



Organization for Security and  
Co-operation in Europe

**Summary Report of the  
Expert Meeting:**

**Police and Roma and Sinti - Current Challenges and Good Practices  
in Building Trust and Understanding**

**Organized by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human  
Rights, the Office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities and the  
OSCE Strategic Police Matters Unit**



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## **ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

CPRSI	Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues
CSCE	Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe
EC	European Commission
ECtHR	European Court of Human Rights
ERRC	European Roma Rights Centre
EU	European Union
FAERLEO	Fraternal Association of European Roma Police Officers
FRA	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
GRTPA	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Police Association
HCNM	High Commissioner on National Minorities
NGO	Non-governmental organization
ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
SPMU	Strategic Police Matters Unit

### ***Disclaimer***

*This report should neither be interpreted as official OSCE recommendations based on a consensus decision, nor as opinion of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights or of any particular OSCE participating State. The content of this report reflects opinions expressed by participants in the Expert Meeting on 8 April 2014 and no additional information has been included since then.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Throughout the region of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Roma and Sinti face a number of human rights challenges in their interactions with law enforcement agencies, including ethnic profiling, the disproportionate or excessive use of force by the police and police failure to respond effectively to Roma and Sinti victims of crime, hate crime and racist violence.

In recent years, the public discourse on Roma and Sinti, led by populist politicians and media, has targeted Roma migrants in identifying threats to internal security, stigmatizing them as “itinerant groups”, “mobile bandits”, “traffickers of children” or simply as “illegal migrants” (both as economic migrants and false asylum seekers). In some cases, this discourse is accompanied by specific policies and police interventions that target Roma and Sinti as a group. As a result, tension between Roma and Sinti and law enforcement agencies and representatives has been exacerbated by a lack of mutual understanding, negative experiences and distrust from both sides, as well as the under-representation of Roma and Sinti within law enforcement agencies.<sup>1</sup>

From the perspective of Roma and Sinti communities, many lack the knowledge and means to challenge and obtain redress for police misconduct.<sup>2</sup> In addition, Roma and Sinti women and children from impoverished communities are particularly vulnerable to becoming victims of human trafficking or dependant on informal street work (such as washing car windows or begging), and as such are often most in need of police intervention to protect them and prevent their further exploitation.

Chapter III of the 2003 OSCE *Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti Within the OSCE Area*<sup>3</sup> recognizes the need to improve relations between police and Roma and Sinti communities, to prevent police abuse and violence against Roma and Sinti people and to improve trust and confidence in the police among Roma and Sinti people.<sup>4</sup> The Action Plan specifically tasks the OSCE Strategic Police Matters Unit (SPMU), the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) to assist participating States in developing tools to improve relations between the police and Roma and Sinti.<sup>5</sup>

The SPMU and ODIHR are specifically mandated to develop programmes and confidence-building measures – including community policing projects – to improve relations between Roma and Sinti and the police at the local level, and to produce a compilation of “best practices” in the OSCE region with respect to policing and Roma and Sinti communities.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, the HCNM, ODIHR CPRSI and the SPMU are mandated to assist participating States in developing codes of conduct to prevent racial profiling and improve interethnic relations.

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<sup>1</sup> See more at: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/107406>.

<sup>2</sup> See more at: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/33500?download=true>.

<sup>3</sup> In further text, the Action Plan: see more in Chapter III of the 2003 OSCE *Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti Within the OSCE Area*, available at: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/17554>.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 10.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, paragraphs 33-35.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

In 2010, the SPMU and the CPRSI published *Police and Roma and Sinti: Good Practices in Building Trust and Understanding*,<sup>7</sup> which identifies principles and good practices to improve relations between police and Roma and Sinti communities. The manual has been translated into Albanian, Bulgarian, Hungarian, Serbian, Slovak, Romanian and Russian languages, and was launched by the SPMU and ODIHR in a number of capital cities in co-operation with national authorities, including, for example, ministries of interior or police academies.<sup>8</sup>

The objective of this expert meeting was to review the relevance, use and practical application of the aforementioned OSCE manual on police and Roma and Sinti by examining the current challenges faced by Roma and Sinti and developments since 2010. In addition, the expert meeting provided a platform for discussions on a future road map for the three OSCE structures to assist participating States in addressing the existing challenges in the area of Roma and Sinti and policing and promote policing in Roma and Sinti communities at the local level.

The expert meeting convened 19 participants with experience in community policing, the human rights challenges faced by Roma and Sinti in the context of policing, drawing up curricula for policing in multi-ethnic communities and addressing hate crimes. The participants included representatives of national law enforcement agencies and related institutions, civil society organizations, including those specializing in Roma and Sinti, and experts on policing.

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<sup>7</sup> See more at: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/67843>.

<sup>8</sup> The countries in question were United Kingdom, Hungary, Slovakia, Romania and Moldova.

## II. SUMMARY OF THE SESSIONS

### **SESSION I:** *Observed challenges with regard to policing in Roma and Sinti communities in the OSCE area since 2010*

Mirjam Karoly began the session by recalling the findings of the 2008 Status Report on the *Implementation of the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area*. The 2008 Status Report identified a range of challenges faced by Roma and Sinti in the OSCE region, including extensive racial profiling and criminalization, denial of rights to Roma following arrest or while in custody, failure by police to respond effectively to Roma victims of crime and racist violence and a lack of means and awareness among Roma to challenge and obtain redress for police malpractice. She also noted that the 2013 Status Report revealed that these challenges persist, as “the tensions that have often existed between Roma and the police caused, in part, by a lack of mutual understanding and mistrust, along with low representation of Roma and Sinti on police forces”. Moreover, according to a 2009 survey of the 27 EU member states conducted by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), “between 65% and 100% of Roma, depending on the country surveyed, did not report their experiences of personal victimization to the police.” That same report also concluded that, on average, 1 in 3 Roma respondents were stopped by the police in the 12 months preceding the survey.<sup>9</sup>

In a number of legal cases brought against different states, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) found that state authorities in a number of countries failed to effectively investigate criminal acts against Roma and Sinti by law enforcement officials or non-state actors. In addition, in recent years, the public discourse in EU member states on Roma and Sinti has singled out Roma migrants as a threat to internal security. In some cases, such discourse has been accompanied by specific policies and police interventions targeting Roma and Sinti as a group.

During his presentation, Idaver Memedov recalled the 1990 Copenhagen Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension, in which participating States clearly and unequivocally condemned “totalitarianism, racial and ethnic hatred, anti-Semitism, xenophobia and discrimination against anyone as well as persecution on religious and ideological grounds. In this context, they also recognize the particular problems of Roma (gypsies)”. Mr. Memedov went on to present the history and evolution of the OSCE’s work in the field of Roma and Sinti, including the recommendations of the OSCE Action Plan on Roma and Sinti that call on participating States to “develop policies that promote awareness among law-enforcement institutions regarding the situation of Roma and Sinti people and that counter prejudice and negative stereotypes”, and to “develop training programmes to prevent excessive use of force and to promote awareness of and respect for human rights” or that “encourage Roma and Sinti people to work in law-enforcement institutions as a sustainable means of promoting tolerance and diversity”. In this context, he reiterated the aim of the OSCE manual on police and Roma and Sinti, namely to identify principles and good practices in developing and implementing policies, strategies and projects to improve relations between the police and Roma and Sinti communities and to provide examples of how to address and prevent racially-motivated crimes against Roma.

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<sup>9</sup> European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, *Data in Focus Report: The Roma* (Vienna: FRA, 2009).

It was also noted that, historically, the police were usually the first state body to deal with Roma and Sinti, both due to their migrant status and to their itinerant way of life. In Europe, Roma and Sinti communities were often perceived to be criminal groups and, consequently, were treated as such by the police. Such stereotypes of Roma and Sinti as being inherently criminal intensified to such extent that in Nazi Germany in the 1930s and 40s they were declared to be “asocial” and subjected to racial extermination. Owing to their long experience of oppression and the use of force against them by members of the police and law enforcement authorities, Roma and Sinti communities have developed an attitude of deep distrust towards the police. Thus, their co-operation with the police and attempts by Roma and Sinti individuals to join the police have often met with rejection and refusal. Mr. Memedov reiterated the continuing challenges with regard to police and Roma and Sinti relations, and shed light on how current trends, such as the stigmatization and criminalization of Roma and Sinti in the public space, affect the work of law enforcement agencies.

In his presentation, Dezideriu Gergely recalled the commitments made by participating States both within the framework of the OSCE and in the framework of the European Union (EU), including the OSCE Ministerial Council Decision No. 4/13 of 4 December 2013 “on enhancing OSCE efforts to implement the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area”, and the Council of the European Union’s “Recommendation on effective Roma integration measures in the member states” of 9 and 10 December 2013.<sup>10</sup> Mr. Gergely emphasized instances of attacks against Roma and Sinti reported by NGOs and the media in Ukraine, Serbia, Romania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Italy and France. In this context, he shed light on the fact that increased anti-Roma rhetoric has a direct impact on the work of law enforcement agencies and often leads to discriminatory behaviour. In this regard, the Report “on the implementation of Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law” issued by the European Commission (EC) in January 2014 states that “Racist and xenophobic attitudes expressed by opinion leaders may contribute to a social climate that condones racism and xenophobia and may therefore propagate more serious forms of conduct, such as racist violence.”<sup>11</sup> With regard to attacks, Mr. Gergely stated that only a limited number of perpetrators of violent attacks against Roma and Sinti are successfully identified, investigated and prosecuted. At the same time, in the absence of identified suspects, the racial motivation of crimes committed against Roma is, in the majority of cases, ruled out or not confirmed. Instances where courts issue suspended prison sentences to persons found guilty of serious crimes against Roma and Sinti reinforce the message that such attacks are acceptable. With regard to hate crimes, it was noted that in spite of adopted legislation, states often do not develop guidelines and protocols on how to investigate hate crimes.

During the follow-up discussion, participants highlighted examples of the role of police in protecting Roma and Sinti individuals. They acknowledged that, for example, during anti-Roma protests in the Czech Republic, Roma communities were given necessary protection by police; however, many children experience trauma as a result of the violence and the use of tear gas, flash grenades and police cavalry. Moreover, no support was given to victims to address resulting health problems in the aftermath of the riots. In the Czech Republic, riots were mostly

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<sup>10</sup> See more at: [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/lisa/139979.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/lisa/139979.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> See more at: [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/fundamental-rights/files/com\\_2014\\_27\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/fundamental-rights/files/com_2014_27_en.pdf).

organized by far-right groups, yet many were organized by “ordinary” citizens. Unfortunately, the mayors of some towns appeared to condone the actions of violent far-right groups and even spoke during neo-Nazi rallies.

On the same subject, it was also noted that many members of neo-Nazi groups in Greece are currently in prison under investigation for committing hate crimes against Roma and Sinti communities and for organizing marches. Participants requested that OSCE institutions intervene in cases where Roma are targeted by police in operations that are supposedly designed to combat criminality. These operations prevalently target Roma communities in Greece, and mainly identify infringements such as unregistered cars, sanitation problems and illegal electricity use, among others. Following such operations, police often issue press statements, in which they emphasize that Roma communities are to blame. Unfortunately, the activities of NGOs working in this field have not put an end to such forms of racial profiling. Moreover, although Roma are not recognized as a minority in Greece, informal ethnic data collection takes place in the country, and is often used to racially profile Roma.

Representatives from the CPRSI and the HCNM noted that the OSCE Action Plan mandates OSCE institutions to act on racial profiling. The SPMU representative noted that, in terms of police raids, there is a wider context concerning criminal proceedings, namely that prosecutors sometimes order raids similar to those in Greece and the police are not always acting of their own accord. Another problem identified in the discussion was that, in various instances, police have made explicit reference to ethnicity when reporting on policing in Roma and Sinti communities. As such, police are often responding to societal expectations, according to which the police must focus on Roma and Sinti communities in order to “combat criminality”. Such racial profiling can be prevented, however, as demonstrated in Romania, for example, where police issued public reports on operations in Roma communities until 2006, when an equality body decision ruled against such reporting and the practice was abolished.

A number of other positive examples were also cited. In particular, it was noted that there are no instances of organized violence against Roma and Sinti by non-state actors in Slovenia, while at the same time Roma and Sinti individuals seek assistance from the Slovenian police and perceive them as objective. In Romania, however, there has been a rise in anti-Roma sentiment, and anti-Roma rhetoric often comes from high-level dignitaries and is then reinforced by stereotypical media reports. At the same time, it was noted that the police and Roma NGOs in Romania used to co-operate very well, mostly as a result of the 2006 OSCE *Memorandum of Understanding* (signed between ODIHR CPRSI, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the NGO Romani CRISS), which led to a decrease in use of force by police in Roma communities. However, as a result of changes in the officials responsible for Roma-related affairs, there is currently a lack of collaboration between Roma organizations and the police, and the working group created as part of the memorandum no longer convenes. With regard to the recruitment of Roma in the police service, an initial positive development meant that police officers of Roma origin were made liaison officers in Roma communities, which helped to prevent violence and racial profiling by police. Unfortunately, this is no longer the case, as those who were recruited to liaise with Roma communities are now often used in surveillance missions set up to monitor Roma communities. One participant at the meeting mentioned a specific issue concerning the practices employed by special police units in Romania, who often do not respect procedures intended to limit collateral damage during police activities in Roma communities. Moreover, since officers serving in these



units cannot be identified, hindering any possibility to file complaints or obtain redress in cases of abuse.

Participants also highlighted the security problems facing Roma in the Czech Republic, resulting in the radicalization of some Roma communities. A particularly dangerous development is the recent creation of self-defence groups among Roma communities, as well as calls to ensure that community members are constantly armed. It was also noted that Roma are often blamed for anti-Roma riots and for the increasing racism against them. Moreover, there is increasing concern in the Czech Republic that the police may at some point be unable to protect the Roma against attacks in spite of their best efforts.

**SESSION II: *Sharing of good experiences and lessons learned in the use of the OSCE manual Police and Roma and Sinti: Good Practices in Building Trust and Understanding***

In the second session of the expert meeting, the focus shifted to good practices in using the OSCE manual on police and Roma and Sinti communities. Petr Torak, the Police Community Support Officer from Cambridgeshire Constabulary, presented his experiences as a police officer of Romani origin working in Peterborough with communities that include Roma from the Czech Republic and Slovakia. He recounted how, between 2011 and 2013, the *Police and Roma and Sinti* manual was distributed to all ranks and departments in the Cambridgeshire Constabulary, and the relevant information shared with police colleagues from across the United Kingdom. According to Torak, a number of positive developments ensued, as awareness of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller issues has increased and police officers have gained more information on these communities. Another positive development came in the form of increased collaboration and information sharing, as the manual and its application were presented in international forums, resulting in the sharing of good practices and visits by Czech and Slovak police officers to the UK.

Unfortunately, the success of the manual was not reflected on all levels. Whereas the manual was distributed to officers of all ranks, some found it difficult to read or irrelevant to their particular work, and indicated the need for a simpler document. In another instance, a commander did not read the manual, as a result of which the manual's recommendations were not applied. The training provided on the basis of the manual was conducted by a person who lacked adequate insight into the matter, and consequently the trainings did not have a positive outcome. In some cases, officers showed a lack of interest in issues relating to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. Meanwhile, these communities were facing increased criminalization, alongside negative publicity relating to a crime case allegedly committed by a Romani person and political statements focusing on "Roma crime".

Noting the lack of progress in terms of the use of the manual and the need for an organization to help fulfil the OSCE recommendations and serve as a monitoring mechanism, in December 2013 Mr. Torak and a group of colleagues established the Gypsy Roma Traveller Police Association (GRTPA), a non-governmental organization independent from the police but with a membership composed entirely of police officers, community officers and constables. The organization has helped disprove the stereotype of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities being opposed to the police, and has demonstrated their presence of in police forces. With regards to selected OSCE

recommendations, the GRTPA has worked to increase the number of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller persons in the police force, a difficult task also in terms of the negative reputation of the police in these communities. The GRTPA promoted their profession in schools and identified other police officers belonging to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in the country. There are currently two persons applying for community support officer posts in Cambridgeshire, in addition to other applications in other parts of the country.

In addition, the GRTPA challenged over-policing, including practices such as surveillance of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities or incidences of police marking the number plates of cars on Gypsy, Roma and Traveller sites, practices not used in relation to other communities. The association also challenged an information package concerning burglaries, which included a section on Gypsy, Roma and Traveller that used stereotypical language. GRTPA have also provided relevant trainings on Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities to police officers, staff and others, and conducted the first UK training on the Romani language, with language classes for police officers, social workers and government workers, and are currently planning to establish an online course.

At the same time, the association also works with the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities to break misconceptions about the police and promote a more positive understanding of police work. GRTPA provides training to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities on relevant new legislation, and offers pertinent knowledge on what affected community members can do. In addition, the association engages with the media, and counterbalances negative media coverage of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities with positive examples, such as interviews with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller police officers, which were received positively and prompted a surprising level of interest. The draft *Hate Crime Strategy and Operational Guidance* also recognized Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities as special groups, and provided useful recommendations on countering hate crimes against these communities. GRTPA also raises the profile of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, and the national launch of the association is scheduled to take place in Westminster in July 2014. GRTPA members co-operate with the Fraternal Association of European Roma Police Officers (FAERLEO), and negotiations are currently taking place in a number of countries on creating national associations of Roma police officers.

In response to participants' questions concerning the negative experiences of Romani individuals wishing to become police officers, especially where more conservative communities are concerned, Mr. Torak recounted his own experiences when he first became a police officer seven years ago. However, he noted that negative perceptions of him had changed over time through his work with the community and by making himself available to the community. Another question raised was the issue of minority officers being tasked to work exclusively with minority communities, and attempts to avoid this type of pigeonholing. Mr. Torak spoke about his experience of being initially regarded as a "Roma police officer", but how he now works with all members of the community, an example of how the Roma community can play a role in mainstream society. As such, he highlighted how increased awareness among young persons from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities on what being a police officer involves results in a spike in interest among young people about the profession.

Some participants expressed concerns for the position of Roma in the Russian Federation, and in particular attacks of neo-Nazi groups and police against Roma, as well as anti-Roma rhetoric by

certain government officials. A recent example cited was the case of the Mayor of Sochi, who stated on several occasions that Roma should be sent to build Olympic sites. This kind of rhetoric also strengthens impunity for anti-Roma actions; at the same time, most Roma in Russia lack a formal education and the capacity to take legal action, and fear retribution if they complain of violence against them. Even when cases of violence are reported by the media or non-governmental organizations, the perpetrators of violence are often not brought to justice. On the other hand, in investigations or trials, judges or prosecutors often only take into account the statements of police officers, and claims of no evidence of violence against Roma are common. Additionally, many Roma in Russia do not possess identification documents, which is against the law and thus makes them vulnerable to irregular document checks and searches in the street. Romani individuals are also often subject to blackmail by police officers as a result of their lack of documentation. At the same time, there are numerous violations of the rights of Roma by police officers, including instances of Romani individuals confessing crimes that they did not commit and under duress, police abuse during arrest and in detention, the murders of Romani persons by police officers and arson attacks against Romani settlements. Non-governmental organizations trying to assist Roma and bring cases of abuse to the courts also face pressure and trials.

A participant from Hungary spoke on good practices and developments in this regard that do not receive sufficient publicity. In 2012, the Ministry of Interior organized a meeting of different law enforcement authorities in order to share good practices, and will convene a similar international event in May 2014. The adoption of the new Criminal Code in 2013 was an important step, as the new code details specific types of hate crime bias and treats these as separate motivations. However, legislation alone is not sufficient, and officers require guidance on how to act in situations involving hate crime.

A participant from Ukraine spoke on the similarities in the situation of Roma in their country to that of the Roma in Russia. The *Strategy for the Protection and Integration of the Roma National Minority into Ukrainian society until 2020*, adopted by the Government of Ukraine in 2013, includes a section on the groundwork that police forces should conduct in Romani settlements to assist in the integration of Roma. However, the purpose and nature of this work was reportedly misunderstood by some officers and implemented in a manner considered inappropriate by Roma non-governmental organizations. In response, in their alternative report on the implementation of the Roma strategy, Roma NGOs provided recommendations on how to conduct such police work, and requested a meeting with the Ministry of Interior and relevant officials in different regions of the country. There are also reports of numerous cases of torture of Roma by police officers, whereby victims are afraid to lodge formal complaints out of fear of retaliation. The current complex situation in Ukraine also contributes to the vulnerability of the Roma community.

A participant from Greece spoke about the lack of policy of the Greek police, both in terms of policing conducted in Romani communities and the need to defend Romani communities from attacks. While there are examples where police chiefs have established good relations with local Roma communities, central police bodies do not consult with local police units working with Romani communities on a daily basis. In addition, while police officer unions have repeatedly called for the hiring of Roma and Albanian officers, this has not taken place.

According to a participant from Slovakia, since 2006, 230 police officers have been hired as police specialists to work in socially-excluded communities in Slovenia. In the majority of cases, the target communities in question are segregated and marginalized Roma communities. This proved to be a very effective liaison mechanism, and 50 officers from this group received training from the GRTPA with a focus on racism and structural discrimination. During the training, participants shared moving personal accounts, including concerning their own changes in attitude towards Roma, as well as their experiences of the abuses of power and excessive policing that unfortunately still exist. The participant from Slovakia praised ODIHR for its support in the translation and customization of the *Police and Roma and Sinti* manual, and recommended that the manual be translated into a wider range of languages, as police officers cannot always be expected to read and apply documents in English. It was also suggested that the manual could be improved by applying a more hands-on practical approach that reflects the current political situation, and possibly by including a regional focus. A number of additional themes were also proposed for the manual, including the issue of loan sharks, trafficking or the relations between new and old communities. This could be supplemented by regional seminars, where participants could share their experiences.

The question of attracting Roma and Sinti to apply for officer positions was also discussed. The OSCE Mission to Serbia has worked on this issue for a number of years, and currently has an open call for applications to enrol in police officer training. In addition, the mission has organized open sessions in Roma communities in co-operation with the Ministry of Interior.

### **SESSION III:** *Review of the challenges and opportunities for community policing in Roma and Sinti communities and the way forward*

In his presentation, Randjel Milosevic highlighted that the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Serbia encourages minority members to work in the police force and has co-operated on several projects with the OSCE Mission to Serbia. In 2012 and 2013, the ministry designed a project to further integrate minorities, which comprised activities implemented by the Centre for Basic Police Training, including the production of a documentary film on minorities in the police force. The ministry has also organized conferences to discuss the professional training opportunities offered to Roma in Serbia, as well as seven promotional public forums. These projects were developed as part of the national Strategy to Combat Discrimination, and included activities such as trainings for police on the issue of discrimination against Roma. Among the objectives of the trainings were improving the registration of individuals and the issuing of identification documents, as well as protecting Romani women from trafficking. Mr. Milosevic noted that good practices on community policing have already been implemented in Serbia for some years as a result of co-operation with experts and law enforcement entities from EU countries.

Concerning the recruitment of Roma in the police force, participants highlighted that it is often not enough to simply encourage persons of Roma origin to apply for jobs in the police force. Further activities are required to reach out to Roma communities, including visiting Roma communities and interacting directly with members of the community. Following this model, the OSCE Mission to Serbia has co-ordinated information campaigns in Roma communities throughout the country. In addition, the mission has organized open days to reach out to potential applicants among Roma for positions in the police force. Such activities received very positive

responses, as Roma youth saw police work as an attractive opportunity to acquire secure and long-term employment.

Other participants pointed out that the recruitment of Roma and Sinti in police forces can also be accomplished through quotas, and legislation to this end exists in some participating States. However, quotas are not the only way to ensure the participation of Roma and Sinti in law enforcement agencies. Preliminary trainings and capacity-building sessions can also help Roma and Sinti candidates overcome language or educational disadvantages.

Participants also noted that, while recruitment activities can be effective, the retention of minorities in the police service often constitutes a challenge. There are often numerous obstacles to their career and advancement opportunities. In particular, the provision of a sufficient salary is an important factor in supporting their retention, as is ensuring that minority representatives in the police are afforded equal opportunities.

With regards to the training of police officers, participants underscored that efforts to enhance co-operation between police and Roma and Sinti communities must be renewed. In Slovenia, for example, more than 700 police officers took part in trainings that included sessions on Roma culture and traditions, non-verbal communication and community policing. Police officers were also taught the basics of the Romani language. It was also noted that budgetary constraints pose a challenge to continuing these programmes in the country.

In discussing relations between the police and Roma and Sinti communities, participants recalled that a fundamental problem is the unequal distribution of power, and one that also applies across the public sector. As such, while dialogue and the recruitment of Roma and Sinti can help improve relations between the police and Roma and Sinti communities, the proper enforcement of anti-discrimination legislation is very important. If legislative regulations related to discrimination are not implemented, then the effect of all other measures is limited, rendering effective corrective tools to redress police misconduct a necessity.

On the question of data collection and the existence of so-called Roma and Sinti registers developed by some law enforcement agencies, participants noted that such incidences have a negative impact on levels of trust between Roma and Sinti and the authorities, including the police. In a particular case in Sweden, mistrust between the police and Roma and Sinti communities deepened following an incident whereby the media made public special files used to track members of the Roma community on the basis of their ethnicity. Participants noted that challenges in this area exist not only between Roma and Sinti and the police, but in relation to state authorities in general. Swedish participants also noted that a series of official inquiries into the case have not helped to assuage the concerns of the Roma and Sinti community.

Participants representing the Swedish National Police made clear that law enforcement agencies are prohibited from collecting data on the basis of ethnicity. It was highlighted that investigations were conducted into the above-mentioned case to determine the purpose of the lists as well as to study data protection issues, and data inspection authorities recommended to improve data protection. Other investigations were opened but have not yet been concluded. At the same time, representatives of the Swedish National Police stated that, while the situation was shameful, it did have some positive outcomes, and has led to renewed efforts to combat discriminatory attitudes. In addition, a contract between police and the Roma community in Malmo was signed,

in which police and Roma and Sinti communities agreed to enhance their co-operation and organize joint trainings. In Sweden, national police objectives include earning and strengthening the trust of citizens in the police; however, the above case demonstrates that trust cannot be taken for granted. The government has drawn up a white paper on abuses and violations of Roma, which examines the situation of Roma communities in Sweden and their experience in the country.<sup>12</sup>

Participants also noted the particular situation of Roma and Sinti women and their exposure to multiple forms of discrimination. Romani and Sinti women often have frequent contact with law enforcement personnel and are particularly vulnerable when raids and searches are being conducted in Roma and Sinti communities. They are also vulnerable in terms of the police response in cases of domestic violence in which Roma and Sinti women are victims. There is serious concern that such cases do not receive proper attention and response from the police.

Some participants deplored the fact that, although there is ongoing communication between police and Roma and Sinti communities, this does not constitute co-operation. In the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, for example, meetings between the police and Roma communities do take place, but the results of these meetings are not implemented. As such, strategies and laws are in place, but the procedures to implement them are often not developed or made available to officers. For instance, in the case of hate crimes, the police cannot document and gather evidence in the absence of procedures and, as a result, prosecutors may reject cases due to a lack of evidence.

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<sup>12</sup> “White paper on abuses and rights violations of Roma”, prepared by the Ministry of Employment of Sweden, <http://www.government.se/sb/d/16234/a/237026>.

### III. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### General Conclusions

Mirjam Karoly summarized the meeting and highlighted the following conclusions from the three sessions:

- The meeting underscored the need to provide for the participation of Roma and Sinti in police structures, and brought to attention the under-representation of Roma in police forces across the OSCE region. Roma and Sinti women require particular support, as they are both under-represented in the police and have limited access to job opportunities within the police. Quotas, on-the-job-training and anonymous entry tests were highlighted as incentives to ensure higher numbers of Roma and Sinti in the recruitment process.
- Building trust between the police and Roma and Sinti communities is an important objective that continues to be very relevant, and for this reason promoting examples of good co-operation will help to move the agenda ahead. Therefore, the work of law enforcement officers should be explained to the community in order to change perceptions and build on positive aspects of police services. The need to make complaint mechanisms accessible to Roma and Sinti was also highlighted.
- Roma and Sinti police networks and professional associations are important, as is the sharing of experiences between them. Therefore, networks to exchange experiences across the regions should be increased and enhanced.
- Participating States should consider implementing outreach activities among Roma and Sinti communities to support their recruitment in police centres and academies.
- Participating States should support local-level partnerships between Roma and Sinti communities and law enforcement bodies. Such partnerships should be maintained and assisted by the Ministries of Internal Affairs.
- The OSCE should also support training and capacity-building initiatives on policing in Roma communities at the local level. The OSCE manual should be translated into other languages, including the Romani language.
- The OSCE should update the existing manual to respond to new challenges and the increasingly complex situation facing the police in protecting the rights of Roma and Sinti. In addition, the OSCE should increase awareness of the manual in the countries where it has not yet been launched.
- Trainings developed for the police and national authorities and implemented by the OSCE should be adapted to local needs and contexts.
- Police should receive further training on community policing and working in Roma and Sinti communities. Police who work in these communities should not be exclusively of Roma and Sinti origin, and Roma and Sinti police officers should be given the opportunity to play a variety of roles in different communities.
- Language and education requirements can present a barrier for Roma and Sinti individuals wishing to join the police. Existing tools and approaches that need to be employed to create a more level playing field for minority representatives applying to police academies.

- The applicability of anti-discrimination legislation is important, and remedies must be made available for Roma and Sinti victims. Furthermore, the situation of Romani and Sinti women and children requires particular attention.
- An integrated approach to responding to the exploitation of children and women is needed. For example, in the case of street children, education and adequate shelter and assistance need to be provided in order to realize long-term changes.
- Lastly, local-level partnerships should be prioritized, and stakeholders should work with ministries of interior to monitor such partnerships.

## **Recommendations**

### *Session I Recommendations:*

- Increased efforts are needed to combat anti-Roma rhetoric and action at all levels, as such rhetoric deeply affects how law enforcement bodies interact with Roma and Sinti.
- Police should refrain from issuing press releases that incriminate Roma and Sinti communities, while the ethnicity of suspects should not be the subject of public statements as this leads to the further stigmatization of Roma and Sinti.
- Increased efforts are needed to recruit more Roma and Sinti as members of the police.
- OSCE institutions are invited to do more to combat racial profiling of Roma and Sinti by police in several participating States.
- In those participating States where co-operation between police and Roma and Sinti has been facilitated by the OSCE, further steps are needed to make sure that co-operation is sustained and enhanced across the OSCE area, as necessary.
- The OSCE manual on *Police and Roma and Sinti: Good Practices in Building Trust and Understanding* is a useful policy guiding instrument. However, it should be streamlined to offer practical advice on the interaction between the police and Roma and Sinti communities.
- Authorities in participating States where anti-Roma marches and riots impact the health and safety of Roma and Sinti communities should provide all necessary assistance to victims and those at risk.
- Roma and Sinti should be provided with opportunities to file complaints and receive redress in cases of police misconduct and abuse.
- New, improved procedures should be introduced regarding witnesses and their protection, especially in cases where they witness police abuse.
- The process and outcomes of internal administrative investigations conducted following incidents involving the police should be explained in detail to Roma and Sinti communities.



### *Session II Recommendations:*

- Police officers of Romani and Sinti origin are not only able to only improve police work in Roma and Sinti communities, but also to raise awareness of relevant Roma and Sinti issues among the rest of the police force.
- Roma and Sinti police officers can also serve as role models to Roma and Sinti youths considering a career in law enforcement.
- National and international professional associations of Roma and Sinti police officers should be established and supported, as they can produce meaningful results through trainings, exchanges of good practices and awareness raising, among other activities.
- Legislation relating to combating crimes against Roma and Sinti, including hate crimes, should be introduced; however, such legislation should be accompanied by relevant concrete procedures for police officers tasked with implementing them.
- The OSCE manual on police and Roma and Sinti should be translated into other languages.
- The manual would also benefit from a more practical approach, and could include context-specific information relating to different regions and their respective situations, expand on the themes already covered and provide follow-up in the form of regional seminars.

### *Session III Recommendations:*

- Efforts to facilitate the participation of Roma and Sinti in police services must be increased, and any initial success in this area should be followed up with outreach campaigns and measures to create a level playing field for Roma and Sinti candidates.
- The retention of Roma and Sinti members of police forces should be a priority, and Roma and Sinti police officers should be afforded the same opportunities to develop their careers as are their peers of other ethnicities.
- Programmes designed to train police officers on community policing need to continue, and these trainings should include a strong anti-discrimination component.
- To build trust and understanding, the interaction between police and Roma and Sinti needs to be oriented towards co-operation.
- Data collection based on ethnicity poses a direct threat to building trust and understanding; therefore, data collection should be done in accordance with international norms and practices.
- If data is collected, it must be ensured that it is protected and is not used for racial profiling.
- More efforts are needed to address the vulnerability of Romani and Sinti women, both in their interactions with the police as well as within the community.
- Protocols and procedures are needed to enforce legislation in the area of combating and preventing hate-crimes.

## Annex I: Agenda

### Expert Meeting:

*Police and Roma and Sinti – Current Challenges and Good Practices in Building Trust and understanding*

Warsaw, 8 April 2014

09:00-09:30 **Welcome and opening remarks**

- Beatriz Balbin, First Deputy Director of ODIHR
- Ilze Brands Kehris, Director of the Office of the HCNM
- Marco Kubny, Deputy Head of the OSCE Secretariat's Strategic Police Matters Unit

09:30-09:45 **Introduction of participants**

09:45-11:15 **Observed challenges with regard to policing in Roma and Sinti communities in the OSCE Area since 2010**

Moderated by Mirjam Karoly, Chief of ODIHR Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues

- Presentation by Idaver Memedov, Officer on Roma and Sinti Issues, ODIHR CPRSI
- Presentation by Dezideriu Gergely, Independent Expert, former Director of the European Roma Rights Centre
- Discussion

11:15-11:30 **Coffee break**

11:30-13:00 **Sharing of good experiences and lessons learnt in the use of the OSCE manual *Police and Roma and Sinti: Good Practices in Building Trust and Understanding***

Moderated by Marco Kubny, Deputy Head of the OSCE Secretariat's Strategic Police Matters Unit

- Presentation by Petr Torak, Police Community Support Officer at Cambridgeshire Constabulary
- Discussion

13:00-14:30 **Lunch break**

14:30-16:30 **Review of challenges and opportunities for community policing in Roma and Sinti communities and way forward**

Moderated by Ilze Brands Kehris, Director of the Office of the HCNM

- Presentation by Randjel Milosevic, Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Serbia
- Discussion

16:30-17:00 **Conclusions and way forward**

## **Annex II: List of Participants**

**Rosario Ali**

É Romani Glinda NGO, Sweden

**Emanuel Banutai**

Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF Ljubljana), Slovenia

**Miroslav Broz**

Konexe NGO, Czech Republic

**Helena Casu Hall**

National Police, Sweden

**Panayote Dimitras**

Greek Helsinki Monitor, Greece

**Natasa Djukanovic**

Bureau for International Cooperation and EU Integration, Ministry of Interior, Serbia

**Dezideriu Gergely**

Independent Expert on Roma Issues, Romania

**Vasile Gilbea**

Romani CRISS NGO, Romania

**Zemfira Kondur**

International Charitable Organization "Roma Women Fund "Chiricli", Ukraine

**Loe Lagrange**

ADC Memorial NGO, Russia

**Lars Lindgren**

Office of the Ombudsperson, Sweden

**Sergey Mikheev**

ADC Memorial NGO, Russia

**Daniel Milo**

Office of the Minister of Interior, Slovakia

**Randjel Milosevic**

Uniform Police Directorate, Ministry of Interior, Serbia

**Agnes Pantya**

Hungarian National Police, International Relations Division, Hungary

**Zhaklina Prosaroska**

Sector for Police and Criminal Affairs, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

**Adi Sinani**

OSCE Mission to Serbia, Serbia

**Jenny Sjokvist**

National Police, Sweden

**Petr Torak**

Police Community Support Officer, Cambridgeshire Constabulary, United Kingdom

*OSCE Staff*

**Ilze Brands Kehris**

Director of the Office of the HCNM

**Mirjam Karoly**

Senior Adviser on Roma and Sinti Issues, Chief of ODIHR CPRSI

**Tatjana Peric**

Adviser on Roma and Sinti Issues, Deputy Chief of ODIHR CPRSI

**Idaver Memedov**

Officer on Roma and Sinti Issues, ODIHR CPRSI

**David Mark**

Officer on Roma and Sinti Issues, ODIHR CPRSI

**Marco Kubny**

Deputy Head of the OSCE Secretariat's Strategic Police Matters Unit