

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF GREECE -RIGHT OF REPLY**Working session 16: Tolerance and non-discrimination I (continued), including:****– Roma and Sinti issues, including: Implementation of the OSCE Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti (1.10.2015)**

In reply to statements on the situation of Roma in Greece, I would like to stress that as in practically all participating states, the situation of the Roma is a cause for concern to my country. In 2011, within the EU framework, we launched the National Roma Integration Strategy, monitored by the European Commission, aiming at combating discrimination and social exclusion of the Roma by adopting or further developing a comprehensive approach to Roma integration in the areas of access to education, employment, health care and housing. Twelve out of thirteen Regions of Greece have developed Regional Strategies for Roma Integration focusing on the specific needs of the Roma in their territories.

Furthermore, the intervention of Roma mediators is promoted, in particular in the fields of health care and education.

The Ministry of Education has continued to apply additional proactive measures and special programs to tackle prejudice or exclusion that Roma children might face during their schooling, such as the program on “Education of Roma children”. In the field of education, Enrollment of Roma pupils and the avoidance of school segregation are among our top priorities.

With regard to housing, the development of basic infrastructures in Roma settlements is the main measure promoted so far, focused on environmental upgrading and recovery of urban landscape and sites, road network construction, creation of playground and recreation areas, construction of sewage and waste-water collection system etc.

In cases of illegal settlements, every effort is being made to seek adequate alternative accommodation solutions, under the existing heavy financial constraints. This requires a sustained effort on the part of all levels of government, including local government organizations, and a constructive attitude on the part of the communities concerned and their representatives.