

April 2014

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## Round-table Debate on Roma Inclusion

Event organized in cooperation with the Slovak Embassy and the  
 Delegation of the European Commission to Romania

Bucharest, April 25, 2014

I am delighted to welcome you to today's conference on behalf of the Rule of Law Program South East Europe of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation.

And I am grateful to H.E. Ambassador Jan Gabor because it was his idea to organize this event and we are honoured that he invited us to become a partner of the Slovak Embassy in the context of this project.

(...)

When we agreed on this project Amnesty International had not yet published its report titled "We ask for Justice-Europe's failure to protect Roma from racist violence." It must be said that this study does not examine any cases in Romania, Slovakia or Germany but this does not mean that there are no cases in our countries that are worrying. When John Dalhuisen, Amnesty International's Europe and Central Asia Director comes to the conclusion that "there has been a marked rise in the frequency of anti-Roma violence" we have every reason not to turn a blind eye to this alarming development.

Fortunately the European Commission is conscious of the existing problems. Therefore on the 5<sup>th</sup> of April 2011 the European

Commission adopted an EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020. The European Council of 24-25 June 2011 endorsed the strategy committing the Member States to paving the way towards a more socially cohesive Europe by preparing and implementing their national Roma Integration strategies. The European Council also underlined that the protection of fundamental rights, notably by combating discrimination and segregation, is essential for improving the situation of Roma people.

A study published by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights and the United Nations Development Programme in 2012 shows that in the 11 EU member states covered by the surveys the socio-economic situation of the Roma in the four key areas of employment, education, housing and health is not satisfactory and is worse, on average, than the situation of the non-Roma living in close proximity.

The Romanian Government is aware of the problems and Romania also has a Roma Integration Strategy and I am grateful to the representatives of several ministries for joining us today and sharing information and their opinions and I extend my thanks to the representatives of the other NGOs that are with us today and I am especially

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keen to know more about the situation, the challenges and the strategies exist in the Slovak Republic.

Our common goal must be to translate ambitions into action. Solidarity and Justice are Christian-Democratic values. Human dignity is inviolable. We know, however, that it is not enough to spend money on welfare. A social policy with a chance of success must be an activating one.

I look forward to an open dialogue and if we can make small steps together in the right direction this conference can already be considered a success.