

# Equal treatment

Equal opportunity for Roma in 2006 underwent some positive changes but there were also others which stunted the progress of this community towards the effective exercise of full citizenship which is the right of all Spaniards.

As mentioned in the foregoing, the most significant step forward in 2006 was the creation of the State Council of the Roma People, an institutional platform within the framework of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs including different NGOs working for the advancement of the Roma community and representatives of the Ministry.

In contrast to this milestone and progress such as the expressed recognition of the Roma people in the Statutes of Andalusia and Catalonia, and the resolution issued by the Catalanian Parliament urging the Regional Government to foster measures acknowledging the Roma people as well as others which support the social integration of this group, we are once again faced with the sluggish effective implementation of Directive 2000/43, exemplified by the lack of a regulatory body for the *Council for the advancement of equal treatment*. In this connection the Fundación Secretariado Gitano, together with other organisations, has publicly stated its concern to the administrations entrusted with the said regulation, urging them to fully comply with these measures and offering our full collaboration in what could prove to be a key element in the fight against discrimination.

As has become a habit for the FSG, we have developed all of the strategic lines and actions needed to counteract the phenomenon of discrimination and foster the principle of equal treatment. Below is a summary of some of those actions:

› **Training and awareness raising.** The Fundación Secretariado Gitano has continued to participate in and foster awareness-raising among the key agents in the fight against discrimination. In this connection, special mention should be made of three seminars specifically targeting the state police and security forces which were assessed very positively by the police officers (Madrid, 5 May and 8 and 15 September).

Together with these training sessions, we should mention other parallel sessions organised within the framework of the Anti-Discrimination Projects and *ROMA EDEM*, fora for all those interested in supporting the cause of equality.

› **Advisory support for victims of discrimination.** In 2006 we provided assistance to 265 victims of discrimination and documented over 150 cases for our *2007 Report on Discrimination and the Roma Community*. In line with the Foundation's strategy, the steps taken in these interventions focused on *communication, mediation and conciliation before resorting to legal action*. This procedure proved very useful to victims and produced the best results.





PRESENTATION OF THE 2006 DISCRIMINATION REPORT

» **Annual Report Discrimination and the Roma Community 2006.** The 2006 annual report *Discrimination and the Roma Community* documented 137 cases bearing witness to the situation of inequality still faced by part of the Roma community. In addition to describing these behaviours, the FSG made it a specific point to propose recommendations to the public administrations, ONGs and the civil society at large (some specifically focusing on the Roma community) with the aim of de facto implementation of the equal treatment principle.

We would stress that this Report is being increasingly well received and has become a benchmark of sorts for institutions in the sector when they examine the conditions contributing to Roma being the group suffering the greatest degree of social rejection.

» **Institutional Action.** Together with all of its other activities, Institutional Action is a priority for the FSG which, together with the Red Cross, CEPAIM and ACCEM, has put together a working group to periodically examine and assess the national and European agenda regarding the fight on discrimination. Special attention is given to monitoring the *Council for the advancement of equal treatment* and we make numerous proposals



OFFICERS FROM THE NATIONAL POLICE FORCE TAKING PART IN AN EQUAL TREATMENT TRAINING COURSE

and recommendations to help this body get more in tune with the needs of the Roma community and other groups.

We continue to put a high value on the collaborative work we continue to undertake with the public administrations which have supported our activity, other social organisations networking with the Area of Equal Treatment team and with the partners which form part of the *Roma EDEM* European Anti-discrimination Project focusing on the areas of education and employment (described in greater detail in the International Cooperation section of this report).