

Press release: ERPC Welcomes New Council
Recommendation on Roma

Brussels, 10 December 2013



The European Roma Policy Coalition (ERPC) welcomes the new Council Recommendation on effective Roma integration measures in European Union (EU) member states. The Recommendation sends a strong message to member states to effectively fight and end discrimination against Roma, and ensure their inclusion at all levels of society.

The Recommendation comes in reaction to the Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies (Framework), established in 2011. The majority of these strategies were weak, not implemented, and failed to deliver inclusion, with systematic and ongoing racism and discrimination against Roma within the EU.

Against this backdrop, the ERPC welcomes the Recommendation's explicit call on member states to take meaningful and effective steps to ensure the inclusion of the Roma by making the most of the potential offered by their National Strategies for Roma and the financial tools available to develop them fully.

The ERPC hopes that as a result of the new Recommendation, member states with poor records cannot remain inert and inactive to Roma integration, and that the Council's calls will encourage member states to strengthen their measures against the Roma exclusion and tackle Anti-Gypsyism seriously.

"Member states must put an end to discrimination, speed up the implementation of their National Strategies, and ensure equal treatment and inclusion of Roma", added Dezideriu Gergely, chair of the ERPC. "Discrimination of Roma in the EU is simply put a form of racism. The EU and member states must ensure an end to this practice within its borders".

The European Commission played an active role in developing the Recommendation and in the enhancement of National Integration Strategies. The Commission however

continues to remain inactive when it comes to implementing the legal tools (infringement proceedings) at its disposal to hold member states accountable.

The ERPC hopes that the Council Recommendation will finally encourage the Commission to launch the infringement procedures for violation of the EU Race Equality Directive and concretely protect one of Europe's most vulnerable minorities.

For further comment/background and interviews, contact:

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Note to editors:

The European Roma Policy Coalition is an informal gathering of non-governmental organisations operating at EU level on issues of human rights, anti-discrimination, anti-racism, social inclusion, and Roma and Travellers' rights. Its members are Amnesty International, European Network Against Racism (ENAR), the European Roma Grassroots Organizations Network (ERGO), the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC), the European Roma Information Office (ERIO), Fundación Secretariado Gitano (FSG), the Open Society Institute (OSI), Policy Center for Roma and Minorities, the Roma Education Fund.