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EUROPEAN ALLIANCE OF CITIES AND REGIONS FOR THE INCLUSION OF ROMA AND TRAVELLERS¹

Strategic Guidelines 2016-2019

1. Objectives

The main purpose of the European Alliance of Cities and Regions² for the inclusion of Roma and Travellers (hereafter “the Alliance”) is – through its participating cities and regions, in coordination with the respective national governments and while taking into account the specificities of each country – to **favour projects and policies for the inclusion of Roma and Travellers at local and regional level.**

Following the Summit of Mayors on Roma held in Strasbourg on 22 September 2011, the Alliance was set up in 2013 by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe with the support of the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) for Roma Issues.

In line with the “Strasbourg Declaration on Roma” adopted by the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers in October 2010³ and the Final Declaration of the Summit of Mayors on Roma “Building Trust at the Grassroots”⁴, the main objectives of the Alliance are the following:

- To set up a framework for co-operation, sharing of good practices, strengthening local and regional capacities for action, identifying specific problems and proposing solutions. The Alliance will therefore be a platform for political support, exchanges and mutual learning focusing on lobbying, advocating, promoting and expanding Roma and Traveller inclusion policies and projects;
- To contribute to the recognition of anti-Gypsyism as a specific form of racism by condemning hate speech against Roma and Travellers and by refraining of doing such statements⁵;

¹ The terms “Roma and Travellers” are being 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.

² See for administrative entities that are not cities or regions, section 5.1.

³ CM(2010)133 final

⁴ Available on http://www.coe.int/t/congress/sessions/20110922-roma-summit/default_en.asp

⁵ Cf. European Commission Against Racism and Equality (ECRI), General Policy Recommendation no.13 on combating anti-Gypsyism and discrimination against Roma

- To improve dialogue and cooperation on the one hand between local and regional authorities and Roma and Traveller communities and NGOs, including their civic participation in local and regional government decision-making; and on the other hand between Roma and Traveller local residents and the rest of the population.

The Alliance is based on the principles of good governance and the human rights standards as established by the Council of Europe. These principles include the requirement to refrain from hate speech against Roma and Travellers, to abolish school segregation and to prevent forced evictions without the provision of alternative accommodation. The Alliance is committed to awarding particular attention to the role of Roma and Traveller women and Roma and Traveller youth in promoting Roma and Traveller inclusion at local and regional level. The Alliance also acts to promote Romani culture, language and history, in particular the celebration of the International Roma Day (8 April) and the International Romani Language Day (5 November), as well as the commemoration of the International Remembrance Day (2 August) of the genocide of Roma during the Second World War⁶.

2. Synergies

The Alliance is supporting the implementation of the “Thematic Action Plan on the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers (2016-2019)” of the Council of Europe, in particular the measures promoting innovative solutions at local level including the joint programmes with the European Commission such as ROMACT⁷ and ROMED⁸.

3. Lines of action⁹

The Alliance undertakes activities in four main areas:

- 3.1 The Alliance will provide a framework to foster and strengthen the political will of its participants to work for the inclusion of Roma and Travellers. It will lobby other local, regional, and national stakeholders to promote Roma and Traveller inclusion. Awareness about European human rights standards, good practices of inclusion of Roma and Travellers, and exchange and collaboration with other participants will help to strengthen the commitments of mayors and governors, local and regional councillors and administration staff.
- 3.2 The Alliance will serve as a forum for exchange and collaboration among participating local and regional authorities. It will promote mutual learning. In particular, the Alliance Taskforce will assist participants in:
 - organising workshops and conferences;
 - establishing a collaboration platform;
 - applying for national and international funds;
 - using the European Database on Roma and Traveller-related Policies and Good Practices¹⁰;
 - establishing city partnerships;
 - implementing lessons learnt from other projects, such as ROMACT and ROMED.

⁶ Known as “Pharrajimos”, “Porrajmos”, “Samudaripen” or “Kalí Traš” depending on the Romani variant used by the community

⁷ <http://coe-romact.org/>

⁸ <http://romed.coe-romact.org/>

⁹ Concrete activities will be set out in an appendix.

¹⁰ <http://goodpracticeroma.ppa.coe.int/en>

The Alliance Taskforce will facilitate cooperation with other Council of Europe bodies, international organisations and networks.

- 3.3 In order to reach out to the media, other authorities and the wider public, the Alliance participants are asked to increase the visibility of their activities on Roma and Traveller inclusion, by contributing to the *Dosta!* campaign of the Council of Europe against stereotypes and prejudices; applying for the *Dosta!* Congress Prize; and marking the days of 8 April, 2 August and 5 November with special activities. Alliance participants will also be encouraged to participate in international activities such as the Week Against Racism (March), International Roma Week (April) and the Day against Fascism and Anti-Semitism (9 November).
- 3.4 The Alliance seeks to promote the involvement of Roma and Traveller civil society, individuals and NGOs, in local and regional policies and projects on Roma and Traveller inclusion, through regular consultation, participation in the budgeting procedures, involvement in activities of the Alliance participants and promotion of active citizenship amongst Roma and Travellers as outlined in the “European Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship”¹¹.

4. Outcomes

The activities of the Alliance and its participants are expected to contribute to the following outcomes:

- Improved social inclusion of Roma and Travellers, and a decrease of discriminatory attitudes and hate speech against Roma and Travellers by using Alliance participating cities and regions as role-models;
- Improved dialogue between local and regional authorities and Roma and Traveller communities and NGOs, and an improved civic participation by Roma and Traveller communities;
- A growing number of cities and regions establishing effective steps to promote the social inclusion of Roma and Travellers at local and regional level;
- Dissemination of tried-and-tested methods and tools for the co-operation, mutual learning and support among cities and regions in this field;
- Improved access to existing financial resources available for the implementation of integrated policies;
- Improved potential for synergies with other cities and regions, for transferring know-how and mutual learning, including through national networks of cities.

5. Structure

The Alliance was set up by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities. It operates in line with the general procedures of the Congress and is overseen by its Bureau. Since January 2016, the operational management of the Alliance has been entrusted to the Support Team of the SRSG for Roma Issues, while the Congress is maintaining its political and financial support.

In particular the Congress will continue to give high priority to the issue of Roma inclusion at local level, through the work of its Current Affairs Committee and its Thematic Rapporteur on

¹¹ Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)7 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education.

Roma. It will continue to organize, every two years, the “Dosta!” prize for municipalities which have been implementing good practices in the field of Roma inclusion, and will dedicate special attention to the follow up of its Resolutions and Recommendations on “The situation of Roma in Europe: a challenge for local and regional authorities”¹² (October 2011) and “Empowering Roma youth through participation: effective policy design at local and regional levels”¹³ (March 2014).

5.1 Alliance participants

The participants of the Alliance are local and regional authorities in Council of Europe member States which are committed to promote Roma and Traveller inclusion and commit to the Alliance objectives and principals.

Participation in the Alliance is open to all entities of sub-national levels, i.e. districts, departments, regions, municipalities, towns, arrondissements, boroughs, wards etc.; it is not restricted to cities and regions in the strict sense. Interested entities participants are asked to express their commitment by means of a letter sent by an elected representative to the Congress President.

Full participation in the Alliance is carried out on the basis of specific criteria, including:

- A clear commitment to overcome existing problems regarding the situation of Roma and Travellers (e.g. a declared policy commitment and a basic local or regional integration strategy);
- Demonstrated past or present efforts in favour of Roma and Traveller inclusion;
- Existing mechanisms for dialogue and cooperation with local Roma and Traveller communities.

The participants have to uphold the guiding principles of participation in the Alliance.

The Secretary General of the Congress jointly with the SRSG for Roma issues, after due consultation with the participant concerned and after having informed the Congress Bureau, are entitled to exclude from the Alliance any participant in breach of the guiding principles of the Alliance – as set up in the last paragraph of part 1 “Objectives” above - or endangering the credibility of the Alliance and the Council of Europe activities promoting the inclusion of Roma and Travellers.

After consultation of the Alliance participants, the Secretary General of the Congress, jointly with the SRSG for Roma issues, may propose a Charter to be signed by Alliance participants specifying their obligations and commitments, should the need for more specific regulation arise.

5.2 Taskforce

The Alliance is assisted by a Taskforce set up within the Support Team of the SRSG for Roma Issues, based in Strasbourg.

The Taskforce is responsible for assisting participants in their activities and implements activities in close consultation with the Congress Secretariat and the Alliance participants.

¹² Available at <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1855297>

¹³ Available at <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=CG%2826%298FINAL&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&Site=COE&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=CACC9A&BackColorLogged=EFEA9C>

The activities of the Taskforce are result-oriented and driven by the needs of Alliance participants. A programme of activities will be listed in a separate appendix.

6. Functioning

The official languages of the Alliance are the official languages of the Council of Europe. Other working languages are used — as resources permit — to ensure effective communication with participants and partners.

Alliance activities can be financed from the following sources:

- Ordinary budget of the Council of Europe (Congress and SRSG Roma)
- Contributions from Alliance participants, e.g. through the hosting of specific activities
- Voluntary contributions from member States
- Joint Programmes with the European Commission (upon prior approval by the European Commission)
- Contributions from other donors, including other international organisations and civil society organisations.