

ODIHR Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
Warsaw, Poland
2-11 October 2006
Questions for the session 15

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

We are concerned about the lack of international response to the plans to demolish the Sulukule settlement in Turkey. It is well known that this location has a particular importance in terms of Romani history and culture. The development of the area seems to be the reason of this demolition decision, taken without any consultation with the Romani community who live in this area. The decision of demolition was executed without any dialogue with the inhabitants, even though they had concrete proposals that conciliated the development of the area with the interests of the inhabitants but also with ecologic and durable development considerations. The guiding principle of the OSCE Action Plan on improving the situation of Roma and Sinti is “for Roma, with Roma”. In Sulukule case, not only the interest of the Roma was not taken into account, but the legitimate expectation of the Romani community for dialogue was simply ignored. We urge Turkish government to stop this practices and to consider the potential of the Romani community in development projects, which are profitable not only to Roma, but to Turkish society as a whole. Also, we would like to ask the Turkish delegation whether some measures have been taken in this sense following the demands made to the Turkish government by the Human Rights Organizations.

We would like the meeting to also address the other Romani neighborhoods being demolished in Istanbul. Without proper consideration being made to the inhabitants they are as a result being made homeless.

Since this issue has been publicized and the European community is aware of the possibility to demolish the Romani neighborhood in Istanbul, the question is what action has been taken? Moreover we are recommending to implement our recommendation to renovate the neighborhoods and complying with the article 43 of the Action Plan for Roma and Sinti Issues.

Romani NGOs registered to the ODIHR Human Dimension Implementation Meeting