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S T A T E M E N T

by Ms Nina Mitic, Assistant Minister, Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs

at the Working session 10: Tolerance and Non-discrimination
2017 OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
(18 September, Warsaw)

Thank you Madam Moderator,

I would like to take this opportunity to inform you on measures adopted in the Republic of Serbia in the field of tolerance and non-discrimination.

Social inclusion of Roma men and women remains one of priorities of the government of the Republic of Serbia, which is evident above all from the Action Plan for Chapter 23, the Strategy for Roma Inclusion 2016-2025, Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy 2017-2018, and operative conclusions from the Roma Inclusion Seminar held in June 2015

Among other things, the Action Plan on improving the situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE area suggests development of comprehensive national strategies or Action Plans to improve the situation of Roma and Sinti. The Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma (2016-2025) was adopted on 3 March 2016. The two-year Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy has been prepared and adopted on 7 June 2017.

The Coordination Body for monitoring the implementation of the Strategy has been established and the Deputy Prime Minister is the Chairperson. The members of the Coordination Body are decision-makers from all relevant Ministries. In addition to this, an expert group has been formed as operational support to the Coordination Body. Membership of the expert group includes representatives of the state institutions, but also civil society organizations and the National Council of the Roma National Minority.

The expert mission of the European Commission on Roma inclusion was organized in July this year. The experts had a chance to meet all relevant Ministries and institutions, as well as civil society organizations and the target group during field visits.

Roma Inclusion Seminar is held every two years in cooperation with the European Commission and it is an opportunity to assess the progress made and formulate key priorities in the form of Operational Conclusions for the next two-year period. The next Roma inclusion seminar will take place in the second part of October this year.

Regional Council for Cooperation provides support to governmental institutions in the countries of the region during the process of Roma inclusion. Serbia hosts the Roma Action Team of the Regional Council for Cooperation, whose office is located in Belgrade.

Law on housing that addresses, among other, the question of forced evictions has been adopted by the Government of Serbia and is currently being implemented. Several articles of this law are regulating the importance of participation of citizens regarding housing issues.

With the support of TARI project, implemented by the OSCE Mission in Serbia, the Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure was supported in the mapping of 583 sub-standard informal Roma settlements in Serbia and in the establishment of GIS information system to enable monitoring and improvement of housing conditions. In June this year, after an open call and selection process, local self-governments received support in the total amount of 7.5 million euros for permanent housing solutions and improvement of infrastructure in Roma settlements, as part of IPA 2013 program.

Access to health care is supported by engagement of 63 health mediators in 59 local self-governments. Health mediators participated in an educational program for professional development and database is being upgraded by inclusion of new indicators for monitoring the health situation among the Roma population.

With the facilitation of the Centers for social services, address of residence can be defined through the address of the Centre for social services or other social welfare institution that provides accommodation. The decision on transfers for provision of welfare services on the local level will improve local capacities to respond to the needs and rights of citizens.

Ministry of Education prepared a Rulebook on criteria for detection of discrimination in educational institutions and within this document defined segregation as a very serious form of discrimination in the education process. A Working Group within the Ministry will develop a manual for the implementation of this Rulebook from the side of the educational institutions.

The network of pedagogical assistants and mentors has been streamlined, 175 pedagogical assistants and 208 mentors provide support in education. Certification of engaged pedagogical assistants and mentors took place. The Department for Roma language at the Faculty of Philology of the University of Belgrade was established and the first group of teachers for Roma language and culture has been educated.

Unemployed Roma men and women are recognized as one of the categories of persons hard to employ and as such are given priority in the process of inclusion of the unemployed in active measures of employment. 1,017 Roma (473 Roma women) are covered by measures of active employment.

As far as proposal expressed by the USA Delegation to have the representatives of Pristina around this table is concerned, we would like to underline that our position remains unchanged, it is well known and we cannot agree with such proposal.

Thank you for attention.
