

Press Release

Diplomatic speech with racist content Antidiscrimination organizations ask the minister Baconschi to resign

Bucharest, 16th February 2010

The signatory organizations protest against the racist declarations of the Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Teodor Baconschi, following a meeting with the French State Secretary for European Affairs, Pierre Lellouche on the 11th February 2010 and against the content of the press release issued by the Romanian Government on 11.02.2010¹, alleged to report the discussions that took place during a meeting between the Prime Minister Emil Boc and the French State Secretary, Pierre Lellouche.

Speaking about the Romanian community in France, the minister Baconschi stated, according to the press declaration published on the Minister of Foreign Affairs website²: „*We have some physiological, natural problems of criminality amongst some Romanian communities, especially among the communities of Roma ethnic Romanian citizens.*” The minister directly associates the criminality with the ethnic origin. Moreover, in an extremely grave manner, he gave a biological explanation for the association he had made with the criminality; a typical explanation one could receive from the Nazi Germany for the reasons of the Holocaust.

Mr Baconschi is not aware of the fact that the association between the criminality and the ethnicity, that „racial profiling” is neither in the spirit, not in the letter of the XXI-st century European law which he invokes, on the contrary.

The association of the ethnicity with the crime violates the Roma people rights to dignity and infringes the Romanian, European and international human rights law. Moreover, these are not the first statements on this issue, the former PM Calin Popescu Tariceanu did the same and he was sanctioned at that moment by the civil society.³

The same type of speech appears in the press release issued by the Romanian Government, following the meeting between the PM Emil Boc and the French State Secretary Pierre Lellouche: “High of the agenda of the meeting there were the measures envisaged by the Romanian authorities to prevent and deter the crimes committed in France by the **Romanian citizens of Roma origin**” (s.n.).

By its content, the press release issued by the Romanian Government also explicitly and deliberately hints at the existence of a direct link between an ethnic group and crime.

As result of the gravity of the Foreign Minister Baconschi’s statement, we call for **his honor resignation or for his dismissal**. We believe that maintaining Mr Baconschi at the head of

¹ Press office , Romania’s Government, *PM Emil Boc received today at Victoria Palace the State Secretary in the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Pierre Lellouche*, 11.02.2010, available at http://www.gov.ro/primul-ministru-emil-boc-l-a-primit-astazi-la-palatul-victoria-pierre-lellouche-secretar-de-stat-in-mae-francez_l1a108046.html (15.02.2010)

² Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Press Statement *Teodor Baconschi, Minister of Foreign Affairs*, 11.02.2010, available at: <http://www.mae.ro/index.php?unde=doc&id=42249&idlnk=2&cat=4> (15.02.2010)

³ Călin Popescu-Tariceanu: “*Ministry of the Interior and the Reform of the Administration from Bucharest will send a team of five policemen to assist in capture and return of Roma people who commit crimes in Rome*” (2007)

Romanian Foreign Ministry, after his statements, infringes the dignity of the Romanian citizens and that it is unacceptable for the image carrier of Romania abroad to show an institutionalized racism through Middle Age typical scientific explanations. Nevertheless, we ask the Romanian Government and the French Embassy in Romania to publicly clarify their positions towards the association of the Roma origin with crime.

The signatory organizations sent a letter to the concerned institutions and will write a petition to the National Council for Fighting Discrimination against Mr Baconschi.

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