



Anastasia Crickley and Martin Collins, Chairperson and Co-Director respectively of Pavée Point Traveller and Roma Centre, receive the 2020 Max van der Stoel Award on behalf of Pavée Point from Dutch Foreign Minister Ben Knapen, 19 November 2021, The Hague. (OSCE/Arnaud Roelofs)

PRESS RELEASE

Traveller and Roma rights organization Pavée Point receives the 2020 Max van der Stoel Award

THE HAGUE, 19 November 2021 — “Barriers to equality have a devastating impact on so many aspects of Traveller and Roma life, including their health, education, accommodation and employment,” said Martin Collins, Co-Director of Pavée Point Traveller and Roma Centre, Dublin, Ireland.

He received the 2020 Max van der Stoel Award on behalf of Pavée Point at a ceremony at the Peace Palace in The Hague today.

“This award offers great encouragement for our work. We hope it will also give renewed impetus to duty bearers to work in partnership with Travellers’ organizations to address racism and inequality,” Collins added.

Anastasia Crickley, Pavée Point Chairperson, who also attended the ceremony, explained: “This award reinforces our determination to continue in Max van der Stoel’s footsteps until Travellers, Roma and all minorities everywhere can live sustainably with full equality and justice. I salute the tireless work of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and his staff towards this goal.”

Addressing representatives from governments, civil society and international organizations who attended the award ceremony, Crickley added: “This acknowledgement of Pavée Point’s contribution to Traveller and Roma rights shows that our work, which has achieved progress against the odds, including during COVID-19 pandemic, has relevance for each of the 57 OSCE participating States.”

Presenting the award, the Dutch Foreign Minister Ben Knapen said: “I want to commend Pavée Point on the excellent work it has been doing for over three decades. Where there was no path, you have made one by walking. Today’s award is well-deserved. Your work is an example to us all, and I am proud that we can honour Max van der Stoel’s memory by celebrating your achievements.”

Speaking on behalf of the jury, former OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) and Chairperson of the 2020 jury, Lamberto Zannier, explained: “The jury had a difficult choice to make as we considered many excellent nominations. However, Pavée Point, with its unique grassroots efforts, systemic work and carefully tailored approach which is sensitive to the needs of their community, stood out among the nominees, gaining a unanimous vote. For over thirty years, this organization, consisting of Travellers, Roma and members of the majority population, has worked at the local, regional and

national levels to ensure that Travellers and Roma have a voice and are included in decision-making processes."

The OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities Kairat Abdrakhmanov said: "Pavee Point stood out among the nominees. Their method of work embodies what my eminent predecessor and the first High Commissioner on National Minorities Max van der Stoep valued as the most effective way to improving the position of national minorities, which is to allow them to empower themselves so they take ownership of actions that bring about change. Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre serves as an outstanding example of an organization that has done exactly this: empower national minorities so that they themselves can become the driving force for positive change."

The OSCE Secretary General Helga Maria Schmid congratulated Pavee Point for their achievement in empowering Roma and Sinti communities in Ireland: "These are the type of stories we need to hear more, to be inspired and reminded what ultimately this is all about: promoting conditions in which people can live in true and lasting peace free from any threat to or attempt against their security, as affirmed in the Helsinki Final Act, our foundational document". She also praised the great work that the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities has been doing for almost 30 years. "The work of the High Commissioner on National Minorities, with its early warning function and early action to address tensions, is of utmost importance for the OSCE concept of comprehensive security".

"It has become clear that the COVID-19 pandemic has further fuelled racism and discrimination against Roma and Sinti as well as other national minorities across the OSCE region," said Matteo Mecacci, Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. "The efforts of the Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre to increase participation and support the genuine equality of minority communities should be an inspiration to governments across the region as they seek to end the exclusion of Roma and Sinti."

Representing the Irish Government, Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth Roderic O'Gorman said: "I am grateful for the opportunity to congratulate Pavee Point as the first Irish recipient of this award. [...] Through celebrating the unique cultures, languages, traditions and shared experiences of these communities, Pavee Point helps to improve solidarity between Travellers and Roma, while also advancing understanding among wider Irish society. [...] Pavee Point has contributed to making Ireland a more diverse and inclusive society."

The Max van der Stoep Award — a prize of €50,000 — has been co-sponsored by the HCNM and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs every two years since 2003. It is presented to a person, group or institution, in recognition of their extraordinary and outstanding achievements in improving the position of national minorities across the OSCE countries.

The 2020 Award Ceremony was postponed to 2021 due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Event material can be found [here](#).

For PDF attachments or links to sources of further information, please visit: <https://www.osce.org/hcnm/504775>

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