

Statement by the delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan**Warsaw, 01 October 2015****Working Session 16****Tolerance and non-discrimination I (continued), including:**

- Roma and Sinti issues, including: implementation of the OSCE Action plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti

Thank you Madam Moderator,

The basic platform or ground for dealing with all minorities living in Azerbaijan is the international human rights conventions. Article 25 of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, adopted in 1995, provides the rights of all citizens of their political economic social and cultural rights. In 2011, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan approved "National Action Program to increase efficiency of protection of human rights and freedoms." As well as all other citizens of Azerbaijan this document became the strategic guidance and provides the rights of all ethnic minorities. The policy of Multiculturalism is the basic core of state acting toward the protection of ethnic minorities of Azerbaijan including Romani.

Historically, the territory of modern Azerbaijan was the part of migration of the Roma people from Asia to Europe which explains why there is a small number of these people living in Azerbaijan. There are three basic areas for living: Garachi village in Yevlakh region, one former village in Karabakh and other one in the north of Azerbaijan. The Romani who lived in Karabakh migrated at the beginning of 1990s before the war in Karabakh started. Fortunately, the Romani did not suffer.

Nowadays a large number of Romani are living in the Yevlakh region and most of them have migrated to the capital (Baku).

Unfortunately, today discrimination against the Roma and Sinti continues to be a challenge in the OSCE region. The Roma continues to face numerous problems ranging from forced eviction, expulsion to access to housing, education, health care and labor market in a number of countries. These problems have been reflected in a number of reports/documents of international organizations, their various monitoring mechanisms etc.

As it was mentioned with the Ministerial Council Decision #4/2013 the OSCE participating States recommitted to enhance their efforts to implement the OSCE Action Plan by putting particular emphasis on Roma and Sinti women, youth and children.

In this regard, we are concerned by the widespread discrimination and violence against the Roma in the Czech Republic. The persistent segregation of Roma children in schools could be highlighted here. We join call made by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child to eliminate all forms of school segregation. We would be grateful if the distinguished Czech Delegation would inform us about the measures taken or envisaged to this end.

In 2011, manifestations, marches and rallies against the Roma in several Czech cities have been accompanied by racially motivated acts of violence, as reflected in the compilation prepared by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights submitted to the Universal Periodic Review Mechanism. We share the concern highlighted *inter alia* by the United Nations Committee against Torture that prompt and impartial investigations and prosecutions regarding these incidents have not been conducted. In this regard, we encourage the

Czech Republic to take appropriate measures to ensure that all these cases are thoroughly investigated and perpetrators are prosecuted.

Furthermore, there are a number of reports on buying of votes of the Roma in the local elections held in October 2014. We would like to request the Czech delegation clarify if an investigation has been conducted on these cases.

Taken into the account the abovementioned we would like to make the following recommendation:

- More efforts should be taken to combat hate crimes against the Roma, to put an end to the negative public attitude towards the Roma, to reduce high unemployment rate and this is just a few to mention. In this regard, we call on the Czech Republic to accelerate its efforts in line with the Roma integration Strategy 2014-2020.

Thank you.