

Statement of Fundación Secretariado Gitano regarding France government and its policies against Roma

Hereby Fundación Secretariado Gitano asks French government to put an end to racist and xenophobic discourse exhibited in recent weeks, which stigmatized the Roma, and strongly condemns the forcible eviction of settlements and the expulsion of Roma to their countries of origin. These measures, too often repeated by the French Government in recent years, violate the dignity of the Roma and their human rights, violate European laws of equal treatment, housing and freedom of movement and are a clear example of racial discrimination.

According to the European Directive 2004/38, French Government cannot deport any citizen of the EU for not comply with the residency criteria. Furthermore, EU law requires to review individual cases and that every citizen who is subject of an eviction must be duly notified at least one month in advance. This action of the French government also violates the rights of Romani children, according to the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

We do not claim that these camps should remain in poverty, isolation and marginalization, we demand France and the rest of the Member States to develop targeted measures to ensure access of Roma to education, employment, health and housing, and to implement their National strategies of Roma inclusion, which represent a commitment to the social inclusion of the largest ethnic minority in Europe but that so far are a mere declarations of intent.

The European Union must face once and for all the "Roma issue" which of course will not be solve with measures of the fifteenth century, such as those being carried out by the French government, but with policies that guarantee the rights of citizenship and social inclusion, measures for all its citizens, something that takes time, effort and commitment.

Therefore, from FSG :

- We urge French government to respect international law regarding evictions and expulsions of EU citizens, to avoid racist and stigmatizing statements about the Roma, and to launch social inclusion policies, instead of promoting indiscriminate expulsions or dismantling camps. It is necessary that French government works, once and for all, for the inclusion of the Roma community.
- We ask the European Commission, as guardian of the Treaties, to monitor and act against the events taking place in France, showing a firm and active answer to the Member States that violate European laws and treaties, ignoring the values and principles contained in the Charter of Fundamental Rights and to guarantee that policies contained in the European framework of National Strategies for the Inclusion of Roma are implemented efficiently.

- We ask the European Parliament, Member States, the Council of Europe and other organizations involved, a forceful reaction regarding the inflexible and racist discourse of the French Government and its measures against the Roma.
- We call on the Spanish government to show utmost firmness and condemn the treatment that Roma are receiving in France.
- We ask civil society in Europe and in Spain to expressly reject the measures and statements of the French Government and to show their solidarity with the Roma.

Madrid, 26th September 2013