

For the attention of the Public Prosecutor of Lille
TGI de Lille
13 avenue du Peuple Belge
BP 729
59034 LILLE CEDEX

Dear Sir/Madam,

The European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC¹) is an International public interest law organisation established in 1996, working to combat racism and discrimination, as well as to defend human rights of Roma population across Europe through strategic litigation, research and policy development, advocacy and human rights education.

The ERRC is writing to you to express its deep concern provoked by an incident which occurred in Lille on the 14th June involving England football supporters and Romani children. According to information compiled from various sources, including French and Foreign media articles the football supporters publically humiliated the Romani children by throwing coins and bottles². Some fans even encouraged the children to fight among themselves to recover the coins thrown on the ground. In the video published by France 3³, England fans can be seen humiliating, and mocking Romani children. Moreover the video published by Channel 4 news shows an England supporter offering Romani children €5 to perform oral sex on him or drink his urine before telling them to “Fuck off you Romanian bastards”⁴. The nature of the abuse is further underscored by the fans referring to the children as ‘gypos’ who will come to England to “rob” them. In addition, the Russian journalist who filmed the football fans claimed that “**police were not far [away], but they did nothing**”⁵.

The ERRC wants to draw your attention to the unacceptable and intimidating behavior of the group of fans in this video.

The fact the victims of this incident are members of the Romani community, and given the circumstances, it is clear that an aggressive, racially motivated incident occurred in Lille. Thus, the full investigation and prosecution (if appropriate) of those involved is a matter of protecting

¹ www.errc.org

² Europe1, *Des supporters anglais humilient les enfants roms en leur jetant des pièces*, 15 June 2016: <http://www.europe1.fr/sport/video-des-supporters-anglais-humilient-des-enfants-roms-en-leur-jetant-des-pieces-2773031>

³ France 3, Euro : à Lille, des Anglais humilient des enfants roms en leur jetant des pièces et des bouteilles, 15 June 2016 : <http://france3-regions.francetvinfo.fr/nord-pas-de-calais/euro-lille-des-anglais-humilient-des-enfants-roms-en-leur-jetant-des-pieces-et-des-bouteilles-1024237.html>

⁴ Channel 4 News (2016) “England’s shame: Undercover with England fans”, 28th June 16, Available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wO_Un-1KwPM

⁵ Entrevue, Euro 2016 : des enfants Roms humiliés par des supporters anglais (Vidéo), 15 June 2016 : <http://www.entrevue.fr/euro-2016-des-enfants-roms-humilies-par-des-supporters-anglais-video/>

the rights of both the individuals affected and the entire Roma community. A successful investigation and resolution of this case will bring justice to the victims in accordance with Article 13 of the European Convention on Human Rights which stipulates that everyone whose rights and freedoms (including the right to liberty and security of person and freedom from inhuman or degrading treatment) have been violated shall have effective remedy before a national authority.

Given the importance of the incident outlined above, the ERRC in accordance with the Framework Decision on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of the criminal law⁶ as well as in application of the law application n° 78-753 of 17 of July 1978 respectfully requests your offices to provide the following written information:

- Is there an investigation into this incident open, and which investigative measures have been undertaken by your office to identify the perpetrators?
- Has anyone been accused of being responsible for this incident and what charges were brought against this person?
- Has anyone been found guilty?
- What sentence was handed down?
- Has racial motivation been investigated? With what result? What guidance was used for the investigation of racial motivation?

Also, the ERRC would like to clarify that this request is based on the law No 78-753 of 17 July 1978 which grants everyone the right of access to documents held in connection with public service mission by administration. We call on your department to investigate this particular case in accordance with the existing protocols, guidelines and decisions taken by your department set to determine the racist motivation of the perpetrators during the investigation related to cases such as the above mentioned.

Finally, we stress that the required information is general and can be provided anonymously and cannot harm the investigation.

The ERRC thank you for your attention to this urgent matter, as well as for your efforts which will greatly contribute to maintaining the status of France as a peaceful and egalitarian society. We look forward to your prompt and detailed response.

Yours sincerely,

Đorđe Jovanović

President European Roma Rights Centre

Piara Powar

Executive Director FARE Network

⁶ Council Framework Decision [2008/913/JHA](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=URISERV:l33178&from=FR) of 28 November 2008: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=URISERV:l33178&from=FR>