



**Statement by the Delegation of Hungary at the  
OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting**  
Warsaw, 30 September 2014

*Working Session 12: Tolerance and non-discrimination I (Roma and Sinti issues including the implementation of the OSCE Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti)*

First of all, I would like to confirm that the Hungarian Government is committed to improve the situation of Roma and to promote their social inclusion. In order to achieve this, since 2010, we have renewed the governmental framework in this field.

In 2011 the Hungarian Government adopted a long-term strategy on social inclusion. This strategy focuses on the most disadvantaged people--especially Roma, children, and those who are living in extreme poverty. Its priority areas are the well-being of children, education, employment, healthcare, housing and involvement, awareness-raising as well as the fight against discrimination. It uses an integrated approach, which means that actions are implemented in a complex and multi-disciplinary manner. We have also set up consultative bodies in order to ensure a partnership. The main partner of the Government is the National Roma Self Government which is a body elected by Roma themselves.

Our work is based on a three year governmental action plan linked to the Strategy and the initial results of its implementation can already be seen.

Please let me highlight some pioneering initiatives.

In the field of the well-being of children and education there is the network of Sure Start Children's Houses offering complex support for more than 18,000 disadvantaged children and their families. The Scholarship Programs support more than 18,000 disadvantaged students. It is important to mention that from the beginning of next year every 3-year old child is obligated to attend kindergarten. Therefore, nearly 5000 new places in kindergartens have been created in disadvantaged regions.

In the field of employment, the Government launched public work programs, involving 400 000 people. Our estimation is that the participation of Roma is about 20% which is approximately three times higher than their percentage of the population. A smaller but important program is the Social Land Program supporting the subsistence and living costs of more than 3000 families.

Regarding involvement, awareness raising, and the fight against discrimination, I must mention that Hungary was the first country in Europe to include Roma culture and history into the National Curriculum. The elections held this year was the first occasion in our country's history when every national minority including Roma had the opportunity to get a preferential mandate in the national parliament.



Finally, please allow me to give an update regarding an on-going housing action of the municipality of Miskolc situated in North-Eastern Hungary, which is one of the most disadvantaged regions in the country.

This year the municipality adopted an amendment of its previous regulation, with the aim to increase the effectiveness of the "elimination of obsolete segregated settlements", and thus enable it to take measures in the realm of urban development. This amendment increased the amount of compensation which can be paid in cases if tenants voluntarily leave apartments rented from the municipality. At the same time, the leaders of the municipality recognized that it is impossible to buy an apartment with all amenities for this sum within Miskolc borders. Therefore, in order to avoid the creation of new slums in other parts of the town, the amendment introduced a new rule. According to this, the compensation can only be chosen in case of leaving low comfort/substandard apartments owned by the municipality and if the tenant purchases property outside of the town. However, the municipality underlined that this is only an opportunity, and moving to the countryside is not mandatory for anyone; those families which do not intend to choose this option are not under any legal pressure to do so. The Mayor of the city personally informed all local Roma minority leaders about this change in advance, and relevant information was also shared with Mr Flórián Farkas, President of the National Roma Self Government, as well as Mr Félix Farkas, Roma Ethnic Spokesperson of the National Parliament.

After recognizing the debate caused by the new rule, with respecting the autonomy of the local government, a high-level multilateral discussion was initiated among the relevant ministries, the municipality and some NGOs. According to the agreement of the participants of this meeting the Hungarian Maltese Charity Service has been involved in the process in order to provide mediation for the people living in the territory concerned. The social workers of the Maltese Charity Service live in the city and they are working on finding solutions for all of the concerned families.

We believe that in the past four years with the National Social Inclusion Strategy being in line with the EU Roma Framework Strategy, the Government created a flexible strategy to respond to these kinds of problems. It is important to highlight that problems are different not only country by country but also even within a small territory, hence there are various solutions of a problem in which local features always have to be taken into account. We are aware that social inclusion of Roma is a question of human rights, but it is also in the economic interest of Hungary and Europe as a whole. Accordingly, we continue our hard work on this issue.