

**Written intervention of Mr. Saimir MILE
president de l'association "La Voix des Rroms"**

Mr. Chairman,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Due to organizational reasons, which unfortunately were numerous in this conference, I could not take the floor during the first session. Nevertheless, I would like, in the name of my organization, to expose briefly its position in relation to the subject of this conference.

Different international forums, including within the framework of OSCE activities, systematically note a growing Anti-Gypsism. The adoption of a Plan of Action on improving the Rroma and Sinti situation in 2003 is one among other proofs that the numerous initiatives at national as well as at international level during these last 15 years have failed. This failure too, has been recognized many times, including during the OSCE Ambassadors Conference in Vienna, on May 2003.

To which conclusion one could come?

As far as we are concerned, we note that sometimes one thinks making others happy without them. The subtitle of the Action Plan on improving Rroma and Sinti situation is « For Rroma, with Rroma ». Yet, one has to note that almost two years later, this formula is still nothing but a slogan, overall on what its second part « *with Rroma* » is concerned.

We have to note that Anti-Gypsism is one form of racism which is widely accepted as normal. This is the indispensable key, without which none could understand and even less fight, this racism the Rroms are confronted with and suffer from in all OSCE participating States.

If « The Voice of the Rroms » should make only one recommendation, this recommendation would be :

Recognize the Rroms as a European people of Indian origin, having a language, a culture and a history of its own, as a people who could not be qualified « minority » since it is 3 or 4 times more numerous than the population of some European states. More concretely, this means to recognize in an official way the contribution of the Rroms to the European societies and to the Europe as a whole, and no more as a social, or even asocial class that one can't do better than trying to assimilate. This is why we ask, as soon as possible:

- The modification of § 72 of the Action plan from du Plan d'Action : «*Consider measures to ensure the respect, protection and pro motion of the Rromani language and its teaching, and of Rroma culture as an integral part of the Rroma and Sinti cultural heritage and its teaching, and of Rroma culture as an integral part of the European cultural heritage*», as it has been requested by the Rromani Working group on the Plan of Action but refused by the OSCE for reasons which, we would prefer to be unidentifiable.
- The establishment of a monitoring mechanism on the implementation of the Plan of Action. Indeed, without such a monitoring mechanism, we are convinced that the Plan of Action will fall into the plethora of declarations of intention.

Lastly, we insist that Anti-Gypsism is not the problem of the Rroms. It is a problem of those who consider, consciously or not, that being a Rrom is a handicap. It is also a problem for the social cohesion and stability, a sort of delayed time bomb whose initial effects are already being sporadically felt. We want to defuse this bomb before it is too late. We strongly hope that the OSCE and its member states join us in this difficult task, which cannot be accomplished by the Rromani NGOs alone nor without them.