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EU ROMA POLICY COALITION



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EU SOCIAL AGENDA: ROMA INCLUSION REMAINS DEADLOCKED

(Brussels, 2 July) The EU's Social Agenda, announced today, fails to propose any long term strategy aimed at Roma inclusion, says the EU Roma Policy Coalition (ERPC).

The Coalition finds that the European Commission's latest paper on Roma inclusion instruments underscores the numerous shortcomings resulting from the EU's and the member states' misguided approach to Roma issues.

"At a time when the scale of abuses committed against Roma is increasing, for example in Italy, it is more important than ever to have a sound, comprehensive and long-term EU Roma strategy and commitment" said Nicolas Beger, Director of Amnesty International, EU Office.

Instead, the European Commission once again chose to defer responsibility to member states rather than focusing on forward-looking initiatives to empower Europe's largest minority group. The Commission should assume its key role in launching, coordinating and supporting an EU Roma strategy.

"The Commission's paper is a first step towards the adoption of an EU Roma Strategy yet it features too many limitations. We expected the document to review, analyse and set the basis for a vision and a strategy to achieve Roma inclusion. The paper falls considerably short in this process, resembling an inventory" underlined Pascale Charhon, Director of the European Network Against Racism (ENAR),

"We hope that EU High Level Conference on Roma, in September, will be a turning point that will bring strong developments which will eventually translate into ambitious policy making to benefit Roma across the European Union" pointed out Andre Wilkens, Director of the Open Society Institute, Brussels,

The ERPC calls for the Commission to:

- devise an ambitious Framework Strategy matched by a Community Action Programme and supported by an institutional co-ordination mechanism with quantifiable targets and benchmarks;
- introduce an effective monitoring mechanism;
- build upon current initiatives such as the Decade of Roma Inclusion, devised in close cooperation with member states and civil society.

The European Roma Policy Coalition (Coalition) is an informal gathering of NGOs operating at EU level in the broader areas of human rights, anti-discrimination, anti-racism, social inclusion and Roma and Travellers rights.

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