

EF.GAL/6/05  
19 May 2005



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**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe**

**Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and  
Environmental Activities**

**Vienna, 18 May 2005**

To: All OSCE Delegations  
Partners for Co-operation  
Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation

Subject: Draft Agenda for the Side event on implementing the Roma and Sinti  
Action Plan (economic and social aspects) on the margins of 13<sup>th</sup> OSCE  
Economic Forum, Prague, Tuesday, 24 May 2005

Attached herewith is the draft Agenda of the Side event on implementing the Roma and Sinti Action Plan (economic and social aspects) on the margins of 13<sup>th</sup> OSCE Economic Forum, Prague, Tuesday, 24 May 2005.



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

The Secretariat

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Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

**Side event on implementing the Roma and Sinti Action Plan  
(economic and social aspects)**

**“Increasing access of Roma to employment and inclusion in local  
economic development; Elements of an OSCE cross-dimension  
approach”**

**(on margins of the Thirteenth OSCE Economic Forum - Prague, 23 - 27 May 2005)**

**Date: Tuesday, 24 May, 16:45 – 18.00**

**Location: Gallery Room, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Czernin Palace, Loretánské nám. 5,  
118 00 Prague 1**

**Organized by:**

OSCE/ODIHR Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues

Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

**Draft Agenda:**

16.45 – 18.00                      **Side event on implementing the Roma and Sinti Action Plan  
(economic and social aspects)**

**Moderator: Mr. Mitja Žagar**, Director, Institute for Ethnic Studies, Ljubljana, Slovenia

**Rapporteur: Mr. Dan Doghi**, Officer on Roma and Sinti issues, OSCE / ODIHR (e ok sa ma  
treci, sa apara cineva, in sa eu nu voi veni ...)

**Speakers:**

- **Mr. Michael Guet**, Head of the Roma and Travellers Division; Migration and Roma Department; DG III - Social Cohesion, Council of Europe, and **Mr. Nenad Vladislavljev**, Roma consultant, Serbia and Montenegro
- **Mr. Michal Vašečka**, Program director and analyst, Institute for Public Affairs, Slovakia
- **Mr. Valeriu Nicolae**, ERIO – European Roma Information Office, Bruxelles
- **Mr. Nicolae Gheorghe**, Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues, OSCE / ODIHR

Discussion

### **Selected topics:**

- Conclusions of the Regional Round table on Access to employment of Roma from South East Europe (Skopje, 25-26 April, 2005);
- Case studies and input from the International conference in Bratislava “Internal Market of the European Union and Roma Minorities in the New Member States and Candidate Countries“ (16-17 May 2005);
- National Action Plans on employment in the Decade of Roma Inclusion;
- EU Lisbon strategy and the opportunities for social inclusion for Roma;
- Housing and living conditions - experience of the project "Legalizing illegal settlement of Roma in Kocani, Municipality, FYROM";
- Health care - Support to non-discriminatory access of Roma to health services; experience of the health mediator for Roma communities in Romania;

### **Background**

So far, within the OSCE framework, the Roma and Sinti issues had been mainly approached from a human dimension perspective. The debate on “Promoting entrepreneurship and opportunities for economic development for Roma and Sinti” during the 12<sup>th</sup> Economic Forum (June, 2004) highlighted the relevance of economic issues and the need for an OSCE cross-dimensional approach of Roma and Sinti policy-making.

Supporting the development of the employability and entrepreneurial skills of Roma and Sinti, training and retraining, economic and social insertion, considering the potential of youth for mobilizing the community etc. were mentioned as potential areas for follow-up.

Addressing the needs of many Roma and Sinti communities should be considered an issue of emergency, as often Roma communities are confronted with extreme poverty, high unemployment of up to 80-90 %, affecting also very much the youth. Roma and Sinti are often confronted with discrimination on the labor market. This negative phenomenon must be addressed by the participating States through adequate policies and regulations, including affirmative action. Social policy reforms should carefully assess the impact on Roma communities and take into account their needs. These policies should also combat the dependency trends among members of some Roma and Sinti communities.

Participating States should first and foremost demonstrate political will to tackle these issues, and adopt and implement relevant policies. Countries should be actively involved in initiatives such as the Decade of Roma Integration and should also resort to the assistance of organizations such as the World Bank, the Council of Europe, the European Commission, the Open Society Institute, IOM, ILO and others.

Following the 12<sup>th</sup> Economic Forum the ODIHR CPRSI remained in contact with local and national authorities in order to share information and to offer assistance in bringing together NGOs, experts and policy-makers.

As follow up of the side event in 2004, the ODIHR CPRSI supported a regional meeting of Pakiv network PERF, in Budapest, 10-12 December (GAINING BY LEARNING! The informal learning and educational dimension of community mobilizing - lessons learned in the PERF regional program and local projects). It resulted, among others, in:

- preparing pilot projects on income generating activities in 9 local communities in 4 States ( Bulgaria, Hungary, Slovakia, Romania), to be financed by private and EU/ EC sources.
- drafting a Pakiv statement which was delivered during the launching of the multilateral *Decade of Roma Inclusion* ( in Sofia, 2 February).

The preparatory process for the 13th OSCE Economic Forum, in particular the seminar in Kyiv, furthermore emphasized that the OSCE should continue to support and enhance the implementation of the Roma and Sinti Action Plan as a useful instrument at hand. The OSCE should encourage and facilitate entrepreneurship in various ways and forms, identify good practices and promote them, promote adequate policies and regulations, including affirmative action.

The purpose of the side event meeting in 2005 is to explore further ways and means of developing related activities, and enhance the co-operation between OCEEA, the ODIHR-CPRSI, as well as other international organizations, Governments and Roma NGOs, also with a view to implementing the relevant provisions of the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area, adopted the Maastricht Ministerial Council (MC.DEC/3/03).

#### **Suggested issue for debate**

“Possibilities for creation of a Fund /Regional Agency to facilitate participation of Roma and Sinti in local economic development” (follow up of the debate in the 12<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the economic Forum)

➤ *The Fund /Regional Agency* will aim to:

- Combat the discrimination against Roma and Sinti in employment;
- Promote the employment of Roma and Sinti; supporting the development of the employability and entrepreneurial skills of Roma and Sinti, training and retraining, economic and social insertion;
- Liaise with relevant Ministries in advising and coordinating the implementation of the provisions regarding the employment of Roma as they are stipulated within the OSCE Roma and Sinti Action Plan, National Strategies for Roma and National Action Plans for Roma Decade;
- Network with Roma NGOs with expertise in the area of employment;
- Integrate human rights goals with social policies; maximize Roma ownership and involvement;
- Consider the potential of youth for mobilizing the community.

#### **Link to OSCE Roma and Sinti Action Plan:**

[http://www.osce.org/documents/odihr/2003/11/1562\\_en.pdf](http://www.osce.org/documents/odihr/2003/11/1562_en.pdf)

#### **Links to UNDP surveys**

“Avoiding the dependency trap”: <http://roma.undp.sk/>

“Faces of poverty, faces of hope”: <http://vulnerability.undp.sk/>