

Second day of the Seventeenth Meeting
MC(17) Journal No. 2, Agenda item 8

DECISION No. 8/09
ENHANCING OSCE EFFORTS TO ENSURE ROMA AND SINTI
SUSTAINABLE INTEGRATION

The Ministerial Council,

Reaffirming the OSCE commitments regarding Roma and Sinti, including those in the 2003 Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area,

Recognizing that some efforts have been undertaken by the participating States to this end,

Noting that limited progress had been made in closing the significant gaps that remain between Roma and Sinti people and wider societies in several areas,

Taking note of the ODIHR's 2008 Status Report on the Implementation of the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of the Roma and Sinti in the OSCE Area,

Emphasizing that resolute action is required to improve the situation of Roma and Sinti across the OSCE region,

Convinced that the participating States should seek to maximize Roma and Sinti ownership of the policies that affect them, and that Roma and Sinti communities should be partners and share responsibility for implementing those policies designed to promote their integration,

Recognizing the particular difficulties faced by Roma and Sinti and the need to take effective measures in order to eradicate discrimination against them and ensure their sustainable integration consistent with OSCE commitments,

Concerned that Roma and Sinti belong to communities that continue to be affected by racism and discrimination and that prejudice and violent manifestations of intolerance against Roma and Sinti have increased,

Noting that in times of global economic downturn, Roma and Sinti belong to those that are especially vulnerable to becoming subject to irrational hostility and societal blame,

Aware that manifestations of intolerance against Roma and Sinti may not only result in increased exclusion and marginalization but might also endanger the social cohesion and peaceful coexistence in the wider society,

Acknowledging that Ministerial Council Decision No. 6/08 on enhancing OSCE efforts to implement the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area was a significant step towards ensuring equal access to education and highlighting the importance of the benefits of early education,

Taking note of the 2009 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting and its working session on the specifically selected topic on Roma and Sinti early education,

Stressing the importance of relevant OSCE institutions and structures in fulfilling their mandates by supporting the implementation of the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area, and of effective co-ordination and co-operation within the OSCE to this end,

1. Calls upon the participating States to enhance their efforts to implement the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area and advance the process of sustainable integration of Roma and Sinti;
2. Calls upon the participating States to continue to supply information to the ODIHR on progress made on the Implementation of the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of the Roma and Sinti in the OSCE Area;
3. Urges the participating States to step up their efforts in promoting tolerance and combating prejudices against Roma and Sinti people in order to prevent their further marginalization and exclusion and to address the rise of violent manifestations of intolerance against Roma and Sinti as well as to unequivocally and publicly condemn any violence targeting Roma and Sinti, and to take all necessary measures to ensure access to effective remedies, in accordance with national judicial, administrative, mediation and conciliation procedures, as well as to secure co-ordination between responsible authorities at all levels in this regard;
4. Calls upon the participating States to enhance, in an appropriate way, the participation of Roma and Sinti in the design, implementation and evaluation of the policies that affect them, as well as to promote dialogue between Roma and Sinti people and the wider society in order to raise awareness of the role that intolerance and discrimination can play in threatening social cohesion, stability and security;
5. Calls upon the participating States, in co-operation with Roma and Sinti, to identify and examine the challenges of Roma and Sinti migration relevant to their sustainable integration within the OSCE area;
6. Tasks the ODIHR, in co-operation and co-ordination with the HCNM and the Representative of Freedom of the Media and other relevant OSCE executive structures, within their mandates and within existing resources, to continue to assist participating States to combat acts of discrimination and violence against Roma and Sinti, to counter negative stereotypes of Roma and Sinti in the media taking into account relevant OSCE freedom of the media commitments, and to implement fully OSCE commitments pertaining in particular to

the implementation of the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area as well as to address the challenges linked to the sustainable and successful integration of Roma and Sinti;

7. Encourages participating States to address early education for Roma and Sinti in a comprehensive manner, with special attention to ensuring equal access to education and integrating Roma and Sinti into mainstream education;
8. Tasks the ODIHR, in consultation with the participating States and in close co-operation with other relevant OSCE institutions, within their mandates, to develop and implement relevant projects on the issue of Roma and Sinti early education, such as projects on teacher training and on overcoming low school attendance;
9. Encourages the relevant OSCE institutions to enhance their co-operation and co-ordination with other relevant international actors such as the Council of Europe and the European Union, when appropriate, as well as civil society actors focusing on Roma and Sinti related issues;
10. Invites the Director of the ODIHR to keep the participating States informed about the ODIHR's work in assisting participating States to promote Roma and Sinti sustainable integration during his or her regular reporting to the Permanent Council.