



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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*“The European Commission must take the Italian Government
to the European Court of Justice”*

PRESS STATEMENT

Bucharest, June 30th, 2008 – The recent statements of Italy’s Minister of Interior, Roberto Maroni, regarding a plan to fingerprint the Roma ethnic population from the Italian Peninsula, represents a new violation of the fundamental human rights and a new defiance from a high-rank Italian official against the European Union and the values it’s build upon, as well as against the European legislation.

The measure of fingerprinting an entire community based on its members’ affiliation to a certain ethnic group, as well as the measure of creating a data base on the Roma community in Italy, are of Nazi inspiration and are unacceptable in a democratic state, built on the rule of law. Even more serious is the initiative of subjecting the children from the Roma community to the same measures.

These actions of the Italian authorities are a violation of the provisions on right to equality and non-discrimination, as they are stipulated in the EU Treaty, in the European Convention of Human Rights, in the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the International Convention on Children’s Rights, as well as in the EU 43 and 78 Directives from 2000, which forbid discrimination on ethnic and racial grounds, and in the 38/2004 Directive on freedom of movement of the European citizens, which expressly forbids systematic checks on EU citizens.

Minister Maroni’s mention of a EU Directive that would allow such actions is simply manipulative. There is no EU Directive allowing such fingerprinting actions or such a census. The referral to the Council Regulation 380/2008 is categorically wrong, since the amendments brought by this document are exclusively aimed to laying down a uniform format for all member states, regarding residence permits for third-country nationals. Furthermore, art.5a of the Regulation clearly states that *“where Member States use the uniform format for purposes other than those covered by this Regulation, appropriate measure must be taken to ensure that the confusion with the residence permit referred to in Article 1 is not possible”*.

If the Italian police has already started to collect digital prints, this must immediately be sanctioned by the European Commission. The Commission cannot wait until a law will be put in place, in order to take steps against the Italian government, as long as – even in the absence of such a law – the Italian authorities are already taking actions and these actions are a flagrant violation of art.6 from the EU Consolidated Treaty on the matter of respect for the fundamental human rights, and of the provisions of art 13 from TEC, which forbids discrimination on ethnic and racial grounds. In conclusion, the European Commission must take the Italian Government to the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg.