

**CoE Contribution on Roma for the Review Conference 2010**  
**Warsaw, 30 September - 08 October 2010**

ENGLISH only

*prepared by DG3 in consultation with DG4 and ERTF*

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**Roma and Traveller Issues at the Council of Europe**

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### Last minute information

**The Secretary General of the Council of Europe** has called for a **High Level Meeting to take place in Strasbourg on 20 October 2010**. Ministers of Foreign Affairs have been invited to participate or to send another member of their government. The meeting is organised in close co-operation with the European Union, which is an indispensable partner in this endeavour. The OSCE and other international institutions concerned with the subject will also be invited.

The meeting will be an opportunity to send a strong and clear message against any discrimination and stigmatisation of Roma, which regrettably persist in our societies. It will focus on five objectives: (1) to agree on the priorities in our collective effort to reverse the tide of social exclusion, (2) to clarify applicable Council of Europe principles and standards that should guide such effort (3) to set up a European mechanism for the collection and dissemination of good practices, and the assistance in their implementation, (4) to condemn the persistent incidents of stigmatisation, hate speech and discrimination of Roma and Travellers and (5) to focus on specific, short term actions to improve the economic and social integration of Roma and Travellers in Europe.

### **1. Committee of Experts on Roma and Travellers (MG-S-ROM)**

In 1995, the Committee of Ministers set up the Specialist Group on Roma, Gypsies and Travellers (MG-S-ROM). In July 2006, **the MG-S-ROM was renamed “Committee of Experts on Roma and Travellers”**. The Committee of Experts is **open to all member states, including states with observer status with the Council of Europe**. As of today **32 member states actively participate in the work of the Committee**<sup>1</sup>.

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, the Office of the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB), the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe, as well as representatives of various Council of Europe monitoring bodies (e.g. the European Social Charter, the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages) are invited to take part in the meetings of the Committee.

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<sup>1</sup> Regular participating countries are : Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Moldova, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”, Turkey, Ukraine and United Kingdom. Canada and Mexico have also participated in some of the meetings as observers.

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In addition, international organisations/institutions such as the European Commission, the European Parliament, the FRA, the OSCE-ODIHR/Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues, the IOM, the UNDP, the UNHCR and the World Bank regularly take part in these meetings. A number of international non-governmental organisations have been granted an observer status. This includes the European Roma Information Office (ERIO), the European Roma Rights Center (ERRC), the European Roma and Travellers Forum (ERTF), the Open Society Institute (OSI), the Project on Ethnic Relations (PER), and since 2009 the Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation, the Forum of European Roma Young People (FERYP) and the Roma Education Fund (REF). Five Roma and Travellers representatives and/or independent experts, including one designated by the European Roma and Travellers Forum, are invited to participate in the work of the Committee depending on the items on the agenda.

The Committee has a **mandate to study, analyse and evaluate the implementation of policies (national programmes and/or action plans) and practices** of member states concerning Roma and Travellers at domestic level, and **act as a forum for the exchange of information**, views and experience on policies, good practice and issues relating to Roma and Travellers. It **keeps under review the situation of Roma and Travellers in member states** in compliance with relevant international instruments, including those of the Council of Europe. The Committee **draws up draft recommendations** concerning specific fields (access to employment, health, housing and education). These recommendations are adopted by the Committee of Ministers, systematically translated by the Council of Europe into Romani, and sometimes in some national languages by member states. The MG-S-ROM can **issue Opinions on specific issues**, e.g. the creation of a European Solidarity Fund, the situation of Kosovar Roma refugees, returnees and IDPs, the housing situation of Roma. In 2010, two new Opinions are under preparation, one concerning Roma migration and freedom of movement and a second concerning the political participation and representation of Roma and Travellers.

Since 2000, the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers has adopted **seven specific Roma and Traveller-related recommendations**: on the education of Roma children [Rec. (2000)4], on employment [Rec. (2001)17], on the movement and encampment of Travellers [Rec. (2004)14], on housing [Rec. (2005)4], on access to health care [Rec. (2006)10], on policies for Roma and/or Travellers [Rec.(2008)5] and, a few months ago, on the education of Roma and Travellers [Rec. (2009)4]. These recommendations serve as **reference documents for a model strategy** for member states wishing to engage in policy-making on Roma and/or Travellers or in monitoring of policy implementation, as well as for other international organisations/institutions **wishing to develop a European Roma policy (re. EU Roma Platform)**.

In 2009, the MG-S-ROM adopted an **explanatory memorandum of Rec. (2006)10 on access to health care**, which includes examples of good practices. In 2010 an **explanatory memorandum of Rec. (2009)4 on the education of Roma and Travellers** was adopted by the Steering Committee for Education (CD-ED). In October 2010 the MG-S-ROM will issue an **implementation report of Rec. (2001)17 on employment**, including good practices in member states.

One of the main priorities of the Committee is **to encourage member states to adopt comprehensive national programmes for Roma and Travellers involving Roma and Travellers in the consultation process**. Such programmes or national action plans have now been adopted in 25 European countries. Finland, Norway and Slovenia have been the most recent countries in doing so, using Council of Europe recommendations.

The Committee encourages other European states having even a small Roma, Sinti or Traveller

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population to develop such national comprehensive programmes at national level. This was one of the recommendations addressed by the MG-S-ROM to the Dutch authorities on the occasion of the public hearing organised in The Hague in November 2008. A similar request was made for Italy. Such **public hearings with state and local authorities and local NGOs** are organised when the Committee meets in a CoE member state (i.e. once a year). In March 2009, the Committee was invited by the Spanish authorities to hold its 27<sup>th</sup> meeting in Seville. On 20-21 October 2010, the Committee will meet in Wroclaw, Poland. Turkey already announced that it will host the MG-S-ROM meeting in the autumn 2011. Field visits to Roma communities usually take place when the Committee meets outside Strasbourg.

**The transformation of the MG-S-ROM in a Steering Committee in 2011** with a direct link with the Committee of Ministers is under consideration.

***2. Intergovernmental activities run by the Council of Europe Directorate General of Social Cohesion (DG3)/ Roma and Travellers Division***

Within the framework of the Council of Europe programme of assistance and cooperation with member States, activities have been undertaken to assess the present situation of Roma and/or Traveller communities.

In addition to the Ordinary budget of the Council of Europe, DG3 may receive **voluntary contributions from member States on its Special Account on Roma**. These contributions make it possible to develop a comprehensive programme of activities to assist governments seeking to develop policies towards Roma and Travellers, as well as to ensure the participation of Roma in various activities at national and international levels.

Since 1996 Finland has been an annual contributor to DG3 Roma activities, while some other countries (including The Netherlands, Norway, Slovakia, Sweden, and the United Kingdom) contributed in the past for specific thematic activities.

In 2010 voluntary contributions have been received from **Finland** (110,000 Euros in particular for the promotion of the Dosta! campaign, Roma children and women's activities, and legal assistance training), as well as from **Slovenia** (20,000 Euros for the Dosta! campaign).

**The thematic programme of activities of the Roma and Travellers Division** has included since last year's OSCE-HDIM the following activities or initiatives:

**ANTI-GYPSYISM / FIGHTING PREJUDICES AND STEREOTYPES**

- **The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)** has started drafting its **General Policy Recommendation no. 13 on Antitsiganism**. This recommendation covers several areas including education, employment and housing. The Working Group in charge of drafting this recommendation has met on several occasions to examine a first draft, which would then be examined in the plenary by whole ECRI members. It should then be sent to NGOs and other Council of Europe sectors for comments before final adoption and publication in the course of 2011.

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- Since 2008 the Council of Europe has encouraged all member states to join its **Dosta! awareness-raising campaign against prejudices and stereotypes**, which had been initially launched through a joint CoE/EU programme in **Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia** and in “**The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**” in 2006-2007, and through another joint CoE/EU programme in **Moldova and Ukraine** the following year. **Croatia, Latvia, Romania and Slovenia** joined the campaign in 2008-2009.

The Ministry for Labour and Social Welfare of **Bulgaria** and the National Office against racism (UNAR) in **Italy** have officially launched the Dosta! campaign in April and June 2010 respectively. They started implementing a full range of activities, including public debates, Roma festivals, media training, promotion of Roma culture, awards and competitions to combat stereotypes, etc.

The Ministry of Education of **Greece** will officially launch the campaign in November 2010. Though the Government of **France** has not yet responded regarding its support for this campaign, a number of French municipalities (Nantes, Laval, Rouen, Poitiers, Lyon, Metz, and soon Paris and Strasbourg) have organised Dosta! events in 2009-2010.

In 2011 Dosta! will be launched in **Spain** (February) and **Turkey** (May). Other countries, including the Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Slovakia, Sweden, and Switzerland have been approached to join the campaign in the near future.

The multilanguage website of the Dosta! Campaign ([www.dosta.org](http://www.dosta.org)) includes free of charge leaflets, posters, TV and radio spots, as well as a toolkit for campaigning for Roma and for fighting against stereotypes, most of them available in national languages of the participating countries.

In 2010, **thanks to voluntary contributions from Finland and Slovenia for the Dosta! campaign**, the leaflet and the toolkit have been translated into French, Bulgarian, Greek and Italian. The campaign has also been promoted through documentaries (*Io, la mia famiglia rom e Woody Allen* by Laura Halilović) and short movies (*Chimères Absentes* by **Fanny Ardant who is the Ambassador of the Dosta! campaign**). Showing the reality of Roma migrants (e.g. photo exhibition in Lyon) or faces of successfully integrated Roma (e.g. *Barvale/Success Montenegrin* exhibition in Skopje) have also been part of the campaign messages in 2010.

### CO-OPERATION WITH LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES / THE CONGRESS

The implementation of these policies, especially at the local level, is now a major concern for the Organisation. This is why the Committee is currently seeking to **reinforce its cooperation with the Congress for Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe**. The Congress decided in March 2009 to nominate a special rapporteur on Roma and Traveller issues who has been invited to attend MG-S-ROM meetings and ensure better coordination between the two bodies. **Existing national networks of municipalities dealing with Roma** have been recently invited to MG-S-ROM meetings (e.g. municipal networks in France, Greece, and The Netherlands) to share their experience. Municipalities which demonstrate good examples of integration of Roma can receive a **Prize for Municipalities, a joint project between the Congress and the Council of Europe Dosta! campaign against prejudices and stereotypes towards Roma**. A call for applications for the 3rd edition of this Prize competition was launched in August 2010 and the award ceremony will take place in Strasbourg during the Spring 2011 Congress plenary session.

- In 2010, **in the context of the Dosta! campaign**, joint activities have been (or will be soon) organised by the Roma and Travellers Division in partnership with the following municipalities: Bolzano and Bari (Italy), Metz, Lyon, Strasbourg and Paris (France).

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Activities include public debates, photo exhibitions, Roma theatre activities, film or music festivals, etc.

- **The 3rd edition of the Dosta!/Congress Prize for municipalities:** following a call for applications launched in August-September 2010, municipalities of all CoE member states have until mid-October 2010 to submit good practices concerning long-term integration projects with involved and are supported by Roma or Traveller local communities. The 3rd prize giving ceremony will take place in Strasbourg in Spring 2010 during the 19<sup>th</sup> Congress of Local and Regional Authorities Plenary session.
- The Congress for Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe nominated a **special rapporteur for Roma and Travellers issues**, Mr. John Warmingsham (United Kingdom), and tasked him to coordinate with the Committee of Experts on Roma and Travellers (MG-S-ROM). At its 29th meeting, (Strasbourg, March 2010) the MG-S-ROM proposed the Congress to reinstate a European Network of Cities and Municipalities for a better integration of Roma and Travellers (as already proposed in Congress Resolution 16 (1995).
- **Existing national networks of municipalities dealing with Roma** have been invited to MG-S-ROM 28th and 29th meetings (e.g. municipal networks in France, Greece, and The Netherlands) to present their experience. The Greek Rom Inter-municipal Network (GRIN), which involves Roma representatives in a participatory approach, has been considered by the Committee as a positive example.
- The Roma and Travellers Division and the Dosta! campaign will be associated with the **8th Meeting of the Strasbourg Club (network of European cities)** on the occasion of a Round table devoted to Roma (local and migrant communities) organised by the Municipality of Strasbourg in partnership with the Congress for Local and Regional Authorities on 14-15 October 2010. It is foreseen that a Joint Declaration be adopted which include a call to reinstate a European Network of Cities and Municipalities for a better integration of Roma and Travellers.

## EDUCATION AND CULTURE

- A decade after the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted Recommendation No. R (2000) 4 on the education of Roma children, it was necessary to take stock of the work done on the education of Roma, to draw lessons from this stocktaking exercise and to make new proposals. A new **Recommendation Rec(2009)4 on the education of Roma and Travellers** was adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 17 June 2009. It is the most recent international official text covering all aspects of the education of Roma and Travellers.
- In 2010, the **International Task Force for the Education of Roma (ITFER)** was established by the Council of Europe, OSCE/ODIHR, UNESCO, UNICEF, Roma Education Fund, European Commission and International Step by Step Association. The main mission of the ITFER is to help achieve the education goals for Roma in a more efficient way, as well as to save time and funds. Professional networks and co-ordination between

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authorities, institutions and NGOs will enable a more meaningful involvement of the key actors, especially governments. As a result, implementation of policies at all levels – local, regional, national and international – will be improved and specific problems will be detected more speedily. **The first IFTER meeting will take place in Strasbourg on 28-29 October 2010 at the invitation of DG4 Directorate of Education.**

- As a result of a joint co-operation between the Council of Europe (DG4 Directorate of Education) and the OSCE-ODIHR, **a website on the genocide of Roma and Sinti** was created ([www.romagenocide.org](http://www.romagenocide.org)). It comprises a data base on the Roma genocide, with a virtual library of the best-known and most useful publications, and an interactive map providing information on curricula, available teaching materials, school textbooks, places of remembrance, and innovative practices introduced by ministries, civil society, international organisations, museums and schools.
- For other Roma-education and culture related activities, please consult below the contribution by DG4 (item 5.)

### EMPLOYMENT

- Preparation of an **implementation report of Committee of Ministers' Recommendation (2001)17 on improving the economic and employment situation of Roma/Gypsies and Travellers in Europe**. The final document, which includes **good practices** in member states, will be approved by the MG-S-ROM at its 30<sup>th</sup> meeting in Wroclaw (20-21 October 2010) and then made public.
- Presentation of a draft of the above-mentioned report by the Chair of the MG-S-ROM at the **International Seminar "Programmes supporting social inclusion of the disadvantaged population – Field Social Work in Marginalized Roma Communities, Local Partnerships for Social Inclusion, Employability"** organised under the **Slovak presidency of the Decade of Roma Inclusion** (Bratislava, Slovakia, 17-18 May 2010).

### GENDER AND HEALTH

- Adoption by the MG-S-ROM in 2009 of the **explanatory memorandum and implementation report of Recommendation (2006)10 on better access to health care for Roma and Travellers in Europe**. The report includes **good practices** in this field.
- Participation of experts supported by the Council of Europe Roma and Travellers Division at the Panel on **Forced Sterilisation of Women** (Romani women in Europe) at the Conference of the International on Gynaecology and Obstetrics (FIGO) (Cape Town, South Africa, 5 October 2009).
- **2<sup>nd</sup> Romani Women's Conference held in Athens, Greece, on 11-12 January 2010** at the invitation of the Greek authorities (as a follow-up of Stockholm's conference held in Sweden in December 2008). The issue of early marriages and access to labour market were put on the agenda by Romani women.
- The **3<sup>rd</sup> Romani Women's Conference** should be hosted by **Finland** in 2011. **Spain** has also proposed to organise a **World Congress of Romani Women** (with participation of Romani women from Europe and Latin America) in 2011.



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## HOUSING

- **Opinion of the MG-S-ROM on the housing situation of Roma and Travellers in Europe**, adopted by the Committee at its 28<sup>th</sup> meeting (Strasbourg, 15-16 October 2009). It recalls the alarming housing situation and evictions of Roma and Travellers in Europe and complements *Recommendation (2005)4 on improving the housing conditions of Roma and Travellers in Europe* and *Recommendation (2004)14 on the movement and encampment of Travellers in Europe*.
- Participation of the Coordinator for Roma-related activities at the **FRA Round table on the housing situation of Roma and Travellers in the EU** (20 October 2009). The newly adopted MG-S-ROM Opinion on housing was presented.

## LEGAL ASSISTANCE AND LITIGATION

- 14<sup>th</sup> annual training session on the case law and mechanisms of the European Court of Human Rights, for English-speaking lawyers and NGOs willing to defend Roma, organised by the Roma and Travellers Division in co-operation with ERRC (Strasbourg, 6-7 September 2010) and the European Court of Human Rights. The agenda also included a presentation on the collective complaints mechanism under the European Revised Social Charter. As a follow-up of this 14<sup>th</sup> training, the establishment of a European network of lawyers is under consideration.
- **National training sessions for lawyers** are under consideration for 2011 following requests received from the Czech Republic, Greece, Spain, Turkey and Ukraine. The one in Turkey is already scheduled in May 2011 under the forthcoming Turkish chairmanship of the Council of Europe.
- Publication by the Council of Europe in 2009 of the "*Handbook on the role of the European Court of Human Rights, a useful tool for lawyers defending Roma and Travellers before national and international jurisdictions*" (available in English). An update of this publication and its translation into French should be soon available.

## MIGRATION AND FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

- **Follow-up of the Joint FRA/OSCE/Council of Europe Conference on Roma migration and freedom of movement (Vienna, 9-10 November 2009)**: Decision of the Committee of Experts on Roma and Travellers in March to prepare an opinion on Roma migration and freedom of movement (to be discussed at the 30<sup>th</sup> MG-S-ROM meeting in Wroclaw, 20-21 October 2010).
- Photo Exhibition "*Roma Migration in Today's Europe*" in Lyon, France, from June to December 2010, organised in co-operation with Lyon Municipal and Regional Authorities

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and Centre d'Histoire de la Résistance et de la Déportation and in the framework of the Council of Europe's Dosta! campaign "Go beyond prejudice, meet the Roma!"

- Participation of the Head of Migration and Roma Department of the Council of Europe in the FERYP Conference on "Roma migration: challenges, opportunities and the youth perspective", **Valencia, Spain** (10-15 November 2009) and at the Seminar on *Roma migrants* organised by the Fundación Secretariado Gitano in **Madrid, Spain**, on 20 January 2010.
- Participation of the Roma and Travellers Division at events addressing Roma migration and freedom of movement, including a public debate "on Roma migrants" in **Laval, France** (4 November 2009) and in Rouen, France (19 November 2009), a Conference on "*Roma Mobilities in Europe*" organised by the Refugee Studies Centre in **Oxford, United Kingdom** (14-15 January), a Seminar "*Roma: integration and migration*" organised by the French Embassy in **Sofia, Bulgaria** (12 May), a public debate on "*Roma migrants*" organised by Appona68 in **Mulhouse, France** (22 April), a public debate on "*Roma and gens du voyage*" in the framework of the festival "*Nomade in Metz*", in **Metz, France** (11 September), a round table on Roma migrants in **Lyon, France** (11 October) and a Conference "*Les Roms et la France: entre politique nationale et d'immigration, droit communautaire et droits de l'homme*" organised by SciencesPO for United Nations in **Paris, France** (25 October).

### POLICY DEVELOPMENT

- Preparation of a **joint CoE/EU/Turkish authorities project on Roma in Turkey**.
- The Council of Europe has offered its expertise and assistance for the development of **new national action plans for Roma in both Moldova and Ukraine**. Modalities of this co-operation are under discussion.
- The Roma and Travellers Division delivered a speech at the **International Conference on "The Legal Status of Roma and Sinti in Italy"** (Milan, 16-18 June 2010) organised by the University of Milan-Bicocca. On that occasion the Dosta! campaign was promoted in co-operation with the National Office against Racism (UNAR). A need for both the adoption of a national policy towards Roma and Sinti, as well as their recognition as an historic-linguistic minority, was highlighted at the Conference.
- During the exchange of views about developments concerning national policies for Roma and/or Travellers held during MG-S-ROM meetings, a new national programme for Roma was presented by **Norway**, as well as policies for Roma in **Austria, Estonia, the Russian Federation and Turkey**. The new national programme for Roma adopted by **Slovenia** will be presented in Wroclaw on 20-21 October 2010, together with the first National programme for Roma adopted by **Finland** and the conclusions of the Roma Delegation in **Sweden**.
- The Council of Europe Roma Division usually participates in meetings of the **international steering committee of the Decade for Roma Inclusion**, though this has not been the case in 2010 due to budgetary constraints. A participation in specific thematic workshops under the Czech Roma Decade presidency is under consideration.



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## **POLITICAL PARTICIPATION**

- An **Overview on forms of representation/participation of Roma and Travellers in decision-making processes at all levels** is under preparation by the Roma and Travellers Division. At its 29<sup>th</sup> meeting (Strasbourg, 26-27 March 2010), **the MG-S-ROM decided to draft an Opinion** on this topic, in close co-operation with FRA and OSCE-ODIHR, for adoption in 2011.

## **REFUGEES, ASYLUM SEEKERS AND RETURNEES**

- **Adoption by the Committee of Experts on Roma and Travellers (MG-S-ROM) of an updated Opinion on “the return of Roma to Kosovo and South Eastern Europe”** at its 27<sup>th</sup> meeting (Strasbourg, 26-27 March 2009). This Opinion was circulated to the Committee of Ministers in July 2009 and April 2010.
- **Adoption in 2010 of several reports (including Recommendations and Resolutions) by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe**, such as Mrs. Strik’s report on “*Readmission agreements*”, Mr. Poulsen’s report on “*Solving issues of refugees and displaced persons*”, Mr Čilevics’ report on “*Improving the quality and consistency of asylum decisions in the Council of Europe member states*” and Mr. Pupovac’s report on “*Roma asylum seekers in Europe*”.
- **Adoption by the Committee of Experts on Roma and Travellers (MG-S-ROM) of an Opinion on PACE Recommendation 1889 (2009) “Improving the quality and consistency of asylum decisions in the Council of Europe member states”** at its 29<sup>th</sup> meeting (Strasbourg, 25-25 March 2010).
- **Regional Conference on “Providing access of Roma to personal identification documents: a regional challenge”, which also addressed Roma asylum seekers and returnees to Kosovo**, organised under the Macedonian Chairmanship of the Council of Europe and in the framework of the Dosta! campaign (Skopje, 14-15 June).

## **ROMA INTERNSHIP**

- Renewal for three years (2009-2011) of the **Roma internship programme at the Council of Europe sponsored by Open Society Institute (OSI)** for young Roma from Central and Eastern Europe. Since 2003, the Council of Europe has welcomed more than 27 Roma interns thanks to a financial contribution from the Open Society Institute (OSI), as well as from the Dutch organisation FORUM and the Finnish government.

## **COUNCIL OF EUROPE PUBLICATIONS RELATED TO ROMA**

- Publication by the Council of Europe in 2009 of the “**Handbook on the role of the European Court of Human Rights, a useful tool for lawyers defending Roma and**

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**Travellers before national and international jurisdictions**" (available in English). An update of this publication and its translation into French should be soon available.

- The Council of Europe Publishing Editions has released in September 2010 the French version of "**The Council of Europe and Roma: 40 years of action**" by **Jean-Pierre Liégeois**. The English version should be soon available. An official launch of the publication will take place at a Symposium in Wroclaw, Poland, on 18 October 2010, on the margin of the 30<sup>th</sup> MG-S-ROM meeting.
- The 2009 updated version of "**Roma in Europe**" by **Jean-Pierre Liégeois** and edited by the Council of Europe Publishing Editions is available in the following languages: **Albanian, Azeri, Croatian, English, French, Hungarian, Romanian and Turkish**.

### **3. Coordinator of Activities concerning Roma and Travellers**

Since 1995, the Coordinator is responsible at the level of the Council of Europe for:

- co-ordinating activities on Roma and Travellers within the Council of Europe;
- co-operating with other international organisations involved with Roma issues, and in particular with the OSCE/ODIHR/Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues and with the European Commission;
- establishing working relations with Roma and Traveller associations, in particular the European Roma and Travellers Forum (ERTF); and
- advising on policies and problems regarding Roma and Travellers.

The Coordinator is also closely involved in the organisation of the bi-annual meetings of the **Informal Contact Group (ICG) of international organisations/institutions dealing with Roma, Sinti and Traveller issues** under each EU Council presidency.

An informal mechanism of consultation and cooperation among international organisations involved in Roma issues was put in place in 2000 and named Informal Contact Group (ICG) between International Organisations on Roma, Sinti and Traveller Issues. It was originally intended to hold meetings between the Council of Europe, the OSCE/ODIHR, the European Commission and the Presidency of the European Union on the occasion of each EU Council presidency.

The objectives of these meetings are to maximise the use of existing resources, to avoid duplication, to benefit from each other's experience and to launch a process of common reflection on current problems facing Roma, Sinti and Traveller communities in Europe. Participants include representatives of European Union institutions (various DGs of the European Commission, European Parliament, Fundamental Rights Agency), the Council of Europe, the OSCE-ODIHR, the World Bank, UN agencies (UNDP, UNHCR), as well as representatives from some international partner NGOs: the European Roma and Travellers Forum (ERTF), the European Roma Information Office (ERIO), Open Society Institute (OSI) and the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC).

### **4. Roma documentation centre and websites**

The Secretariat of the Roma and Travellers Division of the Council of Europe maintains a **documentation centre**, as well as a **website** with thematic reports and other documents concerning Roma and Travellers activities: <http://www.coe.int/romatravellers>.

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The Dosta! awareness-raising campaign against prejudice towards Roma has its own multilingual website: [www.dosta.org](http://www.dosta.org).

**The creation of a database related to Roma** is under consideration.

***5. Intergovernmental activities run by DG4/Education and Cultural Heritage***

***COUNCIL OF EUROPE PROJECT “EDUCATION OF ROMA CHILDREN IN EUROPE” (2002-2009)***

The project « Education of Roma children in Europe » came to an end after the evaluation conference was held in Bled, Slovenia in May 2009. The conference report is available in English [DGIV/EDU/ROM\(2009\)5](#).

The internet site of the project provides all the results achieved: guidelines for educational policies in favour of Roma, publications, manuals and teaching materials [www.coe.int/education/roma](http://www.coe.int/education/roma)

A website dedicated to the genocide against Roma is constantly updated with the necessary information. This site is a unique database existing on this theme. It is the result of Council of Europe/OSCE-ODIHR co-operation: [www.romagenocide.org](http://www.romagenocide.org)

**Outcomes of the Project “Education of Roma Children in Europe”**

The future of Roma communities hinges very much on arrangements for the schooling of their children, as education is a key factor in understanding modern reality and in social integration.

That is why **in 2002, the Council of Europe started the “Education of Roma children in Europe” project**, with the aim of implementing the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers’ **Recommendation 2000/4 on the education of Roma in Europe**. The aim of the project was to support and guide, through co-ordination, synthesis and evaluation, information and training, the integration of Roma communities into the mainstream education system. The originality of the project lied in the fact that the Roma themselves were/are actively involved at every stage, mainly through participation in the design and execution of the policies concerning them.

After **six years of work**, a range of **products** was produced which show the concrete manner of the Council of Europe’s contribution to improving **access to education** for Roma.

Some examples:

- **Strategies for developing national education policies for the Roma**. Specifically, it describes the particular educational context of the Roma and the role of the school. It proposes, via a grid, strategies for implementing those policies. The result is a comprehensive vision of education policy for the Roma, that covers schooling, social inclusion, cultural identity and the promotion of Roma cultural heritage as well as the empowerment and participation of the Roma community.

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- **Teaching kit for Roma pre-school children.** This kit prepares Roma and Traveller children who have not attended nursery school and are neither ready nor sufficiently mature for the first primary school class to start school so that they do not fall too far behind.
- **Training seminars in the framework of the “Pestalozzi” programme for education professionals of the Council of Europe.** Every year training seminars are devoted to Roma issues (use of teaching material, Roma culture and history in schools, Roma school mediators, community/family and school, etc.).
- **Guide for Roma school mediators.** Positions such as that of a Roma mediator or school assistant can be made more effective by promoting high-quality initial training geared to the needs on the ground. This Guide contains an occupational profile, training modules for mediators and other essential practical information.
- **Teaching material suitable for use by Roma and non-Roma teachers working with classes made up of both Roma and other children.** This material, in the form of publications or sets of educational fact sheets covering a number of topics, such as history, culture, language, will foster mutual understanding of differences, which is the basic principle underlying the intercultural approach. It can be used in both formal education and non-formal educational settings such as cultural centres or museums of Roma culture and history. Some of this material can be used in the community by children and their parents.
- **The Roma Holocaust.** A section of the Roma website is dedicated to the Roma Holocaust. This work is done in co-operation with OSCE/ODIHR. It comprises a database on this period of Roma history, 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 will also provide information on curricula, available teaching materials, school textbooks, places of remembrance, and innovative practices introduced by ministries, civil society, international organisations, museums and schools.
- **Standard-setting tools for the teaching and learning of the Romani language were developed** in view of the crucial importance of the issue of Roma education throughout Europe and in the context of the Council of Europe’s comprehensive approach to Roma and Travellers issues. In response to the need expressed by a number of member states for curriculum guidelines to ensure high-quality provision in the Romani language, the Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe has developed and published a ***Curriculum Framework for Romani*** and ***two European Language Portfolio (ELP) models for Romani***, accompanied by a Teacher Handbook. These tools address different target groups. The *Curriculum Framework for Romani* can be used to design curricula, textbooks and other learning materials as well as for planning and organisation of learning and teaching of Romani in schools in Europe. The *ELP models* are a personal document for use by the learners. Both models were conceived in parallel with the Framework as a tool to support language learning, promote plurilingualism, and develop intercultural awareness and intercultural competence. Developed in close co-operation with the European Roma and Travellers Forum (ERTF), these tools are designed to accommodate three different sociolinguistic situations: the teaching of Romani to (i) children who do not speak Romani at home; (ii) children who are not fluent in Romani, though they may hear their family speak the language; and (iii) children who are fluent in Romani but who need to develop their skill in using the language as an instrument of formal learning (Romani as a language of education). Two international seminars were organised by the Council of Europe to introduce these tools to policy deciders and practitioners.

Almost a decade after the Committee of Ministers adopted Recommendation No. R (2000) 4, it was necessary to take stock of the work done on the education of Roma, to draw lessons from this evaluation exercise and to make new proposals.

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**Therefore an evaluation conference of the project was held in Slovenia in May 2009.**

The conclusions of the conference have shown that there is a huge need to ensure the dissemination of the results (disseminate teaching and training material, develop training methods etc) and to enhance the co-operation at international level. The representatives of the various international organisations present at the conference pointed out that international organisations have a key role to play in designing and implementing cross-national and European policies. It was therefore suggested that an International Task Force comprising international governmental and non-governmental organisations could be set up to co-operate with national authorities.

The **International Task Force for the Education of Roma (ITFER)** was established by the Council of Europe, OSCE/ODIHR, UNESCO, UNICEF, Roma Education Fund, European Commission and International Step by Step Association. The main mission of the ITFER is to help achieve the education goals for Roma in a more efficient way, as well as to save time and funds. Professional networks and co-ordination between authorities, institutions and NGOs will enable a more meaningful involvement of the key actors, especially governments. As a result, implementation of policies at all levels – local, regional, national and international – will be improved and specific problems will be detected more speedily.

### ***PROJECT "A CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK FOR ROMANI" AND RELATED TOOLS***

The Language Policy Division implemented a project to foster the teaching and learning of the Romani language in Europe. A "Curriculum Framework for Romani" was developed, drawing on the Council of Europe world-wide used "Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR). It is designed for practitioners as well as for manual designers and policy deciders. The Framework concerns age groups 4-16 and can be adapted to local contexts and needs. After a piloting phase and two seminars involving deciders and the teaching profession, a revised version was published in late 2008.

To supplement the "Curriculum Framework for Romani", additional tools were produced to help more specifically teachers and learners of Romani: two European Language Portfolio models (for age groups 6-11 and 11-16) which are a personal document for the learner, accompanied by a Handbook for teachers. The translation of these instruments into other Romani varieties and into national/official languages is encouraged.

The work has benefited from a voluntary contribution from Finland. The European Roma and Travellers Forum has followed the work with interest and was closely involved in the preparation of instruments, which are available in English and in Romani online.

More information on the Language Policy website: [www.coe.int/lang](http://www.coe.int/lang) (Section Minorities and Migrants).

### ***PROJECT "ROUTE OF ROMA CULTURE AND HERITAGE"***

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The objective of the Route of Roma Culture and Heritage is to increase the knowledge of people in Europe about Roma history, culture, values and lifestyle, to encourage the contribution of Roma to Europe's cultural life and diversity and ultimately contribute to giving a positive value to an image of Roma which are, more often than not, perceived in a negative and stereotyped way.

The Cultural Route will first develop as a network of organisations (associations, museums, documentation and cultural centres, art and education institutions, festivals, etc.) which work together towards developing a common set of activities.

As a second stage, the Route will evolve as a series of tourist itineraries across different cities and territories of Europe, which would allow visitors to gain a more thorough understanding of Roma culture.

More information about the Route of Roma Culture and Heritage on the webpage:

<http://www.coe.int/routes>

### **6. The European Roma and Travellers Forum (ERTF)**

A partnership agreement was signed between the Council of Europe and the Forum on 15 December 2004 on the occasion of the first plenary meeting of the Forum. The Forum is an independent international organisation established upon the initiative of the President of Finland, Mrs. Tarja Halonen, and developed according to a French-Finnish proposal.

The European Roma and Travellers Forum represents Romani interests at European level and gathers together Europe's main international Roma organisations, as well as national member organisations, from most Council of Europe Member States.

The aim of the Forum is *"to promote the effective exercise by Roma, Sinti, Travellers and related groups of all human rights and fundamental freedoms as protected by the legal instruments of the Council of Europe and other international legal instruments where applicable. It shall promote the struggle against racism and discrimination and facilitate the integration of these populations into the European societies and their participation in public life and in the decision-making process"* (Article 2.1, Statutes of the European Roma and Travellers Forum). As a network of networks, the Forum brings together national and international Roma organisations with the aim of unifying and strengthening their voice and achieving a greater impact on policy-making.

On 12-13 October 2009, a *High-Level Conference on the Security Situation of Roma in Europe* took place in Bucharest, Romania.

At its fourth plenary meeting (Strasbourg, 24-26 February 2010), **the ERTF** newly established Roma and Traveller national umbrella organisations' delegates **adopted a European Roma Rights Charter**, re-elected Mr. Rudko Kawczynski as its president, and appointed a new Executive Committee.

The Fifth ERTF plenary meeting will take place in Strasbourg on 29-30 November 2010.

In 2009 and 2010 the ERTF's focus has been on the **ever-increasing violence and anti-gypsyism against Roma in Europe**, as well as the **recognition of Roma and Sinti victims of the Holocaust (Samudaripen/Pharrajimos)**.

The ERTF publishes regularly press releases about positive developments and major incidents in Europe related to Roma and Travellers. See the ERTF website: [www.ertf.org](http://www.ertf.org).