

**2014 OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
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Statement

By

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[Address]

The Council of Europe remains very concerned about the difficult situation of the Roma population in our member States. In order to address the many difficulties in terms of discrimination and social exclusion, the Council of Europe continues being engaged in a wide range of standard-setting, monitoring and capacity-building activities.

Allow me to highlight just a few examples.

The *European Court of Human Rights* continues to deliberate on many cases involving the human rights of Roma. Recent judgments concerned for instance various aspects of the right to education; the lack of proper police investigation of racist attacks on Roma; and the evictions of Roma from their houses.

The *Commissioner for Human Rights* is paying constant attention to the situation of Roma. His recent reports on his country visits to Montenegro, Romania and Hungary – all in 2014 – contain important statements on the continuing difficulties faced by the Roma communities in these countries. Roma will also be a priority on his forthcoming visit to France. The Commissioner has also raised repeatedly his concerns regarding the limitations of the right of Roma to leave their country.

As regards *gender aspects*, the Council of Europe was happy to contribute towards the OSCE Gender Equality Review Conference earlier this year. We regard the situation of Roma women as particularly difficult. Together with the Ukrainian government, we will organize in November 2014 in Kyiv an international seminar in order to promote the mainstreaming of gender aspects in all dimensions of national policies relating to Roma. The Council has the intention to organize together with the government of “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” the 5th international conference of Romani women in September 2015.

Together with the European Commission, the Council of Europe is organizing “*train the trainers*” programmes for the legal professions – lawyers, judges and prosecutors - in order to alert them to the specific situation of Roma in the member States (HELP programme).

Creating awareness for the history of Roma, particularly for the *Pharrajimos* (Roma Holocaust) has been a continuous priority for the Council of Europe in recent years. The Organisation has recently published a new handbook on the Roma genocide (“Right to Remember”), which is primarily used in our education and youth programmes.

The Council of Europe has now worked for four years on the implementation of the “Strasbourg Declaration on Roma” of 2010, the main reference document for our action. Similar to the OSCE, we are observing that in spite of the manifold efforts and the progress that has undoubtedly be made in some areas, the “deep change” necessary to successfully address discrimination and hate against Roma has still not been achieved. The Secretary General has therefore proposed to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe a thorough strategic reflection on the priorities and instruments of our policy in this area.

You can rest assured that continued close co-operation with the OSCE and with the other international institutions active in the field of Roma policies will remain high on our agenda.