

Human Dimension Implementation Meeting – Session 15
Enhancing the implementation of OSCE commitments regarding Roma and Sinti (continued): Partnership between States and representatives of Roma and Sinti in the design and implementation of integration policies for Roma and Sinti

Mr./Ms. Chairperson,

I have the honor to present you a few considerations regarding a crucial element for enhancing the implementation of EU and OSCE commitments regarding Roma: promoting closer cooperation and coordination between central and local authorities and representatives of Roma in the design, implementation and monitoring of policies for Roma of our country.

Enhancing the involvement of Roma in policies regarding their integration is a clear commitment of the EU and OSCE community. As the *Action Plan for the Improvement of the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area* states, the guiding principle in the efforts of the 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 representatives as equal partners who share the responsibility for the betterment of their welfare. "With Roma, for Roma" is an all-encompassing principle of the OSCE commitments in all fields of action. In this respect, we welcome the approach of the Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues (CPRSI) of ODIHR of including Roma and Sinti representatives in all endeavours aimed at assisting participating States in the implementation of their commitments, including field visits and projects.

Romania has fully acknowledged that active participation of Roma must be at the core of its policies in the area.

Romania also decided to strengthen the role of the European Platform for Roma Inclusion and to produce a new Roma Strategy 2011-202, in line with the EU requirements. This year, the Government of Romania, in close partnership with the civil society, including Roma NGO-s, produced the draft of the future Roma strategy 2011-2020. The NGOs made their own proposals and observations, and those considered pointful have been included into the Strategy body and the National Action Plans of the Strategy. Committed to the transparency principle, the NAR maintained this civil society consultation even after that, during the process of public consultation. The Strategy, including its body and

the connected National Action Plans, were posted on the NAR web-site in order to be publicly consulted. In short term, the Government of Romania will adopt the new Strategy, elaborated by the NAR's experts with the consultation both of the civil society and others ministries having specific responsibilities in this field.

Both central and local authorities and the civil society are interested in developing active and sustainable partnerships towards improving social situation of Roma. Joint programmes and common projects, designing and implementing integration policies for Roma, networking are only few of the ways which prove the collaboration and partnership between central and local authorities and civil society. Object lesson, the National Agency for Roma implements all its strategic projects, ESF financed, in partnership with the civil society organizations, promoting the principle of private-public partnership. Also, the Agency supports the initiatives of civil society organizations financing from the state budget them projects in the fields of education, culture, media, health and sport.

We believe that the substantiation of the principle „with Roma, for Roma” demands more efforts from the OSCE. We would like to put forth the following recommendations aimed at improving the active involvement of Roma and Sinti representatives in the policies relevant for them:

- Dedicate special attention to cooperation between central and local authorities and Roma communities;
- Raise awareness among Roma representatives about the strategies, policies and projects that target them explicitly, but not exclusively;
- Continue the practice of CPRSI/ODIHR of organizing common meetings between authorities and Roma representatives during the field visits or on thematic issues;
- Make input of Roma communities a criterion for the assessment of projects for Roma;

Thank you for your attention and we look forward to ideas from the civil society representatives present here about how to develop partnerships between central and local authorities and representatives of Roma and Sinti in the design, implementation and monitoring of integration policies for Roma and Sinti.