

FAO: Ms Sophie ELIZÉON

Prefect for Equal Opportunities, Lille  
Préfecture Région Nord-Pas de Calais  
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Dear Madam,

The European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC<sup>1</sup>) 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 14<sup>th</sup> 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 bottles<sup>2</sup>. Some fans even encouraged the children to fight among themselves to recover the coins thrown on the ground. In the video published by France 3<sup>3</sup>, 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”<sup>4</sup>. 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**”<sup>5</sup>.

The ERRC is appalled by the unacceptable and intimidating behavior of the group of fans in this video.

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 criminal law<sup>6</sup> as well as the national action plan (2015-2017) for fighting against racism and anti-Semitism adopted by the French government<sup>7</sup> calls for the Prefect for Equal Opportunities in Lille to issue a prompt, public

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<sup>1</sup> [www.errc.org](http://www.errc.org)

<sup>2</sup> 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>

<sup>3</sup> 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>

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

<sup>5</sup> 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/>

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

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.gouvernement.fr/sites/default/files/liseuse/4040/master/index.htm>

response condemning the actions of these fans; and second, to take measures for protecting Roma children's rights according to art.2 of the International Convention on the Rights of the child.<sup>8</sup>

The ERRC thanks 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

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>