

**Declaration
of the Conference of Speakers of the European Union Parliaments
on the occasion of the International Roma Day**

Vilnius, 8 April 2014

We, the Speakers of the Parliaments of the EU Member States and the President of the European Parliament –

- Today, on the occasion of the “International Roma Day”, commemorating the first international Romani Congress convened in London on 8 April 1971 which established the “Romani Union” as an international representative organization;
- Considering the fact that approximately ten to twelve million Roma live in Europe as one of the largest vulnerable groups, about half of them citizens of the European Union;
- Concerned that Roma are being confronted with prejudices, intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion on a daily basis and live as a marginalized group under extremely precarious social and economic conditions;
- Expressing appreciation for efforts made to date, especially by the European Union, the Council of Europe and the OSCE, to implement measures at European level;
- Expressing special appreciation for the EU framework adopted in 2011 for national Roma integration strategies up to 2020 and the steps already taken by the EU Member States towards its implementation through their national Roma further-inclusion strategies;

1. Believe that cultural and linguistic diversity is an essential feature of the European Union and that the Roma people enrich this diversity;

2. Believe that advancing Roma inclusion is a common concern and interest of the Member States and the EU and cooperation at EU level brings significant added value, whereas

responsibility and competence for the implementation of measures rests primarily with the Member States, given the fact that different national circumstances should be taken into consideration and that the Roma, above all, are minorities in their respective countries and do not constitute a homogeneous group;

3. Believe that strategies chosen by the individual Member States must be aimed at ensuring acceptance of the Roma people and their integration into the society concerned;

4. Believe that concrete steps are indispensable in the following areas:

- a. Access to education
- b. Access to employment
- c. Access to health care
- d. Access to housing and basic services

5. Believe that strategies for the improvement of the situation of the Roma people are to be implemented not only for the Roma, but in cooperation with them, and that their integration can only be achieved together with Roma, their representatives and their organizations, which in turn depends on their adequate social, economic, political and cultural participation in society as an essential prerequisite.