

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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Access to Information: Italy and the treatment of Roma

Today, Amnesty International formally requested access to information from the European Commission on the process and state of play of the so called pre-infringement procedures against Italy, following its discriminatory treatment of Roma and the specific failure of the national government to ensure equal access to adequate housing for all. Please read our [letter](#).

A large number of Roma in Italy have been forced by the authorities to live in segregated camps on the outskirts of urban areas, in sub-standard living conditions. These camps often do not have basic infrastructure and services, such as access to sanitation and washing facilities, electricity and heating. Roma are often subjected to evictions, frequently carried out in breach of international legal standards and European Union (EU) anti-discrimination legislation. Please see Amnesty International's report [Double Standards: Italy's housing policies discriminate against Roma](#).

Segregating housing and forcibly evicting Roma from their settlements is a serious breach of the Race Equality Directive (2000/43/EC), which prohibits race-based discrimination for access to services, such as housing and education. As a result, in July 2012, Amnesty International formally asked the Commissioner for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship, Viviane Reding to launch infringement procedures against Italy for breaching the Race Equality Directive. Please see our [briefing](#).

The Commission, also prompted by other complaints from civil society, initiated a so-called EU-Pilot, a pre-infringement procedure to engage with the investigated member state and identify whether or not EU law had been violated. Amnesty International has learnt that the Italian authorities responded to this request for information by the Commission. However, despite this, the Commission has neither triggered infringement procedures, nor publicly stated how it will pursue the matter. In the meantime, hundreds of Roma are continuously faced with the denial to access to housing in Italy, and other forms of discrimination.

The Commission must use its legal instruments to hold member states accountable when violating EU legislation. The Commission must swiftly trigger infringement procedures to ensure the Italian government respects the EU Race Equality Directive.

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