

Speaker on the Third International Conference of Roma Women(24-25 October 2011, Granada, Spain) on Item VII (Council of Europe)

Female voice, in English.

Thank you madam Chair, ladies and gentlemen, I am going to present a short declaration of the Third International Romani Women Conference which was held in Granada last month. We the Romani women from different corners of the world came together on the Third International of Romani Women Conference and the first Roma World Congress held in Granada, Spain to discuss and take action in regards to worrying development affecting Romani community especially Romani women and children in Europe. We express our deep concerns regarding the various form of anti-gypsyism with a trend of growing and spreading across Europe over the past few years. Romani women tend to be more vulnerable to various forms of violence forced eviction and economic deprivation there are more and more pushed to the margins of the society, scapegoated, inflicted in their dignity as persons. Basic rights such as the recognition of the Romani women legal status and citizenship are being denied or inadequately addressed. What we are proposing? Practices of early marriages to be stopped because they are leading to deep poverty further discrimination and exclusion re-enforce such practices. Human rights situation of our children, women and youth beggars must be addressed with no further delay. Begging is neither our culture nor our traditional occupation. It is rather the cultural poverty chronic unemployment discrimination and exclusion. Our recommendation is that government implement preventive development measures and refrain from enforcing punitive sanctions because the goal should be to integrate children and youth into inclusive educational system and their parents into formal labour markets across Europe. Therefore, the role of the civil society is to push government to uphold their obligation under international and European treaties and ensure that Romani women can enjoy their fundamental rights. Romani women show the lack of historic knowledge so that way governments are responsible for providing the tools and mechanism for Roma history to be acknowledged and transmitted as a part of their national history. We acknowledge that the political momentum created at the European Union level through the endorsement of the EU framework for national Roma integration and we call for the concerns of Romani women to be effectively mainstreamed through the priorities highlighted by the EU framework but also address separately as appropriate. We acknowledge the need of independent Romani women as well. We are determined to start a political process for Romani women empowerment and we will really rely on governments international organisations and other relevant stakeholder to commit and provide mechanism for developing a European Romani women strategy. Thank you everybody.