



EUROPEAN UNION

**OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 2013
Warsaw, 3 October 2013**

**EU statement – Working Session 16
HUMANITARIAN ISSUES AND OTHER COMMITMENTS II;
ROMA AND SINTI; MIGRANT WORKERS; REFUGEES AND
DISPLACED PERSONS**

Mr Chairperson,

I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the European Union and refer to the implementation of the OSCE Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area that the European Union remains fully committed to.

The European Union has given increased attention to improving the situation of Roma and Sinti and the EU Heads of State and Government have called for the rapid implementation of the Council Conclusions on an EU framework for national Roma integration strategies up to 2020. Currently, all EU Member States are implementing Roma inclusion strategies or sets of policy measures within their broader social inclusion policies, especially via improving access to: education, employment, healthcare and housing. Specific targets and monitoring mechanisms are part of these strategies as means to ensure their better implementation.

However, despite some progress achieved, the challenges remain. The size and social and economic situation of Roma is different in each EU member state, but in many of them, as well as in many parts of the OSCE area, there remain problems related to, inter-alia: combating discrimination and intolerance against Roma and Sinti, including violent manifestations, and ensure effective remedies; countering negative stereotyping, including in the mass-media, while fully respecting freedom of expression and of the media; enhancing participation of Roma and Sinti in the design, implementation and evaluation of policies that affect them; ensuring equal access to education and combating segregation in schools; increasing participation of Roma and Sinti in social, economic and political life; improving living conditions.

The OSCE participating States have undertaken commitments in all of the aforementioned fields. We need to face these challenges through systematic, coordinated and efficient strategies and policies. We also need to take effective and practical measures to make these commitments a reality and deliver sustained improvements in the social and economic situation of Roma and Sinti. The active involvement of Roma and Sinti themselves is essential for the improvement of their living conditions. Strong condemnation of acts of discrimination from officials, political leaders and civil society is also a must. We commend the assistance that ODIHR, notably the Contact Point for Roma and

Sinti Issues, and the HCNM have extended to participating States in fulfilling their commitments and we look forward to increased support from their side.

Additionally, cooperation among international organizations acting in this field needs to be strengthened and, in this respect, we welcome increased dialogue and cooperation between ODIHR/CPRSI and the European Union.

The European Union looks forward to the second Status Report on the implementation of the OSCE Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti, due to be published later this year. We welcome the fact that the third Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting in 2013 will be dedicated to the implementation of commitments with regard to Roma and Sinti at the tenth anniversary of the Action Plan's adoption and we look forward to in-depth discussions on effective action to improve the situation of Roma and Sinti in this framework. We also commend the fact that the Ukrainian Chairmanship-in-Office has presented a draft Ministerial Council decision on this topic and will contribute constructively with a view to its adoption.

The full implementation of all OSCE commitments should continue to be our guiding principles, including in view of the 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act. This should also apply to improving the situation of Roma and Sinti. Therefore, we take this

opportunity to redouble our calls for full implementation of all OSCE commitments regarding Roma and Sinti and our firm determination in this respect.

Recommendations:

- Continue the regular review of the implementation of the OSCE Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area by ODIHR. In this context, participating States should respond promptly and comprehensively to ODIHR's requests for information;
- Exchange best practices on policies to improve the situation of Roma and Sinti and on devising and implementing mechanisms for the monitoring of commitments in this field;
- Enhance data collection with regard to the situation of Roma and Sinti in all fields of the Action Plan;
- Enhance cooperation among international organizations with regard to improving the situation of Roma and Sinti.

The Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Iceland+ and Serbia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the EFTA country Norway, member of the European Economic Area, as well as the Republic of Moldova and Armenia, align themselves with this statement.

** the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.*

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.