

**OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting  
(Warsaw, 24 September - 5 October 2007)  
Working Session 6: Roma and Sinti**

**Bulgarian Delegation**

**Right to reply**

My delegation regrets the egregious violation of the truth in the remarks regarding the participation of Roma in the political life in Bulgaria.

The Constitutional Court has clearly defined the content and the scope of the provision of Art.11(4) of the Constitution, namely that the restriction is applicable only to parties which limit their membership exclusively to a particular ethnic group/groups.

In line with this, there are several political parties in Bulgaria whose members and supporters are mainly Roma, such as “Roma”, “DROM”, “EuroRoma”, “Free Bulgaria”, “A Future for All”, etc.

In the elections for the 40<sup>th</sup> National Assembly in 2005, the political movement “EuroRoma” participated with its own list, while several parties perceived as representing the Roma community, ran in coalitions with mainstream parties. For example, the political party “Roma” joined the “Coalition for Bulgaria”, which won the majority of the votes (82 seats); “DROM” entered the coalition “Unified Democratic Forces” which won 20 seats, etc. It should be recalled also that in its report on Roma Political Participation in Bulgaria, the US National Democratic Institute has pointed out the following:

- “...Roma participation in the elections did increase in several important respects:*
- The number of Roma candidates on mainstream political party lists almost doubled(...),*
  - Roma were increasingly active in get-out-the-vote (GOTV) and election and media monitoring efforts through civil society organizations (...),*
  - Roma NGOs also interacted with mainstream parties through such efforts as the creation of a code of conduct (...),*
  - For the first time in Bulgaria, a mainstream party (the Bulgarian Socialist Party), created a specific platform on Roma-related issues (...),*
  - There was an increase in the public attention paid to the issue of Roma inclusion, as seen in media coverage, candidate debates and other campaign documents and events.”*

We would also like to thank the ODIHR Elections department for clarifying the issue of the registration of voters at places of residence, namely, that *“it is also the responsibility of the voters to register with the municipalities upon the change of residence...”*

As to the Roma-directed strategies in Bulgaria, my Government is committed to allocating even more resources from the state budget for implementation of the envisaged measures. In this regard, I would like to draw attention to the information already provided by the Bulgarian authorities to the ODIHR for updating the Status report.

27 September 2007