

DECLARATION OF ROMANI WOMEN NETWORKS

Romani Women's Rights Conference
Stockholm, 3-4 December 2007

In December 2007, the Fundamental Rights Agency together with the Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality of Sweden and the Council of Europe, organized an international conference on Romani women's rights called "Amare Glasura ashunde"/"Our voices heard". The event took place in Stockholm on 3-4 December 2007 and served as a forum for exchange between policy makers and the Romani women's networks across Europe.

One of the outcomes of the conference was a Declaration of Romani Women Networks at the international level where they expressed their concerns over the persistent discrimination and exclusion of the Romani communities and called upon governments to adopt appropriate policies and measures to effectively address the multiple discrimination faced by Romani women, and ensure the full implementation of Council of Europe Human Rights Conventions and Charters, United Nations Covenants and Conventions and EU directives.

The International Romani women's networks called upon:

- The EU Member States to take immediate steps to implement the European Parliament Resolution on the situation of Romani women in the European Union (2006);
- Council of Europe Member States to effectively implement CoE policy recommendations on Roma and ensure that Roma human rights guaranteed by its Conventions and Charters are fully respected;
- Member States of the United Nations to implement Treaty Body and other related UN recommendations, especially the provisions of the General Recommendation XXVII of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on discrimination against Roma;
- Independent and inter-governmental institutions to conduct research on the occurrence and consequences of forced sterilization practices committed against Romani women in Europe both during and after the communist period; therefore, we call on governments of the countries, where forced sterilization of Romani women took place, to acknowledge the human rights violations committed against Romani women and compensate the victims and their families and/or communities, following the examples of Sweden and Norway;

- The European Commission to adopt a European Strategy for Roma Integration and establish as a matter of urgency a Roma Unit which should start its activity by tackling issues affecting the equal enjoyment of rights guaranteed for all European citizens;

- The European Commission, Member States and the European Parliament to establish a Roma Unit within the European Institute for Gender Equality, as well as to designate a Romani woman specialised in gender issues in the Advisory Forum of the Gender Institute;

- The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) to elaborate a recommendation on anti-Gypsyism in order to condemn, prevent and monitor racist behaviors against Roma throughout Council of Europe Member States;

- The Fundamental Rights Agency to devote more attention to anti-Gypsyism / Romaphobia in Europe and to allocate the necessary resources to monitor racial abuse and human rights violations against Roma as stipulated in the European Parliament Resolution on Roma (2005). Such measures should include, inter alia, the appointment of a Roma Special Rapporteur for Anti-Gypsyism to monitor the response of the judicial systems to cases of Anti-Gypsism throughout the EU, analyse the impact of governmental equal opportunity and integration policies on Roma communities and make Specific Recommendations to the European Commission;

The Fundamental Rights Agency to implement the art 22 of the EP Resolution on Romani women, which states that: Urges the European Union Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia to initiate a series of studies on the role of the media in fostering anti-Gypsyism, and in particular on the promotion of damaging stereotypes of Romani women.