

**Intervention of Saimir MILE, moderator of the Romani working group on the Plan of Action, NGO “The voice of the Rroms”**

Distinguished Ambassadors,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Dear friends and colleagues,

As moderator of the Rromani working group on the Plan of Action, and as a Human rights activist living in France for 10 years, I would like to draw your attention to a fact that I mentioned also in the working session on democracy and elections. The speeches and the discussions in OSCE HDIM give generally the impression that Western countries are those who could help Eastern ones in their democratization processes. I am one of those who refuses to see the exchange in a unique direction, all the more as, living in France, I witness a series of problems that go invisible, or in the best of the cases, inaudible in the OSCE meetings.

Especially since 2003, the situation of the Romani population in France, and I have to specify that I mean both those of French citizenship and the foreign Rroms, is degrading in a very worrying way. I mentioned two days ago the legal exclusion of the French Rroms from the political life, through a discrimination set up by French law. I have to add to this the criminalisation of the stationing of caravans outside the designed areas, which in practice are almost inexistent, the violence exercised regularly by police on Rroms and Sinté, both French and foreign ones, during the evictions, the racketing of Rroms by policemen, who without writing any report, take away from them money and personal documents, and the list is still longer.

Therefore, in this double position, as a Rrom living in France and international activist, I would like to submit some recommendations to the OSCE, its participating states, and a series of particular recommendations for France:

Recommendations to the OSCE and its institutions:

1. Recognizing the Romani people according to its own identity, avoiding social stigmatisation, by modifying the paragraph 72 of the Action Plan as follows: *“consider measures to ensure the respect, protection and promotion of the Romani language and its teaching, and of a Roma culture as an integral part of the Roma and Sinti cultural heritage as and integral part of the European cultural heritage”*. This formulation was the one proposed by the Romani working group and reiterated in Cordoba conference on Anti-Semitism and other forms of Intolerance.
2. Associating, as a consequence, the working group on the Action Plan in the implementation, assessment and review. Mandating and budgeting ODIHR-CPRSI to set up the “Group 2018” drawing upon the experience and the expertise of the Romani working group on Action Plan.
3. Mainstreaming social problems faced by Roma and Sinti in all relevant OSCE activities.

### Recommendations to Participating States:

1. Adopting mechanisms of participation drawing upon the recommendations of the Romani working group, and especially on the proximity principle
2. Adopting concrete measures to make full use of the existing human resources among Roma and Sinti, while financing educational programs to expand the Romani elite, able to act as a full partner in the implementation of the policies
3. Making reasonable use of specially targeting Roma and Sinti in social policies, so as to respond to specific problems faced by this population while avoiding raise of hostility among the majority population belonging to the same economically and socially excluded segment

### Particular recommendations to France:

1. Withdraw the provision of the Finance law year 2006, setting up a habitation tax for caravans, which is both contestable in its principle (the caravan is not recognized as a habitation in terms of social advantages) and exorbitant in its amount (it is 3 times higher than the tax applied to built habitations in the heart of Paris)
2. Recognizing the presence on French soil of Roma and Sinti population as a component of the French society diversity and national identity.
3. Taking a clear political position and concrete measures to stop useless police violence on Roma and Sinti, both French and foreign citizens
4. Reforming the functioning of the "*Commission consultative des gens du voyage*" so as to achieve effective participation and legitimacy of this body
5. Putting in place the necessary caravans' sites as provided for by the French law, taking into account the legitimate request of those concerned to have access to family sites.
6. Financing scholarships for French and foreign candidates to Romani studies in Paris, as a means of long-term solution to a series of problems recurrently identified in France and more largely in Europe
7. Ensure equality through a balanced financial support of the NGOs called "*amis des tsiganes*" and the Romani NGOs, based on expertise and potential of these organisations.