Fundamental rights aspects in Roma integration in the EU: fighting anti-gypsyism

2017/2038(INI) - 25/10/2017 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 470 votes to 48, with 103 abstentions, a resolution on the fundamental rights aspects in Roma integration in the EU: fighting anti-Gypsyism.

Despite efforts at national, European and international level, **persistent anti-Gypsyism can be detected at all levels** of European society throughout all of Europe **on a daily basis**.

In general, Members stated that in order to fight against the subconscious societal consensus to exclude Roma, it is essential to educate mainstream societies about the diversity of Roma, their history and culture. Members States are called, in this context, to take full responsibility for their Roma citizens and launch long-term awareness raising campaigns.

Reconciling and building trust: Parliament urged the Commission to set up a **truth and reconciliation commission** at EU level to acknowledge the persecution, exclusion and disownment of Roma throughout the centuries. Member States are encouraged to make the history of Roma part of the curricula in schools and to mark **2 August** as Roma Holocaust Memorial Day.

Performance checks: most mainstream programmes fail to reach out to the most disadvantaged, in particular the Roma. The Court of Auditors should carry out performance checks of EU programmes, such as Erasmus+ and the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI), in a more thorough manner and on a regular basis.

The Commission is called on to:

- assess EU programmes and funding opportunities;
- reform **European Structural and Investment Fund** to provide financial support for the fight against anti-Gypsyism in a more proactive way;
- extend the Europe for Citizens and the Rights, Equality and Citizenship funding programmes;
- ensure that the relevant interventions financed by the EU with possible implications for the Roma community are inclusive and fight segregation.

Securing equal rights and fighting anti-Gypsyism through training: Parliament recalled that minority rights and the prohibition of discrimination form an integral part of fundamental rights, and that action can be taken by the EU if there is a clear risk of a serious breach by a Member State of those values in accordance with Article 7 TEU.

Member States are called on to implement and enforce:

- Council Directive 2000/43/EC in order to effectively prevent and eliminate all forms of discrimination against Roma;
- Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA as it provides the means for a successful fight against anti-Gypsyist rhetoric and violence against Roma.

Parliament urged the Commission and Member States to **intensify their work with NGOs** to deliver best practice training on countering prejudice as well as on the effective countering of hate speech campaigns. It also deplored the **violation of the right of Roma to free movement**, recalling that the Free Movement Directive does not allow collective expulsions and any kind of racial profiling.

In this context, the Member States of origin to take their responsibility to combat poverty and exclusion of all their citizens, and on the Member States of arrival to increase cooperation across borders to combat discrimination and exploitation and prevent exclusion continuing in the country of arrival.

Members expressed deep concern at the number of stateless Roma people in Europe, resulting in the complete denial of their access to social, educational and health care services and pushing them to the very margins of society.

Member States are called on to:

- **end statelessness**;
- carry out **birth registration** without discrimination;
- ensure access to all the **essential basic services**, including healthcare, housing and education;
- **condemn forced sterilisation** and provide compensation to Roma women having been subject to state-supported sterilisation accompanied by a public apology to the victims of this crime against humanity;
- ensure **equal access to justice and equality** for the Roma before the law and ensure that forced evictions take place in full compliance with EU law;
- ensure the equal treatment of Roma in access to **employment opportunities**;
- provide **non-discrimination-related training courses** for all public officials, who are key to the correct implementation of EU and Member State legislation.

National Roma integration strategies: Parliament called on the Member States to be **more ambitious** in the development of their national integration strategies, to evaluate their effectiveness, to define clear actions and tailor-made measures and to set measurable targets.

The Commission should, for its part, place the issue of anti-Gypsyism among the priorities of the post-2020 European framework and put in place anti-discrimination indicators in the fields of education, employment, housing, health, etc.

Members called for the EU institutions to **mainstream Roma rights in the context of external relations** and insisted strongly on the need to fight anti-Gypsyism and promote Roma rights in the candidate countries and potential candidate countries.

Lastly, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights is called on to prepare a **study on anti-Gypsyism in the EU** and candidate countries, to focus on anti-Gypsyism during their work.