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Roma community among the most affected by COVID-19 and Brexit

EU Settlement Scheme Application Deadline is 30 June 2021

Europia is a registered charity based in Greater Manchester, which supports Eastern European nationals, many of whom are from the Roma Community. The pandemic has revealed, with painful clarity, **systemic discrimination** towards Romani member and the sheer scale of black-market employment of its members.

Most of the people have low-status jobs like factory workers, Uber drivers, or sellers. Although they have proved themselves as crucial, **it has been the worst hit sector**. Moreover, many of them work in jobs and do not receive without records or payslips from their employers. Despite Europia encouraging people to do it, clients were reluctant to involve their former employers to fear causing trouble and jeopardising future employment opportunities.

Additionally, the Roma community has been persecuted, slaughtered, and expelled from wherever they settled; hence, they distrust authorities and policies. Usually, this community is close to outsiders. Thankfully, the fact that several Europia's staff members are themselves Romani, **has eased this work**.

Besides the pandemic, the deadline for the EUSS application looms unstoppable. The Roma community faces several barriers, such as access to digital tools, solid evidence of employability and residence status, and language understanding. Europia finds many are unaware of the importance and urgency of securing their immigration status. **A second Windrush scenario is coming**, where marginalised communities become 'illegally' resident in the UK, without access to housing, help or education for themselves and their children.

The pandemic has altered Europia's approach to working with vulnerable groups like the EU Roma communities in Levenshulme, Gorton and Longsight. We must take a more strategic approach highlighting inequalities to funders and stakeholders and campaigning for change. But the first step is to ensure the legal status and apply to the EU Settled Status scheme. Every council, company, charity, and individuals must act to ensure that their friends and families, clients, and co-workers are aware of the urgency and importance of applying to the **EUSS before the 30 June 2021 deadline**.

For details about free support with EU Settlement Scheme Applications in EU languages, visit www.europia.org.uk

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