



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council Nr 919 Vienna, 5 July 2012

EU statement on the 22 June Roma Symposium

A symposium was held on 22 June here at the Hofburg on the situation of Roma and Sinti communities in the European Union. The Symposium focused on making a tangible difference in the lives of Roma people.

Representatives from the European Union's Fundamental Rights Agency, UNDP, the Council of Europe, the Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation, civil society as well as the OSCE Contact Point for Roma and Sinti presented the wide-ranging efforts which are underway towards Roma inclusion within the European Union.

Presentations at the event included the main findings of two 2011 surveys, conducted by the EU's Fundamental Rights Agency, on the situation of Roma in eleven Member States of the European Union. The surveys provide an in-depth understanding of the situation of Roma and the challenges facing them, which is a prerequisite in addressing these challenges effectively and monitoring the progress made.

In recent years, greater awareness of the situation of Roma on the part of governments and civil society at large has steadily given more impetus to the drive for Roma integration, including since the 2005 signing by a number of European Prime Ministers of the Declaration of the Decade of Roma Inclusion.

Although the EU has been fine-tuning its Roma policy for some years, and this has indeed led to considerable developments, much

improvement and better results are still needed, as acknowledged by the Symposium's participants.

A spirit of open discussion prevailed during this event, which allowed for a valuable, result-oriented exchange of views to take place between government and civil society representatives.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

The Acceding Country Croatia*, the Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Iceland+ and Serbia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

* Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.