

Brussels, 28 August 2013

Dear Mr Raši,

I would like to thank you for your prompt response to my letter of August 13<sup>th</sup> concerning the construction of a wall to segregate the Roma community in Košice-Západ.

You are right to recognise what is truly at stake in this matter: the most fundamental values of the European Union, which ensure respect for human dignity and equality in a society in which non-discrimination and tolerance prevail. I am pleased that you share my ambitions for a Europe with no mental or physical walls, rejecting all forms of racism and granting the same rights to all citizens and communities. All Member States commit to uphold these values when they join the Union.

As a European Capital of Culture for 2013, the city of Košice has a symbolic duty to promote these values and, furthermore, set a positive example by helping all its citizens to live peacefully together irrespective of cultural difference and by encouraging their participation in the cultural and social development of the city. As you know, these are two of the main criteria of the cultural programme for European Capitals of Culture.

I understand from your letter that the wall in the municipality of Košice-Západ was erected illegally, and that your authorities intend to take appropriate legal action to rectify the situation. I trust that you will devote the utmost attention to this matter, and would be grateful if you could keep me informed of your future action and any other developments surrounding the wall in Košice-Západ.

Košice's Roma community is making an important contribution to the city's role as European Capital of Culture. By presenting the many facets of Roma culture and building bridges between the various communities across your city, this special year demonstrates why the European Capital of Culture is such a significant event highlighting our shared cultural diversity. To hold this prestigious title is an honour, and I am confident your city will fulfil its duties with dignity.

Yours sincerely,



C.c: Mr Rudolf Bauer, Mayor of Košice-Západ  
H.E. Ivan Korčok, Permanent Representative of the Slovak Republic to the EU  
Mr Dušan Chrenek, Head of the European Commission Representation in the Slovak Republic

Mr Richard Raši  
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