

Permanent Mission of Bulgaria on Item VI

Male voice, in English.

Madam Chair, the draft of the National Strategy for Roma integration in the Republic of Bulgaria 2012-2020 and effecting plan to it next week will be discussed among central administration before their presentation for adoption by the government. The drafts are prepared by special working groups in line with strategic operational national documents of the responsible institutions and with participation of many NGOs. Six regional and one national conference the last one with 300 participants have been organised all to give opportunity for everyone who is interested in this issue to give his opinion. On 2 December the draft will be presented before new electorate [not clear] and members of municipal councils. The strategy is a political framework document, which sets out directions for the implementation of the Roma Social Integration Policy. In line with the EU framework for national Roma strategies this document uses the terms "Roma" as generic name for vulnerable groups that self-identify as Roma as well as other groups that live in similar conditions and could be identified as Roma bear in mind characteristic of the way of life. Nation Strategy expresses the government political commitment to Bulgaria's European development to the national reform program of the Republic of Bulgaria and to the international initiatives Roma inclusion decade. The strategy constitutes a goal oriented approach within the framework of the more general strategy aimed at fighting poverty and social exclusion which includes the provision of support for all citizens in vulnerable and disadvantaged situations from ethnic groups whose situation is similar to that of the Roma. Concerning situation of Roman women some estimates are given in the draft of the strategy in the first chapter, for example, it is estimated that 1/3 of the men and 2/5 of the women aged 45-60 have partially or entirely lost their capacity to work due to poor health. It is pointed out also that the improvement in the educational status of the Roma, community over the past 20 years is slower than in other groups. It is important that practical illiteracy is three times more common among Roma women than among Roma men. Since women are the primary caregivers to the children their illiteracy and low education level are exceptionally important for the education aspirations and school success of their children. In the process of the strategy implementation of the reading principle will be the 10 common basic principles of Roma inclusion adopted by the Council of the European Union. These principles provide the basis for the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of integration policies concerning Roma. Thank you very much.