



PRESS RELEASE

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A new EU framework for Roma Integration: from institutionalised anti-gypsyism to a society of mutual trust

On the occasion of the International Romani Day on 8 April, **The EU Office of The Salvation Army applauds the efforts of the European Commission with the EU framework for National Roma Integration Strategies (NRIS)**, recognising that the Commission efforts and EU funding as a necessary agent for Roma inclusion in EU member states. It recognises however that little progress has been made in the current decade – especially due to institutionalised antigypsyism attitudes, which are embedded in several member states.

The Salvation Army regrets that the EU framework lacks explicit and measurable goals for the member states. In light of any future action following the end of the EU Framework for NRIS, **the Salvation Army calls on the European Commission for concrete targets to be achieved through EU guidance in the 10 years following 2020**, both at the EU and at national levels, promoting equality in education, employment, housing and health in respect of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

In this scenario, the fight against antigypsyism should represent a crosscutting issue: specific targets should be set for what represents an overwhelming obstacle to Roma integration. As stated by **Major Mike Stannett, head of the EU Affairs Office of the Salvation Army**, *"the conditions that many Roma live in their communities are so poor, with severely restricted opportunities due to public and institutional prejudices that are rarely seen in other ethnic minorities in Europe."*

The Salvation Army calls for Roma inclusion policies to be built on open communication of expectations which fosters **mutual trust between Roma communities at the grassroots level and authorities**. Mutual dialogue between Roma communities and national/local authorities should ensure that the opinion and competences of Roma are taken into account in the design, implementation and monitoring of policies, allowing Roma people to be part of the full process and not just recipients of aid. **A dedicated focus needs to be provided for Roma migrants**: migrating Roma need to be addressed with thoughtful solutions and creating a trustful dialogue, in order to avoid the rise of undocumented/non-registered individuals, with no access to social and health services. The full **establishment of inclusive National Roma Platforms in all EU member states**, as a way to foster dialogue between Roma civil society and national authorities, should be a prerequisite for the goals of the next Roma framework, and include grassroots input.

The Salvation Army, motivated by its Christian faith to do justice, has a long history of working with people who are vulnerable, marginalised and exploited across the world. The Salvation Army works in 127 countries worldwide, including in 22 of the 28 EU Member States, providing social services, poverty relief, social inclusion activities, refugees and migrants' support and anti-human trafficking services.

The Salvation Army has a long tradition of work with Roma people, both in their home communities and as EU internal migrants, and effectively employs Roma in the structures of our social services and church ministries, serving therefore as a model of inclusion. To ensure a coordinated approach to its work with Roma in Europe the Salvation Army has recently established a **European Roma Mission Network**, which includes both Roma and non-Roma members of The Salvation Army. For more information on our work on Roma integration, check the [2017 Mapping Report](#), or write to IHQ-EUOffice@Salvationarmy.org