



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Permanent Council N° 1181 Vienna, 12 April 2018

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#### EU statement on International Roma Day

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On 8 April we celebrate the International Roma Day, an opportunity for us all to both build on the positive work done in terms of fighting discrimination and enforcing integration in all societies and to reflect on the challenges in the OSCE area that Roma and Sinti persons continue to face, especially discrimination, marginalisation and social exclusion.

We are determined to pursue our efforts at European, national and local levels to advance the social and economic integration of Roma and Sinti persons in all countries and to tackle anti-gypsyism. Addressing the root causes of these challenges requires the involvement of Roma and Sinti persons and the civil society as well. Participating States should take further steps to eliminate the barriers faced by Roma and Sinti women and girls.

Public condemnation of any act of discrimination, including anti-rhetoric from officials, by political leaders and civil society is necessary. Political leaders need to be at the forefront of efforts to end systematic discrimination and continuous propagation of negative stereotypes.

The European Union commends the ODIHR Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues for its dedicated efforts in advancing the implementation of the OSCE *Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area*, and in assisting participating States to this end. In 2018, we mark the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this *Action Plan*. The ODIHR's forthcoming status report is due to take stock of the implementation of Chapter VI of the *Action Plan*, which is dedicated to the effective participation of Roma and Sinti persons in public and political life. We welcome the persistent efforts of ODIHR Contact Point in this field.

The EU and its Member States are committed to fighting discrimination and accelerating the process of Roma persons' integration. A solid legal and financial framework has been developed at both EU and national levels. It is constantly being assessed and updated. In this regard, the latest public consultation (July - October 2017) gathered opinions on the achievements and challenges of the first five years of implementation of the *EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies*, in the areas of education, employment, healthcare, housing and discrimination. The findings will feed into the design and implementation of EU policy in the area of Roma policies.

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 persons and our firm engagement in this respect.

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

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