

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Strasbourg, 18 December 2017

CAHROM (2017)30

**14th MEETING OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS
ON ROMA AND TRAVELLER¹ ISSUES
(CAHROM)**

MEETING REPORT

CAHROM website: www.coe.int/en/web/portal/cahrom
CAHROM email address: cahrom@coe.int

Document prepared by the Secretariat
Directorate General of Democracy - DGII

¹ 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.

Introduction

The Ad Hoc Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues (CAHROM) held its 14th plenary meeting in Strasbourg on 24-27 October 2017. The meeting was chaired by Mr Branko Sočanac (Croatia), chairperson of CAHROM, and by Ms Tatjana Andjelić (Montenegro), vice-chairperson of CAHROM. The agenda, as adopted by the Committee, appears in the Appendix to this report. The list of participants is available from the Secretariat.

Item for publication on the CAHROM website

The CAHROM completed a review document on the impact, outcomes and follow-up of CAHROM thematic visits and reports for the years 2012-2017 [document CAHROM (2017)29]. Further to its examination by the Committee at its 13th and 14th plenary meetings and later endorsement by written procedure, the CAHROM approved the publication of this document on the CAHROM website.

Gender representation

At this plenary meeting of CAHROM, the 38 member States present were represented by 21 women and 17 men, 55,3 % and 44,7 % respectively.

Items discussed and decisions taken by the CAHROM

The Committee

3. **took note**, following the introductory presentation by the Director of Local Democracy and Anti-discrimination Directorate, DGII Democracy, that the Roma and Travellers Team would focus its work on the three main priorities of the Council of Europe Thematic Action Plan for the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers 2016-2019: fighting anti-Gypsyism and discrimination; promoting innovative models for inclusive policies for the most vulnerable, in particular women, youth and children, and promoting innovative models for local level solutions for Roma inclusion;

4. **took note** of the intention of the Director of Democratic Governance and Anti-Discrimination (DG II - Democracy), following the recent inclusion of the Roma and Travellers Team into her Directorate, to improve co-operation with other sectors, including monitoring bodies (ECRI, the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages), the SOGI Unit, the No Hate Speech, the Intercultural Cities programme, and the Democratic Governance Department;

5. **took note** of the adoption by the Committee of Ministers on 17 October 2017 of CM/Rec(2017)10 on improving access to justice for Roma and Travellers in Europe and of the approval by the GR-SOC of the proposed CAHROM Terms of Reference 2018-2019;

6. **noted with satisfaction** the priorities and proposed areas of cooperation indicated by the Director of Local Democracy and Anti-discrimination and **underlined** the importance of keeping under priorities the fight against human trafficking affecting Roma communities as underlined by Albania and the important role of local and regional authorities in improving the social inclusion of Roma and Travellers as highlighted by Slovenia;

7. **took note**, of the results of the mid-term review of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies as presented by a representative of the European Commission, Non-discrimination Policies and Roma Coordination Unit, Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers (DG-JUST); **took note** of the fact that the forthcoming EU Platform for Roma Inclusion, to be held in Brussels at the end of November 2017, would focus on the “transition from education to employment”; **took note** of the fact that the European Commission had decided to prolong the financial support to the joint CoE/EC programme on Roma and Traveller women’s access to justice “JUSTROM” beyond the end of March 2018, and that this decision was reflected in the 2018 Work Plan of the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme approved in October 2017, and **took note** that the official decision by the EU Member States was expected to be adopted by the end of 2017;

8. **took note** of the adoption by the European Parliament on 26 October 2017 of MEP Soraya Post’s report “*Fundamental rights aspects in Roma integration in the EU: fighting anti-Gypsyism*”, calling upon the European Commission and EU Member States to *inter alia* put the fight against anti-Gypsyism at the forefront of efforts for the social and economic inclusion of Roma; place anti-Gypsyism in the focus of the post-2020 EU Roma Framework; create European and national truth commissions; increase the monitoring of EU programmes to secure reach-out to Roma and educate mainstream society to combat stereotypes against Roma; **requested** the European Parliament representative to circulate information to CAHROM members about the voting results;

9. **took note** of the priorities of the OSCE/ODIHR presented by the Acting Senior Advisor of the Contact point for Roma and Sinti Issues (CRRSI), namely solving the lack of identity documents, Roma youth, Roma political participation and remembrance of the Roma Holocaust in co-operation with the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) and its Committee on the genocide of Roma; **welcomed** the close cooperation between OSCE/ODIHR and the Council of Europe on shared thematic priorities in Ukraine; **took note** that Bulgaria had recently joined IHRA;

10. **took note**, following a presentation by the Chair of the Board of the European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture (ERAC), of the current process for finding premises for the Institute in Berlin and of the opening of a bank account; **took note** that a meeting of ERAC was expected to take place towards the end of November-early December 2017 to discuss the setting-up of Barvalipe and discuss a workplan for ERAC future activities;

11. **took note** of the concerns expressed by the President of the European Roma and Travellers Forum (ERTF) concerning the lack of clarity of the practical implications of the partnership agreement between the Council of Europe and the ERTF following the decision of the Committee of Ministers in 2015 to cut budgetary and staff support to the ERTF, and to stop giving the possibility for ERTF to hold its plenary meetings in Council of Europe’s premises for free; **expressed interest** to receive further information from the Forum on ERTF priorities and workplan for the future; **took note** that the ERTF president was communicated with written replies submitted by Albania, Greece and the Republic of Moldova to questions raised by Roma and Traveller representatives during the 3rd Council of Europe Dialogue with Roma and Traveller civil society (Strasbourg, November 2016) and that other CAHROM members concerned by this list of questions were requested by the Chair to provide the ERTF president, via the Secretariat, with written answers, as per the decision taken at the 12th CAHROM meeting (15-18 November 2016);

12. **took note** of Roma-related developments at national policy level from CAHROM members in respect of the Russian Federation, Slovenia and Sweden and **took note** of the written contribution submitted by the CAHROM member in respect of Turkey²;

13. **took note**, of the programme of the forthcoming CAHROM thematic visit on the teaching of Roma history, including Roma Holocaust, in textbooks and school curricula to be held in Košice on 7-9 November 2017, as presented by the CAHROM member in respect of the Slovak Republic; **took note** that Hungary and the Republic of Moldova had already appointed their expert and that Romania and the Czech Republic were expected to do the same; **welcomed** the fact that the Holy See and IHRA would both take part for the first time in a CAHROM thematic visit; **took note** of the OSCE/ODIHR apologies for not being able to join the thematic visit despite ODIHR strong interest for the topic;

14. **took note** of the update from the CAHROM member in respect of the Czech Republic concerning recent developments related to the pig farm in Lety near Písek, namely that the Czech Government had declared its determination to purchase the pig farm, which stands on the site of a former concentration camp; **welcomed** the fact that negotiations with the representatives of the owners of the pig farm were successful and that the Government approved on 21 August 2017 the purchase of the pig farm for the purpose of its removal, the purchase contract being currently prepared for signature; **took note** of the Government declassification of the amount for which the pig farm would be bought (450 million Czech crowns); **took note** of the intention of the Czech government to then remove the pig farm and start discussions with experts, survivors of the victims of the Roma Holocaust and wider Roma and non-Roma public on the future look of the site; **took note** that in 2017 the Czech government had also decided to move the stewardship of both Lety and Hodonín under the Museum of Romani Culture, thus fulfilling the Czech Government idea that the Roma themselves should manage the places of suffering of the Roma. The Museum of Romani Culture would therefore administer both the memorial site in Lety and the memorial site in Hodonín;

15. **heard** a presentation on *Roma during the First World War* from the CAHROM member in respect of Serbia; **took note** of his proposal to organise an exhibition of photo material concerning Roma during the First World War and **instructed the Secretariat** to explore the feasibility to organise such an exhibition on the margin of the 16th CAHROM plenary meeting to be held in Strasbourg in October 2018;

16. **took note** that the proposed Terms of Reference of CAHROM for 2018-2019, as endorsed by the GR-SOC, include under “specific tasks” the drafting by the CAHROM of a CM Recommendation on the inclusion of the teaching of Roma history, including Roma Holocaust, in textbooks and school curricula; **considered** that the CAHROM thematic visit in the Slovak Republic could serve as a preliminary brainstorming exercise before a drafting group is established following the approval of the biennium budget by the Committee of Ministers;

17. **took note** of written information provided by the Permanent Observer of Canada to the Council of Europe following the concerns expressed on 15 July 2016 by the Deputy-Commissioner for Minority Rights of Hungary in relation to the pre-boarding screening of international passengers, in particular persons of Roma ethnic origin, at Budapest Liszt Ferenc International Airport, irrespective of the fact that these persons had valid travel documents and

² See these presentations in document CAHROM (2017)31 *Written contributions for the 14th CAHROM plenary meeting*, available from the Secretariat.

air tickets; **recalled** that the ENNHRI and Equinet members from Hungary and the Czech Republic had informed the Committee at the 13th CAHROM meeting (Prague, 31 May-3 June 2017) that such a practice had been observed not only at Budapest Airport but also in transit airports in Brussels, London, Paris, Vienna and Warsaw; **took note** that the ENNHRI and Equinet Hungarian member and the Equinet secretariat had requested further clarification to the reply provided by the Permanent Observer of Canada to the Council of Europe³; **agreed** to keep this item on the agenda of its future meetings;

18. **took note** of an oral report by the CAHROM chairperson on his participation in the Workshop on Roma in the Americas which took place in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on 20-21 September 2017⁴ and the conclusions he drew up from this Workshop, i.e. that more cooperation between the estimated 10-12 million European Roma and 4 million American Roma was needed, as well as more sharing of experience using CAHROM and Council of Europe's expertise on Roma inclusion; that the equivalent of the Dosta! campaign could be launched in the Americas to address prejudice and stereotypes against Roma; that the CAHROM should solicitate more regular participation of Canada, Mexico and USA, all having observer status in the Council of Europe, at CAHROM meetings so as to further advance the connections between Roma communities in Europe and in the Americas; **suggested** that relevant Council of Europe texts, such as Roma-related CM recommendations, should be translated into Spanish and Portuguese and be communicated to the relevant authorities in the Americas, with a view to be used a source of inspiration and be adapted to the American context; **agreed** to invite at its autumn 2018 plenary meeting the new UN Special Rapporteur on minority issues, Mr Fernand de Varennes, to discuss possible cooperation on these conclusions and follow-up proposals;

19. **examined** in parallel working sessions four CAHROM thematic reports, namely on the protection, preservation and teaching of languages spoken by Roma, Sinti, Kaale and Yenish including ways to handle the opposition of traditional communities to have their language written and taught (following a thematic visit in Graz, Austria, on 29-31 March 2017); on challenges and best practices in implementing Roma inclusion strategies, including mechanisms for solving personal identification documents and improving access to social services (following a thematic visit in Kyiv, Ukraine, on 26-28 April 2017); on Roma mediation with a focus on school mediators/assistants (following a thematic visit in Vilnius and Panažėvis, Lithuania, on 25-27 April 2017); and on the situation of eastern Roma groups (Roma from Turkey and South Caucasus, Lom/Bosha/Posha, Dom/Garachi/Karachi, and Abdal) and policy responses to their needs (following a thematic visit in Tbilissi, Georgia, on 21-23 June 2017); **endorsed** the conclusions of the thematic reports presented at the meeting; **instructed the Secretariat** to recirculate the reports to the hosting and partner countries concerned for giving them the possibility to introduce last factual amendments by mid-November 2017 and then to recirculate the final version of the thematic reports for written endorsement by 20 December 2017;

20. **took note** of the review document prepared by the Secretariat following responses received to a questionnaire on the impact, outcome and follow-up given to CAHROM thematic visits and reports over the period 2012-2017 [document CAHROM (2017)29]; **agreed** to submit any additional information to the Secretariat by 15 November 2017; **proposed** to draw the attention of the Committee of Ministers, via the GR-SOC, about the publication of this review document on the CAHROM website, once finalised;

³ For further information, see in document CAHROM (2017)31 *Written contributions for the 14th CAHROM plenary meeting*, the summary paper of exchanges of information related to European citizens belonging to Roma minority allegedly denied boarding to Canada that was prepared by the Secretariat and distributed at the CAHROM meeting.

⁴ The written report is now available in document CAHROM (2017)31 *Written contributions for the 14th CAHROM plenary meeting*, available from the Secretariat.

21. **endorsed** a proposed list of topics for thematic visits in 2018 and 2019 [document CAHROM (2017)3rev8], subject to the adoption of the budget by the Committee of Ministers; **took note** of the confirmation from Latvia and Albania that they would host a thematic visit in 2018 and from the Russian Federation for a thematic visit in 2019; **took note** of the withdrawal of Turkey as hosting country in 2018; **took note** of the proposal from Germany to host a thematic visit in late 2018 or early 2019 that would need to be confirmed at a later stage; **took note** of the numerous expression of interest as partner countries for the proposed thematic visits and **agreed** that in the case of more than six applications as partner countries, the new CAHROM Bureau would take the final decision about the composition of the thematic group, giving priority to countries that have less participated in the thematic work of the CAHROM so far; **asked** the Secretariat to publish the proposed list of thematic visits for 2018 and 2019 on the CAHROM website, once the budget has been adopted by the Committee of Ministers;

22. **held an exchange** with Council of Europe entities, monitoring bodies and rapporteurs on Roma-related issues designated in other inter-governmental committees⁵, as well as with international observers in CAHROM, such as the OHCHR, on recent developments and forthcoming reports (e.g. in PACE), as well as concerns raised in recent monitoring or fact-finding reports, such as school segregation, evictions, lack of political participation and representation, lack of identity documents or hate speech; **took note** of the main conclusions and recommendations of the International Conference “Roma and LGBTI - at the crossroads of discrimination” held in Strasbourg on 9 June 2017; **took note** that a project concerning micro-credits for Roma would be supported by the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB); **underlined** that respective monitoring sectors of the Council of Europe coordinate their monitoring visits to avoid overlaps, and, as highlighted by Germany, that Council of Europe conventions, in particular the Framework Convention for the Protection of national Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, should be applied within their scope of application and cannot be extended one-sidedly by the Council of Europe;

23. **held an exchange of views** with the ad hoc rapporteur of the 4th Council of Europe Dialogue meeting with Roma and Traveller society (Strasbourg, 18-19 September 2017) on the main conclusions and recommendations resulting from this Dialogue which focused on *the transition from education to employment*; **took note** that both the European Commission and the Council of Europe have prioritised transition from education to employment through the Council of Europe Dialogue with Roma and Traveller civil society and the EU Roma Platform giving scope for mutual synergies; **took note** that the gap in unemployment between Roma and non-Roma seemed to be the greatest amongst Roma youth⁶ although some CAHROM members underlined that some Roma should not necessarily be labelled as “unemployed” when working in the grey economy”; **took note** of the nine specific recommendations resulting from the 4th Dialogue meeting; **agreed** to ensure follow-up to some of these recommendations by putting the topic of transition from education to employment on the agenda of its next plenary meeting; by further addressing the Dialogue recommendations through CAHROM thematic visits focusing on access to education, vocational educational and/or employment; **took note** of the information provided by the CAHROM Chairperson that Croatia under its CM Chairmanship of the Council of Europe would host an International Seminar addressing the same topic -

Took part in this exchange : the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights, the Parliamentary Assembly; the Liaison Officer of the European Alliance of Cities and Regions for Roma and Traveller Inclusion; the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB); the Secretariat of the European Social Cohesion Platform (PECS); a member of the experts' committee of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages; ECRI secretariat; the Gender Equality Unit; the SOGI Unit; the Freedom of Expression and Media Division; the Youth Department and the Rapporteur on Roma Youth-related Issues of the Advisory Council on Youth (CCJ).

⁶ In the 2016 EU MIDIS II survey, data revealed that the proportion of young Roma aged 16 to 24 years who are not in work, education or further training (NEET) is, on average, 63%. The results also show a substantial gender gap where, on average, 72% of Roma young women aged 16 to 24 years are neither in work nor in education.

“transition from education to employment” - on the Brijuni island between 26 and 28 September 2018 which would be an opportunity to provide additional follow-up to both the 4th Dialogue and to the EU Roma Platform;

24. **elected** for its 2018 Bureau Ms Tatjana ANDJELIĆ (Montenegro) as chairperson, Mr Ján HERO (Slovak Republic) as vice-chairperson and Mr Manuel DEMOUGEOT (France) as third Bureau member; **warmly thanked** Mr Branko SOČANAC (Croatia) for his commitment as Chair of the CAHROM Bureau in 2016 and 2017;

25. **re-appointed** Ms Henna HUTTU (Finland) as Gender Equality Rapporteur and **appointed** Ms Merita XHAFAJ (Albania) as her substitute; **re-appointed** Mr Stanko Baluh (Slovenia) as Roma Youth Rapporteur and **appointed** Mr Nicolae RADIȚA (Republic of Moldova) as his substitute; **re-appointed** Mr Martin MARTÍNEK (Czech Republic) as Roma Children Rapporteur and **appointed** Ms Sophie HEEGAARD-SCHROETER (Switzerland) as his substitute; **appointed** Mr Andrès ZANZI (Sweden) as Anti-Gypsyism and Hate Crime Rapporteur and **appointed** Ms Hilary PATEL (United Kingdom) as his substitute; **appointed** Ms Linda Niki VOLOSINOVSKY (Hungary) as Rapporteur on the Role of Local and Regional Authorities and **appointed** Mr Martijn KRAAIJ (the Netherlands) as her substitute;

26. **heard** a presentation by a UNDP representative of selected findings of a 2017 regional survey based on micro-narratives entitled *“Roma returnees to Western Balkans: – no place for us neither here nor there”*; **welcomed** UNDP’s presentation, with the exception of the CAHROM member in respect of Albania who expressed concerns about the consultation procedure around this survey; **requested** UNDP to circulate via the Secretariat the PowerPoint⁷ and to be kept informed of the date of publication of the full survey and link to access it; **took note** of information provided by the UNHCR representative and by several CAHROM members on the situation of Roma returnees who are back to Serbia and other Western Balkan countries, as well as on readmission agreements and assistance measures put in place (e.g. by Germany) to facilitate Roma returnees’ integration;

27. **thanked** the Permanent Representation of Turkey and Zero Discrimination Association for inaugurating the photo exhibition *“Do you have a Dream?” “I don’t know...” – Dom and Abdal from Syria to Gaziantep* and for giving the Committee an opportunity to hear about the presence and difficult situation of these communities present among Syrian refugees in Turkey.

28. **heard** a presentation by a Senior Research Associate at the European Centre for Minority Rights (ECMI) entitled *“Roma: an ethnic or a social category?”* which addressed the different types of vulnerability and various concepts of minority status attached to Roma in various Council of Europe member States; **thanked** ECMI for this presentation and **requested** to receive the presentation via the Secretariat⁸; **took note** that the Secretariat would proceed in the coming months with new country factsheets with updated information related to census figures and estimated number of Roma and Traveller population in each member State;

29. **thanked** the Greek authorities, in particular the newly established Roma Special Secretariat, for its invitation to host the next CAHROM plenary meeting and **proposed** to hold its 15th plenary meeting in Athens from 22 to 26 May 2018, subject to the adoption of the Council of Europe Programme and Budget 2018-2019 by the Committee of Ministers;

⁷ Now included in document CAHROM (2017)31 *Written contributions for the 14th CAHROM plenary meeting*, available from the Secretariat.

⁸ See also this presentation in document CAHROM (2017)31 *Written contributions for the 14th CAHROM plenary meeting*.

30. **agreed** to include on the agenda of its next meeting the following agenda items: examination of four new thematic reports; a discussion on state and external donors budget allocation to national Roma integration strategies (proposed by Albania); an exchange on the provision of biometrical identity documents and on housing policies (proposed by Greece); practices concerning the geographical and social mapping of Roma communities; transition between education and employment; preliminary discussion on the setting up of a drafting group on Roma history teaching, including Roma Holocaust; Roma youth challenges; access to justice with a focus on Roma women; early marriages; a presentation of the results of the 6th International Roma Women's Conference: "*Political participation: the case of Roma and Traveller women*" (Strasbourg on 6-7 November 2017); any follow-up to the issue of pre-boarding screening of international passengers of Roma ethnic origin to Canada; an exchange of views with ad hoc rapporteurs of the 5th Council of Europe Dialogue meeting with Roma and Traveller civil society on Roma political participation; as well as an exchange of views with ERIAC Executive Director;

31. **proposed** to hold its 16th plenary meeting in Strasbourg from 16 to 19 October 2018, subject to the adoption of the Council of Europe Programme and Budget 2018-2019 by the Committee of Ministers;

32. **took note** of an oral reporting of the conclusions under each agenda item made at the end of the meeting by the Secretariat and **agreed** to adopt the meeting report by written procedure.

Appendix: Agenda of the 14th CAHROM meeting, Strasbourg, 24-27 October 2017

Tuesday, 24 October 2017

- I. OPENING OF THE 14th CAHROM MEETING AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA
- II. EXCHANGE ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AND UPCOMING PRIORITIES AT INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL LEVELS
- III. HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE AND TEACHING ROMA HISTORY
- IV. EXCHANGE ON THE SITUATION OF ROMA IN NON-MEMBER STATES

Wednesday, 25 October 2017

- V. EXAMINATION OF FOUR DRAFT CAHROM THEMATIC REPORTS (PARALLEL WORKING SESSIONS)
- VI. EXCHANGE AND OPEN QUESTIONS TO/FROM COUNCIL OF EUROPE ENTITIES AND MONITORING BODIES AND CAHROM MEMBERS PARTICIPANTS AND OBSERVERS

Thursday, 26 October 2017

- VII. EXCHANGE OF VIEWS WITH THE AD HOC RAPPORTEUR OF THE DIALOGUE MEETING WITH ROMA AND TRAVELLER CIVIL SOCIETY
- VIII. ELECTIONS OF THE 2018 CAHROM CHAIR, VICE-CHAIR AND THIRD BUREAU MEMBER AND CONFIRMATION OR NOMINATION OF RAPPORTEURS
- IX. UPDATE ON THE CURRENT SITUATION AS REGARDS THE RETURN OF ROMA TO SERBIA AND OTHER REGIONS OF WESTERN BALKANS

Friday, 27 October 2017

- X. OVERVIEW OF THE (MINORITY) STATUS OF ROMA AND TRAVELLERS IN MEMBER STATES, AS WELL AS HOW ROMA AND TRAVELLERS FIT INTO THE CATEGORY "VULNERABLE GROUPS"
- XI. ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE NEXT PLENARY MEETING IN GREECE AND PROPOSALS FOR THE AGENDA
- XII. ADOPTION OF THE LIST OF DECISIONS
