

### **İpsala Elected Memiş İşçi Again 16/01/2009**

Memiş İşçi re-elected as the chairperson of the Association of Romans. The general committee meeting was held in the public wedding hall of the municipality.

In the general committee meeting, during which Erdin Tokat took the chair of the council, Memiş İşçi, Nejdət Tokat and Fikri Kenar were the nominees for the chair position. Memiş İşçi has polled 33 votes. Fikri Kenar has polled 13 and Nejdət Tokat has 18.

The board, now, consists of Kadir Çelik, Yaşar İrkıl, Menderes Kırmızııkaya and Fikret Ö

### **Sight-Seeing In Menzilahır by the Governer of Edirne 17/01/2009**

Mustafa Büyük, the governor of Edirne, has started his visits from the poor conditioned Roma districts in Edirne. As he visited people in kahvehane (traditional coffee shop) and listened to their needs and demands, he ordered action for help for those in need. The governor was quite upset by the hard living conditions of people in the area.

### **No Bathroom - No Toilette at Houses**

During his visit around the district, Mustafa Büyük looked up the family of a 5th grade pupil. He asked whether the little girl went the school. The pupil said "Since we do not have a bathroom, I cannot take a shower. That makes me feel embarrassed of my friends. That is why I'm off the school." When the government Büyük heard this, he said "We will do anything and everything for you to go on to your school. We will get you a bathroom and a toilette just so you go to school."

### **New Employment Opportunities**

Büyük told the citizens complaining about unemployment that the necessary arrangements were taking place to make up for the problem. He mentioned during his speech he gave to the journalists that trust funds would be raised for the citizens living in tough conditions. He said that several projects were to be held in order to create new areas of employment for the people living in the districts: "We have a project in common with the Jockey Club. There will be opened a course for hose farming here which will hopefully provide our people with job opportunities. Moreover, we will provide our people collecting frogs with support and help. We saw houses around without baths and toilettes; we will also better their conditions through trust funds."

### **Picking Wood In Kirmasti 22/01/2009**

The Romans are beside the brook side at the time when the current is at its highest strength in Kirmasti district in Kemalpasa, Bursa.

The greatest concern for the inhabitants during wintertime is the source of fuel... The poor people, especially, are often suffering from the lack of fuel. Romans of the Dere (Brook) district partially

provide their needs from the Kirmasti Brook. As the brook drag along branches, the Romans pick those branches from the side of the brook and sometimes stepping in the water. Recently, a local, Kemal Pire (60), had died of heart attack by the brook and the Gypsies notes that this is something that they do not do for fun but because of necessity. "The stronger the current the more is the possibility for finding branches. On the other hand, it is harder to pick branches with strong stream and we sometimes need to go into the river to be able to pick the branches", add the local Romans.

### **Wedding and Circumcision Ceremonies In Kırklareli 23/01/2009**

A collective wedding and circumcision ceremony has been organized by a collaborative work of the Governorship of Kırklareli and the Kırklareli Roman Culture Preservation and Development Association on 23rd of January.

"Our governor Hüseyin Avni Coş has always been side by side with our people by providing food, cloths, fuel, stove, and medicine. He has given donations to our children doing their military service, for hospital costs and baby food, and has supported the ones who lost their houses by providing clay tiles, wood and cement. The governor has been organizing collective wedding and circumcision ceremonies since the first time he was assigned and he is providing cloths and shoes as well as household appliances to the ones getting married" said Zafer Süpürgeci, the chairman of the association.

Süpürgeci announced that the collective wedding and circumcision ceremony organized by the governorship is going to take place on the 23rd of January. 100 people will be wedded and 40 children will be circumcised in the collective ceremony that will to cover entire Kırklareli towns and villages.

### **Abdals Association on The Spot 24/01/2009**

Once found in Yerköy town of Yozgat, Abdals Associaton had to suspend all activities because of economical difficulties and lack of support. Veli Metin, the founding chairman of the association told us about the situation.

Metin, assessing the problems Abdals who earn their keep by playing the drum, the violin, the darbuka and the jamboree in weddings and ceremonies have, says that the job they're doing was once really popular but recently with the increasing number of wedding halls, the demand for them has drastically fell.

"As the 16 families trying to carry on the tradition, we united under an association, but were disappointed. We were invited to activities as an association but couldn't receive any monetary support." complains Metin. As the association, without any monetary support, they couldn't sustain their activites anymore. Though the Culture and Tourism Ministry began working on a project to support the Abdals and employ the association members who carry on the Abdal tradition, it hasn't came to a conclusion yet. Metin also worriedly expressed that with the last few people who earn their keep by making music leaving their jobs and finding some others, the Abdal tradition would totally fade away.

### **Little Hand To Shoot For Bread 31/01/2009**

This little boy lives in Kırklareli. His name is Alpay. He is 8 years old and a student of primary

school. He says he had to work because his parents are jobless. So he plays the tomtom in front of the cafes to get some baksheesh. By this means he is able to go to school and help his family.

He plays the tomtom in the cold weather while his lucky peers stays at warm houses with their family.

The people who meets this little boy playing the tomtom in the streets suddenly stops and start to contemplate and give him some money. He is too young to bring up a family. But he is only one of the child workers in Turkey.

Kaynak: Yeşilyurt HABER

### **Fire In the Hut 05/02/2009**

A fire broke out in Yeni Mahalle district where Romans are living. Four people barely survived from the fire. Fire got under control with the intervention of fire brigades.

A fire, in Yeni Mahalle district in a street where Roman people live, broke out in Ercan Öztunç's hut because of the electric heater. Four people who are living in the hut which surrounded with fire achieved to survive, fire spread to the two fold house owned by Remzi Öztunç. Fire Brigades of Sakarya Municipality intervened to fire in a short time and police routed the people out of the zone. Hut has been totally burned out and also material damage occurred on the next building.

Source: Zaman

### **Urban Renewal In The Roma Neighborhood 07/02/2009**

Urban renewal in Baglarbasi district in Yalova will be done by cooperation between TOKI and Yalova Municipality.

“We have planned urban renewal against irregular urbanization and to provide hygienic housing in Baglarbasi district for years. We want to carry out postponed project for urban renewal. TOKI will do this.” says Mayor Barbaros Binicioglu.

Baglarbasi district is known as Roma settlement. Many roma says that they do not to want to be aggrieved and local authorities must consider their needs.

### **Romani Association Opening Ceremony In Dikili**

Romany Association opening ceremony took place last month in Dikili. Many administrators and political party representatives attended the ceremony. The attendants made speeches indicating their good wishes. The event also included musical entertainment.

In the ceremony in which Dikili Subgovernor, Mayor and Police Chief were attendants, Executive Director of Dikili Romany Culture Social Welfare Association, Yakup Çardak, made a speech as well. “Culture Social Welfare Association made the first act in Turkey. Our association founded in 2005 and we also contributed to foundation of more than 60 non-governmental organizations. Next month, we are going to actulize a federation in Izmir. We are working on getting together under the same roof.” Çardak said. He also requested the attendant authorities to protect the Romany culture.

### **Romas Have Been Handed Over Their Houses 12/02/2009**

Turnkey process of the council houses which have been built by Hendek Municipality for Romany citizens who reside in Turanlar district, has started.

Mayor Ali Inci distributed the keys to the beneficiaries in the turnkey ceremony which took place in the council hall of the Hendek Municipality. Mayor Inci indicated that the houses, which have been built compatible with Rom culture will raise the life standards of the Roma residents.

Mayor Inci, who indicated that citizens became house owners with projects aimed at various income brackets, said "We made this project considering social lives and incomes of Roma citizens. These one-story houses which we built according to their demands, have been projected compatible with their culture. I wish lots of luck in their new homes. Citizens who took the keys to their houses thanked to Mayor.

### **The Mayor In The Gypsy District 20/02/2009**

Ülgür Gökhan, who is the mayor of Çanakkale, and municipality engineering officers and Ramazan İşıldak, who is the district headman, investigated Fevzipaşa District.

Technical investigation was started in the entrance of Sarıçay area and continued in Testicioğlu Street, Kuyu 1 Street, Kuyu 2 Street and Zafer Square.

Ülgür Gökhan said: "We work on a bridge project that will be applied between Sarıçay area in Fevzipaşa District and the area near Government Water Affairs in Barbaros District. In addition, we will implement an urban transformation project in Fevzipaşa District.

Çanakkale Municipality has expropriated a ruined building known as tunny storage. This building will be transformed into a welfare service building by the municipality. People in Fevzipaşa District will live the urban transformation with us." Furthermore, during the investigation trip, Mr. Gökhan said: "Some problems that were determined in past investigations have been solved. Additionally, some roads will be floored with cobblestones."

### **Wedding In Bursa 09/03/2009**

A mass wedding ceremony organized for Romani people took place in People Area With team work of Osmangazi Municipality, Bursa Romany Association and Olay Media Center.

Marriage ceremony of Hasan İray and Remziye Daldır was conducted by Osmangazi Mayor Recep Altepe; while Labour and Social Security Minister Faruk Çelik, Bursa Senators Ali Kul and Ali Koyuncu, Bursa Governor Şahabettin Harput and Chief Constable of Istanbul Tahsin Demir were witnesses. Roamny dance and music shows added color to the ceremony. Bursa Governor Şahabettin Harput gifted each couple with a Republic Gold

### **Historical Documentary Film For Romany Women 14/03/2009**

Mersin Romany Association was appreciated by Romany women who watched the 25 minute film about Romany history. The women could not help crying.

In 2007 in Mersin Cultural Center, the film was shown to all the Romanies and really impressed them. The film, which outlined 1000 years of Romany history, was shown to Romany women in Mersin with team work of Mersin Romany Association and Radio Kent.

The film, which pointed out identitiy problem and the state of Romanies during World War II was shot by Mirza Turgut. The women could not hide their astonishment when they watched people

living in other countries share the same life as them. Romany women have witnessed the state of Romany people during World War II and that made them far more emotional.

“We are grateful to Radio Kent and Mirza Turgut. They made a research about our history and culture. We were shocked when we watched the film – our ancestors had suffered and gone through a lot. We are citizens of this country, we love this country. But we want to live decently. We want to make our women and youngsters conscious and want to have a say in administration. Because of this, the film prepared and given to us by Radio Kent is important. I want to thank Mirza Turgut and Radio Kent one more time.” Cemal Moğulte, Head of Romany Cooperation Association declared

### **Micro Credit to Cloth Peddlers 18/03/2009**

More than 100 Romani women in Sakarya continue to work owing to the micro credits given by the Foundation for the Support of Women’s Work. Gümüş, the head of the association, points out that the amount of the credit may reach to 2500 TL with the obligation of 3 % and adds:

“In first place, this amount may seem as little, but women improve or establish their works with a little capital. For years, many women have used these credits. Of late years, Romani women are interested in this, too. Romani women usually peddle cloths or sell junks with their husbands.”

In addition to giving credits to women, Gümüş cites to their education programs: “We are trying to educate our women. For example, most of the women do not know how to take notes about their sells. We taught them in this subject. We also support them about how they should use their money effectively.”

Hanif Girgin (35) who has been peddling clothes for many years to contribute to the budget of the house says that her neighbor informed her about the micro credit opportunities. She also tells that they work with small capitals:

“While applying, I did not expect that our application will be accepted. Thanks to them, they took a close interest in us. I bought the materials for cloth peddling with the credit. God helps if you want to work. We can have profits when we work and pay our loans. I pay my loan in installments. Sometimes I can pay it before the deadline. I have 5 children. My husband works too. But I believe that I should earn my own money as a woman. We tell to the customers that we continue our works owing to these credits.”

### **Good News On The Housing Side 16/05/2009**

Last week, Izmir Metropolitan Mayor Aziz Kocaoglu has visited the Ege Neighborhood for the elections and spoke about the projected urban transformation in the region.

Kocaoglu, told that the projected transformation is to be implemented gradually. "Ege Neighborhood has huge problems and it is a priority for us. We are going to solve this problem here in this neighborhood. We will not build skyscrapers here. The buildings that we plan to build here are at most three storey high. We are going to solve your problems in a way that is compatible with your way of living. We are going to build houses for about 280 families around Gurcesme and we are going to move you there, temporarily. There are 655 households in Ege Neighborhood. We are going to move only a half of the neighborhood and we are going to build their new houses here. And then we are going to move the second half to Gurcesme and build the second half of the houses here in Ege Neighborhood. Hence, you will all move to your new houses," he said. The Roma people that were listening to him were very content with Kocaoglu's words and said they were really hopeful about the result.

### **Tension In The Soccer Field 10/06/2009**

*Tension was raised between Ayvalik Kayaspor and Edremit Sanayispor, both known as Romans` football teams , during a Second Amateur League football match that took place in Altinova Ataturk Stadium. Ayvalik Kayaspor was expected to announce to be the champion, in the case of a dead heat.*

Both teams` fans supported their teams with cheering and applauses. Both fans and the players remained in a gentlemanly manner until the 70 th minute of the match. However, following the foul by a Kayaspor player, the tension was raised. When the tension turned out to be a fight, the security forces intervened and reduced the tension.

After the security forces taking the edge off, the game finished with a 2-1 score, with the victory of Edremit Sanayispor.

### **Bloody Ending To Kids' Fight 12/06/2009**

The fight started among the kids living in Nurettin Pasa Caddesi, known as a residence where Romans live, raised the tension among the locals when adults too got involved in. The security forces intervened the fight, following three people getting injured.

During the incident led by kids` fight, E.E., a member of one of the families involved in the incident, injured three people shooting up around with his gun. The injured people were taken to the hospital and a massive number of riot police were sent to the location where the incident took place. Five people considered to be parties to the incident, including E. E. shooting up around, were taken into custody by the security forces

### **Blacksmiths in Soke 18/06/2009**

Soke Demirciler ve Madeni Esya Sanatkarlari Odasi, the foundation serving handicraftsmans in Soke from 1957 till now, organised a morale and cooperation event for its members.

The official head of Soke, İsmail Demirhan, the chair person of Aydin Esnaf Odalari, Hulusi Aksit, the director of Soke Tax Office, Mustafa Coban and the other members have attended to celebrating with their wives. The members over 30 years in their professional life have been appreciated with plates.

İsmail Demirhan, signed the celebrating as an indicator of contention of blacksmiths to continue to their jobs: ‘As you know, today, it is not easy to sustain such a traditional job as it is very difficult to rice with modern world technology just using your hand and effort. ‘

The Roman Public Dancers Group attended to the celabrating with their special figures and fascinated participants. By the time, the unique farrier member of Demirciler ve Madeni Esya Sanatkarlari Odasi, Halil Pandir, was honored with plate as he is the member over 42 years.

Ahmet Tokmakoglu, the chair person of Demirciler ve Madeni Esya Sanatkarlari Odasi, emphasized 52 years spend time with cooperation. He explained that their goal is to institutionalize this celabrating in future

### **Basketmakers are Leaving Their Job 20/06/2009**

The basketmakers living in Ilicabasi in Aydin, pointed out that they are being forced to leave their job as they could not compete against Chinese products and other technological products.

Roma living in Ilicabasi, explained that they have competed against plastic products before to keep their job, but now, as the Chinese products are commonly used in all bazaars, their manufacturing has been interrupted. The basketmaker Roma are very anxious as they could not even earn money to maintain their life. They want officers to take measures about this problem and said that: 'The basketry is the most popular characteristics of Roma, but now it is being defeated to technological products as other crafts.'

'First, the plastic baskets then the cheap and nasty Chinese products forced us out of bazaar even if we work all the day. Although this season is normally very active about sales, we could not sell any baskets, even one in a day! We are just producing but not able to sell. Cheap and nasty products depressed not only our jobs but also all over the world. '

One of the basketmakers, Ceylan Aydeniz, explained that formerly they were only making baskets to earn their life and it was enough for them but now, even they made lots of different jobs besides this, they are at the point of losing their natural life. He said that 'People used to buy handmade baskets before, but now they are preferring cheap and nasty Chinese plastic baskets. As you know, plastics are either very harmful for human health or dangerous for environment'