



Ref number: DDCP/EYCB/RYP/2015/05

Budapest, 14 July 2015



ROMA YOUTH CONFERENCE 2015

A Council of Europe conference to discuss current Roma youth issues and future policy orientations for the participation and inclusion of Roma youth

19-22 October 2015, European Youth Centre Budapest

Presentation and Call for participants

Background of the conference

The Council of Europe is an intergovernmental organisation whose mission is to promote human rights, democracy and the rule of law in Europe. The Council of Europe has been playing an important role regarding the situation of Roma people in Europe, regularly condemning discrimination against Roma and their social and economic marginalisation and developing ways for Roma participation at European level. Currently, the main strategy of the Council of Europe regarding Roma issues (based on the “Strasbourg Declaration”) focuses on the following priorities:

- Non-discrimination, citizenship, women and children’s rights.
- Social inclusion including education, housing and healthcare.
- Empowerment and better access to justice.

Regarding Roma young people, the Council of Europe has worked with Roma young people since 1995 and has developed, in co-operation with its governmental and non-governmental partners, a Roma Youth Action Plan. In 2011, the first Roma Youth Conference was organised by the Council of Europe, during which Roma youth people, youth leaders, members of international Roma youth networks and other international institutions defined the priorities for the Roma Youth Action Plan. The Roma Youth Action Plan¹ is a response of the Council of Europe to the 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 includes activities of the Youth Department and of other sectors of the Council of Europe, as well as activities by other partners – intergovernmental and non-governmental – cooperating with the Council of Europe. The action plan gives priority to human rights and intercultural dialogue as responses to discrimination and antigypsyism, together with the development and capacity-building of Roma youth organisations and movements. The overall plan follows an approach of “double mainstreaming”: promoting the inclusion of youth-related matters in policies and programmes dealing with Roma issues and promoting the inclusion of Roma youth and related issues in youth policies and programmes. Since 2011, the Roma Youth Action Plan has included a wide variety of activities, training courses, development of expertise related to the situation of Roma youth, educational manuals, study sessions in co-operation with international youth organisations, study visits at national level, support and funding to Roma youth projects and policy advising activities. The implementation of the Roma Youth Action Plan is led by the Youth Department in close cooperation with Roma youth organisations and other European stakeholders on Roma and youth policies.

In 2015, the Council of Europe will carry out an evaluation of the Roma Youth Action Plan and will organise a second Roma Youth Conference, in order to take stock and draw lessons from the last years of implementation of the Roma Youth Action Plan. The Roma Youth

¹ More about the Roma Youth Action Plan: www.coe.int/youth/roma

Conference will also be an opportunity to look forward to the future of the Roma Youth Action Plan and its orientations in the years to come.

Aims and objectives of the conference

The Roma Youth Conference aims to bring together Roma youth organisations, Roma youth representatives and relevant Roma youth stakeholders for taking stock of the results and relevance of the action plan so far and to discuss the future orientations of the Roma Youth Action Plan.

The main objectives of the conference are:

- To discuss, promote and learn from the Roma Youth Action Plan experiences and practices
- To promote and enable the participation of young Roma in policy making process at all levels
- To emphasize the role of Roma youth in fighting antigypsyism
- To enhance the inclusion of youth matters in policies and programmes dealing with Roma issues and promoting the inclusion of Roma youth issues in youth policies and programmes within the Council of Europe and all relevant stakeholders
- To shape the future of the Roma Youth Action Plan in coordination with young people in relation to the Council of Europe's policies and programmes and other relevant Roma and youth stakeholders
- To analyse the current place of Roma youth issues in regards of the national Roma inclusion policies, such as the National Roma Integration Strategies and other relevant policies.

Expected outcomes of the conference

The Conference is first of all a learning and networking experience for Roma youth. In addition to this, the conference should also result in:

- A better understanding of the current situation of Roma youth in Europe
- More visibility for Roma youth activities and policy efforts
- Greater awareness about Roma youth issues (policies, organisations agenda, etc.) and proposals on how to address Roma youth issues at national, regional and local level
- Revised orientations for the Roma Youth Action Plan in the future
- Concrete proposals developed and addressed towards institutions and platforms supporting Roma youth such as the: Roma Youth Action Plan, CAHROM, National Roma Integration Strategies, the European Roma Institute, etc.
- More networking, engagement and coordination among RYAP partners
- A declaration by the participants in the conference

Format and methodology

The Roma Youth Conference is a three days and half event involving some 80 participants.

The conference is designed as a multi-stakeholder and non-formal intercultural learning environment, where young people and stakeholder representatives can exchange their experience in working with Roma and young Roma, and build upon previous experiences and results. Representatives of relevant international organisations and institutions working and supporting Roma issues will be also invited to take part at the conference.

Draft programme

18 October 2015

Arrival of participants

19 October 2015

Opening and introductions to the context of the conference

Sharing experiences and realities of working with Roma youth

20 October 2015

The Roma Youth Action Plan ... through the eyes of activists, youth organisations, partners and evaluators

Getting to know European Roma youth activities and projects

21 October 2015

Presentation and lessons learn from the implementation of programmes for Roma youth

Strategic networking and partnership building

Planning the Roma Youth Action Plan's future - priorities, partners, coordination, etc.

22 October 2015

Follow-up actions and the future of the Roma Youth Action Plan

Evaluation and closing

Profile of participants

The conference will bring together representatives and active leaders of Roma youth organisations, young Roma active in other organisations and projects, representatives of other European and national youth organisations and networks policy makers and representatives of international organisations and foundations will also actively take part in the conference.

All participants should:

- Be aged between 18 and 35 years (exceptions will be possible based on the quality of the application form)
- Be motivated and committed to contribute to the conference and its outcomes
- Be active and have some experience in activities with Roma young people, communities and organisations
- Be able to work in English or Romanes
- Be available for the whole duration of the conference

The preparatory team of the conference will select participants on the basis of the following criteria:

- Compliance with the profile of participants
- Representation of the diversity of Roma communities across the 47 members states of the Council of Europe
- Balanced participation of young Roma women and young Roma men
- Level of understanding and experience in the field of (Roma) youth and Roma issues.

Application procedure and deadlines

All interested candidate must apply online, completing the application form through this link: <http://youthapplications.coe.int/Application-forms>

The application must be submitted **by 20 August 2015, at midnight Central European Time.**

Practical and financial conditions

Timetable

The conference will begin at 09:00 on the 19 October 2015 and finish on the 22 October 2015 at 13.00. Selected participants should arrange their travel in order to arrive at the European Youth Centre Budapest on the 18 October and leave on the 22 October afternoon.

Venue and accommodation

The conference will take place at the European Youth Centre Budapest. Accommodation and meals will be provided by the Council of Europe.

Travel and subsistence expenses

Travel expenses to and from Budapest will be reimbursed according to the rules of the Council of Europe.

Working languages

The working languages will be English and Romanes. Interpretation possibilities into other languages may be considered according to need.

Visas

Visa costs will be reimbursed by the Council of Europe. The Council of Europe secretariat will issue invitation letter that should facilitate the delivery of visas to attend the conference.

Further information

For further information about the Conference, please contact Zsuzsanna Molnar, Zsuzsanna.molnar@coe.int .