



OSCE Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLAN ON IMPROVING
THE SITUATION OF ROMA AND SINTI
dedicated to the 10th Anniversary of the adoption of the
2003 OSCE Action Plan
7-8 November 2013, Vienna

UNHCR statement – SESSION II

Dear Participants,

- The Status Report on the Implementation of the Roma and Sinti OSCE Action Plan has captured very clearly the reality on the ground in particular when it comes to the issue of documentation.

- UNHCR sees improvement in legislation of OSCE participating States, there are Action Plans, strategies and meetings. Increased funding for Roma and Sinti projects is notable.

However, and as the report rightly states increased funding does not necessarily yield in results.

- UNHCR would like to highlight in this regard the lack of data and systematic tracking mechanisms for the implementation of the improved legislations among Roma populations.

Therefore UNHCR embarked in **Montenegro** on a data collection project for all Roma Internally Displaced Persons and refugees aiming at getting information on their current status and level of documentation and deciding on the next course of action, assistance and documentation. In **Bosnia Herzegovina**,

UNHCR and the NGO partners have visited 150 out of the 160 identified Roma communities to gather essential information about their remaining needs. There have been important changes in the legislation of **Serbia**, notably allowing for subsequent birth registration, and a Memorandum of Understanding between UNHCR, the Government and the Ombudsman has been signed which creates a national coordination mechanism for providing assistance to affected Roma and finding solutions.

UNHCR sees the following priority areas for recommendations:

1. More attention is needed to find durable solutions for the Internally Displaced and refugee Roma. For many a return to their places of origin is not any more an option. Therefore OSCE participating States should remove obstacles to residence registration and provide access to civil registration documents.
2. The 2011 Zagreb Declaration needs to be followed by firm action and cooperation between the numerous stakeholders at the national level to resolve the remaining open cases of undocumented Roma. Cross-border cooperation between authorities of the current and the former countries of residence should also increase to support individuals in need of documentation.
3. Attention should be paid to accommodating the needs of Roma IDPs and refugees living in irregular housing. Movements from one informal settlement to the next must be identified and addressed.

Thank you