



PERMANENT MISSION OF ROMANIA
to the International Organizations in Vienna

PC.SHDM.DEL/47/13
13 November 2013

ENGLISH only

Seilerstätte 17 / 2. St. / Top 8-9
1010 Vienna

Phone: 0043-1-512.85.66
Fax: 0043-1-512.90.57
Email: mpromviena@mprom.at
www.mpviena.mae.ro
www.mae.ro

**Intervention by Romania at the
Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting on the Implementation of the Action Plan for
the Improvement of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area**

(Vienna, 7-8 November 2013)

Ladies and gentlemen,

Romania is particularly pleased to see this year's third SHDM dedicated to the topic of Roma and Sinti and would like to congratulate the Ukrainian Chairmanship and the ODIHR for organizing this event.

The OSCE Action Plan for Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti remains, to date, the most comprehensive international document in terms of commitments regarding Roma and Sinti. This document and its rich content testifies not only to the OSCE as a pioneer in this field and its continuously high profile, but also to the broad political consensus among participating States a decade ago that improving the situation of Roma and Sinti in all its aspects needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

The Action Plan, at the same time, holds a particular significance for Romania. My country presided the Working Group that elaborated and negotiated the text of the Action Plan, leading to its adoption. I would be remiss if I were not to mention the crucial contribution to the Action Plan by Nicolae Gheorghe, a Romanian Roma and one of the most prominent advocates for improving the situation of Roma and Sinti at national, European and international levels, who was, at the time, ODIHR's Senior Adviser on Roma and Sinti. To our regret, he passed away recently and cannot be present to see the anniversary of one of his important and enduring legacies.

In 2003 as well as now the Action Plan was the proof of Romania's strong commitment to improving the situation of Roma and Sinti and of our engagement to raise the profile of this



topic at the political level in the OSCE. Our resolve in that respect remains unwavering in the OSCE and at the European level, where we have steadily advocated for EU-wide measures for the inclusion of Roma and Sinti that resulted into the EU Framework for national Roma integration strategies and the adoption of Romania's own national strategy.

The Action Plan and the issues it tackles are more relevant than ever in 2013, proving that the OSCE was visionary in adopting this document in Maastricht ten years ago. As the Status Report on the implementation of the Action Plan clearly demonstrates, in most OSCE Participating States challenges remain in the areas of social inclusion, combating discrimination and intolerance, ensuring equal access to education, improving living conditions, increasing participation of Roma in political and social life. The EU Fundamental Rights Agency surveys are also extremely useful in detailing the situation of Roma and Sinti in specific areas, as well as in general, also in comparison to the situation of non-Roma neighbors. New worrying trends have emerged: trafficking in human beings that preys on vulnerable Roma and Sinti, hate crimes against Roma and Sinti, intensified racist anti-Roma rhetoric in the public sphere, etc.

We will study thoroughly and in a constructive spirit the findings of the Status Report and its recommendations. Because we believe that notwithstanding the achievements so far more needs to be done in order to improve the situation of Roma and Sinti, at the national, European and wider OSCE levels. In Romania, we have established an institutional structure that deals with Roma issues, including the National Agency for Roma, a counselor to the Prime Minister on Roma Issues, focal points or units for Roma issues in relevant ministries and counselors at the county level. I would like to refer briefly to a few examples of good practices from the experience gained by Romania while developing social inclusion policies for Roma. The most successful example is the programme for training school and health mediators which, due to its results, currently constitutes the model for the training of the cultural mediators programme of the Council of Europe in various countries. At a more general level, Romania strives to allocate more financial resources to the social inclusion of



PERMANENT MISSION OF ROMANIA
to the International Organizations in Vienna

Seilerstätte 17 / 2. St. / Top 8-9
1010 Vienna

Phone: 0043-1-512.85.66
Fax: 0043-1-512.90.57
Email: mpromviena@mprom.at
www.mpviena.mae.ro
www.mae.ro

Roma. Romanian authorities made available 121 million euros for 43 projects earmarked specifically for Roma from the European Social Fund resources allocated to Romania.

We believe that there is a need to renew our efforts to tackle long-lasting problems and devise new commitments and measures to address new challenges. Currently, we are deeply engaged in forging new commitments to be adopted at the OSCE Ministerial Council in Kyiv this year. We hope that such commitments would honor the tenth anniversary of the Action Plan and become the most ambitious set of commitments assumed by the Participating States since its adoption. We stress upon the fact that we need new OSCE commitments in particular with regard to Roma and Sinti women and girls and secondary and tertiary education.

In this spirit, we would like to offer the following recommendations:

- Adopt new OSCE commitments with regard to Roma and Sinti women and girls, equal access and other issues of Roma related to secondary and tertiary education;
- In order to achieve better results, make use of instruments like Roma mediators at local level (education and health mediators), which have proven to be a good practice in some countries.

Thank you for your attention!