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**REPORT**

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(...)

***4. Communication from the Committee of Ministers***

(...)

The first question is No. 1, tabled by Mr Cilevics, relating to the situation of Roma in Patras.

*“Question No. 1:*

Mr Cilevics,

In June 2005, the Committee of Ministers adopted a resolution on the violation of the Social Charter by Greece. The European Committee of Social Rights found that, one year later, Greece had not redressed the situation.

In its answer to my related Written Question No. 502, the Committee of Ministers included only information provided by the Greek authorities, while completely disregarding the conclusions of the European Committee of Social Rights, as well as findings of the Council of Europe Commissioner for the Human Rights arising from his September 2006 visit regarding the illegal evictions of Roma in Patras.

Recent NGO information indicates that the problems remain as acute as ever. The Deputy Supreme Court Prosecutor justified the evictions and stated that “Patras should not be turned into a gyp-town”.

To ask the Chairperson of the Committee of Ministers,

Does the Committee of Ministers intend to further address the situation of Roma evictions in Patras, in particular, in view of the Commissioner for Human Rights' findings; and

Does the Committee of Ministers intend to invite the Greek authorities to investigate the alleged illegal actions in respect of the Patras Roma, as well as the allegedly racist statements by the Deputy Supreme Court Prosecutor?"

Mr Stolfi, will you please answer this question?

Mr STOLFI (Translation). – The Committee of Ministers is closely monitoring the situation of the Roma in Greece. As the Commissioner for Human Rights pointed out in a letter to the Greek Minister of the Interior, evictions must be carried out only in exceptional circumstances and in a reasonable manner. The persons concerned should be allowed to challenge the eviction measure before the relevant courts.

In its reply dated February 2007, to which the honourable parliamentarian refers, the Committee of Ministers took note of the measures taken by the Greek authorities to redress the situation reported by the European Committee of Social Rights. It encouraged the Greek authorities to continue their efforts and to report to the European Committee of Social Rights on the progress made in implementing measures to redress the situation in question.

As Chair of the Committee of Ministers, I welcome this information and I trust that Greece will carefully consider the comments made by the Commissioner and the European Committee of Social Rights and continue to take all the necessary measures to improve the living conditions of the Roma. I would also like to point out that the Council of Europe – and assuredly the Greek Government – considers any racist or xenophobic remarks to be unacceptable. I therefore assume that the Greek authorities will examine these allegations with particular care.

THE PRESIDENT. – Thank you. Would you like to ask a supplementary question, Mr Cilevics?

Mr CILEVICS (*Latvia*). – Yes, I would. The situation that we are discussing occurred two years ago and we still have hope, so do you agree that the Committee of Ministers should back the activities of Council of Europe bodies and that it should not disregard the findings of the human rights commissioner and European committees?

THE PRESIDENT. – Would you like to reply, Mr Stolfi?

Mr STOLFI said that he could assure the member that the Committee of Ministers supported the work done by other bodies in this area.

THE PRESIDENT. – Thank you.

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