

OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 2016**Statement of the Czech Republic****Equal opportunities for women and men in all spheres of life****Tolerance and non-discrimination, including Roma and Sinti issues**

Madame Moderator,

The Czech Republic fully aligns herself with the EU statement. I would like to make some remarks in my national capacity and to share with you some examples of good practices and measures taken by the Czech Government to promote equal participation of women and men in all spheres of life and to inform you about recent developments and efforts made by the Czech Government in order to improve the situation of the Roma minority.

During the last few years, positive progress can be seen in the Czech Republic. Very important were the adoptions of the Government Strategy for Equality of Women and Men in the Czech Republic for the Years 2014 – 2020 in November 2014 and related documents and of the Strategy for Roma Integration until 2020 in February 2015.

Let me start with the policies on equal participation of women and men. Based on the Strategy the Action Plan for Balanced Representation of Women and Men in Decision-making Positions for the Years 2016 – 2018 was adopted by the Czech Government in July 2016. It is the second Action Plan based on the Strategy. The first one was the Action Plan for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Gender-based Violence for the Years 2015 – 2018.

The Action Plan for Balanced Representation of Women and Men in Decision-making Positions for the Years 2016 – 2018 aims to create a complex framework for measures focused on higher representation of women in politics and other decision making positions. It includes 35 specific measures divided into 4 areas: a) general measures, b) politics, c) public administration and d) companies. The Action plan was created in cooperation with the Committee for Balanced Representation of Women and Men in Decision-making Positions, associating experts from NGOs, social partners, academia and members of political parties.

In October 2015 the Gender Audit Standard (Standard) was created to provide a minimum standard for the implementation of one of the gender mainstreaming tools – a gender audit. The aim of the Standard is to provide various employees with a practical tool for gender audit as

well as to unite the practice of gender audit in the Czech Republic. The Standard was created by the Gender Equality Unit in cooperation with experts from NGOs, academia and other ministries. In May 2016 the Czech Republic signed the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence. According to the Government decision, legislative measures to ensure the implementation of Convention should be submitted to the Government by the Ministry of Justice by June 2017.

In 2016 the implementation of the European Social Fund project was started by the Gender Equality Unit of the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic. The project is focused on implementation of main government strategic documents including those mentioned above. The project is also focused on the gender impact assessment, Gender Audit Standard, international cooperation and transfer of good practice, sex-disaggregated statistical data collection and informational and educational activities related to gender equality.

We are also preparing an awareness raising campaign funded by the Norway Grants focusing on gender equality and gender based violence prevention.

To sum up, the Czech Republic has recently undertaken a number of specific and ambitious measures to improve gender equality in our country and to secure effective implementation of gender mainstreaming. However, a number of challenges still remain ahead of us. Women in the Czech Republic still earn more than 20% less than men, continue to be under-represented in politics and decision making-positions, face lack of child-care facilities, lack of flexible forms of work and become victims of gender-based violence. The Czech Government is aware of these remaining gaps and plans to continue in its efforts to achieve gender equality and empowerment of women. We will also continue to focus on women facing multiple discrimination or disadvantages, gender equality in the media and cyber space, gender equality in the education and participation of men in the gender equality issues.

With regards to the issue of Roma integration the situation remains a high priority of the Government. Following on the adoption of the Strategy for Roma Integration until 2020, the Czech National Roma Contact Point has prepared a Methodology for Evaluation of the Implementation of the Strategy for Roma Integration until 2020. The methodology introduces evidence based approach to public policy evaluation. It sets a list of robust and specific indicators for measuring the progress in Roma integration. It introduces both quantified baseline and target values to measuring progress in all the main fields of Roma integration, to mention the main one, it covers the areas of education, employment, housing, access to social services and health.

Moreover, in February 2016 the Government of the Czech Republic adopted the Strategy to Combat Social Exclusion until 2020. It complements the Strategy for Roma Integration until 2020

with the specific focus on the situation of persons living in socially excluded localities, where also a high proportion of Roma live. It introduces measures and a system for regularly monitoring the phenomenon of social exclusion in collaboration with all relevant ministries. The Strategy also responds to the findings from the Analysis of socially excluded localities in 2015.

Recently, an important change in the area of education has taken place with regards to the adoption of an amendment to the Education Act. The amendment has introduced specific measures to promote inclusive education and equal access to education for all children. Most of the measures came successfully into the force in September 2016. Nevertheless, precise data on enrollment of children in accordance with the amended Education Act will be available in October after the primary schools update their enrollment information into the central system.

Moreover, in May 2016 the Czech Parliament approved another amendment to the Education Act according to which the last year of pre-school education should be compulsory and costless for all children starting from 1st September 2017.

In the area of housing the Czech Government adopted the Strategy for Social Housing 2015 – 2025 which sets the basis for the Social Housing Law.

In line with the implementation of the Strategy for Roma integration up to 2020 the Minister for Human Rights, Equal Opportunities and Legislation and the Minister of Culture held negotiations with the representatives of the owners of the pig farm on the ways to close the farm. In March 2016 the Czech Government confirmed its intention to close the farm, and expressed readiness to purchase the site.

As we reported at the HDIM last year, the Czech Government launched a Campaign against Racism and Hate Violence. The campaign has been especially relevant when addressing Anti-Gypsyism, hate speech and violence against Roma as well as when addressing the anti-Islamic sentiments in the Czech Republic. In total 219 HateFree zones were established among public institutions (for example restaurants, schools, clubs) in the Czech republic with at least 4 172 registered members of the HateFree community (holders of HateFree ID card).

In May 2016 the Czech Government through the Office of the Government Council for Roma Minority Affairs (the National Roma Contact Point) launched the project Activation and Empowerment of Roma Stakeholders by the National Roma Platform which is aimed at strengthening cooperation and dialogue of all relevant stakeholders of Roma integration and empowering Roma stakeholders to effectively take part in identifying the needs of Roma minority, solving the problems of Roma minority and creating ownership of the results of the integration process.

Ladies and Gentlemen, let me conclude that the Roma integration remains one of the priorities of the Czech Government. Specific measures towards this goal are being implemented, aimed at

combating social exclusion and its symptoms, fostering equal access to education, providing access to housing, health care, and fighting discrimination and stereotypes.

Thank you for your attention.