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International Roma Day — anti-Gypsyism in Europe and EU recognition of the memorial day of the Roma genocide during WW II

European Parliament resolution of 15 April 2015 on the occasion of International Roma Day — anti-Gypsyism in Europe and EU recognition of the memorial day of the Roma genocide during World War II (2015/2615(RSP))

(2016/C 328/02)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the preamble to the Treaty on European Union (TEU), notably its second and its fourth to seventh indents,
- having regard to, inter alia, Article 2, Article 3(3), second indent, and Articles 6 and 7 TEU,
- having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union of 7 December 2000 ('the Charter'), which was proclaimed on 12 December 2007 in Strasbourg and entered into force with the Treaty of Lisbon in December 2009,
- having regard to its resolution of 9 March 2011 on the EU strategy on Roma inclusion⁽¹⁾, to the Commission communication of 5 April 2011 on an EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020 (COM(2011)0173), the Commission communication of 2 April 2014 on implementation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies (COM(2014)0209), and to the Council recommendation of 9 December 2013 on effective Roma integration measures in the Member States,
- having regard to the outcomes of the 2011 Roma Pilot Survey conducted by the Agency for Fundamental Rights,
- having regard to the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms,
- having regard to the Declaration of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on the Rise of Anti-Gypsyism and racist violence against Roma in Europe, adopted on 1 February 2012,
- having regard to General Policy Recommendation No 13 of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) on combating anti-Gypsyism and discrimination against Roma,
- having regard to the comprehensive Action Plan adopted by OSCE participating States, including EU Member States and candidate countries, which focuses on improving the situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE area, in which the States undertake inter alia to reinforce their efforts to ensure that Roma and Sinti people are able to play a full and equal part in our societies, and to eradicate discrimination against them,
- having regard to Rule 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas Roma, with an estimated population of 10 to 12 million in Europe, are Europe's largest ethnic minority;

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 199 E, 7.7.2012, p. 112.

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- B. whereas the word 'Roma' is used in this resolution as an umbrella term which includes different related groups throughout Europe, whether sedentary or not, such as Roma, Travellers, Sinti, Manouches, Kalés, Romanichels, Boyash, Ashkalis, Égyptiens, Yéniches, Doms and Loms, that may be diverse in culture and lifestyles;
- C. whereas anti-Gypsyism, the special kind of racism that is directed towards Roma, is an ideology founded on racial superiority, a form of dehumanisation and institutional racism nurtured by historical discrimination, which is expressed by, among other things, violence, hate speech, exploitation, stigmatisation and the most blatant kind of discrimination;
- D. whereas anti-Gypsyism is one of the main causes of the discrimination and marginalisation that the Roma people have suffered historically in many European countries;
- E. whereas many Roma still live in overwhelmingly poor conditions and face extreme levels of social exclusion and discrimination;
- F. whereas the situation of the European Roma, who have historically been part of society in many European countries, without a single kin-state, and have contributed to Europe as its citizens, is distinct among national minorities in Europe, which justifies specific measures at European level; whereas Roma are part of Europe's culture and values;
- G. whereas Roma women are often exposed to multiple and intersectional discrimination on grounds of gender and ethnic origin, and have limited access to employment, education, health, social services and decision-making; whereas discrimination can occur within mainstream society in a context of growing anti-Roma racism, but also within the women's communities by reason of their sex;
- H. whereas the Commission communication of 5 April 2011 on an EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020 called on Member States to adopt or further develop a comprehensive approach to Roma integration and to endorse a number of common goals; whereas the Council recommendation of 9 December 2013 invites Member States to take effective policy measures to ensure equal treatment of Roma and respect for their fundamental rights, including equal access to education, employment, healthcare and housing;
- I. whereas the date of 27 January, the day of liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp, has been designated by the United Nations as International Holocaust Memorial Day;
- J. whereas according to estimates, at least 500 000 Roma were exterminated during World War II by the Nazi and other regimes and their allies, and whereas in some countries more than 80 % of the Roma population was exterminated; whereas at least 23 000 Roma were gassed to death in the Zigeunerlager (Gypsy camp) of Auschwitz-Birkenau during World War II and in one night, from 2 to 3 August 1944, 2 897 Roma, mostly women, children and elderly people, were killed at that camp; whereas, therefore, 2 August has been chosen by Roma organisations as the day to commemorate all Roma victims of this genocide;
- K. whereas the genocide of Roma by the Nazi and other regimes and their allies during World War II is a fact that is still largely ignored and is therefore not acknowledged by the broad public and often not recognised or taught in schools, thus placing Roma people among the 'ignored' victims of the genocide during World War II;
- L. whereas commemorating crimes against humanity and gross violations of human rights is crucial in order to pursue the causes of peace, reconciliation, democracy and human rights in Europe; whereas the genocide of the Roma in Europe deserves full recognition commensurate with the gravity of the crimes of the Nazi and other regimes that were designed to physically eliminate the Roma of Europe, as well as Jews and other targeted groups;

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- M. whereas recognising and commemorating the genocide of Roma during World War II is important for providing the Roma people with restitution where appropriate for the atrocities committed against them by the Nazi and other regimes and their allies during World War II;
- N. whereas recognition of the genocide of Roma during World War II and the establishment of a dedicated European memorial day would thus constitute an important symbolic step in the fight against anti-Gypsyism and contribute to general knowledge of Roma history in Europe;
1. Expresses its deep concern at the rise of anti-Gypsyism, as manifested inter alia through anti-Roma rhetoric and violent attacks against Roma in Europe, including murders, which are incompatible with the norms and values of the European Union and constitute a major obstacle to the successful social integration of Roma and to ensuring full respect for their human rights;
 2. Stresses that discrimination and marginalisation are never caused by an inherent weakness of an individual or group suffering from such discrimination and marginalisation, but mainly result from the failure of mainstream society to recognise the rights of individuals and the failure to provide the necessary structures for individuals to invoke those rights;
 3. Calls on the Member States to implement effectively Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, in order to prevent and eliminate discrimination against Roma, in particular in employment, education and access to housing;
 4. Underlines the need to combat anti-Gypsyism at every level and by every means, and stresses that this phenomenon is an especially persistent, violent, recurrent and commonplace form of racism; calls on the Member States to further strengthen the fight against anti-Gypsyism as part of their National Roma Integration Strategies promoting best practices;
 5. Welcomes the involvement of the Roma communities and NGOs in the implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategies, and calls for their further involvement in the design, monitoring, evaluation and implementation of the NRIS;
 6. Stresses the need to ensure that specific measures for women's rights and gender mainstreaming are included in the National Roma Integration Strategies (NRIS), and that assessment and annual monitoring take into account a women's rights and gender equality perspective in each section of the National Roma Integration Strategies;
 7. Calls on the Member States and the Commission to consider children a priority when implementing the EU Framework for National Roma Strategies, and reiterates the importance of promoting equal access to housing, healthcare, education and dignified living conditions for Roma children;
 8. Calls on the Member States to implement effectively Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA of 28 November 2008 on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law, in order to successfully combat anti-Gypsyism, anti-Roma rhetoric and violent attacks against Roma, as well as the condoning, denial and gross trivialisation of the genocide against Roma;
 9. Recalls that Roma are part of Europe's culture and shared values, and therefore encourages the Member States and other European countries to address the history of Roma people through dialogue with citizens and young people, in particular the genocide of Roma during World War II;
 10. Condemns utterly and without equivocation all forms of racism and discrimination faced by the Roma, and underlines the need for anti-Gypsyism to be effectively addressed if measures in other fields are to be effective;

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11. Calls in this regard on the Commission to effectively monitor and assess Member States' compliance with the fundamental values of the EU; calls on the Commission to ensure that fundamental rights, democracy and the rule of law are respected in all Member States, to effectively monitor and assess Member States' compliance with those values, and to ensure that it responds to any systemic breaches which may occur;
 12. Recognises solemnly, therefore, the historical fact of the genocide of Roma that took place during World War II;
 13. Calls on the Member States to officially recognise this genocide and other forms of persecution of Roma such as deportation and internment that took place during World War II;
 14. Declares that a European day should be dedicated to commemorating the victims of the genocide of the Roma during World War II and that this day should be called the European Roma Holocaust Memorial Day;
 15. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the candidate countries, the Council of Europe, the OSCE and the United Nations.
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