



First Youth Meeting of Roma, Manouche and Gens de Voyage from France

European Youth Centre Strasbourg, 20 – 23 October 2014

Organised by the Youth Department of the Council of Europe in co-operation with ARPOMT and other Roma organisations, within the framework of the Roma Youth Action Plan

Meeting presentation

Background

The Council of Europe has been playing an important role regarding the situation of Roma people in Europe, regularly condemning widespread discrimination against Roma and their social and economic marginalisation and developing ways for Roma participation at European level. In October 2010, a High Level Meeting on Roma was organised and the outcome, the Strasbourg Declaration on Roma (CM(2010)133 final), has become a guiding document for all the activities the Council of Europe undertakes regarding Roma people. The High Level meeting agreed to a joint effort and pan-European response to meet the needs of the estimated 12 million Roma living in Europe. The “Strasbourg Declaration” includes guiding principles and priorities in the actions to be taken:

- Non-discrimination, citizenship, women and children’s rights.
- Social inclusion including education, housing and healthcare.
- Empowerment and better access to justice.

The youth sector of the Council of Europe has associated young Roma to its policy and work for intercultural dialogue and human rights education since 1995, when a ground-breaking training course for Roma youth leaders was held at the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg.

Initiated in 2011, the Roma Youth Action Plan¹ is a response of the Council of Europe to the challenges faced by Roma young people in Europe, particularly in relation to their empowerment, participation in policy decision-making processes and structures at European level and multiple realities of discrimination. The action plan includes activities of the Youth Department and of other sectors of the Council of Europe, as well as activities by other partners – intergovernmental and non-governmental – cooperating with the Council of Europe and interested in securing a maximum of impact of their activities by avoiding double work and creating synergies.

The Roma Youth Action Plan gives priority to human rights and intercultural dialogue as responses to discrimination and antigypsyism, together with the development and capacity-building of Roma youth organisations and movements. Another pillar of the Roma Youth Action Plan is youth participation, namely through supporting Roma youth organisations and making a link between Roma youth participation and the policy-makers.

Within the broad framework of the Council of Europe youth policy, the Roma Youth Action Plan puts a great emphasis on the needs to mainstream Roma youth issues in youth policies and youth issues in Roma policies (hereinafter, “double mainstreaming of Roma youth issues”). More specific country situations need also to be addressed and contextualized. Given this context, this First Youth Meeting of Roma, Manouche and Gens de Voyage from France plans to mobilise Roma youth leaders from France and neighbouring countries and to associate them in a participatory and citizenship process. The first meeting will create a space for discussion of the specific situation of young Roma, Manouche and Gens de Voyage from France and for planning specific responses by the young people themselves, with the support of the Council of Europe.

Aim and objectives

This meeting will bring together some 35 young people, aged 15 to 30, from the Roma, Manouche and *Gens de Voyage* communities. The young people will have different backgrounds (social, gender, origin, territory, life style).

¹ More about the Roma Youth Action Plan: www.coe.int/youth/roma

The meeting dates are 20 to 23 October 2014, and will be held at the European Youth Centre Strasbourg.

The meeting objectives are to:

- create a space for sharing and learning together among young Roma, Manouche and *Gens de Voyage*
- reflect on identity issues (who I am, what I want for my life) and European citizenship aspects
- learn about human rights and the tools to link with European young people
- propose together future activities and have a plan for the future as a group.

The young people who will participate in the meeting will be multipliers with other young people. They will make commitments and work together to better represent the issues that young Roma, Manouche and *Gens de Voyage* identify as important to work on.

Draft programme

Monday, 20 October

From 14:00 Arrival of participants

20h30 Welcome evening

Tuesday, 21 October

9:00 Official opening

10:00 Presentation of the objectives of the meeting, programme, introductions

12:30 Lunch break

14:00 Identity – culture – discrimination

16:00 Break

16:30 Citizenship – political life and participation

19:00 Dinner

20:00 Free expression space: learning to speak in public about yourself

Wednesday, 22 October

9:00 Dialogue with European institutions; Roma youth participation

12:30 Lunch

14:00 Planning activities for the future

16:00 Meetings with local organisations

19:00 Evening at *Paco de Maria*

Thursday 23 October

9:00 Evaluation; Follow-up of the meeting and planning the networking among participants

12:30 Conclusions

13:00 Closing

From 13:00 Departure of participants