

**OSCE HDIM 2007-10-05
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**Statement of Romani CRISS-Roma Centre for Social Intervention and Studies,
Romania to the Working Session no. 7, OSCE Action Plan for Roma and Sinti, 27
September, 2007.**

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE ON ROMA AND POLICING IN ROMANIA

Mister Moderator,

Romani CRISS has had the privilege to be involved in the Roma Working Group which has been consulted in the drafting process of the OSCE Action Plan for Improving the Situation of the Roma and Sinti in the OSCE Area. Our contribution has been, among others, to some of the recommendations included in the Chapter III “Combating Racism and Discrimination”, sub-chapter on “Police and Roma”. This is why we pay a constant attention to the way the OSCE participating States, including Romania, our State of citizenship, and the OSCE Institutions, including the ODIHR CPRSI are implementing these provisions of the Action Plan.

Since 2004, Romani CRISS is a partnership relation with the Ministry of Interior/ General Inspectorate of Romanian Police and with the OSCE ODIHR in implementing an ambitious program for the improving the working relations of the Police with the members of the large Roma population of Romania. The program is named “Strategic Initiative on Roma and Policing in Romania”. It is conducted in the close cooperation of the OSCE ODIHR CPRSI with the Romanian Institute for Prevention and Combat of Criminality with the UK based NGO “European Dialogue” and with a network of Romanian Roma NGOs, including ours..

The main objectives of the project were: to carry out a systematic assessment of current Police policies and practices towards Roma in Romania; to develop a joint programme with the Ministry of Interior and Roma NGO’s on rights training for Roma, and a guidance manual for police working with multicultural communities; to draw up an action plan to ensure that all aspects of policing relating to Roma communities in Romania attain the agreed standards.

The main activities implemented in 2005-2006 were the following:

- Signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the OSCE/ ODIHR, Ministry of Administration and Interior (MAI) and Romani CRISS. As activities, the memorandum stipulates: Systematic Assessment of Police policies and practices towards Roma; training seminars for the Roma non-governmental organisations to build their capacity to participate as partners of MAI in the systematic assessment; training for police officers at the local level in view of developing communication skills in the relations between police and Roma.
- A working meeting with the Roma organisations in the country to set up a documentation base upon negative and positive practice in relation between the local Roma communities and Police.

- A workshop with police representatives aimed to familiarise the police officers with the set of minimal standards foreseen in the European Convention for Human Rights (ECHR), developed through the case law of the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg . The following topics were addressed: Strategic assessment of Romanian Police: operational policies and procedures; Strategic self-assessment on human rights: Operation policies and procedures of Police General Inspectorate; Democratic principles.
- Providing a CRISS in-put to the production, by the of a comprehensive Report on Police work with Roma, of the Romanian Institute for Prevention and Combat of Criminality .

This Report has been presented in its details to the OSCE audience during a Side event to the OSCE HDIM 2006.

Our **recommendations** to the current OSCE HDIM 2007, are:

To the OSCE ODIHR :

- Given the importance of this project for the parties, to consider its support for this work, among others , by prolonging the Memorandum of Understanding for the year 2008 .
- The ODIHR CPRSI to take actions for implementing more vigorously the Recommendations number 33-35 of the OSCE Action Plan on Roma and Sinti.

To Romania as OSCE Participating State and to the relevant OSCE Institutions

- To consider the possibility of a documentation trip in Romania of the experts of the relevant OSCE Institutions, in view of assessing/validating the results of the ODIHR supported program “Strategic Initiative on Roma and Policing in Romania”, 2004-2007.
- If assessed as a “good practice” the Report and other results of this program to be disseminated through the OSCE channels.
- To continue advising and monitoring the respect by the Police of the the human rights of Roma citizens of Romania, on a non-discriminatory basis.

Romani CRISS renew its pledge for contributing its NGO resources to facilitate the implementation of these recommendations, if endorsed by the OSCE institutions and accepted by the Romanian authorities.

Thank you, Mister Moderator.