



## ERGO Network contribution

### OSCE Supplementary Human Dimension Meeting 8 November 2013, Hofburg Palace, OSCE Vienna

Europe is facing a true challenge to respond to the growing extremism against Roma that is now accelerating due to the current crisis. Besides an economic crisis –caused by economic mismanagement and weak political leadership- we are facing political and moral crisis.

The dimension of deeply-rooted anti-Gypsyism is largely overlooked by European policy makers and is one of the root-causes of the failure the implementation of the national policies and of European funding to bring the necessary change on the ground. The growing extremism against Roma and other groups in society -fed by populism among both authorities and media- is worrisome. It threatens the fundamental values of the European Union (EU) as a whole and of participating states in the OSCE area.

With the upcoming European elections, where it is expected that far-right and xenophobe parties will gain more than 20% of the votes, the role of the EU as a guardian of the treaties might further erode, while national politicians will play the ethnic card to secure their power in their countries

The annual report released November 7, 2013 by the Czech Security Information Service (Bezpečnostní informační služba - BIS) warns as well as the 2013 Status report that standard political parties in the country may start taking up extremist opinions, especially at municipal level. Czech report says that while the extremists themselves are becoming attenuated, political parties might exploit their opinions in order to earn the votes of people who are dissatisfied and frustrated, for example, because of the economic crisis. This trend we see all around the Europe and was already reflected in the Czech election 2 weeks ago.

In the light of the Status report 2013 and the EC communication from June 2013 on the implementation of the national Roma integration strategies as well as the currently consulted recommendations of the European and should be adopted during the Lithuanian presidency



ERGO Network calls the OSCE, EU and participating states

The prevention of and the fight against Anti-Gypsyism, and in particular extremism and racist violence, should be made a core priority in all governmental programmes and consequently, receive special attention in the National Roma Integration Strategies.

We encourage Member States and the Commission to create special grant schemes that provide small and flexible funds for community projects and for mobilising local communities on social inclusion issues, as well as local engagement in support of National Roma Integration Strategies. The Community-Lead Local Development funding from ESF and ERDF is specifically interesting for Roma communities in this context, as it invests in building capacity and develop innovation, entrepreneurship and capacity for change by encouraging the development and discovery of untapped potential from within communities and territories.

We call on EU Member States to ensure the sufficient budgetary resources from their national budget and from EU programmes, primarily from the European Social Fund, in order to carry out the objectives identified in their NRIS. Roma inclusion programmes should play a substantive part in the next programming period 2014-2020.

We urge OSCE participating states to fulfil the article no 92 of the Action plan to organize election – awareness campaigns so to increase the participation of the Roma electorate in election. Moreover, to support the voter empowerment and ensure that Roma voters can make the free and informed choices in election as they can make the change!!!

We call upon the Commission and OSCE and participating States to consciously recognize and involve Roma as equal stakeholders in the policy development by setting up mechanisms for regular and transparent dialogue with Roma civil society and experts by applying the principles of the ‘European Code of Conduct on Partnership’ as well as the recommendation of the OSCE Action Plan part VI “Enhancing participation in the public and political life” that sets all necessary conditions for genuine and effective involvement by Roma Civil Society in the policy process;

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