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OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting Warsaw, 10 - 21 September 2018

EU statement – Working Session 9: Tolerance and non-discrimination II, including Roma and Sinti issues, including implementation of the OSCE Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti

Mr. Moderator,

I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the European Union.

In November this year, we mark the 15th anniversary of the 2003 Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area. Acknowledging “the particular difficulties faced by Roma and Sinti persons and the need to undertake effective measures in order to eradicate discrimination against them and to bring about equality of opportunities”, OSCE participating States adopted a comprehensive set of commitments more relevant than ever. This anniversary represents an opportunity to recommit to implement the OSCE Action Plan and to enhance the efforts at all levels (the highest political level and local level, as well) for the inclusion of Roma and Sinti persons in societies in the OSCE region.

The ODIHR’s forthcoming status report is due to take stock of the implementation of Chapter VI of the Action Plan, which is dedicated to the effective participation of Roma and Sinti persons in public and political life. We welcome the persistent efforts of Contact Point on Roma and Sinti Issues (CPRSI) in the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) in this field.

I would like to deliver the following recommendations regarding the Roma and Sinti issues in the OSCE area:

- Encourage pS to strengthen their cooperation with the CPRSI, take advantage of its expertise and actively promote the human rights and fundamental freedoms of Roma and Sinti individuals across the OSCE region.



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- Call on participating States' authorities to systematically and univocally condemn any acts of violence against Roma and Sinti persons and take effective and immediate measures to thoroughly investigate crimes and to hold the perpetrators accountable.
- Take measures to combat any form of violence motivated by racism or xenophobia and ensure a vigorous, effective and independent investigation of racially motivated acts, as well as equal access to effective remedies (judicial, administrative, conciliation and mediation procedures). Perpetrators of violent acts on Roma and Sinti should be brought to justice.
- In this regard, encourage OSCE participating States to make use of the ODIHR's role in conflict prevention and identification of areas of early intervention, and draw on the expertise of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities in this regard.
- Put greater emphasis on actions in the areas of education and employment; promote the training of mediators and training-of-trainers, as well as a useful tool to strengthen community based approaches and human rights.
- Take effective measures to enhance the participation of Roma and Sinti youth in public life.
- Pay particular attention to Roma and Sinti women and girls who often face multiple forms of discrimination.
- Education is an important precondition to the participation of Roma and Sinti persons in the political, social and economic life of their respective countries on a footing of equality with others. Encourage pS to develop comprehensive policies that address the full range of factors that contribute to low-school attendance by Roma and Sinti children. This includes, inter alia, ensuring that Roma and Sinti families have the necessary documentation for registration. Ensuring access to birth registration, identity documents for Roma persons is a key to improving their lives.



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- Encourage participating States to take effective measures to ensure respect of fundamental rights, in particular improving access to education, employment, healthcare and housing.
- Promotion of policies and measures to tackle the persistent challenges the Roma community still faces, social exclusion and discrimination.
- Enhance a better implementation of the OSCE commitments with regard to Roma and Sinti by local authorities.
- Pay particular attention to Roma and Sinti migrants, refugees and IDPs and ensure that they are treated in accordance with the relevant international norms and standards of protection, without any discrimination.
- Ensure a periodical review mechanism of strategies, policies and measures related to Roma and Sinti persons, for a better adjustment to the situation on the ground.
- Continue and enhance cooperation among international organizations with regard to improving the situation of Roma and Sinti persons.
- Continue activities of the OSCE field operations with regard to improving the situation of Roma and Sinti persons.

Mr. Moderator,

Since 2011, with the adoption of the Framework for the National Roma Integration Strategies by European Council, the European Union has put Roma and Sinti persons integration high on the political agenda. This legislative Framework is constantly being assessed and updated.

Respect for fundamental rights, including equal treatment, are the cornerstones of the European Union. Combating social exclusion, discrimination and prejudice is one of its specific tasks. In defining and implementing its policies and activities, the European Union takes into account requirements linked to the promotion of a high level and non-segregated education, employment, adequate social protection, training and protection of health. The EU and its



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Member States are strongly committed to fighting discrimination and accelerating the process of Roma persons' integration.

The European Union commends the work done by the CPRSI to strengthen the capacity of police officers operating at the local level to work effectively with Roma and Sinti persons and mixed communities, while complying with international human rights standards.

The European Union also welcomes the CPRSI support extended to the Ukrainian authorities in granting equal access to birth registration and identity documents for Roma and Sinti men and women and further encourages the cooperation to promote the inclusion of Roma and Sinti persons in the society and to enhance safety and security for Roma and Sinti communities in Ukraine.

We welcome the work of the OSCE Office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities aimed at ensuring a more integrated society in which each and every member can enjoy the same rights.

The full implementation of all OSCE commitments continues to be the EU's guiding principle. We take this opportunity to reiterate our calls for full implementation of all OSCE commitments regarding Roma and Sinti persons and our firm determination in this respect.

Thank you.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO*, SERBIA* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area, as well as GEORGIA align themselves with this statement.

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

The term "Roma" refers to Roma, Sinti, Kale and related groups in Europe, including Travellers and the Eastern groups (Dom and Lom), and covers the wide diversity of the groups concerned, including persons who identify themselves as Gypsies