

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2004



2009

Session document

23.1.2008

B6-0055/2007

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

further to Questions for Oral Answer B6-0389/2007, B6-0003/2008, B6-0004/2008 and B6-0005/2008

pursuant to Rule 108(5) of the Rules of Procedure

by Giusto Catania, Vittorio Agnoletto, Mary Lou McDonald and Dimitrios Papadimoulis

on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

on a European strategy on the Roma

European Parliament resolution on a European strategy on the Roma

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Article 13 of the EC Treaty, which enables the European Community to take appropriate action to combat discrimination based on racial or ethnic origin,
- having regard to its resolution of 27 January 2005 on the Holocaust, anti-Semitism and racism,
- having regard to its resolution of the 28 April 2005 on the situation of the Roma in the European Union,
- having regard to its resolution of 1 June 2006 on the situation of Roma women in the European Union,
- having regard to its resolution of 15 November 2007 on application of Directive 2004/38/EC on the right of EU citizens and their family members to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States,
- having regard to its legislative resolution of 29 November 2007 on the proposal for a Council Framework Decision on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law,
- having regard to Articles 6, 7, and 29 of the Treaty on European Union and Article 13 of the EC Treaty, which commit the EU and its Member States to upholding human rights and fundamental freedoms and which provide European means to fight racism, xenophobia and discrimination, and to the European Charter of Fundamental Rights and the statute of the Agency for Fundamental Rights,
- having regard to international human rights conventions which prohibit discrimination on the basis of racial and ethnic origin, and notably the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR), both signed by all the EU Member States,
- having regard to Directive 2000/43/EC implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, and Directive 2000/78/EC establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation, and to the Framework decision on combating racism and xenophobia,
- having regard to the Report on Racism and Xenophobia in the Member States of the EU for 2007, published by the Agency for Fundamental Rights,
- having regard to the establishment in recent years of the ‘Decade of Roma Inclusion’ and a Roma Education Fund, which aim to heighten the efficacy of policy and funding matters

concerning the Roma and are currently focused on a number of European states, including a number of EU Member States, candidate countries and other countries in which the European Union institutions have a very significant presence,

- having regard to Rule 108(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Article 13 of the EC Treaty prohibits all forms of discrimination, particularly those based on racial or ethnic origin and religion or belief,
- B. whereas Roma living in the European Union suffer racial discrimination, and in many cases are subject to severe structural discrimination, poverty and social exclusion,
- C. recognising the lack of progress in combating racial discrimination against the Roma in the enjoyment of the rights to education, employment, health and housing in both the Member States and candidate countries,
- D. whereas segregation in education continues to be tolerated across the EU Member States, and recognising that an improvement in access to education and opportunities for academic achievement for the Roma is crucial to the advancement of Roma communities' wider prospects; whereas most of the Roma population have limited access to education, and their right to benefit from cultural freedom and scientific progress is endangered,
- E. whereas the Roma minority have to face daily discrimination in the labour market, and their right to work is not fully respected,
- F. whereas most of the Roma population live in poverty and social exclusion, and in some EU Member States have to face serious social security benefit reductions,
- G. whereas the EU has a variety of mechanisms and tools that can be used to improve the access of Roma to quality education, employment, housing and health, including, in particular, social inclusion, regional and employment policies,
- H. recognising that the social inclusion of Roma communities is a goal yet to be achieved, and that EU instruments need to be brought to bear to achieve effective and visible change in that area,
- I. deploring the fact that Roma citizens of the European Union frequently face racial discrimination in the exercise of their fundamental rights, as European Union citizens, of freedom of movement and of establishment,
- J. recognising the need to ensure effective Roma participation in political life, particularly as regards decisions which affect the lives and well-being of Roma communities,
- K. taking note, in particular, of the extreme situation of many Roma and Roma communities in the new Member States, as well as the acute vulnerability of Roma migrants from the new Member States to longer-standing European Union states,
- L. whereas Kosovo remains an unsafe place for all non-Albanian ethnics, including the Roma, and some Member States have carried out forced returns of refugees – many of them of Roma origin – to Kosovo, even if the conditions for such a return are not

guaranteed,

1. Welcomes the conclusion of the European Council of 14th of December 2007 which, ‘conscious of the very specific situation faced by the Roma across the Union, invites Member States and the Union to use all means to improve their inclusion’ and ‘invites the Commission to examine existing policies and instruments and to report to the Council on progress achieved before the end of June 2008’;
2. Strongly condemns all the forms of systematic discrimination faced by the Roma in a number of key areas – such as education, employment, access to health care and housing – in many EU Member States and candidate countries; stresses that all measures designed to end Roma discrimination should be planned, carried through and evaluated with the most direct participation of the Roma communities affected;
3. Reaffirms the important role of the EU in fighting discrimination against the Roma, which is often structural and therefore requires a comprehensive approach at EU level, while acknowledging that the primary investment of political will, time and resources in the protection, promotion and empowerment of the Roma should lie with the national governments of Member States;
4. Urges the European Commission to develop a European framework strategy on Roma inclusion aimed at providing policy coherence at EU level as regards the social inclusion of the Roma;
5. Urges the Commission to examine possible ways of strengthening anti-discrimination legislation in the area of education, focusing on desegregation, and to report its findings to the Parliament within one calendar year of the adoption of this Resolution;
6. Calls on governments to take steps to increase the number of Roma educators and teachers’ assistants, and to ensure that educational texts include material on Roma history and culture, especially in regions and localities with substantial Roma populations;
7. Calls on the Member States and candidate countries to guarantee the Roma minority the right to work and labour market access based on equal and satisfactory conditions, and the right to benefit from a social security system guaranteeing them an adequate standard of living;
8. Urges the Commission to support the integration of the Roma into the labour market through measures including financial support for training and retraining, measures to foster positive action on the labour market and rigorous enforcement of anti-discrimination laws in the field of employment;
9. Calls on the Council, Commission and Member States to support systemic national programmes aimed at improving the health situation of Roma communities;
10. Calls on the Member States to prioritise the necessity to improve the healthcare conditions of Roma throughout the Member States, candidate countries and potential candidate countries in the discussions on a new EU health strategy. The new EU health strategy should make the provision of adequate healthcare to the Roma, along with the provision of

access to the same healthcare services for Roma as for majority societies, a firm priority;

11. Urges all Members States, without delay, to end and adequately remedy: (i) the systemic exclusion of certain Roma communities from healthcare, including *inter alia* those communities in isolated geographic areas; (ii) extreme human rights abuses in the healthcare system, where these have taken place or are taking place, including racial segregation in health facilities and the coercive sterilisation of Roma women;
12. Urges Member States to include the issue of the improvement of Roma housing conditions in the discussions on an integrated urban policy – development plans for the deprived areas where Roma live should be of a comprehensive nature, including education and training, health, employment and leisure aspects – and to take into consideration relocation measures in order to provide Roma with adequate housing conditions – housing policies, especially relocation measures, should be implemented in consultation or cooperation with the Roma communities concerned;
13. Demands that Member States end the destruction of Roma settlements under the pretext of urban modernisation programmes. Such programmes should only be implemented with proper consideration for the population that will be affected. Families should be relocated and provided with adequate housing. A compensation programme for the families affected should also be implemented;
14. Welcomes the essential facilities for Roma Travellers that have been built in the EU, and encourages Member States to continue along those lines;
15. Calls on the European Commission to establish a task force to coordinate implementation of a European framework strategy on Roma inclusion, to facilitate cooperation between the Member States, to coordinate joint actions between Member States and to ensure the mainstreaming of Roma issues through all the relevant bodies;
16. Calls on the European Commission to develop a proposal for the establishment of a Community action plan for Roma inclusion with the task of providing financial support for the implementation of the objectives of the European framework strategy on Roma inclusion;
17. Calls on the Member States to create national Roma integration strategies where these do not yet exist, and on all EU Member States to ensure that an adequate institutional framework exists to ensure the successful implementation of such national strategies and that such institutions and strategies are adequately funded;
18. Urges the EU Member States not to carry out any forced returns of Roma originating from Kosovo for as long as the security situation in Kosovo does not allow for their return; Roma Kosovar refugees should be provided with guarantees for a safe repatriation. They should also be given the opportunity to stay in the host country, if they so wish, and provided with the means to integrate into society in the host country;
19. Urges the new European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights to place Roma inclusion and combating racism and racial discrimination against the Roma among its highest priorities in its programme of work;

20. Urges the Commission and Council to make use of existing initiatives such as the ‘Decade of Roma Inclusion’ and the Roma Education Fund to heighten the efficacy of their efforts in this area;
21. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments of the Member States and the Council of Europe.