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Roma Issues

Council of Europe

## Employment of Roma: tailored policies and good practices

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# Recent developments in the field of Roma\* at the Council of Europe

- High Level Meeting on Roma and Strasbourg Declaration, 20 October 2010
- Nomination of Jeroen Schokkenbroek as Special Representative of the Secretary General for Roma Issues – more transversal approach within the CoE (e.g. with the Congress for Local and Regional Authorities)
- ROMED European Training Programme of (Roma) Mediators (in education, health and **employment**)
- National training of lawyers/judges on European Roma-related case law
- Database on practices and good practices
- Dosta! awareness-raising campaign against prejudices and stereotypes towards Roma
- Roma women, child, and youth activities
- For further information and Roma-related documents, see [http://www.coe.int/t/dc/files/themes/roma/default\\_EN.asp?](http://www.coe.int/t/dc/files/themes/roma/default_EN.asp?)
- \*: The term “Roma” used at the Council of Europe refers to Roma, Sinti, Kale and related groups in Europe, including Travellers and the Eastern groups (Dom and Lom), and covers the wide diversity of the groups concerned, including persons who identify themselves as “Gypsies”.

# Intergovernmental activities and CM Recommendations on Roma

- 2011: the Ad hoc Committee of Experts on Roma Issues (CAHROM) succeeds to the Committee of Experts on Roma and Travellers (MG-S-ROM). The CAHROM will *inter alia* focus on an exchange of experience between member States in implementing Roma policies.
- 6 Recommendations adopted by the Committee of Ministers on Roma:
  - Rec(2009)4 and (200)4 on education
  - Rec (2008)5 National comprehensive policies for Roma
  - Rec(2006)10 on access to health care
  - Rec(2005)4 on improving housing conditions
  - Rec(2004)14 on movement and encampment
  - **Rec(2001) 17 on economic and employment situation**
- **MG-S-ROM implementation report of Rec(2001)17 highlights policies and good practices in member States in the field of Roma employment.**
- **Report [doc. CAHROM(2011)7] written by the Chair of the MG-S-ROM (Louiza Kyriakaki, Greece) based on information submitted by member States and presented to the CAHROM in March 2011.**

# Report: general remarks

- Recognising that the employment and thus the economic situation of the Roma population in Europe is further burdened by all social components of exclusion and in particular discrimination (e.g. in the field of education and vocational training), this report draws attention to the ways the principles and recommendations set out in CM Recommendation Rec(2001)17 have been implemented in practice.
- This report gathers and presents to the extent possible, employment practices which could prove useful for the combat of discrimination through social inclusion policies with a particular focus on economic empowerment and thus, integration.
- Combating discrimination has been often pursued through positive discrimination measures in national employment policies targeting disadvantaged groups of the population, and in particularly the Roma, as one of the most vulnerable groups in all European states.
- In the context of the EU, given that competence in this area lies with Member States, the latter have most commonly transposed into domestic law the general EU framework for the combat of discrimination as regards employment.

# Examples of policies and good practices in Member States (1)

- Introduction of an employment chapter in national comprehensive programmes/strategies/action plans for Roma (in about 25 member states, including 12 Roma Decade countries), sometimes combined with an anti-discrimination chapter (cross-cutting priority of the Roma Decade).
- Finland: the Ministry of Employment and Economy undertook the first comprehensive research concerning means to improve Roma employability in 2008. A doctoral dissertation concerning the Finnish Roma entrepreneurs and the prejudices and discrimination faced by them was published by the University of Jyväskylä in 2009. Among the factors identified: low basic educational level, lack of vocational education, and work experience, special features of their culture, as well as the negative attitudes towards them in the labour market with experienced discrimination by the Roma communities while trying to access the labour market.
- Hungary: Sociological surveys indicate that the Roma's position in the labour market has worsened dramatically after the fall of communism. Secondly, their unfavourable position in the labour market was aggravated by ethnic-based discrimination, according to the Kemény research. Finally it is stressed that the unfavourable employment situation for Roma women is deemed to be related to early marriages, lack of suitable qualifications and gender-based discrimination.

# Examples of policies and good practices in Member States (2)

- Ireland: the National Action Plan Against Racism (2005-2008) provided for equal access of the Traveller community to employment through a number of positive actions implemented by a number of County Councils in co-operation with the National training and Employment Authority (Fás) for counteracting the effects suffered by Travellers on the grounds of discrimination.
- Slovakia: the '*Social Inclusion in the Tatras*' project encourages active job search by creating employment opportunities for jobless people in segregated Roma communities, unqualified and homeless individuals, and those over 50, in the Poprad and Levoča districts.
- Bulgaria: Roma mediators in local employment offices.
- Czech Republic: the "*Social Friendly Employers*" model promotes equal opportunities by employers/authorities.
- Slovenia: the *Roma Employment Centre* provides Roma with employment opportunities, acquisition of better working habits, additional skills and qualifications, while on the same time, promotes Roma relationships with the employers with a view to eliminating prejudices.

# Examples of policies and good practices in Member States (3)

- Romania: the *Roma House project* (implemented by Romano Cher) aims at adapting Roma traditional crafts/skills to existing demand in the labour market. Job fairs. Posts reserved for vulnerable groups, including Roma.
- Greece: allocation by Law (since 2009) of 5% of the posts available in open-air markets for Roma.
- Italy: the project *“The long road of Sinti and Roma: pathways to employment* funded by the Emilia Romagna Region (700,520 €) and implemented by the 2nd largest Confederation of Trade Unions in Italy (CISL) under the sector “Inclusion in the labour market – tackling ethnic and racial discrimination”.
- Spain: the Fundación Secretariado Gitano (FSG) runs a *multi-regional operational programme for combating discrimination* under the ACCEDER programme (2000-2006) in 13 autonomous communities. Project extended to the period 2007-2013 using the European Structural Funds (ESF). It includes a number of initiatives aimed at the integration into the labour market of people facing particular difficulties while accessing the labour market (being excluded or at risk of exclusion from the labour market), including a campaign *“Employment makes us equal”*. A permanent Observatory on employment for the Gypsy population was established in the course of the ACCEDER project under the OP for the combat of discrimination.

# Input from international actors

- Council of Europe: ROMED European training programme for (Roma) mediators (education, school and employment). 400 to 1,000 mediators to be trained in at least 15 beneficiary countries in 2011. ECRI General Policy Recommendations (including forthcoming one on Combating Anti-Tsiganism). Concrete projects empowering Roma women (e.g. Kilt by Roma Women).
- The Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB): a multilateral development bank with a social vocation contributes through loan schemes to strengthen social integration in Europe by attacking the roots of exclusion while promoting preservation of jobs, improving living conditions in urban and rural areas.
- European Union: EU programmes and budget lines (e.g. ESF, ACCEDER, EQUAL, PROGRESS) and EU framework for national Roma integration policies. FRA EU-MIDIS survey on discrimination, including towards Roma).
- Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 Initiative: political commitment of 12 governments to improve the socio-economic status and social inclusion of Roma, focusing on 4 priority areas (education, employment, health, and housing), and 3 cross-sectoral areas (poverty, discrimination, and gender mainstreaming).
- World Bank: published a study on the 4 country "economic costs of Roma exclusion" ([http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTROMA/Resources/Economic\\_Costs\\_Roma\\_Exclusion\\_Note\\_Final.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTROMA/Resources/Economic_Costs_Roma_Exclusion_Note_Final.pdf)).  
The World Bank also administrates the Decade Trust Fund (DTF) supports two principal types of activities: (i) cross-country technical support, training and workshops in the context of refining and implementing the national Decade action plans and the cross-cutting issues of poverty, discrimination and gender, and (ii) monitoring and evaluation of the Decade implementation across the Decade countries.
- United Nations: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) or the promotion of inclusive development and poverty reduction as guided by the Millennium Development Goals ([http://www.undp.org/poverty/focus\\_intro.shtml](http://www.undp.org/poverty/focus_intro.shtml)).



# Some conclusions and remaining challenges

- **Noting the “circle-point” between poverty and discrimination**, in which the lack of access to regular or permanent employment due to the discrimination or social exclusion faced by a large number of Roma communities in most European states - lead to even bigger poverty and social exclusion, the conditions must be set for concrete measures to be undertaken, so that the labour market creates **equal job opportunities** and maintain these in the long-run for the most vulnerable groups of the population amongst which the Roma.
- Discrimination and racism in employment are **indirectly** dealt with by member states through **proactive employment policies**. There are **barely no particular measures addressing directly racism** against Roma in the employment.
- A number of Member states provide programmes for Roma employability, employment opportunities and Roma entrepreneurship (e.g. training, micro-credits, etc.). They help indirectly to lift exclusion from the labour market. However, they do not **redress existing discrimination** in employment faced by Roma.
- **Actions undertaken are often time-limited** (short-term projects). Need to monitor the impact of measures/programmes in the long-term.
- **Anti-discrimination training** of persons involved in recruitment decisions in the private and public sectors and in national employment services should be encouraged. Training should combine information on statutory obligations and on good practices in governmental and company policies, with respect to equal treatment.
- **Roma cultural diversity should be valued**, encouraged and promoted at national and local level. Particular attention should be paid to tailored, though comprehensive policies, towards diversity which may offer an added value to the fight against persistent unemployment.
- Effective employment of policies is a continuing challenge necessitating the establishment of adequate information dissemination channels so that awareness' raising is promoted as regards the rights and the duties for and while accessing the labour market, as well as on **anti-discrimination activities and intermediary support mechanisms** so that eventually, the development of Roma employability bears more social rights and lift dependence.