



European
Commission

Roma and Education

Challenges and
Opportunities
in the European Union

Education and
Culture

More information on the European Union is available on the Internet (<http://europa.eu>).

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he fundamental values of the European Union should allow every European citizen to have access to quality education, especially in their younger years. Provided they acquire basic skills such as reading and writing, better-qualified European citizens tend to find better-paid jobs, whilst European society as a whole benefits from new talent.



Yet amongst European citizens, some are denied these most basic rights – as a result of discrimination and a vicious circle in which poverty robs people of the opportunities they need to build a better life. Many communities throughout Europe have not yet been fully able to exercise their right to education. This means they are denied the chance to contribute to the general prosperity of society. Perhaps no community has suffered racist discrimination and extreme poverty as much as the Roma.

Roma identity and culture belong without doubt to the most marvellous and enduring aspects of our shared European heritage. It is a community that has been part of European society for many centuries. In more recent times, a period of upheaval and turmoil has led to marginalisation, which all too often translates into scapegoating, especially against the backdrop of the present economic crisis.

Roma certainly experience discrimination when it comes to education, which in turn compromises their educational and training outcomes. Many Roma children do not complete school at all. Many families do not even see the point of securing an education for their children.

Every child should be given the best possible chance to get an education: this is the European Union's commitment. Education equips citizens with the knowledge and skills they need for their lives in a society that is becoming ever more complex. Education and training enhance everybody's potential to secure a rewarding job. It is the key that allows citizens to participate meaningfully in the democratic life of European society.

Given the urgent need for sustainable growth across Europe, we now face a set of challenges that are directly related to education and training. The European Union will never achieve the objectives of its 'Europe 2020 Strategy' if it ignores the most socially excluded members of society – for they are an essential part of the solution. With a total population of between eight and 12 million, half of which is below the age of 25, the Roma communities remain far below their potential when it comes to education. This is everybody's loss.





Awareness of the social exclusion and stigmatisation of the Roma communities has been growing over the past few years. The '10 Common Basic Principles for Roma Inclusion' are now the commonly accepted guidelines for efficient action, built around four pillars: education and training; employment; housing; and health. This policy provides the rationale for targeting the Roma communities 'explicitly, but not exclusively' so as to address their difficulties efficiently. Furthermore, an integrated approach is required to combine education with the other three pillars. At the Commission's invitation, Member States recently presented their 'National Roma Integration Strategies' in which education is recognised as a prerequisite to improve the professional and economic status of future Roma generations. We are now working with all concerned stakeholders, the National Contact Points, as well as Roma communities to make sure that no opportunities are missed, and that the voices of all those concerned are heard when it comes to devising and implementing such strategies.

This brochure illustrates some of our achievements so far, and brings together some valuable data. It also includes contacts, which may help both policy-makers and stakeholders to devise innovative and efficient ways to improve the situation of the various Roma communities throughout the European Union.

The European Union has brought peace and prosperity to a continent historically ravaged by war. We cannot allow neglect, distrust and discrimination to undermine this precious achievement, which belongs to all citizens irrespective of their origin. The work of nurturing this legacy, and carrying it into the future, begins in our schools.

Androulla Vassiliou

European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth



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ROMA

THE CHALLENGES FACED BY ROMA TODAY

The Roma in brief



Within the European Union's population of roughly half a billion citizens, Roma communities number somewhere between eight and 12 million. Most live in Central and Eastern Europe. Many face severe difficulties and they are considered the most disadvantaged group in European society. The challenges Roma communities face are not just a matter of facts and figures, and no 'one-size-fits-all' solution exists. A change in approach is needed when it comes to Roma integration.

Roma communities are multifaceted and live in many EU Member States. They are diverse, not only in terms of lifestyle and culture, but also in the extent to which they are integrated in mainstream national societies. Not all Roma are necessarily poor and at the same time not all poor Europeans are Roma.

Stereotyping begins with the impression that we are talking about one single homogeneous population when we speak about Roma people. We should be careful not to confuse sedentary Roma communities with those who have remained somewhat nomadic over centuries and, more recently, with those whose extreme hardships have left them with no possibility other than to go and find better chances of survival in another Member State.

For historical reasons going back to the Middle Ages, traditional Roma communities may be found in most European countries: *Gitanos* in Spain, *Gens du voyage* in France, *travellers* in the United Kingdom and Ireland, *Zigeunern* in Germany, and a rich diversity of Roma communities in Central and Eastern Europe including Croatia, an acceding Member State. Many of the communities in Central and Eastern Europe have been hit very hard by the political and economic upheavals that have totally changed the face of their countries' societies since 1989. Consequently, the situation of the Roma has gone from bad to worse: discrimination, compounded by extreme poverty has negative knock-on effects in terms of education, employment, housing and healthcare. In the most desperate situations, many poor Roma stay in the most remote and impoverished rural areas where they can survive on very little or migrate to find better living conditions, jobs and a place to stay on the outskirts of more prosperous cities.







We are therefore at a turning point in addressing challenges for Roma communities in the European Union. Never before have we had such clear commitments from the Member States to act with such intention and vigour, whilst cooperating between themselves and the European institutions. Never before have we had such a clear outline of objectives to implement not only in the field of education, but also in the other fields, given the fact that they are interlinked. Educational problems amongst disadvantaged communities cannot be solved by referring solely to educational solutions. With such a clear picture of the problems experienced in each Member State and of policy measures envisaged to right these, real progress may now be possible.







Where do we go from here?

It should be mentioned that Member States remain solely responsible for the organisation of their school systems and teaching programmes and that the role of the European Commission is to help them achieve their efforts for improving their respective educational systems, through a variety of policies and programmes. When we look at what has already been implemented, we can speak of achievements and successes. Now, when we look at what remains to be done we must recognise the formidable challenges that we need to overcome. We need to work together now more than ever: with Member States, with other European and international institutions, with all the Roma non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and communities, as well as with all other stakeholders. We need to convince Roma and non-Roma alike, of the indispensable benefits of good-quality education and training.

Scope and ambitions of this brochure

This brochure, however modest in its scope and span, has been devised to make available the new context for policy development and implementation in the field of education and training, as outlined by the two Communications mentioned earlier. It also includes descriptions of Roma projects that have been generated by specific calls for proposals organised under the aegis of the Lifelong Learning programmes since 2011. One particularity of these calls is that for the first time they have implemented 'explicit but not exclusive targeting' for Roma communities. The other particularity is that these 2011 and 2012 calls have raised considerable interest amongst stakeholders active in the field of Roma education and training. This momentum should be welcomed and encouraged. It is therefore hoped that the interested readers of this brochure will find inspiration, contacts and information to come forward with innovative, pragmatic and effective proposals in which these 'best practices' may have the desired effect of imparting that which works better. This brochure also includes descriptions of initiatives for Roma communities in education involving other international organisations, such as the ROMED programme. This programme co-funded and co-managed by the European Commission and the Council of Europe started with the aim of training Roma mediators to restore dialogue and trust between Roma families and communities and local administrations, schools and healthcare centres.



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THE REALITIES OF ROMA LIFE IN EUROPE

‘Roma’ is one name for very different peoples, lifestyles and cultural realities



For a variety of reasons, it is difficult to get exact figures of the Roma populations in Europe. Current accounts speak routinely of 8-12 million Roma European citizens throughout the European Union.

Nomadic communities left the Indian subcontinent some centuries ago and their descendants constitute the European Roma, having settled in many different countries that are now part of the European Union. They are as diverse, in their lifestyle, economic statuses and degrees of integration, as are the names routinely ascribed to them: *Gitanos, Kale, Gypsies, Tziganes, Zigeunern, Sinti, Romanichels, Bohemians, Manouches, Gens du voyage, Travellers or Romanis, Roma or Roms*. The latter term has been chosen by Roma organisations themselves as it means ‘man’ or ‘human being’ in any of the various dialects of the Romani language, still spoken at home by two to three million Roma.

They have been living in Europe for many centuries and were, for the most part, well integrated into the social fabric, especially in rural areas where they worked in traditional trades and practices peripheral to agriculture: the blacksmith trade, small itinerant trade, craftsmanship, musicianship, etc. The post-war mechanisation and industrialisation of rural society completely changed these age-old social structures, functions and roles: a process completed to a large extent during the Communist era. With the passage from a Communist centralised economy to a free market economy, many societies in Central and Eastern Europe experienced difficulties and the most disadvantaged segments of society saw their situation worsen considerably. This was especially the case for Roma communities whose homes are traditionally in Central and Eastern Europe: Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic.

Most Roma in the European Union still reside in these countries of Central and Eastern Europe, but there are also communities that have established themselves in other major Member States of the European Union, such as Spain, France and Ireland.



Roma in today's EU society

Because of the extreme hardships experienced in Central and Eastern Europe as a result of the collapse of post-Communist societies and the Balkan wars in the 1990s, many impoverished Roma families had no choice other than to move elsewhere. Often this was in the most affluent economies of the Union such as Germany, the UK, France and Italy. Despite their European citizenship, these Roma, some of whom do not speak the national language of their host country, are perceived as undesirable migrants and foreigners. Their situation is a special one: they experience the difficulties of unwelcome migrants combined with race-based stigma. Therefore specific attention should be devoted to addressing their difficulties, which differ altogether from those of sedentary or traditional traveller communities that are not forced out of their traditional surroundings as a result of insuperable economic hardship.

In general, Roma communities are an easy target of racism, because of their skin colour and culture. Poverty heightens the impact of social exclusion and ethnic discrimination, which, in turn, worsens their economic situation by denying Roma access to quality education and to proper jobs, healthcare and housing.



The Roma suffer from social exclusion and discrimination

Since 2008, the economic situation of the Roma has dramatically worsened as a result of the global financial crisis, which has had a severe impact on all aspects of their lives. This has been evidenced by two studies⁶, one conducted by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA, in Vienna, Austria) in 2011 in 11 Member

States: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, France, Greece, Italy, Hungary, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Spain; and the other by the United Nations Development Programme/World Bank/ European Commission in the same countries but with the addition of six more countries outside the European Union, i.e. the Western Balkans and Moldova. Across the 11 European Union Member States these surveys provide information on 84 287 households.



Poverty levels amongst Roma are desperately high. Some 90 % of Roma are living below national poverty lines. The income level determining this varies from country to country, but being in this economic situation means that the basic conditions for normal living are not always met, such as a constant supply of food, proper housing, electricity, water supply, heating during winter, etc. This poverty generates further poverty.

Roma find it comparatively more difficult to find paid jobs: not only are these becoming more and more scarce, but also some Roma may not have the professional skills and competencies that are required on today's labour market.

There are a variety of factors that cause this situation: in this context, a major issue is the lack of education amongst Roma. Roma children are at a disadvantage before they even begin formal education. In nine out of the 11 Member States surveyed, a considerable gap is reported between Roma and non-Roma attending pre-school and kindergarten. On average only half of the Roma children in the European Union countries surveyed attend pre-school school or kindergarten: this is a major problem as pre-schooling is where most basic skills are acquired. In some countries the percentage of Roma attending pre-school or any other form of early childhood education and care is as low as 10 %. The proportion of those completing compulsory primary, secondary and tertiary education is also disappointingly low.



With a high degree of illiteracy (especially amongst girls) and very weak basic competences, it is often difficult for Roma to secure an income later on and to support their own children in obtaining an education. The problem therefore is cyclical. Moreover, the connection is not always made between quality education and the prospect of securing a good job. It is therefore essential to reach out to the most disadvantaged parts of the Roma population. The Roma are very young on average, given the comparatively short life-expectancy, and the fact that they often have very large families. Mistrust and misconceptions about education must be overcome by means of awareness-raising campaigns and mediation. In parallel, complementary efforts must be put into rehabilitating school infrastructures, especially in areas of extreme poverty.

Some facts and figures ⁷



- * At least eight out of 10 Roma surveyed are considered to be 'at risk of poverty'. This means that their income is below 60% of the national median income. What this means in terms of *actual* income naturally varies from country to country considering the eleven countries are the subject of the surveys⁸.
- * In most Member States where the surveys were carried out, the number of Roma without any kind of paid employment is at least double the number of non-Roma. In many cases, in some countries in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as in other countries inside the European Union, 60% of Roma have experienced recent cases of ethnic discrimination in trying to find a job, or in any kinds of dealings with mainstream society.
- * In some countries, especially in Eastern and Central Europe, the difference in status and affluence within Roma communities themselves is much larger than the average: the richest 20% of Roma earn up to 13 times more than the poorest 20%.
- * Across the 11 Member States surveyed, just 15% of young Roma complete upper-secondary education on average. In many cases, the proportion of Roma children working outside the home was as high as 10%: the type of work for these children ranges from working on the farm to begging on the streets.
- * In some Member States, a mere 45% of Roma have medical insurance or coverage, compared to 85% of non-Roma.

In pockets of extreme poverty, found in rural areas of Eastern and Central Europe, the quality of housing may be especially sub-standard for Roma people: sometimes there are no basic amenities available, such as water supply, heating or electricity. Sewage (including toilets) is not commonplace. In these same areas, there are very few schools left operating within a walkable distance from Roma homes. Many of the remaining schools are *de facto* segregated, with a predominant Roma school population and very little, if any, support from under-funded local municipalities.





EDUCATION FOR ROMA INCLUSION

Discrimination generates social exclusion and poverty. Roma are denied the opportunity to access education, housing and healthcare services and to secure proper employment. In turn, social exclusion and poverty heighten the degree of discrimination. Caught in such a vicious circle, people tend to feel safer amongst their own community, away from a decidedly hostile environment. This may add to misunderstanding and mistrust.

Ever since their inception, less than a decade after World War II, the European institutions have unequivocally declared themselves against any form of discrimination based on race, gender, disability, religious conviction, sexual orientation and age. Racial or ethnic discrimination is especially condemnable: we must not forget that during World War II, many Roma were exterminated in camps or summarily executed on the spot only because they were deemed to be members of a physically and spiritually inferior race. Hostile stereotyping, hate speeches and crimes, even hints of *pogroms* are still being experienced by some Roma nowadays, only because of perceived differences.



For Europe to remain true to its founding principles, discrimination, particularly based on ethnicity, is simply unacceptable. Certain stigma is often associated with Roma communities and all too often Roma are stereotyped as criminals. Therefore, the challenge to alleviate social exclusion that affects so many Roma is a *political* challenge in the first instance. In their day-to-day lives discrimination translates into very

harsh living conditions, if not situations of basic survival. A mere political message is not enough: policy objectives must be devised, with measurable outcomes, so as to improve the social inclusion of Roma communities in European society. This may be done by simultaneously addressing four major aspects of their inclusion: education, employment, housing and healthcare. An integrated approach, the 10 'Common Basic Principles for Roma Inclusion'⁹, was formulated at the first meeting of the European Platform for Roma integration in Prague on 24 April 2009 and annexed to the 8 June 2009 Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council meeting conclusions on 'Inclusion of the Roma'¹⁰.

Discrimination and poverty affect Roma to a devastating extent

Along with discrimination, poverty is the key challenge. According to the United Nations Development Programme/World Bank/European Commission survey, 70-90% of Roma in the European countries covered suffered from severe material deprivation. This figure is significantly lower for non-Roma. The FRA's survey confirms this bleak data, stating that the proportion of those living in households in what can be described as being 'at risk of poverty', meaning that they live with an equivalised income below 60% of the national median equivalised disposable income, is more than twice as high as for Roma as non-Roma. ('Median equivalised disposable income' means the household income taking into account the differences in household size and composition).

Situations vary widely within and between Roma communities spread over a multitude of European regions. Whilst in some Member States the spectrum of income amongst them is relatively narrow, in other countries the richest 20% have an income up to 13 times higher than the poorest 20%. This shows a great disparity in wealth within Roma communities themselves.

In many cases of extreme poverty, discrimination may be the reason why many Roma feel unable to access basic services. Such disadvantage may be traced to discrimination based on their ethnic origin. Many are unaware of the legislation that protects their rights such as the laws in their country that reflect the European Union Race Equality Directive¹¹. It also seems that many Roma are unaware of the provisions in the national constitutions that outlaw discrimination against people of ethnic minority, especially when applying for a job. Anti-discrimination laws are seldom enforced to their full extent: in some Member States the percentage of those Roma reporting cases of discrimination was as high as 60%, according to the aforementioned survey.



Unemployment and poor healthcare are major problems in the Roma communities

For a variety of reasons, Roma have high levels of *unemployment* in general. In most of the Member States covered by the FRA survey, unemployment figures for Roma are at least double those of non-Roma. In a few of these countries, Roma are up to four or five times more likely to be unemployed than non-Roma. There are cases where a mere one in 10 Roma aged 20-64 is reported as being in paid employment. In those five countries covered by the United Nations Development Programme/World Bank/European Commission and the FRA surveys, the unemployment rates reported for Roma women were on average one third higher than those for Roma men. Poor levels of employment amongst parents can have a negative impact on children's education as the family may not have enough money to send them to school.

As regards *health*, the picture is bleak: even when facilities are available, many Roma are not taking advantage of medical services to which they are nonetheless entitled to, such as preventative healthcare and pre-screening examinations. Looking at all 11 Member States covered by these surveys, 20% of Roma people are not covered by health insurance. In some Member States 55% of Roma are not covered by medical insurance compared to 15% of non-Roma. This has a direct bearing on education: ailing or undernourished Roma children are less likely to benefit from any kind of education, where it is provided, than healthy children.

Roma often live in sub-standard accommodation

As regards *housing*, living conditions for Roma are often very poor and unacceptable by modern standards. Many families live in just one room. Basic amenities such as indoor kitchens, toilets, showers, baths and functioning electricity are scarcer amongst Roma people than non-Roma people. Precarious housing conditions have a very negative impact on children's development and education. If children do not have a comfortable place to complete schoolwork or study, their chances at educational success are compromised. Given the very difficult living conditions of many Roma communities and the great distances that must be travelled in order to reach early childhood education and care facilities, as well as primary and secondary education, it is no surprise that Roma should have comparatively very low levels of education.



POLITICAL SIGNALS AND MESSAGES

THE 2011 AND 2012 COMMUNICATIONS

AS Roma are European citizens with the same rights as any others, many policies and programmes implemented by the European Commission addressing the needs, challenges and potential of the 'most disadvantaged groups' in society were supposedly benefitting anybody belonging to this socio-economic segment of the European population. This includes the Roma. Yet, Roma seemed to benefit less from such actions than any other disadvantaged groups in European society. The situation seems to be similar at European and national level.

Discrimination toward Roma communities is a main factor for such disparities in policy outcomes. The implementation of politically balanced policies runs the risk of 'turning a blind eye' to situations that prove more and more glaringly discriminatory. These Europeans were clearly perceived and treated as second-class citizens and, in practice, were denied their rights and access to basic services, such as a quality education.

Political reactions to such unacceptable situations in terms of equity, social inclusion and respect of basic human rights called for a pragmatic approach, following the recommendations of the 10 'Common Basic Principles for Roma Inclusion'. It became accepted that a special case could be made for the Roma amongst European citizens by means of a principle of 'explicit but not exclusive targeting'. Up until recently, political positions and policy measures, as well as funding, could not specifically single out the Roma amongst European citizens, despite the fact that they were the target of negative discriminatory practices that must be righted. Discrimination affecting Roma is often based on their race or ethnic background, that which generates negative stereotypes. This calls for 'explicitly' targeted action. Roma's plight is compounded by factors of poverty and social exclusion. These factors are not specific to them and may be found in other sectors of European society. This 'explicit' targeting of policy measures, programmes and funding, therefore, need not be 'exclusive'.

2011 – The turning point

On 5 April 2011, in Budapest, Hungary, as a result of the work prepared by the EU Roma Task Force, the European Commission released a Communication, entitled 'An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020' (COM(2011) 173 final, 5 April 2011), calling upon Member States to act: in essence, this major policy document invited Member States to elaborate or update their National Roma Integration Strategies with 2020 as the horizon for their objectives. In order to guide and help them in such policy work, a common framework was provided for these strategies, with an architecture resting on the so-called 'four pillars' of Roma inclusion: education, employment, housing and health, to be addressed with an integrated approach. Such an approach was necessary as problems in these areas are often linked. An example of this is the fact that poor education levels often result in a poor understanding of the importance of proper healthcare and the lack of knowledge about possible help from public services. Poor health may ensue, which negatively affects educational performance. Illiteracy is high amongst Roma, with girls and women being particularly affected. Mothers are traditionally the main care-providers for the whole family, meaning that that this may have implications for their own children's education. Illiterate or under-educated mothers are unable to monitor their children's performance in school. Sometimes they do not fully see the importance of education for their own children and unfortunately this is particularly the case for girls.

Implementing the core messages of the 10 'Common Basic Principles for Roma Inclusion', the Roma Task Force decided to focus on the four pillars these principles identified for better effectiveness: education, employment, health and housing.



In compliance with the so-called 'subsidiarity' principle, European institutions have limited competences in the field of education and training, especially as regards the organisation of the school systems and the contents of the curricula. It is therefore the Member States' prime responsibility to operate and manage their educational systems and to take all necessary measures so as to raise the quality of the education provided to children and students. This education is to be inclusive, not to the exclusion of anyone on the basis of his or her gender, race or ability. They have the responsibility for the attainment levels of all children and to insure that students improve.

In implementing their policy for better social inclusion of the Roma in their educational systems, Member States have devised different strategies, which reflect their specific situation and, in so doing, endeavour to adopt a more 'integrated approach'. This means that education problems may not be solved with educational solutions only, but must be consistent with other proactive actions in the field of employment, housing and health.

Other solutions in the field of education may take the form of informal or complementary education, such as after-school lessons, second-chance classes and other remedial solutions.

In the 2012 Communication, some three best practices were highlighted, which may provide inspiration for innovative action to address the challenges of Roma inclusion in the field of education. In Slovenia, Roma assistants and mediators participated in training given to educators, with a view to significantly improve school completion rates amongst Roma children. Spain is also using mediation in new programmes established to reduce early school leaving and absenteeism amongst Roma students. In Finland, the 'Kauhajoki' model has proven very successful in pre-school: three instructors with Roma background help provide support for the children and families in boosting participation in early childhood education and care.





EDUCATION FOR ROMA

What needs to happen?

For most European citizens, there can be no question about the fact that education is the key to a rewarding professional future.

There may be many difficulties when it comes to finding rewarding jobs. Ideally, such jobs would match market demands for specific skills with the individual's need for personal fulfilment. Education and training may answer both types of needs: Europe as a 'knowledge-based society' relies on education for sustainable growth and economic prosperity and individual lives are shaped by learning experiences, in which formal education, especially in the acquisition of basic skills, is a powerful force in enhancing and developing one's potential.

A successful education is by no means an easy task, both from the student's and teacher's points of view. There are many challenges, some of which may be overcome with innovative pedagogy, increased mobility, more adequate resources and, in some cases, a better head start with improved literacy and linguistic skills. These are difficulties that Roma families may face, but there are considerably bigger hurdles to be overcome that are more specific to their situation and that need to be properly identified and remedied. On many counts, Europe has not yet succeeded in overcoming educational disadvantages, which separate many minorities from mainstream society. In particular, whilst Member States and European institutions have made considerable efforts to improve the attainment levels of Roma students, overt or latent ethnic discrimination combined with the cycle of increasing poverty are still hampering prospects for better social inclusion.



The economic situation of Roma communities is often desperately poor. Whilst it is not a problem affecting Roma exclusively, it is important to get a clearer picture of what is at stake. Many Roma people struggle to have access to basic commodities such as food, basic health care and housing. In that context, education is often found to be too big a financial burden to bear. Many traditional communities understand education in a general sense as child rearing, for which the family environment amply suffices. Whatever benefits a more formal education may present for the future, in the form of early childhood education and care, are not well perceived.

Education is viewed as being imposed and not offered, especially for compulsory primary education. Moreover, the situation is made even worse by rundown facilities, lack of adequate funding and staffing and a general self-fulfilling prophecy that education for Roma could not possibly work.

What are the obstacles?

Many traditional Roma communities, especially in remote rural areas, maintain a vibrant cultural identity through oral transmission. Literacy, i.e. the ability to read and write, does not make immediate sense against the backdrop of such an oral culture. When there is no attempt at establishing intercultural dialogue to emphasise the extra potential a sound education may bring for the future of Roma children, what remains in place looks dissuasive: a lack of teaching facilities, roads to get the children to school, textbooks, properly trained staff sensitive to Roma culture, available lunch, etc. A combination of such adverse factors may explain why the degree of illiteracy is so high in many Roma communities in Central and Eastern Europe. It is therefore essential to concentrate educational efforts on the early years, by means of *early childhood education and care*, i.e. pre-schooling and primary education. At this stage it is comparatively easier to teach children to read and write and, as the case may be, to let them acquire a sound basic knowledge of the language of instruction when it is not that which is spoken at home.

In addition, over the past few years, the economic crisis has made things worse for everybody in general, including Roma families nearing middle-class financial status. In this context, parents are becoming increasingly unsure of how they can support their child's education.

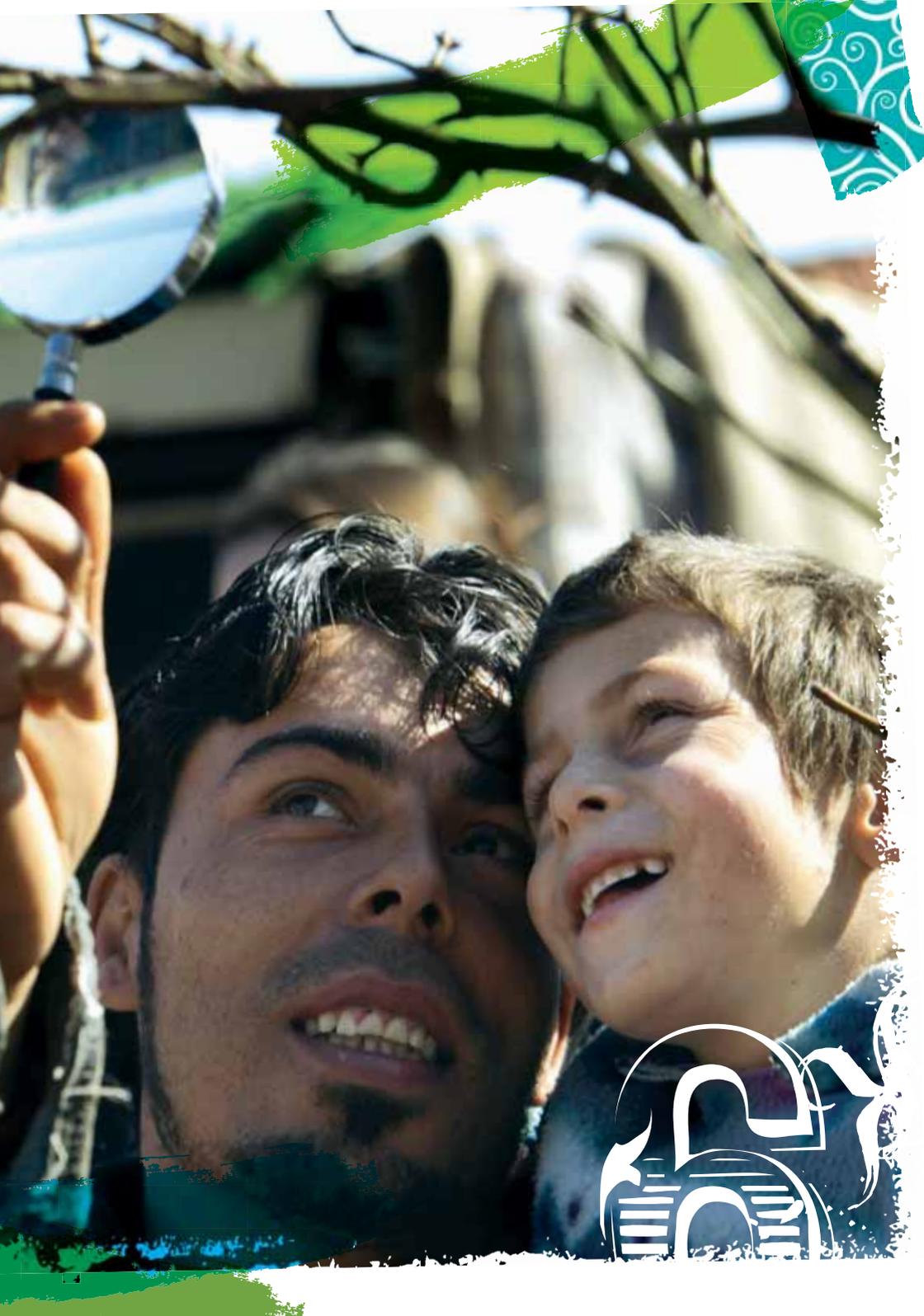


Language is another failure factor in education, which has gone unrecognised for many years: in Central and Eastern Europe, many Roma communities speak their own language, which may be a dialect of the national language or a truly specific language such as Romani. There are quite a few varieties of this language. In some Member States, the state's constitution guarantees Roma communities the right to learn through their own language, but this is very seldom the case in practice. Situations vary widely from one country to another, but it remains constant that a child entering school late that does not have an understanding of the language of instruction will have fewer chances of success. The same observation applies to children of migrant Roma families who have left their homes to find better living conditions elsewhere. Many do not speak the language of the host country. As long as their language barrier is not specifically addressed, the children of migrant Roma will not integrate smoothly into the host country's schools.

Mediation has proven to be one of the most effective tools for reaching out to Roma families. In many instances, mediators know Roma communities very well or are part of them themselves. This helps restore dialogue between worlds that are separated by accumulated misunderstandings and misconceptions. This is only a part of what remains to be done. Other measures include teachers' training and a more integrated approach to take into consideration children's health conditions.

Another important factor is discrimination, which sometimes may be condoned by seemingly innocuous practices, such as mental health screening. The fact of the matter is that Roma children are overrepresented in *special needs education*. There have been many reports of systematic misuse of psychological-diagnostic testing of Roma children, which routinely ascribes their performance in certain tests to mental or cognitive deficiency. Prejudice, stereotyping, inadequate testing methods and similar adverse factors are at play; it might also stem from the fact that in these areas, children may be readily labelled as having learning difficulties when they do not understand the test questions because of a language barrier. All too often this is not recognised or simply not accounted for. Sometimes, this situation is made worse by social welfare benefits, which are allocated to families whose child has been diagnosed as having a disability. Another major issue to be contended with is the fact that in too many cases such misdiagnosed disabilities do not receive adequate therapeutic treatments, which in the best of cases would lead to a reassessment of the child's actual needs.





WHAT IS THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION DOING IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING ?

In the 1950s, one major tenet of the EU founding fathers' credo in a reconciled Europe was the role of democratic values, together with a restored prosperity in securing peace between nations. Both require education. Democratic values are not innate and they must be acquired through education both inside the community and in the more formal setting of schools. Education is also a precondition for sustainable and inclusive growth, especially at a time where prosperity has increasingly become dependent on the intellectual vigour and resources of a knowledge-based society. The prerequisites for both citizenship and knowledge are the quality and inclusiveness of educational systems throughout the European Union.

In this context, the Lifelong Learning programmes of the European Commission, managed by the Directorate-General for Education & Culture have resources, political momentum and visibility, which reflect such commitments. The response from European society, as evidenced by the enormous success of the Erasmus programme, has confirmed that the guiding inspiration of Lifelong Learning is the right one. The Lifelong Learning programme funds a range of actions, including exchanges, study visits and networking activities. Projects are intended not only for individual students and learners, but also for teachers, trainers and all others involved in education and training. With



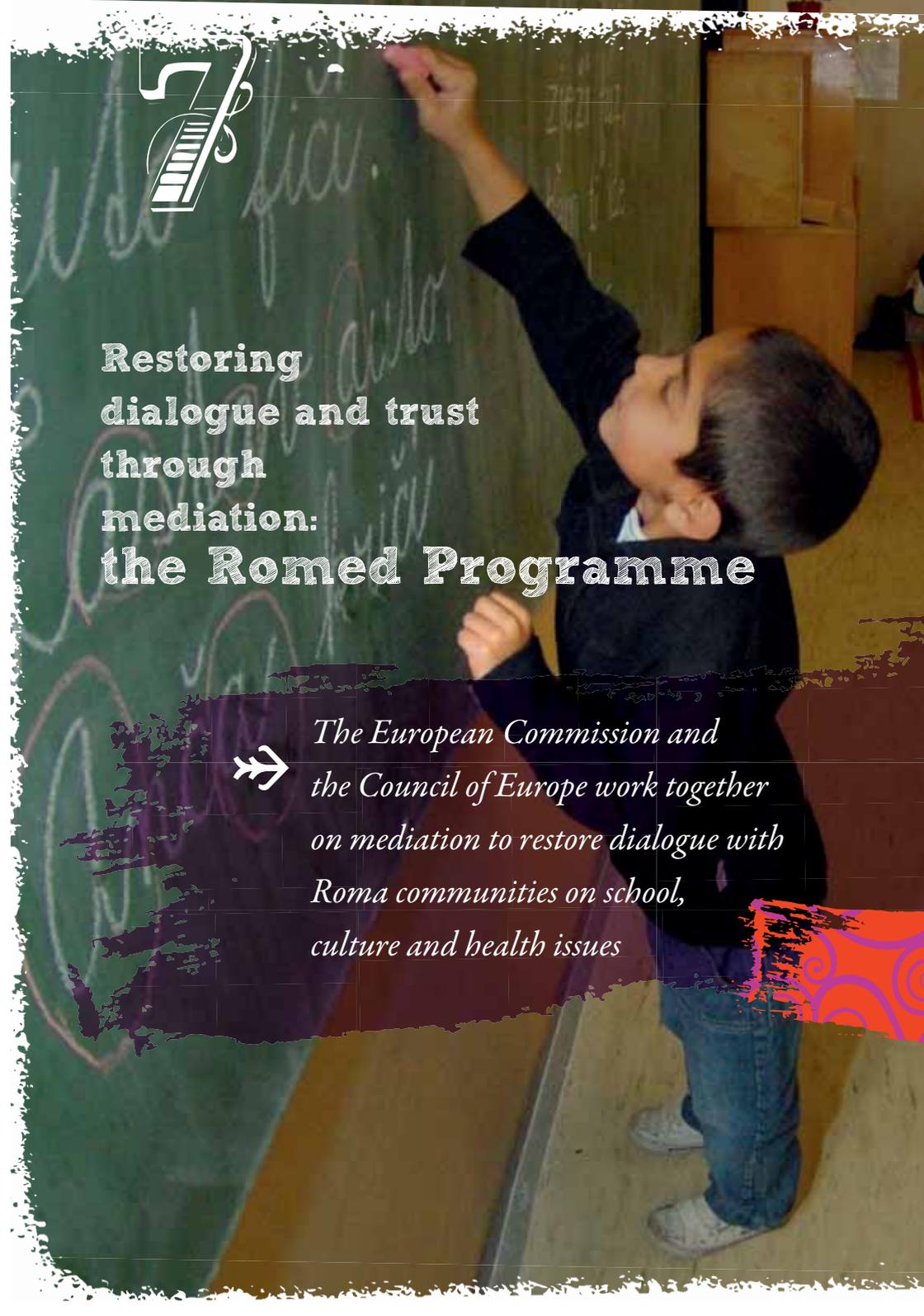
a budget of nearly EUR 7 billion for the period

2007-13, the Lifelong Learning programmes have four headings that fund projects at different levels of education and training: Comenius for schools, Erasmus for higher education, Leonardo da Vinci for vocational education and training, and Grundtvig for adult education. Other projects in areas that are relevant to all levels of education, such as language learning, information and communication technologies,

policy co-operation and dissemination and exploitation of project results are funded through the 'transversal' part of the programme, which also host the specific calls for proposals 'explicitly but not exclusively targeting' Roma communities. However, any proposals submitted in the more general strands of the Lifelong Learning programmes (mainly Comenius, Leonardo da Vinci and Grundtvig) offer great potential for Roma-oriented proposals for project funding, as they address the most disadvantaged groups in society.

In the latter part of this brochure, a short description and contact details are given for all projects funded under Lifelong Learning, with explicit emphasis on Roma, as well as a short selection of projects funded under more general calls.





**Restoring
dialogue and trust
through
mediation:
the Romed Programme**



*The European Commission and
the Council of Europe work together
on mediation to restore dialogue with
Roma communities on school,
culture and health issues*



Mediation refers to the work which people with a Roma background, belonging to local Roma communities, or with a good knowledge of Roma issues, may do to restore communication between such communities and the public institutions. In most cases, mediators speak the specific Roma language of the community with which they are working (that language, as the case may be could possibly be a dialect). The overall aim of the project is to facilitate intercultural dialogue and support efforts towards the greater social inclusion of Roma citizens in Europe. Moreover, the aim is to raise the visibility of existing research and foster cooperation with policy-makers, by providing evidence for policy initiatives. The programme not only sets out to improve the situation of Roma, but also undertakes to promote the mediator's professional status and unique ability to facilitate dialogue between estranged communities.

➔ *EU Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou and Council of Europe Secretary-General Thorbjørn Jagland, together in Strasbourg on 6 July 2011, at the official launch of the joint ROMED Programme*

The first ROMED Programme in the implementation of a joint action between the European Commission and the Council of Europe is running from July 2011 to April 2013. The programme builds upon networks and results of the work on Roma education and inclusion carried out by the Council of Europe. The two organisations, the Council of Europe and the European Commission, have implemented a 'European Training Programme for Roma Mediators', which addresses issues relevant not only for Roma, but also for many other groups. Mediation works both ways, opening closely-knit Roma communities to a less anxious apprehension of European society while facilitating contacts from public institutions and services in their work to palliate and end all forms of discriminations and of social exclusion. Professionalisation of mediating activities, through curricula and qualifications which receive official recognition are part of the long-term objectives for the ROMED Programme.



The improvement of the mediator's status will in the long run prove beneficial to his efficiency on the field and to his own working conditions.

Module-based training can meet these requirements, making it easy to monitor acquisition of knowledge. Basic modules introduce trainees to the realities of the field, whilst specialised modules enable them to adjust their practice later. This generates a training profile for skills that match a work profile, allowing them to construct their own learning itinerary, and improve their qualifications and professional position in the medium or long term.

During the two years of the ROMED programme, 1 000 mediators successfully completed their training. The programme is co-managed by the European Commission and the Council of Europe (EUR 1 million per year has been allocated by both organisations as 50% -50% matching funds).

Work is underway to finalise a successor programme to ROMED to cover 2013-14 with a similar budget and related objectives in terms of mediation, but with a focus on improving the working environment of the mediators, including the local administrations, communities, and public institutions.





The main achievements, so far, include:

- * design and elaboration of a new training curriculum for mediators (available in 20 languages);
- * a European Code of Ethics for Mediators: a set of core principles and norms to guide the work of mediators has been identified as a key tool for protecting the mediator against abuse and for enhancing the quality of the services provided;
- * creation of a European pool of ROMED trainers: 65 trainers, of which 40 are of Roma origin;
- * creation of a European Database on Mediators: a valuable resource with up-to-date information on various aspects of Roma mediation in a number of countries. This tool is already available online and needs constant updating. www.coe-romed.org
- * over 1 000 mediators trained in more than 20 countries. A very large majority of mediators are Roma while the others have a very good knowledge of the Roma community. There is gender balanced participation in the training sessions;
- * around 800 representatives from national and local institutions have attended the training sessions (during each training session, a day was dedicated to the cooperation between mediators and public institutions and authorities). This aspect of the training programme is essential, since the improvement of the working environment has a direct impact on the quality and effectiveness of the mediation;
- * creation of a European network for mediators, which allows professional exchanges between mediators and their peers in other regions or countries; and
- * adoption by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe of the 'Recommendation on mediation as an effective tool for promoting respect for human rights and social inclusion of Roma' (CM/Rec(2012)9).

Involving Roma as mediators is essential for the good operation of the ROMED Programme. It has many advantages: Roma mediators are familiar with the sociological context, the language and the difficulties experienced in the communities for which they restore dialogue with society, while tapping into the communities' dynamism. The ROMED Programme carries a strong political signal which encourages Roma youth to participate in projects that concern them and which creates jobs. It also fosters new, positive attitudes amongst Roma professionals, not only in their own communities, but also amongst their professional associates and institutional partners.



**Lifelong Learning
policies and programmes
to contribute to Roma
inclusion**





Education and training are essential to the development of today's knowledge society and economy, and this is recognised by all decision-makers at all levels. High-quality pre-primary, primary, secondary, higher and vocational education and training are fundamental to Europe's success. In a rapidly changing world, lifelong learning needs to be a priority – it is the key to employment, economic success and allowing people to participate fully in society.

With each EU Member State responsible for its own education and training systems, Union-level policies are designed to support national actions and help address common challenges such as: ageing societies, skills deficits amongst the workforce, and global competition. These areas demand joint responses and countries can benefit from sharing experiences. Social inclusion in general and Roma's improved inclusion in education in particular belong to these transversal concerns, which are addressed both in terms of policy and programmes.

The policy dimension explicitly targeting Roma communities includes the two Communications issued by the European Commission in 2011 and 2012 to provide a framework for national strategies for Roma inclusion described earlier. The programme dimension refers to the funding schemes offered by the various sub-programmes of the *Lifelong Learning* programme¹⁴. General calls under these sub-programmes (e.g. *Comenius*, *Leonardo*, and *Grundtvig*) have already benefitted some Roma communities in addressing the obstacles found in education by the most disadvantaged groups in society. Now, since 2011, there are specific calls for proposals that are 'explicitly but not exclusively targeting' Roma communities in the 'transversal' part of the Lifelong Learning programme. A short summary of projects selected and funded so far under the 2011 and 2012 specific Roma calls is given in the following pages, with a view to guide and inspire potential stakeholders envisaging the elaboration of proposals, multilateral partnerships or networks that may contribute significantly to the implementation of policies for better inclusion of Roma in education at all levels.

A few tips and useful information

The objective of the so-called Roma calls for proposals under the *Lifelong Learning KA1* programme is to support transnational cooperation projects in order to develop wider lifelong learning measures for Roma integration and network activities that raise awareness for the most successful practices in the social integration of Roma. One important feature of these calls is 'joining-up educational and other measures', which means that the approach should be holistic, reaching beyond the confines of education or schooling to include measures related to housing, health, education and employment.

These calls invite proposals for Roma multilateral projects and networks from any and all kind of organisations, public or private, which are active in the field of lifelong learning in raising attainment levels in language and literacy skills: NGOs and stakeholders' organisations: pre-primary, schools, primary, secondary and tertiary education (i.e. access to university), VET, formal and non-formal education providers, higher education including adult learning institutions, as well as any entity active in other social services, such as health, housing and employment, including national or regional ministries in charge of education and training.

The maximum share of the EU grant in the overall budget is 75 %, i.e. EUR 150 000 per year (EUR 25 000 for third countries) and the maximum duration of a project is two years. Partnerships require a minimum of three LLP-participating countries in multilateral projects (or five in networks), with at least one EU Member State.

So far, projects that are 'explicitly but not exclusively' addressing Roma in education deal with teacher training, involvement of families, advocacy skills, exchanges of good practices, building of networks and alternative pedagogies.

Whilst there is no sure-fire recipe for a successful project, it is clear that the following features may help in devising a sound and persuasive project proposal: coherence (problems, solutions, target groups, activities, budget, ambitions/resources/competence), simplicity and clarity (simple and clear, identifying the need for such a proposal, the solutions, and the outputs), evidence-based rationale (*ex ante* needs analysis), state of the art, rigorous planning (what activities, when, for how long, and with what resources?), and clear focus (a proposal is not meant to solve the world's problems, but to address a specific issue).

The Lifelong Learning programmes' website should be regularly consulted to check on news regarding forthcoming calls and other important information.

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/funding/2013/index_en.php

Roma Teaching & Training



This project proposed by Action Synergy s.a. (Greece), a consultancy developing knowledge-based applications in the field of education, concentrates on pre-school education for Roma children, to change perceptions and attitudes that dissuade families to register their children at pre-school. This problem may explain why their education performance is comparatively lower than national average.

The fact that Roma children are not acquainted with the school environment tends to fuel their suspicions and leads them to perceive the school world as a hostile environment where they are not welcome.

Pre-schooling may be the key, though there are clear features of discrimination that may be addressed along the way. The project develops and tests a model for the organisation of pre-school centres, which are sensitive to Roma children's cultural background and which will prepare them integrate into the school environment later on. The activities take into consideration the specific cultural background of the Roma children under the supervision of two intercultural mediators, one Roma and one non-Roma. These mediators receive proper training in the form of workshops and e-learning courses, allowing for distance training. During the piloting phase, it is envisaged that 80 children from the partner countries attend these pre-school centres for six months. The organisation paradigm for such pre-school centres may later on be transferred to other environments and the material for the training of intercultural mediation is available online, free of use. The availability of these courses in such a context may significantly increase the quality of pre-school education for Roma children and thus contribute to the reduction of the number of early school leavers.



COORDINATOR: ACTION SYNERGY S.A, EL | **WEBSITE:** <http://www.action.gr>
TEL.: +30 2106822606 | **E-MAIL:** euprograms@action.gr | **CONTACT PERSON:** Ms Anastasia Balaska

PARTNERS:

- Panhellenic Union of Greek Roma, EL
- AMISS – Associazione Mediatrici Interculturali Sociali e Sanitarie, IT
- Former State Fostered Children's Association, HU
- Federación Maranatha de Asociaciones Gitanas, ES

APPROVED BUDGET (including EU funding): EUR 199 792

Multilateral projects funded in 2011 under Lifelong Learning KA1 programme

What's Working?

This project developed by BHA for Equality, based in the United Kingdom (Manchester City Council) undertakes to address the various difficulties experienced by increasing numbers of Roma migrating from Central and Eastern to Western Europe, with a special concern for their children. It supports the development of Roma communities, as well as individuals, as they may make informed choices and understand the value of 'formal education' especially for young children and teenage girls; it further support young people in their efforts to develop as mediators and become role models for others and through a report it documents the potential barriers to integration, whilst identifying solutions that are transferable to different countries and situations. The partner agencies work to promote the inclusion and engagement of Roma communities through the use of mediators (from the local Roma community), activities for parents and the Roma community, teacher training, improvement in registration levels and continued attendance in compulsory education.



COORDINATOR: BHA for Equality, UK | **GENERAL WEBSITE:** <http://www.thebha.org.uk/>
PROJECT WEBSITE: <http://www.whatsworking.eu/> | **TEL.:** +44 1618742157
E-MAIL: juliedavies@theBHA.org.uk | **CONTACT PERSON:** Ms Julie Davies

PARTNERS:

- Manchester City Council, UK
- Fundación Secretariado Gitano, ES
- Pharos, NL

Approved Budget (including EU funding): EUR 164 507

A further step to let the Roma youth be heard

Proposed by an Italian NGO, GSI – Gruppi di Solidarietà Internazionale, this project originates from ‘Let the Roma youth be heard’, which had been funded by the ‘Leonardo’ programme. It focused on facilitating the Roma population in making its voice heard, sharing its cultural traditions and reporting on their very poor socio-economic conditions. Through participation in a technical training on journalism, the production of a twice-monthly e-magazine and the publication of a report collating the eight most interesting e-magazine editorials, 40 young Roma aged between 18 and 30 enhanced their capacities in reporting on their status. Through this GSI ITALIA was able to identify a number of effective working methods.

The overall objective of ‘A further step to let the Roma youth be heard’ is to contribute to strengthening the participation of 30 young Roma operating as youth workers and coming from five European Union Member States (Italy, Greece, United Kingdom, Poland and Czech Republic) and Turkey. This will take the form of a training course on journalism held in Spoleto, Italy, and led by a professional journalist with the technical support of the association Informatici senza Frontiere’s Tuscany section.

The first target, i.e. 30 people working with the Roma community, will organise a training course in their respective countries for 20 more young Roma people on their return. The plan is therefore to facilitate the transfer of competencies in journalism and of communication tools to European youth workers and young Roma so that they may communicate more efficiently and improve their participation in the social and political life of European society.



COORDINATOR: GSI – Gruppi di Solidarietà Internazionale – Italia, IT

WEBSITE: <http://www.gsitalia.org/en/projects/leonardo-vinci/further-step-let-roma-youth-be-heard>

TEL.: +39 074349987 | **E-MAIL:** marcociapparelli@gsitalia.org |

CONTACT PERSON: Mr Marco Ciapparelli

PARTNERS:

- Media Diversity Institute, UK
- Avrasya, TR
- IQ Roma Servis, o. s., CZ
- Stowarzyszenie Edukacji Nieformalnej ‘Meritum’, PL
- Hellenic Regional Development Center, EL

APPROVED BUDGET: EUR 121 300



Multilateral projects funded in 2011 under Lifelong Learning KA1 programme

Creative teacher training for support of cultural and social inclusion of Roma children at school

Spurred by a Bulgarian organisation, the National Institute for Training and Career Development in Education, this project aims to mobilise intercultural dialogue and awareness to attract and motivate Roma children to embrace education, better understand the benefits of learning, whilst teachers learn to perceive and develop students' personal potential and talents, through more pragmatic and personalised approaches.

More generally, Creative Trainers also aims to improve teachers' understanding of issues specific to Roma children, both within and outside of the classroom, through methods that improve their intercultural skills. In addition, teachers are trained to improve their practical skills by engaging in an open and honest dialogue with Roma children and their parents. Furthermore, teachers may thus become more proficient in incorporating Roma culture into their lessons, for example through music, dance, art and storytelling, as well as humanities subjects such as history and literature.



COORDINATOR: National Institute for Training and Career Development in Education, BG
GENERAL WEBSITE: <http://niiod.bg/> | **PROJECT WEBSITE:** www.create2teach.eu
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CONTACT PERSON: Ms Reneta Palova

PARTNERS:

- Fundatia Centrul Educational Soros, RO
- Associació Departament d'Estudis dels Medis Actuals, ES
- TREBAG Vagyon- és Projektmenedzser Kft, HU

APPROVED BUDGET (including EU funding): EUR 155 266

Roma families get involved: transnational methodology for working with Roma families towards their children's success in education

The aim of this project, established by Fundación Secretariado Gitano, is to reduce early dropout rates amongst *Gitanos* (Spanish Roma), by working with them and their families. Involving families in their children's education is the key to their educational success. It is therefore essential to raise awareness amongst Roma families to the consequences of early school leaving for their children's future development and prospects.

The project sets up a transnational platform for the exchange of knowledge and experience amongst education professionals working with Roma, with a view to improve and refine their understanding of the practices and culture of young Roma in education. Tools are identified or elaborated to assist professionals in facilitating the engagement of Roma families in their children's education. Methodological tools will be made available in five EU languages for greater dissemination amongst professionals involved in Roma education.

➔ **COORDINATOR:** Fundación Secretariado Gitano | **WEBSITE:** <http://www.gitanos.org>
TEL.: +34 914220960 | **E-MAIL:** belen.sanchez@gitanos.org
CONTACT PERSON: Ms. Belen Sánchez Rubio

PARTNERS:

- Roma Oktatási Alap (Roma Education Fund Hungary), HU
- Spanish Ministry of Education, ES
- Fundația Secretariatul Romilor, RO
- Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport, RO
- Municipality of Hódmezővásárhely, HU
- Local Government of Ács Town, HU
- Roma Education Switzerland, CH
- Ministry of Education, Youth and Science, BG
- Fundatia Roma Education Fund Romania, RO



APPROVED BUDGET (Including EU funding): EUR 198 316

Multilateral projects funded in 2011 under Lifelong Learning KA1 programme

MyBeautifulSchool – a place where it is possible to be happy

This Italian project is especially innovative: it is inspired by lessons learned from impoverished regions in the past, where very harsh living conditions made it nearly impossible for children to bridge the cultural gap between their own familiar world and that of formal education. Today, Roma children's access to formal education is often limited in a way that is reminiscent of the situation of those children in remote, rural areas of Europe at the beginning of the 20th Century.

The 'Montessori method' was developed as an attempt to understand and help children in impoverished settings who had major difficulties in benefitting from any education offered to them. Such an approach was first trialled in Villa Montesca and was based on the revolutionary idea that it is the educative space that has to be adapted to the children, not the contrary. The Montessori method, based on the relationship between education and the environment, showed that it was possible to obtain significant educative results with all social groups and it is not implemented in the context of impoverished Roma communities.

The objectives of this project include exploring the experience of the establishment of a cultural centre in the Vilnius Kirtimai Roma settlement, Lithuania, where Gagè and Roma cultural activities help improve mutual understanding between the two communities.



COORDINATOR: VILLA MONTESCA RESEARCH AND TRAINING CENTER, IT
WEBSITE: www.montesca.it | **TEL.:** +39 0758521512
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PARTNERS:

- The Public Institution Roma Community Centre, LT
- Association for Education and Sustainable Development, RO

APPROVED BUDGET (Including EU funding): EUR 199 224

Contribution to the Role of Education – Educating Educators (CORE)

The CORE project proposed by the Adra Bulgaria Foundation set up an international network to promote Roma integration by means of a resourceful ‘Compendium on Best Civil Practices in Roma integration’. Best practices in Roma integration are selected and used to provide evidence for joining educational and other policy measures to ensure interventions that are cost-effective and sustainable. The Compendium reflects the relevant EU policy as well as the EU commitment towards sustainable development of Roma ethnic minorities and the presentation and protection of cultural identity. It compiles a number of best practices identified as outstanding contributions to improving the lives of vulnerable communities and groups. It will also comprise a section on Roma history and culture, which are largely unknown to educators and policy-makers. It is hoped that, through proper dissemination and awareness-raising, this will increase their understanding of Roma and raise the self-esteem of Roma children and students as inheritors and guardians of a valuable cultural heritage. Moreover, the project is expected to raise school attainment levels, as well as increase the level of evidence-based knowledge provided to policy-makers.



COORDINATOR: ADRA BULGARIA FOUNDATION, BG

WEBSITE: <http://www.core-llp-eu.org/en-us/project.aspx> | **TEL.:** +35 9885843485

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PARTNERS:

- DESINCOOP - Desenvolvimento Económico, Social e Cultural CRL, PT
- Amalipe Center for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance, BG
- Liga Pro Europa, RO
- Centre for Educational Integration of Children and Students from Ethnic Minorities, BG
- Public Institution Roma Community Centre, LT
- The Municipality Of Kyustendil, BG
- Adventist Development and Relief Agency Norge, NO

APPROVED BUDGET (including EU funding): EUR 199 958

ROM-UP! The inclusion of Roma through quality successful educational experiences

The principal aim of ROM-UP! is to create an International Romani Network to raise awareness of educational experiences that have already proven to be effective in the promotion of the educational inclusion of Roma. The partners in this project, working in their respective countries, review the value, sustainability and transferability of such best practices as they are implemented in their national school systems and implement at least one of these successful educational practices in one educational setting at a national or local level.

A multi-lingual website is elaborating successful educational experiences and recommendations on how to transfer these experiences to other European countries. In order to boost reflection and dissemination, four national seminars and a final conference bring together stakeholders to activate and intensify Roma networking. Furthermore, a Permanent Observatory on successful educational experiences in Roma inclusion, together with the website and the International Roma network, will ensure adequate sustainability once this project has reached the end of its scheduled duration, in terms of EU support



COORDINATOR: ROMANI ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN DROM KOTAR MESTIPEN, ES
WEBSITE: www.dromkotar.org, <http://rom-up.eu/> | **TEL.:** +34 933043000
E-MAIL: info@dromkotar.org | **CONTACT PERSON:** Ms. Natalia Fernandez Alcala

PARTNERS:

- Amalipe Center for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance, BG
- Utilities for Social Protection and Solidarities - Municipal Training Institute of Volos, EL
- Romani Criss - Roma Center for Social Intervention and Studies, RO
- European Roma Information Office, BE
- Generalitat de Catalunya. Department of Social Welfare and Family. GD of Civic and Community Action, ES
- Pavee Point - Travellers Centre, IE
- Centre of Research in Theories and Practices that Overcome Inequalities of the University of Barcelona, ES

APPROVED BUDGET (Including EU funding): EUR 198 410

Art4ROM

Art4ROM is a project from the International Yehudi Menuhin Foundation designed for children both Roma and non-Roma, aged between 5 and 10, to involve them in education via an innovative educational methodology based on the practice of the arts in school and non-school environments. The emphasis is on using art as the universal language, especially music, as this art form is already at the core of the Roma cultural heritage whose influence on European classical music, especially during the Romantic period, is well known. The problems faced by Roma communities range from illiteracy and language barriers to disaffection and misunderstanding as regards the place of Roma in the educational world, which Roma children and families view as hostile and pointless. Compounding this problem is the fact that much needed intercultural dialogue between Roma and the rest of society has so far been impeded by rampant discrimination and prejudice.



This calls for a more collaborative approach from Roma organisations and international players to achieve significant advances for Roma education. In the view of the Yehudi Menuhin Foundation, connecting the respective perspectives on music as a particularly vibrant and lively cultural art form in Roma communities and of formal education is important. This is a major instrument for social inclusion and employment and will set the pace for exchange and dialogue, from which both worlds may learn, as opposed to a one-way transfer of educational imperatives onto communities perceived as culturally inferior or disadvantaged.



COORDINATOR: International Yehudi Menuhin Foundation, BE

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PARTNERS:

- ETP Slovensko, SK
- Mosaic Art and Sound Ltd, UK
- Unión Romani, ES
- MUS-E Hungary, HU
- MUS-E Napoli, IT
- Provide sprl, BE
- European Roma Information Office, BE

APPROVED BUDGET (including EU funding): EUR 399 579

Professional education of experts for better future of intellectually disabled Roma

Whilst the difficulties faced by Roma in general are well identified – the dangerous combination of illiteracy, widespread unemployment and failing health and housing facilities, issues of disability are often overlooked, especially in the context of extreme poverty. Roma with intellectual disabilities are doubly marginalised because of general discrimination targeting Roma and because of their ethnic origin. Moreover, intellectual disabilities are not adequately addressed by therapeutic care or adequate treatment. This issue is a particularly sensitive one, given numerous reports of widespread misuse of and misdiagnosis within special needs education, which has been the case over the years in parts of Central and Eastern Europe. There is a major risk that actual and proven cases of intellectual disability amongst Roma children of school age go unreported and that essential opportunities for proper care are missed addressing their special needs in an inclusive educational environment.

This project, bringing together stakeholders from countries with a sizeable Roma minority, undertakes to offer adequate and pragmatic training to professionals and social workers in addressing the combined discrimination affecting Roma and children with special needs.

An innovative pedagogical curriculum has been elaborated specifically to improve training and give expertise to professionals involved in treating and caring for intellectually disabled Roma. They are taught to adapt their counselling to the Roma context. The hope is that families may gain a better insight into intellectual disabilities so as to treat these children with special needs on an equal footing with any other child in the family circle.



COORDINATOR: Center za izobraževanje in kulturo Trebnje, SI

TEL.: +38 673482101 | **WEBSITE:** www.ciktrebnje.si

E-MAIL: patricija.pavlic@ciktrebnje.si | **CONTACT PERSON:** Mrs Patricija Pavlič

PARTNERS:

- Zveza Sožitje, SI
- The Public Institution Roma Community Centre, LT
- Amrita Orientációs Baráti Kör Egyesület, HU
- Association for Education and Development of Disabled People, EL

APPROVED BUDGET (including EU funding): EUR 332 650

Teachers' education for Roma, new opportunities in school

This project, based in Greece, sets up special after school support centres for Roma in order to support them in their final years of primary school and strengthen their chances to enter and complete secondary education. Even though primary education is compulsory in Europe, it is a well-known fact that many Roma children do not complete it for a variety of reasons, some of which stem from open or latent discrimination, and others, from a lack of resources and awareness of the value of education for the future. In this project, courses are provided to let teachers know more about the cultural background of Roma children. A variety of learning devices and media is also made available to teachers, Roma families and children alike, to develop IT skills, intercultural dialogue and to act as a forum for discussion.



COORDINATOR: Action Synergy S.A, EL | **TEL.:** +30 2106822606

WEBSITE: <http://www.action.gr> | **E-MAIL:** euprograms@action.gr

CONTACT PERSON: Mrs Anastasia Balaska

PARTNERS:

- Π.Ο.Σ.Ε.Ρ (Πανελληνια Ομοσπονδια Σωματιων Ρομ), EL
- Idea Rom Onlus, IT
- Hungarian Academy of Sciences- Institute of Sociology, HU
- AFRR - Asociatia Femeilor Rome din Romania, RO

APPROVED BUDGET (including EU funding): EUR 397 783

Multilateral projects funded in 2012 under Lifelong Learning KA1 programme



EduRom: Promoting the access of Roma to LLP, VET and employment through family education in primary schools

This project elaborated by the Romani Association of Women 'Drom Kotar Mestipen' has a definite gender angle, which is especially important given the patriarchal culture and structure of Roma communities in general. Aiming to widen access to Lifelong Learning programmes, and especially vocational educational training, this project undertakes to improve employment perspectives amongst Roma. This is achieved primarily by restoring dialogue and trust between students' parents and the schools, and the role of mothers is essential in building confidence and investing in the children's educational future. Families may often not have the skills that their children need to acquire, such as literacy, mathematics and ICT. It is therefore important to inform and advise families on access and the value of education and adult learning for professional qualifications. Information is also made available on certification, Lifelong Learning Programmes and Vocational Educational Training).



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E-MAIL: info@dromkotar.org | **CONTACT PERSON:** Ms. Natalia Fernandez Alcalá

PARTNERS:

- Amalipe Center for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance, BG
- Roma Women Association of Drosero 'Elpida', EL
- Pavee Point Travellers' Centre, IE
- Direcció General d'Acció Cívica i Comunitària, ES
- Roma Woman Association 'For Our Children', RO
- Federació d'Assoc. Culturals i Educatives de Persones Adultes, ES
- Lower Saxony State Institute for Quality Development in School, DE
- NGO Slovo 21, CZ

APPROVED BUDGET (including EU funding): EUR 398 041

REdHous NET – Romani people and educational and housing policies: key links to share

During the last decade, the improvement of living conditions of EU Roma citizens has progressively turned into a priority for the EU. In compliance with the request of the European Commission for the Member States to elaborate National Roma Inclusion Strategies, national, regional and local authorities have adopted initiatives for the inclusion of Roma in many areas, two of which are education and housing. The Redhous NET project aims to create an EU Network for mutual policy learning and cooperation in these areas and to raise awareness of decisive actors vis-à-vis the most successful practices of coordination in these education and housing for Roma from Eastern EU countries.



The methodology will consist of research mapping and analysing policy practices and trends. The EU network will provide mutual policy learning and an interactive web-platform will be created. The target group of the project is composed of public institutions (European, national, regional and local), research boards and civil society organisations, including Roma associations. A Strategic Action Plan will be made that will indicate the activities of the network after the duration of the project.



COORDINATOR: Dirección General de Coordinación de Políticas Migratorias, ES

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PARTNERS:

- Taller ACSA – Antropología y Ciencias Sociales Aplicadas, ES
- Institutul pentru Studierea Problemelor Minorităților Naționale, RO
- Centre for Social Innovation, AT
- Centre for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance AMALIPE , BG
- Oasi, IT
- Programma Integra, IT
- Centre for Research in Anthropology, PT

APPROVED BUDGET (including EU funding): EUR 383 443

European Roma integration good practice exchange and policy network

This pioneering Croatian project is a contribution to the implementation of the National Roma Inclusion Strategies so as to maximise chances of success for Roma integration, by means of exchange of experiences and of best practices via a network. The purpose of this network is to analyse good practices contributed by project partners in four crucial educational areas: pre-school, school, higher and vocational education. Special attention will be brought to issues of accessibility, reduction of early leaving and progressing from one educational level to the next. Policy recommendation papers are expected for these four areas, with the broad involvement of the target group representatives, stakeholders, and political decision-makers in a comprehensive consultation process. The impact will thus affect policy-making in the partner countries and at European level, by means of powerful dissemination activities and exploitation of results.



COORDINATOR: Municipality of Koprivnica, HR

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E-MAIL: gradonacelnik@koprivnica.hr | **CONTACT PERSON:** Ms. Iva Sviric

PARTNERS:

- ZUKUNFTSBAU GMBH, DE
- European Neighbours, AT
- Kulturverein österreichischer Roma, AT
- European Roma Information Office, BE
- FormAzione Co&So Network s.c.s., IT
- Universitatea „Ștefan cel Mare” din Suceava, RO
- Súkromné gymnázium Kremnica, SK
- Confederation of Family Organisations in the European Union, BE

APPROVED BUDGET (including EU funding): EUR 394 112

Desegregation and Action for Roma in Education Network (DARE NET)

The causes and effects of school segregation are often similar in European partner countries, thus necessitating a sustainable and common response to achieve effective results. The DARE NET project seeks to address segregation of Roma children in schools across different European countries in this regard, whilst developing an International Roma Civil Society Network for the dissemination of best-practices and successful educational initiatives (policy, non-governmental initiatives, court jurisprudence). Mediation is now recognised as a very powerful, yet modest instrument for restoring dialogue and mutual trust between estranged communities in the field of education. The network will train 100 school mediators to raise awareness amongst Roma families and school communities about the importance of desegregation and to conduct preventive measures to eradicate it. With the identification and documentation of best practices and successful educational initiatives, a guide for monitoring the situation of segregation will help local and national organisations to review segregation issues and contribute to their solution.



COORDINATOR: Roma Centre for Social Intervention and Studies, RO

WEBSITE: www.romanicriss.org | **TEL.:** +40 213107070

E-MAIL: oana@romanicriss.org | **CONTACT PERSON:** Ms. Oana Mihalache

PARTNERS:

- Ελληνικό Παρατηρητήριο των Συμφωνιών του Ελσίνκι (ΕΠΣΕ), EL
- Sdruzhenie 'Integro Association', BG
- François-Xavier Bagnoud Center for Health and Human Rights, US
- Občanské sdružení Vzájemné soužití, CZ
- European Roma Rights Centre, HU

APPROVED BUDGET (including EU funding): EUR 394 112

2010-11 Lifelong Learning – General Calls

The Lifelong Learning programmes effectively address issues of social inclusion at all levels of education, from pre-school to adult learning, with special attention given to the most disadvantaged groups in European society. It is therefore not only possible but quite commonplace that projects explicitly addressing issues related to Roma and education find support and funding within the Leonardo Da Vinci, Comenius and Grundtvig programmes. Below you will find a few illustrations of such projects. There are many, and more comprehensive information may be found on the Lifelong Learning website.

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/funding/2013/index_en.php

Leonardo Da Vinci

The *Leonardo da Vinci* programme enables organisations in the vocational education sector to work with partners from across Europe, exchange best practices, and increase their staff's expertise. There are many projects that have been selected and funded recently under this programme that have potentially benefitted Roma as a 'most disadvantaged group' without explicitly referring to them. Noteworthy are projects such as *CHARISM – Case management for unemployed youth* (dealing with youth unemployment, VET, ICT skills) or *OWLS – Outcomes that Work for Learners and their Stakeholders* (dealing with VET provision) in 2011, or, in 2010, projects such as *Career Learning as a success for lifelong learning* (dealing with the transition from school to the workplace). The Internet links for the 2010 and 2011 compendia may give an idea of the activities funded in that perspective.

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/results_projects/documents/compendium_leonardo_2011_en.pdf

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/results_projects/documents/leonardo_2010_compendium_final_en.pdf

Comenius

The *Comenius* programme improves and increases the mobility of pupils and educational staff across the EU. It enhances and increases partnerships between schools in different EU Member States. Here are two very recent examples of what may be done in this Lifelong Learning programme:

A project funded in 2011, called *Local networks for social inclusion* put forward by Sevilla Global (ES) and Municipio de Beja (PT) endeavoured to raise awareness of the cultural heritage of the Roma population and establish an exchange programme that includes the development of educational content and innovative lifelong learning practices based on ICT. It also develops exchanges of experience for entrepreneurial culture and entrepreneurship, which allow the social and occupational integration of people at risk of social exclusion. Those involved learn strategies and methodologies that implement social and occupational training in young people.



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Another project in 2011 called *Roma Inclusion through Culture and Education (RICE)* was presented by the Leeds City Council (UK) with the City of Brno (CZ), with a view to improving school education and educational outcomes for Gypsy, Roma and Travelers (GRT) groups and to share and develop good practices. The objectives included improved access to education and the promotion of the integration of GRT children in education, improving the self-esteem and educational achievement of GRT children. It aimed to narrow the attainment gap and to promote positive stereotypes as well as the breakdown of prejudices in host countries.



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Grundtvig

Grundtvig funds a range of activities, particularly those supporting adult learning staff to travel abroad for learning experiences, through exchanges and various other professional experiences.

A Spanish project called *KEYROMA – Develop Key Competences in Social Skills for Roma Women to increase their participation in the service sector* (2011) has been developed by the Spanish NGO Instituto de Formación Integral, together with partners in Romania, Belgium, the Czech Republic and Bulgaria (Asociación De Mujeres Gitanas Españolas, ES, Intercultural Institute Timisoara, RO, European Roma Information Office, BE, Evropská rozvojová agentura, s. r. o., CZ and Център за междуетнически диалог и толерантност „Амалипе”, BG). This project seeks to help Roma women to improve their professional status by addressing gender imbalances in participation to adult education, by means of training modules organised in each country. At transnational level, exchanges of best practices, case studies and experiences in two transnational peer-reviews, with the participation of experts and policy-makers, will help structure and disseminate available experiences and know-how. In addition, an online community will be established, creating a network of practitioners and organisations working in the Roma integration field.



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WEBSITE: www.ifionline.com



In 2011 EKPOSPO NOSTOS, a Greek organisation working on social integration developed a project called *Training Trainers for Migrants and Roma*, creating training material that will familiarise VET teachers with assessing and addressing learning behaviours and stances of adult learners who have been socially excluded up to now. Partners include Asociatia Pakiv Romania, RO, Youth European Social Work Forum, DE and EU WAREHOUSE BVBA, BE. Workshops bring together 400 VET stakeholders, a five-day training course is provided for 25 adult education teachers and staff and a dissemination strategy is created to ensure maximum impact. This very important effort will upgrade – staff skills so that they successfully match the needs of Roma learners – in mainstream VET programmes.



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WEBSITE: www.nostos.org.gr



Notes



- 1 http://ec.europa.eu/justice/policies/discrimination/docs/com_2011_173_en.pdf
- 2 <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/09/st10/st10394.en09.pdf>
- 3 <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=491&furtherNews=yes>
- 4 http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/lsa/108380.pdf
- 5 http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_nat_integration_strat_en.pdf
- 6 The situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States, http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/2099-FRA-2012-Roma-at-a-glance_EN.pdf
- 7 All these data are quoted from the recent report from FRA Roma Pilot survey 2011 & UNDP/World Bank/European Commission Regional Survey 2011, released as The situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States © FRA, UNDP (2012). http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/2099-FRA-2012-Roma-at-a-glance_EN.pdf
- 8 The measurement of poverty in Europe does not use identical thresholds for all countries. Each country has its own individual threshold which is computed on the basis of the median income (most often 60 % is the ratio used). Thresholds vary depending on the standard of living in each country and are calculated on the basis of purchasing power. This method reflects differences in living standards between countries. For example 17 % of the population in the UK lives in poverty, where the poverty rate (at 60 % of the median income) is EUR 853 per month versus EUR 176 per month in Romania where 21 % of the population lives in poverty. The British poverty threshold is 2.8 times higher than the Romanian median income and the richest 10 % of the population in Romania would be considered as part of the poorest 10 % in the UK. The highest poverty threshold is in Austria (EUR 953 per month) followed by the Netherlands and Sweden (over EUR 900 per month). The French poverty threshold is amongst the highest (EUR 877) while the Romanian poverty threshold (EUR 176) is one of the lowest in Europe. Poverty indicators thus vary significantly between old and new EU Member States.
Source: *L'observatoire des Inégalités* (FR), website: www.inegalites.fr
- 9 <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/09/st10/st10394.en09.pdf>
- 10 http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/lsa/108380.pdf
- 11 <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32000L0043:en:HTML>
- 12 <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/09/st10/st10394.en09.pdf>
- 13 http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-10-1097_en.htm
- 14 http://ec.europa.eu/education/pub/pdf/general/what_en.pdf





Roma and education - Whom do I turn to for more information or funding?



NATIONAL CONTACT POINTS:

Each Member State has a National Contact Point in National Government acting as the focal point for all issues to do with the social inclusion of Roma. They are a vital link in the network of those who understand Roma social inclusion issues, how they arise and how they can be solved.

Austria

Federal Chancellery, Constitutional Service
Directorate
Website: <http://www.bundeskanzleramt.at/site/7656/default.aspx>

Belgium

Inter-Ministerial Working Group on Roma Inclusion,
State Secretary for Social Integration, Federal Public
Programming Service for Social Integration
Websites: www.mi-is.be or
<http://www.mi-is.be/en/start>

Bulgaria

Administration of the Council of Ministers,
Secretariat of the National Council for Cooperation
on Ethnic and Integration Issues
Website:
<http://www.nccedi.government.bg/index.php>

Cyprus

Cyprus Social Welfare Services
Website: www.mlsi.gov.cy/sws
Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance
Website: www.mlsi.gov.cy

Czech Republic

Office of the Government Section for European
Affairs, European Policies Coordination Department
Website: <http://www.vlada.cz/>

Denmark

Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration,
Department for Law and International
Website:
<http://english.sm.dk/Sider/Velkommen.aspx>

Estonia

Estonian Ministry of Culture
Department of Cultural Diversity
Website: <http://www.kul.ee/index.php?path=0x1377x1496>

Finland

Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Department
for Promotion of Welfare and Health
Website: <http://www.stm.fi/en/frontpage>

France

Délégation Interministérielle à l'Hébergement
et à l'Accès au Logement (DIHAL)
Website: <http://www.territoires.gouv.fr>

Germany

Federal Ministry of the Interior of the Federal
Republic Germany, Division MII4 - National
minorities and regional languages in Germany;
European policy on minorities
Website: www.bmi.bund.de

Greece

Ministry of Employment, Social Insurance
and Welfare of Greece, ESF Coordination
and monitoring Authority, National Contact Point
for Roma Strategy
Website: Link under Construction



Hungary

Ministry of Human Resources
Website: <http://www.kormany.hu/en/ministry-of-human-resources>
State Secretariat for Social Inclusion
(National Roma Strategy)
Website: <http://romagov.kormany.hu/strategiai-dokumentumok>

Ireland

Department of Justice and Equality, Traveller Policy Division
Website: http://www.inis.gov.ie/en/JELR/Pages/Traveller_Policy_Division

Italy

National Office against Racial Discriminations
Website: <http://www.unar.it>

Latvia

Ministry of Culture, Department of Society Integration Affairs
Website: <http://www.km.gov.lv/en/>

Lithuania

Ministry of Culture, Division of national minority issues
Websites: www.lrkm.lt or http://www.lrkm.lt/go.php/lit/Del_romu_integracijos_i_Lietuvos_visuome/472/0/459

Luxembourg

Ministry of Family and Integration, Reception and Integration Agency
Websites: <http://www.mfi.public.lu/index.html> or <http://www.olai.public.lu/en/index.html>

Malta

Ministry for Justice, Dialogue and the Family
Website: <http://www.mjdf.gov.mt/>

The Netherlands

Ministry for Interior Affairs and Kingdom Relations
Department for Integration and Society
Websites: <http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/ministeries/bzk> or <http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten-en-publicaties/kamerstukken/2011/12/21/kamerbrief-over-de-nederlandse-inbreng-ten-behoef-van-de-sociale-inclusie-van-roma.html>

Poland

Ministry of Administration and Digitisation
Department of Religious Beliefs and National Ethnic Minorities
Website: http://www.msw.gov.pl/portal/pl/181/Program_na_rzecz_spolecznosci_romskiej_w_Polsce.html

Portugal

Presidency of the Council of Ministers,
High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue
Website: <http://www.acidi.gov.pt/>

Romania

Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection,
Secretary of State
Website: <http://www.mmuncii.ro/en/>

Slovakia

Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Government for Roma Communities, Office of the Slovak Government
Website: <http://www.romovia.vlada.gov.sk>

Slovenia

Ministry of the Interior, Office for National Minorities
Website: http://www.uvn.gov.si/en/minorities/roma_community/

Spain

Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality,
General Directorate of Services for Family and Childhood, Sub-directorate General for Social Programs
Website: <http://www.msssi.gob.es/en/>

Sweden

Ministry of Employment, Division for Discrimination Issues
<http://www.regeringen.se/sb/d/11787> or <http://www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/2184/a/19444>

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Department for Communities and Local Government, Integration Division
Website: <http://www.communities.gov.uk>



USEFUL CONTACTS

(list not exhaustive)

European Roma Grassroots Organisations Networks

<http://www.ergonet.org/ergo-network/>

European Roma Information Office

<http://www.erionet.eu/>

Forum of European Roma Young People

<http://www.feryp.org/>

TernType

<http://www.romayouth.com/>

European Roma and Travellers Forum

<http://www.ertf.org/>

Amnesty International

<http://www.amnesty.org/>

European Network Against Racism

<http://www.enar-eu.org/>

European Roma Rights Centre

<http://www.errc.org/>

Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community

<http://www.comece.org/>

Eurodiaconia

<http://www.eurodiaconia.org/>

Caritas

<http://www.caritas.org/>

Médecins du monde

<http://www.medecinsdumonde.org/>

Dynamo International

http://www.dynamoweb.be/dynamo_international/fr/index.html

European Anti-Poverty Network

<http://www.eapn.eu/en>

European Social Platform

<http://www.socialplatform.org/>

Eurochild

<http://www.eurochild.org/>

OTHER USEFUL SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON ROMA ISSUES

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights

<http://fra.europa.eu/en>

European Commission, Directorate General for Justice, EU and Roma

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma/index_en.htm

Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

<http://www.osce.org/>

Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe/Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

<http://www.osce.org/odihr>

United Nations Children's Fund

<http://www.unicef.org/>

International Labour Organization

<http://www.ilo.org/global/lang--en/index.htm#a1>

Council of Europe

<http://hub.coe.int/>

Council of Europe Development Bank

<http://www.coebank.org/index.asp?ChangeLangue=EN>

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Regional Office for Europe

<http://www.europe.ohchr.org/EN/Pages/WelcomePage.aspx>

United Nations Development Programme

<http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home.html>

European Network of Equality Bodies

<http://www.equinet.europa.org/>

The World Bank

<http://www.worldbank.org/>

World Health Organization

<http://www.who.int/en/>

The Open Society Foundations

<http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/>

European Commission, DG Communication- The Europe for Citizens Programme

http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/index_en.htm

Youth in Action

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/youth/index_en.php

Europe for Citizens

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/index_en.php



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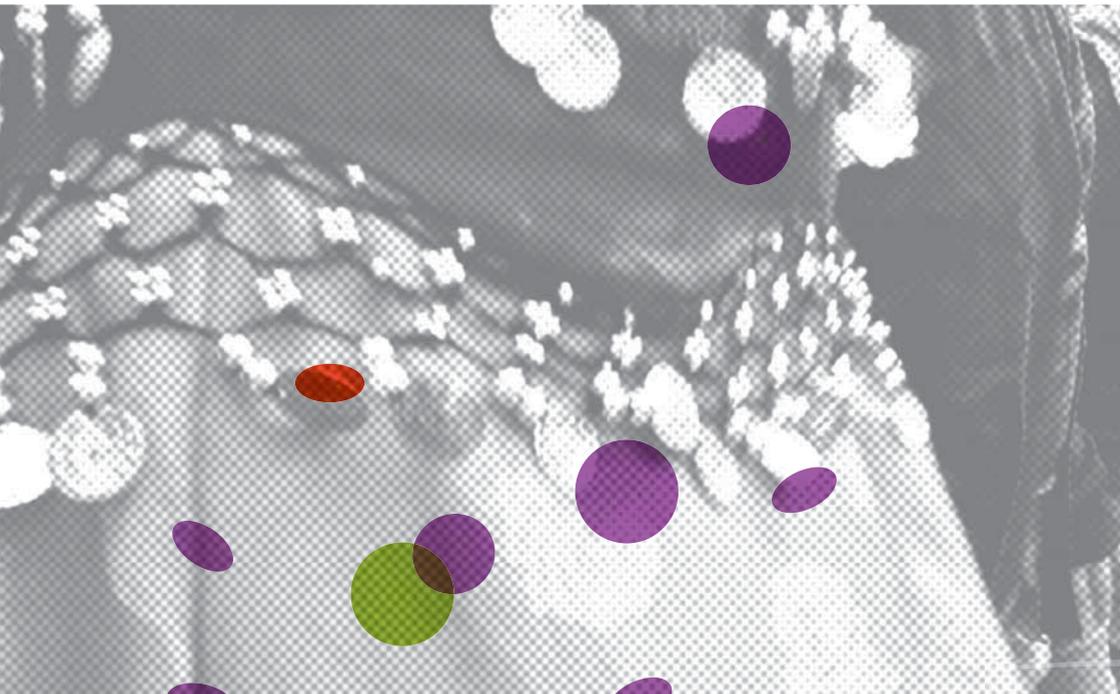
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