



# INTERNATIONAL ROMANI UNION

Office of the President of IRU  
Normunds Rudevičs



Address: Doma laukums 8a, RIGA, LV-1050  
Phone/Fax: +371 67554222  
Mob.phone: +371 27771814  
e-mail: normunds.rudevics@gmail.com  
www.iru2020.com

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To the President of the European Commission  
**Mr. Jean-Claude Juncker**

**Honorable Mr. Juncker**

Today there are about 20 million Roma in Europe. Whilst the report for the LIBE Committee from December 2015 identifies many good practise points in the treatment of Roma issues in different countries, some of the basic understandings about Roma way of life, mentality and particularities are overlooked, although some serious funds are spent every year on addressing the problems of Roma. This is also due to the fact that 27 Member States have their own programs with regards to Roma, which differ cardinally. Currently, there is no clear unified strategy within EU which could lead to the improvement of the overall situation.

There is a genuine desire to assimilate Roma into the modern society employing social mechanisms, addressing the education and employment issues. However, a better understanding of Roma philosophy of life can lead to significant improvement in the interaction with them, integration and coexistence.

Roma communities traditionally lived in unities of family clans – so called Tabors. The core structure of a Tabor can be described as socialistic. The elders are the authority and the judges for the people. The worst that can happen is the ostracising of a person from the Tabor. This comes to show how non-violent is the philosophy of Roma. This is very important to understand – the situation for a Roma national in which he/she does not belong to a Tabor is a non-desirable one. We see that it is very important to make sure a Roma person will see the reality of belonging to the EU community. Dangers of having Roma “roaming free” without a centralised authority are losing them to various marginal elements, including some religious groups attracting and using them in order to increase their influence.

Most Roma people do not trust the banking system, using cash for buying most goods and services. Interestingly enough, this is not entirely up to the lack of education, as many of Roma nationals become good businessmen and artisans, and still the cash economy is more preferable for them due to the lack of trust in the social and economic system.

International Romani Union and its President, Normunds Rudevics, propose to become partners of the **Strategy 2020**, to contribute to it in dealing with Roma issues, creating a constructive collaboration. IRU is ready to present to the European Commission a Program of Integration of Roma in the EU, with deep understanding of the factors mentioned above. IRU is ready to act as a moderator for the programmes in support of Roma and to serve as a direct link between the Roma Desk at the European Commission and the local Roma leaderships in every Member state.

Sincerely yours

**Dr. Normunds Rudevics**  
The President of IRU