



HDIM.DEL/247/07
28 September 2007

DELEGATION OF ROMANIA

Working Session 7: OSCE Action Plan for Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti
in the OSCE Area

Statement by Romania,
presented by the president of the National Agency for Roma
for Working Session 7

Romania highly appreciates the comprehensive approach of ODHIR to improve the situation of Roma and Sinti in OSCE area, as being most appropriate for the specific problems commonly faced by this population throughout Europe.

Speaking about the main theme of this special-day, it is important to stress that the Romanian National Strategy for improving the situation of Roma has been elaborated and is being implemented in close partnership, by Governmental agencies and Roma NGOs, according to the principles of participation, representation and ownership which are endorsed by the OSCE Action Plan. It is the intention of the Romanian authorities to redesign the national strategy in order to include a monitoring and evaluation system. To this end, a Consultative body of over 80 Roma NGO's was formed to ensure inclusive participation in decision-making process.

Romania is ready to share with OSCE partners the good practice it has acquired in developing this active partnership.

A few remarks about the participation to political life: There are two levels of participation at central and at local level. Since the Constitution of Romania guarantees

political representation for national minorities for the lower Chamber of the Parliament, there is at least one member represented in the parliament (which was also elected as president of the Chamber of Deputies Commission on Human Rights, Minorities and Religious issues). Also, some of the political parties represented in the Parliament have members from the Roma community. In principle, political representation of Roma is strongly linked with political participation of Roma, including electoral participation and in the future we are certain that more Roma will run for public offices as members of main political basis and less on an ethnic basis.

I will give you also some examples of participation of Roma to public life in Romania: myself, as President of the national Agency for Roma, I am a political nominee, there is a Roma adviser to the prime-minister and a Roma deputy head of the Ombudsman Office and there are many local Roma counselors at local (villages and cities) and municipal level.

From our experience we noticed that it is quite easy to convince central authorities, Governments and ministries of the necessity to take actions in favour of Roma, but it is more difficult to convince local authorities that there is their duty to improve significantly and in a short period of time, the situation of Roma. We consider that it is very important to have direct participation of the majority in order to have sustainable development projects. Since the majority of the population has the tendency not to regard Roma issues as their problems, we feel that it is well needed to change this attitude through awareness/raising campaigns and involve the majority into solving Roma issues.

Local development without preventing and combating discrimination against Roma is not possible and as long as Roma are still subject to discrimination in areas like education, employment, health-care or housing, it is fair to presume that Roma are not considered equal human beings. In order to overcome discrimination in these areas that I mentioned, the Romanian authorities adopted regulations on preventing segregation in schools at all levels, to ensure diversity, appointing health-mediators and police liaison officers, as well as creating special seats available for Roma to the Police Academy. .

Romania is determined to work closely with the International Organizations, as well as with NGOs to develop its national framework for addressing the objective of improving

the situation of Roma citizens through non-discrimination, integration, access to a dignified life.