

Delegation DIE LINKE. in the  
European United Left/ Nordic Green Left  
European Parliamentary Group  
European Parliament  
60 Rue Wiertz  
B-1047 Brussels



Ivan Gašparovič  
President of the Slovak Republic  
Office of the President of the Slovak Republic  
Hodžovo nám. 1  
P.O. Box 128  
810 00 Bratislava 1

Brussels, 13 September 2013

***Wall to segregate Roma people in the city of Košice***

Dear Ivan Gašparovič, Dear President of the Slovak Republic,

The city of Košice was selected "European Capital of Culture 2013" because it committed to involve minorities in its programming through its strategic line Open Public Space.

It is therefore with disappointment and sadness that we have learnt about a wall separating Roma from their surroundings in the city of Košice.

We strongly believe that the construction of walls only paves the way to hatred, exclusion and alienation.

Many of the estimated 10-12 million Roma in the European Union face prejudice, intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion in their daily lives. Settlements and areas which are inhabited by only or for the most part by Roma can be found in many Member States. The isolation and concentration of Roma in separate settlements increases the likelihood of social conflict and tension, worsens the access to public utilities and infrastructure and there is some evidence that Roma who are living separately and in isolation are more likely to be victims of racism and violent attacks.

The Member States need to ensure that Roma are not discriminated against but treated like any other EU citizens with equal access to all fundamental rights as enshrined in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. Any discrimination based on any ground such as race, colour, ethnic or social origin or membership of a national minority shall be prohibited.

The construction of walls is neither adequate to fight prejudices nor to break the vicious cycle of poverty and constitutes discrimination against a group of people in the Republic of Slovakia.

We therefore hereby convey to you our strong concerns and ask you to ensure that the mayor Rudolf Bauer of the concerned city part of Košice will remedy this unpleasant situation. We would be pleased if you could keep us informed about the further developments.

Sincerely yours,

Gabriele Zimmer, Chair of the European United Left/Nordic Green Left

Cornelia Ernst, Member of the European Parliament

Thomas Händel, Member of European Parliament

Jürgen Klute, Member of European Parliament

Sabine Lösing, Member of European Parliament

Martina Michels, Member of European Parliament

Helmut Scholz, Member of European Parliament

Sabine Wils, Member of European Parliament