



Education des enfants roms en Europe  
Education of Roma children in Europe



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## **The innovatory practices in the field of education of Roma children**

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### Introduction

Over the last few decades, the international community has sought to apply the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, particularly with regard to access to school education. Despite the progress made, there are still, at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, some 875 million adults who are illiterate and over 100 million children of primary and secondary school age in the world who do not have access to a school.

Many of those who do not have access to a school belong to ethnic minorities, despite the fact that numerous efforts have been made and are still being made to give them access to a school. This study concerns the efforts made to give access to school education to members of a particular ethnic minority, the Roma. The European Union and the Council of Europe have been active in the education field for some twenty years now, in particular on the basis of Resolution 1989 and Recommendation 2000 (4) on the education of Roma/Gypsy children in Europe.

It is obviously necessary to provide education for the Roma minority. Members of this minority who have a sound basic education have more opportunity to contribute to the economic development of their country and the possibility to be involved in the decisions taken in their community and in society as a whole. Nevertheless, there are still numerous obstacles to the integration of the Roma minority in schools and education in general: political and institutional problems, social and economic factors, cultural obstacles relating to traditions, and the organisation of education systems.

At European level, and given the social and political differences in the countries in which the Roma live, various factors have a vital influence on the current situation:

- Roma parents' low income and low level of education, which means that they can neither invest in education nor demand that their children continue their studies.
- The very large number of early marriages among the Roma population obliges adolescents to take on responsibilities at a very early age, which does not give them the opportunity to complete their education.
- The lack of knowledge of the official language of the country where they are living, which prevents children from continuing their studies.
- The geographical location (far from towns) and the low standard of most schools attended by Roma children where teachers are not interested in working with children from this minority.

However, investing in access to education seems to be a decisive factor in helping members of this minority escape from the situation in which they find themselves. Indeed, a well-educated person has more chance of becoming independent and of not being a burden but making a contribution to society.

We now need to consider what remains to be done to find a satisfactory solution to the difficulties which the schooling of the Roma minority continues to pose. According to the framework document on which the project is originally based, the work consists in:

- Identifying **the type of education required for Roma**, in the light of the particularities of the Roma community and its ensuing needs;
- Identifying **the criteria for defining the "innovatory practices"** proposed by the European Working Group on Gypsy Education (a group comprising only Roma with experience in this field);
- **Gathering examples of initiatives** which meet these criteria, with a view to gradually building up a regularly updated European handbook of the activities carried out, which could be distributed in a printed form and an electronic form (CD and Internet).

## THE POPULATION WHOM WE SPEAK

### THE ROMA 'S ORIGIN

Identifying the origin of the Roma has been a major challenge to historians for many years. Indeed, it is impossible to pinpoint the exact date of their arrival in Europe, as each group took a different route. Nevertheless it is now broadly accepted that this nomadic people originally came from India. One of the most convincing arguments presented by researchers is undeniably the fact that there is a close link between their language and Sanskrit.

Ancient chronicles often spoke of travelling performers who entertained feudal lords, dancers dressed in glittering costumes, musicians travelling towards Europe and the Balkans. Groups which differed from other people in their lifestyle, their language and traditions were to be seen in Europe, travelling from one place to the next. After spending many years in Greece, these peoples split up: some of them travelled up the Danube valley and "settled" in Central Europe, while the others set off towards Armenia, the Caucasus and Russia<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Jean-Pierre LIEGEOIS, 1983, *Les Tsiganes*, Paris, La Découverte.

Nowadays, Roma can be found just about everywhere in Europe, especially in Central Europe, but also in western parts of Asia, in the Americas and even Australia. Wherever they live, they all remain deeply attached to their traditions and customs.

- ***A variety of names***

Although the generic term "Bohémiens" was automatically used in France, these perpetual migrants were given a variety of names by the inhabitants of the countries they travelled through. In Spain, for example, they are referred to as "gitanos" – because it was supposed they came from Egypt – a word which became "gypsies" in English and "gitans" in French. In the Balkans they are referred to as the "ciganie" in Slavic languages, which was translated into French as "tsigane" and into German as "Zigeuner".

The name "tsigane" comes from a Greek expression (atsingani), meaning "he who does not want to touch or to be touched". The only name the Roma call themselves is "Rom" (masculine, singular, meaning "man" and also "husband"). They also use the term "Romni" (the feminine version). The word Rom usually refers to the whole population and it is non-Roma who use all the other names to identify them<sup>2</sup>.

- ***Travellers***

One of the main characteristics of the Roma, Sinti and Kale is that they are a people without roots, who are perpetually on the move. Although the wagons and horse-drawn caravans of the past have now been replaced by automobiles, the Roma are still travellers by tradition (even if some families have chosen to settle in one place or another). Unfortunately, however, people have always distrusted and are still suspicious of strangers who simply pass through their town or part of the country. Because they refuse to settle somewhere, Roma are considered to be outsiders, isolated within their own culture, traditions and customs. The fact that adult Roma are often not interested in having a paid profession but prefer to do casual work, usually with their fellow Roma, underlines this isolation.

- ***A persecuted people***

### ***The holocaust***

Roma, Sinti and Kale did not always choose their nomadic way of life but were forced into or encouraged to continue this lifestyle because over the centuries they were subjected to exclusion or persecution in every country they lived in. The holocaust which the Nazi authorities inflicted on them during the Second World War was one of the most painful episodes in the history of the

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<sup>2</sup> Jean-Pierre LIEGEOIS, 1971, *Mutation Tsigane*, Paris, Le Seuil.

Roma. In English the word "holocaust" means "hell or destruction" or rather "victims of the flames". The word originally comes from the Greek word "holokaustos", literally meaning "totally burnt".

The Gypsies were deported *en masse* to the concentration camps. One can therefore but pay tribute to the courage, determination and constancy with which this people has managed to preserve its identity and its culture.

Adolf Hitler came to power in Germany on 30 January 1933. The first concentration camp came into operation in Dachau, near Munich, on 9 March 1933, five weeks after he became the Chancellor of the Reich. During this period, the concentration camps were used to strengthen the nationalist regime. Some sixty camps were set up in Germany, the best-known of which are Dachau, Sachsenhausen, Buchenwald, Flossenburg, Mauthausen and Ravensbruck.

Among the people imprisoned in these camps were those who opposed the regime, that is communists, trade unionists and socialists. Following this, there were mass arrests of Jews, Sinti and Roma, homosexuals, Jehovah's witnesses, "asocials" and other people whom the Nazis considered a threat to the German people on grounds of social or biological racism. From 1939 to 1941, the camp system continued to expand. New mass extermination camps were built on the territories occupied by the Germans, for example Neuengamme, Natzwelier, Gross-Rosen and Majdanek. The concentration camp at Auschwitz in occupied Poland opened on 14 June 1940. A year later, its capacity had increased by 100,000 prisoners, following the construction of Auschwitz Birkenau. This took place as part of what the Nazis called "the final solution to the Jewish problem" and of the Roma genocide.

### ***Women and children in the concentration camps***

In 1939, a concentration camp for women was built at Ravensbruck. That was where the first children, Sinti and Roma children, were deported with their mothers. Children were also born in the concentration camps. Approximately 870 children were born at Ravensbruck. As the babies were subjected to the same dreadful conditions as the adults (hunger, cold and vermin), virtually none survived for longer than four weeks in the concentration camps. Only eight babies survived at Ravensbruck, for example.

### ***Survival***

It will never be possible to know exactly how many people were exterminated in the concentration camps – the number has been estimated at a minimum of 1.8 to 2 million people – nor the exact number of survivors who were released from these camps or during the death marches, or who were able to escape amid the chaos of the last days of the Nazi reign. A large number of these prisoners died just after their release. Others were obliged to spend a long time in

a hospital or sanatorium before being able to return to their homes. Most of those who came out of the camps alive no longer had a homeland or a family<sup>3</sup>.

- ***Different groups making up the Roma population***

The Roma who arrived in Central and Eastern Europe often added patronymics to their name, to show which region they came from, their religion or their profession. Generally speaking, the different migratory flows and the mobility of some families gave rise to many different ethnic groups and sub-groups<sup>4</sup>.

**Kalderash, Lovari and Tchurara** Roma were formerly tinkers, horse traders or dealers. **The Vlax** were one of the most important sub-groups in terms of numbers. The **Yerlii**, who were nomadic for many years, became sedentary when they arrived in the Balkans at the time when it was part of the Ottoman Empire. The **Rudara**, who were at one time to be found almost everywhere, now live in small villages, in districts called "mahala". The vast majority of these groups live in Eastern Europe where most of them lead sedentary lives, even if a small number still lead a nomadic lifestyle (e.g. the **Koshicharija**).

The **Sinti** and '**Manouches**' have lived in Western Europe for a very long time. The **Gypsies**, who very quickly became sedentary, belong to Spain and Portugal or the South of France. Then there are also the **Yenish** (particularly in France, Switzerland and Belgium), who simply refer to themselves as travellers (**Voyageurs or gens du voyage**).

As Patrick Williams<sup>5</sup>, the anthropologist, pointed out, this even finer distinction between these groups reinforces cohesion between the members of a community or family.

- ***Organisation of the family***

*"Nanaj chave nanaj baxt"*

Roma children and Roma adults do not live in separate worlds. Roma children quickly learn to mix with the adults. The adults respect the children and the children respect the adults. The extended family supervises the children's conduct to ensure that they are well brought-up and that they respect the family. Roma families are very proud of their children.

The children learn by taking a full part in the social activities of the community and by following the example of their elders. Immersion in Roma society enables the children to learn the

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<sup>3</sup> Swiss Foundation supporting the victims of the Holocaust, *Visages de victimes de l'Holocauste*.

<sup>4</sup> Jean-Pierre LIEGEOIS, *Tsiganes et Voyageurs*, Dossier pour une formation interculturelle des enseignants, Conseil de l'Europe, Strasbourg, 1985.

<sup>5</sup> Patrick WILLIAMS, 1989, *Tsiganes: identité, évolution*, Paris, Syros.

behaviour that is expected of them. From a very early age, the children are also brought up by their grand-parents (who are often more indulgent than the mothers).

The way in which Roma children are brought up by their family depends on their sex. The boys work alongside their fathers and the girls stay with their mothers. Each sex has different obligations. The boys learn their father's trade by helping him (for example in a blacksmith's family, the son goes out looking for metal to recycle and looks after the forge bellows), while the girls must learn first and foremost to become a good wife and a good daughter-in-law. They help their mother to look after the younger children, to prepare the meals, to sell products at the market, etc.

Girls must remain virgins until they get married for the sake of their family's reputation. After the wedding, they usually leave their family home to join their husband's family where they continue their education, helping their mother-in-law with household tasks and looking after their children.

By tradition the mother-in-law is "**dzanel shuzipen**" ("she who likes cleanliness"). She teaches her daughter-in-law ("**bori**") to prepare the meals to which her son is accustomed. Until her first child is born, the daughter-in-law must be at her mother-in-law's beck and call. This may be a difficult time for the young "bori", but once she has proved her worth and given birth to her first child, she is fully accepted as a member of her husband's family.

Non-Roma do not attach great importance to the education provided by the "Gadge"<sup>6</sup>. That does not necessarily mean that they don't want to be "wise" (wisdom is by tradition highly esteemed in the Roma community), but wisdom is acquired and manifests itself in a different way from the traditional education provided by the "Gadge". It is passed on through the experience of the elderly members of the community, in the form of stories, fairy tales, myths, proverbs, anecdotes or riddles. This story-telling tradition has helped preserve the cultural wealth of the Roma, their wisdom, experience, ethical values and philosophy.

School education is, in principle, not a priority for Roma families. Their educational needs are secondary and consist mainly of acquiring basic skills (reading, writing and arithmetic). Some Roma families understand the importance of education but they are often afraid they will lose their culture and their identity if they accept the education provided by the Gadge. They follow their own rules and perceive life in their own particular way. That is what makes them different from the majority of other families. Their life-style, traditions, culture and language are all factors that make them feel different.

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<sup>6</sup> "Gadge" – name given to non-Roma by the Roma.



- ***Young people***

The childhood and adolescence of Roma children end when they establish their own families. Young Roma begin to think about getting married when they reach puberty. Early marriages are one of the reasons why Roma children enter the adult world at a very young age. Young Roma often do not get married out of love but to obey the wishes of their family. Parents often give careful consideration to their daughter's marriage as a means of creating bonds with another family and increasing their prestige. Arranged marriages of this type can only take place between families with the same material standing and which are already friends.

Both fathers must give their consent to the marriage. During the engagement ceremony ("**mangipen**"), the two young people, accompanied by their parents, swear in front of witnesses to be faithful to one another for as long as they live. Traditionally, the head of ceremony binds the hands of the future couple with a scarf and pours wine or schnapps into their palms, which they must then drink, but nowadays their hands are seldom bound but simply crossed and the newly-weds must drink out of each other's glass before kissing one another. The Roma community only accepts that they can live together and have children after the registry office or religious wedding ("**bijav**"), which binds them for life.

Roma couples seldom separate. Separation is only authorised if the wife is sterile or unfaithful. If, after some years, the couple have not had any children, the husband may leave his wife. Sterility is the supreme punishment for a Roma woman as it means that she will be rejected because she cannot accomplish her main role: that of mother. Roma women believe in many magic tricks for overcoming sterility. For example, sterile women have to eat leaves gathered from the tomb of a woman who died from puerperal fever after giving birth. Another magic trick, with a very clear symbolism, is for the women to swallow the contents of an egg blown into her mouth by her husband. Some women also believe in the power of the full moon and eat plants gathered at midnight. Roma women rarely abort as by tradition they are expected to have as many children as possible. As a rule, unfaithful women are abandoned or punished by their husbands, (who can beat them or cut their hair). The husbands, however, are allowed to be unfaithful.

When a Roma woman is sure she is pregnant, she first announces the good news to the other women in the family and then to her husband. She must comply with the rules for protecting the unborn child. These rules are very strict as the Roma believe that faults and failings are transmitted from the mother to the foetus. Pregnant women are therefore subject to various restrictions: for example, they are not allowed to look at people with disabilities or dead people, nor "terrifying" or magic animals such as snakes.

A woman who has given birth is treated with the utmost consideration. Other people living in the house are not allowed to come home late as they might bring bad luck into the house. They have to obey these rules for 40 days after the birth. The entire family, including cousins and aunts look after the newly-born child.

The baptism ("**kirvipen**") always takes place in church. The godparents play a very important role, thereby strengthening relations between their families. At the baptism, children are given their first name, usually their godfather's or godmother's name or the name of one of the parents or of another member of the family. This first name is only used for "official" purposes, that is in contacts with people outside the Roma community. The child receives a second name which is used within the Roma community.

#### ▪ **Adulthood**

When Roma reach adulthood they are responsible for looking after and supporting their family and bringing up their children. A man's ability to support his family is judged by his income.

Roma often live far from town centres. They usually live in ghettos. Before the Second World War, some of them lived in simple houses, dug into the ground, called "**zernice**". In East European countries the Roma are sedentary. Unlike their fellow Roma in the West, who usually live in caravans, they live in houses. Roma prefer to live in the open air. The women do their cooking and washing outside on stoves and tables that they bring out of the house. They live in the streets and outside their homes.

#### ▪ **Old age**

***"De e phuren pativ, kaj jekhvar vi tu aveha phuro."***

Family life is very important to the Roma, which explains why young and old live together. As a result, the elderly members of the family are able to help bring up the children. Elderly members of the family are respected by their children and grandchildren and their opinions carry great weight in decisions taken by the family.

When someone dies, the family watch over the corpse at home until the burial, thereby accompanying the dead person on their journey into the next world. Family members place personal objects belonging to the deceased in the coffin: rings, earrings, watches, a violin, a guitar, cigarettes, spectacles, a small bottle of alcohol, a pack of cards etc, and a prayer book and a rosary for believers, and often small change. Some of these objects may be quite valuable. The 'wake' is governed by strict rules: the participants are allowed to play cards and tell stories about the life of the deceased but they may not sing, dance or make toasts. Before drinking their first

glass, each person must pour a glassful on the ground, in memory of the deceased. The Roma believe that some time after a burial the deceased visit the survivors to let them know if they were satisfied with their funeral. They indicate their presence by a whole range of signs and sounds, which the survivors see or hear in their dreams.

In all countries where there is a large Roma population, there are difficulties in ensuring that they receive a school education. According to a survey conducted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)<sup>7</sup>, only 7% of the Roma interviewed got as far as secondary school. The Roma's low level of school education prevents them from taking up a profession and as a result their financial situation is often difficult. They often work in jobs at the lowest level of the social ladder.

Studies show that the percentage of Roma who do not have access to school education is relatively high compared to the majority population.

- *In Bulgaria*, only 6% of Roma, compared to 40% of the total population of the country, have attended secondary school.
- *In Hungary*, over 90% of Roma children start secondary school but only 33% continue until the end. Only 4.5% complete their secondary education.
- *In Romania*, according to the 1992 population study, 27% of Roma boys and 35% of Roma girls do not even have primary education.

This difference in the level of education between the Roma population and the majority population is found not only in Central and Eastern Europe. The level of education of the Roma, Sinti and Kale (or whatever they may be called in Western Europe) is always lower than that of the majority population. The 1989 Resolution reveals that 30 to 40% of Roma, Sinti and Kale children attend primary school on a regular basis and that less than 10% attend secondary school<sup>8</sup>. In Spain, for example, 50% of the Roma were illiterate in 2000. The number of primary teachers trained to teach Roma children increased as from 1990, but despite the efforts made, the number of Roma children who attend primary school is still very low.

## ***I. OBSTACLES TO SCHOOL EDUCATION***

***Poverty, early marriages, the isolation of Roma communities and their under-representation in educational institutions***, are all factors that have an impact on their access to school education.

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<sup>7</sup> UNDP- 2002, *A Regional Human Development Report*, The Roma in Central and Eastern Europe.

<sup>8</sup> Resolution of 22 May 1989 concerning School Provision for Gypsy and Traveller Children Official Gazette No. C 153/02 of 21.6.1989.

- ***Roma parents' involvement in their children's education***

Roma parents are not always aware of the importance of sending their children to school and the investment required. They are therefore, as a rule, not sufficiently involved in their children's school education. For financial reasons, many parents oblige their children to start working at an early age or to stay at home to look after their brothers and sisters. Roma families' greatest concern is finding ways of satisfying their daily needs.

- ***Cultural and linguistic factors***

There are many negative stereotypes of the education which the Roma families give their children. Teachers, non-Roma parents and educational authorities who were questioned in surveys said they had the impression that the Roma were lazy people who did not want to work and that their social organisation and culture had a negative impact on school education. In fact, many Roma parents do not send their children to school to ensure that they do not become Gages or because they live far from a school and prefer to keep their children at home with them.

Early marriages and births make it difficult for Roma children to go to school. Indeed, many young people form couples before the age of 16 and the birth of the first children prevents young girls from attending school. Studies conducted in Bulgaria show that in 1994, 40% of the Roma had married before the age of 16 and 80% before the age of 18<sup>9</sup>. Identical results were found in Romania.

Another major obstacle is ***the problem of knowing the official language of the country*** where the Roma live. Most Roma children start school with a very poor knowledge of the official language of the country, which makes it impossible for them to take their education very far. They are therefore at a disadvantage compared to the other pupils, who have a good command of the language and therefore do not have the same problems in continuing their education.

Pre-school education assistant teachers, acting as "cultural intermediaries", play a crucial role in helping Roma children to learn the official language of the country and fostering their integration into schools.

The language problem exists in particular in Eastern European countries where the Romani language, despite its historical avatars and the fact that it is only a spoken language, has been well preserved. The surveys conducted by the UNDP show that 54% of the Roma interviewed talk Romani at home.

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<sup>9</sup> Tomova - 1998

- ***Poverty and education***

According to the surveys conducted by the UNDP, poverty is the major obstacle to access to education. Roma families, who are often very poor, cannot afford basic educational materials, such as books, for their children. The poor conditions in which the children live makes it impossible for them to do their homework and their parents, who are often illiterate, cannot help them with their homework either.

- ***The standard of education***

The Roma's access to education depends directly on the standard of education offered to them. It is often noted that the standard of school education given to Roma children is lower than that given to the remainder of the population. Teachers' lack of motivation to work with children from another culture, prejudices towards Roma families and the lack of training are factors which contribute to the low standard of education offered to the Roma.

- ***Teaching materials***

The need to develop teaching material in the Romani language is becoming increasingly noticeable. The existence of school textbooks in the Romani language can help encourage Roma children to go to school and study and also encourages their parents to send them to school. School textbooks in the Romani language also help to preserve the cultural heritage of the Roma.

The problem of producing teaching materials in the Romani language is a financial one and depends to a large extent on states' resolve to make such material available in schools.

Reference to Roma culture and traditions in school textbooks also gives the majority population a more positive image of the Roma. Such material can therefore also serve as a link between Roma and non-Roma and be useful in countering the effects of prejudices and negative images. School textbooks on Roma culture provide information for everyone, Roma and non-Roma. Knowledge of another culture can only be an asset when it comes to intercultural relations and individuals' self-confidence.<sup>10</sup>

- ***"Roma" schools***

School structures and the standard of educational services are major aspects of the principle of the right of access to schools. Most Roma children attend schools or classes where they are in the majority. In many countries, the schools attended mainly by Roma are situated in the districts

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<sup>10</sup> *Identification de matériel existant en langue romani dans les différents pays—Conference held in Strasbourg on 26 and 27 May 2003.*

where the Roma live and the standard of education provided is lower than in other schools. In Bulgaria for example, the fact that most Roma live together in ghettos has had a decisive influence in terms of spatial segregation<sup>11</sup>.

Roma children often attend "**remedial schools for children with mental disabilities**". In most cases, the Roma children who attend these schools do not actually have any mental health problems. Studies carried out in the Czech Republic in 1997 showed that 63% of Roma children attended special schools compared to 4% of the total population<sup>12</sup>. According to official statistics, there are 246 special schools in Romania and the number of Roma children registered at these school was 48 237<sup>13</sup>. In Hungary, various research studies show that 90% of the pupils in special schools are Roma<sup>14</sup>.

Efforts are currently being made to reintegrate Roma children in mainstream schools but it often takes a long time to carry out such measures.<sup>15</sup>

## **II. FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH**

- **Recommendation No. R (2000) 4 of the Committee of Ministers to the members states on the education of Roma /Gypsy children in Europe (see appendix)**
- **Preparation of a methodological tool: the questionnaire**

One of the long-term objectives of a survey on examples of good practice in the education of Roma, Sinti and Kale children is to establish lasting relations between the different partners and to allow them to share in the progress made in Europe. We therefore contacted people belonging to several NGOs, in particular Roma experts working in the field of education in different countries. First of all we had to tell them about our project and explain why we wished to establish partnerships. It was difficult for some of them to respond and to take appropriate action owing to their professional commitments and lack of time, but in the majority of cases our project was well received and aroused interest.

The use of flexible methods at European level, adapted to the local and national levels of the different countries, helps consolidate the work done by the various Roma experts and to pinpoint

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<sup>11</sup> Jean-Pierre LIEGEOIS, 1997 (1<sup>ère</sup> éd. 1986), *Minorité et scolarité: le parcours Tsigane*, Toulouse, CRDP.

<sup>12</sup> ERRC 1999: 23

<sup>13</sup> Save The Children 2001a: 35.

<sup>14</sup> Save the Children 2001b: 123

<sup>15</sup> For example in Bulgaria, the framework programme for the integration of Roma in Bulgarian society was adopted in 1999, but the Bulgarian Ministry of Education did not take any concrete steps to promote the integration of Roma in schools until 2002, these measures will be applied in 2002- 2003. Ministry of Education, 2002: 151- 158.

good practices in the education of Roma children. The dissemination of information at European level contributes to the lasting value of the work and its continuity.

In the light of the objectives set out in the framework document summarising the activities, we drew up a questionnaire with a view to obtaining information from Roma experts working on behalf of Roma communities in several NGOs in various countries, particularly in the field of education. Before analysing the replies received, it is important to explain the type of information requested in the questionnaire:

- General information on the organisation concerned (address, presentation, number of projects carried out in the field of education);
- Information on examples of good practice in the field of education carried out by NGOs;
- Information on the criteria for defining an example of good practice in the field of education, and the improvements that have been made through these projects;
- Information on new priorities for the development of new projects in the field of education;
- Information on essential policies concerning the schooling of members of Roma communities for the period 2003 - 2004.

Questions for « the innovatory practices » send to organization in 3 languages  
(French, English, Romani)

ORGANISATION / ORGANISATION/ ORGANIZACIA :

1. Adresse / **Address** / Adresa :
2. Brève présentation de votre organisation / **Short presentation of your organisation**/ Cikni presentacia pal tumari organizacia :
3. Nom(s) et nombre de(s) projet(s) sur lequel(s) votre organisation a travaillé dans le domaine de l'éducation /**Name and number of the educational projects in which your organisation took part?** / Pala kozom proektura kerda buti tumari organizacia, and-e edukaciaki avlin ?
4. Quelles sont selon votre expérience, les bonnes pratiques à développer dans le domaine de l'éducation pour les Roms / **Which are the good practices to develop in the field of education for the Roma?** / Save si, o lache praktike, katar sa tumari buti so kerde, kaj te keren pes and-e edukaciaki avlin vas-o Roma ?
5. Quels sont pour vous les critères essentiels qui définissent "une pratique innovante"/ **Which are the criterions for "good practice"** / Pala tumaro gindipen save si -o criterura kon keren I "lachi praktika"?
6. Quelles ont été les améliorations possibles grâce aux projets que vous avez développés ? (par exemple : implication du partenariat, amélioration des résultats à l'école, etc.)/ **Which improvements were possible by developing your projects activities?( for example: partnership level, increasing school attendance)**/ Savo, si o azutipen katar o aktivitetura so kerde ? ( partenerija, shkolako lachjaripen) ?
7. Les activités que vous avez développées à travers les projets ont-elles satisfait vos attentes ? Si oui, pour quelles raisons : / **Did the project activities meet your expectations? Please give details/ O aktivitetura so kerde pal o proektura, lacharde tumen? Mothoven maj but:**
8. Quelle a été la leçon la plus importante que vous avez apprise grâce aux activités du projet / **What are the most important lesson (s) you learnt from your project activities?**/ So sikile maj but katar o aktivitetura katar o proekto?
9. Selon vous, quelles sont les priorités pour le développement de nouveaux projets dans le domaine de l'éducation à l'égard des Roms / **What are in your opinion the priorities for the new possible projects that should be developed in the field of Education for Roma?**/ Pala tumaro gindo, save si o prioriteturija kaj te kerdjion pes neve proektura and-e edukaciaki avlin vas-o Roma ?
10. Quelles sont les priorités politiques essentielles à l'égard des Roms dans le domaine de l'éducation dans votre pays pour la période 2003-2004 / **Which are the most important education policies in the field of education for the Roma in your country for the period 2003-2004?**/ Save si o maj vazne politikane prioritetija vas-o Roma and-e edukaciaki avlin ande tumaro them, and-o bersh 2003- 2004 ?
11. Quelles sont les pratiques et structures de consultation, de concertation et de participation, prévues dans votre Etat pour les projets en matière d'éducation / **Which are the practices and structures for consultation and participation in the field of education in your country./** Save si o praktike thaj o strukture vas-i konsultacia, vas-i participacia, vas-o khetanipen, so kerel Tumaro them and- o proektura and- e edukaciaki avlin ?
12. Autres propositions / **Other proposals** /Verver propozicie :



### **III. ANALYSIS OF THE REPLIES CONCERNING INNOVATORY PRACTICES**

#### **▪ Factors which play a vital role in the schooling of Roma, Sinti and Kale children**

##### ➤ *Mediators*

As already said, there are many Roma children who do not know the official language of the country where they live, which obviously leads to difficulties in securing a place on training courses and in studying. Mediators are therefore indispensable to help them overcome these language difficulties. Mediators also work with the families, explaining to them why it is important to send the children to school.

##### ➤ *Teachers*

Teachers are, as a rule, not very interested in working with Roma children. Because they know so little about Romani culture, language and traditions, they and the parents often do not understand one another.

##### ➤ *Parents*

Roma parents' lack of involvement in their children's education is usually due to their often difficult financial situation. As a rule, they do not seem to think that school education can help them be accepted by society or that it could help them to improve their social situation.

##### ➤ *Development of teaching in the Romani language: the Romanian example*

Romania is one of the countries where teaching in the Romani language is most widespread. The Romanian Ministry of Education works in close co-operation with Roma and non-Roma NGOs in devising teaching programmes in the Romani language. This interest is a response to the need to improve the situation of the Roma in order to be accepted for membership of the European Union. The following steps have been taken:

- A 2-hour lesson in Romani, was included in the higher education programme at the faculty of foreign languages and literature at Bucharest University for the first time on 20 October 1992.
- In October 2000, a long-distance, university-level training programme for unqualified Roma teachers was introduced. After completing a 2-year course, students obtain a university degree as a primary teacher in the Romani language.
- In January 2001, the Romanian government adopted Decision N° 23/11 on extending teaching programmes in Romani, introduced a post of deputy director general in this field and appointed an advisor for the Romani language (for primary education, adolescents and adults). In 2001/2002, there were 12,600 pupils studying in their mother tongue, Romani (3 to 4 hours per week).

- Several strategic programmes for teaching in Romani have been introduced in various schools: weekly classes in the Romani language have been introduced in 34 education authorities. Other programmes devised by the ministry and NGOs offer extracurricular lessons in the Romani language during the summer holidays. Many foreigners also take part in these training courses in the Romani language.
- The ministry has appointed 42 school inspectors to inspect classes taught in Romani. Over half of these inspectors are members of the Roma minority.
- From January 2001 to June 2002, the Ministry of Education and Research devised new programmes for teaching Roma as part of the general plan for the application of the strategic plan for the improvement of the situation of the Roma. There are now 102 schools in Romania, where 12,650 pupils study Romani. There are 260 full-time and 96 part-time teachers<sup>16</sup>.

▪ ***Criteria and priorities identified in the replies to the questionnaire***

The analysis of the replies received to the questionnaire focused on highlighting elements which serve to identify useful criteria and work priorities for improving the school situation of Roma, Sinti and Kale children in Europe.

- *Improving living conditions so that Roma children can attend school. Work that needs to be done to get them out of their settlements;*
- *Making it compulsory for Roma children to attend preparatory classes where they learn the official language of the country;*
- *Improving parents' motivation (particularly by providing information) and involving them in their children's education;*
- *Motivating and training teachers to work with Roma children;*
- *Involving institutions as partners;*
- *Ensuring the active participation of the media in helping to integrate Roma children in schools;*
- *Introducing the Romani language and culture in schools, in particular by publishing books in Romani;*

- *Devising a school curriculum for Roma children;*
- *Co-operating with local institutions in applying school education strategies;*
- *Supervising the school education of Roma and involving members of the Roma community, particularly as school inspectors.*

▪ ***Discussion of important points in developing innovatory practices in school education***

This presentation of "innovatory practices" is based on the information obtained from the analysis of the replies to the questionnaire. Ten Roma experts from different countries discussed the replies to the questions concerning innovatory practices in education for Roma children/ Roma.

Before describing these innovatory practices in education, it is very important to consider the specific situation in each country where Roma children live, in other words to draw attention to the differences between the situation in Eastern and Western Europe. In our presentation, we will explain the priorities in the field of education by endeavouring to present each proposal within the relevant context.

The Roma experts do not think that *improving school infrastructure* necessarily entails integrating Roma children in mainstream schools, but that it is more important to improve the standard of teaching and the financial and human resources allocated to the schools they are already attending.

The experts believe that *preparatory classes for Roma children* should be compulsory, and that this should be part of a fully-fledged government policy in every country concerned. In Eastern European countries the importance of these classes is closely related to the fact that they include lessons in the official language.

In Western European countries where the Romani language is no longer used, it is more important for Roma children to acquire the behaviour required of school children: mixing with other children - including Gages, getting up early, staying seated for several hours, etc.

*The role of the mediators and their work depends on the country:*

The experts discussed different experiences of the role of mediators or teaching assistants:

- *In Slovakia* - mediators are called "assistants". The country has been using assistants for 12 years. They are now officially included in the Education Act. According to this law, an assistant can be sent to work with any family that has 4 children and depends on social aid. The salaries paid to these assistants continue to be one of the main problems as they have not been provided

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<sup>16</sup> Ministry of Public Information, Department for Inter-Ethnic Relations *"The current situation in the teaching of*

for in the national budget. When the legislation was enacted, members of parliament thought that the assistant ought to be a member of the Roma community. The head of each school must hire an assistant, whose role has not yet been clearly identified. How important it is for mediators to know the Romani language remains to be established. Experience has shown that this work is the first step and that these assistants can subsequently teach in Romani. The educational process could, however, be more successful if it was possible for them to learn Romani.

- *In Bulgaria* – the work of the mediators helps overcome the language barrier and to improve communication between children, teachers and parents. The experience acquired by Roma mediators in educational matters subsequently enables them to follow a training course for assistants. In Bulgaria, training programmes are organised by NGOs, which give mediators financial support during their two years at university.

Before beginning to work, mediators receive initial training from teachers, who teach them the basic skills they need. The initiative for such training courses was taken by NGOS.

- *In France* - Roma living in France are not officially recognised as an ethnic minority. They do not have any great difficulties with the official language of the country since half of them do not speak Romani. Mediators work with the parents: they encourage them to send their children to school and inform them of existing schools (mobile classrooms set up in trucks, mobile schools on parking lots and mainstream schools). Mediators work in particular with those referred to in French legislation as travellers ("Gens du Voyage").

They are particularly busy during electoral periods as they take part in the negotiations with mayors concerning the establishment of encampment areas in the municipalities. In France the mediators' role is not clearly defined; they work in several spheres and do not receive any vocational training. Very few Roma - only 1% - are mediators because many of them can neither read nor write. Those who would like to do this work do not have the basic knowledge required and cannot therefore do the job. The mediators' salaries are paid out of the government budget and by associations. Only young people between 18 and 25 years of age are entitled to work as mediators for a period of 5 years. It is very important to provide appropriate training for mediators, and for teachers, to achieve better results. The mediator's main task is to liaise between the Roma population and the representatives of the majority population.

- *In Portugal* – There are various mediators in the fields of education, health and social work. Mediators receive preparatory training (the recruitment criteria are very demanding with regard to their level of education, social status and family situation). The training takes two years and students who complete the course are awarded a certificate. Different certificates are awarded depending on the mediator's level of education. Literacy classes are offered not only to Roma but also to other minorities. In Portugal, Roma children speak Portuguese. The main problem is that

they do not want to go to school. The mediators' job is to work with the parents and persuade them to send their children to school as the parents believe that trading is the most important activity for their children to learn. The mediators also liaise between the school and Roma families: for example, if there has been a death in the family, the mediator explains to the teacher why the child cannot attend his music lesson. Mediators are invited to attend all meetings concerning street children, children in difficulty, etc. Mediators are paid by different NGO programmes and by the relevant ministries.

All the experts interviewed thought that the work done by the mediators was very important in improving the situation of Roma children with regard to their school education. It is impossible to establish a single model for the work of Roma mediators as the situation differs from one country to the next. The role of the mediators therefore has to be adapted to the specific needs of each country.

*Motivating Roma parents:* Roma experts believe that devising specific educational programmes (learning how to sew, read and write, for example) and involving the parents in these programmes would motivate them and encourage them to send their children to school. They generally believe that it is essential to work with the children at a very early age and with the parents to improve the current situation.

*Motivating teachers* also seems to have a major impact on the standard of teaching given to Roma children. They must be qualified for the work (through information and training) by being given the opportunity to attend various courses where they can learn more about Roma culture, traditions and customs and understand Roma children/ Roma better and therefore be able to do more effective work with them.

*Involving institutions in the process:* According to Roma experts, it is very important that local and national institutions are involved. The work must first be done at local level with NGOs and institutions – Mayor's office, social welfare office, police etc. and can, if it proves to be successful, serve as an example at national level and be officially adopted by the government of the country. The European institutions – Council of Europe and European Union – play a very important role because they legitimise the implementation of new strategies in favour of the Roma community.

*The participation of the media, radio and television,* is also very important to ensure that information on existing programmes for the education of Roma children / Roma is disseminated. Such information can have a positive effect in so far as it helps give a positive image of the Roma among the majority population, and try to change the stereotypes attributed to them. It is very important for Roma to be taken into consideration by the majority population so as not to feel excluded.

*Introduction of Romani language, culture and traditions at school:* This could, for example, take the form of learning the Romani language by singing songs in Romani, drawing traditional Roma dress, or by including a chapter on the history of the Roma in history books. The introduction of a chapter on the Roma in school textbooks would help children from the majority to learn about the Roma and foster an exchange between the different cultures. Offering Romani as an optional not a compulsory subject at university and secondary school is also a good idea.

*Roma inspectors* play a very important role in ensuring that Roma children attend school regularly and in communicating with the parents. However, the experts admit that it is difficult to find members of the Roma community who have taken their education to a high enough level to be able to do this work.

Exchanging information, lobbying and contacts between European partners improve knowledge of the facts and to help publicise the positive measures taken on behalf of the Roma community.

#### IV. ESTABLISHING A NETWORK OF PARTNERS

It is essential to set up a network of relations, to work together with the representatives of the Roma community, to make use of their experience and involve them in various activities. With this aim in mind, we are planning to set up a network comprising several NGOs which helped define criteria for "innovatory practices".

ORGANISME/PAYS	COORDONNÉES
"Verband Deutscher Romaund Sinti et V. Kalker/ ALLEMAGNE	e-mail : <a href="mailto:seidij2000@yahoo.fr">seidij2000@yahoo.fr</a> Adresse : 5103 Koln, BRD Str. 250
"Roma-Lom Foundation "/ BULGARIE	e-mail : <a href="mailto:assen.slavchev@almus.net">assen.slavchev@almus.net</a> Adresse : 3600 Lom, 4 Neophit Bozvely str. Bulgaria
"Roma Women Association – Better Future"/ CROATIE	e-mail : <a href="mailto:ramiza.mehmedi@zg.hinet.hr">ramiza.mehmedi@zg.hinet.hr</a> Adresse : Av. Marina Dr 4, 420 10 000 Zagreb
"L. A Romani Baht"/ FRANCE	e-mail : <a href="mailto:dragana1966@aol.com">dragana1966@aol.com</a> Adresse : 4, bld. St.Roch 06300 Nice, France
"Minority Rights group-MRG" / HONGRIE	e-mail : <a href="mailto:mrg2.bud@tla.hu">mrg2.bud@tla.hu</a> Adresse : 1125, Szilagyi E, Fasor 22/c H- Budapest
"Roma community centre Drom" / MACEDOINE	e-mail : <a href="mailto:for@drom.org.mk">for@drom.org.mk</a> Adresse : Done Bozinov 11/5 1300 KUMANOVO
"Roma – Students Association "/ MOLDOVA	e-mail : <a href="mailto:raditsa_nicolae@hotmail.com">raditsa_nicolae@hotmail.com</a> Adresse : Minsx 26 str. Ap.23 Chisinau, Republic of Moldova
"Amusap – Association pour le développement des femmes et des enfants gitans portugais" / PORTUGAL	e-mail : <a href="mailto:myrna@sapo.pt">myrna@sapo.pt</a> Adresse : Rua da Liberdade n°3 r/c drt°, 2840 – 157 AMORA Portugal
"Roma – Ural"/ RUSSIE	e-mail : <a href="mailto:olga.chashchikhina@errc.org">olga.chashchikhina@errc.org</a> Adresse : 620087 Ekaterinburg, krotki – 4
"Roma Community Center April 8"/ SERBIE	e-mail: <a href="mailto:rominterpres@yubc.net">rominterpres@yubc.net</a> Adresse: Slygbeni put/86/a Beograd
"Good Romany Fairy Fondation"/ SLOVAQUIE	e-mail : <a href="mailto:nadkesaj@ke.telecom.sk">nadkesaj@ke.telecom.sk</a> Adresse : Hlavna 68, SK- 04000 Kosice

## **CONCLUSION**

At the end of the presentation, we described the living conditions of the Roma, Sinti and Kale almost everywhere in Europe. They are disadvantaged in numerous spheres: education, employment, health and access to social rights. The Roma, Sinti and Kale still have difficulties in being accepted as full members of the community; they are often treated as social outcasts if not persecuted. Indeed, all the evidence shows that they are one of the most marginalised groups in Europe.

Given their often very low level of school education, it is impossible for them to take up a profession. They therefore often depend on social welfare. Roma families travel through Europe in an endeavour to improve their living conditions, facilitate their children's education, but also to promote a fairer policy towards them and strengthen their cultural identity. Access to education for Roma, Sinti and Kale children is, however, one of their most important needs if they are to adjust to and become full members of society.

As we have seen, many factors have an impact on access to school education. On the one hand Roma families and their attitude to schools and on the other hand the teaching provided, which still does not take full account of the cultural and ethnic diversity of Roma communities.

The examples submitted to us have shown that numerous initiatives have been taken and efforts are being made, particularly in East European countries, to give Roma children access to school education. It is therefore important to establish a dialogue between the players concerned and the majority population with a view to improving understanding and respect for the values and differences of all concerned. It is also necessary to train mediators, and to include positive elements of Romani culture and language in school education.

The schooling of Roma, Sinti and Kale children and, more generally, the integration of the Roma/Gypsy minority, is one of the priorities for countries which wish to become members of the European Union. Indeed, future members of the European Union will have to comply with its fundamental principles and offer all the necessary protection to the Roma/Gypsy minority.

Nevertheless, the Roma are not simply an oppressed minority: indeed part of their difference is one that they have consciously chosen themselves. Their lifestyle and the questions they raise, are not only a genuine asset but also a force for Europe and its construction.

We must therefore seize this opportunity to work towards integrating Roma, Sinti, and Kale in the construction of a Europe, which is seeking to come to terms with and provide a framework

for diversity based on equality. This work must be done by giving Roma the same rights as the majority population and minimum guarantees in terms of education, health, housing, training etc. The preservation of this different culture and identity must be seen as an added value for Europe. The “right to be different” must therefore be acknowledged and promoted in the construction of Europe.

This perspective requires firm political resolve on the part of European states with regard to not only the right to be different and the need to protect national minorities but also the effective application of resolutions and recommendations.

The work that needs to be done in the field of education is a complex process which requires a great deal of effort and investment and many years’ commitment to achieve results. However, the importance of access to education should be one of the main priorities in Europe today, and the importance of the issue should be underlined not only for the Roma but also for Europeans who are busy building the Europe of the future, a freer Europe based on common values such as freedom of expression, information, cultural diversity and the equal dignity of all human beings.



This second part on the search for “innovative practices” in the field of education for Roma/Gypsy children in Europe follows directly on from the conclusions of the first part:

- firstly, the **study of obstacles to access to schooling**: the poverty and isolation of Roma communities, early marriage and childbirth, negative stereotyping of Roma individuals, ignorance of the country’s official language preventing children from continuing into higher education, geographical location (far from the towns and cities), the lack of appropriate educational material, spatial segregation of Roma children and their frequent assignment to schools for mentally disabled or retarded children;
- secondly, the **analysis of replies to the questionnaire** sent out in three languages (French, English and Romany) to NGO members, particularly Roma experts working in the educational field in various countries.

These initial conclusions have brought out:

- **the main factors influencing the schooling of Roma/Gypsy children**, which simultaneously include:
  - involvement of *mediators*
  - *teacher* motivation and training
  - working in partnership with the *parents*
  - and *developing teaching in the Romany language* (and more broadly, activities incorporating positive aspects of the culture and language in the teaching process).
- **The criteria and priorities defining an innovative practice and possible improvements:**
  - *Improving living conditions in order to enable Roma children to attend school. Endeavouring to bring them out of their neighbourhoods;*
  - *Mandatory attendance of preparatory classes by Roma children so that they can learn the official language of their country of residence;*
  - *Working on motivating parents (particularly by providing information) in order to involve them in their children’s educational processes;*

- *Motivating and qualifying teachers to work with Roma children;*
- *Involving institutions in working partnerships;*
- *Ensuring active media participation in the process of integrating Roma children at school;*
- *Introducing Roma language and culture at school, particularly by producing Romany-language books;*
- *Developing the curriculum for Roma children;*
- *Co-operating with local institutions in implementing schooling strategies;*
- *Supervising the schooling process and involving Roma players, including inspectors from the Roma community.*

These initial conclusions also highlighted the need to:

- take account of the specific situation and characteristics of each country inhabited by Roma children, ie draw a distinction between the situations in eastern and western Europe;
- to develop information exchange and contacts among the various partners, and set up networks by ensuring co-operation among experts and involving them in a range of activities.

Now that the criteria for defining “innovative practices” suggested by the Roma experts have been adopted, the next step is to develop a catalogue of activities conducted by various institutions in different eastern and western European countries.

### **WORK METHODOLOGY AND ORGANISATION**

Examples of positive experience are being presented in the form of fact sheets and descriptive sheets with an eye to an **open-ended catalogue** which can be updated with new projects in various States and be circulated both in hard copy and on the Internet.

- **STAGE 1: Devising a “model” fact sheet comprising:**
  - general data on the **organisation/institution** having developed the specific positive activity: name, postal address and phone number, and country;
  - data on the **activity:**
    - type of activity and fields of competence (defined by keywords);

- duration of activity (start/finish), or activity under way;
  - name of the European project under which the activity was devised;
  - description of the activity;
  - methods and resources implemented;
  - partnerships;
  - expected results and objectives;
  - means of dissemination (producing materials and/or Internet publication).
- **STAGE 2: Selection of the first examples of positive experience:**
    - The **first activities** presented below were selected with reference to the predefined **criteria**, corresponding to the **guiding principles** of an education policy for Roma/Gypsy children in Europe set out in the Appendix to Recommendation No. R (2000) 4.
    - The diversity and wealth of local initiatives lead us not only to select activities developed under a European project but also to disseminate the results of the responses as tailored to local needs.
    - These experiments cover all the following aspects:
      - complementarity between school and/or support structures;
      - co-ordination and networking of the players involved;
      - alerting education ministries to the issue of schooling for Roma/Gypsy children;
      - pre-school education;
      - information for families on the schooling process;
      - involving members of the Roma/Gypsy community;
      - school curricula and teaching materials;
      - procedure for monitoring “travelling” children;
      - training for teachers and other educational staff.
- **STAGE 3: Updating the catalogue:**

The first experiences listed below in alphabetical order of the countries in which they were first carried out will be complemented over the first few months of 2005.

<b>TYPE OF ACTION:</b>		<b>BULGARIA</b>
<b>INTRODUCING USE OF THE ROMANY LANGUAGE AT UNIVERSITY</b>		
<b>Organisation: University in Veliko Tarnovo</b> Sv. Sv. Kiril i Metodii T. Tarnovski street 1 Veliko Tarnovo 5000 Bulgaria  Tel. (+359 62) 63 88 26		<b>Keywords</b>  Teaching in Romany language Training for young executives
Duration of activity (start/end): 1.10.03	<b>Ongoing</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>If activity is being conducted under a European project (name of project):</b>		
<b>Description of the activity:</b>		
Training programme for 30 young people starting in 2003 in two university faculties in Bulgaria. 30 Roma young people, including some Bulgarians, passed the entrance examination, which was in Bulgarian with an oral section in the Romany language. 19 of these young people are currently studying at the "Sv. Sv. Kiril i Metodii" University in Veliko Tarnovo, and 11 at the "Trakiski Universitet" in Stara Zagora.		
<b>Methods/resources implemented:</b>  In 2003, Mr Hristo Kuchykov, a general studies teacher who has been working on the Romany language for many years now, initiated courses on Romany language and tradition in both Bulgarian universities. 30 young people, including some ethnic Bulgarians, from different regions of Bulgaria, decided to sit the entrance examination in Bulgarian, with an oral section in Romany. They agreed to continue the general course in Romany language and tradition. These young people are currently in their second year of university, studying the full range of subjects required for employment as primary school teachers specialising in Romany language and tradition.		<b>Partnerships</b> <i>European institutions</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Non-governmental</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Governmental</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Voluntary</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Local institutions</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Roma community</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Expected results and objectives:</b>		
In four years these students will be the first Roma young people qualified to teach in primary schools. They will be general teachers with a specialist option in Romany language and tradition.		
<b>Communication facilities:</b>		
<i>Production of material: in hand</i>		
<i>E-mail /or website address: <a href="http://www.care-bg.org">http://www.care-bg.org</a>.</i>		

<b>TYPE OF ACTION:</b>		<b>BULGARIA</b>
<b>TRAINING OF ROMA MEDIATORS</b>		
<b>Organisation: Université à Veliko Tarnovo</b>  “ Sv. Sv. Kiril i Metodii ” rue, “ T.Tarnovski”1, Veliko Tarnovo 5000 Bulgarie  Tel. (+359 62) 63 88 26		<b>Keywords</b>  Training
Duration of activity (start/end): 11 month	<b>Ongoing</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>If activity is being conducted under a European project (name of project):</b> Consortium KHER ”		
<b>Description of the activity:</b>  Training programme for Roma mediators and assistants responsible for improving the schooling of Roma children. Participation by the mediators and assistants in preparing the children for integration into the school environment and the relevant teaching processes. Helping the children adapt. Work alongside the children’s families.		
<b>Methods/resources implemented:</b>  Project carried out in 5 regions, 14 administrative departments, 34 sites and 24 municipalities.		<b>Partnerships</b> <i>European institutions</i> <input type="checkbox"/>  <i>Non-governmental</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  <i>Governmental</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  <i>Voluntary</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  <i>Local institutions</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  <i>Roma community</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<u>Expected results and objectives:</u> Training of 100 mediators and 300 teachers. Integration of 100 Roma young people to work in government departments. Creation of a positive image of Roma people.		
<b>Communication facilities:</b>		
<i>Production of material: in hand</i>		
<i>E-mail /or website address: <a href="http://www.care-bg.org">http://www.care-bg.org</a>.</i>		

<b>TYPE OF ACTION:</b> <b>WORK IN A GENERAL SECONDARY SCHOOL IN A ROMA NEIGHBOURHOOD</b>		<b>BULGARIA</b>
<b>Organisation:</b> <b>Fondation “ Roma- Lom ”</b> 4, Rue Bozveli 3600 LOM Tel./ Fax : + 359 971 66 751		<b>Keywords</b> School structure Helping Roma children for a better integration in school
Duration of activity (start/end):	<b>Ongoing</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>If activity is being conducted under a European project (name of project):</b>		
<b>Description of the activity:</b> The Roma-Lom Foundation was set up in 1996. Its long-term objectives are to motivate excluded persons and help them become better integrated into community life, with respect for the ethnic group to which they belong. In pursuing this goal, the Foundation acts as an intermediary between the families and the institutions. The Foundation appropriates models and practices, and examples deriving from this work show how good practices can be implemented at the local and national levels. The Foundation aims not to usurp State functions but rather to highlight good examples to be used for adopting various strategies vis-à-vis the Roma community. The Foundation works with all institutions operating in the municipal area, and also maintains very close links with all local and regional non-governmental organisations. Its work is centred on the following sectors: <i>human resource development, educational work, and projects the social and employment fields</i> . Families are involved in the activities conducted with the school teams. Activities are organised outside the neighbourhoods in question in order to get people out into the town centre. The Foundation workers encounter great difficulties because of a lack of education among Roma people and a dearth of facilities for helping teachers work with bilingual children. The country also lacks policies for resolving the educational problems of persons belonging to this minority. Furthermore, Roma children have to study in schools with poor infrastructures and inadequate general conditions, etc. One example of the Foundation’s work is its co-operation with the Hristo Botev school.		
<b>Methods/resources implemented:</b> The <i>Hristo Botev</i> school opened in 1863 in a Roma neighbourhood called <i>Mladenovo</i> . In 1929 the school became a secondary school because of the growing numbers of students attending it. The total number of students attending this school today is 614, 580 of whom are Roma youngsters. Bulgarian state schools comprise eight grades. The Foundation team is working with teachers to improve their understanding of Roma culture and tradition and to help them work more effectively with Roma children. The conditions under which this school’s educational team have to work are highly unsatisfactory.	<b>Partnerships</b> <i>European institutions</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Non-governmental</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Governmental</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Voluntary</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Local institutions</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Roma community</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Expected results and objectives:</b> 90% of the children attending this school are Roma, from two Roma neighbourhoods in the town of Lom. The children are regular visitors to the Foundation in the town centre, attending courses, using services providing assistance for children in difficulty, taking part in evening performances and cultural events, etc. The children are given opportunities to get out and about and see things that are not available in their usual living environment. Some children are continuing their education at the secondary school in the town centre and hoping to go on to study at University.		
<b>Communication facilities:</b>		
<i>Production of material: in hand</i>		
<i>E-mail and/or website address: <a href="http://www.http://www.care-bg.org">http://www.http://www.care-bg.org</a>.</i>		

<b>TYPE OF ACTION:</b>		<b>FRANCE</b>
<b>EDUCATIONAL SUPERVISION OF “TRAVELLING” CHILDREN BY CREATING A NEW PERSONALISED “LOGBOOK</b>		
<b>Organisation:</b>	<b>Ecole "Les Voyageurs"</b> Rue Django Reinhardt 21 000 Dijon Tél : 03 80 68 28 64	<b>Keywords</b>  Teaching material
Duration of activity (start/end):	<b>Ongoing</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>If activity is being conducted under a European project (name of project):</b> NON		
<b>Description of the activity:</b> Creation of a “logbook” comprising administrative information on the child (surname, first name, date of birth) as well as legal data (mandatory schooling); information on the different schools attended (with a view to networking the teachers involved); a “summative” (itemised) section setting out the competences expected in the various subjects; a section on schoolbooks and learning aids used by the child; a “roadmap” listing the most recent work in reading and mathematics; a section for the families when the child is being registered or inducted at school, which may comprise various practical items (eg whether or not the child can take part in school outings) and information deemed vital (diabetic children, etc); a section on significant achievements selected with the child during his/her (initial or continuous) assessment and teachers’ comments (personalised projects, individual work plan for the child, etc), in order to facilitate identification of and differentiation between specifically educational contents and aspects which contribute to the child’s general development		
<b>Methods/resources implemented:</b> Educational supervision must respect, incorporate and enhance the children’s cultures of origin and reinforce the motivation and involvement of all the partners concerned. The process is based on three main lines, viz: educational and relational practices enabling the children to (re)build their confidence, reassuring them, and helping them to appropriate their school record book and to position themselves in relation to school (codes and learning processes); a document (record book, logbook or school file) designed to provide parents and various teachers with information on the child’s level of acquisition of competences and knowledge in all school subjects; and a mechanism for transferring and updating the document, which may be dealt with either by the administration or the families themselves, depending on the level, content and objectives.	<b>Partnerships</b> <i>European institutions</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Non-governmental</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Governmental</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Voluntary</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Local institutions</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Roma community</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Expected results and objectives:</b> Education supervision must promote not only the children’s access to and progress through the school learning processes, but also their integration into all the relevant types of educational structures. Such socio-educational support is designed to provide the child with activities tailored to his/her actual competences and knowledge, rather than those expected at his/her age. The approaches and contents are flexible and may be implemented from an intercultural angle. This practice, which places the child at the centre of the learning processes and makes him/her the main protagonist of the latter, is in fact a success-oriented teaching method. The process provides the teacher with information on the child’s main centres of interest and learning methods, while the child is asked “how (s)he learns”, “what (s)he is good at and why”, “what (s)he likes” and “what (s)he finds difficult and why”, etc.		

<b>TYPE OF ACTION:</b>		
<b>DEVELOPING "SCHOOL VAN"-TYPE MOBILE UNITS</b>		<b>FRANCE</b>
<b>Organisation:</b> Association d'Aide à la Scolarisation des Enfants Tsiganes (ASET)		<b>Keywords</b> School structure Promoting schooling
Duration of activity (start/end):	<b>Ongoing</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>If activity is being conducted under a European project (name of project):</b> NON		
<b>Description of the activity:</b> "ASET" was set up in 1969 as an association governed by the 1901 Law, and has now been awarded the official status of a National Youth and Educational Association by the Ministry of Youth and Sports. Initially, its activities were geared to promoting the schooling of Gypsy children and also other "young people in difficulty". It has gradually come to concentrate exclusively on Gypsy children and teenagers from travelling families, setting up mobile school units which travel around the sites where travelling families live. In 1982 ASET introduced its first mobile school unit (known as a "school van") in the Paris region. It has gradually built up a network of travelling classrooms covering not only the Paris region but also the provinces, thanks to the relay persons who have militated for an expansion of the project. There are currently thirty or so school vans spread over 13 Departments, catering every year for approximately 4 000 Gypsy children from travelling families who live in caravans throughout the year and move around for various economic, family, religious and other reasons or else are regularly expelled from their chosen sites. Some of these families are also in the process of settling or being settled.		
<b>Methods/resources implemented:</b> The mobile school units are financed from public and private funds, and operating expenses are covered in part or in whole by the schools to which the units are attached or by public bodies (municipalities, Department Councils, etc). The teachers operating in the mobile units are members of the educational teams of the schools on which they depend (the "base schools") and are paid by the French Ministry of Education. There are some forty such qualified teachers bound by contract with the education ministry working in ASET school vans.	<b>Partnerships</b> <i>European institutions</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Non-governmental</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Governmental</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Voluntary</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Local institutions</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Roma community</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Expected results and objectives:</b> Meeting a growing demand for education from travelling Gypsies, who lack access to any other form of schooling. Promoting the schooling of Gypsy children (and other young people in difficulty), in co-operation with the families concerned and the state and private schools. Defending the right to schooling and consequently the right to park caravans and secure accommodation for families with children requiring schooling. The school vans are not an end in themselves, and in fact they have neither the resources nor any ambition to operate indefinitely. They act as a bridge, an intermediate space between the Gypsy cultural universe and the school. Most of the teaching provided concerns essential learning processes (the "three R's") geared to giving as many of these children as possible access to their nearest and most suitable school.		
<b>Communication facilities:</b>		
<i>Production of material: in hand</i>		
<i>E-mail and/or website address: <a href="mailto:perso.wanadoo.fr/aset.france">perso.wanadoo.fr/aset.france</a>.</i>		



<b>TYPE OF ACTION:</b>		<b>FRANCE</b>
<b>NATIONAL NETWORKING OF TEACHERS</b>		
<b>Organisation:</b> <b>Association Centre de Liaison et d'Information Voyage-Ecole (CLIVE)</b>  Association d'enseignants Son siège est chez Marie Ascoua Chemin du Moulin 80260 Montonvillers		<b>Keywords</b>  National networking of teachers
Duration of activity (start/end):	<b>Ongoing</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>If activity is being conducted under a European project (name of project):</b> NON		
<b>Description of the activity:</b> An information and liaison bulletin is to be published presenting the various existing bodies Reactivating a teachers' association governed by the Law of 1 July 1901 and set up in February 1985 at the initiative of a group of teachers. The association is designed to promote educational debates and provide detailed information on schooling in general with an eye to matching the realities faced by Gypsies and Travellers as closely as possible with school life.		
<b>Methods/resources implemented:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>in the Association (research groups, schools, CASNAV [<i>Centre Académique pour la scolarisation des nouveaux arrivants et des enfants du voyage</i> – Academic centre for the schooling of migrants and traveller children], etc).</li> <li>A new website to further develop the network and increase the circulation and exchange of knowledge (specialist know-how, practice and tools), as well as practical information and contacts nationwide).</li> </ul> A national network is needed to achieve these objectives. Other initiatives might also be taken along the same lines, depending on members' wishes.		<b>Partnerships</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>European institutions</i> <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li><i>Non-governmental</i> <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li><i>Governmental</i> <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li><i>Voluntary</i> <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li><i>Local institutions</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></li> <li><i>Roma community</i> <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>
<b>Expected results and objectives:</b> This association aims to promote: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reflection and exchange of knowledge, practice and tools</li> <li>networking of teachers</li> <li>knowledge of the facts and mechanisms of schooling throughout the French territory</li> <li>action to ensure greater compatibility between the realities of Gypsy and school life.</li> </ul>		
<b>Communication facilities:</b>		
<i>Production of material: in hand</i>		
<i>E-mail and/or website address: <a href="http://www">http://www</a>.</i>		

<b>TYPE OF ACTION:</b>		<b>FRANCE</b>
<b>NEW BOOKLET FOR TEACHERS ON THE RECEPTION OF TRAVELLER CHILDREN</b>		
<b>Organisation:</b> <b>CASNAV de Nancy-Metz</b> 16, Boulevard Paixhans 57 045 METZ CEDEX  Tél : 03 87 75 93 98 Fax : 03 87 75 93 90		<b>Keywords</b>  Integration of school Reception
Duration of activity (start/end): 1999-2000	<b>Ongoing</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>If activity is being conducted under a European project (name of project):</b> NON		
<b>Description of the activity:</b> Producing a document to facilitate the reception and registration of “traveller children” in schools, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• advice on assessment, curriculum counselling, integration in the ordinary school environment and educational supervision</li> <li>• information on cultural specificities and educational counselling, and on management of cultural diversity</li> <li>• presentation of the location and duration of family stays in the local education authority districts</li> <li>• excerpts from legislative and statutory texts</li> <li>• general and thematic bibliographies on Gypsies and Travellers, listing works available from the CASNAV.</li> </ul>		
<b>Methods/resources implemented:</b> Introductory document produced by the Nancy-Metz CASNAV ( <i>Centre Académique pour la scolarisation de nouveaux arrivants et des enfants du voyage</i> ) at a training course organised by the <i>Plan Académique de Formation premier degré</i> , leading to the networking of different experiments and practices vis-à-vis the reception and schooling of Gypsy children. A consolidated index has been created of the various approaches to organising the reception of children in a given municipality and/or school.		<b>Partnerships</b> <i>European institutions</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Non-governmental</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Governmental</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Voluntary</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Local institutions</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Roma community</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Expected results and objectives:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Améliorer la qualité de l'accueil réservé aux enfants roms/tsiganes dans les écoles, quel que soit leur page et leur mode de vie (itinérant, semi-sédentaire ou sédentaire).</li> <li>- Offrir un document qui peut servir d'inspiration à chaque équipe pédagogique pour élaborer sa propre stratégie d'accueil, la plus adaptée à ses réalités.</li> <li>- Constitution d'un pôle de personnes ressources, en dressant l'inventaire dans chaque département de l'Académie, de personnes susceptibles d'apporter des informations et des conseils aux enseignants en poste sur des classes spécifiques, au personnel ressources de l'éducation nationale et aux partenaires associatifs impliqués dans la lutte contre l'illettrisme qui en auraient besoins.</li> </ul>		
<b>Communication facilities:</b>		
<i>Production of material: Booklet for teachers</i>		
<i>E-mail and/or website address: <a href="http://www.ac-nancy-metz.fr/cefisem">http://www.ac-nancy-metz.fr/cefisem</a></i>		

<b>TYPE OF ACTION:</b>		<b>ROUMANIE</b>
<b>A NEW METHODOLOGICAL GUIDE FOR TEACHERS</b>		
<b>Organisation:</b> <b>Institut Interculturel TIMISOARA</b> 2, Miron Costin 1900 TIMISOARA Tél : + 40 56 198 457 Fax : + 40 56 198 457		<b>Keywords</b>  Teaching material Culture in school
Duration of activity (start/end): 1999/2001	<b>Ongoing</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>If activity is being conducted under a European project (name of project):</b> <b>EURROM</b>		
<b>Description of the activity:</b> Producing a methodological guide for all teachers wishing to incorporate elements of Roma culture into their teaching activities. The structure of the guide was designed to provide users with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a theoretical framework and a series of methodological principles based on constructivist pedagogy and intercultural education;</li> <li>• concise information on the situation of Roma communities both across Europe and in the individual countries involved in the project (Romania, Slovakia, Spain and France), highlighting the diversity of Roma communities, together with bibliographical references to complement the information in this field;</li> <li>• suggestions for practical activities, designed and tried out with primary school classes, mostly adaptable to higher educational levels.</li> </ul>		
<b>Methods/resources implemented:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducting networked action-research geared to pragmatic exploration of the local environment (interviews with older members of the communities, historical research projects, archives, local images and illustrations, etc), and organising the education programme around these activities;</li> <li>• Finalising a methodology and teaching materials to facilitate the effective pursuit of the chosen objectives in the schools;</li> <li>• Creating a methodological guide for teachers.</li> </ul>		<b>Partnerships</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>European institutions</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></li> <li><i>Non-governmental</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></li> <li><i>Governmental</i> <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li><i>Voluntary</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></li> <li><i>Local institutions</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></li> <li><i>Roma community</i> <input type="checkbox"/></li> </ul>
<u>Expected results and objectives:</u> Prioritising the intercultural approach, this activity is geared to improving relations and changing teachers' attitudes to their Roma students (by enhancing their knowledge of Roma culture), non-Roma students' attitudes to Roma students, and the attitudes of members of the Roma communities and families to schools. The activity aims: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to integrate Roma culture into an educational process that will enable students to develop an identity and citizenship respecting their specificities and to improve their knowledge, understanding and respect for their cultural frame of reference and the related values;</li> <li>• linking schools up with sectors of civil society that are particularly relevant to these children (communities, families and voluntary associations).</li> </ul>		
<b>Communication facilities:</b>		
<i>Production of material: in hand</i>		
<i>E-mail and/or website address: : <a href="mailto:iit@iit.dnttm.ro">iit@iit.dnttm.ro</a></i>		

<b>TYPE OF ACTION:</b>		<b>ROUMANIE</b>
<b>INTRODUCING THE ROMANY LANGUAGES AT SCHOOL</b>		
<b>Organisation:</b> <b>Ministère de l'Education et de la Recherche en Roumanie</b> <b>Tel/ Fax : 0040-1- 3300513</b>		<b>Keywords</b>  Teaching of romani language
Duration of activity (start/end): 1992	<b>Ongoing</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>If activity is being conducted under a European project (name of project):</b>		
<b>Description of the activity:</b> Romania has one of the most highly developed systems for teaching the Romany language in Europe. The Romanian Ministry of Education works in close co-operation with Roma NGOs and non-Roma groups in developing a variety of Romany teaching programmes. The Government began showing interest in this issue when it launched the strategy to improve the situation of Roma populations in Romania. In 2001 and 2002, 12 600 students were studying their mother tongue, Romany, for three to four hours per week. In January 2001 the Government adopted Decision No. 23/11 expanding the Romany teaching programmes by creating the post of Deputy Director General in this field and appointing a Romany language adviser (for primary school children, teenagers and adults). On 20 October 1992 the first ever university-level Romany language course was launched at the Bucharest Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literature, with two-hour weekly classes. There is also a university-level remote learning course for unqualified Roma teachers, ie teachers who have not previously studied at university.		
<b>Methods/resources implemented:</b> After two years, candidates are awarded a university diploma qualifying them to reach Romany at primary level. This programme began in October 2000. Several strategic programmes have been launched in various schools for teaching in Romany, and 34 departments have initiated weekly classes in the Romany language. Other programmes introduced by the Ministry and various NGOs enable students to learn Romany outside school, for example in summer schools. Many foreigners are also attending these Romany language courses. The Ministry has appointed 42 school inspectors for Romany classes, half of them belonging to the Roma minority. Between January 2001 and June 2002, the Ministry of Education and Research established new teaching programmes for members of the Roma community. These programmes are also part of the General implementation Plan for the Strategy to improve the situation of the Roma population.		<b>Partnerships</b> <i>European institutions</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Non-governmental</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Governmental</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Voluntary</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Local institutions</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Roma community</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Expected results and objectives:</b> Romania currently has 102 schools in which 12 650 students are studying Romany. 260 teachers are working full-time in these schools, with further 96 part-time teachers.		
<b>Communication facilities:</b>		
<i>Production of material: leaflets, audio K7, CD etc</i>		
<i>E-mail and/or website address: <a href="mailto:minorities@mec.edu.ro">minorities@mec.edu.ro</a></i>		

<b>TYPE OF ACTION:</b>		<b>SLOVAQUIE</b>
<b>TEACHING PLANS AND PROGRAMMES FOR THE PRIMARY "ZERO/PREPARATORY CLASS"</b>		
<b>Organisation:</b> <b>Institut Pédagogique d'Etat (SPU)</b> P.O.Box 26 Pluhová 8 830 00 Bratislava 3 Slovaquie Tel: +421-2-44372035 +421-2-44372042 Fax: +421-2-44371187		<b>Keywords</b> Programmes Curricula Preparatory class
Duration of activity (start/end): Janvier 2000 – Juin 2003	<b>Ongoing</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>If activity is being conducted under a European project (name of project):</b>		
<b>Description of the activity:</b> Preparing teaching contents for preparatory classes in order to speed up the children's development for one year so that they can join the first primary class at the end of this preliminary year.		
<b>Methods/resources implemented:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• experimentation with preparatory classes in co-operation with the Educational Faculty of the Comenius University in 30 primary schools, covering 275 teachers working with Roma children</li> <li>• circulating around 52 different primary schools proposals for teaching plans and programmes for preparatory classes and plan monitoring sheets broken down by time and theme.</li> </ul>		<b>Partnerships</b> <i>European institutions</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Non-governmental</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Governmental</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Voluntary</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Local institutions</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Roma community</i> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Expected results and objectives:</b> Modernising content, methods and teaching approaches.		
<b>Communication facilities:</b>		
<i>Production of material: in hand</i>		
E-mail and/or website address: <a href="mailto:spu@statpedu.sk">spu@statpedu.sk</a> <a href="http://193.87.78.9/vzdelavanie_romov/default.htm">http://193.87.78.9/vzdelavanie_romov/default.htm</a> , <a href="http://193.87.78.9/vzdelavanie_Romov/projekt_Valachova.htm">http://193.87.78.9/vzdelavanie Romov/projekt Valachova.htm</a>		

## *Appendix*

### **Recommendation No R (2000) 4 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the education of Roma/Gypsy children in Europe**

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*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 3 February 2000 at the 696<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.b of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Considering that the aim of the Council of Europe is to achieve greater unity between its members and that this aim may be pursued, in particular, through common action in the field of education;

Recognising that there is an urgent need to build new foundations for future educational strategies toward the Roma/Gypsy people in Europe, particularly in view of the high rates of illiteracy or semi-literacy among them, their high drop-out rate, the low percentage of students completing primary education and the persistence of features such as low school attendance;

Noting that the problems faced by Roma/Gypsies in the field of schooling are largely the result of long-standing educational policies of the past, which led either to assimilation or to segregation of Roma/Gypsy children at school on the grounds that they were "socially and culturally handicapped";

Considering that the disadvantaged position of Roma/Gypsies in European societies cannot be overcome unless equality of opportunity in the field of education is guaranteed for Roma/Gypsy children;

Considering that the education of Roma/Gypsy children should be a priority in national policies in favour of Roma/Gypsies;

Bearing in mind that policies aimed at addressing the problems faced by Roma/Gypsies in the field of education should be comprehensive, based on an acknowledgement that the issue of schooling for Roma/Gypsy children is linked with a wide range of other factors and pre-conditions, namely the economic, social and cultural aspects, and the fight against racism and discrimination;

Bearing in mind that educational policies in favour of Roma/Gypsy children should be backed up by an active adult education and vocational education policy;

Considering that, as there is a text concerning the education of Roma/Gypsy children for member states of the European Union (Resolution of the Council and of the Ministers of Education meeting with the Council on School Provision for Gypsy and Traveller Children, of 22 May 1989; 89/C 153/02), it is urgently necessary to have a text covering all of the member states of the Council of Europe;

Bearing in mind the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages;

Bearing in mind Recommendations 563 (1969) and 1203 (1993) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in which mention is made of the educational needs of Roma/Gypsies in Europe;

Bearing in mind Resolutions 125 (1981), 16 (1995) and 249 (1993) and Recommendation 11 (1995) of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe on the situation of Roma/Gypsies in Europe;

Bearing in mind General Policy Recommendation No. 3 of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance on "Combating racism and discrimination against Roma/Gypsies in Europe";

Bearing in mind the work carried out by the Council for Cultural Co-operation (CDCC) to respond to Resolution 125 (1981), and in particular, the publication of the report "Gypsies and Travellers" (1985), updated in 1994 ("Roma, Gypsies, Travellers", Council of Europe Publishing);

Having welcomed the memorandum prepared by the Specialist Group on Roma/Gypsies entitled "Roma Children Education Policy Paper: Strategic Elements of Education Policy for Roma Children in Europe" (MG-S-ROM (97) 11),

Recommends that in implementing their education policies the governments of the member states:

- be guided by the principles set out in the appendix to this Recommendation;
- bring this Recommendation to the attention of the relevant public bodies in their respective countries through the appropriate national channels.

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## **Appendix to Recommendation No. R (2000) 4**

*Guiding principles of an education policy*

*for Roma/Gypsy children in Europe*

### **I. Structures**

1. Educational policies for Roma/Gypsy children should be accompanied by adequate resources and the flexible structures necessary to meet the diversity of the Roma/Gypsy population in Europe and which take into account the existence of Roma/Gypsy groups which lead an itinerant or semi-itinerant lifestyle. In this respect, it might be envisaged having recourse to distance education, based on new communication technologies.
2. Emphasis should be put on the need to better co-ordinate the international, national, regional and local levels in order to avoid dispersion of efforts and to promote synergies.
3. To this end member states should make the Ministries of Education sensitive to the question of education of Roma/Gypsy children.
4. In order to secure access to school for Roma/Gypsy children, pre-school education schemes should be widely developed and made accessible to them.
5. Particular attention should also be paid to the need to ensure better communication with parents, where necessary using mediators from the Roma/Gypsy community which could then lead to specific career possibilities. Special information and advice should be given to parents about the necessity of education and about the support mechanisms that municipalities can offer families. There has to be mutual understanding between parents and schools. The parents' exclusion and lack of knowledge and education (even illiteracy) also prevent children from benefiting from the education system.
6. Appropriate support structures should be set up in order to enable Roma/Gypsy children to benefit, in particular through positive action, from equal opportunities at school.
7. The member states are invited to provide the necessary means to implement the above-mentioned policies and arrangements in order to close the gap between Roma/Gypsy pupils and majority pupils.

### **II. Curriculum and teaching material**

8. Educational policies in favour of Roma/Gypsy children should be implemented in the framework of broader intercultural policies, taking into account the particular features of the Romani culture and the disadvantaged position of many Roma/Gypsies in the member states.

9. The curriculum, on the whole, and the teaching material should therefore be designed so as to take into account the cultural identity of Roma/Gypsy children. Romani history and culture should be introduced in the teaching material in order to reflect the cultural identity of Roma/Gypsy children. The participation of representatives of the Roma/Gypsy community should be encouraged in the development of teaching material on the history, culture or language of the Roma/Gypsies.

10. However, the member states should ensure that this does not lead to the establishment of separate curricula, which might lead to the setting up of separate classes.

11. The member states should also encourage the development of teaching material based on good practices in order to assist teachers in their daily work with Roma/Gypsy pupils.

12. In the countries where the Romani language is spoken, opportunities to learn in the mother tongue should be offered at school to Roma/Gypsy children.

### **III. Recruitment and training of teachers**

13. It is important that future teachers should be provided with specific knowledge and training to help them understand better their Roma/Gypsy pupils. The education of Roma/Gypsy pupils should however remain an integral part of the general educational system.

14. The Roma/Gypsy community should be involved in the designing of such curricula and should be directly involved in the delivery of information to future teachers.

15. Support should also be given to the training and recruitment of teachers from within the Roma/Gypsy community.

### **IV. Information research and assessment**

16. The member states should encourage innovative research/small-scale action projects in order to find local responses to local needs. The results of such projects should be disseminated.

17. The results of educational policies for Roma/Gypsy pupils should be carefully monitored. All the participants involved in the education of Roma/Gypsy children (school authorities, teachers, parents, non-governmental organisations) should be invited to take part in the monitoring process.

18. The evaluation of the results of educational policies towards Roma/Gypsy children should take account of many criteria, including personal and social development, and not be limited to estimates of school attendance and drop-out rates.

### **V. Consultation and co-ordination**

19. The involvement of all parties concerned (ministry of education, school authorities, Roma families and organisations) in the design, implementation and monitoring of education policies for Roma/Gypsies should be promoted by the state.

20. Use should also be made of mediators from within the Roma/Gypsy community, in particular to ease the contacts between Roma/Gypsies, the majority population and schools and to avoid conflicts at school; this should apply to all levels of schooling.

21. The Ministries of Education, in the framework of the awareness-raising action mentioned in point I, paragraph 3, above should facilitate the co-ordination of the efforts of the different parties involved and permit the channelling of information between the different levels of education authorities.

22. Member states should further encourage and support the exchange of experience and good practice