

The situation of Roma women in the European Union

2005/2164(INI) - 25/04/2006

The committee adopted the own-initiative report by by Lívía JÁRÓKA (EPP-ED, HU) on the situation of Roma women in the EU. MEPs stressed that Roma women are among the most threatened groups and individuals in the Europe - particularly in the ten new Member States and accession and candidate countries - and called for measures to combat the extreme levels of multiple discrimination faced by these women on the grounds of both ethnicity and gender.

The report urged public authorities throughout the EU to "promptly investigate allegations of extreme human rights abuses against Romani women, to swiftly punish perpetrators, and to provide adequate compensation to victims". It called on the Member States to give the highest priority to measures to provide better protection for women's reproductive and sexual health, to prevent and outlaw coercive sterilisation, and provide redress for such abuse, and to promote family planning, alternative arrangements to early marriages, and sex education. It also called for proactive measures to eliminate racially-segregated maternity wards, to help victims of domestic violence and to exercise particular vigilance regarding the trafficking of Roma women.

Among other areas of concern, the report urged Member States to ensure that all Roma women have access to health care, and not only, as often occurs, in the case of an extreme emergency or childbirth. It also insisted on the need to end the "separate, substandard education of Romani children". In addition, the committee highlighted the need for measures to tackle the very high unemployment rate among Roma women which, in many places, was many times higher than that of the rest of the adult female population.

In other recommendations, MEPs urged the Member States to improve Roma housing by recognising in national law a right to adequate housing. They also said that the Commission should launch legal proceedings against and impose fines on any Member States that have not yet transposed or fully implemented the EU's anti-discrimination directives with regard to Roma women. The report added that the situation of Roma women in candidate countries should be a key criterion for evaluating "states of readiness" for accession to the EU. Lastly, the committee welcomed the proposal to set up an EU Institute for Gender Equality and said that it should have a unit dealing with Roma women in the EU.