

ERPC PRESS STATEMENT

ERPC welcomes European Commission's negative assessment of the National Roma Integration Strategies

Brussels, 23 May 2012 - The European Roma Policy Coalition (ERPC) agrees with the European Commission that the National Roma Integration Strategies submitted by EU Member States need to be improved to make a real difference in the lives of Roma by 2020. The Commission's assessment, published today, concurs with the ERPC's review issued in March that had already highlighted key shortcomings in the strategies.

"The European Commission's assessment of the strategies reveals many of them to be so deeply flawed that they cannot even be regarded as a first step forward. They reflect a complete lack of political will. Such complacency is neither acceptable nor sustainable", said Shannon Pfohman, ERPC Chair.

Member States need to adopt more concrete targets, measurable deliverables, adequate funding and effective implementation and monitoring mechanisms. It is also crucial that they consult with local authorities and civil society on the content and implementation of the strategies.

The ERPC also welcomes the fact that the Commission calls on Member States to fight discrimination "convincingly" and "to ensure that anti-discrimination legislation is effectively enforced in their territories".

"Fighting anti-Gypsyism and taking effective measures to tackle discrimination must be at the core of the Roma integration strategies. This is all the more urgent in a climate of rising hostility towards Roma across Europe", added Ivan Ivanov, ERPC co-chair.

The ERPC urges the Commission to press EU Member States to revise their strategies in line with the recommendations.

For interviews or further comment, please contact:

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The ERPC is an informal gathering of non-governmental organisations operating at EU level on issues of human rights, anti-discrimination, anti-racism, social inclusion, and Roma and Travellers' rights. Its members are Amnesty International, European Roma Rights Centre, European Roma Information Office, Open Society Foundations, European Network Against Racism, Minority Rights Group International, European Roma Grassroots Organizations Network, Policy Center for Roma and Minorities, Roma Education Fund, and Fundación Secretariado Gitano.

*From November 2011 to May 2012, the rotating chairmanship of the ERPC is held by the European Network Against Racism in close cooperation with Amnesty International and the European Roma Information Office.
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**Winner of Campaign of the Year: ERPC Campaign for an EU Roma Strategy,
European Public Affairs Awards 2011**