



ERIO's Recommendations to the Slovak EU Presidency

July-December 2016

Slovakia assumes the Presidency of the Council of the European Union between July-December 2016. ERIO calls on the Slovak Presidency to commit to Roma's rights and equal treatment and ensure that their rights are guaranteed and respected by taking into consideration the following recommendations:

1. Ensure stronger political will to promote Roma integration and equal treatment

We welcome the fact that the Presidency will focus on Roma integration. We ask the Presidency, through the proposed Council conclusions, to urge member states to **adopt horizontally anti-discrimination legislation** in the different fields (i.e. education, health, housing and employment) of their national system and **implement their anti-discrimination legislation at national level**. Additionally, all necessary measures should be taken to combat increased levels of **hate speech and anti-Gypsyism**, the latter being the main cause of discrimination and marginalisation of Roma.

2. Strengthen the social dimension in employment policies to ensure racism-free labour markets

We ask the Presidency to use the opportunity of the proposed Council conclusions on the **Youth Guarantee** to ensure that such measure does not reproduce the vicious circle of poverty and exclusion of disadvantaged youth, such as the Roma. To ensure that the Youth Guarantee is **inclusive and targets all youth**, some key challenges need to be overcome: tackle discrimination and stereotypes of employment services and employers by providing cultural sensitivity training; provide assistance for registration process by facilitating access and providing mediation services to assist those who need; and promote ethnic data collection.

In light of its commitment to focus on the **European pillar of social rights**, the Presidency should ensure that the Pillar includes social key principles and values **addressing people in disadvantaged situations** such as the Roma.

3. Make sure the refugee situation does not push Roma issues to the side-line

The current refugee situation is having a strong impact on Roma inclusion at different levels. It is spreading panic and a feeling of insecurity which is fuelled by extreme right nationalist and populist parties resulting in increased hate speech and racism towards Roma. Moreover, Roma inclusion slipped down the political agenda as many officials are using the refugee



situation as an excuse to stop or delay the implementation of the 2013 Council recommendation on effective Roma integration measures. We ask the Presidency to urge member states and local authorities to **strengthen their commitment to Roma inclusion** which should be considered as a priority in their political agenda and not as in competition with the refugee situation.

4. Ensure greater efforts from enlargement countries on Roma integration

As a consequence of the current migration crisis and Brexit, EU enlargement will most probably be delayed and will not take place soon. Since a large Roma population lives in many of the EU candidate countries and their situation is worse than in the rest of Europe, this community will be greatly affected by current developments. Thus, we urge the Presidency to ensure the commitment of candidate countries to meet the EU *acquis communautaire* of promoting Roma integration and to pressure them to **transpose and implement the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies at national level** or to adapt existing national strategies to European Commission's and Council Recommendation's requirements as well as the Race Equality Directive 2000/43 and the Framework Directive 2000/78. The transposition of the EU Framework and anti-discrimination legislation would be facilitated with their EU membership where they would directly benefit from opportunities to EU funds to effectively implement their Roma national strategies.

For more information, please contact: Tel: +32 273 33 462 E-mail: office@erionet.eu

The **European Roma Information Office (ERIO)** is an international advocacy organisation which promotes political and public discussion on Roma issues by providing information to the EU institutions, civil society and governments. Through its wide network, it aims to combat racist discrimination against Roma through awareness raising, lobbying and policy development. [Website](#) - [Facebook](#) - [Twitter](#) - [LinkedIn](#)



This publication has been funded by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme of the European Union