

Open Letter

To: Belgian Presidency of the European Council
Spanish Presidency of the European Council
Hungarian Presidency of the European Council

Polish Presidency of the European Council

Missed Opportunity: European Roma Platform Fails to Connect to Policy Agenda

Brussels, 13 December 2010

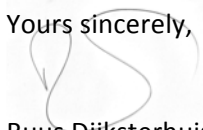
The European Roma Policy Coalition (ERPC) is deeply disappointed that the agenda of the fourth meeting of the Integrated European Platform for Roma Inclusion has not been aligned with the process initiated by the European Commission to develop and adopt by April 2011 a European Framework for National Roma Inclusion Strategies. The main topic for the Platform – ‘early childhood education’ - is an important issue. However, neither the agenda nor the preparations for the Platform have provided an opportunity to debate what is the most significant EU Roma policy process to date. The Platform has therefore missed the opportunity to act as a meaningful forum, which can make EU and Member States’ efforts to deliver results for Roma people more effective. This major omission raises grave concerns about the Platform’s value and functioning.

The unprecedented political attention, which is being paid to Roma rights, and the events which have triggered this, demonstrate the ERPC’s case for greater strategic involvement by the EU to tackle discrimination and the socio-economic exclusion of Roma people in Europe. Opportunities for addressing Roma issues lie in the Europe 2020 Strategy and its Flagship Initiatives, in the review of Cohesion Policy and community initiatives for the 2014 – 2020 programming period and, in particular, in the European Commission’s initiative of proposing an EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies.

In October 2010, the ERPC called on the Belgian Presidency to include these broader policy issues in the agenda of today’s meeting to enable the Platform to accomplish its main aim: *“to foster [...] greater coherence and effectiveness in parallel policy processes at the European, national and local levels aiming at Roma inclusion and the reduction of inequalities between Roma and the majority population.”*

The ERPC deplors this missed opportunity by the Belgian Presidency. The ERPC calls on the incoming Hungarian Presidency and the next Presidency Trio to make the Platform a meaningful forum for fostering effective policy development by closely aligning itself with the EU policy process, adhering to the Platform Roadmap and involving relevant stakeholders and civil society in preparing and setting the agenda of future Platform meetings.

Yours sincerely,



Ruus Dijksterhuis
Executive Director
ERGO Network

The ERPC is an informal gathering of non-governmental organisations operating at EU level on issues of human rights, anti-discrimination, anti-racism, social inclusion, and Roma and Travellers’ rights. Its members are Amnesty International, the European Roma Rights Centre, the European Roma Information Office, the Open Society Institute, European Network Against Racism, Minority Rights Group International, the European Roma Grassroots Organizations Network, Policy Center for Roma and Minorities, the Roma Education Fund, and Fundación Secretariado Gitano.

From October 2010 to April 2011, the rotating chairmanship of the ERPC is held by ERGO Network, in close cooperation with Amnesty International and the European Roma Rights Center (ERRC).

Contact: coordination@romapolicy.eu