

# CAHROM

## Ad Hoc Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller<sup>1</sup> Issues

[www.coe.int/cahrom](http://www.coe.int/cahrom)

### Information document

prepared by the Secretariat

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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. The present is an explanatory footnote, not a definition of Roma and/or Travellers.

## 1. Introduction

The CAHROM was set up in 2011 as an *ad hoc committee* by a decision of the Committee of Ministers following the 2010 Strasbourg Declaration on Roma. It is the equivalent of a steering committee<sup>2</sup>.

A similar intergovernmental structure has existed at the Council of Europe from 1996 to 2010: in 1996, a Group of Specialists on Roma/Gypsies (MG-S-ROM) was established with a limited number of countries. Following the subsequent change in the terminology used at the Council of Europe, the MG-S-ROM was renamed Group of Specialists of Roma, Gypsies and Travellers in 2002, becoming the Committee of Experts on Roma and Travellers from 2006 until the end of 2010.

From 1996 to 2010, thirty meetings of the MG-S-ROM took place (two per year; one in Strasbourg and one abroad<sup>3</sup>). Between 2000 and 2010, the MG-S-ROM drafted seven Roma and Traveller-related recommendations adopted by the Committee of Ministers, addressing Roma policies, education, housing, health, employment and travelling sites<sup>4</sup>, which are still valid guidelines and used by some member States when revising their national Roma integration strategies.

The decision to transform the MG-S-ROM into the CAHROM had positive effects: whilst the MG-S-ROM was a sub-committee of the former European Committee on Migration (CDMG), the CAHROM now directly reports to the Committee of Ministers via the Ministers' Deputies Rapporteur Group on Social and Health Questions (GR-SOC).

The impetus provided by the adoption of the Strasbourg Declaration on Roma and the change of status of CAHROM increased the interest of member States in its work and sometimes the level of representation.

## 2. Added value and composition of the Committee

CAHROM is **the only international inter-governmental committee in Europe (probably in the World<sup>5</sup>) dealing specifically with Roma and Traveller issues.**

With 41 experts appointed by Council of Europe member States, i.e. all of the countries having at least a tiny Roma and/or Traveller population<sup>6</sup>, the CAHROM is truly **pan-European**.

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<sup>2</sup> As opposed to a *steering committee*, an *ad hoc committee* means that the Committee's mandate focuses on a particular topic, i.e. Roma and Travellers in the case of CAHROM.

<sup>3</sup> See the list of hosting countries of MG-S-ROM and CAHROM meetings in Appendix 1.

<sup>4</sup> These recommendations are available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/roma-related-texts>.

<sup>5</sup> In September 2017, the CAHROM Chair was invited in Argentina at a meeting on Roma in the Americas to present its work. CAHROM may inspire the development of a similar intergovernmental structure.

<sup>6</sup> Member States not represented are: Andorra, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Malta, Monaco and San Marino.

The committee is multi-cultural and multi-disciplinary: CAHROM members come from various backgrounds and line ministries and also include persons of self-declared Roma ethnic origin. This **variety of profiles** enriches discussions and enables CAHROM to address topics from different perspectives. A perfect **gender balance** was ensured at the 13<sup>th</sup> CAHROM plenary meeting: 22 men and 22 women<sup>7</sup>. The male/female ratio slightly varies from a meeting to another but is closed to parity.

Externally, CAHROM ensures **co-operation and synergies with external partners**, in particular EU institutions (EC, EP, FRA) and international organisations (OSCE/ODIHR and various UN agencies). Regular observers include AI, ERRC, ERTF, OSF, REF and the Holy See. Written communication exists with the Permanent Observer of Canada to the CoE.

Due to the regular presence of external partners, **CAHROM meetings are also used for coordination meetings between IOs and EU institutions**. The European Commission (DG NEAR) also uses the opportunity of CAHROM members' presence to organise **side events with enlargement countries**. CAHROM meetings are also a **useful framework to discuss EU/CoE joint programmes in the presence of the European Commission (DG EAC, DG JUST, DG EMPL, DG NEAR) and member States concerned**.

Internally, CAHROM contributes to **transversal co-operation with other CoE entities and monitoring mechanisms**, such as ECRI, FCNM, ECRML, ESC, the Execution of Judgements Department, the Youth Department, the Children Rights Division, the Gender Equality Unit/Commission, the SOGI Unit, the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights, the Congress, the Parliamentary Assembly, etc. and **inter-governmental committees** such as CAHENF, CDDH, CDCJ or CCJ.

### 3. Working methods and innovations

**CAHROM appointed five thematic Rapporteurs** among its members, namely on a) **Gender Equality**, b) **Roma youth**, c) **Roma children**, d) **Anti-Gypsyism/hate crime**, and e) **the role of local and regional authorities**. These CAHROM thematic Rapporteurs ensure transversal co-operation with relevant sectors and committees (e.g. the CAHROM Roma Youth Rapporteur attends informal coordination meetings on the Roma Youth Action Plan (RYAP) organised by the Youth Department; the CAHROM Gender Equality Rapporteur attends meetings of the Gender Equality Commission and represents the Committee in International Roma Women's Conferences; the CAHROM Rapporteur on Roma children attends, when relevant, CAHENF meetings, the CAHROM Rapporteur on anti-Gypsyism represents CAHROM at OPRE<sup>8</sup> meetings or at Roma LGBTI

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<sup>7</sup> The total is 44 instead of 41 because Belgium has three officially appointed members (only 1 reimbursed by the CoE) and the country chairing the Committee (Croatia at that time) was represented by two persons.

<sup>8</sup> OPRE stands for Council of Europe/FRA/ENNHRI/Equinet Operational Platform for Roma Equality. More information at [http://a.cs.coe.int/team81/opre\\_platform/layouts/15/start.aspx#/SitePages/Home.aspx](http://a.cs.coe.int/team81/opre_platform/layouts/15/start.aspx#/SitePages/Home.aspx).

events organised with the SOGI Unit. The CAHROM Rapporteur on the role of local and regional authorities is the counterpart of the Congress Spokesperson on Roma and Travellers and has contacts with the Secretariat of the European Alliance of Cities and Regions for Roma Inclusion<sup>9</sup>.

At the request of the CAHROM (supported by the Secretary General and the Committee of Ministers), **other intergovernmental committees have appointed a “Roma Rapporteur” to mainstream Roma issues in their work**, such as the CDDH, CAHENF and CCJ.

In 2012, the CAHROM introduced **innovative thematic working methods**, namely thematic peer reviews: a group of CAHROM experts visits a country, on a voluntary basis, to examine a certain topic; the thematic report, emanating from that visit, includes experts’ conclusions and recommendations for adequate policy responses to the issue examined. Experts also identify good practices which contribute to the online database of Roma-related good practices<sup>10</sup>. In 2017, **CAHROM published a [Review document on the impact, outcome and follow-up of CAHROM thematic reports and visits 2012-2017](#)**, including statistics about member States’ participation.

Between 2012 and 2017, 30 thematic visits, involving 210 experts and 37 member States, were organised (on average five per year). The list of topics reflects the main priorities and challenges faced by member States. The most numerous thematic visits were related to **education**, such as combating school drop-out and absenteeism; increasing school attendance, especially of Roma girls; promoting inclusive education as opposed to special or segregated schools; pre-school education, testing systems and diagnoses before entering school, and vocational education and training. **Housing** was the second most important topic, with reports addressing social housing, legalisation of informal Roma settlements, prevention of evictions or the provision of halting sites for Travellers.

Other addressed topics include ***solving the lack of ID documents, fighting anti-Gypsyism and anti-Roma hate speech, Roma women and youth empowerment and the inclusion of these dimensions in national Roma integration strategies, participation in advisory and decision-making bodies, promotion and protection of the Romani language or other languages spoken by Roma-related communities, Roma school and health mediators.***

Some reports addressed delicate topics, such as ***child/early and forced marriages*** or ***human trafficking*** within Roma communities. Other reports address more generally the ***situation of certain communities, challenges they face and policy responses to their needs, including eastern Roma groups or the integration of Roma migrants.***

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.roma-alliance.org/en/>.

<sup>10</sup> <http://goodpracticeroma.ppa.coe.int/en>.

*Access to employment, access to justice, the inclusion of Roma history in textbooks, or the development of meaningful policies in member States having a tiny Roma population* are among the thematic priorities identified for 2018.

#### 4. Terms of Reference and relevance for CoE priorities

CAHROM supports the implementation of the 2010 Strasbourg Declaration on Roma and the Thematic Action Plan on the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers (2016-2019), adopted by the Committee of Ministers in March 2016.

In its **standard-setting role**, the CAHROM already drafted two recommendations adopted by the Committee of Ministers: [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2012\)9 on mediation as an effective tool for promoting respect for human rights and social inclusion of Roma](#) and [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2017\)10 on improving access to justice for Roma and Travellers in Europe](#).

Its **terms of reference** for the years **2018-2019** include the drafting of a CM recommendation on the inclusion of the teaching of Roma history, including Roma Holocaust, in textbooks and school curricula.

The CAHROM also **raises attention of the CM on emerging issues** (e.g. it drafted [CM Declaration on the Rise of Anti-Gypsyism and Racist Violence against Roma in Europe](#), adopted by the CM in February 2012).

CAHROM regularly provides **comments to PACE and Congress Roma-related Recommendations and/or Resolutions**.

## Appendix 1

### List of CAHROM meetings (2011-2019) and MG-S-ROM meetings (2006-2010)

Year	N° mtg	Venue and hosting country	Dates	MS represented
2019	18 <sup>th</sup>	Strasbourg, Council of Europe	October	tbd
2019	17 <sup>th</sup>	Toulouse (tbc), <b>France</b>	May	tbd
2018	16 <sup>th</sup>	Strasbourg, Council of Europe	16-19 Oct.	tbd
2018	15 <sup>th</sup>	Athens, <b>Greece</b>	22-25 May	tbd
2017	14 <sup>th</sup>	Strasbourg, Council of Europe	24-27 Oct.	37
2017	13 <sup>th</sup>	Prague & Brno, <b>Czech Republic</b>	31 May-3 June	37
2016	12 <sup>th</sup>	Strasbourg, Council of Europe	15-18 Nov.	35
2016	11 <sup>th</sup>	Sofia & Samokov, <b>Bulgaria</b>	26-29 April	38
2015	10 <sup>th</sup>	Bucharest, <b>Romania</b>	27-30 Oct.	32
2015	9 <sup>th</sup>	Strasbourg, Council of Europe	27-29 May	41
2014	8 <sup>th</sup>	Sarajevo & Kakanj, <b>Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>	28-31 Oct.	32
2014	7 <sup>th</sup>	Strasbourg, Council of Europe	14-16 May	35
2013	6 <sup>th</sup>	Rome, <b>Italy</b>	28-31 Oct.	37
2013	5 <sup>th</sup>	Strasbourg, Council of Europe	14-16 May	39
2012	4 <sup>th</sup>	Strasbourg, Council of Europe	28-30 Nov	37
2012	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Skopje & Ohrid, <b>“the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”</b>	22-25 May	31
2011	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Istanbul, <b>Turkey</b>	22-25 Nov.	30
2011	1 <sup>st</sup>	Strasbourg, Council of Europe	30-31 March	34
MG-S-ROM				
Year	N° mtg	Venue and hosting country	Dates	MS present
2010	30 <sup>th</sup>	Wroclaw, <b>Poland</b>	18-21 Oct.	22
2010	29 <sup>th</sup>	Strasbourg, Council of Europe	25-26 March	23
2009	28 <sup>th</sup>	Strasbourg, Council of Europe	15-16 Oct.	24
2009	27 <sup>th</sup>	Seville, <b>Spain</b>	26-27 March	23
2008	26 <sup>th</sup>	The Hague, <b>the Netherlands</b>	6-7 Nov.	24
2008	25 <sup>th</sup>	Strasbourg, Council of Europe	3-4 April	24
2007	24 <sup>th</sup>	Strasbourg, <b>France</b>	8-9 Nov.	22
2007	23 <sup>rd</sup>	Strasbourg, Council of Europe	21-22 May	23
2006	22 <sup>nd</sup>	Strasbourg, Council of Europe	7-8 Nov.	21
2006	21 <sup>st</sup>	Bucharest, <b>Romania</b>	2-3 May	17
2005	20 <sup>th</sup>	Strasbourg, Council of Europe	22-23 Nov	19
2005	19 <sup>th</sup>	Strasbourg, Council of Europe	7-8 April	21
2004	18 <sup>th</sup>	Presov, <b>Slovak Republic</b>	21-24 Nov.	16
2004	17 <sup>th</sup>	Strasbourg, Council of Europe	29-30 March	18

2003	16 <sup>th</sup>	Strasbourg, Council of Europe	27-28 Nov.	19
2003	15 <sup>th</sup>	Strasbourg, Council of Europe	24-25 March	18
2002	14 <sup>th</sup>	Dublin, <b>Ireland</b>	14-16 Oct.	<i>to be found</i>
2002	13 <sup>th</sup>	Strasbourg, Council of Europe	25-26 March	<i>to be found</i>
2001	12 <sup>th</sup>	Helsinki, <b>Finland</b>	22-24 Oct.	<i>to be found</i>
2001	11 <sup>th</sup>	Strasbourg, Council of Europe	<i>April or May</i>	<i>to be found</i>
2000	10 <sup>th</sup>	Budapest, <b>Hungary</b>	30 Oct.-2 Nov	<i>to be found</i>
2000	9 <sup>th</sup>	Strasbourg, Council of Europe	12-14 April	<i>to be found</i>
1999	8 <sup>th</sup>	Sofia, <b>Bulgaria</b>	20-23 Sept.	<i>to be found</i>
1999	7 <sup>th</sup>	Strasbourg, Council of Europe	29-30 March	<i>to be found</i>
1998	6 <sup>th</sup>	Prague, <b>Czech Republic</b>	28 Sept-1 Oct	<i>to be found</i>
1998	5 <sup>th</sup>	Strasbourg, Council of Europe	5-6 March	<i>to be found</i>
1997	4 <sup>th</sup>	Ploiesti, <b>Romania</b>	13-16 Oct.	<i>to be found</i>
1997	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Strasbourg, Council of Europe	27-28 Febr.	<i>to be found</i>
1996	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Strasbourg, Council of Europe	10-11 Oct.	12
1996	1 <sup>st</sup>	Strasbourg, Council of Europe	20-21 March	12

## Appendix 2

Statistical information about member States' participation in CAHROM thematic visits 2012-2017 and topics that are the most attractive per member State

Participations	Member States	As requesting/hosting country	As partner country
9 participations	- Hungary - "The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"	(1 x anti-Gypsyism, 1 x education) (1 x housing)	(4 x education, 1 x history, 1 x language, 1 x policy) (1 x housing, 4 x education; 1 x health; 1 x legal status, 1 x policy)
8 participations	- Bosnia and Herzegovina - Czech Republic - Poland - Romania	(1 x policy) (2 x education) (1 x education) (1 x women)	(1 x education; 1 x health; 2 x housing; 1 x legal status, 1 x participation, 1 x language) (1 x anti-Gypsyism, 2 x education; 1 x history, 1 x language, 1 x participation,) (3 x education; 1 x health; 1 x women, 1 x language, 1 x policy) (1 x education; 1 x history, 1 x language, 1 x migration, 1 x participation, 1 x trafficking, 1 x women)
7 participations	- Croatia - Italy - Slovak Republic	(1 x language) (1 x legal status) (1 x education, 1 x history)	(1 x housing; 1 x legal status; 2 x participation, 1 x policy, 1 x youth) (1 x anti-Gypsyism; 1 x migration, 1 x policy, 1 x trafficking, 2 x women) (2 x education; 1 x housing; 2 x language)
6 participations	- Spain	(1 x migration)	(1 x education; 2 x housing; 1 x participation, 1 x women)
5 participations	- Belgium - Finland - Greece - Moldova (Republic of) - Netherlands - Serbia - Slovenia - United Kingdom	(1 x halting sites) (1 x education) (1 x participation) (1 x policy) (1 x education) (1 x housing) (1 x youth) 0	(1 x education, 1 x health , 1 x participation, 1 x youth) (1 x education, 1 x language, 1 x policy; 1 x women) (1 x housing; 2 x policy, 1 x trafficking) (1 x education, 1 history, 2 x women) (1 x education; 1 x policy, 1 x trafficking, 1 x women) (1 x legal status, 1 x migration, 1 x policy, 1 x youth) (2 x education, 1 x language, 1 x policy) (1 x anti-Gypsyism, 2 x education, 1 x halting sites, 1 x women)
4 participations	- Norway	0	(1 x anti-Gypsyism; 2 x education, 1 x participation)
3 participations	- Albania - France - Latvia - Montenegro - Sweden - Switzerland - Turkey	(1 x housing, 1 x trafficking) (1 x education) 0 0 0 0 0	(1 x policy) (1 x migration, 1 x halting sites) (3 x education) (1 x health, 1 x legal status, 1 x migration) (1 x anti-Gypsyism, 2 x education) (1 x halting sites, 1 x education, 1 x language) (1 x education; 1 x health; 1 x policy)
2 participations	- Austria - Bulgaria - Ireland - Lithuania	(1 x language) (1 x health) (1 x participation) (1 x education, 1 x women)	(1 x language) (1 x migration) (1 x migration) 0
1 participation	- Armenia - Azerbaijan - Georgia - Germany - Portugal - Russian Federation - Ukraine	0 0 (1 x policy) 0 0 0 (1 x policy)	(1 x policy) (1 x policy) 0 (1 x language) (1 x education) (1 x policy) 0
No participation yet	- Cyprus - Denmark - Estonia - Luxembourg	0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0