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European Academic Network on Romani Studies

# 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Scientific Committee of the European Academic Network on Romani Studies

(Cluj-Napoca, 7 April 2014)

A European Union / Council of Europe Joint Programme  
(June 2011 – May 2015)

*The report has been prepared by Mr László Fosztó, Secretary of the Network.*

**Event:** 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Scientific Committee

**Date:** 7<sup>th</sup> April 2014

**Venue:** Hotel Victoria, Bd. 21 Decembrie 1989, nr. 54-56, 3400 Cluj-Napoca, Romania

***Participants:***

- a) Members of the Scientific Committee: Professor Colin CLARK, Professor Victor FRIEDMAN, Professor Jean-Pierre LIEGEOIS, Dr Elena MARUSHIAKOVA, Professor Yaron MATRAS, Ms Elisabetta VIVALDI, Professor Henriette ASSEO, Professor Peter VERMEERSCH, Dr Elisabeth TAUBER, Dr Michael STEWART; Dr Judit DURST and Dr Cătălin BERESCU; Network Secretary Dr László FOSZTÓ. (Members of the SC not attending: Mr Ciprian NECULA and Dr Eva SOBOTKA).
- b) Coordinators from the European Commission and Council of Europe: Ms Laura CASSIO and Ms Kathrin MERKLE.
- c) Special Guests: Mr Alfonso ZARDI, Head of Democratic Institutions and Governance Department; Mr Sixto MOLINA, Head of the Support Team of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Roma Issues; Mr Robert RUSTEM, Executive Chief of the Secretariat of the European Roma and Travellers Forum; Ms Hazel GARDNER, website developer University of Manchester.

**Executive summary:**

*Main objectives of the meeting were:*

- a) General discussion about the latest developments with presentations of the state of art of the work related to Roma in the Council of Europe and the European Commission;
- b) Overview of the progress made in implementing the Network activities and discussions on how the Network could facilitate the integration of available research into policy making processes;
- c) Evaluation of the proposals received for the call for interest for organising meetings and workshops aimed to raise the profile of Romani Studies involving policy makers;
- d) Presentation of the design and new functionalities for the Network website by the web developer, discussions, feed-back and question & answer session related to the website;
- e) Exchange on the medium-term future of the Network and its development options;
- f) Electing the Chair of the Scientific Committee for the forthcoming period April 2014- November 2014.

The meeting day has been divided into two morning sessions (9:00-11:15 and 11:30-13:30) and two afternoon sessions (15:00-16:30 and 16:45-18:00). Topics a), b) and c) were discussed and decisions adopted during the morning sessions while points d), e) and f) were addressed in the afternoon.

Three special guests attended the meeting. During the morning session Mr Sixto MOLINA Head of the Support Team of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Roma Issues, and Mr Robert RUSTEM, Executive Chief of the Secretariat of the European Roma and Travellers Forum, participated in the exchanges with particular focus on the cooperation between the Network and other Roma-related actions at the Council of Europe and the ERTF. Mr Alfonso ZARDI, Head of Democratic Institutions and Governance Department, attended

the full meeting day and offered input and feed-back on several issues discussed during the session.

### **Details about the discussions and decisions adopted during the meeting:**

- 1) Professor Henriette ASSEO presented her resignation from the Scientific Committee. She expressed her good wishes for the future work of the committee and emphasised the need for a continuous focus on the ethical responsibility of Academics in relation to their participation in the policy making process. As one of the founders, Professor ASSEO remains committed to the Network and continues to participate in its actions as a full member. Dr Judit DURST and Dr Cătălin BERESCU have been invited to introduce themselves and join the Scientific Committee. They will serve on the committee until the mandate of the present members of the SC expires in February 2015.

**Decision:** The SC has been completed in line with the decision adopted at the 5<sup>th</sup> SC meeting. The members of the current SC are: Dr Cătălin BERESCU, Professor Colin CLARK, Dr Judit DURST, Professor Victor FRIEDMAN, Professor Jean-Pierre LIEGEOIS, Dr Elena MARUSHIAKOVA, Professor Yaron MATRAS, Mr Ciprian NECULA, Dr Eva SOBOTKA, Dr Michael STEWART, Dr Elisabeth TAUBER, Professor Peter VERMEERSCH, and Ms Elisabetta VIVALDI. All documents and online presentations will be updated and communication within the SC adjusted accordingly.

**Responsible:** The Secretary of the Network with the support of CoE webmaster.

- 2) An overview of the progress made in implementing the *meetings initiated with the National Contact Points* in 6 Member States has been presented by the Network Secretary. Ms Laura CASSIO emphasised the key-role that NCPs will play in the future programming period in implementing and monitoring the social inclusion policies targeting Roma in their communities.

The first preparatory meeting for approaching the NCP has been organised in Bolzano, Italy (17 March 2014), coordinated by Dr Elisabeth TAUBER. Most of the Italian members participated (see [the detailed report](#) on the website). Meetings are being organised in the other 5 countries (Bg, Cz, Hu, Ro, and Sk) based on the degree of interest from the Network members in the respective countries.

**Decision:** The list of countries where such meetings with the NCPs will be organised should be enlarged and meetings should be organised before the end of the year 2014 (in autumn at the latest). For the moment the UK, France and Spain have been suggested to be added to the list but the list can be further expanded. The travel expenses for these meetings will be covered by the Network. A small fee for the main organiser can be offered in case of early career scholars. Scholars who have interest and fieldwork expertise in countries other than their country of residence can be invited to attend the NCP meeting in that country. It was suggested as a principle that the meetings should be organised based on the needs of the membership.

**Responsible:** The Secretary will circulate a call among the members and gather proposals for organising meetings with the NCPs in different countries, he will facilitate the organisation of the event and the reimbursement of travel expenses with the administrative support of the Council of Europe. Professor Yaron MATRAS has been appointed as responsible for preparing and organising the meeting with the NCP in the UK.

- 3) There was a discussion to follow up on the public announcement (by both Mr BARROSO and Mr SOROS during the 3<sup>rd</sup> Roma Summit) of a joint initiative for creating a *Roma Cultural Institute* by the Council of Europe and Open Society Foundation. Mr Sixto MOLINA, Ms Laura CASSIO, Mr Alfonso ZARDI and Ms Kathrin MERKLE as well as the members of the SC participated in the discussion. It was suggested that the most likely form of such an institute would be a Partial Agreement of the Council of Europe, which should be adopted by at least one third of all the members states (at least 15 states), and an option for the Institute could be a central office in Strasbourg with ‘Satellites’ in the CoE member states who will subscribe to this initiative. Although the idea of the Institute has not yet been publicly announced by Mr JAGLAND, Secretary General of the CoE, preparatory documents have been circulated and discussed. As the Network has accumulated considerable resources and expertise in the domain of Romani studies and Roma culture, a form of collaboration should be proposed.

**Decision:** A short concept paper (max. two pages long) – a so called ‘[4W Paper](#)’- will be prepared and validated by the SC. This concept paper will be offered as an input from the Network into the preparatory discussions for establishing a Roma Cultural Institute by the CoE. The paper will be a collective proposal coming from the SC and on behalf of the Network membership.

**Responsible:** The Secretary will be in touch with the members of the SC. Professor Yaron MATRAS and Dr Michael STEWART will prepare the draft paper with the active input from the SC members. Suggestions should be sent by 18 April. The first draft will be prepared by 25 and the final version by 30 April.

- 4) The 7th meeting of the Ad hoc Committee of Experts on Roma Issues (CAHROM) is organised in Strasbourg (CoE Agora building, room G.03) on 14-16 May 2014. Representatives of the Network are invited to attend this meeting in order to (1) present the Network and the resources it can offer, (2) present an exemplification how certain phenomena (ex. migration) are researched by members of the Network. In parallel Mr Sixto MOLINA invited the members of the SC to attend a number of bilateral meetings with members of the Support Team of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Roma Issues in particular on the ROMED / ROMACT project (the possibility to seek the ECTS accreditation of the ROMED trainings should be explored), the Database on Good Practices, or the DOSTA anti-discrimination campaign. The Network could be used as a resource for providing tools of quality assurance to the CoE actions. Possibilities to be granted permanent observer status for the Network in the CAHROM meetings should be explored.

**Decisions:** Dr Elisabeth TAUBER and Professor Yaron MATRAS are reconfirmed as representatives who will attend the 7th meeting of the CAHROM. The bilateral meetings will be prepared and coordinated with the colleagues at the CoE. These meetings should be used as opportunities for building further ties and potential cooperation between the Network and CoE Roma-related actions. A strategy paper will be prepared in order to support the bilateral meetings.

**Responsible:** Dr Elisabeth TAUBER and Professor Yaron MATRAS will attend the CAHROM meeting on behalf of the SC. The Secretary will assist and coordinate the preparations for the bilateral meetings.

- 5) Mr Robert RUSTEM presented the most recent initiatives of the European Roma and Traveller Forum. The members of the Network have been active in providing input and

feed-back to the actions of the ERTF. For example the ERTF report on Early Marriages has relied on the inputs received from Network members. Some of the most recent initiatives of the ERTF (ex. Declaration on the Genocide of the Roma) have been prepared to be adopted by the Committee of Ministers. Further papers on political participation of the Roma, and on gender and youth are under preparation.

**Decisions:** The Network will continue to offer feed-back and support to the initiatives of the ERTF and continue to maintain a good communication with the Roma civil society organisations members of the ERTF.

**Responsible:** The Secretary will continue to be in touch with the ERTF secretariat and distribute the requests and invitations received among the membership, and feed-back the responses to the ERTF.

- 6) A follow-up discussion has been carried out on the Training on Education for officials of the EC planned in Brussels (the trainer selected by the evaluation committee in December 2013 is Dr Barbara Giovanna BELLO). Due to the many Roma-related events organised in this period at the EC it has been reasonable to postpone the training to summer 2014.

**Decisions:** The training will be organised in June 2014 with the support and assistance of Ms Laura CASSIO.

**Responsible:** Ms Laura CASSIO will facilitate and assist the organisation of this training.

- 7) There has been a proposal that a general training for all EC and CoE officials should be offered about the definition of ‘the Roma’ as target group of public policies. Professor Yaron MATRAS proposed that this training should be made obligatory for those officials who are dealing with elaborating, implementing and monitoring these policies. This was advised against by Ms Kathrin MERKLE, who instead suggested the preparation of a ‘briefing paper’, as useful training input.

**Decisions:** A briefing paper will be elaborated based on the recent discussion which took place on the Network email-list.

**Responsible:** The briefing paper will be prepared by Professor Yaron MATRAS with the assistance of the Secretary.

- 8) **11 proposals** for workshops and thematic meetings have been evaluated. The evaluation committee was formed by those members of the SC not involved in the proposals as organisers or invited speakers. Three members of the SC left the room in order to avoid a conflict of interest. The procedure of evaluation has been based on the criteria of evaluation published in [the call](#).

**Decisions:** Applications have been divided in three categories: (A) those offered funding (a total of 28.900€ offered), (B) proposals invited for resubmission (a total of 21.500€ available), and (C) applications offered no funding.

A) The following proposals have been offered funding:

- 1) **Celia Donert:** Bringing History and Policy into Dialogue in Romani Studies (6.000€)
- 2) **Margaret Greenfields:** on criminal justice/policing matters / health issues for UK and European Roma communities (4.500€)
- 3) **Bálint-Ábel Bereményi:** Strengths and challenges of the Policies for Gitanos in Spain. Concepts, implementation and evaluation. (8.400€)

- 4) **Stepan Ripka:** Housing First for Roma in the 21st century? Possibilities and limits (9.000€)
  - 5) **Annabel Tremlett:** Exploring how community-based academic research can feed into evidence-based practice and policy-making (1.000€)
- B) The following proposals will be invited to resubmit, applicants will be advised to elaborate on some aspects of the proposals to make them more specific and also to revise the initial estimates for the budget:
- 1) **Juraj Buzalka:** Enhancing Roma Participation in Public Policy in Slovakia
  - 2) **Mikhail Tyaglyy:** Roma/Gypsies in post-Soviet countries: empowerment and integration through discussion and learning from the past
  - 3) **Ciprian Necula:** Roma policies in Romania: between ethnicity and social vulnerabilities. The perspectives of Nicolae Gheorghe
- C) The following proposals have not been offered funding:
- 1) **Olga Magano:** The impact of social policies on the education of Gypsies/Roma in Portugal: intersectoral meeting
  - 2) **Aidan McGarry:** Policymaking and Research in the Context of CEE Roma Migration in the UK
  - 3) **Andrew Ryder:** Social justice, empowerment, recognition, and solidarity: local lessons and opportunities

**Responsible:** The Secretary will notify the applicants and offer details on the evaluation if requested. He will also communicate with the authors of the proposals invited to resubmit (B section). These should be sent again by 5 May 2014. Two members of the evaluation committee will re-examine the proposals and depending on satisfactory amendments funding will be offered to them.

- 9) The possibility of future calls for workshops has been discussed and it has been proposed that the next proposal should be published earlier in the summer and the procedure for evaluation should be carried out online by a reduced evaluation committee.

**Decisions:** The revised call for proposals will be published in May 2014 and the deadline for the submission will be 1 June 2014. The Chair of the SC will invite 3 members of the SC. The evaluation will be performed using online communication channels (email, website, Skype).

**Responsible:** The Secretary will prepare, publish, receive and register the proposals. The Chair will appoint three evaluators and the committee will perform the evaluation with the assistance of the Secretary.

- 10) The new design and functionalities of the Network Website have been presented and discussed. In line with the website renewal contract Ms Hazel GARDNER introduced the planned changes and new functionalities. She collected feed-back and suggestions on further improvements to the website and adjustments to the needs of the Network communication.

**Decisions:** 1) The colour scheme and the frame-design of the website should be in line with the manual on visual identity of the CoE regarding EC-CoE Joint Projects. 2) The new opening page should emphasise the main resource the Network, i.e. its 'Members'. 3) The advanced search functionality should make more effective use of the existing database of members including the keywords, 4) Certain subgroups of the members will be created and fast-links will be created to these categories (disciplines, residents of a certain country, interest groups), 5) The Forum plug-in will be removed and more integration with the Facebook page and Twitter will be developed in order to encourage reach out to and discussions with the larger public.

**Responsible:** Ms Hazel GARDNER is responsible for the implementation of the new website and for offering consultancy and technical assistance. She will work in close collaboration with the Network Secretary who oversees the day-to-day management of the website (updates, content development, etc.)

- 11) Initiating a Blog for the Network has been discussed. The Blog could address some of the most important themes which preoccupy the members of the Network as revealed through email discussions, or address topics which are highly relevant for policy makers.

**Decisions:** A blog will be started with invited posts. Frequency of the posts should be twice a month. The posts on the website will include summaries of the discussions carried out on among the membership on the email list regarding the 'Salford study' and the 'Definitions of target group'.

**Responsible:** The technical setup of the Blog-motor will be done by Ms Hazel GARDNER. Professor Colin CLARK is the responsible editor of the Blog. The Secretary offers assistance in updating and moderating the comments to the Blog. The discussion threads for the 'Salford study' and the 'Definitions of target group' will be archived by the Secretary and forwarded for editing by 1 May 2014. Professor Yaron MATRAS will edit and summarise the debates and prepare the summary to be published by 1 June 2014. The Secretary will obtain the consent of the message authors before the discussions are posted on the website.

- 12) The role and future of the email-list has been discussed. There has been an agreement that this is the most active channel of communication of the Network. The email-list is restricted to the members at present. A potential expansion of the membership has been discussed.

**Decisions:** It has been decided that officials working on Roma-related issues at the European Commission and Council of Europe will be invited to join the Network email-list.

**Responsible:** The Network Secretary is acting as moderator of the list and will continue to be responsible for managing the membership.

- 13) The EC/CoE Joint Project which led to the creation of the Network will end in May 2015. It is very likely that the present form of funding will be discontinued. The medium-term future of the Network might be ensured by alternative funding and/or the Network could be associated with existing structures at Universities or at the level of the EC and CoE (see point 4 above). Following a discussion it has been suggested that the relevant services of the EC should be approached and dialog initiated on the potential ties the Network could build in order to ensure its future operation and develop further its policy advisory/monitoring roles.

**Decisions:** Dr Michael STEWART and Professor Peter VERMEERSCH have been appointed as participants for a series of meetings in Brussels.

**Responsible:** The Secretary will be in contact with the relevant officers in the different services of the European Commission (in DG EAC, DG Justice, DG Regio etc.) and will arrange appointments for a series of meetings. Dr Michael STEWART and Professor Peter VERMEERSCH will attend these meetings and discuss the potential forms of association of the Network with the different DGs or other structures.

14) The date and place of the next meeting of the SC have been discussed.

**Decisions:** The 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the SC will be organised on 7<sup>th</sup> November. **Responsible:** The Secretary with the support of the CoE secretariat will plan and organise the details of the meeting. The Paris office of the CoE has been suggested as a venue for the 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the SC.

15) The election of the Chair of the SC for the forthcoming period was carried out.

**Decision:** Dr Elisabeth TAUBER was renewed for 6 months as Chair of the SC of the RAN (until November 2014).