

Agenda item 5

30 November

2018

15:00 - 17:45

Dear Madame Chair,

Thank you

I am Ciprian IONITA, and I am a Romanian Roma Kalderash and currently one of the minority fellows of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Although the number of stateless Roma across the European continent has yet to be determined, Roma people have experienced a long-term process of stigmatization, marginalisation, segregation, female sterilization and genocide.

There remain stark violations of fundamental freedoms in the Czech Republic despite the fact that the recommendations of the Human Rights Council Working Group of the Universal Periodic Review (6-7 November 2017) were issued and also included the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the CCPR Human Rights Committee, the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, and the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Moreover, it is deeply concerning to note that the Czech Republic chooses NOT to comply with the Council of Europe, European Court of Human Rights, Decision D.H and Others. As a result, healthy Roma children continue to be allocated to schools designed for children with mental disabilities in a highly arbitrary, systematic and disproportionate manner.

The former Council of Europe High Commissioner's report 2005, Thomas Hammerberg, underlined the following: "**Roma children are frequently placed in classes for children with special needs without an adequate psychological or pedagogical assessment, the real criteria clearly being their ethnic origin.**" The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) underlined the fact that up to 70% of the pupils enrolled in special schools are of Romani background.

Madame Chair, it is deeply concerning to note the issue of forced sterilisation of Roma women in Czech Republic (~~12-15-17~~). Significant barriers concerning access to truth and recognition of wrongs committed for decades towards Czech Romani women persist, which is yet to be known to what extent has affected the personal and professional development of the Roma community in the Czech Republic.

In the light of the UPR Recommendations including those by the delegations of Denmark, China and Spain, I would ask the Government of the Czech Republic to consider the following recommendations:

1. Take measures for the full implementation of the Council of Europe, European Court of Human Rights Decision, case of D.H. and others and put an end to the process of routine allocation healthy Roma pupils to schools designed for children with severe mental disabilities.
2. Take steps to provide adequate financial support for the Roma victims affected of forced sterilisation and bring to justice the perpetrators of such atrocious crimes.
3. Consider the establishment of a Truth Commission that will uncover the wrongs committed for centuries by the Czech Republic against its own Romani population.

Mt Ciprian Ionita

OHCHR.