

Item 3. 15

United Nations - Forum on Minority Issues, 12th Session
Vivien Brasso, 2019 OHCHR Minority Fellow
Oral Statement on the item no. 1

Thank you Madam Chairperson,

I am a Romani lawyer from Hungary.

It is not very common to meet a Romani Lawyer, where I come from. Roma women like me don't often end up in Hungarian law schools. According to European Union data, 61% of Romani children still attend schools where all or most children are Roma. There is also a high concentration of Romani children in certain schools in urban settings, outside ethnically segregated areas.

When Romani and non-Roma children learn together, it is better for everyone. In societies where antigypsyism – the ideology of hatred against Roma – is in the air, Romani children know that they are being separated because society thinks they are inferior. It is hard for me to find appropriate words to tell how degrading that feels. It hits our dignity.

Across Europe discrimination and non-inclusive school systems deprive Romani children their right to education and rob us of our dignity. Many Romani children are sent to 'special' schools and classrooms for children with disabilities because of discriminatory tests or language differences.

Even when Roma win segregation cases in the European Court of Human Rights, segregation persists.

I have a voice. And I am here to speak for those who are not able and are often denied the Mic to express themselves.

I urge governments to look into and act on the following three recommendations:

- One, to make a State-wide commitment to dismantle segregated education and make sure that no Romani child is in a classroom or school that is more than 50% Roma.
- Two, stop placing children in different schools or classes based on tests. The only education is inclusive education. If students need extra support, because of language, ability, this should be provided to them in the classroom.
- And three, provide an accessible way for Romani and other families to make complaints, without fear of victimisation, when their children face discrimination or other issues at school.

Thank you for your attention.