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Dear Sir/Madam

We, the participants in the Roma Diplomacy Conference (Brussels, 8-9 December 2005) and the Roma Diplomacy programme, organised by the European Roma Information Office and DiploFoundation, have the honour to submit to your kind attention a document (*herewith attached*), containing a set of recommendations for action, by the European and other international institutions and organisations, aiming at further combating discrimination against Roma individuals and Roma communities.

The recommendations reflect our own experience as persons belonging to the Roma ethnic group and as professionals in various fields of work. They are based at the same time on the new information and knowledge acquired as a result of our participation in the Roma diplomacy programme, which included, inter alia, study of the law, documents and regulations of the European Union and the European Community, European institutions, as well as the core United Nations human rights treaties and treaty-bodies. The recommendations were thoroughly discussed, and transparently amended and agreed upon, among all participants in the Roma Diplomacy programme. They make a solid collective work and thinking, and mirror many of the major current concerns of the civil society organisations that many of us represent.

The recommendations are preceded by a preamble part that illustrates the background and the motivation of our initiatives, with a particular emphasis on recommendation 23 of the European Parliament resolution of 28 April 2005.

The first part relates to a number of policy measures that cover a wide range of desired action, including a comprehensive European policy, specific European Action plan on Roma, the strengthening of existing initiatives and of the coordination between European institutions, governments and grassroots organisations representing the Roma communities, as well as measures aiming at increasing public awareness and capacity building.

The second part contains institutional measures, which are meant to take into better account the potential of the existing structures or to establish new ones. These proposals are tailored in such a way as to express the specific potential of the targeted institutions and, at the same time, to reflect a coherent approach at the level of the international community with respect to the discrimination against Roma. They focus mainly on the possibilities to enhance the specialisation and expertise on the Roma issues in various structures and sub-structures of your organisations, to provide a better political visibility and a better prioritisation of Roma issues among other policy matters, to improve the quality of information and statistics on the situation of Roma population, and to better disseminate good practices and ideas.

The third part of our recommendations suggests a rich panoply of measures and arrangements that may lead to efficient steps in the elaboration and implementation of Roma related strategies and plans of action: a better representation of Roma experts within the Secretariats of international organisations. The recommendations on human rights arrangements stems from our conviction that employing Roma experts in the units and sub-units working on Roma issues is one of most efficient way to ensure participation and inclusiveness, as well as increasing awareness within those institutions of the problems and expectations of the Roma population.

We are fully aware that our recommendations are numerous, comprehensive, wide-ranged and resource-demanding. We do not unreasonably expect that they be implemented overnight. Nevertheless, we firmly believe that their gradual implementation is feasible and realistic as an expression of the firm determination of your institutions to fight discrimination and to improve the human rights and social situation of the Roma communities all over Europe.

We want to assure you of our full and constant readiness to work with you in refining, developing and implementing these recommendations. We are ready to be involved in future talks around issues related to Roma communities.

Cordially,