

The Roma issue has a significant presence on the European stage. There has been a major leap forward in the last ten years, and although there are still many serious problems in almost all EU member states.

I consider it very important that the Roma organizations play a more proactive role and become more visibly involved in the development of the ideas and policies affecting their communities at the European level. Through their MEPs and their own organisations, they should make full use of all forms and channels of exerting pressure in the European Parliament. The role of the European Parliament has grown since the Lisbon Treaty. Being a Member of the European Parliament we act in a two-way street: we ask for the opinion of Roma NGOs concerning different legislative and non-legislative documents, important plans and programmes, and they also contact us if there is an issue to be supported or to be paid attention to. The Roma organizations should have an ongoing presence in Brussels and Strasbourg, calling for legislation that is important to them, such as the adoption of the antidiscrimination directive that has long been mooted. They should also remind the international organisations – such as the OECD, the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) – of the importance of collecting and providing data, in compliance with the rules governing data protection. Without such data, we do not even know whether funding for Roma communities has been spent in an efficient and targeted manner. I propose that the Roma organisations observing and monitoring the results of the Roma Decade, should also participate in assessing the various forms of European Union support.

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