

Thursday 8 and Friday 9 April: Second Roma Summit and policy Communication on Roma inclusion (Córdoba)

The news:

The second European Summit on Roma inclusion will take place in Córdoba (Spain), on the 8th and 9th of April 2010 on International Roma Day, as a key event of the Spanish Presidency of the Council. Representatives from the European Union institutions, Member States, international organisations and Roma civil society will attend the summit. The event is jointly organised by the Commission and the Spanish Presidency

The background:

Roma communities in Europe continue to face persistent discrimination. Following the enlargement of the EU in 2004 and 2007, they now represent one of the largest ethnic minorities in the EU. However, the richness these communities could bring to European society is often overlooked, tainted by stereotypes and prejudices. Roma communities often face economic, social and political discrimination.

The integration of Roma communities is a joint responsibility of Member States and the EU institutions. Following a request by EU leaders in December 2007, the Commission examined existing EU instruments, policies and progress achieved towards Roma inclusion. On 2 July 2008, the Commission published its response in the form of a comprehensive report which was presented at the first high-level Roma Summit held in Brussels in September 2008. EU leaders confirmed in December 2008 their governments' commitment to using the tools available, e.g. the Structural Funds, to support Roma inclusion.

The EU has a strong legal framework to combat discrimination. It uses the European structural funds and addresses the issue of Roma discrimination in its awareness-raising initiatives. Moreover, it coordinates a number of key policy areas which are particularly relevant for Roma inclusion, such as education, employment and social inclusion.

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On April 7th, just ahead of the summit, the Commission will present the results of a progress report on making Roma inclusion policies more effective as well as a new policy communication setting out the challenges ahead and possible responses. The communication will focus in particular on the strategic role of the EU structural funds, mainstreaming of policies for Roma inclusion and effective policy implementation. This approach is based on the Common Basic principles for Roma inclusion adopted by EU Member States and makes use of the European Platform for Roma Inclusion.