



DIALOGUE

WITH ROMA AND TRAVELLER CIVIL SOCIETY

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

**Council of Europe Dialogue with Roma and Traveller
Civil Society
6th Meeting
Strasbourg
15-16 October 2018**



**Civil society
assessment of the
implementation of the
Council of Europe
Thematic Action Plan
on the Inclusion of
Roma and Travellers
(2016-2019)**

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Council of Europe Dialogue with Roma and Traveller¹ Civil Society
6th meeting, Strasbourg, 15-16 October 2018

**Civil society assessment of the implementation of the Council of Europe
Thematic Action Plan on the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers (2016-2019)**

REPORT

1. Council of Europe Dialogue with Roma and Traveller civil society – concept and purpose

Roma and Traveller integration is a shared responsibility and all actors (Member States, European and International institutions and civil society) have a vital role to play. While recognising the special responsibility of Member States, the Council of Europe has established a dialogue and consultation process between the Council of Europe and Roma and Traveller civil society, including those working at grassroots level, to share information on policies and practices relevant for the inclusion of Roma and Travellers, as identified in the Council of Europe Thematic Action Plan on the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers (2016-2019).

The Dialogue with Roma and Traveller Civil Society serves as a forum between civil society, the Council of Europe and other key stakeholders to improve knowledge by exchanging experiences, sharing best practices, and planning future co-operation activities at international, national and local level. Through their diversity of representation and voice, Roma and Traveller civil society can facilitate the directions of the Council of Europe actions in constructive and mutual dialogue as complementary expert actors. Civil society organisations have technical and grassroots knowledge that is both context-specific and strategically important.

2. The 6th meeting of the Council of Europe Dialogue with Roma and Traveller civil society

The 6th Dialogue meeting was timely chosen to provide the opportunity for Roma and Traveller civil society to assess the successes and challenges resulting from the implementation of the Council of Europe Thematic Action Plan on the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers (2016-2019) and to identify and propose those priority areas, key targets and effective strategies which should be incorporated in the Council of Europe's post-2019 strategic policy document on Roma and Traveller inclusion.

The Thematic Action Plan, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 2 March 2016, provides the framework for Council of Europe action on Roma and Traveller inclusion for 2016-2019.

Roma and Traveller experts from local civil society and representatives of Roma and Traveller organisations, including youth and women organisations, which have been working with the Council of Europe and with expertise in the areas covered by the Action Plan were invited to participate. The opportunity for Roma and Traveller civil society to be part of the assessment and review process not only provided space for input and feedback of main outcomes of the Action Plan but also further consolidated the interaction between the Council of Europe and Roma and Traveller civil society.

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, Calu, 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.

Participants

The 6th Dialogue Meeting was attended by 42 participants and representatives from a cross section of Roma and Traveller civil society and NGOs, such as ARPOMT, CRCR, ERTF (through a written contribution) DIHAL, ERU, GATIEF, Integro, IRWN-Phenjalipe, KAMIRA, Pavee Point, Popusze, Roma National Centrum, Sonce, and TernYpe, local and national bodies – through representatives of the Ad hoc Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues (CAHROM) – and international bodies from 22 member states.² Participants represented a cross section of Roma and Traveller civil society, respecting gender, age, and geographical balance.

Agenda of the 6th Dialogue meeting

The [agenda](#) of the 6th Dialogue meeting was set over a period of 1½ working days, including presentations, interventions, plenary discussions and work groups.

Keynote speakers outlined that since 2010, the Council of Europe has strengthened its political commitment to the inclusion of Roma and Travellers through the adoption of the “Strasbourg Declaration on Roma” in 2010 and the Thematic Action Plan on the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers (2016-2019).

During the first two years of implementation, the Action Plan, with its strategic focus on *strengthening* the competence to fight anti-Gypsyism and anti-Traveller prejudice and *supporting* vulnerable groups through innovative models for inclusive policies with local-level solutions, has facilitated the development and adoption of new standards, such as Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)10 on improving access to justice for Roma and Travellers in Europe. It has also supported the thematic work and reports of the Ad hoc Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues (CAHROM) through peer reviews, co-operation with member states and key stakeholders, and capacity-building activities in the framework of Joint Programmes such as INSCHOOL, JUSTROM, ROMACT, ROMACTED and ROMED, implemented in co-operation with the European Commission. Key programme outcomes and deliverables have successfully been interpreted in policies.

Implementation of the Action Plan has enhanced the commitment and co-operation between the various sectors of the Council of Europe and has strengthened synergies. Furthermore, it has contributed to the implementation of the Action Plan on “Building Inclusive Societies” (2016-2019). Effective strategic planning articulates not only where an organisation is going and the actions needed to make progress, but also how it will know if it is successful. Therefore, review and assessment procedures assist in pointing the way forward, identifying new issues and developing areas that need to be addressed. This will also assist in channeling resources to specific thematic areas that have strategic value for policy development.

The assessment of the implementation of the Thematic Action Plan on the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers (2016-2019) Action Plan by Roma and Traveller civil society was arranged in five thematic workgroups which covered strategic areas of the Plan. The aim was to create the space for all Dialogue participants to assess the implementation of the Plan and identify and propose topics that should be included in the Council of Europe’s post-2019 strategic policy document on Roma and Traveller inclusion, while taking in consideration recent developments and political trends in the member states.

² Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, the Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Romania, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Spain, Sweden, “the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”, Ukraine, United Kingdom.

The five Thematic Clusters Workgroups were:

WG 1: Education and culture & History and Holocaust,

WG 2: Local Governance,

WG 3: Political participation and empowerment,

WG 4: Fighting discrimination/anti-Gypsyism and improving access to justice,

WG 5: Gender equality, youth and children's rights.

During the workgroups, discussions were guided by the following key questions:

Assessment of the implementation of the Thematic Action Plan

- *To what extent have the objectives and actions of the Thematic Action Plan been relevant for 2016-2018?*
- *To what extent have the objectives of the Thematic Action Plan been achieved 2016-2018?*
- *What tangible results/changes have you noticed as a result of the Thematic Action Plan?*
- *To what extent has the programme reached the target stakeholders and beneficiaries?*
- *Have the proposed actions under the Thematic Action Plan been relevant to meet the objectives?*
- *To what extent have the reported changes come about due to the Thematic Action Plan?*

Recommendations for the post-2019 strategic policy document on Roma and Traveller inclusion

- *Will the current objectives and actions of the Thematic Action Plan remain relevant after the Plan's end in 2019?*
- *What would have been useful to address in the Thematic Action Plan objectives and which still remains relevant after the end of the Plan in 2019?*

Main obstacles

- *What is the most important future goal or priority?*
- *What will be the biggest obstacle in reaching that goal?*
- *How can that obstacle be overcome?*

Key Stakeholders Recommendations

- *Identify and propose additional key stakeholders at national level who could become partners in the implementation of the Thematic Action Plan and help to ensure its sustainability.*

3. General recommendations

Recommendation 1:

The new Council of Europe strategic policy document on Roma and Traveller inclusion should also take into consideration the vulnerability of Roma LGBTI, asylum seekers, refugees, migrants and returnees.

The recent financial crisis experienced in many countries where Roma live has brought forward the prioritisation of health-related issues to Roma integration. Poor health indicators, particularly regarding infant and mothers' health, are reflective of poverty levels in the Roma community and therefore an outcome and a driver of social exclusion. On the other hand, good Roma health is a precondition for a good education and to secure employment.

Recommendation 2:

The new Council of Europe strategic policy document on Roma and Traveller inclusion should include support measures to Roma wellbeing and health, as poor Roma health is an underlying consequence of Roma segregation.

Roma and Traveller issues should be mainstreamed in all other policy areas of the Council of Europe's work. In understanding the interdependencies of human rights protection mechanisms, it is important to sustain intersectoral synergies and maintain co-operation, coordination and policy coherence in Roma and Traveller inclusion.

Recommendation 3:

The new Council of Europe strategic policy document on Roma and Traveller inclusion should mainstream Roma and Traveller issues and ensure that Roma and Traveller inclusion becomes an integral part of all policy areas of the Council of Europe's work. It should also help to create strategic synergies through the development of partnerships and cross sectorial committees.

Despite progress with Roma integration policies at different levels, Roma and Travellers continue to face multiple and interrelated disadvantages. The economic crisis has aggravated the situation further, and Roma impoverishment, social exclusion and discrimination continue. It is therefore imperative to maintain an explicit approach to combating anti-Gypsyism, exclusion, segregation and violation of human rights while mainstreaming broader social inclusion measures to foster empowerment, to improve access to services and to enhance participation in decision making.

Recommendation 4:

The new Council of Europe strategic policy document on Roma and Traveller inclusion should secure explicit and sustainable actions able to reverse the disadvantage of Roma and Travellers by fighting discrimination, protecting children, women and youth, and supporting their right to access to quality services.

Involving Roma and Traveller civil society organisations in the design, implementation, and monitoring of the Action Plan ensures stronger accountability on member states' implementation. It is also important to involve Roma and Travellers from the onset of the development of the action plan and in any follow-up assessment procedures as this would also ensure that local level outcomes are interpreted in national policy decisions.

Recommendation 5:

The new Council of Europe strategic policy document on Roma and Traveller inclusion should set up a monitoring committee with Roma and Traveller representatives who would supervise and monitor its implementation, as this is the case in some EU member states for the monitoring of the National Roma Integration Strategies.

There was consensus that the objectives included in the Thematic Action Plan should have been more specific. The two implementation reports included lists of outputs without any clear or tangible outcomes. In the absence of benchmark indicators, it is difficult to identify or measure achievements. Therefore, there is a need to concentrate on outcomes and develop indicators, parameters and benchmarks. Additionally, fighting stereotypes and prejudices are more a long-term goal which is difficult to achieve or assess within a short timeframe. Similarly, more country-specific, targeted actions could be adapted to the national context, needs and challenges.

Recommendation 6:

The new Council of Europe strategic policy document on Roma and Traveller inclusion should adopt an outcomes approach to action planning and include benchmark indicators to measure progress. It should also cover a timeframe of at least two biennia (4 years) in order to set realistic targets and measurable outcomes. It is important to include processes that gather data, assess progress, and provide reports as well as further guidance. Indicators could be clearly linked to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Funding attached to key actions of the Plan is a key element which can potentially define the scope and the depth of the outcome. Therefore, it is important to ensure a long-term and sustainable funding commitment which accompanies the actions through their lifespan for maximum results.

Recommendation 7:

The new Council of Europe strategic policy document on Roma and Traveller inclusion should include a funding commitment for the whole duration of the action plan rather than being based on the Council of Europe's programming and budgeting biennium. It should also be accompanied by a strategy for the raising of financial resources and voluntary contributions.

In light of stricter encampment laws in certain member states, there is a need to protect the right to a travelling way of life.

Recommendation 8:

The new Council of Europe strategic policy document on Roma and Traveller inclusion should acknowledge and protect the culture of Travellers and the nomadic way of life. It should include specific actions and activities to fight anti-nomadism and forced sedentary lifestyles.

4. Specific recommendations and comments emanating from the working groups³

Thematic Cluster 1: Education and culture; history and the Holocaust

The issue of culture is seen as highly relevant as it is intricately associated to Roma identity and representation. It is important that Roma culture promotion is not limited to Roma arts but be linked to education, Romani language and the strengthening of the Romani voice.

The mandate of the European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture (ERAC) should be rooted in the notion of empowering Roma through arts and culture. This is a long-term process and therefore ERAC should be in a position to coordinate activities and sustain the debate on Roma identity and representation both within its European context but also within a wider international scope over a longer period of time.

Recommendation 9:

The new Council of Europe strategic policy document on Roma and Traveller inclusion should work closely with ERAC in order to incorporate these perspectives in its objectives. The focus should be put on ERAC to:

- ***strengthen its capacities;***
- ***include the language dimension in its scope of action;***
- ***develop partnerships with the member states and providing support to them on how to include concrete actions related to Roma in their culture strategies;***
- ***provide guidelines on how to include Roma culture and actions in the European Capital of Culture (Timisoara 2021);***
- ***challenge the academic world, e.g. Roma and slavery has been poorly studied until now. For this, partnerships with the main universities could be developed.***

It is commonly accepted that education provision remains a high priority among support measures for Roma and Travellers since education is a determinant of life chances. Research results^{4 5} confirm that Roma children are largely behind in educational achievement and show a considerable gap between Roma and non-Roma children attending school. Despite the efforts to expand and improve education for Roma children over the years, as many as 50% of Roma children in Europe fail to complete primary education and only a quarter complete secondary education.

Parameters of poor education correlate with poor health, unemployment, social isolation and exclusion and with fewer possibilities of enjoying the same opportunities and life chances as other young people. Therefore, education must remain a strategic priority in the new Council of Europe strategic policy document on Roma and Traveller inclusion, and key emphasis must be placed on equal access to quality education in an open and inclusive learning environment.

Recommendation 10:

The new Council of Europe strategic policy document on Roma and Traveller inclusion should continue to focus on the promotion of quality and inclusive education and include teacher training, resource development and policy redirection. A network of co-operating schools in inclusive education across member states should also be a priority action in an attempt to combat school segregation.

³ C.f. the Appendix for more detailed reports of the working groups.

⁴ Bulgaria, Czech Republic, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovak Republic and Spain; report and analysis of data available at: <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-and-maps/survey-data-explorer-results-2011-roma-survey>.

⁵ Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Portugal, Romania, Slovak Republic and Spain; report accessible at: <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2016/eumidis-ii-roma-selected-findings>

The right to remember is a right to be. The teaching of history and the Holocaust is an explicit attempt to understand human behaviour, instil consciousness and promote awareness. Facing history convenes community members to a dialogue of profound and challenging issues in democratic societies. There is a direct link of the work of the CoE on culture, education and teaching of Roma history and Holocaust to fighting discrimination and anti-Gypsyism and to promoting inclusion.

Recommendation 11:

The new Council of Europe strategic policy document on Roma and Traveller inclusion should incorporate activities that invest in research, provide training for teachers and guidelines on how to teach Roma history and the Roma Holocaust. It could make use of edutainment (education and entertainment) and social media to have greater impact.

Thematic Cluster 2: Local Governance

Although national stakeholders provide the legal and political framework for Roma and Traveller inclusion, it is local governments who create the enabling environment for the social, economic and political integration and who promote social cohesion through planning and service provision. The Thematic Action Plan has incorporated activities which strengthen the capacity of local and regional authorities to develop and implement plans, strategies and services for the inclusion of Roma and Travellers.

It is important that the Council of Europe continues working on local governance to strengthen local inclusive democracies. However, building the culture of democracy needs time. Programme activities need to run for a sufficient amount of time to have the desired impact.

Recommendation 12:

The new Council of Europe strategic policy document on Roma and Traveller inclusion should place greater emphasis on the role and responsibilities of local governments by mobilising local level actors, linking grassroots level pro-active activities with national policies and by seeking synergies with other key stakeholders. At the Council of Europe, co-operation should be increased with the Good Governance Unit and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities.

Thematic Cluster 3: Political participation and empowerment

Political participation is essential for the functioning of pluralist democracy. However, political participation is more than just exercising one's right to vote. It is also political voice for group representation which demands that participation must be effective to reverse embedded marginalisation and discrimination. The individual right to participation is not enough. Effective changes require proactive policies and special measures of capacity building. Although political participation and empowerment as such were no priority in the present Thematic Action Plan, various activities and processes that included features of political participation were present in the implementation of the various objectives of the Plan and particularly in the following processes and programmes:

- the 6th International Roma Women's Conference on "Women and Political Representation: The Case of Roma and Traveller Women", Strasbourg, 6-7 November 2017;
- the 5th meeting of the Council of Europe Dialogue with Roma and Traveller civil society on "Roma and Traveller Political Participation. Presence, Empowerment and Influence in Political and Public Life", Strasbourg, 20-21 June 2018;
- the Joint Programmes ROMED, ROMACT and ROMACTED;

- various activities of the Roma Youth Action Plan;
- the Roma Political Schools/Academies.

Politics should be understood as a tool to defend rights and not interests. When it comes to the communities, the goal is to change the image of Roma as political actors. There have been numerous obstacles to it, including political illiteracy, vote bribery, discrimination, ineffective voting and lack of space for dialogue, etc.

Recommendation 13:

The new Council of Europe strategic policy document on Roma and Traveller inclusion should incorporate activities on political participation, placing emphasis on voter empowerment, political education and reducing political illiteracy within the communities. This could be achieved by supporting the Roma Political Schools/Academies in coordination with the Council of Europe Political Schools, by expanding the circle of targeted beneficiaries within the Joint Programmes, by endorsing the role of Roma mediators in reinforcing motivation and space for political participation and access to active citizenship, and by placing greater emphasis on media (traditional and social) as an important stakeholder.

Thematic Cluster 4: Fighting discrimination/anti-Gypsyism and Access to Justice

Anti-Gypsyism, recognized as a specific form of racism by the Council of Europe, is deeply rooted in negative and biased beliefs, prejudices, misconceptions and discriminatory attitudes towards Roma. Prejudiced behavior towards Roma is often institutionalized, systemic and expressed in the form of discriminatory policies and laws. Therefore, actions should be planned over an extended period of time and with regular stock-taking intervals. The implementation and the enforcement of anti-discrimination legislation and the lack of understanding by law enforcement and legal professionals of key concepts remain a key hurdle. Training programmes should be multi-annual and incorporate post-training reviews and follow ups.

Recommendation 14:

The new Council of Europe strategic policy document on Roma and Traveller inclusion should continue concerted efforts to fight anti-Gypsyism. The DOSTA! Campaign should be revived making use of new social media approaches. New and improved tools should be developed to strengthen actions to fight stereotyping and prejudices covering a wider range of audiences and domains, including school education, to combat racial hate crimes through capacity-building training of lawyers and law enforcement officers in the application of anti-discrimination standards and the Protocol on combating hate crime, to promote new legislation on anti-Gypsyism and to set up an international Taskforce on anti-Gypsyism through synergies with key stakeholders. There is also a need to reinforce recognition of anti-Gypsyism and anti-nomadism in member states.

Access to justice enables individuals to protect themselves against infringements of their rights, to remedy civil wrongs, to hold executive power accountable and to defend themselves in criminal proceedings. It is an important element of the rule of law and cuts across civil, criminal and administrative law. Access to justice is both a process and a goal, and is therefore crucial for individuals seeking to benefit from procedural and substantive rights.

The objectives and actions of the Thematic Action Plan have been extremely relevant in improving access to justice and combating discrimination and anti-Gypsyism. A major achievement has been Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)10 on improving access to justice for Roma and Travellers in Europe, which was drafted by the Ad hoc Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues (CAHROM) and supports the first priority “Improving access to justice and fighting anti-Gypsyism” of the Action Plan. The recommendation emphasises

the importance of equal access opportunities to legal aid and legal services and highlights the role of quasi-judicial methods of conflict resolution and the effectiveness of judicial remedies.

Recommendation 15:

The new Council of Europe strategic policy document on Roma and Traveller inclusion should continue concerted efforts to promote equal access to justice particularly for the most vulnerable. Whilst training addressed to legal professionals (lawyers, judges, prosecutors) and law enforcement bodies (the police, prison staff) should remain a strategic priority, training of local authorities and public administration should also be reinforced. New methodological approaches to training should be adopted to reflect the need for embedded change.

Thematic Cluster 5: Gender equality, youth and children's rights

Roma and Traveller women, children and youth are usually the victims of multiple discrimination. Data disaggregated by sex consistently reveal that Roma women suffer more the adverse effects of their social and living conditions than men.⁶ Roma women are change makers within their communities, therefore it is important to invest in their capacity building.

Young Roma, on the other hand, have a hard time in asserting their rights, affirming their identity and belonging. Problems faced by Roma communities are often reflected in young Roma's transition to adulthood, namely poverty and lack of opportunities within and outside of the community, as well as difficulties in accessing their human rights. Alarming, 63% of Roma aged 16 to 24 are neither in education, employment or training (NEET), an emerging phenomena that needs to be addressed.⁷

Roma children are particularly disadvantaged and hard to reach especially those living in isolated areas. They often do not appear in national statistics and thereby become 'invisible' and risk being forgotten – by decision makers, service providers and the general population. Based on estimates, 46% of the total Roma population in Europe are children⁸ and therefore it becomes imperative to address their needs not in isolation but across other key areas of social inclusion such as education, housing and living standards, employment and life chances and health and well-being.

Recommendation 16:

The new Council of Europe strategic policy document on Roma and Traveller inclusion should maintain its emphasis on the most vulnerable groups within the Roma and Traveller communities. Further accentuation of the rights of women in reproductive life, in security and free from violence should be included in the post-2019 document. Key emphasis should be placed on equal access to quality education for Roma and Traveller children, and to the needs of young Roma not in education, employment or training (NEETs). Strategies to combat early marriages and unlawful removal of children from Roma families should be prioritised through cross-sectorial co-operation and synergies.

⁶ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. Analysis of FRA Roma Survey Results by gender. FRA; Vienna: 2013

⁷ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. *EU MIDIS II Selected Findings-Roma*. FRA; Vienna: 2016

⁸ UNICEF. *Breaking. The Cycle of Exclusion. ROMA Children in South East Europe*. Belgrade: 2007

Appendix

Report from the Working Group 1: Education and culture & History and Holocaust

Moderators: Aurora Ailincăi, Head of the Strategic Partnerships Unit and Camille Gangloff, INSCHOOL Project Manager

Participants: Gelu DUMINICA / Calin RUS / Lisa ROSE / Jan HERO / Orhan GALJUS / Alen TAHIRI

Relevance and assessment of the current Thematic Action Plan

In the field of **culture**, the discussion focused on the recently established European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture (ERIAC). ERIAC is seen as highly relevant – as underlined by the working group on political participation and empowerment, its establishment is one of the good examples of Roma political participation with concrete results. But more importantly, it is considered as a needed institution to coordinate the debate on Roma identity and representation. It is important that its actions in the promotion of Roma arts are not limited and it should have the means and resources to be a key actor in the field of culture with a link to education (broad understanding of culture). The issue of Romani language, as part of culture and identity, should also be tackled by ERIAC. Being a very recent institution, the assessment of ERIAC's workplan is difficult; it is still very early but should be done in the coming years. The development of ERIAC should be seen as a long-term process (building an institution – 10 year process).

In the field of **education**, the discussion focused on the European Union (EU)/Council of Europe (CoE) Joint Programme – INSCHOOL. Its relevance was confirmed, taking into account the importance of education to ensure inclusion but also taking into account the situation in most of the member states. For example, in Romania, with 400,000 children out of school, 42% functional analphabets (64% Roma according to the OECD); working on education is crucial. Very often, the responsibility for this situation is put on the children or parents, based on the prejudice that “Roma families do not care about schools”; but the schools and the education system are not questioned. However, it is important that the schools are welcoming every child and they offer quality education. This is the primary focus of INSCHOOL. Additionally, it is tailor made with a community development approach. It targets the invisible and proposes a renewed, concrete approach to inclusive education at grassroots level to then be mainstreamed at policy level. In Slovakia for example, INSCHOOL supported the creation of a National Working Group at national level with all relevant stakeholders; it triggered the discussion about inclusive education with another perspective and this is timely with the approval of the education plan for the next 10 years. All participants of the working group underlined the importance of teachers' training (how to manage diversity, how to teach Roma history and Holocaust) but also the sharing of practices and peer review as effective tools (see exchange between UK and Slovak teachers). Three additional aspects were mentioned as crucial:

- INSCHOOL should be understood as a process and not a project, and should therefore have a multi-annual perspective. Transforming the school environment takes time; impact can only be assessed after 3-4 years
- Internal coordination with the CoE Education department is important; their tools (Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture) are not explicitly mentioned and included
- The CoE procedures are not field-oriented/adapted to work with schools at local level

Regarding the actions related to **teaching history and Holocaust**; the Georg Eckert Institute research on the analysis of curricula and text books in 23 member states, focusing on the mention and representation of Roma, as well as the factsheets (history and thematic) developed, updated and translated (11 language) was presented. Cooperation with ODIHR on the database on Roma Holocaust was mentioned as well as the preparation of a draft recommendation on teaching Roma history including the Holocaust (CAHROM). The resources for this part were assessed as being too limited, while the importance of it is considered as a key priority. Indeed, all participants mentioned that Roma history (including slavery, Holocaust) is under documented and research should be strengthened. Concrete actions with countries to revise the curricula and textbooks should be implemented. Then teachers' training should be foreseen as well as the development of concrete guidelines for teachers. Roma history should be included in the mainstream curricula and not only for Roma children.

Main obstacles

- The political context remains difficult in most of the member states when it comes to Roma inclusion; education and culture are also very sensitive issues (at national level)
- The lack of consensus on language (different languages/dialects) and on Roma Holocaust (genocide) including among Roma can be an obstacle
- The lack of resources and medium to long-term approach is seen as a major obstacle in the field of education and culture

Recommendations for the future

In general, it is suggested to directly **link the CoE work on culture, education and teaching of Roma history and Holocaust** as a way to fight against discrimination and anti-gypsyism and promote inclusion, meaning that it should be one strategic priority with sub-objectives or key actions.

In the field of **culture, the focus should be put on ERIAC by:**

- strengthening its capacities
- including the language dimension in its scope of action
- developing partnerships with the member states and providing support to them on how they can include concrete actions related to minorities/Roma in their culture strategies
- providing guidelines on how to include Roma culture and actions in the European Capital of Culture (Timisoara 2021)
- challenging the academic world e.g. Roma and slavery is poorly studied until now. For this, partnerships with the main universities could be developed
- reaching the broader public

In the field of **education, the focus should be on promoting equality in education by:**

- consolidating the INSCHOOL approach with a medium to long-term perspective
- including in INSCHOOL schools with more than 50% Roma children when it is due to the residence: quality of education is key

- developing teaching materials and training teachers (on managing diversity but also Roma history); use other CoE tools (Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture) and networks (EPAN)
- working with universities (initial training of teachers) and School Inspectorates
- creating a European network of inclusive schools
- linking INSCHOOL to the work on the curricula and textbooks (identify 2-3 pilot countries volunteering to reform the curricula and textbooks, and complement this with the INSCHOOL work at grassroots level)
- strengthening the awareness of the policy-makers (they should know more about INSCHOOL etc)
- Calin – Timisoara and Novi Sad 2021 European Capital of Culture – include elements related to Roma in the programme (contacts now between the cities, also with Rijeka 2020) = link with ERIAC, establish cooperation already in 2019 ! Get guidelines for all cities that are European Capital of Culture how to address the Roma issue (and minorities in general)

In the field of **history teaching and Holocaust:**

- invest in research, propose scholarships to do research on some specific aspects of Roma history
 - provide training for teachers and guidelines on how to teach Roma history/Holocaust
 - use of education (education and entertainment) and social media to have a better impact
- New stakeholders to involve: **universities**

Report from the Working Group 2: Local Governance

Moderator: Ana Oprisan, ROMACT Programme Manage

Participants: Florin MOISA / Justine MOUQUET / Liliya MAKAVEEVA / Martijn KRAAIJ / Robert MATEI / Tatjana ANĐELIĆ

3.2 Strengthening the capacity of local and regional authorities to develop and implement plans, strategies and services for the inclusion of Roma and Travellers.

- ROMACT started before the Action Plan – in 2013/2014. Until December 2017, the programme was implemented in six member States. Now only in RO & BG & TCC.
 - *To what extent have the objectives and the actions of the Thematic Action Plan been relevant for 2016-2018?*
 - *What tangible outcomes/changes resulting from the Thematic Action Plan have they observed in their own municipality, country or field of activity?*
 - *To what extent did the programme reach the target stakeholders and beneficiaries?*
 - *Have the actions implemented through the Thematic Action Plan been relevant for their field of activity?*
 - *Within the framework of their work on the Thematic Action Plan, to what extent have the changes reported in the two progress reports resulted from activities implemented under the Thematic Action Plan?*
 - *Will the current objectives and actions of the Thematic Action Plan stay relevant after the end of the Plan in 2019?*

Relevance of working on local level / local governance - ROMACT

- Appropriate level of the action
- Strategic approach
- Since there is no mechanism to implement on the ground the NRIS
- Creation of social change: sensitisation about Roma related issues
- Council of Europe (CoE) & EC (bringing also the financing) – hence JP leverage is higher /different from NGO's – "Authorities recognize authorities"
- Expectations are also too much at times – changing mentalities, improving living conditions etc. in an environment which is not cooperative....

Challenges/issues

- Funding => Pre-defining vs. =>Competitive
- Inadequacy between national level decisions and local level realities and capacities
- Programming period did not match with Romact implementation period
- Lack of synergies/cooperation between the different stakeholders (within EC, within CoE, at national level, at municipal level)

- Lack of political will
- Differences in capacities/resources at local level, between municipalities
- Heavy bureaucracy of the CoE, not adapted to the type of project

Suggestions for future

Mainstreaming Roma issues in national/regional/local development strategies.

Supporting the local democracies is important and needed!

In the long term, to work on - changing the relationship/perception between **Roma and majority**.

Roma issues should be kept on the agenda!

CoE should continue the work on local governance as **the EC cannot do it directly itself**. CoE is in the best position to do this type of activity. Nobody else can do it at this level. NGOs cannot do it. It gives an umbrella/a frame.

Building the culture of democracy needs time. Length of programme like ROMACT needs to be **extended so it actually has a long term impact**. Importance on working on the relationship between Roma and Local authorities, ROMACT will go back to “old” municipalities to ensure long term changes: creation of taskforce, building of synergies at local level.

Trust building between LA and Communities needs a boost and it’s good to have the leverage of JP and CoE. This is needed also in western countries where communities are **migrating**.

- More work on linking the ground with the policies (associations of municipalities - ministries) but also tapping in in the resources of the regional and county level (RO)
- Ensure better and concrete cooperation of players at different levels...
- Training package for national agency of civil servants
- Constructive involvement of Congress
- Mainstreaming issues

Who else should be involved?

- Mobilising other levels of action
- county/regional in RO; ministries, associations of municipalities
- BG: ministry of regions, labour and social policies, agency for social protection
- association of municipalities - France: Acina (plateforme en charge de la résorbition des bidonvilles et questions reliées - education, etc. mandated by LA)

Report from the Working Group 3: Political participation and empowerment

Moderator: Marcos Andrade, ROMACTED Programme Manager

Participants: Ferdi ISMAILI / Kristina RADUCAN / Manolis RANTIS / Patrick REILLY / Sabina SALIMOVSKA / Zola KONDUR

1.

Political participation and empowerment as such was not a priority in the present TAP. Nevertheless, various activities and processes that included features of political participation were present in the implementation of the various objectives of the TAP and in particular in the following processes and programmes:

- 6th International Roma Women’s Conference
- 5th Dialogue meeting
- ROMED, ROMACTED and ROMACT Programmes
- Various activities of the Roma youth action plan
- Roma Political Schools/academies

The working group endorses the reflections and recommendations of the 5th Dialogue meeting. The participants also considered as important contributions in the field of empowering Roma communities and preparing the ground for political participation the work done in this field by the programmes such as ROMED and ROMACT, and later ROMACTED. ROMED1 programme generated certified mediators as a valuable resource in accessing the communities and local administration, ROMED2 programme worked closely on democratic governance and community participation through mediation. These processes of community participation allowed to pilot in some local communities:

- a safe environment and spaces for political participation,
- helped to break routines and inertia,
- mobilised, motivated and increased the level for political participation,
- helped creating a sense of collective purpose,
- increased the exposure of Roma community leaders to local and national political processes,
- generated and give visibility to new leaderships in the community,
- created some institutional mechanisms for participation,
- assisted in identify collective priorities and political aspirations for the communities.

These programmes created a natural space for launching the first political schools/academies, using already created resources at the local level to enhance political participation within and outside Roma communities. These schools tend to build curriculum patterns on what should be done in terms of fostering political

participation. Following the experiences, evaluation and recommendations from ROMED and ROMACT programmes, a new programme was drawn up to foster good governance and Roma empowerment at local level in the Western Balkans and Turkey (ROMACTED). Even though, ROMACTED was still in the creation phase prior to adapting the current TAP (2016-2019), its structures and impact are already reinforcing some of the elements that will be of importance for the next TAP after 2019.

Political participation of Roma youth has been included in the Roma Youth Action Plan. Several seminars on this topic have been conducted in recent years.

Discussion:

The Council of Europe (CoE) Joint Programmes have natural chronology – each structure is complementary to the other. Roma mediators work on empowerment of the communities by breaching the gap between the communities and authorities. Besides that, they also have a role of mobilisers and creators of connections within the communities. The ROMED2 Programme is about political activation of citizens and is the 1st step in making the community understand the essence of the political life and how to increase their visibility.

Politics should be understood as a tool to defend rights and not interest. When it comes to the communities, the goal is to change the image of Roma as political actors. There have been numerous obstacles to it:

- political illiteracy within the communities and no electoral education,
- vote bribery,
- Roma women are not in a position to become more active in politics,
- discrimination by the Roma men,
- ineffective voting, lack of acknowledgment of diversity,
- lack of data that undermines and gives false perceptions on the political representation and capacity of Roma,
- lack of IDs and no right to vote,
- no space for dialogue, etc.

2.

The working group unanimously agreed that a Thematic Action Plan is needed and with relevant priorities, and that a new plan should be created for the period after 2019.

The objectives were achieved through several actions. The concept of political participation became a crucial part of the Plan. The launching of the political schools (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Portugal, Italy, Turkey, France) was a direct outcome of the objective. Greater attention was put on participation of Roma women, as well as interest of the Roma LGBTI population. At the local level, change was brought forward by the creation of Community Action Groups (CAG), Institutional Working Groups (IWG) and Multi Taskforce groups (joint CAG and IWG) within several Joint Programmes. These structures carry substantial value for community participation and empowerment – both at the individual and collective level.

In the Ukraine, a new space was created for national authorities through the creation of the National Alliance.

Participation should become an act of active citizenship. Following stakeholders were tackled through the mentioned actions:

- Mediators
- Roma women
- National and local authorities
- National Parliaments
- Roma Communities
- Roma youth
- Spiritual institutions (churches, mosques)

Several actions have evolved out of the Thematic Action Plan, new programmes came out of the external evaluation and recommendations of the ROMED Programme – INSCHOOL and ROMACTED (2017). The evaluation has suggested that further investment should be devoted to political participation. Additional accent was put on fostering political participation of Roma women (workshop in collaboration with NDI) and youth, as well as the LGBTI persons within the communities.

3. Recommendations

- 1) Good consultations on the future Thematic Action Plan, involving both the member states and civil society organisations in the working groups. These groups should also be involved in monitoring the Plan's implementation. Stronger accountability should be built with the member states in implementing the Plan;
- 2) Working with the communities to open up space for political participation. Putting accent on voters' empowerment, political education and reducing political illiteracy within the communities. It is also important to examine the presence of Roma voters and candidates in the next electoral cycles. It is also crucial to increase the sense of collective purpose of the elected leaders;
- 3) Continuing the Roma Political Schools/Academies and expanding these to the targeted beneficiaries within the Joint Programmes (ROMACTED beneficiaries). Current community structures should be prepared for the process of political empowerment and education, in order to reduce the gap of political illiteracy and increase the number of both voters and elected Roma officials;
- 4) Further coordination is needed with organisations that also work in line with political participation in order to avoid creating parallel groups and structures. Therefore it is desirable to reinforce collaboration with - OSF/RIO (Barvalipe), CoE Political Schools, NDI, etc;
- 5) Working with the communities to foster participation of Roma women and youth. Furthermore, it is essential to include the needs and participation of the migrants, returnees and Roma LGBTI population. LGBTI issues within the Roma communities are a topic which hasn't found its place in the current TAP. The WG3 concluded that this is a priority that needs to be tackled by the new TAP, and also suggests that the CoE should have an annual contribution to LGBT Pride;

- 6) Endorsing the role of Roma mediators in reinforcing motivation and space for political participation and access to active citizenship;
- 7) Significant attention needs to be paid to targeting and involving Roma elected and Roma-friendly parliamentarians in fostering political participation. CoE could organise annual conferences or more systematic meetings with Roma elected leaders at local and national level;
- 8) Increasing the exposure of travellers to the local authorities;
- 9) Acknowledging the affirmation of the arts and culture through political participation;
- 10) Putting greater emphasis on media (traditional and social) as an important stakeholder;
- 11) Ensuring good articulation with monitoring bodies/PACE;
- 12) Clear budget and strategy for allocation of financial resources and voluntary contribution for implementing TAP objectives;
- 13) Dedicated Secretariat that ensures the effective implementation of the plan's objectives;
- 14) Fostering participation of Roma within the CoE framework – increasing the presence of Roma professionals.

Report from the Working Group 4: Access to Justice and fighting discrimination/anti-Gypsyism

Moderators: Michaël Guet, Head of I-Care Unit and Michele Bergdoll, JUSTROM Project Manager

Participants: Nora COSTACHE / Zora POPOVA / Theodoros ALEXANDRIDIS / Dezideriu GERGELY / Tatjana ANDELIC / Asmet ELEZOVSKI / Martine SERLINGER

Participants from the Council of Europe (CoE) Roma and Travellers Team: Sandra VELOY-MATEU/ Aida FARKAS

Participants of the working group indicated that the objectives and actions of the [Thematic Action Plan on the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers \(2016-2019\)](#) have been extremely relevant in improving access to justice and combating discrimination and anti-Gypsyism; therefore this should remain a priority objective for the next TAP beyond 2019. One participant highlighted the need to specifically refer to the nomadic way of life of Travellers and some Roma communities and to include more Traveller-related actions, such as developing tools to fight against anti-nomadism and forced sedentarisation. Another participant suggested having more country-specific targeted actions to adapt the TAP to the national context, needs and challenges. One participant indicated that the CoE should be less projects-oriented and focus instead on advocacy. One participant indicated that the results-oriented approach developed within the JUSTROM programme with an effective and tangible positive impact on beneficiaries' life should be replicated and considered as a best practice.

Among the most successful actions of the TAP, were mentioned *inter alia*:

- the JUSTROM programme on Roma women's access to justice which provided legal aid and legal support to many Roma beneficiaries and managed to bring policy and legal changes (e.g. in Greece, Roma women without IDs can now bring back home their children when leaving the hospital whilst previously these children were placed in foster-care institutions; a more extensive application of the so-called Kyenge Decree in Italy, which allows Roma youngsters – and not only them – when born in Italy, to more easily acquire Italian citizenship between the ages of 18 and 19);
- a change of attitude among school teachers in « the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia » following actions conducted over the past three years under the Dosta! campaign and Roma Pride celebrations;
- the legal assistance provided to the authorities in Albania and the inclusion of some provisions in the new Social Housing Act, regarding quotas for Roma and Egyptians as vulnerable groups and measures against forced evictions; these measures will not only benefit Roma and Egyptians, underlining that Roma targeted measures can be beneficial for the rest of the population in vulnerability situation;
- the drafting and production of a toolkit on non-discrimination for the police that has been translated in several languages, the adoption of CM/Rec (2017)10 on improving access to justice for Roma and Travellers in Europe drafted by the CAHROM with the help of consultants, the OPRE platform, etc.

Participants globally agreed that non-discrimination legislation is now in place in most member States. Roma have benefitted from progressive, reliable, and sustainable legislation. Even if Roma have not been the main reason behind the adoption of this new legislation, the effect is implicit for them. The problem lies with the implementation and the enforcement of anti-discrimination legislation and the lack of understanding by law enforcement and legal professionals of key concepts, such as “vulnerable groups”, “substantive equality”,

“affirmative actions” also known as “positive discrimination”, direct and indirect discrimination, etc. This has been visible during non-discrimination training provided under the TAP for various target groups (judges, prosecutors, the police, prison staff, local authorities, etc.).

Fighting stereotypes and prejudices are more a long term goal which is difficult to achieve or assess in a few years’ time. The Dosta! campaign is no longer an active campaign but has become a tool to address stereotypes and prejudices (e.g. for activities in schools, with media, etc.). Dosta! material produced (toolkit, leaflet, radio and TV spots, role model exhibitions, forthcoming child-friendly toolkit) can be used for any activity addressing stereotypes and prejudice towards Roma and for fighting anti-Gypsyism in general. The Dosta! tools should be further translated into national languages under a TAP post-2019.

Whilst underlining the importance of promoting Romani arts and culture, one participant of the working group questioned the real impact on fighting anti-Gypsyism and changing attitudes of the majority population through solely promoting arts and culture. The need for an evaluation of the impact of ERIAC activities in fighting anti-Gypsyism was mentioned in this context. For this participant, Romani arts and culture are often positively perceived by the population; the negative feelings and hostility comes from everyday experience. ERIAC could have a positive outcome in addressing the low self-esteem of many Roma, as well as in the promotion of Roma role models and positive stories (e.g. successful professionals) and messages (Roma being tolerant, being patriots without being nationalists, etc.) under ERIAC and the Dosta! campaign. The work with the media should be strengthened in this respect under a TAP post-2019 and the Media Division of the CoE should mainstream Roma in its future training activities with journalists. A meeting between the Media Division and Mr Orhan Galjus to discuss this future perspective could be envisaged as a direct follow-up of the 6th Dialogue meeting.

Participants noted that in today’s Europe there are still occurrences of ethnically motivated crimes (e.g. recently in Ukraine). There is a need to develop a Protocol on combating hate crime because the police and the judiciary often do not manage to identify the racial/ethnic aspects of these incidents. There is also a need to reinforce recognition of anti-Gypsyism and anti-nomadism in member States. Despite the fact that the term is more widely used by a number of national governments, European institutions and in the media, anti-Gypsyism is not considered as an aggravated factor like anti-Semitism can be. Racist attacks or hate speech targeting the Jewish community is rather easily labelled as anti-Semitism. When it comes to similar attacks or hate speech targeting Roma, it is rarely considered as a severe form of racial discrimination and different types legal provisions and of punishment apply (e.g. perpetrators accused of hooliganism, not of racially motivated crime in Ukraine).

Another problem is impunity, i.e. the fact that incidents involving non-Roma as perpetrators and Roma as victims do not always lead to trials and punishments (the example was given of a car accident in Bulgaria where a local official killed a Roma kid which remained unpunished) whilst the contrary (when Roma are perpetrators and non-Roma the victims) often lead to fines and imprisonment.

It has been suggested by a participant to better use the EP Resolutions, in particular the *European Parliament resolution of 15 April 2015 on the occasion of International Roma Day – anti-Gypsyism in Europe and EU*

recognition of the memorial day of the Roma genocide during World War II and the European Parliament resolution of 25 October 2017 on fundamental rights aspects in Roma integration in the EU: fighting anti-Gypsyism so as to promote new national legislation on anti-Gypsyism and to set up an international Taskforce on anti-Gypsyism with all relevant international actors (an idea already proposed by the last SRSG for Roma Issues). Other participants considered that non-discrimination - if well implemented - should be sufficient. A goal of a TAP post-2019 could be at least to make anti-Gypsyism an aggravating factor.

The two progress reports of the TAP 2016-2019 have a long list of outputs. However, the two reports lack tangible outcomes (except for JUSTROM). For a future TAP post-2019, there is a need to concentrate on outcomes and develop indicators, parameters and benchmarks. The ratification of Protocol 12 by all CoE member States should remain a priority.

Participants concluded that it was difficult to assess the mid and long term impact of training or training of trainers (ToT) on non-discrimination (with a Roma focus) as it deals with structural problems. A clear immediate impact which could be measured (and was measured from the evaluation questionnaire at the end of the training and by doing tests before and after the training) is the level of knowledge acquired by the trainees.

A major achievement of training and ToTs on non-discrimination with a Roma focus has been to bring the issue on the table of legal professionals (judges, prosecutors, lawyers) and law enforcement bodies (the police and prison staff), to bring a human rights perspective and knowledge about the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), the ECtHR case law, and to address without any taboo some of the issues that hurt the most.

For a future TAP post-2019, it is recommended not to do one-off training or ToT, but to develop a multi-annual training programme and to include in the planning and budget regular follow-up events with people who have been trained to assess after one or two years how they made use of the training, whether they changed their working methods and attitude, whether the trainees trained as future trainers have been the engines for change.

It is also important to involve national authorities/governments in these follow-up assessment meetings as they are expected to make such non-discrimination training sustainable (by introduced them into police academies, law faculties, etc.). Generally speaking there is a need to reinforce cooperation between all stakeholders (state and local officials, civil society, various institutions, etc.). The type of community action groups between local authorities and local Roma developed under ROMACT and ROMACTED are positive but they sometimes seem to miss the link with national governments and the national Roma integration strategies (how do measures decided by the local action groups meet the priorities defined by state authorities in their national Roma integration strategies, and vice versa).

It was recommended that Roma students in law are provided with internship opportunities; there is a lack of internship for Roma in public administration, ministries, equality bodies, etc.

The selection of the participants of training activities was also discussed at length. Whilst the participants considered that the national authorities (e.g. bar associations, police headquarters, etc.) should be involved in the selection process, it was recommended that the CoE ensures that these selected participants have the right profile and are motivated and committed to ensure follow-up. It was proposed that the participants of such training (as trainees or future trainers) agree on a roadmap of how they will implement lessons learnt, which could then be assessed at follow-up meetings.

One participant also suggested systematically involving Roma in training activities for the police or legal professionals to provide testimonies about the reality of their life, although this has generally been the case

under the current TAP. It was also recommended to not always involve/focus on the younger generation but to also include more elderly Roma in CoE activities as they do have expertise and can share their life experience.

In the field of access to justice; mechanisms should be put in place to monitor service delivery (not just focusing on court cases). Beneficiaries also face many problems in accessing administrative pathways – this is also due *inter alia* to illiteracy and a lack of confidence. Gaps in national legislation should also be assessed.

More awareness-raising activities among the Roma communities should be conducted to raise their knowledge about their rights and relevant institutions that could help them (ombudsmen institutions, free legal aid services, etc.) but also to reduce the mistrust in public institutions. JUSTROM provides positive examples in this respect but is limited to four member States. There is a need to scale up the JUSTROM programme, including in EU accession countries.

Further exchange of good practices, such as the peer-to-peer CAHROM thematic visits, are needed to include such topics as combating anti-Gypsyism and hate crime/speech towards Roma or access to justice (two CAHROM thematic visits took place on these topics so far).

It was also recommended to pursue collaboration with the HELP programme because the HELP certification is an incentive for participants, as well as with ECtHR judges whose presence at CoE training organised in Strasbourg provide added value. It was highlighted that 15 years ago, it was difficult to work with the ECtHR on this topic, but now there is large case law available at the Court which can and must be utilised. A HELP communication platform should be developed for trainees on non-discrimination with a Roma focus to maintain contacts and exchange experience after the training. The fact that HELP developed a Roma training module is also seen as very positive. This Roma training module should be made available in member States' national languages.

Whilst training addressed to legal professionals (lawyers, judges, prosecutors) and law enforcement bodies (the police, prison staff) should remain a priority of a TAP post-2019, training of local authorities and public administration should be reinforced.

Beyond the mere provision of legal aid/advice, some participants highlighted the need for the CoE to pursue work on litigation, even if this has been deleted from JUSTROM2 objectives. It is considered as key to ensure long-term impact. The OPRE platform between FRA, Equinet and ENNRI could potentially address this aspect, at least with equality bodies and national human rights institutions which have this role in their respective mandate.

Another topic that would require further attention by the CoE in its future TAP-post 2019 is Roma children placed in foster care. This is a persistent and sometimes growing phenomenon in several member States.

The fight against multiple and intersectional forms of discrimination should be clearly stated in a post 2019 TAP and specific actions should be envisaged for Roma and Traveller LGBTI under the TAP priority related to vulnerable groups (Roma LGBTI were absent from the current TAP) such as supporting a European network of Roma and Traveller LGBTI, as a follow-up of previous activities organised in cooperation with the Youth Department, the SOGI Unit and movements such as ILGA and ARA ART.

Participants considered that a new TAP post-2019 should be adopted for at least two biennium (4 years) because national action plans of NRIS are often for five years. Two years is not regarded as a realistic timeframe. One participant wished to recall in this context the statements by Commissioner Jourova at a debate in the European Parliament on 1 April 2016.

It was also proposed to set up a monitoring committee with Roma and Traveller representatives who would supervise and monitor the implementation of the TAP post-2019, as this is the case in some member States for the monitoring of NRIS.

Regarding the provision of legal assistance to member States (based on the experience in Albania regarding the new Social Housing Law), it was recommended to develop and formalise cooperation with other international actors (EU, UNDP, etc.).

It was also recommended to strengthen cooperation between the CoE and the OSCE/ODIHR on training provided to the police. Participants took note of the openness from both the CoE and the OSCE/ODIHR to analyse their respective training methods so as to identify synergies and complementarities. Participants who have contributed to both OSCE/ODIHR and CoE training underlined that whilst the OSCE/ODIHR TACKLE programme has a strong focus on hate crime and follows a rather rigid training curricula with a top-down approach, the CoE's focus is more on non-discrimination, is more flexible and respectful of participants' needs (bottom-up approach). The CoE also has added value because of the ECtHR case law.

Participants took note and welcomed the voluntary contributions received from member States (Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary and Ukraine) for the implementation of the TAP 2016-2019, in particular for Priority no.1, as well as from the European Commission (DG JUST) regarding the JUSTROM programme.

Report from the Working Group 5: Gender equality, youth & children's rights

Moderators: Valerie Poppe-Muess, Project Manager and Denis Durmis, Roma Youth Action Plan Project Officer

Participants: Chrisoula ARCOUDIS / Danjel HYSEINI / Edina TORDAI / Martin MARTÍNEK / Sonja BARBUL / Demetrio GOMEZ AVILA

There was consensus that the objectives included in the Thematic Action Plan (TAP) (2016-2019) should have been more specific and that the lack of baseline and indicators make it difficult to assess its achievements. However, the objectives were relevant and should be carried over into the post-2019 activities to ensure continuity and a long-term strategy for a long-term impact, and to ensure the securing of long-term and sustainable strategy funding.

Secondly, there are faces behind women, youth and children issues and the activities carried out affect real people directly. That is why the sustainability of actions, the follow-up and clear and measurable results are so important. Women, children and youth should be the nucleus of our activities as they are the change-makers and the pertinence and results of the activities on women, children and youth will largely determine the activities on other issues.

The scope of intervention of actions and programmes should evolve from vulnerability to supporting potential of women and youth. For children the focus should be placed on quality education.

Thirdly, intersectionality is lacking and it is essential that for any TAP to be effective, its objectives be included in the work of other relevant Council of Europe (CoE) departments.

In answer to the **questions for discussion:**

To what extent have the objectives and the actions of the Thematic Action Plan been relevant for 2016-2018? Will the current objectives and actions of the Thematic Action Plan stay relevant after the end of the Plan in 2019?

Most issues identified within the TAP are very relevant – a more detailed approach in elaboration of the same is needed. Also, in order to secure a long term perspective in the intervention all current priority areas should be also pursued in the post 2019 activities.

What tangible outcomes/changes resulting from the Thematic Action Plan have they observed in their own municipality, country or field of activity?

Albania

- The Albanian Parliament adopted the Law No.22 / 2018 "On Social Housing".
- Free books in elementary school and scholarship programmes for Roma students in higher education. However support in secondary school is the weak point.
- Implementation of grants system to Roma women entrepreneurs.
- System of social financial assistance given directly to the women.

- **Remaining challenge: early marriages** and domestic violence is widespread. Generally domestic violence is not reported. If it is reported, the police doesn't take it seriously due to stereotypes of Roma.

Hungary

Success of the Dosta! Campaign for children designed by Roma children and other children in disadvantage situations.

The inclusion of Roma holocaust teaching in school curriculum although the approach should be adjusted as to meet the present needs of the community of learners and reflect on the human rights conditions.

Roma youth issues have increased awareness among European and international stakeholders to support Roma youth issues and several processes of national Roma youth movements are being developed although this work is still in early stages and needs further support. (Italy, Croatia, Lithuania, Hungary).

Roma women issues

The issue of forced and early marriages is transversal and included in other strategies and work such as in the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA) and the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO). The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) also recently adopted a resolution on forced marriages in Europe which specifically mentions Roma women.

Have the actions implemented through the Thematic Action Plan been relevant for their field of activity?

Yes, many activities and thematic visits were on education and compulsory schooling but focus needs to be placed more on **youth, children and women** with particular emphasis on:

- Creation of new **role models** and youth as role models.
- **Digital platforms** with information about women, youth and children's rights.
- **Quality education** in all schools.
- Youth and women following capacity building training in various fields should be accompanied and their related activities followed.
- Support national level processes where Roma youth can become more visible. Counter-narrative to extremism and radicalisation of society where needed e.g. Italy.
- **Activism**, a complete vision of the effects of policies inside and outside the community which do not focus only on Roma issues.
- **Employment** of university educated Roma women because when they don't find work, they sometimes turn into negative role models, why go to university if you can't find work?
- Create programmes that encourage children to continue school.
- **Non formal and human rights education programmes** in period of transition to employment.
- Mainstream LGBTQI issues into Roma women and youth issues.
- Consult youth and children and take their opinions seriously.

- From activists to civil servant to make change.
- Incorporate Roma youth organisation into mainstream youth organisations for more impact taking into account the difference between the needs of Roma and mainstream youth organisations e.g. Roma youth marry and have children earlier.
- Securing meaningful participation.
- **Creation of spaces of expression** where young people can express their needs and programmes developed based on these discussions.

How to mitigate obstacles?

Have child friendly versions of relevant campaigns and information and translations into national languages needed to empower youth.

NEET youth – implement policies to ensure they have employment through NGOs for Roma students and Roma student unions.

Sustain political commitment by having long-term action plans inscribed in the government’s priorities.

Counter far-right and populist narrative through the use of internet and social media by mobilising educated people.

Avoid tokenism by training elected candidates on post-election processes to ensure an effective role and voice.

Participation in public affairs as opposed to simple political participation.

To what extent did the programme reach the target stakeholders and beneficiaries?

The final benefits are not clear to the beneficiaries.

Within the framework of their work on the Thematic Action Plan, to what extent have the changes reported come about thanks to the Thematic Action Plan?

The TAP objectives were sometimes incorporated into national inclusion strategies and provided guidelines on the objectives to be reached.

Challenges - Building for successes

- Intersectionality and multiple discrimination are missing (or lack the focus) in the current TAP.
- Data collection/Desegregated data – need for a specific focus on data collection on Roma related issues to support policy making, implementation and monitoring of policies/programmes more effective.
- Romany history, culture and identity issues to be addressed in the TAP with a focus on women, youth and children.

Recommendations

- Quality education.
- Compulsory education.

- Rights of the child with special emphasis on early marriage.
- Methodology of teaching Roma Holocaust but context and background is needed as it's new in the school curriculum using non-formal and human rights education methodologies to complement the work and actions in working with you, children and women.
- Promote Roma culture identity and history with Roma women and youth for promoting positive role models in order to empower the next generation of Roma youth for social and political activism.
- Regular training and capacity building session for young Roma who want to take part in decision making.
- Political training for youth and women.
- Digitalisation to secure active citizenship and youth and women participation to support better access to information, rights and services.
- Make mediators a recognised and remunerated profession.
- Outcome of joint projects need be measured and sustained. Need to ensure follow-up and implementation.
- Double mainstreaming of Roma youth issues.

Conclusions

- The TAP should continue with the same objectives so as to secure the sustainability and long-term impact of actions.
- Change the angle from vulnerability to empowerment particularly in relation to women and youth.
- Role models are needed to ensure that future generations of educated Roma continue to work for the promotion of Roma rights and inclusion and sustain existing activities through non-formal and formal education and the teaching of Roma culture identity and history.
- Digitalisation to secure active citizenship and youth and women participation to support better access to information, rights and services.

Key Stakeholders

Member States, Roma and Traveller NGOs, OPRE platform (FRA, Equinet, ENHRRI and CoE), EC, mainstream youth and women associations and NGOs, International organisations, participants at seminars as multipliers, National Roma Strategy Contact Points, Child Ombudsperson, National Youth Councils, academia.

Analysis

In order to develop relevant and effective policies accurate numbers on Roma and Traveller population are needed. Only then can measurable activities be developed.