

Annual Report 2025



PHIREN AMENCA INTERNATIONAL NETWORK



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Introduction

This annual report tells the story of the Phiren Amenca International Network in 2025. Throughout the year, we worked alongside Roma youth, member organisations, and partners across Europe to create spaces for participation, strengthen voices, and push for equality and justice.

The pages that follow reflect a year of shared learning, collective action, and steady growth, as we continued to build a stronger, more connected Roma youth movement grounded in anti-racism, democracy, and solidarity.

Structural Changes: new Board and Managing director

Dr. Violeta Vajda has been appointed in May 2025 as the organization's new Managing director. A long-standing advocate for Roma rights and social justice, Violeta brings more than two decades of strategic leadership in civil society, with a career dedicated to advancing inclusion, intercultural dialogue, and youth empowerment across Europe and beyond. Her appointment marks both a return and a renewal, as Violeta has worked closely with Phiren Amenca over the years as a partner and ally.

Her priorities include expanding Roma youth engagement, enhancing advocacy across European institutions, and deepening partnerships with civil society and policymakers.

“I am honored to join Phiren Amenca at such a pivotal moment.

Throughout my career, I've seen how powerful youth activism can be in creating change, and I look forward to building on the organization's strong foundation and strengthening its voice across Europe.”

Violeta Vajda,
managing director



Board members



2025 was a year of renewal for our Board. This moment brought fresh energy, new ideas, and valuable experience into our leadership. Together, the renewed Board supports the organisation with care, responsibility, and a shared vision for the future of Roma youth-led work. The new Board members are:

DEZDEMÓNA KOVÁCS

For several years, Dezdemóna has been a dedicated and engaged volunteer, contributing to the network as a member of the management team and as a group leader during events and activities. She has represented the organisation in high-level meetings with the European Youth Forum, the European Commission, and the Council of Europe,

GÉZA BUZÁS-HÁBEL

We got to know Géza in 2014 when he joined us for the Dikh he na bister - Roma Genocide Remembrance event.

Since then, Géza has remained an active member of our network, both at the national and international levels. Phiren Amenca has supported the growth of his organization and has collaborated with him in various initiatives, particularly in advocating for Roma LGBTQI rights. His insights and dedication will bring significant value to our network.

BIANCA ELENA GALUSCA

Bianca is excited about the opportunity to join the Phiren Amenca Board, as she strongly believes in its mission of promoting Roma youth empowerment, inclusion, and social justice. Through her work at FAGiC (Federation of Roma Associations in Catalonia), she has been actively involved in advocacy, capacity-building, and community engagement initiatives. She is eager to bring this experience to the Board to further support Phiren Amenca's vision and is committed to strengthening collaboration among member organizations to contribute to their shared goals.

Organisational development: Shaping the new Phiren Amenca strategy

As a first step, the new Board of Phiren Amenca initiated a broader strategy development process. Rather than starting with predefined priorities, the organisation chose to first listen to the experiences, needs, and ideas of those most closely connected to its work. Inputs were gathered from multiple sources, including focus groups with young Roma people, young Roma researchers, Roma and non-Roma organisations, embassies, individual interviews, and internal Board reflections.

Feedback was organised around three guiding questions: what is working well and should be protected, what new directions or opportunities should be explored, and what challenges or tensions need to be addressed in the next strategic period.

By grouping similar insights across different stakeholder groups, the process helped identify shared priorities as well as differing expectations between local, national, and European levels. This participatory approach ensured that the emerging strategy is grounded in real experiences rather than assumptions. By connecting perspectives from Roma youth, partners, and institutional actors, Phiren Amenca gained a clearer understanding of its strengths, future possibilities, and key dilemmas. These insights now form the foundation for shaping the organisation's next strategy, ensuring it reflects the realities of the network and the voices of Roma youth across Europe.



“This strategy grew from listening, from the voices, experiences, and ideas of Roma youth and partners across Europe.”

Volunteering and Capacity building



Volunteering remained a core pillar of our work throughout the year. At our Budapest office, we hosted volunteers through the European Solidarity Corps (ESC) and the Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) programmes, while also coordinating voluntary service opportunities across our member and partner organisations. These initiatives continued to strengthen transnational cooperation and youth engagement within the network. In March 2025, we organised a study visit to our member organisation, the Association of Young Roma, in Valaská. The organisation operates as an educational centre and social enterprise, including a community laundry, and employs members of the local Roma community.

The visit provided an important learning opportunity, offering practical insight into community-led approaches that combine education, social inclusion, and employment.



Research: Public service access by Roma in Hungary

This participatory research, published in two reports, examines systemic discrimination against Roma communities in Hungary, particularly in education, healthcare, employment, and public services. The findings highlight segregation in underfunded schools, exclusion from essential services, and reliance on low-paid public employment schemes, resulting in structural marginalisation.

The second report analyses the FETE programme (Felzárkózó települések), Hungary's largest government initiative for disadvantaged communities, and identifies key shortcomings related to exclusion, poor implementation, and lack of accountability. The research puts forward recommendations for inclusive education, healthcare access, economic empowerment, and stronger transparency and oversight, emphasising the importance of Roma-led advocacy for sustainable change.



Best Roma Youth Project Award



The European Roma Youth Project Award 2025 was presented on 9 December 2025 in Brussels together with MEP Hristo Petrov. The award recognised outstanding Roma youth-led initiatives that promote participation, empowerment, remembrance, and advocacy across Europe. In addition to financial support for the main awardee, all shortlisted projects were documented and disseminated to strengthen visibility and peer learning within the Roma youth movement.

The 2025 award winners are:

- Best Roma Youth Project: Etanoda and Romoji – A Game of Representation
- Second Place: Memory Bridges
- Third Place: Amaro Voice

Special Awards:

- From Memory to Political Action – #NosViesDeGitansComptent
- Bottom-Up Roma Youth Empowerment – Empowering Youth through Leadership and Mentoring (ROMA T.E.A.M., Romania)
- Successful Advocacy – Local Youth Council of Shuto Orizari

Most Courageous Initiative Award:

- Géza Buzás-Hábel (Diverse Youth Network)

Meet the Winners

Developed by the Foundation for the 21st Century Pedagogy with Impact Games, Romoji uses interactive learning to strengthen Roma youth representation. The game combines play with reflection, offering young people, educators, and mentors a creative tool to explore identity, representation, and empowerment in an engaging and accessible way.



Memory Bridges, led by TENET – Center for Social Transformations, is a Roma youth-driven initiative that connects past and present through creative storytelling. By transforming survivor testimonies into hand-painted artworks, an interactive exhibition, and a short documentary, the project builds skills in oral history, curation, and public storytelling while actively challenging antigypsyism.

2ND PLACE WINNER



Amaro Voice is a video podcast that brings forward the diverse voices of Sinti and Roma communities across Europe, with a strong focus on young Roma perspectives. Through interviews and thematic episodes, the project captures the complexity of Roma identities, histories, and everyday realities. Based in Germany, the team has produced more than 40 episodes, reaching audiences through YouTube, Spotify, and Apple Podcasts.



Advocacy and Combating antigypsyism

In 2025, Phiren Amenca took part in a wide range of advocacy and policy-related activities at European, national, and community levels. At European level, the network contributed to discussions on the EU anti-racism framework through targeted meetings with youth organisations, consultations with the DG Justice Roma Team, and participation in the Equinet workshop on the future EU strategy against racism. Engagement in key forums such as the European Youth Forum General Assembly, the Roma Youth Conference at the European Youth Centre Budapest, and the Roma Youth Together seminar at the European Youth Centre Strasbourg, organised around International Roma Day, further strengthened the visibility and collective voice of Roma youth in European policy and youth spaces.

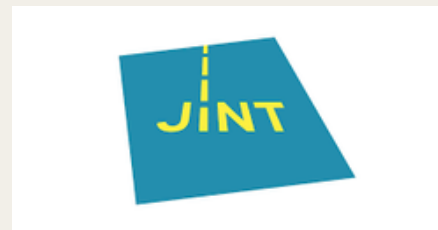
At national and local levels, Phiren Amenca combined advocacy with community engagement through community organising initiatives, research presentations, human rights festivals, Pride actions, and public dialogues. These efforts were complemented by networking and recognition initiatives, including the Roma Youth Project Award, which highlighted innovative Roma youth-led work and reinforced the link between advocacy, participation, and youth leadership.



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