

WRITTEN QUESTION E-4121/08
by Ramona Nicole Mănescu (ALDE)
to the Commission

Subject: Statistics about Roma in the EU Member States

Roma are the largest cross-border ethnic minority in Europe. It is estimated that almost 10 million Roma live in the EU Member States. However, with regard to the EU's anti-discrimination and social insertion policies, there is an almost total absence of specific, reliable and publicly available data about Roma.

Over recent years, there has been an increasingly urgent need for statistics about Roma, since governments have begun to develop special programmes in respect of them. However, all national programmes linked to the integration of the Roma population have a common flaw: they are not based on reliable demographic, employment, health, education and housing data.

However, in 2004, the Commission raised the question of data gathering in respect of ethnic background among Member States, but was unable to convince statistical offices of the need and feasibility of such an operation.

Given the events and debates over the last few years concerning the fraught social situation of Roma in the old and new EU Member States, will the Commission say:

1. What are the most recent data it possesses as regards the number of Roma in each EU Member State?
2. What strategy is the Commission pursuing in order to improve its collaboration with Member States in gathering statistical data concerning Roma?
3. To what extent is the Roma population socially integrated in each EU Member State?
4. What is the impact of the forces of social exclusion on Roma in the EU?