

ODIHR Human Dimension Implementation Meeting

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Statement on Policing Minorities

Marian Mandache - Romani CRISS

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In 2006, an increased number of Police abuse actions within Roma community have been signaled by non governmental organization working in the field of human rights in countries such as Romania, Bulgaria o Macedonia.

Romani CRISS reports that incidents of police brutality in Roma communities in Romania are becoming more frequent: November 2005 – Pata Rat, Cluj, January 2006- Chitila, Bucharest, May 2006 –Gepiu, Oradea, August 2006- Bontida, Cluj.

On 7th September 2006, in the afternoon, a 54 old woman was sweeping in the front yard of her house when a Special Force policeman shot her in the back. As result of Police and Special Forces' intervention in Reghin, Apalina neighborhood inhabited mainly by Roma, there are 36 Roma and 1 non-Roma victims. **Seventeen (17)** of them are women and **five (5)** minors. Twenty-two (22) persons have been shot and 15 hit or gun threatened.

Mr. Vasile Blaga, the Minister of Administration and Interior declared in the newsletter no. 613/ 19.09.2006 that the policemen "*defended themselves in order to avoid being seriously injured or even lynched*" and that the police intervention has respected the legal framework, the very same thing declared by the Deputy head of the Romanian police, the very next day after the incident.

Most European countries have still to set up, make functional or extend the following minimum mechanisms:

- Publicly and unequivocally condemn racism against national minorities, including Roma
- Design and implement police intervention plans taking into account the minimum use of force
- Put in place an independent structure to adequately investigate law enforcement officials misbehavior

This is not just a question of misbehavior, but also a question of taking concrete measures, ab initio and post factum to avoid such conduct.

It is therefore of utmost necessity to work on preventive measures, to ensure to the highest degree possible that misbehavior does not appear in practice. To this send, it should be made use of OSCE expertise and institutions and make the OSCE Action Plan on Roma and Sinti work, to actually implement it and in the same time to contribute to OSCE institution to fulfill their mandate.

On a concrete manner, member countries should invite OSCE institutions, particularly the ODIHR and the Strategic Police Matters Unit to assist on the measure/mechanisms mentioned above, as well as on others, based on para. 10, 11, 16, 17, 22, 27 and 35 of the OSCE Action Plan.

It has come the time to implement the commitments and programs designed in the field of protection of minorities.