



COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMISSAIRE AUX DROITS DE L'HOMME



Ref: CommHR/GC/sf 152-2010

Mr. Nikola GRUEVSKI
Prime Minister
"the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"

Strasbourg, 28 July 2010

Dear Prime Minister,

Further to the discussion I had with President Ivanov on 25 June in Strasbourg, I am addressing you about the situation of the Kosovar refugees in the "former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", the vast majority of whom are persons of Roma origin.

In the report I published in September 2008 following my visit to the country, I recommended that durable solutions be found for the refugees who may not return and who wish to integrate locally. I recall that by Resolution 1739 (2010), adopted on 22 June 2010, the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly called on the member states to refrain from forcibly returning to Kosovo* individuals who might still be in need of international protection according to the relevant United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees guidelines.

I understand that 1 500 displaced people from Kosovo, including persons with subsidiary protection or leave to stay, still live in the "former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" without clear and long-term perspectives so far for local integration and adequate access to basic human rights, including social and economic rights. However, these persons have lived in the country for more than ten years and many of their children were born and raised there.

I believe that the identification and effective implementation of durable solutions for the Roma refugees from Kosovo can no longer be postponed and that the best possible solution for Roma unable to return home in safety and dignity is local integration through a process which will ultimately lead to the acquisition of nationality. I take this opportunity to call upon your government to proceed with accession to the 2006 Council of Europe Convention on the avoidance of statelessness in relation to State succession.

I am looking forward to continuing our dialogue and receiving information on possible measures envisaged to address this issue in accordance with the Council of Europe standards.

Yours sincerely,

Thomas Hammarberg

* All reference to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.