



## **CASCA's Statement in regards to Professor David Scheffel**

In November, 2017, Dr. David Scheffel of Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops, British Columbia, Canada, was arrested by Slovakian police and detained in a remand centre in Prešov. His detainment is related directly to his anthropological research with Romani youth, specifically youth involved in the local sex trade. Dr. Scheffel received full ethics clearance from his University to conduct what is, to date, the most extensive study of Romani sex work in Europe. His incarceration is based on charges for which there appears to be no credible evidence. He is being subjected to harsh prison conditions while also being denied access to the research materials necessary for him to mount a fair and full defense.



Dr. Scheffel is a respected anthropologist who has made invaluable contributions to improving the education, health, water supply, and governance of Slovak Roma, while also facilitating interaction with the broader Slovak society. CASCA is deeply concerned that a professional colleague researching the significant challenges facing Romani youth has been arrested, imprisoned, and denied access to the materials that he needs to defend himself. This calls Slovakia's commitment to human rights and academic freedom into serious question. Fundamental principles of justice are at stake. That this would happen in the European Union in 2018 is particularly alarming and unacceptable.

CASCA is in contact and coordinating our response with the spokesperson for Dr. Scheffel's family, colleagues, and legal counsel. Because Dr. Scheffel is a Dutch citizen, we have sent letters to representatives of the Netherlands government as well as representatives of the Slovakian government, Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the CAUT. We are also in communication with other anthropology associations (including the AAA, the WAU, and the Visegrád Anthropologists' Network) as well as Thompson Rivers University. We encourage all CASCA members to consult Dr. Scheffel's public statement and to consider signing the open letter (available through a link on that site) in support of David's rights:

<https://www.justicefordavidscheffel.com/>

We stand with David and his family, colleagues, students, and friends, wishing them continued strength as we work together for a rightful and just conclusion to this case.

*Pamela Downe*

President, Canadian Anthropology Society/Société canadienne d'anthropologie