



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council Nr 828 Vienna, 9 September 2010

EU statement on Roma and Sinti

The European Union thanks the United States delegation for its statement. The EU and its Member States have their respective responsibilities towards the Roma, who live in all Member States. Improving the situation of Roma and Sinti is a shared responsibility, which requires the continued joint efforts of all countries concerned and the active involvement of all relevant international and European bodies.

The EU institutions, especially the European Commission, are analysing the recent developments in some Member States. The European Union reiterates the importance of respecting the principles of free movement of EU citizens within the EU, exercised in conformity with the provisions of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and the relevant EU legislation, namely Directive 2004/38, and non-discrimination.

Since 2000 the European Union – in partnership with OSCE-ODIHR and the Council of Europe – has implemented joint programmes to assist Roma in South East Europe, Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova. A partnership on Roma issues between the EU, the Council of Europe and Turkish authorities was initiated as from 2009.

The EU has taken up the issue at the highest level during the European Council in December 2007, in subsequent Council conclusions and in European Parliament resolutions, which called, inter-alia, for the elaboration of a European Roma Strategy. Two Roma Summits were organised in 2008 and 2010. Other measures taken at operational level included:

- a. the adoption of EU legislation for combating racism, xenophobia and discrimination;
- b. efforts to mainstream Roma and Sinti issues into all relevant policies;
- c. the adoption of the European Platform for Roma Inclusion and the development of a roadmap for its implementation;
- d. the collection, analysis and dissemination of data on the situation of Roma by the EU Fundamental Rights Agency.

Improving the situation of Roma and Sinti will gain more weight on the EU agenda. On the occasion of the second Roma Summit, the Trio Presidency of the European Union (Spain, Belgium, Hungary) committed itself to, inter-alia, advance the mainstreaming of Roma issues in European and national policies and to stand up firmly against stigmatisation.

Notwithstanding the aforementioned developments, the EU recognises that improving the situation of Roma and Sinti continues to present challenges at the EU level as well as in the Council of Europe and in the OSCE area. As acknowledged by international reports, including the ODIHR Status report of 2008 and the Position Paper on 'Human Rights of Roma' from the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights of May 2010, Roma and Sinti are disproportionately affected by unemployment, poverty, bad housing, poor health standards, violence, discrimination, unequal access to education or subjected to segregated education. Currently, the EU is analysing measures to address more vigorously challenges in these fields, including:

- e. assessment of Member States' measures conformity with EU legislation on non-discrimination;
- f. freedom of movement and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights;
- g. monitoring progress made with regard to implementation of the Roadmap of the European Platform for Roma Inclusion;
- h. ensure continuity for Roma and Sinti issues at the ministerial level;
- i. improve the use of financial resources, which should become easier to access, to promote social and economic integration of Roma.

We avail ourselves of this opportunity to reiterate the urgent need for enhanced efforts to improve the situation of Roma and Sinti, including through the full implementation of the OSCE Action Plan, the Dosta! Campaign of the Council of Europe and other commitments in this field, notably the decisions adopted at the Ministerial Councils of Helsinki and Athens. We reaffirm the important role international institutions, in particular ODIHR and the European Roma and Travelers Forum, have in assisting participating States in these endeavours.

The candidate countries TURKEY, CROATIA*, the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA* and ICELAND, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries ALBANIA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, MONTENEGRO and SERBIA, as well as UKRAINE, the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, ARMENIA and GEORGIA, align themselves with this statement.

*Croatia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.