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Strasbourg, 12 January 2021



Task Force

ROMA YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Third Meeting
12 January 2021

REPORT

Introduction to the meeting

The meeting started with an introduction of the 18 participants (list appended at the end of this report). The agenda was adopted and there were no comments for additional points.

The participants recalled the conclusions of the previous meetings and steps taken after the meetings. The task force was commissioned by the Joint Council on Youth (CMJ) to identify areas for further action of the Youth Department to support Roma Youth Participation and to explore the possibilities for a Council of Europe standard in this area. This third meeting aims to review the outcomes from the initial study and the list of conclusions to be sent to CMJ.

Updates from the Council of Europe and participants' organisations since the last meeting

Youth Department updates – For the Youth Department the most important task is to present the conclusions from the Task force to the CMJ and hopefully have them adopted on the next meeting in April. Other updates include:

-The Handbook for Education with Young People on the Roma Genocide *Right to Remember* is available now in Hungarian, Ukrainian, Russian, German, French and Romani. The Manual on combating antigypsyism through human rights education *Mirrors* is now available in German. The official launching of the publications should be around 8 April with an event in the framework of the German Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

The activities within the Youth for Democracy programme were postponed due to the pandemic. For 2021, an interesting upcoming activity is a Study Session with the National Youth Councils on Roma youth participation, as well as, to resume the training on Roma youth participation initially planned for 2020.

The **European Youth Foundation EYF** will continue to provide spaces for sharing knowledge and understanding how to better support the NGOs applying for projects. The Programming Committee on Youth set up a task force with the EYF to consult with minority and Roma youth organisations and see how they can improve the support for the organisations to apply and receive grants.

The **Advisory Council on Youth** (CCJ) is participating at the meetings of the Steering Committee on Anti-Discrimination, Diversity and Inclusion (CDADI). The CDADI are undertaking a study on political participation on national minority youth and all task force members are invited to complete or share the survey available [here](#).

The CCJ has initiated cooperation also with the secretariat of the Framework convention for the protection of national minorities with the aim to contribute to the next monitoring cycle.

The CCJ also takes part in the ADI-ROM meetings. On their last meeting in October 2020, ADI-ROM established a working group on antigypsyism and another working group on combating hate speech targeting Roma. The Joint Council on Youth (CMJ) is represented in the latter by Georgina Laboda.

Roma and Travellers Division updates - Several processes from last year continue in 2021 and there is a need for even more cooperation with and involvement and participation of Roma youth organisations.

The Council of Europe Dialogue with Roma and Traveller Civil Society meetings are one space for Roma youth participation. The meeting held at the end of November 2020 was devoted to combating hate speech and unfortunately this meeting had few applications from Roma young people to participate. There will be another dialogue meeting on 29-30 April 2021 on the topic

of combating antigypsyism. The participants shared an invitation for a general reflection on how to improve Roma youth participation in the Dialogue meetings or other activities organised by the Council of Europe.

In the framework of the German presidency of the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers there will be a common activity with the Youth Department from 6-10 April 2021 focused on Roma history teaching, Roma genocide remembrance and Roma youth participation.

The biennial International Roma women's conferences (IRWC) are another opportunity for young Roma women to take part – the 8th IRWC is scheduled to take place in September 2021. The Roma and Travellers Team will also continue organising study visits or sessions for Roma and Traveller women concerning Council of Europe instruments and tools and how to use them in civil society work at national level for promoting human rights and gender equality. Young Roma and Traveller women are encouraged to take part in these visits and sessions.

The CDADI is preparing a CM Recommendation on political participation of minority youth so it is important to avoid duplication or overlap and to foster synergies and complementarity between these two processes.

The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities – set as their focus for 2021 to secure human resources for the Roma Alliance Network. Within this work with the Roma Alliance, the Congress will pay attention to include Roma youth and Roma women organisations in the creation of the National networks.

Regarding Roma youth participation, the Congress has adopted the Resolution 366 (2014)¹ on Empowering Roma youth through participation: effective policy design at local and regional levels. This resolution should also be referenced in the Study and the further work on the CM Recommendation on Roma Youth Participation.

ERGO Network – The organisation is focused on advocacy for the Strategy for post-2020 development of the EU, thus sending recommendations to the EU institutions on the future Roma inclusion strategies on national level. ERGO works on the conceptualisation for the EU Roma Week and it is actively engaging with the EU Parliament and the EU Commission, to secure that the youth component is strong in the EU Roma week.

Another project with Roma youth is focused on addressing hate speech online. This project is implemented in cooperation with the EU Commission as well as, Facebook and Google.

For ERGO, it is important to take into account the EU Council conclusions on Roma and Roma youth in the development of possible CM Recommendation.

Phiren Amenca – The focus of the work last year for Phiren Amenca was on advocacy to secure that Roma youth and Roma youth participation is on the EU Commission's agenda especially the implementation national action plans for Roma inclusion.

Phiren Amenca also became a member of the European Youth Forum (YFJ) and worked on a YFJ Resolution on combating antigypsyism. Following this resolution, the organisation will start cooperating with the national youth councils to implement the resolution in their work.

The results of the study on Roma youth participation are almost finalised (to be presented in January). There are a lot of interesting good practice examples which will be also shared in the youth field. Phiren Amenca will be working also on creating national platforms of Roma, non-Roma youth organisations and decision makers to work together on Roma youth participation (soon such platform will be made in Bulgaria).

Phiren Amenca's work on non-formal education resulted with a manual on combating hate speech targeting Roma and combating antigypsyism online. Their current focus is to prepare a manual on advocacy for Roma youth organisations.

The preparation activities for the Roma Youth Social Forum *So keres Europa?* are on their way, checking the feasibility to organise this forum in a presential format.

Federación de Asociaciones Gitanas de Catalunya – As the elections in Catalonia are happening soon, FAGiC was working on promoting Roma youth participation so that they can meet with politicians. Unfortunately, this has been a challenge to achieve. The 50th anniversary of the first International Roma Congress is this year, and FAGiC plans to organise a meeting and exchange on what has changed for Roma people in the last 50 years and how young people can have a say in these processes.

FAGiC's main advocacy focus is linked with the developments of the National action plans for Roma inclusion. Their aim to make sure that Roma young people can have a say on the meetings when these action plans are being developed.

[Study on Roma Youth Participation and Inclusion in Standards, Policies, and Programmes in Europe](#)

The finalised version of the study was presented by Margareta Matache who shared the main conclusions from her work.

The study report includes interviews, data from surveys conducted by Phiren Amenca, focus groups results and the results from the surveys for different stakeholders (Council of Europe statutory bodies, national youth councils and international organisations).

The first part of the study provides an overview of the policies and standards, concluding that there is a history of policy standards (Committee of Ministers Recommendations) for different youth groups and some of these mention Roma youth. However, there is nothing specific for Roma youth. In the Council of Europe, the Congress has been a pioneer in adopting the Resolution on Empowering Roma youth through participation. The work of the Roma and travellers' team and the Youth Department is also strongly supporting Roma youth participation. The Youth sector has specific policy documents guiding the work with Roma young people and a lot of pioneering work with Roma youth in general. Some shortcomings are also highlighted mainly linked with issues related to participation such as the access to technology, speaking the Council of Europe's official languages etc.

The study also gives an overview of the EU's work with Roma young people, concluding that there is an identified need to increase the participation of Roma youth in their programmes but also policies.

An overview of the work on national level concludes that there are not so many spaces, means and opportunities for national level participation of Roma youth.

It is important that the study asks Roma young people of what they mean by participation. *It is beyond just being present in the room*, but it means meaningful place to work together and co-decide with others.

From the side of the Advisory Council on Youth, this study was welcomed, as it gives a strong added value to their work on advocacy. It's conclusions towards the European Youth Foundation will be followed up with the Programming Committee on Youth. Unfortunately, the study confirms that Roma youth are still seen only as beneficiaries but not as contributors and this is important to be changed.

The Roma youth organisations, Phiren Amenca and ERGO welcomed the document as a good reference to use in the work of the youth organisations on advocacy. It shows clearly the issues to be addressed to support the Roma Youth Participation.

Adoption of the draft report and conclusions of the Task Force to the Joint Council on Youth

The task force members looked at the conclusions and proposals collected from the previous meetings. The draft document included as well, the outcomes from the Study and the list of proposals from the 2nd task force meeting. The CMJ will examine the conclusions and will decide if they want to propose to the Committee of Ministers to develop a Recommendation on Roma youth participation.

There are also ongoing discussions with the CDADI about the proposed CM Recommendation on political participation of minority youth. At the moment, it seems that there is more opportunities for complementarity between the two possible Recommendations. Pia will also be at the second meeting of CDADI beginning of February, where study on participation of national minority youth will be on the agenda, so she will also report back.

The proposals for adding new information to the document with Conclusions and Recommendations are included in the revised version of the document.

Follow-up to the work of the Task Force

The finalised draft conclusions will be circulated by the end of the week for any feedback or additional suggestions by the members of the Task force. Once the document is complete, it will be shared by the statutory bodies of the youth sector, and hopefully will be discussed by the CMJ in April. The CMJ can decide to adopt the conclusions and make decisions for the further work on the CM Recommendation.

Later in the year, there is a possibility for another meeting, not as a task force but rather a consultation and coordination for on working together.

Any other business

YEN is running a European Citizens initiative on a minority rights, and this week the EU Commission will have their final position on this initiative.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

GEORGINA LABODA	Roma rapporteur in the Joint Council on Youth
PIA SLOGAR	Advisory Council on Youth (CCJ)
JUOZAS MELDZUKAS	European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ)
MUSTAFA JAKUPOV	European Roma Grassroots Organisations Network (ERGO)
CARMEN TANASIE	ERGO
MARIETTA HERFORT	Phiren Amenca
ANNA CARBALLO	Federación de Asociaciones Gitanas de Catalunya
ALEXANDRA RAYKOVA	Forum of European Roma Young People (FERYP)
MARGARETA MATAACHE	Consultant with the Council of Europe
JOHN WARMISHAM	Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (excused)

Council of Europe secretariat

INGE HANNON	Congress of Local and Regional Authorities
THORSTEN AFFLERBACH	Head of Roma and Travellers Team
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