



**SUPPLEMENTARY
M E E T I N G**

SUSTAINABLE POLICIES FOR ROMA AND SINTI INTEGRATION

Side Event: Roundtable for Civil Society

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

On 10 July 2008 the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the OSCE (OSCE/ODIHR) gathered civil society representatives from across the OSCE region in Vienna to discuss sustainable policies for Roma and Sinti integration, with a special emphasis on the local level. Participants of the Roundtable examined the role and responsibilities of regional and local authorities to assist in integrating Roma and Sinti. Major challenges were discussed and good practices were explored with the aim of improving the situation of Roma and Sinti. In addition, participants highlighted the need to improve policies with regard to facilitating equal access Roma and Sinti to public services.

Introduction

1. We are grateful to the Chairmanship and the ODIHR for initiating an NGO roundtable to prepare recommendations for the Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting (SHDM);
2. We welcome the opportunity for civil society representatives to make introductory speeches, and in particular to present the conclusions and the recommendations of the Civil Society Roundtable during the opening session of the SHDM;
3. We recommend that this initiative be institutionalized in future OSCE human dimension meetings;
4. We encourage the participants of this meeting to refrain from making general statements about Roma and Sinti and to focus their intervention on concrete recommendations and to illustrate those with practical initiatives related to the implementation of the OSCE Action Plan on Roma and Sinti;
5. We suggest that participating States review the OSCE Action Plan with the aim of integrating issues related to migration and movement;
6. We ask the participating States to provide information on the implementation of their agenda related to the implementation of Roma-related policies during the OSCE human dimension meetings;

7. We call upon participating States to address urgently the issue of statelessness, lack of ID and personal documentation among Roma displaced persons and refugees;
8. We recommend that participating States address and acknowledge the challenges Roma and Sinti face in the area of civil registration;
9. We urge that public authorities take immediate action to expedite and simplify existing procedures, and make use of the competence of civil society to ensure all roma are registered and possess the necessary personal documentation to access fundamental rights and basic services
10. We are concerned about the limited application of international standards concerning Roma and Sinti and the poor implementation of Action Plans or Roma-related strategies;
11. We call upon participating States to honour the commitments they have made to protect and promote human rights and minority rights;
12. We remind participating States to take into account the specific needs of vulnerable groups, including Roma and Sinti women;
13. We recommend that participating States launch awareness raising campaigns to counter the prejudices towards and stereotypes of Roma and Sinti.
14. Acknowledging the crucial role of local authorities, we remind States that the main responsibility in combating intolerance against Roma and Sinti and promoting integration lies with governments;
15. We acknowledge the improvement of the Situation of Roma and Sinti in all fields

To participating States

Violent manifestations of intolerance

16. We are deeply concerned about the rise of violent manifestations of intolerance targeting Roma and Sinti communities;
17. We are concerned about the increased activities of right-wing extremist groups and the dissemination of their ideology through the mass media and the internet;
18. We call upon Heads of States, senior government officials, politicians and community leaders to condemn unequivocally manifestations of intolerance targeting Roma and Sinti;

19. We are concerned about the high level of prejudice and negative perceptions about Roma and Sinti throughout the OSCE region often fuelled by the media. We are convinced that officials have a moral and social obligation to challenge anti-gypsyism;
20. We call upon participating States to immediately address the unjustified and disproportionate use of force including of firearms by police and law enforcement institutions against Roma and Sinti;
21. We recommend that advocacy of hatred and State sponsored racism towards Roma and Sinti that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence is prohibited by law and that the prohibition is practically enforced;
22. We ask the OSCE to follow up on responses by States in situations of crisis to ensure that participating States are made accountable when Roma and Sinti are the targets of violent manifestations of intolerance

National Legislation and Policies

23. We commend participating States that fund strategies on Roma and Sinti from national budgets;
24. We call upon participating States to adopt and implement comprehensive legislation with the aim of eliminating discrimination and promoting equality for Roma and Sinti, affected by systemic discrimination;
25. We call upon participating States to establish Roma Advisory Councils on a national level, and on a regional and municipal level when appropriate, and to provide them with proper competency and the authority to achieve results;
26. We recommend participating States carry out extensive research on the roots of Roma and Sinti exclusion and marginalization in order to design adequate National Action Plans and Roma related Strategies;
27. Institutions should undertake regular monitoring, through disaggregated data collection on grounds of ethnicity and gender of Roma and Sinti access to public services;
28. We strongly recommend that participating States adopt positive action measures to ensure access of Roma to positions in public offices;
29. We encourage participating States to adopt a legislative and administrative framework which would ensure that local and regional

authorities are accountable for implementing anti-discrimination policies at the local level;

30. The participating States should encourage the inclusion of measures aimed at integrating Roma and Sinti in municipal and regional development plans;
31. We encourage participating States to engage with all relevant stakeholders such as local and regional authorities, Roma and Sinti and civil society when designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating National Roma Strategies or National Action Plans;
32. We recommend that local and regional authorities take into account the particularities of the local context and design adequate measures within the framework of existing National Roma-related Strategies and Action plans. At the same time, we strongly encourage national authorities to define the indicators of the evaluation of those policies in order to produce comparable and consistent data;
33. We call upon participating States to provide local and regional authorities with adequate financial resources in order to implement National Roma-related Strategies or National Action Plans.
34. Participating States must ensure that National Action Plans on Roma and Sinti, as well as the OSCE Action Plan on Roma and Sinti is disseminated widely and that awareness is raised among regional and local authorities;
35. We call upon participating States that are members of the EU to enforce the European Union Equality Directive adopted in 2000 and to create anti-discriminatory bodies ;

Local Authorities

36. We recommend that participating States strengthen the capacity of local authorities to address the Roma and Sinti related issues;
37. We urge local authorities to work together with local Romani councils and civil society with the aim of involving Roma and Sinti in the governance of their communities at both the level of city districts and villages. This process should be sufficiently funded by national budgets;
38. We call upon local authorities to assist in building the capacity of Roma and Sinti to be actively engaged in the public administration of their countries;
39. Initiatives should be undertaken that sensitize local authorities and raise awareness of mainstream society to the challenges Roma and Sinti confront. This can be done through joint events and projects between local authorities and Roma groups and will serve as reliable confidence-building tools to shape social models for Roma integration and promote positive interethnic relations.

40. We would like to draw attention to the effective results of developing local action plans in partnerships with Roma and Sinti representatives.

Health

41. We ask participating States to pay particular attention to the deteriorating health situation of Roma and Sinti, in particular women and children, in the most disadvantaged areas.
42. Participating States should establish the policy or strengthen the role of Roma health mediators paying particular attention to issues related to life expectancy;

Housing

43. We strongly urge local authorities to regulate housing and property rights and resolve issues of land tenure;
44. We encourage local authorities to work in cooperation with Roma inhabitants with regard to decisions of including Romani settlements into the urban development and zoning plans;
45. A priority for local authorities should be to immediately improve the living conditions in existing Roma and Sinti neighborhoods in order to reach standards of adequate housing as defined in the general comments of the International Pact on Economical, Social and Cultural Rights. This should include the minimum requirements for basic services such as access to running water, sewage system, electricity and health;
46. We strongly urge local authorities to assist those Roma and Sinti living in substandard conditions and on illegal sites and in environmentally risky areas by relocating them to areas that provide access to schools, hospitals, public transport, electricity, and running water. The relocation should eradicate segregation of Roma and Sinti;
47. We urge the immediate cessation of all forced evictions and develop and enforce legislation that prohibits forced eviction

Education

48. We urge participating States to end segregated education of Roma and Sinti, including by abolishing the practice of discriminatory placement of Romani children in special schools;
49. Local authorities should actively promote the attendance of all Romani children to education institutions, especially early education, making use of Roma mediators, assistants and supporting teachers;
50. Targeted opportunities in education institutions, such as scholarships and allotted places in university, should be offered to Roma and Sinti to encourage youth to continue their education;

51. We recommend that the implementation of community based programs for the integration of Roma and Sinti children include measures that also target the majority population to ensure that an integrated approach is taken to promoting desegregation in the education system;
52. We encourage participating States to ensure the incorporation of intercultural education and teaching methods that preserve and build the ethnic identity of Roma and Sinti children;
53. We recommend that the history of the persecution and the genocide of Roma and Sinti is included in official school curricula and teaching materials.

Employment

54. We commend cooperation between employment agencies and Roma civil society to address challenges in the area of access to labour market;
55. To address hardships in Roma and Sinti communities, local authorities should integrate social work programmes aimed at providing immediate relief in conjunction with sustainable employment solutions;
56. We strongly encourage local municipalities to work with civil society to tailor programmes that support young Roma and Sinti to access employment;
57. We recommend that participating States take measures to foster Roma and Sinti entrepreneurship and traditional occupations.

Recognition of minority and cultural rights

58. We strongly urge participating States to take a more active role in recognizing and preserving the existence of a distinct Roma culture and identity;
59. We emphasize the importance of acknowledging the existence of a Roma and Sinti culture and identity when designing anti-discrimination measures;
60. We encourage participating States to recognize Romani language as a part of European cultural heritage;

Cooperation with communities and NGOs

61. We encourage public authorities to make use of the competence of civil society when undertaking needs assessment studies;
62. We recommend that participating States build the capacity and enhance the skills of civil society actors representing or defending Roma and Sinti interests in particular in the area of project management and ability to work with local authorities;

63. We suggest that IGOs and public authorities engage in institutionalized partnerships with civil society in a broad sense and with representatives of Roma and Sinti communities.
64. Acknowledging the crucial role of civil society to monitor and report on progress of implementation of Roma-related policies, we encourage public authorities to support their activities in this area.

To Roma and Sinti

65. We remind all Roma and Sinti representatives of the necessity to create stronger coalitions in order to become active, responsible and respected partners in local and regional politics. In particular, we stress the importance of having Roma and Sinti representatives within mainstream parties;

To the OSCE

66. Acknowledging the increase of violent acts towards Roma and Sinti throughout the OSCE region, we urge the OSCE institutions and field operations to make extensive use of their early warning and conflict resolution mechanisms;
67. We suggest that the OSCE amends paragraph 72 of the “Action Plan on Improving the situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE area” by recognizing Romani language and culture as an integral part of the European cultural heritage¹;
68. We recommend that an explanatory brochure on the OSCE Action Plan on Roma and Sinti, in English, Romani and other relevant languages, is disseminated widely throughout the OSCE region;
69. We strongly recommend that the ODIHR strengthens and institutionalizes partnerships with international Roma and Sinti organizations;
70. We recommend that the ODIHR reaches out in a systematic way to young Roma and Sinti generations by raising awareness on the values and activities of the OSCE and by developing adequate programmes to build their leadership skills;
71. We recommend that the ODIHR collects and disseminates best practices on initiatives targeted at addressing discrimination, violent manifestations of intolerance and promoting integration, mutual respect and understanding towards Roma and Sinti

¹ “72. Consider measures to ensure the respect, protection and promotion of the Romani language and its teaching, and of Roma culture as an integral part of the Roma and Sinti cultural heritage.” Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE area, p.17

72. We recommend that OSCE institutions enhance their cooperation with field operations when reviewing the situation of Roma and Sinti communities and for the implementation of anti-discrimination policies;
73. We ask the OSCE to intervene in situations of crisis according the modalities laid in article 114 of the OSCE Action Plan, especially with regard to the Italian situation;
74. We recommend the OSCE/ODIHR to monitor if the recommendations were followed by participating States by the next OSCE human dimension meeting;
75. We ask the OSCE institutions and field operations to devise and implement programmes aimed at building the capacity and skills of women to participate in politics;
76. We recommend that the ODIHR establishes a working group to look into the situation of Roma in Central Asia and the Caucasus and propose courses of action in order to promote the implementation of the OSCE Action Plan.

To the European Union

77. We call upon the European Commission and the European Council to heed the EP resolution to develop coherent, comprehensive and effective European Roma policy by using the OSCE Action Plan on Roma and Sinti as a model and establish a Roma Unit within the structures of the European Commission;
78. The European Union should consider disqualifying local and regional public authorities for resource allocation when they do not implement national policies or action plans aimed at combating segregation and promoting integration of Roma and Sinti;
79. We recommend that seminars are organized to build the skills and knowledge of civil society and government officials on ways to seek and manage funds in the framework of accession to EU and in new Member States;
80. We encourage the European Union to make use of the competence of Romani observers when designing, implementing, monitoring and assessing Roma-related policies.