Management response to final evaluation – AI's work to tackle discrimination against Roma

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"4.1 In general different elements of Roma work have been perceived as highly relevant and effective in Europe: • Amnesty's ***research and legal analysis*** on human rights violations on Roma has probably been the most relevant part of the Roma work for the policy-makers in European Institutions, providing evidence and examples of violations that drew attention to specific violations and areas, and contributed to their existing evidence on these matters • The public campaign across Europe was recognised as much needed to raise awareness of the issues, in particular forced evictions of Roma. The campaign also helped to ***keep the issue on the European policy and political agenda*** • Amnesty's approach to work in a partnership with Roma communities and at EU-level as part of the European Roma Policy Coalition was seen as highly relevant by all stakeholders, building capacity of Roma activists and NGOs and so giving Roma communities a voice, and so putting Roma at a central stage and part of the debate. • It made sense to launch the campaign at the European level, to ***show human right violations against Roma are not isolated cases***, but also to build solidarity of Amnesty activists across Roma on raising the issue and demanding for justice • The work focused on forced evictions of Roma, which was the least known issue affecting Roma by activists and supporters, but one identified by Roma communities themselves as being the key discrimination issue for them. Partners and decision-makers valued and found ***AI work on forced evictions adding value as 'no one else' had worked on the issue*** • Participatory way of ***working with Roma communities***, involving them to campaign and advocacy work, although resource intensive, was an appropriate approach; a number of stakeholders had come to a conclusion that *"any change can only come from within"* identifying lack of Roma leaders to campaign for justice as one of the key obstacles for progress"	**AGREE** – In general it is important to note that the elements identified as highly relevant and effective during the period examined (2013 – 2014) are a result of long-term work, engagement and investment by AI in research, advocacy, campaigning, engagement with partners and rights holders on the human rights of Roma across Europe. Engagement in this work since 2006 has allowed AI to develop institutional expertise and a body of work that made all this possible.

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"4.2 Interviewees have been careful in their attribution of these impacts solely to AI's Roma campaign. In most cases, respondents have identified impacts from AI alongside those of other organisations. In many respects this is because the majority of interviewees were not privy in detail to the factors that led these policy decisions being made. The absence of key decision makers from the interview programme has had an effect here. Nevertheless, we do have clear statements from those directly involved in the Infringement procedure process that AI's interventions were crucial. Others have called for the same policy outcome, adding their weight to the request but AI alone have presented evidence in crucial stages of the decision making process. Key areas of AI's campaign identified by stakeholders are: • Amnesty's **profile and reputation** – as an organisation was viewed as very well linked at the European level, combining national knowledge and European-level overview, providing independent and reliable work. • **Legal perspective** & knowledge – first to suggest infringement against violation of Equalities Directive • By being **vocal and active** – Amnesty was singled out as a single organisation proactively engaging directly with the European decision-makers. AI combines public campaigning with advocacy to highlight decision-makers inaction making the case in a public fashion adds pressure on officials to act • **Introducing the human rights dimension** to the debate, which had mainly focused on social and economic inclusion (rather than discrimination) of Roma • **Effective and approachable campaign team** – the International Secretariat are widely respected at all levels as being professional and effective in their contributions at international and national level."	**AGREE**
"4.3 AI's public campaign directed at EC institutions and other public bodies has raised the profile of the campaign among decision makers. While few have confirmed that the public campaign has led directly to action a number of stakeholders at EU, national and local level have noted the particular (and for some) novel pressure arising from the public campaign. In a number of cases, public officials, often those not directly subject to a popular mandate,	**AGREE** – It is our belief that public campaigning targeting the EC gave a strong push and complemented already ongoing advocacy work. But the timing for it was right (we exploited already internal interest by EC's technical staff to use the infringement) and we were able to have a clear

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have been made to feel uncomfortable by AI's campaign. We think, but cannot prove, that this has made a difference: • The public campaign has been raised in discussions at international level and was clearly recognised by public authorities who reported that it was helpful to see Roma communities directly involved in the campaign. However, we have no direct evidence on what additional impact this involvement had on securing policy change."	message as a result of our long-standing documentation of EU MS failure to implement EU anti-discrimination law, which made it all more imperative for the EC to take action. Slowly but surely, the EC was forced to publicly announce that it would use the infringement if there is evidence of systematic discrimination (April 2013), to then publicly announce in June at the Roma Platform meeting where we delivered the petition that it had already started a pre-infringement procedure on Italy and the Czech Republic, which then led to the actual infringement being launched in September 2014. At the national/local level it also made a difference, but progress was slower, as authorities were also less likely to make unpopular decisions (see below context of widespread prejudice).
• At the national level, public authorities respect AI's reputation for independence and AI's Roma research materials widely respected by NGOs and civil society organisations in their interactions with public authorities. Where changes have been made to policy at this level, it has been as a result of pressure from the EU.	**PARTIALLY AGREE** – Most significant changes at the national level – in the context of the case studies on which the evaluation focused – were indeed connected with pressure by the EU (e.g. Italian authorities announcing they would not implement discriminatory circular in Rome in response to EU pilot; law on eviction in Serbia part of EU accession agreement). However, elsewhere we have seen important policy/practice changes not as a result of EU pressure (e.g. on individual cases or when Slovakia introduced a prohibition of segregation during the amendment of the Schools Act in 2008).
• At the local level, NGOs have appreciated AIs involvement in getting the attention of local public authorities to the Roma agenda. AI have been credited in helping to overturn the Municipality of Rome's circular excluding Roma from social housing allocation criteria and contributing to a reduction in forced evictions taking place in communities AI had presence.	**AGREE**

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• Another primary benefit reported by NGOs and other partners is learning they have gained on advocacy: *"AI has been an inspiration for us – [we have] learnt about targeting and direct messages to attract popular attention…[and] how to phase our work"* Partner 3.	**AGREE** – It is important to note that EIO have devoted a lot of time and resources to strengthen the capacity of the European Roma Policy Coalition, for example. In most cases this learning did not come as a result of a formal capacity building/training element, but informally by introducing our ways of working and through experience sharing during joint activities.
• The inclusion of Roma themselves in the campaign was appreciated and noticed by policymakers, particularly at EU level. This re-inforced and confirmed AI's research and brought home the circumstances of Roma people to policymakers.	**AGREE** - The participation of rights holders in both the public campaign and advocacy definitely strengthened the message and also made it more difficult for authorities to reject our campaign messages as irrelevant. But it is important to note that in some areas (regional "human rights here, Roma rights now" campaign peak; work on the Cluj case, and 2013 campaign in Romania) we have put a lot of energy in ensuring Roma activists fed into the development of the campaign also behind the scenes – this has definitely contributed to outputs/activities that were relevant and would resonate also with Roma communities/activists themselves.
• AI work in Roma communities in Romania raised awareness of what their existing entitlements and empowered the community to demand their rights. The community is now more engaged with the local decision-making process (e.g. participate in development meetings/consultations). • There is some evidence that Roma activists have started to mobilise others in demanding their rights (e.g. in Cluj activists from the community AI worked in have tried to engage with other Roma communities to join their call). Civil society in Romania is very weak with limited resources and capacity, so this has been a slow process.	**AGREE** – as above. It is important to note that both the involvement of rights holders in the development and implementation of the regional and Romania campaigns, had been extremely effective but also very resource intensive. In most cases, budget for ensuring this participation (especially when involving travel and not during our field work) was not available within ECA and this would not have been possible without the use of relief funds. Collaboration of Relief teams at the IS and Sections was extremely valued and appreciated. However, in the future, if we seriously want to involve rights holders in our work, we need to be able to plan and secure these budgets are available within programmatic work.

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• Responses from AI activists and supporters in Europe indicate that the regional campaign has raised awareness of on-going discrimination against Roma in Europe, in particular awareness of forced evictions. Strong take-up of Rapid Response for Forced Evictions further suggests that AI activists became more engaged with the Roma agenda in Europe.	**AGREE** – However, as noted also by the external consultants, most sections (with the exception of AI Finland) sent the survey only to members with some or significant involvement in the campaign.
• Sections noted that some petitions did generate responses from local authorities targeted, for example, the Mayor of Baia Mare did reply to the petition against forced evictions in August 2013. *"The petitions directed at the countries (authorities involved in forced evictions) in this sense appeared to be more effective than the European campaign petition directed at Brussels"* AI S/S 3.	**AGREE** – At the national/local level mobilization directly brought results mostly when petitions were used to address concerns in relation to cases of individuals/communities. Some significant exception in relation to work in Serbia (not covered by this evaluation) where significant progress was achieved on resettlement methodology/standards following UA targeting the EIB and previously work addressing structural issues in relation. So, this does not mean that petitions addressing more structural issues have no added value – definitely have been useful as engagement/communication tools, for example.
"4.4 Other impacts have been a more collective effort. Indeed, interviewees have praised AI's ability to work in partnership with others and this has been a strength of the campaign. AI have been named consistently as a key and respected voice on Roma issues, particularly in relation to forced evictions. However, they are more often seen as part of a group effort. "	**AGREE**
"4.5 Other areas of the campaign have had a more limited impact: • Raising awareness of the plight of Roma communities has not been able to address discrimination. Widespread prejudice against Roma communities remains a significant issue.	**AGREE** – Effectively addressing the widespread prejudice against Roma is extremely complex. We have definitely made a significant contribution to the kind of coverage the issue gets, but by no means has this effectively shifted public opinion as a whole. We need to be thinking more of communication strategies that would help us have a more significant impact in this area, as well as think of different ways of working with the media/journalists.
• The current economic circumstances and on-going austerity have placed greater strain	**PARTIALLY AGREE** – While this definitely has played a

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on community relations and the ability of public authorities to respond."	role, we need to be careful not to oversimplify. The absence of political will by authorities to address anti-Roma discrimination is not a new issue, related to the economic crisis.
• While some public authorities have removed pejorative language from their official documents, this has not addressed wider stereotypes of Roma and the associated discrimination. Local decision makers highlight the needs/ concerns of other sections of the community at a time when public resources are under great pressure. Social housing is scarce in all nations and decision makers point to a concern over a *"battle of the have-nots"*.	**AGREE** – particularly relevant in the area of housing; however, again, as above – absence of political will is also an important factor.
• Prejudice remains widespread among the general public. A small number of AI Sections were concerned by the impact the Roma campaign would have on their members some of whom believed the cultural stereotypes and had expressed their dissatisfaction with AI. We have found no evidence in the survey of AI members and supporters of this concern (but they are predominately those who played some role in the campaign).	**AGREE** – This is a very serious issue and has definitely been a factor in some key sections not actively pushing the campaign publicly. In some cases, this has had a negative impact in our ability to deliver as effectively as possible some of our campaign objectives. While dealing with prejudice including by AI members is a challenge, many sections have managed to deal with it very successfully – including in countries with priority projects. Following the presentation of the evaluation findings at the European Directors Forum, the AI Slovenia Director suggested that they could share their own experience of overcoming this challenge and running powerful and visible national campaigns against anti-Roma discrimination in Slovenia. Other sections have similar experiences. Similarly AI Denmark have done incredibly successful public-facing work, including also fundraising. It might be useful for us to try and capture these positive examples/experience and share among all sections [maybe it could be done by Veronica, the FDE Campaign Coordinator].
• Members and supporters report that they themselves are much more aware of the	**AGREE**

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issues facing Roma communities and have engaged in talking about the issues and sharing campaign content but this is most often undertaken with people they know. There is a widespread view that the campaign should continue.	
• This has led to some local partners to suggest that while policy decisions have been made, this has not yet led to substantive changes in practice on the ground. Some stakeholders identified a need for some strategies or tools (e.g. training to identify and pursue benchmarks) to assist and empower local civil society and communities to monitor the implementation of EU funded programmes and national strategies.	**AGREE** – As a minimum this should be done by involving partners/activists in our actions or having joint activities. We have also supported NGOs/groups in developing their own plans and delivered training on strategic campaigning, but rolling out a more formal capacity building programme may not be possible due to limited resources.
• Some partners have suggested that driving change in practice at a local level may not be as straightforward – the strength of AI's campaign is where advocacy and strategic litigation combine but for example, *"Local authorities in Italy are deaf to human rights and particularly Roma rights"*. A change of culture is required to reduce stigmatization and discrimination and open a way for a wider debate on the integration of Roma communities.	**AGREE** – This is why ongoing work on the ground, by s/s where we have them, is extremely important. A lot of s/s have been running HRE projects in this area (mainly in schools), although this needs to be combined with public facing work as well to yield results at the level of policy and practice.
• In some circumstances, AI have attracted criticism for allegedly not greeting progress of public authorities: one decision-maker in particular accused AI of not acknowledging, on the occasion of AI's launch of the Zero Tolerance report in November 2012, the adoption by the Government of the National Strategy for the Inclusion of Roma, saying that *"they have a duty to take into consideration the whole context, and to acknowledge that the National Strategy was the result of a dialogue between government and civil society; otherwise, they risk being partial"*. In fact, AI acknowledged, both publicly and in their report "On the Edge" that the Strategy was a step forward by the Government, but also that there were some doubts about its practical impact. • It should also be noted that some stakeholders take a different view *"AI gives big a impact, they can behave like a 'bad cop' and then domestic NGOs are 'good cops'. It is really useful when AI press really hard – this opens up opportunities for us to negotiate"* Activist 4.	**PARTIALLY AGREE** – While this may sometimes be true, the example mentioned in the evaluation is not the best to illustrate this concern – as acknowledged also by the evaluators themselves. We have, however, always tried to acknowledge progress (if limited) and avoid broad-brush statements.
• Integration strategies are in their infancy but NGOs increasingly point to need to root	**PARTIALLY AGREE** – While we agree in principle, addressing issues related to access to employment may be

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housing issue in wider social and economic inclusion. Without work, Roma people will not have the income to afford social housing."	very difficult. When looking at issues of resettlement, or in the context of our work on education, the issue of employment was always connected; but addressing discrimination in access to the labour market or wider inclusion issues may be something that AI is not best placed to do.
"Gaps in the campaign • A number of AI Sections felt that they needed positive responses to members, the media and others who might also raise stereotypes and ask for AI's view on such issues, e.g. the Finnish government are considering criminalizing begging or forcing beggars to register when only Roma beg (although all have access to social benefits if they register). • Sections in a number of countries have suggested that they need to agree an AI position on wider integration issues. For example, EU residents are allowed to stay for 3 months in other EU member states but are then supposed to return to their home country if they do not secure work. In some countries Roma simply remain but are consequently not entitled to any social assistance."	**AGREE** – We need to at least provide s/s with policy lines or lines of response on issues that have come up in the past (Roma and begging / Roma and trafficking / early marriages). This is something that can be easily done, if prioritized [either new DPD or Discrimination Researcher could lead to liaise with policy and some sections to identify any other issues and put together short policy lines/lines of response; once this is ready as a base s/s will still need to consider each situation on a case by case basis] Issues related to freedom of movement within the EU, have been challenging to address, as entitlement not rooted in HR law but EU legislation.
"4.6 The campaign work done during 2013 has built on the previous activity undertaken by the Roma campaign and the additional resources did add significantly to the activities undertaken. Resources in 2013 were higher due to both the Regional campaign and Demand Dignity campaign (Italy and Romania were global priority countries). Resources have returned to 'normal' in 2014 and then taking the decision to step back from the Roma campaign has perhaps caused greater disquiet among partners: • In our case studies, local partners have pointed to the difficulty of AI providing consistent/ on-going support. This may be the particular circumstances of Italy and Romania case study countries. • More generally, there is some confusion over why AI have decided to de-prioritised Roma in their view, although the needs of Roma communities have not yet been addressed.	**AGREE** – This is partially the result of changes in priorities, but also linked to not very good communication of such reprioritization with partners at the national level in some cases. On the issue of re-prioritization it is important to note that when we first started with the Demand Dignity campaign and embarked on the work on housing, we knew this was at least a six-year project. However, the organization decided to change priorities and end the DD campaign (with the level of resources that came with it) earlier. As ECA we are still committed to this work and are going to ensure issues of communication with partners are resolved. We have also made arrangements to ensure that country

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	teams are in a position to deliver more visible work in this area in 2015 (for many teams 2014 involved work in completely new areas of work to meet the demands of the SOS Europe campaign, which is currently a priority). However, the teams are now more familiar with SOS Europe issues.
• Communication issues between the Secretariat and Italian Section have been noticed by partners in Italy but no decision maker raised this as an issue. That said, where individual contributions have been identified by stakeholders, they most often highlight the important role played by members of the Secretariat. The Section has not taken forward the campaign at the level envisaged and this may have reinforced the view that AI have reduced their commitment when this was not the plan."	**AGREE** - We must get to the bottom of this lack of communication/coordination and identify measures to ensure that this problem is solved. This should be done in a discussion with AI Italy early in 2015, at Director's level, perhaps in the context of the renewal of the MoU. We must identify reasons and address challenges, ensuring that allocation of resources is aligned. We need to have a meeting with AI Italy to agree which resources need to be available, for which output, along 2015.
"4.7 This is perhaps mainly an issue of communication – and the extent to which the overall Roma campaign had an exit strategy and the degree to which this has been clearly communicated to partners and Sections. The overlapping aspects of the campaign have made this more complex and are not well-understood outside of AI and within some Sections." "4.8 Other respondents feel that the issue has clearly not yet been resolved. Whatever organisational priorities, some Sections suggested that they will continue with Roma work as best as they can in available resources."	**PARTIALLY AGREE** - It is paramount that we work together (IS and relevant Sections) to plan the use of the (scarce) resources available to continue work in this area. While the campaign does not currently enjoy the level of prioritization it did previously, this does not mean that activities have stopped and it is not a question of having exit strategies in place. We have established ourselves as a key actor, we have set up great campaign opportunities for the future, and we have created expectations among right-holders and stakeholders. We have to: a) identify actions to be taken during 2015 and beyond to keep the campaign alive and achieve our objectives, and b) communicate to stakeholders, in the appropriate form, what these plans are and the reasons behind our reduced capacity.
"4.9 Other communications issues that were identified in our discussions include:	**PARTIALLY AGREE** – It is important that we issue regular

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• AI Secretariat should be better at updating on progress and keeping sections in the loop - this would have encouraged them (and their members) to become more active. • Urgent action work generated very good response but activists were eager to learn what happened as a result. One issue might be that AI issues regular updates more promptly on what transpires afterwards. • A number of Sections were keen to share experiences with other Sections and it may be an issue for future campaigns so that Sections are aware of who is doing what and encouraged to network."	updates to s/s – in particular to feed back on progress, especially in the case of UAs. This has not happened in all cases. We have had annual platform meetings of the Fight Discrimination in Europe Campaigners. We are currently not using a tool that would facilitated more constant experience sharing among s/s (e.g. basecamp); this should be considered, but better in the case of specific/short-term campaigns rather than the area of work as a whole (e.g. on the campaign peak to Wipe out school discrimination of Roma in the Czech Republic).

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"4.10 All stakeholders were asked for their opinions on the priorities for the future to improve the situation for Roma people. We think that there are two issues here (i) what are the priority issues for a Roma campaign and (ii) how should these best be taken forward? Clearly an issue for AI is whether the organisation is best placed to undertake these actions and how these compare with other organisational goals.	This should be an issue of discussion as we are preparing our 2016-2019 plans.
"4.11 There has been significant policy change resulting from and associated with the Roma campaign at EC and national level. However, at local level, stakeholders point to the continuing forced evictions, apparent discriminatory actions and widespread prejudice against Roma. The key message coming back from all stakeholders is that they hope Amnesty will continue the work to tackle discrimination against Roma and that there were a number of common priorities identified in each case study:	**AGREE** - We definitely intend to continue the work as discrimination against Roma is an issue that AI cannot afford not to address, 1. Because of its scale/importance, 2. Because of the role AI has played and is playing as a key actor for Roma rights in Europe.
• Discrimination and stigmatization mean that progress is very slow: and public opinion is still too *"ferociously against Roma"* (Community member 1). There is a widespread concern at regional, national and local level that without continued pressure, any changes in policy and practice will grind to a halt.	**AGREE** – This is something we are taking into consideration and informs our intention to continue work on discrimination against Roma. However, we may need to consider exit strategies for some aspects of the work, while exploring any new areas that we need to be addressing.
• There is a particular need for pressure from the outside at the level of European institutions to respond to the high resistance at political level in Europe. Things are not	**AGREE** – Our strategy for 2015 is taking this into account and we are really focusing on solidifying EU's policing role (with the infringement procedure) and how this is used as

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necessarily getting better – for example it was reported that the actions by police or specialist forces has hardened towards Roma living in camps in a number of European countries. This suggests a continued need for coalition and partnership work with other civil society organisations at European and country levels.	leverage at the national level (campaign on the Czech Republic). During planning for 2016-2019 we need to bring in the views of partners at both regional and national level.
• The lack of capacity among local NGOs and communities was highlighted as an issue. It was suggested that AI could have a continued role in building local activists and NGOs capacity further to support and empower them to monitor the implementation of EU funded programmes and national strategies at the local and national levels. This would allow local actors to highlight any failures to AI, which might decide to pursue them if they have a strategic relevance.	**PARTIALLY AGREE** – While we agree that there is a capacity building role AI can play, we are not convinced this is about monitoring implementation of EU funded programmes and strategies at national/local levels. In many cases local/national NGOs are already better place to monitor such implementation, than AI is, and they are doing it. What AI can do is through joint work – or – if resources allow – more formal capacity building, to strengthen NGOs understanding of the HR framework, strategic campaigning and strengthen HR activism, including by lending its brand and voice to local struggles.
• For some, preventing discrimination is not the same as providing a sustainable solution. As long as the camps remain the only approach on housing for Roma, segregation and social exclusion will worsen and so any inclusion strategy needs to begin with the rethinking of housing policies. • Short-term responses have to be re-cast into a more sophisticated approach to address the housing issue as part of a wider social integration process encompassing education and social cohesion/ integration including also AI's involvement in working conditions and work inclusion. • This would require a wider set of campaign targets for example at the EC level beyond DG Justice within the Commission, including DG Employment, Regions (which is in charge of the Structural Funds) and also health and education – in practice those who make the Roma Task Force.	**PARTIALLY AGREE** – We are already thinking along these lines – our work to expose discrimination in access to social housing in Italy, and planned work to look at barriers for community in Cluj, Romania, to access alternative/social housing are some examples. As mentioned above looking at issues related to Roma accessing the labour market is a lot more complicated – both in terms of research and achieving policy/practice change (especially as far as this issue is linked to discrimination by private employers).
• Positive examples of Roma people successfully integrating and providing an economic and cultural contribution to society would help shift public opinion alongside a continued	AGREE – we are already exploring ideas for bringing the element in as part of the campaign to Wipe out school discrimination of Roma in the Czech Republic. We have

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public campaign.	also tried to use this kind of lines in the regional campaign "human rights here, Roma rights now" and use images that do not reinforce the stereotype. The inclusion of Roma activists in campaigning has definitely also contributed towards this approach.
• Many stakeholders suggested that any future campaign would need to build on the involvement of Roma communities themselves. AI could continue and expand on its role in building capacity or Roma leaders to get more active and engaged with decision-making in Europe."	**AGREE** – As mentioned above this has proved to be very effective. But we note – as above – the significant resource implications.
"4.12 Which of these priorities AI takes forward (if any) need to be considered in the light of other priorities and where AI are uniquely placed. However, if there is one area where AI have consistently been identified the lead, it is the regional campaign focusing on EU institutions. Our findings would suggest that even if a campaign were to focus at the European level it would require: • A public campaign: we have no direct evidence that the public campaign led to EC institutions making decisions but it has certainly been widely noted by decision makers and has put additional pressure on them to respond • A continued link to Roma communities so that their own needs and priorities can be better represented and AI can continue to produce high quality research to back their advocacy effort at this level."	**AGREE**