



EUROPEAN UNION EUROPEAN UNION

Delegation of the European Union

Skopje, 8 April 2013

International Roma Day – 8 April
Screening of documentary film produced within EU-funded
project: Best Practices for Roma Integration

Speaking points
Ambassador Aivo Orav
Head of the EU Delegation

Dear Mr. Breth,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me firstly congratulate all Roma people the International Roma Day.

Despite many existing legal, social and political policies related to Roma community, still a lot remains to be done to guarantee the rights and equality of Roma.

Although discrimination on the basis of race and ethnic origin is prohibited in the European Union, Roma people continue to experience discrimination in education, employment, housing, healthcare and other areas. More effective measures to integrate Roma are needed in all countries.

The Progress Report is very specific about the implementation of Roma policies and raise serious concerns about the social and economic status of Roma in the country. The European Union observed a major slowdown in the implementation of the national Roma Strategy during recent years.

The European Union provides financial assistance to support policies contributing to inclusion of Roma. Numerous projects have been funded in accordance with the goals of the Decade

of Roma Inclusion 2005–2015, aiming at improving the socio-economic status of Roma people.

Tonight, as part of the EU-funded project: "Best Practices for Roma Integration", co-funded and implemented by the OSCE Mission to Skopje, we will have the opportunity to watch the documentary, produced by the Roma NGO Sumnal that presents role models of Roma who have successfully integrated in society. We do hope that the film will be inspiring for many others, will promote the positive aspects of the Roma culture, and so contribute to overcoming stereotypes and prejudice that exists in the society.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The EU has and will continue putting its spot light on and raising Roma issues. We have done this with organising the **two EU Roma Summits** in order to speak about the situation of Roma and discuss solutions. As part of the **EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies** that mark an unprecedented commitment by EU Member States, the European Commission asked the Member States to present strategies for Roma inclusion. The Member States are expected to allocate money from the Structural funds in order to implement these strategies.

Furthermore, during the last two years, the European Commission in cooperation with the governments from the region organised **high level Roma seminars**. In the forthcoming period, we expect to have our second follow up seminar to be held in Skopje.

Also, the European Union made financial commitments under the Instrument for Pre-Accession in order to support the Government in Roma inclusion policies.

Let me conclude, that the real progress on the ground depends also on the Roma themselves being directly involved at all levels of policy development and implementation. Roma should join forces no matter which civil society organisation or local political party they belong to, and lobby towards the local and national authorities to include their concerns while preparing the national strategies and reforms.

Let me once again congratulate you on this day and enjoy the realisation of this documentary.

Thank you for your attention.

Oven saste thaj bahtale [[Thank you in Roma language](#)]