

Open letter

To the attention of Mr. Crin Antonescu, President of the National Liberal Party

Mr. President,

We express our concern regarding the recent statements made by Rares Buglea, a member of the political organization you represent.

By this letter, we wish to draw your attention to the increasing number of extremist, discriminatory, racist and sexist speeches promoted by members of the party that you lead. On Monday, February 4 2013, the press published the statements posted on Facebook by Rares Buglea. *"I know that I will be harshly criticized by the false humanists, but I continue to support the sterilization of Roma women, if after their first birth it is proven by social investigation that they have no conditions and no intention to raise their first child in conditions that are at least minimally humane"*. (Source: Mediafax). Reconsidering his position, Rares Buglea subsequently declared: *"I apologize if through unfortunate wording I left the impression that I was referring only to a particular ethnicity, and not, as I meant and still want to maintain, I refer to all irresponsible mothers in Romania. I apologize to the members of this ethnic group if they felt offended. Indeed, on Facebook ... I was referring to some Roma mothers because of the percentage of these cases, we must admit that this is where we come across such cases more often. But however, I do not refer to the whole ethnicity, I mean any mother who after a birth or two, is found not to have any love and care and concern for those children. I was just proposing some solution to stop this uncontrolled birth rate."*

This statement comes shortly after a campaign promoted by an extreme right group from Romania, the Autonomous Nationalists from Timisoara, which offered a prize of 300 LEI to any Roma woman who agrees to be sterilized.

We welcome the public positions promptly expressed by the members of the Liberal Party such as Florin Alexe, President of TNL Bucharest, and Teodor Atanasiu, President of PNL Alba, regarding the statements of Rares Buglea, currently member of the NLP.

We reemphasize that there have been recent statements and actions of Liberal Party members, which were not in accordance with human rights. Among these, we mention Mr. Catalin Cherecheş and Mr. George Becali. Unfortunately, the leadership of the Liberal Party has not taken any clear stand to distance itself from these positions, nor any steps to effectively sanction such actions. We believe that the recent statements made by Mr. Rares Buglea represent a new position, an extremist one that clearly shows a human rights violation. Although Mr. Buglea resigned from the leadership of the Alba Youth Organization of the Liberal Party, he continues to be the local advisor on behalf of the same party. We believe that these statements must be severely punished by the organization you lead, in order to prove that your party respects human rights and manifests zero tolerance towards extremism in Romania.

Taking into consideration all of the above, we demand the following:

- The exclusion of Mr. Buglea from the National Liberal Party;
- The signing of the Charter of the European Parties for a Non-Racist Society by the National Liberal Party;
(http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/activities/38-seminar_ankara_2011/Charter.asp)
- Measures adopted/actions initiated within the party, aiming at preventing this type of manifestations;
- Measures adopted regarding sanctioning the party members who make public statements with a racist or extremist character.

We also demand a public position from you on the sterilization of Roma women and women with limited economic means.

The signatory organizations:

Romani CRISS - Roma Center for Social Intervention and Study

MCA Romania - Center for Monitoring and Combating Anti-Semitism from Romania

ECPI - Euroregional Centre for Public Initiatives

E-Romnja Association (Association for Promoting Roma Women's Rights)

Romano Butiq Association

FILIA - Centre for Curriculum Development and Gender Studies

ADIS - Association for Development and Social Inclusion

CEDS - Center for Education and Social Development

ActiveWatch - Media Monitoring Agency

FRONT Association

The Group for Feminist Interventions