

ECHR rules against Switzerland for fining and arresting Roma woman



With many Roma in Europe living in poverty, some are forced to beg to survive. (Photo: Hannibal Hanschke/Reuters)

Brussels, January 20 (RHC)-- The European Court of Human Rights has faulted Switzerland for imposing a heavy fine on a Romanian woman for begging and then arresting her when she could not pay. The

ethnic Roma in her late twenties was fined 500 Swiss francs (464 euros, \$563 at current rates) for begging on the street in Geneva in January 2014.

When the woman, who is illiterate and has no job or welfare payments, failed to pay up, she was placed in temporary detention for five days. The court on Tuesday found the penalties against the woman were out of proportion with Switzerland's aims of fighting organised crime and protecting passers-by, residents and business owners.

The woman had "the right, which is inherent in human dignity, to express her distress and try to meet her needs by begging", the verdict said. Switzerland had violated article eight of the European Convention of Human Rights, which guarantees the protection of private and family life, it said, ordering the country to pay the woman 922 euros (\$1,118) in moral damages.

Between 10 and 12 million Roma are estimated to live in Europe, with most in eastern parts of the continent in countries such as Romania. With ancestral roots in India, the Roma migrated to eastern Europe in the 10th century and have been persecuted throughout history.

After the fall of the Soviet Union and the break-up of Yugoslavia, many travelled west, seeking to escape poverty and discrimination.

<https://www.radiohc.cu/en/noticias/internacionales/245224-echr-rules-against-switzerland-for-fining-and-arresting-roma-woman>



Radio Habana Cuba