



*Embassy of Romania
OSLO*

The Ambassador

29 May 2012

Dear Mr. Markussen,

*I am writing to you regarding the article entitled **De er ikke tiggerbander eller kriminelle**, published in Dagbladet on the 24th of May 2012, under the signature of Siril K. Herseth.*

The Embassy of Romania to the Kingdom of Norway has no intention to enter into a polemical debate with researchers and experts, whose freedom of expression has to be fully respected. In the same time, I have to point out that I cannot agree with some remarks of Mrs. Ada I. Engebriksen, researcher at NAVO, and especially those concerning the direct connection between “high level of corruption (gjennomkorruperte - in original)” and the lack of implementation of programs dedicated to Roma people in Romania. Personally I was surprised by this comment, as it came from a distinguished researcher who spent time on studying the situation of Roma people and whose knowledge about Romania the Embassy has always appreciated.

I would like to remind you that the social inclusion of the Roma people has been a priority for any Romanian Government in the last 10 years.

**MR. JOHN ARNE MARKUSSEN
RESPONSIBLE EDITOR
DAGBLADET**

Romania is currently implementing a whole range of social policies regarding the Roma minority focused on measures in the field of education, employment, health, housing and small infrastructure, accompanied by measures for fighting against discrimination, fighting against poverty and promoting equality of chances. Also, Romania has been one of the promoters of the adoption of the 2011 EU Framework for Roma Integration National Strategies, which represents an important step towards both the acknowledgment of the complex nature of the Roma-related issues at European level and the identification of practical solutions to those problems. At pan-European level, Roma integration represents the main aim of the Decade for Roma Inclusion (of which Romania is part) and is included on the agenda of the Council of Europe.

In Romania, these policies are integrated in the general strategies and plans of the Government regarding development and social inclusion like the National Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion Promotion Plan (NAPSIPP), the Joint Social Inclusion Memorandum (JIM), the National Development Plan of Romania 2007 – 2013 (NDPR) and the National Reform Program for 2011 – 2013 as well as in specific strategies and plans for the Roma minority like the Strategy of the Government of Romania for improving the condition of the Roma, adopted in 2001 and the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005 – 2015, which contains a political commitment of the Government of Romania at international level.

At the end of 2011, this already very comprehensive framework was consolidated by the Strategy of the Government of Romania for the Inclusion of the Romanian citizens belonging to Roma minority for the period 2012-2020. It is an inclusive document, since it covers the four main areas of action at EU level (occupation, education, health and housing) and even additional ones, such as the protection of Roma culture or of children. Focused measures are foreseen on each of these areas. The document has been drafted under the larger EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020 and includes proposed measures to increase the level of Roma inclusion in areas like education, labour, health, housing or culture.

The National Agency for Roma functions under the Government of Romania and it is headed by a State Secretary. On its website (www.anr.gov.ro) any interested person could find details regarding projects, including the financing mechanism related to Roma people in Romania.

Last but not least, on the 21st of March 2012, the “largest cooperation ever” on EEA and Norwegian grants was signed in Bucharest. An amount of NOK 2.3 billion has been allocated to programs and projects in Romania. An indicative target of at least 10% of the total funding for relevant Programme areas under the EEA Financial Mechanism 2009-14 shall target the improvement of the situation for the Roma population. In a nutshell, the EEA and Norway Grants will be further used to improve the situation of the Roma population through a number of different measures.

I do hope that this information will cast a correct light on the seriousness and comprehensive approach of the Romanian authorities to this important issue, namely the inclusion of Roma people.

Please receive, dear Mr. Markussen, the assurances of my most distinguished consideration.

Daniel IONIȚĂ