

Roma Civil Society – Decade Focal Points

Statement on the Decade beyond 2015

Roma civil society from all Decade countries ask for continuation of the Decade beyond 2015 until the goal of the Decade is achieved. The commitment of the Decade partners to the Decade should be periodical, starting with the period 2015 – 2025. Roma civil society from all Decade countries calls on their respective governments to involve them in the decision regarding future participation in the Decade.

Roma civil society considers that the mission of the Decade - to eliminate discrimination against Roma and the gap between Roma and non-Roma - is still relevant. The focus of the Decade in the next period should be shifted from reducing the gap in the socio-economic sphere to the elimination of discrimination against Roma. Hence, Roma civil society considers that non-discrimination should become the first priority of the Decade, followed by housing combined with the other priority areas: education, employment and health. Roma civil society recommends the introduction of three additional priority areas, namely security, community empowerment and Roma identity, including culture, language and history.

Furthermore, Roma civil society considers it important to use the term anti-Gypsyism¹ as denoting a specific form of hatred and discrimination towards Roma, in order to tackle the problem properly.

Roma civil society calls on the Decade partners, particularly the National Coordinators in each country, to strengthen their relations with Roma civil society, using the Decade Focal Points as an outreach facility, with a view to establish partnership relations through which Roma communities will be meaningfully and effectively involved in all aspects of the Decade.

Roma civil society considers that the activities of the Decade on an international level, including the International Steering Committee and the thematic meetings, should continue. However, it recommends that the Presidency of the Decade last for six months focusing on a single objective, and that planning is done in a participatory manner with all Decade partners, including Roma civil society.

Roma civil society recommends strengthening of the monitoring system within the Decade by retaining both governmental and civil society reporting and by establishing an independent committee for reviewing progress, with a mandate to perform monitoring visits in the respective countries.

While Roma civil society welcomes the efforts to create and strengthen the interconnection between the Decade and the EU Framework, it considers it highly important to have a single Roma inclusion initiative embracing both EU and non-EU countries in which no differentiation is made between Roma from EU and non-EU countries.

Decade Focal Points: Amaro Drom – Albania; Kali Sara – Bosnia and Herzegovina; Integro – Bulgaria; Roma National Council – Croatia; Slovo 21 – Czech Republic; Romaversitas – Hungary; Mesecina – Macedonia; Young Roma – Montenegro; Sastipen – Romania; Minority Rights Center – Serbia; KARI – Slovakia; Asociación Nacional Presencia Gitana – Spain.

¹ Anti-Gypsyism is a specific form of racism against people perceived of as 'Gypsy', many of whom are of Roma ethnic background. It is an ideology founded on historically nurtured ideas of racial superiority, dehumanization and institutional racism, which is expressed, inter alia, by violence, hate speech, exploitation, stigmatization and the most blatant kind of discrimination.