



Plenary Session V: Tolerance and Non-Discrimination II

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

Dear participants

My name is Ionut PAUN and I represent the Roma Party Pro-Europe Association, a national representative Roma organization set up in 1990, with the aim of empowering the Roma communities in Romania and increasing the participation of Roma in the decision-making process.

The Roma Party Pro-Europe Association has 45.000 members across Romania and represents the Roma minority in the Parliament of Romania, with numerous local councilors elected at local elections.

Our Association is working directly with the Roma communities for a better access to education of Roma children and preserving the Roma culture, identity and traditions.

Until now, the political parties from all spectra have managed to manipulate the Roma voters. The populism creates false expectations also for Roma communities, that are still facing the racism in their daily life.

Work in and with the Roma communities should start from bottom to the top, at grassroots and give a voice to those that are not listened.

We need to focus on issues the Roma in the OSCE area are facing on a daily basis: discrimination and marginalization, while in crisis situations they are constantly scapegoated.

The Roma rights are constantly denied and we strongly believe that there is a need for the participating States to strengthen the existing tools to effectively defend and realize their rights.

Apart from the multiple crises we are facing nowadays, what is more worrying are the extremist parties that are raising all across Europe. Such political entities, with no respect for minority and human rights are in the position to decide the national policies, for minorities included.

The participant States need to take a stand against any extremist statements and actions, that are toxic for the whole Roma community, affecting the Roma integration process.

We are strongly convinced the delegates to this conference will fully understand the importance of realizing the Roma rights and will stay committed towards their institutional obligations.

Thank you for your attention!

Ionut Paun, Chairman of Youth Organization – Roma Party