

**OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting**

**Warsaw, 24 September – 5 October 2012**

**Working Sessions 6-7: Roma/Sinti and, in particular, empowerment of  
Roma women**

**Contribution of the Council of Europe**

---

**Follow-up to the Strasbourg Declaration on Roma**

**September 2011-September 2012**

**By the Special Representative of the Council of Europe  
Secretary General for Roma Issues**

---

## **INTRODUCTION**

Following the adoption on 20 October 2010 of “*the Strasbourg Declaration on Roma*” at the High-Level Meeting on Roma<sup>1</sup>, and with a view to streamlining present actions on Roma issues by the different bodies and sectors of the Council of Europe, reducing duplication and optimising existing financial resources, the Secretary General has decided to re-organise resources in a *transversal* manner within the Council of Europe Secretariat with the task of further developing co-operation with national, regional and local authorities and international organisations in collecting, analysing, exchanging and disseminating information on policies and good practices on Roma, providing advice and support upon the request of national, regional and local authorities as well practical assistance in the implementation of new policy initiatives, specially at the local level, and providing access to training, capacity-building and education material<sup>2</sup>.

After the adoption of the Strasbourg Declaration, the following immediate action was taken:

- the appointment of a Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) for Roma issues, Mr Jeroen Schokkenbroek, in November 2010, responsible for organising Roma-related activities in a coordinated, transversal manner on the basis of the priorities and modalities set by the Strasbourg Declaration;
- the reinforcement of the operational capacity for activities on Roma by means of an increase of the operational appropriations in 2011 in the context of a new Programme “*Roma: Promoting Social Inclusion and Respect for Human Rights*”. Furthermore, additional resources have become available through voluntary contributions.

The information in this document concerns all sectors in the Organisation working on Roma issues and not only the specific activities of the Support Team on Roma issues.

## **I - CAPACITY BUILDING AND AWARENESS RAISING**

### **1. European Roma Mediators Training Programme (ROMED)**

The European Roma Mediators Training Programme (ROMED), is currently being implemented in 20 countries: Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Republic of Moldova, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Spain, “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”, Turkey, Ukraine and the United Kingdom, as well as in Kosovo<sup>3</sup> in the

---

<sup>1</sup> CM(2010)133 final. The term “Roma” used in the present text and in Council of Europe documents refers to Roma, Sinti, Kale and related groups in Europe, including Travellers and the Eastern groups (Dom and Lom), and covers the wide diversity of the groups concerned, including persons who identify themselves as Gypsies.

<sup>2</sup> See paragraph 44 of the Strasbourg Declaration.

<sup>3</sup> All reference to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

context of a separate joint programme between the Council of Europe and the European Commission. 850 mediators have been trained so far.

Since July 2011, the Programme is run as a joint action of the Council of Europe and the European Commission, with financial support of the latter. The Programme covers school, health and employment mediators. In parallel, the Council of Europe has created a European Database on Mediators, which should be a valuable resource with up-to-date information on various aspects of Roma mediation in a number of countries. This tool is already available on line and will be regularly updated. The European Database on Mediators comprises a section on “successes and failures in mediation” which is a library of European examples in mediation practices.

## **2. Empowering lawyers to ensure Roma have equal and effective access to Human Rights protection at national level**

A new training approach focuses on the need to ensure equal and effective access to the justice system for Roma at national level and provide appropriate and targeted training to lawyers based on the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights and the European Social Charter. Over 120 lawyers have benefited from trainings in Greece, France, Italy, Turkey (2011), Romania and Bulgaria (2012).

## **3. Awareness-raising/Dosta! campaign “Go beyond prejudice, meet the Roma!”**

Awareness-raising activities combating prejudices and stereotypes against Roma are being pursued, in particular by building on the good past experience of running the **Dosta! campaign**. A new Dosta! multilingual website<sup>4</sup> is now operational. It includes all multimedia and visibility material and a forum accessible to visitors. The new website gives the possibility to national Dosta! partners to post information about Dosta! activities/events in their own language. In 2012 Lithuania has requested to join the Dosta! campaign. The Slovak Republic and Spain have also expressed interest in joining the campaign in the near future. The Dosta! leaflet has been translated into five additional languages: Spanish, Slovak, Croatian, Latvian and Swedish. A new Dosta! toolkit for fighting prejudices and stereotypes will be published by the end of 2012.

## **4. Mainstreaming Roma issues in general human rights capacity building**

The Council of Europe European Programme for Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (the HELP II Programme) has developed a wide range of substantive and methodological resources for ECHR training, including on the non-discrimination clauses, which is available in English, French, German, Russian and Serbian on the HELP website ([www.coe.int/help](http://www.coe.int/help)). Recently, the Programme has commissioned a case study specifically dealing with Roma issues, which will be translated into eight languages. This case study will then be used in human rights training activities organised by the Council of Europe (Directorate General of Human Rights and Legal Affairs), and by judicial training institutions. It is also available for use by any other interested organisation. As a further example of mainstreaming, the training for judges to be organised under the Joint Programme between the European Union and the Council of Europe entitled “Transparency and efficiency of the judicial system of

---

<sup>4</sup> [www.dosta.org](http://www.dosta.org)

Ukraine” (TEJSU) will include seminars on the protection of Roma rights under the ECHR.

The Support Team of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Roma Issues, in cooperation with the HELP Programme, is working on an online training for lawyers defending Roma. The online training will be launched in Lithuania early 2013.

## **5. Reference tools**

The Council of Europe updated in May 2012 its glossary on Roma-related terminology (a transversal initiative between staff members of both the Council of Europe’s Translation Department and the Support Team of the SRSG for Roma issues). It also regularly updates a table of Roma population census figures and estimates in European countries. Both documents, available on the Council of Europe Roma portal, have become reference tools, not only internally but also for journalists and international organisations, in particular the European Union<sup>5</sup>.

## **II - ANALYSIS AND EXCHANGE OF POLICIES AND GOOD PRACTICES ON ROMA IN MEMBER STATES**

### ***1. Database on Roma-related policies and good practices***

Following the adoption of the Strasbourg Declaration, a database on Roma-related policies and good practices was set up in 2011 by the Council of Europe. This tool which aims at facilitating the exchange of experience at national, regional or local levels, includes a first set of good practices identified in member states through CoE committees and monitoring bodies, by the Commissioner for Human Rights, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities or by international partners, such as the European Union, the OSCE and the Roma Decade. They cover a wide range of areas, such as facilitating access to employment, successful and non-segregated integration of Roma children in school, mediation, teaching of the Romani language at school or university, training capacities, development of pedagogical tools for nomadic Roma and Travellers, etc. which can be sorted out by country, theme, key-word, as well as by level (local, regional, national). In the database you may find either promising practices (that still require validation), demonstrated ones (referred to as good practices in international documents) and duplicated practices (that have been successfully transposed at local, national levels or in other countries). Since September 2012, the database includes a geolocalisation of policies, good practices and experts.

### ***2. Ad hoc Committee of experts on Roma issues (CAHROM)***

This intergovernmental body, responsible directly to the Committee of Ministers, is largely focused on the analysis and evaluation of the implementation of national Roma policies/strategies, as well as, following the adoption of new working methods, on thematic exchanges of experience and good practices among member states.

---

<sup>5</sup> The April 2011 Communication of the European Commission “An European Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020” (COM(2011)173/3) contains an appendix listing population figures on the basis of data assembled by the Council of Europe.

At its 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting in Ohrid, “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” (23-25 May 2012), the CAHROM endorsed two thematic reports of groups of experts, namely on school drop-out/absenteeism of Roma children (with The Netherlands as requesting country and Hungary, Spain and Sweden as partner countries) and on the role of state, regional and local authorities in implementing Roma national strategies (with the Republic of Moldova as requesting country and Finland, Romania and Slovenia as partner countries). Other thematic reports on social housing for Roma (with “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia” as requesting country and Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Spain as partner countries), on inclusive education as opposed to special schools (with Czech Republic and Slovak Republic as requesting countries and Hungary, Slovenia and United Kingdom as partner countries), on school drop-out/absenteeism of Roma girls (with Finland as requesting country and Latvia, Norway and Sweden as partner countries) will be presented and discussed at the 4<sup>th</sup> CAHROM meeting in Strasbourg on 28-30 November 2012. A thematic report on issues related to nomadic Roma and Travellers has already been proposed by Belgium with inter alia France and the United Kingdom as partner countries.

Another result of the work of the CAHROM was the adoption by the Committee of Ministers in February 2012 of a Declaration on the rise of anti-Gypsyism and racial violence against Roma in Europe. The Committee of Ministers is also expected to adopt in September 2012 a Recommendation on mediation as an effective tool for promoting respect for human rights and social inclusion of Roma.

International governmental organisations, including the OSCE-ODIHR, the European Roma and Travellers Forum and other relevant (Roma) non-governmental organisations participate in the CAHROM as observers.

### **III - TRANSVERSALITY AND COORDINATION**

#### **1. Transversality and coordination within the Council of Europe**

##### **THE HUMAN RIGHTS DIMENSION**

##### **The European Court of Human Rights**

The European Court of Human Rights continues to receive applications alleging violation of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) in respect of Roma. In the reference period, the Court delivered judgement in the following cases:

*V.C. v. Slovakia*, 8 November 2011: sterilisation of a 20-year old Roma woman in a public hospital without her informed consent: violation of Article 8 of the ECHR.

*Aksu vs Turkey*, 15 March 2012 (application nos. 4149/04 and 41029/04): allegation that passages in a book about Roma and definitions in two dictionaries were offensive and discriminatory: no violation of Article 8 (right to respect for private and family life) of the ECHR. The Court maintained that it would have been preferable to label a second

definition of the word “Gypsy” – “miserly” – in the dictionaries as “pejorative” or “insulting” rather than “metaphorical”.

*Durđević v. Croatia*, 19 July 2011: (application no. 52442/09): failure to effectively investigate Katica Đurđević’s complaint of police assault and bullying of Daniel Đurđević’ at school: violation of Article 3 (lack of effective investigation into allegations of ill-treatment) of the ECHR.

*Eremiášová and Pechová v. the Czech Republic*, 16 February 2012 (application no. 23944/04): death of the applicants’ relative, of Roma origin, following his allegedly jumping head-first through a first-floor window at a police station where he had been taken on suspicion of burglary: two violations of Article 2 (right to life and investigation) of the ECHR.

*Kleyn and Aleksandrovich v. Russia*, 3 May 2012 (application no. 40657/04): death in 2002 of Fatsima Aleksandrovich after she jumped out of a second-floor window in a police station where she was being held on suspicion of pick-pocketing: no violation of Article 2 (right to life) of the ECHR concerning the death of Fatsima Aleksandrovich but a violation of Article 2 of the Convention concerning the investigation into her death.

*Yordanova and Others v. Bulgaria*, 24 April 2012 (application no. 25446/06): the Bulgarian authorities’ plan to evict Roma from a settlement situated on municipal land in an area of Sofia called Batalova Vodenitsa: A violation of Article 8 (right to private and family life) of the ECHR in the event of any future enforcement of the removal order against the applicants.

*Nacic and Others v. Sweden*, 15 May 2012 (no. 16567/10): Requests for asylum refused for parents and one son, granted to the elder son due to mental health problems: no violation of Article 3 (prohibition of inhuman and degrading treatment) and no violation of Article 8 (right to private and family life) of the ECHR. Indications made to the Government under Rule 39 of the Rules of Court - not to expel the first, second and fourth applicants – are in force until judgment becomes final or until further order.

*Koky and Others v. Slovakia*, 12 June 2012 (no. 13624/03): an allegedly racially motivated assault by private individuals against a group of people of Roma origin in a village in Slovakia: violation of Article 3 (prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment) of the ECHR.

*Borbála Kiss v. Hungary*, judgment of 26 June 2012: (no. 59214/11): excessive force used by the police when called to a family party in Tiszalúc to request that the music be turned down: violation of Article 3 (treatment and investigation) of the ECHR. Just satisfaction: EUR 5,000 (non-pecuniary damage) and EUR 3,000 (costs and expenses).

*N.B v. Slovakia*, judgment of 12 June 2012 (no. 29518/10): victim of forced/coerced sterilisation in a public hospital in Slovakia. She complained in particular that she had been sterilised without her full and informed consent, that the authorities’ ensuing

investigation into her sterilisation had not been thorough, fair or effective and that her ethnic origin had played a decisive role: violation of Article 3 (treatment), no violation of Article 3 (investigation) and violation of Article 8 (right to private and family life). Just satisfaction: EUR 25,000 (non-pecuniary damage) and EUR 5,000 (costs and expenses).

### *European Social Charter (ESC)*

During the period concerned the European Committee for Social Rights adopted two decisions on the merits with regard to the following cases:

- Complaint No. 64/2011, European Roma and Travellers Forum (ERTF) v. France (24 January 2012): in this decision the European Committee of Social Rights found that there was a **violation** of Article E (non discrimination) read in conjunction with Articles 19§8 (guarantees concerning expulsion), 30 (protection against poverty), 31§§1, 2, and 3 (right to housing), and Article 16 (protection of the family) of the Revised Charter.
- Complaint No. 62/2010, International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH) v. Belgium (21 March 2012): in this decision the European Committee of Social Rights found that there was a violation of Article E (non discrimination) read in conjunction with Article 16 (protection of the family) of the Revised Charter.

Concerning Complaint No. 63/2010, Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE) v. France (28 June 2011), the Committee of Ministers adopted Resolution CM/ResChS(2011)8 on 9 November 2011. This Resolution invites the French authorities to report at a forthcoming meeting on the measures taken or foreseen in order to deal with the violations found in the decision on the merits adopted by the European Committee of Social Rights with respect to this Complaint. The violations concerned of Article 31 (right to housing) and Article 19§8 (guarantees concerning expulsion) of the Revised Charter.

### *European Commission against racism and intolerance (ECRI)*

During the reference period, ECRI delegations visited Andorra, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, Liechtenstein, Ireland, Malta, the Russian Federation and San Marino. ECRI published country reports on Andorra, Denmark, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro and Ukraine. It also published its conclusions on the implementation of the priority recommendations it had made to several member states. The conclusions concerning the following countries related specifically to Roma issues: Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia.

In its 2011 annual report, published on 3 May 2012, ECRI referred to high-profile incidents that had drawn attention to the worsening of the situation of Europe's Roma population, which continued to face widespread discrimination, intolerance and stigmatisation, particularly in public discourse. ECRI also recalled that its dramatic country-by-country findings had prompted it to release a General Policy Recommendation (GPR No.13) on combating anti-Gypsyism and discrimination against Roma. In this text ECRI had requested that the authorities of all member states adopt no

less than 90 measures, including encouraging Roma victims of violence and other forms of crime – as well as police misconduct - to lodge complaints and calling on the media to avoid inflammatory reporting. According to GPR No.13, lack of access to decent housing was another major problem for Roma coupled with eviction without notice or appropriate rehousing. ECRI accordingly called upon States to consider, among other steps, legalising long-tolerated Roma sites, even if they had been built in breach of town planning regulations. At the same time, ECRI stressed that it was indispensable for the Roma community to contribute itself, to the extent that it could, to combating anti-Gypsyism.

### ***The Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights***

The Commissioner's work on Roma in the reference period includes: 1) the continuing focus on the human rights of Roma in the context of his country monitoring and thematic work; and 2) the launch in February 2012 of a report on the human rights of Roma and Travellers in the member states of the Council of Europe<sup>6</sup>.

This report<sup>7</sup> presents the first overview of the human rights situation of Roma and Travellers, covering all 47 member states of the Council of Europe. Its purpose is to encourage a constructive discussion about policies towards Roma and Travellers in Europe today, focusing on what must be done in order to put an end to the discrimination and marginalisation they suffer. Summaries of the report have been published in the following languages: Albanian, Bulgarian, Czech, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, Romani, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Slovak, Spanish and Turkish.

Regarding country work, the situation of Roma was reviewed in a number of reports or letters by the Commissioner in the reference period: Republic of Moldova (October 2011), Serbia (November 2011), Slovak Republic (December 2011), Bulgaria (February 2012), United Kingdom (March 2012), Portugal (May 2012) and Italy (report is forthcoming)<sup>8</sup>. The main issues raised by the Commissioner in these reports include: persisting anti-Gypsyism and discrimination, segregation in the fields of housing and education, statelessness, violations of housing rights and gaps in the implementation of policies towards Roma.

Commissioner Muižnieks, who took up office in April 2012, intends to focus on the following main issues during his mandate: the need to expand the fight against anti-Gypsyism as an underlying principle of all policies and measures to improve the situation of the Roma; tackling the problem of statelessness affecting many Roma, including the lack of identity documents, with a particular emphasis on children; tackling school segregation affecting many Roma children throughout Europe; and emphasising the need for a human rights-based approach when dealing with issues related to the migration of Roma.

---

<sup>6</sup> See also Commissioner's thematic website on Roma:

[http://www.coe.int/t/commissioner/activities/themes/Roma/RomaRights\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/commissioner/activities/themes/Roma/RomaRights_en.asp)

<sup>7</sup> Human rights of Roma and Travellers in Europe, Council of Europe Publishing, February 2012.

<sup>8</sup> All reports can be found at: [www.commissioner.coe.int](http://www.commissioner.coe.int)

### **Gender equality: Roma women**

The 3rd International Conference bringing together Roma women from all Council of Europe member states, with additional participation from Latin America and Asia, took place in Granada, Spain, on 24-25 October 2011. It was organised between the Council of Europe and the Spanish Institute for Roma Culture. Roma women addressed issues affecting their full access to human rights such as gender inequalities, early marriages and forced sterilisation. Finland will host the 4<sup>th</sup> International Roma Women's Conference in autumn 2013. The conference, to be organised by the Finnish Government, the Council of Europe, and Roma women's associations, aims to strengthen cooperation among Roma women networks and to lay the groundwork for a European action plan for Roma women.

In preparation for the 4<sup>th</sup> International Roma Women's Conference, the Finnish Government, with the assistance of the Romanian National Center for Roma Culture, has drafted [a questionnaire](#) to gather informed opinions on the themes and the key issues to be addressed at the conference. Interested partners are requested to answer the questionnaire by 12 September 2012.

Questionnaire results – which will facilitate the participation of European Roma women associations and other relevant conference partners – will be presented at a preparatory meeting for the conference to be hosted by the Romanian government in October 2012.

### **The local dimension**

#### ***The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe***

In February 2011, the Congress, together with the SRSG Support Team, launched the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Dosta!-Congress Prize for Municipalities, which is awarded for innovative municipal projects promoting Roma integration, combating discrimination and prejudices against Roma, and raising awareness of Roma culture and rights. The award ceremony took place on 19 October during the Congress' 21<sup>st</sup> session (Strasbourg, 18-20 October 2011).

During its 21<sup>st</sup> session, the Congress adopted a report on the situation of Roma, as well as a comprehensive resolution and recommendation on “The situation of Roma in Europe – a challenge for local and regional authorities”, proposing local and regional action in the fields of education, empowerment and participation, fighting prejudice, and ensuring equal access to health care, housing and employment.

The Summit of Mayors on Roma Issues under the theme “*Building mutual trust at the grassroots*” held in Strasbourg on 11 September 2011 adopted a Declaration calling, inter alia, for the creation of an Alliance of Cities and Regions for Roma Inclusion, as a key tool for increasing local and regional capacities in this area. A kick-off group including six European cities and regions (Aubervilliers/France, Kavarna/Bulgaria, Malaga/Spain, Region of Madrid/Spain, Heraklion/Greece and the 5<sup>th</sup> district of Bucharest/Romania)

was created to build on this Summit and to prepare for the establishment of this new European network at grassroots level. A preparatory meeting for the launch of the Alliance was held on 27 June 2012 in Strasbourg and a pre-launch event will take place on 25 September 2012, also in Strasbourg.

### **Education, Culture, Youth and Child**

The **European Academic Network on Romani Studies**, a joint Action of the Council of Europe and the European Union, seeks to facilitate intercultural dialogue and support efforts towards the social inclusion of the Roma population in Europe. The project raises the visibility of existing research and fosters cooperation with policymakers by providing evidence for better conceived policies. One of its key roles is thus to provide references and guidance to both policymakers and young researchers.

As part of the 2012 agenda of the Network, a [summer school](#) involving some 60 young scholars was held covering the multi-disciplinary field of Romany studies, organised in partnership with the Central European University in Budapest, Hungary.

[Grants to young career researchers](#) are an important part of the 2012 work agenda. The grants will encourage young career researchers in Roma and Roma-related areas to travel, publish and participate in major international events.

The new website [www.romanistudies.eu](http://www.romanistudies.eu) was developed in 2012 and has become a significant visibility tool for the network; its database contains details of more than 200 members of the network, which can be searched by specialisation with the help of a search engine.

### **Roma Routes project**

Initiatives towards a future **Roma Routes project** as part of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe were carried out in 2010-2012, involving the United Kingdom, Germany, Greece, Romania and Slovenia and supported by the EU. During the closing conference of the project held at the Heidelberg Roma and Sinti Documentation Centre in March 2012, it was decided to further develop the [Roma Route](#), which aims to explore and disseminate best practice in making Roma past and present culture visible across Europe.

### **Cultural Resources for Roma Inclusion**

With a view to setting up a **new project on “Cultural Resources for Roma Inclusion”**, a feasibility study will be funded by the Open Society Foundation and carried out by the Slovenian NGO Misija \*S on the positive experience in the [Kamenci settlement](#), aimed at identifying five Roma settlements/organisations in Europe able to adopt the “Kamenci model” and participate in the preparatory phase of the project.

### **Enlarged Partial agreement on Sport (EPAS)**

Within the framework of its pan-European programme to promote diversity and fighting against discrimination, the **Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS)** has invited representatives of the Roma minority to its previous conferences and seminars, in particular those organised in the Western Balkans. These regional seminars are aimed at discussing the role of sport in promoting intercultural dialogue and favouring the inclusion of minorities in society, including the fight against prejudices and stereotypes against Roma. The co-operation between the EPAS and the Football Against Racism in Europe (FARE) network is being continued in 2012 in the Western Balkans, with a particular focus on supporting the inclusion of Roma, as well as increasing the access of Roma population in sport activities.

### **Building a Europe for and with Children**

Cooperation continues between the Roma Programme and the similarly transversal Council of Europe Programme "**Building a Europe for and with Children**". The Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2012-2015) includes an explicit reference to Roma children in its chapter on guaranteeing the rights of children in vulnerable situations. In the short term, this will result in the translation into the Romani language of several existing child-friendly materials developed under the Children Programme. In the medium term, it will include the organisation of activities to further mainstream issues relating to Roma children.

Apart from the above-mentioned activities, other avenues of transversal co-operation have been pursued by the SRSR and relevant Council of Europe sectors, including the organisation of a transversal Experts' Meeting on "*Effective strategies to end or prevent segregation of Roma children in education*" held in Strasbourg on 5-6 September 2011 involving *inter alia* experts from the Steering Committee on Education (CDED) and the CAHROM.

The Council of Europe (Directorate of Youth and Sport in co-operation with the SRSR Roma Team) also organised a **Roma Youth Conference** in Strasbourg on 27-30 September 2011 in order to consult with young Roma people and Roma youth organisations about the strategic priorities of the Council of Europe's youth policy regarding Roma and to support the further development of Roma youth organisations. The conference gave young Roma the opportunity to examine how their organisations could contribute to the implementation of the Strasbourg Declaration on Roma.

The **Roma Youth Action Plan** is a response of the Council of Europe to the challenges faced by Roma young people in Europe, particularly in relation to their empowerment, participation in policy decision-making processes and structures at European level and the realities of discrimination and particularly antigypsyism that they are confronted with. The action plan includes activities of the Youth Department and of other sectors of the Council of Europe as well as activities by other partners – intergovernmental and non-governmental – cooperating with the Council of Europe and interested in securing a

maximum of impact of their activities by avoiding double work and creating synergies between their activities.

Among the activities included in the Plan for 2012 – 2013, several activities include training of youth leaders and the development of dialogue between youth organisations and civil society in general and local authorities to fight discrimination faced by Roma people.

**The Training for Roma youth leaders on taking action against discrimination** (October 2012) will focus particularly on training youth leaders and members of civil society on developing actions involving also local and governmental authorities.

A **report** is under preparation in 2012 by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe and the Youth Department on the specific situation of Roma young people, seeking particularly to identify responses by local authorities for dealing with the specific situations of Roma communities and particularly young people.

In 2013, the Youth Department will organise a **seminar on the role of youth policy in tackling the situation of discrimination faced by Roma young people**, with a focus on the situation in Central and Eastern European countries.

The Roma Youth Action is run in close connection with other activities of the Council of Europe and of other stakeholders towards and with Roma youth. An Informal Contact Group meets at least once a year to strategise the activities in the action plan with other programmes and initiatives. OSCE/ODIHR is invited to take part in in the work of the contact group.

### *Parliamentary Assembly*

As outlined in Resolution 1740 (2010) on “The situation of Roma in Europe and relevant activities of the Council of Europe”, the **Parliamentary Assembly** concluded, in January 2011, a co-operation agreement with the ERTF.

The Parliamentary Assembly is addressing Roma issues in various other ways.

On 28 June 2012, the Parliamentary Assembly adopted Recommendation 2003 (2012) on Roma migrants in Europe as a follow-up to PACE Resolution 1760 (2010) on the recent rise in national security discourse in Europe: the case of Roma. This followed the adoption of Resolution 1768 (2010) and Recommendation 1941 (2010) on Roma asylum seekers in Europe by the Standing Committee on 12 November 2010.

A report on ending discrimination against Roma children is being prepared by the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination (Rapporteur: Ms Memecan, ALDE, Turkey).

Several other reports are currently being prepared where Roma issues, where relevant, may be included in a mainstreamed perspective, including<sup>9</sup>: trafficking of migrant workers for forced labour: time for a closer look; the situation in Kosovo<sup>12</sup>; access to

<sup>9</sup> See also Dick Marty's report on the inhuman treatment of people and illicit trafficking in human organs in Kosovo; the victims of these practices are likely to include Roma from Kosovo. See Doc. 12462.

<sup>12</sup> See footnote 4 on page 3.

nationality; drafting an additional protocol to the ECHR: basic standards for national minorities; putting an end to coercive sterilisations and castrations; the right of everyone to take part in cultural life; families' freedom of choice in education in each member state; and fighting the global backlash against women's human rights.

### **Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB)**

The CEB is actively involved in operations aimed at improving the living conditions of the Roma, in the form of loans and grants. The CEB benefits from fruitful co-operation with the Council of Europe, the World Bank, the European Commission and the specialised agencies of the United Nations”.

## **2. Co-operation and coordination with third parties**

The Council of Europe, represented by the SRSG on Roma issues, attended a number of national and international events to foster co-operation between the Council of Europe and national authorities and international governmental and non-governmental organisations.

The SRSG addressed the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of the European Platform for Roma Inclusion held on 17-18 November 2011 under the Polish EU Council Presidency. Such meetings are attended by all inter-governmental organisations and institutions and several NGOs.

Together with the European Commission, the Council of Europe SRSG convened a meeting of the Informal Contact Group of international inter-governmental organisations dealing with Roma issues (ICG) on 29 June 2012. These informal meetings provide an opportunity for organisations to exchange views and information and, in particular, to ensure synergies and avoid contradictory messages.

The SRSG attended the annual OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting held from 26 September -7 October 2011 in Warsaw and addressed Working Sessions 14 and 15 (Enhancing the Implementation of OSCE Commitments regarding Roma and Sinti).

As a result of inter-institutional co-operation, the Council of Europe (DGIV) has developed, in close co-operation with OSCE/ODIHR, an internet site on the Roma genocide (<http://www.romagenocide.org>). The website, officially launched in Cracow, Poland, on 1 August 2011, comprises a data base on the Roma genocide, with a virtual library of the best-known and most useful publications, and an interactive map on which countries can indicate their special/distinctive features at national level. The website also provides information on curricula, available teaching materials, school textbooks, places of remembrance, and innovative practices introduced by ministries, civil society, international organisations, museums and schools.

Other examples of inter-institutional co-operation under way are the production of a kit for early childhood care and education, comprising a pedagogical kit produced by the Council of Europe, a study on the situation of preschool attendance of Roma children

carried out by OSCE/ODIHR and a publication with guidelines for preschool education jointly produced by the Council of Europe and UNESCO.

The SRSB has carried out a number of official visits and participated in several meetings with national authorities with a view to providing advice and support, notably in connection with the development of national strategies for Roma inclusion - Sofia, Bulgaria, 25 October 2011; Rome, Italy, 6 December 2011; the Netherlands, 30-31 January 2012; Madrid, Spain, 23-24 April 2012.