



ADVISORY COUNCIL ON YOUTH

Monday, 8 April 2019

English only

On International Roma Day, the Advisory Council on Youth underlines the shared responsibility to support Roma youth participation and to develop strong, Roma youth movements, for, by and with young Roma people

The Advisory Council on Youth¹ of the Council of Europe, representing the young people in the member states, on this International Roma Day, sends its warm wishes to all Roma and Travellers² around Europe.

Throughout the history of Europe, Roma have suffered from discrimination, stigmatisation and violations of human rights. Many crimes have been committed against them such as slavery, forced abortions and the genocide during the Second World War. Generations of Roma have been raised into poverty and suffer from exclusion, hate speech, discrimination, harassment, human rights violations and limited access to services.

Anti-gypsyism is a phenomenon that is deeply embedded in society, both in the past and today, and remains still the main barrier for the inclusion of Roma, as well as the main reason for the low levels of participation in public and political life, which especially affect young Roma and women.

In 2011, the Council of Europe launched the Roma Youth Action Plan (RYAP) which focused on addressing the challenges faced by young Roma, increasing their participation, strengthening their identity, as well as empowering and equipping them with the necessary skills and tools to become active citizens. The 2nd Roma Youth Action plan of 2016-20 will formally come to an end this year.

The Advisory Council on Youth strongly supports the continuation of activities with and for Roma youth and a follow-up to the Roma Youth Action Plan. In May 2019, Roma youth organisations, together with other stakeholders, will be invited to participate in a meeting of the Informal Contact Group of the Roma Youth Action Plan to evaluate the RYAP and to plan the future agenda.

Knowing that Roma youth is the most unrepresented, discriminated against and marginalised minority group, it should be a shared responsibility to support Roma youth participation and to develop strong Roma youth movements, for, by and with young Roma people. This commitment must come from all sides: from the Council of Europe, member states, youth NGOs, national youth councils and from Roma youth activists. Roma youth participation, double mainstreaming, self-representation and the support of Roma youth leaders and civil society organisations at local, national and European levels should be furthered.

The Advisory Council on Youth welcomes the progress made by young Roma in the last decade and remains committed to supporting the full participation and integration of Roma youth in Council of Europe member states.

On behalf of the Advisory Council on Youth

The opinions expressed in this statement are those of the Advisory Council on Youth and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Council of Europe or its member states.

¹ The Advisory Council on Youth is part of the co-management structure of the Council of Europe youth sector and is made up of representatives of youth NGOs and networks that provide opinions on all youth sector activities. Together with the government representatives responsible for youth matters they come together in a co-decision body - the Joint Council on Youth - where the youth sector's priorities and objectives are established.

² 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