

Report on the  
**Consultation meeting with representatives of the civil society organisations active in  
the field of Roma inclusion**  
- draft-

Prepared by the Network Secretary

Meeting organised by the European Commission, DG Justice  
Unit D.4: Non discrimination policies and Roma coordination

**Place:** European Commission, Rue Luxembourg 46, 1000 Brussels, Meeting room Falcone Borsellino (ground floor)

**Time:** 10 December 2014 (10:00 – 12:30 AM)

**Participants:** Ms Salla Saastamoinen (DG Justice), Ms Lina Papamichalopoulou (DG Justice), Ms Ilona Negro (DG Justice), Ms Jana Balazova (DG Justice), Ms Lavinia Banu (DG Justice), Ms Dora Husz (DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion), Mr Dominique Bé (DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion), Ms Szilvia Kálmán (DG Education and Culture), Mr Frank Pierobon (DG Education and Culture), Mr Andor Urmos (DG Regional Policy) invited representatives of the NGOs, international organisations, Roma Policy Coalitions and the Academic Network (about 25 persons in total).

### **Summary**

The main purpose of the meeting was to discuss the contribution by the civil society and academia in the implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategies, to update the organisations present on the process, template, and deadline of the progress report prepared by DG Justice on the implementation of the National Integration Strategies, to continue the preparations for the European Roma Platform, and discuss the proposal for establishing a structured dialogue on Roma inclusion policy and funding between the European Commission and the civil society.

### **Highlights:**

- 1) The participatory meeting with stakeholders on the European Platform for Roma Inclusion held on 25 November was a success and the process of consultation on the topics and format of the forthcoming Platform (spring 2015) will be continued. DG Justice will convene the next meeting in mid-January (14 January 2015 is proposed).
- 2) DG Justice reported on the meeting with the National Contact Points held on November. The common indicator framework (S-P-O indicators) prepared by the Working Party facilitated by the FRA – European Agency for Fundamental Rights was shared with the NCPs and three Member States will implement and test this indicator framework in their progress report due in 2015. It is planned that the indicator framework will be introduced by all Member States for the next reporting period (due in 2016).
- 3) The template and the deadline for submitting contribution to the progress report on 2014 for the implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategies was presented and discussed. The contributions are invited by 30 January 2015.
- 4) The proposal for establishing a structured dialogue on Roma inclusion policy and funding between the European Commission and the civil society submitted jointly by 13 civil society organisations was discussed in particular regarding the (1) establishment of a (pro) Roma Civil Society Working Group at European level, (2) facilitating dialogue with the NCPs and civil society actors, and (3) the dialogue with the implementation of the existing policies.

## Detailed report

1.

The European Commission DG Justice organised a participatory meeting with stakeholders on the European Platform for Roma Inclusion. This meeting was held on 25 November. The report prepared on this meeting by the DG Justice is accessible [here](#). In general the meeting has been evaluated as a success and the consultations between the civil society actors and the EC should continue on the exact format and content on the forthcoming European Platform for Roma Inclusion. (For previous Platforms see the website of the European Commission [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma/roma-platform/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma/roma-platform/index_en.htm)).

The main issue of the discussion was to improve the possibilities of the dialogue between the stakeholders at the EC level, the National Contact Points and the civil society actors attending the European Platform for Roma Inclusion. Past experience has shown that the big number of participants and the format of plenary presentations could not satisfy the needs of for the dialogue by the civil society. Alternative forms (ex. a number of smaller workshops) were proposed and the civil society will also be included into the process of agenda setting of the forthcoming platform.

The date of the Platform (as originally planned for February) has been postponed and most probably will take place in March 2015. DG Justice will convene the next consultative meeting in mid-January (14 January 2015 is proposed) a draft agenda of this Platform will be prepared and discussed in details during the meeting in January.

2.

The Meeting of the European Commission with the National Contact Points was held in Rome in November. DG Justice reported that the common indicator framework (S-P-O indicators) prepared by the Working Party facilitated by the FRA – European Agency for Fundamental Rights was shared with the NCPs. (See details of the Working Party on the FRA website: <http://fra.europa.eu/en/project/2013/multi-annual-roma-programme>). It was agreed at the NCP meeting that three Member States will implement and test this indicator framework in their progress report due in 2015.

In the present progress reports on the implementation of the National Roma Inclusion Strategies are prepared by the DG Justice based on the assessment they receive from the governments of the EU Member States, the shadow reports prepared by the civil society organisations and inputs they receive based on the invitation and template which is distributed to civil society and the Academic Network. Reporting on the NRIS will be mandatory for the Member States starting from 2015 based on the EU Council Recommendation (See [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-13-1226\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-1226_en.htm)).

It is planned that the indicator framework will be introduced by all Member States for the next reporting period (due in 2016).

3.

DG Justice has prepared a template for inputs to the progress in implementing in 2014 the NRIS by the Member States. The template and the deadline for submitting contribution to the progress report was presented and discussed. Civil society organisation and members of the academic network are invited to submit their assessment.

The template is covering six main areas: (1) Dialogue with the regional and local authorities, (2) Dialogue with the Roma civil society, (3) Allocation of European Structural and Investment Funds for Roma inclusion (4) Reinforcing the role of the National Contact Points, (5) Fighting discrimination effectively, (6) Monitoring transformation and enabling policy adjustment and additionally (7) Main challenges and successes and (8) Additional information.

Completing any of the sections is welcome by DG Justice, there is no obligation to cover all the areas and sending inputs is voluntary. Deadline for sending contributions is 30 January 2015.

4.

The work of the European Roma Policy Coalition (<http://romapolicy.eu/>) has been presented by member of this structure attending the meeting. This coalition has connected a number of independent NGOs (Amnesty International, ERGO Network, European Network Against Racism, European Roma Information Office, European Roma Rights Centre, Fundación Secretariado Gitano, Minority Rights Group International, Open Society Foundations, Policy Center for Roma and Minorities, Roma Education Fund) and by this coalition they were successful in promoting common issues.

Following up this example a brainstorming session was held based on a discussion paper prepared and supported by a number of NGOs. These are: Amnesty International, Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME), Eurochild, Eurodiaconia, European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN), European Foundation Centre (EFC), European Network against Racism (ENAR), European Public Health Alliance (EPHA), European Roma Grassroots Organisations Network (ERGO Network), European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC), European Roma and Travellers Forum (ERTF), Fundación Secretariado Gitano (FSG), TernYpe International Roma Youth Network, Open Society European Policy Institute (OSEPI).

The discussion paper focused on four main areas: (1) Reform of the Roma Platform meetings to achieve real political progress, (2) Reinforced cooperation between national Roma contact points (NRCs) and civil society actors, (3) Dialogue on the implementation of existing policy measures and regulations, (4) Dialogue on more effective and efficient spending of EU funding for Roma. Points 1-3 (4 – was reserved for a separate meeting when it will be discussed in full details) have been presented and discussed by the participants and the feed-back of the representatives of the different DGs have been collected.

The general conclusion was that the different DGs of the EC have long and mutually rewarding cooperation with civil society organisations and in some domains the knowledge embodied by the civil society is very valuable and indispensable for the policy process. The exchange in the domain of the Roma inclusion should be continued and improved.

Already there are some results in some domains: for example the reform of the Roma Platform is underway, and National Level Roma Platforms involving the National Contact Points will be encouraged and established. The experiences of the European Academic Network on Romani Studies in these domains have been presented and could be used for making the civil society meetings with the NCPs successful.