

**Statement for the OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting  
05<sup>th</sup> of October, 2011, Warsaw**

The Central Council of German Sinti and Roma welcomes the OSCE's efforts on enhancing the implementation of commitments regarding Roma and Sinti. Most interesting here is the European Union's *Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020* which the European Council adopted 19<sup>th</sup> of May, 2011. The Council invites the Member States to improve the social and economic situation of Roma in Europe and stresses that combating discrimination and segregation is essential for any national and European policy. Both, OSCE and the European Union are aware of the situation of the Roma and Sinti from a variety of documentations; they make numerous possible funding available on a legal basis, and especially on EU-Funds and programmes. However, the problems of implementation continue, especially that programmes of all kinds and approaches hardly show any impact at the local level. The Central Council underlines that this deficient execution of national strategies must not result in attempting that the individual countries pass on their direct responsibility onto international institutions while portraying the Roma as a "European problem" and demanding a "European solution". Roma are not a "European minority" but a national minority in their native countries respectively. They have to be acknowledged not only by law but also by political and social praxis as national minorities in their native countries and as well as the other national minorities they should receive the protection and support of the responsible governments. The labelling of Roma and Sinti as a "European minority" even in official statements of European institutions and organisations is questioning the responsibility of the respective home states.

At the same time, the members of the Central Council are deeply concerned about on-going racial discrimination against Roma minorities in Europe. For years now, there is an increase of racism and right-wing extremism, especially pointed at Roma, and widely spread across Europe. In several countries Roma became victims of racial motivated murder attempts. Right wing political parties conduct campaigns against Jews and Roma, culminating in racist violence and murderous attacks against members of the Roma. It is most disturbing that such racist positions have been adopted by representatives of a number of European states and therefore are being accepted, again, in the broader society.

In a multitude of countries of the European community there are frequent discriminations by public authorities. Alarming is that meanwhile minister of various states publicly establish a connection between ethnic affiliation and criminality. To guarantee an effective protection and for necessary suable injunctive relief (and recovery of damages) against actions of state authorities and offices, an extension of the existing guidelines would be necessary. An adequate extension of the existing guidelines would obligatory engage the states to work out legal regulations, to protect the persons concerned against discriminating or racial state practices of any kind – including the protection against discriminating statements by government agencies and according reports, police and other authorities.

Furthermore, protection against discrimination is necessary against racial propaganda via the Internet. Neonazis are using in an extended dimension the Internet platform for spreading racial propaganda about Roma and Sinti, and Jews. The EU-member states have to commit themselves more resolutely against this and to agree within the international guidelines to combat measurements internationally spread and to commit the providers for a complete control of the internet against dissemination of racial propaganda.

Therefore, the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma strenghtens the following point where immediate action is needed :

The support of autonomous structures on the side of the Roma minorities in Europe in order to enable them for direct participation in the development and implementation of national and local strategies. This includes the options for NGOs to apply and participate in EU-programmes for the improvement of the situation of Roma in Europe.

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