

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2004



2009

Session document

23.1.2008

B6-0051/08

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

further to Questions for Oral Answer B6-0389/07, B6-0003/08, B6-0004/08
and B6-0005/08

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

by Viktória Mohácsi and Alfonso Andria

on behalf of the ALDE 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 to its resolution of 27 January 2005 on the Holocaust, anti-semitism and racism,
- having regard to its resolution of 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 to Article 13 of the EC Treaty, which commit the EU and its Member States to upholding human rights and fundamental freedoms and provide legal instruments to fight racism, xenophobia and discrimination, to the European Charter of Fundamental Rights, and to the statute of the Agency for Fundamental Rights,
- having regard to Directives 2000/43/EC implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin and 2000/78/EC establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation, as well as 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 in 2007, published by the Agency for Fundamental Rights,
- having regard to the recent ruling by the Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights in the matter of D.H. and Others v. the Czech Republic,
- having regard to the establishment in recent years of a Decade of Roma Inclusion and a Roma Education Fund, with a view to increasing the efficacy of policy and funding concerning Roma, and currently focused on a number of European states, including a

number of EU Member States, candidate countries and other countries in which the Union institutions have a very significant presence,

- having regard to Rule 108(15) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the eight to twelve million Roma living in the European Union suffer racial discrimination and in many cases are subject to severe structural discrimination, poverty and social exclusion, as well as multiple discrimination on the basis of gender, age, disability and sexual orientation,
- B. recognising the lack of progress made in combating racial discrimination against the Roma and in defending their rights to education, employment, health and housing in both Member States and candidate countries,
- C. deploring the fact that Romani citizens of the European Union frequently face racial discrimination in the exercise of their fundamental rights as EU citizens to free movement and establishment,
- D. whereas segregation in education continues to be tolerated across EU Member States; recognising that such discrimination in access to quality education is persistently affecting the ability of Romani children to develop and enjoy their rights to educational development,
- E. whereas Roma are still subject to discrimination in the employment sector,
- F. whereas there exist, on a wide scale, substandard and unsanitary housing and evidence of growing trends in forced eviction, with Roma regularly being denied the right to alternative housing,
- G. whereas the EU offers a variety of mechanisms and tools that can be used to improve the access of Roma to quality education, employment, housing and health, in particular social inclusion, regional and employment policies,
- H. recognising that the social inclusion of Romani communities is still a goal to be achieved and that EU instruments need to be used to achieve effective and visible change in this area,
- I. 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,
- J. taking note in particular of the extreme situation of many Romani individuals and communities in the new Member States, as well as the acute vulnerability of Romani migrants from the new Member States,
- 1. Welcomes the conclusion of the European Council of 14 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. Condemns utterly and without equivocation all the forms of racism and discrimination faced by the Roma and others regarded as ‘Gypsies’;
3. Urges the new European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights to place Roma inclusion and combating racism and racial discrimination against Roma among its highest priorities in its programme of work;

A comprehensive approach

4. 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 Roma is the responsibility of national governments of Member States;
5. 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 Roma; notes that a European framework strategy on Roma inclusion should:
 - prioritise the inclusion of Roma through the EU's social inclusion and employment policy and through the relevant structural funds by supporting sustainable EU and national programmes seeking to defend Roma's rights to education, employment, health and housing in both Member States and candidate countries,
 - contribute to combating structural and institutional discrimination in the areas of education, employment, access to health services and housing; advance positive actions as an important tool in reversing entrenched disadvantages,
 - aim to combat anti-Gypsism by integrating it thematically in EU-level anti-racism campaigns and initiatives,
 - establish monitoring mechanisms to evaluate programmes in the area of social inclusion and employment; set benchmarks and indicators and provide the necessary support for research and evaluation of programmes implemented,
 - ensure a holistic approach to Roma issues and bring EU policy aimed at Roma inclusion into line with existing intergovernmental initiatives such as the Decade of Roma Inclusion and the OSCE and Council of Europe strategies for the improvement of the situation of Roma;
6. Calls on the European Commission to establish a Roma unit or similarly empowered body to coordinate implementation of a European framework strategy on Roma inclusion, facilitate cooperation between the Member States, coordinate joint actions

between Member States and ensure mainstreaming of Roma issues throughout all relevant bodies;

7. 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 realising the objective of a European framework strategy on Roma inclusion;
8. Calls on Member States to create national Roma integration strategies, where these do not yet exist, and to ensure that an adequate institutional framework and funds are provided with a view to their successful implementation;

Education

9. Urges the Commission to examine opportunities to strengthen anti-discrimination legislation in the area of education, focusing on desegregation, and to report on its findings to Parliament within one year following adoption of this resolution;
10. Reiterates that equal access to quality education should be a priority under a European strategy on the Roma; urges the Commission to redouble its efforts to fund and support actions in the Member States which aim to integrate Romani children into mainstream education from early age; urges the Commission to support programmes fostering positive action for Roma in the fields of secondary and higher education; urges the Commission to support other programmes providing positive and successful models of desegregation; urges the Commission to establish particular funds to support (i) the pre-school education of Roma, (ii) desegregation of Romani classrooms/institutions in elementary education, (iii) monitoring and reforming the practice of illegal treatment of Romani children in institutions for the mentally disabled, (iv) education in the Romani language, (v) access by Romani youth to higher education, (vi) university support for Roma and (vii) the inclusion of sufficient information in Holocaust education programming about the persecution of Roma during World War II;
11. Urges the Member States to prioritise (i) funding for pre-school education of Roma, (ii) desegregation of Romani students so as to move them into mainstream education, (iii) monitoring and reforming the illegal treatment of the mentally disabled, (iv) actions to encourage the education of all children in Romani language, history and culture and the positive contributions Roma have made to European societies, and (v) financial support for Romani students in secondary, tertiary and university education with the help of a tutorial system if needed;

Employment

12. Urges the Commission to support the integration of Roma in the labour market through measures including financial support for training and retraining, measures to foster positive action on the labour market, rigorous enforcement of anti-discrimination laws in the field of employment, and measures to promote the self-employment of Roma and small Romani businesses;

13. Urges the Member States to (i) continuously develop legal and other instruments to combat racial discrimination on the labour market, as well as to ensure that measures taken by employers to foster diversity are promoted, (ii) provide financial support with a view to promoting independent anti-discrimination agencies, (iii) build on positive examples existing in some Member States to ensure that the staff of large- and medium-sized employers adequately reflect the ethnic diversity of the community, and (iv) take measures to support small Romani businesses and to develop the capacity of Roma to undertake entrepreneurial activities;

Health care

14. Calls on the Council, Commission and Member States to support systemic national programmes aimed at improving the health situation of the Romani communities;
15. Urges all Member States to end and adequately remedy without delay (i) the systemic exclusion of certain Romani communities from health care, including but not limited to communities in isolated geographic areas and (ii) extreme human rights abuses in the health care system, where these have taken place or are taking place, including racial segregation in health facilities and coercive sterilisation of Romani women;

Housing

16. Urges the Commission to build on existing positive models to (i) support programmes aimed at ending Romani slums, in those Member States where they exist, and (ii) support other programs providing positive and successful models of housing for Roma, including Romani migrants;
17. Urges the Member States to (i) adopt and implement slum upgrade policies, (ii) rigorously enforce anti-discrimination law in the field of housing, (iii) develop positive statutory obligations to end homelessness, based on positive models existing in some Member States, (iv) take all relevant action against racial segregation in the field of housing, and (v) redouble efforts to end the erosion of housing rights standards in the Union;
18. Calls on Member States to involve the Roma community at grassroots level with a view to empowering the Romani people to fully benefit from the incentives provided by the EU, whether in the field of education, employment or civic participation, given that successful integration involves a bottom-up approach and joint responsibilities;
19. 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 its efforts in this area;
20. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments of the Member States and the Council of Europe.