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Strasbourg, 3 June 2020

**9TH MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE
DIALOGUE WITH ROMA AND TRAVELLER¹ CIVIL SOCIETY**

*Strasbourg, 29-30 October 2020
Online meeting – KUDO Platform*

**Council of Europe Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2020-2025)
Presentation – Implementation – Follow-up**

CONCEPT NOTE

PREFACE

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

Various Council of Europe monitoring bodies have observed during their recent visits to member states persistent discrimination and other human rights abuses against Roma and Travellers. Unfortunately, no European government can claim a fully successful record in protecting the human and minority rights of the members of Roma minorities/communities².

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

The first Council of Europe text on Roma and Travellers was a Recommendation adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly already in 1969, highlighting the Roma contribution to Europe's cultural diversity and the need to guaranteeing Roma rights. It was followed by a Committee of Ministers Resolution in 1975. A review of the materials produced by Council of Europe bodies such as the Committee of Ministers, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (Congress), the Commissioner for Human Rights, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), the European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR), the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) and the Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML) reveals that over time the human rights of Roma and Travellers have increasingly gained traction in the activities and output of these Council of Europe bodies. The Roma and Traveller related case-law of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) has also expanded.

The Council of Europe also created specific intergovernmental bodies dealing with the human rights of Roma, such as the Group of Specialists on Roma/Gypsies (MG-S-ROM), set up in 1995 as the first Council of Europe intergovernmental body responsible for regularly reviewing the human rights situation of the Roma and Travellers in Europe, and later renamed Committee of Experts on Roma and Travellers (same acronym). The MG-S-ROM was

¹ The term "Roma and Travellers" is used at the Council of Europe to encompass the wide diversity of the groups covered by the work of the Council of Europe in this field: on the one hand a) Roma, Sinti/Manush, Calé, Kaale, Romanichals, Boyash/Rudari; b) Balkan Egyptians (Egyptians and Ashkali); c) Eastern groups (Dom, Lom and Abdal); and, on the other hand, groups such as Travellers, Yenish, and the populations designated under the administrative term "Gens du voyage", as well as persons who identify themselves as Gypsies. The present is an explanatory footnote, not a definition of Roma and/or Travellers.

² Roma and/or Travellers are covered under the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) in at least 30 Council of Europe member states (out of the 39 State Parties to the FCNM). Furthermore, out of the 25 State Parties to the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML), 17 have officially recognised Romani as a minority language traditionally present on their territory.

replaced in 2011 by the Ad-hoc Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues (CAHROM) which in 2020 was succeeded by the Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues (ADI-ROM).

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

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW [STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN FOR ROMA AND TRAVELLER INCLUSION 2020-2025](#)

The Council of Europe [Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion 2020-2025](#) aims to combat anti-Gypsyism and discrimination and to support equality. The plan will also foster democratic participation, promote public trust and accountability and support access to inclusive quality education and training. The new plan reinforces progress made from the Council of Europe's Thematic Action Plan on the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers (2016-2019), which tackled anti-Roma and anti-Traveller prejudice, discrimination and crimes ("anti-Gypsyism") with innovative models for local-level solutions and inclusive policies. The previous Thematic Action Plan ensured a coherent approach to the Council of Europe's work on the inclusion of Roma and Travellers, helping to demonstrate both the Organisation's capacity to apply its instruments and tools towards the achievement of this goal, as well as the commitment of member states to furthering the inclusion of Roma and Travellers. It enhanced the commitment and co-operation between the various sectors of the Council of Europe and strengthened synergies within the organisation.

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

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

OBJECTIVES OF THE 9th DIALOGUE MEETING

The 9th meeting of the Council of Europe Dialogue with Roma and Traveller civil society will provide an opportunity for a broad and substantive exchange with a wide range of Roma and Traveller civil society representatives taking into account the whole of the Council of Europe's actions and policies with regard to Roma and Travellers.

The 9th Dialogue meeting will serve as a consultation platform for discussing the implementation of the Council of Europe Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2020-2025).

The meeting will:

- a) present in detail the Council of Europe Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2020-2025) and discuss its implementation process, timeline and cooperation
- b) discuss the role of Roma and Traveller civil society in actively contributing to the promotion and implementation of the Council of Europe Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2020-2025)
- c) collect proposals on how to further develop co-operation between the CoE and Roma and Traveller civil society and the future agenda of the Council of Europe biannual Dialogue meetings with Roma and Traveller civil society
- d) serve as a co-operation and networking platform for Roma and Traveller civil society organisations and other stakeholders, including for exchanging and sharing relevant and successful practices

EXPECTED DIALOGUE OUTCOMES

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

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

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

The 9th Dialogue meeting will increase awareness and knowledge of the new Council of Europe Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2020-2025) and its implementation. It will deepen understanding of the Roma and Traveller civil society's role and tools in actively promoting and contributing to the implementation of the Council of Europe Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2020-2025).

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

PARTICIPATION

Participants: 60-70 persons

Presence of the Ambassador Ivan Orlić, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Bosnia Herzegovina to the Council of Europe, Chair of the Committee of Ministers' Rapporteur Group on Social and Health Questions (GR-SOC) and other GR-SOC members

25 representatives of Roma and Traveller civil society organisations, including youth and women organisations that have been co-operating with the Council of Europe and contributed to the implementation of the [Thematic Action Plan on the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers \(2016-2019\)](#) and whose projects are likely to support the implementation of the Council of Europe Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2020-2025)

Members of the Roma and Travellers Team who implement the Strategic Action Plan through concrete projects and policy work.

Members of other departments of the Council of Europe and of the Inter-Secretariat Task Force who are mainstreaming Roma and Traveller issues into their respective areas of work and whose activities are likely to support the implementation of the Council of Europe Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2020-2025), such as ECHR, European Social Charter, INGO, Gender Equality unit, ECRI, FCNM, ECRML, HR Commissioner, PACE, Congress, Children's Rights Division, Youth Department, SOGI

Selection criteria for Dialogue participants:

- previous experience regarding the different priorities of the Council of Europe Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2020-2025)
- geographical representation of the participants at national and regional levels and across the Council of Europe member States
- age and gender balance
- current or latest contribution or project implementation in the fields of combating anti-Gypsyism, rule of law, Roma and Traveller inclusion, political participation and/or inclusive education
- contributions to developing standards and to monitoring their implementation
- personal motivation.