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Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting

**Implementation of the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of
Roma and Sinti
(dedicated to the 10th Anniversary of the adoption of
the 2003 OSCE Action Plan)**

**7 - 8 November 2013
Vienna, Austria**

Final Report

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The third Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting (SHDM) of 2013 was dedicated to the 10th Anniversary of the OSCE Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti in the OSCE Area. It brought together 213 participants including 128 delegates from 44 OSCE participating States, 6 representatives from International Organizations, 7 participants from OSCE Institutions, 9 representatives from OSCE field operations and 63 representatives from 54 non-governmental organizations.

The meeting was organized in three sessions:

- ODIHR 2013 Status Report on the Implementation of the Roma and Sinti OSCE Action Plan: key findings and lessons learned
- Ten years of implementing the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti: key trends, developments and challenges
- Integration of Roma and Sinti with a particular focus on women, youth and children: best practices and ways forward

Prior to the SHDM the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues (CPRSI) organized a Roma and Sinti civil society meeting titled “The Roma and Sinti Civil Society - Catalyst for Change. Ten Years of the Implementation of the 2003 OSCE Action Plan on Roma and Sinti” which brought together over 40 civil society participants from across the OSCE region.

2. SYNOPSIS OF THE SESSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section summarizes the discussions which took place during the opening session and the three thematic sessions, and presents recommendations made by participants. The recommendations were directed towards a variety of actors, in particular: OSCE participating States, OSCE institutions and field operations, civil society actors, the European Union and its institutions, and representatives of other international organizations. These recommendations have no official status and are not based on consensus. The inclusion of a recommendation in this report does not suggest that it reflects the views or policies of the OSCE. Nevertheless, these recommendations serve as useful indicators for the OSCE to reflect on how participating States are meeting their commitments relating to Roma and Sinti and their views on OSCE/ODIHR follow-up to assist participating States in implementing their commitments on improving the situation of Roma and Sinti.

OPENING SESSION

Opening remarks were delivered by Ambassador Ihor Prokopchuk of Ukraine, Chairperson of the OSCE Permanent Council and by Ambassador Janez Lenarčič, Director of the

OSCE/ODIHR, followed by the keynote speech of Ms. Lívía Járóka, Member of the European Parliament, Vice-chair, Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality.¹

Ambassador Ihor Prokopchuk, Chairperson of the OSCE Permanent Council reminded participants that respect for democracy, human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law are cornerstones of stability and security in Europe and beyond. He recalled the OSCE Astana Commemorative Declaration that reiterates that the inherent dignity of the individual is at the core of comprehensive security. Ambassador Prokopchuk reminded participants that as early as 1990, the OSCE recognized the specific challenges faced by Roma and Sinti communities throughout the OSCE region, and recalled the 1990 Copenhagen Conference on the Human Dimension where participating States affirmed commitments to raise awareness and to introduce effective measures to combat racial and ethnic hatred and discrimination towards Roma and Sinti.

Later in the 2003 Maastricht Ministerial Council Decision, the participating States adopted the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti. The Action Plan was reinforced with the Ministerial Council Decisions in Helsinki in 2008 that focused particularly on enhancing equal access to education and promoting early education, and in Athens in 2009 that urged participating States to address the rise of violent manifestations of intolerance against Roma and Sinti.

Ambassador Prokopchuk commended OSCE/ODIHR for its valuable contributions on Roma and Sinti issues and its expertise in assisting the participating States to tackle the specific problems Roma and Sinti face. He informed attendees that the SHDM marks the 10th anniversary of the Action Plan and urged participating States to address further challenges and take stock of lessons learned. The Second Status Report on the implementation of the Action Plan prepared by OSCE/ODIHR accurately highlights where challenges persist ten years following its adoption. The findings of the report give guidance on further challenges and how to meet them. He also reminded participating States that the Ukrainian Chairmanship has proposed a draft Ministerial Council Decision on enhancing the OSCE efforts to implement the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area with a particular focus on Roma and Sinti women and youth.

The Action Plan itself is a milestone, but much more needs to be done to bring true benefits for the Roma and Sinti communities in the OSCE area. The Chairperson of the OSCE Permanent Council concluded by inviting participants to contribute to a fruitful meeting that would serve as a forum for the participating States and civil society to exchange views and discuss the way forward.

OSCE/ODIHR Director Lenarčič recalled that a decade of efforts in implementing commitments has passed, and highlighted the opportunity the SHDM provides to look at the impact of these measures. He recalled the important contribution of Nicolae Gheorghe and honoured his life's work on Roma and Sinti issues, including as Senior Advisor on Roma and Sinti Issues at the OSCE/ODIHR. He underlined that on the occasion of the 10th Anniversary of the Action Plan his Office presented its second Status Report on implementing OSCE commitments relating to Roma and Sinti and pointed out that in the last five years no real breakthrough has taken place in key areas regarding Roma and Sinti.

¹ The texts of the opening session remarks and keynote speech can be found in Annexes 2 and 3.

The main conclusions of the Status Report are that integration strategies have become a standard for Roma and Sinti inclusion; local authorities are developing local action plans and more funding for Roma and Sinti is made available, including by the European Union (EU). The consolidation of the EU Framework Strategy is seen as a visible progress.

Ambassador Lenarčič noted that despite these positive developments OSCE/ODIHR has identified worrying trends, such as the increase in anti-Roma rhetoric, the violent marches against Roma and no change in the quality of data about social inclusion measures. He further noted that few satisfactory results are visible when it comes to accessing social services, housing, education, health and employment and stressed that education is a key vehicle for Roma and Sinti to lift themselves out of poverty and exclusion. Education is a fundamental human right, a precondition to exercising other human rights and a powerful tool by which economically and socially marginalized communities can improve their lives. Yet, Roma and Sinti children across the OSCE region face discrimination in education by being channelled into segregated, often inferior, education. He also highlighted the particularly vulnerable situation of Roma and Sinti women and girls who face multiple forms of discrimination and brought to the attention of the audience key issues that remain problematic, such as the fact that participation of Roma in public life is symbolic at best. He reminded those listening that especially Roma and Sinti women can and should play a role as agents of change in their communities. Ambassador Lenarčič concluded that Roma policies have become a standard, but more is needed to ensure impact and outcomes.

Representative Járóka recalled the contribution of the European Parliament to the groundwork for the Framework Strategy for National Roma Integration Strategies of the European Union. Despite these efforts she criticized that progress in the field is unbearably slow and the impact is nearly imperceptible. The control and governance of the Framework is not well-defined and it is hard to determine who exactly is responsible for the Framework's success or failure.

Ms. Járóka pointed to the EU enlargement in 2004 and 2007, which brought broader freedom of movement to the citizens of acceding countries, as a positive development for some Roma. However, the older Member States have at times responded to Roma migration with detentions, evictions and expulsions. She deplored the fact that integration is perceived as a burden to EU Member States and noted that the EU Framework was cheered on at the beginning. However, delays and sluggish national strategies have meant that little improvement has been visible since its adoption. Likewise, important flaws have surfaced, such as the lack of quality control mechanisms, as the European Commission and Member States are outsourcing inclusion efforts to NGOs that act on behalf of Roma, but with little Roma involvement. These NGOs do not have legal responsibility for social inclusion; bad projects are replicated again and again and flawed implementation mechanisms are preserved. She mentioned that civil society stakeholders are slow in reacting to European Commission documents and their criticism is weak.

Ms. Járóka underlined five key factors that should be accounted for by policymakers: First, national strategies must be brought closer to reality. Second, national strategies must be brought closer to Roma. Third, national strategies must better target Roma. Fourth, national strategies must protect Roma. Fifth, the Framework should reach Roma in EU neighbouring countries, particularly the Roma population in the Western Balkans region. She highlighted that the Instrument for Pre-Accession may be an effective tool to influence policy-making and implementation of national integration strategies.

She stressed that the economic argument for Roma inclusion is even more relevant now, in the context of the sluggish recovery from the economic crisis. If governments retreat from Roma inclusion, economic opportunities will be missed.

SESSION I: ODIHR 2013 Status Report on the Implementation of the Roma and Sinti OSCE Action Plan: key findings and lessons learned

Moderator:

Mrs. Gabriela Hrabanova, ERGO Network, Policy Coordination

Introducers:

Mr. Andrzej Mirga, OSCE/ODIHR Senior Adviser on Roma and Sinti Issues

The first session presented the content of OSCE/ODIHR's *Implementation of the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area: Renewed Commitments, Continued Challenges, Status Report 2013* that was based on 41 responses by participating States to the OSCE/ODIHR questionnaire and additional information provided by international stakeholders and civil society. The session provided the opportunity to explore the efforts needed by the OSCE participating States to overcome the existing challenges and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of implementation of their strategies or action plans targeting Roma and Sinti, and how to overcome obstacles at the local level in implementing policies assisting Roma and Sinti.

Andrzej Mirga presented the key findings of the second Status Report underlining that in this review period the number of replies of OSCE participating States to the OSCE/ODIHR questionnaire had increased significantly from those received in 2008. He highlighted that nearly half of the participating States that responded have adopted national Roma strategies or programmes in the last five years. Compared to the OSCE/ODIHR review done in 2008, there are now more policies, institutions and financial instruments available to tackle the diversity of problems that continue to face many Roma and Sinti communities, despite the economic crisis that has underpinned the review period.

The Senior Adviser pointed to crucial key areas that need enhanced commitments in order to make progress in effectively implementing Roma inclusion policies, these include: effective and targeted policy measures with adequate funding, and focused local level implementation, data collection and monitoring of outcomes. Especially in the area of data collection there has been no change in the position of key stakeholders. OSCE participating States continue to demonstrate reluctance to collect ethnically disaggregated data. The few data made available are often fragmentary and difficult to aggregate and compare. He reported that the participating States replies to OSCE/ODIHR show that local authorities have increasingly been tasked with implementing Roma policy measures and the bulk of reported funds have been directed to local administrations. Yet, the central government commitment does not always correspond to the commitment at the regional or local level. There is also no assessment of the use of existing resources against achieved outcomes and overall the Status Report concludes that disproportionate resources have been used to produce insignificant outcomes. He summarised the conclusion of the report with stating that little progress has been made in closing gaps dividing Roma and Sinti from majority populations in most areas of concern.

Mr. Mirga further highlighted the key human rights challenges and negative trends observed by OSCE/ODIHR in the last five years. These are: violent racist attacks against Roma; far-right protests or marches targeting Roma and Sinti; extremist anti-Roma rhetoric; and police

inaction in protecting Roma and Sinti communities or settlements. In addition negative trends continue also in the area of housing. Despite more funding made available to improve housing conditions in many places in the OSCE area, Roma continue to face lack of security of tenure or lack of access to basic infrastructure, discrimination in access to social-housing schemes or residential segregation. A number of reports indicate a rise in forced evictions and cases of building walls separating Roma from their non-Roma neighbours.

He also underlined that low employment remains of concern. A disproportionate amount of funds have been used for various job programmes with insignificant outcomes, and although education received greater attention by national stakeholders and has been prioritized in many participating States negative trends persisted. Still a smaller percentage of Roma children finish primary education successfully and the practice of channelling Roma children into segregated schools continues. The rulings of the ECtHR on segregation of Roma children in special education have not been implemented.

The Senior Adviser informed participants that there has been a dramatic change in the overall context of the implementation of Roma and Sinti OSCE commitments in last five years. This change can be attributed to the EU accession process, migration, the economic and financial crisis, and the rise of far-right and populist movements and parties, intolerance and violence. He concluded that EU Roma policy and EU funds made available for Roma integration programmes can be seen as positive development, but underlined that the key question remains how the resources made available by participating States, and especially by the EU, will be used to bring about visible change and tangible outcomes in the situation of many Roma and Sinti communities.

In the discussion that followed several participants noted that despite progress in implementing Roma policies in some areas there is no real change in the situation of Roma and Sinti on the ground. In addition, they expressed concerns about recent developments in a number of areas. The erecting of walls separating Roma from the mainstream population and the continued marginalisation of Roma were highlighted as areas that need attention.

A number of civil society participants recommended to the OSCE participating States to ensure that the Draft Ministerial Council Decision has concrete and appropriate language with regard to Roma and Sinti women and youth and accounts for their active participation at all levels on policies. It was also recommended to highlight in the new Ministerial Council Decision the positive practice of the OSCE to have a specific body dealing with Roma and Sinti and that Roma themselves are hired as expert staff to work within the OSCE, which is regarded as a positive signal to the Roma community.

The importance of enhancing the political participation of Roma and Sinti was addressed by civil society representatives, delegates from OSCE participating States and the representative of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly. Recommendations for inclusion of Roma and Sinti in political life were made in the annual Parliamentary Assembly session in 2007, followed by further recommendations in Astana 2010 and in Monaco 2012. Concerns were raised that the rights of Roma in elections are infringed in some countries by the fact that they belong to an ethnic minority.

The lack of impact of existing policies aimed at Roma and Sinti was criticised by a number of participants, underlining the need to look into past failures to learn for the future, to have an open debate about the process of implementing Roma policies and to have proper data

collection mechanisms in place to regularly review progress made. In order to achieve better results, there were suggestions to have ODIHR draft a new Action Plan addressing existing challenges, including reacting to the racist and violent attacks against Roma. Furthermore, strong leadership and political will was identified as key to achieving progress. Especially at local level there is currently a lack of political will to integrate Roma and Sinti. One delegate recommended to the OSCE participating States to seek more systematic evaluation mechanisms and how to strengthen the mandate of the OSCE/ODIHR Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues and the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities to introduce a more co-ordinated approach in addressing Roma and Sinti.

Concern about the lack of progress to ensure adequate housing or access to social services and the continued discrimination and intolerance against Roma and Sinti was also expressed. There is need to promote access to quality education for Roma and Sinti and to pay attention to the specific vulnerability of Roma women and girls. As to implementing Roma policies in participating States, the principle adopted in the OSCE Action Plan “For Roma with Roma” should remain the cornerstone of addressing Roma issues while a systematic and co-ordinated approach for strategy implementation is recommended to be effective. Civil society representatives remarked on participation, questioning how many countries actually apply this principle.

With regard to the OSCE’s mandate on Roma and Sinti, several participants commended the OSCE/ODIHR CPRSI and the OSCE/HCNM for their work and recommended continued co-operation between these institutions. The OSCE was the first organization to address Roma and Sinti issues, followed by Council of Europe (CoE) and the EU. Also the need for continued close co-operation and co-ordination among the three was stressed.

With regard to recent negative trends it was underlined that OSCE should respond to the “securitization” of Roma issues by police and halt the process of further stigmatisation of Roma and Sinti as criminals.

Another area of concern highlighted was the restrictions and measures imposed on Roma when trying to exercise their right to freedom of movement in the context of Roma travelling. A civil society actor informed attendees about the continued practise of eviction and expulsion of Roma. One participant informed participants that despite positive examples presented in the OSCE/ODIHR’s Status Report, Roma often lack access to information on what official authorities do undertake for Roma. The Status Report quotes in relation to some participating States outdated information on housing, while in fact a number of people have suffered from evictions in recent years due to the economic crises, among them a high number of Roma.

It was also recommended that the OSCE introduce the term “Travellers” along with Roma and Sinti. Some participating States have still not recognised Travellers as an ethnic minority.

The issue of increased violence against Roma since 2008 and anti-Roma marches were also mentioned. The situation remains of particular concern in cases of incitement to hate crime or the overrepresentation of Roma children in state care institutions in some participating States. Those countries involved in these cases were urged to address the problems Roma face.

The following specific recommendations were made in Session I:

Recommendations to OSCE participating States:

- OSCE commitments on Roma and Sinti should reflect strong language and strong commitments addressing Roma and Sinti, the Draft Ministerial Council Decision should have concrete and appropriate language with regard to Roma and Sinti women and youth;
- The principle adopted in the OSCE Action Plan, “For Roma with Roma”, should remain the cornerstone in addressing Roma and Sinti issues;
- Participating States should highlight in the Draft Ministerial Council Decision the positive practice of the OSCE to have a specific body, the OSCE/ODIHR CPRSI, dealing with Roma and Sinti where Roma expert staff has been hired to work within the OSCE;
- Participating States should enhance the political participation of Roma and Sinti and remove all obstacles that might infringe the rights of Roma and Sinti to participate in elections, including limiting suffrage rights for people belonging to a minority group;
- The OSCE should respond to the “securitisation” of Roma issues and halt further stigmatisation of Roma and Sinti;
- The OSCE should draft a new Action Plan to progress with addressing the existing challenges and firmly react to the racist violent attacks against Roma and Sinti;
- OSCE participating States should explore how to achieve more systematic evaluation mechanisms and how to strengthen the mandate of the OSCE/ODIHR CPRSI and the OSCE/HCNM to introduce a more co-ordinated approach in addressing Roma and Sinti;
- The OSCE should introduce the term “Travellers”, along with Roma and Sinti, into the relevant commitments; and
- The OSCE and EU should co-operate and work together with European Member States to implement national Roma strategies.

Recommendations to the OSCE institutions and bodies:

- The OSCE/ODIHR CPRSI and the OSCE/HCNM shall continue to co-operate in order to address Roma and Sinti issues; and
- Close co-operation and co-ordination between the EU, the OSCE/ODIHR CPRSI and the Council of Europe shall continue and be enhanced.

SESSION II: Ten years of Implementing the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti: key trends, developments and challenges

Moderator:

Ambassador Christian Strohal, Head of Permanent Mission of Austria to the OSCE

Introducer:

Ms. Astrid Thors, OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities

The second working session presented participants with the opportunity to discuss ten years of implementation of the OSCE Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti and to exchange information on good practices, challenges and trends. The session provided a possibility for civil society to raise concerns about present human rights challenges faced by Roma and Sinti and present recommendations to the OSCE participating States and the OSCE specialized institutions mandated to assist with the Roma and Sinti Action Plan implementation.

Ms. Thors commended the comprehensive second Status Report on the situation of Roma and Sinti and outlined the role of the OSCE High Commissioner (HCNM) in this regard. She stressed that despite the progress made in the past ten years, the same challenges remain with regard to Roma and Sinti and no major breakthrough was possible in any policy area. In this regard, she underlined the need to have genuine political will and leadership and that real consultation with and participation of Roma and Sinti in decision making and in the monitoring of the implementation of the Action Plan should be standard practice.

The High Commissioner expressed her concerns about growing intolerance, anti-Roma rhetoric and stigmatization of Roma across the OSCE region. She reminded participants of the Ljubljana Guidelines on Integration of Diverse Societies and that integration can only be facilitated if opportunities for participation are provided to all members of society. She further stressed that this process should be based on mutual trust and respect for diversity, creating a feeling of security for all in society

While the lead within the OSCE concerning the Action Plan lies with the OSCE/ODIHR CPRSI, the OSCE/HCNM and other OSCE institutions can complement their efforts. Moreover she underlined the need for co-operation and reminded that the implementation of the commitments remains the responsibility of the participating States.

Ms. Thors informed participants that in relation to Roma and Sinti civil registration, education, combating racism and discrimination, participation and conflict prevention are concrete fields where the OSCE/HCNM has expertise and has offered its assistance. Furthermore, she highlighted the problems caused by the lack of civil registration and underlined that Roma and Sinti communities across Europe are disproportionately affected by lack of registration as well as statelessness. The 2011 Zagreb Declaration, and common efforts with the European Commission, UNHCR and OSCE/ODIHR, and with the participants to the Zagreb Declaration, aims to resolve these issues in the countries involved.

She also stressed the need for quality education for Roma and Sinti and for tackling the issue of segregation. She confirmed that OSCE/HCNM will continue the fruitful co-operation with

OSCE/ODIHR CPRSI during common field visits, and with the participating States she will remain engaged in addressing Roma and Sinti issues in the OSCE area.

A constructive discussion following the introduction by the High Commissioner enjoyed participation from many NGOs from various countries, Roma and Sinti representatives and delegations of participating States. Several participating States presented positive examples of national action plans for the inclusion of Roma and Sinti and received valuable feedback from civil society on the implementation and possible shortcomings.

In particular participants identified three key issues that would require further action: leadership, consultations and results. In addition, the responsibility of politicians was repeatedly underlined.

The role of health and education mediators was positively assessed by the participating States, although some civil society representatives criticized these programmes because often the salaries of mediators are very low. Ensuring concrete impact at the local level of Action Plans was identified as an area where further efforts are needed.

The participation of Roma and Sinti in political decision making, as well as the implementation and monitoring of national action plans, with active involvement of statistic offices in the spirit of ownership, was regarded by participants as crucial for the success of these plans. Civil society participants stressed the need to maintain funding for Roma and Sinti inclusion strategies during the current economic crisis, since the long-term costs of exclusion would be excessive. The need to focus on youth to reach out to whole Roma and Sinti communities and to engage them in political processes was also emphasized. The need to fight rising extremism and anti-gypsyism was stressed as a pressing issue for participating States.

To conclude the session, High Commissioner Thors welcomed the initiative of the Ukrainian Chairmanship (CiO) to adopt a new Ministerial Council decision on Roma women and youth and recommended OSCE/ODIHR to review electoral legislation that prevents Roma and Sinti from participating in elections.

Finally, the moderator emphasized that the Action Plan was intended to be a living document, a fact that was underlined by the discussions during the session. To ensure this, everyone should recognize the importance of joint ownership of the Plan.

The following specific recommendations were made in Session II:

Recommendations to OSCE participating States:

- OSCE participating States should increase the representation and participation of Roma and Sinti in local administration and government and their participation in elections should be facilitated, since local authorities are the key structures in the implementation of Roma and Sinti policy measures;
- OSCE participating States should make sure that national action plans better reflect the needs of Roma and Sinti and ensure the inclusion of Roma and Sinti representatives;

- OSCE participating States should ensure that Roma and Sinti inclusion does not fall victim to current budgetary constraints;
- OSCE participating States should facilitate the access to identity and civil registration documents for Roma and Sinti and fully implement the 2011 Zagreb Declaration;
- OSCE participating States should consider the positive example of health and education mediators for improving the situation of Roma and Sinti and reflect on adequate salaries for mediators;
- OSCE participating States should consider the introduction or improvement of monitoring mechanisms and assessments which ensure Roma and Sinti participation;
- OSCE participating States should continue to regard the Action Plan as a living document and strive for a Ministerial Council decision in Kyiv, including new commitments especially in the area of education and girls and women; and
- OSCE participating States, as well as the OSCE institutions and bodies, should fight any form of “anti-gypsyism” and extremism.

Recommendations to the OSCE institutions and bodies:

- OSCE institutions and bodies should enhance the collection of data on the situation of Roma and Sinti to ensure comparability and the respect for international standards of data protection and transparency. The assistance offered by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights should be considered;
- OSCE institutions and bodies should make youth a priority in their programmes concerning Roma and Sinti and consider their inclusion in decision making;
- OSCE/ODIHR should regard the publication of a Status Report on the implementation of the Action Plan every five years as standard practice; and
- OSCE/ODIHR should consider analysing the possibilities of Roma and Sinti to participate in elections and review electoral law that prevents Roma and Sinti from participating in elections.

SESSION III – Integration of Roma and Sinti with a particular focus on women, youth and children: best practices and ways forward

Moderator:

Mr. Peter Vermeersch, Professor of Politics, University of Leuven, Belgium

Introducer:

Ms. Ethel Brooks, Professor of the Departments of Women's and Gender Studies and Sociology at Rutgers University, and the Undergraduate Director in the Department of Women's and Gender Studies, United States of America

This session explored the opportunity to enhance active participation of Roma and Sinti women, children and youth in all relevant policies of their concern. While international and European stakeholders have recognized that Roma and Sinti women face multiple forms of discrimination in all areas of life based on their gender and ethnicity, their role in policy making and implementation is often limited. Education is key for Roma and Sinti women, children and youth to lift themselves out of the vicious cycle of poverty and social exclusion and it is also a precondition enabling Roma and Sinti women and youth to become role models and agents of change for their communities. Participants discussed how full, active and equal participation of Roma and Sinti women in public and political life can be enhanced and how national and local level authorities can enhance the role of Roma and Sinti women and youth to strengthen their work in improving the lives of their communities.

In her introductory speech, Ms. Brooks pointed to the “intersectional analysis,” first used by African-American scholars as a way of understanding the heightened forms of marginalization and oppression when race, gender, class and other identities “intersect”. She underlined that Roma and Sinti women, children and youth continue to face multiple forms of discrimination stemming from their gender identities, racial and ethnic identities, and class positions as recognized by the UN and the OSCE Parliamentary resolution on promoting policies on equality between Roma and Sinti women and men.

She highlighted that Roma and Sinti women, in particular, face multiple forms of violence and discrimination, such as increased vulnerability to trafficking and sexual violence, domestic violence, and reproductive violence –including forced sterilization. Roma and Sinti women bear the burden of negative policies against Roma, erection of walls and discrimination in education. In recent years Roma and Sinti women, children and youth – really all Roma people – are facing increased extremist violence and hate speech that often goes unchecked by the state and the majority population.

Brooks stressed that Roma and Sinti girls are the most vulnerable. The case of Leonarda Dibrani and her deportation is evocative of this, as is the recent case of Maria, the Roma girl from Bulgaria found living with a Roma family in Greece. She noted that such cases point to continued, sustained racism. They also point to the deep, sustained structural violence experienced by Roma and Sinti women, children and youth in the OSCE region.

Roma women make up more than half of the Roma population across the OSCE and the majority of the Roma and Sinti population are under 18 years of age. According to demographic data 30 per cent of Roma and Sinti are younger than 15 years of age, while over 50 per cent of the population is under 18 years of age. Roma and Sinti women and youth are the future. Roma women are active members as community leaders and participate not only in labour markets, but carry out the work of the home and of public life. This should be promoted – with real support of Roma and Sinti women’s political participation and citizenship practice, as voters and as candidates. Roma youth have the technological capability, energy and the vision to drive society forward. She recalled the 2003 Action Plan which recommended that policy has to be developed with active participation of Roma and Sinti and added that any future commitments have to include the active participation and contribution of Roma and Sinti women and youth.

Roma and Sinti should be real and equal partners and share the responsibility for the betterment of their welfare. The Action Plan further recommends the equal participation of

Roma and Sinti women in decision-making and policy processes in their communities. Ms. Brooks, therefore, underlined the need for intersectional approaches to participation to ensure equality of decision-making and policy processes on all fronts.

Equal participation is necessary and must be facilitated through access to education, reproductive rights, citizenship, housing, health care, and labour markets. In this context she emphasized that security for Roma and Sinti women, children and youth – and for all Roma and Sinti across the region – includes freedom from sexual and domestic violence, from hate crimes and from structural violence and discrimination, and from walls around Roma neighbourhoods and evictions. Equal participation means that there should be no decisions taken, no policies proposed or implemented, without Roma and Sinti included in the process. Making a reference to the Action Plan, she called on participating States to “do nothing about us without us” and stressed that Roma and Sinti people are the largest minority in Europe. “Our future is the future of all Roma, of all citizens, across the OSCE region and beyond.”

Participants called for the review of the criminal code to prevent violence and to protect women in OSCE participating States, stressing that Roma and Sinti women should have effective protection from violence. Furthermore participants called for greater access to employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for Roma women. They emphasized that the efforts to ensure school attendance must be enhanced. Roma women need to be able to participate equally in education and financial barriers should be eliminated. Several NGO representatives highlighted the importance of participation in politics and in the local and central administration.

Participants also stressed that respecting gender equality contributes to economic development and that from this perspective Roma and Sinti women are underutilized. One participant noted that Roma women’s marginalization is correlated to a higher chance of conflict. Roma and Sinti women should be economically independent and more must be done to empower them through entrepreneurship. Legalizing informal activities in commerce can be a way forward. Participants stressed the fact that economic development programmes for Roma women hold positive outcomes for education and children and the welfare of the family in general.

With regards to the draft Ministerial Council Decision on Roma and Sinti women and youth, participants welcomed the initiative while raising concerns regarding the language and intent of the document. They noted that security issues must be raised in the Ministerial Council Decision, taking into account the current challenges that Roma and Sinti women face. Civil society pointed out that issues such as early marriages and the severe underrepresentation in politics should be addressed by OSCE participating States, stressing that empowerment is a crucial aspect in improving the current situation.

Reacting to recent cases of child removal from Roma families, participants stressed that Roma children need support out of poverty, not institutionalization, and that NGOs have good working methods to engage with Roma families. They called for social services to use them, as such methods will help institutions overcome obstacles and will lead to more effective and adapted work with Roma and Sinti.

Participants stressed that Roma youth want to be considered stakeholders and indicated that recent incidents show that Roma young people need support as “anti-Gypsyism” is rampant across the region. As in the case of women, a focus on political participation of youth is

necessary. One participant recalled the National Democratic Institute's (NDI) leadership academies and the NDI experiences in training Roma youth for participation in politics.

Several participants deplored the fact that trained young Roma people do not have the chance to engage in public life. Political parties and local authorities are very reluctant to involve capable Roma and some initiatives were blocked due to negative stereotypes. One participant added that trained Roma people are prepared to start working in the public sector, but expressed fears that many Roma who are educated and trained are not involved in pushing forward the Roma and Sinti agenda. Local authorities are reluctant to hire young Roma professionals. Participants concluded that it is important to support Roma youth to participate, but that mainstream society must also be more open to Roma engagement.

Participants also referred to the fact that realities for Roma youth are often stark at the local level. Roma are seen as a target group, as passive beneficiaries, creating a culture of assistance. They drew attention to the potential of Roma youth who can mobilize, build solidarity and build bridges through youth activism. They called for support for Roma youth organizations to continue activism and integrate the Roma youth issue in the mainstream. One participant deplored the fact that Youth in Action, the EUs youth programme, will not provide support for local initiatives, calling this "a drawback for Roma youth".

Some delegations of OSCE participating States stressed that improving the situation of children in education is the key to Roma and Sinti integration in OSCE Region. They underlined that many problems have been tackled, but efforts to improve the situation constitute a long time endeavour. One delegation mentioned that an important aspect is the motivation for children to participate in education, while taking into account their cultural background. Several delegations mentioned programmes that support poor Roma children to attend education. Support is also provided to schools and kindergartens to enable quality education of marginalized children. One delegation challenged the view that Roma are passive targets, mentioning good practices in education, such as Roma educational incubators, where Roma organizations were the principal stakeholders of the project. During the discussion two incoming chairmanships announced that they would focus strongly on youth issues. They invited Roma youth to contribute to the agenda for the upcoming year.

In the context of this discussion, one participant raised the issue of lack of Roma observers in electoral processes in the regions where Roma live. As a response one delegation called for Roma election observers in electoral processes in the whole OSCE region.

At the end of the session Professor Brooks concluded that Roma and Sinti women and youth are eager to participate and underlined that investing – politically and economically – in Roma women and youth is a good investment.

The following specific recommendations were made in Session III:

Recommendations to OSCE participating States:

- The Ministerial Council Decision should reflect perspectives from Roma civil society. Roma and Sinti Issues should be better reflected in the Ministerial Council Decision in an action oriented way, seeking impact;

- Capacity building of Roma and Sinti women organizations should be supported more, especially at the local level;
- The OSCE Action Plan on gender should be adapted to Roma and Sinti women's needs and Roma and Sinti women should be part of the revision process;
- Efforts to enhance political participation of Roma and Sinti women taking into account experiences of the OSCEs work in the area should continue;
- OSCE participating States should support microfinance and entrepreneurship of Roma and Sinti women, economic and political empowerment of Roma and Sinti women is key to solving challenges;
- Roma and Sinti women should have effective protection from violence;
- Efforts to ensure school attendance must be enhanced. Roma and Sinti women need to be able to participate equally in education and financial barriers should be eliminated;
- OSCE Participating states should revise the way child security is perceived in connection to Roma and in view of increased incidence of violence;
- Child protection institutions should develop better and more effective tools to work with Roma and Sinti families. The rights of Roma children and those of their parents must be protected;
- More must be done to motivate children to participate in education while taking into account their cultural background;
- Support should be provided to Roma youth to continue activism and integrate Roma youth issues in the mainstream; and
- Trained young Roma should be actively involved in politics and in local and central administrations. Roma observers are needed in electoral processes in the OSCE area.

Recommendations to the OSCE institutions and field operations:

- OSCE/ODIHR, in co-ordination with the European Union, the Council of Europe and OSCE participating States, should support the creation of a Task Force on Roma and Sinti Women. The Task Force should produce yearly thematic reports on the situation of Roma and Sinti women;
- The OSCE Action Plan on gender should be adapted to Roma and Sinti women needs and they should be part of the process;
- Efforts should continue to enhance the political participation of Roma and Sinti women and youth taking into account experiences of OSCEs work in the area; and
- OSCE/ODIHR CPRSI should take into account identity issues and should reinforce its role as clearing house.

Recommendations to international and regional organizations:

- The EU's Youth in Action programme should continue to provide support for local initiatives of youth organisations.

3. ANNEXES

Annex 1: Agenda



Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting

Implementation of the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti (dedicated to the 10th Anniversary of the adoption of the 2003 OSCE Action Plan)

7-8 November 2013
Hofburg, Vienna

AGENDA

Day 1	7 November 2013
15:00 – 16:00	OPENING SESSION <i>Opening remarks:</i> Ambassador Ihor Prokopchuk , Chairperson of the OSCE Permanent Council, Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the OSCE Ambassador Janez Lenarčič , Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) <i>Keynote speech:</i> Ms. Lívia Járóka , Member of the European Parliament (on behalf of Fidesz party), Vice-chair, Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality <i>Technical information by Mr. Andrzej Mirga</i> , Senior Adviser/Chief of the OSCE/ODIHR Contact Point on Roma and Sinti Issues
16:00 – 18:00	<u>SESSION I: ODIHR 2013 Status Report on the Implementation of the Roma and Sinti OSCE Action Plan: key findings and lessons learned</u> <i>Moderator:</i>

Ms. Gabriela Hrabanova, Policy Coordinator, European Roma Grassroots Organization

Introducer:

Mr. Andrzej Mirga, Senior Adviser/Chief of the OSCE/ODIHR Contact Point on Roma and Sinti Issues

18:00 – 19:00 Reception hosted by the Ukrainian Chairmanship of the OSCE

Day 2

8 November 2013

10:00 – 12:00 **SESSION II: Ten years of implementing the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti: key trends, developments and challenges**

Moderator:

Amb. Christian Strohal, Head of Permanent Mission of Austria to the OSCE

Introducer:

Ms. Astrid Thors, OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities

12:00 – 14:00 Lunch break

14:00 – 16:00 **SESSION III: Integration of Roma and Sinti with a particular focus on women, youth and children: best practices and ways forward**

Moderator:

Mr. Peter Vermeersch, Professor of Politics, University of Leuven, Belgium

Introducer:

Dr. Ethel Brooks, Associate Professor, Departments of Women's and Gender Studies and Sociology, Rutgers University

16:00 – 16:30 Break

16:30 – 17:30 **CLOSING SESSION**
Reports by the Moderators of the Working Sessions

Comments from the floor

Closing remarks

Ambassador Janez Lenarčič, Director of the OSCE/ODIHR

17:30 Closing of the Meeting

Annex 2: Opening Remarks

**Opening statement by Ambassador Ihor Prokopchuk
Chairperson of the OSCE Permanent Council
at the Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting
on Implementation of the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti
(7 November 2013, Vienna)**

**Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

On behalf of the Ukrainian Chairmanship I would like to warmly welcome you all to the third Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting dedicated to the Implementation of the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti in OSCE Area.

Respect for and promotion of democracy, human rights, fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law are cornerstones of stability and security in Europe and beyond. *The OSCE Astana Commemorative Declaration reiterates that the inherent dignity of the individual is at the core of comprehensive security.*

For many years, the OSCE has been addressing the situation of Roma and Sinti through the work of its various institutions and field operations. As early as 1990, the OSCE recognized the specific challenges faced by Roma and Sinti communities throughout the OSCE region. *During the 1990 Copenhagen Conference on the Human Dimension* the participating States affirmed their commitment to raise awareness and to introduce effective measures to combat racial and ethnic hatred and discrimination towards Roma.

A decade later, the 2003 Maastricht Ministerial Council adopted the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti, thus strengthening the commitments that address the significant disparities between the majority and Roma and Sinti populations. The main objective of the 2003 Action Plan is to reinforce the efforts of the participating States and relevant OSCE structures aimed at ensuring that Roma and Sinti people are able to play a full and equal part in our societies, and at eradicating and discrimination against them.

The OSCE Action Plan remains the most comprehensive policy document addressing Roma and Sinti integration with concrete recommendations in the area of combating racism and discrimination against them, improving access to education, employment, housing and health services, enhancing their public and political participation and addressing Roma and Sinti in crisis and post-crises situations.

The OSCE participating States further strengthened their commitments relating to Roma and Sinti with two Ministerial Council Decisions in *Helsinki in 2008* by focusing particularly on enhancing equal access to education and promoting early education and in *Athens in 2009* by urging participating States to address the rise of violent manifestations of intolerance against Roma and Sinti.

Progress has been achieved since then and substantial efforts have been undertaken by the participating States to implement the OSCE Action Plan and other relevant OSCE commitments. *However, despite many positive developments, Roma and Sinti continue to be marginalized socially, politically and economically in different parts of the OSCE area.* Therefore there is a need for greater efforts in order to bring about equality of opportunities consistent with the OSCE commitments.

For nearly two decades the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) has been tasked with assisting participating States in meeting their human-dimension commitments related to Roma and Sinti communities. In this regard I would like to commend ODIHR for its valuable expertise in assisting the participating States to tackle the specific problems Roma and Sinti do face in various areas.

Dear ladies and gentlemen,

This SHDM has a historic significance for the OSCE, since it marks the 10th anniversary of the Action Plan on Roma and Sinti. It is important to use this opportunity to assess the implementation of the commitments that the participating States agreed upon ten years ago and what challenges remain to be addressed in this area.

This Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting seeks to review the lessons learned from realized policies and measures aiming at Roma and Sinti integration. Particular attention will be paid to progress made at the local level and to identify concrete recommendations for the way forward to address more efficiently existing gaps and persistent forms of racism and discrimination and to broaden good examples of successful integration to ensure visible progress in the years to come.

In this context *the ODIHR's second Status Report on the Implementation of the OSCE Action Plan on improving the situation of Roma and Sinti*, published this year, is very timely. The Report highlights what has been achieved and where challenges persist in realizing the objectives contained in the Action Plan. It draws upon the responses by OSCE participating States to an ODIHR questionnaire. It also identifies the recommendations for combating hate crimes and discrimination against Roma and Sinti, improving housing, ensuring their access to adequate health care and enhancing their participation in public and political life.

The findings of the ODIHR's report give us valuable guidance on where improvements have been made and where challenges are yet to be met within the whole OSCE area.

Dear colleagues,

Recognizing the important framework the Action Plan provides for the promotion and protection of the human rights of the Roma and Sinti people by the participating States and aiming to strengthen efforts to ensure that Roma and Sinti people, in particular women and youth as the most vulnerable group, are able to participate fully in societies, the *Ukrainian Chairmanship has proposed a draft decision for the Kyiv Ministerial Council* on enhancing the OSCE efforts to implement the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area with a particular focus on Roma and Sinti women and youth.

The Action Plan itself is a milestone but obviously still needs much more implementation work in order to become an instrument that brings true benefits for the Roma and Sinti communities in the OSCE area.

We do hope that the proposals and recommendations generated at this SHDM will make an important and meaningful contribution to our discussions on the draft decision with a view to strengthening our commitments in this area and producing a concrete deliverable on this vital topic this year.

Dear participants,

Improving the human rights situation of Roma and Sinti in our countries will contribute to improving the general human rights situation and making our societies overall better. *Roma integration is essential for achieving greater social cohesion and opportunities in societies we live in.*

In this regard I am looking forward to a fruitful meeting that will serve as a forum for the participating States and civil society to exchange views and discuss the way forward. I eagerly look forward to the active participation by Roma and other non-governmental organizations in the discussion.

I am confident that this Supplementary meeting will be marked by dynamic discussion, both fruitful and constructive, in the Helsinki spirit of co-operation, equality and dialogue and provide valuable insights, as well as guidance through sharing best practices in implementing OSCE commitments set in the Action Plan on Roma and Sinti in 2003.

I would like to conclude by expressing the Chairmanship's deep appreciation to Ambassador Janez Lenarčič and his team for their tireless efforts in organizing this year's meeting.

Following the conclusion of the first working session today, the Ukrainian Chairmanship is happy to host a reception to which you are cordially invited.

Thank you very much for your attention!

Opening Address by Ambassador Janez Lenarčič
Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)
Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting
on Implementation of the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti
(7 November 2013, Vienna)

Excellencies, Distinguished Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you to this year's third and last Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting focused on the Implementation of the OSCE Action Plan on improving the situation of Roma and Sinti in OSCE.

Today and tomorrow we can look back at the decade of efforts implementing the Action Plan on Roma and Sinti and other relevant OSCE commitments. This is an opportunity for us all to review the impact of measures taken for Roma and Sinti integration and to identify concrete recommendations for the way forward to address more effectively existing implementation gaps and persistent forms of racism and discrimination against Roma and Sinti.

In this context I would like to pay tribute to the enormous and extraordinary contribution of Nicolae Gheorge, the first OSCE Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues in 1999, who was also the architect of much of the OSCE work on Roma. As you know, Nicolae passed away this year and I wish we would all honour his life-work by renewed commitment to improve the situation of Roma and Sinti.

Five years after its adoption, in 2008, ODIHR published its first Status Report on the Implementation of the Roma and Sinti Action Plan, which assessed efforts by participating States to ensure Roma and Sinti integration. The main conclusions of the first Status report were that despite the number of initiatives undertaken by participating States, no real breakthrough took place in any of the key areas contained in the Action Plan. Serious problems remained in the implementation, funding mechanisms, lack of political will and lack of attempts to measure progress. Moreover, a failure to implement national policies at local level was identified.

Today, at the time when we mark the tenth anniversary of adoption of the Action Plan and five years since ODIHR issued its first Status Report, our Office presents its second Status Report on the Implementation of the Roma and Sinti Action Plan.

On a positive note: the findings of the new Status Report demonstrate that integration strategies or policy measures for Roma and Sinti inclusion have become a standard in many participating States. There are now more policies, institutions and financial instruments available to tackle the broad range of problems facing Roma and Sinti communities. We can see that, increasingly, local authorities are engaged in developing local action plans and implementing initiatives.

In addition, more funding for Roma and Sinti programmes has been made available, including by the European Union through its assistance programmes for implementing integration strategies and action plans for its Member States as well as for countries aspiring to EU accession. Moreover, the consolidation of the EU policy on Roma and Sinti with the adoption of the EU Framework Strategy for National Roma Integration Strategies in 2011 is a visible progress in this area.

On a less positive note we have identified worrying trends which seriously hamper the prospects for social inclusion of Roma and Sinti communities: against the background of the global economic downturn over the last five years, there has been an increase in anti-Roma rhetoric by populist politicians and extremists, violent manifestations against Roma and Sinti, mobilization of citizens to march with discriminatory slogans targeting their Roma neighbors and the scapegoating of Roma migrants.

During the review period, there has been little change in the quality of data about Roma and Sinti gathered by the participating States. In addition, there were few satisfactory results were achieved to close the gap between Roma and Sinti and the mainstream society, especially in the areas of education, employment, housing and access to social services.

I would like to highlight two issues in particular:

1. We believe that education has been identified as a key vehicle for changing the future through giving equal opportunities to the Roma and Sinti population by both national authorities and the international community, including the OSCE. Let me recall that education is a fundamental human right and a precondition to exercise many other human rights. It is further a powerful tool by which economically and socially marginalized communities can lift themselves out of poverty and participate fully as citizens. Yet, when we look at the situation of Roma children across the OSCE region we see that, they still face discrimination in education by being channelled to segregated, often inferior, education. Of particular concern remains the practice to send Roma children to so called “special” education.
2. Further, I would like to underline that especially Roma and Sinti women and girls are vulnerable to multiple forms of discrimination in all areas of life. While this is recognized by many international and national stakeholders, their issues are still not fully accounted for both in policy design or implementation, and their participation remains often symbolic at best. In 2012 the HDIM Roma and Sinti special day confirmed that Roma and Sinti women can and should play the role of agents of change for their community but also for the wider society to promote equal opportunity and inclusion for all.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Most participating States have arrived at a stage where Roma policy has become a standard. However, the key challenge today is how to ensure effective implementation to produce tangible outcomes with regard to Roma and Sinti integration and with regard to the persistent forms of discrimination, racism and violent attacks against them.

I wish you a fruitful but also honest and critical discussion to reflect on the achievements and the absence thereof, from the last decade. Hopefully this will result in concrete and realistic recommendations on how to address the existing challenges and ensure that Roma and Sinti have equal opportunities and are full and equal partners in our societies.

Once again thank you for your participation.

Annex 3: Keynote Speech by Ms. Lívia Járóka

Honourable Ambassadors,
Dear audience,

One of the greatest challenges for Europe's future prosperity is how we can convince governments to view social inclusion as a chance for inclusive and sustainable growth. This new thinking is all the more pressing now, when our Union is put to the test to see how we can grow under the economic recession and simultaneously maintain and develop our social achievements. And you can be sure that if we retreat in our combat against social exclusion, Roma will be at the short end of it.

The communist regime disrupted the traditional communities of millions of Eastern European Roma, and deprived them of their ability to provide their own subsistence or to satisfy even their most basic necessities. The end of the Cold War then brought a sudden upheaval in the post-Comecon area, which unsparingly transformed and polarized our societies, leaving the vast majority of Roma practically detached from national economies and sinking ever deeper into poverty.

Realizing that the situation was neither acceptable, nor sustainable, most Member States with a significant Roma population and many concerned international organizations came up with their own ideas for solution, such as the Council of Europe Recommendations in 2002, and the OSCE Action Plan on Roma Inclusion in 2003. Despite the multitude of good proposals and progressive ideas of these documents however, the result was in all cases disappointing. The programmes launched by the Member States were not only inadequate for fostering social inclusion, but the accumulation of well-documented failures started gradually directing the responsibility at Roma communities themselves. And this remained the public opinion, regardless of the several studies showing that in some cases less than 10% of all Roma inclusion assets reached their target group.

Then came 2004 and 2007, when 12 new countries joined the EU, along with their roughly 4 million Roma. Very soon, as a fairly predictable consequence of juxtaposing free movement with the enormous regional disparities between old and new Member States, a massive, although somewhat overrated influx of migration began. And as soon as the long-established and wealthy democracies of Western Europe became players from spectators, they proved to be no better than those they had been criticising, with their responses ranging from detentions to evictions and expulsions.

The complexity of the issue, the lack of actual commitment and the fear of failure have made Roma inclusion a massive economic burden that the actors throughout Europe wished to get rid of by loading it on each other's shoulders. Or even worse: a political mace that parties would hit each other with, should their selfish and short-term interests demand so. So, after two decades of stumbling from one crisis management to the next under successive governments, it became clear that success demanded a solution that was embraced through the entire continent and across the political divide. A strategy that is supervised and implemented for the inclusion of our grandchildren, not the lifetime of one or two parliaments.

Most stakeholders therefore - who had for long been critical of the piecemeal approach to Roma inclusion to date - cheered when 2011 saw the launch of the first ever EU-level policy for Roma inclusion, and welcomed a more integrated approach eagerly expecting the results. And notwithstanding the unquestionable benefits and advantages of the EU Framework for National Roma Inclusion Strategies, it very soon became a general impression that due to the delays in its preparations and sluggish start up, progress in the field is unbearably slow and the impact is nearly imperceptible.

And indeed, the initial phase of the Framework's implementation has already revealed some significant flaws that I address in my current report in the European Parliament, scheduled for adoption next week. Concisely, I conclude in my report that despite - or rather due to - the involvement of several actors, the control and governance of the Framework is not well-defined and it is hard to determine who exactly is responsible for the Framework's success or failure and to what extent, leaving the process without adequate guidance and quality control. The obvious inclination of both Member States and the European Commission to 'outsource' related measures to NGOs and international organizations - that act on behalf of Roma, but without practically any Roma involvement - is also of concern. It risks giving up policy control and insight on the one hand and on the other hand allocates responsibilities to outsiders, who have no legal responsibility for social inclusion. This means that much of our efforts will go astray, unless we introduce a mechanism that will allow for efficiently determine which projects are sustainable and which we should forget about.

In its current scoping document also the European Commission highlights some key areas for national strategies to move forward and acknowledges that most Member States have not yet addressed the gaps identified by the Commission's 2012 communication. The communication is certainly to be welcomed and even more the accompanying proposal for a Council recommendation, which may - if adopted - provide much-needed support and guidance to Member States, especially as the main features of the Framework are still mostly under construction.

But success demands to move beyond the basics. That said, policymakers should act in five ways to root out the major risks:

First, national strategies must be brought closer to reality. This would mean drafting a 'flow chart' of the EU Roma inclusion process in order to clarify the state of play of implementation and the next steps to be taken, as well as to clearly specify the division of tasks and responsibilities among stakeholders. It would further imply developing a 'Dashboard of EU Roma Inclusion Indicators', adding outcome indicators, baselines and numerical headline targets to national strategies. This also requires that Member States allocate enough financial assets to fulfil their policy commitments, as well as reflect the National Roma Inclusion Strategies in their national budgetary policies.

Second, national strategies must be brought closer to Roma. That is, Roma organizations and local NGOs must be involved in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the strategies. For that purpose, a proper framework for consultation, peer learning and the sharing of experience among policy-makers and Roma organizations must be established. But more importantly, the independence and capacity of Roma NGOs must be strengthened. Roma NGOs must measure up the real needs of their local communities and also combat the political misuse and the misinterpretation of Roma-related issues that are distorted by the media and party politics. We need authentic, independent and highly educated Roma leaders,

who actively lead the public discourse on Roma and who work for the overall benefit of their communities and put community building and social mission in the forefront, behind the interests of their sponsors.

Third, national strategies must better target Roma. It means taking into account the multi-dimensional and territorial aspects of poverty and launching integrated multi-sector development programmes for the most deprived micro-regions by mobilizing all available CSF Funds and other EU instruments. Also, urban planning must be mobilized for integration and desegregation, and for developing the infrastructural and environmental qualities of cities that are most unevenly affected by social imbalances.

Fourth, national strategies must protect Roma. This implies that the inclusion strategy must operate in a mutually reinforcing and complementary manner with anti-discrimination measures and that our efforts aiming to improve the socio-economic status of Roma must go hand in hand with the fight against discrimination and anti-gypsism. It obviously means also to put a stop to any collective action against Roma as a group, including forced evictions and mass expulsions.

Fifth, the Framework should reach Roma outside the EU. Neighbouring countries - with special regard to the Roma population of the Western Balkans - must be involved into the European level pursuit of Roma integration from the very first stage. The Instrument for Pre-Accession may be an effective tool for underpinning national initiatives and we should seek ways to influence policy-making also through the mechanism of the Stabilisation and Association (SAA) process.

After the clear and very disappointing failure of the Decade of Roma Inclusion initiative, it would be an irreparable mistake to let the Framework to be downgraded into superficial window-dressing. Or even worse: a private business area - as it has been the case much too frequently so far -, where a very few earn well, while we are losing another generation of Roma who sink deeper into social exclusion. Furthermore, the socio-economic inclusion of Roma - so that their figures could approach the regional average - would not only respond to the demographic challenge of the increasing elderly and decreasing working age populations, but could also trigger a substantial economic growth. And it may also contribute to a cultural shift among Roma, from a cluster of closed, defensive and disparate communities to an open, self-aware and integrated European minority.

Annex 4: Biographical Information on Introducers and Moderators



Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting

Implementation of the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti

(dedicated to the 10th Anniversary of the adoption of the 2003 OSCE Action Plan)

7 - 8 November 2013
Vienna, Austria

Biographical Information: Speakers and Moderators

Keynote speaker:

Ms. Lívia Járóka

Ms. Lívia Járóka is a member of the Hungarian political party “Fidesz” and a member of the European Parliament, as well as the Chair of the Working Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) on Roma Inclusion. She has served as a member of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs and Vice-chair of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality since 2004. Ms Járóka is also a substitute member of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs and the Committee on Human Rights.

From 2004 till 2009, Ms. Járóka was the Vice-Chair of the European Parliament's Anti-Racism and Diversity working group; and the programme director of the working group on Roma integration for the Group of the European People's Party and European Democrats. She is a member of the Board of Trustees of the Roma Education Fund, a member of the High-Level Working Party on the Roma Diplomacy Programme and a member of the Board of Trustees of the European Roma Information Office. In 2013, Ms. Járóka received the Member of the European Parliament of the Year award in the category of Justice and Fundamental Rights. She holds Ph.D. in social anthropology.

SESSION I: ODIHR 2013 Status Report on the Implementation of the Roma and Sinti OSCE Action Plan: key findings and lessons learned

Mr. Andrzej Mirga (Introducer)

Mr. Andrzej Mirga was a fellow at the Kosciuszko Foundation and Rockefeller Brothers Fund. He taught at Rutgers University, and studied, and later lectured, at the Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland. Mr. Mirga co-founded the first Polish Roma Association after the fall of communism and served as its Chair. He organized its two first events in Poland

commemorating the Romani Genocide in 1993 and 1994 in Auschwitz-Birkenau and Krakow and represented the Roma at the Days of Remembrance ceremony at the Capitol Rotunda in Washington D.C. and most recently at the 2010 Observance of Holocaust Remembrance Day at the UN, in New York. Mr. Mirga is also a long-term associate of the Project on Ethnic Relations, a U.S.-based non-governmental mediating organization in Princeton, New Jersey. He is a former member of the Committee of Experts on Roma and Travellers of the CoE (former Specialist Group on Roma/Gypsies, since 1996), and served as its chair from 2003 to 2005. Since December 2006 he works as the Senior Adviser on Roma and Sinti Issues at the OSCE/ODIHR and heads its Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues.

Ms. Gabriela Hrabanova (Moderator)

In 2002, Gabriela Hrabanova became a Roma eRider in Roma Information Project, focusing on consultancy and trainings for Romani non-governmental organizations, their strategy planning and development of NGOs' organizational skills. In 2005, she was elected as Executive Director of the Roma student organization "Athinganoi" and later in 2008, she was appointed as Director of the Office for Roma Minority of the Czech Government.

Ms. Hrabanova was highly involved in the Czech Presidency of the European Union when the EU accepted the 10 Common Basic Principles for Roma Inclusion where she organized the first meeting of the EU Roma Platform. After completing the Czech presidency of the Decade of Roma Inclusion in July 2011 she moved to Brussels where she works as Policy Coordinator for the ERGO Network. In addition to her EU advocacy assignment, she established the digital platform RomaReact.org as well as supporting the growth of the ERGO Network. She is a member of the Romedia Foundation's Board of Directors.

SESSION II: Ten years of implementing the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti: key trends, developments and challenges

Ms. Astrid Thors (Introducer)

Ms. Astrid Thors is the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities. She began her three-year mandate on 20 August 2013. Ms. Thors has been a Member of the Parliament of Finland since 2004. She also served as Minister of Migration and European Affairs of Finland in 2007-2011 and was a Member of the European Parliament in 1996-2004. Prior to her parliamentary career, she was a practicing lawyer from 1983 to 1995.

Ms. Thors served at various positions of trust, including chairing such bodies as the Advisory Board of International Human Rights Affairs (2011–2013), the Swedish Assembly of Finland, Folktinget (2005–2007), Unicef Finland (2000–2005), and Youth Theatre, Unga Teatern (1994–1999). She was a Vice Chair of the Swedish People's Party (1992–2000) and a Member of the board of the National Land Survey of Finland (1991–1996).

Ms. Thors received a Master of Law degree in 1983. She speaks Swedish (mother tongue), Finnish, English, and French.

Amb. Christian Strohal (Moderator)

Amb. Strohal was appointed Head of the Permanent Mission of Austria to the OSCE in September 2013. In 2003, he was assigned as Special Envoy for the “Vienna+20” Conference.

Amb. Strohal is a career diplomat who served as the OSCE/ODIHR Director from March 2003 to June 2008. In his previous career, he worked as a representative to the UN Commission on Human Rights, as a delegate to the UN General Assembly, and as a representative to the EU Working Group on Human Rights. From 1994 to 2000, he was Director for Human Rights, International Humanitarian Law, and Minority and Gender Issues at the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He was Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations in Geneva in 2008-2013 and before that he headed the Austrian Embassy in Luxembourg in 2000-2003.

SESSION III: **Integration of Roma and Sinti with a particular focus on women, youth and children: best practices and ways forward**

Dr. Ethel Brooks (Introducer)

Dr. Ethel Brooks is a professor in the Departments of Women's and Gender Studies and Sociology at Rutgers University, and the Undergraduate Director in the Department of Women's and Gender Studies. Dr. Brooks is a Tate-TrAIN Transnational Fellow, and was the 2011-2012 US-UK Fulbright Distinguished Chair at the University of the Arts, London. In 2011 and 2012, Dr. Brooks served as a Public Member of the United States Delegation to the Human Dimension Implementation Meetings of the OSCE; in 2013, she spoke in the General Assembly hall for the United Nations Holocaust Remembrance Ceremony. She is co-Director of the annual Feminist Critical Analysis course in Dubrovnik, Croatia and the 2013 Summer Campus in Romani Studies in Lyon, France.

Dr. Brooks is the author of *Unraveling the Garment Industry: Transnational Organizing and Women's Work*, winner of the 2010 Outstanding Book from the Global Division of the Society for the Study of Social Problems and has contributed articles to a number of books and journals, including *We Roma*, *Nevi Sara Kali*, *International Working Class History*, *Sweatshop USA* and *Sociology Confronts the Holocaust*, as well as editorials for *The Guardian*.

Mr. Peter Vermeersch (Moderator)

Peter Vermeersch is Professor of Social Sciences at University of Leuven (KU Leuven), research professor. Between 2003 and 2009 he worked as a postdoctoral research fellow of the Fund for Scientific Research (FWO-Flanders) and Assistant Professor at KU Leuven. He was a visiting scholar at Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies (Harvard University: 2007-2008) and research resident in the Prague Office of the OSCE Secretariat (November 2000 – January 2001). Mr. Vermeersch's research focus is on Nationalism and Political Mobilization; International Relations; Ethnic conflict and International Intervention. Among other appointed positions, he is board member of the Leuven Centre for Research on Peace and Development (CRPD, KU Leuven), member of the Scientific Committee of the

European Network on Romani Studies (Council of Europe/European Union) and member of the convention program committee of the Association for the Studies of Nationalities (ASN).