



Madách tér 4
Hungary – 1074 Budapest
Office Tel: +36 1 413 2200
Office Fax: +36 1 413 2201
E-mail: office@errc.org
www.errc.org

Mr Mario Monti, President of the Council of Ministers
Mrs Annamaria Cancellieri, Minister of Interior
Mrs Elsa Fornero, Minister of Labor and Social Policies
Mr Andrea Riccardi, Minister of Integration and International Cooperation
Director of UNAR
Mr Giuliano Pisapia, Mayor of Milan
Mr Gianni Alemanno, Mayor of Rome

31 July 2012

Re: Gaps between policy and practice as concerns the inclusion of Roma, Sinti and Caminanti

The European Roma Rights Centre,¹ Associazione 21 luglio,² Consulta Rom e Sinti della Città di Milano (Committee for Roma and Sinti of Milan),³ Gruppo di Sostegno Forlanini,⁴ NAGA⁵ and UPRE ROMA⁶ are writing to underline the strong discrepancy between commitments recently undertaken by the Italian Government with its National Strategy for Inclusion of Roma, Sinti and Caminanti (NSIRSC) and the practice of local authorities, in particular in Milan and Rome.

On 24 February 2012 the Italian Government approved its NSIRSC⁷ following consultation between UNAR, Italian federations of RSC, international human rights NGOs and other organisations. The Italian Strategy aims to fulfill European Communication n. 173 of 5 April 2011 entitled "EU Framework for National Strategies for Roma Integration up to 2020" (EU Framework),⁸ following the four areas indicated in the EU Framework, namely education, employment, housing and health. The Italian Strategy emphasises the need to overcome emergency responses to the situation of RSC in a coordinated manner.⁹

¹ The European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) is an international public interest law organisation engaging in a range of activities aimed at combating anti-Romani racism and human rights abuse of Roma, in particular strategic litigation, international advocacy, research and policy development, and training of Romani activists. Information about the European Roma Rights Centre is available at: <http://www.errc.org>

² Associazione 21 Luglio is an organisation established to promote and defend the rights of children in general, and those of Roma children living in Italy in particular. The mission of the organisation is: safeguarding Roma children, fighting every form of discrimination, building critical awareness regarding the rights of Roma children, promoting campaigns and launching appeals to halt possible violations of Roma children's rights. Information about Associazione 21 luglio is available at: <http://www.21luglio.com>

³ The Consulta Rom e Sinti di Milano was formed by an act Submitted to the mayor of Milan, Giuliano Pisapia on 17 June 2011 on behalf of the Roma and Sinti of regular and irregular camps present in the municipality

⁴ Gruppo di Sostegno Forlanini is a group of volunteers. For 4 years it has worked with Roma of informal camps located in the Eastern part of Milan. It supports Roma participation, deals with social support and helps with concrete aid to Roma.

⁵ NAGA is a non-profit secular, nonpartisan, volunteer-based organisation founded in Milan in 1987. It promotes and defends the human rights of foreign citizens, Roma and Sinti without discrimination. NAGA has more than 300 volunteers. It guarantees free health, legal and social support to regular and undocumented foreign citizens, Roma and Sinti, refugees, asylum seekers and victims of torture. It also carries out training courses, documentation and lobbying. More information is available at www.naga.it

⁶ ROME UPRE is one of 16 associations with a majority composition of Roma, Sinti and Caminanti that formally responded to the public call by the NCP in order to participate to the monitoring of the Strategy.

⁷ The National Strategy for the Inclusion of RSC is available at: <http://www.unar.it/>

⁸ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, 5 April 2011, available at http://ec.europa.eu/health/social_determinants/docs/com2011_173_en.pdf

⁹ National Strategy for the Inclusion of RSC, page 5.

On 15 June 2012 Minister of Integration and International Cooperation Andrea Riccardi sent a letter (n. 3014) to Italian prefects and other local authorities communicating the contents of the Strategy and announcing a series of national, regional and local thematic roundtables. The Minister underlined that the roundtables should be characterised by "the participation of representatives of State, regions, provinces and municipalities, as well as the involvement of associations and institutions of civil society committed to the protection of RSC communities and representatives of the same communities. The regional tables will have the task of raising awareness of and monitoring the implementation of the Strategy at local level and will be the place of preparation of local plans that will be experienced primarily in regions previously covered by the State of Emergency (Lazio, Campania, Lombardy, Piedmont and Veneto)."¹⁰

However, until today there remains a stark contrast between the aims of the Strategy and the actions of local authorities targeting RSC in Rome and Milan.

In Rome, there is no strategy for RSC inclusion planned. In fact, the only plan going forward appears to be the so-called "Nomad Plan" adopted by the then Special Commissioner for the Nomad Emergency¹¹ of the region Lazio on 31 July 2009, which was declared illegal by the Council of State in November 2011.¹² As consequence of this plan on 18 June 2012 a new segregated camp for Roma called La Barbuta was officially opened. From 5 to 13 July 2012 the semi-formal camp via del Baiardo which had housed Serbian and Macedonian Roma for nearly 20 years was closed and a census of the residents was conducted. Rome authorities had not undertaken maintenance and refurbishment work in the camp which was in severely degraded conditions at the time it closed. The ERRC and Associazione 21 luglio monitored the eviction. Only a small proportion of the residents (approximately 30) agreed to move to La Barbuta. Only families with children were offered emergency shelter for up to 90 days, after which Mayor Gianni Alemanno noted that they should "return to their country."¹³

On 6 July 2012 the city of Milan presented its draft "Project Roma, Sinti and Travellers for 2012-2015. Proposal of the City of Milan". Town Councilors Marco Granelli and Pierfrancesco Majorino reported that it "will fit into the framework outlined at the national level by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers with the document National Strategy of Inclusion of the RSC."¹⁴ They also noted that the forced eviction of informal camps will continue; indeed, the day before on 5 July the City of Milan evicted two informal Romani settlements housing about 300 Romanian Roma despite the fact that accommodation in emergency shelters was available for only 85 persons. The draft plan includes the same types of measures targeting residents of informal Romani camps that until now have failed to improve the situation of Roma: forced evictions and short-term emergency shelter if available. Milan's draft project with respect to the administration of formal camps for Roma and Sinti mirrors in many ways the actions undertaken in the context of the Nomad Emergency which the Council of State declared illegal in November 2011. In addition representatives of RSC population and NGOs were not consulted in the preparation of the draft policy, though they have been invited to submit comments since expressing this concern.

¹⁰ Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, Ministro per la Cooperazione Internazionale e l'Integrazione, *Strategia nazionale di inclusione dei Rom, Sinti e Caminanti – Iniziative*, 15 June 2012.

¹¹ Decreto del Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri 21 Maggio 2008, available at: http://www1.interno.it/mininterno/export/sites/default/it/sezioni/servizi/legislazione/immigrazione/0979_2008_05_27_decreto_21_maggio_2008.html.

¹² Consiglio di Stato, sez.IV, n.6050, 16 November 2011, available at: <http://www.leggioggi.it/allegati/consiglio-di-stato-sez-iv-16-novembre-2011-n-6050/>.

¹³ European Roma Rights Centre, Field research 4-5 July 2012.

¹⁴ Progetto Rom, Sinti e Caminanti 2012-2015. Proposta del Comune di Milano del 6 Luglio 2012, page 1.

Finally, the submitting organisations are concerned with the significant downsizing of Italy's equality body, UNAR, which plays an important role in the fight for equality of treatment in Italy and is the National Contact Point of Italian NSIRSC. The planned reduction of staff seriously undermines already weak implementation of the Strategy.

We request that you each, within the capacities of your respective offices, ensure that actions undertaken on the ground locally with respect to Roma, Sinti and Caminanti are in line with the aims the National Strategy. We thank you for your attention to our concerns and are available to discuss effective implementation of the National Strategy at all levels in Italy.

Sincerely,

Dezideriu Gergely
Executive Director
ERRC

Carlo Stasolla
President
Associazione 21 luglio

Pietro Massarotto
President
Associazione Naga



Stefano Nutini
Gruppo di Sostegno Forlanini

Djiana Pavlovic
Consulta Rom e Sinti di Milano

Paolo Cagna Ninchi
UPRE ROMA

