



PC.DEL/839/12
20 September 2012

ENGLISH only

Permanent Mission of Hungary to the OSCE

Statement of the Permanent Mission of Hungary to the OSCE
at the 924th Meeting of the Permanent Council
as delivered by Ambassador dr. Miklós Boros

Vienna, 20 September 2012

Referring to the statement of the distinguished representative of the United States made during the 6 September, 2012 meeting of the Permanent Council related to Roma issues in Hungary I would like to inform the PC of the following:

Hungary is fully committed to the implementation of its commitments undertaken in the framework of OSCE, the European Union and the Council of Europe. I would like to recall that Hungary initiated the adoption of a European Union Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies during its Presidency of the Council of the European Union in April 2011. We equally supported the Strasbourg Declaration of October 2010 which aims at creating a pan-European engagement and cooperation in order to address more effectively the challenges of Roma inclusion.

Accordingly, a National Social Inclusion Strategy for the Roma was adopted last November in Hungary with the aspiration of tangibly improve the situation of Roma people by the end of the current decade. The implementation of the programmes contained in the Strategy has already started. Hungary was the first among OSCE Participating States to present its Strategy in the framework of the Human Dimension Committee in May.

The authorities have made resolute efforts to reach out to NGOs and other relevant stakeholders as well. In order to ensure a thorough consultation on issues related to the development, implementation and monitoring of the National Social Inclusion Strategy, as well as to contribute to the collection of best practices in the field of social inclusion and Roma integration, a Roma Coordination Council has been set up in 2011. The representatives of the Roma minority self-government, NGOs dealing with Roma integration, representatives of municipalities and churches, and the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights are equally participating in the work of the Council. The Council previously discussed the National Social Inclusion Strategy, and plays an important role in the monitoring of its implementation.

We are glad to note that the implementation of the National Social Inclusion Strategy has started to bear its first fruits, and that is also positively noted in the first assessment



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of the European Commission on the implementation of the EU Framework Strategy (COM(2012)226 final). In order to promote Roma inclusion, model programs have been introduced aimed at improving healthcare, housing and related community services. In the upcoming years several similar projects will be implemented with the help of ESF (European Social Fund) and ERDF (European Regional Development Fund). As another example; we aim to train at least one thousand Roma, predominantly women and facilitate their acquisition of practical experiences in social, child welfare and child protection services, and also their training as family support social workers, community developers, employment facilitators and healthcare mediators.

Several other initiatives have been launched. I would like to mention that in January this year the Wallenberg Prize was established and awarded to individuals and municipalities who had played an outstanding role in the promotion of peaceful coexistence of Roma and non-Roma people, and whose activities greatly contributed to the overcoming of negative prejudices, racism and anti-Roma sentiment.

The Hungarian Government strongly condemns the signs of extremism, the appearance of certain forms of the so-called „crime in uniform” with underlying racist motivation. In this regard, in May 2011 the Hungarian Parliament amended the Criminal Code and enacted the so-called crime of *violence against a member of the community*. The new regulation renders it punishable by up to three years of imprisonment if someone displays an apparently anti-social behavior against others for being part, whether in fact or under presumption, of a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, or of a certain societal group aiming to cause panic or to frighten others. Therefore, not only the assault against another person or applying coercion or duress to do, not to do, or to endure something for the same reasons constitutes a crime any more in Hungary.

Mr. Chairman,

As regards the threats happened in Devecser and Cegléd on 5th August and 19th August, 2012, I would like to communicate the following:

On 5th August a Member of Parliament from the Jobbik Party organized a demonstration in Devecser, Veszprém County. After the announcement of the demonstration the local police station informed the Roma Local Government of Veszprém County. On the day of the demonstration the Immediate Action Police and



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the Police Station of Veszprém County secured the location. Following the event, two Roma individuals reported to the Police that they had been insulted by two unknown persons. The Police Headquarters of Veszprém initiated an investigation in accordance with Section 174/B of Act IV of 1978 on the Criminal Code concerning violence against a member of the community. According to the primary medical records both victims suffered injuries healing within eight days. Videos taken by TV stations and participants were seized by the Police. The Police also took a video recording on the spot. In the course of the investigation 40 persons were inquired so far. According to the video recordings the identification of three persons will be necessary in order to carry on with the procedure, one has already been identified.

On 19th August the Civil Guard „Szebb Jövőért” organized a demonstration in Cegléd. During the manifestation tension was incited between Roma and non-Roma members of the community. The Police Headquarters of Pest has undertaken a criminal procedure under Section 263/A of the Criminal Code concerning illegal possession of firearms and ammunition, and under Section 271 of the Criminal Code concerning *public nuisance*. In relation to the first procedure ten persons have already been inquired, in connection with the second, 40 persons have been inquired and the questioning of further individuals is deemed to be necessary.

The distinguished delegation of the US also referred in its statement to the cases of violence against Roma people that took place between 2008 and 2009. As far as these cases are concerned let me recall that in August 2009 the Police apprehended four men who were accused of having committed crimes against Roma people. The trial of first instance began on 25 March, 2011 and the procedure is in progress. According to the Court's communication, a verdict is foreseen by the end of of this year. The Hungarian government is convinced that the timely conclusion of the legal proceedings will properly demonstrate that violence against Roma cannot and will not remain unpunished.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.