

Strasbourg, 6 July 2022

14TH MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE
DIALOGUE WITH ROMA AND TRAVELLER¹ CIVIL SOCIETY

Mid-term Review on the implementation of the
Council of Europe Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2020-2025)

Strasbourg, 11-12 October 2022
Online/Palais de l'Europe

DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE

BACKGROUND

Many of the 10-12 million Roma and Travellers in Europe suffer from extreme poverty and exclusion. The existence of widespread antigypsyism reinforces and aggravates the economic and social deprivation of Roma. Despite ongoing efforts by local and national authorities to render the public institutions and the mainstream societies more inclusive, inequalities still persist and anti-Roma and anti-Traveller prejudice, discrimination, hate speech, and hate crimes continue or even increase.

Various Council of Europe monitoring bodies have observed during their recent visits to member States persistent discrimination and other human rights abuses against Roma and Travellers. Unfortunately, no European government can claim a fully successful record in protecting the human and minority rights of the members of Roma minorities/communities.

The Council of Europe plays a central role in the promotion and protection of the human rights of Roma and Travellers. A major objective for the Council of Europe is to contribute to the full inclusion and democratic participation of Roma and Travellers both in their local communities and at regional and national levels.

The first Council of Europe text on Roma and Travellers was a Recommendation adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly already in 1969, highlighting the Roma contribution to Europe's cultural diversity and the need to guaranteeing Roma rights. It was followed by a Committee of Ministers Resolution in 1975. A review of the materials produced by Council of Europe bodies such as the Committee of Ministers, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (Congress), the Commissioner for Human Rights, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), the European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR), the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) and the

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.

Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML) reveals that over time the human rights of Roma and Travellers have increasingly gained traction in the activities and output of these Council of Europe bodies. The Roma and Traveller related case-law of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) has also expanded.

Several intergovernmental bodies of the Council of Europe have focused their work on Roma and Travellers-related issues, such as the Group of Specialists on Roma/Gypsies (MG-S-ROM), set up in 1995 as the first Council of Europe intergovernmental body responsible for regularly reviewing the human rights situation of the Roma and Travellers in Europe, and later renamed Committee of Experts on Roma and Travellers (same acronym). The MG-S-ROM was replaced in 2011 by the Ad-hoc Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues (CAHROM), which in 2020 was succeeded by the Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues (ADI-ROM).

On 20 October 2010, the Council of Europe strengthened its political commitment to the inclusion of Roma and Travellers through the adoption of the "Strasbourg Declaration on Roma". On 2 March 2016, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted the Thematic Action Plan on the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers (2016-2019), followed by the new Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion 2020-2025, approved by the Committee of Ministers on 22 January 2020.

The First Report on the Implementation of the Council of Europe Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2020-2025), was endorsed by the Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues (ADI-ROM) in October, and by the Steering Committee on Anti-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI) in December last year. Eventually, the Committee of Ministers took note of the final Report at its meeting on 27 January 2022. The mid-term review of the implementation of the Council of Europe Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2020-2025) is underway.

The Council of Europe Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion 2020-2025 aims to combat antigypsyism and discrimination and to support equality. The plan will also foster democratic participation, promote public trust and accountability and support access to inclusive quality education and training.

The plan reinforces progress made on the Council of Europe's Thematic Action Plan on the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers (2016-2019), which tackled anti-Roma and anti-Traveller prejudice, discrimination and crimes ("antigypsyism") with innovative models for local-level solutions and inclusive policies.

The Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion 2020-2025 is structured around three main lines of action:

- combating antigypsyism and discrimination and supporting real and effective equality
- supporting democratic participation and promoting public trust and accountability;
and
- supporting access to inclusive quality education and training.

OBJECTIVES OF THE 14TH DIALOGUE MEETING

The 14th meeting of the Council of Europe Dialogue with Roma and Traveller civil society will provide an opportunity for a broad and substantive exchange with a wide range of Roma and Traveller civil society representatives taking into account the Council of Europe's actions and policies with regard to Roma and Travellers.

The 14th Dialogue meeting will serve as a consultation platform for discussing the implementation of the Council of Europe Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2020-2025).

The meeting will:

- Present the Council of Europe Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2020-2025) and provide an overview of its implementation
- Discuss the role of Roma and Traveller civil society in actively contributing to the implementation of the Council of Europe Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2020-2025)
- Collect proposals on how to further develop co-operation between the Council of Europe and Roma and Traveller civil society and the future agenda of the Council of Europe bi-annual dialogue meetings with Roma and Traveller civil society
- Serve as a co-operative and networking platform for Roma and Traveller civil society organisations and other stakeholders
- Serve as a platform for extending the knowledge of Council of Europe work in this area, exchanging experiences and sharing best practices on Roma inclusion
- Identify possible topics that should be included in the Council of Europe's post-2025 Strategic Policy Document on Roma and Traveller inclusion

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The involvement of Roma and Traveller communities, at every level of policy formulation, implementation and follow-up, is an essential component of the Council of Europe's policy regarding Roma and Travellers.

Whilst recognising that the responsibility of Roma and Traveller integration lies first and foremost with the member States, the Council of Europe considers that other actors, such as local and regional authorities, civil society and international organisations, have an important role to play in terms of policies and practices.

Civil society has the necessary networks and invaluable knowledge about the situation of Roma and Travellers on the ground and can contribute to assist member States and the Council of Europe in meeting their commitments. The role of Roma and Traveller civil society is to provide support and be the bridge between Roma and Traveller communities and decision and policy makers. As Council of Europe programme beneficiaries, project implementors and complementary actors, civil society can facilitate the directions of Council of Europe actions through constructive and mutual dialogue.

The 14th Dialogue meeting will increase awareness and knowledge of the Council of Europe Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2020-2025) and its implementation. It will deepen understanding of the Roma and Traveller civil society's role and tools in actively

promoting and contributing to the implementation of the Council of Europe Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2020-2025).

The Dialogue meeting will also serve as a forum for Roma and Traveller civil society organisations and other stakeholders to improve their knowledge, exchange experiences and share best practices, plan future co-operation activities and identify possibilities for promoting Roma and Traveller political and public participation.

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 Team. 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 regarding the different priorities of the Council of Europe Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2020-2025), that have been co-operating with the Council of Europe and contributed or can contribute to the implementation of the Council of Europe Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2020-2025).

Participants must be competent to work in English or French or Romani, the working languages of the meeting.

- Members of the Roma and Travellers Team who implement the Strategic Action Plan through concrete projects and policy work
- Members of other departments of the Council of Europe and of the Inter-Secretariat Task Force who are mainstreaming Roma and Traveller issues into their respective areas of work and whose activities support the implementation of the Council of Europe Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2020-2025)

Participation is subject to the existing travel, public health and sanitary restrictions applicable in France and/or other countries during the time of the 14th Dialogue meeting (11-12 October 2022).

DATES AND VENUE

The meeting will take place on 11 October 2022 from 09:00-17:30 and on 12 October 2022 from 09:00 to 13:15, in hybrid format – in Strasbourg, France and online via the KUDO conferencing system.

Travel and subsistence expenses, as well as visa fees, if necessary, related to the participation in this 14th Dialogue meeting will be reimbursed according to Council of Europe rules and regulations.

Working and background documents:

- Agenda of the 14th Dialogue meeting
- Concept Paper of the 14th Dialogue meeting
- [Council of Europe Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion \(2020-2025\)](#)
- [First Implementation Report of the Council of Europe Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion \(2020-2025\)](#)