

Plan for re-establishing and reintegrating safely and with dignity the Roma people in Sânmartin, Harghita

Context:

Roma Center “Amare Rromentza”, Roma ACCESS association, Equal Opportunities association and Romani CRISS – Roma Center for Social Intervention and Studies herein propose you to get involved in stopping the inter-ethnic conflicts and acts of violence against the Roma by coordinating the activities of organisations/ activists in Sanmartin locality.

To this end, we drafted a local intervention plan for this area affected by conflict, which we submit to debate and implementation.

The purpose of this action is to stop/ prevent acts of violence and attacks against the Roma in Romania, especially against the Roma in Harghita (Sânmartin and Sâncrăieini).

The plan of action is a form of intervention in the context of violent attacks against the Roma in Harghita County, started on May 31st 2009, in Sânmartin locality, incidents that still continue in the present.

On May 31st, 2009, approximately 400 Hungarians from the Sanmartin locality gathered and went to 40 houses belonging to Roma in the locality. On the background of increased tensions, connected to stealing committed by Roma people (stealing from the field crops, from the households), the Hungarians damaged the houses, breaking the windows, destroying the doors and tiles of the houses. Several goods in the homes were destroyed, such as TV sets and TV aerials. Several cars were damaged and several dogs in the yards of the Roma were killed by Hungarian ethnics. On June 3rd, 2009, a house belonging to Roma was set on fire. In the same day, the Roma left their homes and spent the night in the woods or on the field, under the open sky.

The signatory organisations carried out 4 documentation visits, starting with June 3rd 2009. On the same day, the local authorities initiated a series of meetings for dialogue and peace-making, to which Roma had limited access. In one of these meetings a protocol was signed, establishing the conditions for the Roma to be able to return to their homes (see Annex 1 – Protocol of Sanmartin). We mention that destructive conflicts happened in the neighbouring localities between Hungarian and Roma people, in Plăiesii de Sus and Cașinul Nou in 1991. The case is subject of a ECHR decision, after exhausting the legal remedies in Romania.

For approximately a month, the Hungarian ethnic citizens have gathered almost daily, in groups of 200 persons, going to Roma houses and threatening the Roma. In the last two weeks, the Hungarians agreed to gather every Monday evening and see the Roma, in order to “monitor” the implementation of the “protocol” agreed on June 8th, 2009, by the Roma and the Hungarian, with the mediation of the City hall. Each time, although accompanied by the Police, the actions of Hungarian groups led to threats against the Roma and to the perpetuation of the permanent state of tension, faced by the Roma returned to the village.

At least 50 (among which 25 children aged 4 to 7) out of the 170 Roma in the locality never returned to the village up to date, from fear of being attacked. At present, they sleep in woods or on fields, around the Miercurea Ciuc locality. Part of the Roma

returned to Sanmartin do not spend the night in their homes, but take refuge during the night in the nearby woods, from fear of being attacked by Hungarian ethnics.

Objectives of the local plan

Objective 1- Reparation of Roma in Sanmartin situation, in terms of observing

- **Human rights** – right to physical and psychical integrity, right to freedom and security, right to non-discrimination;
- **Social, economic and cultural rights**: right to housing, right to education, right to health;
- **Civil rights**: right to property

Objective 2- Increasing confidence/ trust between Roma, Hungarian ethnics and local authorities

Objective 3- Raising awareness of communities and authorities of Sanmartin in regard to human rights

Objective 4 – Facilitating Roma’s access to justice and right to defence – by ensuring legal assistance

Objective 5- Facilitating access to health services, education and employment of Roma people in Sânmartin

Objective 6 – Mapping the areas with increased risk of interethnic conflicts that may involve Roma people and implementing specific activities aimed at bringing the interethnic relations at the safety benchmark

In order to fulfil the above mentioned objectives, the activities described in the *Intervention Plan (see Annex 1)* are to be implemented.

Participant organisations

The invitation of participation to the activities goes to the nongovernmental organisations which, depending on their profile and intervention, could contribute to fulfilling the objectives, as well as to independent activists.

The organisations wanting to contribute are invited to contact the initiators and to mention the activities in the Action Plan that they could realise or contribute to their implementation, as well as to propose new activities.

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General functioning procedure

The responsibility of the Secretariat is to elaborate the documents necessary to implement the activities stipulated in the action plan¹.

¹ Procedure of obtaining the necessary approvals for organising events, etc.