

Recommendations of Participants at the Roma Diplomacy Conference Brussels, 8 – 9 December, 2005

Considering the seven-century long presence and contributions of Roma to Europe in the fields of language and culture, as well as the existing potential for better participation of Roma in building a more tolerant and prosperous European society;

Concerned with the existing levels of anti-Gypsyism (Romaphobia or Gypsophobia), the limited communication between Roma and European Institutions, the limited transparency of initiatives and projects focused on Roma, and the deficiencies in the flow of information;

Mindful of recommendation 23 of the European Parliament resolution of 28 April 2005: **“Supports the continuing moves within the EU institutions towards incorporating the Roma-to-Roma approach, as developed by the OSCE, in the future hiring of staff for Roma - as well as non-Roma-related vacancies;”**

In view of the lack of ethnic segregated data and indicators, and problems related to the lack of Roma participation in collecting such data;

Noting the fact that the lack of effective Roma participation in European Institutions strongly affects Roma visibility in Europe and sends a negative signal to the Roma communities;

Considering that the lack of Roma representatives within international institutions facilitates, both directly and indirectly, the perpetration of the social stigma associated with the Roma identity and hinders any sense of ownership and participation among Roma, related to the activities of these institutions;

Aware of the success of the OSCE/ODIHR contact point for Roma and Sinti which is closely linked to the employment of people of Roma ethnicity, including the Senior Advisor, a move which considerably increased the visibility of Roma on the international level;

We recommend:

1. Policy measures

- a. Develop, as recommended by the European Parliament’s resolution of 28 April 2005, a comprehensive policy on Roma which is multi-sectorial, recognising the varying needs of EU member states as well as candidate and potential member states. The first step should be the publication of a green paper on the situation of Roma by the European Commission identifying the most urgent issues for action;
- b. Establish a steering committee at the level of the European Parliament with the task to assess and evaluate the implementation of the Resolution of the European

Parliament on the Situation of Roma from 28 April 2005; the steering committee should include Roma MEPs and take into account Roma expertise;

- c. Develop a specific European Action Plan on Roma, based on the existing National Action Plans and Joint Inclusion Memorandums' chapters on Roma and taking into account existing national and international plans and strategies;
- d. Encourage European Institutions, as well as European Commission Delegations and national governments, to collect data and report on countries' progress on integration of Roma on an annual basis in separate reports or chapters of the required reports for the European Union;
- e. Adopt a special, accessible, budget targeting the capacity of Roma grassroots organizations;
- f. Initiate common public awareness campaigns concerning the discrimination faced by Roma using various mediums, including the Internet, and provide steering and moral leadership in the fight against anti-Gypsyism;
- g. Actively participate towards maximizing the impact of existing initiatives on Roma. For instance, the European Commission and European Parliament need to be involved and use to the maximum the potential of the Decade of Roma Inclusion, the initiatives of the Council of Europe, OSCE, UNDP and World Bank as well as some good initiatives of the national governments;
- h. Increase awareness of the implementation of the OSCE Action Plan on Improvement of the situation of Roma and Sinti in the OSCE area;
- i. Strengthen coordination with relevant European Roma organizations such as the European Roma and Travellers Forum and promote a similar kind of partnership agreement as emphasized in the Partnership Agreement with the European Institutions;
- j. Given the special interest of Roma in the future of Kosovo and considering the failure to include Roma in the negotiation teams on the future status of Kosovo, the European Institutions and especially the European Parliament and European Commission should increase attention to the status of Roma and their participation in the future Kosovo ;
- k. Encourage the development of Roma human resources capacities and develop a inter-institutional task force with the competence to combat widespread European anti-Gypsyism;
- l. Establish European Prizes for achievements in the fields of Roma culture, studies, and policy making (particularly combating racism/anti-Gypsyism);
- m. Provide a budget for the translation of the major documents and texts of European institutions, and those related to Roma, into the Romani language.

2. Institutional measures

A. For the European Commission:

1. Establish a Roma Unit, using the existing models of horizontal units (gender, disability);
2. Strengthen the existing Roma Interservice Group through a secretariat including Roma experts with a clear budget line. Increase transparency concerning the activities of this group. The role of the secretariat should be to steer the actions taken by the European Commission;
3. Facilitate and actively encourage a Roma advisory role for the cabinets of the most relevant Commissioners of the following DGs: Enlargement, Employment and Social Affairs, Regional Development, Justice, Education and Culture, External Relations;
4. Recommend and support the publication of annual reports monitoring anti-Gypsyism as one of the priorities of the future Human Rights Agency;
5. Actively include Roma in the Consultative Bodies for the European Institutions and, especially, in the European networks of experts, none of which at this moment include any Roma;
6. Actively promote the inclusion of Roma women and Roma related issues in the activities of the future Gender Institute;
7. Prioritize the mainstreaming of ethnic minority and multiple discriminated women in the activities of the Gender Equality Unit. Include Romani women issues in the general policy framework dealing with gender mainstreaming;
8. Monitor and take steps to ensure the observation and implementation by both EU member states and candidate countries of the obligatory criteria regarding human rights protection as enumerated in the Copenhagen criteria;
9. Develop measures to increase the participation of Roma human rights NGOs in European funded projects and ensure their sustainability and independence from national governments. Provide technical support for Romani NGOs to apply for EU funds and to implement EU projects successfully and stimulate the training and employment of Roma managers of EU funded projects.

B. For the European Parliament:

1. Establish a steering committee (see point 1b) to assess and evaluate the implementation of the Resolution of the European Parliament on the Situation of Roma (28 April 2005);

2. Request an independent evaluation of the European Commission activities focused on Roma;
3. Initiate a public awareness campaign on Roma issues and provide steering and moral leadership in the fight against anti-Gypsyism;
4. Encourage relevant committees and subcommittees in the Parliament (Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, Women's Rights and Gender Equality, Human Rights, Culture and Education, Employment and Social Affairs, Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, Regional Development, Petitions) to produce annual reports on the most pressing issues affecting the Roma communities;
5. Organise a hearing and publish a "handbook" of good practices of member states related to Roma issues, to highlight positive experience and provide ideas to other countries about how to improve the situation.
6. Taking into account the recognition of the good practices of the OSCE as highlighted in the European Parliament resolution of April 28, 2005, adopt a similar Roma advisor scheme for the European political parties.
7. Mainstream issues faced by the Roma population by facilitating and actively encouraging Roma participation and advice in Intergroups focusing on particular grounds of discrimination (for example disability, gender, age, sexual orientation).

C. For the Council of Europe:

1. Promote successful initiatives and establish mechanisms to share and replicate the good experiences of the Council of Europe;
2. Publish annual reports focused on the most critical issues affecting Roma.

D. For the UN/UNDP:

1. Adopt a policy of employing and capacitating Roma individuals within its structure, similar to existing measures targeting disadvantaged groups identified by the main European institutions, such as gender and disability;
2. Ensure that Roma are not excluded during the process of designing the programming documents at the country and regional levels;
3. Establish a permanent UNDP Roma organisational body at the international level which should be consulted and must approve Roma related policies and activities, and should serve as a Steering Committee for all the Roma projects at the country level;

3. Regularly report on the results and impact of Roma-related projects according to clear and precise indicators, especially those referring to the involvement of Roma in designing and implementing projects;
4. Apply pressure to UN member states to respect UN conventions related to ethnic minorities and women's rights and to fulfill their obligations with emphasis on ethnic minorities and especially Romani women;
5. Actively participate in international initiatives related to Roma and link them to the other UN initiatives like Millennium Development Goals.

E. For the World Bank:

1. Re-vitalize the National Delegations of Roma Civil Society in order to facilitate independent monitoring of social accountability;
2. Advocate and facilitate inclusion of Roma in national governments in order to enable them to participate in the institutional implementation of the Roma Decade;
3. Ensure active involvement of Roma in designing and implementing World Bank policies/programs targeting Roma communities;
4. Initiate, stimulate and form partnerships with grassroots level Roma organisations in order to address the problems of Roma communities;
5. Extend existing programmes or create new opportunities offering access to microcredits for Roma, in particular Roma women, in partnership with Roma NGOs.
6. Introduce Roma as a component in the programs of the Country Offices, especially in the field of entrepreneurship and employment;
7. Promote better communication and coordination of the implementation activities related to the Roma Decade.

3. Human Resources Arrangements

A. For the European Commission:

1. Develop a strategy to attract and employ Roma within the European Commission and increase the visibility of role models from discriminated groups, especially the Roma;
2. Introduce knowledge of Romani language in the non-required but mentioned candidate profile for internships, temporary and permanent contracts for the European Commission in order to ensure the recruitment of Roma;

3. Make real efforts to advertise new opportunities in the Romani media;
4. Propose a minimum percentage of Roma employees and a timeframe for that target to be reached. This should be developed based on the existing legal framework which addresses gender balance employment and recruitment of people with disabilities;
5. Appoint, within DG Enlargement, a Roma expert to assist with the formulation and implementation of policies/programmes on Roma targeting candidate countries and focused on monitoring the Copenhagen Criteria and anti-discrimination framework in relation to Roma in the candidate countries;
6. Appoint Roma women within the Equal Opportunities Unit and promote the issue of Roma women for its future agenda;
7. Encourage the recruitment of Roma within the future Human Rights Agency and Gender Institute;
8. Continue and make more visible the existing Roma internship scheme for Roma from EU and candidate countries and launch an internship scheme for the cabinets of the Commissioners;
9. Employ Roma experts in the EC Delegations in countries with a high Roma population, in particular, candidate countries and those which are part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.
10. Ensure that Roma students benefit from scholarships in the framework of EU programmes, including, but not only, for Roma studies.

B. For the European Parliament:

1. Encourage the political groups to establish and maintain a Working Group specifically dealing with Roma issues, with the task to ensure proper implementation of current policies, and work towards further policy creation.
2. Target the employment of Roma Advisors for Roma issues within the Political Groups;
3. Introduce a criteria referring to knowledge of Romani language in the list of required skills for permanent and temporary jobs and internships within the European Parliament;
4. Appoint Roma within the MEPs cabinets and strive to reach 0.3% Roma employment within the permanent and temporary jobs of the European Parliament;
5. Promote a Roma internship scheme within the main European Parties.

C. For the Council of Europe:

1. Encourage the inclusion of Roma within the relevant Divisions of the Council of Europe (Divisions III and IV), as well as establish a minimum percentage target and time frame to be reached for employees of Roma origins;
2. Reinforce the existing MG-S-ROM through involving more Roma within its structure and activities;
3. Actively include Roma in the activities of the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe by employing a Roma advisor and involving Roma interns in its activities;
4. Ensure the participation of Roma experts in the Council of Europe programs (evaluation; field missions, etc.) at national, regional and international levels.

D. For the UN/UNDP:

1. In order to empower Roma, target the employment of at least 1 Roma in each country office that develops projects on Roma, and create 1 position for a Roma Coordination Officer at the Europe and CIS Office in Bratislava by the end of 2006; also strive to employ Roma in permanent positions;
2. Establish an internship scheme such as those offered by the Council of Europe and the European Commission;
3. Create a Roma Advisor position at the level of UN following the example of the OSCE.

E. For the World Bank:

1. Establish a numeric target of Roma to be employed by the end of 2006 in the World Bank structures, including some permanent positions;
2. Employ Roma as focal points within the Headquarter and Country offices to work with the governments and Roma NGOs on the implementation of the Roma Decade and improve communication with Roma NGOs;
3. Support leadership training and human rights activities to ensure fulfilment of Millennium Development Goals and the Decade of Roma Inclusion.