

ROMA YOUTH ACTION PLAN

Supporting the participation and inclusion of
Roma young people in Europe.



What is the Roma Youth Action Plan?

The Roma Youth Action Plan (RYAP) is a project of the Council of Europe which responds to the challenges faced by Roma¹ young people in Europe. Many Roma young people face obstacles to their inclusion and participation due to social and economic precariousness and discrimination.

The Roma Youth Action Plan was initiated in 2011 to complement the 2010 Strasbourg Declaration on Roma. Following an evaluation carried out in 2015, the Joint Council on Youth² decided to continue the Plan linking it to the Thematic Action Plan on the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers of the Council of Europe.

The Roma Youth Action Plan is carried out within the framework of the Council of Europe Youth Department's co-management system, in close co-operation with the Support Team of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Roma Issues.

Guidelines for the implementation of the Roma Youth Action Plan (2016-2020), adopted by the Joint Council on Youth, have been drawn up taking into account the proposals: from the evaluation of the Plan; from the participants in the second Roma youth conference (October 2015) and from the partners and organisations which make up the Informal Contact Group. The RYAP Guidelines lay down the projects' strategic orientations, priority areas and main approaches for the upcoming implementation period.

The Informal Contact Group brings together the different partners in the Roma Youth Action Plan, first and foremost Roma youth organisations and platforms. It is a co-ordination body and promotes communication among the partners thus building synergies and securing maximum impact of their activities.

1. The terms "Roma and Travellers" are being 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, 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.

2. The co-decision-making body of the Council of Europe youth sector comprising governmental and non-governmental representatives.

Regular partners in the project include:

- youth organisations: Forum of European Roma Young People (FERYP), TernYpe – International Roma Youth Network, Phiren Amenca – network of Roma and non-Roma volunteers and volunteer service organisations and the European Youth Forum;
- other sectors of the Council of Europe: the ROMED programme, the Ad Hoc Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues (CAHROM), the Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Unit;
- international organisations and institutions: European Roma Rights Centre, SALTO-Youth Network, OSCE/ODIHR and others.

The close involvement and participation of the Advisory Council on Youth and of the European Steering Committee on Youth³ ensure a strong link between the activities of the RYAP and the national and European youth-policy stakeholders in the Council of Europe.

The Roma Youth Action Plan includes various types of activities and interventions for Roma and other youth organisations, policy makers and Roma young people, such as:

- capacity-building activities for youth organisations;
- training courses for Roma youth leaders;
- sharing of knowledge about the situation of young Roma to a wider public;
- support for policy makers in order to create policies and measures that respond to the needs of young Roma;
- the development and dissemination of educational resources on antigypsyism, education for remembrance and youth participation.

The thematic priorities of the Roma Youth Action Plan for 2016 – 2020 are:

- strengthening Roma youth identity;
- Roma youth participation and building a stronger Roma youth movement;
- human rights and human rights education;
- combating structural discrimination and antigypsyism;
- supporting Roma young people's access to social rights and their transition to autonomy and work life;
- addressing multiple discrimination and fostering gender equality.

³ Which together make up the Joint Council on Youth.

Approaches of the Roma Youth Action Plan

Double mainstreaming

The project is based on “double mainstreaming” to ensure, on the one hand, the inclusion of youth issues in Roma policies and programmes and, on the other, that of Roma youth issues into youth policies. This process is indispensable in order to make sure that Roma-youth-specific issues are effectively considered by all actors concerned. The creation of a thematic group on youth in CAHROM, or the involvement of national youth policy authorities in Roma youth seminars in Portugal and Ukraine, are only some of the examples of double mainstreaming in practice.

Capacity building of Roma youth

The project strengthens the competences of Roma youth leaders and organisations, and others working with young Roma, as a way of supporting the autonomy and participation of young Roma people as well as the sustainability of Roma-youth-led projects. The capacity-building activities and the study sessions at the European Youth Centres have been central to the emergence and development of European Roma youth organisations and projects.

Youth participation – from local to European

This project aims to involve Roma young people in all processes related to them and ensure that they play an active role in shaping Roma and youth policies. The promotion of the participation of young Roma people at national and local levels is a priority, which implies also supporting co-operation with non-Roma partners and organisations.



Activities foreseen in 2016-2017

- regional training courses for Roma youth leaders on combating antigypsyism;
- consultations with the partners in the Informal Contact Group;
- regional and national training courses in Ukraine on Roma youth participation with a focus on youth policies;
- study sessions in co-operation with Roma youth organisations at the European Youth Centres in Strasbourg and Budapest;
- regional training courses on Roma youth participation and self-organisation;
- the launching of a Roma Youth Academy, a project for the development of the democratic leadership of Roma youth organisations and the emergence of Roma youth leaders;
- awareness-raising activities on hate speech and antigypsyism within the No Hate Speech Movement Campaign;
- educational and youth activities under the Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative to commemorate and raise awareness of the Roma Genocide organised by the ternYpe International Roma youth network with the support of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe.

Activities by partners in the Roma Youth Action Plan for 2016-2017:

- Study session on combating anti-Semitism and antigypsyism in November 2016 organised by the European Union of Jewish Students and Phiren Amenca International Network in co-operation with the Youth Department of the Council of Europe;
- “Putren Le Jakha” international youth conference on antigypsyism to be held in October 2016 by member organisations of the Phiren Amenca International Network.

For an updated list and calendar of activities, please check the website.

The Roma Youth Academy

The Roma Youth Academy is a new long-term educational activity of the Youth Department to enhance the role of Roma youth leaders in democratic leadership processes, the self-organisation of communities and economic autonomy.

The Academy will be based on three pillars:

- support to civil society through the training, assistance to and coaching of leaders of Roma youth organisations;
- support for political participation, through the training, assistance to and coaching of young Roma politicians;
- support for economic empowerment, through the training, assistance to and coaching of young Roma entrepreneurs.

The Academy will implement a comprehensive training programme which includes coaching and individual support, thematic seminars as well as action at the local/national level and networking activities. The Academy will serve also as a pool of resources and experience to support other activities in the Roma Youth Action Plan and those of partners.

Training opportunities

The Council of Europe Youth Department has been initiating activities with Roma young people since 1995, starting with a training course in the All Different – All Equal European Youth Campaign against Racism, Anti-Semitism, Xenophobia and Intolerance. In the years that followed, various training courses, study sessions and other activities were implemented with the aim of strengthening the capacity of Roma youth organisations and Roma youth leaders in Europe.

The Roma Youth Action Plan has given even more space to educational activities since 2011. Several training courses have been organised to support the development of Roma youth organisations' competences. These have included, among others, training courses on the promotion of human rights and on ways to combat discrimination, on how bloggers can stand up against hate speech online and also on the management and development of Roma youth organisations.

Educational Tools

The following educational resources have been produced within the RYAP and are available for educators, youth-policy makers and youth organisations:

- **Mirrors** – Manual on combating antigypsyism through human rights education;
- **Barabaripen** – Young Roma speak about discrimination;
- **Right to Remember** – Handbook for Education with Young People on the Roma Genocide;
- **Roma youth participation in action** – study on practices of Roma youth participation at the local level.

These materials draw on the expertise of the Council of Europe in non-formal education and on approaches to human rights education through non-formal learning. They complement other resources for education and action such as **Compass**, the manual for human rights education with young people and **Bookmarks**, the manual to combat hate speech online.

The Roma Youth Action Plan is open to partnerships with organisations that are interested in funding the translation and dissemination of these educational tools in their national or local context.

All educational materials are available on the website and can be ordered at youth@coe.int.



Opportunities for Roma youth activities

The **European Youth Foundation** supports youth activities that are consistent with the Council of Europe's values and work. Four kinds of grant are available to different types of organisations, from local to European level, providing support for international activities, annual work plans, local pilot activities as well as administrative costs for international youth NGOs. The Foundation regularly supports projects organised for, with and by Roma youth.

The **European Youth Centres** host and finance study sessions lasting from four to eight days which bring together members of youth networks and experts for discussions on a specific subject relevant to the priorities of the Council of Europe youth sector and to youth organisations. Eligible Roma youth organisations and networks can also apply for such activities. Please see the general conditions at www.coe.int/youth.

Roma Youth Action Plan Achievements

Since 2011, the Roma Youth Action Plan has resulted in:

- over 4,200 participants have been reached by the activities;
- 2,300 participants have been involved in 31 capacity-building activities, some of which were the first in their kind in the Roma and youth fields, such as the "United for Dignity" conference on the situation of young Roma people affected by multiple discrimination, or the training workshop on combating antigypsyism through human rights education;
- thirty-four projects by Roma youth organisations have been supported by the European Youth Foundation, for a total of 1,965 direct participants/beneficiaries;
- five educational publications have been produced;
- policy tools related to the specific situation of Roma youth have been adopted:
 - Empowering Roma youth through participation: effective policy design at local and regional levels: resolution and recommendation adopted by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe;⁴

⁴ CG(26)8FINAL

- Roma youth empowerment and the inclusion of a youth dimension in national Roma inclusion strategies/policies: a thematic report with a set of recommendations for member States adopted by the Ad Hoc Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues (CAHROM). Youth is now a transversal issue of the Committee's work programme and Roma youth matters will be followed closely.

A brief glimpse of activities organised within the Roma Youth Action Plan:

- **Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative** – The Plan supports Roma young people's initiatives to encourage research on and a better understanding of the meaning of the Roma Genocide. Roma youth identity is one of the priorities of the Plan and therefore the concerns about and interest of young Roma in understanding and recognising the Roma Genocide are among the priorities for support.
- **Training course on the management and development of Roma youth organisations** – in 2013-2014, an international training course was organised for youth leaders working in organisations/institutions implementing projects with young Roma or informal youth groups. The course strengthened the capacity of Roma youth organisations to represent and to voice their concerns and needs.
- **First encounter of Roma youth, students and families of Portugal** – The first meeting of Roma youth and students and representatives of the community, national and municipal authorities, and other Portuguese stakeholders was organised by Letras Nomadas. The event gathered around 100 participants including 70 Roma students and family representatives. The meeting was co-supported by the ROMED Project of the Council of Europe and resulted in a number of Roma youth initiatives and support to the schooling of Roma children and young people.

Similar initiatives have been organised in France and Ukraine and will be expanded to other countries and regions where Roma youth participation is invisible.

The Youth Department has also implemented a training project for youth workers and Roma mediators in four youth centres in Bulgaria within the frame of the programme "Children and Youth at Risk" funded by the EEA Norway Grants, with the aim of developing intercultural and inclusive youth work initiatives at the local level.

The Roma Youth Action Plan is a project of the Council of Europe youth sector to respond to the challenges faced by Roma young people in Europe.

Check out this brochure and get to know more about:

- the achievements of the Roma Youth Action Plan 2011-2015
- the new themes of the Roma Youth Action Plan for 2016 – 2020
- the approaches of the Roma Youth Action Plan: double mainstreaming, capacity building and youth participation from local to European level
- different types of activities for and with Roma youth organisations, policy makers and Roma young people.

Find information on:

- training opportunities
- educational tools
- funding opportunities.

Contacts:

Youth Department, Council of Europe
youth@coe.int



www.coe.int

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It includes 47 member states, 28 of which are members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

www.coe.int/youth/roma



ENG