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**Council of Europe Dialogue with Roma and Traveller¹ Civil Society
4th meeting, Strasbourg, 18-19 September 2017**

FROM EDUCATION TO EMPLOYMENT

RECOMMENDATIONS

Education and educational achievements remain life changing factors for all youth but particularly for vulnerable youth who are at risk of social and economic exclusion. For young Roma and Travellers this is often a persistent struggle due to social exclusion, substandard education and direct or indirect discrimination.

Therefore, concerted efforts should concentrate on assisting Roma and Traveller youth to complete quality education, offer subsequent or alternative vocational training, and provide safety nets for those who drop out of education early.

As **employment and occupation** are major factors in ensuring personal autonomy and independence, there is a need to link educational attainments to employment prospects. In a changing Europe, employment issues should be part of the education dialogue.

Youth employment incentive schemes and Roma Youth entrepreneurship initiatives contribute to securing employment and labour market entry for Roma youth.

These issues were discussed during the 4th meeting of the Council of Europe Dialogue with Roma and Traveller civil society in response to data which reveals that the gap in unemployment between Roma and non-Roma seems to be the greatest amongst Roma youth aged 16 to 24 years and in particular Roma youth who are not in work, education or further training (NEET), who make up, upon average, 63% of all unemployed Roma. ([2016 EU MIDIS II survey](#) & [2016 Midterm Review of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies](#))

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.

The following recommendations emanated from the plenary and workgroup sessions:

1. Stronger emphasis should be placed on the issue of Roma and Traveller youth as well as employment and occupation within National Roma Inclusion Strategies/Action Plans. This recommendation should be placed within the working priorities of the Ad hoc Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues (CAHROM) for 2018-2019.
2. More policy and strategic commitments should be shown by all relevant stakeholders to implement quality actions to tackle the increasingly high number of Roma and Traveller youth who are neither in education, employment or training (NEET). There is an immediate need for national policy definition and strategic intervention identification within National Roma Inclusion Strategies/Action Plans.
3. All stakeholders should show more commitment to addressing the need for a tailored approach to redirecting Roma and Traveller youth drop outs back into education and training by examining current support programmes, such as second chance schools, vocational educational training (VET) pedagogies and multidisciplinary teams, counselling and outreach programmes, and whole family support schemes, as well as the need to review the procedures of validating informal and non-formal learning.
4. Employers should be part of the dialogue concerning the employability of Roma and Traveller youth. They should be part of training initiatives on information access, vocational guidance, relevant skills acquisition, and local youth employment project design. Dual education as an alternative to low secondary education attainment and vocational educational training (VET) with direct involvement of employers should be developed. Working groups made up of government agencies, education providers, employer and industry training representatives should be set up to support the development and implementation of VET policies by clearly describing core underpinning skills which make Roma youth employable.
5. Vocational Educational Training (VET) should be tailored to the needs of Roma and Traveller youth. Local communities and local civil society should be part of the consultative process in designing VET programmes and coordinating service provision for young Roma. Emphasis should be placed on matching training courses to local employment and self-employment needs, conditions and prospects.
6. Mainstream youth employment, self-employment and social entrepreneurship schemes should take into account the specific needs of Roma and Traveller youth as well as gender and age equality perspectives. Current schemes should address the factors inhibiting Roma and Traveller youth in accessing information and employment support opportunities due to illiteracy, isolation and/or discrimination. Good practices should be monitored and their impact documented and disseminated.
7. There should be defined synergies between the Council of Europe, the European Commission, the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), Roma and Traveller civil society and other stakeholders to capitalise on existing tools and to develop new

instruments where needed which will assist policy makers in defining Roma and Traveller youth employment initiatives.

8. European-based Roma projects coordinated by the Council of Europe and the European Commission should reflect an equal participatory approach where all countries have the opportunity to take part in new policy and practice initiatives, while ensuring a balance between Central, Eastern and Western European countries' involvement.
9. The above recommendations and all programmes or policies addressing education, vocational guidance and training, or employment and occupation, should take into consideration and be adapted to the specific way of life of nomadic and semi-nomadic Roma and Traveller populations, where relevant.