

WRITTEN QUESTION E-5136/08

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to the Commission

Subject:           Attack on Roma citizens in Italy

On Friday 5 September 2008, three families of Italian citizens of the Roma ethnic group parked their caravans in a square in Bussolengo (Verona) while they took their midday meal. When the local police turned up, the travellers confirmed that they would vacate the car park immediately.

A few minutes afterwards, a patrol of carabinieri from the Bussolengo barracks appeared and violently attacked the three families. All three families were brutally beaten (including children younger than 10) before being taken to the Bussolengo barracks, where they were subject to further astoundingly violent treatment: beating, bullying, torture and abuse. All this is documented by medical reports.

Three people are still in prison now, accused of resisting a public official in the exercise of his duty and theft.

Unfortunately, this is only the most recent of a series of acts of violence and intimidation against members of the Roma population who are resident in Italy (and, in many cases, are Italian nationals).

In view of the foregoing, does the Commission agree that Italy is becoming a 'special case' by virtue of the serious and recurrent nature of such incidents?

Does the Commission agree that urgent action must be taken to stem and reverse this trend by every available means and at every level, whether local, national or European?

How does the Commission intend to approach the Italian Government with a view to preventing any further such abuses of basic human rights?