

Information Documents

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Thematic Action Plan on the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers^[1]

(2016-2019)^[2]

Introduction

Across Europe many Roma and Travellers continue to live on the margins of society, where they are frequently subjected to discrimination, prejudice and hate. Their situation remains of profound concern.

A major objective for the Council of Europe has been to help contribute to the full inclusion of Roma and Travellers in their local communities. The genuine and effective participation of fellow Europeans of Roma and Traveller origin is a precondition for success.

In 2010, the Council of Europe strengthened its political commitment to the inclusion of Roma and Travellers through the adoption of the “Strasbourg Declaration on Roma”^[3]. In line with the strategic orientations agreed by the Ministers’ Deputies at their 1231st meeting on 17 June 2015^[4], the Council of Europe will now focus its action on three major priorities:

- to tackle anti-Roma and anti-Traveller prejudice, discrimination and crimes more effectively;
- to demonstrate innovative models for inclusive policies for the most vulnerable;
- to promote innovative models for local-level solutions.

This thematic Action Plan provides the political, logical and budgetary framework for Council of Europe action in the years 2016 to 2019, subject to the decisions of the Committee of Ministers on the Programme and Budget. Particular efforts will be taken to enhance the level of focus and concentration of project activities and to increase their visibility and impact. In addition, it aims to offer targeted support to member States on relevant inclusion policies and to implement result-oriented projects with a concrete impact.

Priority 1: Tackling anti-Roma and anti-Traveller prejudice, discrimination and crimes (“anti-Gypsyism”)

The results of the monitoring activities of the Council of Europe, and evidence from other sources, show that Roma and Travellers still suffer from widespread anti-Gypsyist prejudice and stereotyping and are still the victims of massive discrimination in many member States. These processes perpetuate the marginalisation of Roma and Traveller communities and pose serious obstacles for any policy initiatives to improve their situation.

Prejudice, discrimination and crimes must be tackled by a combination of legal responses, capacity-building, as well as educational and awareness-raising initiatives.

All bodies and institutions of the Council of Europe are engaged in securing the full application of European standards in order to abolish the discrimination of Roma and Travellers, in monitoring the progress achieved, and in building the capacities of public authorities and civil society. The conventions and recommendations of the Council of Europe provide the relevant standards, together with the recommendations of the convention mechanisms, the Commissioner for Human Rights and the European Committee against Racism and Equality (ECRI).

Overall objective

To achieve the inclusion of Roma and Travellers in European societies as citizens with full rights and responsibilities.

Specific objectives

1.1 Strengthening the competence to fight against anti-Gypsyism

- The Council of Europe will be a partner of the “European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture” (ERIAC)[\[5\]](#), set up as an independent institution to promote Romani arts and culture. The Council of Europe will during the launching phase make a financial contribution and engage itself in its governance.
- The Council of Europe will work towards the integration of curricular elements on the history of Roma and Travellers in school, reaching Roma, Travellers and non-Roma pupils and students alike. The activity includes the production of teaching material, the training of educational professionals and the promotion of the website devoted to the remembrance of Roma victims during WWII. Furthermore, Council of Europe support for the European Parliament’s resolution of 15 April 2015 to declare 2 August the “European Roma Holocaust Memorial Day”[\[6\]](#) will be explored.
- The “*Dosta!*”[\[7\]](#) awareness-raising campaign against prejudice, stereotypes and anti-Gypsyism and for the promotion of Romani culture, language and history will be prolonged and if possible expanded beyond its current implementation in 17 member States and Kosovo[\[8\]](#). A child-friendly version of “*Dosta!*” campaign material will be produced and distributed in participating member States. The “No Hate Speech” campaign will also contribute to spreading a counter-narrative against anti-Roma and anti-Traveller hate speech.

1.2 Improving the access of Roma and Travellers to justice

- Based on a successful pilot project in 2012, effective primary legal aid to Roma and Travellers will be rolled out on a wider scale by the Council of Europe.
- In co-operation with national police forces, human rights institutions and equality bodies, the Council of Europe will promote solutions which have been successfully implemented in member States to tackle the notorious under-reporting and under-prosecution of racist crimes against Roma and Travellers.

1.3 Developing the skills and knowledge of legal professionals and administrators

The Council of Europe is co-operating with OSCE-ODIHR, Amnesty International, the European Network of Equality Bodies (EQUINET), the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions (ENNHRI) and the EEA /Norway Grants. The Council of Europe will try to establish a common initiative with the European Commission and the OSCE on practical ways to strengthen the capacities to promote the inclusion of Roma and Travellers. This initiative must take account of existing practices and be conducted in close co-operation with national governments. Accessing and managing EU structural funds available for the social inclusion of vulnerable groups is a particularly important issue.

- Comprehensive Council of Europe training programmes for legal professionals on non-discrimination with a focus on vulnerable groups, including Roma and Travellers, will be implemented more widely. New and updated HELP training courses for judges, prosecutors and lawyers will be made available in several member States. Training opportunities dealing with diversity and non-discrimination, focusing on the situation of Roma and Travellers will be offered to national police forces, including border police.
- The Council of Europe will co-operate with Romania, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" and Albania to help strengthen the capacity of detention systems to comply with relevant international human rights instruments by improving the competences of police staff in pre-trial detention centres.

Priority 2: Demonstrating innovative models for inclusive policies for the most vulnerable

Roma and Travellers are extremely vulnerable to violence, crime, economic and cultural discrimination. Within these communities, women, children and youth are particularly exposed to multiple discrimination and specific forms of violence, including early or forced marriage, domestic violence, trafficking and forced begging. Young women and men receive insufficient support in their transition to autonomy and working life and risk permanent exclusion. At the same time, women, children and young people are fundamental for bringing about social and economic change in Roma and Travellers communities; their full enjoyment of rights requires special support, also from within the Roma and Traveller communities themselves.

Overall objective

To empower the most vulnerable among Roma and Travellers, and strengthen their protection against all forms of discrimination.

Specific objectives

2.1 Strengthening the self-organisation of young Roma and Travellers and their participation in society

Council of Europe action in this area aims at mainstreaming youth-related matters in all policies dealing with Roma and Travellers issues and Roma and Travellers issues in youth policies. In education, a pilot project on the exchange of experience between teaching staff from different member States has produced positive results.

- Training and education programmes will be set up to support Roma and Travellers youth leaders, youth workers and human rights educators with a view to strengthening the

development of democratic leadership of Roma and Travellers youth organisations and the emergence of Roma youth leaders ("Roma and Travellers Youth Academy").

- Peer-to-peer training of teachers on inclusive education for Roma and Travellers pupils will be rolled out to more member States.

2.2 Better protecting the rights of Roma and Travellers children

Action in this area will be conducted as a part of the Council of Europe strategy on the rights of the child in the forthcoming period.

- The Council of Europe will keep a focus on the access of Roma and Traveller children, in particular girls, to inclusive education and address the negative consequences of early/child marriage. Priority topics will be school attendance, early school-leaving and absenteeism, particularly of girls, early and forced marriage, human trafficking within Roma and Traveller communities, the situation of street children, prostitution, forced begging and domestic violence, and access to personal identity documents where they do not yet have them.

2.3 Empowering Roma and Traveller women and promoting gender equality

Action in this area will be conducted in the framework of the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017. It will follow up on the results of the International Roma Women's Review Conferences of the Council of Europe[9] and the CAHROM thematic report on empowering Roma women and gender mainstreaming in national Roma integration strategies.

- The Council of Europe will implement a new project to improve the access of Roma and Traveller women to justice, starting in 2016 in Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Lithuania and Romania, possibly in co-operation with the European Commission. The project includes training opportunities for Roma and Travellers women, capacity-building action for legal professionals and law enforcement bodies and the establishment of low-threshold services providing legal advice.
- In co-operation with the European Commission, the Council of Europe Development Bank will encourage entrepreneurship particularly of Roma women through pilot projects in the Southeast European region.
- The conceptual framework of gender equality and empowerment action will be promoted through the Roma Women's International Conferences planned for 2017 and 2019.

Priority 3: Promoting innovative models for local-level solutions

Policy measures at local and regional level are decisive for bringing about real improvement for the social inclusion of Roma.

Overall objective

To enable local and regional authorities to address discrimination more effectively and develop successful strategies for the full inclusion of Roma and Travellers in society.

Specific objectives

3.1 Supporting the participation of Roma and Travellers in local decision-making

“Democratic Governance and Roma Community Participation through Mediation” (ROMED2), a Joint Programme with the European Commission, aims to improve the participation of Roma by mobilising Roma and Travellers communities and to bring them closer to local decision-making. ROMED2 uses mobilisation of Roma citizens and the Roma community to promote effective participation in decision making, training and accompanying measures, empowering Roma and local administrations for more effective civic dialogue and co-operation, including through Community Action Groups, and local awareness raising actions for the understanding of the local governance and power relations. In 2015, the programme has been implemented in over 80 municipalities in 12 member States. The programme is currently being evaluated.

- Following the conclusion and evaluation of the ROMED2 programme in 2016, the Council of Europe will in co-operation with the European Commission prepare and implement a follow-up programme, building on the ROMED1 and ROMED2 results.

3.2 Strengthening the capacity of local and regional authorities to develop and implement plans, strategies and services for the inclusion of Roma and Travellers

The Joint Programme ROMACT aims to facilitate capacities and resources for local development in areas with majority Roma population. ROMACT supports local administrations, enabling them to implement sustainable inclusion policies, including through a better use of EU funds. Training and coaching sessions for local authorities to become familiar with key principles and tools for successful Roma inclusion policies, functional multisectoral platforms/teams within local administrations and technical support in the process of accessing and using EU funds are the main actions. ROMACT promotes good governance processes in education, employment, health, housing, urban development and culture. In 2015, the programme has been implemented in six member States.

- The ROMACT programme will be continued and extended to additional member States. New programme components will be added, particularly as regards co-operation and common actions and projects between municipalities in Southeast and Western Europe.

Accompanying measures

In order to support the implementation of the Thematic Action Plan on the inclusion of Roma and Travellers 2016-2019, it will be necessary to also take a certain number of accompanying organisational steps.

- Starting in 2016 and at regular intervals thereafter (annually or bi-annually), the Secretary General will publish a “digest” which makes the most relevant results of monitoring and other activities of the Council of Europe pertaining to on the inclusion of Roma and Travellers available to a larger public.
- Roma rapporteurs will be appointed in additional intergovernmental committees, including CDDH, CDPPE and CDDG the CAHROM will however retain its role as the provider of strategic orientation for the Council of Europe action in favour of Roma and Travellers and will therefore be consulted in all issues of importance to the Council of Europe’s work for Roma-integration.

- The Council of Europe will continue and develop its dialogue with international organisations engaged in inclusion policies, notably through regular consultation meetings in the context of the CAHROM meetings held twice a year. This dialogue will especially focus on how to create synergies and avoid duplications in the work of the different international organisations. The member States will have the possibility to discuss these issues with the international organisations in the aftermath.
- The Council of Europe will organise two annual dialogue events with civil society organisations of Roma and Travellers, in order to discuss the results and follow-up of CAHROM thematic visits and Council of Europe monitoring activities.[\[10\]](#)
- The “European Alliance of Cities and Regions for Roma Inclusion” will remain under the stewardship of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, whereas its management will be brought closer to the operational activities of the SRSG Roma Support Team, in order to increase its outreach.

A special initiative will be taken to promote the recruitment of young Roma professionals into the Council of Europe Secretariat.

Implementation of the Action Plan

The activities foreseen under this Thematic Action Plan for the next two years are contained in the Secretary General’s proposal for the Programme and Budget 2016-2017[\[11\]](#), and subject to the final decision of the Committee of Ministers. They will be financed either under the Ordinary Budget, with the help of voluntary contributions, under a Joint Programme with the European Commission, or with a combination of funding sources. The Thematic Action Plan is understood as a flexible instrument, open to revision if changing circumstances demand this.

Activities foreseen for the years 2018 and 2019 are indicative. They will be adapted to future needs and requirements in the course of the preparation of the Programme and Budget for the next biennium.

The proposed actions take into account complementarity and co-operation with the European Union and other international actors. Gender and youth aspects are mainstreamed throughout the activities.

The activities listed in this Thematic Action Plan on the inclusion of Roma and Travellers are implemented by various services of the Council of Europe. Internal and external co-ordination will be ensured by the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Roma Issues. The Committee of Ministers will receive yearly updates on the progress and results.

Appendices

- Financial overview for the biennium 2016-2017, and outlook beyond 2017
- Sources of justification

APPENDIX I

Financial overview for the biennium 2016-2017, and outlook beyond 2017

Action Plan sectors	2016		2017		<i>Indicative annual costs expected after 2017</i>
	OB*	Extra- budgetary resources (available or required)	OB*	Extra- budgetary resources (available or required)	
1. Tackle anti-Roma prejudice, discrimination and crimes	355 000	620 000	355 000	118 000	> 1 380 000
2. Innovative models for inclusive policies for the most vulnerable	400 000	1 302 000	400 000	1 302 000	1 652 000
3. Innovative models for local-level solutions	806 000	1 500 000	694 000	1 500 000	3 000 000
4. Accompanying measures	150 000	.	150 000	.	95 000
Total	1 711 000	3 422 000	1 599 000	2 920 000	> 6 167 000

* These figures only refer to non-staff appropriations.

APPENDIX II

Council of Europe sources of justification

Overall sources of justification

- Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities
- CM Resolution (1997)10 and 2009(3)
- Reports 2014 and 2015 of the Secretary General on the “State of Democracy, Human Rights and the Rule of Law in Europe” (chapter V)
- “The Strasbourg Declaration on Roma”, Council of Europe High Level Meeting on Roma (Strasbourg, 20 October 2010), [CM\(2010\)133](#)
- [CM/Rec\(2008\)5](#) Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States on policies for Roma and/or Travellers in Europe

- [CM/Rec\(2012\)9](#) Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States on mediation as an effective tool for promoting respect for human rights and social inclusion of Roma
- [CM/Rec\(2009\)4](#) Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the education of Roma and Travellers in Europe
- [CM/Rec\(2006\)10](#) Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States on better access to health care for Roma and Travellers in Europe,
- [CM/Rec\(2005\)4](#) Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States on improving the housing conditions of Roma and Travellers in Europe

Sources of justification for specific actions

- 1. To tackle prejudice, discrimination and crimes against Roma and Travellers ("anti-Gypsyism")*
 - Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2009\)4](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the education of Roma and Travellers in Europe
 - Recommendation [Rec\(2001\)15](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member States on history teaching in the 21st century Europe
 - Declaration by the Ministers of Education of the Council of Europe member States establishing the Day of Remembrance of the Holocaust in schools and the Prevention of Crimes against Humanity
 - Declaration adopted on 27 March 2015 at the Brussels High Level Conference
 - Recommendation [Rec\(2004\)4](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the European Convention on Human Rights in university education and professional training
 - Council of Europe report: "Police training concerning migrants and ethnic relations", 1993.
 - ECRI General Policy Recommendations (GPR) Nos. 2, 7, 13; new ECRI GPR No. 15 on combating hate speech (*forthcoming*)
 - Case-law of the ECtHR: *Velikova group of cases v. Bulgaria* (pending execution), pilot judgement *Neshkov and others v. Bulgaria, Kehayov v. Bulgaria* (pending execution), *Bragadireanu group of cases v. Romania* (pending execution)
 - CPT reports and standards, CPT public statement concerning Bulgaria
 - CM Recommendation [Rec\(2006\)2](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the European Prison Rules
- 2. To demonstrate innovative models for inclusive policies for the most vulnerable*
 - [Resolution CM/Res\(2008\)23](#) on the youth policy of the Council of Europe
 - Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2015\)3](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the access of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods to social rights

- Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2010\)7](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education
- Recommendation 354 (2014) of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, Empowering Roma youth through participation: effective policy design at local and regional levels
- "Children's Human Rights — Council Of Europe Strategy For The Rights Of The Child 2016 – 2021", 2nd draft, 26 May 2015
- Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017, document [CM\(2013\)136](#), 6 November 2013
- CM Recommendation No. R(79)10 concerning women migrants
- CM [Rec\(2013\)1](#) on gender equality and media
- CM [Rec\(2007\)13](#) on gender mainstreaming in education
- CM R(93)1 on effective access to the law and to justice for the very poor

3. To promote innovative models for local-level solutions

- The Final Declaration of the Summit of Mayors: "Building Mutual Trust at the Grassroots" (Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, 22 September 2011)

4. Accompanying measures

- CM decision on co-operation with Roma organisations, 1229th meeting on 3 June 2015, item 6.3
- Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, "European Alliance Of Cities And Regions For Roma Inclusion — Strategic Guidelines (2014/2020)", 9 September 2014

[1] The terms "Roma" and "Travellers" are being used at the Council of Europe to encompass the wide diversity of the groups covered by the work of the Council of Europe in this field: on the one hand a) Roma, Sinti/Manush, Calé, Kaale, Romanichals, Boyash/Rudari; b) Balkan Egyptians (Egyptians and Ashkali); c) Eastern groups (Dom, Lom and Abdal); and, on the other hand, groups such as Travellers, Yenish, and the populations designated under the administrative term "Gens du voyage", as well as persons who identify themselves as Gypsies.

[2] Approved by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 2 March 2016 at the 1249th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies.

[3] [CM\(2010\)133](#)

[4] [SG/Inf\(2015\)16-final](#)

[5] Working title. Cf. decision in principle of the Committee of Ministers at the 1235th meeting, 15-16 September 2015, item 6.4

[6] European Parliament document P8_TA(2015)0095

[7] "Dosta" is the Romani word for "enough"

[8] All reference to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

[9] The 5th International Roma Women's Conference is held in Skopje, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", on 6-7 October 2015

[10] Decision of the Ministers' Deputies, 1229th meeting 3 June 2015, item 6.3

[11] Document [CM\(2015\)130](#)