



MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN  
AFFAIRS OF FINLAND

20

Human Rights Council  
The fourth session of the Forum on Minority Issues  
Item 5

Statement by the delegation of Finland

30 November 2011:

*Ms Krista Oinonen*

*LEGAL OFFICER*

*MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF FINLAND*

Madam Chairperson,

Finland attaches great importance to the subject of this forum ~~[and would like to address the draft recommendations on effective participation in economic and social life]~~ Full implementation of human rights and democracy requires that both women and men have equal opportunities to take part in political and social decision-making and leadership at all levels.

Roma women frequently face multiple discrimination based on their gender and ethnic background. This manifests itself in high unemployment and difficulties in accessing services. Roma women wearing traditional Roma costume are particularly vulnerable to discrimination in such matters. The Government views discrimination based on multiple grounds with concern.

Traditionally Roma women in Finland have participated in earning a livelihood outside the home, but they are often faced with negative attitudes when trying to find work. Due to the existing prejudices, it is difficult for even educated Roma women to find work. Apart from negative attitudes and discrimination, ~~however~~, the major obstacle preventing the employment of Roma women is their lack of education and work experience.

Finland adopted its first National Policy on Roma in December 2009. It aims, among other things, at strengthening the education of Roma adults and promoting their employment, equal treatment, access to services and opportunities of participation. The implementation of the Policy will be evaluated periodically.

*INCLUDING VOCATIONAL TRAINING*

~~In December 2010 the Government made a decision in principle on the guidelines for promoting policies on Roma. According to the decision, each Ministry must promote the inclusion and equality of Roma by implementing the measures under its responsibility.~~

*ACCORDING TO THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION-IN-PRINCIPLE, ADOPTED IN DECEMBER 2010,*

The National Policy on Roma highlights the best practices developed for strengthening the inclusion of Roma people, such as

- the activities of Roma contact persons in the employment and economy administration,
- the positive results of projects on adult education and employment of Roma and
- recruitment of employees with Romani background for projects supporting the employment and education of Roma.

Many Roma women need motivation, encouragement and support in the employment process. This entails investment in individual service and intensive customer service in particular, as most Roma job-seekers are not familiar with the educational and vocational options available, have little if any work experience, and possess inadequate information retrieval skills. Having counsellors with a Romani background act as interpreters and mediators has proved extremely useful in these situations.

Roma women should be encouraged, <sup>FOR EXAMPLE</sup> to start their own businesses through cooperative entrepreneurship, ~~for example~~. Entrepreneurship guidance and training in particular should take into account the Roma women's need for support in working out business ideas and the planning of business activities, where the models developed in entrepreneurship training for immigrants could be utilised.

Thank you.