

ROMA COMMUNITY COUNCIL OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA

Date: 8 March 2023

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA FOR NATIONAL MINORITIES

Re: Sixth Report on the implementation of the
Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in Slovenia – Reply

INTRODUCTION

The Roma community lives in various regions across Slovenia. The quality of their lives varies depending on a number of factors and actors. The majority community in southeast Slovenia is not tolerant of Roma. There is hardly any dialogue between them, and the local authorities often ignore the problems of the Roma people. Roma can also be prone to conflict and themselves are frequently unwilling to help improve the situation of the Roma community. The political participation of Roma at the local level is ensured. However, achieving any political progress is a lengthy process.

The situation is different in Prekmurje and other regions inhabited by Roma.

The Roma community is still subject to discrimination in Slovenia. Hate speech, Romanophobia and actions leading to prejudice against members of the Roma community have been on the rise in recent years. Many comments under articles containing information about Roma in electronic media are offensive and extremely loaded with Nazi sentiment.

Reply of the Roma Community Council:

- Every citizen of Slovenia has the right to express their nationality, religious belief and political affiliation, and to use their mother tongue in the environment of their community. These rights are also enjoyed by members of the Roma community.
- The Roma community are free to practice and develop their culture, language and customs. Funding is provided from municipal and state budgets in the form of public calls for tenders for the implementation and promotion of cultural content and use of Romani.
- The competent state authorities often fail to ensure adequate protection for members of the Roma community when they are threatened due to their ethnicity.
- Slovenia grants members of the Roma community the right to freedom of expression, the right of association and the right to organise into various organisations and associations.
- Slovenia is one of the countries that ensures media broadcasts on national radio and television, partly produced by Roma themselves. Media and publishing activities are also carried out by Roma institutions and associations.
- The Roma community also has its own institutions and programmes for informal education, which contribute significantly to preserving the Roma language and identity and promoting the Roma history and culture. The support of state institutions is expected in this area.

- Primary education is lacking teacher training in terms of learning about the Roma way of life, culture, language and history.
- Content about Roma in teaching materials and presentations in primary schools are also lacking.
- There is still no appropriate scholarship policy that would motivate young Roma people to enrol in universities and at the same time establish conditions for them to complete their studies.
- Roma are still not on equal footing in political dialogue and representation of their community on the local and state levels.
- Representatives of the Roma community also engage in international activities, which are supported with appropriate funding from the state budget.

While Slovenia implements various programmes and measures contributing to the development of the Roma community, these are either carried out too slowly or fail to achieve the desired effect. We reiterate that much is yet to be done in the areas of education, employment and living conditions. Approaches to solving Roma issues should be more concrete, with clear goals and guidelines, and supported with adequate financial investment.

Written by:

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