



RESOLUTION FIGHT AGAINST THE DISCRIMINATION OF ROMA YOUTH

FOR ADOPTION

**COUNCIL OF MEMBERS/EXTRAORDINARY
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
THESSALONIKI, GREECE, 21-24 NOVEMBER
2013**

1 The European Youth Forum has been advocating for the rights of young people in
2 Europe and supporting the creation of inclusive, open and tolerant societies. Among
3 the Youth Forum's key values and principles are the active participation of young
4 people, their involvement in decision-making, a cross-sectorial policy approach to
5 youth supported by appropriate structures to represent them, and increasing mutual
6 understanding of various groups of young people, regardless of their origins,
7 ethnicity, beliefs, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, or any other factor.

8 In the light of these principles, the Youth Forum considers unacceptable any attempt
9 to discriminate any group of young people, for any reason. The young Roma have
10 been particularly affected by the recent economic crisis, serving as scapegoats in
11 many European countries, as seen for instance in the Slovak city of Košice.

12 Roma youth is a fast growing group, which in many European regions faces
13 obstacles to receive the same treatment and services as their peers. Struggling with
14 language or cultural differences and challenged by the economic situation, it is at
15 many occasions deprived of its rights and limited in opportunities. Modern societies in
16 Europe, which should be defined not by their approaches towards the privileged
17 majorities, but rather their actions taken to open up for minorities, should not allow
18 themselves to discriminate any groups. Therefore, the worrisome examples of
19 discriminatory practices against Roma communities and the lack of actions that
20 would prevent them and ensure equal opportunities for all Roma youth need to end.

21 The recent attempts to segregate Roma population from the remaining part of the
22 local community in Košice in Slovak Republic, to which European Commissioner
23 Androulla Vassiliou reacted in her open letter addressed to the mayor of the town,¹
24 are simply unacceptable. Although, the reaction of the Commissioner tackled a
25 particular case of the city of Košice, the example is neither uncommon nor
26 characteristic only of that municipality. Considering the challenges faced by many
27 members of the Roma community, the European Youth Forum would like to express
28 its concerns and call for intensified actions of all stakeholders involved, in reach out
29 to Roma youth and paying particular attention to the challenges they face.

30 The Roma community has been at the centre of attention of many international
31 organisations, such as the Council of Europe, the Organisation for Cooperation and
32 Security in Europe, and the Open Society Foundations. Although, numerous attempts
33 to increase the cooperation with and involvement in civil society organisations have
34 taken place, the situation in the Roma community is not improving at a satisfactory

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¹ Open Letter of Mrs. Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou to the Mayor of Košice, Mr. Richard Raši, sent on 13 August 2013.

1 pace. Policy solutions proposed by different stakeholders are not sufficient and their
2 implementation leaves a lot of space for improvement. The European Youth Forum
3 would like to express its foremost concern with this fact and commits itself to an
4 increased involvement to work on solving the challenges.

5 As a response to the current situation, we call for:

- 6 - Immediate actions taken by all actors on all levels to prevent any
7 discriminatory practices against the Roma youth community, and reduce
8 currently existing obstacles that Roma youth is facing;
- 9 - Particular focus on Roma youth that would ensure the construction of an
10 inclusive society for current and future generations;
- 11 - Concrete actions by policy-makers focused on the whole scope in combating
12 the underprivileged situation of Roma youth, by ensuring their full and
13 appropriate access to education, both formal and non-formal, access to
14 healthcare system, support in establishing and functioning of sustainable civil
15 society organisations, further investments to improve the living conditions of
16 Roma communities, and support for actions aimed at overcoming prejudices
17 and fighting stereotypes;
- 18 - Enhanced efforts by the Youth Forum to include European Roma youth
19 organisations in its activities and to include them in the membership of the
20 platform;
- 21 - Commitment of the Youth Forum and its member organisations, in partnership
22 with other stakeholders, to develop and strengthen already existing policy
23 solutions directed at Roma youth;
- 24 - Increased attention of member organisations to reaching out to Roma youth
25 and pro-active approaches aimed at including, wherever appropriate, local,
26 regional or national Roma youth organisations in their structures.