

Romania

Special Session on Indigenous Affairs

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Indigenous peoples throughout the world face constant discrimination and lack basic human resources. That is why Romania avidly supports the integration of indigenous people all the while keeping in mind their ethnic background and beliefs.

1. Indigenous Peoples, Mental Health and Wellness

Having recently closed a Decade of Roma Inclusion, it is clear that Romania openly advertises equal and accessible healthcare to their indigenous peoples : the Roma¹. With 20% of Roma population not covered by health insurance², solving this problem would be a first step to achieving the ultimate goal of providing adequate healthcare to all.

Romania's tuberculosis problem, in 2014, represented one quarter of all tuberculosis cases in the EU³. Considering that tuberculosis is among the ten leading causes of death⁴, proper treatment is crucial. However, most Roma families cannot seek proper care due to discrimination based on their ethnic background or lack of access to medical centers. Although the World Health Organization is constantly working on ways to diminish deaths caused by tuberculosis⁵, it is Romania's responsibility to take action for it's own country in helping to reduce the unnecessary deaths linked to the disease.

¹ Decade of Roma Inclusion. "Decade in Brief".

² United Nations Development Programme. "The Situation of Roma in 11 EU States - Survey results at a glance".

³ The Economist. "Getting serious: Romania and tuberculosis".

⁴ World Health Organization. "Fact Sheets". *Tuberculosis*.

⁵ World Health Organization. "Programmes". *The Global TB Program*.

Mental health, regardless of ethnic group, is a constant problem in today's society. Over 90% of participants in a Roma study stated that in addition to their mental health problems, they also suffered from physical ailments and other problems such as low income⁶. This goes to show that in marginalized groups, mental health has an even greater impact, as many are afraid or unable to seek help. Proper sensibilisation and education on the matter are necessary to help decrease the alarming statistics.

As mentioned previously, discrimination and lack of access to medical centers are the main reasons for preventable deaths among indigenous groups. The same applies to infant and child mortality : families are unable or too afraid to seek adequate prenatal and neonatal care. Proper education and precautions are needed in order to decrease the amount of preventable deaths among indigenous children and infants.

2. Indigenous Land Rights, Climate Change impacts and Environmental Protection of Resources

Climate change is a constant worry in the industrialized world. With global warming at its peak, it is crucial that everyone take part in the solution. That being said, it is inequitable that certain groups do not get the representation they deserve, such as many indigenous minorities including the Roma⁷. They may represent a much smaller demographic, however, their land is often the first to be taken when in need of industrial space⁸. It is unacceptable to simply dismiss a certain group of people and their opinions. Unfortunately, many indigenous groups face

⁶ Roma Support Group. "Mental Health Advocacy Project (2011)"

⁷ European Roma Rights Center. "Romani political participation and racism: reflections on recent developments in Hungary and Slovakia"

⁸ The Guardian. "Evicting Indigenous Australians from their homelands is a declaration of war."

constant rejection from their countries government due to the fact that they are significantly fewer compared to the rest of the population.

3. Indigenous Peoples, Poverty, and Development

Although Romania has tried to ease the gap between the Roma people and the rest of Romanian society by dedicating a decade to their integration, there is still work to be done on the matter; over 71% of the eastern european Roma population still lives in deep poverty⁹.

The Roma people have been the victims of institutional oppression for centuries (as have many other indigenous groups), therefore Romania should take further actions to help them finally reach a point of equality.

The reason for which poverty among indigenous peoples is more significant than the rest of the population, is due to the fact that it is a cycle. Once a group falls into poverty, it is almost impossible to conquer their financial problems without outside intervention. Therefore, it is Romania's goal to help the Romani break the cycle of poverty and eventually integrate themselves with the rest of the population all the while keeping their ethnic background and beliefs.

⁹ The World Bank. "Europe and Central Asia Brief". *Roma*.