



European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)

Vienna, 7 April 2008

## **European Union needs common action to make equality a reality for the Roma**

**“We have put in place strong legislation to root out discrimination in the EU, but the promise of equal opportunity remains unfulfilled for many Roma and Travellers in our societies”, said Anastasia Crickley, Chairperson of FRA’s Management Board, in a statement ahead of International Roma Day (8 April).**

“Roma and Travellers are subjected to racially motivated violence and hate speech. The Fundamental Rights Agency and many other organisations have documented the endemic discrimination against Roma in education, employment, health care, housing and access to services. Romani women and children are particularly vulnerable. The action plans and strategies on how to solve these issues through comprehensive programmes have all been drawn up long ago. We must now implement them rigorously, measure their impact, identify good practice and learn from our mistakes. Partnership with the Roma communities themselves must be one of the principles guiding the implementation of these programmes and policies”, Anastasia Crickley continued.

A particularly acute problem across many Member States of the European Union is the housing situation of Roma and Travellers. The lack of provision of accommodation sites by local authorities often results in people from these groups living in sub-standard accommodation, which lacks even basic sanitary facilities. In some countries, the housing conditions, in which some Roma communities live are aggravated by their subjection to evictions and forced relocations.

The situation of Roma and Travellers and the discrimination they face is a European concern requiring a common European response. The Agency therefore welcomes the moves towards greater coordination of Member State efforts at European Union level. At the European Council in December 2007, the Heads of States and Governments of the EU recognised the “very specific situation faced by the Roma across the Union” and invited Member States and the Union “to use all means to improve their inclusion”.

The Fundamental Rights Agency will support this common EU effort to help Roma and Travellers realise their right to equal opportunities in the EU.

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### **Notes to the Editors**

#### **Information about FRA**

- The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), based in Vienna, was established in March 2007. It is an independent body of the EU and being built on the former European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC). Its objective is to provide assistance and expertise on fundamental rights matters to the EU and its Member States, when they are implementing Community law. The aim is to support them to respect fully fundamental rights when they take measures or formulate courses of action. To find out more about FRA's work, please visit <http://fra.europa.eu>