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A FRAME STATUTE OF THE RROMANI PEOPLE IN EUROPEAN UNION

*A document drafted
by the Rromani Activists' Network
on Legal and Political Issues (RANELPI)
IRU HQ endorsement May2009*

Even though initially meant to be addressed to European Union, this document is a valuable guide for all national and international authorities in Europe and it comes again in a right moment. Indeed, we are at a crucial moment in the European processes. There is now certain awareness on behalf of European IGOs (OSCE, CoE and EU) that Rromani issues should be taken into consideration seriously and treated in an efficient way.

In this context, the project of a Frame Statute of Rromani people in EU, drafted eight years ago by a Network of Rromani and non-Rromani activists and reviewed by specialists of International Law, comes as an inside contribution. Its main feature is the consideration of the Rromani people as a segment of European realities and of the Rroms as active citizens and players of these realities.

True enough most views expressed in the present Frame Statute are already implemented in the practice of many European states. Nevertheless the purpose of the present Frame Statute is to endow them with a legal form in order to make easier relations and talks between partners, to reduce the risk of regression to former practices, less propitious to the Rroms and to promote a reasonable harmonization of political practices addressing the Rroms in the realm of the European Union.

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PREAMBLE

The Rromani people has been a constituent element of Europe for over six centuries, to which it has ceaselessly been bringing a valuable yet too-often neglected human, material, artistic, economic, military and moral contribution. At the beginning of this 21st century, drawing on the heritage of the preceding centuries (historical and cultural evolutions, persecutions, scientific discoveries etc...) and on the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights — Rights explicitly acknowledged to be universal, the Rromani people wishes to establish his position inside the European Union by being part and parcel of a resolutely affirmative process geared to social integration, equality of rights, the refusal of exclusion, and mutual respect towards all the identities and structures represented in Europe. It would thus be advisable that this Frame-Statute be officially recognized by the European Union, by its Member-States and by the States about to enter the Union, each of them drawing on the general principles and the specific resolutions of action displayed here, in order to define in more details the position of Rromani people in its legal space.

PART ONE: GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Chapter 1 – Definitions

§ 1 – National Identities in Europe

The European Union acknowledges the existence throughout the territory of its Member-States, of various national identities intertwining with one another and enriching each other;

- a) it is obvious that there are 27 identities corresponding to the 27 Nation-States, to which the nationals are linked, not only on an administrative, but also from an emotional, cultural and spiritual point of view;
- b) There is also a number of other identities, which do not match the limits of the boundaries of the States, and to which the nationals are linked mainly from an emotional, cultural and spiritual point of view — moreover, in some States, these communities are materialized from an administrative point of view (autonomous communities, nationalities, *generalitats* etc...);
- c) Among these identities which do not correspond to the limits traced by the boundaries of the States, some are said to be with a compact territory, where the members of the given identity form a substantial part, or even most, of the total population in an area of several boroughs. Others are said to be with no compact territory, where no area is superior to the dimensions of a borough in which the population belonging to the given identity forms a significant part of the population;
- d) Among the populations belonging to the identities with no compact territory, some of them are diasporas of identities with a compact territory situated somewhere else in Europe or outside, whereas others do not have such a reference.
- e) Among the latter, some lead a partly mobile lifestyle, others are completely sedentary.

§ 2 – Citizens and Residents

The Nation-States gather within one administration and one community of material and moral interest not only their nationals (called citizens) but also their usual residents, closely linked to their citizens by their social and professional activities.

§ 3 – National Identities and Leading Nations

In the case of the members of leading nations (in most cases the population with the greatest number of members in the Nation-State), the national identity of the Nation-State and the identity of the leading nation coincide. When the State is formed by several [con]federated nations, the specific identities are partly distinct from the identity of the [con]federation without any coinciding fully with it, while converging all towards the unity of material and moral interests.

§ 4 – Harmony Between the National Components

In the normal state of things and in a fair political context, there is no conflict of interest between the Nation-State and the various national identities within it, but to the contrary: their interests converge and complement one another. Such a situation can only be achieved through a reasonable and earnest dialogue between the authorized representatives of the structures of the Nation-State and those of the various national identities. This is true as much for the national identities with a compact territory as for those with no compact territory (no matter whether their lifestyle be totally or partially sedentary). The legitimacy, fairness and degree of democracy of national politics are mirrored by the harmony existing between the national components and through the absence of conflict, overt or covert, between them.

Chapter 2: the National Rromani Identity

§ 1 National Identities With No Compact Territory Of Their Own

The European Union acknowledges the existence, throughout the territory of its Member-States, of various national identities with no compact territory of their own; from a numerical point of view, the main one is represented by the Rroma, Sinte and Kale people, who are all of Indian origin. Nevertheless, there are others as well:

- a) some of them, whose presence on the European soil cannot be dated due to their very antique existence, are reputed to be of European origin (the Travellers, of Irish origin, the Yenisch, probably of Germanic origin, the Gurbetsya in Greece, of Romanian origin, the Balkano-Egyptians in Greece and Albania, the Mercheros in Spain, the Camminanti in Southern Italy etc...);
- b) others come from a more or less recent immigration, like the Western Armenians or the European Jews (Yiddisch~ or Ladino-speakers). There are some reasons to add Maghrebian Arabs and Amazighs, possibly even Moluccans and a number of other groups, whose members were born, for several generations, on the territory of one Member-State, whatever the extension of its territory at the time considered. Among these people, some have a historical or present reference territory out of Europe, some are devoid of such a territory.

§ 2 Entry into the European Union of New National Identities Without a Compact Territory.

The entry into the European Union of new States brought into the national European variety new national identities with or without a compact territory. Among these, should be taken into account the Beásh, also known as Rudars/Ludars (now present in Rumania, Hungary, Croatia and Bulgaria – not to mention Latin America), the Ashkalis or Balkano-Egyptians and the Aromanians in Southern Balkans etc...

§ 3 The Notion of "Gypsy" and "Tsigane/Zigeuner"

Throughout history, the words "Gypsy", "Tsigane/Zigeuner", and similar other words, have been used by the ordinary people of different countries and without any concern of accurateness to refer to various human groups of very different origins and who had nothing in common (a religious sect, some groups of Rromani people, mobile communities, sedentary

communities, groups of plunderers, ordinary vagrants etc...). These words, which cover no national and/or ethnic reality and which have taken a derogatory connotation in very many languages, are to be banished from the political vocabulary, except in historical and potential racist contexts, where they convey an intentionally derogatory meaning.

§ 4 The "Rromani Nation", As It Defines Itself

The group comprising the Rroma, Sinte and Kale people have defined themselves as "a Rromani nation with no compact territory and with no claim to such a territory" at the 5th Congress of the International Rromani Union (Prague, July 2000). The Rromani nation dissociates itself from such labels as "Tsigane/Zigeuner" or "Gypsy" as well for itself as for any other identity whatsoever, unless should a human group explicitly claim such an identity for itself; in such a case, the use of this word will be restricted to the concerned persons.

There are no definitory criteria which determine the Rromani identity, but a body of references, of which the most outstanding are as follows:

a) a common North-Indian origin; namely, very recent discoveries (among which the Kitab al-Yamini, manuscript of the chronicler Al-'Utbi, 11th century, only since recently accessible) have enabled to establish with a great degree of certainty the town of Kannauj, the cultural and spiritual capital of Northern India at the end of the first millenium, as the cradle of the Rromani nation, and the 8th Shaban 409 of the Hegira (20th of December 1018) as the date of the exodus. According to this text, the 53,000 inhabitants of Kannauj, most of them leading citizens of the State, artists and craftsmen, were transported by sultan Mahmud of Ghazni to Khorasan, where they stayed for several decades in captivity, before joining Byzantium and the Balkans;

b) a common Rromani language, either in actual traditional use, or existing in the memory as having been used by ancestors; this language, belonging to the group of Northern Indian languages, contains some Persian elements acquired during their stay in Khorasan and Asia minor, some Greek elements, acquired during their stay in Byzantium and some elements borrowed from various languages of contact in Europe. In spite of these borrowings, superficial and thus very conspicuous, and which give an erroneous impression of dialectical shattering, Rromani constitutes one and the same language, the unity of which is remarkable, even though some groups have lost the usage of whole or part of it;

c) an important Byzantine and Balkan element, both cultural and linguistic, making the Balkans a second cradle of the Rromani ethnogenesis, whence the Rromani people have spread all over Europe and even beyond;

d) a number of common philosophical and human values, which have been expounded in various documents (among others the "statement of Caen" issued in 1994 and attached to the present document) and which remain a reference for the Rroms attached to the constructive and truly admirable part of the Rromani tradition;

e) an integration of a variable degree, through blood and/or marriage to the network of the Rromani families in Europe;

f) and lastly a consciousness of belonging with pride to a common Rromani nation, whatever the words used locally to refer to it, the people not belonging to the said community being traditionally referred to by various names, the most common of which is "gazo" in the masculine form and "gazi" in the feminine form.

§ 5 The Rromani Nation, As It Does Not Define Itself

Conversely, the Rromani nation does not recognize itself in the various labels forced upon it by history, as being mainly nomadic people, characterized by a certain colour of skin, a certain aspect, certain occupations, certain denominations etc... even less spies of the Turks,

magicians, criminals, irresponsible, ignorant, and other terms which are either openly racist or concealed in paternalistic pseudo-values.

§ 6 The Rromani Nation inside the European Union

a) The European Union acknowledges the existence on the territory of its Member-States of a Rromani nation without a compact territory. The definition of the said nation is the one, which the nation gives itself, as it is expressed in this Charter. Accordingly, the European Union declares the Rromani nation living on its territory one of the constituent nations of Europe, in full equality from all points of view with all the other nations which constitute Europe, irrespectively of their possible relations with States and territories.

b) The European Union acknowledges that in the course of human history the Rromani nation has been the victim of numerous persecutions, as well active as passive ones, that now the Rromani nation is still very largely targeted by overt or covert manifestations of Gypsophobia and that any politics which are concerned with the said nation must take into account the present consequences of the discrimination from which the Rromani nation has been suffering for centuries and which has led some sub-groups of Rromani people to live in particularly appalling conditions of distress and exclusion.

c) The European Union acknowledges that during the Second World War the Rromani people has been victim of genocide, called in Rromani language "Samudaripen", for which a number of European then official governments have been responsible. This immense crime destroyed more than half a million Rromani lives, entire families and a considerable amount of cultural and material heritage. Survivors until today endure bodily and emotional martyrdom. The Samudaripen has never been recognized at the required level.

d) The European Union acknowledges that, beside a few fallen groups of Rromani people, fallen as a consequence of various historical circumstances (these groups being unfortunately the most conspicuous for those people whose interest is that the Rromani nation should be reduced to the said groups), the great majority of the Rromani nation constitutes a lively, healthy, original and outstanding part of the European population, a part which has contributed for centuries to the edification of the European genius.

§ 7 The Notions of Rrom, Sinto and Kalo

The Rromani nation, defined in accordance with the elements displayed in § 4, is compounded of the following elements, in close relations of kinship, although European history and the popular routine use to distinguish:

a) Rroms themselves, scattered in almost the entire European continent, established for centuries mostly in Central and Eastern Europe and in the Balkan. In all of those places they are practically all citizens (their number is on the verge of reaching twelve million).

b) Sinte, locally called "Manouches", whose groups arose on German-speaking territories, separating themselves in the Middle-Ages from the common Rromani people and currently present in numerous European countries (they are several hundred thousands). It should be kept in mind that the word sinto had originally a more general meaning, but evolving through the years, it now refers specifically to the said group.

c) Kale, more commonly known under their Spanish name "Gitanos" and other derived nouns, who were separated very early from the common Rromani majority. They have been living eventually for centuries in the Iberian Peninsula, where particularly fierce persecutions have caused them to loose the usage of the Rromani language (they are about one million).

All those numbers do not take into account the Rromani, Sinte and Kale populations of the other continents, mainly North and South America.

§ 8 Transversal Solidarities

- a) The fact that the Rromani nation identifies itself in the references quoted in § 4 and does not identify itself in those quoted in § 5, does not mean that the said nation withdraws from any solidarity with persons referred to in § 5. On the contrary, it resolutely commits itself to work towards the betterment of the whole of European society, with the firm belief that the betterment of the life of the Rromani people is impossible without an overall betterment of European society and that conversely a betterment of European life is inconceivable without a betterment of all the segments compounding it, including Rroms and other nations without a compact territory.
- b) Accordingly, the Rromani nation declares its solidarity in matters of principle and action for the betterment of the life of all the nations within the European Union, whether their limits coincide or not with State boundaries, but it insists on developing particularly its solidarity with the most vulnerable nations, i. e. the nations without a compact territory and who are in difficulty or even social distress.

Chapter 3 – The Notion of Mixed Identity

§ 1 — Complex and Flexible Individual Identity

- a) The European Union insists on the fact that the national and ethnic identities are not the only identity of a citizen, but that they are a part of a very complex mechanism of individual and collective identities which construct the personality of the individual and permanently negotiate his or her place in society.
- b) Besides, no identity (national, professional, political, denominational, cultural, familial, sexual, generational, regional etc...) exists as a definitive and unchangeable category. On the contrary it is in permanent renegotiation all along the citizen's life, sometimes in conflicting and/or contradictory ways, and it is only in these conditions that it can constitute a supple articulation between himself/herself and a flexible and overt society.
- c) Identity is a tricky and intimate question which, though founded on collective references (for instance familial, regional etc...) ultimately belongs to the free will of the citizen and no one can impose or deny a given identity, including a national identity, to a citizen who claims that he/she belongs to such or such identity.
- d) Though it is individual, any identity, including the national identity, gives the citizen rights and duties of a collective type, though excluding any privilege whatsoever.

§ 2 Complex and Flexible National Identities

- a) The national identity itself is complex as well: namely, beside the two levels mentioned above (belonging to a Nation-State and potentially to a nation which does not correspond to the limits traced by the boundaries of the States), every citizen recognizes himself in several other levels, which go from his neighbourhood or village to Europe and to the world at large, through his region and various levels which do not necessarily correspond to a geographical entity;
- b) the articulation between these different levels, the pre-eminence of some on others, are themselves flexible and likely to evolve in time in the very perception of the citizen himself or herself;
- c) there exists no European person possessing, so to speak, one and only one strictly defined national identity, insofar as interactions between the various levels and the various identities at stake are inescapable, not only because the individual belongs, almost systematically to the different levels stated above, but also as a consequence of different life stories: children born to a mixed family (either legitimate or not), people raised in a multi-cultural background different from their own, shifting backgrounds during one's life, socializing with different

backgrounds, marriage outside one's "group", changes in the population in a given place, etc... This composite quality of identity keeps becoming more widespread with the evolution of European society and the mixings which derive from it;

d) it is essential to acknowledge and enhance this composite character of the individual identity, without however attributing a hierarchy to the various complex components of identity, but by acknowledging that the identities are compatible, when they are taken in a perspective of democracy and of mutual respect, and that consequently the aim of actually democratic multicultural politics is to facilitate their mutual structuring, not only at the level of individual personality, but also between communities;

e) there exists no community which would be circumscribed, closed, or isolated from others by a simple averred discontinuity. Any claim to the existence of such a community is a dangerous fiction which can, in certain historical circumstances, become criminal. Similarly, any claim to the purity of a community and any aiming towards such as purity pertains to political lie. As a matter of fact, all communities have a mutual relationship of continuity and exchange, not only through the various people who serve as "bridges" between them, but also by the social interactions at all levels, convergent points but also conflicts, which cause them to be more and more intertwined. It is only in the sense of open collectivities, and which undergo constant reorganisations, such as they exist in reality, that the word "community" can be accepted.

§ 3 Gnessodiversity

It is a universally recognized truth that one of the determining factors of the vigour of life is diversity. It is called "biodiversity" as far as ecosystems are concerned. This factor is called "gnessodiversity" when dealing with the richness of cultural approaches of the realities of life. This richness derives from the co-existence of various cultural systems ("wisdoms"), with all their interactions, and it allows the multiplication of mental abilities serving to find solutions to the problems with which the individual or society are faced. One of the essential elements of gnessodiversity is glottodiversity, or linguistic diversity, which only has a value insofar as it nourishes, sustains, and expresses the said gnessodiversity.

§ 4 Synergies and Conflicts Between the Cultural Systems

a) All cultural systems and approaches do not have the same relevance, for the totality of its constituting elements, to the harmony of human life, individual and social, especially when some elements are in contradiction with Human Rights and the fundamental freedoms, explicitly declared here to be universal. Moreover, one can find situations in which different cultural systems bring contradictory answers, or even conflicting answers, to a given question. This issue does not belong to political decision, but to a far wider reflexion, which must itself contribute to the mutual enrichment of those systems, ceaselessly in process of improvement.

b) It is essential in this perspective that the perfectibility of any cultural system be recognized, including the Rromani system, in its numerous varieties, as has been stated in Leuwen's document (Pavee Point & Council of Europe, 1998, § 26).

SECOND PART: SPECIFIC RESOLUTIONS OF ACTION

Chapter 4 – Citizenship

The European Union has observed that in some of its Member-States, the citizenship of the country is still being refused, in a way direct or indirect, covert or overt, administrative or officious, to some residents of Rromani nationality whose family has sometimes been living on the territory for centuries (Fićira and Baćora in Greece for instance). Such situation has arisen also recently in some countries as a result of the non-declaration in due time of children's birth. The European Union demands from all its Member-States that this obvious inequality should end within a year after the signature of the present document, by giving to all these nationals the citizenship of their country of residence, and by registering them in the township where they find themselves at the time of the implementation of this article. The birth of one of the parents on the soil of the State concerned will be a sufficient criterion to give the citizenship and thus reduce the number of stateless persons.

Chapter 5 – Education and Research

§ 1 — Learning to Know and Respect One Another

As it is clear that a great number of problems between Rroms and other populations arise from a lack of knowledge about one another, or even from the contempt that they have for one another, it is indispensable to enforce a policy which will insist on the enhancement of the Rromani culture, in its various forms, in the opinion of the other populations, but also on the enhancement of the various non-Rromani cultures in the opinion of all the Rroms, by the following means:

- a) a real bringing up-to-date in the encyclopaedias, dictionaries and other didactic publications, including internet websites and CD-ROMs, of all the articles dealing in any way whatsoever with the Rromani nation; this will have to be based on serious research and not on sensational or emotionally motivated anecdotes;
- b) the introduction into school syllabuses and the books accompanying them, of information concerning the participation of the Rromani nation to the creation of European genius; it seems important, every time possible, to present these elements as linked with the issues on the syllabus, not as an element added superficially to the lesson; this process must be carried out with the same rigorous criteria as those listed above under “a”;
- c) the diffusion, in a standing rhythm, by all means geared at mass education, mainly the mass-media, of information in the same scope as that mentioned above, and meeting the same rigorous criteria; parody, irony and sarcasm will be occasionally used to fight Gypsophobia. Needless to say, there is no point of drawing an idyllic image of the Rromani population. The aim is to try and display, without hypocrisy, the different historical, social, cultural and psychological mechanisms which have led to the present situation, in its positive as well as its negative aspects, and to prepare mentally the citizens to work for a constant betterment of the various types of relations between the Rroms and other groups. It would be useful, in the scope of this display of information, to insist on the aspects developed in Chapter 3;
- d) it is also essential to teach better the Rromani people the values and cultural elements of the non-Rromani cultures so as to avoid a derogatory attitude and a rejection of these values and elements (gazophobia), so as to allow a better mutual understanding to take place, leading to a real reciprocal respect between communities, rooted at the core of the European awareness of the persons considered.

§ 2 Specific Education of the Rromani Youth

Refuting categorically the assertion according to which ignorance would be a cultural heritage, whatever the biased form under which this assertion is disguised, the European Union commits itself to examine various modes of education in order to adapt them to the various situations represented by its citizens, in particular the Rromani youth, so as to both help them to get acquainted with the Rromani cultural heritage of the elder (bearing in mind that this transmission needs, in the current social situation, an institutional, voluntarist support in order to be passed on to the younger generations) and to gain full access to formal and academic knowledge in the most enjoyable and efficient way possible. In this perspective, it is indispensable to consider seriously the contents of school syllabuses, the didactic approaches offered, the role of the Rromani language at school (particularly for the numerous groups who actually use it in everyday life), the material living and working conditions of the children etc... Creating cheap-rate syllabuses for schools will be definitely rejected. On the contrary, what is aimed at is a better assimilation and an optimisation of the syllabuses.

§ 3 – Living Conditions

An effort must be made in order to provide Rromani children, mainly those who come from families in a situation of social distress, with quiet and peaceful places where they can find the tranquillity necessary for individual studying. Supporting staff, among which there will be teachers but also parents, will be present to ensure psychological and didactic help. Since attendance at school is universally compulsory all over the territory of the European Union, this obligation has to be systematically implemented in all the Member-States, whatever the legal status of the pupils' parents. Accordingly, it is imperative that grants be allocated in order to help children who find themselves in difficult situations and enable them meet successfully this obligation. A specific effort will be made to help those human groups with a mobile lifestyle, whether they belong to the Rromani nation or not, so as to facilitate the schooling of their children and to improve their school results; this effort will focus on the critical examination of syllabuses, on the development of mobile school units, on the development of distance learning and learning support, on the training and recruiting of teaching staff (staff on the spot and distance-learning staff), whether they come from a Rromani background or not, and on any innovation which will contribute to the improvement of the quality of the didactic services which are offered to children.

§ 4 – Preparation of Didactic Frames

In the present state of things, a major hindrance to the evolution and modernisation of the Rromani nation is caused by a severe lack of didactic frames; this lack is due by no means whatsoever to the will of the Rromani nation to create such a situation, but it is the result of age-old discrimination. Action will be taken to identify those youngsters who wish to make a teaching carrier (on the spot or in distance-learning), to help them from a pedagogical, material (grants) and moral (informal interviews) point of view, to enable them to acquire an adequate higher education training and to fit them into the programme aimed at in this Chapter as teachers, designers of school syllabuses, local supporting staff, inspectors, mediators etc... An ad hoc budget will have to be voted to cover their respective needs by the Union, its States, the regions and boroughs concerned (possibly also private).

§ 5 Research

The European Union notes the appalling backwardness in scientific research as concerns Rromani studies. This is true whatever the European country or the discipline concerned: history, sociology, ethnology, politology, racismology, literary criticism, linguistics etc... This backwardness is due to the fact that for a very long time, the Rromani people, reduced by

history to the most disadvantaged sections of the population, have failed to understand these disciplines, but most of all it is due to the scornful attitude of scientists towards the themes linked to the Rromani people. At the same time, this backwardness is itself widely responsible for the lack of knowledge of the Rromani nation, not only by other populations, but also by the Rromani people themselves. Thus, they are trapped in a vicious circle, as the situation nourishes and aggravates itself. In these conditions it is indispensable to create posts for research workers in the various scientific institutions in Europe, relevant for such research, to allocate grants for students and research workers, mostly Rroms, but also non-Rroms, committed to such research and to give them the opportunity to disseminate the results of their works, so as to make up progressively for the backwardness accumulated for centuries. A particular effort will be made during the initial phase to create such posts, so as to contribute to make good for this backwardness and fight the ignorance it generates in society. The researchers concerned can be gathered within a transversal structure which might be called "Rromani Akadèmia."

§ 6 – Financial support

It is clear that the above presented programme will require an *ad hoc* financial support, but this fact should not hamper its implementation, since Rroms (together with Sinte and Kale) constitute more than 2% of the total population of the European Union and that they contribute to its economy through production and taxes, in accordance with the specific rules of the various Member-States.

Chapter 6 – Mobility

§ 1 – The Right to Mobility

a) Even though mobility is not an essential feature of the Rromani nation, a certain part of it, minor but indeed nonetheless existing, shares with some other communities a totally or partly mobile lifestyle. The right to mobility is an inalienable right, according to the terms of article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. However, in order to be able to exercise a right, it is not enough that the right be stated in a legal document, the conditions of its achievement must also exist in reality.

b) Information about the European and local juridical provisions dealing with mobility will be disseminated among both mobile and majority populations to enable them to understand better the whole issue considered.

c) It will be seen to it that the identity papers demanded from the populations with a mobile lifestyle will not constitute discrimination in comparison to the identity papers of non-mobile populations.

§ 2 The Right to Parking

a) Article 13 of the U.D.H.R. links the right to free movement and the right to parking, the latter still being too limited in the countries of the European Union. It is thus urgent to develop parking areas worthy of the name and worthy of the name of the European Union in every place where experience has proved that they would be needed, through consultations carried out between the mobile population, the majority population and jurists competent in this field. The various populations will be systematically and largely represented during these consultations, to avoid agreements in discrepancy with real democracy.

b) Information about the European and local juridical provisions dealing with parking and parking areas will be disseminated among both mobile and majority populations to enable them to understand better the whole issue considered.

c) The opening up of parking areas will not cause the mobile populations to be kept in the background of local life, the borough's services or human contact. On the contrary, these areas will always be built in a spirit of brotherly integration between the various populations.

§ 3 The Right to the Acknowledgement of Mobile Accommodation As a Domicile.

There derives from art. 13 of the U.D.H.R. that a caravan, a tent or any other possible mobile accommodation must be considered as a domicile in so far as it is indeed the usual domicile (over three months per year) of an individual or a family. In these conditions, this domicile must benefit from all the prerogatives granted to permanent structures: inviolability without a mandate, housing benefits, aid for the credit at purchasing etc...

§ 4 The Right to Park on Private Areas

In so far as a mobile accommodation is acknowledged a domicile, in accordance with art. 13 of the U.D.H.R., its presence on any private area belonging to, or rented by, its owner must be authorized, according to the same criteria as permanent structures: land use plan, parking permission (replacing the planning permission), certificate of viability etc... according to the States.

§ 5 The Right to Quit Mobility

a) Still in accordance with art. 13 of the U.D.H.R. any individual or family with a mobile lifestyle wishing to settle down through the purchase or renting of a land, a house, or a flat must be able to do so. No measure, direct or indirect, administrative or officious, may deprive the said person or persons of this right, whatever the pressure exerted on the authorities, who must be guarantors of this right.

b) The same measure is to be implemented in the case of the inheritance of real estate.

c) Any member of a nation without a compact territory will enjoy the said right as well, when he/she wishes to settle in a given place, provided that he/she has the financial and juridical capacity to do so, in total equality with the persons of other nations.

§ 6. Responsibility of the authorities that these rights be respected

The authorities who, through electioneering or through contempt towards part of the population, would evade their duties related to the right related to lead a mobile lifestyle, to park and/or to settle will have to answer for their acts and/or omissions in front of an institution, the structure and functioning of which has still to be defined.

Chapter 7 – Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Migrants

§ 1 – Mobility and Asylum Seeking

The European Union observes that the issue of Rromani refugees, asylum seekers and migrants is still a crucial issue, in spite of a noticeable stabilisation, for the Rromani nation and also to some extent for the Member-States. The European Union also observes that the persons displaced as refugees and/or asylum seekers do not do so in the scope of a mobility linked to an allegedly traditional lifestyle, but that they are driven to exile, usually from the countries of Central, Eastern and Balkan Europe into western countries, where democracy and individual safety, as well as access to basic rights mainly schooling, are ensured with more stability and rigorousness than in the countries whence they come from, especially for Rroms.

§ 2 – Causes and Political Character of Exile

a) the European Union observes that in a majority of cases, these persons have left their country, which has been the fatherland of their ancestors for generations, indeed unwillingly,

leaving all their goods behind, under the pressure of war, of the most diverse forms of violence, physical, administrative and economic persecutions, while the attitude of the local authorities, and quite often of the alleged Rromani "representatives", was one of accommodating passivity. Accordingly, these direct persecutions against Rromani people do indeed fall under the heading of political and ethnic persecutions of States, and that for both these reasons they are doubly relevant to the Convention of Geneva.

b) In so far as these persons have in their country conspicuously far more limited opportunities than the ethnical majority, living often in starvation, roofless, begging and/or making a living in ways unworthy of modern democracies, with no real access to education and stable life due to a complex network compounded of ethnically motivated forces, of authorities who show an accommodating attitude towards these racist forces, of fictitious representatives of the Rroms and of official spokespersons who minimize or utterly deny the discrimination to which the Rromani people fall victims, all of this being integrated into the political system of the country, the political aspect of the causes of exile is obvious. On this account, the refugees and asylum seekers who are victims of these indirect ethnic persecutions do indeed fall into the field of the Convention of Geneva both as the victims of ethnic discrimination and as the victims of a discriminatory state policy, even if, in this mechanism, the State only covers, through its passivity, or overtly denies, the said indirect persecutions.

§ 3 – Tackling the Problem at the Root

Insofar as exile constitutes the last chance of survival for refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, who often feel their transfer as a life tragedy, the European Union insists on the necessity of radical changes prior to these movements of people, that is to say in the countries of origin of the refugees and asylum seekers. This must be done thanks to a common European policy, to which a Chapter is dedicated below.

§ 4 – Discernment and objectivity in understanding the asylum issue

a) When dealing with the files of Rromani asylum seekers (or belonging to other groups with no compact territory) it is indispensable to improve the judgement qualities of the authorities responsible for granting the status of refugee, since these petitioners are in a far more precarious position than the petitioners belonging either to the majority population of a State, or to a minority possessing outside their own country a Nation-State of the same identity as themselves, which is able to intervene through negotiations and/or pressure so as to help their nationals during bilateral negotiations with their State of residence. The vulnerability of petitioners who belong to minorities without a compact territory and without a Nation-State of the same identity as themselves must be taken into consideration and must facilitate the granting of the refugee status.

b) It is also clear, regarding the qualification of States as "safe and democratic", that these discernment qualities must be improved, because a State may be safe and democratic for its majority population in terms of formal democracy (universal suffrage elections etc...) without being so for its minorities (nazi Germany has been an example of this situation). Thus, in the context of dealing with asylum seekers belonging to minorities, the said countries must be in a position to be declared "safe and democratic for all their citizens, including their minorities with or without a compact territory included".

§ 5 – Valuing the Professional Contribution of Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Migrants

Most of Rromani asylum seekers inside the European Union have acquired in their country of origin professional, linguistic and cultural skills which are by no means insignificant. These must be acknowledged, developed and used to the good of the country of refuge and of the Rromani communities who usually live there. In the context of European Union's

enlargement, the same acknowledgment is necessary for the Rromani migrants, who often bring to the host countries a valuable new manpower and knowhow.

§ 6 – The Freedom to Choose

Work must be done simultaneously in the country of origin and in the country of refuge, in order to give the Rromani refugees, eventually, the freedom of choosing either to return to their traditional country of residence, or to settle in the country of refuge; such conditions can only exist at the price of a close collaboration between the Member-States of the European Union and the countries of origin of the refugees on the one hand and, on the other hand, inside each country between the various ministries concerned with the Rromani issue (Education, Health, Work, Culture, Interior, Foreign Affairs etc...). In any case, the return can only be carried out in a climate of freedom and trust, following the explicit demand of the persons concerned.

§ 7 – Special Cases (ex-Yugoslavia)

a) The return of Rromani refugees from Cossovia (Kosovo, Dardania) to their country appears to be currently impossible, because of the climate of violence, lack of safety and Gypsophobia prevailing there as a result of the lack of political will to combat it, all of this in spite of the presence of foreign forces responsible for maintaining peace.

b) The continuance of arbitrary and brutal racist practices in Serbia, in spite of the apparent change in power, a few occasional declarations and a few merely formal decrees, still ranks this country among the most dangerous countries now existing in Europe for its national minorities, mainly for Rromani people. Keeping within the boundaries of the European Union the Rromani asylum seekers until the situation of this country has fundamentally changed is the obvious and only solution.

§ 8 – Estimating the Safety of Countries as Regards Rromani People

The assessments focusing on the normalisation of the situation of the Rromani people in the various countries of origin of the Rromani refugees, asylum seekers and migrants must be established using reliable indications and detailed reports drawn up by Rromani and non-Rromani NGOs working on monitoring of Human Rights in the country, but also by the council police in the various districts on the basis of criminality statistics (which will have to be established according to indications defined from now on to deal year after year with estimated needs – namely taking better in account possible racist motivation), by delegates of specialized international and supranational organisms and institutions which have worked out in the field, by delegations of independent experts who know the mentality of the populations considered thoroughly and lastly, in the case of Cossovia, by the foreign military and administrative authorities on a temporary mission – all of this centralized, cross-checked, synthesized, and kept up to date so that they are reliable upon. It would be vain to be content with chancellery declarations or the feelings of foreign diplomats in office. The information collected from Rromani associations is not reliable either, if it is isolated, because these associations are stakes in the most incredible manipulations. It is important that young Rromani persons be trained to this type of independent expertise and a budgetary line will enable them to get student grants in fields that will prepare them to the said task better.

§ 9 – Deterritorialisation of Racist Crimes (cf. Leuwen document, 1998 Section 3, art. 15)

a) The police authorities of the European Union will examine the methods which will enable to bring about the deterritorialisation of racist crimes, in similar ways as terrorist or narcotraffic crimes are deterritorialized. Such measures would allow the involvement of the police in the countries of origin of the asylum seekers in the repression of racist crimes.

Besides, it would be a means to avoid their possible complacency towards criminals, to facilitate the granting of refugee status to asylum seekers identified as legitimate thanks to a transnational enquiry, and to identify and to nonsuit illegitimate seekers better.

b) Under the heading of racist crimes, there must be added all the discriminations leading citizens belonging to persecuted minorities to be totally excluded from the socioeconomic system of their country of residence (refusal to allow credits, refusal to recruit, refusal to welfare and housing benefit, exclusion from normal schooling, from places of socialisation etc...) which compel them to live in misery, starvation, downfall and/or criminality and eventually to exile.

§ 10 – Helping Rromani Women, Children and Disabled Persons in Distress

A number of Rromani women, children and disabled persons have been brought in the past into the European Union through cunning or force, as a result of commercial transactions between relatives and they are sometimes still exploited or used there in begging and/or various forms of petty criminality without having the possibility of freeing themselves from their slave traders. Various facilities have to be set up very urgently to support them, free them of slavery, and enable them to fit in an acceptable way into the society where they wish to live, mainly through education and training, and a special effort has to be exerted to prevent the reactivation of such rings.

§ 11 – Integrating Refugees and Migrants

a) It is important that Rromani persons and families who have obtained the refugee status or the right to reside in EU Member-States, given the specific problems of each of the countries of origin, be able to benefit rapidly from all the aids linked to this status, mainly access to acceptable housing, and that these measures lead to the disappearance of parking camps with caravans out of order, which have never matched the wishes of their occupants but have been forced upon them against their own will (these populations have always lived traditionally in permanent structures before their arrival in the European Union).

b) It is indispensable that asylum seekers and migrants be received in acceptable conditions, as soon as they enter into the country of refuge, since it has been proved that a reception with no respect for the persons' dignity does not contribute to hold back movements of population and that deterritorialisation of racist crimes, as proposed above, allows indeed to regulate them with cogency and thus efficiency.

c) Lessons in the official or national language of the country (and optionally in the regional language of the region of settlement) will be offered to these refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, together with a psychological support and counselling which will enable to determine their skills and to take advantage as much as possible from them, as much in their own interest as in that of the society of refuge. All possible efforts must be made in order to enable them to consider a return to their country with equanimity (mainly regular contacts with their country of origin and consistent and regular information on the progress of the work done there, as mentioned in § 3 of this Chapter), without any pressure being made to this end.

§ 12 – Reviving Deserted Villages Within the European Union

It could be suitable to start a dialogue with local and regional authorities in the areas with a situation of acute depopulation in order to propose the integration of migrants or refugees, individuals or families, into the villages and hamlets concerned, which are, far more than the cities and suburbs where they are usually squeezed up, a place akin to that in which they were traditionally integrated. This will diminish the urban stress to which they are not used, will facilitate their integration and will enable to boost the various plans of rural revival which are now being carried out in several countries of the European Union, including, but not only, by

developing biological agriculture. In addition, Rromani families will be proposed to work in helping elderly and retired persons, to develop with them cultural activities and generally speaking to participate in their daily psychological support.

Chapter 8 – General Rromani Policy of the European Union

§ 1 – Observation of the Situation of Rromani People

It will be possible to consider satisfactory and long-term solutions to the problems with which the Rromani people are confronted in the countries outside the European Union as well as inside it only insofar as the situation of these countries is well-known and analysed and as the mechanisms of *de facto* discrimination are identified. This would make possible to avoid the political cant of non-interference and entitle the European Union to exert a real political pressure on the hypocritical regimes which continue to persecute, through the intermediary of alleged "self-management" puppet organisms, their most vulnerable minorities, mainly Rromani people. In order to do so, it is important that the European Union plan a budget destined to finance student grants for young Rroms likely to become experts in the assessment of the degree of democracy of these countries, especially towards their Rromani inhabitants. This will allow to pinpoint the underlying mechanisms (historical, local, economic, political, psychological, clan-linked, etc...) which maintain Gypsophobia and to combat it better.

§ 2 – Conditions of Entry

The fair treatment of minorities and particularly of Rromani people by the applicant countries is one of the requirements of the entry into the European Union. Thus all the attention necessary must be focused on this approach, both on the part of the applicant country as on the part of the European Union, all of this in a context of openness and perceptiveness as follows from § 1 of this Chapter, in order to insure more justice toward the Rroms thanks to this co-operation in the States candidates but also in the member-States.

§ 3 – Cooperation

The European Union will also invest into the development of local communities and supervise closely the access of Rromani people to these investments. Each time analysis will prove it useful, it will be possible for Rromani communities to obtain specific financial help allocated to them by the European Union, but collated investigations will always be carried out so that nobody, whether s/he is Rromani or not, can monopolize the aid to their sole benefit, or even use it in a way contrary to its purpose. There again, experts, well-versed in ethnopsychology specific to the countries and communities considered and with a practical background, will have to be trained. The investment into the said analysis and the training of these experts will allow a considerable increase in profitability of the aids thus allocated. Some of the Rromani people already residing in the European Union may act, following a specific training, as experts and interfaces.

§ 4 – Education, Contacts and Exchanges

Education must represent the main section of this aid to Rromani communities, in various ways:

- a) direct aid through shares of student grants for pupils in difficulty (direct local controls will have to be organized regularly);
- b) training aid, in the countries of the European Union, for particularly talented school and university students from all European countries and from outside (when training is started very young it allows the learning of moral values which are often taught only as a matter of form in certain countries, without their belonging to the basic culture of the population);

- c) setting up of training centres allowing this trained youth to multiply, on the spot, this education and training;
- d) launching of distance education which will allow to complement the education received on the spot and to improve it through a didactic personalized support. Modern technologies allow doing this at a very low cost, since the budget needed for this project has to cover only the work of distance teaching staff;
- e) teaching in Rromani language of a substantial part of the syllabuses, first in pre-school non basic subjects and further in personalized courses, seeing that this condition is crucial for the children, once adults, to pass Rromani to their own children (in the conditions of contemporary life, one passes to one's children the language which has been acquired at school).
- f) setting on line educational and entertaining activities in Rromani language in order to maintain a sufficiently high level of exchanges in this language, including for persons living in isolated families, and open up the users out of the simple domestic functioning of the language.
- g) spreading by radio broadcasts in various languages, among others in Rromani, of a genuine education on effective (non-formal) democracy and Human Rights;
- h) system of occupational training practice, lasting one to two years for young Rromani people from Eastern, Central and Balkan Europe in the European Union (according to an already existing programme, among others in Germany), and during which the youngsters can acquire professional skill of an excellent level, a little capital destined to be re-invested in their country, and a new perception of society (seminars for training these people to a better understanding of the social mechanisms should accompany the training courses); at the same time, they may help those Rromani, Sinti and Kali people of the European Union who have lost their linguistic and cultural heritage and who would host the young trainees during their stay in the European Union, to recover thanks to them their Rromani knowledge.

Chapter 9 – Intellectual Life

§ 1 – Knowledge and Documentation

It has been pointed out above that a more accurate knowledge of the Rromani people is necessary to a better harmony between the populations in Europe. Efforts of research, financing studies (grants for students in schools and in universities), editing and publishing material of all kinds, mainly in the Rromani language, translating, spreading of knowledge, fostering the development of mass-media etc... will have to be genuinely committed for a better knowledge of Rromani people and a fair perception of this nation to be part of the basic culture of any European citizen.

§ 2 – Rromani Language

There exists a common Rromani language called "Modern Rromani" or "Rallying Language": its material dates back to medieval India, enriched by Persian, Byzantine, Caucasian and European elements; its varieties can be found in very many places in Europe; its principles were defined at the first Rromani Congress in London in 1971 (equality in value and dignity of the various dialects, necessity of a convergence towards a common and modern language, common alphabet etc...); its codification (alphabet and polylectal functioning of this alphabet) was approved at the 4th Rromani Congress in Warsaw in 1990 and its normalisation continues in a very satisfactory way. The Warsaw Congress has also defined the Rromani language as being "the national language of the Rromani people". The European Union acknowledges this language as one of the languages of culture of modern Europe, encourages its use in all the levels of everyday life (teaching, press, radio and television, editing, artistic and literary life

etc...), equally to other languages in Europe, and acknowledges the polylectal principle underlying its use (respect of all the dialects in all their elements with the sole exception of the elements which are an obstacle to reciprocal comprehension and to an easy functioning as a modern language of communication). The European Union commits itself to contribute to its promotion so that this equality is achieved *de facto*, especially in domains aimed at in Chapter 8.

§ 3 – Racismology

As Antigypsyism and Gypsophobia are taking increasingly varied shapes, increasingly complex (mixed with corruption, trafficking, struggle for power etc...) and increasingly unexpected, it is indispensable that scientific research be orientated towards the identification of these phenomena, towards the collecting and the analysis of concrete data and towards reflexion in order to reach both an intimate and a global understanding of the mechanisms considered, through comparison with other forms of racism and leading, as much as possible, to solutions which will allow to curtail racism and Gypsophobia and prevent its appearing every time possible. Naturally, this experience will be one to share with all the other communities in a similar situation.

§ 4 – Financing

The European Union will check thoroughly that it is not possible for the financing of these various initiatives to fall into the monopole of a person or small group of persons but that the conception, financing, realisation and checkings are public and distributed among various groups which will have proved themselves. In any case, pluralism will be one of the principles of functioning and rigorous checking on the returns of the aids and investments will make it possible to identify quite rapidly those participants who are reliable and those who are not. A wise listening will be granted to all the participants, so as to achieve a genuine, not merely a formal, understanding of their difficulties and realisations. The training of a new generation of Rromani persons, thanks to student grants, should allow the arrival on the European scene of an important number of new competent participants, dedicated to the common cause (both of the Rromani people and of the society as a whole) and of exemplary probity.

§ 5 – Equality of Treatment

In every activity, remuneration will be the same in the case of equal work and abilities of any two workers; the notion of "ethnic motivation" will not be used as a justification to ask Rromani people to work on a voluntary basis, while non-Rromani people are being paid. Conversely, when non-Rromani persons do work entirely or partly on a voluntary basis, Rromani people involved in similar conditions will be asked to work on an entirely or partly voluntary basis as well.

Chapter 10 – Work, Housing, Hygiene, Health

§ 1 – Work and Environment

The emphasis put on education and training will eventually reduce the problems of under-employment which affect the Rromani population appallingly. Preparation of a better level will revive the feeling of individual and collective project, as well as the will to undertake things. Special aid will be provided to favour the restoring of traditional crafts in which Rromani people had acquired very high-quality skills, which are in danger of disappearing, among others some forms of metalwork which are turning out to be useful again, jobs linked to the environment (salvaging, upkeep of woods and rivers etc...), art and entertainment etc... Naturally, each time this will be expressed, help will also be directed towards realisation

in other fields of professional activity – one will carefully avoid any confinement of a population to a professional ghetto.

§ 2 – Housing, Hygiene and Health

The realisation of basic life conditions stated above will enable Rromani people to accede *ipso facto* to such accommodation as they wish to live in, including to stay in caravans or tents if it is the wish of such or such a generation or family. In all cases, the longing for hygiene of the populations concerned will have to be met, as it is within their basic rights, so as to enable them to accede, without any hindrances, to a decent level of health and follow-up treatment.

§ 3 – Financial support

It is clear that the above presented programme will require an *ad hoc* financial support, but this fact should not hamper its implementation, since Rroms (together with Sinte and Kale) constitute at least 2 % of the total population of the European Union and that they contribute to its economy through production and taxes, in accordance with the specific rules of the various Member-States.

Chapter 11 – Representativity, Participation and Authority

§ 1 – Present Representation

- a) Historically, Rromani people have had two types of customary representatives: some had a power of decision in the community; the task of the others was above all to serve as spokesmen and/or mediators with the local authorities. Sometimes the same person fulfilled both functions and bore different names according to regions (Patriarch, Gitano de Repeto, Šero-Rrom, Voyevod, Vajda, Bulibaş, or even Prince or King etc...). These functions were sometimes hereditary. Furthermore, the accession to such a position in the group was not always motivated by the personal qualities of the person concerned, but also very often by his wealth and his economic power (leading role of the collective activities of trade and service).
- b) Throughout history, some Rromani (and even sometimes non-Rromani) persons have been placed by the local authorities themselves in the functions of representativity of Rromani communities, whose only option was generally to accept them.
- c) A number of charismatic leaders with only a local and short-lived influence have begun to appear a few years ago.
- d) As to the leaders democratically elected, the scattered map of the Rromani people in several tenths of countries and their living conditions, the difficulties in keeping regular contact with other Rromani people of different countries, the frequent denial by the authorities of the very existence of a Rromani nation, the lack in political preparation and various other objective hindrances have not yet permitted their actual genuine advent.

§ 2 – The International Rromani Union

All the representations mentioned above are local and relatively fragile. In both a European and a democratic perspective, the body which, in this beginning of the 21st century, remains the most representative of the Rromani nation is the International Rromani Union, founded in 1971 at its first Congress in London. The International Rromani Union is a category 2 NGO at the UNO (with a representative at the General Assembly).

§ 3 – Evolution of Representative Persons and Bodies

a) Without it being necessary to overestimate the moral value of democratic representation based on the counting of suffrages, it is extremely desirable that this form of representation be developed among the Rromani people, together with a socially aware and democratic education about common interest, as much that of the Rromani community as that of European society in general. Every time possible, the discharge of authority will be collegiate (at least three persons) and will rely on a maximum participation of the persons concerned, who will have a right to be informed on the decisions and activities of their authorities and to response to these, up to revocation according to procedures which will be established in the appropriate place and time.

b) Furthermore, it may be desirable, in some cases, for certain customary authorities to remain in force, coordinated with, and complementary to, the democratic authorities, in the local forms of the various groups. A reasonable and wise practice on behalf of these authorities and representations upholds the harmony between the democratic and the customary parts; in case of strong contradictions between the two, and if reaching an agreement proves impossible (for instance through a compromise), it is the democratic part which should prevail in principle. Special attention will be paid to prevent political representatives creating an isolated political cast living separated from the Rromani people.

§ 4 – Qualities of the Representatives; electoral map

Four major qualities will be required: competence (in the broadest meaning of the word) and honesty (which includes dedication to the good of the Rromani community and to that of European society in general), as well as popular support (expressed by suffrages or not) and belonging to the Rromani community (in any form whatsoever). The first two prevail over the last two. Ethnic identity or popular support can by no means whatsoever be by themselves criteria of designation of the representatives, in the case of the established absence of competence and honesty. Both these qualities, how much difficult they are to establish (as in any other human community), will remain the fundamental criteria of accession to formal responsibilities, which are still to be defined in the appropriate place and time.

The electoral map for the elections of Rromani representatives will be drawn on the basis of boroughs or small regional areas, according to a new system which has still to be elaborated, maybe on the basis of non-geographic criteria and in principle with no relation with the borders of the existing States.

§ 5 – Primacy of Action and Participation over Representation

A sustained and specific educating effort will be made in order to have the Rromani persons abandon the perceptions inherited from various regimes of the past, which used to understand the exercise of power and/or representation as a despot's prerogative, a honorific function or an instrument of personal convenience. The idea of a wide participation of all Rroms to discussions, decisions and activities will be systematically promoted through adequate education, beginning with the earliest years of childhood. New, more efficient, mechanisms of participations will be searched. Representatives will be imposed a duty to obtain results as well as a duty to be accountable for what they do, with the possibility that disciplinary action be taken against them, including through the revocation mentioned above.

§ 6 – Customary Law

The exercise of the Rromani customary Law (*rromani kris*) will be respected with its ideology proper, which is the primacy of reconciliation over formal sanction, but its fields of activity will be defined so that they do not conflict with Human Rights or fundamental freedoms. Moreover, decisions will be enforceable only with the free accord of both conflicting parties, each of them having the inalienable right to appeal to another jurisdiction if they wish to.

§ 7 – Male/Female Parity

The male/female parity is not an end in itself because there is no direct link between it and the fairness or accuracy of decisions, but an effort will be made, permanently and systematically, to get as close as possible to such a situation in all the organs of decision and authority, including customary Law. This will not be achieved through punctual decisions but indeed through education and continuous efforts of persuasion.

Chapter 12 – Symbols, Colours etc...

§ 1 – Rromani flag (*barăx*)

The International Rromani Union Congress of London in 1971 has defined the flag of the Rromani people as a red cartwheel, taking up again all the Indian symbolism of the wheel, centred on a two-coloured background: the upper half is blue, symbolizing the Sky, the endless father of Humanity and the lower half is green, symbolizing the Earth, the fertile mother of Humanity. This flag may be hoisted in celebrations and various events, always together with the colours of the country concerned and with the European flag – all these flags being of equivalent size and visibility. The flags of the other surrounding communities should also be hoisted. Stylized, artistic and interpreted anew representations of the Rromani flag will rather be favoured to *ne varietur* representations.

§ 2 – Symbolical Colours

The Rromani tradition acknowledges warm colours (mainly red, yellow and orange) as its symbolical colours, while green and blue, the colours of the flag, are connected with the emerging Rromani political awareness.

§ 3 – Rromani Anthem

a) The song *Gelem, gelem*, the music of which is a popular melody from the Banat, whereas the lyrics have been composed by Jarko Jovanović during his visit in the Struthof concentration camp after the War, has become spontaneously throughout the years and thanks to its popularity, the national anthem of the Rromani people. It was established in this role by the Congress of Geneva in 1978 and the Congress of Warsaw in 1990 published its official lyrics in four stanzas.

b) Unlike the anthems of most nations, the Rromani anthem *Gelem, gelem* can be interpreted according to all the styles of either traditional or modern Rromani music (oriental, romance, flamenco, rumba etc...), insofar as its dignity is respected (stanzas 2 and 3 refer to the *Samudaripen*, the nazi genocide against the Rromani people). This liberty of interpretation expresses the richness of the cultural traditions of the Rromani people and the mutual respect of the various groups for one another. However, the melodic line and the lyrics are fixed.

CONCLUSION

The European Union acknowledges that the work to be put in is wide-ranging, that it implies a serious and reasoned cooperation of the Member-States, that various areas of each of the Member-States must cooperate taking council together continuously, that an actual and effective commitment, not merely a formal work, beyond any political cant or preconceived idea (be it regarded as favourable or unfavourable to the Rromani people) must be undertaken in a radical manner, but that in spite of the difficulties which no one denies, it is the very future and the credibility of democracy and the stability of the continent which are at stake in this issue. In this respect, the Rromani nation must be granted the ability to integrate with

dignity and with esteem to its cultural richness into the family of the European nations. Budgetary and diplomatic efforts must be made, the first above all to fund student grants for young Rromani persons, the latter mainly so that the States indeed carry through a radical change in the situation of their home communities of Rromani citizens, so that they can reach the position of well-being and dignity to which every citizen and every community has a right to lay claim.

The European Union issues an appeal to all Rroms (including Sinte and Kale) and to their organisations so that they commit themselves actively in an effective participation to the programme expounded in the present document, which has been elaborated jointly by the RANELPI (Rromani Activist Network on Legal and Political issues) and the European Union.

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