



FRENCH PERMANENT REPRESENTATION
TO THE OSCE

Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
(Warsaw, 24 September-5 October 2012) / Working Session 6
“Roma/Sinti”

French Delegation right of reply

“Mr Chair,

I fully back the declaration of the European Union.

- France is fully committed to supporting Roma populations nationally and internationally, in line with the commitments it has signed up with in the framework of the United Nations, the OSCE, the EU and the Council of Europe. As a reminder, France supported the October 2010 Strasbourg Declaration which includes a common commitment to cooperation in the matter. It also participates actively, including in financial terms, in the ROMED programme aimed at developing a network of mediators to work with Roma populations in some 20 countries (€165,000 in 2011).
- Our position is based on a double objective of ensuring the rule of law and respect for human rights whilst improving the human situation of Roma. The approach adopted by the French Government in this framework places particular emphasis on individualized and appropriate responses for individuals and families, taking into account all health, social, cultural and economic dimensions. It is to address this double concern that operations to dismantle illegal camps were undertaken this summer.
- The French Government has already communicated regarding this subject, on 23 August. I would just like to recall some of the principles and priorities of action which guide the French national strategy for Roma integration, in accordance with our international commitments:
 - 1) The illegal camp dismantling operations are fully legitimate, having taken place in application of a judicial decision. These operations aimed to put an end to the deplorable sanitary conditions suffered by the populations living in the camps.
 - 2) Alongside these dismantling operations, the State, with local partners and associations, mobilized a full range of tools aimed at addressing the demands of vulnerable people in terms of housing and emergency medical monitoring. Moreover, social, health and integration through employment schemes have been implemented. As the President of the Republic indicated in his letter to the Human Rights League on 22 February, when an insalubrious camp is dismantled, alternative solutions must be offered.
 - 3) The dismantling of illegal camps does not mean that there is a systematic expulsion procedure. When camps are dismantled, the people concerned are not

subject to expulsion judgments in European law (ie. Article 27 of Directive 2004/38), which provides for the possibility of EU Member States to force European citizens to leave their territory if they do not fulfil normal residency conditions. The repatriations in question are the result of voluntary decisions made by the interested parties. In any case, when an expulsion measure is taken regarding a foreign national, this follows an analysis of the individual situation, in accordance with the general legal principles and under the control of national and European judges. It can of course be appealed before a judicial body (administrative court).

- In parallel to these short term measures, reflection has been launched with a view to amending the French strategy in order to better utilize all support tools and improve their coordination in the framework of a comprehensive approach. The work of the OSCE are in this respect an interesting spotlight on national reflection. The Government also intends to step up the fight against the trades exploiting misery and people (prostitution, begging, etc.).
- France considers that the answers to this phenomenon should be applied at European level and necessitate the involvement of countries of origin in order to seek a long-term solution.
- It is with this aim in mind that the French Minister of the Interior, Mr Manuel Valls, and the Minister-Delegate for European Affairs, Mr Bernard Cazeneuve, made a joint visit to Romania on 12-13 September. An agreement between the French Immigration and Integration Office (OFII) and the Romanian authorities was signed during this visit, aimed at allowing the implementation and follow-up of 80 concrete reintegration projects for people who have returned from France, thanks to close collaboration between French and Romanian national and local authorities.