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**Recommendations and Conclusions**  
**Regional Conference**  
**„Safety of Roma Women in the Western Balkans“**  
**October 25, 2017**  
**Hotel Tulip INN, Belgrade, Republic of Serbia**

A total of 78 representatives of 14 governmental/local institutions and of 37 non-governmental and international organizations from 8 countries, including the European Union countries, participated at the Conference. During the Conference through their speeches and later discussion participants presented current situation of Roma men and women in their respective countries, results achieved focusing on the exchange of positive and/or negative practices. The participants have come to certain joint conclusions and have determined the recommendations.

The Conference enabled the participants to establish and continue the dialogue which opened the communication channels for possible future processes of regional and European cooperation with the aim of facing and dealing with issues of multiple discrimination of Roma men and women. Therefore, the event served as a foundation for national and regional cooperation, networking and joint advocacy activities. The event also directly enabled partnership building with identified stakeholders thus the participants from the region had an opportunity to get to know the situation and results achieved more closely in regards to Roma men and women in the EU countries and from the region before and after joining the EU by which we can come to the conclusion that countries in the accession process have an easier access to funds allocated for addressing the issues of Roma men and women which is necessary to use before the countries' EU access.

One of the most important discussed segments is the Strategy dealing with Safety and Security of Roma Women. More intensified work on informing the public, cooperation of institutions, civil sector and Roma men and women is necessary focusing on Roma collective and personal safety and developing a culture of security. To initiate and implement educational and other campaigns in order to create an effect of social solidarity which would be a strength in utilization of negative beliefs and traditional attitudes of the community which, in certain measure, tolerates negative trends of violence against women and increasing the degree of informing Roma women of their rights.

**1. REGIONAL COOPERATION AND POSITIVE PRACTICES:**

In order to improve the efficiency of Roma organizations dealing with Roma issues it is necessary to work on strengthening the networking within the region itself, respectively beyond, at the level of the Balkan countries - European Union countries.

Recording positive practices and transfer of these positive models from locality to locality at all levels; models should be adapted to the local context.

- ❖ Advocating the development of a special Roma Integration Plan at the EU level which will be implemented after the implementation of the Roma Integration Strategy upto 2020 with strengthened commitments as well as ensuring better integration of Roma women and increasing the role accession countries in this policy
- ❖ Advocating the recognition of the phenomenon of Antigypsism at EU level and adopting appropriate legislation to combat this phenomenon, both at EU and national level, including the enlargement region through the EU integration process

\* Under UN Resolution 1244



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- ❖ Advocate recognition of the existence and activity of Antigypsyism phenomena (especially in EU countries)
- ❖ Ensure consistent application of existing laws and strategies at the local and national level
- ❖ Establish systems of monitoring of the implementation of adopted strategies and mechanisms for amending public policies and concrete actions of states
- ❖ Work on advocating gender-responsive budget development that supports the implementation of strategies and action plans
- ❖ Analyze documents and open the question of their concretization and/or operationalization with a special focus on Roma women, respectively, advocate development of gender-oriented documents
- ❖ Employment of Roma women in international, local non-governmental organizations and institutions who advocate solving problems within the systems in which they are employed

## **2. COOPERATION OF NGO SECTOR AND INSTITUTIONS:**

Non-governmental organizations play an important role in addressing Roma issues through the development of their programs and project implementation in all areas which are identified through the Action Plans and Strategic Documents. Despite the efforts of non-governmental organizations, they are complementary and supportive to the institutions in addressing Roma issues in all the countries of the region. Therefore it is recommended:

- ❖ Development and support of interdisciplinary approach to tackling Roma issues and support to already recognized mechanisms in the region
  - Intensify cooperation between institutions, civil society and citizens through development and support of inter-sectoral commissions (thematic or general)
  - Recognizing the importance of inter-sectoral commissions including them in decisions, strategies or documents of governmental institutions
  - Nominating representatives within inter-sectoral groups as a position through formal decisions as the changes of government would not to affect them
- ❖ Increasing trust in institutions (police, social work centers, judiciary, ombudsmen) through sensitizing the representatives of institutions and involving Roma in the work of institutions
- ❖ Increasing the employment of Roma men and women in those institutions
- ❖ Systematic establishment of position of Roma mediators (general, health, pedagogical)
- ❖ Enhancing institutional financial support to Roma non-governmental organizations



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### **3. POLITICAL PARTICIPATION**

Roma women's issues are identified and their solution advocated by Roma women's organizations and politically active Romani women. Prior to the appearance of the Roma women's movement, the needs of Roma women were not recognized, and during the years in Romani communities, the patriarchal society is changing awareness about the role and importance of women. By political participation Roma women are directly involved in the system ensuring work-life sustainability, so it is necessary:

- ❖ Insist on the implementation of existing laws on political participation of women within the bodies dealing with women and Roma issues
- ❖ Strategies or public policies and built up the necessary mechanisms guarantee the rights of Roma women in all social processes
- ❖ Mobilizing and strengthening capacity of women's roma non-governmental organizations and activists bringing changes in communities

### **4. EDUCATION**

Education plays an important role as it is one of the most important ways of raising the level of Roma women's equality and makes the first step in enabling a brighter and safer future.

- ❖ Development of inclusive education and improvement of quality of Roma education through the education system itself
- ❖ Ensure the compulsory enrolment of children in schools regardless of possession of personal documents which requires the development of new or revision of existing education regulations
- ❖ Regular monitoring of children through the education system (primary and secondary) which directly leads to reduction of drop-out
- ❖ Development of positive image of educated Roma men and women and their employment
- ❖ Return of acquired knowledge to communities through the work of scholars in Roma communities during and after their education
- ❖ Development and support of projects and programs of formal and informal ways of education (education of Roma adults)
- ❖ The introduction of educated Roma school assistants and/or mediators in schools