Resolution on a European strategy on the Roma

2008/2502(RSP) - 31/01/2008 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

Following the debate in plenary, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the Roma, condemning utterly all forms of racism and discrimination faced by the Roma and others regarded as 'Gypsies'. The resolution was adopted by 510 votes for, 36 against and 67 abstentions. It pointed out that the 12 to 15 million Roma living in Europe, some 10 million of whom live in the EU, suffer racial discrimination and in many cases are subject to severe structural discrimination, poverty and social exclusion, as well as multiple discrimination on the basis of gender, age, disability and sexual orientation. Parliament felt that there has been a lack of progress in combating racial discrimination against the Roma and in defending their rights to education, employment, health and housing in both Member States and candidate countries.

The EU and Member States have a shared responsibility to promote inclusion of the Roma and uphold their fundamental rights as European citizens, and urgently need to achieve visible results in that area. The new Agency for Fundamental Rights was urged to place anti-Gypsyism among the highest priorities in its work programme.

The Commission was urged to do the following:

-to develop a European Framework Strategy on Roma Inclusion aimed at providing policy coherence at EU level as regards the social inclusion of Roma and to shape a comprehensive Community Action Plan on Roma Inclusion with the task of providing financial support for realising the objective of the European Framework Strategy on Roma Inclusion;

-comprehensively to shape a Community action plan on Roma inclusion, noting that the plan must be drawn up and implemented by the group of Commissioners for employment, social affairs, equal opportunities, justice, freedom, education, culture and regional policy;

-to give one of its Members responsibility for coordinating a Roma policy;

-to implement the "Roma-to-Roma" working methodology as an effective tool in dealing with Roma issues and calls on it to promote Roma staff within its structure;

-to establish a Roma unit to coordinate implementation of a European framework strategy on Roma inclusion, facilitate cooperation between Member States, coordinate joint actions between Member States and ensure mainstreaming of Roma issues;

-to make the impact of private investment in equal opportunity a relevant factor in the release of EU funding, by obliging those persons submitting tenders for EU-financed projects to draw up and implement both an analysis and an action plan on equal opportunity;

-to establish an all-European crisis map, measuring and surveying those areas within the EU where communities are hardest hit by poverty and social exclusion;

-to examine opportunities to strengthen anti-discrimination legislation in the area of education, focusing on desegregation, and to report on its findings to Parliament within one year following adoption of this resolution, and to support programmes fostering positive action for Roma in the fields of secondary and higher education;

-to support the integration of Roma in the labour market through measures such as financial support for training and retraining, measures to foster positive action on the labour market, rigorous enforcement of anti-discrimination laws in the field of employment, and measures to promote the self-employment of Roma and small Romani businesses;

-to consider the possibility of a micro-credit scheme to encourage the launching of small businesses and to replace the practice of usury that is crippling many communities;

-to support systemic national programmes aimed at improving the health situation of the Romani communities, in particular by introducing an adequate vaccination plan for children;

-to build on existing positive models to support programmes aimed at putting an end to Romani slums and to support other programmes providing successful models of housing for Roma, including Romani migrants;

Parliament recalled that all candidate countries committed, in the negotiation and accession process, to improving the inclusion of Roma communities and to promoting their rights to education, employment, healthcare and housing. It asked the Commission to make an assessment of the implementation of those commitments and of the current situation of the Roma in all Member States.

Lastly, Parliament called on the Commission and the relevant authorities to take the necessary steps to end pig fattening on the site of the former concentration camp in Lety (Czech Republic) and to create a memorial to honour the victims of persecution.