

**TO
FRENCH CONGRESS**

**NICOLAS SARKOZY
PRESIDENT OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC**

22 September 2010

LETTER OF ROMA ORGANIZATION FROM BULGARIA

We, representatives of Roma organizations in Bulgaria are deeply concerned that the expulsion of Roma from France and other European countries will put under serious menace the efforts for establishing and implementing Roma inclusion policy, will question some of the basic European rules and principles and in this way will deteriorate the well-being of many European citizens.

Having in mind that:

- the free movement of people is one of the cornerstones of the European Union;
- Roma are the biggest ethnic minority in the European Union and the conditions of life for the big majority of them do not correspond to the standards of the other EU citizens;
- Roma integration policy should be one of the top priorities for the countries of the EU and for the Union as a whole;
- Roma integration policy is shared responsibility of the member-states and the EU; the national governments and the European commission; the responsible institutions and the civil society; the majority populations and Roma minority

We call upon the French Parliament and the French Government:

1. ***To stop the practice of group expulsion of Roma:*** as it is envisaged in the Resolution of the European Parliament from September 9, 2010;
2. ***To consider*** – together with the governments of Bulgaria and Romania as well as with the European Commission – ***preparing and implementing investment programs in the poorer areas in Bulgaria and Romania populated with Roma.*** Such program should foster the social inclusion and integration of Roma via investment in employment, education and living conditions. This is the real way to tackle the root-causes leading Roma to abandon their homes and move across borders;
3. ***To keep actively Bulgaria in the debate for Roma inclusion:*** Our concern is that the debate at European level for the necessary urgent steps for improving the state of Roma integration at present misses Bulgaria. We consider this as a crucial mistake since the situation of Roma in Bulgaria needs significant improvement and the implementation of Roma integration policy needs stronger attention and real steps;
4. ***To support Bulgarian and Romanian governments for stronger implementation of the Roma integration policy:*** Despite some good strategies and programs approved by several national governments in Bulgaria and Romania, there is *strong need of concrete and forward-*

looking measures to implement these documents: with clearly defined financing, proper administrative infrastructure and mechanisms for engaging the civil society and Roma community itself. The European Commission and the French government did a good job for encouraging the states from Eastern Europe to implement their Roma integration strategies during the accession period. These efforts should continue: *you should be more active in influencing the national governments regarding Roma inclusion targeted actions.*

5. To support the efforts for establishing strong European Roma Strategy: Until now the European policy for Roma inclusion has defined 10 Common Basic Principles and has been seen mainly as a process of exchange of good practices among the member-states through the European Roma Platform. Some member-states have shown interest to use the Structural funds for Roma integration activities which has been encouraged by the European Commission. These are important founding steps. Nevertheless, the recent events have outlined that these steps are not enough and should be further developed towards stronger European Roma Strategy that defines common European standards for Roma inclusion and mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of these standards at national and regional levels. The European Roma Platform *should go beyond the exchange of experience and to appropriate stronger policy development, consultation and monitoring functions.* The usage of European funds for Roma inclusion should become stronger obligation for the member-states

Center AMALIPE, Veliko Turnovo
Chair: Deyan KOLEV

The Health of Romani People Association
Chair: Stefan PANAYOTOV, MD

INTEGRO Association, Razgrad
Chair: Lilia Makaveeva

Diverse and Equal Foundation, Sofia
Chair: Radostin Manov