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## OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting Warsaw, 16 - 27 September 2019

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### EU statement – Working Session 16 & 17 (specifically selected topic): Roma and Sinti

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Mr. Moderator,

I have the honor to take the floor on behalf of the European Union and deliver the following recommendations and messages regarding the Roma and Sinti issues in the OSCE area.

We thank the Slovak Chairmanship for its decision to specifically select the topic "Roma and Sinti" for the 2019 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting. It shows once again that improving the situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE area should remain a priority for each OSCE participating State.

It also emphasizes that the commitments undertaken in this field are more relevant than ever and despite the progress that has been achieved in legislation, programs and policies, more and substantial efforts are still needed.

In December 2018, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) launched the Third Status Report *"For Roma, with Roma : Implementation of the OSCE Action Plan on Roma and Sinti, Chapter VI – Enhancing Participation in Public and Political Life"*. The event highlighted the 15th anniversary of the *2003 Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area* (in November 2018) and also revealed an important reality: persisting challenges preclude the participation of Roma and Sinti persons in meaningful ways in public and political life. Together with the valuable input and contribution of the representatives of the civil society, participating States had the opportunity to reflect on the current situation, to share their views and to suggest new ways to follow-up in this area. Continuous efforts are needed at all levels to promote the participation of Roma and Sinti,



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including women and youth, in public and political life. Access to quality education is a fundamental precondition for inclusion and full participation.

We welcome the persistent efforts of the Contact Point on Roma and Sinti Issues (CPRSI) in the ODIHR in this field and to reassure him of our support in his further efforts.

The EU is strongly committed to pursue the efforts in combatting hate crimes and countering intolerance in all kinds and forms.

Since 2011, with the adoption of the *Framework for the National Roma Integration Strategies* by European Council, the European Union has put Roma and Sinti integration high on the political agenda. This legislative Framework is constantly being assessed and updated. A recent evaluation by the European Commission, followed by the *High Level Conference on the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies*, organized by the Romanian Presidency, on 4-5 March 2019, indicated that the Framework is the beginning of a process. We have seen positive results and an initial change in trends, however, limitations remain and further steps are needed.

The EU and its Member States are strongly committed to fighting discrimination and accelerating the process of Roma persons' integration.

The European Union commends the continuous efforts of the CPRSI to implement its training programme, *Effective and Human Rights – Compliant Policing in Roma and Sinti communities* which aims at strengthening the capacity of police officers to work in Roma and Sinti communities in line with human rights standards and to ensure the safety and security of persons belonging to Roma and Sinti.

The European Union welcomes the work done by ODIHR in the past years in Ukraine in improving access of Roma and Sinti to personal documents. The EU further encourages the cooperation to promote the inclusion of Roma and Sinti in the society and to enhance safety and security for Roma and Sinti communities in Ukraine.

We welcome the work of the OSCE Office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities aimed at ensuring a more integrated society in which each and every member can enjoy the same rights.



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The full implementation of all OSCE commitments continues to be the EU's guiding principle. We take this opportunity to reiterate our calls for full implementation of all OSCE commitments regarding Roma and Sinti and our firm determination in this respect.

Mr. Moderator,

I would like to deliver the following recommendations regarding the Roma and Sinti issues in the OSCE area:

- Take measures to combat any form of violence motivated by racism or xenophobia and ensure a vigorous, effective and independent investigation of racially motivated acts, as well as equal access to effective remedies (judicial, administrative, conciliation and mediation procedures). Hate-motivated attacks and violence against Roma and Sinti individuals must be immediately and fully investigated and responsible persons held accountable.
- Encourage OSCE participating States to make use of the ODIHR's role in conflict prevention and identification of areas of early intervention, and draw on the expertise of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities in this regard.
- Take actions in order to increase the confidence of Roma and Sinti persons about reporting incidents of discriminatory treatment, hate motivated attacks and the trust that the competent authorities treat these complaints in a serious manner and follow-up on them.
- Design and promote policies and programs meant to build trust among police and Roma and Sinti individuals. We encourage the use by pS of the valuable expertise and assistance of the CPRSI in this field.
- Taking into account that anti-Gypsyism remains an important barrier to Roma inclusion, strongly encourage participating States to promote rights awareness campaigns about historical discrimination and segregation.



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- Ensure a more effective Roma participation in policy making at all levels and involvement in the design, implementation and monitoring of policies for Roma, thus strengthening Roma voice and the ownership of the processes.
- We once again encourage participating States to strengthen their cooperation with the CPRSI, take advantage of its expertise and actively promote the human rights and fundamental freedoms of Roma and Sinti individuals across the OSCE region.
- Accurately address the specific disadvantages faced by Roma women, children and youth and other vulnerable Roma and Sinti individuals (persons with disabilities, elderly persons etc.). Roma women's issues should be systematically mainstreamed in all relevant policies designed for the Roma persons.
- Counter populist discourse and stop rhetoric that target the Roma and Sinti persons for political purposes. Promote cohesive and inclusive societies for all individuals.
- Put greater emphasis on actions in the areas of education and employment, promote the training of mediators and training-of-trainers and useful tools to strengthen community based approaches and human rights.
- Ensure greater access to quality and non-segregated education at all levels. In this regard, intensify efforts for access to personal documents, civil registration and identity documents.
- Encourage participating States to take effective measures to ensure respect of fundamental rights, in particular improving access to employment, healthcare and housing.
- Pay particular attention to Roma and Sinti migrants, refugees and IDPs and ensure that they are treated in accordance with the relevant international norms and standards of protection, without any discrimination. Coordinated actions with other international relevant actors are important in order to avoid overlapping and for better responses.



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- Ensure a periodical review mechanism of strategies, policies and measures related to Roma and Sinti, in consultation with Roma and Sinti persons, for a better adjustment to the situation on the ground.
- Continue and enhance cooperation among international organizations with regard to improving the situation of Roma and Sinti.
- Continue activities of the OSCE field operations with regard to improving the situation of Roma and Sinti.

Thank you.

The Candidate Countries REPUBLIC of NORTH MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\*, SERBIA\* and ALBANIA\*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area, as well as the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA and ANDORRA align themselves with this statement.

\* Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.