



bites the hands that feed discrimination

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**Statement by *Sille Jansen*, representing Magenta Foundation/Stichting Magenta, during the
HUMAN DIMENSION SESSIONS OF THE 2010 OSCE REVIEW CONFERENCE, 30
SEPTEMBER - 8 OCTOBER 2010, WARSAW, POLAND;
WEDNESDAY, 6 OCTOBER - 10:00-13:00 WORKING SESSION 7:
Tolerance and Non- Discrimination I including Implementation of the OSCE Action Plan on
Roma and Sinti, National minorities & Preventing aggressive nationalism, racism and
chauvinism**

Dear ladies and gentlemen,

(Let me take you on a tour of some OSCE participating states)

One country expels Roma and has started collecting fingerprints of the Roma that were awarded 300 euro's to leave the country. The authorities of this country assume Roma to travel back from Bulgaria and Romania to receive another 300 euros to leave again. No evidence to back this assumption has been produced. Traveling back from Bulgaria to this country to make 300 euros is not a lucrative business. Even if Roma were to undertake this effort, taking only their fingerprints is a discriminatory measure.

In another country Roma are being registered by ethnicity in at least one city. These Roma are citizens of this state, they are not illegal. In fact they do not differ from other citizens in this country except for the fact that they are Roma. The government of this country has developed a general national policy with regard to Roma that has two focal points: crime reduction and school attendance. Discrimination of Roma is not a focal point in its policy. Roma in this country are afraid they will be expelled, like the Roma living elsewhere.

In yet another country, Roma are considered a 'national security risk' and a 'nomad emergency'.

Which countries are these, are they the “usual suspects”? Are we talking East of Vienna?
Anyone who has followed the news lately knows this is not the case.

The implementation of Roma rights has taken an alarming turn. Whereas the rights of Roma for a while seemed to be an issue mainly to the states East of Vienna, the violation of Roma rights is now also intensifying in the West.

Recent events show that while violations persist in the East, states West of Vienna can no longer point a finger. Expelling Roma to states where their human rights - such as the right to housing, health and education - are compromised and from which they have fled, is not a solution to any problem. There is a serious and urgent need for states to take a step back and look into the mirror.

It is the indifferent attitude of governments compromises the position of Roma and leaves opportunity for discrimination by citizens.

It should be noted that Roma rights have been on the OSCE agenda quite prominently since 2000 when the ODIHR contact point for Roma and Sinti was created. A little later in 2003 the Action Plan to improve the situation of Roma and Sinti was drafted. The OSCE is to contribute to individuals and communities living in freedom, prosperity and security. At the time of this conference, it is clear that this contribution is perhaps more necessary now than ever.

We recommend the OSCE participating States and OSCE Institutions to:

- Make public statements renouncing prejudices against and discrimination of Roma and for public officials to refrain from any anti-Roma rhetoric.
- Ensure that the proactive enforcement of anti-discrimination legislation is part of any policy addressing Roma. The principle of non-discrimination should be at the core of policies regarding the right to housing, the right to health, the right to freedom of movement as well as those policies regarding police hate crime investigations and profiling.
- Enhance enforcement of anti-discrimination laws and to call upon ODIHR to continue to provide training of police and judiciary on the implementation of these laws.
- Implement at the country level the commitments made at the OSCE level and improve the accountability of participating states for these commitments with regard to non-discrimination of Roma.