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Strasbourg, 13 January 2021



Task Force
ROMA YOUTH PARTICIPATION

**CONCLUSIONS AND PROPOSALS
TO THE JOINT COUNCIL ON YOUTH**

About the Task Force

The Task Force on Roma Youth Participation was created by decision of the Joint Council on Youth at its 42nd meeting in March 2020 as part of the follow-up to the evaluation of the Roma Youth Action Plan (2011-2019). The Task Force was specifically tasked with:

- Preparing a proposal for the continuation of the work on Roma youth participation in the 2020-2021 biennium and within the 2030 Youth Strategy;
- Identify priorities and specific missions of the youth sector, in articulation with the Roma and Travellers Division and safeguard the necessary role of Roma and non-Roma youth civil society;
- Assess the opportunity and feasibility of preparing a recommendation by the Committee of Ministers on Roma youth participation, notably by identifying the possible substance of the recommendations and their relevance for youth (and Roma) policy stakeholders in Member states.

The Task Force generated interested from all major stakeholders in the Youth and Roma sectors. It held 2 online meetings, in June and in September 2020; it convened exceptionally on 12 January 2021 in order to review and adopted these conclusions and recommendations. The reports of the meetings are available at <https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth-roma>

The work of the Task Force was significantly supported by the study on [Roma Youth Participation and Inclusion in Standards, Policies, and Programmes in Europe](#), carried out by Margareta Matache for the Council of Europe. The study grounds the work and conclusions of the Task Force in the broader context, perceptions and needs of Roma young people, Roma organisations and Europe/international organisations concerned with the human rights and social inclusion of Roma people in Europe. The study strengthens need and evidence-based approaches for youth policy interventions.

The Task Force summarises the recommendations for action by the Joint Council in 5 proposals. It is important, however, that the full report of the Task Force and the study on Roma Youth Participation and Inclusion in Standards, Policies, and Programmes in Europe be considered as part of the work and conclusions of the Task Force.

Conclusions and Proposals

1. Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on Roma youth participation

Participation and inclusion are critical pillars of democratic societies. However, Roma youth and their specific needs have been neglected or misunderstood in mainstream youth policy circles as well as in Roma related policies.

Roma youth have a right to participate in policy matters that impact their lives.

Roma youth have a pivotal, but unacknowledged, role to bring about change in our societies. Many have lived experiences of discrimination or stigmatisation and understand the urgency of justice and human rights. Roma youth are also motivated, committed, and competent to contribute to the change that Europe urgently needs. Thus, European societies and institutions

need and must include Roma youth's expertise and ideas to truly ensure human rights, justice, and social cohesion.

Targeted policies, standards, and programmes specific for and with Roma youth have almost never been developed and implemented at the local, national, and European levels. Mainstream or double mainstream approaches inclusive of Roma youth have not been systematically employed in policy design at the national and European levels. National and European institutions have avoided or neglected recognising and including the specific history, needs, and challenges of Roma youth in mainstream policies and measures. The inadequate length, quality, and consistency of programmes, involving but not targeting or double mainstreaming Roma youth, have made it impossible to meet the needs of the significant number of Roma young people across Europe, especially the most marginalised ones.

The work done by Roma youth organisations and by the Council of Europe, notably within the Roma Youth Action Plan and the Thematic Action on the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers (2016-2019), needs to be supported and deepened by policy changes. A Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states is needed to call for action for participation and inclusion of Roma young people, promoting equality and countering discrimination, racism and antigypsyism. The recommendation should take into account the Resolution 366 (2014)1 of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities on Empowering Roma youth through participation: effective policy design at local and regional levels. Such a recommendation will fill an important gap in standards on Roma and youth participation in Europe by:

- a) proposing common standards and guidance to all national governments on the importance of addressing gaps and barriers to Roma youth participation and inclusion, targeting and addressing Roma youth's specific needs, history, challenges, and demands in youth and Roma related policies
- b) guiding governments on revising the existing models of inclusion and empowerment, including by addressing intersectional discrimination and ensuring double mainstreaming in Roma and youth programmes
- c) helping Roma youth organisations to advocate governments at the national and local levels to take into account Roma young people, their specific needs, and human rights when designing policies for youth and Roma
- d) guiding and supporting youth organisations and youth councils at the local, national, regional, and European levels to seriously address the lack of representation of Roma youth in their structures and programmes and the limited attention in hearing their voices and tackling their needs
- e) calling upon national and local governments to ensure substantive participation, leadership, and inclusion of Roma young people in processes, policies, and programmes.
- f) sending a signal to Roma young people that the Committee of Ministers is hearing their challenges and needs, and that Roma youth do benefit from the same attention as any other groups of young people in Europe.
- g) ensuring the continuity of previous targeted and double mainstreamed work conducted by the Council of Europe with Roma youth, including the Roma Youth Action Plan
- h) providing examples of good practice and practical guidelines for improving Roma youth participation in all programmes and projects for young people, including those provided by local authorities and municipal youth services
- i) consolidating the expertise and leadership of the Council of Europe in standards for youth participation, human rights and human rights education with young people;

- j) increasing the visibility and relevance of Roma youth in National Roma integration strategies
- k) Finally, a Committee of Ministers' Recommendation on Roma youth participation would bring added value by expanding Roma youth-related work at the level of institutions. It would also represent a unique and pioneering text and advocacy tool across European national and intergovernmental institutions and would be an important contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Strategy of the youth sector of the Council of Europe.

The Recommendation should also address the needs and realities of young people from Travellers communities wherever relevant.

Proposal 1

The Terms of Reference of the Joint Council on Youth for 2022-2023 should include the drafting of a recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on promoting Roma youth participation. The recommendation can be drafted in 2022 on the basis of the documents and contributions prepared for the Task Force. Coordination with and input from the ADI-ROM (CD-ADI) are important for securing synergies and complementarity and avoiding duplication and overlap with other ongoing or planned initiatives.

2. Continuing and developing the achievements of the Roma Youth Action Plan

The Council of Europe Youth Department is credited for the capacity to involve, listen and mainstream the Roma youth's demands and needs, and to strengthen their voice, capacity, and power in the Council of Europe. This role is specific to and within the Council of Europe: no other intergovernmental organisation in Europe has prioritised and worked with Roma and non-Roma youth organisations and individuals towards achieving participation, diversity, and strengthening capacity of Roma youth.

The Task Force has reviewed the existing proposals for measures and ways forward by the Council of Europe's youth sector in the next years. These include:

1. Securing the continuation and visibility of the work on Roma youth participation in the 2022-2023 biennium and in the 2030 agenda of the youth sector. It should in particular identify priorities and safeguard the central role of Roma and non-Roma youth civil society. The measures and activities should be connected under one name or label, such as *RomaActiveYouth*.
2. The Youth Department should strengthen education and training measures to support and empower Roma youth leaders, trainers, youth workers and their organisations. The scope of these activities should be connected with advocating for human rights, combating structural racism and discrimination through human rights education.
3. The European Youth Centres in Budapest and Strasbourg should include activities organised with, for and by Roma young people and their organisations.
4. The emphasis of the activities should be placed on quality and complementarity with the programmes of Roma youth networks and the work of the Roma and Travellers Team.
5. More knowledge on structural racism and discrimination against Roma youth across Europe is needed. Roma youth organisations should be supported in their efforts to document structural racism and discrimination.

6. The training activities should include information and guidance to Roma youth organisations on identifying, documenting and reporting discrimination.
7. A specific training activity on antigypsyism should empower youth leaders to recognise and counter antigypsyism based on Mirrors and the Education Pack All Different – All Equal.
8. The Council of Europe should continue to support the activities of youth organisations in the framework of Dikh he na Bister, Roma genocide remembrance. The handbook Right to Remember should be further used and promoted, together with Mirrors.
9. The role and cooperation between the youth rapporteur in ADI-ROM and the Roma rapporteur in CMJ should be strengthened.
10. The number of Roma youth workers and trainers who are involved in the Youth sector's programme should increase in order to build more multipliers on human rights education, inclusion and youth participation.
11. The sharing and coordination of the work of double mainstreaming between the Youth Department and the Roma and Travellers Division needs to continue and be clarified, notably in conjunction with the Council of Europe Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2020-2025).
12. The European Youth Foundation as an instrument of the Council of Europe's youth sector has a role in promoting Roma youth participation as well. One of the potential measures includes that the EYF receives feedback from Roma youth organisations to examine the de facto accessibility to Roma youth (organisations). Clearer synergies and communication with Roma-led activities of the EYF should be established with the rest of the programme of the Youth Department.
13. Organise strategic jointly national level educational activities - training courses and seminars for Roma youth leaders, youth workers, and others who want to participate and contribute to youth movements involving a diverse group of national partners. Synergies with Joint Programmes of the Roma Team are important.

Proposal 2

The Youth for Democracy programme will continue prioritising and giving visibility to activities on Roma youth participation as proposed by the conclusions of the Task Force on Roma youth participation. These measures and activities should be connected under one name or label, such as *RomaActiveYouth*. The programme should continue and innovate the activities with and by Roma young people and youth organisations in pursuing a double mainstreaming approach.

Proposal 3

In order to continue the practice of consulting and involving Roma youth organisations and networks, and in order to coordinate efforts and favour internal and external synergies, an annual consultative meeting on Roma youth participation will be organised. The participating organisations should reflect the composition of the Task Force.

3. Articulation with the Roma and Travellers Division and other Council of Europe bodies or services

The Roma and Travellers Team has proposed the following measures and possibilities to secure the ongoing support for Roma Youth participation:

1. On institutional level it is important to continue to invite the CMJ to take part in ADI-ROM meetings. ADI-ROM has a youth rapporteur and contributes to the work of other committees; for example, ADI-ROM contributes to a draft CM Rec on combatting hate speech.
2. On programme level, the involvement of young people can be particularly strong within the activities in the field, notably the different EC/CoE joint programmes (JP) such as the JP ROMACTED and the JP INSCHOOL, which marked a high participation rate of young Roma in the community action groups.
3. Roma Holocaust commemoration activities have a youth support component which should also continue in the upcoming period. Roma in schools has a specific approach also increasing the participation of Roma children and youth at school level., as a concrete example, the JP INSCHOOL has identified youth ambassadors. Another example is the Seminar on Roma history, Roma Holocaust Remembrance and Roma Youth participation to be held at the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg on 6-10 April 2021 under the German CM Presidency.
4. The Roma and Travellers Team could facilitate strategic partnerships of interest to Roma youth, as for example the partnership with the CEU, e.g. at the “Summer Universities” regularly held at the CEU, with financial support by the Roma and Travellers Team.
5. The new CM Recommendation CM/Rec(2020)2 on Roma and Traveller history teaching also allows for working with youth organisations on teaching materials and raising awareness for change in curricula and textbooks. Encourage and seek ways to improve the participation of Roma youth at the CoE Dialogue meetings with Roma and Traveller civil society, at its Roma Women Conferences and the study visits/session (e.g. on Council of Europe instruments and tools for promoting human rights and gender equality), and more concretely, the 2 dialogue meetings per year.
6. The biennial International Roma Women’s Conferences (IRWC) and in particular the 8th IRWC to be held in September 2021, which will also be a forum for young Roma women to participate. There will also be annual study visits/sessions for Roma and Traveller women.
7. The Roma and Traveller Team regularly organises “Roma Political Schools” in various member states to increase the representation and participation of Roma and Travellers in public and political life. The participation of young Roma and Travellers is welcome.
8. Together with the Roma and Travellers Team, reflect on approaches and ways to further promote meaningful Roma youth participation in the work of the Youth Department and the Roma and Travellers Team.

Proposal 4

The role of the Roma and youth rapporteurs in the CMJ and ADI-ROM should be strengthened and cooperation between them enhanced as part of the double-mainstreaming between Roma and youth programmes and policies. This should be accompanied by explicit complementarities between the activities of the Youth Department and the Roma and Travellers Team, including looking at synergies with Joint Programmes where relevant and avoiding overlap and duplication. The Youth Department should contribute to strengthening the visibility of youth participation issues in the Council of Europe Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2020-2025). Cooperation should also continue with the Congress of

Local and Regional Authorities to include Roma Youth organisations and groups in the activities of its Alliance of Cities and Regions for Roma Inclusion, when organising meetings to set up national Alliance networks with mayors in member states.

Proposal 5

The Joint Council on Youth took note of the conclusions and proposals of the Task Force on Roma Youth Participation and welcomed the study on the study on Roma Youth Participation and Inclusion in Standards, Policies, and Programmes in Europe. The Joint Council on Youth thanked the members of the Task Force for their commitment and contribution and commended the composition and interest in the Task Force as an example of co-management and cross-sectoral cooperation that should inspire future work on supporting Roma youth participation and combating antigypsyism.

Appendix 1

COMPOSITION OF THE TASK FORCE

GEORGINA LABODA	Roma rapporteur in the Joint Council on Youth
BERIL BARANYAI	Youth rapporteur in ADI-ROM
PIA SLOGAR	Advisory Council on Youth (CCJ)
IRINA BELYAEVA	European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ)
JUOZAS MELDZUKAS	CDEJ
MUSTAFA JAKUPOV	European Roma Grassroots Organisations Network (ERGO)
CARMEN TANASIE	ERGO
MARIETTA HERFORT	Phiren Amenca
SIMONA TOROTCOI	Phiren Amenca
VIVIAN ISBERG	TernYpe – International Roma Youth Network
ALEX PETROVICS	European Youth Forum (National Youth Council of Ireland)
ANNA CARBALLO	Federación de Asociaciones Gitanas de Catalunya
ALEXANDRA RAYKOVA	Forum of European Roma Young People (FERYP)
JOHN WARMISHAM	Congress of Local and Regional Authorities
MARGARETA MATACHE	Consultant with the Council of Europe

Council of Europe secretariat

ANTONELLA CRICHIGNO /	
INGE HANNON	Congress of Local and Regional Authorities
THORSTEN AFFLERBACH	Head of Roma and Travellers Team
AURORA ALINCAI	Roma and Travellers Team
HENNA HUTTU	Roma and Travellers Team
PETRA NEUMANN	Roma and Travellers Team
STEFAN MANEVSKI	Educational advisor, Youth Department
LÁSZLÓ MILUTINOVITS	Educational advisor, Youth Department
MARIYA ANGELOVA	Programme Officer, Youth Department
MARGIT BARNA	European Youth Foundation
MIRJAM HAGMAN	Trainee, Youth Department
RUI GOMES	Head of Division Education and Training, Youth Department