

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1398/09
by Viktória Mohácsi (ALDE)
to the Commission

Subject: Roma children living in camps who have been taken away from their parents by the Italian authorities

On 17-18 May 2008, during a visit to several Roma settlements in Rome and Naples, Italy, ones that are referred to by the Italian authorities as 'nomad camps', I discovered that in recent years all trace has been lost of a large number of Roma children, 12 of whom had reportedly been taken from their parents by the Naples Juvenile Court. Since then, the parents of these children have heard nothing about their fate or their whereabouts. Testimonies by a large number of parents suggested that there had been hundreds of similar cases in Italy. Similar testimonies have been documented by local NGOs in Milan, Rome, Florence and other parts of Italy. Also according to the testimonies, after having their babies taken from them, the Roma families faced pressure and threats to stop them protesting or seeking legal aid.

In particular, the following children are missing:

- Lenuța Iancu, born on 12 November 1997, mother's name: Rodica Iancu, was taken away in October 2006;
- Lenuța Ottavian, born on 5 October 1996, mother's name: Marianna Ottavian, was taken away in Naples in 2005;
- Kristina Konstantin, born on 22 December 1994, mother's name: Marianna Ottavian, was taken away in Naples in 2006;
- Lenuța Konstantin, born on 22 May 1995, mother's name Marianna Mustafa, was taken away in May 2006;
- Francesca Stefan Stefanuscu, born in Pesaro on 6 March 2008, was taken away from her parents Lucretia Stanescu and Decian Stefan just a few hours after her birth by the police and a social worker from Rimini.

Is the Commission aware of the practice whereby children are taken away from their parents, mainly on the basis of the social workers' judgment of the suitability of their living conditions? Would the Commission carry out an inquiry into this disturbing practice, into the whereabouts of these specific children, and into whether this procedure does not violate parents' rights?