



Third Status Report

Implementation of the Action Plan on
Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti
within the OSCE Area

For Roma, With Roma
2018

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ARDI	European Parliament Anti-Racism and Diversity Intergroup
BME	Black and minority ethnic group
CEC	Central election commission
CERD	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
CPRSI	ODIHR Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues
CSO	Civil society organization
EAM	Election assessment mission
ECRI	European Commission against Racism and Intolerance
ENS	European Network on Statelessness
ERRC	European Roma Rights Centre
EOM	Election observation mission
ERTF	European Roma and Travellers Forum
EU	European Union
FCNM	Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities
FRA	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
HCNM	OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
IDPs	Internally displaced persons
IRCA	Institute of Romani Culture in Albania
ISI	Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion
LEOM	Limited election observation mission
MEC	Municipal Election Commission
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NGO(s)	Non-governmental organization(s)
NRIS	National Roma Integration Strategy/Strategies
ODIHR	OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Foreword

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) 2003 Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti constitutes a comprehensive framework of political commitments intended to strengthen the efforts of participating States and relevant OSCE institutions and structures to ensure that Roma and Sinti people are able to play a full and equal part in our societies, while eradicating discrimination against them.

Despite a number of longstanding OSCE and other international commitments for inclusion of Roma and Sinti, the improvement of their situation still falters. These commitments have not yet produced the action necessary for real progress. Roma and Sinti people face severe exclusion from most areas of life, while structural discrimination and racism continue to be their daily reality. The modest and short-lived advancements in some countries are often hindered by weak policy frameworks, and have been over-shadowed by a resurgence of anti-Roma rhetoric and even racially-motivated violence against Roma and Sinti in some participating States.

This year, the OSCE marks the 15th anniversary of the Action Plan's adoption. This third Status Report seeks to review the progress made by participating States in implementing the Action Plan's provisions over the past five years, this time with a particular focus on enhancing Roma and Sinti participation in public and political life.

The purpose of this report is to assess the achievements in improving the access of Roma and Sinti to public and political life, as well as to identify the remaining obstacles precluding their meaningful participation. At the same time, the report highlights a number of practices and initiatives that have produced results, to serve as inspiration for participating States and other relevant stakeholders to consider adopting and replicating.

The report has gathered information from the majority of OSCE participating States with sizable Roma and Sinti populations through responses to a questionnaire. Other contributors included OSCE field operations, Roma civil society, and inter-governmental and international organizations.

The following pages indicate only limited progress on Roma and Sinti representation in public and political life, covering barriers ranging from lack of identification documents to low levels of interest from established parties towards their Roma and Sinti constituency. At the same time, the report includes a number of notable examples of Roma and Sinti in elected and appointed positions, as

well as of consultative mechanisms facilitating their public participation.

Regrettably, despite a number of policies, programmes and legislative reforms implemented by some participating States, measurable advancement has failed to materialize. This has to change. I therefore hope that this report can help strengthen participating States' resolve for more sustained efforts to increase Roma and Sinti public participation, including that of women and youth. I strongly encourage all Participating States to devise and implement wide-scale interventions to build the capacity of Roma and Sinti individuals and communities, to foster their participation in all spheres of life, using the priority areas and recommendations for action outlined here as a starting point. In all these efforts, dedicated application of the principle "for Roma, with Roma" is key to ensuring their engagement in policy-making processes and measures concerning them.

Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir

Director, OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions
and Human Rights (ODIHR)

Executive Summary

For 20 years, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) has been tasked by participating States to promote “full integration of Roma and Sinti communities into the societies they live in, while preserving their identity” (1998 OSCE Oslo Ministerial Decision).¹ This year marks the 15th anniversary of the “OSCE Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti in the OSCE Area”. Adopted in 2003, the primary objective of the Action Plan is “to reinforce the efforts of the participating States and relevant OSCE institutions and structures aimed at ensuring that Roma and Sinti people are able to play a full and equal part in our societies, and at eradicating discrimination against them.”²

This is the Status Report on progress made by participating States in implementing these commitments. It differs from the two previous reports, which were published in 2008 and 2013, respectively, and which reviewed the entire gamut of recommended actions included in the Action Plan. This report focuses specifically on Chapter VI of the Action Plan: Enhancing participation in public and political life. The Action Plan states that Roma and Sinti people have an equal right to participate in public affairs, to vote, stand for election, and form political parties without discrimination; and that “Roma and Sinti people play an essential and irreplaceable role in ensuring that the right to participate in the political process is observed in practice.”³ The OSCE’s mandate to support the political participation of Roma and Sinti, including women and youth, has been reaffirmed in three subsequent Ministerial Council Decisions.⁴

The right to participate in public affairs and in political life is an integral part of a truly democratic society. It is inextricably linked to the full realization of all human rights and it is vital for the advancement of democratic governance, the rule of law, social inclusion and economic development. The OSCE’s “Lund Recommendations on the Effective Participation of National Minorities in Public Life” define effective participation as involvement, both in terms of the opportunity to make substantive contributions to decision-making processes and in terms of the effect of those contributions.⁵ The recommendations also stress that inclusive processes require conditions of tolerance and intercultural understanding: “A social and political climate of mutual respect and equality needs to be assured by law and also taught as a social ethic shared by the whole population.”⁶ This guiding principle has lost none of its urgency yet the devaluation of this principle over the last 20 years has made itself keenly felt in the exclusion and discrimination that Roma and Sinti people suffer to this day.

Observations on improving participation from the 2013 Status Report

The 2013 Status Report noted that several participating States had amended or introduced legislation to enhance Roma representation at the municipal level. In some countries, Roma minority councils had also been established, as key advisory bodies representing Roma interests and legitimized through direct voting by Roma communities.

1 “The ODIHR Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues: An Overview”, OSCE/ODIHR, 2003, <<https://www.osce.org/odihr/13996?download=true>>, (hereafter, “The ODIHR Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues: An Overview”).

2 OSCE Ministerial Council, Decision No. 3/03, “Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area”, Maastricht, 1 and 2 December 2003, <<http://www.osce.org/odihr/17554>>, (hereafter, the OSCE Action Plan).

3 “The ODIHR Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues: An Overview”, *op. cit.*, note 1, p. 12.

4 OSCE Ministerial Council, Decision No. 6/08 Enhancing OSCE Efforts To Implement The Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area, 5 December 2008, <<https://www.osce.org/mc/35488?download=true>>, (hereafter, OSCE Ministerial Council Decision No. 6/08); OSCE Ministerial Council, Decision No. 8/09 on Enhancing OSCE Efforts to Ensure Roma and Sinti Sustainable Integration, 2 December 2009, <<https://www.osce.org/cio/40707>>, (hereafter, OSCE Ministerial Council Decision No. 8/09); OSCE Ministerial Council, Decision no. 4/13 Enhancing OSCE efforts to implement the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE area, with a particular Focus on Roma and Sinti women, youth and children, 6 December 2013, <<https://www.osce.org/mc/kyiv?download=true>>, (hereafter, OSCE Ministerial Council Decision No. 4/13).

5 “The Lund Recommendations on the Effective Participation of National Minorities in Public Life”, OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), 1 September 1999, <<https://www.osce.org/hcnm/32240>> (hereafter, “The Lund Recommendations on the Effective Participation of National Minorities in Public Life”).

6 *Ibid.*, p. 21.

The 2011 European Union (EU) Decision on the Framework for Roma National Strategies (NRIS)⁷ prompted EU member states to nominate contact points for implementation of the NRIS, and to establish new consultation mechanisms or working groups, and, if applicable, to strengthen existing ones.

Deficiencies identified in the first status report in 2008 were still observed in the 2013 report, which concluded that Roma continued to be disadvantaged, underrepresented and, in many cases, excluded from effective political participation, with mainstream political parties even less interested in nominating Roma candidates than in 2008.

The 2013 Status Report also emphasized the growing importance of local politics and the expanding competences of municipal authorities to address issues of social exclusion in a time of increased decentralization.⁸ The report called on participating States to take concrete action to protect and enhance the right of Roma and Sinti women and men to participate as voters and candidates; to address the ongoing challenges that make Roma communities especially vulnerable to vote-buying and vote manipulation; to address the lack of capacity of elected Roma representatives at the national and local levels through targeted programmes; to enhance government consultation mechanisms, allowing for partnerships with Roma civil society organizations as a measure of good governance; and to provide specialized training to Roma working in public administration and in minority councils.

The wider political context

In the five year period since the last Status Report, increased international recognition of the need for increased Roma participation in public and political life has continued to go hand-in-hand with the economic impoverishment of marginalized Roma communities and a rise

in anti-Roma racism in many participating States; particularly those with significant Roma populations. In the last few years, this was prompted by the rhetoric of radical populists scapegoating vulnerable groups, primarily asylum-seekers but also Roma and Sinti, among others. In addition to violent hate crime, biased rhetoric and intensification of anti-Roma sentiment, Roma continue to be subjected to “everyday racism” and institutional discrimination that impinges on their fundamental rights and dignity.

The sustained commitment by the OSCE, the Council of Europe, the EU and other international organizations to empowering and building the capacity of Roma representatives continues against a backdrop of political polarization. The growth of nativist populism and the increasing numbers of voters who support far-right parties with explicitly racist and xenophobic political agendas means that anti-Roma racism remains prominent in the discourse of constituencies driven by hate, resentment and prejudice. In a number of countries, some more mainstream parties have adopted rhetoric previously used almost exclusively on the extremes of the political spectrum.⁹

Challenges to participation of Roma and Sinti in electoral processes¹⁰

The barriers that hinder the participation of Roma and Sinti in elections have remained fairly constant since the publication of the 2013 Status Report. From the reports and information received and analysed over the past five years,¹¹ it is evident that Roma still face problems “ranging from direct pressure to ‘controlled voting’, vote buying, lack of voter education and illiteracy, candidates’ lack of capacity to run for elected office, lack of registration documents, family voting, and legal and administrative barriers.”¹² Roma and Sinti women remain

7 “An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020”, European Commission, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, COM(2011) 173 final, Brussels, 5 April 2011, p. 3, <<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52011DC0173&from=EN>>, (hereafter, “An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020”).

8 *Implementation of the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area Renewed Commitments, Continued Challenges: Status Report 2013*, (OSCE/ODIHR: Warsaw, 2013), <<http://www.osce.org/odihr/107406?download=true>>, (hereafter, Status Report 2013).

9 Antigypsyism in public discourses and election campaigns, Central Council of German Sinti and Roma, Heidelberg, 2017, <<http://zentralrat.sintiundroma.de/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/central-council-of-german-sinti-and-roma-2017-antigypsyism-in-election-campaigns.pdf>>.

10 The section refers to challenges during the reviewed period of the current report, 2013-2017.

11 “Political participation of Roma and Sinti”, OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights website, 6 November 2018, <<https://www.osce.org/odihr/223691>>. Also, please see OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Final Reports, “Documents library”, OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights website, <https://www.osce.org/resources/documents/%22Final%20Report%22?page=2&filters=%20im_taxonomy_vid_3%3A%28120%29%20im_taxonomy_vid_1%3A%2824%29%20im_taxonomy_vid_22%3A%28472%29&sort=score%20desc&rows=50&category=Official%20Documents>.

12 Status Report 2013, *op. cit.*, note 8.

under-represented in politics, and mainstream political parties are still resistant to fielding Roma and Sinti candidates.¹³

While the lack of civil registration documents and improper residence documents remains a significant obstacle to participate as voters and candidates in elections, progress with civil registration has been reported in a number of OSCE participating States. A combination of legislative reforms, the simplification of procedures, community outreach and engagement, and improved co-operation between governmental organizations (NGOs) working on, and local authorities responsible for, civil registration, has given many Roma and Sinti the opportunity to vote.

Reports of vote buying featured in several ODIHR election observation mission (EOM) reports during the reporting period. ODIHR noted that during the 2017 presidential election in Serbia “the Roma community remained vulnerable to pressure and manipulation, with reported cases of vote-buying through the distribution of food and hygienic packages as well as promises of free medical treatment and of organized transport on election day”.¹⁴ By contrast, Slovakia made efforts to deter vote-buying by using civic education and criminalizing the offence, which appeared to decrease the practice in the 2016 parliamentary elections.¹⁵

Roma and Sinti civil society representatives and advocates acknowledged some positive changes and progress in participating States in relation to the issue of participation in public life, while still recognizing that Roma and Sinti largely remain under-represented. Roma still often do not trust in the authorities or the justice system, which remains a major impediment to full and effective participation in public and political life. Furthermore, they highlighted that Roma civil society needs to be able to work within a safe and enabling environment, free from harassment by state or non-state actors; and called for continued support for capacity-building and training events to empower Roma men, women and youth to become effective rights advocates, to encourage social inclusion and to participate in politics.¹⁶

Actions to promote participation of Roma and Sinti voters and candidates

While it is widely accepted that improved voter education, registration processes and campaigns to “get out the vote” are vital to preparing, mobilizing and actively engaging Roma and Sinti in local and national electoral processes, most participating States responded that they do not implement specifically targeted civic and voter education programmes for Roma and Sinti.¹⁷ A number of participating States responded that Roma and Sinti, as citizens of their respective states, can participate in and benefit from policies, programmes and legislation that address the citizenry in general. Specific actions targeting Roma were implemented in Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the OSCE and the Council of Europe have partnered with local institutions to deliver voter education targeting Roma women and youth, and to provide training for Roma candidates running for local elections. Similar programmes were run by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) in Hungary, Slovakia and Romania, according to information obtained from participating States and civil society.

One of the methods for helping Roma and Sinti make informed decisions in electoral processes is the provision of electoral information in the Romani language. Most of the participating States who responded to the ODIHR questionnaire stated that the Roma and Sinti population in their respective states speak the majority official language and face no obstacles in this regard. A number of participating States, notably Albania, the Czech Republic, Hungary and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, all reported that they produce election information in the Romani language.

Difficulties of assessing progress in representation since 2013

It is difficult to identify any definitive trends in the representation of Roma and Sinti because most of the participating States do not collect data about candidates or voters that is disaggregated by ethnicity. Only a few participating States reported a slight increase in the number

13 “Roma and Sinti Political Participation: Opportunities and Risks of Local-level Engagement, Summary Report of the Expert Meeting”, Warsaw, 28 November 2014, Warsaw, January 2016, <<http://www.osce.org/odihr/219511?download=true>>, (hereafter, “Roma and Sinti Political Participation: Opportunities and Risks of Local-level Engagement”).

14 “Republic of Serbia Presidential Elections 2 April 2017, ODIHR Election Assessment Mission Final Report”, ODIHR, Warsaw, 8 June 2017, p. 13, <<https://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/serbia/322166?download=true>>, (hereafter, Republic of Serbia Presidential Elections 2017).

15 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic, The Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities, received 22 March 2018.

16 ODIHR Consultation workshop – Third Status Report on the implementation of the OSCE Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area, Warsaw, 5-6 June 2018, <<https://www.osce.org/odihr/383397>>, (hereafter, ODIHR Consultation workshop 5-6 June 2018).

17 Information provided by participating States in their responses to an ODIHR questionnaire. More information about the methodology is available in the subsequent section.

of Roma and Sinti candidates and elected representatives. Similar to the previous reporting period, the factors impeding the participation of Roma and Sinti as candidates in elections included the low level of interest among mainstream parties in national minority issues, their reluctance to include and promote Roma and Sinti as candidates on their candidate lists, and limited financial resources to support campaign activities by Roma candidates – especially of women.

Several participating States reported that there is currently no quota in the legislative body for ethnic minorities. In a majority of states there were no specific electoral thresholds for political parties representing national minorities. In addition, most of the participating States either responded that they do not collect information about the ethnicity of elected candidates or that there are no self-declared Roma and Sinti members of parliament. Moreover, most participating States did not include information regarding the existence of parliamentary sub-committees addressing minority issues, or Roma and Sinti issues in particular. Many also did not provide any data concerning Roma candidates in local or regional councils. However, Croatia, Hungary and Romania all reserve seats in their parliaments for Roma and Sinti candidates.

Evidence suggests that the needs and priorities of Roma and Sinti are not represented in the political platforms and priorities of many mainstream parties in the OSCE area.¹⁸ Responses to the ODIHR questionnaire indicate that many mainstream political parties do not have specific quotas for minorities on their party lists and also that Roma remain largely under-represented in mainstream political parties. In participating States that allow for the formation of ethnic political parties, Roma and Sinti have formed their own political parties to compete in elections.¹⁹

There are only a handful of examples of Roma and Sinti running as candidates for mainstream political parties. Even fewer have been elected or appointed to positions for the purpose of representing their communities. Roma and Sinti continue to remain largely under-represented in politics, which is in line with the findings of the 2013 Status Report.

Executive structures and consultative mechanisms

Only five participating States reported the existence of governmental structures or institutions in their countries specifically mandated to address Roma and Sinti issues. Twenty-four OSCE participating States reported that certain executive government structures address issues related to Roma and Sinti as part of their broader mandate, while a number of participating States reported the absence of any such institutions within their government structures. Under the auspices of the EU NRIS Framework, EU member states have established national contact points and put in place structures for consultation and dialogue with Roma and Sinti. It is clear from the responses of participating States that these arrangements vary greatly in terms of scope, ambition and efficacy. As part of the EU accession process, some candidate countries have devised action plans and strategies for Roma inclusion and set up consultative working groups on Roma and Sinti issues, which include opportunities for structured participation by Roma experts and organizations. However, their input is often ignored or only considered to a limited extent. The mere existence of these structures does not, therefore, guarantee the effective public participation of Roma and Sinti.

Roma women in public and political life

The Action Plan also tasks participating States “to promote Roma women’s participation in public and political life”, adding that “Roma women should be able to participate on an equal basis with men in consultative and other mechanisms designed to increase access to all areas of public and political life.”²⁰

The 2010 Strasbourg Declaration on Roma recommends promoting effective participation of Roma in social, political and civic life, while the newly-adopted Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018 – 2023 sets out to achieve balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making and to empower women candidates.²¹

At the 6th International Roma Women’s Conference organized by the Council of Europe in Strasbourg on 6- and 7 November 2017 and entitled “Women and Political Representation: The Case of Roma and Traveller

18 According to participating States responses to the ODIHR questionnaire and other reviewed reports and materials.

19 For instance in Albania, Czech Republic, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Romania, Serbia.

20 The OSCE Action Plan, *op. cit.*, note 2, para. 98, <<http://www.osce.org/odihr/17554>>.

21 “Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023”, Council of Europe, adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, March 2018, <<https://rm.coe.int/prems-093618-gbr-gender-equality-strategy-2023-web-a5/16808b47e1>>.

Women”²², a pledge on political representation of Roma women was signed by 12 political leaders, /parties and / groups to promote gender equality and the participation of women from minority groups, in particular Roma and Traveller women, in decision-making bodies and in political representation at the next European, national, regional and local elections.²³ On the occasion of 8 April, the 2018 International Roma Day on 8 April, the Secretary General published a statement in 2018 urging political parties to fast-track Roma women in politics.²⁴

Based on responses from OSCE participating States, this commitment remains, at best, aspirational. The NRIS framework, launched in 2011, did not provide much by way of added impetus towards this goal. In a 2013 resolution, the European Parliament expressed regret that, “despite the adoption of its resolution on the situation of Roma women in 2006 and the 10 Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion by the Council, in which one of the principles relates to gender awareness, the vulnerable situation of Roma and Traveller women has, in practice, remained unaddressed by European and national policy makers”²⁵ The European Parliament also noted that “Roma women often face multiple and intersectional discrimination on the grounds of gender and ethnic origin – which is more intense than that against Roma men or non-Roma women – and have limited access to employment, education, health, social services and decision-making”, and that Roma women are often victims of racism, prejudice and stereotypes that have a

negative impact on their real integration.²⁶ The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs called on the European Commission of the European Union (European Commission) “to adopt a systematic approach to gender equity and the active participation of Roma women as agents of change, which currently is absent from the NRIS”²⁷ The Committee also called on the European Commission to monitor and evaluate the extent to which NRIS takes into account the gender perspective and the intersectional nature of discrimination faced by Roma women in all priority policy areas.²⁸

Two Roma women have been elected to the European Parliament in previous terms. For the 2014-2019 mandate, they were followed by Soraya Post, the first Roma person to stand as a candidate for a political party in Sweden, succeeded in securing a seat in this legislative body. She is chair of the European Parliament Anti-Racism and Diversity Intergroup (ARDI), and a member of other groups,²⁹ and was instrumental in pushing the European Parliament to dedicate an official day to “commemorating the victims of the genocide of the Roma during World War II”, and recognizing anti-Gypsyism “as an especially persistent, violent, recurrent and commonplace form of racism”, that must be combatted at every level and by every means.³⁰ Her report, “Fundamental rights aspects in Roma integration in the EU: fighting anti-Gypsyism”, was initially adopted in the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs of the European Parliament,

22 “Roma women: 6th International Roma Women Conference”, Council of Europe website, <<https://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/roma-women?desktop=true>. “Pledge on political representation of Roma and Traveller women, Council of Europe, Strasbourg 6 November 2017”, <<https://rm.coe.int/pledge-with-signatures-/1680764c40>>.

23 “Pledge on political representation of Roma and Traveller women, Council of Europe, Strasbourg 6 November 2017, <<https://rm.coe.int/pledge-with-signatures-/1680764c40>>.

24 “8 April, International Roma Day: Statement by Secretary General Thorbjørn Jagland”, Council of Europe website, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/roma-latest-news/-/asset_publisher/Wf2OtrKpyHUY/content/8-april-international-roma-day-statement-by-secretary-general-thorbj-rn-jagla-1?inheritRedirect=false&redirect=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.coe.int%2Fen%2Fweb%2Fportal%2Froma-latest-news%3Fp_id%3D101_INSTANCE_Wf2OtrKpyHUY%26p_p_lifecycle%3D0%26p_p_state%3Dnormal%26p_p_mode%3Dview%26p_p_col_id%3Dcolumn-1%26p_p_col_count%3D1>.

25 “Resolution on gender aspects of the European framework of national Roma inclusion strategies”, European Parliament, 10 December 2013, <<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2013-0545+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>>.

26 *Ibid.*

27 “Report on gender aspects of the European Framework of National Roma Inclusion Strategies”, European Parliament Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality, Rapporteur: Livia Járóka, 25 October 2013, <<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&reference=A7-2013-0349&language=EN>>.

28 *Ibid.*

29 Soraya Post is a member of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D); the co-ordinator of the sub-committee on Human Rights (DROI) and the spokesperson on Roma issues; a member of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) and substitute in the Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET); she is also part of the delegation for relations with the countries of Central America; chair of ARDI and member of the Disability and LGBTI Rights Intergroups.

30 “MEPs urge end to Roma discrimination and recognition of Roma Genocide Day”, European Parliament press release, 15 April 2015, <<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20150414IPR41851/meps-urge-end-to-roma-discrimination-and-recognition-of-roma-genocide-day>>.

and formed the basis for the resolution adopted by the European Parliament on 25 October 2017.³¹

ODIHR activities to promote public and political participation of Roma and Sinti

During the period 2013-2018, ODIHR organized a range of activities in pursuance of its mandate to enhance the participation of Roma and Sinti, including women and youth, in public and political life. ODIHR has organized training, workshops, awareness raising and voter education campaigns, with a focus on capacity-building of Roma and Sinti women and youth. These events aimed to empower Roma and Sinti communities and individual activists, and provided forums for Roma and Sinti experts, politicians, public officials and civil society activists to contribute to shaping national and international discussion and agendas regarding the importance of participation of Roma and Sinti in public and political life. These activities have also provided a platform to discuss and examine positive developments and to identify the next steps for addressing the complex challenges Roma and Sinti face regarding effective public and political participation.

³¹ "Fundamental rights aspects in Roma integration in the EU: fighting anti-Gypsyism", European Parliament Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, Rapporteur: Soraya Post, 11 October 2017, <<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+REPORT+A8-2017-0294+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>>. Also see "Fundamental rights aspects in Roma integration in the EU: fighting anti-Gypsyism", European Parliament resolution of 25 October 2017, <<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+TA+P8-TA-2017-0413+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN>>.

PART I

Introduction

Background

The Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area, adopted in Maastricht in 2003, defines key related policy areas. The Action Plan focuses on combating racism and discrimination, ensuring equal access and opportunities for Roma and Sinti in education, employment, housing and health services, enhancing public and political participation, and assisting Roma and Sinti in crisis and post-crisis situations.³²

ODIHR, through its Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues (CPRSI), is mandated to assist participating States and other stakeholders in the development of policy measures to improve the situation of Roma and Sinti in the OSCE area, as well as to review and assess the progress of participating States in implementing OSCE commitments regarding Roma and Sinti. In addition, the CPRSI acts as a clearing-house and catalyst for Roma and Sinti issues, initiatives and policies.³³

This is the third Status Report to assess the progress made by participating States in the implementation of the 2003 Action Plan. This report differs from the previous two, which examined progress, as well as challenges and trends, across all the commitments and chapters contained in the Action Plan. The 2018 Status Report, which coincides with the 15th anniversary of the adoption of the Action Plan, focuses solely on assessing progress related to Chapter VI. Enhancing participation in public and political life. As noted in a 2016 report commissioned by ODIHR, this area has received significantly less consideration than others in recent years, despite its crucial importance.³⁴ The importance of the effective participation of national minorities in public affairs is strongly highlighted in the OSCE's Lund Recommendations, which describe participation as "an essential component of a peaceful and democratic society."³⁵

Roma and Sinti live throughout the OSCE region, predominantly in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. Largely settled, Roma and Sinti represent one of the largest ethnic minorities in Europe. Although Roma and Sinti lack a territory of their own, they share significant

cultural, linguistic and ethnic ties. Since their arrival on the European continent, they have been subjected to persecution, slavery and genocide. For generations, they have been trapped in a spiral of exclusion, marginalization and poverty, perpetuated by systemic racism and discrimination in all spheres of life. Today, Roma and Sinti continue to be largely excluded from wider society.

This report takes stock of the implementation of commitments by OSCE participating States to enhance the effective participation of Roma and Sinti in public and political life, and to review progress made and remaining challenges in this area.

The assessment reflects on current developments and trends regarding participation in public affairs, providing data and information contributed by participating States, Roma and Sinti civil society organizations and experts. To the extent possible, based on available information, the report also includes references to the participation and representation of Roma and Sinti women and youth.

On the one hand, the Status Report provides an up-to-date account of progress made by participating States and remaining challenges, while, on the other, it emphasizes the importance of upscaling existing positive practices, developing them into policies and intensifying efforts required to close the gaps between Roma and mainstream populations in terms of participation in public and political life.

The report details the kind of administrative and social obstacles that prevent Roma from overcoming the cycle of exclusion that deprives them of an equal chance to live a dignified life and to achieve their full potential. The report, which underlines challenges and barriers to participation and presents recommendations for participating States, should serve as a blueprint for state interventions to help Roma and Sinti fully enjoy their human rights and fully engage in society.

32 The OSCE Action Plan, *op. cit.*, note 2.

33 The clearing-house function of the CPRSI is related to sharing information about Roma-related policies, initiatives and programmes with relevant stakeholders, including participating States, OSCE structures and civil society.

34 "Roma and Sinti Political Participation: Opportunities and Risks of Local-level Engagement", *op. cit.*, note 13.

35 "The Lund Recommendations on the Effective Participation of National Minorities in Public Life", *op. cit.*, note 5.

Methodology

The structure of this third Status Report is different from the 2008 and 2013 reports, as this edition assesses only progress in the implementation of Chapter VI of the Action Plan: Enhancing participation in public and political life.

Like the first two Status Reports, the current edition is based on replies from participating States to a questionnaire circulated by ODIHR. ODIHR received replies from 39 of the 57 participating States.³⁶ Of the 39 states that responded, 16 responded to most questions, 19 either provided partial information in their answers, or responded only to a limited number of questions, while four replied that the questionnaire was not relevant due to there being no Roma and Sinti population within the territory of the respective participating State. States providing limited information stated that this was due to them having either a very small Roma population or insufficient data regarding their participation in public and political life.

The information submitted by participating States has been supplemented with information from other sources, including OSCE field operations.

The questionnaire was also shared with all civil society from ODIHR's database of Roma and Sinti organizations. ODIHR received 12 replies from civil society organizations.³⁷ In order to gather information from Roma civil society organizations, ODIHR organized a consultation workshop in Warsaw, in June 2018, to discuss the preliminary findings and conclusions of the draft status report. Input and recommendations of the meeting have been used in the preparation of this report.

ODIHR has also gathered and processed alternative relevant sources of information published by other inter-governmental and international organizations, civil society and academia during the reporting period.

The Status Report is constructed primarily from the information provided to ODIHR by OSCE participating States and is consistent with the structure and logic of the questionnaire. Supplementary information from Roma civil society organizations and other third-party sources is added, where appropriate, throughout the report.

Context

The extent of social exclusion, material deprivation, racism and discrimination faced by Roma and Sinti in Europe has been thoroughly documented. The most recent report by the EU's Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) confirmed that the situation of Roma in the European Union in 2017 has not changed significantly compared to 2016:

"The overwhelming majority of Roma remain at risk of poverty (80% in 2016). Early childhood education enrolment increased to 53 per cent on average, but dropping out early from education remains a problem, particularly among Roma girls. The situation for young Roma, and particularly young Roma women, worsened; the proportion of young Roma not in education, employment or training (NEET) increased from 56 per cent to 63 per cent, on average."³⁸

The same report also highlighted that anti-Roma racism and discrimination continued to pose a grave challenge to Roma inclusion, despite the existence of legal and policy frameworks in EU countries and other national administrations to eliminate racially-motivated crime and harassment.

As was noted in the 2013 Status Report, the EU is not only playing the lead role in creating the normative framework for Roma-related policy, but has also become a major donor to Roma programmes within the EU and in candidate countries. In this reporting period, the European Commission became more explicit about the need to fight discrimination and anti-Roma racism. In its 2016 communication on the EU Roma Framework, the European Commission reported that it has "stepped up action" to fight discrimination, segregation and anti-Gypsyism, hate speech and hate crime. The European Commission also highlighted the failure of member states to address the most important housing challenges, by looking at situations of segregation and by preventing forced evictions. The European Commission pledged to investigate discrimination in housing and schools in a number of other countries, and stated that it will take

³⁶ Forty states responded in 2013, and 19 of the then-56 participating States provided substantive input for the first report in 2008. For the current 2018 report, responses were received from: Albania, Andorra, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom.

³⁷ ODIHR received replies from the following civil society organizations: Public Association "POROJAN", Roma Education Fund, Landsorgansasjonen for Romanifolket, the Serbian legal aid organization PRAXIS, Public Foundation "International Protection Centre", Romano Centro, Roma Women Rights Center Albania, Slovo 21, E-Romnja, Roma Women Rights Center Serbia, Ágnes Oszolykán (independent expert), Public Policy Advocacy Centre.

³⁸ "Fundamental Rights Report 2018", FRA, 2018, p. 99, <<http://fra.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/annual-reports/fundamental-rights-2018#roma>>.

action to ensure the Racial Equality Directive is properly transposed and enforced.³⁹ Three member states are currently facing legal proceedings due to school segregation.

During implementation of the framework, the European Commission expressed concerns that “no real improvements can be seen on the ground”.⁴⁰ It called on EU member states to demonstrate greater political will to combat discrimination. It also described rising anti-Gypsyism as “a specific form of racism” and urged public authorities to distance themselves from racist and xenophobic discourse that targets Roma.⁴¹ On anti-Roma hate speech and hate crime, the European Commission stated that the failure of authorities to take action effectively amounted to complicity: “it is important to realize that a reluctance to act also contributes to the acceptance of intolerance in societies.”⁴² The European Commission also declared its intent to develop a post-2020 strategic approach to Roma inclusion.

The 2018 synthesis report from the Roma Civil Monitor project provides a succinct snapshot of the current state of Roma and Sinti participation in public and political life. The report, which focuses on five Central and Southern European countries, finds that Roma remain under-represented in parliaments and that their participation in national elections is significantly lower than country averages. Researchers found that “Roma ethnic political parties do not attract Roma voters [and that] representation of Roma depends on mainstream political parties to place Roma candidates in high positions on their lists.” However, Roma seem to be more successful in local elections, particularly in municipalities with high proportions of Roma people. According to the report, vote-buying continues to be a problem across the five countries, but is not systematically monitored, and in some countries “instances of local governments and mayors controlling voting decisions made by Roma through

regulating their access to public services (e.g., active labour market measures)” have been recorded.⁴³

Participants at an event organized by ODIHR with the support of the United States Helsinki Commission in March 2017 concluded that voting, as well as standing as candidates is crucial for Roma communities to counter anti-Roma rhetoric, hate crimes and racism.⁴⁴ During discussions as part of another consultation meeting in October 2016, participants also pointed out that, despite the fact that there are an increasing number of educated Roma and Sinti, mainstream parties continue to ignore them when putting forward lists of candidates in elections.⁴⁵

International standards for the participation of minorities

The right to participate in political and public affairs is an integral element of a democratic society. It is important for the advancement of democratic governance, the rule of law, social inclusion and economic development. It is inextricably linked to the full realization of all human rights, and political participation is a crucial means of empowerment for groups and individuals to overcome marginalization and combat discrimination. The OSCE, Council of Europe, EU and the United Nations (UN) all have standards that apply to minorities and seek to protect their right to participate in society. These are outlined below.

OSCE commitments

The effective participation of national minorities, including Roma and Sinti, in public and political life has been recognized as a priority in a number of OSCE Ministerial Council decisions. Moreover, the OSCE has a clear mandate to support and enhance the political participation of Roma and Sinti, including Roma and Sinti women

39 “Assessing the implementation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies and the Council Recommendation on effective Roma integration measures in the Member States – 2016”, European Commission, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, The Council, The European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, COM(2016) 424 final, Brussels, 27 June 2016, <<https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/1/2016/EN/1-2016-424-EN-F1-1.PDF>>, (hereafter, “Assessing the implementation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies and the Council Recommendation on effective Roma integration measures in the Member States – 2016”).

40 *Ibid.*

41 *Ibid.*

42 Bernard Rorke, “EU Roma Framework: European Commission Puts Fighting Racism First”, ERRC News, <<http://www.errc.org/news/eu-roma-framework-european-commission-puts-fighting-racism-first>>.

43 “Roma civil monitor pilot project: A synthesis report on implementation of national Roma integration strategies in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia”, European Commission, Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, 2018, <<https://cps.ceu.edu/sites/cps.ceu.edu/files/attachment/basicpage/3034/rcm-civil-society-monitoring-report-1-synthesis-cluster-1-2017-eprint-fin.pdf>>.

44 “Effective participation of Roma and Sinti fundamental for successful inclusion, conclude participants in ODIHR workshop in Brussels”, OSCE/ODIHR, 28 March 2017, <<https://www.osce.org/odihr/308361>>.

45 “Full participation of Roma and Sinti in electoral processes essential to their successful inclusion, say participants at OSCE/ODIHR meeting in Warsaw”, OSCE/ODIHR, 28 October 2016, <<https://www.osce.org/odihr/277806>>.

and youth, as underlined in the Action Plan.⁴⁶ This mandate has been reaffirmed in three subsequent Ministerial Council Decisions.⁴⁷

The OSCE Action Plan on Roma and Sinti stresses that:

“Participating States are encouraged to take into account the following basic conditions for ensuring effective participation by Roma and Sinti people in public and political life:

Early involvement:

Any initiative relating to Roma and Sinti people should involve them at the earliest stages in the development, implementation and evaluation phases;

Inclusiveness:

Roma and Sinti people should be included in formal consultative processes, and the effectiveness of mechanisms established for their participation in shaping major policy initiatives should be ensured by involving them in a broadly representative process;

Transparency:

Programmes and proposals should be circulated sufficiently in advance of decision-making deadlines to allow for meaningful analysis and input from representatives of Roma and Sinti communities;

Meaningful participation by Roma and Sinti people at all levels of government:

Participation by Roma and Sinti people in local government is essential for the effective implementation of policies affecting them;

Ownership:

Roma and Sinti people play an essential and irreplaceable role in ensuring that the right to participate in the political process is observed in practice.”

- Participate in political life;
- Organize election-awareness campaigns to increase participation of Roma elections;
- Facilitate dialogue between political leaders and Roma groups at local and national levels;
- Ensure Roma voters can make free and informed choices in elections; and
- Take measures to guarantee women have equal voting rights, including by prohibiting so-called “family voting”.⁴⁸
- Organize training for and by Roma NGOs on democratic processes and participation;
- Develop and implement voter education and registration programmes;
- Monitor and assess participation of Roma and Sinti in elections; and
- Continue the practice of including experts on Roma and Sinti in OSCE election observation missions.⁴⁹

Ministerial Council Decision No. 6/08 calls on participating States to engage Roma and Sinti in policy-making and promote effective participation among them in public and political life.⁵⁰

Ministerial Council Decision No. 8/09 calls on participating States to enhance the participation of Roma and Sinti in policy-making processes affecting them.⁵¹

Ministerial Council Decision 4/13 calls on participating States to enhance the participation of Roma and Sinti in policy-making processes affecting them, including by fostering their political participation and supporting voter education among Roma and Sinti.⁵² It also acknowledges the particular situation of Roma and Sinti women and calls on participating States to take active measures to support the empowerment of Roma and Sinti women, including by promoting their participation in public and political life.⁵³

In the 2011 OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Resolution on Promoting Policies in Favour of the Roma Population, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly asked that Roma have more prominence, stating that:

“(a) More spaces for participation are needed;

The OSCE Action Plan, Chapter VI. Enhancing participation in public and political life

The Action Plan calls on participating States to ensure that Roma and Sinti people have all the necessary documents to enable them to:

⁴⁶ The OSCE Action Plan, *op. cit.*, note 2.

⁴⁷ OSCE Ministerial Council Decision No. 6/08; OSCE Ministerial Council Decision No. 8/09; OSCE Ministerial Council Decision No. 4/13, *op. cit.*, note 4.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, paras. 87, 91, 92, 93, 94.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, paras. 100, 101, 105.

⁵⁰ OSCE Ministerial Council Decision No. 6/08, *op. cit.*, note 4, para. 7.

⁵¹ OSCE Ministerial Council Decision No. 8/09, *op. cit.*, note 4, para. 4.

⁵² OSCE Ministerial Council Decision No. 4/13, *op. cit.*, note 4, para. 2.7.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, para 4.2.

(b) More public and political presence is required of the Roma;

(c) Better self-organization;

(d) Priority should be given to women, children and young people.”⁵⁴

The OSCE’s Lund Recommendations,⁵⁵ which aim to facilitate the inclusion of minorities within states, called on governments to establish specific arrangements and establish electoral mechanisms to facilitate minority representation. These include:

- Proportional representation systems;
- Forms of preferential voting;
- Lower numerical thresholds for representation in the legislature;
- Single-member districts where minorities are territorially concentrated; and
- Ensuring that the boundaries of electoral districts facilitate the equitable representation of minority communities.

Council of Europe standards and commitments

Article 15 of the “Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities”, adopted in 1995, stipulates that state parties “shall create the conditions necessary for the effective participation of persons belonging to national minorities in cultural, social and economic life and in public affairs, in particular those affecting them”.⁵⁶ In 2008, the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention stated that “persons belonging to national minorities can be involved in public affairs through a number of arrangements, such as representation in elected bodies and public administration at all levels, consultative mechanisms or cultural autonomy arrangements. Particular attention should be paid to the balanced

representation of women and men belonging to national minorities”.⁵⁷

The 2010 Strasbourg Declaration on Roma recommends promoting effective participation of Roma in social, political and civic life.⁵⁸ The Ad Hoc Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues (CAHROM) published two thematic reports in relation to the participation of Roma and Travellers in advisory and decision-making bodies, as well as in political life, with a focus on women and youth, following a CAHROM thematic visit to Ireland in February 2016 and another one to Greece.⁵⁹

EU standards

The EU Framework for NRIS up to 2020 encouraged all member states to design and implement national integration strategies to improve the social and economic situation of Roma.⁶⁰ The principle of participation was emphasized through the need to ensure “active dialogue” and participation of Roma in the processes and priority areas of employment, education, housing and healthcare.⁶¹

Recognizing the socio-economic deprivation experienced by Roma throughout Europe and acknowledging that “non-discrimination alone is not sufficient to combat the social exclusion of Roma”, the European Commission asked the institutions of the EU to endorse the framework. The European Commission stated that the framework “is a means to complement and reinforce the EU’s equality legislation and policies by addressing, at national, regional and local levels, but also through dialogue with and participation of the Roma, the specific needs of Roma regarding equal access to employment, education, housing and healthcare.”⁶²

54 “Resolution on Promoting Policies in Favour of the Roma Population”, OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, 20 July 2011, <<https://www.osce.org/odihr/81072>>.

55 “The Lund Recommendations on the Effective Participation of National Minorities in Public Life”, *op. cit.*, note 5.

56 “Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and Explanatory Report”, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, February 1995, p. 6, <<https://rm.coe.int/16800c10cf>>.

57 “Commentary on the Effective Participation of Persons Belonging to National Minorities in Cultural, Social and Economic Life and in Public Affairs”, Council of Europe, Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, 27 February 2008, p. 6, <<https://rm.coe.int/16800bc7e8>>.

58 “Council of Europe High Level Meeting on Roma, “The Strasbourg Declaration on Roma”, Strasbourg, 20 October 2010, <https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=09000016805ce1de>.

59 “Ad hoc Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues (CAHROM)”, Council of Europe website, <[https://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/cahrom?desktop=true#%2218195071%22:\[\]>](https://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/cahrom?desktop=true#%2218195071%22:[]>)>.

60 “An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020”, *op. cit.*, note 7.

61 *Ibid.*

62 *Ibid.*

Subsequent communications, outlined below, have emphasized that anti-Roma racism is, in fact, a root cause of exclusion, and have stressed the need for meaningful Roma participation in all policy processes. However, those communications have not specifically mentioned the importance of political participation.

In its 2015 progress update, the European Commission noted the “especially urgent” need to strengthen the capacity of Roma civil organizations to “ensure their transparent involvement in local-level implementation and monitoring”, to reinforce partnerships and Roma participation, and support more inclusive co-ordination structures.⁶³

The Council of the European Union has stated that racism against Roma is “a root cause of their social exclusion and discrimination”. The Council called on EU member states to “promote the empowerment, active involvement and necessary participation of Roma, in particular of Roma youth, at all levels of policy development, decision making, and policy implementation, with particular focus on employment opportunities as well as education.” EU member states were encouraged to take steps “to empower young Roma by promoting the mechanisms of participatory policymaking so as to give them a concrete say in policy fields directly impacting them”; and to facilitate “a proactive and participatory approach to integration through the meaningful involvement of relevant stakeholders, including Roma women.”⁶⁴

The 1993 Copenhagen criteria, which constitute the conditions for EU membership, include specific requirements concerning human rights and respect for and protection of minorities, stable democratic institutions and the rule of law.⁶⁵ In 2016, the European Commission affirmed that its enlargement policy remained focused on the “fundamentals first” principle, which prioritizes ensuring respect for the rule of law and fundamental rights,

with specific mention of the “need to better protect minorities, in particular Roma”.⁶⁶ The European Commission has also called “credible enlargement” the key driver of political, economic and social transformation in the Western Balkans, where there is a concentration of EU candidate countries.

UN standards

International law provides the normative basis for political participation of national and ethnic minorities. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that the “will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of the government” (Article 21(3)).⁶⁷

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) guarantees various rights and freedoms to exercise political and civil rights without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status (Articles 18-26).⁶⁸ In particular, Article 25 of the ICCPR defines the obligations of states parties in connection with the right to take part in the conduct of public affairs, vote and be elected at genuine periodic elections, and have equal access to public service positions. It is complemented by the interpretative General Comment No. 25, which stresses that the rights provided under Article 25 lie “at the core of democratic government based on the consent of the people and in conformity with the principles of the Covenant”.⁶⁹

Article 2 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) condemns racial discrimination and encourages states to support “integrationist multiracial organizations and movements and other means of elimination barriers between races and to discourage anything which tends to strengthen racial division.”⁷⁰

63 “Report on the implementation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies 2015”, European Commission, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and The Committee of the Regions, COM(2015) 299 final, Brussels, 17 June 2015, <<http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/1/2015/EN/1-2015-299-EN-F1-1.PDF>>.

64 “Accelerating the Process of Roma Integration – Council Conclusions (8 December 2016)”, Council of the EU, <<http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-15406-2016-INIT/en/pdf>>.

65 Presidency Conclusions, Copenhagen European Council, 21–22 June 1993, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/enlargement/ec/pdf/cop_en.pdf>.

66 “2016 Communication on EU Enlargement”, European Commission, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and The Committee of the Regions, COM(2016) 715 final, Brussels, 9 November 2016, <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20161109_strategy_paper_en.pdf>.

67 The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, UN, General Assembly resolution 217 A, 10 December 1948, <<http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>>.

68 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, UN, Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI) of 16 December 1966, entry into force 23 March 1976, in accordance with Article 49, <<https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/CCPR.aspx>>.

69 General Comment No. 25 (57), UN, Human Rights Committee, CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.7, 27 August 1996, <https://tinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2fC%2f21%2fRev.1%2fAdd.7&Lang=en>.

70 International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, UN, Adopted and opened for signature and ratification by General Assembly resolution 2106 (XX) of 21 December 1965, entry into force 4 January 1969, in accordance with Article 19, <<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CERD.aspx>>.

Article 2 (e) and Article 5 of the CERD guarantee the right of everyone to participate in elections, to vote, and to stand for election as well as to exercise other civil and political rights.

Article 2 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious or Linguistic Minorities guarantees that “persons belonging to minorities have the right to participate effectively in cultural, religious, social, economic and public life”.⁷¹

⁷¹ Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, UN, adopted by General Assembly resolution 47/135 of 18 December 1992, <<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/Minorities.aspx>>.

PART II

Implementation of the Action Plan

1 Participation of Roma and Sinti in electoral processes

1.1 Challenges faced by Roma and Sinti as voters and candidates in electoral processes

During the review period, OSCE/ODIHR election observations were one of the main ways of assessing the participation of Roma and Sinti as voters and candidates in elections. The findings of election observation reports during the review period were complemented by analyses and assessments undertaken by Roma and non-Roma civil society organizations. The information included in election observation reports, as well as information provided by OSCE participating States and civil society organizations reveal that Roma and Sinti continue to face similar obstacles to those identified in the previous review period. These issues range from vote-buying and vote-manipulation, family voting, illiteracy, weak civic education and economic and social exclusion, to disinterest and discrimination on the part of political parties, and the use of racist and anti-Roma rhetoric by populist politicians.

In some OSCE participating States, individuals representing Roma and Sinti and other national minorities, have faced legal and administrative barriers to registering as candidates in elections. While the lack of civil registration and identification documents remains a significant obstacle for many Roma communities to participate as voters and candidates in elections, progress on the issue of civil registration has been reported in a number of OSCE participating States. This has been done through legislative reform, simplification of procedures, community outreach and engagement (including the use of mobile units that register individuals), exemptions from registration fees and improved co-operation between NGOs, international agencies and governments. For instance, in April 2018 the government of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia announced a public call for unregistered persons to apply by 30 September 2018

for registration, regardless of whether or not they possessed the documentation necessary to register according to standard procedures. Authorities endeavor to register applicants in a distinct database, issue temporary identification numbers, which would enable them to receive health and social services until registered within the standard system. Eventually, the individuals receive a permanent identification number and regulated status, giving them access to all legal rights and services afforded to registered residents.⁷² All of these developments have reduced the risk of statelessness and effectively enfranchised many Roma.

Broader obstacles to political participation were identified by participants of ODIHR's consultation workshop organized on 5 and 6 June 2018, in Warsaw.⁷³ While a few participants acknowledged some positive changes in participating States, most pointed out that, just as in the previous reporting period, Roma and Sinti are still very much under-represented and barely involved at all in politics. Participants also stressed the role of broader civil society in addressing the challenges of Roma exclusion from public participation. They called for continued support for capacity-building and training to empower Roma and Sinti, including women and youth, to become effective politicians, advocates and activists on Roma and Sinti issues. Further, participants stressed that Roma and Sinti still fear national authorities and have little trust in justice systems. The combination of fear and mistrust among Roma and Sinti remains one of the main impediments to their full and effective participation in public and political life.⁷⁴

Another participant emphasized the urgency of restoring faith and trust in the institutions that have failed Roma to date, and highlighted that civil society organizations need to be able to work within an environment free from harassment by state or non-state actors. Participants also emphasized the necessity of building the capacity of Roma youth and women so they are better

72 Joint Submission to the Human Rights Council at the 32nd Session of the Universal Periodic Review Macedonia, Macedonian Young Lawyers Association, Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion, European Network on Statelessness, European Roma Rights Centre & Minority Rights Group International, 12 July 2018, p. 9, <http://www.institutesi.org/UPR32_Macedonia.pdf>.

73 Comments made by participants at Consultation workshop – Third Status Report on the implementation of the OSCE Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area, Warsaw, 5-6 June 2018, (hereafter, Comments made by participants at Consultation workshop 5-6 June 2018).

74 *Ibid.*

able to represent their communities.⁷⁵ At the same workshop, participants noted that increased representation does not necessarily lead to substantive change. Hungary was cited as one example where Roma are represented at all levels, but where their presence has not translated into decision-making power, and marginalization persists.⁷⁶

Voter registration and identification documents

The lack of identification documents is often a significant factor for the social exclusion of Roma and Sinti in a number of participating States. Among other factors, this often translates into being the main trigger for their practical exclusion from public and political participation processes, such as participating in electoral processes as voters and candidates.

In **Albania**, the Roma community still faces barriers to registering as voters. Barriers include lack of official documentation such as identification and civil registration documents and inadequate residency status. A recent ODIHR EOM noted that, “voters from the Roma community still face practical barriers in terms of voter registration due to a variety of factors, including lack of official documentation and less stable residency.”⁷⁷ In the 2017 parliamentary elections, a number of first-time voters were not recorded in the civil registry.⁷⁸ Feedback during an ODIHR training event in Albania in 2017 revealed that a considerable number of Roma individuals were lacking identification documents, including women and youth who had just turned 18 years old and were therefore eligible to vote. Obstacles ranged from not being able to pay for legal services to inadequate provision of free legal aid, or lack of birth certificates and/or related documents.⁷⁹ In 2015, the Albanian General Directorate of Civil Status launched a campaign in collaboration with civil society organizations to identify unregistered persons (in particular, children) and assist them

in registering across 11 regions of the country. Approximately half of the 300 unregistered Roma children identified during the campaign were registered. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the NGO Tirana Legal Aid Society have worked together to ensure that hundreds of Roma children born in Greece have received consular support to enable them to be registered.⁸⁰ In 2017, a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) project addressing statelessness and supporting civil registration facilitated the documentation of over 1,000 Roma and Egyptians in Albania.⁸¹ Despite the positive developments reported by Albania’s Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, the *Roma Belong* report by the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC), drawing on field research carried out in 2016-2017 in Albania, indicates that “discriminatory attitudes among officials and rigid bureaucratic systems play a role.”⁸² Nevertheless, some progress was noted following amendments to the legislation related to the registration procedure in the civil registry.

In its 2016 Report on **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) of the Council of Europe noted that “the fact that many Roma still lack identity documents and birth certificates” is an “overarching problem.”⁸³ UNHCR and civil society have set up outreach programmes in Roma communities to encourage birth registration, and national legislation has been amended to ensure unlimited validity of documents such as birth certificates and to establish a more proactive role for social welfare centres and central civil registries across the different entities of the country.⁸⁴ The country’s new 2015 Registration Law requires residents to provide the address of a place of residence that is registered in their name. Roma organizations expressed concern that many Roma may not be able to fulfill this requirement due to their irregular housing situation, which, in turn, could prevent them from renewing their identity cards or registering the births of

75 *Ibid.*

76 *Ibid.*

77 “Republic of Albania, Parliamentary Elections 25 June 2017, ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report”, ODIHR, Warsaw, 28 September 2017, p. 18, <<http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/albania/346661?download=true>>, (hereafter, Republic of Albania Parliamentary Elections 2017).

78 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the OSCE Presence in Albania, received 7 February 2018.

79 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Civil Society Organization “Roma Women Rights Center”, received 17 April 2018.

80 *Roma Belong - Statelessness, Discrimination and Marginalisation of Roma in the Western Balkans and Ukraine*, (ERRC, the Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion (ISI) and the European Network on Statelessness (ENS): Budapest, 2017), p. 22, <http://www.errc.org/uploads/upload_en/file/roma-belong.pdf>, (hereafter, *Roma Belong* 2017).

81 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Directorate International Organizations, Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Republic of Albania, received 7 February 2018.

82 *Roma Belong - Statelessness, Discrimination and Marginalisation of Roma in Albania*, (ERRC, ISI, ENS: Budapest, 2018), p. 7, <http://www.errc.org/uploads/upload_en/file/4993_file3_roma-belong-albania-english-language.pdf>.

83 “ECRI Report on Bosnia and Herzegovina (fifth monitoring cycle)”, Council of Europe, European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, adopted on 6 December 2016, published on 28 February 2017, p. 26, <https://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/Country-by-country/Bosnia_Herzegovina/BIH-CbC-V-2017-002-ENG.pdf>, (hereafter, “ECRI Report on Bosnia and Herzegovina (fifth monitoring cycle)”).

84 *Roma Belong* 2017, *op. cit.*, note 80, p. 15.

their children. ECRI recommended that the authorities apply the law “in a way that does not impede access to identity documents and birth certificates for Roma.”⁸⁵

In **Bulgaria**, the legislation regarding civil registration was amended in May 2012. The amendments made the application procedure for civil registration documents more flexible, allowing individuals to prove their place of residence by presenting not only ownership or rental documentation, but also service provision contracts, such as electricity or water bills. The law also provides that an individual does not have these supporting documents, a commission may be set up by local authorities to facilitate the registration process.⁸⁶ However, the Roma Civil Monitor reports that some Roma cannot obtain identity cards because they do not have a legal, permanent address. The report suggests that socially excluded and economically deprived Roma are “particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of the enacted provisions.”⁸⁷

Regarding **Georgia**, in 2016 the Council of Europe Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) expressed concerns that lack of documentation and other issues linked to obtaining legal status are still affecting Roma.⁸⁸ Government authorities, in response to the ODIHR questionnaire, stated that most Roma are registered with appropriate legal status and that a process of comprehensively registering the Roma population is in progress.⁸⁹

In **Greece**, most of the Roma population are recorded in municipal registries and consequently in voter lists, yet, a small percentage lack identification documents, either due to illiteracy or lack of financial resources to cover the fine for not having registered. Governmental authorities have sought to address the issue by setting up an inter-ministerial working group on the civil and municipal status of Roma. In addition, the prosecutor of the

Supreme Court issued a circular requiring competent authorities and courts to provide legal aid to the Roma population in relation to the lack of identity documents.⁹⁰

In **Hungary**, the Elections Act provides an option for national minorities to vote on a national minority list. In order to take part in the electoral process, citizens must register as national minority voters and choose between voting on the national minority list proposed by the national minority self-government or the national list. As highlighted in a 2014 ODIHR Limited Election Observation Mission (LEOM) report,⁹¹ national minority groups have been dissatisfied with the fact that they must choose between these two lists. Some interlocutors of the LEOM pointed to “instances of manipulation of the national minority voter registration process, especially within the Roma community, whose vulnerability in some cases may have been exploited by political actors.”⁹²

ECRI’s 2016 Report on **Italy**, recognized the progress that has been made in tackling the issue of statelessness among Roma, comparing to the situation in 2011. At the same time, the ECRI raised concerns about the issue of *de facto* statelessness of many Roma men, women and children in Italy who come from the countries of the former Yugoslavia. In response to the ODIHR questionnaire, the Italian authorities stated that a working group has been set up within the Ministry of the Interior to address the issue of statelessness, specifically focusing on the legal status of Roma from the former Yugoslavia and aiming at the elaboration of possible administrative procedures to overcome “*de facto* statelessness.”⁹³ However, the response to the questionnaire did not provide any information about the progress made by this working group in resolving the issue.

In **Montenegro**, government authorities have taken active steps to solve the legal status of Roma internally

85 “ECRI Report on Bosnia and Herzegovina (fifth monitoring cycle)”, *op. cit.*, note 83, pp. 25-26.

86 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Mission of Bulgaria to the UN, the OSCE and other International Organizations in Vienna, Republic of Bulgaria, received 9 February 2018.

87 “Civil society monitoring report on implementation of the national Roma integration strategies in Bulgaria”, Roma Civil Monitor, European Commission, Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, March 2018, p. 33, <<https://cps.ceu.edu/sites/cps.ceu.edu/files/attachment/basicpage/3034/rcm-civil-society-monitoring-report-1-bulgaria-2017-eprint-fin.pdf>>, (hereafter, Roma Civil Monitor Bulgaria).

88 “Second Opinion on Georgia adopted on 17 June 2015”, Council of Europe, Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, Strasbourg, 11 January 2016, <<https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=0900001680590fb5>>.

89 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Mission of Georgia to the OSCE, received 2 February 2018.

90 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Special Secretariat on Roma Social Inclusion, Ministry of Labour, Social Insurance and Social Solidarity, Greece, received 15 February 2018.

91 “Hungary Parliamentary Elections 6 April 2014, OSCE/ODIHR Limited Election Observation Mission Final Report”, OSCE/ODIHR, Warsaw, 11 July 2014, pp. 22-23, <<http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/hungary/121098?download=true>>, (hereafter, Hungary Parliamentary Elections 2014).

92 *Ibid.*

93 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Delegation of Italy to the OSCE, received 29 January 2018.

displaced persons (IDPs) from Kosovo* and assist them in obtaining personal identity documents.⁹⁴ Activities aimed at addressing outstanding issues in relation to registering Roma and granting them personal documents were implemented in line with Montenegro's national legislation on regulating the different status of different types of residents and the Memoranda of Co-operation between Montenegro and neighbouring countries. Montenegro helps Roma to obtain documents from their countries of origin (if they exist), and provides administrative assistance and processes applications.⁹⁵

In **Romania**, the Ministry of Internal Affairs increased the number of civil status certificates and identification documents issued to Romanian citizens of Roma ethnicity during the review period.⁹⁶ A national programme was adopted in 2015 aimed at legalizing the informal settlements of communities in a state of vulnerability. A programme addressing issues related to identity and property documents in Roma communities has also been implemented by the National Agency for Roma — a specialized governmental structure. This was implemented in 26 urban and rural localities in 2014 and 2015. No further information was provided regarding the outcomes of the programme. However, the Roma Civil Monitor report suggested that access to identification documents remains a problem, and that “according to information provided by the National Contact Point for Roma, there have been some consultations for promoting legislative changes that would allow persons without addresses to receive normal identification”.⁹⁷ The results of this consultation process are still not clear and further information is not available at this point in time.

In **Serbia**, amendments made to legislation regarding the registration of births and co-operation between the Protector of Citizens (Ombudsman) and line ministries, with the support of UNHCR, resolved issues

regarding personal identity documents for over 25,000 Roma during the past five years. Serbia has organized training sessions for the staff of competent state bodies and for Roma co-ordinators, healthcare mediators, educational assistants and civil society representatives to help them identify and resolve issues faced by unregistered individuals. Visits to informal settlements where Roma reside have been organized, as have media campaigns and roundtable events with stakeholders, and these have raised awareness.⁹⁸ Both administrative and court procedures for birth registration were provided free of charge, whereas free legal assistance to Roma in the procedures of birth registration before the administrative bodies or courts was provided by civil society organizations.⁹⁹ In April 2016, simplified procedures were introduced regarding registration of births, citizenship and residence, as well as registration for healthcare services in the implementation of the project “Baby, welcome to the world”,¹⁰⁰ nevertheless, according to information from the civil society organization Praxis, this is not a legally binding procedure.¹⁰¹ Moreover, despite progress, there were still systemic legal obstacles that prevented birth registration of every child immediately after birth in cases when parents do not possess an identity card or a birth certificate.¹⁰²

In **Turkey**, the Ministry of Interior, acting upon information received through civil society reports about stateless Roma, instructed the governorates of several provinces to create commissions for determining the citizenship status of these individuals, with a view to including them in the citizenship register. The governorates of two provinces stated in the questionnaire that 38 Roma were registered in the citizenship register, and 19 cases are still under consideration.¹⁰³

In **Ukraine**, there have been several reports, including by ODIHR EOMs, that Roma and Sinti have faced

94 * There is no consensus among OSCE participating States on the status of Kosovo and, as such, the Organization does not have a position on this issue. All references to Kosovo institutions/leaders refer to the Provisional Institutions of Self Government. Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Mission of Montenegro to the UN, OSCE and other International Organizations in Vienna, received 6 March 2018.

95 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the OSCE Field Operation to Montenegro, received 8 February 2018.

96 According to the response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Mission of Romania to the International Organizations in Vienna, received 7 February 2018, in the period between 2013-2017, in total 179,007 identity documents and 42,560 civil status certificates were issued to Roma citizens. For instance, in 2013, 27,998 identity documents were issued to Roma, and this number increased to 38,276 identity documents in 2017.

97 “Civil society monitoring report on implementation of the national Roma integration strategies in Romania”, Roma Civil Monitor, European Commission, Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, March 2018, p. 39, <<https://cps.ceu.edu/sites/cps.ceu.edu/files/attachment/basicpage/3034/rcm-civil-society-monitoring-report-1-romania-2017-eprint-fin.pdf>>, (hereafter, Roma Civil Monitor Romania).

98 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Serbia to the OSCE and other International Organizations – Vienna, received 12 February 2018.

99 Input provided by the Civil Society Organization “Praxis”, received 19 November 2018.

100 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Serbia to the OSCE and other International Organizations – Vienna, received 12 February 2018.

101 Input provided by the Civil Society Organization “Praxis”, received 19 November 2018.

102 *Ibid.*

103 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Mission of Turkey to the OSCE, received 22 March 2017.

“excessive and contradictory bureaucracy when attempting to obtain identity documents, due to legal and procedural deficiencies”. Interlocutors also informed ODIHR that “at least half of their community was excluded from the election process, mainly due to lack of identity and registration documents”.¹⁰⁴ More recent information refer to the fact that, in some communities, 30 to 40 per cent of Roma lack identification documents, leaving them unable to vote.¹⁰⁵ In the same report, ECRI recorded some improvements: A data collection system has been established by Ukrainian authorities for monitoring how many Roma have acquired personal identity documents. According to this system, 2,143 internal identity documents were issued to Roma in 2015. Ukraine plans to simplify procedures for individuals to register themselves. A promising pilot project was recently initiated in Odessa, whereby a commission of one person each from the State Migration Service, the Department of Justice and a registered Roma NGO meet every three months to decide on applications. New rules also exist for complex cases and, as a last resort, court proceedings can still be used to prove identity.¹⁰⁶

ECRI further stated that there has been progress in addressing issues related to accessing personal identity documents. At same time, it noted that state agents sometimes request additional documents not foreseen in the current regulations. Roma confirmed that even those with all the required documents often find themselves in situations where they still have to prove their identity in court. Since court fees are very high and identification documents are essential, ECRI strongly recommended that court fees should be waived for those whose only remaining option is to go to a court of law to prove their identity for the purpose of obtaining personal identification documents.¹⁰⁷

In the **United Kingdom**, some Roma and Sinti residents originating from other European countries and who have a poor level of English might find the registration form difficult to understand or complete. Some of the “Gypsy” and Traveller communities who still live a nomadic lifestyle may also have difficulties accessing

the form, as the local council may not be able to contact households without permanent registered addresses. The forms are designed to be as simple as possible and are posted by local councils to each registered address, and are also made available online. Electoral registration officers are ready to support individuals with the registration process.¹⁰⁸

The *Roma Belong* report by the ERRC acknowledges that considerable progress has been made in the fields of birth registration and documentation. Progress has also been made in reducing the risk of statelessness among Roma through, legislative reform, simplification of registration procedures, community outreach and engagement, and co-operation between NGOs, international agencies and governments.¹⁰⁹

Notwithstanding progress made to date, the findings of the *Roma Belong* report indicate that solutions have at times been put forward and pursued by the responsible authorities. The report suggests that such approaches have not succeeded in fully mitigating the risk of statelessness among Roma. The impact of the lack of access to civil registration and identification documents on Roma remains significant, is often cyclical and is passed on from generation to generation.¹¹⁰ This compounds the exclusion and marginalization faced by affected Roma, and prevents them from participating in the public life of the state as citizens.

Election-related challenges

In the 2013 Status Report, ODIHR noted that OSCE/ODIHR election observation reports in the previous period indicated that Roma candidates and voters faced problems ranging from “incidents of direct pressure, threats, or so-called ‘controlled voting’, to vote-buying, lack of education and illiteracy, as well as other difficulties and obstacles impeding Roma participation.”¹¹¹ Many of these problems have persisted in some participating States during the current review period.

General obstacles to the participation of Roma and Sinti as electoral candidates and voters range from family voting, to restrictions on the use of minority

104 “Ukraine Early Presidential Election 25 May 2014, OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report”, OSCE/ODIHR, Warsaw, 30 June 2014, pp. 21-22, <<http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/ukraine/120549?download=true>>.

105 “ECRI Report on Ukraine (fifth monitoring cycle)”, Council of Europe, ECRI, adopted on 20 June 2017, published on 19 September 2017, <<http://rm.coe.int/fifth-report-on-ukraine/16808b5ca8>>, (hereafter “ECRI Report on Ukraine (fifth monitoring cycle)”).

106 *Ibid.*, p. 23.

107 *Ibid.*

108 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, United Kingdom, received 8 February 2018.

109 *Roma Belong* 2017, *op. cit.*, note 80.

110 *Ibid.*, p. 53.

111 Status Report 2013, *op. cit.*, note 8, p. 51.

languages¹¹² and disinterest/discrimination by mainstream politicians/parties.

Vote-buying

In a number of participating States, vote-buying practices targeting disadvantaged areas and groups, including Roma, have been reported. Such practices can distort informed decision making and weigh down the importance of their voting, as well as the accountability of candidates and elected officials for responding to the needs of Roma and Sinti constituencies.

In **Albania**, several interlocutors encountered by OSCE/ODIHR election observers in 2017 “acknowledged that attempts at vote buying in economically disadvantaged areas remains a problem. Though not unique to these communities, this issue affects in particular the Roma and Egyptian national minorities”.¹¹³ In an earlier OSCE/ODIHR EOM report, on the 2015 local elections, interlocutors reported that “the Roma community in particular, and to some extent the Egyptian community, remain vulnerable to vote-buying practices. In some cases Roma and Egyptian voters reported having witnessed the distribution of fuel vouchers or cash by persons known to be affiliated with the two largest political parties”.¹¹⁴ Similar allegations of vote-buying involving the Roma and Egyptian populations surfaced in the ODIHR final report regarding the 2013 parliamentary elections.¹¹⁵

Reports of vote-buying practices in **Bulgaria** feature in several ODIHR EOM reports during the reporting period. The 2013 ODIHR EOM final report referred to the Roma population as the group most vulnerable to potential electoral malfeasance, even though “the issue of vote-buying extended across ethnic groups and was increasingly tolerated by the society”.¹¹⁶ A 2014 EOM report

“raised concern that the public debate on vote-buying tends to portray Roma as the source of the problem, thus enforcing intolerance and stereotypical perception of Roma”.¹¹⁷ Concerns regarding “alleged vote-buying and cases of controlled voting, particularly among vulnerable groups of voters, such as minority groups, especially Roma” were also raised in relation to the presidential elections in 2016.¹¹⁸ Similar concerns regarding “vote-buying and ‘organized’ voting in economically and socially vulnerable communities, particularly [among] Roma” were raised by all ODIHR LEOM interlocutors in relation to the early parliamentary elections of March 2017.¹¹⁹ At the same time, Bulgarian authorities informed ODIHR about legislative changes aimed at eradicating this negative phenomenon. Acts of “buying and selling votes” are criminal offences in the Criminal Code and campaign material contains information that buying and selling votes is a crime.¹²⁰

In **Romania**, some ODIHR needs assessment mission interlocutors ahead of the parliamentary elections in 2016 alleged that “vote-buying is still attempted in the more economically deprived regions of the country with minority, especially Roma, communities being more susceptible to such practices.”¹²¹

Following the April 2017 presidential election in **Serbia**, the ODIHR Election Assessment Mission (EAM) final report noted that “the Roma community remained vulnerable to pressure and manipulation, with reported cases of vote-buying through the distribution of food and hygienic packages as well as promises of free medical treatment and of organized transport on election day”.¹²²

In **Slovakia**, interlocutors of the ODIHR EAM for the parliamentary elections of March 2016 noted “efforts to deter vote-buying, including through education

112 For example, see “Republic of Bulgaria Early Parliamentary Elections 26 March 2017, ODIHR Limited Election Observation Mission Final Report”, ODIHR, Warsaw, 30 June 2017, pp. 2, 13, 19, <<http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/bulgaria/327171?download=true>>, (hereafter, Republic of Bulgaria Early Parliamentary Elections 2017).

113 Republic of Albania Parliamentary Elections 2017, *op. cit.*, note 77, pp. 2, 9, 18, 19.

114 “Republic of Albania, Local Elections 21 June 2015, OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report”, ODIHR, 8 September 2015, Warsaw, p.18, <<https://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/albania/180731?download=true>>.

115 “Republic of Albania Parliamentary Elections 23 June 2013, OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report”, ODIHR, Warsaw, 10 October 2013, <<https://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/106963>>, (hereafter, Republic of Albania Parliamentary Elections 2013).

116 “Republic of Bulgaria Early Parliamentary Elections 12 May 2013, OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report”, ODIHR, Warsaw, 25 July 2013, p. 12, <<http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/103878?download=true>>.

117 “International Election Observation Mission Republic of Bulgaria - Early Parliamentary Elections, 5 October 2014, Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions”, ODIHR, OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Council of Europe, Sofia, 6 October 2014, p. 10, <<http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/bulgaria/125140?download=true>>.

118 “Republic of Bulgaria, Presidential Election 2016, Needs Assessment Mission Report 31 May-3 June 2016”, ODIHR, Warsaw, 27 June 2016, p. 7, <<http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/bulgaria/248771?download=true>>.

119 Republic of Bulgaria Early Parliamentary Elections 2017, p. 14, *op. cit.*, note 112.

120 Additional input from the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Bulgaria to the United Nations, the OSCE and other International Organizations, received 19 November 2018.

121 “Romania Parliamentary Elections 11 December 2016, Needs Assessment Mission Report 27-29 September 2016”, ODIHR, Warsaw, 31 October 2016, p. 7, <<http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/romania/278346?download=true>>.

122 Republic of Serbia Presidential Elections 2017, *op. cit.*, note 14, p. 13.

and criminalization of such offenses, appeared to decrease the practice for these elections, previously being of significant concern, especially in vulnerable Roma communities”.¹²³

Racist rhetoric by populist mainstream politicians

Many political parties across Europe resort to hate speech against Roma, and use anti-Roma discourse as a tool in promoting populist agendas focused on scapegoating Roma. They usually shy away from speaking firmly against racism and discrimination against Roma and Sinti to reduce social distance and prejudice. The perpetuation of such a climate, aside from widening the gap between Roma and Sinti and the mainstream society, affects the potential participation of Roma in public and political life.

At ODIHR’s consultation workshop, a civil society representative expressed deep concern at the extent to which mainstream parties across Europe resort to hate speech against Roma.¹²⁴

Bulgaria has witnessed a steep rise in hate speech against Roma in recent years. The final report of the OSCE/ODIHR EOM report on the early parliamentary elections of March 2017 noted that “some parties used inflammatory and xenophobic rhetoric”, targeting Roma and that the election campaign was affected by cases of using racist, xenophobic and anti-Roma rhetoric.¹²⁵ Human rights organizations have expressed deep concern at the appointment of Valeri Simeonov in May 2017 as chairman of Bulgaria’s National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues. Simeonov, who is also Deputy Prime Minister, was subsequently convicted of hate speech against Roma in a Bulgarian court

in October 2017.¹²⁶ In its concluding observations in 2017, the UN Committee on CERD echoed these concerns and noted that “racist discourse and appeals are evident during election campaigns and that political parties and candidates frequently use slurs against minority groups and individuals.”¹²⁷

In the **Czech Republic**, the Roma Civil Monitor has reported that anti-Roma or racist speech is a regular feature of the rhetoric of mainstream parties and politicians.¹²⁸ For example, the conservative Civic Democratic Party (ODS) used a video before the 2016 regional elections depicting an unemployed Roma gambler telling non-Roma labourers to get to work “so there will be money for welfare”.¹²⁹ Some Czech politicians from established parties have used anti-Roma rhetoric to boost their popularity and raise their public profiles.¹³⁰ ECRI has expressed similar concerns, specifically around the 2013 parliamentary electoral campaign, where the leader of the party Dawn called for Roma to “leave the Czech Republic and found their own state or, ideally, return to India.”¹³¹ The party obtained 6.88 per cent of the votes and won 14 of the 200 seats in the parliament. Before the European Parliament elections in May 2014, Dawn put up billboard posters of a cartoon herd of white sheep kicking a black sheep off the Czech flag. The slogans read: “Support families not misfits” and “Jobs for us not immigrants”. The party failed to obtain any seats in the European Parliament.¹³² ECRI also noted that intolerant and racist expression features in the speech of mainstream parties, and cited the example of the Czech president who, at an official meeting in Liberec in June 2014, made controversial comments about decent housing for Roma and reinforced deeply rooted stereotypes about their lifestyle.¹³³

The Roma Civil Monitor reported an improvement in

123 “Slovak Republic Parliamentary Elections 5 March 2016, OSCE/ODIHR Election Assessment Mission Final Report”, ODIHR, Warsaw, 22 April 2016, <<http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/slovakia/235591?download=true>>, (hereafter, Slovak Republic Parliamentary Elections 2016).

124 Comments by participants at Consultation workshop 5-6 June 2018, *op. cit.*, note 73.

125 Republic of Bulgaria Early Parliamentary Elections 2017, *op. cit.*, note 112, pp. 2, 13, 14, 19.

126 Mariya Cheresheva, “Bulgarian Deputy PM Convicted of Hate Speech”, *Balkan Insight*, 25 October 2017, <<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/bulgarian-deputy-pm-convicted-of-hate-speech-10-25-2017>>.

127 “Concluding observations on the combined twentieth to twenty-second periodic reports of Bulgaria”, UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, 31 May 2017, p. 3, <http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2f-C%2fBGR%2fCO%2f20-22&Lang=en>.

128 “Civil Society Monitoring Report on Implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy in Czech Republic”, Roma Civil Monitor, European Commission, Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, February 2018, p. 14, <<https://cps.ceu.edu/sites/cps.ceu.edu/files/attachment/basicpage/3034/rcm-civil-society-monitoring-report-1-czech-republic-2017-eprint-fin.pdf>>, (hereafter, Roma Civil Monitor Czech Republic).

129 *Ibid.*

130 *Ibid.*

131 “ECRI Report on the Czech Republic (fifth monitoring cycle)”, Council of Europe, ECRI, adopted on 16 June 2015, published on 13 October 2015, p. 15, <https://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/Country-by-country/Czech_Republic/CZE-CbC-V-2015-035-ENG.pdf>, (hereafter, “ECRI Report on the Czech Republic (fifth monitoring cycle)”).

132 “Czech Republic: Úsvit running a racist, xenophobic EP campaign”, *romea.cz*, 28 April 2014, <<http://www.romea.cz/en/news/czech/czech-republic-usvit-running-a-racist-xenophobic-ep-campaign>>.

133 “ECRI Report on the Czech Republic (fifth monitoring cycle)”, *op. cit.*, note 131, pp.15, 16.

prosecuting politicians for hate speech, specifically members of the extremist Kotleba-LSNS party in 2016 and 2017. Members of parliament (MPs) Milan Mazurek and Stanislav Mizík were handed 1,000 EUR fines for abuse of their immunity as MPs by the Parliamentary Mandate and Immunity Committee. The police have also started investigating several MPs from the party. Most recently they charged Mazurek with hatred against an ethnic group for his speech during a show aired on Radio Frontinus on 2 October 2016. Mazurek, among others, stated that “we did not have to pour 300 million EUR for seven to eight years into one community, build playgrounds for them in gypsy suburbs that they will destroy, kindergartens that they will destroy – we do not need to teach them how to use a computer, how to dance; we have to give them work”. In his speech, he also compared Roma to animals.¹³⁴

In contrast, there have also been positive public interventions by leading politicians to challenge anti-Roma racism, such as Slovak President Andrej Kiska, who stated “Let’s stop talking about the ‘Roma problem’ and start working on how to utilize the potential of the Roma. I would welcome if people felt more commitment and willingness from the government and relevant agencies to improve the situation of Romani communities and reduce tensions while living together with the majority population.”¹³⁵

In a similar vein, Romanian President Klaus Iohannis, during a debate about the 160th anniversary of the liberation of Roma in the Romanian Principalities, stated that “The cases of discrimination have not disappeared yet, and most of the time their condemnation lacks celerity and firmness. After 160 years, not all Roma are citizens. Some of them still lack identity papers and they are deprived of any prospect of integration in terms of education, health, social security and constitutional rights. This situation must be on the agenda of the responsible authorities.”¹³⁶

High illiteracy and economic and social exclusion

Along with racism and discrimination, socio-economic factors also impede effective participation of Roma in public and political life. In Bulgaria, Roma interlocutors of the ODIHR LEOM for the early parliamentary elections of March 2017, noted with concern that “their communities are affected by high illiteracy and economic and social exclusion”.¹³⁷ Similarly, the ODIHR EAM, regarding the parliamentary elections in Slovakia of March 2016, stressed that “poor socio-economic circumstances, social exclusion and low level of education have previously rendered Roma communities vulnerable to undue influence and electoral manipulation”.¹³⁸

Legislative barriers

Legal and administrative barriers to registering candidates

In a number of participating States, some legal provisions or administrative regulations create barriers for Roma to register as candidates in elections.

In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, in 2016, the High Commissioner on National Minorities “urged for a unified commitment to secure the implementation of the European Court of Human Rights’ ruling on the Sejdić and Finci case”.¹³⁹ The case relates to the right to be elected to public office, as the plaintiffs Dervo Sejdić (Roma) and Jakob Finci (Jewish), stated that they were declared ineligible to stand for election to the Presidency and the House of Peoples of the Parliamentary Assembly by the Central Election Commission (CEC) due to their ethnicities. This situation stemmed from the application of the Dayton Peace Accords, which allowed only Bosniaks, Croats or Serbs, as the three constituent peoples of the country, to stand for elections to the Presidency or the House of Peoples of the Parliamentary Assembly. The ECtHR ruled that this amounted to discrimination.¹⁴⁰

On the same issue, in 2017 the ECRI Report on Bosnia and Herzegovina¹⁴¹ and the UN Human Rights Committee concluding observations on the third period report

134 “Civil Society Monitoring Report on Implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy in Slovakia”, Roma Civil Monitor, European Commission, Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, February 2018, p. 46, <<https://cps.ceu.edu/sites/cps.ceu.edu/files/attachment/basicpage/3034/rcm-civil-society-monitoring-report-1-slovakia-2017-eprint-fin.pdf>>, (hereafter, Roma Civil Monitor Slovakia).

135 *Ibid.*

136 Roma Civil Monitor Romania, *op. cit.*, note 97, p. 44.

137 Republic of Bulgaria Early Parliamentary Elections 2017, *op. cit.*, note 112, p. 19.

138 Slovak Republic Parliamentary Elections 2016, *op. cit.*, note 123, p. 14.

139 “High Commissioner on National Minorities visits Bosnia and Herzegovina and calls for quality inclusive education for all”, OSCE/HCNM, 24 March 2016, <<https://www.osce.org/hcnm/229861>>.

140 “Sejdic and Finci v. Bosnia and Herzegovina”, Open Society Foundations, 16 January 2015, <<https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/litigation/sejdic-and-finci-v-bosnia-and-herzegovina>>.

141 “ECRI Report on Bosnia and Herzegovina (fifth monitoring cycle)”, *op. cit.*, note 83, pp. 25-26.

of Bosnia and Herzegovina¹⁴², reiterated their concern about the matter.

In **Bulgaria**, according to the ODIHR EOM reports, the legal prohibition of the formation of political parties along “ethnic, racial or religious lines” is at odds with OSCE commitments and other international standards.¹⁴³ In addition, the electoral code restricts the use of languages other than Bulgarian for campaigning. To promote effective participation in public affairs, several ODIHR EOMs have concluded that individuals belonging to ethnic minorities should be allowed to campaign in their mother tongues.¹⁴⁴

Various reports have indicated the existence of some legal and/or administrative barriers to registering candidates or lists representing national minorities. In its fourth opinion on **Romania**, the Advisory Committee of the FCNM noted the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights in the case of *Danis and Association of Ethnic Turks v. Romania*, which considered that “the requirement of obtaining a ‘public utility’ status introduced just seven months prior to the scheduled parliamentary elections constituted a violation of Article 14 (prohibition of discrimination) in conjunction with Article 3 of Protocol No. 1 (right to free elections) to the Convention.” Further, the Advisory Committee referred to the restrictive conditions on parties wishing to participate in local elections introduced by the 2016 Law on Local Elections.¹⁴⁵

In the case of **Slovenia**, the distinction between “autochthonous” and non-autochthonous” Roma “continues to have an impact on the political participation of the Roma community as they do not have a guaranteed seat in municipal councils in all municipalities where they reside”, as per the fourth opinion on Slovenia of the Council of Europe Advisory Committee of the FCNM.¹⁴⁶ This

distinction is made by Slovenian authorities between Roma who have traditionally lived in the country and Roma who have come more recently, mainly as a result of the break-up of former Yugoslavia.¹⁴⁷ On the same matter, the UN Human Rights Committee, in its concluding observations on the third periodic report of Slovenia of April 2016, expressed concern, *inter alia*, about the same distinction and recommended that it be repealed.¹⁴⁸

In **Ukraine**, provisions in electoral legislation have reportedly created some obstacles for the participation of minorities, including Roma, in local elections. The ODIHR EOM to in 2015 Ukraine stressed that amendments to electoral legislation should be developed in consultation with national minorities with a view to enhancing representation of national minorities at the local level. Independent candidates should be allowed to stand for elections at all levels, in line with the OSCE commitments and other international obligations and standards, including those obliging participating States to facilitate the participation of national minorities.¹⁴⁹

1.2 Participation of Roma and Sinti women and men as voters

There is a combination of factors that constrain Roma participation in politics – particularly Roma women. These include lack of civil registration in Roma communities, exploitation and manipulation of Roma voters through vote-buying, proxy voting and cultural practices that constrain Roma women’s participation.¹⁵⁰ These factors were also highlighted in previous Status Reports in 2008 and 2013, and despite policies, programmes and legislative reforms initiated by some participating States to promote electoral participation, it remains clear that more concerted efforts are required across the OSCE

142 “Concluding observations on the third periodic report of Bosnia and Herzegovina”, UN Human Rights Committee, 13 April 2017, <http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR/C/BIH/CO/3&Lang=En>.

143 Freedom of association includes the freedom to establish political parties based on communal identities, and the Code of Good Practice (Paragraph 2. 2.4) states that the national minorities must be allowed to set up political parties. See Article 7 of the FCNM, Article 2 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious or Linguistic Minorities, paragraph 7.6 of the 1990 Copenhagen Document, and Section I.2.4.a of the 2002 Venice Commission Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters, Republic of Bulgaria Early Parliamentary Elections 2017, *op. cit.*, note 112.

144 *Ibid.*, pp. 7, 19, 25.

145 “Fourth Opinion on Romania”, Council of Europe, Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, Strasbourg, 16 February 2018, <<https://rm.coe.int/fourth-opinion-on-romania-adopted-on-22-june-2017/168078af76>>, (hereafter, “Fourth Opinion on Romania”).

146 “Fourth opinion on Slovenia”, Council of Europe, Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, 25 January 2018, <<https://rm.coe.int/fourth-opinion-on-slovenia-adopted-on-21-june-2017/16807843c7>>, (hereafter, “Fourth opinion on Slovenia”).

147 “Minorities and indigenous people in Slovenia: Roma”, minorityrights.org, 21 May 2018, <<https://minorityrights.org/minorities/roma-18>>.

148 “Concluding observations on the third periodic report of Slovenia”, UN Human Rights Committee, 21 April 2016, <https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR/C/SVN/CO/3&Lang=En>, (hereafter, “Concluding observations on the third periodic report of Slovenia”).

149 “Ukraine Local Elections 25 October and 15 November 2015, ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report”, ODIHR, Warsaw, 19 February 2016, pp. 23, 34, <<https://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/ukraine/223641?download=true>>.

150 *Implementation of the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area Status Report 2008*, (OSCE/ODIHR: Warsaw, 2008), <<https://www.osce.org/odihr/33500?download=true>>.

area to increase voter turnout in Roma communities, enhance the participation of women in electoral processes and ensure that all Roma voters can cast their votes unhindered in fair and free elections, as articulated in the 2003 OSCE Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area.

Policies and programmes promoting electoral participation of Roma and Sinti

Several participating States replied to the ODIHR questionnaire by stating that their respective institutions do not implement specifically targeted civic and voter education programmes for Roma and Sinti. The commonly stated assumption is that Roma and Sinti, as citizens of their respective states, can participate in and benefit from policies, programmes and legislation addressed to the general population.

The most fundamental form of political empowerment is enfranchisement – the ability to cast one’s vote freely. Improved civic education, voter education, registration and voter turnout programmes are vital to preparing, mobilizing and actively engaging Roma communities in local and national electoral processes, by increasing their political literacy and competences, and building confidence in the electoral system.¹⁵¹ Voter education is broadly understood as initiatives that addresses voters’ motivation and preparedness to participate fully in electoral processes. Well-informed citizens with a clear understanding of the election system, as well as of the power of their freely cast vote, can make informed decisions in votes that can have an impact on their own lives.

While some states reported sporadic or localized voter education initiatives, the OSCE Presence in **Albania** has collaborated with the CEC over the last three years to organize voter education activities with Roma and Egyptian communities. In the 2015 local elections, the OSCE Presence in Albania delivered voter education training for 194 Roma and Egyptian women in seven cities. The participants learned about amendments to the Electoral Code of 2015 concerning voting procedures and gender quotas. In 2016, a memorandum of understanding was signed by the Roma civil society organization (CSO)

Institute of Romani Culture in Albania (IRCA) and the CEC to run voter education projects for Roma that aim to create and strengthen the culture of participating in elections in these communities. The CEC also celebrated Global Election day in 2016 by focusing on Roma youth in the electoral process. Ahead of the 2017 parliamentary elections in Albania, the OSCE supported the CEC in organizing a voter education campaign for Roma women and youth, encouraging participation in elections for approximately 800 Roma women and youth. The CEC worked with Roma youth who were involved in providing voting information at information points across the city of Tirana, and an online application by the CEC was created to help voters find their polling stations.¹⁵² Prior to the elections in 2013, 2015 and 2017, the CEC provided leaflets and posters in Romani language to explain the voting process.

In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, the Council of Europe’s Programme ROMED worked to address the political participation and the visibility of Roma as active citizens in democratic societies by providing training on political participation prior to local elections in 2016, resulting in ten of them being elected in municipal councils of ten different municipalities and taking office in 2017.¹⁵³

In 2016 the Council of Europe’s European Alliance of Cities and Regions for the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers supported the Support Center for Roma (ROMALEN) in organizing voter education workshops in Kakanj, Prnjavor and Tuzla, which were attended by 74 participants from the Roma communities. A further workshop, which targeted Roma who were running for office as local councillors, was attended by 20 participants.¹⁵⁴

In **Finland**, the National and Regional Advisory Boards on Roma Affairs arranged local events to promote voting and offered equal opportunities for interested candidates and all parties to reach Roma voters in general meetings that were open to all citizens.¹⁵⁵

In the **former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**, the OSCE Mission to Skopje indicated that they have not observed voter education and registration programmes targeted at the Roma population. However, the Mission indicated that the State Election Committee (SEC) develops broadcasts and posts voter information on their

151 For further argumentation on the matter see: Sudetic Chuck, Jovanovic Zeljko, “Roma in Political Life in Europe: Introduction”, Open Society Foundations, 10 September 2013, <<https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/voices/roma-political-life-europe-introduction>>.

152 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Directorate International Organizations, Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Republic of Albania, received 7 February 2018; Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the OSCE Presence in Albania, received 7 February 2018; and Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Civil Society Organization “Roma Women Rights Center”, received 17 April 2018.

153 “Voluntary contributions, 2017 – Facts and figures”, Council of Europe, <<https://rm.coe.int/voluntary-contributions-2017-web-en-rev/16808e56fe>>.

154 “Alliance supports political participation of Roma in Bosnia and Herzegovina”, Council of Europe, European Alliance of Cities and Regions for the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers, <<http://www.roma-alliance.org/en/page/216-alliance-supports-political-participation-of-roma-in-bosnia-and-herzegovina.html>>.

155 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Delegation of Finland to the OSCE, received 20 March 2018.

website in the language of the various ethnic communities. They do not, however, garner much attention from the Roma community.¹⁵⁶

In response to the ODIHR questionnaire, **Romania** indicated that electoral education and voter registration programmes targeting Roma were run by a number of NGOs, in partnership with the NDI, between 2013 and 2017. A range of community-based and localized CSO-led projects also took place during the reporting period. However, the absence of data about these projects means that it is not possible to assess the impact of such interventions on the voting behaviour of the targeted Roma communities.¹⁵⁷

In **Georgia**, between 2013 and 2015, the Centre of Electoral Systems Development, Reforms and Trainings¹⁵⁸ financed projects aimed at awareness-raising and also financed information campaigns for the Roma community on elections-related issues.¹⁵⁹

In response to the ODIHR questionnaire, the Special Secretariat on Roma Social Inclusion in **Greece** reported that, while they were unaware of any voter education programmes targeting Roma and Sinti in Greece, the Roma Social Centres, which provide social services and assistance, as a matter of course do inform the population of their political rights and duties.¹⁶⁰

Hungary reported that the NDI has a voter education programme designed for Roma. The programme takes place in five localities, each with 15 participants. The programme is to be extended to more localities and delivered to more participants in the future.¹⁶¹

In **Slovakia**, the NDI provided pre-election training in 2017 for more than 200 Roma participants on voter education. The Roma Advocacy Network, comprised of community activists from Banská Bystrica, Košice and Prešov regions, also delivered voter education to 100 participants before the 2017 local elections. In both cases,

the groups were overwhelmingly male: 80 per cent and 60 per cent, respectively.¹⁶²

The European Roma and Travellers Forum (ERTF) has stated that the **Czech Republic, France** and **Italy** hold the lowest voting participation rates of Roma, and in debates their voices are rarely heard.¹⁶³ They further argue that in the United Kingdom the lack of Roma, Gypsy and Traveller participation in elections should be tackled through initiatives to develop better understanding of the electoral process and increase the trust of these communities in the political sphere, drawing upon lessons learned during the “Operation Traveller Vote” campaign.¹⁶⁴ Operation Traveller Vote is a campaign run in the United Kingdom by the Traveller Movement. It was started in 2017, and aims “to ensure Gypsies Roma and Travellers are registered to vote and most importantly, have their voices heard”.¹⁶⁵ It provided information on the voting procedure and eligibility, the importance of voting, the political platforms and commitments during the electoral campaign, and details on how to get in contact directly with parties and candidates.

Availability of election information in Romani language

One of the means for facilitating free and informed choices in electoral processes for Roma and Sinti is the provision of electoral information in Romani language. Most of the participating States who responded to the ODIHR questionnaire stated that the Roma and Sinti population in their respective states speak the majority official language and face no obstacles in this regard. However, there are some countries that do produce information in Romani.

In **Albania**, election information materials produced by the CEC – mainly posters and leaflets – are also published in Romani.¹⁶⁶ Nevertheless, the OSCE Presence in

156 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the OSCE Mission to Skopje, received 8 February 2018.

157 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Mission of Romania to the International Organizations in Vienna, received 7 February 2018; and Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from E-romnja organization, received 20 April 2018.

158 For more information about the Center of Electoral Systems Development, Reforms and Trainings please see <electionreforms.ge/eng/static/7/misia>.

159 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Mission of Georgia to the OSCE, received 2 February 2018.

160 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Special Secretariat on Roma Social Inclusion, Ministry of Labour, Social Insurance and Social Solidarity, Greece, received 15 February 2018.

161 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Roma Education Fund, received 20 March 2018.

162 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic, The Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities, received 22 March 2018.

163 “Fact Sheet on the Situation of Roma and Sinti in Italy”, ERTF, June 2015, p. 8, <https://www.ertf.org/images/Reports/The_situation_of_Roma_in_Italy_13062015.pdf>, (hereafter, “Fact Sheet on the Situation of Roma and Sinti in Italy”).

164 “Fact Sheet on the Situation of Roma/Gypsies/Travellers in the United Kingdom”, ERTF, May 2015, p. 19, <https://www.ertf.org/images/Reports/The_situation_of_RomaGypsiesTravellers_in_the_United_Kingdom_03062015.pdf>.

165 Operation Traveller Vote, the Traveller Movement, <<https://travellermovement.org.uk/project/operation-traveller-vote/>>.

166 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Directorate International Organizations, Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Republic of Albania, received 7 February 2018.

Albania stated that, due to time limitations, the CEC has not always been able to distribute these materials to all areas as planned.¹⁶⁷

In the **Czech Republic**, authorities stated that Roma do not face problems in understanding information and instructions in the Czech language. However, the current legislation allows for election information to be translated into Romani, and this is standard practice. The legislation ensures that members of national minorities who have traditional and long-term residence in the territory of the Czech Republic have the right to publish a notice of the venue and other information for voters in the language of national minorities. Thus, in municipalities where a national minority accounts for at least 10 per cent of the population, such basic electoral information is published in the language of the national minority.¹⁶⁸

In Hungary, all information related to the specific election and, at their request, the names of the candidates and/or names of the represented national minority parties or civil society organizations are printed on ballots both in Hungarian and Roma language for the elections of the minority self-governments, for local elections as well as for Parliamentary elections on the ballot of the list set up by the National Minority Self-Government.¹⁶⁹

The Electoral Code in the **former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia** articulates that in “municipalities where at least 20 per cent of citizens speak an official language other than Macedonian, the Municipal Election Commissions (MECs), i.e. Election Commission of the City of Skopje and the Election Boards, shall use, in addition to the Macedonian language and its Cyrillic alphabet, the official language and alphabet spoken by at least 20 per cent of the citizens in that municipality.”¹⁷⁰ The OSCE Mission to Skopje reported that the language of the communities does indeed appear on election materials, the ballot and voting instruction in municipalities where 20 per cent of citizens speak a language other than Macedonian. In the territory of Shuto Orizari,¹⁷¹ representatives of the Roma community are represented in the MEC. To ensure provision of information in Roma language, there should be at least one representative of the Roma community in

the MEC. The OSCE mission also observed that Roma are included in election boards.¹⁷²

Data and trends regarding the participation of Roma and Sinti as voters, including women and youth, in electoral processes

The 2013 Status Report concluded that a positive change was observed in several participating States between 2008 and 2013 regarding the participation of Roma and Sinti due to amendments to legislation, new legislation and greater representation of Roma in elected bodies, especially at the municipal level. Similarly, the establishment in some countries of advisory bodies, such as Roma minority councils that represent Roma interests and are legitimized through direct Roma voting, was a new development during the same period.

In general, the Roma Civil Monitor observed in the current reporting period, that active campaigning targeting marginalized Roma communities at the local level, including unethical behaviour such as vote-buying, increases their turnout. For instance in Slovakia, the report highlighted that “several activists believe that passivity and hopelessness among excluded Roma prevent them from being more active in political life in their villages”.¹⁷³ A common observation in all the elections between 2013 and 2017 was that the Roma community remained vulnerable to pressure and manipulation.

In the current reporting period (2013-2017), it is difficult to identify any definitive trends in the participation of Roma and Sinti in electoral processes, because almost all of the participating States explicitly stated that they do not register or collect personal data on the basis of ethnicity or nationality, and there are no requirements for voters to specify their nationality or ethnic background. Germany, for example, pointed out that membership of a minority group is an individual personal decision that is not reviewed, contested or registered by the authorities. As a result, no data are collected or available to state authorities on the participation of Roma and Sinti in electoral processes.

167 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the OSCE Presence in Albania, received 7 February 2018.

168 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Mission of the Czech Republic to the OSCE, received 26 April 2018.

169 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary, received 15 February 2018.

170 See article 23.3 of the Electoral Code. “Electoral Code of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”, European Commission for Democracy Through Law (Venice Commission), Strasbourg, 24 February 2016, <[http://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=C-DL-REF\(2016\)020-e](http://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=C-DL-REF(2016)020-e)>.

171 Shuto Orizari is Europe’s largest Roma governed municipality where eighty percent of the population is Roma. This municipality is the only local administrative unit in the world who has adopted Romani as an official language. See: Valerie Hopkins, “Shutka: Inside Macedonia’s only Roma-run municipality”, Aljazeera website, 8 April 2017, <<https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/04/shutka-life-world-roma-run-municipality-170406133010977.html>>.

172 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the OSCE Mission to Skopje, received 8 February 2018.

173 Roma Civil Monitor Slovakia, *op. cit.*, note 134, p. 12.

Despite such limitations, a few participating States provided data about the turnout of Roma and Sinti voters in the minority self-government and Roma minority councils' elections, as well as data from available studies related to the participation of minority voters in elections.

A positive development was observed in **Albania**, which reported heightened Roma voter participation in electoral processes.¹⁷⁴ Both the OSCE Presence in Albania and the civil society organization responses to the ODIHR questionnaire confirmed that voter and civic education programmes in 2013 and 2017 led to higher voter turnout, particularly among Roma women.¹⁷⁵ A few other states (Finland, Greece and Italy) noted some progress in the participation of Roma and Sinti in electoral processes, but did not provide further details.

In **Croatia**, the only data publicly available are the turnout of Roma national minority voters at elections for Roma national minority councils and individual representatives, or Roma national minority representatives in the executive or representative bodies of local and regional authorities.¹⁷⁶ Romania provided data concerning the participation of Roma political organizations, electoral alliances or civil society organizations based on their own declarations of ethnic affiliation.¹⁷⁷

Hungary reported that data on the ethnicity of voters is not collected. However, in the 2014 parliamentary elections, voters could, for the first time, opt to vote for national minority lists. The statistics show that 4,014 Roma voters subsequently voted for the list set up by the National Roma Self-Government. At the 2014 minority self-government elections, out of a total of 157,902 registered Roma voters, 96,985 (61 per cent) exercised their right to vote.¹⁷⁸

In **Romania's** 2016 parliamentary elections, only 13,126 people voted for the Roma Party "Pro-Europa" for the Chamber of Deputies, and 523 for the Roma

Democrats Party, according to the Roma Civil Monitor. These numbers reveal a very low interest in voting for ethnic Roma political structures compared to voting for mainstream parties and, as such, none of the Roma candidates were elected. The Roma Party "Partida Romilor Pro-Europa" received the highest number of votes of all organizations of citizens belonging to a national minority. They were awarded a mandate in the Chamber of Deputies, based on the constitutional provision of a reserved seat for Roma and Sinti.¹⁷⁹

Serbia provided data from the direct elections for members of the National Council of the Roma National Minority in 2014, where only 16,523 Roma out of a total of 61,755 registered voters (26.8 per cent) actually cast their votes.¹⁸⁰ In Serbia, according to the response received from the civil society,¹⁸¹ progress is very poor regarding the participation of Roma in electoral processes. The CSO attributes this to the lack of programs to support their participation.

In the **United Kingdom**, an independent study conducted for the Electoral Commission on the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities' turnout showed that the participation of minority ethnic groups is significantly lower than that of their majority counterparts – possibly lower than 50 per cent.¹⁸²

1.3 Participation of Roma and Sinti as candidates in elections

The second Status Report (2013) noted that "mainstream parties are still reluctant to put forth Roma candidates, despite a significant increase in the pool of potential Roma candidates, i.e., Roma individuals with the necessary educational and professional backgrounds needed to run for public office".¹⁸³ Moreover, ODIHR election observation reports noted under-representation of Roma and Sinti women in elections and unequal participation among them in public and political life.¹⁸⁴ The Report

174 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Directorate International Organizations, Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Republic of Albania, received 7 February 2018.

175 Responses to the ODIHR questionnaire from the OSCE Presence in Albania, received 7 February 2018, and from the Civil Society Organization "Roma Women Rights Center", received 17 April 2018.

176 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Government Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Republic of Croatia, received 16 February 2018.

177 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Mission of Romania to the International Organizations in Vienna, received 7 February 2018.

178 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary, received 15 February 2018.

179 Roma Civil Monitor Romania, *op. cit.*, note 97, p. 12.

180 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Serbia to the OSCE and other International Organization – Vienna, received 12 February 2018.

181 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from Roma Women Rights Center – Serbia, received 7 May 2018.

182 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, United Kingdom, received 8 February 2018.

183 Status Report 2013, *op. cit.*, note 8, p. 51.

184 *Ibid.*

called for concrete efforts to be made by participating States and structures of the OSCE to protect and enhance the right of Roma women and men to participate as voters and candidates in local and national elections.¹⁸⁵

In their responses to the ODIHR questionnaire, only a few participating States reported any increase in the number of Roma and Sinti candidates in elections. Among the factors impeding participation of Roma as candidates in elections were low interest among mainstream parties in national minorities, reluctance to include and promote Roma and Sinti as candidates on their lists, and limited financial resources for campaigning – especially for supporting Roma and Sinti women candidates. A majority of participating States that replied to the ODIHR questionnaire stated that they do not implement targeted programmes encouraging Roma and Sinti to stand as candidates for elected positions. Many of the reported programmes implemented by national or international civil society organizations are more general in nature, aiming to increase democratic participation of Roma and Sinti, particularly as voters.

Programmes encouraging Roma and Sinti to stand as candidates for elected positions at the local and/or national level

In **Albania**, the OSCE presence reported that the Open Society Foundation, through its Roma and Education programme, supports Roma self-organization and advocacy as a means of empowerment. The aim of the education and training programme is to reshape the landscape for Roma civic activism by steadily building their policy advocacy skills. Moreover, in 2014, the Open Society Institute Roma Initiative Office supported the establishment of a Roma and Egyptian Women Network, which brought together 40 women activists and trained them to formulate their demands and communicate them to politicians during the 2015 local election campaign. The network created a platform for communication with political parties and mobilized approximately 500 women

to support it. The network also supported the candidature of one Roma woman in Berat, who went on to win a seat in the local council. In addition, several other organizations were active partners in the implementation of programmes in Albania in the area of community mobilization and empowerment, advocacy and activism.¹⁸⁶ According to the civil society organization Roma Women Rights Center (Albania), potential Roma candidates need to be encouraged and supported to run in elections, as there are no Roma parties and the level of participation of Roma in politics is very low.¹⁸⁷

In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, Care Balkans implemented a project in the period 2012 – 2015 titled “For active inclusion of Roma Women in Western Balkans”. As part of the project, 23 Romani women received in training on participation to increase their capacity and willingness to participate in decision-making processes.¹⁸⁸ Moreover, the first Roma Political Academy in Bosnia and Herzegovina was organized in 2016 within the framework of the ROMED1 Programme, with financial support from the Alliance for Roma Inclusion and the Unit of Electoral Assistance and Census of the Council of Europe. The training sessions targeted 20 Roma in advance of local elections, which were held in October 2016. Ten out of 20 candidates were elected for local councils, and received additional training after assuming office. Among them was the first young Roma woman ever elected.¹⁸⁹

Between 2016 and 2017, the Office of the Government of the **Czech Republic** implemented a project called “Activation and Empowerment of Romani Stakeholders through the National Roma Platform”, the aim of which was to promote the involvement of Roma in public life. The project has provided training to Roma on community organization and on negotiating skills. Many of the project participants were young Roma.¹⁹⁰ Moreover, in the review period, the NGO Slovo 21 organized political training for Roma women and a Roma leadership programme called “Barvalipe”, which targeted young Roma.¹⁹¹

185 *Ibid.*, p. 54.

186 These active organizations include ARSIS, Romani Baxt, Romano Kham, the Roma Federation (only active for a short period in 2013), Roma Women Rights Center, AmaroDrom, IRCA and Sfiniski. Response to ODIHR questionnaire from the OSCE Presence in Albania, received 7 February 2018.

187 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Civil Society Organization Roma Women Rights Center (Albania), received 17 April 2018.

188 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, received 8 February 2018.

189 *Ibid.*

190 Responses to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Mission of the Czech Republic to the OSCE, received 26 April 2018. See also “Slovakia: Czech Human Rights Minister speaks at EU conference on Romani youth”, Romea.cz, 11 October 2016, <<http://www.romea.cz/en/news/world/slovakia-czech-human-rights-minister-speaks-at-eu-conference-on-romani-youth>>.

191 Responses to the ODIHR questionnaire from Slovo 21, received 19 April 2018. See also “Czech Republic: Romani college women learn how to compete in politics”, Romea.cz, 27 February 2014, <<http://www.romea.cz/en/news/czech/czech-republic-romani-college-women-learn-how-to-compete-in-politics>>.

In **Hungary**, the NDI ran a project encouraging Roma to stand as candidates in elections.¹⁹²

Montenegro reported that the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights has organized several training courses on an annual basis for members of the Roma and Egyptian communities. This training was designed to empower communities and increase their inclusion in public and political life. During the training courses, participants had the opportunity to learn from experiences and practices shared through presentations by representatives of parliamentary political parties, relevant state institutions and local self-governments, as well as representatives from national parties and NGOs.¹⁹³ In addition, the OSCE Field Operation to Montenegro informed ODIHR that in the period 2016 – 2017 the NGO Young developed a platform to support political and social activism initiatives of Roma and Egyptians in Montenegro with the goal of presenting Roma and Egyptians as an integral part of a new democratic and social movement, and bringing together marginalized social groups.¹⁹⁴

In the **former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**, according to the OSCE Mission to Skopje, civil society organizations Daja and Luludi delivered targeted interventions encouraging Roma women to engage in political parties and/or stand as candidates for elected positions in the country. Daja, in partnership with the civil society organization Kham, implemented a project titled “Public and political participation of Roma women”,¹⁹⁵ which included, among other things, local public information sessions with Roma women and a training session with male political representatives on the topic of creating a favourable environment for improving the participation of women in politics. Another project implemented by Luludi association aimed at supporting young Roma women to overcome obstacles within their parties and be

included as candidates on party lists.¹⁹⁶

Portugal reported that, while there have been no programmes specifically targeting potential Roma candidates and encouraging them to run for elected positions, the High Commission for Migration promoted the participation of Roma youth in civic and associative initiatives through the programme “More Leaders – Roma youth” (June 2016 - July 2017). Eighteen young Roma participated in the programme (12 men and 6 women).¹⁹⁷

Romania reported that some Roma NGOs, in partnership with NDI, have organized programmes to encourage Roma to stand as candidates for local and/or national positions.¹⁹⁸ Moreover, in 2017, the Together Agency (Agentia Impreuna) implemented an empowerment programme for 50 Roma policy leaders titled “Promoting a legislative framework that favors the Roma community”.¹⁹⁹

In **Slovakia**, NDI held training courses for Roma candidates (with an over representation of men) ahead of the 2014 and 2017 regional elections, as well as the 2016 parliamentary elections. NDI also supported one Roma candidate in the 2014 European Parliament elections.²⁰⁰

In the **United Kingdom**, Operation Black Vote (OBV) encouraged the political participation of BME candidates. Any interested individuals with a BME background, including Roma, could apply to be part of the scheme.²⁰¹

Progress regarding the participation of Roma and Sinti as candidates in electoral processes

Most of the participating States pointed out that their legal frameworks do not allow them to collect ethnically disaggregated data on candidates. Therefore, it is difficult to measure the overall progress in the participation of Roma and Sinti in elections as candidates.

192 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Roma Education Fund, received 20 March 2018.

193 Response to the questionnaire from the Permanent Mission of Montenegro to the UN, OSCE and other International Organizations in Vienna, received 6 March 2018.

194 The platform was developed within the project “Strengthening capacities of Roma for public activism-United we reach more!” in partnership with Union of Free Trade Unions of Montenegro and coalition Roma Circle and funded by the Delegation of the EU in Montenegro. Response to the questionnaire from the Permanent Mission of Montenegro to the UN, OSCE and other International Organizations in Vienna, received 6 March 2018.

195 The project was funded by EIDHR and implemented December 2015–November 2017.

196 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the OSCE Mission to Skopje, received 8 February 2018.

197 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the High Commission for Migration, International Relations Unit, Portugal, received 9 February 2018.

198 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Mission of Romania to the International Organizations in Vienna, received 7 February 2018.

199 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from E-romnja organization, received 20 April 2018.

200 Altogether 137 Roma candidates were trained for the two regional elections (80-90 per cent of them men) and three Roma men for the parliamentary elections. Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic, The Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities, received 22 March 2018.

201 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, United Kingdom, received 8 February 2018.

In **Albania**, in the 2015 local elections, four Roma (1 man and 3 women) ran for municipal councils and out of them, two women were elected.²⁰² The candidates were registered on two party lists. However, they were often not placed in positions in which they could actually win mandates. Reportedly, their inclusion was dismissed by some as a campaign tactic. A prominent exception included a Roma candidate at the top of the Macedonian Alliance for European Integration (MAEI) candidate list in Korçe.²⁰³ In the 2013 parliamentary elections, the ODIHR EOM report noted that minority issues featured prominently in the campaigns of only five parties that focused on minority communities. It also noted that only a few parties included minority representatives on their candidate lists.²⁰⁴

While **Austria** reported that it does not produce disaggregated data and that no reliable answer could be given on the progress of Roma and Sinti, the civil society organization Romano Centro observed growing interest among Roma and Sinti in running for political positions. Most interest focused on the municipal level, but in individual cases there was also interest at the state and national level.²⁰⁵ In 2017, a young Roma woman nominated by the People's Party (ÖVP) was elected to the local council (Gemeinderat) of the Oberwart city in Burgenland. In another municipality in Burgenland, a Roma candidate ran for election for the local council for the Freedom Party (FPÖ) in 2017.²⁰⁶

In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, election law regulates the right of members of national minorities, including Roma, to occupy reserved seats in local elections.²⁰⁷ In addition to political parties, registered associations or other registered organizations of national minorities with at least 40 citizens have right to vote can apply to

nominate candidates for reserved minority seats.²⁰⁸ Such seats are not reserved in general (parliamentary) elections, where candidates are nominated to the general candidates' lists in accordance with the regulations applicable to all candidates in Bosnia and Herzegovina.²⁰⁹ The number of Roma candidates running for the seats reserved for representatives of national minorities has remained the same since the introduction of the provision in the 2008 local elections.²¹⁰ During the local elections in 2016, 40 members of the Roma national minority ran as candidates for local councils, compared to 39 in 2008. The OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina observed, however, that there was an increase of Roma women candidates from two in the previous reporting period to five between 2013 and 2017. These five Roma women had received training on the electoral process and on organizing election campaigns. The main problem faced by all Roma women candidates, running as both independent candidates and as part of a political party, was that they lacked financial resources for their campaigns.²¹¹ The system of reserving seats for representatives of national minorities in local elections has been problematic. The Advisory Committee on the FCNM noted that reportedly "some political parties have taken advantage of two factors in particular: first, that candidates of national minorities require fewer signatures for their candidacy to be validated than others and, second, that nothing prevents an individual from changing her or his declared ethnic affiliation from one election to the next, in order to include candidates on their lists who claim to belong to a national minority (and may thus be elected to seats reserved for national minorities) but are not recognized as such by national minorities themselves".²¹² The Advisory Committee voiced concern at the abuse of the system

202 Responses to ODIHR questionnaire from the OSCE Presence in Albania, received 7 February 2018, and from the Civil Society Organization Roma Women Rights Center (Albania), received 17 April 2018.

203 Party for Europeanisation and Integration (comprising Roma and Egyptians) ran as part of the AEA, in addition to which Roma and Egyptians ran in the PAWD list. "Republic of Albania, Local Elections 21 June 2015, ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report", ODIHR, 8 September 2015, Warsaw, p. 18, <<https://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/albania/180731?download=true>>.

204 Republic of Albania Parliamentary Elections 2013, *op. cit.*, note 115, p. 21.

205 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from Romano Centro Austria, received 16 April 2018.

206 Responses to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Bundeskanzleramt Österreich / Verfassungsdienst, received 6 February 2018, and from Romano Centro Austria, received 16 April 2018.

207 The number of members of ethnic minorities who are directly elected in the municipal assembly/council and city assembly/council should be defined under a city or municipal statute, whereby members of all national minorities are guaranteed at least one seat provided that they account for more than 3 % of the total population in the constituency according to the latest census.

208 Article 13.14 paragraph (5) of the Election Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

209 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Mission of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the UN, OSCE and other International Organizations, received 27 February 2018.

210 *Ibid.*

211 According to the information provided by the Permanent Mission of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the number of female candidates in the 2016 local elections was six. *Ibid.*

212 "Third Opinion on Bosnia and Herzegovina", Council of Europe, Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, Strasbourg, 7 April 2014, p. 37, <<https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=090000168008c667>>.

and recommended that “authorities should review the criteria for inclusion of national minority representatives on party lists, so as to prevent abuse of the system by candidates who do not represent national minorities.”²¹³

In **Bulgaria**, the challenge to participation of Roma as candidates in elections is that while the constitution provides for the right of self-identification, it prohibits the formation of political parties along “ethnic, racial or religious lines”.²¹⁴ In the 2013 parliamentary elections, no candidate of Roma origin was elected to the parliament for the first time since 1991.²¹⁵ In the 2014 early parliamentary elections, according to the final report of the ODIHR LEOM, five of the 25 political parties or coalitions fielded a total of 13 Roma candidates (8 men and 5 women), who were generally placed on lower positions on the candidate lists. Two of them (both men) secured seats in the parliament.²¹⁶ In the 2017 early parliamentary elections, the Roma community was mainly represented by the Movement for Equality Public Model (DROM). The ODIHR LEOM was informed of some 120 Roma candidates in five candidate lists.²¹⁷

In **Croatia**, the Act on the Election of Representatives to the Croatian Parliament guarantees that ethnic minority members have a right to representation in parliament. Ethnic minority members are entitled to elect eight representatives to the parliament in a special constituency comprising the entire territory of the Republic of Croatia. Members of 12 minorities, among them Roma, are entitled to elect one joint representative to the parliament.²¹⁸ In the 2015 parliamentary elections, out of 11 candidates, six were Roma (all men), while in the 2016 early parliamentary elections out of eight candidates there were seven Roma candidates (5 men and 2 women).²¹⁹ During the review period, positive developments

were observed in the participation of Roma in local elections. In the 2013 local elections, there were 24 Roma candidates on party lists in total, and out of them nine were elected (8 men and 1 woman between the ages of 30 and 68 years). In the 2017 local elections, there were 44 Roma candidates, out of which 11 were elected (9 men and 2 women, between the ages of 23 and 51 years).²²⁰

The **Czech Republic** reported that in the review period the Roma Democratic Party participated in elections. The party had a candidate list in the elections to the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament in 2013, in the elections to the European Parliament in 2014, in the elections to the regional councils in 2016 and in the elections to the municipal councils in 2014.²²¹ According to a media source, the Roma Democratic Party did not field candidates in the 2017 elections to the Czech Chamber of Deputies. Instead, seven members of the Roma minority (6 men and 1 woman) were listed on the candidate lists of some mainstream movements and parties.²²² Reportedly, compared to the previous elections to the Chamber of Deputies, the number of Roma candidates has fallen.²²³

Finland reported steady growth in the number of Roma candidates for municipal elections between 2013 and 2017 compared with the past. In the 2017 local elections, a male Roma candidate won a landslide victory, while in another municipality, a young Roma man was elected as alternate member of the local council. Seven other Roma (5 men and 2 women between 26-58 years) stood as candidates in different municipalities but were not elected. In parliamentary elections Roma candidates have almost been non-existent and the number of Roma voting has been low.²²⁴ In 2014, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women commended Finland in its concluding observations for the

213 Authorities were also advised to review the 3 per cent threshold for guaranteed reserved seats, taking account of the results of the next census. *Ibid.*

214 Republic of Bulgaria Early Parliamentary Elections 2017, *op. cit.*, note 112. Please see also footnote 143.

215 “Republic of Bulgaria Parliamentary Elections, 12 May 2013 ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report”, ODIHR, Warsaw, 25 July 2013, p. 17. <<https://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/103878?download=true>>. No candidate of Roma origin was elected to the parliament, but one replaced an MRF MP, who resigned.

216 “Republic of Bulgaria Early Parliamentary Elections, 5 October 2014, OSCE/ODIHR Limited Election Observation Mission Final Report”, ODIHR, Warsaw, 7 January 2015, pp. 17, 19. <<https://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/bulgaria/133571?download=true>>. (hereafter, Republic of Bulgaria Early Parliamentary Elections 2014).

217 Roma candidates were in DROM, DPS, DOST, BSP and GERB lists. Republic of Bulgaria Early Parliamentary Elections 2017, *op. cit.*, note 112, p. 19.

218 Austrian, Bulgarian, German, Polish, Roma, Romanian, Ruthenian, Russian, Turkish, Ukrainian, Valachian and Jewish minorities.

219 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Mission of the Czech Republic to the OSCE, received 26 April 2018.

220 *Ibid.*

221 *Ibid.*

222 Four of them were on the candidate lists for the Green Party, one on the Social Democrats’ list, one on the candidate list of the “Movement of the Order of the Nation”, and one on the list of the Republican Party (SPR - RSC).

223 “Six Romani men, one Romani woman running for the Czech lower house”, *Romea.cz*, 20 October 2017, <<http://www.romea.cz/en/news/czech/six-romani-men-one-romani-woman-running-for-the-czech-lower-house>>, (hereafter, “Six Romani men, one Romani woman running for the Czech lower house”).

224 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Delegation of Finland to the OSCE, received 20 March 2018.

high percentage of women in the parliament, government and among the state's representatives in the European Parliament. However, the Committee also observed that Roma women are still under-represented in political and public life and noted the lack of statistical data on their situation.²²⁵

In **France**, Anina Ciuciu, a young naturalized French citizen of Romanian origin who identifies as Roma, ran a campaign under the colors of the party "Europe Écologie Les Verts" (left-wing ecologists) running for the position of Senator of the Seine-Saint-Denis department in September 2017, but was not elected.²²⁶ Ciuciu, who was nominated as a honorary council on Roma issues for the Romanian Prime Minister in 2014, explained at the ODIHR consultation workshop that it was grassroots community backing that prompted her to make a historic run for the French Senate, and that she ran as a candidate championing not just the cause of migrant Roma people, but also sought the support of other vulnerable groups, including ethnic, migrant and sexual minorities.²²⁷

Hungary reported that no information is gathered on the ethnicity of candidates. Moreover, a constitutional amendment that decreased the number of seats in parliament, combined with new election legislation following the parliamentary elections in 2010, makes it difficult to compare the participation of Roma and Sinti as candidates in the elections of 2010 and 2015.²²⁸ A 2011 act ensures preferential quotas that enable each national minority to field a single candidate for election to the National Assembly with only a quarter of the votes that would otherwise be needed. However, the ODIHR LEOM final report for the 2014 Hungarian parliamentary elections stated that none of these candidates obtained sufficient votes to win a parliamentary seat. Each national minority's single registered candidate serves as a spokesperson for their minority in the parliament.²²⁹ The Roma Education Fund noted that the number of women and youth in electoral processes has not significantly increased over the past ten years. During the review period, Roma women were provided a platform merely in the LMP (Politics Can be Different) party.²³⁰

In **Latvia**, the CEC provides statistics on the ethnicity of the candidates. However, many Roma candidates prefer not to declare their ethnicity. Two Roma candidates (1 man and 1 woman) from the political party From the Heart to Latvia participated in the 2014 parliamentary elections. No Roma candidates participated in the local elections in 2017.²³¹

In the **former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**, the OSCE Mission to Skopje reported that in the review period there has not been progress regarding the participation of Roma, including women and youth, in competing in parliamentary elections or running for mayoral positions. In the 2017 local elections, 22 Roma (17 men and 5 women) were elected councillors on mainstream or Roma party lists. In comparison, in the 2013 local elections, 33 Roma (25 men and 8 women) were elected. According to the mission, Roma youth activism in political parties is limited because of the lack of capacity and the control exercised by party leaders over the campaigns of Roma candidates.²³²

In **Moldova**, for the first time since independence in 1991, two Roma women were elected to local councils following the 2015 local elections. They were among 15 Roma candidates (8 men and 7 women), who were part of a 40-strong group that received training and preparation on running as candidates in the local elections. The two councillors credited their own past community work as well as pre-election campaign training seminars organized by the Romani Women and Girls Network (RWGN) and supported by UN Women as the main factors motivating them to run and eventually succeed in the elections.²³³

In **Romania**, data on the participation of Roma political organizations in the 2016 elections for county councils shows that a total of 346 Roma candidates ran from two Roma organizations (349 candidates from three organizations in 2012). Candidates for county councils proposed by Roma political organizations received a total of 35,746 votes in the 2016 elections, compared to 43,438 in 2012. The data for local council elections revealed a similar downward slide in candidates running from 2012 to

225 "Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of Finland", UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, adopted by the Committee at its fifty-seventh session (10-28 February 2014), CEDAW/C/FIN/CO/7, 10 March 2014, <http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2fC%2fFIN%2fCO%2f7&Lang=en>.

226 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Representation of France to the OSCE, received 15 February 2018.

227 ODIHR Consultation workshop 5-6 June 2018, *op. cit.*, note 73.

228 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary, received 15 February 2018.

229 Hungary Parliamentary Elections 2014, *op. cit.*, note 91, pp. 22-23.

230 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Roma Education Fund, received 20 March 2018.

231 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia, received 12 February 2018.

232 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the OSCE Mission to Skopje, received 8 February 2018.

233 Information received from a civil society representative from Moldova, ODIHR Consultation workshop 5-6 June 2018, *op. cit.*, note 73, and <<http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2015/9/roma-women-elected-in-moldova>>. For more information, see <<http://www.md.undp.org/content/moldova/en/home/projects/women-in-politics-in-moldova.html>>.

2016. In the most recent 2016 local elections there were 4,003 candidates for local councillors (146 elected), while 7,259 candidates (161 elected) ran in the 2012 local elections. For mayoral contests the difference was minimal: In 2016, 38 candidates ran for mayoral positions, with one being elected (37 candidates, one elected in 2012).²³⁴ Some mainstream parties have promoted Roma candidates. The Social Democratic Party (PSD) had self-declared Roma in party lists in local and parliamentary elections in 2012 and in 2016. In the 2016 parliamentary elections, the party had two Roma candidates, of which one was elected.²³⁵ Also, the Alliance of European Liberal Democrats (ALDE) promoted Roma candidates both in local and parliamentary elections. In the 2016 parliamentary elections, one of the ALDE's Roma candidates was a woman. At local level, a large number of Roma were elected as local councillors on mainstream party election lists – the majority were men aged 40 to 50 years.²³⁶

In **Serbia**, the OSCE Mission to Serbia reported that there were eight Roma political parties on the register. In 2014, the Roma political party Demokratska levica Roma (a national minority political party) ran for parliamentary elections in coalition with other political parties. In the 2016 and 2017 parliamentary elections, none of the Roma political parties were involved, either separately or as a part of a coalition. The Roma Women Rights Center in Serbia reported that three Roma parties participated in the 2016 local elections and that one Roma woman ran on the party list of the mainstream Democratic Party.²³⁷

Slovakia reported slow progress in terms of the number of candidates placed in electable positions on candidate lists. There were ten Roma candidates on the lists of five parties in the 2016 parliamentary elections.²³⁸ The final report of ODIHR's EOM noted that no Roma party presented a list, reportedly due to unsuccessful attempts to consolidate politically, and that Roma were not

very active in the campaign. Several Roma interlocutors pointed out that municipal elections were perceived to be more relevant to Roma communities than parliamentary elections.²³⁹ Slovakia confirmed this in its questionnaire response, reporting that a great number of self-declared Roma candidates participate in municipal elections.²⁴⁰ Overall, the Roma Civil Monitor observed “a steady increase in the number of Roma candidates placed on the electoral lists of mainstream political parties” in Slovakia, but maintains that these have usually been placed low on the voting list, with very limited chances of being elected. Moreover, the NDI noted that there continues to be a major imbalance in the political participation of Roma women compared with that of Roma men. In the most recent regional elections, which took place in November 2017, only five out of 47 Roma candidates for councilor positions were women. None of the Roma candidates was elected.²⁴¹

Slovenia reported progress in the participation of Roma in the electoral processes, without providing further details. The Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, however, pointed out that they believe there has been no change regarding the participation of Roma representatives in elected bodies and decision-making processes, with the exception of the election of all municipal council members and the training they have received to carry out their tasks more effectively.²⁴²

Spain, in its response to the ODIHR questionnaire, indicated that Roma men, women and youth are active voters. However, very few Roma stand as candidates. According to the ERTF, only ten Roma candidates were elected as councillors during the municipal elections in 2015.²⁴³

In **Turkey**, according to ERTF,²⁴⁴ four Roma candidates from different political parties and one independent

234 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Mission of Romania to the International Organizations in Vienna, received 7 February 2018.

235 “Summary Report of the Workshop - Strengthening Diverse Leadership, Participation and Representation of Roma and Sinti, including Women and Youth, in Public and Political Life”, ODIHR, Brussels, 27-28 March 2017, p. 8, <<https://www.osce.org/odihr/342211?download=true>>.

236 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Mission of Romania to the International Organizations in Vienna, received 7 February 2018.

237 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from Roma Women Rights Center – Serbia, received 7 May 2018.

238 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic, The Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities, received 22 March 2018.

239 “Republic of Slovakia, Parliamentary Elections 2016, Election Assessment Mission Final Report”, ODIHR, Warsaw, 22 April 2016, p. 14, <<http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/slovakia/235591?download=true>>.

240 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic, The Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities, received 22 March 2018.

241 Roma Civil Monitor Slovakia, *op. cit.*, note 134, p. 14.

242 “Fourth opinion on Slovenia”, *op. cit.*, note 146, p. 6.

243 “Fact Sheet on the Situation of Roma in Spain”, ERTF, Strasbourg, January 2016, (hereafter, “Fact Sheet on the Situation of Roma in Spain”).

244 “Fact Sheet on the Situation of Roma in Turkey”, ERTF, June 2015, p. 9, <https://www.ertf.org/images/Reports/The_situation_of_Roma_in_Turkey_17062015.pdf>, (hereafter, “Fact Sheet on the Situation of Roma in Turkey”).

candidate participated in the 2015 general election. The first Roma member of parliament, Özcan Purçu, was elected from Izmir province from the main opposition party, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (CHP).

In **Ukraine**, in the 2015 local elections, of the 15 known Roma candidates, five won council seats. However, none were elected to the Transcarpathia regional council, despite there being a large number of Roma living in the region. The Advisory Committee of the FCNM also pointed out that the Law on Local Elections did not provide for voting by internally displaced people in Ukraine. However, the Advisory Committee noted that national minority representatives, in particular Roma, were included in the lists of major parties running in their districts and that intolerant or xenophobic speech toward minorities was not observed during the campaign.²⁴⁵

2 Representation of Roma and Sinti

2.1 Representation of Roma and Sinti within political parties and platforms

Strong, independent and accountable political parties provide effective representation and citizen participation, strengthen societal stability and help guarantee good governance. Competitive, viable political parties that engender trust in the electorate, generate vibrant public debate, and provide voters with real choices, are essential to sustaining the pluralist and representative character of liberal democracy. Government and opposition parties should reflect the needs, interests and aspirations of all citizens, including ethnic and national minorities.

Roma and Sinti representation through their own parties and organizations

This sub-section gives an account of existing political parties that Roma and Sinti have setup based on ethnic lines in the OSCE region, in the participating States where the registration of ethnic political parties is allowed according to national legislation. As reported below, in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, the former Yugoslav Republic

of Macedonia, Romania, Serbia and Ukraine, a number of Roma candidates and parties were registered and some competed in elections, but only a limited number succeeded in securing elected positions.

In **Albania**, the OSCE presence reported that the New Tolerance Party claims to specifically represent Roma. However, they failed to register in time to run in the 2015 local elections and again in the 2017 parliamentary elections. The party submitted a complaint to the CEC that they were prevented from running in the elections on the grounds of discrimination.²⁴⁶

In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, even though there are no political parties that exclusively represent Roma, parties have included Roma on separate lists for seats reserved for members of national minorities.²⁴⁷ In the 2016 local elections, a total of 40 candidates from the Roma national minority were certified. Ten political parties nominated 21 members of the Roma national minority for reserved seats. Furthermore, one candidate was verified on the joint candidates' list of a Roma association called Roma "Sunce-Kham" Gradiska, and 18 groups of citizens with voting rights nominated representatives of the Roma national minority.²⁴⁸

Croatia responded that there is one party on the Register of Political Parties that contains the word "Roma" in its name: the Croatian Roma Assembly, which holds the registered seat in Zagreb. However, the register of political parties does not classify parties according to specific categories such as ethnicity, so it can only be inferred from the name of the party that it represents Roma. Article 2 of the party's statutes declares that it is "open to Roma as well as all other citizens of the Republic of Croatia, and as a national and nation-building party promotes Croatian national and nation-building interest, preserves the tradition and identity of Roma, identity of the Croatian people and identities of other ethnic communities in Croatia."²⁴⁹

The **Czech Republic** indicated that there were two Roma political parties that run in elections but they did not participate in the most recent elections. The Roma Democratic Party had a candidate list in the elections to the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament in 2013,

245 "Fourth Opinion on Ukraine", Council of Europe, Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, adopted on 10 March 2017, published on 5 March 2018, Strasbourg, p. 50, <<https://rm.coe.int/fourth-opinion-on-ukraine-adopted-on-10-march-2017-published-on-5-marc/16807930cf>>, (hereafter, "Fourth Opinion on Ukraine"). See also obstacles to the representation of national minorities, especially in local councils, presented in the Chapter 1.1.

246 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the OSCE Presence in Albania, received 7 February 2018.

247 According to the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, the following political parties specifically represent Roma: A-Party of democratic Action (A-SDA), Social Democratic Party (SDP), Union for Better Future (SBB). All three parties participate in parliamentary and local elections. Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, received 8 February 2018.

248 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Mission of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the UN, OSCE and other International Organizations, received 27 February 2018. The information was received from the CEC, and it does not necessarily represent the viewpoint of the OSCE Presence in Albania.

249 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire Government Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Republic of Croatia, received 16 February 2018.

in the elections to the European Parliament in 2014, in the elections to the municipal councils in 2014 and in the elections to the regional councils in 2016.²⁵⁰ Roma political parties have historically received very little interest, with the Roma Civil Monitor noting that “the preference for Roma parties has historically been in the tenths of a percentage point”.²⁵¹

In **Greece**, there is one political party that defends the rights of Greek Roma the political party ROMA (Radical Orthodox Front of Solidarity), which was established in 2014 and participated in the January 2015 general election, but not in the subsequent September general election of that year.²⁵²

In **Hungary**, Roma civil society organizations and parties were registered in all three elections held in 2014. For the general election, five Roma parties were registered: Európai Roma Keresztények Jobblétéért Demokratikus Párt; MCF Roma Összefogás Párt; Magyar Cigány Néppárt; Magyarországi Cigánypárt; and Megújult Magyarországi Roma Összefogás Párt. In the local elections, 12 Roma parties and civil society organizations were registered,²⁵³ while in the local national minority self-government elections, 50 Roma civil organizations were registered.²⁵⁴

In the **former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**, as of January 2018, there were seven Roma political parties, six of which had until recently been in coalition with a mainstream political party: the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO DPMNE). The OSCE Mission to Skopje observed that each of these Roma parties would need to put more effort into creating an internal democratic environment to avoid the perception that their leaders “own” the political parties.²⁵⁵

In **Romania**, the political organizations, electoral alliances and civil society organizations that specifically

represent or represented Roma in electoral processes are the Roma Party ‘Pro-Europa’ Association, the Democratic Roma Party and the Alliance for Roma Unity.²⁵⁶ Another entity, the Roma Democratic Alliance Party, is listed in the political parties register but has not participated in electoral processes to date. Two other entities: the National Union of Roma Communities and the Roma Democratic Civic Alliance, which participated in elections in 2012, did not participate in 2016.

In **Serbia**, there are seven registered national minority political parties that deal with issues related to the protection and political participation of the Roma national minority. These are the Roma Democratic Party (RDS); the Unified Party of Justice (JSP); Jekhutno čidimos čaćimasko (JČČ); Roma Party (RP); United Roma Party/Jekutni Partija Romani (UPR); Roma Party Unity (RS); Union of Roma of Serbia (URS); and the Democratic Union of Roma (DUR).²⁵⁷

In **Ukraine**, the Odessa Regional State Administration reported that, in 2016, the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine registered the “Gypsy Party of Ukraine”. However, all attempts to contact the party through their official address or phone number, or to find any statutory documents, proved unsuccessful. The party does not have a website.²⁵⁸

Roma and Sinti representation through mainstream political parties

This sub-section provides an overview of mainstream political parties in the OSCE region that have Roma and Sinti members who have been elected to office, as well as parties that include Roma issues among their party priorities and field Roma candidates. None of the participating States who responded to the questionnaire indicated

250 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Mission of the Czech Republic to the OSCE, received 26 April 2018.

251 Roma Civil Monitor Czech Republic, *op. cit.*, note 128, p. 13.

252 Another party ASPIDA ROM, which was established in 2006, is currently dormant. Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Special Secretariat on Roma Social Inclusion, Ministry of Labour, Social Insurance and Social Solidarity, Greece, received 15 February 2018.

253 Bagaméri Romákért Egyesület; Fialat Romák Országos Szövetsége; Hajdúhadház Roma Érdekvédelmi Szövetség; Lásó Drom (Jó Út) Országos Érdekvédelmi Roma Egyesület; “Lungo Drom” Országos Cigány Érdekvédelmi És Polgári Szövetség; Magyarországi Cigányok Demokratikus Szövetsége; Magyarországi Cigányok Fóruma- Összefogás Magyarországotért Párt; Magyarországi Cigánypárt; Magyarországi Összefogás Roma Rom Szervezet; Phralipe Független Cigány Szervezet; Roma Diplomások Országos Szervezete; 100 Roma Virtuóz Országos Kulturális Egyesület.

254 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary, received 15 February 2018.

255 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the OSCE Mission to Skopje, received 8 February 2018.

256 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Mission of Romania to the International Organizations in Vienna, received 7 February 2018.

257 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Serbia to the OSCE and other International Organization – Vienna, received 12 February 2018.

258 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna, received 2 February 2018.

that there are quotas for representation of Roma and Sinti within mainstream parties.²⁵⁹

Evidence suggests that the interests of Roma and Sinti voters are, for the most part, not reflected in the priorities of mainstream political parties, and responses to the ODIHR questionnaire indicate that Roma remain under-represented in political parties across the OSCE participating States. Roma who have joined mainstream political parties have occasionally been elected or appointed to positions that offer some measure of interest and representation for their communities.

In the majority of participating States, no specific measures, such as quotas for minorities on mainstream party lists²⁶⁰ or specific electoral thresholds for political parties representing national minorities,²⁶¹ have been introduced.

In **Albania**, the OSCE presence indicated that, in 2017, the Albanian Workers Movement Party made a public statement that they would represent/support the Roma community. However, the party was disqualified from running in the 2017 parliamentary elections for failing to return state funds owed from the previous local elections, where they failed to secure the minimum number of votes.²⁶²

In **Austria**, a Roma candidate in the elections for the national parliament in 2017 formed a Roma-department of the Social Democrats in his district.²⁶³

In the **Czech Republic**, the Green Party agenda has long included a comprehensive approach to Roma inclusion and a consistent anti-racist position. In the 2017 general election, seven Roma were on the candidate lists of four mainstream parties, but none of them won a mandate.²⁶⁴

Italy reported that the Democratic Party (Partito Democratico), the Italian Left-Wing (Sinistra Italiana) and the

Tsipras List (Lista Tsipras), have included Roma and Sinti issues within their political programmes. In the 2013 general elections, and on the occasion of municipal elections, there have been some Roma candidates on the lists of these three parties.²⁶⁵ However, Roma in Italy are estimated to be among the most politically disenfranchised in Europe, according to the European Roma and Travellers Forum, which has called on mainstream political parties in Italy to focus efforts on training Roma candidates and to pay more attention to their Roma members in order to develop policies for Roma inclusion.²⁶⁶

Latvia indicated that there is no single political party that specifically represents Roma as an ethnic minority or a vulnerable group. However, the political party Unity continuously supports initiatives of the NGO Roma Culture Centre. Additionally, local authorities from the municipality of Jelgava who are representatives of the Green Farmers Party regularly support local Roma initiatives.²⁶⁷

In the **former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**, both major mainstream political parties, VMRO-DPMNE and the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM), have included Roma political parties in their pre-electoral coalitions. The OSCE Mission to Skopje noted, however, that this did not lead to better representation of Roma needs and interests and, as junior coalition partners, Roma parties have not been able to influence policy-making, legislation or budget-setting in any strategic manner.²⁶⁸

In **Romania**, there is no mainstream political party specifically promoting Roma interests.²⁶⁹ However, the Social Democratic Party had an eligible place for a Roma candidate to the Deputy Chamber within the parliament in 2016. The candidate is currently a deputy, and the party has a chapter in its platform addressing Roma issues.²⁷⁰

In **Serbia**, based on the information from a Roma civil society organization, there are two self-declared Roma (1

259 Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina (no information available to government), Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany (it is not for the government to monitor this), Greece (Roma do not constitute a minority), Latvia, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (information from the OSCE Mission to Skopje), Montenegro, Romania (no information available to government), Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Ukraine.

260 Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Latvia, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (information from the OSCE Mission to Skopje), Montenegro, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Ukraine.

261 Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Finland, Greece, Latvia, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (information from the OSCE Mission to Skopje), Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland, Ukraine.

262 Response from Albania, *op. cit.*, note 152.

263 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from Romano Centro Austria, received 16 April 2018.

264 Roma Civil Monitor Czech Republic, *op. cit.*, note 128, pp. 12-13.

265 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Delegation of Italy to the OSCE, received 29 January 2018.

266 "Fact Sheet on the Situation of Roma and Sinti in Italy", *op. cit.* note 163, p. 13.

267 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia, received 12 February 2018.

268 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the OSCE Mission to Skopje, received 8 February 2018.

269 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Mission of Romania to the International Organizations in Vienna, received 7 February 2018.

270 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from E-romnja organization, received 20 April 2018.

man and 1 woman) on the management board of the Serbian Progressive Party.²⁷¹

In **Slovakia**, the Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities underlined that, while mainstream parties have mentioned Roma explicitly, they have not necessarily done so in a positive or affirmative way.²⁷²

Spain reported that some political parties have promoted the interests of the Roma population. These parties include the People's Party; the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party; Citizens; Podemos; and the United Left party.²⁷³

Sweden replied that no in-depth analysis of the official positions of the parties has been made, but in a vote on a parliamentary motion in 2015, where the Swedish parliament urged the government to continue the work against anti-Gypsyism and for Roma inclusion, a vast majority (seven out of eight parties of the current parliament) voted in favour of the motion.²⁷⁴

Switzerland informed ODIHR that the Socialist party (SP), the Green party (GP) and the Schweizerische Volkspartei (SVP) party have supported minority issues related to Yenish, Sinti and Roma.²⁷⁵

Some participating States (**Finland, Greece and Hungary**) reported that a majority of mainstream parties have, to some extent, featured Roma in their programmes and platforms, or at least occasionally represented the interests of Roma as a vulnerable group.

2.2 Elected bodies

This chapter provides an overview of the representation of Roma and Sinti within elected bodies at the national, regional and local levels, which include national parliaments, regional and local councils. It also reviews the

mechanisms of representation through quotas and specific electoral thresholds.

Information on self-declared Roma and Sinti in elected positions at the national and European level

Most participating States informed ODIHR that they did not have any information on self-declared Roma and Sinti members of parliament.²⁷⁶ Nevertheless, a number of other participating States were able to provide information regarding elected Roma and Sinti within their representative structures.

Bulgaria reported that there are no self-declared Roma in the current parliament, whereas in the two previous parliaments elected within the review period (2013-2017), there were one and two Roma members of parliament, respectively (all male, representing the Movement for Rights and Freedoms party).²⁷⁷

In **Hungary**, in addition to the Roma spokesperson, Félix Farkas, there are three Roma members of parliament (all men, representing MSZP and FIDESZ-KD-NP-Lungo Drom).²⁷⁸

Romania indicated that it does not collect data based on ethnicity and that the information it does have is based on publicly available self-declared data. In addition to the Roma minority representative, a well-known Roma activist, Florin Manole (male) was elected from the Social Democratic Party to the current parliamentary term (2016-2020). Dana Varga (female, Alliance of Liberals and Democrats - ALDE) stood as a candidate but was not elected to the parliament. However, she is currently state councilor for Roma issues within the office of the prime minister.²⁷⁹

In the **former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**, the OSCE Mission to Skopje informed ODIHR that two Roma

271 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from Roma Women Rights Center – Serbia, received 7 May 2018.

272 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic, Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities, received 22 March 2018.

273 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Representation of Spain to the OSCE, Spain, received 5 March 2018.

274 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Ministry of Culture of Sweden, received 8 February 2018.

275 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from Switzerland (Departement des Innern EDI, Bundesamt für Kultur BAK), received 23 January 2018.

276 Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria (not in the current parliament), Czech Republic, Finland, Germany (data neither collected nor registered), Greece, Latvia, Montenegro, Poland, Serbia (not in the current parliament, but since 2008 there have been three self-declared Roma members of parliament), Slovenia, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom (cannot confirm).

277 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Mission of Bulgaria to the UN, the OSCE and other International Organizations in Vienna, Republic of Bulgaria, received 9 February 2018. In the 2013 parliamentary elections, no candidate of Roma origin was elected to the parliament, but one replaced an MRF MP, who resigned. Republic of Bulgaria Early Parliamentary Elections 2014, *op. cit.*, note 216, p. 21, footnote 62.

278 The three Roma members have been members of the parliament since 2002. Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary, received 15 February 2018. In the former parliament (2010-2014) there was also one Roma woman member (LMP, 43 years). Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Roma Education Fund, received 20 March 2018.

279 In the first half of the previous term (2012-2016), there was one self-declared Roma Senator. In 2014, he became a member of the European Parliament. Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Mission of Romania to the International Organizations in Vienna, received 7 February 2018.

have been elected to the current parliament on the lists of established political parties (both male, respectively).²⁸⁰

Portugal reported that one Roma woman, Idália Serão (the Socialist Party) has been a member of parliament since 2005. She has also had governmental responsibilities and is currently member of the Parliament Bureau.²⁸¹

Spain responded that Manuel Bustamante (male) from the People's Party has been a member of the regional parliament of Valencia, and Silvia Heredia (female, the People's Party), is a member of congress.²⁸²

In **Slovakia**, Peter Pollák (male, the Ordinary People, Independent Personalities party [OLaNO]) was the first ever Roma to be elected to the parliament, serving from 2012 to 2016, and Plenipotentiary for Roma communities. Irena Bihariova, a Roma woman, is the deputy leader of the extra-parliamentary political party Progresivne Slovensko.²⁸³

In the review period there were three self-declared Roma or Sinti members in the European Parliament of the European Union. James Carver (male) from the **United Kingdom** affiliated with UK Independence Party,²⁸⁴ Soraya Post (female) from **Sweden**, representing the Feminist Initiative, and Damian Draghici (male) from **Romania** representing the Social Democratic Party were elected as MEPs in 2014.²⁸⁵

Reserved seats and specific electoral thresholds for Roma and Sinti

A majority of participating States that responded to the ODIHR questionnaire stated that there are currently no quotas or electoral thresholds in their legislative body for ethnic minorities, and specifically for Roma and Sinti.²⁸⁶

In **Croatia**, the Act on the Election of Representatives to the Croatian Parliament guarantees that ethnic/national minority members have a right to representation in the parliament.²⁸⁷ As mentioned above, ethnic minority members are entitled to elect eight representatives to the parliament in a special constituency comprising the entire territory of the Republic of Croatia. One of the eight representatives is a joint representative of 12 different minorities, among them, Roma.²⁸⁸ The candidate who receives the highest number of votes cast is elected. In the 2016 early parliamentary elections, Veljko Kajtazi a male member of the Roma ethnic minority was re-elected for the second time as the joint representative of the minorities.²⁸⁹

In **Germany**, the Advisory Committee of the FCNM pointed out that there are mechanisms in place to facilitate the participation of national minority parties in certain parliamentary bodies, through the exemption of national minority parties from the 5 per cent threshold for representation in the parliaments of Schleswig-Holstein and Brandenburg. National minority parties are also exempt from the same threshold for the distribution of seats among *Länder* lists in the federal parliament. Individuals belonging to national minorities have also been elected on mainstream party lists in these *Länder*. However, political representation of Sinti and Roma has remained low, and the Advisory Committee pointed out that more needs to be done to promote the participation of Roma and Sinti in politics, whether in dedicated or mainstream parties.²⁹⁰

Hungary reported that there are no special thresholds in place for parties in the parliamentary elections, but the minority lists do not have to reach the 5 per cent

280 Samka Ibrahimovski/SDSM and Amdi Bajram/now independent, elected both in the 2014 and 2016 parliamentary elections. A third Roma candidate in the 2016 elections currently holds the position of mayor. Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the OSCE Mission to Skopje, received 8 February 2018.

281 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the High Commission for Migration, International Relations Unit, Portugal, received 9 February 2018.

282 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Representation of Spain to the OSCE, Spain, received 5 March 2018.

283 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic, The Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities, received 22 March 2018.

284 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, United Kingdom, received 8 February 2018.

285 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Ministry of Culture of Sweden, received 8 February 2018.

286 Albania, Austria, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Latvia, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (information from the OSCE Mission to Skopje), Montenegro, Poland, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, Ukraine.

287 Articles 15-18 of the Act on the Election of Representatives to the Croatian Parliament. See also the previous section on electoral thresholds.

288 Members of Austrian, Bulgarian, German, Polish, Roma, Romanian, Ruthenian, Russian, Turkish, Ukrainian, Valachian and Jewish minorities elect one representative.

289 He was elected to the same parliamentary seat in the same constituency in the parliamentary elections in autumn 2015 and in 2011. Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Government Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Republic of Croatia, received 16 February 2018.

290 "Fourth Opinion on Germany, adopted on 19 March 2015", Council of Europe, Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, Strasbourg, 19 March 2015, paragraph 132, p. 37, <<https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=09000016805946c6>>.

threshold applicable for parties to receive a preferential mandate.²⁹¹ In fact, one seat is reserved for each national minority, including Roma, in the unicameral parliament and, since 2014, the Roma spokesperson has been Félix Farkas.²⁹² According to a civil society organization that contacted ODIHR, Roma parties in Hungary struggled to reach the 5 per cent electoral threshold. Mainstream parties did not satisfactorily represent Roma interests.²⁹³

In **Montenegro**, the Law on the Election of Councilors and Members of Parliament sets the electoral threshold at 3 per cent. In addition, the law establishes a lower threshold clause of 0.7 per cent for Bosniak, Albanian and Muslim minorities, and of 0.35 per cent for the Croatian minority. Roma and Egyptians are not included as minority groups in the provision.²⁹⁴ In the 2016 parliamentary elections, national minority party lists were registered for Bosniaks, Albanians and Croats, whereas there were none for Roma.²⁹⁵

In **Romania**, the constitution provides that “organizations of citizens belonging to national minorities that fail to obtain the minimum number of votes for representation in parliament, have the right to one deputy seat each, under the terms of the electoral law. Citizens who are members of a national minority are entitled to be represented by one organization only.”²⁹⁶ Following the 2016 elections, Daniel Vasile (male, Roma Party “Pro-Europa” Association) represented the Roma minority in the Chamber of Deputies.²⁹⁷

In **Serbia**, the electoral system does not guarantee seats to national minorities in the National Assembly. However, the 2004 Law on the Election of Members of Parliament contained the so-called “natural threshold”, which provides an opportunity for national minority political parties and/or coalitions of national minority political parties to win seats despite not meeting the a five per cent electoral threshold. This method has not guaranteed a seat for national minority political parties in the

national assembly. Instead it has merely simplified the acquisition of seats, since these parties did not need to meet the condition of crossing the electoral threshold required for all other participants in the elections for members of parliament, but still participate in the process of distributing the seats.²⁹⁸

Information on parliamentary committees addressing minority issues, and, in particular, Roma and Sinti issues

A number of participating States reported that they do not have any parliamentary committee addressing minority issues, and Roma and Sinti in particular.²⁹⁹ However, several participating States submitted information regarding the parliamentary sub-structures addressing Roma and Sinti issues.

In **Albania**, the Sub-committee on Human Rights, working under the Standing Committee on Legal Issues, Public Administration and Human Rights, is responsible for addressing minority issues, including those related to the Roma and Egyptian community. Representatives of the Roma and Egyptian communities are invited to participate in public hearings when the committee discusses pieces of legislation or issues of relevance to them. Moreover, the participation of Roma in decision-making at the central level was limited to the appointment of a Roma individual to the State Committee on Minorities – an advisory body to the Government.³⁰⁰ In 2017, the OSCE Presence in Albania facilitated a public hearing of Roma women activists from across the country in the Commission for Social Affairs and Human Rights to raise issues related to Roma communities in civil registration, health, education, social protection and political participation.³⁰¹

Bosnia and Herzegovina reported that the Commission for the Protection of Human Rights is responsible for national minority issues, including issues related to

291 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary, received 15 February 2018.

292 *Ibid.*

293 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Roma Education Fund, received 20 March 2018.

294 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Mission of Montenegro to the UN, OSCE and other International Organizations in Vienna received 6 March 2018; Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the OSCE Field Operation to Montenegro, received 8 February 2018.

295 “ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report, Montenegro Parliamentary Elections 2016”, Warsaw, 25 January 2017, p. 18, <<https://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/montenegro/295511?download=true>>.

296 National minorities are the ethnic groups represented in the Council of National Minorities.

297 In the 2012-2016 parliamentary cycle, the Roma minority was represented by Nicolae Păun (man, Roma Party “Pro-Europa”). Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Mission of Romania to the International Organizations in Vienna, received 7 February 2018.

298 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Serbia to the OSCE and other International Organization – Vienna, received 12 February 2018; Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the OSCE Mission to Serbia, received 8 February 2018. Please also see Republic of Serbia, Republic Electoral Commission, Parliamentary Commission, <<http://www.rik.parlament.gov.rs/english/izbori-za-narodne-poslanike.php>>.

299 Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Finland, Greece, Latvia (no information available), Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom.

300 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the OSCE Presence in Albania, received 7 February 2018.

301 *Ibid.*

Roma. Bosnia and Herzegovina confirmed that there are no Roma members of the commission.³⁰²

In **Croatia**, one of the 29 parliamentary committees is the Human and National Minority Rights Committee. The committee comprises three sub-committees, one of which is the National Minority Rights Sub-committee. The committee must include at least one representative of each national or ethnic minority represented in the parliament and is traditionally chaired by the most senior minority member of the parliament. The current Roma member of the parliament is a member of the committee.³⁰³

In **Hungary**, the parliamentary National Minority Committee consists of the spokespersons of those national minorities that have drawn national minority lists for parliamentary elections but have failed to win a preferential mandate, including the Roma spokesperson, Félix Farkas.³⁰⁴

In the **former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**, a Roma parliamentarian is a member of the Committee for Local Self-government and deputy member of the Committee on Labour and Social Policy. The seat reserved for Roma in the Committee on Relations between the Communities is vacant.³⁰⁵

Romania reported that Daniel Vasile, the representative of the Roma minority in the current legislative body, is one of the vice-chairpersons of the Committee for Human Rights, Cults and National Minorities Issues, as well as the founder and chairperson of the Sub-committee on the Observance and Defense of the Rights and Freedoms of Romanian Citizens Belonging to Roma Minorities. The other Roma deputy, Florin Manole, is also a member of the sub-committee. In addition, the Senate of Romania has a standing Committee for Human Rights, Religious denominations and Minorities, which, *inter alia*, examines draft laws and legislative proposals regarding human rights and the rights of national minorities and oversees

the observance of human rights and the rights of national minorities in the relevant ministries and other public administration bodies. In the current parliamentary period (2016 to 2020) no Roma are represented in this committee.³⁰⁶

Russia reported that the Committee of the State Duma for Nationalities Affairs deals with the situation of national minorities and indigenous minorities and the implementation of state policy in the sphere of inter-ethnic relations. Representatives of national minorities, including Russian Roma (NGO Federal National-Cultural Autonomy of Russian Roma), have been invited to join the temporary working groups set up during the drafting of laws relating to inter-ethnic relations, as well as to participate in parliamentary hearings and other events on this issue.³⁰⁷

Serbia reported that the National Assembly has a Committee for Human and Minority Rights and Gender Equality, working on issues facing national minorities, including Roma. The committee has several activities dedicated to the issue of improving the status of Roma. Roma issues are also covered by the committee under other activities, such as the review of reports by independent state bodies, including the Ombudsman and the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality. From 2012 to 2014, one committee member was a member of the Roma national minority.³⁰⁸ In addition, the OSCE Mission to Serbia noted that there is a possibility of establishing *ad hoc* working groups on particular issues, such as on rights and freedoms of the Roma national minority.³⁰⁹

Slovakia reported that one parliamentary committee (Výbor Národnej Rady Slovenskej republiky pre ľudské práva a národnostné menšiny) focused on and supported the rights of most-disadvantaged minorities, as well as the protection of personal data and gender equality.³¹⁰

In the **United Kingdom**, the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Gypsies, Travellers and Roma provides

302 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Mission of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the UN, OSCE and other International Organizations, received 27 February 2018.

303 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Government Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Republic of Croatia, received 16 February 2018.

304 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary, received 15 February 2018.

305 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the OSCE Mission to Skopje, received 8 February 2018.

306 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Mission of Romania to the International Organizations in Vienna, received 7 February 2018.

307 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the OSCE, received 5 April 2018. [Unofficial translation from Russian to English].

308 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Serbia to the OSCE and other International Organization – Vienna, received 12 February 2018.

309 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the OSCE Mission to Serbia, received 8 February 2018.

310 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic, The Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities, received 22 March 2018.

a forum for parliamentarians to discuss issues facing these communities.³¹¹

Information on self-declared Roma and Sinti in mayoral positions

Based on the responses received from participating States, very few had official data available on Roma mayoral candidates or mayors.³¹²

Croatia reported that electoral bodies do not collect data on the ethnic background of candidates for mayoral or county prefect positions. Nevertheless, in the local or regional self-government units, in which national/ethnic minority representatives are entitled by law to proportional representation in the representative body, they are also entitled to representation in the executive body of the unit. In both the 2013 and 2017 elections, members of national/ethnic minorities were entitled to propose and elect candidates for a total of 61 deputy mayor and county prefect seats in 49 municipalities and towns and in 11 counties. Members of the Roma minority were entitled to propose candidates and elect two deputy mayors, who were duly elected in the municipalities of Orehovica and Pribislavec.³¹³

Hungary responded that, while no information is gathered about the ethnicity of mayoral candidates, four Roma and Sinti organizations nominated a total of seven candidates (all of them male) for mayoral positions in the 2014 local elections. None of them were elected.³¹⁴ According to civil society responses to the ODIHR questionnaire, there are 28 Roma mayors in Hungary, most of whom were elected after running as independent candidates.³¹⁵

In the **former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**, two Roma candidates ran for the position of mayor in Shuto Orizari in the 2017 local elections, and one of them was elected. Also, in the 2013 local elections, one out of two Roma candidates was elected as mayor of the same municipality.³¹⁶ In the 2016 local elections in Romania there were 38 Roma candidates for the position of mayor, one of whom was elected.³¹⁷

Slovakia reported slow progress in terms of the number of Roma mayors elected.³¹⁸ The Roma Civil Monitor reported that in the most recent municipal elections in 2014, per the estimates of the NDI, 34 Roma were elected as mayors, although mostly in very small villages. The report suggests that Roma would be even more successful if political manipulation (often by non-Roma mayors) was somehow addressed.³¹⁹ The Advisory Committee on the FCNM welcomed the decision of the Constitutional Court in September 2014 to suspend the discussion of a draft bill that made it obligatory for mayoral candidates in local elections to have completed secondary education. They deemed this draft bill unconstitutional and stated that it interfered with the electoral process. The draft bill was reportedly submitted with the intention to place candidates of Roma origin at a disadvantage.³²⁰

Information on self-declared Roma and Sinti elected representatives in local or regional councils

Several participating States reported that they do not monitor or there is no official data available on the number of Roma candidates or elected representatives for local or regional councils.³²¹

311 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, United Kingdom, received 8 February 2018.

312 Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Slovenia, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom (cannot confirm).

313 According to the Constitutional Act on the Rights of National Minorities, the Roma population reached the threshold entitling them to elect deputy mayors for the first time in the 2013 local elections in the municipalities of Orehovica and Pribislavec. Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Government Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Republic of Croatia, received 16 February 2018. See also "Government of the Republic of Croatia, Fourth Report of the Republic of Croatia on the Implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities", Zagreb, July 2014, received 11 September 2014, p. 91, <<https://rm.coe.int/1680094aa8>>.

314 The organizations that nominated candidates were Lungo Drom (2 candidates), Fiatal Romák Országos Szövetsége (1), Magyarországi Cigánypárt (3), Magyarországi Összefogás Roma Szervezet (1). Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary, received 15 February 2018.

315 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Roma Education Fund, received 20 March 2018.

316 In 2017 Kurto Dudush Kuco, from SDSM, and in 2013 Elvis Bajram, from VMRO DPMNE coalition partner SRM, were elected. Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the OSCE Mission to Skopje, received 8 February 2018.

317 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Mission of Romania to the International Organizations in Vienna, received 7 February 2018.

318 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic, The Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities, received 22 March 2018.

319 Roma Civil Monitor Slovakia, *op. cit.*, note 134, pp. 13-14.

320 "Fourth Opinion on the Slovak Republic", Council of Europe, Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, 3 December 2014, pp. 26-27, <<https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=0900001680303190>>.

321 Czech Republic, Germany, Latvia (no candidates), Montenegro, Poland, Switzerland, United Kingdom (cannot confirm).

In **Albania**, in the 2015 local elections, four self-declared Roma women ran for municipal council positions. Two of them were elected: Nadire Rrenja is a member of the Berat Municipal Council and Albana Nuredini is a member of the Elbasan Municipal Council. Moreover, some members of the Socialist party are self-declared Roma.³²²

In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, in the 2016 local elections, 24 municipalities and towns provided reserved seats for representatives of national minorities in their statutes, making up a total of 26 seats.³²³ A total of 40 candidates from the Roma national minority were certified, of which nine were elected to municipal councils. Three of them were elected from two political party lists (SDP – Social-democratic Party, SBB – Fahrudin Radonicic) and the remaining six elected were independent candidates; all of the elected Roma were men.³²⁴ According to the information from the OSCE mission, two of the elected Roma were chairpersons of the municipal councils.³²⁵

In **Bulgaria**, according to a study on local engagement for Roma inclusion in the municipality of Pavlikeni that was commissioned by FRA, three Roma were elected as city councilors in 2015, which was a significant development. One of them was elected deputy chair of the city council, while the other two were Roma activists and members of the Roma NGO Amalipe.³²⁶

In **Croatia's** local elections, held in May 2017, members of national/ethnic minorities were guaranteed the right to elect a total of 310 members of representative bodies in 156 local and regional self-government units, pursuant to the Local Elections Act and local statutes. Out of them, the Roma minority was guaranteed the right to elect 13

representatives to the representative bodies of self-government units (municipalities, towns/cities and counties), which resulted in 11 elected representatives (nine men and two women) as the right was not exercised in some municipalities.³²⁷ In the 2013 local elections, Roma elected ten representatives (9 men and 1 woman) in eight self-government units. In addition, one representative was elected following a by-election, while in three municipalities where Roma had the right to elect representatives there were no candidates, thus none elected.³²⁸

In the **Czech Republic**, the Office of the Government first monitored the representation of Roma in elected or appointed positions in 2016, when there were only six Roma in elected political office in municipal councils. No Roma were elected to the regional councils.³²⁹

Finland reported that in the last local elections, which took place in 2017, out of the nine Roma candidates, one man (Aarre Lindeman, Social Democratic Party) won the highest share of votes (5.2 per cent of all the votes) in the municipality of Hattula. In the municipality of Hausjärvi, a young Roma man Mikael Hedman was elected a deputy member.³³⁰

Greece reported that there are many self-declared Roma throughout the country who are members of various political parties. In Greece there is no differentiation between Roma and non-Roma members within any political party. Roma have stood as candidates of both mainstream political parties and Roma political parties. A number of them have been elected for the posts of municipal or regional councilors.³³¹

Hungary reported that, while no information was gathered about the ethnicity of candidates in local and regional elections, out of the 252 candidates nominated by

322 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the OSCE Presence in Albania, received 7 February 2018, and Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Civil Society Organization "Roma Women Rights Center", received 17 April 2018.

323 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Mission of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the UN, OSCE and other International Organizations, received 27 February 2018.

324 All elected candidates were men between 40 and 68 years of age. Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Mission of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the UN, OSCE and other International Organizations, received 27 February 2018.

325 According to the OSCE Mission, seven Roma candidates were elected, one of them woman, and the age range of the Roma representatives was 30-70 years.

326 Deyan Kolev, "Local Engagement for Roma Inclusion (LERI) – Locality study Pavlikeni (Bulgaria), 2016", FRA, 2016, p. 8, <http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/local-engagement-roma-bulgaria-pavlikeni_en.pdf>.

327 The Municipality of Kotoriba did not hold a supplementary election because the competent election commission had not received any slate proposal.

328 The ten representatives were elected in one county (Međimurje) and seven municipalities (with two councillors in two municipalities). By-elections were held in September 2013, as a result of which one more Roma representative was elected (Podturen), while in three municipalities (Kotoriba, Peteranec and Petrijanec) there were no candidates and therefore elections were not held. Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Government Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Republic of Croatia, received 16 February 2018.

329 "Six Romani men, one Romani woman running for the Czech lower house", *op. cit.*, note 223.

330 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Delegation of Finland to the OSCE, received 20 March 2018.

331 323 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Special Secretariat on Roma Social Inclusion, Ministry of Labour, Social Insurance and Social Solidarity, Greece, received 15 February 2018.

Roma organizations to run for local councils in the 2014 election, 13 were elected (10 men and 3 women).³³² In addition, the 1,031 Roma national minority self-governments (autonomous organizations operating as independent legal entities, introduced in 1993), comprise 3,920 representatives (2,721 men and 1,199 women).³³³ However, as noted by an expert meeting convened by ODIHR, the self-governments are elected bodies that function in parallel to mainstream institutions and decide on matters related to education, the use of language in public institutions and the protection of traditions and culture. They have access to local council committee meetings, but they do not have a vote on the matters decided.³³⁴

In the **former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**, the OSCE Mission to Skopje reported that in the 2017 local elections, 22 Roma councillors were elected country wide, five of whom were women. This was lower than the 2013 elections, which returned 33 Roma councillors, among them eight women.³³⁵

In **Montenegro**, the OSCE field operation observed that the current ruling coalition – the Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS) – had a few Roma candidates in their list for local councils, but none were placed in winnable positions.³³⁶ The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women noted with concern that women in Montenegro, including those belonging to minorities, continue to be under-represented in public and political life, and recommended that the authorities create an enabling environment for women’s participation in political and public life, in particular with regard to women belonging to minority groups.³³⁷

In **Romania**, the Roma Party “Pro-Europa” Association, a non-governmental Roma organization, participated in the local elections with its own party list. In the

2016 Local Elections, local Roma councilors were elected. Moreover, the Social Democrat Party (SDP) and Alliance of European Liberal Democrats (ALDE) promoted Roma on the party lists in local elections, but the exact number of local councilors was not known. Furthermore, one independent Roma candidate was elected as a local councilor in Bucharest. No county councilors from Roma political organizations were elected because they all failed to reach the required electoral threshold.³³⁸

In **Russia**, an ethnic Roma, Rustam Lvovich Koldaras (male, born 1973) was elected as a deputy in the City Duma of the 6th convocation (2015-2020) in Maloyaroslavets city (Kaluga region).³³⁹

In **Serbia**, according to a civil society organization and the Roma National Council of the Roma National Minority, one Roma woman, representing the governing Serbian Progressive Party is a member of the Assembly of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina.³⁴⁰ Also, one Roma man is a member of the local council, and there are two Roma men and one Roma women in the local parliaments.³⁴¹

Slovakia informed ODIHR that, in the 2013 elections for the Self-Governing regions (VÚC), 11 Roma candidates each received more than 1,000 votes; one of them (Stanislav Vospálek) was elected. In addition, there were a great number of self-declared Roma candidates in municipal elections.³⁴² The Roma Civil Monitor reported that in the most recent municipal elections, in 2014, per the estimates of the NDI, approximately 400 Romani candidates succeeded in becoming local councilors in 140 municipalities.³⁴³

In **Slovenia**, the Roma minority continued to be represented in the 18 municipalities and two cities where the right to elect one council member representing Roma

332 The elected councilors represented Lungo Drom (5), Fiatal Romák Országos Szövetsége (2), Magyarországi Cigánypárt (3) and Phralipe Független Cigány Szervezet (3). Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary, received 15 February 2018.

333 More information on the national minority self-governments, <<https://www.oronk.hu>>. Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary, received 15 February 2018.

334 “Roma and Sinti Political Participation: Opportunities and Risks of Local-level Engagement”, *op. cit.*, note 13, p. 7.

335 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the OSCE Mission to Skopje, received 8 February 2018.

336 Based on information from the National Coordinator for Roma (Ministry of Human and Minority Rights) and the president of the youth Roma NGO Mladi Roma. Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the OSCE Field Operation to Montenegro, received 8 February 2018.

337 “Concluding observations on the second periodic report of Montenegro”, UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 24 July 2017, paras. 28, 29(a), <http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/TreatyBodyExternal/countries.aspx?CountryCode=MNE&Lang=EN>.

338 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Mission of Romania to the International Organizations in Vienna, received 7 February 2018.

339 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the OSCE, received 5 April 2018. [Unofficial translation from Russian to English]

340 Response to the ODIHR Questionnaire from Roma Women Rights Center – Serbia, received 7 May 2018; Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the OSCE Mission to Serbia, received 8 February 2018.

341 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from Roma Women Rights Center – Serbia, received 7 May 2018.

342 The parties with Roma candidates were Smer SD, Sieť, KDH, OĽaNO and Most-Híd. Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic, The Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities, received 22 March 2018.

343 Roma Civil Monitor Slovakia, *op. cit.*, note 134, pp. 13-14.

is guaranteed by law.³⁴⁴ The Local Elections Act allows a mandatory Roma community representative to run for election in a municipality with a Roma population if, during local elections, no Roma representative has secured enough votes to be elected councilor.³⁴⁵ In the 2014 local elections, there were 28 Roma candidates altogether. Five women and 15 men candidates were elected – all of them as representatives of Roma communities in the 20 municipalities.³⁴⁶

In **Spain**, according to ERTE, ten Roma candidates succeeded in being elected as local councilors in the 2015 municipal elections.³⁴⁷ Spain's response confirmed that there are ten Romani councillors from various political parties. Among them, Manuel Bustamente, from the People's Party, has been a member of the regional parliament of Valencia.³⁴⁸

In **Turkey**, according to information from ERTE, some parties nominated Roma candidates for the municipal council in the 2014 local elections. However, in most cases they were placed in low, unelectable ranks in the lists. Only one Roma individual was known to have been elected to a municipal council in Turkey.³⁴⁹

Ukraine replied that it does not have complete information on the number of candidates/or elected councilors from the Roma minority. Nevertheless, based on the information provided by regional state authorities in Transcarpathia, Odessa, Poltava and Cherkasy, in the 2015 local elections, nine representatives of the Roma national minority (8 men and 1 woman) ran for village or city councils, and three of the men were elected to city councils.³⁵⁰

2.3 Executive structures

A number of participating States did respond to the section on executive structures in the ODIHR questionnaire.³⁵¹ Most of the responses indicated either that there are no self-declared Roma and Sinti within the governmental apparatus as ministers of secretaries of state,³⁵² or that such information is not available, often for reasons related to specific restrictions regarding the collection of data on the ethnicity of individuals.³⁵³ Three participating States informed ODIHR that there are no Roma advisers in ministries and other government structures.³⁵⁴ Fourteen participating States informed ODIHR that such information is not available.³⁵⁵ The Czech Republic and Romania provided information about appointed Roma advisers in previous governments, while six participating States mentioned that there are Roma and Sinti advisers within their current government apparatus.³⁵⁶

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Norway and Poland responded that there are no Roma and Sinti in other positions within the government apparatus. Nine participating States informed ODIHR that such information is not available,³⁵⁷ while 12 provided information regarding Roma and Sinti within central or regional governmental structures, ranging from "one" individual to "several" or "a significant number".³⁵⁸

Twenty-four participating States reported that certain executive governmental structures address issues related to Roma and Sinti as part of their broader mandate.³⁵⁹ Fifteen participating States reported that they do not have specific governmental structures or institutions to deal

344 Based on article 39 of the Local Self-Government Act. "Fourth opinion on Slovenia", *op. cit.*, note 146, p. 30.

345 "Roma and Sinti Political Participation: Opportunities and Risks of Local-level Engagement", *op. cit.*, note 13.

346 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Representation of the Republic of Slovenia to the UN, OSCE and other International Organizations in Vienna, received 5 February 2018.

347 "Fact Sheet on the Situation of Roma in Spain", *op. cit.*, note 243, p. 9.

348 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Representation of Spain to the OSCE, Spain, received 5 March 2018.

349 "Fact Sheet on the Situation of Roma in Turkey", *op. cit.*, note 244, p. 9.

350 Two to Uzhgorod City Council (both male, born 1972 and 1980, the "Renaissance" faction and "Unified Center"), one to Zelenogorsk settlement council of Lyubashevsky district (male, the Petro Poroshenko Bloc). Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna, received 2 February 2018.

351 Armenia, Belarus, Canada, Cyprus, Estonia, Holy See, Iceland, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Mongolia, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkmenistan, United States, Uzbekistan.

352 Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Czech Republic, Finland, Greece, Montenegro, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain.

353 Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Russian Federation, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom.

354 Montenegro, Poland, Norway.

355 Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom.

356 Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Finland, Greece, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Slovakia.

357 Bulgaria, Italy, Portugal, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovenia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom.

358 Albania, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Slovakia, Spain.

359 Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom.

with Roma and Sinti issues.³⁶⁰ Five participating States reported the existence of structures specifically mandated to address Roma and Sinti issues, namely the **Czech Republic** (Government Council for Roma Minority Affairs Unit), **Greece** (Special Secretariat of Social Inclusion of the Roma, within the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity), **Romania** (The National Agency for Roma and the National Centre for Roma Culture – Romano Kher), **Slovakia** (Office of the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities) and **Slovenia** (Governmental Commission for the Protection of Roma).

2.4 Consultative mechanisms

The ODIHR questionnaire inquired whether consultation or participation mechanisms for Roma and Sinti, including those related to integration strategies, exist within the OSCE participating States. Participating States were also asked whether there are overall consultative or advisory structures in place to deal with Roma and Sinti issues, and about the mandate and representation of Roma and Sinti within these structures.

Under the auspices of the EU NRIS, EU member states have established national contact points and put in place structures for consultation and dialogue with Roma and Sinti. It is clear from the responses of participating States that these arrangements vary greatly in terms of scope, ambition and efficacy. As part of the EU accession process, some candidate countries have devised action plans and strategies for Roma inclusion and set up consultative working groups to manage the drafting of strategies that include opportunities for structured participation by Roma experts and organizations. Again, the varied outcomes serve as a reminder that the mere existence of formal consultation mechanisms does not guarantee effective public participation of Roma and Sinti.

The issue of Roma participation, empowerment and effective local level implementation of inclusion policies

became a pressing concern for the European Commission as the implementation gap became ever more apparent in the EU Roma Framework in the years following its launch in 2011.³⁶¹ In its subsequent communications, the European Commission has repeatedly emphasized that civil society and, in particular, Roma organizations must play an active role in generating change, and has called on member states to secure civil society participation in the review, implementation and monitoring of national strategies.³⁶²

Many Roma participants at ODIHR's consultation workshop on 5 and 6 June 2018, in Warsaw acknowledged that there had been notable developments in terms of consultative mechanisms, owing to a good extent to the EU framework. However, there was an abiding sense that these mechanisms are far from optimal. One civil society representative stated that the consultative mechanisms of the EU framework are not working and that monitoring is weak. For example, they said, this is because Roma participation is not mandatory and implementation is mainly managed by non-Roma. Participants also highlighted a lack of transparency and accountability regarding the agenda of consultative mechanisms.³⁶³

Albania became a candidate country to the EU in 2014. In this context, the Action Plan for Integration of Roma and Egyptians 2016-2020 was developed.³⁶⁴ A broad range of governmental and civil society actors, including from Roma and Egyptian organizations, provided input into the process.³⁶⁵ The State Committee on Minorities is an advisory body on minority issues to the government, and includes one member of the Roma community.³⁶⁶

Austria, as a member state of the EU, takes part in the EU Framework for NRIS.³⁶⁷ A Roma Platform aimed at assessing the implementation of the NRIS has been set up by the Roma Contact Point within the Austrian Federal Chancellery, which include public authorities and civil society stakeholders, and is convened two to three

360 Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Finland, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Montenegro, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russian Federation, Serbia, Spain.

361 "An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020", *op. cit.*, note 7, p. 3.

362 "Assessing the implementation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies and the Council Recommendation on effective Roma integration measures in the Member States – 2016", *op. cit.*, note 39. More details of EU supported efforts for regional and local authorities to ensure the implementation of national Roma integration strategies are available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/justice-and-fundamental-rights/discrimination/roma-and-eu/who-we-work-roma-integration_en>.

363 Comments by participants at Consultation workshop 5-6 June 2018, *op. cit.*, note 73.

364 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Directorate International Organizations, Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Republic of Albania, received 7 February 2018.

365 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the OSCE Presence in Albania, received 7 February 2018.

366 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Directorate International Organizations, Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Republic of Albania, received 7 February 2018. Information confirmed by the Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the OSCE Presence in Albania, received 7 February 2018, as well as by the Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Civil Society Organization "Roma Women Rights Center", received 17 April 2018.

367 For more information, see <https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/roma-and-eu/roma-integration-eu-countries_en>.

times per year.³⁶⁸ Roma civil society members expressed dissatisfaction that the online consultation on the draft strategy precluded broader consultation, and also excluded many interested Roma from participation because German was not their first language and that their access to the Internet was limited.³⁶⁹ There is also an Advisory Council on the Ethnic Group of Roma (Volksgruppenbeirat) in the Federal Chancellery of Austria, which can make recommendations to public authorities. The Advisory Council consists of eight members (6 men and 2 women), half of them appointed by proposal of minority organizations.³⁷⁰

In **Belgium**, to initiate and consolidate a participatory process of dialogue with all stakeholders and all Roma communities, the national Roma Contact Point created the Belgian National Roma Platform in May 2016, within the same EU Framework for NRIS. The work of the platform is facilitated by a steering committee comprised of representatives of administrations of the federal level and the federated entities, Unia (the independent public institution that combats discrimination and promotes equal opportunities), and the associations of cities and towns.³⁷¹

In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, there are consultation processes involving Roma in the development of policy documents and action plans.³⁷² The Roma Advisory Board was established in 2002 as an advisory body to the Council of Ministers (CoM). The Roma Advisory Body consists of 22 members, equally divided between governmental and Roma representatives. Out of 11 Roma representatives, there are three women and eight men.³⁷³ The 2017-2020 Roma Action Plan was developed in co-operation with the Roma Advisory Board.³⁷⁴ Thematic working groups designed to report on progress regarding the implementation of Roma Action Plans have been set up by the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees, each having three Roma representatives participating in their work.³⁷⁵

In **Bulgaria**, the National Roma Platform facilitates dialogue, exchange, involvement and co-operation between

all stakeholders relevant to the NRIS or relevant mainstream policies. A series of meetings were organized in 2017 with a broad range of stakeholders, including women and youth, mediators and civil society representatives. It was also mentioned that representatives of Roma civil society were taking part in the working group.³⁷⁶ The National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues at the Council of Ministers (NCCEII) has advisory and co-ordinating functions and assists the government in the development and implementation of state policy on ethnicity and integration issues. In 2016, it was reported that 49 of the 59 civil society organizations represented were Roma organizations or were addressing the question of Roma inclusion. This structure is paralleled at regional and local levels.³⁷⁷ However, there is cause for some concern. According to the Roma Civil Monitor, in the period of 2016 and 2017, dialogue between Roma civil society organizations and the government was shifted to other consultative formats or carried out through direct contact with the institutions.³⁷⁸

In **Croatia**, the National platform for Roma inclusion was set up in 2016, with the support of the European Commission, to strengthen the participation of relevant stakeholders, including Roma youth and women in the implementation and monitoring processes of the NRIS. In addition, with the support of United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and within the context of the Action Plan 2018-2020, six stakeholder working groups were organized, which include Roma representatives. Two focus group meetings have been organized in Roma settlements to enable the participation of Roma women. However, Roma and civil society representatives expressed concern that "there has been insufficient consultation and co-ordination with the communities themselves at central and local level in the implementation of the NRIS 2013-2020".³⁷⁹ The Constitutional Act on the Rights of National Minorities (CARNM), adopted in 2002, led to the establishment of an advisory National Council of

368 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Bundeskanzleramt Österreich / Verfassungsdienst, received 6 February 2018.

369 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from Romano Centro Austria, received 16 April 2018.

370 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Bundeskanzleramt Österreich / Verfassungsdienst, received 6 February 2018.

371 Response to the questionnaire from the Permanent Representation of Belgium to the OSCE

372 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Mission of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the UN, OSCE and other International Organizations, received 27 February 2018.

373 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, received 8 February 2018.

374 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Mission of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the UN, OSCE and other International Organizations, received 27 February 2018.

375 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, received 8 February 2018.

376 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Mission of Bulgaria to the UN, the OSCE and other International Organizations in Vienna, Republic of Bulgaria, received 9 February 2018.

377 *Ibid.*

378 Roma Civil Monitor Bulgaria, *op. cit.*, note 87.

379 "Fourth Opinion on Croatia", Council of Europe, Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, adopted 18 November 2015, published 29 November 2016, p. 31, <<https://rm.coe.int/16806c268b>>.

National Minorities (NCNM). A Roma member of parliament sits on the council. At the regional and local level, advisory bodies to city/municipality councils were also established.³⁸⁰

In the **Czech Republic**, the Government Council for Roma Minority Affairs and the Secretariat of the Government Council for National Minorities run public consultations in the form of working groups, with the aim of monitoring the Strategy for Roma Integration until 2020.³⁸¹ There has been some criticism of the design, implementation and evaluation of the NRIS 2011-2015, which some claim did not adequately include Roma, who are seen rather as passive beneficiaries.³⁸²

In **Finland**, Roma are consulted and actively participate in the design, monitoring process and evaluation of national integration strategies and policies addressing Roma.³⁸³ The Advisory Board on Romani Affairs was set up by the Finnish authorities in 1956 under a different name, but currently works under the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. Its role is to enhance opportunities for Roma to participate in society and to monitor developments related to their living conditions. It contributed to the development of legislation to improve the situation of Roma. Further, there are regional Advisory Boards on Romani Affairs to facilitate co-operation between Roma and authorities.³⁸⁴

In **Germany**, the Advisory Committee for matters relating to German Sinti and Roma comprises representatives of Roma and Sinti civil society, members of the German Bundestag from all parties, and representatives of the Federal Ministry of the Interior and all 16 federal Länder. The task of the Advisory Committee is to safeguard contact between the Roma and Sinti, the Federal Government and the German Bundestag.³⁸⁵

In **Greece**, a board of experts has been set up by the Minister of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity

in relation to the establishment of the Special Secretariat on Roma Social Inclusion. Along with governmental representatives from different institutions, it also comprises two representatives designated by the Roma community, and is aimed at providing data and support through research, analysis and data collection, as well as draft recommendations on Roma issues.³⁸⁶

In **Hungary**, the Roma Co-ordination Council provides a framework for social dialogue and co-operation between different stakeholders in order to promote social inclusion of the Roma population by identifying problems, evaluating existing actions and proposing recommendations. The Roma Platform was set up to ensure consultation on the regional level and as a forum for discussion between public authorities and relevant stakeholders, including Roma civil society and experts. A thematic working group on Roma issues was set up within the Human Rights Working Group, comprising 17 member organizations – the majority of them Roma. A Working Group Responsible for National Minority Affairs is also functioning under the same Human Rights Working Group.³⁸⁷ One participant in the ODIHR consultative workshop in Warsaw explained that, while in Hungary there are Roma advisers, inter-ministerial working groups and many other good examples of consultative mechanisms, they do not translate into any real leverage over decision-making.³⁸⁸

In **Italy**, in September 2017, the Forum of Roma, Sinti and Caminanti Communities was set up in relation to the National Office against Racial Discrimination (the National Contact Point) and the NRIS 2012-2020. This forum encourages participation of representatives of 29 Roma, Sinti and Caminanti civil society organizations.³⁸⁹ The FCNM of the Council of Europe noted that Roma Sinti and Caminanti representatives expressed

380 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Government Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Republic of Croatia, received 16 February 2018.

381 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Mission of the Czech Republic to the OSCE, received 26 April 2018.

382 "Fourth Opinion on the Czech Republic", Council of Europe, Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, Strasbourg, adopted on 16 November 2015, published 28 June 2016, para. 35, <<http://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=0900001680684ff9>>.

383 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Delegation of Finland to the OSCE, received 20 March 2018.

384 "Fourth Report Submitted by Finland Pursuant to Article 25, Paragraph 2 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities", Council of Europe, Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, Strasbourg, 8 April 2015, para.121, p. 28, <<https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=09000016802f299f>>.

385 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from Auswärtiges Amt [the German Federal Foreign Office], received 5 February 2018.

386 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Special Secretariat on Roma Social Inclusion, Ministry of Labour, Social Insurance and Social Solidarity, Greece, received 15 February 2018.

387 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary, received 15 February 2018.

388 Comments by participants at Consultation workshop 5-6 June 2018, *op. cit.*, note 73.

389 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Delegation of Italy to the OSCE, received 29 January 2018.

reservations regarding their consultation on the implementation of the NRIS.³⁹⁰

In **Latvia**, since 2016, the Latvian Roma Platform project, which aims to provide a platform for dialogue between all relevant stakeholders on the issue of Roma inclusion, has been implemented by the Ministry of Culture, with the support of the EU. Roma are also represented in consultative bodies such as the Minorities' Consulting Council of the President of the Republic of Latvia, the Council supervising the implementation of Roma integration policy measures of the Ministry of Culture and the Consulting Council in Ethnic Minority Education Affairs of the Ministry of Education and Science.³⁹¹

In **Montenegro**, a commission was set up to monitor the implementation of the Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma and Egyptians 2016-2020. Two of the 24 members of the commission are Roma, and both are men. The Roma Council, an advisory body, has 17 members (four women and 13 men).³⁹² A platform for Roma and Egyptians was set up in 2016 as a component of an EU-funded project.³⁹³

In the **Netherlands**, every two months there are (informal) consultative meetings between the Ministry of Social Affairs/Employment and a representative group of self-declared Roma to discuss Roma-related issues.³⁹⁴

In **Poland**, according to the Permanent Mission of Poland, the NRIS entitled "Programme for the integration of the Roma community in Poland for the period 2014-2020" was adopted in 2014 by the Council of Ministers, after broad consultations with the Roma community.³⁹⁵

In **Portugal**, a Consultative Group for the Integration of Roma Communities (CONCIG) is consulted in relation to the implementation of the NRIS of Portugal. Roma representatives were consulted in 2017 in the process of revising the NRIS. The process concludes in 2018.³⁹⁶

In **Romania**, in 2017, the National Agency for Roma set up a consultative council, with the role of consulting with and ensuring permanent involvement of civil society in implementing and monitoring the NRIS. The Consultative Council comprises the representatives of 70 Roma NGOs from across the country.³⁹⁷ Despite the fact that the NRIS provides for the setup of Ministerial Committees within relevant line ministries, which should also comprise Roma civil society representatives or experts, there is little or no information about the effective set up or work of these committees.³⁹⁸ At the same time, Roma civil society organizations stated that they were not "properly consulted at the drafting stage of the NRIS and their comments and suggestions were not taken into account in the adopted document".³⁹⁹

At the same time, the Council of National Minorities (CMN) is a consultative structure of the Government which comprise three representatives of the organizations belonging to national minorities represented in the Parliament of Romania⁴⁰⁰. Since the Roma Party "Pro-Europa" Association is the organization representing the Roma minority in the Romanian Parliament, it is therefore represented in the CMN.⁴⁰¹

In **Serbia**, the drafting process of the Strategy for the Social Inclusion of Roma in the Republic of Serbia by 2025 (Roma Strategy) and the relevant Action Plan involved a broad consultative process comprising members of Roma civil society organizations and the National Council of the Roma National Minority. At the level of the government, a co-ordination body was established for monitoring the implementation of the Roma Strategy. Representatives of the Roma national minority participate in the activities of this body. The Council of the Government of Serbia for improving the status of Roma and implementing the Decade of Roma Inclusion was set up in 2013 and

390 "Fourth Opinion on Italy", Council of Europe, Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, adopted on 19 November 2015, published 12 July 2016, para. 115, <<https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTM-Content?documentId=09000016806959b9>>.

391 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia, received 12 February 2018.

392 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Mission of Montenegro to the UN, OSCE and other International Organizations in Vienna, received 6 March 2018.

393 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the OSCE Field Operation to Montenegro, received 8 February 2018.

394 *Ibid.*

395 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Poland to the UN Office and the International Organizations in Vienna, received 31 January 2018.

396 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the High Commission for Migration, International Relations Unit, Portugal, received 9 February 2018.

397 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Mission of Romania to the International Organizations in Vienna, received 7 February 2018.

398 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from E-romnja organization, received 20 April 2018.

399 "Fourth Opinion on Romania", *op. cit.*, note 145.

400 According to the provisions of art. 2 of the Government Decision no. 589/2001 on the establishment of the Council of National Minorities, as subsequently amended and supplemented.

401 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Mission of Romania to the International Organizations in Vienna, received 7 February 2018.

is tasked with preparing policy proposals, implementing the adopted government policies and providing opinions regarding Roma policy to relevant stakeholders. The Council of the Government of Serbia for National Minorities is headed by the prime minister and comprises line ministers and the presidents of all councils of national minorities. National councils of national minorities are bodies representing national minorities as collectives, and play an advisory role in state bodies in relevant areas that impact the ability of national minorities to exercise their rights.⁴⁰²

In **Slovakia**, the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities has, under its auspices, a permanent steering working group for the preparation and implementation of the NRIS until 2020. This steering group has thematic working groups for its seven areas of work. Participation is ensured through three advisory organs of the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities: for mayors, for youth and for non-profit and NGOs.⁴⁰³ The Roma Civil Monitor reports “a general improvement in the governance of Romani issues, especially through the work of the Government Plenipotentiary for Romani Communities (GPRC)”, which it describes as representing “one of the most salient participatory institutions for Roma.”⁴⁰⁴

In **Slovenia**, the Governmental Commission for the Protection of Roma acts as an advisory body to the government. Beside representatives of seven ministries and four municipalities, there are four representatives of the Roma community represented in the commission. At the municipal level, the Roma community has a reserved seat in 20 councils. Nineteen of these 20 municipalities have established specialized bodies responsible for dealing with Roma-related issues for the legislative period 2014 to 2018.⁴⁰⁵ Nevertheless, there have been concerns regarding the functioning of the Roma Community Council, as the 2007 Roma Community Act has not been amended. This means that the body is not perceived to be representative of the entire community.⁴⁰⁶ The UN Human Rights Committee expressed similar concerns.⁴⁰⁷

In **Spain**, the State Council of the Roma People is an inter-departmental consultative and advisory body under the Ministry of Health, Social Policy and Equality. It comprises 20 government representatives and 20 representatives of Roma civil society organizations. There are six working groups through which the council operates. The State Council of the Roma People participated in formulating the 2012-2020 National Strategy for Social Inclusion of the Roma Population and associated operational plans and was involved in monitoring and evaluating its implementation.⁴⁰⁸

In **Sweden**, the Government Office has appointed a Roma reference group. It consists of 20 Roma women and men representing different ages and Roma groups. Meetings with the responsible ministry are carried out two to four times per year. Relevant line ministries and municipalities also hold consultation meetings with Roma representatives.⁴⁰⁹ However, there have been concerns from Roma representatives that they have not been adequately consulted, that the measures foreseen in the strategy are project-based and lack potential sustainability, and that the situation of Roma from other EU countries is not addressed.⁴¹⁰

In **Turkey**, the Committee of Monitoring and Evaluation was established in 2016 for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the National Strategy for Roma Citizens (2016 to 2021) and the First Phase Action Plan (2016 to 2018). Twelve of the members of the committee (10 men and 2 women) out of 48 declare themselves as Roma.⁴¹¹

In **Ukraine**, the Strategy for the Protection and Integration of the Roma National Minority into Ukrainian Society by 2020 was adopted in April 2013, followed by the adoption of an associated Action Plan in September 2013. The drafting of the Action Plan was carried out with the participation of Roma civil society organizations. In November 2015, an inter-departmental working group was set up regarding the implementation of the Action Plan. It includes government representatives

402 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Serbia to the OSCE and other International Organization – Vienna, received 12 February 2018.

403 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic, Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities, received 22 March 2018.

404 Roma Civil Monitor Slovakia, *op. cit.*, note 134, p. 7.

405 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Representation of the Republic of Slovenia to the UN, OSCE and other International Organizations in Vienna, received 5 February 2018.

406 “Fourth opinion on Slovenia”, *op. cit.*, note 146, p. 6.

407 “Concluding observations on the third periodic report of Slovenia”, *op. cit.*, note 148, para. 23.

408 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Representation of Spain to the OSCE, Spain, received 5 March 2018.

409 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Ministry of Culture of Sweden, received 8 February 2018

410 “Fourth Opinion on Sweden”, Council of Europe, Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, adopted 22 June 2017, published 16 October 2017, para. 28, <<https://rm.coe.int/fourth-opinion-on-sweden-adopted-on-22-june-2017/168075fbab>>.

411 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Permanent Mission of Turkey to the OSCE, received 22 March 2018.

and five Roma representatives, out of whom one is vice-chair of the working group. Several regional national minority advisory councils include Roma representatives.⁴¹² Concerns have been reported that Roma have not been sufficiently consulted and engaged in the drafting of the strategy and discussion on the action plan.⁴¹³ However, consultations have taken place between relevant stakeholders and the issue was also discussed during a 2017 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting side event.

In the **United Kingdom**, stakeholder groups are organized by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) and the Department for Education. In addition to this, the MHCLG's Race Equality team helps other government departments reach stakeholders to test the potential impact of proposed policies as needed. The stakeholder groups aim to provide Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities with input into policies that affect them. The group also acts as a platform for consulting stakeholders about proposed new policies.⁴¹⁴ However, there have been concerns that "there is no evidence that these meetings have any impact on the policy decisions of the UK Government", as the introduction of relevant policy in 2015 without consultation of a group during a previous meeting.⁴¹⁵

Priority Areas and Recommendations

Populism and the explicit inclusion of racist and xenophobic agendas in mainstream political discourse are posing increasing challenges in the OSCE region. Anti-Roma racism remains a prominent tactic for mobilizing constituencies driven by hate, resentment and prejudice. It is crucial, therefore, that public figures, politicians and decision-makers take a firm stance in condemning incidents of hate speech, discrimination or violence against Roma and Sinti communities, and that they lead by example to confront anti-Roma sentiment.

This is the first step towards more tolerant and inclusive societies, while further efforts are needed to ensure diverse political leadership, promote ethnic diversity in institutions and enable the participation and representation of Roma and Sinti, including women and youth, in public authorities and institutions, as well as governments and parliaments.

Roma continue to be under-represented in politics. To address this, continued support is needed for

capacity-building and training to empower Roma and Sinti, including women and youth, to become effective advocates, activists and politicians. Roma issues are often seen as marginal in politics and Roma are even scapegoated, adding to existing anti-Roma sentiment. As a result, Roma issues are often not prioritized in policy-making processes. At the same time, Roma and Sinti who decide to run as political candidates often face significant negative campaigning and racism. To counter this, awareness-raising and sensitization activities should be directed at mainstream parties and non-Roma candidates. This can be done by making clear the importance of broad-based, inclusive politics for social cohesion. Political parties should, therefore, step up their efforts to include Roma and Sinti in their platforms and support their efforts to stand as candidates in electable positions.

Relevant public authorities and civil society stakeholders should provide support and training to elected Roma and Sinti representatives at all levels to improve their efficiency in representing the interests of Roma and Sinti, while donors should prioritize funding for it. At the same time, to increase awareness regarding the importance of electoral processes, educational initiatives should support Roma and Sinti, with a particular focus on civic education. Such educational activities should focus on communicating the importance of voting and voting rights, and include training on activities to prevent manipulation and vote-buying. In addition, to address illegal practices in electoral processes, such as vote-buying or pressuring voters, participating States should strengthen mechanisms to enforce existing legislation sanctioning them.

Training programmes should also address existing and potential Roma and Sinti candidates, including women and youth. Community organization and mobilization programmes should also be supported to empower Roma and Sinti to participate in public and political life at local, regional and national levels. It is essential to ensure the participation of Roma and Sinti women and men in public and political life as voters, candidates and full partners in policy-making processes concerning them through mainstream parties, as well as through ethnic-based parties and organizations.

As has been mentioned, the mere existence of formal consultation mechanisms related to policy-making in connection to Roma and Sinti issues is not in itself

412 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the International Organizations in Vienna, received 2 February 2018.

413 "Fourth Opinion on Ukraine", *op. cit.*, note 245. See also "ECRI Report on Ukraine (fifth monitoring cycle)", *op. cit.*, note 105.

414 Response to the ODIHR questionnaire from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, United Kingdom, received 8 February 2018.

415 "UK NGOs' Alternative Report – Submission to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination with regard to the UK Government's 21st to 23rd Periodic Reports", Runnymede Trust, June 2016, <<https://www.runnymedetrust.org/uploads/CERD%20Civil%20Society%20Report%20UKfinal.pdf>>.

sufficient. As the previous Status Report stated, policy implementation addressing Roma and Sinti is often most active at the local level, particularly considering the principles of decentralization and subsidiarity. Hence it is of particular importance that these consultation mechanisms entail effective involvement of Roma and Sinti while fully considering the needs and priorities of Roma and Sinti communities, as determined by and together with them. More efforts are needed to ensure that Roma and Sinti are equal and effective partners in policy-making processes and in the implementation of all measures concerning them.

PART III

OSCE Activities and Initiatives to Enhance the Participation of Roma and Sinti in Public and Political Life

Activities implemented by ODIHR

During the review period, ODIHR organized a wide range of activities in pursuance of its mandate to enhance the participation of Roma and Sinti, including women and youth, in public and political life. The activities summarized in the chronological sequence below have served as platforms for structured discussions to examine positive developments and challenges to effective political participation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE area. These activities have included training sessions, workshops, awareness-raising and voter education campaigns, with a focus on capacity-building for Roma women and youth. They have served to empower Roma and Sinti communities and individual activists and have provided forums for Roma and Sinti experts, politicians, public officials and civic activists to collectively promote the importance of enhancing public and political participation at the national and international levels.

Since 2013, ODIHR has actively worked on the issue of Roma and Sinti youth. Through the Roma and Sinti Youth Initiative project,⁴¹⁶ ten implementing partner agreements on youth projects with civil society organizations from seven OSCE participating states (Croatia, Czech Republic, Georgia, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Serbia and Spain) have been signed. Through these projects, 721 individuals have benefited, 40 per cent of whom were women. Through the awareness-raising component of the project, the participation of 109 Roma and Sinti youth (46 men and 63 women) at OSCE and other human dimension events has been supported. Three junior experts have been hired to work in ODIHR for a period of six months, and two young Roma were supported as short-term election observers.

In November 2014, in Warsaw, ODIHR organized the expert meeting “Roma and Sinti Political Participation:

Opportunities and Risks of Local-level Engagement”.⁴¹⁷ The meeting convened Roma and Sinti political activists, elected representatives and other politicians, experts and academics with extensive experience of and knowledge related to the political participation of Roma and Sinti. The meeting aimed to explore current mechanisms through which Roma and Sinti participate in politics at the local level, highlighting opportunities and challenges in this area.

Since 2014, ODIHR has supported the Ukrainian authorities in addressing existing obstacles faced by Roma, with a specific focus on granting equal access to civil registration and identification documents for Roma in the country. In September 2014, ODIHR published the “Situation Assessment Report on Roma in Ukraine and the Impact of the Current Crisis”, which identified lack of access to personal documents as the main challenge facing Roma communities in Ukraine. ODIHR also noted that there are no comprehensive and accurate data available on the number of Roma in Ukraine. Furthermore, reportedly, there is a knowledge gap on the causes and obstacles preventing Roma men and women from obtaining personal documents and establishing their legal identity, which negatively impacts their access to basic services as well their ability to participate in public and political life.⁴¹⁸

In November 2015, ODIHR and the Office of the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, in close co-operation with UNHCR and Roma civil society, hosted an expert meeting to define solutions to address the problems Roma face in accessing civil registration and personal identification documents. The meeting resulted in a comprehensive set of recommendations to remedy the lack of civil registration and identification documents among Roma in Ukraine.⁴¹⁹ In 2017, ODIHR commissioned a baseline study to map the existing

416 “Participation of Roma and Sinti Youth”, Factsheet, ODIHR, April 2018, <<https://www.osce.org/odihr/377284?download=true>>.

417 “Roma and Sinti Political Participation: Opportunities and Risks of Local-level Engagement”, *op. cit.*, note 13.

418 “Situation Assessment Report on Roma in Ukraine and the Impact of the Current Crisis”, ODIHR, 29 September 2014, <<http://www.osce.org/odihr/124494>>.

419 “Summary Report – Access to Identification and Civil Registration Documents by Roma in Ukraine”, ODIHR, 21 December 2015, <<https://www.osce.org/odihr/211996>>.

administrative practices, analyse the current legal and policy framework and offer recommendations for overcoming the identified challenges. In May 2017, ODIHR organized a roundtable event on “Access to Identity and Civil Registration Documents among Roma in Ukraine”, in Odessa, in co-operation with the State Migration Service of Ukraine. The participants developed the Odessa declaration, which sets out specific recommendations to overcome obstacles to civil registration and identification documents faced by Roma in Ukraine.⁴²⁰

In December 2014, a Roma and Sinti Youth Conference in Belgrade was convened by ODIHR, with the support of the Office for Human and Minority Rights and the Ministry of Youth and Sport of Serbia. The conference focused on the empowerment and social inclusion of Roma and Sinti communities through youth activism and the participation of Roma and Sinti youth in politics and democratic processes. The conference report includes background papers, prepared by young Roma and Sinti activists and academics, relating to youth political participation and election-related challenges.⁴²¹

Furthermore, ODIHR organized a consultation meeting with Roma and Sinti women activists in May 2015 in Warsaw.⁴²² The consultation meeting underscored the need to further empower Roma and Sinti women through programmes that relate to voter education, electoral observation and political candidacy. Promoting the participation of Roma and Sinti women within public administration and advisory bodies at the local and national levels was also marked as a priority.

In September 2016, ODIHR organized the high-level meeting “Confronting increasing manifestations of racism and xenophobia against Roma and Sinti: The Role of Political Leaders in Countering Discrimination, Racism, Hate Crimes and Violence against Roma and Sinti Communities”, in co-operation with the Council of Europe and the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma.⁴²³ The meeting, held in Berlin, was hosted by the 2016 German OSCE Chairmanship and brought together more than 130 participants, including members of the OSCE

Parliamentary Assembly, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the European Parliament and of national parliaments, along with high-ranking government representatives, civil society representatives and other relevant stakeholders in the fight against racism and discrimination targeted at Roma and Sinti. The participants in the meeting put forward a number of specific recommendations on how to enhance the participation of Roma and Sinti in public and political life.

In October 2016, ODIHR organized a consultation meeting entitled “Political Participation of Roma and Sinti: The Right to Vote and Electoral Processes”, in Warsaw.⁴²⁴ It included a session on obstacles in electoral processes facing specific groups within Roma and Sinti communities, such as women, and included Roma women politicians and activists among its participants, including as panelists and moderators in all sessions.

In March 2017, ODIHR held the workshop “Strengthening Diverse Leadership, Participation and Representation of Roma and Sinti, including Women and Youth, in Public and Political Life”, in co-operation with the Commission on Security and Co-operation in Europe (U.S. Helsinki Commission), at the European Parliament in Brussels.⁴²⁵ The workshop aimed to strengthen dialogue between Roma and Sinti, policymakers and politicians and at exploring strategies to enhance civic and political participation so that the interests and priorities of local communities can be reflected on the national and European political and policy agendas.

In September 2017, ODIHR organized a side event at the annual Human Dimension Implementation Meeting in Warsaw focusing on good practices in promoting Roma and Sinti youth participation.⁴²⁶ The event brought together Roma and Sinti activists from the OSCE area, including representatives of organizations involved in the Office’s Roma and Sinti Youth Initiative project, to discuss challenges facing young Roma and Sinti and to explore how both civil society and public institutions are adapting to new, indirect forms of participation by young people, with a focus on Roma and Sinti youth.

420 “Conference outcome document, Odesa Declaration, Recommendations to overcome obstacles in access to civil registration and identity documents by Roma in Ukraine”, Odesa, 30-31 May 2017, ODIHR, published 2 October 2017, available in English, Ukrainian and Russian, <<https://www.osce.org/odihr/347251>>.

421 “Activism, Participation and Security among Roma and Sinti Youth”, ODIHR, 1 October 2015, <<https://www.osce.org/odihr/187861>>.

422 “Roma and Sinti women activists discuss gender equality issues at OSCE/ODIHR consultation meeting”, ODIHR, 19 May 2015, <<https://www.osce.org/odihr/158801>>.

423 “Confronting anti-Gypsyism is responsibility of mainstream society, needs strong political leadership, say participants at OSCE Chairmanship event”, ODIHR, 6 September 2016, <<https://www.osce.org/cio/262606>>.

424 “Full participation of Roma and Sinti in electoral processes essential to their successful inclusion, say participants at ODIHR meeting in Warsaw”, ODIHR, 28 October 2016, <<https://www.osce.org/odihr/277806>>.

425 “Strengthening Diverse Leadership, Participation and Representation of Roma and Sinti, including Women and Youth, in Public and Political Life: Workshop Summary Report”, ODIHR, 17 September 2017, <<https://www.osce.org/odihr/342211>>.

426 “Good practices in promoting Roma and Sinti youth participation presented at ODIHR event in Warsaw”, ODIHR, 19 September 2017, <<https://www.osce.org/odihr/342166>>.

Activities implemented by OSCE field operations

As was the practice in previous review periods, ODIHR continued to hold annual meetings with the focal points on Roma in OSCE field operations. Four regional meetings took place, in Podgorica, Sarajevo, Warsaw and Pristina, respectively. In addition to providing support for the CPRSI in its visits to participating States, field operations also undertake their own activities to improve the situation of Roma and Sinti in the locations where they are stationed and to promote their public and political participation.

The OSCE Presence in Albania supported the CEC in organizing a voter education campaign for Roma women and youth ahead of the 2017 parliamentary elections. The campaign was preceded by a train-the-trainer event that included 30 Roma community activists, who subsequently ran the voter education campaign with Roma women and youth in 11 locations with major Roma populations, in collaboration with the IRCA – a local Roma NGO. The awareness campaign targeted some 800 Roma women and youth and encouraged their participation in elections. The community activists helped voters find their polling station locations through an online application administered by the CEC. The campaign was beneficial for them in particular, as it helped to educate Roma women about how they can vote, as many were doing so for the first time.⁴²⁷ In addition, in the 2015 local elections, the OSCE presence delivered voter education training for Roma and Egyptian women. The training sessions aimed at informing them about the right to vote, encouraging them to participate in the 2015 local elections and in political life in general. The women participants also learnt about the amendments to the Electoral Code of 2015 concerning the improvement of gender quota, and about voting procedures. The project reached 194 women in seven cities. It was successful in raising awareness among Roma and Egyptian women about the importance of voting, and gave them with confidence to participate in the process, provided them with tools to go through the voting procedure and encouraged them to be more active in political life.

The OSCE Mission to Serbia has been actively supporting the integration and empowerment of Roma in Serbia. Their work includes substantial technical assistance to state institutions, including for enhanced Roma participation in programme planning, implementation and development. The mission has been helping to build

the capacity of Roma co-ordinators and municipal mobile teams for Roma inclusion through the Technical Assistance for Roma Inclusion (TARI) project. One of the project's components provides free legal aid assistance to Roma through the NGO partner Praxis. The project assisted approximately 1,000 people to obtain personal identification documents.

The OSCE Mission to Skopje supported the Agency for the Realization of Community Rights (ACRR) in establishing and maintaining its Participatory Forum (PF), which has operated since 2012. The PF is an informal consultative body composed of representatives of government institutions, bodies responsible for the promotion, realization and protection of the rights of smaller communities. It also includes representatives of civil society organizations from various communities, including Roma. The PF strives to promote community rights and integration in society by ensuring that recommendations and assessments for further action are introduced by the relevant authorities.

Activities implemented by other OSCE institutions

In March 2017, the OSCE and UNHCR launched⁴²⁸ the *Handbook on Statelessness: International Standards and Good Practices*⁴²⁹ under the auspices of the Austrian OSCE Chairmanship. The handbook, which was jointly developed by ODIHR, the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and UNHCR, highlights the implications of statelessness for individuals, states and societies. It also outlines good practices that can be implemented in OSCE participating States and provides recommendations concerning how to increase engagement and progress in addressing the phenomenon by OSCE participating States. The handbook highlights the nexus between statelessness and the participation of stateless persons in public life and their inclusion in decision-making processes as fundamental elements of OSCE commitments and principles. It pays specific attention to the situation of Roma and Sinti, stressing that the phenomenon of legal invisibility still affects many Roma and Sinti within the OSCE region and prevents them from accessing their socio-economic and political rights. Following the publication of the Handbook, UNHCR, together with the Austrian OSCE Chairmanship and ODIHR, co-organized a study visit for Ukrainian officials to Serbia. The purpose of the trip was to encourage the exchange of good

427 "Roma women and youth first-time voters – self-worth that is making a difference in Albania", OSCE Presence in Albania webpage, 20 September 2017, <<https://www.osce.org/stories/roma-women-and-youth-first-time-voters>>.

428 "New OSCE and UNHCR handbook aims to help states to address statelessness", OSCE, 2 March 2017, <<https://www.osce.org/cio/302471>>.

429 *Handbook on Statelessness in the OSCE Area: International Standards and Good Practices* (OSCE and UNHCR: s.l., 2017), available in English and Russian, <<https://www.osce.org/handbook/statelessness-in-the-osce-area>>.

practices for issuing documents confirming nationality as a means to reduce and prevent statelessness among Roma and Sinti. The outcomes of the study visit were presented on 2 October 2017 in Vienna at the “Practical OSCE-UNHCR Seminar on Sharing Good Practices on Statelessness among OSCE participating States”.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: OSCE Action Plan

**1 and 2 December 2003,
Maastricht, the Netherlands**

DECISION No. 3/03

ACTION PLAN ON IMPROVING THE SITUATION OF ROMA AND SINTI WITHIN THE OSCE AREA

(MC.DEC/3/03)

The Ministerial Council,

Committed to respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without adverse distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion or belief, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status,

Supporting the adoption and implementation of comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation to promote full equality of opportunities for all,

Recognizing the particular difficulties faced by Roma and Sinti people and the need to undertake effective measures in order to eradicate discrimination against them and to bring about equality of opportunities, consistent with OSCE commitments,

Recognizing that progress has been achieved in national legislation and in programmes for action and that substantial efforts have been undertaken by the participating States to this end,

Aware at the same time that resolute action is still required to improve the situation of the Roma and Sinti population across the OSCE region,

Noting the rich cultural, linguistic and historical diversity among Roma and Sinti people within the OSCE area, as well as the diversity of national structures and traditions in the OSCE area,

Noting the outcome of important recent governmental and non-governmental conferences and initiatives on Roma and Sinti in Europe, including, *inter alia*, the launching of a Decade of Roma Inclusion and the possible creation of a European Forum for Roma and Travellers,

Convinced that Roma and Sinti populations should have an ever-increasing degree of ownership of the policies focusing on them,

Decides to endorse the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area, adopted by the Permanent Council in its Decision No. 566 on 27 November 2003, and annexed to this Decision.

Annex to Decision No. 3/03

ACTION PLAN ON IMPROVING THE SITUATION OF ROMA AND SINTI WITHIN THE OSCE AREA

PC.DEC/566
27 November 2003
Original: ENGLISH

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Permanent Council

479th Plenary Meeting

PC Journal No. 479, Agenda item 4

DECISION No. 566

ACTION PLAN ON IMPROVING THE SITUATION OF ROMA AND SINTI WITHIN THE OSCE AREA

The Permanent Council,

Decides to adopt the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area, annexed to this Decision.

PC.DEC/566
27 November 2003
Annex

ACTION PLAN ON IMPROVING THE SITUATION OF ROMA AND SINTI WITHIN THE OSCE AREA

I. Scope and objectives

1. The Action Plan is intended to reinforce the efforts of the participating States and relevant OSCE institutions and structures aimed at ensuring that Roma and Sinti people are able to play a full and equal part in our societies, and at eradicating discrimination against them.

2. The Action Plan relies on the framework of international and regional human rights law, existing OSCE

commitments and examples of best practices from countries throughout Europe, where these are in place, and aims at fostering such practices elsewhere. The special measures foreseen by the Action Plan with a view to improving the situation of Roma and Sinti people are based on the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination¹.

3. Both the participating States and OSCE institutions are called upon to implement the Action Plan. Roma and Sinti communities in the participating States are invited to draw upon and contribute actively to the implementation of the Action Plan's provisions.

II. General context: for Roma, with Roma

4. Each national policy or implementation strategy should: (1) respond to the real problems, needs and priorities of Roma and Sinti communities; (2) be comprehensive; (3) introduce a balanced and sustainable approach to combining human rights goals with social policies; and (4) maximize Roma ownership of the policies that affect them. At the same time, national policies or implementation strategies should be adapted and implemented according to the specific needs of Roma and Sinti populations in particular situations in participating States. Implementation strategies should also include mechanisms to ensure that national policies are implemented at the local level.

5. The guiding principle in the efforts of participating States and relevant OSCE institutions should be that each policy and implementation strategy should be elaborated and implemented with the active participation of Roma and Sinti communities. It is essential to ensure real participation by Roma and Sinti people in all the decisions that affect their lives. Roma and Sinti people should work alongside local, national and international authorities in the development of these strategies. Equally, Roma communities should be equal partners and should share the responsibility for the betterment of their welfare.

6. The particular situation of Roma and Sinti women should be taken into account in the design and implementation of all policies and programmes. Where consultative and other mechanisms exist to facilitate Roma and Sinti people's participation in such policy-making processes, women should be able to participate on an equal basis with men. Roma women's issues should be

systematically mainstreamed in all relevant policies designed for the population as a whole.

III. Combating racism and discrimination

In order to counter prejudice against Roma and Sinti and to effectively elaborate and implement policies to combat discrimination and racial violence, the following actions are recommended:

Legislation and law enforcement

Recommended action by participating States:

7. Consider ratifying the relevant international treaties as soon as possible, if they have not already done so, *inter alia*, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

8. Adopt and implement effective anti-discrimination legislation to combat racial and ethnic discrimination in all fields, including, *inter alia*, access to housing, citizenship and residence, education, employment, health and social services. Involve Roma and Sinti representatives in the design, implementation and evaluation processes.

9. The anti-discrimination legislation should ensure:

- Prohibition of both direct and indirect racial discrimination;
- Imposition of effective, proportionate and dissuasive sanctions for discriminatory acts or practices;
- Imposition of heavier sentences for racially motivated crimes by both private individuals and public officials;
- Equal access to effective remedies (judicial, administrative, conciliation or mediation procedures).

14. Endeavour, by encouraging a genuine dialogue or consultations or through other appropriate means, to improve the relations between Roma and Sinti people and other inhabitants, with a view to promoting tolerance and overcoming prejudices and negative stereotypes on both sides.

15. Document, consistent with national and international standards on the protection of data, all types and relevant cases of discrimination in order to better assess the situation and respond to the needs of Roma and Sinti people.

16. Ensure the vigorous and effective investigation of acts of violence against Roma and Sinti people, especially

¹ Article I, paragraph 4 reads: "Special measures taken for the sole purpose of securing adequate advancement of certain racial or ethnic groups or individuals requiring such protection as may be necessary in order to ensure such groups or individuals equal enjoyment or exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms shall not be deemed racial discrimination, provided, however, that such measures do not, as a consequence, lead to the maintenance of separate rights for different racial groups and that they shall not be continued after the objectives for which they were taken have been achieved."

where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that they were racially motivated, and prosecute those responsible in accordance with domestic law and consistent with relevant standards of human rights.

17. Ensure no impunity for perpetrators of discriminatory or violent acts, *inter alia*, by taking prompt and effective investigative and punitive action on the part of the police.

18. Facilitate access to justice for Roma and Sinti people through measures such as legal aid and the provision of information in the Romani language.

19. Take into account in all measures and programmes, the situation of Roma and Sinti women, who are often victims of discrimination on the basis of both ethnicity and sex.

Recommended action by OSCE institutions and structures:

20. The ODIHR and, where appropriate, other OSCE institutions and structures, including OSCE field operations, will assist participating States, at their request, in developing anti-discrimination legislation, as well as in establishing anti-discrimination bodies.

21. The HCNM, within its mandate, will continue to follow the development of anti-discrimination legislation and provide advice and assistance to the participating States in this respect, as appropriate.

22. Upon request, the ODIHR will provide advice on how a participating State's existing mechanisms, such as ombudsman offices, commissions for combating discrimination, police disciplinary commissions, and other relevant bodies can alleviate tensions between Roma and Sinti and non-Roma communities.

23. The ODIHR/Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues (CPRSI) will promote better relations between Roma and Sinti non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the participating States.

24. The ODIHR-CPRSI will serve as a clearing house on initiatives undertaken by participating States and facilitate exchanges of information on best practices.

25. The ODIHR-CPRSI will, in close co-operation with participating States, Roma and Sinti communities, and where possible with other international organizations, and in full respect of the laws on the protection of

personal data, collect documentation for the purpose of developing more precisely targeted policies.

Police

Recommended action by participating States:

26. Develop policies that promote awareness among law-enforcement institutions regarding the situation of Roma and Sinti people and that counter prejudice and negative stereotypes.

27. Develop training programmes to prevent excessive use of force and to promote awareness of and respect for human rights.

28. Develop policies: (1) to improve relations between Roma and Sinti communities and the police, so as to prevent police abuse and violence against Roma and Sinti people; and (2) to improve trust and confidence in the police among Roma and Sinti people.

29. Develop policies and procedures to ensure an effective police response to racially motivated violence against Roma and Sinti people.

30. Assess the gap between international standards on police and currently existing national practices in consultation with national police forces, NGOs and representatives of Roma and Sinti communities.

31. Elaborate, where appropriate, and in close partnership with international organizations and Roma NGOs, policy statements, codes of conduct, practical guidance manuals and training programmes.

32. Encourage Roma and Sinti people to work in law-enforcement institutions as a sustainable means of promoting tolerance and diversity.

Recommended action by OSCE institutions and structures:

33. The Strategic Police Matters Unit in the Secretariat and the ODIHR will assist participating States in developing programmes and confidence-building measures — such as community policing — to improve the relations between Roma and Sinti people and the police, particularly at the local level.

34. The ODIHR-CPRSI and the Strategic Police Matters Unit will, within their respective mandates, produce a compilation of police “best practices” in the OSCE region with respect to policing and Roma and Sinti communities.

35. The HCNM, the ODIHR-CPRSI and the Strategic Police Matters Unit will assist the participating States in developing codes of conduct to prevent racial profiling and improve interethnic relations.

Mass media

Recommended action by participating States:

36. Launch information and awareness-raising campaigns with a view to countering prejudices and negative stereotypes of Roma and Sinti people.

37. In order to foster freedom of expression, encourage training of Roma and Sinti journalists and their employment in media outlets with a view to facilitating wider access to the media for Roma and Sinti people.

38. Encourage the media to show positive aspects and present a balanced portrayal of Roma life, refrain from stereotyping Roma and Sinti people and avoid inciting tension between various ethnic groups. Organize round tables between media representatives and Roma and Sinti representatives to promote this objective.

Recommended action by OSCE institutions and structures:

39. In co-operation with the ODIHR as well as relevant international organizations, the Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFOM) should consider how the OSCE could contribute to the establishment of a European Roma Radio which would broadcast throughout Europe. The ODIHR and the RFOM should organize public debates, anti-discrimination campaigns and joint training programmes with and for the media.

40. The RFOM should consider facilitating training seminars for Roma journalists.

41. The ODIHR-CPRSI and the RFOM will organize round tables with journalists on the image that Roma and Sinti communities have in society.

42. The HCNM will continue to elaborate and disseminate guidelines for policy-makers on the use of the State broadcast media in multicultural communities, aimed, *inter alia*, at encouraging support for minority broadcasters, including Roma and Sinti broadcasters, and improving their access to the media.

IV. Addressing socio-economic issues

Action is required to ensure that Roma and Sinti people enjoy social and economic rights on a par with others. Measures at the grass-roots level, particularly those originating from Roma groups themselves, are particularly needed in order to promote the integration of Roma and Sinti people into social and economic life and to combat their isolation and poverty. The OSCE and its participating States should continue to facilitate such integration.

Housing and living conditions

Recommended action by participating States:

43. Put in place mechanisms and institutional procedures to clarify property rights, resolve questions of ownership and regularize the legal status of Roma and Sinti people living in circumstances of unsettled legality (e.g., Roma neighbourhoods lacking land rights or which are not included in the urban plans of the main locality; families and houses without legal residence status in settlements where the people have been living *de facto* for decades).

44. Involve Roma and Sinti people in the design of housing policies, as well as in the construction, rehabilitation and/or maintenance of public housing projects meant to benefit them. Ensure that housing projects do not foster ethnic and/or racial segregation.

45. Consider the possibility of guaranteeing loans to participating States that may be available from international organizations and financial institutions for low-income housing projects.

46. Promote the option of co-operative housing schemes for Roma communities and provide appropriate training for the maintenance of such facilities.

Recommended action by OSCE institutions and structures:

47. The ODIHR-CPRSI and the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) are encouraged to play a larger role in facilitating the provision of information about and access to resources made available by foreign donors for specific projects, particularly those generated by Roma and Sinti groups, addressing the social and economic development of Roma and Sinti communities.

Unemployment and economic problems

Recommended action by participating States:

48. Promote increased representation of qualified Roma and Sinti people in public employment.

49. Develop training programmes to prepare under-represented groups such as Roma and Sinti for employment in local public administration and other areas, and develop policies to encourage employment of the graduates of these programmes as civil servants.

50. Reassess the impact of subsidized employment programmes, paying particular attention to their educational components, to ensure that these will aim to increase the competitiveness of Roma and Sinti people on the labour market.

51. Develop policies and programmes, including vocational training, to improve the marketable skills and employability of Roma and Sinti people, particularly young people and women.

52. Adopt social policies that strengthen incentives to seek employment, as a sustainable way to avoid dependency on social benefits.

Recommended action by OSCE institutions and structures:

53. At the request of participating States, the OCEEA, together with relevant international organizations, will contribute to developing approaches designed to overcome obstacles and discrimination that prevent Roma and Sinti people from fulfilling their potential in the economic sphere.

54. At the request of participating States, the ODIHR-CPRSI and the OCEEA will support development of the employability and entrepreneurial skills of Roma and Sinti people through the establishment of training and re-training programmes in participating States. Successful practices, particularly relating to the development of entrepreneurial skills and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) (e.g., the Youth Entrepreneurship Seminars programme) could be adapted to the needs of Roma and Sinti people. The OCEEA could also facilitate economic and social insertion by acting as a catalyst for support by partner organizations and financial institutions of micro-credit programmes, in the form of small loans for the establishment of small-scale businesses.

55. The OCEEA, working in close contact and in co-operation with other international organizations, so as to

avoid overlapping, can assist governments in assessing the impact of economic policies and processes on Roma and Sinti communities (by developing policy performance/assessment indicators).

56. The ODIHR-CPRSI and the OCEEA will draw upon the research developed by UNDP and other agencies to assess the needs of Roma and Sinti people with a view to fostering policies that take into account the extent and nature of their specific needs in each participating State.

57. In co-ordination with relevant international organizations (in particular UNDP and the World Bank), the ODIHR-CPRSI and the OCEEA will examine ways to stimulate better access by Roma and Sinti people to regular training programmes. Workshops or round-table discussions tailored to the needs of Roma and Sinti people can be organized, with a view to informing and educating community members regarding the economic and social rights of individuals and entrepreneurs.

Health care

Recommended action by participating States:

58. Ensure that Roma and Sinti people have access to health care services on a non-discriminatory basis.

59. Promote awareness about the specific needs of the Roma and Sinti population amongst health care personnel.

60. Address the high incidence of disease and malnutrition among Roma communities.

61. Encourage access by Roma and Sinti populations to general public health services at an early stage by:

- (a) Informing Roma and Sinti people about the availability of such services and telling them how to take advantage of them;
- (b) Strengthening the confidence of Roma and Sinti people towards public health care providers, including through: punishing incidents of direct or indirect discrimination experienced by Roma and Sinti; training health care workers to understand relevant aspects of Roma culture; and supporting mediators who can play an important role in bridging the gap between Roma communities and public health care service providers.

62. Pay special attention to the health of women and girls, *inter alia*, by:

- (a) Promoting and/or developing programmes aimed at providing information on health care (including nutrition, neonatal care and domestic violence, etc.);
- (b) Improving access to gynaecological health care, including prenatal, delivery and postnatal health care services, *inter alia*, through the provision of information and training.

63. Pay special attention to the health of Roma and Sinti children through the provision of appropriate paediatric care, including preventive measures such as offering vaccinations in Roma settlements.

Recommended action by OSCE institutions and structures:

64. In co-operation with other international organizations and NGOs, the ODIHR will draw upon existing research data to identify socio-economic, political and cultural factors that have an impact on the health status of particular Roma and Sinti populations, and will advise participating States regarding public health programmes which would respond to needs identified.

65. The ODIHR-CPRSI and, where appropriate, other OSCE institutions and structures, including OSCE field operations, will assist participating States in launching educational initiatives to help Roma and Sinti people make full use of regular health services. They will, *inter alia*, collect, produce and disseminate relevant information on good practices.

66. The ODIHR-CPRSI will pay special attention to ensuring that Roma and Sinti people have access to programmes aimed at prevention and/or treatment of drug abuse and addiction and AIDS and related diseases.

V. Improving access to education

Education is a prerequisite to the participation of Roma and Sinti people in the political, social and economic life of their respective countries on a footing of equality with others. Strong immediate measures in this field, particularly those that foster school attendance and combat illiteracy, should be assigned the highest priority both by decision-makers and by Roma and Sinti communities. Educational policies should aim to integrate Roma and Sinti people into mainstream education by providing full and equal access at all levels, while remaining sensitive to cultural differences.

Recommended action by participating States:

67. Ensure that national legislation includes adequate provisions banning racial segregation and discrimination in education and provides effective remedies for violations of such legislation.

68. Consult Roma and Sinti representatives when designing educational policies affecting them.

69. Actively promote equal opportunities in the field of education for Roma and Sinti children, particularly by providing them with language-related or other assistance.

70. Take special measures to enhance the quality and effectiveness of education for Roma and Sinti children. Encourage increased representation of Roma and Sinti people among school teachers.

71. Include Roma history and culture in educational texts, with particular consideration given to the experience of Roma and Sinti people during the Holocaust.

72. Consider measures to ensure the respect, protection and promotion of the Romani language and its teaching, and of Roma culture as an integral part of the Roma and Sinti cultural heritage.

73. Develop and implement comprehensive school desegregation programmes aiming at: (1) discontinuing the practice of systematically routing Roma children to special schools or classes (e.g., schools for mentally disabled persons, schools and classes exclusively designed for Roma and Sinti children); and (2) transferring Roma children from special schools to mainstream schools.

74. Allocate financial resources for the transfer of the Roma children to mainstream education and for the development of school support programmes to ease the transition to mainstream education.

75. Facilitate Roma children's access to mainstream education by taking measures such as:

- (a) Taking measures to eradicate manifestations of prejudice against Roma and Sinti people in schools;
- (b) Training of educators regarding multicultural education and ways of dealing with ethnically mixed classes;
- (c) Developing strategies to gain wider community support for the desegregation of schools;

- (d) Providing support to bridge the gap between Roma and Sinti children and other pupils, including through pre-school programmes designed to prepare Roma and Sinti children for primary school;
- (e) Providing support to increase the number of mediators/trainers and teachers from within the Roma communities.

76. Develop and implement anti-racist curricula for schools, and anti-racism campaigns for the media.

77. Develop policies that address the full range of factors which 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 as any other inhabitants.

78. Consider elaborating social support programmes for low-income Roma families with school-aged children.

79. Promote regular school attendance by Roma and Sinti children, *inter alia*, through the involvement of family and social mediators, the promotion of awareness by Roma and Sinti parents and elders of their responsibility to facilitate children's school attendance and, in particular, equal access to education for girls.

80. Pay special attention to providing Roma and Sinti girls with equal opportunities for educational and social inclusion and develop programmes to counter their particularly high drop-out rate.

81. Consider developing appropriate programmes for those who have not completed primary school or are illiterate.

82. Develop, where necessary, scholarship programmes for Roma students and encourage their increased participation in existing scholarship programmes.

83. Encourage computer literacy among Roma and Sinti people through the setting up of information web-sites.

84. Evaluate periodically the effectiveness of educational policies.

Recommended action by OSCE institutions and structures:

85. The HCNM will encourage participating States to comply with their commitments to provide free and equal access to public education to all members of society, and

will encourage them to take steps to improve the situation of Roma and Sinti people in this respect.

86. The HCNM will continue to provide guidance on educational models, curriculum content and the teaching of, or in, the mother tongue, including the Romani language.

VI. Enhancing participation in public and political life

Roma and Sinti people face special challenges in their efforts to participate in the public — and particularly the political — life of their respective countries. Low levels of education and, in certain cases, discrimination against them contribute substantially to the under-representation of Roma and Sinti people at all levels of government. Roma and Sinti people have an equal right to

participate in public affairs. This includes the rights to vote, stand for election, participate in public affairs and form political parties without discrimination. Efforts made in recent years to foster Roma political participation should be encouraged, particularly those originating from the Roma groups themselves.

Recommended action by participating States:

87. Participating States must be proactive in ensuring that Roma and Sinti people, like any other inhabitants, have all the necessary documents, including birth certificates, identity documents and health insurance certificates. In resolving problems related to the lack of basic documents, participating States are strongly advised to work in partnership with Roma and Sinti civil organizations.

88. Participating States are encouraged to take into account the following basic conditions for ensuring effective participation by Roma and Sinti people in public and political life:

Early involvement:

Any initiative relating to Roma and Sinti people should involve them at the earliest stages in the development, implementation and evaluation phases;

Inclusiveness:

Roma and Sinti people should be included in formal consultative processes, and the effectiveness of mechanisms established for their participation in shaping major policy initiatives should be ensured by involving them in a broadly representative process;

Transparency:

Programmes and proposals should be circulated sufficiently in advance of decision-making deadlines to allow for meaningful analysis and input from representatives of Roma and Sinti communities;

Meaningful participation by Roma and Sinti people at all levels of government:

Participation by Roma and Sinti people in local government is essential for the effective implementation of policies affecting them;

Ownership:

Roma and Sinti people play an essential and irreplaceable role in ensuring that the right to participate in the political process is observed in practice.

89. Elected officials should establish close working relations with Roma and Sinti communities.

90. Establish mechanisms to ensure equal, direct and open communication between Roma and Sinti representatives and government authorities, including advisory and consultative bodies.

91. Facilitate interaction between political leaders at the local and national levels and diverse Roma groups.

92. Organize election-awareness campaigns so as to increase participation of the Roma electorate in elections.

93. Ensure that Roma voters can make free and informed choices in elections.

94. Take measures to guarantee the equal voting rights of women, including by enforcing prohibitions on so-called “family voting”.

95. Encourage Roma and Sinti people to engage more actively in public service, including, where necessary, through the introduction of special measures to promote their participation in the civil service.

96. Encourage the representation of Roma and Sinti people in elected and appointed office at all levels of government.

97. Empower and integrate Roma and Sinti individuals into decision-making processes of States and localities as elected representatives of their communities and as citizens of their respective countries.

98. Promote Roma women’s participation in public and political life; Roma women should be able to participate on an equal basis with men in consultative and other mechanisms designed to increase access to all areas of public and political life.

Recommended action by OSCE institutions and structures:

99. The ODIHR and, where appropriate, other OSCE institutions and structures, including OSCE field operations, will develop programmes aimed at fostering the registration necessary for full political participation.

100. The ODIHR-CPRSI should help to organize training for and by Roma NGOs, including media organizations, for wider Roma communities on the issues of democratic processes and participation.

101. The ODIHR and, where appropriate, other OSCE institutions and structures, including OSCE field operations, will develop and implement voter education and voter registration programmes.

102. The ODIHR will act as a catalyst for exchanges of information and best practices among participating States and other international organizations.

103. The ODIHR will continue and strengthen the practice of examining the involvement of Roma people in voting and election processes, and will continue the practice of including Roma and Sinti experts in its election observation missions in the OSCE area.

104. The HCNM, within its mandate, will continue to advise States on appropriate ways and means of facilitating the participation of Roma and Sinti people in all areas of public life.

105. The ODIHR-CPRSI and, where appropriate, other OSCE institutions and structures, including OSCE field operations, will design programmes that encourage Roma and Sinti representatives to stand as candidates for elected bodies or will identify creative solutions that would ensure the participation of Roma and Sinti representatives in national and local decision-making processes.

106. The ODIHR will devote particular attention to activities aimed at increasing access by Roma women to all areas of public and political life.

VII. Roma and Sinti in crisis and post-crisis situations

The participating States have an obligation to ensure that, even in crisis and post-crisis situations, all the fundamental rights, including the rights of refugees deriving from relevant international instruments, in particular the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, are secured without discrimination. They take into account the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement as a useful framework for the work of the OSCE and their endeavours in dealing with internal displacement.

Recommended action by participating States:

107. Consult Roma and Sinti populations when defining crisis situations in order to facilitate adequate procedures and to identify specific geographical areas from which refugees and internally displaced persons flee, as well as to ensure that the specific situation of Roma and Sinti people are addressed.

108. Ensure that Roma and Sinti populations in a forced displacement situation (refugees and IDPs) are duly registered and provided with the relevant documents.

109. The participating States should ensure that programmes are in place to promote informed choice regarding the decision of Roma and Sinti refugees and IDPs concerning durable solutions to their situations, including the exercise of their right to safe, decent and sustainable return. Such programmes should provide concrete information regarding each subject of concern to refugees and IDPs and should be made available in the relevant languages.

110. Ensure that Roma and Sinti refugees are treated in accordance with the relevant international norms and standards of protection, and in a non-discriminatory manner.

111. 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 HCNM in this regard.

112. Pay special attention to the needs of Roma and Sinti women and children in crisis and post-crisis situations, particularly by providing them with access to health care, housing and schooling.

Recommended action by OSCE institutions and structures:

113. The ODIHR will make use of its specific role in addressing conflict prevention and identifying areas of potential crisis requiring early intervention.

114. In accordance with its mandate, the ODIHR-CPRSI is called upon to respond effectively to crisis situations by, *inter alia*, co-operating with relevant governments, inter-governmental bodies and international organizations, in particular the UNHCR, to ensure protection of Roma communities at risk.

115. The ODIHR-CPRSI will raise awareness among public officials, journalists and others of the situation of Roma and Sinti people in crisis or conflict areas.

116. The ODIHR will assume a proactive role in analysing measures undertaken by participating States relating to Roma and Sinti people and offer its advice with a view to better tackling those elements of tension in particular local contexts which may evolve, if not prevented, into open conflict situations.

117. The HCNM will continue to exercise his mandate of conflict prevention at the earliest possible stage.

VIII. Enhancing co-operation and co-ordination with other international organizations and NGOs

Given the increased attention being paid to issues concerning Roma and Sinti people by various international organizations, co-ordination and co-operation is required to avoid duplication of effort. With a view to ensuring effective implementation of the Action Plan, the OSCE, and in particular the ODIHR, will closely co-operate with international organizations and non-governmental organizations.

118. The ODIHR-CPRSI will continue to participate actively in *the Informal Contact Group on Roma of the Intergovernmental Organisations*².

119. The strengthening and up-grading of this informal body will be agreed upon and implemented in co-operation with all the relevant partners, particularly by ensuring the inclusion of representatives of OSCE participating States. Regular meetings of the Informal Contact Group at the expert level, or a higher level when deemed

² The *Informal Contact Group on Roma of the Intergovernmental Organisations* is composed of representatives from OSCE/ODIHR, the Council of Europe, the European Commission and the European Union.

necessary, will be considered with a view to furthering this aim.

120. The Informal Contact Group should establish common orientations and priorities, as well as better co-ordination and co-operation in order to avoid duplication of effort.

121. The ODIHR-CPRSI will seek to consolidate the “International Roma Contact Group”³ and will further contribute to the Council of Europe’s initiative for a possible European Forum for Roma and Travellers.

122. The ODIHR-CPRSI will provide information and co-ordination services to relevant national and international institutions, and will facilitate dialogue among them and with Roma NGOs.

123. The ODIHR-CPRSI will seek to develop relations with Roma and Sinti organizations and help them to co-ordinate their efforts and resources, both within individual States and across borders, and to avail themselves fully of opportunities provided by existing national and international policies affecting Roma and Sinti people.

124. The ODIHR-CPRSI will draw upon the experience and input of existing monitoring projects developed by other international organizations.

IX. The ODIHR Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues

125. Where necessary, the ODIHR-CPRSI will facilitate information-sharing among OSCE participating States that have developed or are seeking to improve national policies on Roma and Sinti people.

126. Upon request, ODIHR-CPRSI will advise participating States on future policies related to Roma and Sinti people and will stimulate debates between governments and Roma NGOs.

127. The ODIHR-CPRSI will support capacity-building for Roma and Sinti NGOs.

128. The ODIHR-CPRSI will establish a database of best practices in OSCE participating States.

129. The ODIHR-CPRSI should assume a proactive role in analysing measures undertaken by participating

States, as well as in particular situations and incidents relating to Roma and Sinti people. Towards this end CPRSI will establish and develop direct contacts with participating States and will offer advice and opinions to them.

130. Governments concerned will co-operate with the ODIHR-CPRSI in identifying effective solutions to crisis situations.

131. The ODIHR-CPRSI will provide Roma and Sinti communities with more information on OSCE resources and activities.

132. In co-operation with relevant OSCE institutions and structures, the ODIHR will develop appropriate action aimed at tackling the root causes of trafficking in human beings, especially in children, and raise awareness of its consequences among Roma and Sinti communities.

X. Implementation: review and assessment

133. The implementation of the Action Plan’s provisions will be reviewed at the Human Dimension Implementation Meetings, Review Conferences and other relevant human dimension events.

134. Drawing on the outcome of the above-mentioned meetings, as well as on input from the consolidated Informal Contact Group on Roma of the Intergovernmental Organisations and the International Roma Contact Group, the Director of the ODIHR will report to the Permanent Council, which may recommend to participating States and OSCE institutions priorities for co-operation and co-ordination.

135. The Permanent Council will periodically organize informal briefings by the Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues on the areas covered by the present Action Plan in order to assess the impact at the national and local levels of the measures foreseen by it.

136. With a view to facilitating the implementation review process, OSCE participating States are encouraged to provide information on recent developments in the situation of Roma and Sinti people and/or measures inspired by this Action Plan at the Human Dimension Implementation Meetings, prior to Review Conferences and to the Permanent Council, where appropriate.

³ The International Roma Contact Group was established in October 2000 at the initiative of the ODIHR Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues. The Contact Group includes representatives of the International Romani Union, the Roma National Congress, elected Romani representatives, Romani experts and the ODIHR-CPRSI.

137. All relevant OSCE institutions and structures, including OSCE field operations, will continue to interact closely with participating States in order to assist them in implementing the Action Plan.

138. The ODIHR-CPRSI will disseminate information on this Plan to Roma and Sinti communities and organizations as well as to other international organizations.

139. In order to enable ODIHR-CPRSI to carry out the tasks entrusted to it in the present Action Plan, the OSCE Permanent Council will address providing adequate human and financial resources.

The details will be worked out by the Advisory Committee on Management and Finance and will be submitted to the Permanent Council.

Appendix 2

1. Questionnaire regarding the participation of Roma and Sinti, including women and youth, in public and political life

OSCE/ODIHR Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues

Questionnaire regarding the participation of Roma and Sinti, including women and youth, in public and political life

Warsaw, 7 December 2017

Please specify the OSCE participating State:

Background

ODIHR is mandated by the OSCE participating States to review the implementation of OSCE commitments relating to Roma and Sinti. In this respect ODIHR has issued two status reports, in 2008 and 2013, on the implementation of the 2003 OSCE Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area (Action Plan).

Following up on previous assessments, ODIHR will publish its third status report, focusing on the Action Plan's Chapter VI on "Enhancing participation in public and political life." This report will focus on the period 2013-2017 and be released on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of the Action Plan.

The report will take stock of how far commitments by the OSCE participating States on enhancing effective participation of Roma and Sinti in public and political life have been implemented and outline remaining challenges. This assessment aims to provide participating States and other relevant stakeholders with a comprehensive view of the participation and representation of Roma and Sinti in political structures. It will also analyse Roma and Sinti participation in electoral processes and describe factors that influence positively and negatively their involvement in the process. The status report will also analyse the political participation and representation of Roma and Sinti women and youth. Last but not the least, the report aims to stimulate debate and provide recommendations for enhancing the participation of Roma and Sinti in public and political life.

The report will be based on responses from OSCE participating States and selected OSCE field operations. ODIHR will also commission external consultants to draft background papers on the participation of Roma and Sinti in the OSCE area. The background papers will analyse the participation of Roma and Sinti in the OSCE area and will complement the information and data received from participating States from the questionnaire below, circulated in December 2017. The document will analyse the specific factors influencing the participation of Roma and Sinti women and youth, the challenges they face and the status of their participation and representation in public and political life.

I. Participation of Roma and Sinti in elections

1. Please specify whether the lack of identification documents, or the process of obtaining them, presents a barrier for Roma and Sinti in your country for participating in electoral processes, both as voters and candidates. If applicable, please indicate what policy, programme or legislation was designed to address the issue. If not, are there any plans to address this issue?
2. Please specify whether Roma and Sinti encounter obstacles to registering on voter lists in your country. If yes, what are the reasons? If applicable, what policy, programme or legislation was designed to address the issue? If not, are there any plans to address this issue?
3. Are you aware of any voter education and voter registration programmes targeting Roma and Sinti in your country? In particular, are there any new programmes that began in the period between 2013 and 2017? If applicable, please provide detailed information about these programmes, including the implementing institution or organization, timeframe, and the number of beneficiaries (including gender and age).
4. Please indicate whether any programmes encouraging Roma and Sinti to stand as candidates for elected positions at local and/or national level have been implemented in your country, particularly in the period between 2013 and 2017. If applicable, please provide detailed information, including the implementing institution or organization, timeframe, and the number of beneficiaries (including gender and age).

5. Please specify whether any voter information or education programmes addressing Roma and Sinti were implemented in your country. Also, are there any policies, programmes or legislation addressing electoral violations, such as family voting, vote-buying or proxy voting that might influence the participation of Roma and Sinti in elections? If applicable, please provide detailed information.
6. Please indicate whether any policy, programme or legislation addressing the accessibility of voting, including the availability of information in Roma language in electoral processes, have been implemented or enacted in your country. If applicable, please provide detailed information.
7. Please specify whether there is any data available on the turnout of Roma and Sinti voters in elections in your participating State between 2013 and 2017. If available, is it disaggregated by sex and age? Please provide details.
8. How would you assess the progress regarding the participation of Roma and Sinti, and particularly of women and youth, in electoral processes, both as voters and candidates between 2013 and 2017 compared with the past, and particularly with the period between 2008 and 2012?

II. Participation of Roma and Sinti in political parties

9. Please list the political parties that specifically represent Roma and Sinti in your participating State, the year of their registration, and whether they participate in parliamentary and/or local elections (if applicable).
10. Please list mainstream political parties in your participating State that expressly represent the interests of Roma and Sinti, either as an ethnic minority or a vulnerable group, as per their political platforms (if applicable).
11. Please indicate whether there are any self-declared Roma and Sinti in elected positions in mainstream political parties, or self-declared Roma and Sinti members of political parties at the managerial level. If so, which political parties? Please specify gender, age, and whether they have any managerial responsibilities within the party (to the extent of the available information).

12. Please specify whether any self-declared Roma and Sinti have run for election between 2013 and 2017. Please indicate if they have run for national, regional or local elections, in which year, and what their position was on the party list for the respective election, or if they ran as independent candidates. Please also specify their gender and age.

III. Participation of Roma and Sinti in national legislative bodies

13. Please specify whether there are reserved seats (a quota) in the national legislative body (parliament) for ethnic minorities and particularly Roma and Sinti (including information regarding the type of legislative structure (unicameral/bicameral). If applicable, please provide information regarding the number of seats reserved in each chamber. If applicable, please also provide information about the Roma and Sinti who occupy these seats in the current legislative body, including their gender and age.
14. Please list the mainstream political parties in your participating State that have quotas for minorities (such as Roma and Sinti) on their party lists for elections (if applicable).
15. Please indicate whether there are specific electoral thresholds for political parties representing national or ethnic minorities. If applicable, how do they affect Roma and Sinti political parties?
16. Please specify whether there are any self-declared Roma and Sinti members of the current legislative body (parliament), and if yes, please provide information including gender and age and the political parties they represent. What was the case in previous parliamentary cycles, between 2013 and 2017, if applicable?
17. Please indicate whether the structure of the parliament comprises any parliamentary (sub-) committee addressing minority issues, and Roma and Sinti in particular. Are Roma and Sinti represented in these structures? If applicable, please provide their gender and age.

IV. Participation of Roma and Sinti at regional and local levels – elected positions

18. Please specify whether self-declared Roma and Sinti have been candidates for positions of mayor in the most recent local elections (including gender and age). Were they elected? Please specify which political parties included them on their electoral lists or if they

ran as independent candidates. What was the case in previous electoral cycles between 2013 and 2017, if applicable?

19. Please indicate whether self-declared Roma and Sinti have been candidates in local or regional councils in the last local or regional elections. Were they elected? Please specify which political parties included them on their electoral lists or if they ran as independent candidates. Please specify their gender and age.

V. Participation of Roma and Sinti at the level of government (ministries, state secretaries and public officials)

20. Please specify whether there are any ministers and/or state secretaries of self-declared Roma and Sinti ethnic origin. Please specify their position, as well as their gender and age.
21. Please indicate whether self-declared Roma and Sinti occupy positions as appointed (political) advisers in ministries, and if so, indicate which ministries, and specify their gender and age.
22. Please specify whether self-declared Roma and Sinti occupy other positions in governmental institutions or structures, and specify their gender and age.
23. Please indicate whether there are any governmental institutions or structures mandated to address Roma and Sinti issues. Please describe their mandate, as well as the engagement of Roma and Sinti within the institution or structure, including their role, gender and age.
24. Please provide information about any specific inter-departmental/ministerial structures specifically addressing Roma and Sinti issues and, if so, whether Roma and Sinti are represented in such structures. Please specify their role, gender and age.
25. Please indicate whether there are any consultation or participation mechanisms for Roma and Sinti on the design, monitoring process and evaluation of national integration strategies and policies addressing Roma and Sinti issues. If yes, please provide details.
26. Please specify whether consultative or advisory structures on Roma and Sinti and/or minority issues exist in your country and, if yes, please describe their mandate and the participation and representation of Roma and Sinti in these structures. Please include information about the gender and age of Roma and Sinti representatives.

Appendix 3

Responses to ODIHR's Questionnaire from OSCE Participating States

Albania
Andorra
Austria
Azerbaijan
Belgium
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Bulgaria
Canada
Croatia
Czech Republic
Denmark
Finland
France
Georgia
Germany
Greece
Hungary
Italy
Latvia
Liechtenstein
Lithuania
Monaco
Montenegro
Netherlands
Norway
Poland
Portugal
Romania
Russian Federation
San Marino
Serbia
Slovakia
Slovenia
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
Turkey
Ukraine
United Kingdom