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OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting Warsaw, 11-22 September 2017

Working session 10.2: Tolerance and non-discrimination I, including rights of persons belonging to national minorities, Roma and Sinti issues, including implementation of the OSCE Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti, preventing aggressive nationalism, racism and chauvinism

Mr./Ms. Chairperson,

on behalf of the European Union I have the honor deliver the following recommendations and messages regarding the issues related to Roma and Sinti persons in the OSCE area.

The participating states should be encouraged to:

- Carry continuous resolute efforts at all levels (the highest political level and local level, as well) for the inclusion of Roma and Sinti persons. In particular, the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE area should be subject to a regular review of its implementation. Participating States are called to fully support the activity of ODIHR with a view to facilitating the implementation review process.
- Provide information on specific steps and recent developments in the situation of Roma and Sinti persons and/or measures inspired by this Action Plan.
- For EU member states, continue to ensure the complementarity of the OSCE Action Plan on improving the situation of Roma and Sinti and the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies which established a solid policy, legal and financial framework at both EU and national levels.



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- Take effective measures to ensure respect of fundamental rights, in particular improving access to education, employment, healthcare and housing; Ensuring access to birth registration, identity documents for Roma and Sinti persons is a key to improving their lives.
- Continue efforts to enhance participation in public life of Roma and Sinti youth, as future stakeholders promoting inclusion of Roma and Sinti persons, especially in the elaboration, implementation and evaluation of the policies that affect them.
- Particular attention should be paid to Roma and Sinti women and girls who often face multiple forms of discrimination. Welcome the focus of the Contact Point for Roma and Sinti of ODIHR on enhancing the public and political participation of Roma and Sinti women, contributing thus to the implementation of the Kyiv Ministerial Council Declaration, which has a particular focus on Roma, and Sinti women, youth and girls. The consultation meetings for Roma and Sinti women activists represent a good opportunity to receive direct feedback on ODIHR's work, to receive further guidance of the needs of the community and therefore to mainstream their needs in the further activity of the CPRSI.
- Put greater emphasis on actions in the areas of education and employment; promote the training of mediators and training-of-trainers as a useful tool to strengthen human rights.
- Organizing campaigns aimed at raising awareness of their rights. Roma and Sinti persons are still facing challenges, social exclusion and discrimination in access to education.



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- Combating all forms of discrimination, including multiple discrimination, faced by Roma children and women, and fighting violence, including domestic violence, against women and girls, trafficking in human beings, underage and forced marriages are further issues that we are seeking to address, in particular through the enforcement of legislation.
- Continue to publicly condemn any act of discrimination, including anti-Roma rhetoric and hate speech from officials, political leaders and civil society.
- Enhance implementation of the OSCE commitments with regard to Roma and Sinti persons by local authorities.
- Further combat poverty and social exclusion affecting Roma and Sinti persons, through investment in human capital and social cohesion policies; pay particular attention to Roma and Sinti migrants, refugees and IDPs.
- Increase access to efficient and independent justice for Roma and Sinti in the OSCE area, an essential aspect of the rule of law and a fundamental requirement for any democratic society. Several factors, including a lack of rights awareness and poor knowledge about the tools that are available to access justice are responsible for the existing barriers to access to justice.

The OSCE Institutions should:

- Review periodically strategies, policies and measures related to the situation of Roma and Sinti persons, for a better understanding of the accuracy of these measures and for addressing practical obstacles.
- Continue enhancing cooperation among international organizations with regard to improving the situation of Roma and Sinti persons;



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- Continue activities of its field operations with regard to improving the situation of Roma and Sinti persons.

Mr./Ms. Chairperson,

Since 2011, with the adoption of the EU Framework for the National Roma Integration Strategies the European Union has put Roma and Sinti integration high on the political agenda. EU Member States were invited to prepare, update or develop Roma inclusion strategies or sets of policy measures within their broader social inclusion policies. These policies target in particular improving access to education, employment, healthcare and housing.

The Europe 2020 strategy, in the context of which the European Commission is undertaking targeted communication activities to fight discrimination and stereotypes against Roma and Sinti persons, encompasses a set of measures in the field. Also, the European Commission annual assessments of progress on Roma and Sinti integration in the Member States represent another useful mechanism put in place at EU level. The 28 National Roma Contact Points provide comprehensive and updated information on the measures adopted at national and local level. The European Union will continue to help local and regional authorities strengthen their administrative capacities in order to access and use EU funds more effectively.

In May 2015, the Commission addressed country specific recommendations to promote the participation of Roma children in quality inclusive early childhood and school education.

The European Union commends the work done by OSCE Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues in promoting Human Rights of Roma and Sinti Women who face multiple forms of discrimination. Dialogue with Roma and Sinti raises awareness and represents a good opportunity to receive further guidance of the needs of the community they belong to and therefore to mainstream their needs in the further activity of the CPRSI.



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We welcome the work of the OSCE Office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities aimed at ensuring a more integrated society in which each and every member can enjoy the same rights.

The full implementation of all OSCE commitments continues to be the EU's guiding principle. We take this opportunity to reiterate our calls for full implementation of all OSCE commitments regarding Roma and Sinti and our firm determination in this respect.

(1) The term "Roma" refers to Roma, Sinti, Kale and related groups in Europe, including Travellers and the Eastern groups (Dom and Lom), and covers the wide diversity of the groups concerned, including persons who identify themselves as Gypsies

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA country ICELAND, member of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA and GEORGIA align themselves with this statement.

* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.