



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 19.03.2014
C(2014) 1521 final

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Senát for its Opinion on the Proposal for a Council Recommendation on effective Roma integration measures in the Member States {COM(2013) 460 final}.

The Commission appreciates the constructive attitude by the Senát towards the Recommendation that was unanimously adopted at the EPSCO Council on 9 December 2013. This adoption occurred less than six months after having been proposed by the Commission. This Recommendation is a landmark in the EU as it is the first ever EU-level legal instrument for Roma integration. The agreement on this Recommendation is a strong signal that Member States are willing to tackle the challenging task of Roma integration. Ministers have made a unanimous commitment to improve the situation for Roma communities on the ground.

The Commission shares the view of the Senát that the issue of Roma integration needs to be dealt with not only at the European level, but also at national, regional and local level. While EU action in this field can help achieve better results, it is primarily for the Member States to implement the national strategies or integrated policy measures they have set. As the Senát has highlighted, the measures towards the inclusion of the Roma population should be adopted in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity at the national, regional and local level.

The Recommendation agreed in December 2013 specifically mentions that, since the size and the social and economic situation of the Roma population vary considerably between different Member States, national approaches to Roma integration should be tailored to the specific circumstances and needs on the ground, including by adopting or continuing to pursue policies that address marginalised and disadvantaged groups, such as Roma, in a broader context.

The Commission supports the opinion of the Senát that the integration of Roma is a two-way process, which requires the involvement of both the Roma community and the rest of society. The Commission is already working closely with several associations representing the Roma in the European Union and is also encouraging awareness-raising and sensitisation of society to Roma issues.

Mr Milan ŠTĚCH
President of the Senát
Valdštejnské náměstí 17/4
CZ – 118 01 PRAGUE 1

The Commission takes note of the opinion of the Senát regarding the key areas of education, employment, healthcare and housing. The Council Recommendation on effective Roma integration measures in the Member States aims at giving specific guidance to help Member States strengthen and accelerate their efforts to improve the situation of the Roma.

Finally, the Commission would be very pleased if the high-level participation of the Senát could be ensured at the Roma Summit. This meeting, taking place on 4 April 2014, will be hosted in Brussels by Vice-President Viviane Reding and Commissioner Laszlo Andor.

The Commission hopes that these comments address the concerns raised by the Senát and looks forward to continuing our political dialogue.

Yours faithfully,

*Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President*