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European Academic Network on Romani Studies

**3RD MEETING OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE OF
THE EUROPEAN ACADEMIC NETWORK
ON ROMANI STUDIES
(Paris, June 26, 2012)**

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

Report

Document prepared by Mr László Fosztó, Secretary of the Network

Event: 3rd Meeting of the Scientific Committee of the European Academic Network on Romani Studies

Date: June 26, 2012 (9:30 – 17:30)

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

Participants:

Members of the Scientific Committee:

Thomas Acton (UK), Henriette Asséo (Fr), Victor Friedman (USA), Jean-Pierre Liégeois (Fr), Yaron Matras (UK), Eva Sobotka (A), Michael Stewart (UK), Elisabeth Tauber (It), Peter Vermeersch (Be), Enikő Vincze (Ro).

Member not present: Elena Marushiakova (Bg)

Also present:

Laura Giulia Cassio (EC), Kathrin Merkle (CoE), Elena Dubinina (CoE), and László Fosztó, secretary of the Network (Ro - ISPMN).

Invited participant: Sixto Molina, from the Council of Europe, Roma Support Team

Summary

The agenda for the 3rd meeting of the Scientific Committee proposed the following;

- a) To engage in a general discussion on the connections between the academia and the policy making communities;
- b) to refine and consolidate the working rules for internal functioning of the Network;
- c) to optimise relevant initiatives within the EU, the CoE and other institutions, NGOs and relevant bodies;
- d) to discuss the communication strategy of the Network (including the website);
- e) to present an overview plan of activities for the year 2012 and preview activities for 2013.

The one-day meeting was divided in two by the lunch-break: the internal matters of the Network were discussed mainly in the morning (9:30-13:00); and the meeting hosted Mr Sixto Molina during the afternoon (14:00 -17:30).

The main decisions adopted by the SC are the following:

1. to produce a document which gathers the existent contributions on the National Integration Strategies by the members of the network;
2. to elaborate a template for evaluating policy strategies and policy evaluation;
3. to adopt an action plan for improving the participation of Roma in academia and within the Network;
4. to expand the Scientific Committee with two additional positions which will be elected by and from the associated members of the network;
5. to improve the cooperation with the Roma-related initiatives of the European Commission, Council of Europe, and other international organisations;
6. improve the database of the members of the network including an advanced search facility and keyword list;
7. deciding about conference travel the grants for Early Career Researchers;
8. the organisation of a policy-oriented round table in the framework of the forthcoming EU Roma Platform meeting (Autumn 2012).

Action plan for the coming period:

I.

After debate on the **Networks role for policy advice and policy making**, the majority of SC members agreed that the network should indeed play an explicit role in these and not be confined to a merely academic mission - focused on promoting Roma-related research and researchers. The RAN's policy potential was seen in contributing to national Roma strategies, providing input on specific policy questions, providing methodological guidance and supporting relevant training activities. Rules and expectations would need to be made explicit on the side of those requesting policy advices (EU, CoE, FRA, etc) to allow efficient input from members of the Network.

Actions proposed:

- 1) the SC also agreed to the production -overseen by two SC members (Eva Sobotka and Elisabeth Tauber) including the representative of the FRA- of a **template detailing procedures for follow-up on policy papers**.
- 2) **compiling and publishing on-line the existing reviews** written by member of the network on the National Strategies of Roma Integration. This process will be coordinated by the Secretary.
 - 1) a call will be sent to the members to provide the documents by end of July,
 - (2) the documents should be gathered by end of September
 - (3) the texts should be edited and annotated with all the details about the authorship and context of the first publication and a brochure edited by the end of November 2012.

II.

A controversial debate took place on the **procedures for the election of SC members, and generally, Roma representation within the network**. This debate concluded with a vote by which SC members decided to create two more seats on the SC for junior or associate members, and engage in targeted reach-out to Roma candidates for filling these positions. They excluded the introduction of any quota system for Roma. Further rules for the internal functioning of the network will be worked out as required, with the network secretary indicating needs.

Actions proposed:

- 1) Completing the present structure of the Scientific Committee with two additional positions.
- 2) Organising elections in Autumn of 2012 (closing by the end of October 2012). This process will be coordinated and organised by the Secretary.
- 3) Launching a recruitment campaign during the summer (closing date September 15) in order to increase the participation of younger researchers and scholars with Romani background. All members will be invited to advise more people to join and take part in the election during the autumn of 2012.

III.

In terms of **co-operation with international Organisations, Sixto Molina from the SRSB Support Team invited SC members and the network to engage in a number of ongoing CoE activities** (Alliance, CAHROM, country reports, database on good practices, Romed, Romawomen et al), to be further specified by the partners.

Actions proposed:

- 1) The Secretary will provide the SRSB Support Team with contact details and additional information needed in order to facilitate the participation of the members of the Network in the activities organised by the Team.

- 2) Eva Sobotka as the **FRA representative reaffirmed co-operation will and made concrete proposals for action**, mostly related to methodology development and involvement of SC members in monitoring exercises.

IV.

SC members agreed to fully **“use the network for networking purposes”**, which would involve a more active role of the SC and network members, and possibly, applying a larger thematic approach going beyond Roma issues.

Actions proposed:

- 1) The organisation of a policy-oriented round table (e.g. on “Participatory Action Research”) in the framework of the forthcoming EU Roma Platform meeting or as an academic side-event (workshop/round-table). Peter Vermeersch and the Secretary will plan and organise this event during the autumn of 2012 (date is pending on the date of the Platform).
- 2) To plan an event for 2013 in Marseilles (it will be the Cultural Capital of Europe) which would involve the members of the Network and the SC. Jean Pierre Liégeois was assigned as a contact person and organiser of this event.

V.

Agreement was achieved to finance from the remaining sources (around 100 000 €) projects which will promote young scholars of Romani origins as well as translations of important research carried out in Italy, Germany, France, etc. into English.

Action proposed:

- 1) To develop and implement a strategic plan to promote academic involvement of students and early career researchers of Romani background (including research training seminars with theoretical and practical component, targeted dissemination of research by early career Romani academics, and internships at academic research projects in Romani studies) Detailed description has been prepared by Yaron Matras who was appointed as the responsible for the implementation of the plan (with secretarial support).
- 2) A list of shorter articles (in languages other than English) proposed for translation will be compiled with the help of the SC members. Elisabeth Tauber and the Secretary will coordinate this process.

Detailed report:

I. During the morning session the Scientific Committee discussed the following issues in detail:

1. Connections between academia and policy making

The European Commission asked the Network members to provide feed-back on the National Strategies for Roma integration. Laura Cassio mentioned that the project has raised expectations from the EC – DG Justice but the input from the Network was somehow disappointing (just few comments have been submitted). Members of the SC analysed the causes of this and proposed ways to improve the procedures for the future.

There was a broad agreement among the members of the SC that a more formalised approach for consultation would be beneficial. Eva Sobotka mentioned that it is need to use different methods of policy assessment which would bring more transparency into the process of evaluation and that would provide the policy makers with improved methods and more reliable evidence not just anecdotal feed-back or a “chat” with someone who is considered to be informed about a situation. Nevertheless the expectation from the side of the EC, FRA or other organisations need to be formulated more clearly in order to yield better results.

Members who were involved by the authorities in the preparation or commented directly in some context on the National Strategies noted that the processes of consultation were tensioned because national authorities perceived as an “attack” the criticism on the strategy (Tauber). Acton stated that providing short public feedback papers could detract from participation in detailed organisational consultations with government departments over their responses.

Although the opportunity to increase the visibility of the network offered by the call to comment on the National Strategies was not used fully, many members of the Network had contributed to the analysis of the strategies in various forms and context. Yaron Matras suggested that a document could be compiled by the network secretariat which would gather the different inputs by the members submitted in a large variety of contexts (ranging from academic publications to NGO reports). This practical suggestion was agreed upon by most members. Thomas Acton announced his abstention. The timeline of the production of this document is the following: (1) a call will be sent to the members to provide the documents by end of July, (2) the documents should be gathered by end of September (3) the texts should be edited and annotated with all the details about the authorship and context of the first publication and a brochure edited by the end of November 2012.

The SC members concluded that main reason for the limited response could be attributed to the absence of a clear formulation of the expectations and the potential use of the feed-back requested. Two members of the SC (Eva Sobotka and Elisabeth Tauber) were assigned the task to work on a template for the future inputs into the policy planning process and also the evaluation of the policies adopted.

Other topics discussed were; the limited presence of the Romani studies in the national academic configurations, that there is a shortage of academic position in RS (Asséo ()) and almost a total lack of public visibility within some countries. It was argued that strengthening Romani studies within academia could be done more efficiently with support of EU institutions (Vincze). The funding and reviewing process of the research on the European level – for example the FP7 framework –, could use more efficiently the expertise of the network (Stewart). Jean-Pierre Liégeois said that possible connections between academia and policy making are diverse and might be classified and a typology might be build, including 1 - "direct" academic input (for instance the production of informative or pedagogical materials, "good practices" criteria and presentation, definitions...), 2 - expertise / evaluation (for instance about the implementation of the national strategies), 3 - input by providing academic basis for policy strategies (cf. for instance the genesis of the 1989 Resolution of the Council about Education, after the 1984 European research).

2. The question of Roma participation within academia and in the network

Not long before the meeting the SC received a 'letter of concern' regarding the lack of Roma from the leadership of the Network. Laura Cassio argued that letter is a one-off, but there is a general problem; how the network can contribute to the more active participation of the Roma in academia and in the network. The SC agreed not to issue a response letter to the 'letter of concern' but rather respond by a concrete action plan on several levels.

The discussions were focused on three levels of the problem: (1) to increase the participation and encourage pursuing academic career by young Roma researchers in general, (2) to improve the opportunities and visibility of Roma scholars within the network, (3) to improve the election system for the Scientific Committee.

On the issue of encouraging Roma participation in academia and in the network SC members agreed that the network should be expanded further and potential members identified among them scholars with Romani background. Eva Sobotka proposed to target directly and invite more Roma academics who are working for example at Roma museums etc. Sobotka proposed to invite two academics whom she personally knows. It was proposed that SC members should invite people and copy the invitation to the secretary for further procedures. Elena Marushiakova suggested in her previously email granting scholarships to young Romani scholars who are doing doctoral research. Elena Marushiakova also suggested that the Network should fund other summer schools or other events and it was a general agreement that in principle this could happen if these events are proposed and discussed by the SC.

The issue of encouraging young Romani scholars within the network was also addressed by Yaron Matras. Matras presented a proposal 'Plan to promote academic involvement of students and early career researchers of Romani background in Romani Studies and Other Fields of Academic Research' The plan consists of a series of measures (lecture series in Romani studies, Research training session, targeted dissemination of the academic papers by Romani scholars and internship for young Romani researchers (see the summary Annex 1).

The plan was discussed and most members agreed that a significant part of the remaining budget of the project should be dedicated to the activities outlined by the proposal. Thomas Acton expressed opposition, as he considered that the project was not an adequate response to the problem. Jean-Pierre Liégeois suggested that accreditation for the some components should be considered, for example to obtain ECTS credits for the training session. Michael Stewart outlined some experiences from an OSI

project he is involved; the Roma Access Program seeking response why most of the people involved in this project do not follow academic career. Enikő Vincze argued that the different domains of knowledge could be better integrated into the bridging the boundary between research and activism. Yaron Matras argued that the network and the proposal should be seen as complementary in the academic domain to other existing internships (ex. by EU institutions) or activities which have advocacy or activism as a main scope. Matras also noted that external financing of the activities could be involved. Kathrin Merkle noted that the idea of ‘using the network for networking purposes’ – at the core of this proposal would enable more active role of each member in enhancing the Roma participation in academia. The SC voted and approved the proposal.

Eva Sobotka considered that this proposal would be a right response to the concerns of Roma participation in the network. Elisabeth Tauber proposed to include a component of translation (to English) into the action plan and to compile with the input of all the SC members a list of proposed titles of short studies for translation. Peter Vermeersch urged that the website of the network should be turned into a hub for communication for researchers and information source on opportunities.

On the issue of the designing a new election system for the SC Thomas Acton suggested that a Single Transferable Voting system should replace the present voting system and Acton proposed to create a subcommittee which would work on the design of this new election system. Stewart suggested that a computerised STV (single transferable vote) system should be searched for and presented to the next meeting for consideration. Peter Vermeersch argued that by changing the election system will not guarantee that the result will be better representation of Romani scholars.

Laura Cassio argued that this could be guaranteed by some kind of quota for Roma with the agreement of those involved. An idea of a senior independent advisor with Romani origins was also suggested Yaron Matras argued that the source of the legitimacy of the network is drawn from the academic expertise of the members and an outsider advisor might not be beneficial for the network. Jean-Pierre Liégeois argued that the SC is already an advisory body and would create confusion to have advisor to the advisors. The proposal of an external advisor was rejected by the vote of the SC.

Thomas Acton proposed a motion that a rule for by-election should be introduced for the cases of resignation, death, or other reasons some of the members should be replaced in the SC the motion was not adopted. The SC decided by vote not to create a subcommittee for revising the election system and the proposal for the rules on by-election was voted down. Jean-Pierre Liégeois insisted also on the fact that the SC has to act as an interface and facilitator for instance between requests that are done by the institutions, or support proposed by institutions, and the members of the Network. It has to be clear that the SC does not work for itself or for the benefit of its members.

Elena Marushiakova circulated on email prior the meeting her proposals for the enhancement of the elections in order to make the SC more inclusive. Others also suggested that associated members should be granted voting right for the SC election and the complementing the present SC with two new positions which could be potentially filled by Roma candidates. Members of the SC discussed the proposals and agreed that in order to grant better representation for the younger scholars the associated members of the network should be able to participate in the elections. The connections with the Roma NGOs was also discussed and it was proposed that during the next meeting of the SC the ERIO and the ERTF could be invited, no final decision on this issue was taken.

Two new positions were proposed and created for the members elected among the associated members. In order to make the elections as inclusive as possible it was suggested that the recruitment of associated members, among them Roma young scholars should start and continue during the

summer period and the election for the two new positions should be organised in the Autumn (starting from September 15 2012, it was suggested).

II. During the afternoon.

The meeting hosted Mr Sixto Molina, Head of the Support Team during the afternoon session. He presented the main activities of the team led by him (http://www.coe.int/roma_srsg-support-team) and an overview of the Council of Europe work related to Roma in the present.

Mr Molina talked about the work of the Ad hoc Committee of Experts on Roma Issues (CAHROM) (<http://www.coe.int/cahrom1>) which produces thematic reports on the situation of the Roma in the CoE member states. He invited the members of the network to take actively part in some of these thematic reports, participate in the field visits and share their expertise with the Ad hoc Committee of Experts. In order to enable this it was agreed that the secretary of the network will be contacted and provided more information and asked for the contact details of the network members who might be involved. The next CAHROM meeting will be in November and Mr Molina invited the network to delegate some members.

Mr Molina argued that the new large projects managed by the CoE as the training of Roma Mediators (<http://coe-romed.org/>) and the good practices database (<http://goodpracticeroma.ppa.coe.int/en>) deserve the attention and could benefit from the input of the members of the SC and of the network as a whole. Members of the SC asked for more information on these projects and it was agreed that the Support Team will provide more details about the content and organisation of the project to the SC members via the network secretary.

At the initiative of Yaron Matras the CoE definition of the Roma was debated and it was suggested that the definition would benefit from an academically informed revision. The mediator project could also benefit from consultations with the extended network of scholars and the project could be improved. Jean-Pierre Liégeois did insist on the high potential of cooperation which exists between the CoE activities and the Network, and listed some concrete activities. He emphasized on the fact that this cooperation has to be on a clear thematic basis: for instance if one member of the Network is invited to next CAHROM meeting, as it was proposed, it has to be in line with his or her expertise about the theme discussed during this CAHROM meeting (housing, or employment, or discrimination, etc.) in order to present an academic view based on the existing knowledge.

Ms Eva Sobotka presented the FRA plan for evaluation for of the progress in the implementation of the National Strategies in the period 2013-2020. Members of the network can be involved in the process of evaluation conducted by the FRA.

In 2013 Marseilles is the European cultural capital. It was proposed for the network to organize some events; conferences or seminars and conduct the meeting there. Jean Pierre Liégeois has been assigned to role to keep contact with the organisers.

During the autumn of the 2012 the Platform of Roma Inclusion will be organised in Brussels. The SC agreed to organise some side event to this major meeting. Peter Vermeersch agreed to be the organiser of this event which might take the form of a thematic workshop or roundtable discussion where participants of the Platform will be invited.

László Fosztó presented the state of the travel grants for early career researchers with particular focus on the forthcoming conference of the Gypsy Lore Society in Istanbul. Members of the SC agreed those

scholars who have been accepted to the conference and submitted eligible application to the network secretary will be granted the travel grant (the situation of the applications is in the Annex 2).

The financial report was presented by Kathrin Merkle and the members agreed to produce a detailed action plan and budget overview, following agreement on the final SC meeting report. Agreement was achieved to finance from the remaining sources (around 100 000 €) English translations of important research to carried out in Italy, Germany, France, etc. into English, three internships of young Roma researchers in lead academic institutions as well as two research training seminars (see the annexed proposal), as well as the initially foreseen grants to students system.

The improvement of the website was discussed and the SC members agreed that the search facilities of the members' database should be improved in order to make the website more user friendly for outsiders. One way of doing this improvement is to apply a list of predefined keywords from which the members can select and in this way create categories. The creation and maintenance of thematic study groups was also discussed and it was decided to start these groups on a web-based forum application.

Annexes

1. Plan to promote academic involvement of students and early career researchers of Romani background in Romani Studies and Other Fields of Academic Research



Proposal Roma in
academiaReduced.do

2. List of travel grants for early career researchers



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Action plan¹ for the European Academic Network on Romani Studies (2012 – 2013)

The following main activities were discussed and adopted by the Scientific Committee during its 3rd meeting (Paris, June 26, 2012):

1. Produce a template detailing procedures for follow-up and evaluation of strategy documents and policy papers.

Date: September 2012

Persons responsible: Eva Sobotka and Elisabeth Tauber in collaboration with Laura Cassio

2. Compile and publish on-line the existing reviews on the National Strategies of Roma Integration written by members of the network.

Date: July – November 2012.

Persons responsible: László Fosztó (with the support of SC members)

3. Supplement the composition of the SC with two additional positions elected by and from the associated members, recruit new members with Romani background, and organise the election before the 4th meeting of the SC.

Date: July – November 2012.

Person responsible: László Fosztó (with the support of SC members)

4. Prepare a proposal for a policy-oriented round table (e.g. on “Participatory Action Research” on some other topic) in the framework of the forthcoming EU Roma Platform meeting or as an academic side-event (workshop/round-table).

Date: TBA (date is pending on the date of the Platform).

Persons responsible: Peter Vermeersch (with the support of László Fosztó)

5. Plan an event for 2013 in Marseilles (this city will be the Cultural Capital of Europe) which would involve the members of the Network and the SC.

¹ All the actions of the European Academic Network on Romani Studies will be carried out also in consultation with the Council of Europe and the European Commission the initiators and sponsors of this project.

Date: 2013 (date needs to be negotiated with the organisers)
Person responsible: Jean Pierre Liégeois (with the support of László Fosztó)

6. Provide the CoE SRSG Support Team with contact details and additional information needed in order to facilitate the participation of the members of the Network in the activities organised by the Team in order to engage members and the network in a number of on-going CoE activities (Alliance, CAHROM, country reports, database on good practices, Romed, etc).

Date: July – November 2012

Person responsible: László Fosztó (with the support of SC members)

7. Involve members of the Network into methodological discussions and monitoring exercises of the Fundamental Rights Agency.

Date: September 2012 – May 2013

Person responsible: Eva Sobotka (with the support of László Fosztó)

8. To develop and implement a strategic plan to promote academic involvement of students and early career researchers of Romani background (including Research training seminars with theoretical and practical component, targeted dissemination of research by early career Romani academics, and internships at academic research projects in Romani studies).

Date: August 2012 – May 2013

Person responsible: Yaron Matras (with the support of László Fosztó)

9. Compile a list of shorter articles (in languages other than English) proposed for translation. Organise and supervise the process of translation and on-line publication of a selection from these articles.

Date: August 2012 – May 2013

Person responsible: Elisabeth Tauber (with the support of the members of the SC and László Fosztó)

10. To improve and encourage the use of the website (romanistudies.eu) for communication of the Network with the creation of discussion fora for the members, dissemination of information about events, publications and call for papers etc.

Date: August 2012 – May 2013

Person responsible László Fosztó (with the support of SC members)