

**OSCE HDIM Warsaw 2018
Working Session 09**

**Participation of Roma and Sinti minority of Poland
in the public space.**

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Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

On the today's session of the OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 2018 in Warsaw I would like to share with all the representatives of states institutions, social organizations, media and academics some remarks on the issue of Roma and Sinti participation in a public life and their participation in the whole society life.

As the representative of a large and powerful Romani NGO, whose President Mr Roman Chojnacki is a member of the Joint Government and National and Ethnic Minorities Commission of the Republic of Poland I must definitely admit that the level of Roma participation in public life is slowly, but consequently growing. One of the most important reasons for that is significant growth of Roma and Sinti youth and children participation in education over the period of last 10-15 years and the previous large gap between them and children from majority society is much over lower. That achievement as well as the whole social-wide raising awareness campaigns on Roma minority issues is an effect of Roma organizations activity, which is very often difficult and is crucial to the change of Roma and Sinti position in the society.

The same applies to various kinds of cultural, scientific and education events and initiatives on Roma education, history, culture and language, where Roma organizations, especially those most powerful and their activists act both as participants, partners, organizers and co-organizers. They play a very important function, which is a source of right information and knowledge on Roma affairs and representing their voice and their own point view on their issues.

It also necessary to say, that in Poland, which is a very mono-ethnic country and Roma ethnic minority consists between 12 and 30 thousands of people only there is a very little chance for setting up Roma political parties and Roma media like it is the case in other Visegrad Group states.

Unfortunately, in Poland the same like in very many other countries over the recent several years among the mainstream society is growing a climate of intolerance, xenophobia and hostility on the basis of ethnic and racial origin, which are aimed at Roma as one of the most important targets.

Bearing in mind the so far progress the mentioned issued it worth to emphasize, that those improvements and progress were achieved thanks using Polish authorities financial support in the framework of the Programme for the Roma Community in Poland 2004-2013 and the present Programme of the Roma Integration 2014-2020. Presently, it is still not known, how will look supporting similar tasks and initiatives after the year 2020. The scale of

Roma minority in Poland needs is still large and it is even necessary to continue at least some kind of those actions as it is already foreseen in some countries with a large Roma minority.

Recommendations to the Republic of Poland authorities' and OSCE Member States

1. Even though the Roma in Poland are a small community it is recommended for all local and regional authorities to include Roma inhabitants' needs as well as their suggestions in the all issues associated with the settlements and districts they live in.
2. It is very important to ensure the presence and participation of Roma minority members as a Roma voice and a Romani point of view representatives in all kinds of public events devoted to any Roma minority issues.
3. The authorities of the Republic of Poland as well as other OSCE Member States should continue at least on lower scale the so far and similar kinds of programs and initiative oriented at multi field assistance for Romani minority based on OSCE, Council of Europe and the EU frameworks and recommendations.