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CAHROM (2017)16

**AD HOC COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON ROMA AND TRAVELLER<sup>1</sup> ISSUES**  
**(CAHROM)**

**13<sup>th</sup> CAHROM MEETING**

**Prague, Czech Republic, 31 May-3 June 2017**

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CONCEPT PAPER ON THE PROPOSED REFORM OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE DIALOGUE  
WITH ROMA AND TRAVELLER ORGANISATIONS

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**BACKGROUND 2015-2017**

At its 1229<sup>th</sup> meeting on 3 June 2015:

*"The Deputies*

1. *took note of the Secretary General's proposal to create a mechanism for regular dialogue with Roma civil society organisations, as set out in document GR-SOC(2015)3 rev;*
2. *invited the Secretariat to begin preparations for the implementation of the regular dialogue event with Roma civil society organisations, with a view to holding the first trial meeting in autumn 2015, and to explore further possibilities for closer co-operation with the European Commission in the field of dialogue with Roma organisations;*
3. *agreed to prolong the partnership agreement with the European Roma and Travellers Forum (ERTF) to 31 December 2015, in the light of the synopsis of the GR-SOC (cf. GR-SOC(2015)CB4 rev);*
4. *invited the ERTF to actively participate in the new dialogue event".*



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In the present format, the Dialogue with Roma and Traveller civil society organisations (hereafter the "Dialogue") has not yet fully met its objectives since the three meetings held to date have been limited to general conclusions without concrete follow-up. Since the CAHROM Terms of Reference are currently being reviewed for 2018-2019, the timing is therefore right to reform the Dialogue which should be closely linked to:

- the Council of Europe Thematic Action Plan on the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers (2016-2019), the framework of the 10 goals for the next 10 years, and other relevant programmes and priorities;
- the "European Platform for Roma Inclusion", the EU mechanism for dialogue with Roma and pro-Roma organisations;

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<sup>1</sup> The term "Roma and Travellers" is 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.

- independent experts who can bring new perspectives, niche expertise and experience and can reinvigorate the Dialogue.

## OBJECTIVES

1. The three main objectives of the Dialogue indicated in the CM decision should be redrafted, see proposal below:
  - a) Reinforce regular dialogue and consultation between the Council of Europe and Roma and Traveller civil society, including those working at grassroots level, on policies and practices relevant for the inclusion of Roma and Travellers, as identified in the Council of Europe Thematic Action Plan on the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers (2016-2019) and the framework of the 10 goals for the next 10 years or additional priorities identified in consultation with Council of Europe's entities and monitoring bodies;
  - b) Channel the outcomes/conclusions/follow-up proposals of this regular dialogue prepared by two appointed civil society rapporteurs through member States (via the CAHROM) and the (National) European (Union) Platform for Roma Inclusion with a view to multiplying the impact of the Dialogue;
  - c) Timeframe permitting, for any future revision of the Council of Europe Thematic Action Plan on the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers (2016-2019), the Roma and Traveller civil society could be consulted through the Dialogue before new Council of Europe priorities are set.
  - d) [alternatively:] Act as civil society consultative body on the implementation of the Council of Europe Thematic Action Plan on the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers (2016-2019) and the framework of the 10 goals for the next 10 years.

## TOPICS ON THE AGENDA

2. The Council of Europe Secretariat should decide about the topics (maximum two per year) to be on the agenda of the Dialogue based on the Council of Europe Thematic Action Plan on the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers (2016-2019), the framework of the 10 goals for the next 10 years or additional priorities.
3. Within the two pre-identified topics, priority issues can be chosen at national level and working groups created accordingly. Cooperative work between all stakeholders could be coordinated using the current contact persons of the EU Platform for Roma Inclusion, CAHROM members, NRIS Focal Points, etc.
4. On an exceptional basis, additional topics for discussion could also be identified in order to respond to emergency/crisis situations in Europe/member States which require immediate dialogue with civil society and action.

## PARTICIPANTS

5. The Dialogue should be reformed in order to better combine organisational representation through non-governmental organisations with independent individual expertise. That way the Dialogue will be better enabled to benefit from the hands-on experience of independent experts working at grassroots level and understanding the real concerns and issues at stake.
6. The CM decision should therefore be amended in order to firmly base the Dialogue on the expertise provided by international Roma and Traveller organisations as well as by Roma and Traveller individuals.
7. Once the topics for the next Dialogue meeting have been identified, a call for motivated applications should be published on the Roma portal of the Council of Europe and through relevant websites, mailing lists and Roma news networks.
8. When responding to the call for applications, applicants should clearly state their area of competence in the field and indicate in which way their expertise would contribute to reaching pertinent conclusions on the two identified topics.

9. The call for applications should include questions about the working language (English, French or Romani), as well as the acceptance by the applicant to play a role of rapporteur, speaker, etc.
10. Guidelines for rapporteurs, moderators, speakers, etc. should be prepared and published at the same time of the call for applications.
11. The SRSG for Roma Issues will select participants based on merits with a view to obtaining the highest possible level of expertise, and duly taking into account the gender balance and geographical as well as age-group representation.
12. Two rapporteurs will be designated from amongst the selected Dialogue participants whose tasks will be to draft the conclusions and to present them to the Ad hoc Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues (CAHROM) at its next meeting. The CAHROM will examine the conclusions with a view to incorporating them into their work.
13. A new call for applications should be issued for each Dialogue meeting. Rotation of participants will be encouraged to increase capacity and expertise, find new talent and bring in different perspectives, innovative ideas and thus change the dynamic of and reinvigorate the Dialogue.

## ORGANISATION AND BUDGETARY ISSUES

14. The reform of the Dialogue will be conducted in a budget-neutral way (56,000€ annually). In this scenario, the meeting costs will be broken down as follows:
  - a. Two meetings per year of one and a half days' duration with 20 Roma and Traveller participants at each meeting, including moderators, speakers and rapporteurs: 35,200€
  - b. Simultaneous interpretation in English, French and Romani (if required) at one of the meetings, interpretation in English and French at the other meeting: 17,280€
  - c. Travel and subsistence expenses for two the Dialogue rapporteurs in the two CAHROM meetings per year: 3,520€
15. The Dialogue should take place in Strasbourg to allow for the presence of a large number of the Council of Europe's entities and monitoring bodies, as well as Permanent Representations. Half a day would be set aside for meeting with these representatives.
16. The Dialogue meeting should take place at least six weeks before the CAHROM plenary meeting in which the rapporteurs will have to report about the Dialogue.
17. The Dialogue meeting should include an opening session, two parallel working sessions on the two identified topics, a plenary session to present and agree upon the conclusions of the two parallel working group sessions, as well as the aforementioned half day for meetings with Council of Europe entities and monitoring bodies, as well as Permanent Representations.

## JOINT DIALOGUE MEETING WITH THE CAHROM

18. The CM decision should be amended. There should be no joint meetings with the CAHROM. However, the two rapporteurs of the Dialogue (both from Roma and Traveller civil society) will be invited on an ad hoc basis to the CAHROM plenary meetings to report and exchange with the CAHROM participants about the outcomes/conclusions/proposals for follow-up resulting from the Dialogue meeting.
19. The CAHROM Terms of Reference that are currently being reviewed for 2018-2019, should be amended accordingly and reflect the above.