



REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA

HDIM 2019, Working Session 17 – Roma and Sinti

Albanian Reply -

Thank you Mr. Moderator,

I would like to add some comments, following the remarks of the two representatives of the Albanian Roma and Egyptian communities.

Indeed, the Roma and Egyptian communities in Albania face many challenges, which are not simple and easy to be addressed and solved. Much has been done so far, and yet we are aware that a lot more remains to be done.

On the positive side, I would like to highlight the recognition of these communities as national minorities. The Law “for the Protection of National Minorities in the Republic of Albania” provides the equal enjoyment of the rights for all national minorities, including Roma and Egyptians. These rights are in full conformity with the Framework Convention on National Minorities and based upon the relevant European experiences; It fully reflects the contents of the Framework Convention and the ‘list of rights’ used by the Venice Commission.

Second, I would like to underline the progress made in the implementation of the National Action Plan for the Integration of Roma and Egyptians for 2016-2020. This Plan represents a commitment, which is targeted to the two respective minorities. It provides measures to comprehensively address the situation of Roma and Egyptians in Albania in the field of education and inter-cultural dialogue, civil registry and justice, social protection, employment, education and vocational training, urban housing, and health care, as well as coordination and monitoring policies. The AP scales up the measures being implemented and also initiates new activities for promoting the integration of Roma and Egyptians.

Sufficient resources are allocated for its implementation, by the Government and international donors.

To improve coordination in the field of Roma and Egyptian integration, **a network of seven focal points** has been created among the key ministries responsible for education, civil registration, health, employment, social housing and vocational trainings. A database of 57 focal points at the municipal level that coordinate policies for Roma and Egyptians has been created.

The electronic system RomAlb was developed, serving as a centralised web application allowing for collection and management of information on Roma and Egyptian minorities at all levels. The system is currently being upgraded to align the indicators with the NAP. Twelve

trainings were conducted for public servants at the central and local level in 2017, with 190 public employees being trained and supervised at their workplace in the use of the system.

Regarding **Housing and urban integration**: more Roma and Egyptian families are involved directly or indirectly in housing programs. I have a long list of figures, which may be consulted in the written version of this statement.

- 508 Roma and Egyptian families benefited during 2017 through the small grants program by the municipalities for new infrastructure, water supply, sanitation facilities versus 187 families reported in 2016;
- 60 Roma families (approximately 300 inhabitants) benefited from improved living conditions in Tirana;
- 219 Roma and Egyptian families across the country benefited from rented social housing;
- 101 Roma and Egyptian families benefited from low-cost housing versus 37 families reported in 2016;

Specific data

- 1,717 families (8,587 individuals) Roma and Egyptians benefited from the scheme of economic aid during 2017 versus 8,000 individuals reported in 2015.
- 2,012 Roma and Egyptians benefited from public and non-public residential centers during 2017 versus the 235 reported in 2015.
- 899 Roma and Egyptian children have followed compulsory education and consequently, their families have benefited from extras in economic aid versus 120 children reported in 2016.
- 48 community centers were created and were functional and serving members of both communities in 2017 versus 4 reported in 2016.
- 10,258 Roma and Egyptians have been informed about health problems including mental, physical, reproduction, use of dribbling, etc. by mobile teams during 2017 versus 2000 reported in 2015.
- 2000 promotional materials were produced in the Roma language during 2017 against 0 reported for 2015.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the commitment of my Government to continue to pay attention to, and make efforts to properly address the issues in order to improve the lives of the Roma and Egyptian communities in Albania.

Thank you.