



JOURNALISM EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2024

**ETHICAL MEDIA
REPORTING ON ROMA**

EQUIROM

Equality and Freedom from Discrimination for Roma

Co-funded
by the European Union



EUROPEAN UNION

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



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Co-funded and implemented
by the Council of Europe

ABOUT

The Journalism Excellence Awards 2024 “Ethical Media Reporting on Roma and Combating Racism and Antigypsyism through the Media” is an initiative organised under 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.

The competition, launched between 11 March and 14 April 2024, targeted journalists, media professionals, and journalism students from the Council of Europe Member States who are active in producing objective, neutral, bias-free, or positive media reports on Roma-related issues.

Applicants were invited to submit journalistic content produced and published between January 2020 and April 2024, falling into one of the following categories:

- 1. Photojournalism:** Images that tell unbiased stories of Roma, particularly about Roma women and young people, refraining from generalisation and stereotyping.
- 2. Investigative Journalism:** Reporting on the hardships of and exposing discrimination, unequal treatment, and human rights violations towards Roma and other racialised groups, as well as showcasing initiatives and promising or constructive practices tackling antigypsyism, racism, and discrimination.
- 3. Best Interview:** Conducting interviews on Roma-related topics and/or broader issues linked to racism, particularly antigypsyism and discrimination, including interviews with (famous) Roma individuals.
- 4. Global Event:** Coverage of global events in recent years (2020-2024) that have impacted Roma communities and/or individuals, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, climate change/natural disasters, etc.
- 5. Young Journalists:** For journalists under the age of 26 (at the time of application) reporting on human rights, or ethnic minorities and racialised groups.

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, the European Commission, 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 EQUIROM project [website](#).

FOREWORD



Eleni Tsetsekou

Head of Roma and Travellers Division, Council of Europe

The Council of Europe is committed to preventing and combating antigypsyism and discrimination while promoting equality for Roma people, in accordance with the EU Roma Strategic [Framework for equality, inclusion and participation](#) and the [Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Travellers Inclusion 2020-2025](#).

The joint efforts of the EU and the Council of Europe are focused on countering hate speech, changing narratives and promoting positive portrayals of marginalised groups across various communication and media outlets. Key texts and [recommendations](#) to Council of Europe member states, covering human rights, freedom of expression, hate speech and anti-discrimination, provide valuable resources for implementation.

However, our journey is far from complete. While we continue to support the Roma community by ensuring equal access to education, employment, healthcare, housing, and civil documentation, we must also engage with journalists and media professionals to increase their interest and to produce unbiased representations of the Roma community in the media, with a view to changing narratives and public perception.

It is an honour to present the winners of this year's "Journalism Excellence Awards 2024 - Ethical Media Reporting on Roma." Their commitment and dedication to objectively portraying the Roma community, along with deep research striving to understand marginalised communities and the challenges they face, have been genuinely inspiring. This year's winners send a powerful message to the whole society that Roma people are Europeans. Congratulations to all the winners for their excellent work and to all applicants for going against the odds!



Szabolcs Schmidt

Head of Unit, Non-Discrimination: Anti-Racism and Roma Coordination, European Commission

Antigypsyism and anti-Roma discrimination remain persisting problems throughout Europe. The [2023 Special Eurobarometer on Discrimination in the European Union](#) confirms this bleak picture: 65% of respondents consider that discrimination against Roma is widespread in their countries, making Roma people the group against whom discrimination is most pervasive in the EU.

The European Commission has defined the fight against antigypsyism and discrimination as a horizontal objective of the [EU Roma Strategic Framework for equality, inclusion and participation](#). As a concrete action contributing to achieving this goal, the Commission is cooperating with the Council of Europe in the framework of the EQUIROM programme, which aims to combat stereotypes in the media and promote positive narratives about Roma.

The research that was carried out as part of EQUIROM confirms that, very often, media continue to portray Roma in a negative manner that reinforces harmful attitudes and biases. The Journalism Excellence Awards acknowledge a better way of media presentation, by showcasing and rewarding outstanding examples of facts-based journalistic work that can help counter stereotypes and disinformation.

It is very encouraging that many journalists have taken up this challenge. The awards attracted a total of 53 applications, both from countries across the European Union and from the EU's neighbourhood. This booklet presents the work of the awarded candidates, showing how journalism can help fight discrimination and antigypsyism, and promote respect and tolerance as founding values of our societies.

WINNER IN THE PHOTOJOURNALISM CATEGORY

Achilleas Chiras

Greece

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Achilleas Chiras was born in Trikala in 1994. In 2015, he moved to Thessaloniki to study photography and has been living and working there ever since. He studied and graduated from the Photography Department of I.V.T. of AKMI. Following his studies, he began his career in photojournalism, initially working as an intern at a Greek news agency. Achilleas is currently employed as a photojournalist at the Athens News Agency (ANA-MPA) and serves as a correspondent for the European Pressphoto Agency (EPA). He is also a member of the Greek Photojournalist Association. Achilleas covers current affairs, political and social issues, as well as sports content, all from his base in Thessaloniki, Greece.



ABOUT THE AWARDED MATERIAL

Kostas Fragoulis, a 16-year-old Roma, tragically lost his life after being fatally shot by a police officer during a pursuit, sparked by an incident where he fled a gas station without paying €20. Despite spending over a week in critical condition, Kostas succumbed to his injuries shortly after.

The selected image captures the somber scene of Kostas Fragoulis' funeral, attended by over 1500 mourners, including grieving relatives. Kostas, who was married and had a young child, leaves behind a devastated family and community. Despite calls for calm from his loved ones and the Roma community, the aftermath saw days of intense protests, often escalating into violence.



[Consult the full image here](#)

WINNER IN THE INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM CATEGORY

Rodothea Seralidou

Germany

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rodothea Seralidou is a Greek-German journalist, born in 1979 in Düsseldorf, Germany. She initially graduated from the Athens Law School as a lawyer. To pursue her dream of becoming a journalist, she continued her studies at Heinrich-Heine-University in Düsseldorf, where she obtained a degree in Media and Culture. During her studies, she began working for the German Public Radio WDR in Cologne. Today, she splits her time between Athens and Düsseldorf, working as a freelancer for German-speaking media such as Deutschlandfunk and SRF. She reports on a wide range of topics related to Greece and Europe, including migration, society, human rights, tourism, politics, and economics.

ABOUT THE AWARDED MATERIAL

The radio story delves into the challenging situation faced by the Roma population in Greece and, by extension, in other EU member states. Roma people continue to struggle with illiteracy, low education levels, unemployment, poverty, and extremely difficult housing conditions. For this story, the author visited Nea Zoi in Aspropyrgos, an industrial town near Athens where many Roma live in harsh conditions, residing in tents and makeshift homes without access to electricity and water. The Roma community shared their lives, problems, and aspirations.

The story highlights the efforts of the EU and the Greek government to improve the situation. It includes interviews with a chief researcher from the EU Fundamental Rights Agency, a representative from the Greek Ministry of Family Affairs, and a spokesperson from the European Commission discussing the measures being taken at the EU level to address the plight of the Roma in Europe.



Extract from the article:

The story ends with the dreams of Giorgos, a Greek Roma who lives in the impoverished Roma district of Nea Zoi. When asked about his biggest dream, he took a deep breath and, after a moment of thought, answered:

"A small house, nothing big. Two rooms and a shower. And a job. That is what I dream of. I would work the whole day and, in the evening, I would return home and take a shower."



[Listen to the full report here](#)

WINNER IN THE BEST INTERVIEW CATEGORY

Gilda-Nancy Horvath

Austria

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gilda-Nancy Horvath began her journalism career in 2006 at the Austrian Public National Broadcast ORF, where she produced the Romani Radio magazine “Radio Kaktus” and a TV magazine. In 2021, she began writing the Glaso Portrait Series for Deutsche Welle Europe, which will be published as part of a book on Roma in the media by the end of 2024.

Beyond her journalism work, Gilda is an active project designer, artist, and activist. Under her alter-ego Nancy Black, she publishes rap music and poetry in the Romani language. She has also designed several projects to support and educate journalists from the Romani community.

Gilda is a board member of the European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture (ERIAC).

ABOUT THE AWARDED MATERIAL

“Glaso - Voice” is a series of portraits featuring individuals who are changing the world. It examines major societal discourses from the perspective of those often only questioned about their origins. These voices highlight the *zeitgeist* and evolving values in Europe from the viewpoints of Sinti and Roma.

The interviews form portraits of many impressive individuals, such as Branislav Nikolic, a three-time grandfather and programmer; Alina Serban, a film director who won the German Prize for best actress; Selman Selma, an artist also known as Picasso and Tito; Roxanna Lorainne Witt, who speaks about the transgenerational trauma of Sinti; Maria Bogdan, a scientist exploring the concept of “the stranger”; and William Bila, a successful consultant who provided a defining quote for the series: “Roma are the Avant-Garde, and I can think of a thousand ways to show it.”



Extract from the article:

“Roma are the Avant-Garde and I can think of thousand ways to show it.”

William Bila



[Read the full article here](#)

WINNER IN THE GLOBAL EVENT CATEGORY

Anna Alboth

Poland

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Anna Alboth is a journalist and human rights defender who focuses on migration issues at various European borders. She works as a media officer at Minority Rights Group International, advocating for minority communities worldwide. Additionally, she has co-founded several initiatives, including Grupa Granica (*ang. border group*), a collective working on the Polish-Belarusian border, and the Civil March for Aleppo, which was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2018.

ABOUT THE AWARDED MATERIAL

The article sheds light on the severe discrimination faced by the Roma community in Ukraine, exacerbated by the ongoing conflict with Russia. It follows stories from Uzhhorod, where Roma children struggle to access education due to systemic barriers and describes the harsh realities for Roma families living without basic necessities and legal documentation.

The author poignantly captures personal testimonies, illustrating the resilience and hopes of Roma individuals amid pervasive racism and violence. The article combines in-depth reporting with empathetic storytelling, providing a voice to an often overlooked and marginalised group. It documents the intersection of historical injustices and current crises, offering a human face to the abstract issues of statelessness and ethnic persecution. By highlighting both the systemic problems and the grassroots efforts to address them, the article calls for greater awareness and action against anti-Roma racism in Ukraine and beyond.



Extract from the article:

"As the Roma say (depending on the dialect): Khetane ame Zorale. Together we are stronger."



[Read the full article here](#)

WINNER IN THE YOUNG JOURNALISTS CATEGORY

Yana Radchenko

Ukraine

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Yana Radchenko is a 24-year-old Ukrainian journalist with a passion for human rights journalism. She focuses on topics such as women's rights, hate crimes, and discrimination.

Yana graduated from Zaporizhzhia National University, earning both her bachelor's and master's degrees in journalism. She has received several prestigious national awards, including the 25 Under 25 award, and won the Honour of the Profession competition in the Hope of Journalism category in 2021.

In February 2022, Yana's hometown of Tokmak in the Zaporizhzhia region came under occupation. During her time there, she participated in pro-Ukrainian rallies and wrote about the Russian-Ukrainian war under a pseudonym. After moving to territory controlled by Ukrainian authorities, she began to openly write about the challenges faced by vulnerable groups, including national minorities, LGBTIQ people, and people with disabilities, during the war.

ABOUT THE AWARDED MATERIAL

Roma have always been one of the most vulnerable communities in Ukraine, and the full-scale war has further exacerbated their situation. Many Roma families have remained in the temporarily occupied territories or war zones due to a lack of money and the ability to evacuate. Roma people who have left, but do not have documents, cannot receive internally displaced persons (IDP) status or humanitarian aid. Additionally, Roma children often lack devices for distance learning through digital technologies.



Extract from the article:

"Actually, I still don't understand how we survived. We came under terrible shelling, the windows in the car were smashed inwards and fell directly on us. The driver's wheel flew off. I thought we were going to die. I covered my four children and began to pray that, if our day and time came, God would take me and save them", – one of the Roma women who left the occupation



[Read the full article here](#)

JURY EXPERTS



Inge Welbergen

Inge Welbergen is a coordinating legal officer for media at the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science. She is an expert in media regulation and is responsible for coordinating and formulating Dutch international media policies.

Inge represents the Netherlands in the EU Council Working Group for Audiovisual Affairs, the EU Contact Committee for Audiovisual Affairs, and the European Audiovisual Observatory Executive Council. She has been a member of the bureau of the Council of Europe's Steering Committee on Media and Information Society since June 2019, serving as chair in 2020 and 2021, and vice-chair in 2022 and 2023. Additionally, she has been a member of the CoE's expert group on quality journalism in the digital age (MSI JOQ).

Inge studied International and European Law and holds a Master's degree in Legislation. From 2009 to 2013, she was a seconded national expert to the European Commission (DG Markt), working on the revision of the Professional Qualifications Directive. In 2008, she worked in Brussels for the Netherlands Permanent Representation to the EU. Prior to that, she was a legislator/legal advisor at the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science, specializing in legislation on student finance and the subjects of free movement of persons and goods.



Robert C. Schwartz

Robert C. Schwartz has worked with Deutsche Welle (DW) from 1992 to 2023. Between 2000-2020 he headed the Romanian editorial department of DW. Subsequently he was in charge of the comprehensive project "Sinti and Roma in Europe".

Robert was born in Hermannstadt/Sibiu, Romania. After studying German philology and literature at the University of Bucharest, he worked as a teacher at the German Gymnasium in the Romanian capital, of which he became headmaster after the fall of communism. In 1990 he was a representative of the German minority in Romania's first provisional parliament after the political change. He has lived in Germany since 1991.

In 2023, Robert was elected president of the German-Romanian Society Berlin (Deutsch-Rumänische Gesellschaft Berlin). He is a member of the Southeast Europe Society (Munich) and sits on the board of the German-Romanian Forum (Berlin). In 2012 he was awarded the Romanian Order of Cultural Merit with the rank of Commander.



Mircea Toma

Mircea Toma has been a Member of the National Audiovisual Council in Romania since 2021. He has a rich background as a university teacher, having taught at various institutions including the University of Bucharest, the School of Journalism, and the National School of Political Science and Administration (SNSPA) in Romania. His teaching experience spans across journalism, political science, and education sciences.

Mircea Toma has significant expertise in working with media, contributing to radio and television programs, and authoring numerous press articles. He possesses a deep understanding of media and press functionality in Europe and is a member of the European Platform for Regulatory Authorities (EPRA).

Before joining the National Audiovisual Council, Mircea Toma presided Active Watch in Romania for more than a decade. Active Watch is a human rights organisation that advocates for free communication in the public interest, underscoring his long-standing commitment to media freedom and human rights.



Roma and Travellers

The member states of the European Union have decided to link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms. The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders.

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