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## Recommendation CM/Rec(2020)2 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the inclusion of the history of Roma and/or Travellers<sup>1</sup> in school curricula and teaching materials

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 1 July 2020  
at the 1380<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

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The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, under the terms of Article 15.b of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Recognising that Roma and Travellers' longstanding historical presence in Europe is still not adequately acknowledged in educational systems and that their contribution to the European cultural heritage is underestimated in formal and non-formal education, and by the public in general;

Recognising that education and increasing public knowledge about the contribution of Roma and/or Travellers to the cultural heritage of their respective countries can lead to deeper understanding, intercultural dialogue and mutual respect;

Considering that traditionally, the history and collective memory of Roma and/or Travellers have been transmitted from generation to generation through oral narratives;

Taking into account the numerous examples of continued marginalisation of Roma and Travellers and the importance of teaching history for improving relations between members of the Roma and/or Traveller communities and their respective member States;

Recognising that, according to estimates, at least 500 000 Roma, Sinti, Yenish and members of other communities labelled as "Zigeuner" (Gypsies) were exterminated during the Second World War by the Nazi regime and its allies;

Taking into account that teaching about the Holocaust perpetrated by the Nazi regime and its allies as well as other acts committed against Roma and Travellers across Europe could be an effective tool in combating all forms of hatred, discrimination and prejudice, as well as radicalisation, Holocaust denial and revisionism;

Bearing in mind that history teaching is one of the most important tools contributing to the elimination of prejudice and to the promotion of knowledge about different groups that are from the same geographical area and who have shared the same historical experiences;

Mindful that the history of Roma and Travellers is closely linked to social progress over the last centuries and the fact that Roma and Travellers were unable to benefit from that progress (including employment, education, health services, housing or social security), which, in turn, resulted more recently in unequal enjoyment of social rights as demonstrated through the monitoring work of the European Committee of Social Rights as regards the implementation of the European Social Charter (revised) (ETS No. 163);

Considering the commitment made in the Declaration adopted at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Summit of Heads of State and government of the Council of Europe (Warsaw, 2005) to "foster European identity and unity, based on shared fundamental values, respect for our common heritage and cultural diversity";

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<sup>1</sup> The term "Roma and Travellers" is used at the Council of Europe to encompass the wide diversity of the groups covered by the work of the Council of Europe in this field: on the one hand a) Roma, Sinti/Manush, Calé, Kaale, Romanichals, Boyash/Rudari; b) Balkan Egyptians (Egyptians and Ashkali); c) Eastern groups (Dom, Lom and Abdal); and, on the other hand, groups such as Travellers, Yenish, and the populations designated under the administrative term "Gens du voyage", as well as persons who identify themselves as Gypsies. The present is an explanatory footnote, not a definition of Roma and/or Travellers.

Considering the Plan of Action on Combating Racism, Xenophobia, Antisemitism and Intolerance, adopted at the 1<sup>st</sup> Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe (Vienna, 1993), and its call to focus on “promoting education in the fields of human rights and respect for cultural diversity; strengthening programmes aimed at eliminating prejudice in the teaching of history by emphasising positive mutual influence between different countries, religions and ideas in the historical development of Europe”;

Considering the Final Declaration of the 25th Session of the Council of Europe Standing Conference of Ministers of Education “Securing democracy through education” (Brussels, 11-12 April 2016);

Having regard to the 2010 Strasbourg Declaration on Roma, in which the member States of the Council of Europe agreed to “take measures to foster knowledge of the culture, history and languages of Roma and understanding thereof”;

Recalling the Council of Europe Thematic Action Plan on the Inclusion of Roma and Travellers (2016-2019), which enumerates, among other objectives, the specific goal to “work towards the integration of curricular elements on the history of Roma and Travellers in school, reaching Roma, Travellers and non-Roma pupils and students alike”;

Considering Article 12 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (ETS No. 157) which states that: “[t]he Parties shall, where appropriate, take measures in the fields of education and research to foster knowledge of the culture, history, language and religion of their national minorities and of the majority. In this context, the Parties shall, *inter alia*, provide adequate opportunities for teacher training and access to textbooks, and facilitate contacts among students and teachers of different communities”;

Recalling Recommendation CM/Rec(2011)6 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on intercultural dialogue and the image of the other in history teaching, Recommendation CM/Rec(2009)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the education of Roma and Travellers in Europe, Recommendation Rec(2001)15 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on history teaching in twenty-first-century Europe and Recommendation Rec(2000)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the education of Roma/Gypsy children in Europe;

Recalling the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly Resolution 2153 (2017) on “Promoting the inclusion of Roma and Travellers”, Parliamentary Assembly Resolution 2106 (2016) on “Renewed commitment in the fight against antisemitism in Europe”, Parliamentary Assembly Resolution 1927 (2013) on “Ending discrimination against Roma children”, Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1880 (2009) on “History teaching in conflict and post-conflict areas”, as well as the reply to it adopted by the Committee of Ministers, and Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1283 (1996) on “History and the learning of history in Europe”, as well as the reply to it adopted by the Committee of Ministers;

Recalling the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe Resolution 403 (2016) on “The situation of Roma and Travellers in the context of rising extremism, xenophobia and the refugee crisis in Europe”;

Recalling the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) General Policy Recommendation No. 3 on combating racism and intolerance against Roma/Gypsies, General Policy Recommendation No. 10 on combating racism and racial discrimination in and through school education, General Policy Recommendation No. 13 on combating anti-Gypsyism and discrimination against Roma, and General Policy Recommendation No. 15 on combating hate speech;

Considering the UNESCO Resolution on Holocaust Remembrance of 2007;

Recalling the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area adopted in 2003, which recommends that OSCE participating States “include Roma history and culture in educational texts, with particular consideration given to the experience of Roma and Sinti people during the Holocaust”;

Bearing in mind the Declaration of the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust of January 2000, and the work of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) in promoting research, education and remembrance of the persecution of Roma during the Holocaust;

Recommends that the governments of member States, with due regard for their constitutional systems and their respective national, regional, and local policies, circumstances and responsibilities, in particular in the field of primary, secondary and tertiary education:

- implement the principles and proposed actions set out in the appendix;
- bring this recommendation to the attention of Ministries of Education and other relevant stakeholders, in particular national, regional or local boards of education;
- translate this recommendation into the official languages of the member States; and
- review its implementation in five years' time, and at similar intervals thereafter.

### ***Appendix to Recommendation CM/Rec(2020)2***

#### **Principles and proposed actions for including the history of Roma and/or Travellers in school curricula and teaching materials**

##### **I. Aims of the recommendation**

The purpose of this recommendation is to promote the inclusion of Roma and/or Travellers' history, including remembrance of the Roma Holocaust, into school curricula and teaching materials, with the aim of building a culture of tolerance and respect at school; developing the historical awareness and the consciousness of all pupils; contributing to the assertion of Roma and/or Travellers' identity; and enhancing the understanding that Roma and/or Travellers are an integral part of both national and European societies.

It is understood that introducing the teaching of Roma and/or Travellers' history would not require additional class hours, but could be incorporated into various school subjects, such as history, civic or social education, literature, religion or ethics, arts, music or languages, and would thus have limited, if any, budgetary implications.

It is also understood that the teaching of Roma and/or Travellers' history would contribute to further developing a number of competencies (democratic citizenship, human rights, gender equality, social skills, intercultural understanding, etc.) required by pupils and students, and would also deepen the understanding of historical and political developments and provide a differentiated perspective of societal and cultural phenomena.

The development of relevant teaching materials could build on existing web-based materials of the Council of Europe and other international stakeholders and should be contextualised to the national situation, in close consultation with representatives of Roma and/or Traveller communities.

##### **II. Definitions**

For the purpose of the present recommendation:

Anti-Gypsyism is a specific form of racism, an ideology founded on racial superiority, a form of dehumanisation and institutional racism nurtured by historical discrimination, which is expressed, among other things, by violence, hate speech, exploitation, stigmatisation and the most blatant kind of discrimination.<sup>2</sup>

The term "Roma Holocaust" is used in line with the current practice at the Council of Europe and with the conclusions and recommendation of the conference entitled "The Forgotten Voices", organised by the European Roma and Travellers Forum (ERTF) in co-operation with the Council of Europe at the Romanian Parliament in Bucharest on 7 April 2016.

The present recommendation takes no position with respect to the Romani language term to be used in respective national contexts to refer to the Roma Holocaust. The conclusions of "The Forgotten Voices" conference confirm the existence of various terms used by Roma in different parts of Europe to designate the Roma Holocaust, such as "Samudaripe(n)", "Mudaripe(n)", "Phar(r)aj(i)mos", "Por(r)ajmos" or "Kalí

<sup>2</sup> European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), General Policy Recommendation No. 13 on combating anti-Gypsyism and discrimination against Roma, adopted on 24 June 2011.

Traš”.<sup>3</sup> National authorities, in close consultation with national/local Roma communities and scholars, may choose the most appropriate Romani linguistic variant(s) for the purpose of Roma history teaching. It is, however, important that teachers know about and signal the existence of different Romani terms identifying the Roma Holocaust.

Teaching of Roma and/or Travellers' history may include, where relevant, the culture of Roma and/or Travellers. It can be covered in various school subjects, such as history, civic or social education, literature, religion or ethics, arts, music or languages.

The term “teaching materials” should be understood in a broad sense, and include textbooks, lesson plans, open educational resources and digital pedagogical material.

Teaching methods referred to in the present text include, *inter alia*, non-formal education and extra-curricular activities, immersive teaching, site visits, living history and living libraries, storytelling, social media, exhibitions, study visits, exchanges, gatherings, training, workshops and seminars.

### III. Principles and proposed actions

#### 1. Teaching of the history of Roma and/or Travellers and its inclusion in national school curricula and teaching materials should:

- a. include a balanced and contextualised teaching of Roma and/or Travellers' history, reflecting both their national presence and historical context and their common history as a people present in Europe for centuries;
- b. include information about the contribution of Roma and Travellers to the national economies, in particular trade, metalwork and other handicrafts, as well as animal husbandry, and refer to various aspects of Roma and/or Travellers' history and culture, such as storytelling, literature, religion, music and traditions, as well as the asymmetric social progress and unequal access to social rights they have experienced;
- c. bearing in mind that history teaching has a cross-curricular character, include information on Roma and/or Travellers' history in other school subjects, such as economics, civic or social education, literature, religion or ethics, arts, music or languages;
- d. ensure, or in situations where the State has no direct responsibility at regional and local levels, encourage Roma and/or Travellers' history to be taught at local level to all pupils and students;
- e. within the general framework of education and initiatives on human rights, equality and/or anti-discrimination, and as a tool to counter new crimes against humanity that could affect, *inter alia*, Roma and/or Travellers, raise awareness of anti-Gypsyism as a specific form of racism, and the denial of their status as victims of the Holocaust, underlining the historical roots of these prejudices and their consequences for contemporary anti-Roma and/or anti-Traveller hate speech and violence;
- f. give an opportunity to representatives of Roma and/or Traveller organisations and communities, in co-operation with the school communities concerned, to meet pupils/students in order to discuss and illustrate certain aspects of Roma and/or Traveller history and to provide testimonies;

#### 2. Development and revision of teaching materials and methods should:

- a. develop flexible curricula and interactive pedagogies which acknowledge cultural differences, promote diversity and include a multi-perspective approach to showing the full complexity of history and to ensuring a shared history approach;
- b. ensure that history or civic education curricula in particular reflect the way in which the activities and attitudes of ordinary individuals and groups of people have shaped the history of European societies;
- c. pay attention to historical sources with a view to combating anti-Gypsyism, hate speech, propaganda and fake information;
- d. analyse and revise school curricula, with a focus on history curricula, in order to include content related to the history and culture of Roma and/or Travellers in general history teaching;

<sup>3</sup> “Samudaripe(n)” or “Mudaripe(n)” means “murder of everyone” and is reminiscent of the Jewish term “Shoah” (“destruction”). “Phar(r)aj(i)mos” or “Por(r)ajmos” means “that which devours” which, however, can be an offensive term in certain variants of the Romani language. “Kali Traš” could be translated by “Black Tragedy” or “Black Horror”.

- e. analyse and revise current textbooks in order to eliminate stereotyping related to Roma and/or Travellers; as regards the teaching of art or literature from earlier periods that expresses anti-Gypsyist tropes, develop materials to contextualise such content as part of the history of anti-Gypsyism and ensure a critical understanding of the controversial nature of such content, which should be taught only to students who have become capable of the level of abstraction required to understand the texts as historical documents;
- f. in order to implement the two above-mentioned activities, identify opportunities for the inclusion of Roma and Travellers' history in teaching and training, update and customise them to particular national contexts; and prepare a road map for implementing the revised teaching materials and training methods in co-operation with Roma and/or Traveller communities and civil society, academics, teacher-training institutes and professional teachers' organisations;
- g. make use of existing teaching, pedagogical and research materials, tools and publications on Roma and/or Travellers' history prepared by international stakeholders such as the Council of Europe, the European Union Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA), UNESCO, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), the Shoah Foundation/Institute for Visual History and Education of the University of Southern California (USC), the European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture (ERAC), the European Association of History Educators (EUROCLIO), and other institutions;
- h. prepare additional high-quality teaching and learning materials that are ready-to-use, in co-operation with Roma and/or Traveller civil society and academics, in order to build on and complement existing resources.

### **3. Teaching about the Roma Holocaust and other historical persecutions should:**

- a. form an integral part of teaching and learning about the Holocaust committed by the Nazi regime and its allies as well as other acts committed against Roma and Travellers across Europe, and this should be complemented by teaching and learning about relevant episodes in history when Roma and/or Travellers were not victims;
- b. refer to positive narratives about Roma and/or Travellers' history, such as their contribution to the local, national and European cultural heritage, and the active role of Roma, Sinti and Yenish in anti-Nazi and anti-Fascist resistance movements;
- c. apart from a specific chapter on the Roma Holocaust, refer, where relevant, to the other important forms of persecution of Roma and/or Travellers in Europe (anti-vagrancy policies, violations of parental and children's rights, forced assimilation, forced sedentarisation, forced sterilisation, internment and deportation policies, etc.<sup>4</sup>),
- d. integrate activities related to the remembrance of the Roma Holocaust into formal and non-formal education, in connection with 2 August (European Roma Holocaust Memorial Day) or a date more adapted to the historical context of the country concerned, for example local anniversaries and places connected with the imprisonment or deportation of Roma to concentration camps, and to the school year.

### **4. Training activities should:**

- a. deliver relevant training involving experts and academics on Roma history and culture to teachers, educators, school directors, staff of the Ministries of Education and, where necessary, other pedagogical staff in order to provide them with knowledge about the history of Roma and/or Travellers;
- b. introduce compulsory and systematic training in competency-based learning, intercultural education/dialogue, and diversity modules into the initial and further training of teachers.

### **5. Extracurricular activities should:**

- a. raise the awareness of the general population, and the younger generation in particular, about the historical presence of Roma and/or Travellers in Europe and their contribution to local, national and European history;

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<sup>4</sup> See Council of Europe Factsheets on Roma History at [www.coe.int/education/roma](http://www.coe.int/education/roma).

*b.* include activities to mark significant days for the Roma, such as 8 April (International Roma Day), 16 May (Romani Resistance Day), 2 August (European Roma Holocaust Memorial Day), and 5 November (World Day of Romani Language), or any other relevant dates in the respective national contexts;

*c.* support the participation of pupils/students in study visits to places devoted to Roma and/or Travellers' history and culture, with a focus on commemoration and remembrance sites and museums.<sup>5</sup>

**6. Research into the history of Roma and/or Travellers should:**

*a.* be promoted by means of grants or other incentives, whenever possible, for the academic community, research centres and cultural institutions; special attention should be paid to historical documents and artefacts relating to the Romani and/or Travellers' culture, which should be incorporated into existing collections, and collections of testimonies, especially regarding the Second World War period and the traditional way of life;

*b.* be available online and be licensed for educational use.

**7. National and international co-operation on the history of Roma and/or Travellers should:**

*a.* result in focused, sustained and effective co-operation between relevant national stakeholders, with an emphasis on teachers and educators, and international organisations and academics active in the field of research and the promotion of knowledge about Roma and/or Travellers' history and culture, and should foster co-operation with the IHRA, in order to promote education and remembrance of the Roma Holocaust;

*b.* involve cross-border cultural co-operation and peer-to-peer sharing of experiences about the teaching of Roma and/or Travellers' history, and share (and, where possible, adapt) existing tools, materials and publications;

*c.* involve non-governmental organisations (NGOs), in particular Roma and/or Travellers' NGOs, especially those active in the field of education, so that they play an active part in raising the awareness of Roma and/or Travellers' history both in the general population and amongst Roma and/or Travellers themselves who may sometimes not be familiar with their own history;

*d.* promote the inclusion of the teaching of Roma and Travellers' history in the work of national and international NGOs such as EUROCLIO<sup>6</sup> or the Europa Nostra federation.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Certain museums, such as the Louvre and the Prado, have set up specific exhibitions related to the presence of Roma in paintings, sculptures, etc. in the framework of a Council of Europe project entitled "Representation of Roma in Major European Museum Collections".

<sup>6</sup> See <https://euroclio.eu/>

<sup>7</sup> See <https://www.europanostra.org/>