance with the applicable laws and comply with any other relevant legislation when producing their photographs.

2. Applicants retain the copyright to their entries. By participating in the contest winners accept to grant a royalty-free license to the Council of Europe to publish and/or exhibit the contest entries in any format to feature the winners and their respective images. They may also be used to promote future events as well as for awareness-raising purposes for the work of the Council of Europe. Winners accept to enter into a license agreement with the Council for the above purposes. When the CoE will use the winning pieces to illustrate materials of the Organisation or to promote the work of the Organisation, the competition and the name of the author will always be mentioned.

Article 10: Data Protection

Any personal data belonging to the applicants is securely processed in accordance with the Council of Europe Regulations on the Protection of Personal Data adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 15 June 2022 at the 1437th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies. It will be kept for the sole purpose of the organisation and follow-up work pertaining to the competition and will not be disclosed to any third parties. Applicants may request access to and deletion or rectification of the personal data submitted to the competition. Personal data will be deleted as soon as it is no longer needed for the purposes of the competition.

Article 11: Cancellation of the awards

The Council of Europe may decide to amend, suspend or cancel the competition at any time and may choose not to give awards in any category or use further any winning entries without providing reasons or paying compensation of any kind to the applicants or winners.

Article 12: Amendment of the Regulations

The present Regulations can be amended unilaterally by the Council of Europe.

Article 13: Privileges and immunities

Nothing in these regulations shall be construed as constituting a waiver of the privileges and immunities enjoyed by the Council as an international organisation and as they are stipulated in the General Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the Council of Europe and Protocols to the said agreement as well as any other relevant international acts.

Article 14: Disputes

Any disputes shall be settled amicably without recourse to any national jurisdiction.

³ AI-generated images are strictly prohibited in the Photojournalism category.