



STEERING COMMITTEE FOR CULTURE, HERITAGE AND LANDSCAPE (CDCPP)

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27 September 2013

**4th meeting of the Bureau
Strasbourg, 16-17 October 2013**

MARSEILLES SEMINAR AND PUBLIC CONFERENCE ON “THE EUROPEAN DIMENSION OF ROMA CULTURE – SCIENTIFIC AND POLITICAL DISCOURSES” AND ACTIVITY REPORT ON THE EUROPEAN ACADEMIC NETWORK ON ROMANI STUDIES, 25-26 SEPTEMBER 2013

DOCUMENT FOR INFORMATION AND DECISION

Item 3.5 of the draft Agenda

The Bureau is requested to:

- take note of the Marseilles events on 25 and 26 September 2013 and underline the pertinence of the Council of Europe’s engagement with Roma issues through the works of the European Academic Network on Romani Studies;
- invite member States to optimally use the knowledge resources offered by the European Academic Network on Romani Studies in their policy making on Roma issues and disseminate information on the network at national level.

BACKGROUND

The EU/CoE Joint Programme “European Academic Network on Romani Studies” (RAN), launched in June 2011, has entered its second project phase in June 2013. The aim of the project is to facilitate intercultural dialogue and support efforts for the social inclusion of Romani citizens in Europe, by offering an interface between academic researchers and political decision makers. The project raises the visibility of existing research and fosters co-operation with policymakers to allow for the implementation of better conceived policy initiatives, based on reliable evidence. One of RAN’s key roles is thus to provide references and guidance to policymakers and researchers by mapping relevant resources in the field of Romani studies and developing a scientifically reliable -and unique in its scope- knowledge database on Roma. The network consists of a Scientific Committee (12 members) and more than 300 network members as well as a coordinator.

Marseilles Seminar and Public Conference on “The European Dimension of Roma Culture – Scientific and Political Discourses” and 5th meeting of the Scientific Committee of the network

The 5th meeting of the Scientific Committee took place in Marseilles on 25 September 2013 and marked the transition from phase I of the Network project (2011-2013) to phase II (2013-2015). Whilst the first phase allowed for building the network infrastructure, recruiting members and establishing communication protocols within the network and with relevant policy making bodies (with a priority on the Roma-related actions of the Council of Europe and the European Commission), the second phase will give emphasis to optimally using the scientific and policy expertise embodied in the RAN (intensified external communication and participation of network members in policy relevant meetings; provision of feed-back on documents and of policy reviews). The network will also carry on with specific trainings for young Roma researchers including from a Romani background (travel grants, study visits) to set up a strong, long-term knowledge and action resource on Roma policy.

The meeting of the Scientific Committee was followed by an academic seminar and a public conference on the “*European Dimension of Roma Culture: Scientific and Political Discourses*” as part of the programme of the European Capital of Culture Marseilles-Provence 2013 (<http://www.mp2013.fr/>) – a novelty in the programming of an ECC, providing exceptional visibility to an “easily forgotten” cultural subject.¹

The events - endeavouring to deconstruct meanings and interests behind so-called “Roma Culture” and correct widespread stereotypical perceptions as a step towards identifying common points and developing a new direction in the discourse - involved some 40 specialists and about 250 participants at the public event.

NEXT STEPS

The follow-up to the Marseilles events including the 5th session of the Scientific Committee of the RAN includes:

- the preparation of a reader on the scientific seminar and public conference on Roma Culture and dissemination with project stakeholders and the wider public;
- a video-documentation of the seminar lectures and creation of a YouTube channel to share these with the general interested public;
- detailed updating of the project action plan (2013-15) along decisions taken;
- an update of the RAN website and database functionalities to enhance search functions and offer a most efficient tool for study, policy design and implementation;
- the preparation of a dedicated workshop on academic research and policy making in the context of Romani Studies;
- enhanced communication and co-operation with policy making bodies at local, regional and national levels and pro-active involvement of RAN members in advisory and policy review processes;
- the implementation of grant and training schemes for young researchers.

¹ Specific topics included, inter alia: Romani language, literature, music, visual arts/museums, performing arts/theatre.