
Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

CPRSI Newsletter

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ODIHR NEW INITIATIVE

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NGO Liaison

The ODIHR CPRSI has undertaken recently a new initiative designed to seek out information on existing or developing programmes for the provision of free legal counsel to members of Roma/Sinti communities (as well as to other individuals) where allegations of human rights violations are concerned. Letters of inquiry are being distributed to OSCE points of contact (OSCE Desks within Ministries of Foreign Affairs, OSCE Missions) and to NGOs having relevant interest and/or experience. The intent of these letters is to solicit information on the current situation in each OSCE participating State, with the hope that, once a clear picture can be drawn, areas may be identified where the need for such legal assistance is not being met. Although the ODIHR is still in the process of sending off inquiries, already some very interesting responses have arrived in by mail and fax. It is hoped that a complete report

will be ready for distribution and discussion at the ODIHR's Human Dimension Seminar on the Rule of Law, scheduled to take place 28 November - 1 December. On these pages readers will find a summary on the responses as they arrive. The ODIHR CPRSI welcomes suggestions from readers as to NGOs which may have information pertinent to this new project.

The content of ODIHR's letter of inquiry follows below:

"The ODIHR Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues seeks information regarding the following:

- training programmes designed to prepare lawyers for bringing cases to trial of alleged human rights abuse, including violations against members of Roma/Sinti communities;
- legal aid centres that provide legal assistance in human rights cases, including those of Roma/Sinti defendants;
- contact names and co-ordinates of Bar Associations and Judges Associations in your country of operation; - contact names and co-ordinates of foreign legal assistance programs in your country."

**DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE
COUNCIL OF EUROPE
MINISTERS' DEPUTIES MEETINGS**

At its June meeting (541th), the Committee of Ministers examined the report entitled **“The situation of Gypsies (Roma) in Europe”** prepared by the European Committee on Migration (CDMG) as a follow-up to the Assembly Recommendation 1203 (93) on “Gypsies in Europe”.

The report was examined in connection with the follow-up to the Warsaw Seminar on Roma (September 1994). In the first part, it gives an overview of the situation of Roma: Gypsies in Europe and contains (in the second part) some proposals for action that could be undertaken by the Council of Europe in order to improve the situation.

After an extensive discussion, the Ministers' Deputies took a series of decisions in response to the proposals contained in Part II of the report (“Proposals for action to improve the situation of Gypsies/Roma”). As well as agreeing that existing resources and texts of the Council of Europe should be made use of in order to improve the situation of Roma/Gypsies, they instructed various Council of Europe intergovernmental committees to examine certain issues concerning Roma.

At their 544th meeting (September 1995), the Ministers' Deputies decided to create a Group of Specialists on Roma/Gypsies. This group of experts, appointed by the member States, will be in position to advise

the Committee of Ministers on how the Council of Europe could usefully contribute to solving the problems facing Roma/Gypsies. Moreover it will be able to launch specific studies where needed. It will work in close co-operation with other international organizations; in particular, the Organization for Co-operation and Security in Europe (OSCE)/Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the Commission of the European Communities.

The Group will also establish working relations with Roma associations which are in a position to make a useful contribution to its work.

The tasks of **the Secretary General's Co-ordinator of Activities on Roma/Gypsies** were also confirmed during the last meeting of the Ministers' Deputies. Thus he is responsible for contacts with the OSCE and the European Union with the aim of strengthening co-operation on matters of common interest and avoiding duplication of activities.

Furthermore he is to promote dialogue on policies and problems regarding Roma/Gypsies. He should also foster the development of working relations with Roma/Gypsy organizations.

This series of decisions is an important step forward as it represents a clear recognition by the Council of Europe's intergovernmental organs of the importance of questions relating to situation of Roma/Gypsies in Europe today.

EUROPEAN HUMAN RIGHTS: TAKING A CASE UNDER THE CONVENTION

From the editor:

The Author of this book, Luke Clements, is a lawyer be of substantial assistance and a practical guide aimed at individuals (lawyers) making complaints to Strasbourg.

The European Convention on Human Rights provides for a wide range of fundamental rights and comes into play after national remedies are exhausted. All practitioners will encounter clients who have potential complaints which can be satisfied under the Convention.

As a thorough narrative this book will guide the inexperienced practitioner as to how complaints are brought to the Court or Commission. Extensive Appendices contain relevant Articles of the Convention, Rules of the Court and Commission and also practical materials such as a copy of an official complaints form and Legal Aid form.

This is an excellent guide for those with little experience in taking a case under the Convention.

The author is currently completing an academic article highlighting the evolution of European Human Rights developments as they affect Roma and Sinti which we hope to have a chance to publish in one of the issues of *OSCE ODIHR Bulletin*.

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THEATER AN DER RUHR

From the editor:

Further to our previous publication about Theater Un Der Ruhr we would like to announce Theatre's latest performance.

IN THE JUNGLE OF THE CITIES/ SEHRIN VAHSI
CALILIKLARINDA

Bertolt Brecht in German and Turkish language

During the cooperation of long standing with the Turkish State Theatre, for the first time THEATER AN DER RUHR and actors from Turkey work on a common project, speaking two languages.

We believe that this performance will be well suitable for the countries where the confrontation is transpired in these two languages.