

PARLIAMENT OF ROMANIA

CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES

DECISION

**concerning the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - Report on the implementation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies
COM (2014) 209**

Pursuant to the provisions of Articles 67 and 148 of the Romanian Constitution, republished, of Law No 373/2013 on cooperation between Parliament and the Government in the area of European affairs, and of Article 40 of Decision No 11/2011 of the Chamber of Deputies on the working and decision-making procedure for parliamentary supervision of draft legislative acts of the European Union, based on the provisions of the Treaty of Lisbon on the role of national Parliaments,

The Chamber of Deputies hereby adopts this decision:

Sole Article - Having regard to draft opinion 4 c-19/238 adopted by the Committee for European Affairs at its meeting of 12 June 2014,

1. The Chamber of Deputies welcomes the continuity in drawing up a global framework with regard to Roma integration, based on concrete elements and clearly correlated with the Europe 2020 strategy. The EU framework serves as a common denominator for all the Member States, which in turn have an obligation to adapt it to their particular situation at national level.
2. The Chamber of Deputies notes that the report indicates for the first time the progress made in the four key areas of education, employment, healthcare and housing, as well as in the fight against discrimination and the use of funding. The report also assesses the progress achieved at EU level.
3. The Chamber of Deputies takes note of and subscribes to the positions adopted in the Committee for Human Rights, Religion and National Minorities. The Committee stressed that the conclusions of the report indicate that the drafting of a national Roma integration strategy by each Member State using the EU 2011 framework as point of departure constituted the first step towards a positive change in the lives of the Roma people.
4. The Chamber of Deputies recalls that in December 2011 the Romanian Government adopted its 2012-2020 Strategy for the inclusion of Romanian citizens belonging to the Roma minority. The Strategy replaced the public policy documents relating to the Roma community adopted up until 2011.
5. The Chamber of Deputies would point out that the draft law on the establishment of the 'Proiect Ferentari' Foundation has been discussed in the standing committees of the Chamber in the context of the implementation of the programme for the social inclusion of

Romanian citizens belonging to the Roma ethnic group. The draft law, which covers the establishment of the above-mentioned Foundation under the coordination of the Secretariat General of the Government, is currently being re-examined at the request of the Romanian President. The Foundation would run projects, programmes and activities relating to the social inclusion of Romanian citizens belonging to the Roma ethnic group.

6. The Chamber of Deputies takes note of and subscribes to the positions adopted in the Committee for Human rights, Religion and National Minorities arguing that the following aspects should be taken into consideration as part of the European strategy:

a) the creation of ethnic community bodies, made up of representatives of the community elected by direct vote or confirmed (in the case of Roma civil servants), set up to take decisions at a level that is as close as possible to the community (ethno-communitarian subsidiarity). Each ethnic community body would propose and approve measures for community development and management, monitor the situation of Roma people in the locality/county/development region in question and the means of implementing public policy dedicated to the Roma people, and assemble a database on Roma communities and migration as a premise for the development of more wide-ranging strategies in the medium and long-term.

b) Cooperation and partnership with the public administration, development of relations with European institutions and the Roma diaspora (lobbying, advocacy and monitoring):

- increasing the autonomy of local authorities by establishing regional and county-level bodies, the transfer of decision-making powers and financial and material resources, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity;

- increasing institutional efficiency and increasing transparency in relations with citizens belonging to the Roma minority in particular and increasing the quality and access of the Roma minority to public services.

- creation of a European Agency for Roma Inclusion that would manage all issues relating to the Roma minority in all EU states.

c) with regard to the problems of racism, discrimination and xenophobia, 'positive actions' need to be adopted in all European states in which Roma live. This is needed to ensure genuine equal opportunities. The principle of equal treatment does not prevent a state from maintaining or adopting specific measures to prevent or compensate for disadvantages based on racial or ethnic origin, for the purpose of achieving the leap from a poorly educated traditional culture to a modern culture that is integrated into contemporary values.

d) adoption of specific public policies:

- the European, national and/or regional strategy should aim to guarantee equality for and integration of Roma people and/or travellers into social, economic and political life, promote greater autonomy and the strengthening of the capacities of the social groups in question, raise awareness among the whole

population with regard to the culture and way of life of the Roma people and/or travellers, guarantee respect for the identity of Roma and/or travellers and ensure effective protection against racism. Public policy on Roma and/or travellers should be drawn up on the basis of the following principles:

- continuing an approach based on global, dynamic and integrated rights;
- recognition of the diverse nature of Roma and/or traveller communities and of their needs, which require a varied and flexible response;
- promoting the participation of Roma people and/or travellers as an essential component of all stages of the strategies targeting them, from drafting to implementation, monitoring and assessment and promoting the consolidation of the capacities of the community;
- ensuring effective monitoring of the implementation of the strategy using clearly defined reference points and criteria in order to obtain the best results;
- a common legislation that would compel authorities to promote equality and non-discrimination and to allocate the necessary resources for this to become possible;
- tackling the problems faced by Roma people in the EU should be based on a detailed and scientifically grounded assessment of their needs carried out by the authorities, while also taking account of Roma organisations that are active on the ground;
- carrying out a set of censuses in EU Member States in order to identify the real situation with regard to the Roma people living there, so that a coherent set of public policies can be adopted;
- public policies for Roma and/or travellers should include revision of existing legislative and administrative practices in order to ensure consistent implementation;
- sufficient financial resources should be earmarked in the state budget, within the limits of its long-term possibilities, in order to guarantee the implementation, monitoring and assessment of public policies for Roma people;
- governments should provide sustainable support from the budget for the participation of Roma people and/or travellers in the drafting, implementation and monitoring of strategy;
- local and/or regional authorities should include in local and/or regional budget planning specific actions to improve the living conditions of Roma people and/or travellers in order to guarantee sufficient funding for implementation;
- the various public policies intended to improve the condition of the Roma people should be adopted by means of a legal text, whether a law at national level or a directive at European level, in order to ensure the sustainability of those policies;
- the implementation apparatus that is used needs to be sufficiently well-funded and staffed at European, national, regional and local level;

e) Development of cooperation between Romanian institutions responsible for managing migration and the relevant institutions in host countries in order to draw up a report on changes in the number of Roma migrants in the informal sector and living in unsanitary housing and the implementation of measures based on the findings of that report:

- reintegration into the local labour market of migrants who return home;
- clarification of the rights and obligations and demonstration of the benefits of diversity and multiculturalism, in order to effect a change based on mutual respect between ethnic minorities, immigrants and the other European citizens;
- in order to break the cycle of the transmission of poverty and exclusion to future generations, a framework needs to be put in place to offer equal opportunities for all children in the education system;
- improving the well-being of children involves increasing the family income through direct support, whether financial support, or support in the form of basic social services, and measures to facilitate access by both parents to the labour market;
- monitoring, with the aid of indicators measuring the effects of national or inter-state programmes with regard to Roma people;
- firm action on the part of European institutions to push state players to take decisions to increase the active participation of Roma people in the societies in which they live.

7. The Chamber of Deputies would point out that Romania, like other Member States, has made considerable efforts to integrate sedentary Roma, but national strategies are not sufficient on their own to successfully resolve the problems of the Roma community, especially nomadic Roma.

8. Given the problem at hand and the requirements presented above, the Chamber of Deputies recommends that the European Commission include on its working agenda a debate on the development of an innovative strategy based on the recognition of the Roma ethnic group as a European ethnic group, in order to promote a set of principles that would form the basis for a single European project dedicated to this minority, and not just serve as a framework for the national Roma integration policies, as is the case at present.

This Decision was adopted by the Chamber of Deputies at the session of 9 September 2014, in compliance with Article 76(2) of the Romanian Constitution, republished.

PRESIDENT OF THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES

Valeriu Stefan Zgonea

Bucharest, 9 September 2014

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