As anthropologists and ethnologists from over 90 countries presently gathering at the 18th World Congress of the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences (IUAES) in Florianopolis, Brazil, we write to express grave concern about Professor David Scheffel’s detention in Presov, Slovakia, since November 10, 2017.

Professor Scheffel is a recognized expert in Romani studies whose arrest appears to have been in connection with his anthropological field research on juvenile prostitution among the Roma of eastern Slovakia – a wholly legitimate scientific research project that focuses, as do many other such projects worldwide, on informal and illegal activities.

We call for Professor Scheffel’s dignity to be respected under all circumstances, especially while he is detained, and in compliance with national and international standards. We call too for him to be given a fair trial and to be permitted full access to qualified defence lawyer/s and to his research material in order to prepare his defence.

Along with the World Council of Anthropological Associations, the other chamber in the World Anthropological Union, we call on the Slovak authorities to ensure that Professor Scheffel’s trial is fully open and transparent.