

# STATEMENT

## Of Roma youth organizations to the National Agencies concerning the Youth in Action programme

On the 7th and 8th of April 2008, SALTO organized a Roma youth round table regarding Roma youth participation within the Youth in Action programme. The meeting was attended by more than 20 Roma youth organizations from twelve different European countries.

The meeting was initiated under the European year of intercultural dialogue 2008.

### The objectives of the meeting were:

- Assessment of needs of Roma youth with relation to the Youth in Action programme
- Explain the Youth in Action programme spirit and possibilities
- Explore National Roma inclusion strategies connected to Youth in Action programme
- Gain a picture of the connection between Roma youth work and Youth in Action programme
- Creating a better cooperation between National agencies and Roma NGOs

After the meeting we determined the Roma youth needs and we specified that there is a lack of information for the Youth in action programme towards the Roma youth people.

It is necessary to be explained in details the Youth in action programme to the Roma youth organizations according the facilitation of their participation and inclusion in the European Union.

In this regard, we would like each National agency that is responsible for the implementation of Youth in Action programme to encourage and promote the access and participation of the Roma youth people, according to the objectives and the priorities of the programme Youth in action:

- Develop solidarity and promote tolerance among young people in order to foster social cohesion in the European Union
- Foster mutual understanding between young people in different countries
- Cultural Diversity
- Inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities
- Participation
- European Citizenship

**In order to ease the process of participation of Roma young people into the Youth in Action programme, Roma youth organisations are telling the National Agency structure that they want the following actions:**

1. The Roma community needs recognition as an ethnic minority.
2. We want Roma representation and expertise in each National Agency. The role model for that is the Slovakian National Agency.
3. The topic of Roma should be mainstreamed in the activities of the National Agency, in the same way as any work with minorities is done.
4. We want national and international meetings between NAs and Roma organisations.
5. We need special assistance because of the application procedure. To be included more, the Roma communities need help with the bureaucracy of project applications, and for training course participation.
6. To work together to find a way to fund administrative and operational costs for sustainability of organisations and to support long term action.
7. Promotion and advertisement needs to be improved to the Roma communities. Cooperation with existing organisations should be encouraged and more access to information on a more regular basis.
8. Promotion of the programme should be improved and increased, and done in a different way than has been done so far.
9. To include Roma participants in all programmes, not just YiA. Roma should be a horizontal priority in all programmes and programme elements.
10. We recommend the NA to have an awareness raising campaign and skills training in Roma youth issues. Use the Slovakian NA as a role model on how to contact Roma organisations and how to work together with them.
11. NA staff should have a youth movement background, so they can understand the approach and pressures of Roma NGOs.
12. We strongly recommend to use the support and resource of the networks and organisations represented at this Round Table.

We rely on mutual understanding and we are expecting better cooperation from the National agencies with Roma youth people in order to ease the process of the participation in the programme Youth in action. We commit ourselves and offer our help and assistance to National agencies for the facilitation of the process of involvement of Roma youth people.

Yours sincerely,

*Federation of European Roma Young People / Roma Participation Programme – Open Society Institute (Budapest) / Parudemos association (Romania) / Roma centre for Democracy (Serbia) / Amari Ograda (Moldova) / Verbund Deutscher Roma & Sinti (Cologne – Germany) / International Roma Youth Network (Roma Active Albania - Albania, Kale dor Kayiko - Spain, Humanitarian Association of Roma - Serbia, National Association of Roma Youth - Romania and Amaro Drom - Germany) / Pakiv European Network / National Roma Centrum (Macedonia) / Roma education Centrum (Slovakia) / Roma National Centre (Moldova) / Gypsy Fire (Lithuania) / Student organisation for Development of Interethnic Dialogue (Bulgaria) / Roma Youth Organisation (Bulgaria) / Roma Information Centre Montana (Bulgaria) / Romai Katuna (Ukraine) / Save the Children (Scotland)*