



THE SENATE
OF THE PARLIAMENT OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC
9TH TERM

373rd

RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE

Delivered on the 16th session held on 27th November 2013

on the Proposal for a Council Recommendation on effective Roma integration measures in the Member States /Senate Press no. N 081/09/

The Senate

I.

1. Supports

the efforts of the Commission and Member States to promptly address the issues of social exclusion and socially excluded areas, because, in addition to other negative effects, these are a common cause of social pathologies (crime, drug trafficking, prostitution, homelessness, gambling, etc.) and their spreading;

2. Notes

that Art. 153, Par.1 (j) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union gives the Union the power to support and complement Member States in their fight against social exclusion, and the measures taken may be intended to solely encourage cooperation between Member States through initiatives aimed at improving knowledge, developing exchanges of information and best practices, promoting innovative approaches and evaluating experiences;

3. Recalls

the long-term position of the Senate, as stated in its Resolution No. 305 of 4th August 2011 on the Communication from the Commission on the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020, in which the Senate did not consider a common solution for the Roma exclusion at the EU level to be sufficiently effective, with regard to the considerable cultural and socioeconomic variation of individual Roma communities, their different manners of life (nomadic, sedentary urban or rural) and level of inclusion into the majority population;

4. Rejects

the introduction of ethnic-determined measures in the field of social policy, as neither the Constitutional order nor international commitments allow the Czech Republic to define social intervention beneficiaries according to ethnicity;

5. Is of the opinion

that across-the-board association of any ethnicity with the socio-economic status of social exclusion is greatly misleading, is not based on facts and, to a certain extent, borders with discrimination and promotion of harmful ethnic stereotypes;

II.

1. Is convinced

that measures towards the inclusion of the Roma population should be adopted in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity at the national level where mainly the coordination of the integration activities should take place, and above all at the regional and local level where a concrete situation and needs of Roma communities can only be fully reflected and effective individual solutions can be provided;

2. Is of the opinion

that the inclusion of this minority will be successful only if Roma communities representatives are engaged in the search for and implementation of the solution which could enhance the co-responsibility of these communities for finding an appropriate solution and for its implementation;

3. Notes

that there is no ethnicity-based discrimination in relation to access to health-care in the Czech Republic, as all members of the health insurance system are entitled to access to standard medical care as specified by the law;

4. Does not recommend,

in this context, introducing higher out-of-the pocket expenses paid by patients into the health-care system, because it may lead to a reduction in the availability of health care mainly for vulnerable groups of citizens, thus further increasing their risk of social exclusion, while it adds that a necessary condition for good health is sufficient awareness of the principles of a healthy lifestyle;

5. Supports

the expansion of social housing projects for all those in danger of social exclusion, while it assumes that responsibility for their realisation rests upon municipalities that should determine who, and on what conditions, is allowed to use the social housing services, and it is up to central authorities to support this effort by all means available;

6. Calls on the Government

to modify the current practice of housing allowance payments that allows abuse by rental housing providers, and recommends focusing on dispersed social housing projects in close cooperation with community workers;

7. Denies

unsubstantiated accusations of ethnicity-based discrimination in education made against the Czech Republic, because, in the Senate's opinion, the placement of individuals within the sections of educational system is based primarily on the assessment of their ability to graduate within a particular educational programme and also on the assessment of their relevant social habits;

8. Adds

that early school dropout cannot be blamed on arbitrary and deliberate decisions of educational facilities, but rather it is a consequence of insufficient family-school cooperation and inadequate design of education and training programmes;

9. Does not support

the introduction of positive discrimination and affirmative action (i.e. preference of criteria that are not based on qualification) for employment in the civil service,

because the applicant's qualification necessarily has to fulfil, above all, qualification requirements of the employer;

10. Is ready,

nevertheless, to debate the creation of supported employment opportunities for the disadvantaged in the labour market, while noting that these jobs should be available to other vulnerable groups as well, such as recent graduates with little or no experience, foster care children, mothers taking care of children and employees close to retirement; furthermore, better workforce mobility will help the functioning of labour market as well;

11. Adds

that a thorough revision of social security legislation that would ensure better targeting of benefits and transparency of the whole scheme must be a part of solution to the issue of social exclusion, as this should prevent misinformation about benefit abuses from spreading; furthermore, there should be a stronger link between a social intervention and support for integration of individuals and their families;

III.

1. Requests

the Government to inform the Senate about the way this position was taken into account and to provide the Senate with further information on the proceeding of negotiations;

2. Authorises

the President of the Senate to forward this Resolution to the European Commission.

Milan Štěch
sign manual
President of the Senate

Eva Syková
sign manual
Senate Verifier