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**romanistudies.eu**  
European Academic Network on Romani Studies

7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Scientific Committee  
of the European Academic Network on Romani Studies  
(Paris, 7 November 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:** 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Scientific Committee

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

**Venue:** Council of Europe, Paris Office, 55 Avenue Kléber, 75784 Paris, Cedex 16, room 1

**Participants:**

- a) Members of the Scientific Committee: Dr Cătălin BERESCU, Dr Judit DURST, Professor Yaron MATRAS, Dr Eva SOBOTKA, Professor Michael STEWART, Dr Elisabeth TAUBER, and Professor Peter VERMEERSCH (apologised: Professor Colin CLARK, Professor Victor FRIEDMAN, Dr. Elena MARUSHIAKOVA, Dr. Ciprian NECULA, Dr. Veselin POPOV, Ms Elisabetta VIVALDI).
- b) Coordinator from the Council of Europe: Ms Kathrin MERKLE, administrative assistant Ms Katharina FOUQUET, Network Secretary Dr László FOSZTÓ (apologised: Ms Catherine MAGNANT, Coordinator from the European Commission).
- c) Special Guest: Mr Ulrich BUNJES, Special Representative of the Secretary General for Roma Issues.

**Executive summary:**

*Main outcomes of the meeting were:*

- a) Overview of the progress in implementing the action plan adopted at the 6<sup>th</sup> SC Meeting and preview of the work schedule for the forthcoming activities;
- b) General discussion about the latest developments with presentations on the current state of the work related to Roma in the Council of Europe;
- c) Exchange on the future of the Network and its development options which will ensure the preservation of the legacy of the Network Project;
- d) Evaluation of the proposals received for the Second Call for events Bridging the Gap between Academia and Policy Making;
- e) Presentation of the renewed Network website followed by discussions;
- f) Discussion on the Letter for support for Early Elections;
- g) Election of the Chair of the Scientific Committee for the forthcoming period until 31 May 2015.

The meeting day was divided into two morning sessions (9:00-11:00 and 11:15-13:00) and two afternoon sessions (14:30-16:00 and 16:00-18:00). Topics (a), (b) and (c) were discussed and decisions adopted during the morning sessions. The first afternoon session was fully dedicated to agenda item (d), and during the second session topics (e), (f) and (g) were addressed.

Special guest, Mr Ulrich BUNJES, attended the morning sessions. He participated in the overview of the activities of the Network, presented the latest developments in the Roma-related activities of the Council of Europe, with particular focus on the revised concept paper on the European Roma Institute. A consultation process based on this revised concept paper will be opened with the relevant actors in November 2014.

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

As part of the overview of the progress made in implementing the Network activities the following issues were discussed:

- 1) ***Meetings with the National Contact Points:*** These events have been initiated in several countries, as agreed during the previous SC meetings. Yet so far meetings have been successfully organised only in two of the selected countries: Italy and the United Kingdom. In the case of the UK the NCP has failed to follow up the action point even if initially agreed (see reports of these meetings published on the website). In Italy a follow-up workshop will be organised where representatives of the NCP will take part. In some of the other countries (Bulgaria, Slovakia and Czech Republic) the initiatives for meetings with the NCP were not successful or were considered unnecessary by the Networks' members. In yet others, (Hungary and Romania) these meetings have been postponed due to political changes in the past months (elections). In December 2014 a Nordic Meeting will be organised where Finnish, Swedish and Norwegian members of the Network will meet with the representatives of the NCPs from Finland and Sweden at the initiative of Dr Kimmo Granqvist.

**Decision:** The SC has decided to continue the action and encourage Network members to organise further NCP meetings. Ideally, these meetings should also take place in other EU Member states, in particular in counties with large Roma populations such as *Romania* and *Hungary*. SC members in these countries are encouraged to take a more active role in facilitating their organization.

**Responsible:** The Secretary of the Network with the support of SC members and Network members from the respective countries.

- 2) As agreed at the 6th SC meeting, the SC of the Network has prepared and circulated a position paper on the ***plans for a European Roma Institute***. The impact and constructive effect of the input from the Network have been acknowledged by Mr Ulrich BUNJES, and he invited the Network to further participate in the consultative process. Since the last SC meeting a revised plan for the ERI has been prepared by the Council of Europe and the new concept was discussed with Mr Ulrich BUNJES. Members of the SC pointed out that the principal points of critique raised by the SC in its statement on ERI have now been taken on board in the revised consultation document. Mr Ulrich Bunjes acknowledged that academics have also provided important input into the work of the Council of Europe in other domains (like the Education or Youth Sector). Working with the European Academic Network on Romani Studies can potentially help improve the CoE Roma-related activities, including the ERI. Network members are invited to send further input based on the revised concept paper which will be circulated within the Network.

**Decision:** It was agreed that the Network will continue to engage with the issued related to the plans of the European Roma Institute.

- 3) The ***7th meeting of the Ad hoc Committee of Experts on Roma Issues (CAHROM)*** was organised in Strasbourg (CoE Agora building, room G.03) on 14-16 May 2014. The Network was presented to the CAHROM Experts by the Chair of the SC, Dr Elisabeth Tauber; Professor Yaron Matras also made a presentation on the Network members' work related to the migration of Roma. Representatives of the Network attended bilateral meetings with Roma-related entities of the Council of Europe (detailed report is available; see also the [abridged report](#) of the 7th CAHROM meeting). Related to this action point Mr Ulrich BUNJES proposed that a solution

should be found for the Network to attend CAHROM meetings regularly as a permanent observer. For this it may be necessary that the Network has a legal statute or form.

**Decision:** This issue needs to be re-addressed during the discussion related to the future of the Network and the options for its development.

- 4) A follow-up discussion was held 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). The date of the training has been postponed twice and the training has not taken place so far.

**Decisions:** The feasibility of this needs to be checked with the Network coordinator from the European Commission.

**Responsible:** The Network Secretary will contact Ms Kathrin MERKLE and the EC coordinator to check the feasibility and potential date of this action.

- 5) At the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting it was decided that Professor Michael STEWART and Professor Peter VERMEERSCH would attend a series of *meetings in Brussels with different services of the European Commission* in order to identify potential collaboration with the Network. As part of this action they attended a meeting on 9 September 2014 with DG Justice, Unit D.4: Non discrimination policies and Roma coordination. This meeting reconfirmed that DG Justice is open for input and invites members of the Network to share their comments on the progress of the implementation of the National Integration Strategies. In particular they are keen to receive detailed local information about best/worst practices as part of their annual returns examining the national strategies. They hope to have a longer period on this occasion for members to write in. They are also interested in – but have no funding for – short policy oriented seminars/presentations on issues of relevance to them. A very brief Skype presentation (not exceeding 60 minutes) by (a) Network member/s might be envisaged.

**Decision:** The Network Secretary will continue to keep the members informed about the scheduled progress reports prepared by DG Justice, circulate the invitation and template (if available), collect and forward the inputs, and archive them on the website.

**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.)

- 6) At the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting it was decided that a *briefing paper on the ‘Roma as target group for public policies’* will be elaborated based on the discussions which took place on the Network email-list. This paper has not been produced to this point. The necessity of this paper has been revisited and the idea reconfirmed. The edited discussion-threads from the email list have not been published. It was reconfirmed that Dr Judit DURST will edit and submit the extracted discussions threads until December 2014.

**Decisions:** The briefing paper will be elaborated based on the edited archives of the discussions exported from the email-list. The archives of the discussions will be published on the website of the Network.

**Responsible:** Dr Judit DURST will edit and submit the extracted discussions threads and the Secretary will obtain the consent of the messages’ authors before the discussions are posted on the website by 20 December 2014. The briefing paper will be prepared by Dr Eva SOBOTKA with the assistance of Professor Yaron MATRAS.

- 7) The *implementation of the new design and functionalities of the Network Website* was presented and discussed. The Network Secretary presented the website prototype which is hosted on the server of the University of Manchester. Following the approval of the prototype (confirmed by Memo 1.) and the redesigned and revised functionality of the website (Memo 2.) the website is ready to go online.

**Decisions:** The website will be connected to the domain name <http://romanistudies.eu/> and put online.

**Responsible:** The Secretary will be in contact with Ms Hazel GARDNER in order to implement the domain and test its functionality. The Network Secretary will do the day-to-day management of the website (updates, content development, etc.)

- 8) The progress in *initiating a Network Blog* was discussed. Professor Colin CLARK was appointed as Editor at the 6<sup>th</sup> SC meeting. The call for posts was circulated among the Network members and post-proposals have started to be sent to the Editor and Secretary.

**Decision:** A Blog will be published as agreed earlier once the website is connected to the domain name and publicly accessible.

**Responsible:** The set-up and testing of the Blog will be supervised by the Secretary with the technical support from Ms Hazel GARDNER. Professor Colin CLARK is the responsible editor of the Blog with secretarial support.

- 9) The role and *future of the email-list* was discussed. The email-list is restricted to the Network members at present. A potential migration or re-initialisation of the email-list as part of the H-Net Networks <https://networks.h-net.org/> has been discussed, which could enhance the visibility of the email-group and the Romani Studies in general putting these into the context of other prestigious academic discussion networks.

**Decision:** It was decided that the email list will remain a closed and moderated forum as part of the Yahoo-Groups.

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

- 10) *The Network project's future and development options* after the end of the second phase of the joint programme in May 2015 were addressed. The project coordinator informed the SC that the sponsors will not provide an extension to the project after the current funding period ends in May 2015. This is because EC projects of this kind are generally limited to a maximum of two funding periods. There was a discussion of the options for the Network after the funding period. It was generally agreed that the Network has been successful in creating valuable resources. The project coordinator reported that the policy organisations wish to continue to make use of these resources and that they should be preserved. Thus the SC discussed how to ensure that the main achievements of the Network can be preserved and developed. It was agreed that Network members should continue to engage in collaborative activities and it was pointed out that a range of funding options are available to them through open calls.

**Decision:** The Secretary will circulate information on the 2015 calls from the Erasmus Plus programme ([http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/discover/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/discover/index_en.htm)) and further information received from the coordinators. It was decided that actions will be taken to preserve the project's legacy after the end of the funding period. (1) the email list will be maintained as it is, László Fosztó will continue to act as moderator, (2) the Network website and expert database will be hosted on the University of Manchester server, (3) the present membership of the email

list and expert database will be maintained; members wishing to opt out can do so by notifying the moderator, (4) the Network will be kept open to new members based on the same criteria of full membership and associated membership that have been applied so far. New applications will be submitted to the list moderator and reviewed by a validation committee, the initial composition of which is the following: Dr Eva Sobotka, Dr Judit Durst, Professor Yaron Matras, Professor Michael Stewart, Dr Elisabeth Tauber, and Dr László Fosztó. In due course the committee may be extended, (5) the membership will be invited to think of ways in which the Network and its resources can be further developed and promoted, (6) the website and expert database will be recognised as the EANRS legacy and will acknowledge the founding role of the Council of Europe and the European Commission (2011-2015).

- 11) Following the publication of the *Second Call for Bridging the Gap between Academia and Policy Makers events* the Network Secretariat received **10 proposals**. These have been evaluated by the evaluation committee formed by SC members not involved in the proposals as organisers or speakers. The procedure of evaluation has been based on the criteria of evaluation published [in the call](#).

#### **Decisions:**

The following proposals have been offered funding:

- 1) **Victor Leggio:** Safeguarding Roma children: is it a cultural problem? (5.000€);
- 2) **Olga Magano:** Social policies on schooling levels of Ciganos/Gypsies in Portugal and the challenges posed by the National Ciganos/Gypsies Communities Integration Strategy (5.260€);
- 3) **Chiara Manzoni:** Pathways of Roma Housing Inclusion: Practices and Tools between Research and Policy (11.000€);
- 4) **Vita Petrušauskaitė:** Roma integration on local level: discussion of academics and mayoral candidates in Vilnius (1.700€);
- 5) **Márton Rövid:** The role of informal education in the social inclusion of Roma (2.500€);
- 6) **Ioana Vrăbiescu:** Roma as a political subject: Between Citizenship Status, National Minority and Vulnerable Group (5.300€) – Subject to the submission of a revised list of confirmed participants.

**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 offered funding about the budget request and initiate the practical organisation of the events with the help and support of Ms Katharina FOUQUET.

- 12) The possibility of continuing to offer *Early Career Grants* was discussed and it was agreed that the call should remain open.

**Decision:** The Call for grant application for Early Career researcher will remain open until the end of the present financing cycle within the limits of the funds available (approx. 5.000€). In line with the requirements of the RAN contract, all activities funded must have been concluded by the end of the project's implementation period (31 May 2015).

- 13) The *organisation of a Final Event for the Network Project* was discussed. The idea of this final event was very much welcomed by the Council of Europe colleagues participating in the meeting. This event would serve as a forum to highlight the achievements and legacy of the Network and present the colleagues from the Council of Europe, European Commission and other relevant participants with the resources available.

**Decision:** It was agreed that a final showcase event of the Network Project will be organised in Strasbourg using the resources still available for this activity (approx. 30.000€). It was decided to organise the event in conjunction with the 8<sup>th</sup> and last SC meeting. The date for the closing event has been proposed for late April 2015, the exact date needs to be confirmed with the Council of Europe and European Commission colleagues.

**Responsibles:** Dr Eva SOBOTKA, Dr Judit DURST and Professor Yaron MATRAS have been appointed to develop the concept and format of the event. The practical aspects of the event will be organised by the Secretary and Ms Katharina FOUQUET in close collaboration with Ms Kathrin MERKLE.

- 14) The *Letter for support for Early Elections* was discussed and it was agreed that no Early Elections should be organised at this point.

**Decisions:** A reply to the letter should be sent to Ms Anna Mirga and also be circulated among the Network members. The text of the letter agreed is the following:

*“Dear Anna Mirga,*

*The Scientific Committee in its meeting in Paris discussed the letter of support for election of the SC of the EANRS that you forwarded. We took this first opportunity today after our last SC meeting to discuss its contents and suggestions.*

*All members present agreed that there are no grounds to call new elections at this point in time. The committee has received a clear mandate from the great majority of the membership at the last elections. The letter you sent was signed by less than 10% of the membership and therefore the majority remains in place.”*

- 15) The issue of the elections for the Scientific Committee planned for February 2015 was discussed and it was agreed that since the funding of the project comes to an end in May 2015 it makes no sense to have a new committee elected for the last 3 months.

**Decision:** The present SC will take responsibility and oversee the implementation of the activities of the Network until the end of this project cycle (31 May 2015).

- 16) The election of the *Chair of the Scientific Committee* was carried out.

**Decision:** Dr Elisabeth TAUBER was renewed as Chair of the SC for the next period until 31 May 2015.