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Thousands call for Commission to act urgently on discrimination against Roma people

Ahead of the EU Roma Platform for Roma Inclusion tomorrow, Roma activists along with 93,165 people from around the world are calling on the European Commission to take action to end the continuing widespread discrimination faced by Roma people across Europe.

“The time has come for the EU to take action on this issue,” said Nicolas Beger, Director of Amnesty International’s European Institutions Office. “Roma people across Europe continue to face forced evictions, segregation in schools and hate crimes as a result of discriminatory policies and practices. The EU has the tools to address this discrimination by forcing EU countries to uphold EU anti-discrimination laws. So far, the European Commission has been reluctant to use these tools. 93,165 ordinary people are now demanding that they do so.”

“The large number of cases of forced evictions of Roma, their segregation in housing and education and the inadequate response to hate crimes against Roma are not just isolated incidents but the result of widespread and systemic discrimination,” said Beger.

As the guardian of EU anti-discrimination laws, the Commission can hold EU countries to account if they are found to be breaching these laws.

The Commission has stated that it will take legal action if it finds that systematic discrimination is occurring in EU countries. However, despite evidence presented by Amnesty International and other bodies, which points to specific policies and discriminatory practices that breach the Race Equality Directive, the Commission has so far been reluctant to act.

Thousands of people are asking Commissioner Reding to use all the tools at her disposal, including legal action where necessary, to ensure that Roma in Europe can enjoy their human rights on an equal basis with everyone else.

Today’s ‘Start your day with justice and human rights’ breakfast at the Berlaymont provides an opportunity for Commission officials to meet Roma activists who have experienced human rights violations and highlights popular support for the cause. This is ahead of the delivery of over 93,000 signatures – collected over the last two months as part of Amnesty International’s “Human rights here, Roma rights now” campaign – to Commissioner Reding tomorrow.