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### **Main messages**

- On 16 September 2008, the European Commission, the European Parliament and the French Presidency combined their efforts and organised the first EU Roma Summit with over 500 participants.
- President Barroso in his speech at this event stated that "*It is by sending a clear political message to the Member States about the urgent need to act that the European Commission can exercise its role of political leadership in this area*".
- Member States expressed their political commitment towards the Roma community in the Conclusions of the European Councils of 14 December 2007 and 14 June of this year. The December European Council will most likely incorporate in its conclusions a further commitment towards Roma inclusion by calling the Commission to set up a European integration platform to exchange good practices.
- The European Parliament adopted a Resolution early this year (end of January 2008) on the European Strategy on Roma and has asked to the European Commission to set up a pilot project in support of Roma integration.

- In the coming two years the Directorate General for Regional Policy will set up a pilot programme to support innovative projects promoting the inclusion of the Roma population through actions covering:
  - - **1. Education** : early, vocational and life long, including awareness campaigns targeted at the majority populations
    - **2. Housing, health care and social services**
    - **3. Self-employment support by exploring the development of a micro credit programme**
    - **4. Strengthening of the role of Roma organizations and leaders in inclusion promotion.**
  
- Through the Cohesion policy we can work together with Member States and regions to better seize and tackle the variety of problems related to Roma integration. Roma societies in the old MSs face different problems than in new MSs and the projects feasible for Slovakia rural communities are different from those needed in the outskirts of big capital cities like Paris and Rome.
  
- The political momentum is there. We have now to work very closely with the Roma societies associations to bolster initiatives, to address the complex problems faced by Roma and having in mind that we have to work very closely with national, regional and local authorities.