



EUROPEAN UNION

Delegation of the European Union

Skopje, 11 April 2012

**DECADE OF ROMA INCLUSION 2005 – 2015**

**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ADDRESSING THE PROBLEMS  
OF PERSONS WITHOUT DOCUMENTS AND ACCESS TO RIGHTS**

**11 April 2012  
Holiday Inn**

Speaking points

H.E. Mr. Aivo Orav,  
Head of the Delegation of European  
Union

**Dear Ministers,  
Ambassadors, representatives from the international community,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is my great pleasure to address you at this important event organised under the Roma Decade.

The European Union is here to support you.

Our policies help to promote Roma inclusion and social integration, through different measures in various fields. The European Union funds are the main funding mechanisms supporting the socio-economic integration of Roma.

Last year the European Union organised a series of conferences on the integration of the Roma in Western Balkans countries. I am pleased to see that the Government organised the first follow up meeting in the Region.

This meeting focused on the recommendations regarding employment, persons without documents, refugees, housing, infrastructure as well as education. Such meetings are an excellent opportunity to comprehensive review of policy recommendations and to share information about the progress.

I welcome the effort of the Government to detect the persons without personal ID number.

Roma were and will stay a priority for the European Union. We are monitoring and assessing the situation of the Roma community in the political criteria of the Progress Report. As you may noticed the European Union observed a major slowdown in the implementation of the national Roma Strategy during last years.

More effective measures to integrate Roma are needed in all countries. In the Progress reports issued for the countries you are coming from, the European Union is very specific about the implementation of Roma policies and raise serious concerns about the social and economic status of Roma.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The Roma inclusion is for everyone's benefit. In these economically and financially challenging times, we must remember that inclusive growth remains the pre-condition to Europe's overall success in overcoming the crisis.

We can overcome the crisis and achieve inclusive growth if we empower people through employment, education, fighting poverty and building a cohesive society.

However, the real progress on the ground depends on the Roma themselves being directly involved at all levels of policy development and implementation. The 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 consider their problems while preparing the national strategies and reforms.

Let me underline in particular the importance of unity among the Roma political leaders and civil society on the way towards improvement of the situation of the Roma community.

***Thank you, Blagodaram, Oven saste***