

DRTO(2024)NN

Strasbourg, 23 February 2024

**17TH MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE
DIALOGUE WITH ROMA AND TRAVELLER¹ CIVIL SOCIETY**

**Teaching Roma and Travellers History.
Roma Holocaust Remembrance, Recognition and Education**

**Strasbourg, 11-12 June 2024
Council of Europe, Agora Room G04**

DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE

BACKGROUND

The regular dialogue events with Roma and Traveller civil society organisations aim to:

1. reinforce the regular dialogue between the Council of Europe and Roma communities on all policy issues relevant for Roma inclusion
2. stimulate the regular dialogue between member states and Roma organisations at national level
3. provide input to the various organs and entities of the Council of Europe on the effectiveness and appropriateness of their operational programmes, monitoring mechanisms and political initiatives, with due respect for their independent character and mandates.
4. increase the capacity of Roma and Traveller civil society organisations and to build expertise and knowledge of the Council of Europe standards and monitoring mechanisms, relevant for Roma and Traveller inclusion.

The 17th meeting of the Council of Europe dialogue with Roma and Traveller civil society focuses on the topic of Roma and Travellers history and of Roma Holocaust Remembrance, Recognition and Education.

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.

Roma and Travellers' presence in Europe, their contributions to the European cultural heritage and their history are not yet adequately reflected in formal and non-formal education and are known in a very limited degree by the general public.

The Council of Europe has developed key recommendations and instruments in the area of history teaching, setting clear methodological principles on the objectives of history teaching in a democratic and pluralist Europe. The Committee of Ministers later reaffirmed the principles and guidelines laid down in this document in its 2011 Recommendation to member states on intercultural dialogue and the image of the other in history teaching (CM/Rec(2011)6).

In the Strasbourg Declaration on Roma, the member States of the Council of Europe agreed to take measures to foster knowledge of the culture, history and languages of the Roma and understanding thereof. Article 12 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (ETS. No. 157) states that "Parties shall, where appropriate, take measures in the fields of education and research to foster knowledge of the culture, history, language and religion of their national minorities [...] and shall inter alia, provide adequate opportunities for teacher training and access to textbooks". However, the Committee of Ministers has on several occasions recognized the fact that the longstanding historical presence of Roma and Travellers in Europe is still not adequately acknowledged in European societies and educational systems and that their contribution to the common European cultural heritage is underestimated in both formal and non-formal education, and by the public in general. Finally, the Council of Europe complemented in 2020 the earlier recommendations with a more specific Recommendation on the Inclusion of the history of Roma and/or Travellers in school curricula and teaching materials (CM/Rec(2020)2).

In 2022 the Committee of Ministers adopted a recommendation on the remembrance of the Holocaust and preventing crimes against humanity, which references Roma.

Monitoring bodies of the Council of Europe have repeatedly called for adequate teaching of Roma history and culture in schools, including on Roma Holocaust, emphasizing how this can significantly contribute to fighting stereotypes².

An essential part of the educational process is knowledge about the common history that Roma and Travellers share with all the others in Europe, taking into account their contribution to society, but also the longstanding historical persecutions they have faced, in particular the horrific crimes committed against Roma during the Second World War. Research shows that most existing teaching materials overlook this aspect.

Roma and Traveller history teaching, and education, remembrance of recognition of the Roma Holocaust are aspects which member States should prioritize. There is a need and a right of Roma and Traveller children and youth to know their history, so that they can develop free from discrimination and confident about their identity³. Equally important is for the general populations to become aware of the history of communities they live next to. The more critically young generations understand the past, the less likely are future clashes among

² See, inter alia, [ECRI report on Finland](#), fifth monitoring cycle, 18 June 2019, § 82, [ECRI report on Portugal](#), fourth monitoring cycle, 9 July 2013, § 99, [ECRI report on Croatia](#), fourth monitoring cycle, 20 June 2012, § 80, [ECRI fourth report on Spain](#), fourth monitoring cycle, 7 December 2010, § 72 and Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the protection of National Minorities (ACFC), [Fifth Opinion on Austria](#), 8 June 2023, § 138, [Fifth Opinion on Romania](#), 3 April 2023, §§ 20, 88, [Fifth Opinion on Spain](#), 27 May 2020, § 13.

³ Council of Europe, "Right to Remember. A Handbook for Education with Young People on the Roma Genocide", second edition, 2017.

different groups. Knowledge of history is critical to empower a group that was historically victim of human rights violations and to gear them up to claim equal rights.

Reforming school curricula and production of quality teaching materials represent an effective method to combat traditionally biased views on minorities, such as Roma and Travellers. To invest in such actions is to invest into building balanced multicultural societies, that do not perceive Roma and Travellers simply as vulnerable groups, but as citizens with equal rights, who have contributed to society development and who continue to do so.

Remembrance and recognition of Roma Holocaust should be non-disputable. It is the minimum action current and future generations, governments and general populations alike, owe to the victims of this human atrocity.

The meeting aims to take stock of where Europe stands in terms of Roma Holocaust recognition and remembrance, to discuss potential for linking remembrance initiatives with calls for political actions, and to map tools and practices that can be used by member States to increase knowledge on Roma and Traveller history and on Roma Holocaust. It will also kick-off the European Union/Council of Europe Joint Programme "Equality and freedom from discrimination for Roma: Roma Holocaust Remembrance and Education (RomaMemory)".

OBJECTIVES OF THE 17TH DIALOGUE MEETING

The 17th meeting of the Council of Europe Dialogue with Roma and Traveller civil society will provide an opportunity for a broad and substantive exchange on the topic of Roma and Travellers history and of Roma Holocaust Remembrance, Recognition and Education.

The participants will:

- **Take stock** of recognition and remembrance of the Roma Holocaust in Council of Europe member States (e.g. Holocaust Memorial Days, memorial sites, securing and disseminating survivors' testimonies, actions to prevent and combat of Holocaust distortion and denial)
- **Highlight** and **exchange** examples of good practice related to the teaching of Roma and Traveller history
- **Address** the increasing antigypsyism, its historical roots and the role of history teaching on combating it
- **Discuss** the Council of Europe standards and instruments related to Roma and Traveller history teaching that civil society organisations can promote in their member States
- **Discuss** the "Capacity building programme and tools supporting the implementation of Rec CM/Rec (2020)2 on the inclusion of the history of Roma and/or Travellers in school curricula and teaching materials at national level"
- **Strategise** on the visibility and recognition of the Roma Holocaust that should be built around the 80th anniversary on 2 August 2024
- **Discuss** the upcoming European Union/Council of Europe Joint Programme " Equality and freedom from discrimination for Roma: Roma Holocaust Remembrance and Education (RomaMemory)" and discuss possible synergies with the initiatives promoted by the Joint Programme.

PARTICIPATION

- 25 civil society participants will be chosen through an open call disseminated via the public website of the Council of Europe's Roma and Travellers Division. Participants will be representatives of Roma and Traveller organisations, including representatives of youth and women organisations, and experts from international, national and local civil society organisations. Priority is given to representatives who hold specific expertise in the area of Roma and Traveller history teaching and Holocaust remembrance and have participated in the processes of history curricula reform, production of relevant Roma and Traveller history and Holocaust Remembrance teaching materials, trainings and events, or have engaged in relevant teacher training work or research in the aforementioned areas.
- Participants must be competent to work in English or French or Romani, the working languages of the meeting.

DATES AND VENUE

The meeting will take place on 11 June 2024, from 09:00-16:30 and on 12 June 2024 from 09:30 to 15:15 – in Strasbourg, France.

Travel and subsistence expenses, as well as visa fees, if necessary, related to the participation in this 17th Dialogue meeting will be reimbursed according to Council of Europe rules and regulations.

Working and background documents:

- Agenda of the 17th Dialogue meeting
- Concept Note of the 17th Dialogue meeting

OTHER COUNCIL OF EUROPE INSTRUMENTS AND TOOLS

- [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2011\)6 by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to the member states on intercultural dialogue and the image of the other in history teaching](#)
- [The Strasbourg Declaration on Roma \(CM\(2010\)133\) by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to the member states](#)
- [Recommendation CM/Rec \(2001\)15 by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to the member states on history teaching in twenty-first-century Europe](#)
- [Resolution 2153 \(2017\) by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe to the member states on promoting the inclusion of Roma and Travellers](#)
- [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2009\)4 by the Committee of Ministers to the member states on the education of Roma and Travellers in Europe](#)
- [Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities \(FCNM\)](#)
- [European Commission against Racism and Intolerance \(ECRI\) - Factsheet on Roma and Travellers](#)
- [Council of Europe Factsheets on Roma History](#)
- [CAHROM Thematic Reports on Language, History and Culture](#)

- [Right to Remember - A Handbook for Education with Young People on the Roma Genocide](#)
- [The representation of Roma in major European museum collections: Volume 1 – The Louvre \(2020\)](#)
- [The representation of Roma in major European museum collections - Volume 2 – The Prado \(2020\)](#)
- [The Representation of Roma in European Curricula and Textbooks](#)