



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Roma in Europe

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
September 9, 2010

The United States is greatly saddened by recent incidents targeting ethnic Roma including, most tragically, shootings. We extend our condolences to the families and community of the victims. We urge all European countries to seek ways to improve the socio-economic and security situation for their Roma residents and to ensure accountability for discrimination or violence directed at them, in accordance with OSCE commitments.

Protecting and promoting the human rights of Roma everywhere has long been a personal commitment for Secretary Clinton and, under the Obama Administration, it is a stated priority of the United States. Like all people, ethnic Roma should have the opportunity to live free from discrimination, enjoy equal access to education, healthcare and employment, and pursue their full potential.

The United States works to improve the situation of Roma through our bilateral relations with the countries where they reside and through our involvement in organizations such as the OSCE and the United Nations. The OSCE's cross-dimensional and comprehensive view of security makes this organization uniquely poised to address the plight of Roma. We would like to acknowledge and express our appreciation for the important work performed by the OSCE's Contact Point on Roma and Sinti issues, as well as the engagement of the High Commissioner on National Minorities. The connection between desperate poverty and a particular vulnerability to abuses such as discrimination, trafficking in persons, forced prostitution, and inequitable labor practices illustrates the need to address these issues cooperatively, comprehensively, and across all three dimensions.

We urge OSCE governments to review their policies concerning immigration and the rights of ethnic minority communities, especially Roma communities. In accordance with the values embodied by the OSCE and the commitments that the participating States have freely undertaken, we stand ready to work with our OSCE partners in this endeavor.