

INTERNATIONAL ROMANI UNION – IRU

STATUTE OF THE ORGANIZATION

The International Romani Statute adopted at the 5-th Congress in Prague, in 2000. At that Congress Emil Skuka (Czech Republic) was elected President of IRU. Nadejda Demeter (Russia), Victor Famulson (Sweden), Stanislaw Stankiewicz (Poland) and Florin Cioabă (Romania) became Vice Presidents of IRU. The General secretary was elected Hristo Kjučiukov (Bulgaria). The President of IRU Parliament was elected Dragan Jevremovic (Austria)

INTERNATIONAL ROMANI UNION

STATUTE

PREAMBLE

The preamble of the Statute of IRU wishes to express ideas and common purpose of Romanes nation whose representatives were united in order to create IRU. We, the people of the Romanes Nation are decided to protect the future of next generations against the malice and national hatred with whom they met many times during the life, and brought to the Romani people a lot of hardship, suffering and genocide of war, but we trust in fundamental rights, honor and value for the human rights, existence in variety, equal rights for men, women and children, big and small nations which are taking part in creating the circumstances and favorable conditions for the defense of justice and honor of the human beings and to undergo of its obligations arising out of signing international treaties, to support and improve the fundamental democratic principles: freedom and living standards.

To attend these purposes we are decided to sustain the tolerance between us, to join our forces to help for the development of all the nations.

We decided to unite in order to achieve these goals.

CHAPTER 1.

Goals and principles

Art. 1.

The purpose and principles of IRU defined in the Statute

1. To develop all the qualities favorable Romani cultural traditions, customs and language.
2. To respect the fundamental human rights and liberties and to respect all the obligations arising out of signing international treaties.
3. To contribute to maintaining and sustaining peace and World security.
4. To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect, equal rights and equal rights among nations.
5. To cooperate in solving the social, economic, educational, cultural and humanitarian problems of the Romani people.
6. To become an observation center of solving these goals
7. To reinforce support for equal rights, fundamental freedoms without taking into account race, sex, language or religion.

ART. 2.

IRU and its members have the right to follow the next principles:

1. The Organisation is based on the principle of suzerainty and equality of all its members.
2. All the members must meet the conditions imposed by the statute
3. All the members will sustain IRU every time they are asked to in concordance with this statute
4. The members who are excluded from IRU can not be punished without a sentence of the IRU Justice Court.
5. The members of the organizations must solve their disputes and problems in accordance with the legal standards of their countries.

CHAPTER II

MEMBERSHIP

Art.3.

The first members of IRU are the representatives of 28 countries who participated at the foundation Congress in London and who signed this Statute

Art.4.

Any other Roma organization from the member states may become an IRU member before it adopts the obligation from this Statute and are considered by IRU to be capable to meet the obligations.

Art.5.

A member of another Romani organization who joined to IRU becomes a member of IRU.

Art.6.

The Parliament of IRU may on the recommendation of the board to offer the honor to become an Honor Member of IRU to any person who has a contribution to improve the culture and the education, or has a contribution in keeping the Romani traditions and customs. This member will be a permanent member.

Art.7.

Acceptance of new members is the result of the decision taken by the Parliament on the recommendation of the Government.

Art.8.

A member of the IRU that was condemned by the Court of Justice may be required to resign from Parliament on the recommendation of the Government

Art.9.

The Parliament may recommend to the Presidium the exclusion of a member who continuously violated the principles of the Statute.

Art.10

A member of IRU who stopped to participate like a representative of his country, or he lost the membership of the organization will be stripped of rights and benefits by the Parliament on the recommendation of the Parliament. This does not affect the members of the organizations from the countries which are members of IRU. Parliament elects the candidates recommended by national organizations and by Government for vacancies

CHAPTER III

Offices

Art. 11

Like principal parts of IRU are established the next offices:

Congress

Parliament

Court of Justice

Government

President

Other assistance corps may be established according to the Chart

Art.12.

IRU may not impose any limit in terms of legal qualifications of men and women, equally for any office in any body of IRU

CHAPTER IV

THE CONGRESS

Composition

Art.13

1. The Congress includes delegates of the individual member organizations, honor members and members
2. Each country is represented in Congress by a number of delegates corresponding to the total number of roma people which are living in that country. The key of definition of the number of delegates from each country will be defined by the Parliament.

Virtue and authority

Art.14

The Congress may act in all the situations and problems which belong to this Statute or have contact with the authority and functions of the bodies established by the Statute. The Congress may also designate members of IRU with tasks or recommendations for all these situations or problems.

Art.15.

1. The Congress approves the program and the long term vision of IRU
2. The Congress makes recommendations whose purpose is to support the participation of Roma people from different countries in politics, economy, social problems, culture, education and also facilitate the exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without discrimination of sex, race, language, nationality.

Art. 16.

1. The Congress negotiates the annual reports and situations of the Roma people from Europe and the World presented by the IRU President
2. The Congress receive the annual reports from the others departments of IRU and acts on them.

VOTING

Art. 17.

1. Each member of the Congress has one vote
2. The Congress decide on the important problems with 2/3 from the majority. These problems include:
 - The adoption by IRU of the Chart and the amendments
 - The election of the IRU Parliament
 - The election of IRU President
1. The decisions in other problems are taken by simple majority of votes.

Art. 18.

An IRU member who has arrears to the payment of member fee loses his right to vote if the arrear is equal with the member fee for the last year.

ADMINISTRATION

Art.19

The Congress meets once in four years in regular session. If the situation requires, the President decrees a special meeting on the recommendation of the Parliament or of the majority of IRU members.

Art.20

The Congress hands the Procedural Order. The Congress elect one delegate for each meeting.

Art.21

The Congress may create assistance offices if necessary for the good functioning of the Congress

CHAPTER V

THE PARLIAMENT

Composition

Art.22

1. The Parliament is composed by IRU representatives
2. Each country member has a representative in the Parliament
3. The members of the Parliament are elected from the congress delegates for four years.
4. The members of the Parliament elect the President and the Vice President at the first meeting of the Parliament.

VIRTUE AND AUTHORITY

Art.23.

1. In the period between the two consecutive meetings of the Congress, the Parliament assume most of its operation. The Parliament cannot elect or dismiss the President of the IRU.
2. The Parliament meets at least twice a year in spring and autumn sessions. The Parliament gathered at the request of the President.

Art.24.

The Parliament manages the situation reports of the Romani population from all the countries during his sessions.

Art. 25.

The Parliament defines the international and national politics of IRU

Art. 26.

1. The Parliament negotiates and adopts the budget of IRU
2. The Parliament negotiates and adopts all the financial accords with the member organisations
3. The Parliament specifies annual memberships for the member organizations of IRU.

Art. 27.

1. The Parliament elects and dismiss the Government members on the recommendation of the President
2. The Parliament recommends to the President the candidates for the Justice Court and candidates for the office of the General Secretariat

Art.28

1. The Parliament is responsible for all his actions at the Congress
2. If the Parliament does not succeed to meet in regular sessions, is not capable to exercise decisional power during one year, the President may dissolve the Parliament and order a special meeting of the Congress
3. The President may not dissolve the Parliament within three months before the regular session.

Art. 29

If the Parliament decide in his majority against the Government, this must dissolve in 30 days. In this time, The Parliament asks the President to appoint candidates for the Government.

VOTING

Art.30.

1. Each member of the Parliament has a vote.

2. The Congress will decide on the important problems with 2/3 of majority. These problems include:

- The election of the IRU Parliament
- The election of the IRU President
- Expelling of members

1. The decisions in other problems are adopted by the simple majority of votes.

ADMINISTRATION

Art.31.

The Parliament meets in regular sessions twice in a year, in the spring and in the autumn, and if necessary in extraordinary sessions. The extraordinary sessions are asked by the Border of Parliament on the demand of the Government, of the President, and of majority of the Parliament members.

Art.32

The Parliament adopts the Procedural Order.

Art. 33.

The Parliament may establish assistance corps if necessary for the good function of the Congress.

Art. 34

The head-quarter of the Parliament is in Vienna, Austria

MAIN COMMISSION BUREAU

Component

Art. 35.

1. The Main Commission Bureau is composed by Heads of Commissions, each of them being responsible of a sector
2. The administration of each Commission is given to the Chief of the Main Commission Bureau
3. The Chief of the Main Commission Bureau appoints his Deputies.

Virtue and authority

Art. 36.

The Main Commission Bureau - is composed of the Chief of the Commission Bureau, two Deputy Chiefs of the Commission Bureau - Vice-Chiefs and 10 individual Heads of Commissions - and two deputies. The Main Commission Bureau - is defined with the following Commissions:

Art. 37

Task and obligations of the Chief of the Commission Bureau

- To lead the internal and external policy of the IRU organization in front of the international institutions and organizations, proposals of projects and their realization of public interest for the Roma, as well as a proposal Budget of the IRU in collaboration with the Heads of the Commissions.

- The Chief of the Commission Bureau - can give proposals to the Assembly to resolve and appoint of new Heads of Commissions - which the Parliament decides with 2/3 of the Composition.

1. First Deputy Chief of the Commission Bureau - is obliged for the external politics - Europe and first advisor of the Chief of the Commission Bureau -

2. Second Deputy Chief of the Commission Bureau - is obliged for the external politics - Asia, Australia and America and advisor of the Chief of the Commission Bureau - Prime Minister.

1. Head of the Commission for Holocaust
2. Head of the Commission for Economic and social issues
3. Head of the Commission for Education, Science and Language
4. Head of the Commission for Human Rights and Equality
5. Head of the Commission for Financial Issues and Budget
6. Head of the Commission for Justice
7. Head of the Commission for Communication and Media
8. Head of the Commission for Interventions
9. Head of the Commission for Youth and Sports
10. Head of the Commission for Culture and Tradition

Art. 38

The Commission Bureau and the Commissions decide for all questions asked by the Assembly or from the President of the IRU

Art.39

1. The Commission Bureau monitors the IRU Program decided by the Parliament and adopted by the Congress.
2. The Commission Bureau and the Commissions may elaborate studies and reports about economic, social, cultural, educational problems and related to the reports given to the IRU Parliament, to the President of IRU, in some member countries and international organizations and institutions.
3. The Chief of the Main Commission Bureau can make recommendations to support the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms.
4. The Commission Bureau may convene International conferences in order to make decisions about areas of interest
5. The Commission Bureau may accept measures to receive reports from IRU members and their committees regarding to the actions or recommendations of The Commission Bureau and Parliament, Congress, President, in problems regarding the Presidium. The Commission Bureau can submit to the Parliament the comments regarding these reports.
6. The Commission Bureau may continue its function to the recommendations of the Parliament.

7. The Commission Bureau can offer services asked by IRU, expert committees, or other control corps which are exposed to the approval of the Parliament.
8. The Commission Bureau exerts his specific functions in this Statute designed by the Parliament or by the President.

Art. 40

The Commission Bureau and the Commissions are responsible for the actions of the President and of the Parliament.

Administration

Art.41.

1. The Commission Bureau and the Commissions are administrated in such way that it has continous activities. To facilitate this thing each member must be present to IRU meetings.
2. The Presidency can organize meetings not oly in the name of IRU, but in any place which can facilitate the activities of the Government.

Art. 42

The Commission Bureau and Commissions may establish Control Bodies if necessary for the good function of the Congress.

Art. 43

The Commission Bureau and Commissions adopt the orders of unfoldings of the events.

Art. 44.

Each member of IRU which is not a member of the The Commission Bureau and Commissions may participate at their meetings without having the right of vote regarding to the interesting problems for this member.

Art. 45

If the Commission Bureau and Commissions debate a very important problem regarding one of the members, this member can be invited at the session, but he cannot vote.

Art. 46

The Commission Bureau and Commissions can adopt measures in order to facilitate the participation of the representatives of the expert commissions and other control bodies, without having the right of vote.

The Vote

Art. 47

1. Each member of the Commission Bureau and Commissions has one vote
2. The Commission Bureau and Commissions may decide by the simple majority of votes.

CHAPTER VII

COURT OF JUSTICE

Composition

Art. 48

The Court of Justice is an organism composed by independent judges elected on the base of their quality of IRU members, from the persons with high moral merits, with a natural authority and respect for Roma people.

Art.49

The purpose of the Court is a moral one, but also of control of the IRU body. The Headquarters of the Court of Justice are in Stockholm

Art. 50

The Court of Justice is composed by seven members, from different countries.

Art. 51

The members of the Court are nominated by the President on the recommendation of the Parliament.

Art. 52

The term for the judges of the Court is four years. The Court elects its president at the first meeting.

Virtue and authority

Art. 53

1. The purpose of the Court of Justice includes the surveillance of all the members, and all the bodies of IRU according to this Statute.
2. The Court of Justice pays special attention to the moral code of the members of IRU.
3. The Court of Justice initiates special proceedings against any member who violates this Statute and the moral code of IRU.
4. The Court of Justice is authorized to recommend the exclusion of IRU members or to propose the interruption of the statute of a member or to accord penalties according to this Statute.
5. The Court of Justice of IRU may establish senates in those countries / organizations in which IRU have members.

Art. 54

The activities of the Court of Justice are governed by this Statute and are subject of approval for the Parliament. The Court of Justice adopts the order of development of internal events.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PRESIDENT

Art. 56

Art. 57

The President is elected with 2/3 from the majority of votes.

Art. 58

The President must be of Romani nationality and speak the Romani language.

Art. 59

The IRU President is elected for 4 years.

Art. 60

The IRU President is responsible for his actions in front of the Congress.

The office of the President is not compatible with the offices of the members of the Parliament, of the Court of Justice or the members of the Government.

Art. 61

The President chooses the Vice-President from the independent candidates recommended by the Parliament.

Art. 62

The President, like a major representative of IRU acts in the name of the Union, both inside or outside of it.

Art. 63

The President organizes the spring and autumn sessions of the Parliament.

Art. 64

The President is authorized to dismiss the Parliament in specific situations according by this Statute.

Art. 65

The President is authorized to participate in the sessions of the Parliament and he has the right to speak on demand.

Art. 66

The President may recommend to the Parliament members of the Government, but also may recommend their dismissal.

Art. 67

The President gives recommendations and proposals to the members of the Commission Bureau and the Commission in accordance with the Heads of the Commissions.

Art. 68

The President recommends to the Parliament the candidate for the function of treasurer, and also he may recommend his dismissal

Art. 69

The President nominates according to the Parliament recommendation of the General Secretary .

Art. 70

The President nominates according to the Parliament and recommendation of the judges of the Court of Justice and he is authorized to dismiss them before the approval of the Parliament.

Art. 71

The President nominates the General Secretary, with the accord of the Parliament

Art. 72

The President is the statutory body of IRU

Art. 73

The President nominates the IRU representatives for the international organizations of ONU in New York, Geneva, Vienna, UNESCO in Paris and other necessary representatives.

CHAPTER IX

GENERAL SECRETARY

Composition

Art. 74

The Secretariat includes the General Secretariat and its staff

Art. 75

The Secretariat is named by the President on the recommendation of the Parliament. The General Secretariat is the supreme administrative office of IRU.

Art. 76

The Headquarter of the IRU Secretariat is in Bruxelles

Art.77

The General Secretariat is managed by a General Secretary which is responsible in front of the President and the Chief of the Commission Bureau

Art. 78

The Secretariat operates according by the Procedural Order approved by the President and the Chief of the Commission Bureau.

Art. 79

The Secretariat is a body of assistance of the President, the Main Commission Bureau, the Congress and others expert commissions and assistance bodies.

Art. 80

The Parliament establishes his own secretariat in Bratislava, whose actions are managed by an Executive Secretary nominated by the President of the Parliament.

Art. 81

The IRU Secretariats of IRU acts in the benefit of the President, of the Government and of the Parliament are governed by this Statute and by the Procedural Order. The Secretariats do not have to complete each- other.

Art. 82

The budget of both secretariats is approved by the Parliament.

CHAPTER X

ECONOMY

Art. 83

The main sources of income are the contributes of individual members, of member organizations, in the amounts set by the Parliament.

Art.84

Other sources of income are the presents, the inheritances and the donations of the national and international organizations

Art. 85

The financial works are managed by the treasurer of the Organization (Commission for Financial Issues and Budget), which is responsible for his procedures in front of the Parliament.

Treasurer (Commission for Financial Issues and Budget) elaborates a plan for the annual budget, economic reports, and to deliver them to the Commission Bureau and the Commissions and later to the Parliament to be adopted.

Art. 87

The Court of Justice (Commission of Justice) is responsible with the inspection of the economy and usage of the resources.

Art. 88

The Parliament can establish a financial expert committee managed by a member of Parliament to ensure the transparency of financial business.

Art. 89

The treasurer (Commission for Financial Issues and Budget) has the right to present the Annual Financial Report in front of the Parliament, elaborated and researched from the international Audit Company.

Art. 90

Treasurer (Commission for Financial Issues and Budget) and the General Secretary are authorized to use the financial resources from bank accounts. .

CHAPTER XI**AMENDMENTS****Art. 91**

The amendments of this Statute reintegrates and are effective for all IRU members by ratification of 2/3 of the majority of the Congress delegates.

CHAPTER XII

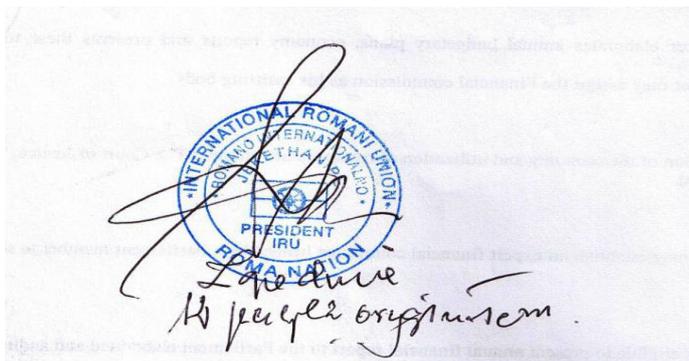
RATIFICATIONS AND SIGNATURES

Art. 92

1. This Statute must be ratified by all the delegates at the 10th Congress of IRU in Skopje, March 2016
2. The ratified documents must be submitted at the IRU Headquarters, in Bruxelles, at ONU, ECO section in IRU files.
3. The signing of this Statute will become effectively viable after all original members of IRU will submit the ratification documents.

Art. 93

The signatories of this Statute whose texts are in Romani, Russian, English, Czech, Bulgarian, Romanian, Magyar, French, Spanish and German are authentic and must remain in ONU archives and IRU archives. The copies of these must be sent by IRU to all member organizations. As proof of this, the delegates of the 10th IRU Congress signed in this Statute



Resolution 1740 (2010) adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly of the European Council

The situation of Roma in Europe and relevant activities of the Council of Europe

1. The Roma constitute the largest minority in Europe and are present in virtually all Council of Europe member states. All member states – without exception – have the moral and legal duty to make concrete and sustained efforts to improve the situation of Roma and to ensure the full respect of their fundamental rights.

2. The Parliamentary Assembly is shocked by recent outrages against Roma in several Europe member states, reflecting an increasing trend in Europe towards anti-Gypsyism of the worst kind.

3. Taking advantage of the financial crisis, extremist groups capitalise on fears deriving from the equation made between Roma and criminals, choosing a scapegoat that presents an easy target, as Roma are among the most vulnerable groups of all.

4. This situation is reminiscent of the darkest hours in Europe's history. The Council of Europe was founded precisely to prevent those dark hours from repeating themselves. The European Court of Human Rights regularly condemns states in which Roma have suffered from abuse or discrimination.

5. Besides the appalling rise in violence against Roma, the Assembly observes that the process of Roma integration has not reached its objectives over the last twenty years.

6. Assembly Recommendation 1557 (2002) on the legal situation of Roma in Europe already stressed that the aims set out in its Recommendation 1203 (1993) on Gypsies in Europe had been achieved only to a limited extent. The Assembly now notes with great concern that the present situation is virtually unchanged, if not worse. This is a shamefully poor record considering the amount of paper – and money – dedicated to improving the situation of Roma at all levels.

7. The Roma people are still regularly victims of intolerance, discrimination and rejection based on deep-seated prejudices in many Council of Europe member states. The situation of Roma with regard to education, employment, housing, health care and political participation is far from satisfactory. The Assembly is convinced that effective and sustainable access to education and decent housing are the first decisive steps towards breaking the vicious circle of discrimination in which most of the Roma are locked.

8. The Assembly therefore urges all Council of Europe member states to face up to their responsibilities and to tackle the issue of the situation of Roma seriously and sustainably.

9. The Assembly notes that many member states have already adopted national strategies for improving the situation and the integration of Roma. This is a positive but insufficient step. Such action plans need adequate and long-term funding as well as efficient co-ordination. Last but not least, the implementation of such action plans must be ensured also at local and regional levels.

10. The Parliament stresses that many initiatives remain too isolated and too limited – therefore offering only partial responses. The Parliament calls on member states to adopt national policies based on an integrated approach. Relevant ministries and other players must act in a concerted way, as the problems faced by the Roma are inextricably linked.

11. The Parliament also notes that the concrete results of a wide range of measures – including the national action plans – cannot be properly evaluated because many governments refuse to collect statistics based on ethnicity. In these circumstances, it seems to be impossible to identify successful measures or to improve the less successful ones.

12. Both the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) consider that the collection of data based on ethnicity is a valuable tool for evaluating the impact of minority policies and monitoring discrimination. Such data should, in addition, be gender disaggregated.

13. The Parliament notes with concern that Roma remain extremely under-represented in elected bodies and that their participation in public and political life is limited. Considering that Roma representation and involvement are just as important as official action, the Assembly urges the Roma community to use every opportunity to be as active as possible.

14. Finally, the Parliament notes a new trend within member states to consider that the Roma issue falls under the responsibility of international and European organisations. Whilst convinced of the importance of the role of international organisations – and especially of the Council of Europe – in this field, the Assembly reiterates that the main responsibility lies with the member states. There should be no shirking of responsibility: education, employment, social inclusion, health services and housing are almost entirely national responsibilities.

15. Therefore, the Assembly urges member states to:

15.1. treat the Roma issue not only from the perspective of a socially disadvantaged group, but from the perspective of a national minority entitled to enjoy the rights enshrined in the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (ETS No. 157) and in the European Convention on Human Rights (ETS No. 5), as interpreted by the European Court of Human Rights;

15.2. protect Roma from discrimination including, where not in place already, through the adoption, implementation and regular monitoring of comprehensive anti-discrimination

legislation as well as measures to increase awareness among Roma of such legislation and their access to legal remedies when their rights have been violated;

15.3. adopt sustainable national action plans and strategies which follow an integrated approach in conformity with Committee of Ministers Recommendation CM/Rec(2008)5 on policies for Roma and/or Travellers in Europe;

15.4. ensure that each ministry and decentralised or local Government institution has effectively functioning structures capable of implementing these plans and strategies and that they act in a concerted way;

15.5. put in place means of supervision of the way local authorities implement parts of national action plans and strategies that fall under their competence and sanction any failure to do so;

15.6. enhance political participation and representation of Roma both at national and local level, *inter alia*, by providing Roma with the necessary identity documents, removing institutional discrimination and legal barriers and/or by allocating reserved seats to Roma representatives in parliament as well as in local and regional elected bodies;

15.7. collect reliable statistical data – including ethnic and gender-disaggregated data – with the necessary strict safeguards to avoid any abuse, in line with ECRI's recommendations and the opinion of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, and to analyse these data carefully in order to assess the results and to enhance the effectiveness of the existing plans and programmes;

15.8. promote a positive image of diversity and address stereotypes and prejudices, including those linked to gender, using for instance the Dosta! campaign developed by the Council of Europe; strongly condemn and effectively prosecute acts of anti-Gypsyism; respond more effectively to, and invest greater resources in, combating racially motivated crime against Roma; react strongly to racist discourse by public officials; develop policies and training programmes to combat anti-Roma prejudices amongst law enforcement officials; and tackle hate speech vis-à-vis Roma, whether occurring in the media, politics or in civil society;

15.9. base all action intended to improve the situation of Roma, at every stage of the process, on prior and genuine consultation and co-operation with the Roma themselves;

15.10. consider taking positive action in order to combat discrimination and to improve the opportunities offered to Roma, in particular in the fields of education and employment;

15.11. promote the use and development of Roma culture, language and lifestyle by promoting, for instance, the Roma Cultural Route developed by the Council of Europe;

15.12. take special measures to protect Roma asylum seekers who have fled racist violence, to ensure that citizens of the European Union (EU) have the possibility to rebut the presumption of safety that applies in respect of EU member states, and to avoid returning Roma to Kosovo until the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has confirmed that the situation there has sufficiently improved in terms of security and access to social rights.

16. As regards education, the Assembly urges member states to:

16.1. fully implement Committee of Ministers Recommendations No. R (2000) 4 on the education of Roma/Gypsy children in Europe and CM/Rec(2009)4 on the education of Roma and Travellers in Europe;

16.2. dismantle segregated schooling by ensuring the effective and non-segregated access of Roma to mainstream education and develop their pre-school enrolment while expecting the Roma to accept that they should fulfil their obligations with regard to education;

16.3. train teachers adequately, increase the number of Roma teachers and enrol – as appropriate – Roma school mediators;

16.4. ensure that Roma girls are given equal opportunities in education, in particular secondary education, which too many Roma girls are obliged to drop out of because of parental and/or community pressure linked to early marriage, teenage pregnancies, and household and family responsibilities;

16.5. where appropriate – and where there is a demand within the Roma minority – assist them institutionally and legally to set up minority schools based on their own language and identity;

16.6. increase the number of Roma students in secondary schools and universities, where appropriate by allocating places for Roma, in particular Roma girls;

16.7. undertake, in conjunction with civil society organisations, gender-sensitive studies on the situation of children from minority groups in the school system, by compiling statistics on their attendance, completion and drop-out rates, results achieved and progress made, as recommended in ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 10 on combating racism and racial discrimination in and through school education.

17. As regards housing, the Assembly urges member states to:

17.1. fully implement Committee of Ministers Recommendation Rec(2005)4 on improving the housing conditions of Roma and Travellers in Europe and seriously take into consideration the opinion of the Committee of Experts on Roma and Travellers (MG-S-ROM), adopted in October 2009, on the housing situation of Roma and Travellers in Europe;

17.2. implement fully the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights 2009 recommendation on the implementation of the right to housing and ensure that Roma's living conditions meet the criteria of adequate housing;

17.3. unequivocally condemn all attacks on Roma living areas, settlements and camps, and prosecute those responsible for them;

17.4. as a priority, address the problem of domestic violence within the Roma community, in particular violence against women and girls, as well as the human rights violation constituted by forced and child marriages in accordance with Assembly Resolution 1468 (2005) on the subject;

17.5. take urgent measures to prevent further forced evictions of Roma camps and settlements and – in cases of unavoidable evictions – ensure that such evictions are carried out only when all procedural protections required under international human rights law are in place, including the provision of adequate alternative housing, adequate compensation for expropriation and losses of moveable possessions damaged in the process of eviction; in the absence of such procedural protections, member states should introduce legislation on evictions, providing safeguards and remedies in accordance with international standards.

18. As regards employment, the Assembly urges member states to:

18.1. fully implement Committee of Ministers Recommendation Rec(2001)17 on improving the economic and employment situation of Roma/Gypsies and Travellers in Europe;

18.2. develop employment policies for the Roma population by adopting comprehensive national employment programmes and monitoring their implementation at local level;

18.3. while so doing, readjust employment policies to the needs of the local Roma communities and the local markets;

18.4. build upon existing good practices such as the creation of Roma employment mediators, or the development of special internship programmes for Roma in the civil service in order to increase Roma representation within the state and local administration.

19. As regards health care, the Assembly urges member states to:

19.1. fully implement Committee of Ministers Recommendation Rec(2006)10 on better access to health care for Roma and Travellers in Europe;

19.2. enhance Roma access to health services, *inter alia* by building upon existing good practices such as campaigns to ensure immunisation for Roma children, the training of Roma health mediators and the setting-up of mobile clinics;

19.3. in particular, provide on a regular basis outreach services for Roma women and girls who otherwise have little access to medical services, pay special attention to gynaecological and maternal health, and ensure the availability of continuing health education (in particular sexual and reproductive health education) taking into account social and cultural factors influencing the health of Roma women;

19.4. ban and punish forced sterilisation and provide for compensation for all victims.

20. The Assembly also urges in particular the relevant authorities to take immediate action and to relocate as a matter of urgency the inhabitants of the lead-contaminated camp of Mitrovicë/Mitrovica (Kosovo).

21. In addition, the Assembly supports the strengthening and development of the European Roma and Travellers Forum (ERTF) – a unique Europe-wide body – in order to enhance both the representation and the co-ordination of Roma at European level.

22. Furthermore, the Assembly strongly encourages the national delegations to the Assembly to include members of the Roma minority if they are represented in their parliament.

23. Roma are currently not represented at all in the Assembly. It therefore resolves to propose a co-operation agreement between the Assembly and the ERTF on the basis of which representatives of the ERTF would have regular contact with the relevant committees of the Assembly and could attend their meetings.

24. The Assembly calls on the Roma community and its representatives to fight discrimination and violence against Roma women and girls in their own community. In particular, the problems of domestic violence and of forced and child marriages, which

constitute a violation of human rights, need to be addressed also by the Roma community itself. Custom and tradition cannot be used as an excuse for human rights violations, but should instead be changed. The Assembly calls on member states to support Romani women activists who engage in debates within their community about the tensions between the preservation of a Romani identity and the violation of women's rights including through early and forced marriages.

25. Finally, given the urgency of improving the situation of Roma in a wide range of areas, the Assembly decides to come back to this question in more depth in due course.

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Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire



Recommendation 1557 (2002)¹

The legal situation of Roma in Europe²

1. Nearly ten years ago in its Recommendation 1203 (1993) on Gypsies in Europe, the Parliamentary Assembly stressed the need for special protection for Gypsies and condemned the various forms of discrimination suffered by them in the member states of the Council of Europe. Although international organisations, national governments, local authorities and non-governmental organisations have made great efforts, the aims set by this recommendation have been achieved to a restricted extent.

2. The Assembly recalls the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of 1950, the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment of 1987, the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages of 1992, the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of 1995 and the revised European Social Charter of 1996.

3. Today Roma are still subjected to discrimination, marginalisation and segregation. Discrimination is widespread in every field of public and personal life, including access to

public places, education, employment, health services and housing, as well as crossing borders and access to asylum procedures. Marginalisation and the economic and social segregation of Roma are turning into ethnic discrimination, which usually affects the weakest social groups.

4. Roma form a special minority group, in so far as they have a double minority status. They are an ethnic community and most of them belong to the socially disadvantaged groups of society.

5. Most Roma are currently faced with a rather severe economic situation in most of the member countries of the Council of Europe. Despite efforts in the social field, the market economy, especially the neo-liberal version of it, has marginalised disadvantaged social groups including Roma even in the most developed European countries. In central and eastern Europe the economic and political transition has aggravated their socially disadvantaged situation.

6. From a legal point of view, the Romany community is still not regarded as an ethnic or national minority group in every member state, and thus it does not enjoy the rights pertaining to this status in all of the countries concerned. Roma must be treated as an ethnic or national minority group in every member state, and their minority rights must be guaranteed. The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages exist and must be applied.

7. The nature and direction of Roma migration has changed recently, as its illegal aspect has grown markedly, and even former transit countries have become final destinations. Ethnic conflicts and civil wars over the last ten years in certain parts of Europe have intensified the phenomenon of Roma migration. This migration is still not higher than the average migration trend from central and eastern Europe, but it attracts greater public attention because of its specific nature, as it is usually not an individual, solitary enterprise, but a family affair for the smaller or larger Romany families. In the meantime, several states have adopted formal rules or systematically implemented practices which are clearly aimed at preventing Roma from entering these countries, and are directly or indirectly discriminatory with respect to Roma.

8. It is necessary to adopt a series of confidence-building and advisory measures aimed at helping Romany migrants from central and eastern Europe already living in the countries of western Europe, and to prevent their further marginalisation. At the same time, it is also necessary to provide effective support for the reintegration of those Romany migrants who return to their homeland.

9. Roma, as full citizens of the country in which they reside, have to have the same rights and obligations as others. The right of Roma to move around must be recognised. The majority population and Roma share responsibility in society to an asymmetrical measure in the light of their capacities and their economic, political, cultural and social resources. The majority population must accept Roma into society without assimilating them, and support Roma as a disadvantaged social group. Roma have to accept the rules governing society as a whole, and they can be called upon to be more active in handling their own problems, but this must be associated with appropriate conditions, encouragement and incentives provided by the state.

10. Member states of the Council of Europe should encourage Roma to set up their own organisations and participate in the political system as voters, candidates or members in national parliaments. Incentives should be provided to mainstream political parties to include Roma on their electoral lists, in electable positions. States are encouraged to devise and implement policies aiming at the full participation of Roma in public life, and at all levels of administration, as well as the strengthening of democratic Romany constituencies. Romany communities, organisations and political parties should be given the full opportunity to take part in the process of elaborating, implementing and monitoring programmes and policies aimed at improving their present situation.

11. The situation of Romany women needs to be improved, because they play a determinant role in improving the living conditions of Romany families. These women suffer from a triple discrimination, as Roma, as women and also as persons belonging to a socially disadvantaged group.

12. The Assembly encourages awareness-raising among media professionals of their particular responsibility in building dialogue between Roma and the majority population, fighting against discrimination in society, making the majority population more familiar with the culture of Roma and the efforts made by them to improve their situation, and reporting the positive examples concerning the integration of Roma into society.

13. The Assembly recognises that there is a need to strengthen, clarify and harmonise the work of:

a. European multilateral organisations, such as the Council of Europe, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, and the European Union, in their activities concerning Roma;

b. several bodies of the Council of Europe dealing with elaborating and monitoring initiatives, reports, recommendations and programmes concerning the situation of Roma in Europe.

14. The convention preparing a common future constitution for the European Union, has asked civil society to make remarks and proposals. Romany communities and organisations should not miss the opportunity of expressing their views.

15. The Council of Europe can and must play an important role in improving the legal status, the level of equality and the living conditions of Roma. The Assembly calls upon the member states to complete the six general conditions, which are necessary for the improvement of the situation of Roma in Europe:

a. to resolve the legal status of Roma:

16. to recognise Romany individuals as members of an ethnic or national minority group;

17. to acknowledge the minority group status of Romany communities;

18. to guarantee individual and community minority rights for Roma;

19. to provide for Roma, legally residing in the country in which they live, with the full

opportunity to obtain an identity card, in the countries where it exists;

20. to sign, ratify and fully implement the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages;

21. to provide Roma with the social rights protected by the revised European Social Charter;

b. to elaborate and implement specific programmes to improve the integration of Roma as individuals and Romany communities as minority groups into society and ensure their participation in decision-making processes at local, regional, national and European levels:

22. to elaborate and implement policies designed to deal with the problems of Roma, which are comprehensive and related to economic, social and cultural factors;

23. to strengthen the dialogue between Romany individuals, Romany communities and other groups in society;

24. to involve representatives of Roma at all stages of the decision-making process in developing, implementing and evaluating programmes aimed at improving the conditions of Romany individuals and communities. This involvement should not be limited to consultation only, but should take the shape of a real partnership;

25. encourage the presence of Romany members in national parliaments and encourage the participation of elected Romany representatives in the regional and local legislature process and executive bodies;

26. to foster interregional co-operation with a view to handling the problems faced by Roma, with their active participation;

27. to strengthen the systematic and regular monitoring process of the implementation of recommendations and specific programmes aimed to improve the legal situation and the living conditions of Romany individuals and communities;

c. to guarantee equal treatment for the Romany minority as an ethnic or national minority group in the field of education, employment, housing, health and public services. Member states should give special attention to:

28. promoting equal opportunities for Roma on the labour market;

29. providing the possibility for Romany students to participate in all levels of education from kindergarten to university;

30. developing positive measures to recruit Roma in public services of direct relevance to Roma communities, such as primary and secondary schools, social welfare centres, local primary health care centres and local administration;

31. eradicating all practices of segregated schooling for Romany children, particularly that of routing Romany children to schools or classes for the mentally disabled;

d. to develop and implement positive action and preferential treatment for the socially deprived strata, including Roma as a socially disadvantaged community, in the field of education, employment and housing:

32. to ensure long-term budgetary support for developing income-generating programmes for the socially disadvantaged groups, including Roma;

33. to ensure that housing programmes announced by governments are available for all socially disadvantaged families, including Romany families;

34. to ensure budgetary support and assist Roma communities with technical training to upgrade the existing Romany settlements;

35. to make use of the Council of Europe Development Bank to finance integrated projects, developed in partnership with the Roma communities concerned, in order to improve their living conditions and to facilitate their economic independence;

e. to take specific measures and create special institutions for the protection of the Romany language, culture, traditions and identity:

36. to help and promote the teaching of the Romany language;

37. to encourage Romany parents to send their children to primary school, secondary school and higher education, including college or university, and give them adequate information about the necessity of education;

38. to make the majority population more familiar with Roma culture;

39. to ensure that educational textbooks include material on the Romany history and culture;

40. to recruit Roma teaching staff, particularly in areas with a large Romany population;

f. to combat racism, xenophobia and intolerance and to ensure non-discriminatory treatment of Roma at local, regional, national and international levels:

41. to enact and enforce comprehensive anti-discriminatory legislation in the member states with regard to Roma;

42. to ratify Protocol No. 12 to the European Convention on Human Rights, if they have not already done so, as a matter of priority;

43. to set up conflict prevention and management bodies at regional and local levels;

44. to enact and enforce comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation in the member states, in harmony with European Council Directive 2000/43/EC “implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin”, as the benchmark guidelines on anti-discrimination law in all European states;

45. to give considerable support to non-governmental organisations protecting individual and Roma community minority rights;
46. to pay particular attention to the phenomenon of the discrimination against Roma, especially in the fields of education and employment;
47. based on reliable statistical data, to fight against racial discrimination and protect Roma against the abusive and involuntary collection of data;
48. to strengthen the monitoring system on discrimination against Roma at local, regional, national and international levels;
49. to ensure that the full scope of the rights envisaged in the European Convention on Human Rights, as well as the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, are applied to Roma without discrimination;
50. to pay particular attention to the problems faced by Roma in the field of acquisition or loss of citizenship, border-crossing decisions and policies;
51. to ensure that the rules applied and policies implemented in the field of migration control are not discriminatory towards Roma migrants.
52. The Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers:
53. support the initiative of setting up a European Roma consultative forum, democratically established, that can articulate and transmit the voice of Romany individuals and communities and serve as an advisory body to the Committee of Ministers, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and institutions of the European Union;
54. set up the institution of a European ombudsman for Roma to deal with the violation of the individual and community minority rights of Roma;
55. establish a European Roma study and training centre, affiliated to the European Youth Centre of the Council of Europe, which needs to be set up with a small staff to facilitate the efficient exchange of positive experiences concerning the integration of Roma at local, regional and national levels in the member states and to promote the co-ordination of the training of Romany and majority specialists;
56. consider recruiting Roma staff in the Secretariat of the Organisation;
57. create a European solidarity fund for Roma financed by voluntary contributions from the member states of the Council of Europe and other international multilateral organisations;
58. draw up an additional protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights on the rights of persons belonging to minorities;
59. strengthen monitoring mechanisms and support to a greater extent the implementation

of the initiatives and recommendations enumerated by existing international texts.

1. *Assembly debate* on 25 April 2002 (15th Sitting) (see Doc. 9397, report of the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, rapporteur: Mr Tabajdi; Doc. 9417, opinion of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography, rapporteur: Mr Cilevics; and Doc. 9424, opinion of the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee, rapporteur: Mrs Rupprecht).

Text adopted by the Assembly on 25 April 2002 (15th Sitting).

2. The term “Roma” used in this report always refers to the “Gypsy”, “Sinti” and “Traveller” categories.

CHARTER ERTF ROMA RIGHTS

1. More than seven centuries ago, our People were enslaved in the Indian subcontinent in the course of the Islamization of India and expelled towards Europe during the Islamic wars.

2. For more than six centuries, we Roma have lived here in Europe. Our history has been marked by Antiziganism, slavery, discrimination, persecution, expulsion, violence and genocide; this history has been written with our people’s blood.

3. Hundreds of thousands of our people were victims of the Parrajimos, the Holocaust on Roma, murdered in the name of the Nazi race mania, abused for pseudo-medical experiments and gassed in concentration camps. This injustice and crime against our people has too often been concealed, ignored, treated as a footnote to history, or simply forgotten.

4. We Roma have been deprived of recognition as a national minority group so far. Traditionally, we are regarded as a social fringe group, as a social problem that is to be “integrated” by means of disciplinary measures and state repression.

5. Our fate has been determined by self-appointed experts and specialists; our history has been written by linguists and gypsyologists.

6. Our people live in deplorable conditions comparable with the Third World, often segregated from the rest of society and subjected to rejection and discrimination.

7. Our people are frequently denied equal access to public health services. Our people's life expectancy is far below the European average; our infant mortality is much higher than average. Our everyday life is determined by segregation in every area of life;

8. Our children are regularly denied access to education or segregated from other children in so-called "special schools".

9. Discrimination at work is commonplace; our people's unemployment rate is 80 per cent and in some parts of Europe even higher.

10. Hate campaigns against us in the media are increasing year by year; the public image of our people as a criminal and unwanted menace has long been current. Balanced media accounts of the conditions of the Roma are infrequent. Positive media images of Roma are few and far between.

11. Expulsions and expropriations of our people are not condemned by the International Community; on the contrary, authorities are encouraged by the Public Opinion to continue their antigypsy policies through silence and reward.

12. Millions of our people are forced to live in ethnic slums, with no future, with no hope.

13. Thousands of our people were sent to battle against each other in European wars; brothers and sisters, parents and relatives were forced to fight against each other in different armies.

14. Instead of fighting the causes for fleeing, international institutions are fighting Roma refugees. Our people's attempt to flee from discrimination and Antiziganism is interpreted as nomadism, as asocial behaviour.

15. Romani women are exposed to triple discrimination: as women in society; as Romani women in the women's rights movement; and often as scapegoats in our own community. Young women and girls are particularly vulnerable to violence and lack of life opportunities.

16. After centuries of expulsion and exclusion, some of us have chosen the path of cultural selfdetermination and a travelling way of life and are particularly affected by prejudices, defamation, violence and rejection.

17. By discrimination against our language, customs, tradition and culture, by falsification of our history and our identity, the breeding ground for European Antiziganism was created.

18. Thousands of Roma children have been taken away from their parents, forced to be adopted and torn away from their roots: a measure that runs like a red thread through our people's history.

19. The defamation of our people as a social fringe group is the basis of deprivation of our rights as a national minority and lack of equal treatment with other people and nations.

20. The traditional adherence to experts and specialists deciding on our fate constitutes a blatant infringement of any kind of peoples' right of self-determination; this discriminatory practice is an integral part of our problem. This kind of neo-colonialism is actually to blame for Europe's failure to insure Human Rights and Civil liberties to our People.

21. We Roma, as well as our organisations, live in an atmosphere of general suspicion; the system of general suspicion is the most striking feature of Antiziganism and has to this day led to self-appointed experts being entrusted with making decisions concerning Roma instead of Roma themselves.

22. The behaviour of European States towards the Roma in the 21st century will be a critical test of their implementation of the human rights and civil liberties of minorities, as well the sincerity of their commitment to combating any kind of racism, anti-semitism, discrimination xenophobia and antiziganism.

23. The Roma occupy a unique position in Europe, both historically and politically, as a pan-European national minority, without kin-state. Efforts to improve the situation of the Roma in Europe must acknowledge this special position.

24. A constitutional, democratic and just Europe must include the participation of Roma in all areas of society. The participation process needs to draw on common roots and common perspectives beyond citizenship, group affiliation, or country of residence. Ensuring the participation and contribution of Roma in decision-making processes is one of the principal aims we wish to achieve.

25. A Europe in which Roma suffer from Antiziganism and segregation should not be allowed to exist for any longer. Yet we will only succeed in reducing this xenophobia, prejudice, stereotyping and fear emerging from ignorance through systematic and continuous education.

26. The Charter of the United Nations, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, as well as the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action,¹ affirm the fundamental importance of the right to self-determination of all peoples, by virtue of which

they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development

27. Considering that every attempt to decisively improve the Roma's situation to date has been unsuccessful, a collaboration of the states, international institutions and the Roma's legitimate representatives based on equal rights is urgently needed. Furthermore, it is our obligation and duty to ensure that societies, as well as states and international institutions, revise their opinions;

28. Recalling the spirit of the partnership agreement signed on December 15 2004 between the Council of Europe and ourselves the European Roma and Travellers Forum (ERTF), we the Roma in Europe declare the principles of this Charter on the Rights of Roma as binding for all Roma Representations, Initiatives and particularly for the ERTF, as the only legitimate representation of

Roma in Europe authorised by democratic processes, and actively commit ourselves to promote the implementation of the rights and principles in this Charter, in collaboration with all Roma and everyone of good will.

29. The Roma are a European national minority and citizens of the countries they live in; their participation process needs to draw on common roots and common perspectives beyond citizenship, group affiliation, or country of residence.

30. We, the ERTF as the only legitimate representation of Roma in Europe authorised by democratic processes, declare the principles of this Charter on the rights of Roma as binding and actively commit ourselves to promote the implementation of this charter in collaboration with all Roma and everyone of good will.

As such, we proclaim the following:

Article 1

Roma is; who avows oneself to the common historical Indo-Greek origin ,

who avows oneself to the common language of Romanes, who avows oneself to the common cultural heritage of the Romanipe,

Article 2

We have a shared national identity as Roma, independent of citizenship, state and/or group and/or religious affiliation.

Article 3

Every person of our people has the right to self-determined designation, identity and community. Every person has the right to freely practice his/her religion, culture and tradition.

Romanipe is based on unity through diversity.

Article 4

We Roma are a people equal to every other people in the world. We Roma live in every state of Europe and hereby declare ourselves to be a national minority in Europe without our own state or claim for a state.

Article 5

As a national minority, we Roma engage in the rights and duties stipulated in contracts, agreements and declarations both collectively and individually. Roma have the right to the protection and opportunities as secured in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Treaties of the Council of Europe⁴, the OSCE⁵ and the European Union⁶, as well as all

further national and international civil rights.

Article 6

We Roma have the right to self-determination in accordance with international law including: the right to cultivate one's cultural autonomy, the right to freely promote our economic, social and cultural development and to select our partners, projects, and programmes on our own and, where appropriate, implement them as well; the right to decide on our representation free of any kind of obstruction or discrimination and to vote on it democratically.

We refuse any kind of heteronomy; representations, experts or speakers on our behalf who are self-appointed or appointed by third parties,

Article 7

We Roma have the right to a nationality and citizenship, social life, to have access to public health services, the right to physical integrity, the right to freedom, the right to protection from defamation and prejudices. We Roma have the collective right to lead our lives in peace, to equal opportunities,

security and equal treatment.

Article 8

We Roma have the right to life, physical and mental integrity, liberty and security of the person. We Roma have the collective right to live in freedom, peace and security and shall not be subjected to any act of genocide, pogrom or any other act of violence, including forced sterilisation, internment,

compulsory expropriations, forced resettlement, all forms of hard labour or forcibly removing children. To protect our People we have the right to use all appropriate measures that are foreseen by the international community and in accordance with international law.

Article 9

Participation in all areas of society and contribution to their decision processes is one of the principal aims we wish to achieve.

Article 10

We Roma, collectively and individually, have the right to not be subjected to forced assimilation or to abandonment or destruction of our culture. States shall provide effective mechanisms for prevention of and redress for:

- Any action which has the effect of depriving Roma of their integrity as distinct peoples, or of their cultural values or ethnic identities or language;

Any action which has the aim or effect of dispossessing them of their land, housing or possessions;

- Any form of forced population transfer, resettlement or expulsion;

- Any form of forced assimilation or integration;

- Any form of incitement or promotion (by individuals, organisations the media or any other source) of discrimination, hatred, violence, humiliation, defamation or false reporting against them.

Article 11

States shall ensure by means of appropriate measures that the media cannot incite hatred and violence against Roma through false reporting and hate campaigns. Additionally, statutes shall be revised if, in the name of freedom of the press, they allow humiliation, defamation or incitement or commit offences that are punishable by existing international understanding.

Article 12

States and international institutions shall initiate appropriate education campaigns in their public authorities, departments and among their employees in order to counteract prejudices and stereotypes, as well as xenophobia and Antiziganism, and to raise awareness of injustice and sensitivity toward human rights and civil liberties and the values of the Council of Europe.

Article 13

As our language, Romanes shall be equated with all other European languages.

States, as well international institutions, shall therefore ensure by all appropriate means that Romanes is protected as a living European language. This includes taking measures to promote public acceptance of Romanes and all measures stipulated in the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, as well as support our own educational institutions and native-language classes

at schools.

Article 14

States shall ensure, by appropriate means, that Roma are able to establish their own media in their mother tongue. The mainstream media, both state and private and including television

and radio, shall provide the Roma with the opportunity to report in their own language without discrimination; this particularly applies to state media.

Article 15

States shall ensure that Roma history, origin and fate, persecution and community are included in school curricula.

To this end, States and international institutions shall develop such curricula in collaboration with Roma institutions and integrate them without delay into their educational systems.

Article 16

States shall, in collaboration with Roma institutions, develop effective solutions for the improvement of the living conditions of Roma. The EU and its institutions shall take all appropriate measures within their respective competencies to support the efforts of its Member States to carry out their duties under this Charter.

The EU shall establish, in cooperation with the ERTF, a special aid fund for the stabilisation of Roma civil society.

The European Commission shall take all possible measures to ensure that Structural Funds, as well as Social Funds, are used to support disadvantaged regions of the EU in which a particularly large number of Roma live.

Article 17

Political parties, institutions and universities, public service and governments shall take measures, including where appropriate, positive action, to ensure that the proportion of the Roma in their states is reflected in the number of their Roma employees and/or members. The

European Commission, the Council of Europe, the OSCE and other international institutions shall make particular efforts to act as role models in this regard. The ERTF also appeals to international corporate groups to show more courage and increasingly

employ Roma.

Article 18

States shall ensure that any kind of segregation and/or apartheid within their sphere of influence is removed and fought effectively and sustainably. This particularly applies to the education sector.

Article 19

States shall implement and enforce strong and effective laws and action against discrimination in employment against Roma. These shall include provisions against direct and indirect discrimination, victimisation and harassment. They shall also allow employers to take positive action to prevent or compensate for disadvantages experienced by Roma. We explicitly refuse short-term projects which merely develop symbolic value. State sponsored programmes to increase the employment of Roma shall be long-term and sustained. The unemployment rate of Roma has to be reduced drastically by positive actions; this also includes the development of appropriate strategies as well as the cooperation of state, economy and Roma.

Article 20

The ERTF calls upon the Roma in Europe to actively participate in the political processes in their states. This implies participating in elections actively as well as passively, becoming members of political parties or founding one's own party.

Article 21

The ERTF shall instantly begin examining compensation claims to states or their legal successors, which are to blame for violence against the Roma in the past.

Article 22

None of the articles of this Charter shall be interpreted in a way that infringes upon the Charter's spirit and positive intentions.

Article 23

As pacifists who do not wish to participate in acts of war, we Roma shall not be forced into military service; though this does not affect the right of individual Roma to volunteer for military service.

Article 24

States, as well as international institutions, shall support the establishment of independent civilian Roma society, both actively and financially. Based on the ERTF model, each national state shall ensure that existing Roma organisations are enabled to unite to form a national Roma umbrella alliance/forum which is free of state influence. Each national Roma umbrella alliance/forum shall then be granted a seat in the national state's parliament. The national state shall provide sufficient financial assistance to each national Roma umbrella

forum/alliance. National umbrella organisations of Roma must be accepted, promoted and supported as legitimate representations of interests and partners of governments.

Article 25

States shall ensure that Roma are granted pro bono legal advice, including on the implementation of existing human rights and civil liberties.

Article 26

In order to succeed in the implementation of large parts of this charter, legally binding agreements of the member states of the Council of Europe, the European Union, the United Nations and the OSCE are necessary. These kinds of legally binding agreements only could contribute to the abolishment of the present unequal treatment of our people among the states and to the respect for the special situation of our people.

Article 27

Nothing in this charter may be interpreted as implying for any state, people, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act contrary to the Charter of the United Nations or construed as authorising or encouraging any action which would dismember or impair, totally or in part, the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign and independent states. In the exercise of the rights enunciated in the present declaration, human rights and fundamental freedoms of all shall be respected. The exercise of the rights set forth in this declaration shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law, and in accordance with international human rights obligations. Any such limitations shall be non-discriminatory and strictly necessary solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and for meeting the just and most compelling requirements of a democratic society.