

Bucharest, October 6th, 2008

Your Excellency,

We are seeking your support in relation with the hunger strike initiated by our colleague Mr. Istvan Haller following the non-observance of judgements of the European Court of Human Rights by Romania in relation with cases of violence against Roma dating from the early 90es.

You might remember the incidents of collective violence leading to the murder of three Roma men and the arson of Roma houses in Hădăreni, Plăieșii de Jos and Cașinu Nou. As a result of the friendly settlements reached in *Moldovan and others v. Romania* (5 July 2005), *Kalanyos and others v. Romania* (26 April 2007) and *Gergely v. Romania* (26 April 2007), the European Court of Human Rights took note of the declaration of the Romanian Government pledging to adopt general measures for combating discrimination and specific measures relevant to each case (including reconstruction of houses, building a medical clinic, rehabilitating the local school, initiating programs to foster access to the labour market for local Roma communities, awareness raising and tolerance projects etc.).

In the Hădăreni case, the Government Decision 523 from 2006 established measures for meeting the commitments undertaken before the European Court of Human Rights. However, in 2007, the funds pledged were made available only in September-October and were supposed to be spent by December 15th. As this could not happen, the funds were returned to the state budget. In 2008, these programs were not initially mentioned in the state budget and though the August 2008, Government Decision 980 on supplementing the state budget mentioned the funding and the Hădăreni Program was re-launched in a press conference on September 10th, the funds pledged were not disbursed so far. Even if the amount promised would be available in the near future, due to mandatory legal procedures on organizing a tender for building the houses and improving the infrastructure, once again the funds would have to be spent between November and December 15th, which means that once again some attempts to build would be carried out during the winter and in the end the unspent amount would be returned to the state budget.

As for the commitments of the Romanian Government in relation with the friendly settlements of the Plăieșii de Jos and Cașinu Nou cases, the Government represented by the National Authority for Roma abandoned the projects claiming that the mayor of Plăieșii de Jos would oppose to the measures supposed to be carried out as a part of the governmental commitments.

Mr. Istvan Haller who as human rights activist was in 1993 the head of the Human Rights Department of the Pro Europe League documented all these cases and supported the victims in their quest for an effective remedy. Following the repeated failure of the authorities in observing the commitments undertaken before the European Court and the appalling conditions of the Roma communities after more than 15 years after the mob violence and arson, Mr. Haller decided to go on hunger strike on October 3rd.

We are seeking your support in convincing the Romanian authorities of the importance of observing our international commitments and of taking adequate measures to improve the conditions of these three communities. We think that the vows undertaken by Romania will be fulfilled only by committing the required amount in due time and in good faith and by allowing the proper use of the funding. We also hope that the courageous initiative of Mr. Haller will not be sanctioned by attacking his current position as a member of the Steering Board of the National Council on Combating Discrimination.

Respectfully yours,

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Asociația ACCEPT – Romanița IORDACHE
Centrul de Resurse Juridice – Georgiana IORGULESCU
CeRe – Oana BĂHNARU-PREDA
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