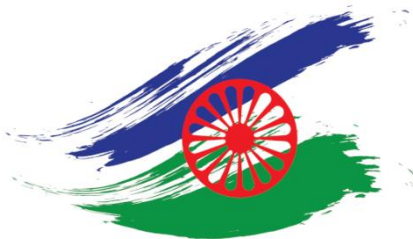




Child Friendly DOSTA! Campaign Material



Comprehensive Report on the Child Consultations



Roma and Travellers

“Tell me and I forget.
Teach me and I remember.
Involve me and I will learn”.

Benjamin Franklin

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**The development of child-friendly material
for the Dosta! campaign with the participation of children**

Comprehensive Report of the Child Consultations in Albania, Hungary and Spain

Content

1. Introduction	3
2. Framework	4
2.1. Objectives of the child consultations	4
2.2. About the Dosta! campaign	4
2.3. Participation of Roma and non-Roma children	6
2.4 The need to address anti-Gypsyism early with children	7
3. Implementation of the child consultations	9
3.1. Partners	9
3.2. Stages of implementation	10
3.3. Open call, selection of children and composition of groups	10
3.4. Methodology	11
3.4.1. Non-formal education	11
3.4.2. Intercultural approach	12
3.4.3. Child consultations	12
3.5. Adults supporting the child participation process	13
3.6. Child safeguarding standards	14
4.1. General remarks	15
4.2. Campaign materials developed by the children	16
4.2.1. Logos	16
4.2.2. Websites	16
4.2.3. Short videos	17
4.3. Proposals of the children for further campaign materials to be developed	18
5. Concluding remarks of the child consultations	18
6. Follow up activities by the Roma and Travellers Team of the Council of Europe to the child consultations	18

1. Introduction

In 2017, Roma¹ and non-Roma children in Albania, Hungary and Spain were involved in the development of child-friendly materials for the Dosta! Campaign through child based consultations. The Dosta! Campaign, launched in 2006, aims at raising awareness of the prejudices and stereotypes concerning Roma and Travellers. Children's participation, equal opportunities for all children and countering discrimination are key priority areas of the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021). The Strategy identifies the right to be heard as a cross cutting objective, *"special emphasis will be given to the participation of children in vulnerable situations, such as children with disabilities, children living in poverty, children in care, Roma children, children on the move or otherwise affected by migration, and children from minorities."*² The Thematic Action Plan on the inclusion of Roma and Travellers (2016-2019)³ recognises the vulnerability of Roma children and incorporates strategies which promote school and social inclusion through intercultural dialogue.

Anti-Gypsyism, recognized as a specific form of racism by the Council of Europe⁴, is deeply rooted in negative and biased beliefs, prejudices, misconceptions and discriminatory attitudes towards Roma and, as a consequence, Roma face a life of alienation, isolation and entrenched poverty. Prejudiced behaviour towards Roma is often institutionalized, systemic and expressed in the form of discriminatory policies and laws. Under the assumption that the roots of adult forms of exclusion can be documented in childhood, then schools and education play a vital and critical role in reversing these trends by creating a harmonious learning environment rich in opportunities for exploring diversity, appreciating cultural diversity, understanding tolerance, promoting solidarity and fostering mutual respect as a means of avoiding stereotyping, prejudice and racism particularly in changing multicultural societies. There is need therefore to address anti-Gypsyism in schools and tackle anti-Gypsyism early.

In line with the aim of the campaign, bringing Roma and non-Roma citizens closer to each other, children of different backgrounds from three Council of Europe member States were provided with the opportunity, the space, the means and the support to develop the key messages of the Dosta campaign in a child- friendly way.

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 The Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021), Para. 39.

³ [Thematic Action Plan on the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers \(2016-2019\)](#)

⁴ [ECRI General Policy Recommendation N°13 on combating anti-Gypsyism and discrimination against Roma](#)

2. Framework

2.1. Objectives of the child consultations

Children start to understand prejudice by the time they enter preschool, and they can already tell how certain characteristics, like skin colour or gender, affects how people see them and their peers. Although a child's age is one of the most important factors in considering when to begin an intervention regarding prejudice and discrimination, the most important issue is how to talk to children about respecting diversity.

The material developed so far in the Dosta! campaign addresses the needs of an adult audience in large and some specific professional group such as journalists. Therefore, the need emerged to interpret the Dosta! Campaign message for children through an approach whereby children themselves develop the material for children within the framework of a consultation procedure. In line with the goals of the Dosta! campaign, both Roma and non-Roma children were invited to take part in the consultations and work together on their ideas that later served as a basis to develop three awareness raising videos for three different age groups.

Besides the clear and relevant objective of the involvement of children, the participants from culturally different backgrounds had the opportunity:

- to participate in a cross-cultural interaction experience outside of their usual frame,
- to express their ideas and concerns about racism, discrimination and anti-Gypsyism,
- to analyse this experience critically by sharing, comparing, contrasting, reflecting and drawing conclusions,
- to develop further critical literacy by seeking a practical solution and planning for effective behaviour change dealing with anti-Gypsyism.

2.2. About the Dosta! campaign

The Dosta! campaign *“Enough! Go beyond prejudice, meet the Roma!”* aims to raise awareness of the prejudices and stereotypes concerning Roma and Travellers not by denouncing them but by breaking down the stereotypes by showing who the Roma really are. It aims to bring non-Roma closer to Roma citizens by promoting understanding and active participation and by breaking down the barriers caused by prejudices and stereotypes. The Dosta! campaign was developed by the Council of Europe under the joint Council of Europe and European Commission programme on Roma in South Eastern Europe *“Equal rights and treatment for Roma in South-Eastern Europe”* (2006-2007). Since 2007, the campaign has been extended to all Council of Europe member states.

The Dosta! campaign is a response to the need to combat the distinct racism, discrimination and intolerance that many Roma face in Europe today, despite the fact that Roma have lived in Europe since the 13th century. The Roma form a group of approximately 10-12 million people and can be found in almost all Council of Europe member states. In several central and eastern European countries, they represent between 5% and 10% of the total population. Although citizens in their own countries, and hence citizens of Europe, having the same rights as any other European citizen, they are often victims of social and systemic discrimination and deeply rooted negative and biased

beliefs, prejudices, misconceptions and discriminatory attitudes and as a consequence, Roma face a life of alienation, isolation and entrenched poverty.

The campaign addresses very deep-rooted beliefs and prejudices. It conveys two basic positive messages.

1. *A socio-political message:* Roma have the same rights and aspirations as everybody else. They are citizens of the countries they live in and they must be recognised as such, in the full respect of their citizenship and human rights. Taking a positive approach towards diversity in European societies means enabling all citizens to obtain new competences and skills for facing future challenges and building stable and cohesive societies.
2. *A cultural message:* Roma culture is part of Europe's cultural heritage and it has contributed to the enrichment of many European societies. It is now time to recognise this contribution.

The Dosta! campaign toolkit was developed to assist stakeholders and citizens to understand what the campaign is about and how it can be used to combat anti-Gypsyism by taking concrete actions at the local level. A multi-modality approach was adopted, and the toolkit includes a wide range of resources including the following:

- [Website](#) for the promotion of all the campaign's activities, as well as for the collection of audio-visual material used in Council of Europe member states.
- Creative visuals and slogans to be used on material such as leaflets, posters, promotional material (t-shirts, mouse pads, etc.) and audio-visual products.
- The CD "Music beyond prejudice: Romani variations on the European Anthem" produced in co-operation with the Council of Europe Directorate of Communications.
- Video clips depicting situation of overcoming prejudices and stereotyping of Roma.
- A television and a radio spot in local languages - one of the main tools of the Dosta! campaign.
- Media pack for journalists includes a video kit with interviews of senior international officials, video interviews and testimonials, a Euronews report on the Roma, the Dosta! campaign's television spots and the "Tool for fighting stereotypes towards Roma". The media pack is distributed to the press during major Council of Europe Roma-related events.
- Photographic resources, a selection of photos is published on the campaign website.
- VIP testimonials, as personalities with popular mass appeal and recognition have provided statements in favour of the Roma in order to break down the barriers caused by prejudice.
- Press service support for individual events.

2.3. Participation of Roma and non-Roma children

Participation of all children is one of the priority areas of the Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021) with reference to Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights on the right to freedom of expression and Article 9 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child on the right to be heard. Since the right to be heard was identified as a cross cutting objective, it was also foreseen that “the Council of Europe will continue to involve children and give due respect to their views in the development, implementation and evaluation of its child-related standards, policies and activities, respecting the above-mentioned principles. In doing so, special emphasis will be given to the participation of children in vulnerable situations, such as children with disabilities, children living in poverty, children in care, Roma children, children on the move or otherwise affected by migration, and children from minorities.”⁵

The Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on the participation of children and young people under the age of 18 sets the framework of involvement of children in any decision-making procedure having an effect on them. In line with the Recommendation, child participation means that children, any person under the age of 18 years, individually or in groups, have the right, the means, the space, the opportunity and, where necessary, the support to freely express their views, to be heard and to contribute to decision making on matters affecting them, their views being given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity.⁶

All children and young people, including those of pre-school age, school age and those who have left full-time education, have the right to be heard in all matters affecting them, their views being given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity. Thus, the right of children and young people to participate applies without discrimination on any grounds such as race, ethnicity, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, disability, birth, sexual orientation or other status. Particular efforts should be made to enable the participation of children and young people with fewer opportunities, including those who are vulnerable or affected by discrimination with certain provisions for children with special needs.

In order to be able to participate meaningfully and genuinely, children and young people should be provided with all relevant information and offered adequate support for self-advocacy appropriate to their age and circumstances. Children and young people who exercise their right to freely express their views must be protected from harm, including intimidation, reprisals, victimisation and violation of their right to privacy. Children and young people should always be fully informed of the scope of their participation, including the limitations on their involvement, the expected and actual outcomes of their participation and how their views were ultimately considered.

Interventions to reverse prejudice and stereotyping needs to be based on an understanding of how, why, and under what conditions, children make decisions to exclude others. One of the most

⁵ The Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021), Para. 39.

⁶ Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)2 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the participation of children and young people under the age of 18, Section I

powerful influences on the development of children's attitudes, are children themselves,⁷ therefore the purpose was to ensure that Roma and non Roma children from different backgrounds and age groups participate in the consultations and their experiences, ideas and thoughts are shared in the child participation process in the development of child friendly material to fight anti-Gypsyism.

Equally, it is important to remember that the roots of adult forms of exclusion can be documented in childhood, and children who experience exclusion are particularly at risk for long term negative outcomes. Therefore, Roma children should be part of all interventions to discuss problems associated with exclusion, how exclusion is experienced, and how exclusion originates and changes over the course of a person lifespan⁸.

2.4 The need to address anti-Gypsyism early with children

Children are able to distinguish between physical traits—hair colour, height, weight, etc. - at a very early age. They start to understand prejudice by the time they enter preschool, and they can already tell how certain characteristics, like skin colour or gender, affects how people see them and their peers. As children get older and depending both on social and family influences, this can lead to intolerance and discrimination. Children have already learned stereotypes from important adults in their lives, from the media, from books and from peers. These attitudes are then often brought in the school environment. Schools and learning settings should be active in the processes of countering those negatives with positives models.

Prejudice and discrimination occur at different levels of society. Prejudiced behaviour towards Roma may be institutionalized, and expressed in the form of discriminatory practices, policies and laws. Schools are not exempted from the display of these phenomena but they can undoubtedly play a critical role in reversing these trends by creating a harmonious learning environment rich in opportunities for exploring diversity, appreciating cultural diversity, understanding tolerance, promoting solidarity, and fostering mutual respect as a means of avoiding stereotyping, prejudice and racism particularly in changing multicultural societies.

Schools prepare students to be active members of a diverse society. Therefore, the school curriculum and its pedagogical approaches should promote human values of equality, respect and tolerance, and encourage active participation of all its members in the democratic management of the schools. Classroom practices should promote critical thinking, cooperative teaching and learning, collaborative problem solving, heterogeneous grouping and democratic values and attitudes.

Although a child's age is one of the most important factors in considering when to begin an intervention regarding prejudice and discrimination, the most important issue is how to talk to children about respecting diversity.

Research in this area has shown that:

⁷ Killen, Melanie & Rutland, Adam. (2011). Children and Social Exclusion: Morality, Prejudice, and Group Identity.

⁸ Abrams, Dominic & Killen, Melanie. (2014). Social Exclusion of Children: Developmental Origins of Prejudice. *Journal of Social Issues*. 70. 10.1111/josi.12043.

- Children do not hold negative attitudes towards children outside of their 'in' groups, such as fans of a certain football team or members of a different ethnic group and are more worried about not being excluded themselves.⁹
- The most powerful influences on young people's behaviour are norms: the rules, stated or otherwise, which govern society. Such rules exist within children's groups: for example, to share or not to share, how to dress, or who can be included in an activity.
- Norms within the school context are often explained to children within school charters – a document or statement that outlines how teachers expect pupils to behave in order to create a harmonious learning environment. By attending school, children agree to adhere to this set of generic rules. School charters emphasising equality and inclusion that are endorsed by teachers are effective tools.
- Schools do have an influencing factor on inclusion,¹⁰ particularly when they encourage peer groups to be positive and inclusive between each other.

⁹ McLeod, S. A. (2019, Oct 24). *Social identity theory*. Simply Psychology. <https://www.simplypsychology.org/social-identity-theory.html>

¹⁰ McGuire, Luke; Rutland, Adam and Nesdale, Drew. 2015. Peer Group Norms and Accountability Moderate the Effect of School Norms on Children's Intergroup Attitudes. *Child Development*, 86(4), pp. 1290-1297. ISSN 0009-3920 [Article] <http://research.gold.ac.uk/19637/1/McGuireRutlandNesdale-CD%20%27in%20press%27.pdf>

3. Implementation of the child consultations

3.1. Partners

The child friendly DOSTA! campaign “4 children by children” project was developed as a joint initiative between the Roma and Travellers Team and the Children’s Rights Division of the Council of Europe in recognition of the right of the child to live in an environment free of discrimination and intolerance and the right of the child to express himself/herself and be heard.



In close collaboration with the project country partners, three NGOs implemented the child consultation activities in Albania, Hungary and Spain.

ALBANIA



In Albania, the consultation was organised by Roma Active Albania (RAA) on 20 -21 November 2017, Gjirokaster, Community Center, Albania. The vision of RAA is to contribute to empowering Roma and non Roma youth to come together in a grassroots movement, which will change the position of Roma by fighting against exclusionary mechanisms. RAA lobbies and advocates on Roma issues at local, national & international level and has expertise in addressing issues, conducting analysis and developing new methods & strategies to tackle the exclusion of Roma people in Albania & Europe. RAA supports empowerment of women and youth.



HUNGARY

In Hungary, the consultation was organised by the Hope for Children Hungary on 18-19 November 2017. The goal of the Association is to advocate and to protect the children’s rights based on the standards and principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as well as on the Fundamental Law of Hungary. The idea that the children’s rights are not the downgraded varieties of the rights of the adults, but they are special rights derived from their age,

physical and mental ability serving the “best interest of the child” holds a special place in the vision of the Association.

www.hopeforchildren.hu

SPAIN



In Spain, the consultation were organised by Asociación Intercultural Nakeramos

On the 23rd – 25th – 28th – 30th of November 2017, at the Turo' Institute of Roquetesen Barcelona, Spain. The Intercultural Association Nakeramos is a nonprofit organization founded in 2002 as an informal platform by a group of Roma and non-Roma in collaboration with students and activists of the Autonomous University of Barcelona. Nakeramos was created as a multicultural

and intercultural entity in social work and activism within the Roma community at a local and regional level. Nakeramos develops its activities and projects with diverse groups with special attention to youth, and with an important collaboration with other informal groups and entities in defence of values and common objectives for society.

3.2. Stages of implementation

STAGE 1	Open call to invite children to take part in the child consultation with all the relevant information about the objectives, the framework, the possible effects and limitations of their participation
STAGE 2	Selection and preparation of the children and the parents
STAGE 3	Practical organization of the child consultation (facilitator, venue, date)
STAGE 4	Implementation of the child consultation in a child-centred, inclusive, meaningful, transparent and sustainable way and reporting to the Council of Europe
STAGE 5	Follow-up to the child consultation: all the children who take part in the consultation are informed how their views were ultimately considered

3.3. Open call, selection of children and composition of groups

In accordance with the General Comment on Article 12 of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, the process was designed to be transparent and informative, voluntary, respectful, relevant to children's lives, in child-friendly environment, inclusive, supported by training, safe and sensitive to risk, and accountable.

The objective was to organise consultations with the participation of approximately 20 children per country, who were invited by an open call and selected in a transparent procedure. Accordingly, all three partners made an open call for participation and shared it with their partners/network.

In **Hungary**, the applicants could apply through a website, later the applications were validated by the partner organization. The partner informed the children and the parents about the aim of the consultation and the process, and in accordance with GDPR rules, they collected the signed informed consent forms from the participants and their parents. The children and the parents shared their ethnicity voluntarily in the application process, but the partner organization did not ask any declaration about the ethnicity of the participants in written form. In **Spain** and in **Albania** the participants could apply to the partners via email or offline, then similarly, the children and their

parents were informed about the aim of the consultation and the process, after the relevant information were given, in accordance with GDPR rules, the partners collected the signed informed consent from the participants and their parents. Ethnic data were not collected neither.

In line with the aim of the campaign, bringing Roma and non-Roma people closer to each other, children of different backgrounds from the three countries were provided the opportunity, the space, the means and the support to develop the key messages of the Dosta campaign in a child-friendly way. Approximately half of the participants were Roma children (from different Roma groups), but also a number of other factors were considered during the composition of the groups including age, language, gender balance, religion and social background etc. The partners managed to involve migrant children and children from other minority communities as well.

At the consultations in Spain, Spanish Roma children and non-Roma children from South America and North Africa with a middle/low socio-economic background also took part. The participants, aged between 12-16, lived in the different communities of the neighbourhoods of Nou Barris, Sant Andreu and Roquetes. In Albania, the children, also aged between 12-16, were consulted from different Roma communities but the majority were Egyptians living at the centre and in the city of Gjirokastra and in the villages nearby, the non-Roma children were from Gjirokstra and the two neighbouring villages. Five of the participating children previously dropped out of school and they were in the process of returning to the education system. The composition of the group in Hungary was quite diverse too: children, between the age of 12 and 16, participated from Budapest and from the village of Hodász (Eastern-Hungary). The children living in the capital actually came from different backgrounds, some of them studied at an elite school while others at a so-called “tanoda” (extracurricular study centre), furthermore, few children were from alternative care (SOS Children Villages). Most of the participants from Hodász and some of them from the “tanoda” institution identified themselves as Roma and there were children from mixed marriages as well.

3.4. Methodology

3.4.1. Non-formal education

Non-formal education refers to planned, structured programmes and processes of personal and social education for young people designed to improve a range of skills and competences, outside the formal educational curriculum. Non-formal education is what happens in places such as youth organisations, sports clubs and drama and community groups where young people meet, for example, to undertake projects together, play games, discuss, go camping, or make music and drama. Non-formal education achievements are usually difficult to certify, even if their social recognition is increasing. Non-formal education should also be:

- voluntary
- accessible to everyone (ideally)
- an organised process with educational objectives
- participatory
- learner-centred
- about learning life skills and preparing for active citizenship

- based on involving both individual and group learning with a collective approach
- holistic and process-oriented
- based on experience and action
- organised on the basis of the needs of the participants.¹¹

3.4.2. Intercultural approach

The intercultural approach promotes the appreciation of cultural diversity, solidarity, tolerance and the fostering of mutual respect and ethno-relative thinking as a means of avoiding stereotyping and prejudice particularly in changing multicultural societies. The approach encompasses the notion of intercultural learning whereby learners have the opportunity to become aware of self and other cultures, to recognise cultural values and patterns in an **attempt to identify the underlying common factors of cultural difference and to understand the transient and unifying character of culture as part of human culture.**

The approach recognises the need for intercultural competence and skills development for intercultural communication. These skills are essentially necessary in cross-cultural interactions. Its pedagogical model includes inclusive and cooperative learning practices, which not only **embrace the whole learner** in the learning process but also seek to **empower the learner to change the reality in which they live in.** It promotes critical democracy, individual freedom, social justice and social action.

Hence, it becomes essential to give the children the opportunity to:

- engage in a cross cultural activity and participate in an experience regarding Roma outside of the usual frame,
- analyse this experience critically by sharing, comparing, contrasting and reflecting on the cross-cultural interaction
- abstract some useful insight from the analysis of anti Gypsyism by drawing conclusions, identifying general issues and
- apply the result in a practical situation, planning for effective behaviour change.

3.4.3. Child consultations

The child participations were taken place in the form of consultations with the support of adult professionals who facilitated the consultation as a process with non-formal educational methods. The appreciation of cultural diversity, solidarity, tolerance and the fostering of mutual respect and ethno-relative thinking as a means of avoiding stereotyping and prejudice particularly in changing multicultural societies were as also an important element of the methodology. The facilitators were encouraged to use media sources as much as possible in order to be able to speak about different issues in an interactive way.

In order to provide support for the partners to involve children in the development of the key messages of the Dosta! campaign in a child- friendly way, several activities were developed and

¹¹ Compass – Manual for human rights education with young people, Council of Europe.

adjusted to the needs of target group (age and ethnicity) based on training materials of the Council of Europe with special reference to the [Compass - Manual on human rights education with young people](#), the [Bookmarks - Manual for combating hate speech through human rights education](#) and the [Mirrors – Manual on combating anti-gypsyism through human rights education](#).

The first set of the activities aimed at getting children familiar with the Dosta! Campaign and providing them with all the information needed to develop the child-friendly messages of the campaign. The second set of activities then focused on the preparation of child-friendly campaign materials. At the end of the consultation, the facilitators evaluated the consultation process as such with the children. Proposed activities over a two full-day program (16 hours) or shorter sessions on 3 occasions (e.g. after-school sessions).

	Aim of the session	Duration
1.	Introduction, aims of the consultation, setting the house rules	45-60 min
2.	Getting to know each other, name and ice-breaking games, team-building activities with intercultural elements	60 min
3.	Getting to understand: stereotypes, prejudices, intolerance and discrimination	120 min
4.	How does it work? Awareness raising activities and campaigns	60 min
5.	Planning child-friendly material for the Dosta! campaign	120 min with breaks
6.	Implementation of the work plan of the group	180 - 240 min with breaks
7.	Presenting the outcomes at plenary, wrap-up and debriefing	45-60 min
8.	Evaluation	30-45 min

3.5. Adults supporting the child participation process

The children were provided with all the necessary support during the consultations by the facilitators, although observers were also present to take notes of the process. The crucial role of the facilitators was to:

- create a safe and comfortable environment for all children involved,
- keep the consultations focused on the topic of interest while ensure that all children have the opportunity to contribute and,
- provide guiding support for the children to express their views and opinions in a

comprehensive way.

The consultations were implemented in Albania by two facilitators, in Hungary and Spain by three facilitators and an observer was present in Albania and in Hungary. In every country, at least one of the facilitators also belonged to the Roma community. The following requirements were taken into account during the selection of the facilitators:

- having experience in non-formal education, at least one of the facilitators having experience in small group facilitation;
- having experience in working with children and young people and in the field of human rights education;
- being committed to the project and be present throughout the entire project;
- having knowledge of English was an asset.

However, all the facilitators had experience in human rights education with non-formal methods and an extent knowledge about Roma and worked with different communities, facilitation of a child participation process as such was a pioneer project for most of them. An international expert was involved to provide expertise on child participation and on the application of the multicultural approach on local level.

3.6. Child safeguarding standards

All activities from the preparation of the child consultations until the reporting stage were carried out in accordance with the common values of the Council of Europe: respecting human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The best interest of the child was a primary consideration in all actions implemented throughout the whole process in line with the domestic legislation on child protection.

During the course of the organisation and implementation of the child consultations, particular attention was dedicated to respect the privacy of the child and to inform and obtain the consent of the parents/caretakers in accordance with the domestic legislation. Accordingly, national data protection and professional secrecy rules were followed strictly with due attention given to the needs and special situation of children belonging to vulnerable groups.

4. Outcomes of the consultations

4.1. General remarks



The children had the opportunity to express their opinion about the form and content of child-friendly messages for Dosta! campaign during the implementation of different activities. The views, ideas and proposals of the children in the three countries differed in some aspects but also shared many similarities. The differences can be explained with the specific political, economic and social situation of the countries that has a clear influence on the thinking of the children, some terminology or the meaning of pictures might have different

connotation in different countries. The influence of the formal educational system, the teaching methods and the national curriculum are also an important factor in this case. Nevertheless, the following conclusions can be drawn from all three child consultations.

1. General awareness about the Roma, their historical and cultural background in the society is quite low, even some Roma children applied with the expectation to learn more about Roma rights, history and culture at the consultations. The participating children could not recall any successful campaign or advocacy to empower Roma, probably due to the weak representation of the Roma in general in their communities.
2. Children had some knowledge of human rights and children's rights, but they themselves felt that it is quite limited. In total, only three children heard about the Council of Europe and none of the participants knew the Dosta! campaign before. The children had no possibility to exercise the right to be heard and to participation at the educational system, child-friendly presentation of issues relevant for their life is missing (with special reference to the lack of websites). Children expressed their concern that they might have limitations concerning child participation because the adults and teachers would not take them seriously or they might lack the necessary skills to express themselves. These concerns might be related from the fact that examples for successful child-managed advocacy is missing in their lives.
3. All in the three countries were found that the intercultural approach is missing in the formal educational system, while for many of the participants it was the first time to participate in a non-formal educational activity (and they expressed their interest to be involved in similar programmes). Online and offline bullying was a pressing issue raised by all the groups: it is part of their everyday life at school but the teachers and adults do not intervene and the peers do not know to react or step up against bullying.

4.2. Campaign materials developed by the children



The children developed campaign materials in several different formats. Spanish and Hungarian children made proposals for similar slogans: “Friendship does not understand colour” and “Inside everyone there is the same colour”. The children participating at the consultations in Albania and Hungary drafted flyers for the campaign, while the Hungarian and the Spanish children prepared posters. Acknowledging the importance of the digital technology, children in Hungary and Spain proposed to set up a website, the Albanian and Hungarian children themselves shot short videos. Furthermore Albanian and Spanish children suggested flash mobs also as a good way to raise awareness nowadays.

Concerning the content, several common characteristics can be found in the materials prepared. Skin colour were identified as a basis of prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination, but the children expressed that through friendship and being nice or talented person it is possible to overwrite prejudice and discrimination. The topics of talented children and education possibilities were highlighted as a relevant item for the website. Children also emphasized that equality should be a value respected by everyone. The use of the Roma flag was a common feature in the campaign material developed by the children. Flags often serve as symbolic and unifying representations of a people’s history, culture and expression of belonging. It is also a shared space of recognition. Roma and non-Roma children used the Roma flag equally, to represent their share understanding of the Roma people and their culture.

4.2.1. Logos



The children came up with ideas also to adjust the logo of the Dosta! campaign in the child-friendly version.

This logo is prepared by a 12 years-old girl who said that this version may highlight that flowers are important part of the Roma culture and at the same time children might like this colourful version better than the original one.

According to the 13 years-old boy who is the author of this version: ‘The horse was chosen because for Vlah Roma the horse is a symbolic animal which refer to the travels and the freedom, at the same time everyone likes horses because it is a nice animal’.



4.2.2. Websites

The websites were designed by the children in Hungary and Spain, both for adults and children as

target groups, while the Albanian children said that they would prefer to organize flash mobs since the internet is still not accessible for many people.

The websites proposals in both countries aimed to highlight that Romani children are talented: if they get the opportunity, they can show that they are also smart and able to learn like any other children. In addition, the Spanish children wanted to challenge gender roles as well.

The Hungarian consultations revealed that children see things from a different angle than adults: they made also positive remarks about pictures considered stereotypical by adults. For example, they said that although the children on the pictures look like poor or dirty, they seem to be happy because they can play music or football. In relation to another picture it was said that however the child is begging by playing music on the street, this also means that he is a talented boy.

According to the children, it is true that some of the Roma children live in disadvantaged social-economic situations but it is important to emphasise that Roma children are also smart and many times they are deprived of their potentials. The segregated education as such was not recalled, but children referred to the importance of quality education and equal opportunities. The children also mentioned that Roma girls might face barrier in getting higher education.



4.2.3. Short videos

The short video developed by the Albanian partner organization was aimed to give an impression about the 2 days of the consultation but also to give opportunity for the participating children to address the issue of discrimination. Two brothers made a parallel and said that “we are twins, we look the same but we are different and equal in the society”; while another participant said that she thinks discrimination is the biggest problem in the world. The addressee of their message was not only their peers in Europe but also the adults who can make decisions in relation to these topics.

In Hungary, promotional video was shot about the child consultation and the children suggested making a short “campaign video” as well. The consultation process was supported by a well-known Roma activist, who is a youtuber and makes vlogs about Roma, therefore he inspired the children and could provide all the necessary technical assistance on the spot. All the participants agreed that a short story about bullying could be an impressive message to any child in Europe, because almost everyone experience bullying not only because of their ethnicity but other characteristic like having glasses or being overweight etc. The role of bystanders and friends was also considered crucial because if someone protects and stands with the victim, this could change the way of thinking and behaviour of the other children, too. This “campaign video” tells the story of a Roma child who is bullied because he is eating with his hands but one of his non-Roma friends stands up and protects him saying “Inside everyone has the same colour!” and he also starts eating with his hands. The children prepared the behind-the-scenes video and explained the idea behind and the making of this “campaign video”.

4.3. Proposals of the children for further campaign materials to be developed

According to the children who took part in the consultations, campaign materials should be prepared in the mother tongue of the children with understandable and simple words. Romani language versions would be highly appreciated. Since social media is an important source of information for them, it should be used as a channel of communication by the campaign. Although they raised concerns about the involvement of schools, they still found it important to engage the teachers and educational institutions. The children stressed that not all animation is necessarily child-friendly, but short, creative and funny videos are more likely to catch the attention of the children. If there is a story in the video, it should conclude with a solution to the problem; even if the story is sad, it should have a happy ending. The children proposed to involve celebrities who could promote the campaign (Roma and non-Roma singers, football players) and to get a song written for the campaign (preferably sang by children themselves).

5. Concluding remarks of the child consultations

Based on the feedback provided by the children, tailor-made human rights trainings and participatory activities with the involvement of Roma and non-Roma children and facilitated by Roma and non-Roma facilitators should be further promoted and supported.

Preparation of child-friendly materials about Roma history and culture shall be considered since many children, including children from Roma backgrounds, have limited knowledge about Roma history. The importance and role of friendship among children shall be emphasized, it can even be used as a counterargument against segregated education. Furthermore, attention shall be paid to the potential and talent of Roma children while keeping in mind the topic of gender roles, too. It would be a way to empower children by educating and training them about the use of different communication tools e.g. how to make a vlog or a blog, how to use social media to reach out to other children but also to decision makers. There is no child-friendly material available about child participation, its role and importance in the national languages, therefore, the preparation of child friendly material in relation to these topics would be highly appreciated by professionals and children alike.

6. Follow up activities by the Roma and Travellers Team of the Council of Europe to the child consultations

The consultations with Roma and non-Roma children for the development of child friendly DOSTA! campaign material was based on the assumption that one of the most powerful influences on the development of children's attitudes, are children themselves. Children were given the space and the support to express their ideas and concerns about racism, discrimination and anti-Gypsyism and were able to critically challenge misconceptions and beliefs about Roma.

The children raised the following concerns:

- *they need child friendly information on human rights;*
- *they often don't have the opportunity to challenge beliefs and misconceptions on Roma in schools;*
- *they need to understand stereotypes, discrimination and human rights better;*
- *the right to be heard as children is missing from the education system;*
- *bullying due to difference has become part of everyday life for all children in schools;*
- *no one needs to suffer discrimination. It is important to understand we are all different but equal at the same time.*

These concerns were incorporated into their suggestions regarding campaign material for children by children within the DOSTA! campaign.

The Roma and Travellers Team in cooperation with the Children's Rights Division of the Council of Europe incorporated the ideas and proposals of the children into the development of three campaign video spots.

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/roma-and-travellers/dosta-child-friendly-campaign>

Video Spot Number 1:

Open your mind - go beyond stereotypes!

Teaching the facts about Roma people



This video, aimed mainly at children 6-10 years of age, deals with some common misconceptions concerning the Roma, through the scenario of a teacher addressing a class of pupils with a series of questions.

The video can be used as awareness campaign material for the 8th April, International Roma Day and for teaching purposes regarding stereotyping.

Video Spot Number 2:

Open your mind - go beyond prejudice!

Using a feline metaphor to dispel Roma stereotypes



This video, aimed mainly at children 11-14 years of age, uses the metaphor of a black cat, which is discriminated against because of its association with witchcraft and bad luck. The clip urges children to confront similar Roma-related prejudices held by adults, with the aim of better integrating Roma into mainstream society.

The video can be used as campaign material for the 8th April, International Roma Day and for teaching purposes regarding prejudices and their harmful effects.

Video Spot Number 3:

Stop the hate. Give nothing to racism. Fight anti-Gypsyism

This video, aimed mainly at children 14-17 years of age, portrays the harmful effects of racism and anti-Gypsyism on the real lives of Roma citizens in our communities. It encourages Roma and non Roma children and youth to fight racism and anti-Gypsyism wherever it appears. Not challenging this type of extreme form of racism in our communities will have long-lasting negative effects for its Roma citizens but also for the community as a whole.

