

CALL FOR PAPERS

Conference:	Racism, Justice, Environment: Critical Approaches in Romani Studies and Beyond
Date:	June 1-2, 2023
Deadline:	February 26, 2023
Venue:	Central European University, Vienna and online

The Romani Studies Program and the Environmental and Social Justice Action Research Group at Central European University, the Roma Program at the FXB Center for Health and Human Rights, Harvard University, in cooperation with the Critical Romani Studies Department at Södertörn University and the European Institute for Arts and Culture are pleased to invite scholars to submit abstract proposals for the *Racism, Justice, Environment: Critical Approaches in Romani Studies and Beyond* conference dedicated to the topic of environmental justice. The conference will be held on June 1-2, 2023 in a hybrid format, in Vienna (Austria) and online.

People in Eastern Europe have higher chances of dying as a result of pollution than those in Western Europe. The highest rates of pollution-related deaths are in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, and Romania, all countries with significant Roma communities. As the 2019 European Environment Agency report shows, environmental inequality and toxic exposure are linked to race and ethnicity: “Roma communities in Central and Eastern Europe are often excluded from basic services and exposed to environmental pollution, with serious health consequences”.¹

Across Europe, numerous Roma communities live in environmentally hazardous areas with restricted access to water, sanitation, and waste removal, with their land, water, and air contaminated by waste dumps, industrial farms, mines or abandoned industrial areas, and with unavailable public infrastructure and access to green zones. The uneven distribution of environmental harms and benefits significantly contribute to the inequities Roma people face in health. This gap will further grow along the impact of climate change.

¹<https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/healthy-environment-healthy-lives>

The present climate crisis is rooted in structures of extractive capitalism and white supremacy, i.e. the maximization of profit by exploiting natural resources and subjugated, racialized communities. The common origin of the climate crisis and racism is the unregulated accumulation of wealth. Because the rate of profit tends to fluctuate and fall, capitalist societies have to move anew to plunder lands and people and resort to cruel modes of creating capital. The civilized space of legality and democracy is often dependent on the racist and extractive spaces of unregulated accumulation. However, it is under this perspective that we can also see a return of an allegedly ungovernable, overexploited actors - nature and oppressed racialized groups re-asserting their agency in fighting the colonial domination of exploitative and extractive governance.

The conference seeks to promote the participation of Romani scholars and professionals in documenting and shaping academic, professional, and popular discourse to counteract past practices of exploitation and exclusion. Moreover, the conference aims to facilitate a knowledge exchange between various scholars and professionals from social, historical, environmental, architecture and urbanism, and climate disciplines.

Critical Romani Studies proposes a paradigm shift and challenges the dominant academic and policy discourses and suggests inquiries into forms of oppressions Roma are facing, highlighting the importance of structural forms of injustice. When it comes to environmental injustice, blame is placed on Romani individuals and communities for making wrong “lifestyle” choices, and they are often held responsible for their own poor living conditions, environment, and health. This conference also aims to focus on structural inequities, authoritarian politics, and institutional corruption that produce and maintain uneven environmental and climate exposure.

We are especially keen to receive papers on the following topics:

- The relation between antigypsyism / anti-Roma racism and climate injustice
- Romani emancipation and climate justice
- Empirical inquiries into forms of antigypsyism/anti-Roma racism and climate injustice
- Neoliberalism, austerity, and environmental rights
- Critical reflections on the role of NGOs in environmental justice for Roma
- Comparative studies of environmental injustice (Roma and non-Roma groups)
- Theoretical examination of the nexus between environmental injustice and Roma, especially using critical theories
- Case studies of environmental injustice in Europe
- Positive practices of mobilization and actions against environmental injustice in Europe and beyond

Guidelines for authors

Proposals are welcome from researchers at all stages of their careers. Scholars of Romani origin are particularly encouraged to apply.

Please submit proposals including the author's name, title, a 500-word-long abstract, and a 100-word long biography at <https://forms.office.com/e/dcGJNaE7rx>

Deadline of submission: February 26, 2023. All proposals are reviewed by the academic program committee. Successful applicants will be notified by March 15, 2023.

The draft papers are to be submitted by April 30, 2023. We expect all scholars to submit high quality and original (not yet published) papers.

The organizers can cover the costs of a limited number of Romani scholars who otherwise could not afford to participate and commit to submit an original (not yet published) draft paper. In case of co-authored papers, only one author may apply for funding. Junior scholars (MA graduates, junior PhD students) may submit 2000-3000-word-long papers (including critical reviews of books or cultural events, products), whereas senior scholars are expected to contribute 4000-7000-word-long papers.

We recommend authors to present their draft paper at the conference. Selected papers might be published - after peer review – in the *Critical Romani Studies* journal. However, we are accepting submissions from scholars who cannot attend the conference but would like their papers to be considered for peer review and publication.

Paper proposals are to be submitted at: <https://forms.office.com/e/dcGJNaE7rx>

All inquiries should be directed to romaconference@ceu.edu



About the organizers:

The **Romani Studies Program at Central European University (RSP)** aims to engage scholars, policy makers, and activists in interdisciplinary knowledge production and debate on Roma identity and movement; antigypsyism; social justice and policy making; gender politics; and structural inequality. RSP encompasses the Roma Graduate Preparation Program and the Advanced Certificate in Romani Studies. RSP offers courses for MA and PhD students of CEU and summer courses for graduate students and activist scholars from all over the world. RSP organizes annual academic conferences promoting critical approaches to Romani Studies and publishes *Critical Romani Studies* an international, interdisciplinary, double blind peer-reviewed open access journal. RSP supports internships and offers various fellowship primarily targeting Romani students and scholars.

The **Environmental and Social Justice Action Research Group (ACT JUST)** at Central European University is a platform for dialogue, scholarship, and activism in environmental and social justice. In a world that is increasingly complex, people are facing constant challenges in their everyday lives involving secure meaningful opportunities for sustaining themselves, their families, and the environment. At the same time, the wealth of opportunity for a very small percentage of the world's population has been expanding resulting in a tremendous rise in social inequality manifested as limitations on access to environmental goods (food, water, air, etc.) and disproportionate exposure to environmental risks.

The **Roma Program at the FXB Centre for Health and Human Rights, Harvard University** aims to shift Romani studies away from the margins of academic interest and toward a central place in social and political theory and in multidisciplinary and multiregional studies. We seek to put Roma rights on academic and policy agendas in the United States and elsewhere by amplifying the voices of leading and emerging Romani scholars and leaders through research, events, and publications. A cornerstone of our program is the use of participatory action research and case study methodologies to give voice to the issues identified as problematic by Roma themselves, to strengthen the capacity of Roma communities, and to support leadership among Roma youth.

The **Critical Romani Studies Department** at Södertörn University has the governmental assignment to develop Romani Studies as a field of research and education, including a teacher education in Romani chib. Within research, the department has had a strong focus on human rights, including the right to education, antigypsyism as a particular phenomenon and in comparison with other forms of racism, Romani history, including both the history of persecution and liberation, as well as the Romani language. The department strive to integrate emancipatory and critical perspectives on power and racism in all research and teaching. The department has an institutional agreement with ERIAC, and uses their teaching materials in courses in Romani chib, and their Barvalipe Roma online university lectures in their courses in Critical Romani Studies.

The **European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture (ERIANC)** has a unique and single mandate as the transnational, European-level organization for the recognition of Roma arts and culture. ERIAC exists to increase the self-esteem of Roma and to decrease negative prejudice of the majority population towards the Roma by means of arts, culture, history, and media. ERIAC acts as an international creative hub to support the exchange of creative ideas across borders, cultural domains and Romani identities. ERIAC aims to be the promoter of Romani contributions to European culture and talent, success and achievement, as well as to document the historical experiences of Romani people in Europe. ERIAC exists to be a communicator and public educator, to disseminate a positive image and knowledge about Romani people for dialogue and building mutual respect and understanding.