

A huge step forward for Roma inclusion

Stop Discrimination Newsletter

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INTRODUCTION

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This edition of the Stop Discrimination Newsletter focuses on initiatives taken at EU level to improve the situation of Europe's Roma population. We explore recent developments, which have helped create momentum at European level on the issue of Roma inclusion, and examine in detail the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies adopted by the European Commission on 5 April 2011.

We hear from Livia Járóka MEP and Zoltán Balog, Minister of State for Social Inclusion in Hungary, on the new EU Framework and how a territorial approach can be used to support Roma inclusion. We also speak to Aurel Ciobanu-Dordea, the new Director for Equality at the European Commission, Directorate-General Justice, about his role and what he thinks are the main challenges for the coming years in the field of equality and anti-discrimination.

You can also learn more about multiple discrimination and the EU laws that exist to protect us all against discrimination, as well as find out about the latest activities, publications and events taking place across the EU to fight discrimination and promote diversity.

This newsletter provides information about the policies and activities conducted by the European Commission to fight discrimination on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

For more information, please visit: <http://ec.europa.eu/antidiscrimination> and the European Commission's anti-discrimination campaign 'For Diversity. Against Discrimination.' <http://ec.europa.eu/stopdiscrimination>

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The EU makes an unprecedented commitment to Roma inclusion

For more than a year, the attention of Europe's media and politicians has been sharply focused on the marginalised situation of the Roma. The first half of 2011 has seen the EU respond to this ongoing problem and make an unprecedented commitment to promoting the economic and social inclusion of the Roma.

The first development came from the European Parliament which showed its support for tackling the many issues faced by the Roma by passing a Resolution on 9 March 2011. Through this Resolution, which is based on a report prepared by Livia Járóka MEP, the European Parliament urged EU Member States and the European Commission to take action and set out proposals to address the wide range of social and economic problems that affect the everyday lives of the Roma.

The content of the Resolution fed into the European Commission's 'Communication on an EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies Up to 2020', which was adopted on 5 April 2011. The title of the Communication emphasises the role of the EU Member States, as they have responsibility for the policy areas where action is needed to promote Roma inclusion. The EU's role is to steer this work and ensure that all EU Member States deliver, at national, regional and local level.

The EU Framework requires EU Member States to draw up national strategies to improve the situation of their Roma populations by the end of 2011. To guide these national strategies, goals are defined in four crucial areas: education, employment, health and housing/access to essential services. EU Member States are required to include in their individual strategies achievable national goals in all these areas. Reaching these objectives in the coming decade will help bridge the gap that currently exists between Roma and non-Roma. It will also contribute to achieving the targets for employment, social inclusion and education set in the EU's growth strategy, Europe 2020 (for more information on the EU Framework, please see the In Depth section).

The European Commission's proposals were presented to stakeholders at a meeting of the European Platform for Roma Inclusion on 7-8 April 2011 in Budapest, Hungary, which brought together representatives from the EU Member States and candidate countries, the EU Institutions, international organisations and Roma civil society. The EU Framework was presented by Viviane Reding,



Vice-President of the European Commission responsible for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship, who stressed that it represents a political consensus between different stakeholders on the best ways to bring about Roma inclusion. The EU Framework was also welcomed by Hungarian Minister of State for Social Inclusion Zoltán Balog who called it a 'bold and courageous document' (for more information on Minister Balog's views, please see the Interviews section).

Participants at the Platform meeting also discussed the advantages and disadvantages of a territorial approach for targeting policies and funding to those Roma populations that are most in need. This approach uses social and economic criteria, geographical factors and educational levels to map the most disadvantaged micro-regions in EU Member States (for more information on the territorial approach see the interview section).

IN FOCUS

Following its adoption by the European Commission, the EU Framework was welcomed by EU Employment and Social Affairs Ministers and approved as part of the conclusions of the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council on 19 May 2011. The EU Framework was then endorsed by EU Heads of State and Government at the European Council held on 24 June 2011. Although not legally binding, these declarations do represent a commitment by all Member States to present national Roma integration strategies, or sets of integrated policy measures, by the end of the year.

The Hungarian Presidency of the European Council, which began on 1 January 2011, has played a crucial role in achieving this result. Together with Spain and Belgium, with whom a common Trio Presidency work programme was developed, Hungary made a pledge to promote the social and economic inclusion of Roma, fight social exclusion, which is often directed at Roma, and strengthen fundamental rights. Poland will take on the Presidency of the European Council from 1 July 2011 and with it the challenge of sustaining the momentum achieved and keeping Roma inclusion firmly on the EU's agenda. ■



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> **The European Union and Roma: includes key documents and information on the Platform for Roma Inclusion**

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma/index_en.htm

> **European Parliament Resolution of 9 September 2010 on the situation of Roma and on freedom of movement in the European Union**

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2010-0312+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>

> **Council Conclusions on an EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020 – Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council, Brussels, 19 May 2011**

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/lsa/122100.pdf

> **Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union**

<http://www.eu2011.hu/>

> **Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union**

<http://pl2011.eu/>

The EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies

Hungarian Minister Zoltán Balog and Lívia Járóka MEP have their say



Zoltán Balog is Minister of State for Social Inclusion in Hungary which holds the Presidency of the Council of the EU until 30 June 2011. During its six-month mandate Hungary has made Roma inclusion a key priority.

Lívia Járóka is the first Roma woman to become a Member of the European Parliament (MEP). Since her election in 2004, Ms Járóka has been a key force in bringing the issue of Roma inclusion to MEPs' attention. Most recently, she served as 'rapporteur' on the European Parliament report on an 'EU strategy on Roma inclusion' which resulted in a resolution being passed on 9 March 2011.

We speak to them both about the new EU Framework and hear more about a territorial approach that aims to boost Roma inclusion.

What are your views on the recently adopted EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies?

Zoltán Balog: *The situation of the Roma requires an urgent and ambitious response from the EU and its Member States. We believe that the new EU Framework will indeed significantly contribute to improving of the situation of Europe's largest and most disadvantaged minority. At the same time we have to keep in mind that this strategy alone is not sufficient. The responsibility of solving the problem lies primarily with the EU Member States. This Framework Strategy is not a magic wand, but an important step on the long road towards integrating our Roma communities.*

EU Member States should take the measures necessary to improve the employment, education, health and housing situation of the Roma people. EU Member States also have to fight against discrimination and ensure that they fully apply the relevant EU anti-discrimination legislation. They also need to consider the situation of the Roma within their individual

broader economic and employment policy frameworks, namely the National Reform Programmes. The Commission's proposals for making more effective use of the EU funds for Roma inclusion are welcomed. We hope EU Member States will make full use of these opportunities. We also agree that the Commission has to set up a strong monitoring mechanism and follow-up on the progress made on a yearly basis.

Let's not forget that improving the lot of our Roma populations is not only a challenge, but an opportunity for EU Member States. We must include our Roma populations in the labour market. Research confirms that the socio-economic integration of Roma is not only a humanitarian issue or a moral duty, but would also contribute to increasing the competitiveness of the EU and the sustainability of its social systems, as well as reducing social problems.

Lívia Járóka: *The European Commission's document takes on board many of the principles set out in my report on the 'EU strategy on Roma inclusion' and also adopts several of the European Parliament's specific recommendations: the appointment of national contact points for the national strategies, the simplification of funding procedures, and the putting in place of a robust monitoring mechanism with clear benchmarks to ensure that tangible results are measured.*

The European Commission is also taking on the task of assessing national plans right after their submission and reporting annually on the progress of integration and the achievement of goals. So, it seems that the Commission is ready to play a leading role in the strategic coordination of the key stages of delivery.

The document is, of course, far from perfect and could be much bolder in many aspects, but it is a step in the right direction. From now on, it will be up to EU Member States to pledge their support by adopting the strategy and to realise its goals under the scrutiny of the European Parliament and the European Commission.

What exactly is the 'territorial approach' mentioned in the EU Framework and how is it relevant to Roma inclusion?

Zoltán Balog: *Using a territorial approach means identifying those territories where marginalised and disadvantaged groups, including the Roma, are overrepresented and launching integrated programmes in order to reduce their disadvantages. Identification of these territories means, in effect, producing a kind of a European extreme poverty map based on demographic, educational and employment indicators.*

Several surveys show that people living in extreme poverty are often concentrated in particular micro-regions or

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segregated neighbourhoods, and that these territorial units should be identified for the sake of policy design and monitoring. As the Roma are overrepresented in most of these disadvantaged micro-regions and in segregated neighbourhoods, identifying them will enable marginalised Roma communities to be targeted. In this way, the approach enables us to target the marginalised population, including the Roma, without using ethnically disaggregated data, which is not available or is inadvisable in most cases.

Once these communities are identified, promoting active inclusion and reducing poverty can be achieved through investing in education, training and skills, labour markets and transport, education, social and healthcare services to help people anticipate and manage change and to build a cohesive society. Coordinated and comprehensive policy measures, explicitly but not exclusively targeting Roma, mainly in the priority areas of education, employment, housing, health, and anti-discrimination should be developed in order to ensure the social-economic integration of Roma and to promote cohesion for the benefit of society as a whole.

Livia Járóka: One of the most determining features of the social exclusion affecting Roma is the strong territorial dimension of poverty and marginalisation. The geographic distribution of social disadvantages is not uniform throughout EU Member States. Poverty and social exclusion is concentrated in underdeveloped micro-regions, which in many of the new EU Member States are inhabited by significant numbers of Roma. Exclusion from economic and social development has a predominantly territorial nature and these deprived areas hamper the social development of the EU as a whole.

The most disadvantaged regions and micro-regions lack the necessary financial resources to provide their own contribution to the Community funding for which they are eligible, and most often lack the administrative capacity and human resources to make good use of this funding. These regions therefore enter the competition for EU and budgetary sources with an irrevocable disadvantage. It is necessary to help them to get out from their position as underdogs and to target their specific needs through an equivalent, complex and intensive programme.

The territorial exclusion described above is currently 'invisible' in European statistics, as well as in terms of policy objectives and instruments. Since the scope of analysis, decision making and planning is too wide to locate these regions, they usually remain hidden from EU level approaches. The analyses and data collection conducted by Eurostat, or within the European Spatial Planning Observation Network (ESPON) programme, are also unable to identify this phenomena, which cannot be addressed within the Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics (NUTS) classification, but could be targeted at the Local Administrative Units (LAU) 1 and LAU 2 levels. I believe it is also necessary to earmark resources at EU level and to let these micro-regions decide themselves how to best use them.

A European-wide crisis map needs to be established therefore, which measures and surveys those micro-regions within the EU where communities are hardest hit by poverty and social exclusion. These crisis areas can and should be identified by their common attributes, such as the accessibility of workplaces, the rate of unemployment, and the lack of proper infrastructure, as well as by the low levels of average income, education, and human resources. ■



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Introducing Aurel Ciobanu-Dordea, Director for Equality, European Commission

Aurel Ciobanu-Dordea has been Director for Equality at the European Commission, Directorate-General (DG) Justice since April 2011. He talks to us about his new position, what he hopes to achieve and what are, in his opinion, the main challenges for the future.

Can you tell us something about yourself? How do you think your previous experience will help you in your new position?

As I came from another Directorate within DG Justice [Mr Ciobanu-Dordea was previously Director for Fundamental Rights and Union Citizenship] my new role is not so structurally different, but of course the issues, the environment and the

stakeholders, for example, are not the same. I previously worked on issues such as fundamental rights, data protection, freedom of movement and the fight against illegal drugs. Now I work on equally complex dossiers, such as gender equality issues in pension provision, which have a significant economic impact on the lives of women and on our societies in general, and on highly political subjects like the recently adopted EU Framework for National Roma Integration

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Strategies. My background as a lawyer and experience as an agent for Romania at the European Court of Human Rights and the European Court of Justice also help me to understand the context in which we are working and the content of my new dossiers.

Since becoming Director for Equality in April 2011 how do you see your role?

I see my role to be a leader and a 'bon père du famille' [someone who is attentive to others and mindful of the responsibilities entrusted to him], but also to promote the values that underpin the policy agenda. The Equality Directorate is used to developing initiatives in discussion with stakeholders, such as civil society organisations, employers' organisations and trade unions, which means it has a strong interaction with real-life that I have long admired. All policy is given a kind of 'reality check' as it is developed and this creates a culture of transparency where people can have their say. I intend to continue to uphold this spirit and work in this way.

What do you hope to achieve, particularly in the context of the newly created DG Justice?

The European Commission is a complex institution which is both challenging and charming at the same time. Working in a newly formed organisation like DG Justice is undoubtedly a challenge, both in terms of opening up it up to the new equality portfolio [the Equality Directorate moved from DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion to DG Justice at the beginning of 2011] and ensuring that our ongoing work on equality is successfully integrated into the DG's overall work, so that there is consistency and understanding of the issues involved. I am doing my best to facilitate this change and to contribute to the DG's understanding of the challenges we face and the approaches we use, here, in the Equality Directorate.

In your opinion, what are the key challenges for the coming years in the field of equality and anti-discrimination?

The Roma is a key issue of course. The new EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies is a response to a crisis that has been unfolding in the EU in recent years. It aims to tackle sensitive issues which are of political, social and economic importance for the Member States. Civil society is of course also closely involved and highly vocal on the subject. Roma integration presents a policy challenge, a political challenge and a communication challenge, but by far the greatest challenge is to make a real palpable change so that in a decade we see real improvements in the lives of Europe's Roma. I do believe it is possible in a decade to make a difference, even if progress is slower at the beginning. We are on the right track and I must stress that we are not starting from zero! The European Commission has been active on this issue for many years and the Member States also have extensive experience of using different approaches and measures.

However, this is by no means the only pressing issue on which we are working.

Mainstreaming gender equality in a more effective way in the proposals and policies developed or adopted by the EU is another key area for action. The role of women in the economic and social development of our societies has a potential that is still insufficiently tapped. A number of legislative proposals and policy measures should, in the near future, help to further open up our society to greater equality between women and men.

Consolidating the rights of people with disabilities in the EU is another crucial issue. We must use the laws that exist as leverage to improve the situation at local, regional and national level. It must be said that a gap still exists in the legal protection that has not been filled. I am referring here to the Commission's proposal of July 2008 for a new Directive that would protect people against discrimination based on age, disability, sexual orientation and religion or belief beyond the workplace, which is still under discussion in the Council. However, there is positive news to report as the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, to which the European Community is a signatory, came into force this year. While there is no perfect legal instrument, the UN Convention provides a very useful legal 'hook' for taking action and has huge symbolic value for our work.

It is also vital to reinforce the links between equality and the Europe 2020 Strategy. Equality issues, such as enhancing gender equality, enabling people with disabilities to participate fully in society and improving the situation of the Roma, need to be clearly anchored in Europe 2020. If we take the Roma as an example, the economic and social benefits of integrating Europe's Roma population into mainstream society and the EU labour market are vast for both Roma and non-Roma! Clearly linking equality issues to Europe 2020 will strengthen our efforts and make it possible to achieve real change in people's lives. ■

DID YOU KNOW...?

Did you know that a person from an ethnic minority is five times more likely to experience multiple discrimination?

A recent survey* found that people from ethnic minorities are, on average, almost five times more likely to experience multiple discrimination (discrimination based on more than one ground) than the rest of the population.

Roma often experience multiple discrimination – for example, a Roma man with a disability may experience discrimination due to his ethnic or racial origin *and* his disability.

So, what can you do if you, or someone close to you, experience multiple discrimination? Use the questions and answers below to test your knowledge.

What laws exist to protect people from multiple discrimination?

The Employment Equality Directive (2000/78) protects everyone in the EU from discrimination based on age, disability, sexual orientation and religion or belief in the workplace. The Racial Equality Directive (2000/43) prohibits discrimination on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin in the workplace, as well as in other areas of life, such as education, social security, healthcare and access to goods and services. While they do not include an explicit mention of multiple discrimination, both Directives can be used in cases of discrimination based on more than one ground.

Do these laws apply in all 27 EU Member States?

Yes, the Directives were agreed by all EU Member States in 2000. Each Member State was then obliged to incorporate these new laws into its national system.

Where can you go for help if you think you have been discriminated against?

Help and advice is available from national equality bodies. These organisations exist in most EU Member States and work to promote equal treatment. They can advise members of the public on their rights and on how to make a complaint if necessary. To find out about the organisation in your country, visit the website of EQUINET, the European Network of Equality Bodies (<http://www.equineteurope.org/>). ■



* Data in Focus Report 5 – Multiple Discrimination, EU-MIDIS: European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey (2010), European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)

<http://fra.europa.eu/eu-midis>

An EU Framework to achieve concrete results for Europe's Roma

There are between 10 and 12 million Roma living on the continent of Europe today, approximately six million of whom reside in the EU Member States. Roma often experience persistent discrimination and social exclusion and are at risk of poverty and unemployment. This situation has worsened recently due to the economic crisis, which has caused hardship for many Europeans and led to a rise in xenophobia and racism in some countries. The opening up of the EU's internal borders following the last wave of EU enlargement has also had an impact on the Roma, many of whom after choosing to leave their country of origin have found it difficult to adapt to their new environment.

Huge gaps exist between Europe's Roma and non-Roma citizens in terms of education, health, employment and access to decent housing and essential services:

- only 42% of Roma complete primary school in some EU Member States, compared to the EU average of 97.5% for non-Roma;
- employment rates for Roma are much lower than for non-Roma, often due to discrimination in the labour market;
- life expectancy for Roma is estimated to be, on average, 10 years less than for non-Roma in the EU; and
- Roma often live in poor housing conditions with inadequate access to utilities such as water, electricity and gas.

Tackling these complex and often interrelated problems is primarily the responsibility of the EU Member States. The EU however has a role to play in keeping the issue high on the political agenda and ensuring that fundamental rights protected under EU law, such as non-discrimination and freedom of movement, are respected. In addition, EU Structural Funds can be used by EU Member States to help improve the situation of the Roma.

In early 2010 the European Commission released a communication and staff working paper which took stock of the progress made at both EU and national level to improve the situation of the Roma. However, the Roma Task Force, an internal European Commission team charged with assessing EU Member States' use of EU funds, reported at the end of 2010 that appropriate measures to address the problems faced by Roma were still not in place in some countries. In particular, EU funds which have great potential to support Roma inclusion were not being used effectively. To step the process up a gear, the European Commission published a new communication, 'An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020', on 5 April 2011, which was endorsed by the 27 EU Member States on 19 May 2011.

The EU Framework is based on five main pillars.

- The first pillar is to require all EU Member States – in proportion to the size of the Roma population living in their territories and taking into account their different starting points – to adopt or further develop a comprehensive strategy or an integrated set of policy measures for Roma inclusion by the end of 2011. A number of approaches are recommended when designing these policies: the setting of national goals for Roma inclusion, so that the gap between Roma and non-Roma citizens is bridged; the identifying of disadvantaged micro-regions (the so-called 'territorial approach') where communities are most in need of help; the allocating of adequate funding from national budgets; the monitoring of the strategy's impact and effectiveness; and the need to work in close cooperation with the Roma community throughout the process.
- The second pillar sets out four European level goals in education, employment, health and housing or access to essential services:
 - to ensure that all Roma children complete at least primary school;
 - to cut the employment gap between Roma and non-Roma;



IN DEPTH



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- to reduce health inequalities (including life expectancy and infant mortality) between Roma and the rest of the population; and
- to close the gap between Roma and non-Roma regarding access to housing and utilities (water, electricity and gas).

These goals aim to improve Roma people's lives by 2020.

- The third pillar is to ensure that EU funding is used more effectively. The Roma Task Force identified a number of bottlenecks at national, regional and local level which prevent funding from reaching where it is most needed. To overcome these obstacles, EU Member States are encouraged to make changes to their current funding programmes, which are co-financed by EU Structural Funds or the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), in order to better support projects that target the Roma. A suggestion is also made for EU Member States to entrust the implementation of some parts of their Roma national programmes to intermediary bodies, such as international organisations or regional development bodies, with a proven experience in Roma inclusion.

- The fourth pillar concerns the measuring of progress. The EU Framework puts in place a robust monitoring system. The European Commission will report annually to the European Parliament and the Council of the EU on the steps made towards reaching the goals set in the EU Framework. This progress will be measured using data on the social and economic situation of the Roma collected by the Fundamental Rights Agency and through other evaluation mechanisms. The European Commission will also take into account ongoing work within the Open Method of Coordination which monitors the implementation of Roma policies, and use the information provided in national reform programmes and the peer review process of the Europe 2020 Strategy to evaluate progress at national level.
- The fifth pillar outlines a number of measures to make sure that any new countries joining the EU address the problems facing their Roma populations. In addition, the EU Framework will strengthen the European Platform for Roma Inclusion, which brings together national governments, the EU, international organisations and Roma civil society representatives, to stimulate cooperation and exchange experiences.

The EU Framework was welcomed by EU Employment and Social Affairs Ministers meeting at the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council on 19 May 2011 and endorsed by EU Heads of State and Government at the European Council held on 24 June 2011. EU Member States are expected to present their national strategies by the end of 2011. The challenge for the European Commission in the coming years will be to keep all EU Member States engaged in the process, to ensure that local and regional authorities as well as civil society and the Roma are fully involved, and to guarantee that the EU Framework delivers. Provided that this can be achieved and all stakeholders are committed, the EU Framework has the potential to make a tangible difference to the lives of Europe's Roma. ■

> The EU and Roma – information and links to key documents including the EU Framework

<http://ec.europa.eu/roma>

SYNTHESIS REPORT 2010, NETWORK OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC EXPERTS IN THE NON- DISCRIMINATION FIELD (SEN)

Each year the SEN produces a synthesis report which provides an analysis of data, trends, achievements and challenges, including conclusions and recommendations.

The 2010 report focuses on discrimination issues in the labour market for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people and ethnic minorities. Its content is based on country reports produced by the network, as well as the outcomes of two good practice exchange seminars.

Main findings on the discrimination of LGBT people in the labour market include a lack of data on the employment situation of LGBT people across the EU, which makes it difficult as a result to assess the level of discrimination that exists, and uneven progress between EU Member States on addressing the discrimination, harassment and inequality often experienced by LGBT people. The report also underlines the crucial role of European Commission initiatives in promoting equal opportunities for LGBT people in the labour market.

Conclusions drawn on discrimination in the labour market of people from ethnic minorities include the need for a planned approach at national level, which comprises measures aimed at the long-term unemployed in general, as well as targeted support to people from ethnic minorities. The report also stresses the importance of legislation and the work of the national equality bodies in eliminating discrimination. In addition, initiatives that help organisations adapt their policies, practices and procedures to accommodate cultural diversity are also advocated.

> SEN Synthesis Reports

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/experts/index_en.htm

FIRST EUROPEAN EQUAL PAY DAY, 5 MARCH 2011

Women in Europe currently earn on average around 17% less than men. To raise awareness of this inequality and its impact on women's lives, the first European Equal Pay Day (EPPD) was organised on 5 March 2011. The EPPD will be an annual event across Europe and provide a focus for activities to raise awareness of the gender pay gap and the need to take action to close it.

Its date, which will vary every year depending on the average EU gender pay gap provided by Eurostat, marks the day up to which women need to work in order to earn the same salary as men during a full year of work. While a man would receive his salary on 31 December, because of the

gender pay gap a woman in Europe in 2011 would be required to work until 5 March the following year to earn the same.

> Gender Pay Gap

<http://ec.europa.eu/equalpay>

GOOD PRACTICE EXCHANGE SEMINAR, 21 MARCH 2011, VIENNA

The Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection hosted a seminar to share good practice at national level on public policies combating discrimination based on age in accessing and progressing in employment on 21 March 2011 in Vienna. The event brought together government representatives from 11 European countries, as well as members of the Network of Socio-Economic Experts in the Non-Discrimination Field (SEN) from four countries and the European Commission.

Good practice examples from Austria, the Netherlands, Slovenia, France, Denmark, the Czech Republic, Finland, Estonia and Sweden were presented during the seminar. Conclusions and common lessons to be learned were drawn from the examples and the group made a series of recommendations, aimed at both EU and national level, to support the development of effective public policies that fight age discrimination in the labour market.

These seminars take place around twice a year and the next event is planned for 29-30 September in Estonia. It will focus on how to overcome the obstacles that currently exist in implementing public policies on combating discrimination against and promoting equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. The seminar will build on the work of a previous event on this subject which was held in The Hague, The Netherlands, in 2010.

> Networks of experts

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/experts/index_en.htm

HIGH LEVEL EVENTS ON STRUCTURAL FUNDS FOR ROMA

Building on the success of the series of High Level Events that took place in Hungary in 2009 and Romania in 2010, the European Commission organised a High Level Event in Bratislava, Slovakia on 23-25 May 2011. A series of events also took place in Bulgaria: a High Level Event on 21-22 June in Sofia, followed by two regional events in Veliko Tarnovo on 23 June 2011 and Burgas on 24 June 2011.

These events aimed to raise awareness of the opportunities offered by EU funds, as well as to promote their use and enhance the impact of the projects they support.

Speakers included representatives from the EU Institutions, national governments, local authorities, international organisations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Participants included representatives of national, regional and local authorities, the media, and potential beneficiaries of EU funds, including municipalities and NGOs that work on Roma inclusion.

> The EU and Roma

<http://ec.europa.eu/roma>

TAKE PART IN THE EU JOURNALIST AWARD 2011!

The EU Journalist Award – Together against discrimination! is the only journalism competition for print and online journalists focused on discrimination and diversity issues in the EU. Through the Award, the European Commission recognises journalists who contribute to a better understanding of the value and benefits of diversity and the fight against discrimination in the EU.

The competition will close at 12.00 (midday – CET) on 10 November 2011.

> EU Journalist Award 2011

<http://journalistaward.stop-discrimination.info/>

ACCESS CITY AWARD 2012 NOW OPEN

The European Commission's Access City Award sets out to showcase and reward cities of over 50 000 inhabitants which take exemplary initiatives to improve accessibility for people with disabilities. The competition enables cities to share ideas and experiences and, in this way, aims to encourage the development of more accessibility initiatives across the EU. The first edition, launched in 2010, was won by the Spanish city of Ávila for its comprehensive plan to improve accessibility to public buildings and to provide incentives for private initiatives. Ávila has also developed accessible tourism facilities and improved job opportunities for people with disabilities.

The new edition of the Access City Award is now open and information on the competition, the rules of participation, and the application and selection processes is available on the competition website. The winning city will receive its award at a ceremony to be held during a conference organised on 1-2 December 2011 in Brussels to mark the European Day of People with Disabilities. The competition will close on 20 September 2011.

> Access City Award 2012

<http://accesscityaward.eu>

INFORMATION AND EVENTS ON EQUALITY

CONFERENCE 'EQUALITY BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN', 19-20 SEPTEMBER 2011, BRUSSELS

The European Commission is organising a conference to exchange ideas on the most effective way to make progress on the main priorities of the 'Strategy for equality between women and men (2010-2015)'. Participants will also examine these priorities in the context of the economic crisis, demographic changes and the Europe 2020 Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

The conference will bring together a broad range of stakeholders including representatives from the EU Institutions, EU Member States, candidate countries, European Economic Area (EEA) and European Free Trade Association (EFTA) States, equality bodies, social partners, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and international organisations.

It will be followed up by a Dialogue for Equality between Women and Men on 20 September. This is a new annual appointment for the main European stakeholders in the field of gender equality which aims to provide the EU Institutions with the opportunity to present their shared commitments to making progress on gender equality.

Participation is by invitation only.

> Gender Equality

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/index_en.htm

COMPENDIUM ON NON-DISCRIMINATION/EQUALITY MAINSTREAMING

A compendium has been produced to promote the use of non-discrimination/equality mainstreaming in the policy processes of the EU Member States. This publication provides practical guidance and

gathers examples of non-discrimination/equality mainstreaming taking place at national, regional and local level in the EU.

The Compendium will be published this autumn in English, French and German. A leaflet 'Non-discrimination Mainstreaming: An Introduction' is already available in all EU languages. Published in 2010, the leaflet provides an overview of non-discrimination/equality mainstreaming, including its objectives, the benefits, the tools used and the success factors for its effective implementation.



> 'Non-discrimination Mainstreaming: An Introduction'

http://bookshop.europa.eu/is-bin/INTERSHOP.enfinity/WFS/EU-Bookshop-Site/en_GB/-/EUR/ViewPublication-Start?PublicationKey=KE3010489

FIFTH EUROPEAN EQUALITY SUMMIT, 14-15 NOVEMBER 2011, POZNAŃ

Organised by the Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union and the European Commission, the Fifth Equality Summit will explore effective equality policies at regional and local level. Workshops will examine equality as a factor of regional development and the effective use of funds for anti-discrimination policies.

The Summit, which will take place in Poznań in Poland, will bring together

stakeholders active in the field of non-discrimination, including national authorities, representatives of civil society, social partners and equality bodies.

> Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union

<http://pl2011.eu/>

MEETING OF THE EU DIVERSITY CHARTERS EXCHANGE PLATFORM

The organisers of national diversity charters, which currently exist in Austria, the Brussels-Capital Region of Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Spain and Sweden, will hold a conference on 24 November 2011 in Brussels. The event will bring together diversity charter organisers and stakeholders from the business sector and public authorities to share good practice and raise awareness of the benefits of diversity management for both multinationals and small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). This platform for EU level exchange was set up with the European Commission's support in 2010.

> Diversity Charters

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/diversity/diversity-charters/index_en.htm

LAST WORD

Roma integration presents a policy challenge, a political challenge and a communication challenge, but by far the greatest challenge is to make a real palpable change so that in a decade we see real improvements in the lives of Europe's Roma.

Aurel Ciobanu-Dordea, Director for Equality, DG Justice