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The situation of Roma in Europe and relevant activities of the Council of Europe

Motion for a recommendation
presented by Mr Cilevičs and others

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only the members who have signed it

1. In a number of documents, notably Recommendation 1557 (2002) on “The legal situation of Roma in Europe”, the Assembly addressed the situation of the biggest minority in Europe, the Roma.
2. In the Council of Europe, the Roma issue is at the heart of three of the Organisation’s priorities: protection of minorities, the fight against racism and intolerance and the fight against social exclusion. Consequently, a number of bodies deal with Roma issues. The first European Roma representative body, the European Roma and Travellers Forum (ERTF), has been established under the auspices of the Council of Europe. Nevertheless, these activities have so far brought limited results.
3. In recent years, a number of other international organisations, including the UN (particularly its Development Programme), the OSCE and the European Union, have developed numerous programmes and projects aiming at the protection of human rights and the promotion of social integration of Roma. Several national governments, primarily in Central Eastern Europe, have elaborated policies to pursue the same goal. Besides, many NGOs, both national and international, established by Roma themselves and non-Roma human rights and advocacy organisations, have implemented various types of activities devoted to improvement of the situation of Roma.
4. However, despite increased attention and all the activities mentioned above, Roma remain by far the most discriminated minority in Europe. In almost all European countries, Roma represent the most vulnerable and socially disadvantaged group in respect of access to employment, education, and healthcare. More often than people belonging to other groups, Roma become victims of police brutality. They frequently have access to only substandard housing, and cases of forced evictions of Roma from their houses are increasingly recorded in a number of European states. Roma are disproportionately affected by forced displacement in cases of conflict, particularly in the Balkans, their access to asylum and international protection is difficult, and forced returns in situations where security and social conditions in the countries of origin obviously do not allow for successful (re)integration become systematic. It should be stressed that the European Court of Human Rights has issued some judgments related to racially motivated violence and discrimination against Roma.
5. Given the situation briefly described above, the Assembly decides to undertake a careful study of the activities of various branches of the Council of Europe relevant to the protection of Roma and facilitation of their integration, with the view to further streamlining these activities, to improving co-operation and enhancing synergy between all bodies involved so as to raise effectiveness of the efforts aimed at improving the situation of Roma undertaken at both national and international level.

*Signed*¹:

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¹ SOC: Socialist Group
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EDG: European Democratic Group
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left
NR: not registered in a group