

06 SEP. 2016  
Brussels,  
SC/ps/1901967 - D(16) 5061496

Dear Ms Spinelli,

Thank you for your letter of 20 April 2016 addressed to President Juncker urging the Commission to open infringement proceedings against Hungary due to discrimination of Roma children in education. President Juncker asked me to reply to you on his behalf.

You mention that there is considerable evidence for the existence of the problem and underline that the situation in the Hungarian educational system is actually deteriorating.

The Commission shares your commitment to fight against discrimination of Roma. On 26 May 2016 the Commission has taken the decision to send a letter of formal notice to Hungary requesting it to put an end to the discrimination of Roma children in education. The European Commission is requesting Hungary to ensure that Roma children enjoy access to quality education on the same terms as all other children and urges the government to bring its national laws on equal treatment as well as on education and the practical implementation of its educational policies into line with the Racial Equality Directive (Council Directive 2000/43/EC). This Directive prohibits discrimination on grounds of racial or ethnic origin in education. The Commission has a number of concerns in relation to both Hungarian legislation and administrative practices which lead to the result that Roma children are disproportionately over-represented in special schools for mentally disabled children and also subject to a considerable degree of segregated education in mainstream schools.

The aim of the Commission's action is to ensure for Roma children an equal access to education which is a determining factor for employment opportunities and thus an indispensable component of working towards full Roma inclusion.

In the recent past and in relation to similar cases, the Commission has sent letters of formal notice to two other Member States, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, in relation to similar issues in the recent past. If Hungary fails to reply to the letter of formal notice in a satisfactory manner, the Commission may send to the Hungarian authorities a reasoned opinion.

I hope this reassures you that the Commission is firmly committed to defending the rights of the Roma in the EU.

Yours sincerely,



Mr Benedek JÁVOR, MEP  
Ms Soraya POST, MEP  
Ms Barbara SPINELLI, MEP  
Mr Frederick FEDERLEY, MEP  
Ms Laura FERRARA, MEP  
European Parliament