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Summit of Mayors on Roma to consolidate local and regional action for Roma inclusion

Strasbourg, 21.07.2011 – To address the situation of the estimated 10 to 12 million Roma and Travellers, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe is organising a Summit of Mayors on Roma, in Strasbourg (France) on 22 September 2011.

The Summit is a response to the increasing discrimination against Roma in Europe and their social and economic marginalisation. The Strasbourg Declaration on Roma, adopted by the High-level Meeting of the Council of Europe member states on 20 October 2010, highlighted the particular importance of local and regional action to improve the situation of Roma.

The Summit of Mayors on Roma, to be held under the motto "grassroots", is being co-organised with the Special Representative of the Council of Europe Secretary General for Roma issues, Jeroen Schokkenbroek, and in partnership with the City of Strasbourg and the Strasbourg Club municipal network. The Summit will bring together representatives of municipalities, regions and networks actively addressing the situation of Roma or interested in becoming involved, Roma organisations and elected representatives as well as other institutions concerned with this situation, in order to provide a co-operation framework for action in favour of Roma.

The discussions will focus on the relations between local and regional communities and Roma groups, with a particular emphasis on identifying concrete and innovative solutions to any problems encountered. The long-term objective is to establish a pan-European network which will provide information on the growing number of local and regional initiatives and serve as a co-operation framework for the various actors in the field.

The Summit will be opened in the Hemicycle of the Palais de la Paix by the Secretary General Thorbjørn Jagland, Congress President Keith Whitmore, President of the Parliamentary Assembly Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, a representative of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers and Mayor of Strasbourg Roland Ries, President of the Strasbourg Club. Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights Thomas Hammarberg and Special Representative for Roma issues will lead in the plenary discussion on obstacles to Roma inclusion, which will be followed by workshops on integration through education, on fighting prejudice and managing cultural diversity, and on equal access to housing, health care and employment.

Debates on the local and regional commitment to the future action in favour of Roma and on financing activities for Roma inclusion will conclude the Summit. Among the personalities invited to address the participants are notably European Commissioners László Andor and Viviane Reding, President of the European Roma and Travellers Forum Rudko Kawczynski and Vice-President of the International Romani Union Nicolae Gheorghe, members of the European Parliament Livia Járóka and Hélène Flautre, representatives of the Council of Europe Development Bank and Open Society Foundation.

Practical information:

Interpretation: The working languages of the Summit will be English, French, German, Russian, Italian and Romani.

Registration: www.coe.int/roma-summit-registration

Website : www.coe.int/roma-summit

Follow the Summit on [Twitter](#)

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The Congress has two chambers, the Chamber of Local Authorities and the Chamber of Regions. It brings together 318 full and 318 substitute members representing more than 200 000 European territorial communities.

President of the Congress: Keith Whitmore (United Kingdom, ILDG), President of the Chamber of Regions: Herwig van Staa (Austria, EPP/CD), President of the Chamber of Local Authorities: Jean-Paul Frécon (France, SOC)

Political Groups: Socialist Group (SOC), Group of the European Peoples - Christian Democrats (EPP/CD), Independent and Liberal Democrat Group (ILDG).