

## ERPC PRESS RELEASE

### **National Roma Integration Strategies: what happened to the fight against anti-Gypsyism and ensuring Roma participation?**

**Brussels, 22 March 2012** - There is a lack of targeted measures to combat anti-Gypsyism and of meaningful participation of Roma and civil society in the execution of the National Roma Integration Strategies. This is the main conclusion of a comparative study of the National Roma Integration Strategies launched today by the European Roma Policy Coalition (ERPC) on the occasion of the European Platform for Roma Integration's meeting in Brussels. The study gathers the views of Roma organisations and civil society on the development processes and implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategies in the different Member States, and provides an assessment of the strategies submitted to the European Commission.

At a time when attitudes towards Roma are becoming increasingly hostile, the survey unfortunately reveals the lack of emphasis placed on measures targeting anti-Gypsyism in the national strategies. A majority of respondents report that there was no mention of anti-discrimination and the fight against anti-Gypsyism at all in the strategies or that some measures are planned but are insufficient. Human rights issues were also often neglected in discussions during the drafting phase of the strategies.

Michaël Privot, current chair of the ERPC, said: *"Putting an end to anti-Gypsyism must be an integral part of the National Roma Integration Strategies. Although addressing the gaps in employment, health, education and housing is important, there will be no progress without making the elimination of anti-Gypsyism a key priority of the national strategies."*

Findings from the ERPC study also suggest that in most Member States, some form of stakeholders' participation took place during the designing phase of the strategies. However, the consultation processes were often not accessible by all stakeholders or even Roma civil society. When consultation did take place, it seemed to have little or no impact at all on the national strategies in the majority of cases. Moreover, most respondents described the drafting process of the national strategies as lacking transparency. The ERPC urges EU Member States to ensure a full and responsible involvement of civil society and to establish a continuous dialogue with stakeholders.

#### **For interviews or further comment, please contact:**

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*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 November 2011 to May 2011, the rotating chairmanship of the ERPC is held by the European Network Against Racism in close cooperation with Amnesty International and the European Roma Information Office.  
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**Winner of Campaign of the Year: ERPC Campaign for an EU Roma Strategy,  
European Public Affairs Awards 2011**