



SUPPLEMENTARY HUMAN DIMENSION MEETING

**“Sustainable Policies for Roma and Sinti
Integration”**

FINAL REPORT

**10 - 11 July 2008
VIENNA**

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The second OSCE Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting (SHDM) of 2008 was devoted to the topic of *Sustainable Policies for Roma and Sinti Integration*.¹ The meeting took place on 10 and 11 July in Vienna, and brought together a total of 244 participants, including 92 representatives of 69 non-governmental organizations (NGOs).² Additionally, a distinguished Keynote Speaker and a group of Introducers also participated in the Meeting.

The Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting consisted of three Working Sessions:

1. Role and responsibility of regional and local authorities to assist in integrating Roma
2. Good practices and major challenges in improving the situation of Roma at local level: examples from municipalities
3. Policies to facilitate equal access of Roma and Sinti to public services and education

In addition to these working sessions, four side events were organized by the ODIHR and SHDM Participants.³ The first side event was held before the start of the SHDM on 10 July, the Roundtable for Civil Society, and involved the participation over 50 Roma civil society actors. The purpose of the side event was to provide non-governmental organizations with an opportunity to prepare recommendations to be presented at the opening of the SHDM on the thematic focus of each of the three sessions.⁴

Another side event, convened by the ODIHR and also held on the first day of the meeting was on “The effective use of European Court of Human Rights judgments to implement change.” Discussions focused on how valuable European Court judgements are in terms of delivering change for Roma and Sinti communities. Of primary importance was to examine whether the European Court rulings translated into national legal measures.

On the second day, 11 July, two side events were held in between Session II and III. The first event was organized jointly by the ODIHR and the European Roma Rights Center and discussed “Building partnerships between Roma communities and local authorities: participation in governance.” Panellists and participants from several countries with large Roma and Sinti populations discussed how Roma and Sinti can participate more in public life. In particular the discussions focused on how Roma participation in governance, including through cultural mediation and peer education practices, can be valuable tools and what challenges exist that may limit this participation at the local level.

The second side event on 11 July addressed the “Fundamental Rights and Freedoms of Roma in Italy” and was organized by the Open Society Institute. The focus of the event was to discuss the recent situation of Roma and Sinti in Italy within the framework of OSCE human dimension commitments as they relate to fundamental freedoms, human rights, democracy and the rule of law. In particular, a team of non-governmental

¹ See Annex I for the Agenda and Annex II for the Annotated Agenda of the Meeting.

² See Annex X for Statistics on Participants and Annex XI for the List Participants.

³ See Annex VIII for the list and description of the Side Events.

⁴ See Annex IX for the full text of Civil Society Roundtable recommendations.

organizations presented findings from a recent trip to Italy for the purpose of collecting data on the latest social unrest regarding Roma and Sinti.

Introductory remarks at the **Opening Session** of the SHDM were delivered by Ms. Sarita Friman-Korpela, Secretary General of the Advisory Board on Romani Issues of Finland, Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Finland, followed by Mr. Gruia Bumbu, State Secretary of the National Agency for Roma in Romania, and Ambassador Janez Lenarčič, Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR).⁵

Representing the Chairman-in-Office, Ms. Friman-Korpela noted that the Finnish OSCE Chairmanship highlights the importance of promoting sustainable integration of Roma and Sinti from a human rights perspective. She underlined the fact, that “we all have the right to be treated equally. Regrettably, this is not the case when we look at the realization of social, cultural and economic rights of the Roma in the OSCE area.”

The keynote speech was delivered by Mr. Gruia Bumbu, State Secretary of the National Agency for Roma in Romania who noted that if sustainable policies for social inclusion of Roma and Sinti are to occur, measures that address both the requirements necessary to improve living conditions should be done in parallel with the aim of integration into mainstream society. Mr. Bumbu emphasized that any sustainable integration policy needs to include the following elements: “good governance, equal opportunity and participation of Roma and Sinti, transparency and accountability, strong leadership, and last but not least monitoring of efficiency and effectiveness of Roma-related policies.” He also underlined that “having Roma as partners and not only as a target group is the essential and mandatory ingredient for ensuring the sustainability of the implementation of public policies for Roma.”

Ambassador Janez Lenarčič highlighted that this meeting should be focused on ways to translate the words contained in the OSCE Action Plan on Roma and Sinti into action at the regional and local level. He noted that: “This is a particularly favorable time to consider the role and responsibility of regional and local authorities. The trend towards decentralization of state power to regions and towards empowering local authorities in States offers opportunities for more effective integration of Roma.” For this to take place, regional and local authorities need to work more proactively and in conjunction with Roma communities.

Recommendations from the *Civil Society Roundtable Side Event* which preceded the SHDM were presented by Ms. Isabela Mihalache from the Roma Participation Program of the Open Society Institute.⁶

The Opening Plenary was followed by three working sessions. The first session was moderated by Ambassador Liviu Bota, formerly the Permanent Representative of Romania to the International Organizations in Vienna. The second session was moderated by Mr. Ivan Ivanov, the Director of the European Roma Information Office. The last session was moderated by Mr. Gabor Daroczi, Decade of Roma Inclusion Coordinator of the Open Society Institute in Hungary

⁵ Please see Annex VI for the Opening Remarks of Ambassador Lenarčič

⁶ Please see Annex IX for the Civil Society Roundtable recommendations.

In **Session one** on *The role and responsibility of regional and local authorities to assist in integrating Roma*, the introductory speech was delivered by Mr. Joachim Ott, Co-ordinator of the Roma Action Group, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities at the European Commission.

This session explored the concept of integration with regard to Roma and Sinti communities, while respecting their cultural diversity and upholding OSCE human dimension commitments. The specific role and responsibility of regional and local authorities was discussed and specific integration models were presented. It was underlined during this session that for regional and local integration efforts to be successful, Roma representatives must be engaged as partners in the planning and implementation of integration strategies.

Session two discussed *Good practices and major challenges in improving the situation of Roma at local level: examples from municipalities*. This session was introduced by Mr. Ramon Vilchez who works with the Roma community, with the Ministry of Governance and Public Administrations of the Catalan government in Spain.

The objective of this session was to discuss how regional and local authorities ensure that the commitments contained in the OSCE Action Plan on Roma and Sinti to integrate this group into wider society are done in a proactive manner. The Action Plan specifically tasks local authorities to work with Roma and Sinti communities to implement integration strategies.

A re-occurring theme that emerged from participant's interventions during this session concerned the inclusion of Roma in all levels of decision making with regard to programs that aim to integrate them into society. This includes appointing qualified Roma to positions within regional and local municipalities. Creating partnerships between Roma representatives, civil society and municipalities guarantees that programs of social inclusion will be sustainable. However, concern was expressed that capacity building needs to take place for both Roma representatives and local authorities if the specific needs that are challenging this group to integrate are to be achieved.

Session three discussed *Policies to facilitate equal access of Roma and Sinti to public services, in particular social services and education*. The introductory speech was delivered by Ms. Eva Rizzin, a researcher and representative with the Federazione Rom e Sinti Insieme and OsservAzione.

This session focused on selected areas of integration which have particular relevance for Roma and Sinti communities. These include education, housing, employment, civil registration and access to public services.

At the **Closing Plenary**, Ambassador Janez Lenarčič, Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights delivered remarks. He highlighted the valuable contribution by civil society and the set of recommendations issued at the civil society roundtable which preceded the opening of the SHDM meeting. Ambassador Lenarčič noted that the need to improve the living conditions of Roma and Sinti is still unfinished that the more concrete action needs to be taken.

Ambassador Lenarčič observed the significant gap that divide Roma and Sinti from mainstream society in all areas of socio-economic life including, housing, education, employment and access to public services. It was also noted in his speech that Roma and Sinti must have judicial remedies to the increasing intolerance and discrimination this groups confronts. It was noted by the Ambassador that the OSCE Action Plan on Roma and Sinti offers clear guidelines for participating States to effectively address the challenges that confront this group.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

This part of the report focuses on recommendations that were given during the three working sessions. The following broad range of recommendations was made by delegations of the OSCE participating States, international organizations and NGOs, and aimed at various actors, such as the OSCE participating States, OSCE Institutions and field operations, as well as other international organizations and NGOs.

These recommendations have no official status, they are not based on consensus, and the inclusion of a recommendation in this report does not suggest that it reflects the view or policy of the OSCE. They are, however, a useful indicator for the OSCE in reflecting upon how participating States are meeting their commitments, determining future priorities, and considering possible new initiatives relevant to national institutions against discrimination.

Recommendations to the OSCE participating States:

- Policy-makers should recognize that good practices have key elements in common:
 - Complex problems need to be addressed with complex solutions. Good examples from Spain, Hungary and Romania;
 - Ethnic exclusiveness – targeted programs need not exclude others in the same neighbourhood. This can make activities more politically viable;
 - Individual activities which are targeted; and
 - Work with Roma communities – not top down solutions. EC is working in this direction
- Authorities should discuss, especially with Roma, the main purposes of Roma programs.
- Work must be done on educational issues and administration of public authorities.
- Programs to teach non-Romani children about Roma culture should be established.
- Participating States must act in compliance with the rule of law and non-discrimination principle.
- A permanent structure within a municipality is important to maintain continuity and to act as contact point for outsiders such as media.

- If Roma jobseekers contact employers from within municipalities, this makes employers more positive towards them as serious applicants.
- Local authorities should condemn and not condone discrimination against Roma which is frequently felt and expressed by this community. The Council of Europe, Dosta! Campaign in the Balkans is a good example of an anti-discrimination project and more countries should join this initiative.
- Need for a strong enforcement structure for municipalities to ensure they do their action plans and implementations but this requires support and structure
- Programme and project design should include the following:
 - Active social agents should carry out different projects for Roma
 - Roma should be involved in the process of the all project related issues- they should bare responsibility
 - There should be a multicultural orientation of the project
 - Their should be affirmative action for Roma included in the plan
 - Should involve non-associated Roma in these projects
- Those who work with Roma, including local authorities, national governments and civil society should be self-critical if the living conditions of Roma are to improve.
- It is recognized that Roma strategies will only be successful if they enjoy the involvement of local authorities and all municipal authorities.
- Key element for success is involvement of Roma as partners.
- Participation of Roma in programs that are meant to benefit them is still lacking and participating States, the EU, and other international organizations should take this into account.
- Roma representatives should be included in the local government.
- Institutional support from local and national levels is needed.
- National programs for intercultural education incorporate integrated education into education reform.
- Policies for Roma should target education as the key to successful integration.
- Data collection is critically needed for the Roma and Sinti community.

Recommendations to the OSCE, its Secretariat, Institutions and Field Missions:

- The OSCE ODIHR is commended for its election work and including Roma and Sinti in political participation projects.
- OSCE must hold States morally and politically responsible when they do not implement their commitments. Should do this from the next HDIM and report on

Italy if it does not implement the OSCE Action Plan. Also, OSCE must act on paragraphs 113 – 117 of Action Plan on emergency situations.

- This is a good opportunity for the OSCE to set up a database that collects examples of good practices. A template could be developed for this purpose.
- The OSCE is commended for focusing on the local level as it is stated in the OSCE Action Plan on Roma
- There are educated and capable Roma and they should be hired to run programmes that are deal with Roma integration
- OSCE should distribute the Action Plan at the local level.

Recommendations to intergovernmental and NGOs:

- Roma NGOs should be involved at an institutional level with public authorities.
- A comprehensive database for evaluation of projects and programmes for Roma and Sinti should be developed.
- Capacity building is also an area that assists in integration strategies.
- NGOs should collect all cases issued by the ECtHR and implement the judgments at the national level

3. SUMMARIES OF THE SESSIONS

Session I: Role and responsibility of regional and local authorities to assist in integrating Roma

Introducer: **Mr. Joachim Ott**
Co-ordinator of the Roma Action Group,
Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and
Equal Opportunities, European Commission

Moderator: **Ambassador Liviu Bota**
Frmr. Permanent Representative of Romania to
International Organizations in Vienna

Mr. Ott discussed how the European Council recognized for the first time in December 2007 the specific situation of Roma in European Union member states. A number of incidents which could not be seen as isolated cases were the starting point of the Roma Action Group. Mr. Ott pointed to the need for sustainable solutions and that ignoring the challenges Roma faced was no longer possible. The majority of activities carried out by the EC can be seen by a communication which will include an analysis of the situation of Roma, and a report on equality issues in the EC with a specific chapter on Roma.

There are clear implementation gaps, noted Mr. Ott, as well as gaps in policies. Better evaluation techniques and more targeting activities are required, he observed. The individual rights-based approach of EU means litigation and ECtHR are tools that Roma can use to address injustices.

Mr. Ott noted that desegregation remains a major issue, including in the provision of services and in geographical segregation. He stressed that the integration agenda is an expression of the political will of individual mayors and local authorities. Barriers are well-known but removal requires an integrated approach which involves all stakeholders.

Following Mr. Ott's introductory remarks the floor was opened for interventions by participants at the meeting. Statements were made by OSCE institution representatives, civil society and delegations from Austria, Romania, France, Finland, Belarus, the United States of America, Italy, Poland and an official from the Council of Europe. They discussed their views on Roma-related policy-making and the role regional and local authorities should have in assisting Roma and Sinti to integrate into wider society.

A number of participants noted the limited improvement in Roma and Sinti's living condition against the increased prosperity of new Europe. Of particular significance, according to the representative of the OSCE HCNM is the risk associated with implementing national strategies at the local level which may put strain on the local community. This becomes more pertinent with the increasing movement within the EU of Roma. The OSCE HCNM will release a report on migration in late 2008 focused on Roma and Sinti.

Civil society participants discussed the importance of social inclusion policies and the need to have local authorities, as well as Roma representatives engaged in

implementation of these policies. It was highlighted that without the involvement of all stakeholders any implementation policies would fail.

Session II: Good practices and major challenges in improving the situation of Roma at local level: examples from municipalities

Introducer: **Mr. Ramon Vilchez**
Sub-Director of Associative and Volunteer Affairs
of the Secretary of Citizen Affairs
Head of the Unit of Attention for the Roma Community
Ministry of Governance and Public Administrations
Catalan Government

Moderator: **Mr. Ivan Ivanov**
Director
European Roma Information Office

Mr. Ramon Vilchez introduced the session by discussing the design and implementation of the Integrated Plan for the Roma People in Catalonia. The successful implementation of this project relied on the widespread inclusion of Roma representatives in the planning and implementation stages. Mr. Vilchez stressed the importance of taking an integrated approach when designing projects for Roma and Sinti. He underlined the importance of involving as many public authorities as possible so that implementation will be sustainable.

It was highlighted that Roma and Sinti must be engaged in the process of developing policies that affect them. This includes involving Roma in all phases of the design and implementation of programs. It was noted that, when possible, affirmative action should be used when designing programs for Roma and Sinti, especially in the areas of employment. In addition, some constructive measures to tackle intolerance and discrimination include working with the media to sensitize them to the challenges Roma communities face.

Supporting education initiatives, and in particular early education, is an area that many participants viewed as crucial to fostering the social inclusion of Roma and Sinti. A number of positive practices were put forward, including: local authority support for Roma assistants in schools with Roma pupils, providing transportation for Roma children to attend school, and waving civil registration fees to allow Roma children to obtain personal documents needed to register for school. Obligatory school attendance was also raised at a positive practice to encourage Roma to attend school.

And finally, it was underlined by many participants at this session that funding for Roma-related programs should be continuous if sustainable programs are to be achieved. In addition, an integrated approach should be taken that includes all sectors where Roma and Sinti are facing challenges- such as housing, employment, education and healthcare.

Session III: Policies to facilitate equal access of Roma and Sinti to public services, in particular social services and education

Introduction: **Ms. Eva Rizzin**
Researcher
OsservAzione

Moderator: **Gabor Daroczi**
Decade of Roma Inclusion Coordinator
Open Society Institute

Ms. Eva Rizzin introduced the session by discussing the increase in intolerance and discrimination against Roma and Sinti. She stressed the need to include Roma and Sinti in the drafting, and implementation of Roma-related integration strategies. Ms. Rizzin also emphasized the importance of education and need for participating States to provide sustainable financial and human resources in this area. In addition, Ms. Rizzin highlighted to importance of creating a cohesive approach when addressing the challenges Roma and Sinti communities face.

Interventions by participants at this session focused largely on the importance of education and the need to eradicate segregation in schools. It was noted that anti-discrimination measures need to be enforced by local authorities in schools. The participants also underlined that while important steps had been taken to implement legislation, it is crucial to translate laws into action and prosecute cases of discrimination against Roma and Sinti through the judicial system.

ANNEXES

ANNEX I: Agenda

The meeting will be preceded by a Side event: roundtable for Civil Society on 10 July, 9:00-12:00.

Day 1 10 July 2008

- 15.00 - 16.00 **OPENING SESSION:**
- Opening remarks***
 A representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office
 Director of the OSCE/ODIHR
- Keynote speech*
- Presentation of report from the Side event:
 roundtable for Civil Society
- Technical information* by the OSCE/ODIHR
- 16.00 - 18.00 **Session I: Role and responsibility of regional
 and local authorities to assist in integrating
 Roma**
- Introductory speech*
- Discussion*
- 18.00 **Reception by Chairman-in-Office**

Day 2 11 July 2008

- 09.00 - 12.00 **Session II: Good practices and major challenges in
 improving the situation of Roma at local level:
 examples from municipalities**
- Introductory speech*
- Discussion*
- 12.00 - 14.00 Lunch

14.00 - 16.00

Session III: Policies to facilitate equal access of Roma and Sinti to public services, in particular social services and education

Introductory speech

Discussion

16.00 - 16.30

Break

16.30 - 17.30

CLOSING SESSION:

Reports by the Working Session Moderators

Comments from the floor

Closing Remarks

17:30 Close of Day 2

ANNEX II: Annotated Agenda

While institutional and legal frameworks necessary for integrating minorities have been successfully developed, serious problems remain with regard to the realisation of human rights of Roma and Sinti groups, including economic, social and cultural rights, throughout the OSCE region. A number of countries are witnessing the emergence of new trends, stemming from isolation, poverty, and lack of socialisation as much as from intentional discrimination of Roma and Sinti. National responses to these negative phenomena have been largely inadequate. Even though some countries have adopted specific programmes and strategies for Roma and Sinti – often encouraged by international organisations, donors and human rights groups, the implementation of undertaken commitments has been lagging behind the rhetoric.

The Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti Within the OSCE Area (*Action Plan*) adopted at the Ministerial Council in Maastricht in November 2003 sought “*to reinforce the efforts of the participating States and relevant OSCE institutions and structures aimed at ensuring that Roma and Sinti people are able to play a full and equal part in our societies, and at eradicating discrimination against them.*” In addition to the participation of the Roma, best practices between participating States, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, Roma and Sinti representatives, and local authorities is of utmost importance in the process of improving the situation of the Roma.

The implementation of the *Action Plan* by participating States has been the subject of several OSCE conferences and meetings. The 2005 Warsaw and 2006 Bucharest Conferences addressed the limited progress reached in pursuit of policies and actions plans by governments, inter-governmental organizations, and initiatives focusing on Roma and Sinti issues (i.e. Council of Europe, European Union, and Decade of Roma Inclusion) and the need for harmonization of their efforts, to avoid duplication.⁷

The *Action Plan* makes further references to the importance of involving local government, stressing that “*[i]mplementation strategies should also include mechanisms to ensure that national policies are implemented at the local level.*” It also urges participating States to “*assess on a regular basis, especially at the local level, the results of these strategies and involve Roma and Sinti communities in the evaluation process.*”

⁷ *Joint Conference on the Implementation of Policies/Action Plans for Roma, Sinti and Travellers, and Measures Against the Anti-Gypsyism Phenomenon in Europe* (Warsaw, October 2005) and the conference on *Implementation and Harmonization of National Policies for Roma, Sinti and Travellers* (Bucharest, May 2006).

There is growing concern among many actors and stakeholders that despite the numerous Roma-related programmes and initiatives, the intended changes and results have not been achieved. Focus should be moved from rhetoric to action; from central government to local authorities and administration; and from comprehensive programmes and policies to concrete implementation, in particular in a local context. Indeed, many of the problems faced by Roma and Sinti can be remedied by local authorities. Processes of decentralisation allow the local level to take on the competencies and services which are crucial for the improvement of the situation of Roma and Sinti. This is particularly relevant in the fields of education, housing, security and police, and employment.

This SHDM seeks to review existing initiatives and practices and recommend measures to ensure effective implementation of the *Action Plan* at the municipal and community levels. The main focus will be to discuss how regional and local authorities can be more pro-active in supporting practical realisation of human rights of Roma and Sinti groups, including economic, social and cultural rights in particular and how to ensure sustainability of Roma-related policies and their effective implementation. In addition, means to ensuring that an effective partnership with Roma and Sinti exists throughout this process will be debated. The first session will seek to answer some more general questions about the mandate, role and responsibility of regional and local authorities. In the second session, local authorities should share experiences and present their perspective on Roma and Sinti integration. The third session will focus on the perspective of Roma and Sinti themselves on how to best access public services.

Session I: Role and responsibility of regional and local authorities to assist in integrating Roma

The concept of integration, respecting the diversity of populations and promoting mutual respect and understanding between these, is a principle of the human dimension commitments OSCE participating States have adopted. Regional and local authorities are encouraged to actively include minorities in the political, social, economic and cultural life of mainstream society, while providing means for preservation of their own identity and culture. For this approach to be viable, specific integration models which encourage and promote respect for diversity, while addressing the practical needs of integrating minority communities are necessary. Regional and local level input from both officials and minority communities, such as Roma and Sinti, are therefore crucial in designing effective integration approaches.

Challenges remain in many countries with large Roma and Sinti populations for achieving successful integration. Yet, Roma and Sinti remain rather passive, lacking involvement in processes of decentralization and are not well informed of their rights and responsibilities as citizens. Regional and local authorities need to work with local Roma representatives to translate national programs for integration into everyday practices.

This session will discuss the role and responsibility of regional and local level authorities to implement national integration strategies towards Roma and Sinti communities. Discussions will focus on the mandates of regional and local authorities and how these translate into practical implementation of Roma-related policies. Emphasis will be placed on examining how regional and local authorities address the challenges faced by their local Roma communities, within the national relevant frameworks, and assess if key stakeholders – including community and Roma representatives – are meaningfully involved.

Issues to be discussed:

- What function do regional and local authorities have in acting as regulators and facilitators of Roma-related integration strategies?
- What are the prerequisites for effective policy implementation at regional and local level?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages in Roma-specific frameworks (a targeted approach) and in general minority integration strategies (a mainstream approach)?
- What are the procedures and mechanisms required to develop Roma-related integration plans and measures at regional and local level?
- What partnerships are necessary for the preparation and implementation of Roma-related integration strategies?
- What are the major obstacles encountered and how can these be overcome?

Session II: Good practices and major challenges in improving the situation of Roma at local level: examples from municipalities

The importance of ensuring that local authorities take a proactive role in assisting Roma and Sinti to integrate into the wider society is outlined in the OSCE's *Action Plan*. Local authorities are specifically tasked to work with Roma and Sinti representatives and put into action national Roma-related integration strategies at local levels. As outlined in its Chapter IV on Addressing socio-economic issues: *“Action is required to ensure that Roma and Sinti people enjoy social and economic rights on a par with others. Measures at the grass-roots level, particularly those originating from Roma groups themselves, are particularly needed in order to promote the integration of Roma and Sinti people into social and economic life and to combat their isolation and poverty.”*

Widespread intolerance and discrimination against Roma and Sinti is a deplorable fact throughout the OSCE region. It contributes, for its part, to the exclusion of many Roma and Sinti from access to public services which may offer remedies to the socio-economic challenges they face. If Roma and Sinti

are to effectively integrate, local authorities have an important role to play with regard to overcoming barriers and ensuring access to socio-economic areas, including access to quality education, adequate housing, including residential security, and breaking the multi-dependency cycle created by lack of employment and economic opportunities.

This session will explore the concrete experiences of municipalities with regard to integration practices for Roma and Sinti populations. Lessons learned will be shared, as well as good practices and challenges encountered by local authorities. Emphasis will be placed on identifying both obstacles to the effective integration of Roma, and measures to overcome these.

Issues to be discussed:

- What are examples of good practices and initiatives that can be presented and promoted by municipalities in addressing the major challenges to integrate Roma and how can these practices be replicated and multiplied?
- What are the measures taken by large municipalities with Roma and Sinti that addressed emerging developments in the following areas: access to quality education, security of tenure and residence, and ensuring the right to benefit of public services that may assist with addressing issues of unemployment and economic hardship?
- How do local authorities ensure that Roma and Sinti are part of the process of formulating policies and measures towards them?
- What are the indicators of successful integration of Roma and what are the pre-conditions that lead to this success?
- What measures can local authorities take in addressing the root causes?

Session III: Policies to facilitate equal access of Roma and Sinti to public services, in particular social services and education

The overall goal of the OSCE's *Action Plan* is to ensure that Roma and Sinti are able to play a full and equal part in their societies, and eradicate discrimination against them. Mainstreaming Roma issues into wider institutional structures at both the national and local level is needed and requires the promotion of best practices among participating States, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, Roma representatives, and local authorities within States. The *Action Plan* envisages an increased level and quality of reporting regarding the progress in implementation of the *Action Plan*, and the creation of networks among Roma and non-Roma NGOs to render the implementation of Roma-related policies at the local level more effective and sustainable.

Although both national and international institutions have in the past years highlighted the need to take action to improve the situation of Roma and Sinti, their integration will be limited without direct input from the community itself. This was recognized by the OSCE's High Commissioner on National Minorities report on Roma and Sinti⁸ and made subject for a Special Day on Roma and Sinti at the HDIM 2007.⁹

⁸ Report on the Situation of Roma and Sinti in the OSCE Area (2000): "*Unfortunately, countless programs for Roma have been destined to fail because they were developed without Roma*

This session will focus on selected areas of integration which are of particular relevance for Roma and Sinti. These include education, housing, employment, civil registration and access to public services. Discussions from the perspective of Roma and Sinti towards integration strategies at the local level will be encouraged throughout this session.

Issues to be discussed:

- What are the central areas to focus on for successful integration in society? How should local authorities and Roma approach areas as education, housing, employment and welfare benefits?
- Are some areas of integration more important or urgent from a Roma and Sinti perspective than others and why? Is there a need to prioritize on some particular areas?
- How can inter-ethnic relations at the local level be effectively improved?
- From the perspective of Roma and Sinti, how can policies be designed that accommodate the State, Roma and non-Roma expectations for integration?
- How should information regarding Roma's access to legal mechanisms be disseminated more effectively?
- What is the role, responsibilities and own contribution of Roma and Sinti in the integration process? How can Roma and Sinti be empowered to increase their participation in this process?

participation, and, correspondingly, with scant awareness of the specific culture and needs of the intended beneficiaries. Equally important, programs for Roma designed without Roma are scarcely likely to earn the confidence and commitment of Roma”.

⁹ Working Session 6 & 7: OSCE Action Plan on Roma and Sinti: Participation in Political Life, Overcoming Discrimination

ANNEX III: Keynote Speech

- **Mr. Gruia Bumbu, State Secretary, National Agency for Roma, Romania**

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honored today to have the opportunity to speak about the importance of sustainable policies for Roma and Sinti. It must be noted that sustainable development policies for social inclusion of Roma and Sinti should include measures that both address the needs to improve their living conditions, in parallel with the objective of integrating them into mainstream society.

Sustainable development and social inclusion concerns the well being not only of this generation, but also of future generations that will inherit the legacy that we are creating for them today. I welcome the opportunities provided by this meeting to stimulate discussion on this important subject.

In my speech I would like to focus on several aspects that in my opinion are at the foundation of what is needed for building sustainable policies addressing the needs of Roma and Sinti. This includes: good governance, equal opportunity and participation of Roma and Sinti, transparency and accountability, strong leadership, and last but not least monitoring of efficiency and effectiveness of Roma-related policies.

First of all, decision-making in the area of Roma and Sinti issues requires the integration of economic, social, cultural and political objectives. By neglecting consideration of this inter-dependence and focusing only on sectoral public policies may jeopardize other policy objectives. Governance is central to this decision-making process and it is crucial to create an enabling environment for achieving sustainability of such policies.

However, when we are discussing governance we are not just talking about the current government in office. Governance is about all the institutions involved in managing a country's resources and affairs, including political parties, parliament, the judiciary system, the media, and civil society. Weak governance and leadership prevents sustainable development in the same way as weak institutions undermine effective implementation of public policies. Without effective laws and institutions that promote social cohesion, tolerance and inclusion of minorities will not have an equal chance for integration. Those disadvantaged, like Roma and Sinti in many societies today, will face exclusion.

The participatory process gives voice to decision-making, either directly or through legitimate institutions that represent Roma and Sinti interests at local, regional, national and international levels. This is particularly important in the decision-making process, where decisions have a direct impact on the situation of Roma and Sinti communities. We are all conscious of this truth, yet we are as well aware that Roma and Sinti are largely excluded from that process – their participation in public and political life as well as in mainstream institutions remain low.

The principle “For Roma with Roma” as outlined in the OSCE Action Plan on Roma and Sinti has not been effectively translated into reality. For example, the European Commission today does not have any Roma or Sinti people as members of its staff. Yet this institution has legal instruments, policies and programs that work to improve the situation of Roma and Sinti in the EU member states.

Furthermore, the process of Roma and Sinti participation is essential for providing also the foundation of transparency and accountability of the actors involved in the elaboration and implementation of Roma and Sinti policies. Without transparency there cannot be an effective process addressing the situation of Roma and Sinti, or any indication of whether the policies are sustainable and efficient. At the same time, transparency ensures that all stakeholders can be held accountable, including government, regional or local authorities, but also the private sector and civil society.

Specifically, public local institutions are mandated and responsible for ensuring equal protection and equal rights for disadvantaged minorities, including Roma and Sinti, so they may have equal access to public services. These institutions have a key role in the delivery of public services to Roma and Sinti at the local level, such as quality education, access to employment, health and housing, and other basic services.

There are several challenges at the local level. Those elected into public office often pursue the will of the majority of voters. They are also held accountable to them. The policies of local authorities should have the support of the majority in order to implement them. For this majority however, Roma and Sinti are very often a burden or issue they do not feel responsible for. Public attitudes towards this community are well reflected in various opinion pools, such as the Eurobarometer. Even well intentioned authorities may have a problem with realizing a policy that aims to improve the situation of Roma and Sinti when the majority opt for rejecting such policies, or request their exclusion or even expulsion, or at best suggest neglecting them. The challenge here is how to make the majority supportive and confident in integration policies towards the Roma and Sinti and have these kind of policies sustained over a period of time.

It should be highlighted here that sustainable development and implementation of Roma-related policies rests equally with Roma and Sinti leaders and representatives. Good leadership is critical in ensuring lasting development programs that integrate Roma communities. They are the custodians of resources and their decisions should reflect the best interest for Roma and Sinti people.

What is needed at the local level is a strong coalition between Roma leaders and representatives who in turn should work in partnership with local authorities. Without integrity and genuine commitment towards Roma and Sinti, supported by sufficient and sustained financial allocations, the benefits obtained in the implementation of Roma-related programs or projects will be limited.

Clearly, strong leadership from the national government, including offering incentives, both financial and human resources are needed to overcome the lack of engagement and indifference of the majority and to mobilize Roma and Sinti for concerted action at the local level.

We are all probably aware of the recent Roma and Sinti movements within the EU, which are contributing to raising the level of intolerance and discrimination against this community. In such countries, such as Italy, the situation has escalated to dangerous directions. The OSCE meetings provide a space to address and debate these concerns in a constructive way. Ignoring problems faced by Roma and Sinti is not an option or solution. Building up suitable frameworks for their integration has to start at the local level, in localities where they live. The disparities that divide majority and Roma and Sinti have to diminish, otherwise they become push factors for many Roma and Sinti families to migrate. Ensuring equal access to public services and enabling Roma and Sinti to effectively use them for improving their lives is a must. Centuries of discrimination, victimization, marginalization, symbolized by a period of their enslavement, should be put to an end now.

Each government defines its own framework for establishing a viable and sustainable strategy for improving the situation of Roma and Sinti. There is no unique model or blueprint for a sustainable strategy or agenda for Roma and Sinti. Building up such a strategy requires assessment and data, in order to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of Roma-related measures.

The situation today and the evident lack of sustainable policies are the result of short-term actions that were developed sometimes mainly for the purpose of bringing political benefits to those in power and not for solving the problems confronting Roma and Sinti communities.

Let me present, at the end, the institution I head in Romania's government, the National Agency for Roma (NAR). It established a comprehensive and integrated approach for Roma issues as a baseline for its work by developing interconnected programs that are focusing on areas such as education, employment, health and housing. Specifically, this year NAR undertook several transnational projects with a value of approximately 25 million Euros financed through the European Social Fund. Projects target education and employment issues in an interconnected approach.

Moreover, in order to ensure real change and improvements to the situation of Roma, the NAR designs and implements public policies from the grassroots to the national level. For example, the National Plan of Measures 2009-2011 for implementing the Romanian National Strategy for Roma is the result of local, county and regional plans elaborated by local and regional authorities, with the participation of Roma at all levels.

The National Agency for Roma also acknowledges that the sustainability of public policies for Roma can only be ensured with the collaboration of Roma civil society. Towards this end, the National Agency for Roma established valuable partnerships with civil society in order to implement more effectively public policies for Roma. For example, in 2007 NAR created the Social Inclusion Forum which this year had its third meeting. The aim of this forum

is to identify Roma priorities at regional and local level in the following four areas: education, employment, housing and health care, and also to raise awareness about social inclusion and offer tools for realization of this concept. The forum is mainly composed of representatives of Roma civil society.

In conclusion, I would like to underline that having Roma as partners and not only as a target group is the essential and mandatory ingredient for ensuring the sustainability of the implementation of public policies for Roma. Breaking the vicious circle of discrimination against Roma depends on the understanding of the complexity of Roma issues and on identifying pertinent solutions by all responsible international and national actors. Thus, the whole process requires genuine commitment from institutions and civil society, sufficient financial allocations and human resources, in order to establish a framework which enables and empowers Roma to become equal citizens with access to fundamental rights.

ANNEX IV: INTRODUCTORY SPEECHES TO THE WORKING SESSIONS

Session I: the role and responsibility of regional and local authorities to assist in integrating Roma

- **Mr. Joachim Ott, Coordinator of the Roma Action Group, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, European Commission**

(from PPT presentation)

December 2007 European Council

- The European Council, conscious of the very specific situation faced by the Roma across the Union, invites Member States and the Union to ***use all means to improve their inclusion***. To this end it invites the Commission to ***examine existing policies and instruments*** and to report to the Council on progress achieved before the end of June 2008

Violence and overall appreciation that situation has not improved

- Political awareness that further negligence is not a feasible option
- HLG report of December 3, 2007
- EP resolution of January 31, 2008

Community Instruments and Policies for Roma Inclusion (Working document)

The document is 57 pages and will provide an analysis of community instruments and policies for Roma inclusion. Gender mainstreaming across all thematic chapters will be included. The report will include the following:

1. Introduction
2. Legislation
3. Cohesion Policy
4. Non-discrimination Policy
5. Employment Policy
6. Social Inclusion Policy
7. Education, Culture, Youth Policy
8. Public Health Policy
9. Rural Development Policy
10. Enlargement Policy
11. Gender Equality Policy
12. Fundamental Rights Agency
13. Conclusions

Main Results of CSWD

- instruments and policies are ***appropriate***, but there is an ***implementation gap*** in the Member States
- the use of the potential of ***Structural Funds and pre-accession instruments*** is crucial for overcoming exclusion
- the ***policy cooperation*** mechanisms at EU - and Member States level are suitable for targeted analysis and action
- there is a need for a ***supporting context*** around the rights-based approach; Equality bodies and the cooperation/capacity building of civil society play an important role in this respect

- ☑ in the framework of existing instruments and policies there is considerable **room for manoeuvre** to make them more effective (lessons learned)

Main Results of Communication

- ☑ Clear position regarding **anti-gypsism, discrimination and social exclusion** of Roma
- ☑ Commitment to enforce **Non-discrimination legislation**;
- ☑ Commitment to support **capacity building** of civil society and to involve it at all levels of policy development and implementation
- ☑ Commitment to **support Council** in responding to the call of the June 2008 European Council
- ☑ Willingness to use the **scope for improvement** to make Community instruments and policies more effective

June 2008 European Council

"The European Council looks forward to the results of the Commission's evaluation of existing policies and instruments aimed at improving the inclusion of the Roma population as well as to the forthcoming conference on this issue to be held in September. It **invites** the **Council** to take this **into account** in its examination of the revised Social Agenda. The **European Council will return to this issue** before the end of the year."

- ☑ Constant pressure to keep issue on the agenda
- ☑ Awareness that situation has human rights, social, and security dimension
- ☑ Clear Member States' commitment
- ☑ 1st time official Commission report

Roma inclusion 2007 – 2009

- European Council (December 14, 2007)
- European Parliament (January 31, 2008)
- European Council (June 20, 2008)
- CSWD/Communication (July 2, 2008)
- Exploratory Opinion (July 9, 2008)
- EU Roma Summit (September 16, 2008)
- European Council (December 12, 2008)
- European Parliament (January 2009)

3 Strand Integration Concept

- Creation of real equal opportunities, including positive measures
- Diversity management
- Fight against discrimination

Assets

Local and Regional actors

- Demand for goods and services
- Executive bodies
- Cultural actors

- Role models
- Budget
- Political actors
- Employers/social partners

Examples of Good Practice

ACCEDER

- 45 integrated employment centers in Spanish regions
- Labor insertion through tailor-made vocational training, coaching
- Awareness-raising
- Improvement of environment and living standards

Positive Action

- Public service (*e.g.* police)
- Access to education, promotion of higher education

Desegregation

- Desegregation of school education
- Access to public funds only subject to segregation plans (Hungary)
- Addressing the interdependence of educational, vocational and social segregation

Conclusions

- ☑ Regions and municipalities are **key actors** for the integration of Roma
- ☑ Priority: Need for an open and constructive debate at **EU Roma Summit** on September 16, 2008
- ☑ Next step: December 2008 **European Council** and clear proposals (plus political mandate) for follow-up
- ☑ Need to define the **role** of public actors and create **political momentum** at all levels

Challenges

- Lack of precise data / knowledge
- Implementation gap
- Targeting or mainstreaming
- Competences EU/MS/regions
- Time constraints (02-05/2008)
- The CSWD is not:
 - A document which announces the next steps
 - An Evaluation report

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Session II: Good practices and major challenges in improving the situation of Roma at local level: examples from municipalities

- **Mr. Ramon Vilchez I Enriquez, Head of the Unit of Attention for the Roma Community, Ministry of Governance and Public Administrations, Catalan Government, Spain**

(From PPT presentation)

Integrated Plan for the Roma People in Catalonia

What have we learned?

- It is important that Roma entities take part in the processes of public politics.
- The active and responsible involvement in the different administrations.
- How to focus on programmes from different points of view.

Some pieces of advice

- Expect the active social agents to carry out different projects.
- Expect the Roma involvement in the projects.
- Expect the dialogue processes with Roma.
- Expect the multicultural orientation of these projects.
- Expect the social benefits of these projects.
- Expect successful orientation from these projects.
- Expect the affirmative action to the Roma.

What has worked inside this plan?

- The projects which have been carried out from the responsible department.
- The strong involvement of Roma people when planning, designing and assessing the projects.

Our future challenges

- We should involve non-associated Roma in these projects.
- We should value Roma people in the institutional field.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION
IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASED DO NOT HESITATE TO ASK
ME

rvilchez@gencat.cat

Session III: Policies to facilitate equal access of Roma and Sinti to public services and education

- **Ms. Eva Rizzin, Researcher, Federazione Rom e Sinti Insieme and OsservAzione**

INTRODUCTION

I wish to thank OSCE and ODIHIR for inviting me today to this meeting. I realize that we are here to talk about European policies and strategies, but as an Italian citizen belonging to the Sinti minority, as well as a member of the “Federation Rom and Sinti together”, I cannot start my speech before having expressed my total and profound indignation for the serious violations of Rom and Sinti rights which have been increasingly taking place in my country.

Since December 2006, in Italy a real “hunt” was started against these minorities. This profound, at times violent intolerance has deep roots, but never until now had it manifested itself in such a brutal form; during the last two years in Italy we have witnessed infinite series of forced evictions, unaccompanied by any alternative solutions, episodes of gratuitous violence, often under the form of arsons such as those which took place in Ponticelli or Naples, and punitive patrols who carried out assaults with metal bars and molotovs.

The violence, the incitation to racial hate, and many other forms of abuse against Roma and Sinti people in Italy today are unfortunately neither banned nor censored, but generally accepted by both the authorities and public opinion.

The government has now started filing all the residents of the so-called “nomad camps”, including minors, by registering their fingerprints. This filing process may broaden to involve even Rom and Sinti Italian citizens; such a policy is unjustified and deeply discriminatory, in that it violates every international law on human rights, and is incompatible with the EU guidelines on equal treatment.

I have brought with me today also a copy of the questionnaire which is given to all those subjected to the fingerprint filing; in this questionnaire, the ethnic and religious belonging must also be declared, to then be put on record. Is it possible that in 21st century Italy people are being labelled on the basis of their ethnicity and religion?

In Italy there is a Rom/Sinti issue which has been neglected now for too many years. This difficult situation has its roots in the choice of segregation and exclusionist policies, which have a long history in our country. Such a populist choice as the filing of fingerprints is only an attempt to hide the absence of a state will to seriously work on policies aimed at improving the social interaction amongst Roma and Sinti minorities and the rest of the population.

ADOPTING A EUROPEAN STRATEGY

Before analyzing the policies necessary to improve Rom and Sinti social interaction, we must stop to seriously consider the degree of acceptation that Italian society has for these minorities, because only by fighting this prejudice can we hope to improve such a sad situation.

The 31st of January 2008 the European Parliament adopted a resolution pertaining to the necessity of adopting a European strategy to solve the problems of 10 million Roma people living inside the EU.

GUARANTEE THE PARTICIPATION OF ROMA AND SINTI

It is impossible though to plan an effective European strategy for Roma and Sinti people without involving the direct protagonists in its drafting. It is impossible to speak of a constructive future for Roma and Sinti minorities if we are incapable of promoting their involvement in the creation of policies that concern them.

Ensuring their effective participation to political life is in fact an imperative. From this point of view, political parties both national and European should commit to modifying their internal structures so as to remove all direct and indirect obstacles to the participation of Roma and Sinti representatives. Political factions should also proceed to incorporate in their political and social agenda specific programs favouring the full integration of these minorities. But how are we to reach such an objective? I think this is the first and most urgent question to solve.

ACCESS TO EDUCATION AS THE PRIMARY CONDITION FOR PARTICIPATION

An adequate access to the educational system is the first condition for an increase in Roma and Sinti participation to the political, economical and social life of our countries, in that it offers the possibility of acquiring an equal status to that of the rest of the population.

Education is certainly the key to the emancipation of the Roma and Sinti future generations. The insufficient education amongst these groups is well known by us all, and constitutes in every European country the first obstacle to their insertion in the formal work world.

It is of fundamental importance to offer our children and young a non-discriminatory education, by guaranteeing their equal rights in this field, independently from their social or ethnical background.

It is equally important to sensitize public opinion to the difficulties Roma and Sinti children must deal with daily in school, so as to encourage the proposal of possible solutions through the cooperation of teachers, teacher labour unions, school authorities and the children's families. For many of these children, whose daily experience is marked by forced evictions, discriminatory attitudes, unsustainable costs and great distances from the public schools, attendance rapidly becomes impossible.

Instead of being a place in which to build positive and equalitarian relations between students and teachers, school is one of the first places in which the segregation of Roma and Sinti is perpetuated and reinforced.

THE LANGUAGE

Access to the educational system could be facilitated also through the adoption of particular measures to encourage the respect, protection and promotion of the Romani language and Rom/Sinti culture. Such encouragement could for example be obtained through the creation of projects and scholarships tailored specifically for Roma and Sinti students.

Many European schools have already witnessed initiatives directed towards the promotion of romani culture; such projects unfortunately often end up end up creating stereotyped and abstracted images of our culture. These initiatives also often have very little continuity, due to discontinuous or insufficient funding, which is often bestowed in clusters without an adequate planning or monitoring measures.

In the elaboration of educational policies, the involvement and consultancy of Roma and Sinti representatives is absolutely essential. Likewise, it is important to encourage an increase of Roma and Sinti amongst the teachers in these same schools.

It is also of primary importance that the history and ideology of gipsy discrimination be included in educational programs, with a special focus on the Roma and Sinti genocide during the Second World War.

MEDIATION

For an effective optimization of interaction in the educational context, the presence of a professional Roma or Sinti “cultural mediator” is also of great importance.

The use of cultural mediators has given positive results until now, greatly improving the interaction between teachers and parents. It cannot be expected, though, that these mediators be able to solve some of the substantial problems of interaction which find their origin in the economical and social marginality which Roma and Sinti children and their families live in.

The indifference of certain local administrations, along with the active choices of others, relegate or confirm Roma and Sinti groups to conditions of extreme marginality in the cities they live in; this marginality does not only translate in to the maintainance of a physical distance, but also leads to the impossibility of creating a common social arena, in which Roma and non-Roma could build relationships built on the basis of mutual recognition and the attribution of shared meanings to shared realities, such as that of school.

To obtain concrete results though, we must necessarily pursue a global policy that foresees an integrated answer to all these difficulties. The topic of education must in fact be connected to other important aspects of Roma and Sinti discrimination, such as housing, employment and health care, for it to have any effective impact.

THE RECOGNITION OF MINORITY STATUS AND THE NEED FOR A GLOBAL, NATIONAL AND COHERENT STRATEGY

RECOGNITION

Roma and Sinti people should be guaranteed today in Europe the same rights as those that are recognized to other minorities.

Single states, even though they have signed various resolutions, conventions and declarations, do not respect the decisions that these same documents discipline; likewise, whilst nominally recognizing these rights, they do not recognize the Roma and Sinti minority within their own geographical and legal area of influence.

STRATEGY

The recognition of minority status must be sided by a concrete effort to create a global strategy aimed at solving the practical problems that Roma and Sinti experience in various sectors, such as that of housing, occupation and education.

The absence of such global policies is often an inevitable consequence, when there are no national laws to recognize a specific juridical status to Roma and Sinti populations living within the national borders.

Any strategy, to be effective, should therefore be global, national and coherent.

INTEGRATED: An integrated approach must take in to consideration different problems as related within a system. It is insufficient to adopt a strategy, which for example deals exclusively with the housing issue. Housing is often built to then be rented to people who have no job, and therefore no income, to pay the rent with. **PARTICIPATION** must play an essential role in the drafting of an integrated approach, in which authorities and Roma and Sinti representatives are jointly involved in the planning.

CULTURAL:

It happens all too often that theoretical instruments, unused by national governments, remain only interesting literature cases.

European institutions can encourage and offer both financial and legal instruments to national governments, but it is ultimately a responsibility of same governments to take concrete action in the field.

Global strategies and policies regarding the Roma and Sinti minorities are unfortunately rarely put in to practice; international guidelines are likewise frequently ignored, and although there the is EU funding available, some countries (like Italy) do not even requested them.

EUROPEAN PROCEDURES:

On the European level, we can see a great variety of effective procedures which highlight the feasibility of concretely protecting the rights of all those

belonging to Roma and Sinti communities. Different countries however show an extremely varied landscape of attitudes:

- There are nations in which this issue is totally neglected, and neither the state nor local authorities show much interest in the topic of Roma and Sinti rights;
- There are countries in which although the issue has some visibility, much talk is not followed by enough practice. In these countries on the other hand there is generally very little institutional will to fund practical initiatives;
- There are some countries in which the only active initiatives are funded by private donors and foundations;
- There is also a small number of countries that demonstrates a continuous effort by regularly funding projects and showing a concrete will within the institutions to change the Roma condition within their soil. In these countries state programs have been started, which means that the activities proposed are generally carried out with a mainly public budget;
- Last of all there are countries, like my own, where local authorities appear to have as a unique priority the expulsion of Roma and Sinti communities through forced evictions. These are contexts in which the local authorities are reluctant to use the means in their possession to improve the living situation of these minorities. They appear in no way determined to change the status quo, but are only interested in pushing these citizens away from their territory seems. It is hardly necessary for me to dwell on how preoccupying this phenomenon is.

POLITICAL WILL AND POPULAR SUPPORT

There is still a long way to go before Roma and Sinti rights are adequately recognized and protected.

The best financial and legislative instruments will continue falling short of the goal, until an effective political will emerges, a will backed by widespread popular support. No legislation will be fully effective unless there is a widespread will to translate it in to long-term, concrete initiatives.

We can currently observe a widespread absence of such political will, especially at a local level. This vacuum only reflects the population's scarce involvement in the issue. This is an essential aspect to be taken in to account.

Before adopting any one strategy, or dealing with any one sector, the population must be involved, motivations behind initiatives must be explained, and stereotypes erased, or no program will be easily carried out.

Spreading of knowledge regarding the Roma and Sinti culture, and impact on public opinion- This is a primarily cultural and political problem, which we absolutely cannot underestimate.

Until there is so little knowledge of the Roma and Sinti reality, it will always be hard to speak of social interaction. The lack of knowledge, as well as the blatantly negative images and attitudes towards Roma and Sinti people causes the public opinion to perceive cohabitation as extremely problematic.

Stereotypes are perhaps the first real obstacle to the realization of incisive policies.

To invert these discriminatory tendencies the first step is that of confrontation, which we can achieve only by activating mechanisms of reciprocal interaction and understanding, in the form of multiple meeting occasions.

The mass media, as an information vector, should be the main instrument for encouraging cultural communication and reciprocal understanding. Often, though, a generalized attitude encouraging stereotypes and prejudices is to be found in the media coverage.

The press regularly quotes politicians' declarations against Roma minorities, declarations often containing clearly stigmatizing statements and incitements to racial hate.

This is a sad situation that today in Italy can be observed almost daily even in the government's public discourse.

Freedom of expression is a right which also comes with certain duties and responsibilities attached, if only the obligation to not promote racist ideas.

This topic is another one that calls urgently for discussion.

CONFRONTATION:

Which are then the possible solutions, and which the priorities which call for our intervention? I will try here to mention some:

- Creating occasions for encounter;
- Informing the public;
- Training personnel in the educational system;
- Carrying out anti-discriminatory campaigns on the model of the advertisement promoted by the CoE: «Dosta!» (Enough!):

Fighting racism, xenophobia, intolerance, and guaranteeing a non-discriminatory treatment of roma/sinti on a local, regional, national and international level. application of existing european guidelines.

Eight years have gone by since the European Union adopted a legislation that forbids all direct or indirect discrimination based on race or ethnical belonging, religion or convictions, handicaps, age or sexual orientation.

The full acknowledgement of Directive n. 2000/43/CE is today of vital importance, as is the concrete possibility of contrasting all the forms of ethnical/racial discrimination, both direct and indirect, which Roma and Sinti communities suffer from.

The European Parliament in its resolution of September 2007 declared that much still has to be done to enforce this directive, especially in that which concerns:

- Legal solutions;
- The inversion of the burden of proof in cases of racial discrimination;
- Building awareness;

- Collecting information (which does not mean filing!);
- The independence of National Authorities for equal treatment.

BUILDING AWARENESS

We must endeavour in building Roma awareness of the severe violations which their rights are subjected to, for example by training Roma and Sinti mediators/activists.

To obtain this result, Roma and Sinti communities must first of all be better informed about the legal protection they are entitled to, and the instruments available in each country to fight various forms of discrimination.

This could be encouraged through the organization of seminars aimed at Roma and Sinti organizations, in other words at the direct protagonists of this situation. Such seminars would catalyze the production and diffusion of informative material for Roma and Sinti communities on subjects such as equal rights, available resources and examples of good practice in different European languages as well as in ròmani.

We must also ask for stricter punishments for those who violate of the law against discrimination, penalties today being ridiculous. Roma and Sinti associations must also be implemented so as to have the means to contrast these crimes on one side, and to assist and protect the victims of discrimination on the other.

Unaffected by European directives, discrimination continues to exist, and much has to be done to guarantee the correct realization and application of the existing legal frame.

CONCLUSIONS

To conclude this presentation, I would like to briefly refer back to where I started, in other words what is now happening in Italy. Anti-Roma feeling and numerous racial prejudices are having a severe impact in my country today; these phenomena represent a serious menace not only for the Italian Roma and Sinti population but also more generally for the European and international values of democracy, human rights and constitutional state, therefore the safety of all of us European citizens.

Annex V: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION ON KEYNOTE SPEAKERS, INTRODUCERS AND MODERATORS

Keynote speaker: MR. GRUIA BUMBU

Since June 2005, Mr. Bumbu has worked for the Government of Romania, as Adviser to the Deputy Prime Minister on Roma issues. From Jan-June 2005, Mr. Bumbu worked for the Prefecture of Alba County, as Advisor to the Prefect of Alba County on Roma issues. From Jan 2003-Jan 2005, Mr. Bumbu was Advisor to the Mayor of Alba Iulia on Roma issues, with the City Hall of Alba Iulia. From Jan 1990-Jan 2003, he acted as Vice-President for the Democratic Union of Roma in Alba. Previous to this, from Jan-Oct 1999, Mr. Bumbu was Interim Executive Director of Romani CRISS.

Moderator, Session I: AMBASSADOR LIVIU BOTA

Ambassador Liviu Aurelian Bota, formerly the Permanent Representative of Romania to the International Organizations in Vienna, has served as Chairman of the Preparatory Commission for the second half of 2002. Mr. Bota joined the diplomatic service in 1961 and spent several years as a member of the Permanent Mission of Romania to the United Nations in New York. He also held several high-ranking positions in the United Nations system, including Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) in Geneva, Senior Advisor to the Undersecretary-General for Human Rights in Geneva and Head of the United Nations Mission of Observers to Tajikistan (UNMOT) and Georgia (UNOMIG). In 2001 he served as Chairman of the Permanent Council of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Moderator, Session II: Mr. IVAN IVANOV

Ivan Ivanov is the Executive Director of the European Roma Information Office (ERIO). Previously as an Attorney for the Budapest-based European Roma Rights Center, Ivan Ivanov was involved for five years in research and building the legal strategy of ground-breaking civil rights cases filed with the European Court of Human Rights and the domestic courts of several countries in Central and Eastern Europe. From 1996 to 1998 he has served as a legal adviser for the Human Rights Project a national human rights and legal defense organization based in Sofia, Bulgaria. In this period Ivan Ivanov has spearheaded the development of a number of strategic litigation cases and key advocacy initiatives.

Ivan Ivanov holds degrees in medicine and law. In 1999-2000 he was a visiting scholar at the Law School of Columbia University in New York, where he has specialized international human rights and anti-discrimination law. He has a number of publications focusing on issues related to discrimination and access to education and health care.

Moderator, Session III: MR. GÁBOR DARÓCZI

Gábor Daróczi (1974) was born in Berettyóújfalu, near the Romanian border. He attended local primary schools. In 1985 he moved to a school in Budapest, where he received his high school diploma. He earned a degree in cultural management at the University of Pécs. He worked in the Education Department of the Soros Foundation and then for the National Health Development Research Institute on a national representative survey of Roma health. Later worked for the PHARE Office of the Prime Minister's Office where he co-ordinated a national media campaign on Roma education and Roma identity. In late 2004, he became ministerial commissioner for the integration of disadvantaged and Roma children at the Ministry of Education. Since February 2008 he works in the Open Society Institute as the coordinator of the Decade of Roma Inclusion.

Introducer, Session I: DR. JOACHIM OTT

Dr. Joachim Ott is the Co-ordinator of the Roma Action Group, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, European Commission.

Previous to his work at the Commission, Dr. Ott was adviser and head of office for two Members of the European Parliament. In addition, he has held positions as Research Fellow and Visiting Assistant Professor at the Universities of Frankfurt Hamburg (Germany), and "La Sapienza" Roma (Italy) for Roman History. He received his PhD in Classics at the University of Frankfurt a.M. (Germany).

Introducer, Session II: MR. RAMON VILCHEZ

Mr. Vilchez currently works as Sub-Director of the Associative and Volunteer Affairs of the Secretary of Citizen Affairs and head of the unit of attention for the Roma community, Ministry of Governance and Public Administrations of the Catalan Government in Spain. Mr. Vilchez is responsible for the "Plan Integral del Poble Gitano a Catalunya". This is a comprehensive political plan that aims at eradicating Romani social exclusion in Catalonia. Previously Mr. Vilchez worked as a Technical Officer in the Support Unit working with Romani and immigrant communities. Mr. Vilchez holds a postgraduate degree in Adult Education from the University of Barcelona.

Introducer, Session III: MS. EVA RIZZIN

Eva Rizzin was born in Udine on November 29th, 1977. She belongs to the Italian Sinti Community. She graduated at Trieste University in Political Sciences in 2003 and her thesis, in Political and Economic Geography, was on "*Sinti Gačkane Eftawagaria, Sinti community and culture in its multiple expressions*". In 2007 she obtained a Ph.D. in Geopolitics and Geostrategy at the Political Sciences' Department of the University of Trieste with research on Antiziganism in the Enlarged European Union. In 2005, Ms. Rizzin completed a traineeship reserved for young Roma students/professionals with the patronage of Livia Jaroka (Romani Member of the European Parliament) and the support of the Robert Schumann Foundation.

She has participated actively in the work of the Livia Jaroka MEP's office, assisting in the preparation of international meetings, and in the preparation and drafting of substantive documents/files on different topics.

In July 2005 she participated in the Human Rights Summer School organized by the European Roma Rights Center in Budapest with a workshop on "Capacity Building for Roma Rights Advocacy". As a member of the OsservAzione NGO (Centre for Research Action against discrimination of Roma and Sinti) she does research in various fields related to the NGO's activities.

In addition, Ms. Rizzin collaborates with the study group on local politics for Roma in Europe at the Bicocca University in Milan, Department of Sociology and Social Research.

She is a member of the Sinti and Roma Together Federation (the first Italian national coordination of Roma and Sinti) delegated to the study of questions related to rights and antidiscrimination legislature. From September to December 2007 she followed a research activity on methodology and cultural mediation services offered to Roma and Sinti community women of Mantova Province in collaboration with the Sugar Drom Association and the Institute of Sinti Culture.

Since May 2008, Ms. Rizzin has been working in Mantua for "Articolo 3" monitoring racial discrimination in the Lombardia Regional Press, aiming to become a point of reference for all victims of discrimination. Ms. Rizzin participated as lecturer to many

meetings and conventions. In particular she was the speaker in the special session on defence of Roma rights and respect for rule of law at the European Conference on Roma organized by the Italian Ministries of Interiors and of Social Solidarity in Rome in January 2008.

ANNEX VI: OPENING AND CLOSING REMARKS by Ambassador Janez Lenarčič, ODIHR Director

Opening Remarks (Written Statement)

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to warmly welcome you all to this Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting, on “*Sustainable Policies for Roma and Sinti Integration*”. The aim of this meeting is to discuss ways to move beyond words and translate the *OSCE Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area* into concrete implementation in particular at regional and local levels.

I myself am pleased to be here among you, the first SHDM that I attend as ODIHR Director. I would like to especially welcome the representatives of national institutions, the many regional and local municipal representatives, as well as our partner international organisations and a significant number of civil society members.

In the same vein, I would like to thank the Finnish OSCE Chairmanship for having chosen this important topic and to welcome Ms. Sarita Friman-Korpela, the Secretary General of the Advisory Board on Romani Affairs of Finland.

At the outset of this meeting, let me say that the OSCE’s concern for, and its occupation with, Roma and Sinti communities has, in comparison with action taken within other international fora, been exemplary. As early as 1990, the OSCE recognized the specific challenges faced by Roma communities throughout the OSCE region. During the 1990 Copenhagen Conference on the Human Dimension, participating States affirmed their commitment to raise awareness and to introduce effective measures to combat racial and ethnic hatred and discrimination towards Roma.

A decade later, the 2003 Maastricht Ministerial Council adopted the *Action Plan on Roma and Sinti*, thus strengthening the commitments that address the significant disparities between the majority and Roma and Sinti populations. The Action Plan, we all remember, is aimed at “ensuring that Roma and Sinti people are able to play a full and equal part in our societies, and at eradicating and discrimination against them.”

This, I believe, serves as a good and necessary reminder of why we have gathered here in the Hofburg for this meeting today and tomorrow. While the respect for civil and political rights of Roma has, *en gros*, improved somewhat over the years, serious problems remain. In short: Roma and Sinti are not yet able to “play a full and equal part in our societies”; “discrimination against them” has not yet been eradicated.

Today and tomorrow, we will hear a lot about the role and responsibility of regional and local authorities in the process of integration; about good practices that testify to the improvement of the situation of Roma in some quarters; and about measures that can facilitate the access of Roma to public services. The ODIHR has drafted a report that assesses aspects of the Action Plan’s implementation. The discussions today and tomorrow will be valuable for us indeed as we finalize the report.

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

The ODIHR, as you all know, acts as clearing house on initiatives undertaken by OSCE States and facilitates exchanges of information on best practices. Our findings thus far indicate that there is a need to strengthen Roma-related policies and their implementation at the regional and local levels. All too often, States develop policy initiatives at the national level, without ensuring commensurate impact at the regional and local level within the targeted communities. Furthermore, policy commitments too often are not followed through with the necessary budgetary allocations to ensure their realization. The implementation process is therefore incomplete.

It is incomplete due to a lack of political will at the national level, and indifference, apathy or neglect to implement policies at the regional or local levels. Yet indifference does not solve pressing issues of integration, or of isolation, poverty and a lack of socialization. Communities are facing problems throughout the OSCE region and those affect the majority as well. We have seen evidence of such spill-over, and sadly very recently so, in several places in Europe.

This is a particularly favorable time to consider the role and responsibility of regional and local authorities. The trend towards decentralization of state power to regions and towards empowering local authorities in States offers opportunities for more effective integration of Roma. Regional and local authorities now have the chance to enhance their efforts to integrate Roma and ensure that they have full and equal access to public services, including access to quality education, health care and social services.

There are, of course, challenges ahead. Let me mention two. Regional and local authorities need to become more proactive in addressing challenges and seeking solutions in co-operation with Roma and Sinti communities. If we do not devise policies that work, the problems we see will not just *not* disappear but, instead, escalate and intensify, and may even threaten the human security of Roma communities. That is why there is a need for concerted action at all levels, but most essentially at local level.

Second, Roma representatives themselves need to bear more responsibility for decisions and solutions to their problems at the local level. As the Action Plan calls it: "*For Roma, with Roma*". It is clear that sustainable solutions to the challenges faced by Roma will not come about without their direct involvement and empowerment, and their assumption of responsibility.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would now like to warmly welcome and hand over to our keynote speaker, Mr. Gruia Bumbu. We are very delighted to have him at this meeting in his capacity as State Secretary and President of the National Agency for Roma in Romania.

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Thank you, State Secretary.

I would now like to turn to Ms. Isabela Mihalache who will for us summarize the discussions and recommendations that have emerged from this morning's side event with civil society. By way of introduction, Ms. Mihalache is a Senior Programme Manager at the Open Society Institute in Budapest and as such a long-standing partner of the ODIHR. Ms. Mihalache, you have the floor.

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Thank you. For us at the ODIHR, this meeting will certainly prove most useful. The discussions today and tomorrow will enhance the ability of our programmes and activities to assist participating States more effectively in implementing their commitments in this field and will provide most valuable input for finalizing the status report which we intend to present, in its final form, at the HDIM in October.

I wish us all a productive meeting, and encourage you to speak out freely and with concrete recommendations in mind.

Closing Remarks

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is safe to say that we had a very productive two days as testified by the reports of the three moderators who so well summarized the key issues discussed during the working sessions. I would also like to highlight the valuable contribution of the civil society preparatory side event to the meeting which provided a wealth of ideas and proposals for action.

I have been particularly encouraged to hear so many examples of good practices that exist in the OSCE region; for example, the program of integration of Roma in Catalonia/Spain, educational projects in Croatia, and efforts by municipal authorities to integrate Romanian Roma in Bologna.

We have also listened closely to the concerns you have expressed. It is clear that the improvement of the situation of Roma and Sinti is unfinished business. We all need to do more. Concrete action to combat racism and discrimination against Roma and Sinti must become a top priority.

We have heard that significant gaps remain dividing Roma communities from mainstream society in areas such housing, education, employment and access to services and justice. Recent migration movements clearly present a challenge to our societies and require responses in line with OSCE commitments and other international standards. Singling out and vilifying one particular minority group can never be the answer.

The Action Plan provides a clear road map for addressing these concerns. The good examples mentioned earlier prove that this can be done if there is sufficient political will and determination.

The discussions have clearly identified that the recipes for success involve inclusion of Roma themselves in policy-making and implementation; proactive approaches at the local and regional level; and ensuring sustainability of policies by providing adequate financial, institutional and human resources.

Where do we go from here?

First, the outcome of this meeting and the recommendations will be reflected in the status report on the implementation on the Action Plan which my Office will prepare. I would like to use this opportunity to call upon the participating States to provide input and updates on their activities and policies by the end of this month.

Second, we should all take a close look at the recommendations and good practices as incentives for concrete action. We all know that the weak link is implementation of policies to improve the situation. I urge everybody – especially local and regional authorities – to take on their responsibility towards all communities and transform the commitments into a reality.

We have the recommendations on how to proceed, we have the tools available and we have a proper underpinning in the commitments contained in the Action Plan on Roma and Sinti. We will have another chance to take stock of the first steps towards real action at the HDIM this fall.

Finally, as this meeting draws to a close, it is time for the thanks. I want to thank the speakers, moderators and rapporteurs for the important work they have done to help us organize and clarify all our thoughts and ideas. Thanks should further be given to all participants, especially those from regional and local authorities and NGOs, for

sharing their experiences and proposals and for carrying the messages forward. Let me also thank the Finnish Chairmanship for their strong support, and the dedicated ODIHR team for their hard work.

My Office looks forward to a continued partnership with authorities, National Institutions, partner international organizations and NGOs to support the implementation of the recommendations made today. And the last message and thanks go, as usual, to the interpreters for the good job they've done to make sure that we can all have a dialogue together.

Thanks to you all and have a safe trip home.

ANNEX VII. OPENING REMARKS by the OSCE Chairmanship

Ms Sarita Friman-Korpela, Secretary-General of the Advisory Board on Romani issues of Finland, Representative of the Finnish OSCE Chairmanship

Mr. Chair,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to address this OSCE human dimension meeting on behalf of the Finnish OSCE Chairmanship of 2008. I would like to start with a word of thanks to the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights for the strenuous efforts and good co-operation in organising this meeting.

The title of this SHDM meeting "Sustainable Policies for Roma and Sinti Integration" is broad in a way. At the same time, such sustainable policies for integration need to be seen, first and foremost, from the human rights perspective. That is, we all have the right to be treated equally. Regrettably, this is not the case when we look at the realization of social, cultural and economic rights of the Roma in the OSCE area. The scale and depth of the problems may vary but widespread discrimination remains at the core. Therefore, let's face the challenge that we all need to improve: nobody is perfect in human rights.

Approximately five years have passed since the adoption of the OSCE Action Plan on Roma and Sinti. Given that it is very timely that we gather together with the objective of assessing what has been achieved so far. Many of us remember the drafting process behind the Action Plan. The Plan itself was a milestone but obviously still needs much more implementation work in order to become an instrument that brings true benefits up to the local level, where most needed, for example, in education, housing and health sectors. It is at the local level where building a broad concept of security and measures of conflict prevention start- through implementation of human rights and strengthening of social cohesion.

In addition, we all acknowledge that the Action Plan aims to involve multiple players, including from within the OSCE, as the objective of improving the situation of Roma and Sinti is a very cross-dimensional one in nature. The Roma are a human dimension and a human rights issue at great extent, but also encompass elements of economic and security dimensions. Therefore, a truly comprehensive approach is needed. At the same time, we should not allow ourselves to think that the involvement of multiple actors would somehow decrease the role of the national and local level authorities. All the contrary, the ultimate responsibility towards the Roma and their citizens in general lies always within the Participating states.

With reference to a recent meeting of the OSCE National Focal Points on Hate Crimes in Helsinki, I find it important to reiterate that no grounds can be interpreted acceptable for justifying discrimination or intolerance, but all grounds are equally condemnable. A Roma person may be discriminated against both because of ethnic origin and because of her gender. In addition, disability, sexual orientation or other grounds makes the burden even heavier. We also know that the education of Roma girls is a particular problem. Indeed, multiple discrimination is something we need to recognize and effectively target in order to reach the most vulnerable.

Given the honour to speak on behalf of the Finnish OSCE chairmanship I would like to use this opportunity to share with you the simple idea of the Roma and official authorities working together at all levels in society.

In Finland we have over 50 years long experience of making an impact on the lives of Roma from their own point of view in officially recognized advisory bodies. I am particularly proud of the work and the results of the four Regional Advisory Boards, which were included in the state budget in 2004. The Finnish method of chaining the Romani issues from the government through regional level to the municipalities is neither perfect nor omnipotent. However, it is vitally important to recognize the Romani issues officially as well as to provide a forum to work together.

In practice this chain works - just to provide an example - in the way that the national Advisory Board for example prepares a national Romani policy, which the government enforces. This is actually in process in Finland at the moment. Regional advisory boards and Romani working groups in municipalities play a decisive role when concretizing the aims in practice.

The point is that all countries must find the best method suited to their conditions and structures in order to promote all over well being of the Roma with the Roma.

This meeting offers an excellent opportunity to exchange best practices and challenges in implementing OSCE commitments set in the Action Plan on Roma and Sinti in 2003. While it certainly is time to shift from words to more action, I am convinced that the dialogue during these one and half days will contribute to actual implementation back home. The findings of the ODIHR's draft report on the implementation of the Action Plan gives us guidance on where improvements have been made and where challenges are yet to be met within the whole OSCE area. In order to have efficient responses to remaining challenges, it is important that the participating States and other actors involved in the implementation of the Action Plan carefully look into the findings of the draft report, provide further and updated information where necessary and consider and take action on the basis of the findings of the report.

I look forward to the presentations by our distinguished introducers. In addition, I eagerly look forward to the active participation by Roma and other non-governmental organisations participating in this meeting. The term successful integration will remain a hollow concept if not planned and carried out together with the Roma. We need each other in order to achieve tangible results and in order to transform shared commitments into practice.

Thank you.

ANNEX VIII: SIDE EVENTS

The Helsinki Document of 1992 (Chapter IV) called for increasing the openness of OSCE activities and expanding the role of NGOs. In particular, in paragraph (15) of Chapter IV the participating States decided to facilitate during CSCE meetings informal discussion meetings between representatives of participating States and of NGOs, and to provide encouragement to NGOs organizing seminars on CSCE-related issues. In line with this decision, NGOs, governments, and other participants are encouraged to organize side meetings on relevant issues of their choice.

The opinions and information shared during the side event convened by participants do not necessarily reflect the policy of the OSCE/ ODIHR.

THURSDAY, 10 JULY

Title: The Effective use of European Court of Human Rights judgments to implement change
Convenor: ODIHR TND & CPRSI/European Roma Rights Centre
Time: 13.00 – 15.00
Venue: Segmentgalerie I
Language: English

Summary: The European Court of Human Rights has in recent years made a wave of judgments relating to discriminatory treatment of Roma. Two recent cases illustrate different approaches to concluding cases. In the case of *D.H and others v Czech Republic*, the existence of a *de facto* segregated schooling led to the usual payment of damages. By contrast, the *Hadareni* case relating to anti-Romani pogroms in Romania was unusual in that it led to a friendly settlement with the Romanian government to a range of measures aimed at ameliorating the situation of the Roma locally.

These two different outcomes present the question: to what extent are the judgments of the court able to effect long-term change? Held jointly with the European Roma Rights Centre, a key promoter of litigation at the European Court, the event will use these cases as examples, to consider how to ensure that a successful litigation strategy transforms into concrete changes for Roma populations. The content will include

- Overview of the two cases and their outcomes;
- How the European Court's judgments are given effect;
- Whether the cases have been effective at delivering change, and if not why;
- Whether the principles enunciated by the ECtHR are translated into national legal systems;
- The extent to which similar friendly settlements should be considered in future ECtHR cases.

FRIDAY, 11 JULY

Title: Building partnership between Roma communities and local authorities: participation in governance and access to rights
Convenor: ODIHR CPRSI and ATP

Time: 12.00 – 14.00
Venue: Segmentgalerie I
Language: English & Romani

Summary: Denial of basic rights - such as access to education, medical care, access to justice - discrimination, marginalization, violence and prejudices are still realities for Roma and Sinti throughout the OSCE region.

This side event wants to present and discuss a number of local initiatives – from Albania, Italy, Romania, and Bulgaria – that aim at overcoming obstacles Roma still face to effectively participate in civil, social and political life and access their rights. The side event will discuss how Roma participation in governance and outreach to Roma communities through, for example, cultural mediation and peer education, have been valuable tools in achieving this. The discussion will also highlight what challenges and limitations are still faced when implementing effective responses at the local level.

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Title: Fundamental Rights and Freedoms of Roma in Italy
Convenor: Open Society Institute
Time: 12.00 – 14.00
Venue: Ratsaal
Language: English & Romani

Summary: The Side Event on *Fundamental Rights and Freedoms of Roma in Italy* is going to discuss the situation of Roma in Italy in the context of the OSCE human dimension commitments related to fundamental freedoms, human rights, democracy and the rule of law and the implementation of the OSCE Action Plan on Roma and Sinti.

The discussions are going to be based on the key findings of the fact-finding report under the working title of *Fundamental Rights and Freedoms of Roma in Italy* - conducted at the end of May by an International Delegation of the Open Society Institute, European Roma Rights Center, Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions, Romani Criss and the Roma Civic Alliance in Romania.

The purpose of the fact-finding was to collect data on the racist and xenophobic cases against Roma in Italy in the present political, social and cultural Italian context. Considering the increasing racism and xenophobia against Roma in Italy and taking account of the new legislative initiatives with regards to migrants both within Italy and the European Union, the current report aims to objectively inform on the human rights violations against Roma in Italy and to provide tools for EU and other international institutions, the Romanian, Italian and other governments and civil society to adequately address the situation of Roma and migrants within the European Union members states.

ANNEX IV: RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE ROUNDTABLE FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

On 10 July 2008 the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the OSCE (OSCE/ODIHR) gathered civil society representatives from across the OSCE region in Vienna to discuss sustainable policies for Roma and Sinti integration, with a special emphasis on the local level. Participants of the Roundtable examined the role and responsibilities of regional and local authorities to assist in integrating Roma and Sinti. Major challenges were discussed and good practices were explored with the aim of improving the situation of Roma and Sinti. In addition, participants highlighted the need to improve policies with regard to facilitating equal access Roma and Sinti to public services.

Introduction

1. We are grateful to the Chairmanship and the ODIHR for initiating an NGO roundtable to prepare recommendations for the Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting (SHDM);
2. We welcome the opportunity for civil society representatives to make introductory speeches, and in particular to present the conclusions and the recommendations of the Civil Society Roundtable during the opening session of the SHDM;
3. We recommend that this initiative be institutionalized in future OSCE human dimension meetings;
4. We encourage the participants of this meeting to refrain from making general statements about Roma and Sinti and to focus their intervention on concrete recommendations and to illustrate those with practical initiatives related to the implementation of the OSCE Action Plan on Roma and Sinti;
5. We suggest that participating States review the OSCE Action Plan with the aim of integrating issues related to migration and movement;
6. We ask the participating States to provide information on the implementation of their agenda related to the implementation of Roma-related policies during the OSCE human dimension meetings;
7. We call upon participating States to address urgently the issue of statelessness, lack of ID and personal documentation among Roma displaced persons and refugees;
8. We recommend that participating States address and acknowledge the challenges Roma and Sinti face in the area of civil registration;
9. We urge that public authorities take immediate action to expedite and simplify existing procedures, and make use of the competence of civil society to ensure all Roma are registered and possess the necessary personal documentation to access fundamental rights and basic services
10. We are concerned about the limited application of international standards concerning Roma and Sinti and the poor implementation of Action Plans or Roma-related strategies;
11. We call upon participating States to honour the commitments they have made to protect and promote human rights and minority rights;

12. We remind participating States to take into account the specific needs of vulnerable groups, including Roma and Sinti women;
13. We recommend that participating States launch awareness raising campaigns to counter the prejudices towards and stereotypes of Roma and Sinti.
14. Acknowledging the crucial role of local authorities, we remind States that the main responsibility in combating intolerance against Roma and Sinti and promoting integration lies with governments;
15. We acknowledge the improvement of the Situation of Roma and Sinti in all fields

To participating States

Violent manifestations of intolerance

16. We are deeply concerned about the rise of violent manifestations of intolerance targeting Roma and Sinti communities;
17. We are concerned about the increased activities of right-wing extremist groups and the dissemination of their ideology through the mass media and the internet;
18. We call upon Heads of States, senior government officials, politicians and community leaders to condemn unequivocally manifestations of intolerance targeting Roma and Sinti;
19. We are concerned about the high level of prejudice and negative perceptions about Roma and Sinti throughout the OSCE region often fuelled by the media. We are convinced that officials have a moral and social obligation to challenge anti-gypsyism;
20. We call upon participating States to immediately address the unjustified and disproportionate use of force including of firearms by police and law enforcement institutions against Roma and Sinti;
21. We recommend that advocacy of hatred and State sponsored racism towards Roma and Sinti that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence is prohibited by law and that the prohibition is practically enforced;
22. We ask the OSCE to follow up on responses by States in situations of crisis to ensure that participating States are made accountable when Roma and Sinti are the targets of violent manifestations of intolerance

National Legislation and Policies

23. We commend participating States that fund strategies on Roma and Sinti from national budgets;
24. We call upon participating States to adopt and implement comprehensive legislation with the aim of eliminating discrimination and promoting equality for Roma and Sinti, affected by systemic discrimination;

25. We call upon participating States to establish Roma Advisory Councils on a national level, and on a regional and municipal level when appropriate, and to provide them with proper competency and the authority to achieve results;
26. We recommend participating States carry out extensive research on the roots of Roma and Sinti exclusion and marginalization in order to design adequate National Action Plans and Roma related Strategies;
27. Institutions should undertake regular monitoring, through disaggregated data collection on grounds of ethnicity and gender of Roma and Sinti access to public services;
28. We strongly recommend that participating States adopt positive action measures to ensure access of Roma to positions in public offices;
29. We encourage participating States to adopt a legislative and administrative framework which would ensure that local and regional authorities are accountable for implementing anti-discrimination policies at the local level;
30. The participating States should encourage the inclusion of measures aimed at integrating Roma and Sinti in municipal and regional development plans;
31. We encourage participating States to engage with all relevant stakeholders such as local and regional authorities, Roma and Sinti and civil society when designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating National Roma Strategies or National Action Plans;
32. We recommend that local and regional authorities take into account the particularities of the local context and design adequate measures within the framework of existing National Roma-related Strategies and Action plans. At the same time, we strongly encourage national authorities to define the indicators of the evaluation of those policies in order to produce comparable and consistent data;
33. We call upon participating States to provide local and regional authorities with adequate financial resources in order to implement National Roma-related Strategies or National Action Plans.
34. Participating States must ensure that National Action Plans on Roma and Sinti, as well as the OSCE Action Plan on Roma and Sinti is disseminated widely and that awareness is raised among regional and local authorities;
35. We call upon participating States that are members of the EU to enforce the European Union Equality Directive adopted in 2000 and to create anti-discriminatory bodies ;

Local Authorities

36. We recommend that participating States strengthen the capacity of local authorities to address the Roma and Sinti related issues;
37. We urge local authorities to work together with local Romani councils and civil society with the aim of involving Roma and Sinti in the governance of their communities at both the level of city districts and villages. This process should be sufficiently funded by national budgets;
38. We call upon local authorities to assist in building the capacity of Roma and Sinti to be actively engaged in the public administration of their countries;

39. Initiatives should be undertaken that sensitize local authorities and raise awareness of mainstream society to the challenges Roma and Sinti confront. This can be done through joint events and projects between local authorities and Roma groups and will serve as reliable confidence-building tools to shape social models for Roma integration and promote positive interethnic relations.
40. We would like to draw attention to the effective results of developing local action plans in partnerships with Roma and Sinti representatives.

Health

41. We ask participating States to pay particular attention to the deteriorating health situation of Roma and Sinti, in particular women and children, in the most disadvantaged areas.
42. Participating States should establish the policy or strengthen the role of Roma health mediators paying particular attention to issues related to life expectancy;

Housing

43. We strongly urge local authorities to regulate housing and property rights and resolve issues of land tenure;
44. We encourage local authorities to work in cooperation with Roma inhabitants with regard to decisions of including Romani settlements into the urban development and zoning plans;
45. A priority for local authorities should be to immediately improve the living conditions in existing Roma and Sinti neighborhoods in order to reach standards of adequate housing as defined in the general comments of the International Pact on Economical, Social and Cultural Rights. This should include the minimum requirements for basic services such as access to running water, sewage system, electricity and health;
46. We strongly urge local authorities to assist those Roma and Sinti living in substandard conditions and on illegal sites and in environmentally risky areas by relocating them to areas that provide access to schools, hospitals, public transport, electricity, and running water. The relocation should eradicate segregation of Roma and Sinti;
47. We urge the immediate cessation of all forced evictions and develop and enforce legislation that prohibits forced eviction

Education

48. We urge participating States to end segregated education of Roma and Sinti, including by abolishing the practice of discriminatory placement of Romani children in special schools;
49. Local authorities should actively promote the attendance of all Romani children to education institutions, especially early education, making use of Roma mediators, assistants and supporting teachers;
50. Targeted opportunities in education institutions, such as scholarships and allotted places in university, should be offered to Roma and Sinti to encourage youth to continue their education;
51. We recommend that the implementation of community based programs for the integration of Roma and Sinti children include measures that also target

- the majority population to ensure that an integrated approach is taken to promoting desegregation in the education system;
52. We encourage participating States to ensure the incorporation of intercultural education and teaching methods that preserve and build the ethnic identity of Roma and Sinti children;
 53. We recommend that the history of the persecution and the genocide of Roma and Sinti is included in official school curricula and teaching materials.

Employment

54. We commend cooperation between employment agencies and Roma civil society to address challenges in the area of access to labour market;
55. To address hardships in Roma and Sinti communities, local authorities should integrate social work programmes aimed at providing immediate relief in conjunction with sustainable employment solutions;
56. We strongly encourage local municipalities to work with civil society to tailor programmes that support young Roma and Sinti to access employment;
57. We recommend that participating States take measures to foster Roma and Sinti entrepreneurship and traditional occupations.

Recognition of minority and cultural rights

58. We strongly urge participating States to take a more active role in recognizing and preserving the existence of a distinct Roma culture and identity;
59. We emphasize the importance of acknowledging the existence of a Roma and Sinti culture and identity when designing anti-discrimination measures;
60. We encourage participating States to recognize Romani language as a part of European cultural heritage;

Cooperation with communities and NGOs

61. We encourage public authorities to make use of the competence of civil society when undertaking needs assessment studies;
62. We recommend that participating States build the capacity and enhance the skills of civil society actors representing or defending Roma and Sinti interests in particular in the area of project management and ability to work with local authorities;
63. We suggest that IGOs and public authorities engage in institutionalized partnerships with civil society in a broad sense and with representatives of Roma and Sinti communities.
64. Acknowledging the crucial role of civil society to monitor and report on progress of implementation of Roma-related policies, we encourage public authorities to support their activities in this area.

To Roma and Sinti

65. We remind all Roma and Sinti representatives of the necessity to create stronger coalitions in order to become active, responsible and respected partners in local and regional politics. In particular, we stress the importance of having Roma and Sinti representatives within mainstream parties;

To the OSCE

66. Acknowledging the increase of violent acts towards Roma and Sinti throughout the OSCE region, we urge the OSCE institutions and field operations to make extensive use of their early warning and conflict resolution mechanisms;
67. We suggest that the OSCE amends paragraph 72 of the “Action Plan on Improving the situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE area” by recognizing Romani language and culture as an integral part of the European cultural heritage¹⁰;
68. We recommend that an explanatory brochure on the OSCE Action Plan on Roma and Sinti, in English, Romani and other relevant languages, is disseminated widely throughout the OSCE region;
69. We strongly recommend that the ODIHR strengthens and institutionalizes partnerships with international Roma and Sinti organizations;
70. We recommend that the ODIHR reaches out in a systematic way to young Roma and Sinti generations by raising awareness on the values and activities of the OSCE and by developing adequate programmes to build their leadership skills;
71. We recommend that the ODIHR collects and disseminates best practices on initiatives targeted at addressing discrimination, violent manifestations of intolerance and promoting integration, mutual respect and understanding towards Roma and Sinti
72. We recommend that OSCE institutions enhance their cooperation with field operations when reviewing the situation of Roma and Sinti communities and for the implementation of anti-discrimination policies;
73. We ask the OSCE to intervene in situations of crisis according the modalities laid in article 114 of the OSCE Action Plan, especially with regard to the Italian situation;
74. We recommend the OSCE/ODIHR to monitor if the recommendations were followed by participating States by the next OSCE human dimension meeting;
75. We ask the OSCE institutions and field operations to devise and implement programmes aimed at building the capacity and skills of women to participate in politics;
76. We recommend that the ODIHR establishes a working group to look into the situation of Roma in Central Asia and the Caucasus and propose courses of action in order to promote the implementation of the OSCE Action Plan.

To the European Union

77. We call upon the European Commission and the European Council to heed the EP resolution to develop coherent, comprehensive and effective European Roma policy by using the OSCE Action Plan on Roma and Sinti as a model

¹⁰ “72. Consider measures to ensure the respect, protection and promotion of the Romani language and its teaching, and of Roma culture as an integral part of the Roma and Sinti cultural heritage.” Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE area, p.17

and establish a Roma Unit within the structures of the European Commission;

78. The European Union should consider disqualifying local and regional public authorities for resource allocation when they do not implement national policies or action plans aimed at combating segregation and promoting integration of Roma and Sinti;
79. We recommend that seminars are organized to build the skills and knowledge of civil society and government officials on ways to seek and manage funds in the framework of accession to EU and in new Member States;
80. We encourage the European Union to make use of the competence of Romani observers when designing, implementing, monitoring and assessing Roma-related policies.

ANNEX X: STATISTICS ON PARTICIPATION

Numbers of OSCE Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on *Sustainable Policies for Roma and Sinti Integration*

Vienna, 10 – 11 July 2008

Total number of participants – **244**, including:

127 participants from 43 participating States (except Andorra, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Kyrgyzstan, Liechtenstein, Malta, Moldova, Monaco, Uzbekistan, San Marino, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan)

No representatives from Partners for Co-operation

9 representatives of 5 Int'l Organizations:

- Council of Europe, including Advisory Committee, CoE Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities
- EU European Economic and Social Committee
- European Parliament; Office of MEP Els de Groen
- International Organization for Migration (Office in Austria and Office in Belgrade)
- UNDP; Bratislava Regional Centre

8 participants from the 3 OSCE Institutions:

- OSCE Secretariat
- OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities
- OSCE Parliamentary Assembly; Liaison Office in Austria

8 representatives of 7 OSCE Field Operations:

- OSCE Presence in Albania
- OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina
- OSCE Mission in Kosovo
- OSCE Office in Minsk
- OSCE Mission to Moldova
- OSCE Mission to Serbia
- OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje

92 representatives of 69 NGOs from:

Austria (9 organizations); Belgium (1); Cyprus (1); France (3); Ireland (1); Italy (7); the Netherlands (2); Spain (2); Sweden (3); Switzerland (2); United Kingdom (3); United States of America (1)

Albania (1); Croatia (1); the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (4); Montenegro (1); Serbia (4)

Belarus (1); Bulgaria (2); Czech Republic (1); Hungary (5); Moldova (2); Poland (2); Romania (5); Russian Federation (2); Slovakia (2)

Israel (1)

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Mrs. Isabela	MIHALACHE	Presentation of report from the Side event: roundtable for Civil Society
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