



**ROM-SC(2011)1**

**1ST MEETING OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE OF  
THE EUROPEAN ACADEMIC NETWORK  
ON ROMANI STUDIES  
(Paris, June 23, 2011)**

**A European Union / Council of Europe Joint Programme  
(June 2011 – May 2013)**

**Report**

*Document prepared by Mr László Fosztó, Secretary of the Network*

**Event:** 1st Meeting of the Scientific Committee of the European Academic Network on Romani Studies

**Date:** June 23, 2011 (9:30 – 17:30)

**Venue:** Council of Europe, Paris Office (55 Avenue Kléber, 1<sup>st</sup> floor, Room 5.), France

**Participants:**

*Members of the Scientific Committee:*

- Thomas Acton (UK),
- Henriette Asséo (Fr),
- Katalin Kovalcsik (Hu),
- Hristo Kyuchulov (D),
- Jean-Pierre Liégeois (Fr),
- Elena Marushiakova (Bg),
- Yaron Matras (via Skype) (UK),
- Veselin Popov (Bg),
- Michael Stewart (UK).

*Members not present, apologised for absence:*

- Juan Gamella (Es),
- Ian Hanckok (USA),
- Alain Reyniers (Fr).

*Also present:*

- Laura Giulia Cassio (EC),
- Joëlle Bouteiller (CoE),
- Irena Guidikova (CoE),
- László Fosztó, secretary of the Network, (Ro - ISPMN).

**Highlights:**

The main points for the discussion following the proposed agenda included: (1) defining the purpose and mission of the Network, (2) establishing the criteria for membership and procedures for recruitment, (3) organisation of the network and the mode of communication between the members, (4) planned activities, as well as a calendar for these future activities. After a lively discussion the participants agreed on most of the points therefore the meeting reached its main goal.

The activities of the Network will focus on increasing the visibility of the academic knowledge among the policy makers (organising meetings with them) as well among the general academic community. Therefore small meetings will be organised with policy makers and travel grants offered for early career researchers in Romani Studies in order to facilitate their presence in different forums and conferences.

The call for membership will be circulated in early July. The participants agreed that there will be a two level membership (full members/associated members) and the full members of the network will elect the Scientific Committee through democratic vote. General elections for the Scientific Committee will be organised in December 2011.

A separate website of the network will be built and the Secretary will be responsible for the maintenance and updating the content. The website should contain a database of the experts in different domains and connect the members of the network (using probably a social network application).

## **Detailed Report**

The 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the Scientific Committee (SC) of the European Academic Network on Romani Studies (the Network) was convened in order to discuss the general purpose of the project, to lay down the main principles of organisation of the Network and plan the activities for the coming period. The provisional agenda of the meeting contained four main points:

- the main purpose of the Network;
- the membership of the network;
- the issues related to communication;
- the proposed activities for the coming period.

The meeting started at 9:30 and ended at 17:30. In addition to the 12 participants who were able to attend the meeting in person, Yaron Matras joined the sessions via Skype. The discussions were both lively and fruitful; by the end of the discussions the participants reached agreement on most of the points. Some future clarifications will be necessary later via e-mail on some of the issues.

### **1. The purpose of the Network**

The project of the Network has its origins in an initiative of the European Commission (see the document prepared by Mr Xavier Troussard, 10 March 2010) and the Council of Europe joined this initiative. The main idea of creating a network was to increase the visibility of the existing scientific research outside the academic community and enable a more informed decision taking and policy planning in issues related to Roma at the level of European institutions.

The Network will connect different specialist into an extended web and policy makers will have access to credible sources of expertise.

The Network will not fund research but discussions about possible directions of future research are among its purposes. The Network can in this way inform European bodies which have funding lines for Roma related research about the possible priorities and policy relevant research topics. The Network will not function as a formal advisory body and it will not review applications for funding.

Strengthening the presence of research related to Roma in mainstream academic and policy related events it is also among the objectives of the Network. In order to achieve this, the Network will be inclusive and young/early career researchers will be encouraged to join. More senior members of the Network can offer advice and guidance for the younger researchers and there will be a scheme of travel grants elaborated in order to support their participation in conferences.

### **2. Membership criteria and recruitment procedure**

*The members* (both full and associated) will be included and connected through the Network. Members will participate in the events organised by the Network and their name and publications will be listed in a database of expertise.

The members of the Network will be included based on their scientific degrees and activities. There will be two levels of membership: full members (simply named as 'members') and associated members. The only difference between the two categories is that only full members are eligible for and have the right to vote for the Scientific Committee. (It was suggested that a representative of the early career researchers might be included into the SC. No decision in this sense was taken, nor was a procedure discussed).

*The Scientific Committee* is elected among and by the full members of the Network via electronic voting. The role of the SC is to decide on issues related to organisation and functioning of the

Network, plan the activities, advice early career researchers, supervise and support the work of the secretary.

The number of the members of the SC was not decided, there was suggested that it should be reduced (Stewart). The duration of the mandate of the members of the SC also need to be decided before the election will be organised.

The criteria for membership were established as follows:

*for full members*

- PhD in a topic of direct relevance for Romani studies (exception to the PhD rule will be made for a limited number of people with a longstanding experience in Roma studies); and
- active in academic/scholarly research (e.g. having academic publications, employed in a university, museum, research institute, think tank, government research departments, supervising PhD candidates).

*for associate members*

- MA with a topic in Romani who are academically active; or
- PhD candidates with a topic in Romani studies who are academically active; or
- PhD in a topic with relevance to Romani studies who are no longer active in the field (active in other fields)

*The procedure*

An application form will be prepared which the applicants will fill in. The secretary of the network will check the credentials of the applicants and suggest their inclusion into the Network. In problematic cases the secretary will seek the support of the SC. A full CV of the applicants will be requested and this will be published (with the agreement of the member) on the website of the Network.

As the first step for recruitment the call for membership and the application form for the Network will be published and circulated in early July 2011. Members will be included into the Network continuously. The aim is to establish the Network by the autumn of 2011 in order to organise the elections for the SC in December 2011.

### **3. The website and communication**

Communication within the Network, between the members of the SC, and also the external presentation of the Network will be organised through a dedicated website. In order to perform these different functions the website will be composed by:

- a social network application which will include all members and enable them connect with each other, to update and maintain a personal profile, participate in forums, join on-line activities, etc.
- a public interface for display of the events, a news flow, new publications of the members;
- a database of experts, a list of the meetings, reports, recommendations regarding the situation of Roma in Europe;
- a restricted area reserved for the Scientific Committee (internal documents etc.).

The creation of the content and updating of the webpage is the responsibility of the Secretary. Each member will be asked to provide updated information through the personal profile and to upload publications respecting the copyright rules.

Until the website is functional (and even after that) the main form of communication will be email between the members of the Network, the SC, the Secretary and the management of the project.

#### 4. Activities

The activities of the Network will be focused on making academic knowledge and expertise more visible outside the academic community. Members of the SC suggested that no major conference should be organised by the Network because this would consume a large part of the budget of the project and would not contribute to this purpose. There is already a large Romani Studies conference in September 2011 organised by the Gypsy Lore Society (GLS) in Graz, Austria and there are regular academic conferences where members can present their work.

There was a suggestion (by Liégeois) that the events organised by the Network should concentrate on policy relevant issues. The participants agreed that this would contribute to the creation of the profile of the Network which might distinguish it from other professional associations (including the GLS). The GLS also has limited representation from Eastern European countries so the Network should also be more active in this region. It was suggested that future meetings of the SC and of the Network should be organised in Eastern European countries (like Bulgaria or Romania).

It was agreed that activities of the Network should be organised as a series of smaller meetings with policy makers and stakeholders at the international level. A list of meetings organised by the European institutions will be compiled and the documents produced in these gathered together. The first series of meetings are planned with officials of the European Commission in September and October 2011.

The plan of co-organising a summer school (in 2012) for early career researchers with the Open Society Institute/Central European University SUN was discussed. This summer school could include a shorter period (some days) of an extended event when a larger group (other than the participants of the summer school) could convene. We need to follow up this discussion.

The main milestones for activities of the network in 2011:

- Launch of the call for membership and circulating the application form (early July);
- Launch of the website, press release, and official memos to the national governments (September);
- Meetings with the officials of the European Commission (September-October);
- Call for application for travel grants addressed to early career researchers (October);
- Elections for the Scientific Committee (December).

##### *The calendar of the planned activities*

	Activities	Timeline (2011)						
		Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
1.	Meeting of the Scientific Committee							
2.	Launch of the call for membership							
3.	Recruiting members							
4.	Building the website							
5.	Launch of the website							
6.	Press release and official memo to the national authorities							
7.	Meetings with European Commission							
8.	Preparing a list with meetings, reports, recommendations regarding the situation of Roma in Europe							
9.	Publishing the list of the meetings etc.							
10.	Elaborating and publishing the rules for travel grants for early career researchers							
11.	Receiving applications for travel grants							
12.	Elections for the Scientific Committee							

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