



**JOINT DECLARATION BY THE TRIO
(SPAIN, BELGIUM & HUNGARY)
ON THE OCCASION OF
THE SECOND ROMA SUMMIT
HELD IN CÓRDOBA (8 & 9 APRIL 2010)**

The Roma population, currently numbering between ten and twelve million people, has been living in Europe for centuries. Many of its members find themselves in a situation of exclusion, affecting such basic areas of daily life as access to education, unemployment and job insecurity, poor housing conditions and health inequalities. These situations are often aggravated by discrimination, social rejection and lack of guaranteed access to basic rights. Women and children are particularly affected by these problems. This segregation hinders equal access to housing and to such basic needs as social and health services and the education system, and relegates them to low-quality services.

In recent years, the Roma issue has gained prominence on the agendas of EC Institutions and many Member States. This is evidenced by the successive Resolutions of the European Parliament in 2005, 2006, 2008, 2009 and the one recently approved on 25 March 2010 on the occasion of this Summit. The European Commission not only has intensified efforts to include the Roma in its programmes and activities, but has also improved co-ordination between its different programmes and units. The Trio welcomes the Progress Report presented by the Commission in this Summit and the accompanying Communication outlining priorities and challenges for the future.

Since 2007, the Council has adopted Conclusions on four occasions, with the aim of intensifying European and national policies on Roma inclusion; further conclusions are expected to be adopted during the Spanish Presidency, which will mean another step in the right direction. The First European Roma Summit held in Brussels in 2008 and the establishment of the Integrated Platform for Roma Inclusion in order to *organise and exchange good practices and experiences between the Member States in the area of Roma inclusion, provide analytical support and encourage co-operation between all the stakeholders concerned by Roma issues, including the organisations representing the Roma*, are good examples of the significant progress achieved.

The current Trio, comprised of Spain, Belgium and Hungary, believes that the time has come to give a boost to the Roma dossier and achieve substantial improvement in the social and economic integration of the Roma in Europe, within the framework of the Decisions and Recommendations adopted by the European institutions in recent years. It is therefore necessary to ensure that the current policies and instruments are fully implemented and operate effectively from a medium-term perspective.

Therefore, the Trio commits itself to:

- Advance in ensuring that Roma issues are central to European and national policies (*mainstreaming Roma issues*) by introducing specific actions in favour of the social and economic inclusion of the Roma into European strategies and instruments. This cross-cutting approach must be guaranteed in such areas as fundamental rights, the gender perspective, personal security, protection against discrimination, poverty and social exclusion, regional cohesion, economic development, access to education, housing, health, employment, social services, justice, sports and culture. This cross-cutting approach should also be considered in relationships with third countries with a large Roma population.
- Improve in designing a road map for the Integrated Platform for Roma Inclusion, so that it establishes a framework for medium-term action, defines objectives and goals to met, prioritises key issues to be addressed and strengthens horizontal co-operation between the Member States and civil society, backed by the fundamental support and motivation of the Commission in organising meetings and activities. In the framework of the Platform, there are plans to offer guidance and support to facilitate the implementation and practical application of the Ten Common Basic Principles.
- Ensure that the existing financial instruments of European Union, in particular the Structural Funds, are accessible to the Roma, address their needs and have a positive impact on improving their living conditions. In this respect, the recent amendment of Article 7 of the General Provision on European Regional Development Fund is particularly relevant, as well as the opportunities it offers for launching integrated initiatives aimed at improving their living conditions and eliminating segregation in rural and urban areas.
- Propose the introduction of minimum requirements in the granting of EU funds so that the Roma are ensured equal access to the funds, which is essential step to strengthening social inclusion. Moreover, the procedures for granting these funds should be simplified in order to ensure equal opportunities of access to the resources. Therefore, in the modification of the regulations on the European Social Fund and the Regional Development Funds, the three following three principles will be put into practice: 1. Promoting equal access to the resources; 2. Eradicating segregation; and 3. Ensuring integral development.

The Trio intends to turn back to the conclusions and the messages of the Second Roma Summit in the political process and activities developed in this and the next two Presidencies. The Trio Presidency will organise a conference on child poverty and *homelessness*, with special emphasis on the Roma. Likewise, it will pay particular attention to the problems of the Roma in the labour market and will organise a meeting of the Integrated Platform for Roma Inclusion in the first half of 2011.



The Trio Presidency will stand up firmly against stigmatisation and will seek to improve co-ordination and co-operation with the Commission and the Parliament, as well as co-operating with other political processes, such as the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005 – 2015 and the OSCE Action Plan, within the framework of the Recommendations of the Council of Europe and the United Nations.

Córdoba, 9 April 201