

Stop Discrimination Newsletter

June 2010



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Introduction



The European Commission is pleased to announce that the 'For Diversity. Against Discrimination.' campaign's newsletter and the 'Equality in Action' newsletter have been merged into the Stop Discrimination Newsletter which has a new format and length in 2010.

This newsletter will provide you with information on all the European Commission's activities and policies in the field of anti-discrimination. I hope that you find it interesting and useful for your work!

In this edition, we will focus on Europe's Roma population, looking at recent developments including the second European Roma Summit which was held on 8-9 April in Córdoba, Spain, and the European Commission's recent Communication on Roma inclusion.

We will hear from Viviane Reding, Vice-President of the European Commission responsible for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship, and László Andor, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, on how the European Commission is taking action to support Europe's Roma, as well as Francisco Moza Zapatero, Spanish Ministry for Health and Social Policy, on the Roma Summit in Córdoba from the host's point of view.

You will also have the opportunity to learn about innovative projects aimed at supporting the Roma, test your knowledge of the EU laws and organisations which exist to protect the Roma against discrimination, as well as find out about activities, publications and events taking place across the EU to fight discrimination and promote diversity.



Belinda Pyke
Director of Equality between men and women,
Action against discrimination, Civil society,
European Commission

Working towards a better future for Europe's Roma

The Roma represent one of the biggest ethnic minorities in the EU with a population of between 10-12 million people across several different Member States. Many Roma live in difficult conditions and continue to experience frequent racist violence, hate speech and discrimination in accessing employment, education, health care, and public and social services.

The EU has a responsibility, together with Member States, to take action to tackle this situation. So, what exactly is the European Commission doing to promote the inclusion of Europe's Roma?

On 7 April, the Commission released its first ever Communication on the social and economic integration of the Roma. The joint work of Vice-President Viviane Reding, responsible for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship, and László Andor, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, the Communication sets out the progress achieved so far at national and EU level and the challenges that still lie ahead.

It acknowledges that the problems the Roma face are interconnected and outlines an ambitious plan which uses a range of different policies and tools to address the complexity of these issues. These tools include the EU's financial instruments, such as the European Social Fund and the European Regional Development Fund which, if employed effectively, have the potential to significantly improve the situation of the Roma.

This Communication was published together with a report which provides a detailed overview of policies and initiatives which have been used from 2008 to 2010 to promote Roma inclusion. This report updates a previous overview released in 2008 and for the first time also includes details of work at national level.

The Communication and the Commission report fed into discussions at the second European Roma Summit which took place on 8-9 April in Córdoba, Spain. Organised by the European Commission and the Spanish EU Presidency, the Summit brought together around 400 participants from the EU Institutions, national governments, regional and local authorities and civil society. Hosted by Spanish Minister for Health and Social Policy, Trinidad Jiménez García-Herrera, speakers at the Summit included Vice-President Reding and Commissioner Andor, and ministers from several EU Member States, as well as George Soros of the Soros Foundation and Theodore Ahlers, Director, the World Bank. The two-day event provided a timely opportunity for all stakeholders to take stock of recent developments and explore how to use existing instruments, initiatives and policies more effectively.



Key to the practical implementation of the new Communication is the European Platform for Roma Inclusion, which draws together all stakeholders: national governments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), EU officials and Roma civil society representatives. Its role is to help make the existing policy processes at national, European and international level more coherent and effective.

Set up following the first European Roma Summit, in September 2008, the first meeting of the Platform took place in Prague in April 2009. The Platform's work so far has included identifying key principles for policy-makers and project managers working to support the inclusion of Roma communities. These '10 Common Basic Principles for Roma Inclusion', form a practical aid that can be used in the design and implementation of policies and projects targeted at the Roma. In June 2009, EU Employment and Social Affairs Ministers invited the Commission and the Member States to take these principles into account. The Platform will meet twice in 2010 to continue its work and follow up the outcomes of the Summit.

These new initiatives are injecting a new momentum in the fight to improve the situation of Europe's Roma. The sustained commitment of all stakeholders is needed to ensure that this work is now implemented and built upon, so that in years to come the Roma can play a full role in all areas of European society.

Communication on Roma integration and Progress Report 2008-2010

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=749&furtherNews=yes>

Video News Release produced for the Second Roma Summit

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/fdad/cms/stopdiscrimination/press/information_films/?langId=en

The European Commission Roma Portal

<http://ec.europa.eu/roma>

Interviews: Hearing from those making a difference

Supporting Europe's Roma – Views from the European Commission and the Spanish EU Presidency



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Viviane Reding is Vice-President of the European Commission responsible for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship. She brings her previous experience as Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth, Media, Sport 1999-2004 and Commissioner for Information Society and Media 2004-2009 to this new role. Ms Reding

gives us her opinion on diversity, how to fight discrimination against the Roma and, speaking shortly before the Second European Roma Summit, the outcomes of the meeting in Córdoba.

A Eurobarometer survey* in 2009 showed that discrimination is still widespread in the EU. Do you think people in general are open to the idea of a diverse society?

Yes, I believe that Europeans are open to diversity! The same survey also found that the social circles of Europeans are becoming more diverse with, for example, almost three out of five respondents having friends or acquaintances who are disabled or of a different ethnic origin to them. This is positive for the future as having a diverse group of friends helps break down stereotypes and makes citizens more aware of the problem of discrimination.

1 in 2 Roma has suffered discrimination in the last 12 months according to a recent survey. What steps are being taken by the European Commission to fight this level of prejudice?**

The EU has a number of powerful instruments to fight discrimination against the Roma. First, we have anti-discrimination laws, such as the Race Equality Directive (2000/43/EC) and the Framework Decision on combating racism and xenophobia (2008/319/JHA). But legislation alone is not enough, and the Commission is also working to change opinions and attitudes through information campaigns such as the EU-wide 'For Diversity. Against Discrimination.' campaign which informs people about their rights and fights against stereotypes. Last, but not least, the Commission cooperates with a number of NGOs active in this field as well as other stakeholders, such as the equality bodies, to promote cooperation and joint projects to fight anti-gypsyism and promote Roma inclusion.

What is the European Roma Summit on 8-9 April hoping to achieve? What are the key issues which should be urgently addressed?

The key priorities to foster Roma inclusion are improving access to education, employment, housing and health. These issues are interconnected and require integrated strategies and the joint effort of all stakeholders working together. These include national governments, the EU level and the NGO sector, among others. The Summit provides an opportunity to take stock of the progress achieved since the first Summit in September 2008 and debate the challenges still ahead – and they are many.

Viviane Reding's website

http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/reding/index_en.htm

Second European Roma Summit

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=88&langId=en&eventsId=234&furtherEvents=yes>

* Eurobarometer survey 317 – Discrimination in the EU in 2009 (Nov 2009).

** Data in Focus Report 1 – The Roma, EU-MIDIS: European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey (2009), European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA).





László Andor is European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion. Formerly an economist in his native Hungary, he speaks to us about how the European Commission is helping promote social inclusion and remove barriers to employment for the Roma.

2010 is the European Year for combating poverty and social exclusion: how are EU programmes and instruments, such as the European Social Fund, being used to help the Roma?

Roma are particularly vulnerable to unemployment and social exclusion and the European Social Fund (ESF) can help improve living and working conditions for the Roma, in particular by investing in education and skills development projects. The European Commission is making a series of high-level visits to Member States to draw attention to the potential of EU funding in supporting the social and economic integration of Roma, and to promote its full use by national governments and local actors. Roma inclusion is also the focus of many individual events and projects in the Member States as part of the European Year against poverty, especially in countries with large Roma communities, such as Slovakia or Hungary.

How can we ensure that this funding is effective in supporting Roma inclusion?

First, we need to learn from our past experiences: a report released by the Commission on 7 April analyses what progress has been made since 2008 in using EU instruments and policies to promote Roma inclusion. We also need to learn from the good practices achieved around the EU. The 'Common Basic Principles for Roma Inclusion' have been built on these lessons and the European Platform for Roma inclusion provides a forum for exchanging experiences. Finally, we need to fully and actively involve civil society and Roma communities themselves in the design, implementation and evaluation of projects: this is vital for their success.

How is the European Commission working to remove barriers to the labour market for Roma and promote their full inclusion in society?

The main priorities for action concerning the Roma are employment, health, education and housing. Although these are mainly national responsibilities, the Commission plays a role in coordinating work at European level and encouraging the exchange of knowledge and experience. For example, to tackle poverty and social exclusion, the Commission works closely with individual countries, using the so-called 'open method of coordination' to develop national strategies to address these problems at national level. Promoting inclusion of Roma in mainstream society needs to be part of the overall strategy for social inclusion, just as it needs to be part of our overall employment objectives. Including all members of society can contribute to what we call 'inclusive growth' – a key priority in our overall Europe 2020 economic and employment strategy.

László Andor's website

http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/andor/index_en.htm



Francisco Moza Zapatero is Secretary General for Social Policies and Consumer Protection in Spain which currently holds the EU Presidency. He tells us about Spain's work on equality issues, promoting social inclusion for the Roma and, speaking shortly before its opening, his hopes for the Second European Roma Summit in Córdoba.

How does the Spanish EU Presidency this year aim to support European policies to fight discrimination?

Fighting discrimination and promoting equal opportunities are at the forefront of the Spanish government's policies with flagship initiatives including gender equality, rights for same-sex couples and the social inclusion of the Roma.

We are working to promote these same values at European level during our Presidency through areas of work including the 2010 European Year against Poverty and Social Exclusion, the social inclusion of the Roma, equal opportunities for people with disabilities, and intergenerational solidarity.

The Presidency is also promoting the inclusion of issues such as the protection of vulnerable groups and the values of equality and solidarity in new policy developments – for example, the Europe 2020 Strategy.

What do you think Spain can offer in terms of good practice examples of initiatives to promote Roma inclusion?

There are around 650 000 Roma in Spain and all levels of government, local, regional and national, have made great efforts to improve their lives. Progress has been made, for example, in the field of education where we have achieved high school enrolment rates. We are also working to facilitate access to social housing, fight unemployment and promote the empowerment of Roma women.

What is the European Roma Summit on 8 April hoping to achieve?

Participants will discuss the developments of the last two years, as well as the immediate challenges facing the Roma and how we can best tackle them.

The Summit is expected to define how the EU Platform for Roma Inclusion should move forward and further develop the '10 Common Basic Principles for Roma Inclusion'.

The Summit will also have an impact on future policy as its recommendations will be included in a report to the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council. Outcomes will also be debated at the next meeting of the Platform and fed into the work of the current trio of EU Presidencies.

Spanish EU Presidency
<http://www.eu2010.es/>

Did you know...

...that half of all Roma have been discriminated against in the last 12 months?

According to a recent survey* every second Roma person questioned reported that he or she had been discriminated against at least once in the previous year. What do you know about discrimination against someone of Roma origin? Use these questions and answers to test your knowledge...

Among those Roma reporting discrimination, each person experienced on average 11 incidents of discrimination over a 12 month period. Isn't it against the law to discriminate?

In 2000 the EU adopted the Racial Equality Directive which protects people from being discriminated against because of their racial or ethnic origin in all areas of life including education, social security, healthcare and access to goods and services. The Directive has become national law in all EU 27 Member States.

Are Europeans aware of the level of discrimination experienced by the Roma?

61 % of Europeans questioned in another recent survey** believe that discrimination based on a person's racial or ethnic origin is common in their country. This figure is often lower in Member States with a large Roma population, such as Bulgaria, Romania and the Czech Republic, which suggests the general public in these countries have a different perception of how common discrimination is compared to the reality experienced by their Roma neighbours.

86 % of Roma were unable to name an organisation that could assist them if they had been discriminated against. Where can Roma go for help in cases of discrimination?

Help and advice is available from national equality bodies. These bodies, which exist in most Member States and work to promote equal treatment, will help advise members of the public on their rights and how to make a complaint if necessary. To learn about organisations in your country, visit the website of the European Commission campaign 'For Diversity. Against Discrimination.'

'For Diversity. Against Discrimination.' website
<http://ec.europa.eu/stop-discrimination>

* Data in Focus Report 1 – The Roma, EU-MIDIS: European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey (2009), European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) – <http://fra.europa.eu/eu-midis>

** Eurobarometer survey 317 – Discrimination in the European Union in 2009 (November 2009) – <http://ec.europa.eu/antidiscrimination>



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In Depth

EU programmes supporting Roma inclusion

The EU supports the social inclusion of the Roma through various instruments and initiatives. It is based on an 'explicit but not exclusive approach', one of the 10 Common Basic Principles for Roma Inclusion, which means that, instead of singling out the Roma as a distinct group, policies or projects aim to improve the living standards and environment of all those living in similar conditions, while at the same time paying particular attention to the needs of the Roma. The overall objective is that the Roma are fully included in mainstream society.

In line with this approach, Roma inclusion is encouraged through financial instruments such as the European Social Fund (ESF) which supports employment and the improvement of living standards, and helps people enhance their education and skills.

One ESF funded project is *Acceder* in Spain which is designed to promote social inclusion and equality for members of the Roma community by opening up the labour market. Run by the *Fundación Secretariado Gitano*, the project operates in a number of different regions in Spain to help Roma enter employment through adapting vocational training targeted at the Roma to the needs of the labour market, and by building links both between the Roma and business, and between Roma jobseekers and employment service providers. As discrimination and discriminatory practices are a major barrier for Roma jobseekers, the project also raises awareness about prejudice and challenges stereotypes.

How does it work in practice? 48 integrated employment centres in locations which are accessible for local Roma communities have been established throughout Spain. Each individual who visits a centre looking for work undergoes a personal assessment and a tailor-made plan, including training and specially adapted careers guidance sessions, is drawn up. The individual's progress is monitored throughout the plan's duration and support is then provided to help him or her find a job. A follow-up service is also available for those who have found employment. In parallel, to facilitate the relationship between Roma jobseekers and business, a mediation system is offered to companies to match demand with suitable potential Roma employees.

In June 2009, 47 778 people had attended *Acceder* integrated work centres and 33 827 jobs had been found in Spain as a result of the programme. 72% of these successful jobseekers are Roma as, although *Acceder* focuses mainly on Roma jobseekers, 30% of its target population is made up of non-Roma who experience similar problems in entering the labour market.



The EU also funds projects and initiatives which raise awareness of the situation of the Roma and contribute to the fight against discrimination through PROGRESS, its employment and social solidarity programme.

Recent PROGRESS projects include an initiative in Hungary run by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour entitled 'Improvement of Roma people's social inclusion and effective implementation of the principle of non-discrimination within a regional framework'. The project organised two workshops for government experts and representatives from Roma non-governmental organisations (NGOs) from 13 Central and Eastern European countries to explore and exchange ideas and experiences on Roma inclusion.

The project also developed a communication campaign using images of Roma people expressing their hopes and ambitions for the future. The images aimed to challenge stereotypes by showing positive images of the Roma and highlighting that they have the same dreams as non-Roma people. The photos were used as adverts in the Budapest underground system, as postcards distributed to the general public, and were also displayed as an exhibition.

Actions to support Roma inclusion can also be funded through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) which supports regional development, economic change, enhanced competitiveness and territorial co-operation throughout the EU, as well as through all other Commission programmes, including the Lifelong Learning Programme, the Youth in Action Programme, the Culture Programme (2007-2013), and the Health Programme 2008-2013.

Acceder

<http://roma-conference.eu/web/roma/acceder>

National projects funded by PROGRESS

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=584&langId=en>

Instruments and programmes which can be used to support Roma inclusion

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=634&langId=en>

Information and Events

General public

● Equality Day, Budapest, Hungary 8 May

Building on the success of Diversity Days in 2009, the European Commission organised a large event on 8 May in Millenaris Park, Budapest. It was exceptionally named 'Equality Day' in order to mark Hungary's national Equality Day.

The event was organised in the framework of the 'For Diversity. Against Discrimination.' campaign in close collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and with the active participation of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), trade unions and the national equality body.

Aimed at the general public, the event aimed to highlight issues of equality and diversity, provide information on anti-discrimination law, and encourage people to challenge their own views and prejudices. Activities were organised to inform and entertain visitors including interactive workshops, a Diversity Graffiti Wall, a photo exhibition exploring images of diversity which tours the regions throughout spring, an anti-discrimination quiz and music and dance performances.

Three other Diversity Days are planned for autumn 2010 in Poland, Greece and in Metz, France which will be a cross-border celebration bringing together stakeholders from Belgium, France, Luxembourg and Germany.



Diversity Days 2010

<http://ec.europa.eu/stop-discrimination/diversitydays>



● EU Journalist Award – Together against discrimination!

The winners of the Journalist Award 2009 received their prizes from Vice-President Viviane Reding at an awards ceremony held on 29 April in Brussels. The three winners are Kathrin Löther from Germany (first prize), István Balla from Hungary (second prize) and Hanna Nikkanen from Finland (Special Award for Discrimination and Poverty). Their articles are available both in the original language versions and in English on the EU Journalist Award website.

Vice-President Reding also launched the 2010 competition. This year's competition will run until 17 September 2010 and the winners will receive up to €5 000! For more details or to take part visit the EU Journalist Award 2010 website.



EU Journalist Award 2010 website

<http://journalistaward.stop-discrimination.info/>



Specialist

● Good Practice Exchange seminar on public policies combating discrimination against and promote equality for LGBT people, The Hague, The Netherlands, 18-19 March

Hosted by the Dutch government, this meeting of the non-discrimination Governmental Expert Group (GEG) examined policies and initiatives in the Netherlands, a country which is regarded as a leader in promoting equality for LGBT people, as well as exploring examples of innovative practice from other countries including Ireland and Sweden. A report on the seminar is now available online.

Good Practice Exchange Seminar, The Hague, 18-19 March 2010

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=840&langId=en>





● **New Publication: Vademecum – The 10 Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion**

Aimed at policy-makers and practitioners managing programmes and projects, the 10 Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion provide a framework for the successful design and implementation of actions to support Roma inclusion. Produced by the European Commission, the publication sets out the 10 Principles and provides explanations and practical examples to help readers put them into practice.

Roma Vademecum

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/fdad/cms/stopdiscrimination/resources/campaign_materials/?langid=en

● **European Platform for Roma Inclusion**

The Platform, which brings together national governments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), EU officials and Roma representatives, will meet during the Spanish EU Presidency on 17 June. More details will be available in the coming weeks.

EU Platform for Roma Inclusion

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=761&langId=en>

● **Stories of identity and discrimination: Court rules on school segregation**

The Chance for Children Foundation, a non-governmental organisation (NGO) in Hungary, brought a case to the country's Supreme Court which argued that by not taking action against practices which result in segregation, such as teaching groups of pupils with a high proportion of Roma and non-Roma children in different classrooms, schools and education authorities are not respecting the EU Racial Equality Directive.

The court found in favour of the NGO and established that by failing to teach Roma and non-Roma children together, regardless of issues of space or long standing traditions, the schools and education authorities were guilty of discrimination. It also called for the introduction of additional classes on Roma culture to not be used as a justification for exempting the school from ensuring equal treatment between pupils.

Chance for Children Foundation

http://www.cfc.hu/ugyeink_en.html

Last Word

'The Summit provides an opportunity to take stock of the progress achieved and debate the challenges still ahead – and they are many.'

Viviane Reding, Vice-President of the European Commission responsible for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship on the Second European Roma Summit held 8-9 April, Córdoba, Spain.

This newsletter provides information on the policies, activities, projects and events organised by the European Commission in the field of anti-discrimination. For more information, visit www.ec.europa.eu/antidiscrimination

You can also visit the website of the European Commission's anti-discrimination campaign 'For Diversity. Against Discrimination.' (www.ec.europa.eu/stopdiscrimination). This campaign works in all EU Member States to raise awareness of discrimination and the legislation which exists to combat it, as well as to promote the benefits of diversity.

All these activities are funded under the anti-discrimination strand of PROGRESS, the EU's employment and social solidarity programme.

The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the opinion or position of the European Commission, [Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities](#). Neither the European Commission nor any person acting on its behalf is responsible for the use which might be made of the information in this publication.



The European Commission's anti-discrimination campaign



**FOR DIVERSITY
AGAINST DISCRIMINATION**

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