

ODIHR Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
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Questions for the session 15

Tolerance and non discrimination II
Roma/Sinti; Implementation of the OSCE Action Plan for Roma and Sinti Issues

The rebuilding of the lives and safety of Kosovar Romani refugees and internally displaced persons (as well as anyone lucky to live in their own dwelling) has been painfully slow, if not absent altogether. Although concrete and constructive proposals have been submitted to OSCE by Romani organisations in terms of peace building, no favourable answer has been given so far. As an example, the reconstruction of Mitrovica Romani Mahàla (Fabrička Mahàla) still seems to be a hurry initiative supposed to solve the problem of lead poisoning of a part of its former inhabitants, currently IDPs in North Mitrovica. We are concerned about the long term effects of this project. Indeed, the IDPs, whose situation will be dealt with in priority, are the most vulnerable segment of Mitrovica Mahàla. Those who played a key role in the economic and social life of this neighbourhood are currently abroad, in Western Europe. Except France, where they have a relatively stable status (they are recognized refugees), the other European countries intend to return them. "Ternikano Berno" and other Romani NGOs based in Western Europe have proposed since 2001 to conduct a thorough study on the properties of Roma in this neighbourhood, in the perspective of a coherent, comprehensive and fair urban plan. Also, a very important dimension of this proposal is the reconstruction of interethnic confidence and harmony. To date, no concrete steps have been taken to adopt this approach, which corresponds better to the mission that the international community has in the region. An updated proposal of "Ternikano Berno" is made available in the documentation distribution service. It requires, among others, the full attention of UNMIK and of the OSCE mission in Kosovo. Only a concrete involvement of these bodies can ensure the success of the ongoing process of reconstruction. If not, we can reasonably expect the first returnees to sell the houses they will be proposed as a result of the total lack of perspectives.

Is the UNMIK and the OSCE Mission in Kosovo willing to support this proposal, aiming at evidencing all the lost properties and adapting the reconstruction project to the data that will be collected by a commission mandated to this mission ?