

Roma Youth Action Plan

Combating discrimination and supporting the participation of Roma young people



Roma youth and the Council of Europe

The youth sector of the Council of Europe initiated activities with Roma¹ young people in 1995, with a training course at the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg within the framework of the All Different – All Equal European youth campaign against racism, Antisemitism, xenophobia and intolerance. In the years that followed, various other activities were carried out to strengthen the capacity of Roma youth organisations and Roma youth leaders in Europe. These have included:

- Study sessions with Roma European youth networks covering human rights education, youth mobilisation, the management of Roma youth organisations, and intercultural dialogue
- Activities where the concerns of Roma young people were particularly relevant, such as young migrants, young women, violence in everyday life or gender equality
- Training courses for youth leaders and youth workers, such as the series of long-term training courses on participation and citizenship of minority youth, and the Enter! project on access to social rights for young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods (2009-2012)
- Support to local pilot projects by the European Youth Foundation.

The youth policy of the Council of Europe supports both the fight against discrimination affecting Roma young people and the participation of Roma youth in all areas of the programme of the Youth Department.

The Roma Youth Conference

In September 2011, as a follow-up to the Strasbourg Declaration², the Youth Department invited 60 Roma youth leaders to a conference in Strasbourg to discuss thematic fields, priorities and activities to be included in a 'Roma youth action plan'.

The conference was organised in close co-operation with European Roma youth networks and other stakeholders and was a response to the realisation that the concerns of young Roma were insufficiently addressed in policies concerning Roma.

The participants at the conference exchanged experiences and built on previous results for a common identification of current challenges for Roma young people and priorities for European youth work and youth policy.

Promoting real equal opportunities

The Action Plan sets out to:

- Support the creation of an environment where Roma youth can grow up free from discrimination and confident about their future perspectives, while appreciating their plural cultural backgrounds and affiliations as young people, as Roma, as citizens of their countries, and as active Europeans
- Change prejudices and stereotypical attitudes against Roma
- Support and develop the participation and autonomy of Roma youth at European, national, and local levels
- Defend the human rights of Roma by empowering young Roma through human rights education
- Promote real equal opportunities for Roma young people in all aspects of life, notably education, employment, health, and housing
- Combat the segregation of Roma schools and settlements
- Support an integrated approach to all Roma youth-related policies
- Value and promote Roma identity, culture, and language.

The guiding principles of the Roma Youth Action Plan are:

- Direct, constant and consistent involvement of Roma youth and Roma youth organisations in the implementation of the Plan with other partners
- Creating synergies among initiatives in order to respond to the need for systemic changes in structural forms of discrimination
- Adopting human-rights based approaches to the challenges faced by young Roma, including a concern for gender equality
- Mainstreaming Roma issues in youth policy and mainstreaming youth issues in Roma-related policies
- Encouraging change and action at the local and national levels.

1. The term "Roma" used at the Council of Europe refers to Roma, Sinti, Kale and related groups in Europe, including Travellers and the Eastern groups (Dom and Lom), and covers the wide diversity of the groups concerned, including people who identify themselves as "Gypsies".

2. In October 2010, the Council of Europe High Level Meeting on Roma resulted in the Strasbourg Declaration on Roma (CM(2010)133 final), which has become a guiding document for all the activities that the Council of Europe undertakes regarding Roma people. The High Level meeting agreed to a pan-European effort to respond to the needs of the estimated 12 million Roma living in Europe. This is based on the principles of non-discrimination, citizenship, women and children's rights; social inclusion including education, housing and healthcare; empowerment and better access to justice.

Empowerment and access to human rights

The Roma Youth Action Plan is articulated around six themes, including specific activities under each theme which will be monitored and evaluated constantly.

Strengthening Roma youth identity
Addressing multiple discrimination and recognising plural identities
Building a stronger Roma youth movement
Increasing the capacity of Roma youth organisations to participate in policy making
Human rights and human rights education
Combating discrimination and antigypsyism

1. Strengthening Roma youth identity

The objective is to support the creation in Europe of an environment where Roma young people can grow up free from discrimination and confident about their identity and future perspectives while appreciating their history, plural cultural backgrounds, and affiliations as young people, as Roma, as citizens of their countries, and as active Europeans.

In 2012 and 2013, activities related to this objective include:

- Workshops, festivals and youth events to celebrate 8 April (International Roma Day), organised by Roma youth networks FERYP and ternYpe to promote Roma history and culture, at local and international levels
- Conferences and awareness raising events for the Roma and Sinti Genocide commemoration on 2 August, organised by the Roma youth network ternYpe and OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
- Barvalipe Camp, organised by the Open Society Foundations – Roma Initiative
- Youth exchanges and debates on the recognition of Roma identity and a culture of tolerance, organised by Roma youth networks.

2. Addressing multiple discrimination and recognising plural identities

The objective is to empower groups that experience multiple discrimination, including from within Roma communities, such as young women, LGBT Roma, migrants and religious or linguistic groups.

In 2012 and 2013, activities related to this objective include:

- Research on the situation of LGBT young people in Roma communities, carried out in 2012 by the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) in co-operation with Roma youth networks



- Research and publication on life stories of Roma young people facing multiple discrimination based on gender and ethnicity, to be carried out by the Council of Europe in 2013
- Activities on multiple discrimination against young Roma LGBT people, to be organised in co-operation with the Directorate of Human Rights and Anti-discrimination of the Council of Europe in 2013
- Meetings and seminars on the specific situation of young Roma women
- National seminars and local youth projects and workshops on the topic of diversity, to be organised by Roma youth organisations.

3. Building a stronger Roma youth movement

The objective is to facilitate and enable Roma youth alliances within and outside Roma communities, mobilise Roma youth and stake their position in their communities and society at large.

In 2012 and 2013, activities related to this objective include:

- Capacity-building activities for Roma youth organisations, to be organised by Roma youth networks, on topics such as using new technologies in youth organisations, developing effective advocacy and leadership skills, Romanî language courses, and so on
- Campaigns promoting participation and active citizenship of young Roma at local, regional, national and international levels
- A study session with the Forum of European Roma Young People (FERYP) on strategies for inclusion of young Roma, organised in April 2012 in co-operation with the European Youth Centres of the Council of Europe
- A Report on the specific situation of Roma youth in Europe, to be elaborated in 2013 by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe
- A training course on the management of Roma youth organisations to be organised by the Youth Department of the Council of Europe in November 2013.



4. Increasing the capacity of Roma youth organisations to participate in policy making

The objective is to support active Roma youth participation in decision-making processes in order to mainstream Roma issues in youth policies, and youth issues in Roma policies and programmes.

In 2012 and 2013, activities related to this objective include:

- Networking activities between Roma youth networks and other youth organisations, including the European Youth Forum
- Seeking synergies with the activities of the Decade for Roma Inclusion presidencies
- Promoting active participation of Roma youth at the annual Human Dimension Implementation Meetings organised by the OSCE in 2012 and 2013
- Study sessions to build the capacity of Roma youth networks, to be organised in co-operation with the youth sector of the Council of Europe in 2012 and 2013
- A networking meeting on empowerment and mobilisation of Roma youth in Albania organised by ternYpe in 2012
- A seminar on the role of youth policy on the support of the social inclusion of young Roma, proposed by the Council of Europe for 2013.

5. Human rights and human rights education

The objective is to raise awareness of the human rights situation of young Roma and promote a culture of human rights.

In 2012 and 2013, activities related to this objective include:

- A training course for Roma youth leaders activists to promote human rights and combat discrimination, organised by the youth sector of the Council of Europe
- The publication into Romani of the Council of Europe's *Compassito - manual on human rights education for children*
- The Roma Rights Summer School, an ERRC annual capacity-building 10-day training course aimed at increasing and strengthening the core of Romani activists working to promote equality for Roma in Europe.

6. Combating discrimination and antigypsyism

The objective is to promote systemic changes to structural forms of discrimination and combating antigypsyism through enforcing existing anti-discrimination norms and promoting human rights education.

In 2012 and 2013, activities related to this objective include:

- A study session with the network Phiren Amenca on challenging stereotypes and antigypsyism and supporting the work of young Roma and non-Roma volunteers as they engage in tackling discrimination and promoting inclusion in diverse voluntary service placements from across the world
- A seminar on the role of youth work in combating segregation in school environments, in November 2012 by the youth sector of the Council of Europe
- Two training courses for bloggers against hate speech online, organised by the youth sector of the Council of Europe, including a focus on hate speech affecting Roma young people
- A study session by ternYpe in co-operation with the youth sector on creative campaigning and fighting antigypsyism
- Development of a *Toolkit on combating antigypsyism* by the Council of Europe
- A training course for Roma youth mediators against discrimination and segregation affecting Roma young people organised by the Youth Department of the Council of Europe in 2013.

This programme is subject to regular changes and updates.

Funding and resources

The Roma Youth Action Plan is carried out within the framework of the co-management system of the Youth Department, responsible for the youth policy of the Council of Europe, which includes the Advisory Council on Youth and the European Steering Committee on Youth.

For 2012 and 2013, the programme of activities of the Roma Youth Action Plan benefits from financial voluntary contributions from the Flemish Department of Foreign Affairs and from the Ministry of Education and Culture of Finland.



Training course for Roma youth leaders and activists for human rights and action against discrimination

The Youth Department of the Council of Europe runs this course to empower Roma youth leaders and multipliers to take action against discrimination.

Objectives of the course:

- To strengthen participants' understanding of key concepts of human rights, discrimination and antigypsyism
- To gather information about the realities of young Roma in Europe and the challenges they face, and to exchange practices and responses to discrimination developed by different social actors
- To improve participants' competences in using human rights-based approaches to tackle situations of discrimination, exclusion and antigypsyism
- To empower participants to take action and develop projects by and with young Roma for human rights in their local communities
- To introduce participants to the Council of Europe's work in the areas of human rights, human rights education, active youth participation and intercultural dialogue
- To support the capacity of Roma youth organisations and movements across Europe to network for human rights and to be associated with the Roma Youth Action Plan.

The training course involves 31 participants based in Roma communities supported by a team of trainers and an educational advisor of the Council of Europe.

Course calendar

Phase 1 (October 2012)

Preparation for the course: Getting to know each other, getting familiar with e-learning and mapping exercises in relation to the residential seminar.

Phase 2 (21 - 29 October 2012)

Initial training seminar: Common programme for the development of competences, and participants working together face-to-face in an intercultural learning setting, deepening of concepts and practical implications of the main themes of the programme, leading to the development and preparation of local projects for human rights and anti-discrimination to be implemented by the participants.

Phase 3 (November 2012 - December 2013)

Project implementation and consolidation of learning: Each participant implements a local youth project using rights-based approaches to fight discrimination and antigypsyism with educational support through mentoring and e-learning to secure their feasibility and impact.

Phase 4 (February 2014)

Evaluation and follow-up training seminar:

Evaluation of the projects and their completion, and of personal learning and evaluation of the course.

Overview of participants' projects

The development of the projects by the participants responds to the following purposes:

- to offer participants the opportunity of a full practical experience, from the needs analysis to the evaluation and follow-up of a project
- to mobilise young people for human rights and to fight discrimination affecting Roma communities
- to transfer the learning and results of the course to the participants' local community and organisation
- to identify and value the role of the participants and their projects as examples of action to be replicated to combat discrimination, and to promote social cohesion and Roma youth participation.

The responsibility for the implementation of the project lies with the participants, within the framework of their organisations and communities. The Council of Europe provides institutional and educational support and connects them with other actors and activities of the Roma Youth Action Plan.

■ Albania

Brisilda TACO - Romano Kham

Project idea: Awareness raising among Roma young people at national level about the rights and discrimination that they experience in daily life (in the media, in schools, hospitals, at home, at work, etc.); training and campaigning activities to take action against discrimination.

Nersida ARAPI - Roma Youth in Action

Project idea: Regional meetings of young Roma for them to learn about their identity and human rights framework. After these meetings, participants will act as peer educators in the communities and will start small-scale activities with their peers at the local level.

Hyseni DANJEL - Disutni Albania

Project idea: Training activities for young Roma students to fight discrimination, particularly in education. These will also be included in a series of TV shows on local television dealing with raising the awareness regarding the problems of young Roma.

■ Belgium

Bekim BERISA

Project idea: Initiating a Roma youth organisation in Ghent to fight discrimination and advocate for the right of young Roma to education. The project focuses on community meetings with the three generations: grandparents,

parents and young people, raising their awareness about the right to education as a key to having a successful life and removing obstacles that prevent young people from continuing their education.

Armen BAHTIJAR - European Roma Information Office

Project idea: Opening a local youth centre where Roma and non-Roma young people can have access to educational and leisure-time activities. The ultimate aim of this centre is dialogue between young Roma and non-Roma and learning the local language.

Mihaela MIHAI - ASBL "Centre des Roms Ilo Romano"

Project idea: Mobilising 10 Roma young people as mediators among the Romanian Roma community in Belgium in their relation to institutions, schools, healthcare and youth-related services.

Bulgaria

Veselina VARGOVA - Tolerance and Mutual Aid Foundation

Project idea: Developing responses to the very low percentage of youth employment among young Roma, including a seminar between young Roma, businesses and the government to establish a system of internships leading to employment. This pilot project will involve 20 young Roma; a wider project will be developed based on the lessons learnt.

Croatia

Biljana NELOVIC - Youth Centre Osijek

Project idea: Awareness-raising activities in the city of Osijek for the majority community to learn about the existence and problems of the Roma community situated near this city. The awareness-raising activities will be developed both by Roma and non-Roma young people and will use creative methods of awareness raising (media, video, exhibitions, music, etc).

Finland

Anette AKERLUND - Romano Missio

Project idea: Promoting access of young Roma in Finland to cultural life through the development of artistic and awareness-raising workshops. The outcomes will be presented during the Roma Women Conference in 2013 in Helsinki.

France

Ionut STAN - Secours Catholique

Project idea: Youth exchange between France and Romania to learn about discrimination in the two countries and develop strategies to combat these practices. The aim is to show a different image of Roma young people by engaging in volunteering activities.

Greece

Eleni KARAFYLLIDOU - United Societies of Balkans

Project idea: Creation of a webradio where Roma young people can express their concerns and discuss issues

of discrimination in the communities. Young people themselves prepare the shows and broadcast in the communities and beyond.

Theofano PAPAKONSTANTINOU - K.E.K. Europrooptiki of Larisa

Project idea: Educational activities for young Roma people to have access to health services.

Loanna PETRAKI - Centre for Intercultural Studies of the University of Athens

Project idea: Supporting mediation processes for access of Roma young people to health services.

Georgia TOITSIOU - Second Chance Schools

Project idea: Supporting networking among civil society and local institutions for improving the access of Roma communities to education.

Hungary

Veronica CZUTOR - Független Egyesület

Project idea: Awareness raising and training for teachers, parents and young people to prevent school drop-out and combat segregation. This includes complementary university courses for students studying pedagogy on how to work with mixed classes of Roma and non-Roma. A practice phase where the future teachers develop workshops in the schools is also part of the project.

Peter WENDL - Roma Civic Association

Project idea: Coaching young Roma and supporting them in staying in education, as well as providing professional orientation on the job market.

Kosovo*

Armend BEHLULI - Municipality of Gjakova

Project idea: Human rights education activities in schools and in the Roma communities.

Dardan KRYEZIU - Mus-e Kosova

Project idea: Workshops with young people from Roma communities and other communities, on human rights and against discrimination, resulting in a documentary.

Lituania

Bozena KARVELIENE - Roma Integration House

Project idea: Participation of Roma children and young mothers in kindergarten.

The Netherlands

Andreaa CARNU - European Youth for Action

Project idea: Developing an online toolkit for young activists working on anti-racism, focusing on racism against the Roma minorities in Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary.

* All reference to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo

■ Portugal

Sofia Aurora REBELO SANTOS

Mandacaru – Cooperativa de Intervenção Social e Cultural

Project idea: Supporting young Roma to form local organisations and take action for the recognition of the Roma community.

■ Romania

Lucia-Stefania DULEA

European Platform for Youth Development

Project idea: Educational activities for teachers on Roma issues, culture, history and the current situation. A public event will create more confidence between teachers and the local Roma community.

Nicoleta SCRIPCARIU - Romanian Centre for European Policies

Project idea: Training course for students from different ethnic minorities on their rights and what actions they can take if they are discriminated against. The project includes a policy dimension by proposing policy guidelines to the National Council for Anti-discrimination specifically focused on young people from different ethnic minorities.

■ Serbia

Marko TOMASEVIC - Red Cross Serbia

Project idea: Developing a non-formal education curriculum for organisations working on human rights education with Roma young people.

■ Spain

Pedro CASERMEIRO - Rromane Siklivone, associació de joves estudiants gitanos del Bon Pastor

Project idea: International youth exchange with young Roma and non-Roma focused on intercultural dialogue, and aimed at building the confidence and competences of young Roma to act as peer educators and activists.

Sandra Maria HEREDIA FERNANDEZ - FAKALI

Project idea: Organisation of a coalition of Roma and non-Roma organisations with the aim of fighting hate speech that affects the Roma community in Spain.

■ "The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"

Shaip ISENI - Sumnal – Association for development of the Roma community

Project idea: Intercultural activities involving young people from different ethnic communities in schools, with the aim of preventing violence and creating trust among young people.

Anife SABEDINOVSKA - Roma Youth Centre

Project idea: Supporting Roma youth trainers and multipliers in human rights education.

■ Turkey

Halil Ibrahim NURBEL - ROMANKARA

Project idea: Research on young Turkish Roma, focusing

on the access of young Roma to formal and non-formal education opportunities.

Figen KELEMER - Turkish Roma Youth Network

Project idea: Activities against forced evictions of Roma communities. A group of young Roma will be trained on how to take action and raise awareness in the community about this problem; they will then organise activities to raise awareness in the communities on how Roma people can take action against forced eviction.

■ United Kingdom

Frances DONNELLY - Coventry Roma Project

Project idea: Opening a Roma Community Centre in Coventry including youth groups and mothers and toddlers groups as an example of helping to support and deal with the poor health provision for the Roma community.

A joint venture for Roma youth empowerment

The Action Plan includes activities of the Youth Department and of other sectors of the Council of Europe, particularly those of the Team of the Special Representatives of the Secretary General on Roma issues, the Directorate of Human Rights and Anti-discrimination, along with activities proposed by other partners.

An Informal Contact Group co-ordinates the partners in the implementation and evaluation of the programme of activities. The contact group operates within the context of co-management in place at the Youth Department; the Advisory Council on Youth and the European Steering Committee on Youth take an active part in the contact group and, as Joint Council on Youth, carry the political support and responsibility for the plan in the Council of Europe.

The partners of the Roma Youth Action Plan include, first and foremost, youth organisations and platforms:

- **Forum of European Roma Young People (FERYP)**
- **ternype – International Roma Youth Network**
- **European Youth Forum**

The Open Society Foundations, the European Roma Rights Centre and OSCE – ODIHR also take part in the plan. The project is also open to other interested stakeholders.



The Roma Youth Action Plan is a response of the Council of Europe to challenges faced by Roma young people in Europe, particularly in relation to their empowerment, participation in policy decision-making processes and structures at European level and multiple realities of discrimination. The action plan is based on the outcomes of the Roma Youth Conference (2011) and complements the Council of Europe Strasbourg Declaration on Roma by associating Roma youth to its implementation.

This brochure includes the description of the Roma Youth Action Plan and the plan of activities in 2012 and 2013, as well as a description of one key activity, the training course for Roma youth leaders and activists for promoting human rights and taking action against discrimination.



COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

The Council of Europe has 47 member states, covering virtually the entire continent of Europe. It seeks to develop common democratic and legal principles based on the European Convention of Human Rights and other reference texts on the protection of individuals.



Ministry of
Education
and Culture

With the support of the Flemish Department of Foreign Affairs
and the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture.

 www.coe.int/youth/roma
youth@coe.int

