



DDCP/EYCB/RTCMirrors/2016/14

Budapest, 16 December 2016

**“MIRRORS” REGIONAL TRAINING COURSE ON COMBATING  
ANTIGYPSYISM THROUGH HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION**

Athens, Greece  
16-19 November 2016

**Course report**

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## BACKGROUND, OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES

### BACKGROUND

The Roma Youth Action Plan (hereinafter RYAP) was initiated in 2011 by the Youth Department of the Council of Europe to respond to the challenges faced by Roma young people in Europe, particularly in relation to their inclusion and participation in decision-making processes and structures. The action plan gives priority to human rights and intercultural dialogue as responses to discrimination and antigypsyism and relies on the principle of double-mainstreaming and youth participation to support the efforts of young Roma in reaching their full potential as citizens and as young people.

Capacity-building and the development of competencies of young Roma, and of Roma youth organisations and networks has been a central part of the project. In 2015, the Youth Department published [\*Mirrors – manual on combating antigypsyism through human rights education\*](#), an educational resource that provides for youth educators, trainers and facilitators of non-formal education processes with essential information and methodological tools to address antigypsyism with young people.

On the basis of the [\*Guidelines for the Implementation of the Roma Youth Action Plan for the period of 2016-2020\*](#), local and national level initiatives have been prioritised under the RYAP in order to achieve a meaningful impact, especially in countries and communities where Roma youth participation is least visible.

Within the framework of the Roma Youth Action Plan in 2016 several training courses were organised with and for young people and organisations across Europe with the aim to raise awareness and develop competences of youth to better understand and be able to respond to situations of antigypsyism and structural discrimination through human rights education and human rights.

During 16-19 November 2016 a regional and national training courses were held in parallel in Athens, Greece. The regional training course gathered 18 participants from Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, Serbia, Montenegro, Albania, Turkey and the Former Yugoslav Republic of “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”.

The regional and national training courses on combating antigypsyism through human rights education were organised in partnership with Bodossaki Foundation and with the logistical support of Antirropon NGO from Greece. The partners for this activity are also responsible for the translation and distribution of a Greek version of Mirrors which will be made available soon.

The purpose of this report is to document the main discussions of the training course, to explore the realities and challenges of Roma youth from the various communities where they are coming from and to present and promote ideas for actions against antigypsyism and discrimination.

The report should also be motivational for other organisations and young people which work or willing to challenge the current state of affair through the use of human rights education, human rights and youth participation.

## OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTCOME

The objectives of the course were:

- To raise awareness and deepen the recognition and understanding of antigypsyism and its implications in relation to human rights education.
- To support the exchange of experiences and practices addressing issues of discrimination of Roma.
- To develop the competences of 25 participants in organising non formal educational activities (based on “Mirrors”) and other activities as response of issues of discrimination and antigypsyism
- To support regional cooperation and networking among Roma and youth activists.
- To inform participants about other activities of the Council of Europe, about funding possibilities, about peer support mechanisms, network so that their activities can be more sustainable.

The overall expected outcome of the course was that as a consequence of it, participants will be motivated and ready to undertake concrete activities addressing antigypsyism: educational activities using and adapting Mirrors to their context and/or any other kind of activity.

## **PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS**

A summary of the profile of the eighteen participants would be:

- They were all educators, youth activists or youth leaders active in the Roma community and/or having experience in working with Roma communities and Roma youth in particular.
- They were residents of Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, Albania, the Former Yugoslav Republic of “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”, Serbia, Montenegro and Greece.
- All of them had experience in developing and running educational activities with young Roma people (some of them with children as well) but not using the Mirrors manual.
- Most of them have previous international experience but few of them in Council of Europe youth activities.
- All of them were committed for organising follow-up activities with young people addressing antigypsyism and interested in networking at the regional level.
- Around half of them identify themselves as Roma.

## TRAINING CURRICULUM

In addition to the “standard” sessions of welcome evening, introduction, team building, mid-term and final evaluation, the seventeen sessions of the curriculum of the training course can be grouped in three blocks:

### SHARING – EXCHANGE – PEER LEARNING:

- Contexts of Roma youth
  - o In this session participants shared and analysed the realities of Roma communities with a particular focus on young people and explaining the work they do with them.
- Mapping of Antigypsyism in the region:
  - o In this session participants shared and reflected about the incidents and manifestations of antigypsyism in their contexts.
- Good practices against Antigypsyism:
  - o In this session participants shared and learnt from each other practices addressing antigypsyism.
- Joint evening with the National TC:
  - o In the joint meeting with the national training courses participants got to know in an informal way the realities and projects of young Roma in Greece.
- Visit final event EEA Granted Projects
  - o In this optional session participants got to know the organisations and projects (many of them in the youth and human rights fields) developed under the EEA grants in Greece.

### MIRRORS – HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION:

- Mirrors
  - o In this session participants got to know the Mirrors manual through an introduction, being participants of the “Roma bingo” exercise and planning the adaptation of the “Good news-Bad news” activity to their context. The session also included an input on links between basic non-formal educational principles and the human rights education approach of the Youth Department and the manual.
- Antigypsyism
  - o In this session participants explored the notion of antigypsyism, its manifestations and implications in relation to Human Rights.
- Addressing antigypsyism as Human Rights violations
  - o In this session, through a practical exercise, participants linked common manifestations of antigypsyism with human rights violations and identified working areas for addressing them.

### ACTION ORIENTED – NETWORKING AND FOLLOW-UP:

- Motivation

- In this session inspired by a video-testimony, participants reflected and expressed in a creative way their values and motivations for doing something against antigypsyism.
- Meeting the Advisory Council representative
  - In this session participants got to know the participation possibilities and mechanisms in the youth sector of the Council of Europe. They discussed and made proposals to improve the participation of young Roma and Roma youth organisations at the policy level. (See the proposals below: *'Challenges and suggestions for addressing antigypsyism'*)
- Support Café
  - After exploring possible fields of action, in this session participants got to know possible support programmes and structures in which they could develop their projects against antigypsyism: European Youth Foundation, Erasmus + programme, Roma Youth Action Plan and the No Hate Speech Movement Campaign. The session was attended by the EDC/HRE coordinator and the No Hate Speech Movement Campaign coordinator for Greece.
- Networking and follow-up
  - In this session participants shaped, planned and receive feedback on their networking and follow-up actions at personal, local, national and regional level.

## “MIRRORS” REGIONAL TRAINING COURSE ON COMBATING ANTIGYPSYISM THROUGH HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

Athens, Greece, 16<sup>TH</sup> -19<sup>TH</sup> November 2016

### Programme

|               | 15/11/2016<br>(Tuesday) | 16/11/2016<br>(Wednesday)                 | 17/11/2016<br>(Thursday)                    | 18/11/2016<br>(Friday)                                  | 19/11/2016<br>(Saturday)                         | 20/11/2016<br>(Sunday) |
|---------------|-------------------------|---|---|---|--|------------------------|
| 9.30 - 11.00  | ARRIVAL                 | S2: INTRO                                 | S7: MIRRORS                                 | S12: ANTIGYPSYISM                                       | S15: NETWORKING + FOLLOW UP                      | DEPARTURE              |
|               |                         | S3: TEAM BUILDING                         |   |   |  |                        |
| 11:00 - 11:30 |                         | Coffee break                              | Coffee break                                | Coffee break  | Coffee break                                     |                        |
| 11.30 - 13.00 |                         | S4: CONTEXTS OF YOUNG ROMA                | MIRRORS                                     | S13: ADDRESSING ANTIGYPSYISM AS HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS | NETWORKING + FOLLOW UP                           |                        |
| 13.00 - 14.30 |                         | Lunch                                     | Lunch                                       | Lunch   | Lunch  |                        |
| 14:30 - 16:00 |                         | S5: MAPPING OF ANTIGYPSYISM IN THE REGION | S8: GOOD PRACTICES AGAINST ANTIGYPSYISM     | S14: SUPPORT CAFE                                       | NETWORKING + FOLLOW UP                           |                        |
| 16.00 - 16.30 |                         | Coffee break                              | Coffee break                                | Coffee break  | Coffee break                                     |                        |
| 16:30 - 18:00 |                         | S6 : MOTIVATION                           | S9: MEETING ADVISORY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE | FREE  | S17: FINAL EVENT EEA GRANTED PROJECTS (Optional) |                        |
|               |                         |   | S10: MID –TERM EVALUATION                   |   |  |                        |
| 19:00         |                         | Dinner                                    | Dinner                                      | Dinner  | Dinner   |                        |
| 21:00         | S1: WELCOME EVENING     |   | S11: JOINT EVENING WITH THE NATIONAL TC     |   |  |                        |



## LEARNING ACHIEVEMENTS

Participants learnt at first about realities of young people in different Roma communities in the region and about the work developed by other participants attending the training. Some common characteristics of this work are:

- the existing cooperation between Roma and non Roma young people;
- the work on awareness raising activities on antigypsyism very much linked to human rights education;
- most of the extra curricula activities with children and young people are link with the (or in cooperation) schools/formal education

Participants got to know various manifestations of antigypsyism. Hate speech, segregation in schools, walls to isolate Roma neighbourhoods, discrimination in the health provisions, demonstrations and attacks by violent groups, spreading of stereotypes and prejudices through media are present in all countries. All together participants felt and estimated that discrimination and antigypsyism is increasing in the region.

Participants got inspired by other good practices in combating antigypsyism in other countries. Some of those were:

- Campaigns using videos and showing Roma role models.
- Mentoring and community empowerment programmes.
- Lobby and policy work with local authorities, with the ombudsman.
- Pedagogical assistant to support Roma children and families in schools.
- Creation of a curriculum for MA Studies on Roma culture and history.
- Hiking trips with Roma and non Roma youngsters.
- Health mediators and psycho-social support for young Roma.
- Open debates on Roma issues.

Participants got familiarised with Mirrors as human rights education tool for combating antigypsyism. They experience it as participants and learnt how to use and adapt it as educators or trainers. The exploration of antigypsyism in relation to human rights education strengthened their capacities to deal with it in different fields: youth work, policy, advocacy, media, education.

## **CHALLENGES AND SUGGESTIONS FOR ADDRESSING ANTIGYPSYISM**

The main challenge that Roma young people is facing today is the growth or reactivation of antigypsyism. The particularly persistent and deeply rooted phenomenon of antigypsyism is being nourished by the intolerant reactions to the economic crisis or to the migration processes in the region.

As expressed by participants together with the growing attacks and acts of violence against their communities young Roma face obstacles for accessing and discrimination in the fields of participation, education and employment. The obstacles in one of those fields lead to fewer opportunities in the other ones; i.e. poor education limits the participation and employment possibilities, without the participation of Roma youth education and employment policies can hardly become inclusive for them...Many young Roma get trapped in this vicious circle.

When addressing antigypsyism Human Rights Education is for participants and their organisations a key field of action. The educational activities of all kind planned by participants are an expression of their conviction that HRE activities should be multiplied for reaching more communities and new target groups. The efforts of the Council of Europe in that direction, using Mirrors should continue with a particular attention to regional and national partnerships for the sustainability and multiplication of HRE in the region.

Being HRE, non-formal education and youth work a privileged field of action for addressing antigypsyism, the projects and activities developed by participants very often aimed to go beyond; i.e. they address the formal education through extra curricula activities or even proposing formal curricula for Roma studies, in relation to employment participants expressed the need for supportive measures, internships or quota systems in public institutions. Those are just some examples of the need to work in cooperation and targeting other actors in the fields of education and unemployment to overcome the barriers that as result of discrimination young Roma face in those fields.

In relation to participation young Roma face particular difficulties. The information on policies affecting them, on the decision making processes and on the possibilities to influence them, hardly reaches young Roma in their communities. Specific information strategies considering among others the issues of language, geographical dispersion and access to information technologies should be envisaged. This would be the first step for an effective participation of young Roma. In this regard the role of Roma youth organisations and of youth in Roma organisations should be recognised and supported.

Other actions and project ideas in the training course like the videos for awareness-raising to be massively broadcasted in the media show that participants feel that, beyond the normally mid and long term effects of HRE activities, it is urgent to address antigypsyism with very direct messages and actions. The NHSM is a very valuable platform for that but other actions or campaigns in relation to media could be considered particularly at national level.

### **Outcomes of the meeting with the representative of the Advisory Council on Youth**

The following issues were raised by participants during the facilitated discussion with Maria Roidi (Advisory Council on Youth, Council of Europe). The recommendations are also to be shared with other members of the AC, namely Cristina Marian (FERYP) and Matic Germovsek (YEN) who are responsible for Roma Youth Action Plan on behalf of the Advisory Council.

Needs of educators in order to be able to work on policy level:

- Development of the educational background and the experience of the educators who work in the policy level.
- More educational programmes and opportunities.

In relation to Roma Youth issues the following issues need to be should advocated for:

- The elimination of language barriers.
- Paying attention to the access of young Roma to education, offer more opportunities.
- Scholarships for Roma and non Roma young people.
- Paid internships and work for young Roma at public institutions in recommended positions.
- More visibility to Roma success stories.

Recommendations for the Advisory Council to better represent the needs of Roma youth:

- Advocacy for more institutional support of youth Roma on grassroots level.
- Advocacy for Roma Rights with the General Secretary of the Council of Europe.
- Promotion of Roma Rights through the Partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Commission.
- Creating necessary tools and support on fighting unemployment, with special regard to the problem of the financial crisis.
- Creativity.
- Advocacy for double mainstreaming the Roma Youth issues through the RYAP in the Council of Europe

Idea for the future of the Rome Youth Action Plan:

- To enable young Roma to take part in the decision making process-
- To support young Roma leaders, unorganized youth but also with experience
- To take advantage of the different offices the Council of Europe has in the member states, as the Council of Europe started enthusiastically to work in Roma issues but this has changed
- To promote a cross sectorial approach for Roma youth agendas of national level and regional
- To reconsider the status of the Egyptians community when it comes to Roma programmes in European level
- To include more young Roma educators in every country
- To increase the visibility of youth Roma organizations and to share the information among the other organizations as for example the organizations and networks that work closely with the Council of Europe.

## FOLLOW-UP BY PARTICIPANTS

As result of the learning and of the personal development process that took place in the course, participants committed to the following actions and projects at local and national level:

- Translation of Mirrors into “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”, Serbian and Albanian.
- Workshops and trainings in Bulgaria, “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”, Albania, Romania and Serbia. These workshops will be of different kind and format according to the different needs: i.e. for the Roma communities on personal skills, for Roma and non Roma teenagers on Human Rights, adapted to the particularities of each city and promoting networking among them.
- Cooperation with the Muslim communities for awareness raising activities on racism and discrimination in Greece.
- Movies and short documentaries in Montenegro and Albania showing Roma role moles and the cultural heritage and life experience of Roma people.
- Extracurricular activities in cooperation with schools in Turkey and Romania: sport clubs for Roma and non Roma, debates, Human Rights educational activities...
- Introducing antigypsyism in the current activities of the No Hate Speech Movement Campaign in Bulgaria.
- Roma Caravan with academic speakers in Greece.

At regional / international level two projects were initiated:

- The first one involves “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”, Montenegro, Albania, Serbia will have three pillars:
  - The translation of Mirrors at national level.
  - The creation of a practitioners’ network – starting by the participants of this course.
  - The implementation of workshops addressing antigypsyism in secondary schools.

In a second phase of this project a round table with policy makers and representatives of civil society (ministries, NGOs, ...) will be organised with the purpose of presenting Mirrors and promote the workshops in many more schools at national level.

- The second one involves Greece, Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey. It aims the creation of a training module addressing antigypsyism via internet. At first participants will share and learnt from each other involving the groups and organisations they are working with (NGOs, Universities, local authorities...).

In a later stage a curriculum and format will be designed for a learning module so that it can be used as extracurricular education module and at international level. Meetings, new activities and projects are expected to be generated on the basis of these on-line interactions.

## ANNEX: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

### PARTICIPANTS

|    | <b>Family Name</b> | <b>First name</b> | <b>Organisation</b>   |
|----|--------------------|-------------------|---|
| 1  | Agapoglou          | Theodora          | Aristotle University of Thessaloniki  |
| 2  | Amet               | Ines              | Roma Women and Youth Association ' LULUDI'  |
| 3  | Aslan              | Selçuk            | Edirne Nature Sports Club Association   |
| 4  | Costas             | Lucila            | INFINITE OPPORTUNITIES ASSOCIATION  |
| 5  | Selmani            | Deniz             | Institute for research and policy analyses - Romalitico                                 |
| 6  | Djordjevic         | Tanja             | Elementary school "19.oktobar", Informal network - Romani Youth Network of Serbia(RYNS) |
| 7  | Fuzi               | Ribana            | Young Roma Maramures  |
| 8  | Geangos            | Gabriela          | 'Together' Agency for Community Development   |
| 9  | Jovanovic          | Nikola            | Montenegro Red Cross  |
| 10 | Michoudi           | Dimitra           | AID - Alternative Innovative Development  |
| 11 | Mustafi            | Merita            | Roma Democratic Development Association Sonce   |
| 12 | Christou           | Ioannis           | Hellenic Roma Action and Association of Greek Roma Mediators                            |
| 13 | Qirollari          | Erjon             | Disutni Albania   |
| 14 | Rapti              | Urania            | AID - Alternative Innovative Development  |
| 15 | Saatchi            | Cafer             | National Youth Forum - Bulgaria   |
| 16 | Tahiri             | Allmir            | Roma restart  |
| 17 | Taho               | Klaudjo           | Institute of Romani Culture in Albania  |
| 18 | Umer               | Alen              | R.R.O.M.A   |

### TRAINERS TEAM

|    |              |              |         |
|----|--------------|--------------|---------|
| 19 | Garcia Lopez | Miguel Angel | Trainer |
| 20 | Jakupov      | Mustafa      | Trainer |
| 21 | Raykova      | Alexandra    | Trainer |
| 22 | Sakip        | Ramiza       | Trainer |

### GUEST SPEAKERS

|    |        |          |  |
|----|--------|----------|--|
| 23 | Toura  | Katerina | Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs, Directorate of European and International Affairs, Greece |
| 24 | Pyrrou | Ioulia   | Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs, General Directorate for Youth, Greece                     |

## COUNCIL OF EUROPE

|    |              |        |   |
|----|--------------|--------|---|
| 25 | Roidi        | Maria  | Advisory Council on Youth, Council of Europe                                |
| 26 | Milutinovits | László | Council of Europe, Youth Department, Educational Advisor                    |
| 27 | Durmish      | Denis  | Council of Europe, Youth Department, Roma Youth Action Plan Project Officer |

## ORGANISATIONAL PARTNERS

|    |               |         |   |
|----|---------------|---------|---|
| 28 | Papatheodorou | Artemis | Bodossaki Foundation, Programme Officer           |
| 29 | Lazarou       | Jenny   | Bodossaki Foundation, Assistant Programme Officer |
| 30 | Nikolaou      | Sotiris | Antirropon NGO                                    |
| 31 | Androutsou    | Yolanda | Antirropon NGO                                    |
| 32 | Pyrgaki       | Nikol   | Antirropon NGO                                    |