

ORAL QUESTION WITH DEBATE O-0078/08

pursuant to Rule 108 of the Rules of Procedure

by Jan Marinus Wiersma, Claudio Fava, Kristian Vigenin, Gianni Pittella, Adrian Severin and Katalin Lévai, on behalf of the PSE Group
to the Commission

Subject: Creation of a Roma fingerprints database in Italy

- The Italian Government has adopted derived executive measures involving the collection of fingerprints of Roma children and the compilation of a register of Roma families in larger cities, and the police is already proceeding to a series of checks in Roma camps, particularly in Milan, including fingerprinting procedures.
- The Italian Minister of the Interior has announced the plan to extend the fingerprinting of Roma minors to all municipalities after the adoption of the legislative 'security' package, in order to create a national Roma database for identification purposes. The database will be held by Italian law enforcement authorities placed under the control of Prefects, who have already been appointed by decree as 'extraordinary commissioners for the Roma emergency' and granted extraordinary powers.
- The Prefect of Rome has affirmed that he will not fingerprint Roma children and several Prefects have expressed concerns in this respect.
- The Council of Europe, UNICEF, the Italian data protection supervisor, the Italian Jewish community, and the President of the Holy See Pastoral Council for Migrants, together with trade unions and opposition parties, have expressed serious concerns about what appears to be a law enforcement population register based on ethnicity.
- Article 13 of the TEC allows the EC to take action to prevent and avoid discrimination based, inter alia, on ethnic origin and race.

Will the Commission:

1. assess whether the measures defined by the Italian Government in order to fingerprint Roma and create a biometric database of Roma constitute a case of discrimination based on race, ethnic origin and nationality, to prevent and avoid which the Community may take action under Article 13 of the TEC?
2. assess whether the collection of fingerprints of Roma and the creation of a Roma database can be considered compatible with the fundamental rights enshrined in the EU Charter and in the ECHR which, according to Article 6 of the TEU, the Union and its Member States are obliged to promote and respect? Will it also assess any other fundamental human rights issues arising under international law, as relevant?
3. assess the need to raise its concern with the Italian authorities, and to take action, in accordance with its competences, in order to avoid any kind of discrimination directed at Roma in Italy, as well as respect for fundamental rights and the promotion of integration measures?

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Forwarded: 03.07.2008

Deadline for reply: 10.07.2008