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PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA
TO THE INTERNATIONAL
ORGANIZATIONS
VIENNA

Speaking Points
on Roma and Sinti inclusion in Albania,

as delivered by Ambassador Spiro Koçi at the
2013 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting,

Working Session 16 on Humanitarian Issues and Other Commitments II; Roma and
Sinti; Migrant Workers; Refugees and Displaced Persons
Warsaw, 03 September 2013

Thank you very much Mr. Moderator,
Dear Colleagues,

- Albania aligned itself with the EU Statement. On a national capacity I would like to make some brief remarks on Roma and Sinti issues.
- Participating states would recall that during the proceedings of the Human Dimension Committee Meeting of 5 March 2013, we made a comprehensive presentation on Albania's efforts to implement the OSCE Commitments with respect to Roma and Sinti and promote Roma inclusion into society.
- During that presentation we provided a detailed account of Albania's legal framework and the recent measures that have been put in place to advance Roma inclusion, in particular those tailored to facilitate birth registration procedures, improve access to education, health care and the labour market, improve housing conditions and prevent discrimination.
- Let me remind here that the Government of Albania has established two main instruments to achieve the aforementioned objectives: the National Strategy on the improvement of the living conditions of the Roma community and the national action plan on the Roma decade. These were drafted jointly by the central government institutions, local government units, Roma organizations and civil society.
- Understandably, the successful implementation of both documents represents a difficult task, especially in terms of resources and inter-departmental coordination. Aware of the challenges persisting in these aspects, the new Government of Albania, which took office a little bit less than a month ago, has put the issue of the implementation of the above-mentioned National Strategy and Action Plan at the forefront of its work agenda.

- As a matter of urgent priority the new Minister of Social Welfare and Youth, and the Government as whole, are trying to address the issue of resettling some 37 Roma families who had to leave their camp located on a private ground in a Tirana suburb on 7 August. Following a court decision the Roma camp had to make way to a private a construction project. In this respect, I am pleased to inform that the Government of Albania has already taken a decision to relocate the 37 Roma families in new facilities.
- The Government is committed to make its utmost to improve the overall situation of the Roma population in the country. In this regard, Albania stands ready to continue its existing cooperation with the OSCE Presence in Albania. The new Head of the Presence together with the Albanian Authorities are developing concrete ideas on these issues of particular importance for us. We believe that Roma inclusion is one of those areas where the OSCE Presence in Tirana may get successfully involved, in close coordination with ODIHR and other international organisations in Albania.
- By way of conclusion, I wish to avail myself of this opportunity to thank ODIHR and its Contact Point for Roma and Sinti for the fruitful cooperation established over the last two years, in the framework of the Best Practices for Roma Integration Project. This project, which aims at developing Local Roma Action Plans, is currently being implemented in six municipalities in Albania. It is our hope that the project will be completed successfully and we stand ready to continue our cooperation with ODIHR also in the future.

Thank you.