



**Romani CRISS**

Roma Centre for Social Intervention and Studies

Raspantiilor St. no 11, District 2

Bucharest, Postal Code 020547

Telephone: 021 3107070

021 3107060

Fax: 0318157623

[office@romanicriss.org](mailto:office@romanicriss.org)

[www.romanicriss.org](http://www.romanicriss.org)

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*Bucharest, July 12, 2013*

## **OPEN LETTER**

To: Ban Ki-moon, United Nations  
Jose Manuel Barroso, European Commission  
Morten Kjaerum, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights  
John Kerry, United States State Department

Dear Sirs,

Romani CRISS is drawing your attention on the fact that throughout the past 20 years the Romanian state has consciously been lying to you with regard to the Roma integration issue. Through the declaration made on July 11, 2013, the Romanian Prime-Minister, Mr Victor Ponta, has publicly recognized that the Romanian state did nothing to integrate Roma in the past two decades. Journalists have asked Mr Ponta to comment on a study of non-governmental organizations, which states that the policies in this area in 2012-2013 haven't brought any new measure. Mr Ponta has replied: *"The non-governmental organizations you mention have been responsible for these policies, for the past 20 years, while the current Government, only for the past year."*<sup>1</sup>

As you are aware, the Romanian state has constantly reported to the organizations you represent, with regard to the human rights situation, combating discrimination and promoting social inclusion of Roma. Moreover, the Romanian state has adopted two strategies for improving the Roma situation. These strategies tackle different areas, such as education, housing, health or Roma employment. The public policies which target Roma should be based on the moral and political commitment of the Romanian state, honest and voluntary, to support the Romanian citizens of Roma ethnicity throughout the inclusion process. The fact that this political and moral commitment has been corrupted since the very beginning and that for 20 years the Romanian authorities have pretended to be interested in the Roma issue is truly shocking. Romani CRISS manifests its total disagreement towards the way the Romanian state has understood to lie, to trick, international organizations and Roma civil society, partners of the Romanian authorities in this process.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.mediafax.ro/politic/ponta-ong-urile-responsabile-de-20-ani-pentru-integrarea-romilor-guvernul-va-folosi-mai-bine-banii-11117807>

At the same time, through this sincerity burst, the Romanian Prime-Minister has offered the first logical explanation, realistic, for the limited results of the Romanian authorities with regard to the social inclusion policies. The weak results weren't caused by the lack of resources or by the complexity of the problems, but by the disinterest for the subject.

Furthermore, during the past days, both the Prime-Minister, as well as the Romanian President, made a series of declarations meant to blame the NGOs for the state's failure, as well as to discredit and intimidate the members of the civil society.<sup>2</sup> We emphasize that these statements were made in the context that many Roma and non-Roma NGOs have filed complaints both against the President and the Prime-Minister, respectively have criticized publicly them for their public discriminatory statements, targeting Roma and women.<sup>3</sup>

We respectfully ask you to take into consideration the very serious statements of the Romanian Prime-Minister, who is disclosing an even more serious reality, which is the fact that the Romanian state, in bad faith, hasn't fulfilled its international obligations it has signed up for during the past two decades. The bodies you represent must ask the Romanian Government for clarifications on how it has understood its role of coordination and implementation of Roma public policies, during the last 20 years. We also ask you to express your official point of view with regard to the issues presented above.

Yours faithfully,  
Marian Mandache

Executive Director  
Romani CRISS

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<sup>2</sup> Traian Basescu: "I am convinced that tomorrow, again, all NGOs which "eat" money to support these Roma children, will react" <http://www.bzi.ro/traian-basescu-face-o-noua-declaratie-care-va-scandaliza-ong-urile-375385>

Victor Ponta:

<sup>3</sup> Romani CRISS, Active Watch, ECPI and the Centre Partnership for Equality have lodged a complaint to the National Council for Combating Discrimination against the statements of Mr. Victor Ponta, made during an interview for BBC, in March 2013. Mr. Traian Basescu has addressed, within a meeting with business women, to all Romanian women, encouraging them to respond to their "patriotic duty" of giving birth to children, and acting surprised by the capacity of Roma women to "have 5-6 children", as opposed to Romanian women <http://www.romanicriss.org/PDF/RCRISS%20si%20CRJ%20-%202020.06.2013.pdf> For these statements, many organizations have filed a complaint in front of the National Council for Combating Discrimination.