

**INTERNACIONAL ROMANI UNION
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Initiative for establishing an independent body and contact point - Romani Ombudsman

At its regular Plenary Assembly held on 28 – 29 June 2019 in Skopje, North Macedonia, the President of the International Union (IRU) Mr Zoran Dimov, launched the idea for establishing an “Independent body - Romani Ombudsman.

The Plenary Assembly was attended by delegates and members from all the continents around the globe, members from the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia, representatives of embassies accredited in the Republic of North Macedonia (Italy, Germany, Hungary, Albania, Bosnia and Hercegovina) as well as representatives from International organizations (ERTF, OSCE ODIHR, IOM, CEO, EPA and other).

The initiative was further elaborated by Mr. Zeljko Shajn - M.Sc. in Law, delegate from Republic of Serbia.

Taking into consideration the Council of Europe key strategic documents: The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms as well as the Charter of Fundamental Rights of The European Union, the Anti-discrimination Directive of the European Union, which provides mechanisms for creating institutions for safeguarding human rights, Roma still continue to be discriminated, under represented and left on the margin of any society. Increased intolerance towards Roma, nourished by racism and populism practiced by major political parties, the abuse of social media, in order to foster tension and violence towards this community, emphasizes the need for the establishment of an Independent Body / Roma Ombudsman.

This institution, initially introduced within the framework of the International Roma Community, will act as a representative of the Roma community and will work towards increasing the trust between the community and the institutions / citizens and will protect and improve the rights of the Roma.

The Roma Ombudsman institution should be established and act within already existing institutions at national and international level with clearly defined mandate and goals in accordance with domestic and international legislation.

In this regard, a support from the European Union, the Council of Europe, the United Nations and other institutions is expected. H.E. Ambassador Christian Thimonier, from the French embassy in North Macedonia have expressed the french interest for this initiative.

Having in mind the aforementioned, the Plenary Assembly of the International Romani Union adopted a

DECISION

for establishing an independent body and contact point - Romani Ombudsman in Strasbourg (France) and Geneva (Switzerland)

The Initiative for establishing an independent body and contact point - Romani Ombudsman - the Roma Ombudsman is a result of discrimination and other serious human rights abuses against Roma which, unfortunately, at the moment no government can guarantee full protection of the human rights of the Roma Nation.

IRU's Plenary Assembly also adopted a decision to establish a Coordinative Body in charge for cooperation and coordination with international organizations such as UN, EU and CoE on one hand, and IRU, RIPO and ERTF on the other.

Furthermore, this Coordinative Body will also work Draft Project for the Initiative, while considering political and international legal aspects.

Chairman of the Coordinating Body: Mr. Zeljko Shajn

Members: HE Ambassador of the Republic of France to the Republic of North Macedonia - Christian Thimonier, Academic Vlado Kambovski, Academic Sergei Baburin - Professor of Constitutional Law and President of the Moscow Academy of Sciences and Arts, Prof. Milenko Kreco Ad hoc judge at the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.

RESOLUTION - IRU/2019/02

The initiative for establishing an independent body and contact point - Romani Ombudsman comes as a result of the current negative developments in the field of Human Rights and fundamental freedoms, with an emphasis on the Roma nation.

- having regard to the Treaty on European Union, the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,
- having regard to the Commission's report of 5 April 2011, entitled "The EU Framework for Roma Integration Strategies by 2020" (COM (2011) 0173) and the subsequent reports on implementation and evaluation,
- having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms,
- having regard to the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights on the recognition of Roma as a group in need of special protection against discrimination,
- Having regard to Resolution 2153 (2017) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on "Promoting the involvement of Roma and travelers,
- Having regard to Council Directive 2000/43 / EC of 29 June 2000 on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin,
- having regard to the Council's recommendation of 9 December 2013 on effective measures for the integration of Roma in the Member States and for the Council's conclusions of 8 December 2016 to speed up the integration process of the Roma and, on 13 October 2016, the European Court of Justice Special report no. 14/2016 to auditors,
- Having regard to Council Framework Decision 2008/913 / JHA of 28 November 2008 on the fight against certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law,
- having regard to its resolution of 25 October 2017 on the aspects of fundamental rights in the integration of Roma in the EU: the fight against anti-gipsysm,
- having regard to the resolution of 15 April 2015 on the International Roma Day,
- anti-gypsyism in Europe and recognition of the EU as a memorial of the genocide of the Roma during the Second World War

- having regard to the Fundamental Rights Report of 2016 by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) and the EU-MIDIS I and II FRA and various other surveys and reports on Roma,

- having regard to the European Citizenship Initiative "Minority SafePack", registered on April 3, 2017,

At the same time, the initiative itself is fueled by the fact that the International Roma Union - IRU has its own ECOSOC status in the United Nations - the UN. Similar to the fact that IRU is part of the associated international organizations in the UN network, and the commitments and adopted documents by the UN, among which:

- The UN Human Rights Office, chaired by the UN Regional Working Group on Roma, works in several countries to strengthen the effective realization of human rights by Roma and travelers,

- It does so by supporting the activities for developing government policies for Roma inclusion, strengthening the capacities of Roma - and especially Romani women - to participate in local, regional, national and international decision-making, and to work on the challenges and practices of discrimination and abuse,

- At the same time acting as an IRU part of the European Roma Travel Forum (ERTF) and also part of the Council of Europe, acting according to the activities of this European institution, which, among other things, is well known:

- The results of the monitoring activities of the Council of Europe, especially those of the Commissioner for Human Rights and the European Committee against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) and evidence from other sources, show that Roma and travelers in Europe are still suffering from widespread and persistent anti- cyganism - recognized as a specific form of racism triggered by anti-Semitism. prejudices, and stereotypes - and are still victims of various forms of discrimination, including school segregation and forced sedentation, hate speech and, sometimes, hate crimes in many councils of states and are States of Europe.

Therefore, this initiative, as well as the RESOLUTION adopted, is supported by the membership of IRU and the delegates, as well as by the guests present during the Parliamentary session of IRU, from: Representatives from the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, political parties, foreign embassies in the Republic of Macedonia, international associations and organizations (ERTF, OSCE / ODIHIR, IOM, CEE, ERA etc.),

The resolution was adopted on 29.06.2019 in Skopje, Republic of Macedonia in the course of the 5th Parliamentary Session of the International Roma Union – IRU.

Note: Due to its adoption of this meeting, the Resolution will be recorded as:

RESOLUTION - for establishing an independent body and contact point - Romani Ombudsman - IRU/2019/02.

Skopje, Republic of North Macedonia - 29.06.2019

IRU President
Zoran Dimov

