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REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA

Prešernova cesta 25, SI - 1000 Ljubljana

T: +386 1 478 2000
F: +386 1 478 2340, +386 1 478 2341
E: gp.mzz@gov.si
www.mzz.gov.si

STATEMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA

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

Mr/Ms Chairperson,

allow me to begin by aligning with the EU statement and expressing Slovenia's full commitment to implementing the OSCE Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti.

When we discuss tolerance and indiscrimination, we all should pay special attention to the Action Plan, bearing in mind that the most vulnerable population groups are the first to feel the deteriorating economic and social situation.

To improve the social and economic participation of Roma, Slovenia has adopted a special systemic law, which requires local self-governing communities and the state to provide special rights to the Roma community, including funding to ensure their implementation. As part of the five-year National Programme of Measures, which concludes at the end of this year, Slovenia has taken concrete steps to improve housing conditions, education, employment, and health, as well as to promote Roma tradition and culture.

The new National Programme of Measures is planned to be adopted by the end of the year; it will cover the period from 2016 to 2021 and incorporate best practices, policies, recommendations, and approaches, as well as other basic EU documents concerning Roma integration. As in the case of the previous Programme, the Roma community and civil society will be actively included in drafting the new Programme.

Slovenia is planning to prepare an integrated strategy, which should be clear and concrete and provide for measures in all fields in which we face challenges: the management of housing conditions, education, employment and health, the general situation of Roma women and children, intolerance against Roma and hate speech, dismantling prejudices and stereotypes concerning Roma and reinforcing dialogue and cooperation between relevant local and state authorities, the Roma community and various civil society organisations.

Today's discussion, in particular interventions by civil society representatives, including Roma communities, show that a lot of work needs to be done by each OSCE State to implement the Action Plan, and the work starts at home.

In this regard, we are grateful for the valuable assistance provided to the States by the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Ms Astrid Thors, and by the ODIHR Contact Point for Roma and Sinti.

Thank you.