



ODIHR WORKSHOP ON ROMA POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Prague, 30 November - 1 December 2000

GENERAL GUIDELINES

The workshop is organized by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR), with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic and the Prague Office of the OSCE Secretariat.

I. AIM OF THE MEETING

The workshop-style meeting over two days on Roma Political Participation is intended to promote constructive discussions among elected Roma leaders, governmental representatives and MPs, election experts to develop strategies and guidelines to increase Roma participation in elections and its effectiveness.

In order to advance the human rights of Roma and to improve their position in society, the ODIHR Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues seeks to develop strategies to increase Roma political participation, drawing on the experience of Roma representatives who have already been elected to public office.

The results of the meeting will be disseminated among Roma and Sinti populations in the OSCE area. The strategies developed in the meeting will be incorporated into the ODIHR's broader efforts to increase Roma participation in elections, including the CPRSI political participation in 2001.

Formal interventions in the form of prepared statements are not envisaged in the course of the meeting. However, prepared statements or "position papers" may be submitted for circulation before and during the meeting. This will be carried out with the assistance of the OSCE Secretarial Office in Prague.

II. LANGUAGES

As this is intended as an informal meeting, translation will be provided in English and Romanes only. Taking into account the number of participants from Czech Republic and Slovakia, interpretation in Czech language may be considered for some discussion in the meetings.

III. PARTICIPATION

The provisional list of invitees includes elected representatives of Roma and Sinti, participants from Romanes political parties and associations with an electoral platform; representatives of political parties which include Roma and Sinti on their electoral lists and representatives of the Czech Parliament and Government.

IV. ORGANIZATIONAL DETAILS

Modalities

- The workshop will take place in the Czernin Palais in Prague, as facilitated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic.
- The technical support of the workshop is ensured by the ODIHR, in co-operation with the Czech MFA and the Prague Office of the OSCE Secretariat.
- The workshop will open on the first day at 10.00 a.m. It will close on the second day in the afternoon.
- All plenaries and the working groups will be open. The plenary and working group meeting will take place according to the work programme below.
- The organisers consider the possibility of a side meeting between the workshop's participants with Roma officers in national and local administration of the Czech Republic.
- An ODIHR representative and a representative from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are chairing or co-chairing the workshops and plenary meetings. The chairpersons may be assisted by moderators and/or experts who have technical expertise related to the electoral process.

Agenda

- The focus of the ODIHR workshop of elected Roma leaders (MPs, mayors, municipal councillors) is to develop strategies to increase Roma political participation through better use of the possibilities offered by the electoral process and the elected bodies.
- The debates are to focus on the political/organizational and technical aspects of the participation of Roma and Sinti in the electoral process. It is recommended to avoid a general discussion of Roma and Sinti issues, such as the symptoms of social exclusion, discrimination, etc, as these issues are currently under discussion in other Roma-related meetings.
- Informal meeting with Roma expert in local administration of the Czech Republic (tbc with the Czech co-organizers).
- Annotated agenda; to be further elaborated

Work Programme

Working hours: 10:00 a.m. – 13:00 p.m.
15:00 p.m. – 18:00 p.m.

	Thursday 30 November 2000	Friday 1 December 2000
Morning	PL (10:00 a.m. – 13:00 p.m.)	WG 1(continued) WG 2
Afternoon	WG 1 WG 2	PL 15:00-17:00 p.m. (15:00 p.m. – 17:00 p.m.)

Results and follow ups of the workshop

- The ODIHR will prepare a “position paper” as a preparatory working document to facilitate the debates.
 - A summary report of the meeting will be published and distributed to all registered participants.
- The consolidated report of the workshop will include guidelines for further actions of the ODIHR Contact Point on Roma and Sinti Issues, in view of facilitating electoral training of Roma voters as well as higher electoral representation of Roma and Sinti in the OSCE States.

Other organizational issues:

Arrival of (Roma) participants: Wednesday, 29 November

Departure: Sunday, 3 December

Accommodation until 3 December will be included.



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TENTATIVE AGENDA

Workshop:

- Thursday-Friday: 30 November – 1 December 2000;
- with a possible informal meeting with Roma associations of the Czech Republic, on 2 December, 2000

Wednesday, 29 November 2000

Arrival of participants; informal preparatory talks; meeting with Czech Roma officers and NGOs

Thursday, 30 November 2000

10:00 - 13.00 OPENING PLENARY MEETING

Opening

Deputy Foreign Minister of the Czech Republic, Mr. Martin Palous
First Deputy Director of OSCE ODIHR – Mr. Peter D. Eicher

President of International Romani Union, Mr. Emil Scuka

Technical information on the Meeting: Mr. Zdenek Venera, Prague Office
of the OSCE Secretariat

*Background information from the ODIHR projects on “Roma political
participation and Roma and Election”*, Mr. Nicolae Gheorghe, ODIHR
Adviser on Roma/Sinti Issues,

Coffee break

Presentation of the “position papers” of the Meeting

Mr. Peter Harris, expert from IDEA, Sweden (tbc)

Mr. Nicolae Gheorghe, CPRSI

13:00-15.00 Lunch break

15:00-18:00

Session 1

**Patterns of electoral participation and of electoral politics of Roma
and Sinti in the OSCE States:**

Suggested topics for an informal exchange of information and views:

- Roma and Sinti electoral behaviour, 1999-2000: successes, weaknesses, good practice;
- Mapping the elected representation of Roma and Sinti in the OSCE area: MPs, mayors, members of local councils, elected self-governing bodies of minorities, etc.
- Assessment of Roma participation in recent elections in Romania and in the Balkans, June-November 2000; background information: Mr. *Martin Demirovski*, Mr. *Ashemt Elezovski*, RCC DROM, Kumanovo, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
- Availability and opportunity of electoral statistics on minorities

Coffee break

- Patterns of Roma voting in the context of national electoral systems- the case of newly established democracies
- OSCE HCNM *Lund Recommendations* and the ODIHR follow-up guidelines on Minority Participation in Public Life (results of the Warsaw Workshop, 3-4 July)

Introducers:

Mr. *Peter Harris*, expert from IDEA, Sweden

Ms. *Zdenka Machnyikova*, HCNM

- Comments: the relevance of the HCNM *Lund Recommendations* for the particular case of Roma political participation.

Reception hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Czech Republic

Venue: Czernin Palais

Time: tbc

Friday, 1 December 2000

9:00 - 13.00 *Session 2:*

Role of elections and of elected representatives in the process of policy making on Roma affairs

- how to promote the awareness on Roma affairs in political sphere: the role of Roma parties; exchange of views on the electoral platforms of some Roma parties and electoral associations/coalitions
- prospects for inclusion in the platform of the mainstream political parties of Roma-related issues, including of provisions in the governmental programmes for a comprehensive approach of Roma affairs
- Possibilities for electoral coalitions between mainstream political parties and electoral Roma parties and associations
- Existing practice on advocacy and lobbying on Roma affairs in elected bodies, national and international

13:00- 15.00 Lunch break

15:00-18:00 *Session 3*

Suggesting guidelines for more effective participation of Roma voters in national and local elections, including for electoral training of Roma voters

- Recommendations for follow-up activities to increase the political participation of Roma; role and responsibilities of Roma elected representatives.

CLOSING REMARKS

Saturday, 2 December

10:00-13:00

- Informal meeting (yet to be scheduled): Meeting with representatives of local Roma associations and with Roma officers in the public administration of the Czech Republic.

If decided, the working languages may include Czech and Romanes.