

Intervention of Prof. Danuta Hübner in the plenary session in Strasbourg, 9th February

Summit in Cordoba will be a test for all of us, European institutions and Members states.

It should demonstrate clear commitment to prepare a fully fledged, political and operational strategy that would go in addressing Roma issue beyond obvious human rights perspective - fundamental as they are - towards real economic and social inclusion.

We need a strategy, a policy and an action plan, cutting across all areas relevant for economic and social belonging.

Much has been done and achieved but without any doubt there is still a long travel ahead of us.

We need member states, European Commission and the Parliament working hand in hand.

We expect from the European Commission a clear allocation of the responsibility for this matter to one of Commissioners and effective coordination between all relevant services.

We expect that the 5 mln euro project currently implemented by the Commission in cooperation with World Bank and OECD will pave the way for efficient and effective solutions to areas which matter most - early childhood education and economic inclusion and will provide progress on policy learning and evaluation.

We appreciate efforts by DG for Regional Policy and we encourage the Commission to further enhance local and regional involvement in practical actions strengthening economic inclusion of Roma society.

In the European Parliament, many colleagues across political groups have already shown their involvement. But our duty is to put much greater political power into this issue.

Cordoba Summit gives us a chance to make European labour market truly inclusive. It gives us a chance to move forward in addressing European demographic challenge. We must treat Cordoba summit as a last call for real inclusion of the Roma.