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CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Strasbourg, 18 December 2017

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

ABRIDGED MEETING REPORT

as submitted to the GR-SOC for its consideration at its 18 January 2018 meeting

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Document prepared by the Secretariat
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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.

I INTRODUCTION

1. The Ad Hoc Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues (CAHROM) held its 14th 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.

II GENDER REPRESENTATION

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

III ITEMS DISCUSSED AND DECISIONS TAKEN

The Committee

3. **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;

4. **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;

5. **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); 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”; 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 that the official decision by the EU Member States was expected to be adopted by the end of 2017;

6. **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 their efforts for the social and economic inclusion of Roma; to place anti-Gypsyism in the focus of the post-2020 EU Roma Framework; to create European and national truth commissions; to increase the monitoring of EU programmes and secure that these programmes reach-out Roma; and to educate mainstream society to combat stereotypes against Roma;

7. **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; and **welcomed** the close co-operation between OSCE/ODIHR and the Council of Europe on shared thematic priorities in Ukraine;

8. **took note** of the latest developments concerning the European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture (ERAC) as presented by the Chair of the ERAC Board;
9. **held an exchange for views** with the President of the European Roma and Travellers Forum (ERTF) and expressed an interest in receiving the ERTF work plan and list of priorities;
10. **took note** of Roma-related developments at national policy level as orally presented by CAHROM members in respect of the Russian Federation, Slovenia and Sweden as well as of the written contribution submitted by the CAHROM member in respect of Turkey;
11. **took note** of the programme of the forthcoming CAHROM thematic visit on the teaching of Roma history, including the 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;
12. **took note** of the update from the CAHROM member in respect of the Czech Republic concerning recent developments related to the pig farm in Leti, near Písek, constructed on the site of a former concentration camp, and **welcomed** the fact that the Czech Government on 21 August 2017 had approved the purchase of the pig farm for the purpose of its removal and had decided to hand over the stewardship of both the Leti and Hodonín memorial sites to the Museum of Romani Culture;
13. **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 of organising such an exhibition on the margin of the 16th CAHROM plenary meeting to be held in Strasbourg in October 2018;
14. **took note** that the proposed Terms of Reference of CAHROM for 2018-2019, as endorsed by the GR-SOC, include the task of drafting a CM Recommendation on the inclusion of the teaching of Roma history, including Roma Holocaust, in textbooks and school curricula;
15. **took note** of written information provided by the Permanent Observer of Canada to the Council of Europe following the concerns expressed 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, **recalled** that ENNHRI and Equinet members had informed the Committee at the 13th CAHROM meeting (Prague, 31 May-3 June 2017) that such practices had also been observed at airports in Brussels, London, Paris, Vienna and Warsaw; and **agreed** to keep this item on the agenda;
16. **took note** of an oral report by the CAHROM chairperson on his participation in the Workshop on Roma in the Americas, organised by the UN Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues, which took place in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on 20-21 September 2017, concluding that more sharing of experience between the continents would be useful, that the setting up of an international intergovernmental committee such as CAHROM could serve as a source of inspiration also beyond Europe, that the equivalent of the Council of Europe's Dosta! Campaign could be launched in the Americas to address prejudice and stereotypes against Roma; that the CAHROM should solicitate more regular participation in CAHROM meetings of Canada, Mexico and USA, all having observer status with the Council of Europe, so as to further contacts and co-operation; **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; **agreed** to invite Mr Fernand de Varennes, UN Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues, to the autumn 2018 CAHROM meeting;
17. **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 Tbilisi, 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 to the committee for written approval by 20 December 2017;

18. **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; **agreed** to submit any additional information to the Secretariat by mid-November 2017; and **proposed** to draw the attention of the Committee of Ministers, via the GR-SOC, to the publication of this review document on the CAHROM website;

19. **endorsed** a list of proposed topics for thematic visits in 2018 and 2019, subject to the adoption of the Council of Europe Programme and Budget 2018-2019 by the Committee of Ministers; **took note** of the numerous expression of interest as partner countries for the proposed thematic visits and **agreed** that in case of more than six applications as partner countries, the CAHROM Bureau would take the final decision about the composition of the thematic group;

20. **held an exchange of views** with Council of Europe entities, monitoring bodies and rapporteurs on Roma-related issues designated in other inter-governmental committees², as well as with international observers in CAHROM, such as the OHCHR, on recent developments and forthcoming reports, 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; and **took note** that a project concerning micro-credits for Roma could be supported by the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB);

21. **held an exchange of views** with the ad hoc rapporteur of the 4th meeting of the Council of Europe Dialogue with Roma and Traveller civil society (Strasbourg, 18-19 September 2017) on the main conclusions and recommendations resulting from that meeting, which focused on *the transition from education to employment*; **took note** that both the European Commission and the Council of Europe have prioritised this topic in 2017, providing opportunities for synergies; **took note** that the gap in unemployment between Roma and non-Roma seemed to be the greatest amongst Roma youth³; **took note** of the nine specific recommendations resulting from the 4th Dialogue meeting; **agreed** to ensure follow-up by putting the topic on the agenda of its next meeting and by addressing the recommendations at future CAHROM thematic visits; **took note** of the information provided by the CAHROM Chair that Croatia under the aegis of its forthcoming Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe would host an International Seminar on the “transition from education to employment” on the Brijuni islands at the end of September 2018;

² Were present and 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).

³ 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.

22. **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*”; **took note** of information provided by the UNHCR representative and by several CAHROM members on the situation of Roma returnees to Serbia and other Western Balkan countries, as well as on readmission agreements and assistance measures put in place to facilitate Roma returnees’ integration;
23. **heard** a presentation by a Senior Research Associate at the European Centre for Minority Rights (ECMI) entitled “*Roma: an ethnic or a social category?*”, addressing the different types of vulnerability and various concepts of minority status attached to Roma in various Council of Europe member States;
24. **elected** for 2018 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 CAHROM Chair in 2016 and 2017;
25. **re-appointed** Ms Henna HUTTU (Finland) as Gender Equality Rapporteur and **appointed** Ms Merita XHAF AJ (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. **thanked** the Permanent Representation of Turkey and the representative of the Zero Discrimination Association for inaugurating the photo exhibition “*Do you have a Dream?*” “*I don’t know...*” – *Dom and Abdal from Syria to Gaziantep*”;
27. **thanked** the Greek authorities, in particular the newly-established Roma Special Secretariat, for its invitation to host the next CAHROM meeting and **proposed** to hold its 15th 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;
28. **proposed** to hold its 16th meeting in Strasbourg, France, from 16 to 19 October 2018, subject to the adoption of the Council of Europe Programm and Budget 2018-2019 by the Committee of Ministers.

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
