EC Staff Working Paper

Community Instruments and Policies for Roma Inclusion

October 2007  Mark David
Paper highlights the many gaps and failures that plague the EU and Member State’s approach to Roma inclusion.

We have a sense of déjà vu, we see the many problems, but there is yet no ambitious strategy, no long term planning, no direct commitment for an EU Roma Strategy.

The approach of the Commission for this paper was minimalist and sends a clear signal that the EC is rather reluctant to get seriously involved.

The paper is revealing, it compiles some interesting examples contains useful information, it fails when it comes to solutions for the many “lessons learned”.

It fails also in its last part as there are no meaningful conclusions.

It is a reflection of the passive stance, the EC is far more focused on passing the entire responsibility to Member States rather then focusing on the initiatives it could kick-start and coordinate.
Issues highlighted in the paper:

- Opportunistic approach when it comes to implemented Structural Funds’ projects, lack of strategic approach,

- Underlines problems but offers no solutions when it comes to enforcing anti-discrimination legislation and combating structural discrimination,

- The virtual non-existence of a debate on Roma inclusion in the Social Inclusion OMC and Employment Strategy and the lack of reporting,

- The absence of effective monitoring mechanisms, indicators and benchmarks, which would enable the EC to measure the impact of policies,

- The lack of effectiveness of awareness campaigns,
A comprehensive inventory of “off the shelf” available instruments,

Encouragement and indications on how instruments could be used,

A useful assessment of gaps and failures under ‘lessons learned’,

Some indication of possible solutions, acknowledgment that improvements across the board are needed,
And the bad parts:

- The document lacks vision and reflects unwillingness for long term planning, denotes a minimalist not an ambitious approach,

- The overall conclusions are inconsistent with the content,

- Derogates responsibility of ‘good governance’ solely to the Member States’, EC fails to acknowledge that it is also accountable as source of legislation and resources,

- Reuse of past findings, denoting lack of progress in addressing issues,

- Lack of creative solutions to the identified problems,

- Fails to call for a strategic approach on behalf of the EU,
Concluding remarks of EU Roma Policy Coalition:

- We expected a **EC paper with a vision, we got an inventory**, however we still regard the Staff Working Paper as a first step towards the adoption of an EU Roma Framework Strategy.
- We believe that the findings of the paper **do make the case for an EU Roma Strategy even more stronger**, unfortunately the conclusions do not match that.
- The EC needs to be come up with an ambitious Framework Strategy matched by a Community Action Programme and a institutional coordination mechanism (Unit),
  - The Strategy has to be ambitious in scope and approach, envisaging clear and quantifiable targets and setting benchmarks,
  - The strategy has to benefit of an effective monitoring mechanism, progress or adversely lack of progress needs to be measurable, (the current Roma Inter Service Group could be a basis for such a body,)
  - The Strategy has to be complementary and build upon current initiatives such as the Decade of Roma Inclusion,
  - The Strategy should be devised in close cooperation with Civil Society, especially Roma NGOs (national and international level),
Concluding remarks of EU Roma Policy Coalition (2):

- Taking into account the Council Conclusions of December 2007 and June 2008 European Councils,

- The EU High Level Conference on Roma, in September, must be a turning point that will bring strong developments that

- The conclusions of the Conference must translate into ambitious policy making to benefit Roma across the European Union,