



Romanian Parliament  
Senate

Bucharest, 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2017

**OPINION**

**Regarding the *COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS***

***Assessing the implementation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies and the Council Recommendation on effective Roma integration measures in the Member States - 2016  
COM (2016) 424 final***

*The Romanian Senate has examined the COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS - Assessing the implementation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies and the Council Recommendation on effective Roma integration measures in the Member States - 2016 – COM (2016) 424 final – under the Protocol (no.1) annexed to the Treaty of Lisbon regarding European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community signed in Lisbon on December 13, 2007.*

Taking into account the report of December 12, 2016 of the permanent Committee for European Affairs, **the Plenum of the Senate**, during its session of February 8, 2017, decided as follows:

The Romanian State has decided the official use of denomination „Roma” through Ministry of Foreign Affairs Memorandum D2/1094/29.02.2000, approved by the Prime Minister which called for the reconsideration of Memorandum H03/169 of 31.01.1995 and the universally use of the term „Roma” in official correspondence. It was taken into consideration that „Roma” has a pejorative connotation, referring to the servitude status of Roma (servant, slave). The Romanian State’s decision represented a result of „consultations with a number of specialists, international organizations (the Council of Europe and OSCE), national institutions (the Department for National Minorities, Ministry of Education, the Ombudsman) and Roma Associations”. Thus, the term „antigypsism” in Romanian translation cannot be officially „anti-țigănism” but possibly anti-Roma racism or anti-racism.

**1. The following are noted:**

- a. The existence of a continuity of public policies for Roma inclusion;

- b. This Communication puts antigypsism for the first time in terms of strategic importance in Roma inclusion, even in front of social measures;
- c. The need of conceptual clarification of the „antigypsism” and the necessary measure to do so.
- d. The efforts of the Romanian State Institutions responsible in the implementation of policies of effective integration of Roma people: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Administration and Internal Affairs, the National Agency for Roma, and in particular the National Contact Point for Roma which carries extensive activities that meet the outlined needs within the Commission’s recommendations, such as:
  - i. The coordination between European Policies and Social Cohesion;
  - ii. The Inter-ministerial Committee Coordination for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the Romanian Government strategy regarding the inclusion of Romanian citizens that belong to Roma minority;
  - iii. The National Platform of Best Practices for Roma – project funded by 95% by the EC, DJ Justice which aims to organize workshops in eight regions of the country for delivering and dissemination of information on the possibility of accessing European funds to implement integrated services within communities;
  - iv. Project for strengthening the administrative capacity of PNCR funded by Human Capital Operational Programme, Axis VII, is about to be filed at the POCU registry (worth approx. 9,9 mil. euros);
  - v. Organizing cultural manifestations and events which have the goal of preserving and promoting the Roma culture.

**2. The following conclusions contained in the Commission’s evaluations, are welcomed:**

- a. The increased attention towards education by the Member States. The most Member States have reported the adoption of some relevant measures for the education and care of preschool children, early school leaving, inclusion education and individualized support, strategies for combating early school leaving, promoting access to education for preschool children and its quality, for subsequent dropout prevention and the improvement of academic standards;
- b. The distribution - still very poor - of Roma people on the labor market;
- c. The weak approach in combating segregation and preventing forced evictions;
- d. The positive steps taken to strengthen the institutional activity and capacity of the national contact points for Roma people integration, even if their mandate and resources still vary considerably;
- e. The holding-back factors in combating the discrimination against Roma people, particularly segregation in housing and preventing forced evictions ;
- f. The cooperation with the civil society and the involvement of the private sector in implementing the decisions remain deficient.

**3. The following are considered necessary:**

- a. the continuation of law enforcement and establishing national and local safeguards;
- b. the elimination of housing segregation, in accordance with Commission’s views through: legislation, inclusion-oriented political reforms, teacher training, the dissemination of inclusive methods and measures of explicit desegregation combined with specific support in order to eliminate all barriers to access;

- c. the expansion and multiplication of smaller-scale initiatives that have been successful through the use of funds for 2014-2020;
- d. the further development of methodologies for data collection, monitoring and reporting to meet expectations regarding the justification of public funds and to ensure that the impact of specific and general measures concerning Roma people is evaluated and that it leads to policies improvement and review;
- e. making full use of national platforms for Roma people integration to ensure the inclusive participation of all stakeholders in the implementation, monitoring, reporting and policies review to promote exchanges, evaluation and the transfer of best practices, to establish partnerships and further mobilize Roma communities, local authorities, civil society and the private sector;
- f. the recommendation of Roma associations will consider:
  - i. A conceptual clarification of antigypsism (anti-racism), meaning specialized reflections and as concerted action; in this sense, to create a laboratory for public and legal policies testing, as a working structure of subcommittees which will publish annually a report on monitoring and combating the antigypsism (anti-racism);
  - ii. Setting up a national anti-racist network involving state institutions and the empowering of Roma people, as a partnership structure for public policies to combat the discrimination and antigypsism by launching a public campaign aimed at both Roma women and children, 2016-2025;
  - iii. Endorsement by the state through the development of policies to combat the antigypsism and social discrimination, of a new social contract between the dominant civil society and Roma civil society stating for both parts the mutual and brought to normal limits of the „contract of integration” as social equity and empowering Roma people in programs and strategies concerning them.

**4. The following are recommended:**

- a. Mentioning in the subsequent evaluations of the Commission and affirmative measures in education, undertaken by Romania. It is worth mentioning that the affirmative actions should be reconsidered in accordance with the new European realities.
- b. In the absence of a conjugated vision of the three pillars of action and reflection (UN, CoE, EU states) on combating the antigypsism, to maintain the expertise of efficient policies on combating the anti-Roma racism, terminological and conceptual clarifications of the antigypsism are required, adapted to the historical reality of Roma people cohabitation, in various EU countries, in close relation with normative relating anti-Semitism and racism of the European and international institutions.

**President of the Senate**



**Călin POPESCU - TĂRICEANU**