



“AMALIPE”

ENGLISH only

CENTER FOR INTERETHNIC DIALOGUE AND TOLERANCE

Bulgaria, Veliko Turnovo 5000, p.o.box. 113, 24 Bulgaria Blvd
 Tel: +359 62 600 224; e-mail: center_amalipe@yahoo.com, www.amalipe.com

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**Center AMALIPE calls for stronger and complex
 targeted measures for Roma integration
 both at national and European level**

During the past weeks certain developments in France, Slovakia and some other European countries brought serious concerns regarding the situation of Roma and the advance of Roma inclusion process. The European society reacted negatively to the attempts of the French authorities to expulse thousands of Romanian and Bulgarian Roma. In its Statement Viviane Reding, Vice-President of the European Commission, expressed the readiness of the Commission “to have a very open, frank and honest dialogue with all Member States on how best to take on – using the Treaties and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights as the basis – our joint responsibility for the Roma”.

As part of the civil society and Roma movement in Bulgaria and EU, Center for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance “AMALIPE” follows and analyzes the recent developments. We are deeply concerned that the expulsion of Roma will additionally question the efforts for establishing and implementing Roma inclusion policy as well as some of the basic European rules and principles. Certain important conclusions appear and require tailored actions:

- The recent events clearly show that Roma issue is not only national but also European issue. Since the freedom of movement of people is fundamental European principle, it is not possible to achieve substantial advance in Roma integration if the last is applied only in some European countries and not applied in the others or if Roma integration policy follows different standards and principles in different countries. Until now the European policy for Roma inclusion has defined 10 Common Basic Principles and has been seen mainly as a process of exchange of good practices among the member-states through the European Roma Platform. Some member-states have shown interest to use the Structural funds for Roma integration activities which has been encouraged by the European Commission. These are important founding steps. Nevertheless, the recent events have outlined that these steps are not enough and should be further developed towards stronger European Roma Strategy that defines common European standards for Roma inclusion and mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of these standards at national and regional levels. The European Roma Platform *should go beyond the exchange of experience and to appropriate stronger policy development, consultation and monitoring functions*. The usage of European funds for Roma inclusion should become stronger obligation for the member-states: following the example of the recent Amendments in Art. 7 of the Regulations of European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the European Rural Development Fund need to define specific shares for Roma inclusion targeted actions.

- The recent events clearly show that there are serious problems with the Roma integration in the countries of Eastern Europe and that the root-causes leading Roma to abandon their homes and move across borders are not tackled. The lack of integration in the countries of origin fosters thousands of Roma from Eastern Europe to migrate in other

countries of the European Union to find better future. Despite some good strategies and programs approved by several national governments, there is ***strong need of concrete and forward-looking measures to implement these documents: with clearly defined financing, proper administrative infrastructure and mechanisms for engaging the civil society and Roma community itself***. The European Commission did a good job for encouraging the states from Eastern Europe to implement their Roma integration strategies during the accession period. These efforts should continue: ***the Commission should be more active in influencing the national governments regarding Roma inclusion targeted actions***. The European Roma Platform should develop mechanisms for policy consultations and monitoring the national Roma integration policies. The process of preparing the new operational programs for the next planning period should be steered in a way that guarantee the participation of Roma organizations; the inclusion of Roma integration targeted measures in the programs for the next planning period should be actively promoted in order to guarantee the usage of Structural funds for social and economic inclusion of Roma as it is foreseen in the Communication on the social and economic integration of Roma in Europe from April 7, 2010.

○ The recent events clearly show also that ***specific targeted actions are necessary*** to foster Roma inclusion significantly. The final aim of the entire process of Roma integration is to bring Roma at the mainstream education, mainstream labor market, mainstream society as it is formulated through the fourth Basic principle of Roma inclusion “Aiming at the mainstream”. At the same time it becomes clear that using only mainstream tools will take too long time and specific targeted actions for Roma inclusion are necessary as it is formulated in the second Basic principle of Roma inclusion “Specific but not exclusive targeting”. ***Roma inclusion targeted measures should be promoted both at national and European levels. Their design and implementation should be joint responsibility of the national governments, European Commission and Roma community through a strengthened European Roma Platform and respective policy development mechanisms at national level.*** The implementation of these measures should be financially backed up by the European funds and the respective national budgets. Roma inclusion targeted measures need to be included in the new operational programs in a way that guarantee specific budget and clear responsibility for their implementation. The implementation of the national strategies for Roma integration also should be equipped with reasonable administrative and financial back up.

Finally, the recent events clearly show that the engagement of different kind of actors is obligatory for fostering Roma inclusion: national governments, civil society organizations, Roma community, European institutions. The European Commission has an important role to play: as “broker between Member States” and as monitor of the advance achieved that was strongly confirmed by the Statement of Vice-President Viviane Reding. It has also important role to play for establishing stronger European Roma Strategy, for strengthening the European Roma Platform and for raising the importance of Roma inclusion topic at European level. The recent developments show that it is time for action.

Therefore, we call for:

- *Complex targeted measures for Roma integration both at nation and European level with shared equal responsibilities of European institutions, Member states and (Roma) Civil Society representatives*
- *Stronger and more determined European Roma Strategy*
- *Higher engagement of the national governments for Roma integration with specific financing and clear responsibilities*