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*Mr Ion-Marcel CIOLACU
President of the Camera Deputaților
Palace of the Parliament
Str. Izvor nr. 2-4, sector 5
RO – 050563 BUCHAREST*

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Camera Deputaților for its Opinion on the Evaluation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020 {COM(2018)785 final}.

The mid-term evaluation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies covering the 2011-2017 period concluded that despite many limitations and taking into account the massive task involved the EU Framework has shown positive results and an initial change in trends. While the Framework's ambition of putting an end to the exclusion of Roma has not yet been achieved, the evaluation clearly demonstrated its EU added value, in particular by putting Roma inclusion on the EU and national agendas.

The Commission welcomes that the Camera Deputaților expressed support for the aim to reduce the gaps between the Roma population and the rest of the population in terms of education, employment, health status and access to housing and public utilities. The evaluation has indeed confirmed that these four areas continue to be valid for Roma inclusion.

The Commission highly appreciates the strong emphasis of the Camera Deputaților on the need to stimulate the business sector, access to education of young Roma, the need for sociological studies, the importance of the Roma culture and that of the need to promote good practices of cooperation between the Roma population and the rest of the population. With a view to education, the 2019 Report on the implementation of national Roma integration strategies¹ adopted on 5 September 2019 highlights that education is the area where Member States are doing the most work to promote Roma inclusion, whilst the evaluation concluded that a more ambitious goal in the area of education would be warranted.

¹ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council - Report on the implementation of national Roma integration strategies – 2019 {COM(2019)406 final}.

The promotion of best practices and peer learning on Roma inclusion has been proactively and consistently promoted by the Commission, both at the European and national level, through the organisation of the annual European Platform for Roma Inclusion and its financial and technical support to the Member States in organising National Roma Platforms.

The Commission equally appreciates the Camera Deputaților's view on the development of the EU framework with greater flexibility for adapting objectives and selecting target groups according to specific national contexts, whilst stressing the need for a pragmatic strategy at European level that meets both the long-term needs of integration of the Roma population and its immediate needs. In this respect, the evaluation has shown that the Framework provided enough flexibility to Member States to adapt its objectives to specific national contexts.

With reference to coordination at European level, it is of utmost importance to recall that whilst in 2011 the Commission has taken a leading role on Roma inclusion at the European level and has put forward various tools to support Roma inclusion measures at the national level, Member States still uphold the main responsibility with regards to the inclusion process of the Roma population. All work on Roma inclusion has to take into account this division of responsibilities, which contributes to the success of Roma inclusion in all Member States.

Taking into account the lessons learned from the evaluation, the valuable feedback received from stakeholders and partners, such as civil society organisations, the European Parliament, the Council, or the set of recommendations resulting from the Austrian and the Romanian Presidency events, calling on the Commission to prepare and present a specific EU Roma policy initiative for post-2020, the Commission has organised on 1 October 2019 a workshop on future policies for Roma. This event focused on forward-looking findings of the evaluation of the EU Framework as well as on options to address them in a potential post-2020 initiative. Regarding the outcome of the workshop, all the follow-up documents will be published on the EU Roma website².

The Commission hopes that these comments address the issues raised by the Camera Deputaților and looks forward to continuing our political dialogue.

Yours faithfully,

*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*

*Věra Jourová
Member of the Commission*

² https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/roma-and-eu/roma-integration-eu/workshop-future-policies-roma_en#documents