



## **Warsaw Human Dimension Conference**

**October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2022**

### **Plenary Session V: Tolerance and Non-Discrimination**

*Rights of persons belonging to national minorities; Treatment of citizens of other States and human rights of migrants; Roma and Sinti issues; Equal opportunities and rights for women and men; Violence against women and children*

Statement on behalf of Centre for Education and Human Rights, Romania

Your Excellences,

Honourable representatives of State Governments,

Dear colleagues and representatives of Civil Society,

The OSCE Action Plan for Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti and other European/national strategies has not had the expected impact and results, as one of the main reasons for the very slow advancement in improving the living conditions and reducing of racial discrimination, was and still remains the lack of political commitment and financial support from national governments and international communities. Policies designed for minorities and especially those dedicated to Roma and Sinti are not popular among the mainstream society since they do not mobilize electoral support. Under these circumstances, public decision-makers, politicians are not pro-active in granting full support for the effective implementation of Roma and Sinti Action Plan.

Moreover, such policies even create a large disapproval from the mainstream population. In some European countries, political parties, especially the populist and far right

extremist politicians are using the “Gypsy problems” as a rhetoric propaganda to mobilize electoral support. And in some case, they are successful, unfortunately... .

We cannot deny that the very existence of some principles, legal documents, legitimate objectives assumed by the Governments in its public policies is not a positive step forward. This step has been already taken decades ago. Roma and Sinti population face new challenges in European countries today, such as: racial attacks, security and safety for their families in Ukraine, but also in the host countries as refugees. Many NGOs reports have documented local situations in which Roma families (children and women) from Ukraine were excluded and discriminated against by exactly those public institutions which should provide humanitarian aid and medical assistance. Roma were excluded from accommodation services or in some situations Roma refugees were accommodated in very inappropriate settings and segregated from other Ukrainian refugees. This reality indicates how public authorities and international organisations fail to show their humanity to all refugees from Ukraine and, honestly speaking - we do not need another strategy or action plan - to serve the people in the crisis situations and exclude others because of their ethnicity, such as Roma.

At the end of our statement, we urge the humanitarian international organisations and national authorities to STOP discriminate Roma refugees from Ukraine. This is too much, and it is beyond limits. Do your job properly and serve the people fleeing their homes to save their children and their families!

ODIHR having a specific mandate regarding the implementation of the Action Plan should provide an independent report on the status of Roma refugees from Ukraine in neighbouring countries and work closely with national authorities and international organisations to oversee the situation and prevent the racial discrimination against Roma.

Thank you for your attention!

Costel Bercus

Executive Chair - Centre for Education and Human Rights, Romania