



HOUSE OF COMMONS

14<sup>th</sup> November 2018

By email

**Re: 'Action Against Hate: the UK Government's plan for tackling hate crime-two years on.'**

Dear Baroness Williams and Lord Bourne,

We are writing in our capacity as Co-Chairs of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers, who are concerned with tackling the inequalities faced by these communities in the UK today.

Thank you for your letter updating us about the positive work that is being done on tackling hate crime. We welcome the steps being taken in the Hate Crime Action Plan and that the '*Action Against Hate The UK Government's plan for tackling hate crime – two years on*' document refers to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. However, we feel there are some missed opportunities to more actively address the widespread race hate against Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. This is particularly pertinent given the worrying research that has just been published by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (Oct 2018), '*Developing a national barometer of prejudice and discrimination in Britain*', which shows that British people still hold the highest level of prejudice towards Gypsies and Travellers out of any group in the UK today (44% in England felt very negative towards Gypsies, Roma and Travellers, 27% towards immigrants and 20% towards Muslims).

In the light of this disproportionate and worrying level of prejudice held towards Gypsies, Roma and Travellers, we believe specific and concrete actions need to urgently be put in place to tackle anti-Gypsyism.

We note that in the '*Update on the actions from the UK Governments 2016 Action Against Hate action plan*' there are a number of actions and updates that refer to tackling antisemitism and Islamophobia but do not include tackling anti-Gypsyism. We have listed some examples of these below.

In Table 1, Action 2, 'To support Streetwise to work with young people to tackle antisemitism and Islamophobia.' Where the Streetwise Stand Up! Project has reached over 8,000 young people to challenge prejudices, 'particularly antisemitism and Islamophobia'. It is essential that such awareness raising and anti-bullying programmes also include anti-Gypsyism. Is there scope for widening the scope of this project to do so?

In Table 2, Action 7, 'To work with the Society of Editors, the Media Trust and the Independent Press Standards Organisation to update the 'Reporting Diversity' Booklet', Update 'In collaboration with the Cross-Government Working Group on Tackling Antisemitism and the Society of Editors, MHCLG has produced a guide to moderating online hate crime.' In Table 2, Action 8, 'To work with the Independent Press Standards Organisation to devise training to help journalists to have a better understanding of Islam'. We can see in the update that MHCLG and DCMS are overseeing work towards providing guidance on the sensitive reporting of Islam, on Sikhism and on antisemitism.

We welcome this positive work but feel there is a glaring gap in these action points in the consideration of race hate against GRT communities which is very much alive in the comments sections of media outlets' websites and irresponsible coverage of GRT issues in the media. We are grateful for the answer you gave on the 5<sup>th</sup> November to our parliamentary question HL10975 where you confirmed that any revisions to the Reporting Diversity Booklet will consider hatred against Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. Could you please confirm when such revisions will take place and if there will be specific references and actions to incorporate tackling anti-Gypsyism as there is with other forms of race hate?

We also note in Table 2, Action 15, that Cross-Government Working Groups on Antisemitism and Anti-Muslim hatred already exist. We appreciate that there is an MHCLG GRT Stakeholder Group and a DFE GRT Stakeholder Group but there is merit in a cross-departmental approach to tackling Anti-Gypsyism.

We would like to end by raising an issue we have done on a number of occasions, that all police forces should disaggregate race hate crime data to include the categories of Romany Gypsies, Irish Travellers and Roma so that the a better picture of race hate can be achieved.

Tackling race hate against Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities will require strong leadership and we look forward to receiving a response to our specific points about how race hate against Gypsy Roma and Traveller communities might more effectively be addressing in the Hate Crime Action Plan and any subsequent updates to it.

Yours sincerely

The image shows two handwritten signatures in blue ink. The signature on the left is 'Baroness Whitaker' and the signature on the right is 'Kate Green'.

Baroness Whitaker

Kate Green MP

Co-Chairs of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers