



Barbara Prammer

REPUBLIC OF AUSTRIA  
National Council  
The President

Ms. Loreta GRAUŽINIENĖ  
President of the Seimas  
Republic of Lithuania  
Vilnius

Madam President,

Vienna, 20 December 2013

First of all, let me thank you for the efforts you have already made in preparing the next Conference of the Speakers of the Parliaments of the EU Member States and the President of the European Parliament to be held in Vilnius from April 6 to 8, 2014.

For quite some time, April 8 has been celebrated as the International Roma Day, the intention being to raise awareness of the issues facing the Romani people as an ethnic group, on the one hand, and to commemorate the victims of the policy of extermination of the Roma pursued by the National Socialist regime. In recent years, including last year, I used to organize events in the Austrian Parliament with representatives of the Austrian Romani population.

In many European countries, Roma and Sinti still live under conditions of discrimination and marginalization. Neither at the national level nor at European Union level have we succeeded in integrating them to a sufficient extent in the institutions of representative democracy. In my opinion, the highest-ranking representatives of the European democracies should therefore consider it their responsibility to take a firm stance against the exclusion of these European ethnic groups and to engage in a process of reflection – together with Roma and Sinti representatives – on ways and means of improving their situation.

I think that it would be in the interest of all participants if the Lithuanian Presidency were to take this topic into account when drawing up the agenda and preparing the programme of our conference for April 8.

With best regards,

Barbara Prammer