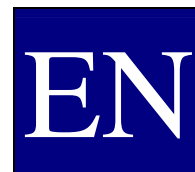




**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Council conclusions on advancing Roma Inclusion

***3019th EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL POLICY HEALTH and CONSUMER
AFFAIRS Council meeting
Luxembourg, 7 June 2010***

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

RECALLING

1. The Presidency Conclusions of the European Council of December 2007¹ and June 2008²; the Council Conclusions on the Inclusion of the Roma of December 2008³; and the Council Conclusions on the Inclusion of the Roma of June 2009⁴;
2. The European Parliament resolutions on the Situation of the Roma in the European Union (April 2005); on the Situation of Roma women in the European Union (June 2006); on a European strategy on the Roma (January 2008); on the Social situation of the Roma and their improved access to the labour market in the EU (March 2009); and on the Second European Roma Summit (March 2010).
3. The Council's Framework Decision on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law⁵.

¹ Doc. 16616/1/07 REV 1.

² Doc. 11018/1/08 REV 1.

³ Doc. 15976/1/08 REV 1.

⁴ Doc. 10394/09 + COR 1.

⁵ Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA. OJ L 325, 6.12.2008, p. 55.

P R E S S

ACKNOWLEDGING THAT

4. A significant proportion of Roma experience situations of extreme poverty, discrimination and exclusion, which also entails low educational levels, inadequate housing conditions, lack of access to employment, and precarious health; and that Roma women and girls face particular difficulties, including the risk of multiple discrimination;
5. In many cases the aforementioned conditions have been worsening markedly in the past years, and that anti-Gypsyism and violent attacks against Roma are intensifying;
6. Roma-related issues have gained relevance on the EU agenda in the past years, and have become important for many EU Member States, and that the European Commission has undertaken various actions in different policy areas;
7. While the Member States have the primary responsibility for advancing the social and economic integration of Roma, cooperation at the EU level brings significant added value;
8. The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights is performing valuable work by collecting data, reporting on racist incidents and raising awareness;
9. International organisations such as the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the UN and its agencies, and the World Bank have long been actively involved in Roma issues, acquiring substantial expertise;
10. International initiatives such as the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 have made a contribution, bringing together the expertise of European countries with significant Roma populations;
11. Efforts to improve the socio-economic conditions experienced by Roma have a demonstrable positive impact when Roma issues are addressed as an integral part of policies through mainstreaming and when actions are implemented over the long term, achieving sustainable results;
12. Available EU policies and financial instruments can usefully play a more substantial role in supporting the Member States in their efforts to tackle the needs of the Roma population and to correct inequalities;
13. Horizontal collaboration and the exchange of information between the Member States, with the support of the EU institutions and within the framework of the Open Method of Coordination, can improve local responses to concrete needs, encourage the acquisition of knowledge, and stimulate the transfer of good practices into new contexts, while also enhancing the adaptability of the relevant actors and increasing their know-how.

WELCOMING

14. The Commission Communication "Non-discrimination and Equal Opportunities: a renewed commitment"⁶ of July 2008, which noted that, while boosting the fight against discrimination through both legislative and policy tools will benefit all potential stakeholder groups, it remains important to address the particular concerns of specific groups. It described the situation of the Roma as characterised by persisting individual and institutional discrimination and far-reaching social exclusion;
15. The Commission's accompanying Staff Working Document on "Community Instruments and Policies for Roma Inclusion"⁷ of July 2008, which emphasised the precarious socio-economic conditions of Roma, who find themselves at a particularly high risk of poverty, unemployment, discrimination and, in some cases, violence;
16. The First European Roma Summit (Brussels, 16 September 2008), which arose from the Communication, and where participants emphasised the co-responsibility of all stakeholders, including the European Union, the Member States and Roma citizens, and the need for an integrated approach to Roma inclusion;
17. The creation of the Integrated Platform for Roma Inclusion, in accordance with the Council Conclusions of December 2008, which called on the Commission "to organise, initially, an exchange of good practice and experience between Member States in the sphere of inclusion of the Roma, provide analytical support and stimulate cooperation between all parties concerned by Roma issues, including the organisations representing the Roma"⁸ in this context;
18. The first meeting of the Integrated Platform in April 2009, following which the Council took note of the Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion, and invited the Commission and the Member States, in close cooperation, and in accordance with their respective competences, to take into account the Common Basic Principles, where appropriate, when designing and implementing policies to promote the full inclusion of the Roma, as well as when designing and implementing policies to defend fundamental rights, uphold gender equality, combat discrimination, poverty and social exclusion, and ensure access to education, housing, health, employment, social services, justice, sports and culture, and also in the EU's relations with third countries⁹;
19. The organisation by the Commission of high-level events in Member States since 2009 aimed at encouraging a more effective use of the Structural Funds in support of Roma inclusion;
20. The recent amendment of Article 7(2) of Regulation 1080/2006/EC on the European Regional Development Fund¹⁰, which extends the eligibility for financial support for housing interventions in favour of marginalised communities. Hitherto restricted to renovations in urban contexts, such interventions will in future also be available for the replacement of sub-standard houses in both urban and rural areas and for renovations in rural areas "in the framework of an integrated approach for marginalised communities"¹¹;

⁶ Doc. 11530/08.

⁷ Doc. 11530/08 ADD 1 + COR 1.

⁸ Doc. 15976/1/08 REV 1, para. 14

⁹ Doc. 10394/09, para. 11.

¹⁰ Docs. 12281/09, 7964/10 + ADD 1 and PE-CONS 6/10.

¹¹ Article 7(2)(b).

21. The Pilot Project on Pan-European coordination of Roma integration methods which will support innovative measures on early childhood education and care, self-employment and microcredit, and information and awareness-raising, as well as establishing a method for collecting data and evaluating the success of the project;
22. The Commission's Communication on "The Social and economic integration of the Roma in Europe"¹², which identified the challenges ahead, highlighting the importance of improving cooperation between European, national and international players and Roma communities; of translating commitments and cooperation into positive changes at the local level; of communicating the benefits of Roma inclusion for local and national economic and social development more effectively; of promoting the integrated use of EU funds; of developing explicit desegregation policies; of the need to focus on the most disadvantaged micro-regions; of mainstreaming Roma inclusion issues into broad policy areas; and of developing model approaches for integration which provide guidance for policy makers in order to address the specific problems of different Roma communities in their geographical, socio-economic, cultural and legal contexts;
23. The Commission's Staff Working Document "Roma in Europe: The Implementation of European Union Instruments and Policies for Roma Inclusion – Progress Report 2008-2010"¹³, which confirmed the positive developments taking place at the European level as well as the progress that is being made in the Member States;
24. The Second European Roma Summit, which took place in Córdoba on 8 and 9 April 2010, and which demonstrated the determination of all stakeholders to promote policies in favour of the social and economic inclusion of Roma, building on the outcomes of the first and second meetings of the Integrated Platform, including the Common Basic Principles, and to develop guidance to facilitate their practical implementation, while pursuing an approach based on fundamental rights.

INVITES THE COMMISSION AND THE MEMBER STATES, in close cooperation, and in accordance with their respective competences

25. To advance the social and economic integration of Roma within the framework of the decisions and recommendations made by the EU institutions, including the Council Conclusions of 8 December 2008¹⁴ and of 8 June 2009,¹⁵ by ensuring the more effective use of existing policies and instruments;

¹² Doc. 8439/10.

¹³ Doc. 8439/10 ADD 1.

¹⁴ Doc. 15976/1/08 REV 1.

¹⁵ Doc. 10394/09 + COR 1.

26. To make progress in mainstreaming Roma issues into European and national policies by mobilising existing EU strategies and instruments for concrete action in favour of the socio-economic inclusion of Roma, including, where appropriate, within the framework of the Europe 2020 Strategy. Mainstreaming should be undertaken in the fields of fundamental rights, gender equality, personal security and protection against discrimination, poverty and social exclusion, regional cohesion and economic development, as well as in other fields that are key to the active inclusion of Roma, such as ensuring access to education, housing, health, employment, social services, justice, sports and culture, and also in the EU's relations with third countries;
27. To take into account, where appropriate, the Common Basic Principles in the design and implementation of all relevant policies and to develop orientation and support to facilitate their practical implementation, bearing in mind specific needs and existing legal and socio-economic circumstances and supporting regional and local authorities in the implementation process;
28. To make progress towards a specific road map for the Platform, in order to provide a mid-term framework of stakeholder actions and expected outputs and to reinforce horizontal cooperation between the Member States and civil society in matters related to Roma by taking such matters into account within the existing Open Method of Coordination; the aims set out in the road map should include coordination and creating synergies between existing parallel policy processes and gathering in-depth information on national policies having an impact on Roma inclusion; it should also prioritise issues within different fields of action and define central points/axes, in accordance with Common Basic Principles 1¹⁶ and 4¹⁷, focusing especially on education, housing, healthcare, and equal access to employment;
29. To support the current Trio of Presidencies (Spain, Belgium and Hungary) in giving priority to issues to be followed in the future Platform activities, in accordance with the Joint Statement adopted by the Trio on the occasion of the Second European Roma Summit¹⁸, and to address Roma-related issues, explicitly where needed, in the relevant sectoral Councils with a view to mainstreaming the Roma perspective in the different fields of action;
30. To participate actively in the Platform, so as to guarantee its effective functioning, management and continuity;
31. To ensure the active involvement of civil society, including Roma organisations as well as other relevant institutions such as the Committee of the Regions, in cooperation with international organisations and, where appropriate, organisations representing local interests, in the work of the Platform;
32. To ensure that existing EU financial instruments and especially the Structural Funds are accessible to Roma, and that those funds tackling Roma needs have an effective impact, by, for instance, promoting the active involvement of local authorities and organisations dealing with Roma issues, as well as Roma themselves, in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation process;

¹⁶ "Constructive, pragmatic and non-discriminatory policies."

¹⁷ "Aiming for the mainstream."

¹⁸ http://www.eu2010.es/export/sites/presidencia/comun/descargas/Ministerios/Declaracixn_de_Cxrdoba_inglxs_acc.pdf

33. To take full advantage of the opportunities offered by the amendment of Article 7 of Regulation 1080/2006/EC by initiating appropriate integrated actions for the support of Roma communities in both rural and urban areas, with a view to the improvement of housing conditions and desegregation;
34. To address the specific needs of Roma women and girls and to apply a gender perspective in all policies and actions for advancing Roma inclusion;
35. To advance the full inclusion of Roma by guaranteeing their legal rights, including by means of ensuring the protection of Roma victims of human trafficking, in accordance with existing European law.

INVITES THE COMMISSION

36. To explicitly address Roma needs in EU Programmes in the fields mentioned in paragraph 26, including the current Programme of Community Action in the Field of Health (2008-2013) and the PROGRESS programme;
 37. To follow up in the medium term on the use made by the Member States of the Common Basic Principles within the framework of the Open Method of Coordination;
 38. To take account of the need to advance Roma inclusion, where appropriate, in agreeing the revision or modification of relevant current Operational Programmes of the Structural Funds and in preparing the proposals for the next programming period, in the spirit of the Common Basic Principles for Roma inclusion and of these Conclusions;
 39. To provide assistance and orientation to the Member States and regional and local authorities in their efforts to advance Roma inclusion and to encourage the transfer of effective working methods;
 40. To support the implementation of the road map referred to in paragraph 28. This support will include the organisation of further meetings of the Platform, including the preparation of background documents, in cooperation with the current Trio of Presidencies (Spain, Belgium and Hungary);
 41. To report, in 2012, on the impact of the Pilot Project on the Pan-European coordination of Roma integration methods.
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