

Education of Roma children in Europe

Texts and activities
of the Council of Europe
concerning education



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Foreword

Education of Roma children in Europe Texts and activities of the Council of Europe concerning education

This publication is one element of response to Recommendation No. R (2000) 4 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to member states on the education of Roma/Gypsy children in Europe and an outcome of the project “Education of Roma children in Europe” developed by the Division for the European Dimension of Education.

The Council of Europe has expertise in the area of education, offering a pan-European forum for the development of policies, standards and tools, and the sharing of good educational practice. The programme of activities involves assistance to the 49 signatory states of the European Cultural Convention in reviewing their educational policies, organisation and contents, and with the reform of educational legislation.

Educational policy is considered to be a key element of social policy, and consequently the Council of Europe is particularly active in developing policies and good practices for the education of minorities, with a specific focus on equal opportunities for access to quality education for these groups. In this context, the Council of Europe has undertaken a range of initiatives concerning the education of Roma since 1969, and has developed specific actions in the field of teacher training since 1983.

This publication takes stock of the official texts and activities carried out by the Council of Europe in connection with Roma. Thanks to the innovative nature of the ideas they have conveyed, one can consider them to be of exploratory and anticipatory value. It is important for the people concerned to have access to the results of activities, and to keep an accurate record of the action taken and of the lessons learnt from it.

This is the purpose of this publication which lists the relevant texts adopted by the Council of Europe over the last thirty years with which not only national authorities, but also non-governmental organisations and institutions should be familiar, so that they can draw on them for assistance in their own action.

I believe that the Council of Europe’s experience and expertise in the field of education of Roma children shows that our Organisation is ideally placed to develop further initiatives with a European dimension in the future.

I would like to express my appreciation to Aurora Ailincăi and Ruth Amar for their contribution to the realisation of this work.

Gabriele Mazza
Director of School, Out-of-School and Higher Education

Part I – Official texts of the Council of Europe

A. Official texts concerning the Roma population and comments

The official texts are presented in chronological order. Texts that do not refer to education are not mentioned.

Recommendation 1557 (2002) on the legal situation of Roma in Europe

Adopted by the Assembly on 25 April 2002

Point 15.c of the recommendation foresees “to guarantee equal treatment for the Romani minority as an ethnic or national minority group in the field of education [...]” giving special attention to:

“ii. providing the possibility for Romani students to participate in all levels of education from kindergarten to university;

iii. developing positive measures to recruit Roma in public services of direct relevance to Roma communities, such as primary and secondary schools, social welfare centres, local primary health care centres and local administration;

iv. eradicating all practices of segregated schooling for Romani children, particularly that of routing Romani children to schools or classes for the mentally disabled;

e. to take specific measures and create special institutions for the protection of the Romani language, culture, traditions and identity:

i. to help and promote the teaching of the Romani language;

ii. to encourage Romani parents to send their children to primary school, secondary school and higher education, including college or university, and give them adequate information about the necessity of education;

iii. to make the majority population more familiar with Roma culture;

iv. to ensure that educational textbooks include material on the Romani history and culture;

v. to recruit Roma teaching staff, particularly in areas with a large Romani population.”

Comment

Although Recommendation 1557 (2002) on the legal situation of Roma in Europe, adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly on 25 April 2002, was drafted from a legal standpoint, as its title indicates, there are significant implications for education – and the Education Directorate may be able to make a vital contribution – in the fields mentioned, most of which were covered in Recommendation No. R (2000) 4: recognition of Roma as a minority, training for teachers and other Roma staff, development and distribution of teaching material, language teaching, studies and dissemination of information on Roma history and culture, involvement of families, highlighting positive experiences, setting up a European study and training centre, etc.

Recommendation Rec(2001)17 on improving the economic and employment situation of Roma/Gypsies and Travellers in Europe

Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 27 November 2001

“V. Training and education

33. Governments should introduce positive incentives such as grants and mentoring support to encourage young Roma/Gypsies to complete their secondary education and to attend higher education institutions or take up apprenticeships. They should also consider means to improve low levels of qualification and participation in higher education on the part of Roma/Gypsies.”

Comment

Recommendation Rec(2001)17 of the Committee of Ministers, on improving the economic and employment situation of Roma and Travellers in Europe, contains a section on training and education, and another on information, research and assessment.

Recommendation No. R (2000) 4 on the education of Roma/Gypsy children in Europe

Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 3 February 2000

See the recommendation in the appendix.

Comment

Recommendation No. R (2000) 4 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the education of Roma children in Europe gives “[g]uiding principles of an education policy for Roma children in Europe”, setting out priorities in terms of structures, curricula and teaching material; recruitment and training of teachers; information, research and assessment; and consultation and co-ordination. This recommendation is the basis for the “Education of Roma/Gypsy children in Europe” project, initially scheduled to

run from 2002 to 2005. In this recommendation, the Committee of Ministers recalls the existence of a fundamental text adopted by the Council of the European Communities (Resolution of 22 May 1989 on School Provision for Gypsy and Traveller Children) and stresses that, “as there is a text concerning the education of Roma/Gypsy children for member states of the European Union”, of which there are 15, “it is urgently necessary to have a text covering all of the member states of the Council of Europe”, involving 44 states in 2000. This recommendation recognises that there is an urgent need to build new foundations for future educational strategies on behalf of Roma children, and asks that Roma children be guaranteed equality of opportunity in the field of education and that economic, social and cultural factors and the fight against racism and discrimination be taken into account in their schooling.

ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 3: Combating racism and intolerance against Roma/Gypsies

Adopted by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) on 6 March 1998

ECRI recommends the following to governments of member states:

- to ensure that discrimination as such, as well as discriminatory practices, are combated through adequate legislation and to introduce into civil law specific provisions to this end, particularly in the fields of employment, housing and education;
- to vigorously combat all forms of school segregation towards Roma/Gypsy children and to ensure the effective enjoyment of equal access to education;
- to introduce into the curricula of all schools information on the history and culture of Roma/Gypsies and to provide training programmes in this subject for teachers.

Comment

ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 3: Combating racism and intolerance against Roma/Gypsies was issued on 6 March 1998. In this text, with respect to education, ECRI recommends to the member states that they “vigorously combat all forms of school segregation towards Roma/Gypsy children and [...] ensure the effective enjoyment of equal access to education” and “introduce into the curricula of all schools information on the history and culture of Roma/Gypsies and [...] provide training programmes in this subject for teachers.” These general policy recommendations are addressed to the governments of all member states.

Recommendation 1338 (1997) on the obligations and commitments of the Czech Republic as a member state

Adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly on 22 September 1997

In Recommendation 1338 (1997), the Parliamentary Assembly insists on the question of measures needed to reduce discrimination against the Roma community in the Czech Republic.

Resolution 1123 (1997) on honouring of obligations and commitments by Romania as a member state

Adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly on 24 April 1997

The Assembly therefore earnestly requests that the Romanian authorities: “promote a campaign against racism, xenophobia and intolerance and take all appropriate measures for the social integration of the Rom population”.

Resolution 16 (1995) on the contribution of Roma (Gypsies) for the construction of a tolerant Europe

Adopted by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe on 31 May 1995

“7. Encourages the local and regional authorities to play their part to the full and shoulder their responsibilities towards Roma (Gypsy) communities, in particular through the following activities:

iv. the possibility given to Roma (Gypsy) communities to effectively exercise their fundamental right to education, having access to high-quality education at all levels, participating fully in the educational process and enjoying respect for their special needs;

8. Undertakes to continue its efforts to ensure better provision for Roma (Gypsies) in the urban environment by:

ii. carrying out more detailed studies highlighting sound examples, if possible with partners within and outside the Council of Europe, especially studies of:

a. structures providing a good level of education for Roma (Gypsy) communities, while at the same time endeavouring to optimise the multicultural context and encouraging links between schools in areas with different cultures in order to share the experiences of each minority culture;

iii. organising hearings, in the near future, with the Network of Cities and other partners, in response to the invitations received from Kosice (Slovakia), Ploiesti (Romania) and Pardubice (Czech Republic). These hearings, to be held between 1995 and 1997, should enable more in-depth consideration to be given to the three following groups of subjects:

a. education, training, employment and culture.”

In the appendix, operating principles:

“8. The work of the Network will focus on the following three approaches:

– the cultural approach, aimed at enhancing Roma (Gypsy) culture, language and history, and developing education;

On this basis, the work of the Network will seek to promote the following activities:

iii. Providing education for children, academic training and education in civics, vocational training and premises in which to provide such education and training.

iv. Informing teachers and elected representatives about Roma (Gypsy) culture and raising their awareness.”

Comment

Resolution 16 (1995) on “Towards a tolerant Europe: the contribution of Roma (Gypsies)” of the Congress takes up a number of points relating to education mentioned in Resolution 249 (1993). The Congress also undertakes to improve the reception of Roma in cities by organising “Hearings [...] with the Network of Cities and other partners, in response to the invitations received from Kosice (Slovakia), Ploiesti (Romania) and Pardubice (Czech Republic)”. Education, training, employment and culture were to be discussed in greater depth at these hearings. The cultural approach, one of the three approaches¹ on which this work is based, aims to enhance Roma language, culture and history, and develop education.

Recommendation 11 (1995) on the contribution of Roma (Gypsies) for the construction of a tolerant Europe

Adopted by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe on 31 May 1995

“x. invite the governments of member states which have not already done so to sign and ratify the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and to accord particular attention, in this context, to recognition and promotion of the Romani;

...

xvii. invite the governments of member states to encourage the governments of member states to implement a settlement policy for Roma (Gypsy) communities wanting to become sedentary, by granting them permanent residence rights that can help solve their housing and health problems and meet their educational and vocational training needs;

...

1. The Network’s activities are based on three approaches: social, cultural and “human rights, citizenship and democracy”.

xx. lend its full support to the urgent efforts of the Council for Cultural Co-operation aimed at instituting a "Roma (Gypsy) Cultural Route" and to its activities in the field of education, training and information."

Comment

Recommendation 11 (1995) on "Towards a tolerant Europe: the contribution of Roma (Gypsies)" of the Congress takes up a number of proposals made by the Parliamentary Assembly in its Resolution 1203 (1993) and recommends that the Committee of Ministers, among others, "lend its full support to the urgent efforts of the Council for Cultural Co-operation aimed at instituting a 'Roma (Gypsy) Cultural Route'", and support its activities in the fields of education, training and information.

Gypsies in Europe, Supplementary reply of the Committee of Ministers to Recommendation 1203 (1993) on Gypsies in Europe

Reply adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 17 October 1995

The CDCC was invited to continue giving attention, in the context of its work on intercultural education and the education of minorities, to the development of effective educational methodologies for Roma/Gypsies and to work for recognition and development of Roma/Gypsy culture.

Reply of the Committee of Ministers to Recommendation 1203 (1993) on Gypsies in Europe

Prepared by the Directorate of Social and Economic Affairs on 21 March 1994

Paragraph 4 states that "the CDCC has organised, as part of its Teacher Bursary Scheme, a series of training courses for teachers as well as seminars on schooling for gypsy and traveller children."

Recommendation 1203 (1993) on Gypsies in Europe

Adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly on 2 February 1993

"In the field of education:

- vi. the existing European programmes for training teachers of Gypsies should be extended;
- vii. special attention should be paid to the education of women in general and mothers together with their younger children;
- viii. talented young Gypsies should be encouraged to study and to act as intermediaries for Gypsies."

Comment

Recommendation 1203 (1993) of the Parliamentary Assembly, "Gypsies in Europe", proposes that teacher training programmes be extended, and special attention paid to women's education. It also proposes that young Roma be encouraged to act as intermediaries for their people. This recommendation represented a significant step in the Council of Europe's work in relation to Roma, for it prompted other Council of Europe bodies to organise activities and to continue work that was already under way.

Resolution 249 (1993) on Gypsies in Europe: the role and responsibility of local and regional authorities

Adopted by the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe on 18 March 1993

"The Standing Conference,

8. Invites local and regional authorities:

i. to take necessary measures as part of an overall strategy to facilitate the integration of Roma/Gypsies into the local community, in the area of housing, caravan sites, education, health and support for the expression and development of their identity and culture;

10. Requests the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers:

i. to encourage member state governments to ratify as soon as possible the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages;

ii. to encourage governments to implement the Charter articles dealing with non-territorial languages;

iv. to instruct the Council for Cultural Co-operation:

a. to step up the work pursued over the last 10 years with publications for the purposes of education and information in the field of schooling and training for Gypsy children and young people;

b. to co-operate in the setting-up and operation of the network of municipalities to be developed by the Committee on Culture, Education and the Media and the Committee on Social Affairs and Health;

c. to organise training seminars for teachers and other staff within the framework of this network of municipalities;

d. to consider the possibility of launching a European Gypsy Route as part of the European Cultural Routes programme."

Comment

In Resolution 249 (1993) on “Gypsies in Europe: the role and responsibility of local and regional authorities”, the Standing Conference asks the Committee of Ministers “to encourage member state governments to ratify [...] the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages”, “to implement the Charter articles dealing with non-territorial languages”, to instruct the Council for Cultural Co-operation “to step up the work pursued over the last 10 years [...] in the field of schooling and training for Gypsy children and young people” and “to organise training seminars for teachers and other staff”. The idea of a European Roma route² was launched. The Congress set up a Network of Cities to encourage the circulation of information on cultural, housing and education issues and facilitate the implementation of various joint projects. Other activities organised in response to Resolution 249 (1993) include the meeting of the Working Group in Kosice on 8 and 9 December 1995 and three hearings on the topic, “Roma (Gypsies) in the Municipalities: What Provision for Education, Culture, Social Problems, Training and Employment? Some Innovative Experiences and Models”.

Resolution 125 (1981) on the role and responsibility of local and regional authorities in regard to the cultural and social problems of populations of nomadic origin

Adopted by the Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe on 29 October 1981

“The Standing Conference:

...

18. Asks the Council for Cultural Co-operation (CDCC):

ii. to prepare, as part of its work on intercultural education, information on dossiers (*sic*) for teachers on the history, culture and family life of people of nomadic origin in member states, on the lines of its information dossiers for teachers of migrant children;

iii. to study the possibility of setting up, if possible in co-operation with UNESCO, a specific training programme for teachers with a view to enabling them to teach the Romani language.”

2. See the second part of this document.

Comment

Resolution No. 125 (1981) of the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe proposes new activities for the future on education issues relating to Roma, including the preparation of “information on dossiers for teachers on the history, culture and family life of people of nomadic origin” and consideration of the possibility of setting up “a specific training programme for teachers with a view to enabling them to teach the Romani language”. This is the first time an official Council of Europe text mentions the possibility of teaching in the Romani language.

In response to this resolution, the Council for Cultural Co-operation organised a seminar on the training of teachers of Gypsy children, held in Donaueschingen (Germany) in 1983, along with a whole series of other activities.³

Resolution (75) 13 containing recommendations on the social situation of nomads in Europe

Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 22 May 1975

“6. Aware that the low level of school attendance of the children of nomads endangers seriously their chances of social and occupational advancement;

B. Camping and housing

...

2. As a general rule, the camping sites should be located in the vicinity of towns and villages or, at any rate, be so located as to offer facilities for access to communications, supplies, schools [...]

...

C. Education, vocational guidance and vocational training

1. The schooling of the children of nomads should be promoted by the most suitable methods, working towards integrating them into the normal educational system.

2. At the same time, general education of adults including literacy should also be promoted, where the need for it exists.

3. These activities are discussed in Section B.

3. Nomads and their children should be enabled to benefit effectively from the various existing provisions for vocational guidance, training and retraining.

4. So far as concerns vocational guidance and training, the greatest possible account should be taken of the natural abilities [and inclinations of these populations].”

Comment

In 1975, the Committee of Ministers adopted Resolution (75) 13 containing recommendations on the social situation of nomads in Europe, in which it states that it is “[a]ware that the low level of school attendance of the children of nomads endangers seriously their chances of social and occupational advancement” and suggests more appropriate ways of encouraging travellers’ children to attend school and promoting general education for adults, and states that “the greatest possible account should be taken of the natural abilities [and inclinations of these populations]”.

Recommendation 563 (1969) of the Consultative Assembly on the situation of Gypsies and other Travellers in Europe

Adopted during the 21st ordinary session on 30 September 1969

“The Assembly

...

8. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers urge member governments:

...

iv. where attendance at existing schools is not possible, to encourage the provision of special classes near caravan sites or other places where groups of Travellers gather regularly to facilitate the integration of children from Travellers’ families into normal schools and to ensure that the educational programmes for the children from Travellers’ families link up satisfactorily with those of secondary school or other forms of continued education.”

Comment

On 30 September 1969, the Parliamentary Assembly (then known as the Consultative Assembly) adopted Recommendation 563 (1969), which was the first official text on Roma. This text deals with children’s education in addition to the other aspects discussed. It recommends to the Committee of Ministers that it encourage “special classes [...] to facilitate the integration of children from travellers’ families into normal schools.”

B. Official texts concerning minorities

1. European Social Charter

The Charter formulates various rights and freedoms, and establishes a monitoring system to ensure that states parties respect them. The rights guaranteed are the rights to housing, health and education, employment, legal and social protection, freedom of movement and non-discrimination.

Compliance with the commitments embodied in the Charter is monitored by the European Committee of Social Rights (hereinafter “the Committee”). Its 15 members are independent and impartial, and are elected by the Council of Europe’s Committee of Ministers for a six-year term, renewable once. It assesses from a legal standpoint the compliance of states parties’ laws and practices with the Charter (Article 24 of the Charter, as amended by the Turin Protocol of 1991).

A monitoring procedure based on national reports: states parties submit annual reports, indicating how they implement the Charter in law and in practice. Each report covers some of the accepted Charter provisions. The Committee reviews the reports and decides whether the situation in the states concerned is consistent with the Charter. Its decisions are known as “conclusions”, and are published every year.

If a state fails to take action when the Committee rules that it is not respecting the Charter, the Committee of Ministers addresses a recommendation to that state, asking it to change its law or practice. The Committee of Ministers’ work is prepared by a Governmental Committee, comprising representatives of the governments of states parties to the Charter, assisted by observers representing the social partners in Europe.

A collective complaints procedure: under a Protocol opened for signing in 1995 and effective since 1998, complaints alleging violation of the Charter may be submitted to the European Committee of Social Rights. Once a complaint has been declared admissible, a written procedure is initiated, with memorials being exchanged by the parties. The Committee may also decide to organise a public hearing. It then adopts a decision on the validity of the complaint, and sends it to the parties and the Committee of Ministers in a report, which is published not more than four months later. Finally, the Committee of Ministers adopts a resolution. If appropriate, it may recommend that the state concerned take specific measures to bring the situation into line with the Charter.

The effects of application of the Charter in states

The monitoring procedure prompts states to make many changes in their laws and practices, to bring them into line with the Charter. Details of these results (and the changes currently being made) are given in data sheets on states, which are posted on the website.

Right to education

i. Free primary and secondary education

Article 17 of the revised Charter embodies a general right to education (supplementing Articles 10 and 15). It requires states to provide and maintain a system of free education. The appendix explains that Article 17.2 does not oblige them to provide compulsory education up to the age of 18. Nonetheless, the Committee takes the view that schooling must be compulsory for a reasonable period, and generally up to the minimum age of admission to employment.

ii. Education which is accessible and effective

The education system must also be accessible and effective. In deciding whether a system is effective, the Committee seeks to establish whether there are operational primary and secondary schooling facilities, and considers school population, number of schools, size of classes, teacher/pupil ratios and training provided for teachers. It also considers the failure rate, and the number of children who complete compulsory schooling and go on to secondary school. If the figure for children who drop out or fail to complete compulsory schooling is high, action must be taken to remedy this.⁴

To be effective, the education system must include machinery making it possible to verify the level and quality of the teaching provided. Accessibility requires, first of all, fair geographical and regional distribution of schools (particularly between urban and rural areas). It also requires that basic education be free, hidden costs (textbooks, uniforms, etc.) reasonable, and subsidies available to limit their impact on the most vulnerable groups. Finally, all children must be guaranteed equal access to education.

iii. Vocational guidance

Article 9 guarantees the right to free vocational guidance for schoolchildren and adults. This right extends to non-nationals.

iv. Vocational training

Article 10 requires states to promote technical and vocational training for all on completion of compulsory schooling. The concept of vocational training in Article 10.1 includes: basic training, general and vocational secondary schooling, higher technical and university education, vocational training and

4. The situation in Romania was considered inconsistent with this provision, owing to the high level of absenteeism during compulsory schooling (2003 conclusions).

continued training. Non-nationals must be guaranteed equal treatment in the matter of access to vocational training.

v. Apprentices

Apprenticeship and other training schemes must be set up to prepare young people for the various trades which they mean to pursue. Links between training establishments and firms must be maintained. The effectiveness of apprenticeship and other training systems for young people must be monitored.

vi. Access to universities

Access to higher technical and university education must be determined solely by individual aptitude. All fees or levies must be reduced or abolished, and financial assistance provided when necessary.

vii. Equal access to education for children in vulnerable categories

Special care must be taken to ensure that vulnerable groups have a right – and equal access – to education. This applies to children from minorities, child asylum seekers, refugee children, children in hospital, children in hostels, adolescent girls who are pregnant or have children, and also children placed in young offenders' institutions or serving prison sentences. If necessary, special action must be taken to ensure that all these children have access to education on the same conditions. However, measures more specially aimed at Roma children must not lead to their being isolated/ segregated in schools.⁵

The Committee considers the right of children with disabilities to education with reference to Article 15.1 – if the state in question has accepted it – or otherwise Article 17. Article 15 (the right of persons with disabilities to independence, social integration and participation in the life of the community) applies to all types of handicap – physical, mental and intellectual. The first paragraph deals with education and training, to which all persons with disabilities – including children – are entitled. Education includes general education, compulsory basic education and supplementary education, as well as vocational training in the normal sense. Children with disabilities must be integrated within the normal school system, and receive their schooling and training in ordinary facilities; only when this is not possible should they be accommodated in special facilities. The education provided in special schools, and the special education provided in ordinary schools, must be of good quality. Under this provision of the revised Charter, states must pass laws prohibiting all discrimination on grounds of disability in the education field.

5. See conclusion concerning Slovenia (2003 conclusions).

2. European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

Adopted in 1992, came into force in 1998, signed by 32 states and ratified by 20⁶

The Charter provides for the protection and promotion of historic regional and minority languages. It was drafted both out of a concern to preserve and enhance Europe's traditions and cultural heritage and because protecting and promoting regional and minority languages in the various countries and regions of Europe does much to help build a Europe based on democratic principles and cultural diversity, with due regard for national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The Charter begins by setting out objectives and principles by which the parties undertake to abide in respect of all regional or minority languages on their territory: respect for the geographical area of each of these languages, the need to promote them and encourage their use in speech and writing, in public and private life, provision of appropriate facilities for their teaching and study, and the promotion of international exchanges in the case of languages used in identical or similar forms in other countries.

The Charter goes on to list a whole series of measures to be introduced to encourage the use of regional or minority languages in public life. They concern: education, the judicial authorities, the administrative authorities and public services, the media, cultural activities and facilities, economic and social life and trans-frontier exchanges. Each party undertakes to apply a minimum of 35 paragraphs or sub-paragraphs chosen from among the provisions, a number of which must be chosen from a "hard core". In addition, each party must specify in its instrument of ratification each regional or minority language used on the whole or part of its territory to which the chosen paragraphs apply.

Implementation of the Charter is monitored by a committee of experts, which is responsible for examining periodical reports submitted by the parties.

Excerpts with implications for the education of Roma children

"Article 1 – Definitions

- a. 'regional or minority languages' means languages that are:
 - i. traditionally used within a given territory of a state by nationals of that state who form a group numerically smaller than the rest of the state's population; and
 - ii. different from the official language(s) of that state;

6. Updated on 22 May 2006.

- b. 'territory in which the regional or minority language is used' means the geographical area in which the said language is the mode of expression of a number of people justifying the adoption of the various protective and promotional measures provided for in [the] Charter;
- c. 'non-territorial languages' means languages used by nationals of the state which differ from the language or languages used by the rest of the state's population but which, although traditionally used within the territory of the state, cannot be identified with a particular area thereof.

Article 2 – Undertakings

- 1. Each party undertakes to apply the provisions of Part II to all the regional or minority languages spoken within its territory and which comply with the definition in Article 1.
- 2. In respect of each language specified at the time of ratification, acceptance or approval, in accordance with Article 3, each party undertakes to apply a minimum of 35 paragraphs or sub-paragraphs chosen from among the provisions of Part III of the Charter, including at least three chosen from each of the Articles 8 and 12 and one from each of the Articles 9, 10, 11 and 13.

Part II – Objectives and principles pursued in accordance with Article 2, paragraph 1:

Article 7 – Objectives and principles

- 1. ...
 - a. the recognition of the regional or minority languages as an expression of cultural wealth; ...
 - c. the need for resolute action to promote regional or minority languages in order to safeguard them;
 - d. the facilitation and/or encouragement of the use of regional or minority languages, in speech and writing, in public and private life;
 - f. the provision of appropriate forms and means for the teaching and study of regional or minority languages at all appropriate stages;
 - g. the provision of facilities enabling non-speakers of a regional or minority language living in the area where it is used to learn it if they so desire;
 - h. the promotion of study and research on regional or minority languages at universities or equivalent institutions;
 - i. the promotion of appropriate types of transnational exchanges, in the fields covered by [the] Charter, for regional or minority languages used in identical or similar form in two or more states.
- 2. The parties undertake to eliminate ... any unjustified distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference relating to the use of a regional or minority language

and intended to discourage or endanger the maintenance or development of it.

3. The parties undertake to promote ... mutual understanding between all the linguistic groups of the country and in particular the inclusion of respect, understanding and tolerance in relation to regional or minority languages among the objectives of education and training provided within their countries and encouragement of the mass media to pursue the same objective.
4. In determining their policy with regard to regional or minority languages, the parties shall take into consideration the needs and wishes expressed by the groups which use such languages. They are encouraged to establish bodies, if necessary, for the purpose of advising the authorities on all matters pertaining to regional or minority languages.
5. The parties undertake to apply, *mutatis mutandis*, the principles listed in paragraphs 1 to 4 above to non-territorial languages. However, as far as these languages are concerned, the nature and scope of the measures to be taken to give effect to this Charter shall be determined in a flexible manner, bearing in mind the needs and wishes, and respecting the traditions and characteristics, of the groups which use the languages concerned."

[Part III, below, is not intended to apply to languages that have no territorial base, such as Romani, although a few countries, such as Hungary, have announced their intention to apply it to Romani. In Germany, Part III is applicable in part to the Romani spoken by Sinti and Roma of German nationality on German territory. Part III applies to Romani in Slovakia.]

"Part III – Measures to promote the use of regional or minority languages in public life in accordance with the undertakings entered into under Article 2, paragraph 2:

Article 8 – Education

1. With regard to education, the parties undertake, within the territory in which such languages are used, according to the situation of each of these languages, and without prejudice to the teaching of the official language(s) of the state:
 - a. i. to make available pre-school education in the relevant regional or minority languages; or
 - ii. to make available a substantial part of pre-school education in the relevant regional or minority languages; or
 - iii. to apply one of the measures provided for under i and ii above at least to those pupils whose families so request and whose number is considered sufficient; or
 - iv. if the public authorities have no direct competence in the field of pre-school education, to favour and/or encourage the application of the measures referred to under i to iii above;

- b.
 - i. to make available primary education in the relevant regional or minority languages; or
 - ii. to make available a substantial part of primary education in the relevant regional or minority languages; or
 - iii. to provide, within primary education, for the teaching of the relevant regional or minority languages as an integral part of the curriculum; or
 - iv. to apply one of the measures provided for under i to iii above at least to those pupils whose families so request and whose number is considered sufficient;
- c.
 - i. to make available secondary education in the relevant regional or minority languages; or
 - ii. to make available a substantial part of secondary education in the relevant regional or minority languages; or
 - iii. to provide, within secondary education, for the teaching of the relevant regional or minority languages as an integral part of the curriculum; or
 - iv. to apply one of the measures provided for under i to iii above at least to those pupils who, or where appropriate whose families, so wish in a number considered sufficient;
- d.
 - i. to make available technical and vocational education in the relevant regional or minority languages; or
 - ii. to make available a substantial part of technical and vocational education in the relevant regional or minority languages; or
 - iii. to provide, within technical and vocational education, for the teaching of the relevant regional or minority languages as an integral part of the curriculum; or
 - iv. to apply one of the measures provided for under i to iii above at least to those pupils who, or where appropriate whose families, so wish in a number considered sufficient;
- e.
 - i. to make available university and other higher education in regional or minority languages; or
 - ii. to provide facilities for the study of these languages as university and higher education subjects; or
 - iii. if, by reason of the role of the state in relation to higher education institutions, sub-paragraphs i and ii cannot be applied, to encourage and/or allow the provision of university or other forms of higher education in regional or minority languages or of facilities for the study of these languages as university or higher education subjects;

- f.
 - i. to arrange for the provision of adult and continuing education courses which are taught mainly or wholly in the regional or minority languages; or
 - ii. to offer such languages as subjects of adult and continuing education; or
 - iii. if the public authorities have no direct competence in the field of adult education, to favour and/or encourage the offering of such languages as subjects of adult and continuing education;
 - g. to make arrangements to ensure the teaching of the history and the culture which is reflected by the regional or minority language;
 - h. to provide the basic and further training of the teachers required to implement those of paragraphs a to g accepted by the party;
 - i. to set up a supervisory body or bodies responsible for monitoring the measures taken and progress achieved in establishing or developing the teaching of regional or minority languages and for drawing up periodic reports of their findings, which will be made public.
2. With regard to education and in respect of territories other than those in which the regional or minority languages are traditionally used, the parties undertake, if the number of users of a regional or minority language justifies it, to allow, encourage or provide teaching in or of the regional or minority language at all the appropriate stages of education.”

3. Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities

Adopted in 1994, came into force in 1998

The convention is the first legally binding multilateral European instrument concerning the protection of minorities in general. It is designed to protect national minorities on the parties' respective territories and to promote full, effective equality for members of national minorities by ensuring conditions conducive to preserving and developing their culture and safeguarding their identity.

The convention sets out principles concerning the protection of members of national minorities in the various fields of public life, such as freedom of peaceful assembly, freedom of association, freedom of expression, freedom of thought, conscience and religion and access to the media, and in the area of linguistic freedoms, education, transfrontier co-operation, etc.

Excerpts with implications for the education of Roma children

“Article 6

1. The parties shall encourage a spirit of tolerance and intercultural dialogue and take effective measures to promote mutual respect and understanding and co-operation among all persons living on their territory, irrespective of those

persons' ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity, in particular in the fields of education, culture and the media.

...

Article 12

1. The parties shall, where appropriate, take measures in the fields of education and research to foster knowledge of the culture, history, language and religion of their national minorities and of the majority.
2. In this context the parties shall, *inter alia*, provide adequate opportunities for teacher training and access to textbooks, and facilitate contacts among students and teachers of different communities.
3. The parties undertake to promote equal opportunities for access to education at all levels for persons belonging to national minorities.

Article 13

1. Within the framework of their education systems, the parties shall recognise that persons belonging to a national minority have the right to set up and to manage their own private educational and training establishments.
2. The exercise of this right shall not entail any financial obligation for the parties.

Article 14

1. The parties undertake to recognise that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to learn his or her minority language.
2. In areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities traditionally or in substantial numbers, if there is sufficient demand, the parties shall endeavour to ensure, as far as possible and within the framework of their education systems, that persons belonging to those minorities have adequate opportunities for being taught the minority language or for receiving instruction in this language.
3. Paragraph 2 of this article shall be implemented without prejudice to the learning of the official language or the teaching in this language.

Part II – Assessment of the activities of the Council of Europe concerning the education of Roma children

A. Education

In 1981, the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe adopted Resolution 125 on the role and responsibility of local and regional authorities in regard to the cultural and social problems of populations of nomadic origin, in which it asks the Council for Cultural Co-operation (CDCC):

- i. to make provision in its work programme for a thorough study of the education and vocational training problems of nomads with a view to drawing up strategies for the implementation of items A.3 and C of the appendix to Resolution (75)13;⁷
- ii. to prepare, as part of its work on intercultural education, information on dossiers (*sic*) for teachers on the history, culture and family life of people of nomadic origin in member states, on the lines of its information dossiers for teachers of migrant children;
- iii. to study the possibility of setting up, if possible in co-operation with UNESCO, a specific training programme for teachers with a view to enabling them to teach the Romani language.”

In response to this resolution, the CDCC decided in 1983 to hold an international seminar, “Training of Teachers of Gypsy Children”, which was the first in a series of activities in the education field. These discussion seminars on school provision for Roma children and teacher training courses gave rise to a number of reports, which will be outlined later in this document.

In 1983-84, the CDCC also published the book *Gypsies and Travellers*, which was revised and updated in 1994 under the title *Roma, Gypsies and Travellers*. Written by Jean-Pierre Liégeois, Director of the Gypsy Research Centre (Université René Descartes – Paris), this book is a response to Resolution 125 adopted by the Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe; it was the result of a collaborative effort by some 30 people in different states. It is divided into two sections: “Socio-cultural Data” (a description of the populations in question) and “Socio-Political Data” (an analysis of the economic, legal and educational situation in which Roma and Travellers find themselves).

7. Resolution No. (75) 13, items A3, “The participation of nomads in the preparation and the implementation of measures concerning them should be encouraged and practised under conditions laid down by national legislation”, and C, “Education, vocational guidance and vocational training” (see the first section).

1. “Training of Teachers of Gypsy Children”

Seminar held in Donaueschingen, 20-25 June 1983 (DECS/EGT(83)63)

The report of the 20th European teachers' seminar, on the topic “Training of Teachers of Gypsy Children”, was written by Jean-Pierre Liégeois, who was also the director of the seminar. This seminar brought together teachers, teacher trainers, school inspectors and ministerial representatives from eight member states of the Council for Cultural Co-operation (CDCC) to discuss issues relating to the education of Roma children. The presence of a teacher and a teacher trainer from northern Norway enabled the schooling problems of other nomads to be subjected to a comparative analysis.

In his introduction, the author gives a general overview of the situation of Roma, their way of life and the repercussions for their children's education.

The aims of the seminar were as follows:

- to discuss the situation of Roma and nomad groups in the area of schooling;
- to identify those elements of Roma culture and history with which teachers in western Europe should be acquainted;
- to make proposals for improving the situation with regard to schooling for Roma children, in particular through teacher training.

The seminar was the first stage in a wider programme, and could be seen “as a balance-sheet of reflections and experiences, as a crystallisation of certain hopes – in short, as a synthesis for Western Europe, favoured by the fact that the presence here of participants from different countries should enable a comparative and contrastive account to be drawn up, showing various types of schooling in Europe”. Thanks to a comparative assessment of these aspects, the seminar afforded a unique opportunity to compare the results obtained within different institutional frameworks.

Each participant prepared and presented a summary based on broad regional or national experience and knowledge.

It is worth noting the presentation on “Local and regional authorities and the Gypsies” given by Ulrich Bohner (Deputy Executive Secretary of the Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe).

Roma were represented by: Dany Peto-Manso (France, Secretary General of the National Office for Gypsy Affairs), who gave a presentation on “The Socio-Educational Problems of Gypsy and Nomad Children”; Juan de Dios Raminéz Heredia (Spain, MP for Almería, Member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe), who gave a presentation on

“Responsibility of Teachers of Gypsy Children”; and Agnès Vranckx (Belgium, West European Romani Council), who gave a presentation on “Socio-Educational Problems of Nomad Gypsy Children”. Other documents were also presented or discussed, and the information was then used by the working groups.

In response to the presentations, discussions, summary reports and the proposals made by each study group, the participants drew up recommendations on school provision:

- that all appropriate action be taken to ensure initial and further training of teachers such as will imbue them with a pedagogical approach adapted to the children of cultural minorities;
- that the reception of Gypsy and nomad children in ordinary schools – the present tendency of intercultural education – be always accompanied by adequate teacher training and the adaptation of school curricula and structures;
- that the Romani language and culture be used and accorded the same respect as regional languages and cultures and those of other minorities;
- that links be forged between schools and Gypsy families, in the interests of genuine participation,
- that Gypsy teachers be granted priority in the teaching of Gypsy children,
- that, in schools where Gypsy children are numerous, the auxiliary staff include persons of Gypsy culture.

Lastly, the report emphasised the very important role played by the Council of Europe on behalf of the Gypsy and nomad peoples, “by reason of its opportunities for gathering and ... disseminating relevant information, by urging member states and the local and regional authorities ..., and by sponsoring activities conducive to reflection, training, studies and research, in co-operation with other international institutions”.

The report was published in German, English and French, as well as Spanish (by the Presencia Gitana association) and Italian (by the Lacio Drom association).

2. “Schooling for Gypsy Children: Evaluating Innovation”

Seminar held in Donaueschingen, 18-23 May 1987 (DECS/EGT(87)36)

The 35th Council of Europe teachers’ seminar was on the topic “Schooling for Gypsies’ and Travellers’ Children: Evaluating Innovation”. It was attended by teachers, teacher trainers, educational advisers and representatives of teachers’ associations and ministries from 10 member states and two non-

member states (Hungary and Yugoslavia). The director and rapporteur of the seminar was Jean-Pierre Liégeois.

The theme of the seminar being the evaluation of innovations in schooling for Gypsy children, “it was a question of studying the conditions under which innovation emerges, the forms which it takes and the fields in which it occurs; to consider its results and to evaluate its ‘transferability’ potential”.

Following the introductory address by Mr Liégeois, in which he explained the context and theme of the seminar and reflected on innovation, lectures were given by Jean Alciati (France), Jean-Jacques Oehlé (Switzerland) and Rafael Montoya (Spain, represented by Henar Corbi).

The working groups, which adopted a method based on the conceptual framework suggested by Mr Liégeois (listing new developments; results, analysis and evaluation; recommendations), then came up with numerous points for analysis and discussion. The rapporteur noted the variety of approaches taken, despite the more or less common conceptual framework, and the similarity of the groups’ conclusions despite the wide-ranging nature of the points discussed.

After giving this summary, the rapporteur presented his final conclusions,⁸ exploring areas of strength and weakness at different stages of implementation, the conditions in which innovation emerges, the forms it takes, the fields to which it applies and its effects. The recommendations emphasised the need to:

- “envisage school-related projects holistically, taking in socio-cultural, socio-economic, and political facts ...;
- ... realise that the implementation and development of intercultural pedagogy must be accompanied by the implementation and development of general policies of an intercultural nature, guided by the same principles of pluralism and mutual respect ..., and confirm that this requires a taking into account, and serious recognition of the Gypsy community as a cultural minority;
- envisage schooling, not as an end in itself, but as a means of acquiring skills of adaptation and development for the members of a community”.

Having presented these recommendations, the rapporteur felt that he should emphasise the need for flexibility in all fields (programmes, structures, etc.), co-ordination (ensuring complementarity and continuity between activities),

8. These conclusions focused on: the roots of innovation, the conditions in which innovation emerges (ideological, political, financial, institutional and organisational conditions), areas of innovation (structures, teaching methods, teaching material and teacher training) and innovation policy.

consultation (involvement of all partners, especially Roma representatives), careful planning of the activities envisaged and ongoing evaluation throughout those activities, consolidation, possible extension/transferability of innovation, increasingly active direct involvement of Roma and Travellers in teaching (through training of Roma and Traveller teachers), the development of various forms of support (availability, research, publications, co-ordination, etc.), and the setting-up of a centre for co-ordination, information, training and publications connected with school provision for Roma and Traveller children.

The report exists in German, French, English (Council of Europe Publishing), Spanish (published by Presencia Gitana) and Italian (published by Lacio Drom, Rome).

3. “Gypsy Children in School: Training for Teachers and Other Personnel”

Summer university run by the Gypsy Research Centre at Montauban Teachers’ Training College, France, 4-8 July 1988 (DECS/EGT(88)42).

The “summer university” on school provision for Roma and Traveller children was an initial course offered to teachers and other staff during the holidays. This project was organised from the Gypsy Research Centre at Université René Descartes by Jean-Pierre Liégeois, the director of the centre, in conjunction with other experts. The summer university was attended by about 60 people, including nursery, primary and secondary teachers, teaching staff from higher education institutions, regional school inspectors, teacher trainers, guest speakers from three different states (Spain, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom) and a guest speaker from a Roma organisation.

This seminar “was simultaneously a training course and a week of reflection on the subject of training, before coming forward with its own proposals and follow-up geared towards improving this training”; it was both complementary to, and an extension of, other national and international meetings. The reports of the two previous seminars (1983 and 1987) were discussed, and were considered to represent a crucial phase in the continuity of work in this area.

The main aims of the summer university were: “to participate in a specific way in the development of in-service training, to contribute to a growth in skills, to provide support for teams of teacher trainers, to spread innovation, to produce pedagogical tools”.

The following activities took place:

- five lectures to the plenary session;
- nine presentations to the plenary session;

- working group sessions;
- two evenings set aside for participants to present video tapes, photographs, teaching material and books.

In his introductory address, Mr Liégeois referred to the multitude of contexts within which the week's activities were taking place (school provision for Gypsy and Traveller children, schooling generally and broader policy issues). He emphasised the need for teacher and in-service training, and suggested intensified complementary training which would produce highly qualified specialists who could go on to work as trainers, counsellors, and co-ordinators.

People with particular expertise were invited to give lectures, most of which appear in report DECS/EGT(88)42, together with summaries of the working group discussions and a number of final conclusions. They include lectures by Harry Hutjens (Administration and Pedagogical Aspects of School Provision for Gypsy and Traveller Children in the Netherlands), Donald Kenrick (School Provision for Gypsy Children in the United Kingdom and the Gypsy Language) and Maria-Teresa Codina (Administration and Pedagogical Aspects of School Provision for Gypsy Children in Catalonia), and extracts from the lecture by Dany Peto-Manso.

There is a growing desire to provide schooling that accords due respect to children and to the communities to which they belong, and teachers and other staff are becoming aware of the importance of performing this task well. They are expressing a need for proper training and co-ordination of activities so as to avoid duplication. The working groups made very clear recommendations on this subject:

- Group 1 proposed setting up a Resource Centre (comprising teachers with experience in the field, researchers, educational advisers and Roma organisations) equipped with a resource bank responsible for the collection and dissemination of information, research, literary and scientific publications concerning Roma and Travellers, and various teaching materials;
- Group 2 proposed at national level, the setting up of an umbrella body which would include professionals from national education, CLIVE (the Travellers School Centre for Liaison and Information – the national association for specialised personnel), CRT (the Gypsy Research Centre of the Université René Descartes – a university structure capable of guaranteeing the quality of available information and of research), and CNDP (the National Educational Documentation Centre, which could take charge of disseminating information [...]). At *département* level, the creation of a regional network which would make information circulate amongst correspondents at local level;

- Group 3 proposed activities similar to those implemented in some European countries (training centres);
- Group 4 considers that to the participants of this Summer University it feels urgent to set up a National Resource Centre in order to co-ordinate thinking, research and training, in collaboration with the various concerned bodies.

In his final conclusions, the author of the report notes that after years of discussion the same old demands keep coming up, particularly in respect of training and the related need for information and co-ordination.

4. “Towards Intercultural Education: Training for Teachers of Gypsy Pupils”

Seminar held in Benidorm, Spain, 9-13 June 1989 (DECS/EGT(89)31)

The third Council of Europe seminar on schooling for Roma and Traveller children was held in Benidorm, Spain, and dedicated to the memory of Juan Manuel Montoya, a young Roma doctor who had died shortly before the meeting.

The seminar was organised by the Government of the Autonomous Community of Valencia; the Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia had proposed it to the Council of Europe under the CDCC's Teacher Bursary Scheme. It was attended by 75 people, including teachers and other staff (trainers, inspectors and advisers) from six states: Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, Portugal and the United Kingdom. The director and rapporteur of the seminar was Jean-Pierre Liégeois.

The series of eight lectures on the various issues addressed by the seminar was followed by group sessions designed to allow more in-depth discussion and the formulation of conclusions and guidelines, particularly in relation to training activities.

The aim of the seminar was directly related to the text adopted by the European Community⁹ on school provision for Roma and Traveller children: drawing up a work programme, particularly in the area of teacher training. Seen in the context of the European Community resolution, this seminar, which was organised under the auspices of the Council of Europe and with its help, is a good illustration of how the two organisations' work can be complementary. The author of the report noted that, as a rule, the initial and in-service training available was rather poor, and that in-service training was scarce and disorganised. Changes could be made fairly quickly, however,

9. Sixth resolution of the Ministers for Education of the European Union on School Provision for Gypsy and Traveller Children, adopted in 1989.

which meant that the proposals put forward at the end of the working meeting were useful and realistic.

The lectures covered the following topics:

- The Intercultural School in Organisational Models of the Twentieth-Century School (Antonio Munoz Sedano);
- The Intercultural: from Theory to Practice (Claude Clanet)
- School Provision for Gypsy Children in Andalucia: Practice, Achievements and Plans (Joaquin Risco Acedo);
- The Intercultural Approach to Working with Irish Travellers (John O'Connell);
- Training Projects in Catalonia (Maria Teresa Codina i Mir);
- A Training Project in Valencia (Jesus Salinas Catalá);
- Studying Inter-Ethnic Relations in the School (Reyes Lalueza Latorre);
- Attitudes and Prejudices of Teachers and Pupils Regarding Other Peoples and Cultures (Tomás Calvo Buezas).

The working groups identified needs and priorities at both the institutional and school levels, and made the following proposals:

- specialised training for teachers, inspectors and other school personnel;
- in-service training in the form of intensive courses on school-related themes and social aspects, and medium-term courses and seminars;
- a structured programme of co-ordinated, ongoing projects for teacher training must be developed;
- training structures must exist at local, regional, national and European level;
- those who are to train others must themselves receive training on a par with that received by other trainers;
- existing training centres must play an active role in the development of appropriate teaching materials, course preparation and increased emphasis on understanding minority cultures. In these centres, teachers, teacher trainers and Gypsies must work in collaboration;
- production of teaching materials in which mention is made of the Gypsy people and other minority cultures.

Some aspects had been covered at the 1983 seminar in Donaueschingen, but it was noted that they had not been put into practice. In comparison with the first seminar in 1983, this seminar had made significant progress.

5. “Schooling for Gypsy and Traveller Children: Distance Learning and Pedagogical Follow-up”

European teachers’ seminar, held in Aix-en-Provence, France, 10-13 December 1990 (DECS/EGT(90)47)

This was the fourth Council of Europe seminar on schooling for Gypsy and Traveller children (the previous ones were held in 1983, 1987 and 1989). Organised by the Directorate of Schools and the Directorate of General and International Affairs and Co-operation within the French Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, it was attended by about 60 people, including teachers and other staff from nine states.

The seminar was designed to complement other Council activities in this area. In his report of the seminar, rapporteur Jean-Pierre Liégeois outlined the threefold context within which it took place:

1. the institutional context;
2. previous Council of Europe seminars on schooling for Roma and Traveller children;
3. work on distance learning and pedagogical follow-up.

In the plenary sessions, participants heard about current practices and possible developments in the next few years, through presentations by distance learning specialists; they also learned about the advantages of using the new information and communication technologies (NICT) along with the problems sometimes associated with them, thanks to presentations by teachers, other Education Ministry staff and members of Roma communities.

Following a summary of ongoing projects, it was noted that the new information and communication technologies had been found to be very useful in the schooling of Roma and Traveller children.

On the basis of the lectures and on discussions with distance learning specialists, the participants analysed practices and techniques that seemed likely to improve educational conditions and outcomes. They then drew up a list of requirements and put forward practical proposals.

The lectures covered the following topics:

- The experience of the Bouches-du-Rhône *département* (Jean-Marc Janain);
- Thoughts on the situation in the United Kingdom (*The West Midlands region* – Mike Baldwin, *Educational follow-up: an initiative to simplify the transfer of files* – Margaret Wood, *The future of education for traveller children in Ealing: the beginnings of a response* – Bob Carvell);
- National Centre for Distance Learning – CNED (Jean-Christian Plessis);
- Education of Gypsy children: an East European viewpoint (Tibor Derdák);
- Distance learning and multimedia: the experience of the OPTE (Guy Gouardères);
- The situation of Roma in Czechoslovakia (Stanislav Zeman and Ondrej Gina).

The working groups made the following proposals:

- setting up a comprehensive distance learning project. This project should be Europe-wide (the Roma way of life means that these populations extend beyond national boundaries, and their history is bound up with the changes arising from the development of Europe in the past, present and future). The aim of the project is threefold: providing specific training for teachers and leaders, improving the literacy of all Gypsies and Travellers by offering educational supervision by correspondence and conducting research on Gypsy history, language and culture;
- in the context of pedagogical follow-up, making optimum use of existing “products” and the following activities: exchanges, twinnings and correspondence within an enlarged European framework, formal and informal networks of teachers and resource people, development of new technologies that are geared to Gypsy cultural content and foster an intercultural approach;
- developing training for resource people (youth workers, nursery assistants, etc.) from a Gypsy background, who should be paid on the same basis as other resource people;
- setting up an international training centre specialising in the culture and language. A scholarship system should be introduced to cover both exchanges and training for the people involved;

- using new technologies in flexible, modular formats geared to travellers, in order to meet the educational needs of teenagers;
- setting up a committee to ensure that the Council of Europe recommendations are implemented as rapidly as possible in each member state.

6. “Local History and Minorities (with special reference to the Gypsy minority)”

Seminar/workshop held in Spisska Novà Ves, Slovak Republic, 14-17 September 1994 (DECS/SE/BS/Sem (94)17)

This seminar was held in Slovakia in 1994 as part of the “Democracy, Human Rights, Minorities: Educational and Cultural Aspects” project.¹⁰ The long-term objective of the project was to ensure that all history curricula include the history of minorities, and that all history textbooks mention those minorities.

Donald Kenrick (the general rapporteur) outlined the background to the seminar.

The main purpose of the seminar was to set up a network of teachers from different countries who could implement a practical programme exploring local Gypsy history.

The plenary sessions covered:

- The Oral History of Romanies (Milena Hübschmannova);
- Two Exhibitions on Romani Culture organised in Austria (Claudia Mayerhofer);
- Motivation: the Inevitable Precondition for the Successful Education of Romani Children (Arne Mann).

Three workshops were held during the seminar:

- Workshop A – Curriculum;
- Workshop B – Methodology;

10. In 1993, the CDCC included in its programme the “Democracy, Human Rights, Minorities: Educational and Cultural Aspects” project, based on a four-year study and an assessment to be undertaken in 1997. This project sought to develop civic awareness, intercultural education and cultural democracy, in order to propose guidelines to governments on educational and cultural rights.

- Workshop C – The Classroom Project.

At the end of the seminar, Herbert Heuss, the project co-ordinator, explained the follow-up tasks that the teachers would have to undertake: they would implement the programme during the 1994/95 school year, reporting regularly to the co-ordinator of the experimental phase of the pilot project. The idea of holding a final colloquy in 1995 to evaluate the results achieved during that period and draw up a new work programme for the future was also launched.

7. “Research Group for European Gypsy History”

Set up by Jean-Pierre Liégeois in 1994-95

This CDCC project concerns the contribution that history teaching and the design of history textbooks can make to improve the situation of minorities, and Roma in particular. The aim of this research group, set up by the director of the Gypsy Research Centre in Paris, was to use minorities’ history to give them more prominence. As a result of the project’s findings, a methodological handbook was produced for history teachers working with Gypsy pupils.

8. Project, “Democracy, Human Rights, Minorities: Educational and Cultural Aspects”

The three case studies mentioned above were part of the “Democracy, Human Rights, Minorities: Educational and Cultural Aspects” project, which ended in May 1997 with a final conference in Strasbourg from 21 to 23 May. The final declaration was published (DECS/SE/DHRM(97)8).

“A Programme of Case Studies concerning the Inclusion of Minorities as Factors of Cultural Policy and Action – Romani Culture: the Secondary School of the Arts and the Romathan Theatre”

Kosice, Slovak Republic, April 1996 (DECS/SE/DHRM(96)18)

This case study focuses on two institutions set up in Kosice, Slovakia, in 1992; the establishment, operation and development of these institutions are of great practical and symbolic value to both Gypsy communities and the surrounding environment.

The report was written by Jean-Pierre Liégeois, Gypsy Research Centre (Université René Descartes – Paris).

Content of the report:

1. General considerations (Democracy, Human Rights, Minorities: Educational and Cultural Aspects; case studies).

2. Background (a history of negation; the example of Gypsies; the Roma of Slovakia).
3. The Secondary School of the Arts (setting up the school; description of the school and its pupils; subjects taught; relations with other bodies; opportunities; the principle of exchanges and co-operation; problems).
4. The Romathan Theatre (the development of the theatre; organisation; some biographies; the Romathan repertoire; activities).
5. Prospects (analysis of a dynamic process; serving as a model; proposals for future development).

If the opportunities for cultural, social and political development opened up by the School and the Theatre were to disappear, there would be a serious danger of descent into violence. The costs engendered by such disillusionment would be far higher than the cost of maintaining and developing these institutions.

Kosice can therefore be seen as a centre of excellence, a kind of cultural capital for Roma; the Roma site of Romathan, on the other hand, suffers some of the worst conditions in Europe. This should be seen as a lesson, rather than a contradiction or paradox; it is important to do everything possible to ensure that centres of excellence develop in exactly those places where the most disadvantaged Roma live.

“A Programme of Case Studies concerning the Inclusion of Minorities as Factors of Cultural Policy and Action – Roma Policy: Gypsy National Self-Government and Local Self-Governments”

“Democracy, Human Rights, Minorities: Educational and Cultural Aspects” project, Budapest, Hungary, May 1996 (DECS/SE/DHRM(96)23)

The report was written by Jean-Pierre Liégeois, Gypsy Research Centre (Université René Descartes – Paris).

The Hungarian Parliament passed the Act on the Rights of National and Ethnic Minorities on 7 July 1993. The act covers all 13 of Hungary’s recognised minorities, but is of particular relevance to Gypsies.

The implementation of the act through the holding of elections for local self-governing councils and a national self-governing council represented a challenge for Roma communities; significant associative dynamics had been in place for a number of years, but the possibility of electing self-governing councils introduced a new, complementary dimension to the political responsibilities of Roma communities, and of their representatives. The self-governing councils were called upon to demonstrate their organisational ability, and this, particularly for Roma, who had previously been kept out of

decision-making and even excluded from partnership and consultation, meant both an opening up of new horizons and a swift, sometimes difficult apprenticeship in new relationships with their environment and with the grass roots communities they represent.

The passing and subsequent implementation of the act made it possible for Roma to stop being seen as a group characterised by social problems, but rather to be considered as a minority with an identity and a full culture of its own. The emergence of self-governing councils legitimised Roma partnership in all fields and at every level of decision-making and action.

Lastly, the appearance on the public and political scene of these new partners, the Roma self-governing councils, challenged the majority's habits and conventional wisdom. The majority had to grasp the concept that partnership relations can and must be established at local and national level, and that Roma elected representatives must take their rightful place, without concessions or paternalism, rejection or demagoguery, compromise or reservation, when it comes to negotiation and decision-making.

If the act was to be implemented fully and completely, the Roma communities would need training and experience – but so would the other communities. Certain procedures and financial allocations needed to be clarified, as did the administrative powers of the minority councils. Better co-ordination of activities was also required, and partnerships with Roma non-governmental organisations would have to be strengthened.

If the Hungarian act paved the way for a substantial improvement in the situation of Roma communities, as it looked likely to do, it might stand as testimony, inspiration and, one hoped, as an impetus for other states, although it was obvious that such provisions could only be introduced within the particular political and institutional context of each state. The transnational nature of Roma communities and the development of similar projects in a number of places in Europe heightened the need, and strengthened the rationale, for trans-European co-operation.

“Self-government of the Gypsies in Hungary seen in the Light of the Experience of the Sami Self-government in Norway”

Case study as part of the Democracy, Human Rights, Cultural Minorities: Educational and Cultural Aspects project, 1996 (DECS/SE/DHRM(96)17)

9. “Romanies and Europe: Characters of Romani Origin in European Literature”

Rajko Djuric, in conjunction with the project entitled “A Secondary Education for Europe”,¹¹ Council for Cultural Co-operation, Council of Europe Publishing, 1996 (ISBN 92-871-2855-3)

This book presents some of the most significant works of European literature which mention Roma. Through a description of literary characters from various eras, the author introduces aspects of Roma history and culture. Some writers revealed their prejudices against Roma in their work, while others were more realistic. This book should foster mutual understanding and awareness between the Roma people, who for centuries were deprived of all their rights, and majority peoples, as well as providing food for thought and a means of establishing dialogue.

10. “Education for Democratic Citizenship”

Project implemented by the CDCC between 1997 and 2000 (DECS/EDU/CIT(99)58)

The “Education for Democratic Citizenship” (EDC) project was launched in 1997 with the aim to find out which values and skills individuals require to become participating citizens, how they can acquire these skills and how they can learn to pass them on to others.

The project activities were divided into three sub-groups: concepts and analyses; the sites of citizenship (sites of citizenship involving Roma and Traveller populations were set up in Bulgaria, Spain, Ireland and Portugal) and the training and support systems.

The themes and activities connected with the sites of citizenship are as follows:

- partnerships between different institutions;
- setting up innovative participatory structures;
- mediation;
- community development;

11. The CDCC project, “A Secondary Education for Europe”, launched in 1991, aimed to:
– give young people the knowledge, skills and attitudes they will need to meet the major challenges of European society;
– prepare young people for higher education, and for mobility, work and daily life in a democratic, multilingual and multicultural Europe;
– make young people aware of their common cultural heritage and their shared responsibility as Europeans.

- learning strategies in formal and non-formal contexts;
- intercultural dialogue;
- democratisation in schools.

The Bulgarian site (set up in 1998 and co-ordinated by the Centre for Open Education, an NGO working in the education field) comprises four projects based in Sarnitza, Rakitovo, Velingrad and Pazardjik, and is aimed at people aged between 15 and 21 from Bulgaria's Roma, Muslim and Orthodox communities. Through the organisation of workshops and seminars, this site seeks to develop civic awareness, understanding and leadership skills among young people and adults. The Centre for Open Education has set up committees to promote intercultural understanding among young people. The activities organised by the Bulgarian site include the projects "School for All", "Community Advice Centre", "Garden of Paradise" (environmental education project in Roma neighbourhoods) and "Hope for Life" (personal development for young Roma with disabilities).

The Spanish site comprises three projects, located in Cornellà de Llobregat (on the outskirts of Barcelona), Cueto (on the outskirts of Santander) and Torrejón de Ardoz (in the Madrid area). The Cueto site has introduced activities for Roma communities, giving priority to developing a social mediation model based on training in liaison work and in the social integration of marginalised groups, particularly the Roma community. It also aims to improve the participation of Roma communities in democratic life and their integration by providing schooling, jobs and social protection.

The Irish site is located in Tallaght, on the outskirts of Dublin. Its activities include an education and housing project for Traveller groups.

The Portuguese site is located in disadvantaged neighbourhoods of Lisbon, inhabited by large numbers of African immigrants and Roma communities. This site places considerable emphasis on the role of schools in education for democratic citizenship, and illustrates several basic principles associated with sites of democratic citizenship, such as the use of formal and informal teaching methods and the development of innovative partnerships between volunteers, the ministry and schools, between parents and schools and between teachers and pupils.

11. "The Education of Roma Children in Europe"

A project started in 2003 aimed to implement Recommendation No. R (2000) 4 of the Committee of Ministers.

The broad thrust of the project is outlined in the framework document drawn up in 2002 (CD-ED-BU (2002) 30).

The implementation of the recommendation by the Steering Committee for Education in 2002 was based on this framework document, which outlines the aims of the project.

- Inter-sectoral co-operation: conducting a projective study in the various sectors of the Council of Europe in order to obtain information on activities in the field of education, including those that may have a positive effect on, or be able to be directly linked to, the activities implemented as part of the project, thereby strengthening its potential for action.
- Inter-institutional co-operation: establishing closer relations with the European Commission and the OSCE Contact Point for Roma Issues, as well as with UNESCO and international NGOs working in the field of schooling for Roma children.
- Seminars and exchanges of views and experiences: piloting of activities, providing impetus for new activities, exchanges between people from different backgrounds, consultation with participants, information gathering, etc.
- Development of structural projects:
 - Compendium of good practices: criteria for defining “good practices” put forward by Roma/Gypsies, information gathering, publications (a directory, a European compendium of selected projects, production of a “guide” to help Roma teachers and school mediators/assistants define the context of their work)
 - Designing teaching material: review of existing material (catalogue of available material), adapting existing material (following evaluation and selection), new material suitable for use throughout Europe (history, linguistics, culture etc.), publications, collections of pedagogical fact sheets and other teaching material.

Several seminars and activities have been organised:

“The Education of Rom/Gypsy Children: Preparatory Classes”

Seminar held in Kosice (Slovakia) under the Teacher Bursary Scheme (20-24 October 2002)

The report, drafted by Martina Hornakova, was published in the form of a manual as part of the project.

More than 40 people attended the three-day seminar, including Slovakian teachers, representatives of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, the State Pedagogical Institute and the French Embassy, and

foreign guests, forming a group that had a great deal to contribute to the discussions.

The seminar focused on “preparatory classes”.

The conclusions emphasised the need to continue supporting and enhancing preparatory classes by updating content, methods and teaching approaches, and offering vocational preparation to Roma teachers and teacher aides.

Reference was also made to the need to promote nursery schools, to include them in the education system and to support training programmes for their teaching staff.

“Opré Roma: Families and School”

Seminar held in Castellon (Spain) in conjunction with a European research project conducted by Jaume I University (11-16 November 2002)

“Teacher Training and Research”

Seminar held in Dijon (France) as part of a European project on training for education staff (5-7 December 2002)

This seminar was organised by the Gypsy Research Centre at Université René Descartes, Paris 5, in conjunction with the Chief Education Officer of the Dijon Regional Education Authority and the Council of Europe.

The seminar, which was attended by people from 11 European countries with relevant expertise involved in training (teachers, trainers, lecturers, management staff, inspectors, etc.), afforded an opportunity for exchanges of information and experience, and set specific goals for the development of future training activities.

The working groups emphasised the need to:

- meet the expectations and needs of those directly affected (Roma/Gypsy population);
- provide resources (financial and human) to develop and publicise innovative activities;
- include a specific component on the schooling of Roma/Gypsy children in initial training;
- promote a qualification-based training course that builds on participants' knowledge and is recognised by the various institutions.

“Romani in Europe”

(Introduction to the Gypsy language in the school context), document relating to the organisation of a seminar in Graz (Austria), drafted by Mihaela Zatreanu and Dieter Halwachs. This publication is available on the project website under the reference: DGIV/EDU/ROM(2003)7.

“Conference on the Harmonisation of Teaching Material in the Romani Language”

(Strasbourg, France, 26-27 May 2003)

“A European training project for the schooling of the Roma children”

European summer school (Dijon, France, 30 June-5 July 2003)

The summer school’s principal objective was to organise training modules for the education professionals.

The training sessions proposed were relevant to all the participants through the themes presented, the actions and the reflection on the themes, the preparation work required, the activities having taken place during the summer school and the follow-up of all points raised.

The experience and the evaluation of the summer school, the documents and the publication produced, should give the participants the opportunity to duplicate the experience gained from the summer school with their colleagues and other education professionals.

The outcomes of the summer school, especially the production of training modules, are published so that the results of the training sessions could be transmitted to people who have not attended the summer school.

“The History of Roma in the European Classroom”

Experts meeting (Graz, Austria, 27-28 July 2003)

The objective of the meeting was to elaborate guidelines for teaching materials and teacher in-service training modules on the history of Roma in view of a possible publication.

Outcomes:

- guidelines for teaching materials in form of a preliminary proposal for a table of contents for a future publication;

- proposals for using and where necessary modifying existing materials for the production of a publication (working papers, fact sheets, etc.);
- recommendation of experts who are able and willing to check existing materials and make suggestions for modifications, etc.;
- recommendation of experts who are able and willing to write new articles for a possible publication, working papers, fact sheets, etc.;
- suggestions for the transformation and use of these materials in teacher in-service training by joining or establishing partnerships with already existing initiatives and/or projects.

Museum Directors' Meeting on Roma Culture and History

(Brno, Czech Republic, 28-29 November 2003)

Objective: to draw up a plan for implementing the Roma/Gypsy Cultural Route, employing museums of Roma history and culture as vectors for developing activities from an educational perspective.

The idea was to take account of the priorities put forward by the museum officials and to consider their impact and spin-offs in educational terms:

- sharing each institution's experience in the field of educational activities;
- studying the existing potential, the activities to be developed and priorities;
- considering how to develop and build on the potential.

Outcomes:

- guidelines on educational materials and activities in museums;
- proposals on the use of these teaching materials and methods and, where necessary, changes to these materials/methods (the differences between the contexts in which Roma lived in Europe's various countries were underlined several times);
- suggestions on adapting and using these materials for teaching purposes;
- new proposals for implementation of the Roma Cultural Route.

The training of Roma school mediators

Seminar organised in Timisoara, Romania, from 1 to 4 April 2004

Objective:

- facilitate the pedagogical experience in the field of the training of Roma school mediators and assistants;
- discuss the training contents;
- discuss the current position of Roma school mediators/assistants and the conditions for practising this job (qualification and institutional recognition);
- job profile.

Contents:

- seminar on the situation of Roma school mediators/assistants in Europe;
- comparative study on the situation in several countries;
- working groups.

Since 2005 the privileged themes are:

Roma children's access to basic education

A teaching kit for children at pre-school level has been developed in partnership with the Strasbourg-based Association pour une Recherche Pédagogique Ouverte en milieu Tsigane (Association for Open Educational Research within Roma communities). It will prepare Roma children to begin school by reducing the educational retardation of those who have not attended nursery school for various reasons (whether cultural, economic, social or practical (mobility-related)) and are not yet ready to start the first class of primary school. A pedagogic story-telling CD is already available in French.

Training of education professionals

Training of educational staff remains a project priority. The demand of those involved, whether training activity organisers or course applicants, is for specialist, high-skills training courses which must also be recognised as a qualification for those who follow them. Training materials are developed in the form of pedagogic fact sheets on Roma history and culture and through the guide for Roma school mediators. Training of Roma school mediators and of museum staff will constitute a major contribution to the activities concerning non-formal education and learning of others' cultures.

Give greater prominence to the Roma history and culture

In the context of intercultural learning, education and culture are directly and inextricably linked. Education, culture, history and language must be combined as part of a broad-based approach that aims to be both dynamic and respectful, through interconnecting themes and subjects.

Unfortunately, the Roma question is all too often regarded as synonymous with the “Roma problem”; however, an effective way of approaching this question in cultural terms would be to adopt a stance which refuses to regard Roma communities as sordid and problematic, but, instead, gives them due credit for their dynamism and grants them the positive recognition to which they are perfectly entitled.

B. Culture

Council of Europe Roma Cultural Route

The idea of a Roma Cultural Route was put forward by Jean-Pierre Liégeois in 1992 following the meeting “Minorities in Europe: Educational and Cultural Aspects”, and mentioned in the conclusions to the report of the colloquy, “Gypsies in the Locality”, in October 1992.

A report was circulated on the form and implementation of a European Roma Cultural Route: Council of Europe, Council for Cultural Co-operation, *A Council of Europe Gypsy Cultural Route: Exploratory Study*, document ICCE (93) 9, Strasbourg, 1993.

The exploratory study demonstrates the value, relevance and feasibility of setting up a Roma Cultural Route, interweaving institutional and field-related elements. It presents an overall framework for discussion and makes practical proposals based on an analysis of projects and on the results of a special survey. Replies to the survey were accompanied by documents; the content of these letters showed that there was considerable interest in a Roma route, and demonstrated the existence of well-established projects that could contribute to the development of such a route.

The proposals set out in the above report outline themes that could be included in a European route, such as:

- historic signposting of the first major Roma migrations, from the eastern marches of Europe to western Europe, using texts from existing archives.
- such a route could draw on other historical highlights and noteworthy sites (examples include well-known and less well-known pilgrim paths, sites of tragic events, such as the concentration camps, and centres of artistic creation, including particular places in Andalusia for flamenco,

and in Hungary or elsewhere for music and songs that are at once similar and different;

- a network of museums: museums have been set up in several European states;
- a network of performers (theatre and dance companies, musicians): working meetings could be held, and joint projects set up, with a view to the organisation of festivals and European tours;
- the proposals set out in the survey on which the report is based include possible useful links between artistic activities and the education sector (with an emphasis on arts and crafts);
- a network of publishers of newsletters and books;
- a network of universities and research centres: teams have been set up, linking them together and linking their work so that being directly connected with the development of a cultural route is a simple matter, and one that is essential in a number of fields (language, history, sociology, etc.);
- setting up a mobile cultural centre – part museum/exhibition and part teaching activity – in conjunction with schools; cultural events would be organised when the exhibition arrived in a given place;
- there was also a proposal for an annual “Gypsy Week”, with cultural events in various parts of Europe; a particular place would be chosen each year for a major festival;
- emphasis was placed on the production not only of books and other printed material, but also of audio-visual material – such as photographs and video recordings – in order to reach a large number of people and to ensure that the Route is accessible to all in the present conditions of limited literacy.

The exploratory study mentioned above was very well received. According to a meeting report of the Cultural Routes Advisory Committee: “It was felt inappropriate to reduce a theme of such great interest to a Cultural Route. Instead, it should be the subject of a general Council programme. That did not mean that certain activities connected with the theme could not be handled in the form of a Route. Indeed, given that the Gypsies were a central political issue concern for the Council of Europe, a project conducted at Council level could be so devised as to include collaboration by the Cultural Routes Project, taking into account the cultural and educational aspects of the subject and the need to involve Gypsies themselves in any action” (meeting report ICCE (94) 13).

Since that initial study, there have been numerous references to the Roma Cultural Route and expressions of interest in it, some of them appearing in texts adopted by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities.

The project was reactivated at the February 1997 meeting of the Specialist Group on Roma and Travellers (MG-S-ROM).

A new document was circulated, following on from the 1993 study (ICCE (93) 9).

C. Youth and sport

The European Youth Centre (EYC) held a training course for leaders of Roma youth organisations in Strasbourg from 18 to 27 April 1995, as part of the European Youth Campaign against Racism, Xenophobia, Anti-Semitism and Intolerance.

It was called “Young Roma, Gypsies and Travellers in Europe: Situation and Perspectives of Young People from Roma/Gypsy and Travellers’ Backgrounds in Europe” and a report has been drafted by Diego Luis Fernández Jimenez, April 1996.

This course was attended by 35 people, who took part in discussions and intensive workshops on topics such as education, discrimination, setting up networks for Roma youth leaders and the role of Roma women.

It was organised as a first step towards overcoming the obstacles blocking young Roma and Travellers from access to Europe. This was the European Youth Centre’s first activity for Roma youth; it afforded an opportunity to identify, and gather information on, a significant number of community projects run by young Roma in Europe, and served as a springboard for the European forums that now exist for Roma youth.

Following this initial activity, the Youth Directorate of the Council of Europe has concentrated on:

- training youth leaders in order to promote active community involvement;
- setting up voluntary organisations in order to ensure representation for Roma youth issues in Europe.

1. Training Activities

Training courses for Roma youth leaders, organised by the Youth Directorate of the Council of Europe

As part of the follow-up to the European Youth Campaign against Racism, Xenophobia, Anti-Semitism and Intolerance, a longer-term training course for Roma leaders was held in Helsinki from 21 October to 2 November 1997.

The main purpose of the course was to train people actively involved in community work and to enhance their skills in the area of project design and management.

From 2 to 14 March 1999, in conjunction with DG XXII of the European Commission, the Youth Directorate held a training course for young Roma leaders and representatives in Strasbourg. It aimed at teaching them how to design projects in consultation with their communities. A report was drafted by Demetrio Gomez Avila (Spain), Alexandra Raykova (Bulgaria), Rui Gomes (Portugal), Anne Dussap and Corinne Grassi (France).

From 20 to 24 October 1999, the Youth Directorate, in conjunction with the Directorate-General for Social Cohesion, the European Youth Forum and Roma youth organisations, ran a joint activity in Budapest, designed to foster dialogue between Roma youth organisations and national youth councils in Europe. The seminar enabled participants to discuss issues relating to the representation of Roma youth organisations within local and European authorities, the need for co-operation between Roma youth organisations and other youth organisations and participation by Roma minorities in the political life of their countries.

The ROMECO activity: developing co-operation between Roma youth organisations and other youth NGOs at local and national levels (Strasbourg, 18-24 September 2000). This course was the continuation of an identical activity held in Budapest in September 1999 (see above).

All of these training courses were led by a team of Roma trainers in conjunction with trainers from the Youth Directorate.

Participation by Roma youth leaders in training activities run by the Youth Directorate (since 1995)

Special attention has been given to Roma youth leaders, who have been specifically encouraged to take full advantage of the general training offered as part of the Youth Directorate's programme of activities; a significant number of leaders have attended the various courses:

- training courses on the organisation of international youth activities, training of trainers, training in intercultural teaching, language courses;
- "participation and citizenship": a longer-term training course for young people from minority groups, aimed at training and empowering minority youth leaders to design projects and devise appropriate strategies for development within a European framework based on civil society.

2. Support for the development of European Roma youth organisations

As part of its policy of fostering active participation by young people in society, the Youth Directorate has encouraged the development of

international Roma youth organisations. A number of training activities and exchanges have been financed by the European Youth Centre (Directorate of Youth and Sport), and held in one of the two European Youth Centres with the assistance of a trainer. Aside from the provision of educational, administrative and financial support, the applicant organisation has total control over the topics and participants selected. The following activities have been organised.

In September 1996, an initial training seminar at the Budapest EYC was attended by about 30 young Roma and travellers. It prompted participants to set up the European Forum of Roma and Traveller Young People (the FERTYP, which has since become the FERYP – Forum of European Roma Young People), with a view to:

- promoting Roma youth NGOs in Europe;
- supporting the representation of Roma youth within the relevant European institutions;
- promoting co-operation and training for young Roma NGO leaders in Europe.

The FERYP subsequently organised an initial activity in Romania, with financial support from the European Youth Fund.

From 5 to 12 July 1998, the FERYP and Romi International held a week of joint reflection in Strasbourg on the role of Roma women and young people in the development of European Roma youth movements and their place in the Roma community and in society. This meeting was based on the premise that changes cannot be made within the Roma community without the participation of Roma women and young people.

Among the activities organised by the FERYP, with support from the European Youth Fund and the Youth Directorate and in conjunction with the *Roma Lom Foundation* and the Foundation for Promotion of Roma Youth, a seminar on Roma women was held in Sofia from 25 October to 1 November 1999. The seminar was designed to promote and support the development of young Roma women's movements at local and European level, under the umbrella of the FERYP.

From 29 November to 5 December 1999, the FERYP held a "training course for young Roma/Gypsy multipliers" with the support of, and in conjunction with, the Council of Europe's European Youth Centre in Strasbourg. This course provided young Roma with a number of theoretical and practical tools, together with the necessary skills to run activities and programmes under the FERYP umbrella, and helped them to sustain their work in their local communities and organisations.

In 2000, the Directorate of Youth and Sports/European Youth Centre in Strasbourg held a seminar entitled: "Young Roma Beyond 2000: Between Tradition and Modern Society", July 2000, Strasbourg (in conjunction with the FERYP).

From 14 to 21 October 2001, the FERYP held a training seminar on project management, organised in conjunction with the Directorate of Youth and Sport. This seminar was designed to provide young European Roma youth leaders with the necessary methodological tools and skills to manage projects.

From 22 to 29 June 2003, the FERYP led a discussion seminar at the Strasbourg EYC on Roma communities and the concept of leadership.

The Directorate of Youth and Sport always endeavours to open all of its activities to Roma youth leaders (training courses, language courses, background seminars on the situation in South-Eastern Europe, etc.).

D. Confidence building measures

Further to the Vienna Summit of Heads of State and Government in October 1993 and discussions in the Committee of Ministers, the Council of Europe was instructed, at the 508th meeting of the Deputies, to promote measures to build confidence between minorities and majority populations, and to establish legal standards concerning minorities.

As there appeared to be a need to back up legal reforms with work on the ground, the Council of Europe financed various pilot projects in the field of education for Roma children.

The purpose of the programme of confidence-building measures (CBM) is to provide moral and financial support for NGO projects, the main aim being to promote relations between people belonging to different ethnic groups in a given country or in two or more neighbouring countries. The projects financed are proposed by civil society (in particular, local NGOs) following a call for applications, and are carried out by them.

1. "Rudňany Roma Kindergarten/Project for mothers"

CBM (95) 8, March 1995, Rudňany, Slovak Republic

This project was designed to improve the social and material circumstances of Roma in Rudňany, boost their confidence and encourage them to take the initiative.

Staff teaching at the Rudňany special school since May 1992 and teachers from other special schools in Slovakia attended courses specifically concerning the Roma population.

This provided an opportunity to identify special needs, in the form of projects for young children (aged 3 to 6), vocational training and measures to improve the living conditions of this community.

Given the backwardness of the young children in terms of language and social and motor development, it was agreed to begin the project with a programme catering for young children, in which the mothers would take part.

The project was to be carried out in co-operation with local institutions and representatives of the Rudňany Roma community. Roma involvement was essential.

The work programme focused on the behavioural, social and emotional development of Roma children; preparation, with mothers, for the children's starting pre-school education; educational advice and programmes for the mothers; practical courses for women.

The project was to take place in three stages:

- 1995-96: Launch of the kindergarten project in co-operation with the mothers; continuation of training for teachers and other school staff; exchange programme; maintenance of contacts with organisations in the Netherlands and Slovakia; preparation of a report with a view to preparing stage two, which concerned the improvement of living conditions.
- 1996-97: Continuation of the same programme; preparation of a timetable for stage two.
- 1997-98: Arrangements for linking the project to other programmes in Slovakia; strengthening of co-operation with the "One Europe" foundation.

2. "Spolu project in the Slovak Republic"

CBM (95) 12, March 1995, carried out in Plavecky-Stvrtok – Bratislava, Lomnicka, Rudňany, Lincinde-Roznava and Banska Bystrica

The objectives were to co-ordinate and support activities designed to consolidate the Roma identity, raise the standard of living of Roma, improve cohabitation with non-Roma in various regions of the Slovak Republic, and allow children living in boarding schools to adapt to family life by means of integration camps.

The Spolu project encompassed four sub-projects:

- Project No. 1: Education scheme and advisory service for Roma children and young people and their families. Plavecky-Stvrtok, Lomnicka,

Rudňany and Lincinde-Rozvana, Slovak Republic. 1995-96. The idea was to open reception and advice centres to Roma and organise music and dancing lessons for Roma children, holiday camps and integration camps, and excursions for Roma children and young people.

- Project No. 2: Motor and musical development of Roma children. Music and dancing school lessons, Plavecky Stvtork, Lomnicka, Rudňany, Lincinde-Rozvana, Slovak Republic. 1995-97. The project was designed to support the artistic talents of young Roma who had no access to music and dancing schools because of their precarious family circumstances.
- Project No. 3: Integration programmes in the form of excursions, weekends or holiday camps. Plavecky Stvtork, Lomnicka, Rudňany, Lincinde-Rozvana, Slovak Republic. Begun in 1995. The objectives were to attenuate the adverse influences of an unfavourable environment, encourage the development of individuality and the Roma identity, and improve the integration of Roma and non-Roma children through excursions and organised weekends.
- Project No. 4: Holiday and integration camps for Roma children and young people at boarding school and those living a long way from their families and the Roma community, 1995, several places in the Slovak Republic. The objectives were to provide Roma children at boarding school with an opportunity to get out of the school and meet other Roma and non-Roma children and thus attenuate the adverse consequences of the lack of a family environment and enable them to make new friends in a non-conflictual context.

3. "Centre of Romani Culture pilot project in Prague 5 and 13"

CBM (95) 29, June 1995, Prague, Czech Republic

The plan to set up a Centre of Romani Culture in Prague originated in the needs of Roma minorities in this part of the city, identified in the light of analyses and projects carried out in the city from 1990 to 1994. The main organiser was the MOSTY Foundation and the main sponsor, the Council of Europe.

One of the Centre's chief aims was to organise activities for Roma children and adults.

These activities have been proposed: to work with children from the Prague 5 dancing and music group; music lessons for talented children; outings for children to the countryside or to cultural events; to work with "street children": leisure activities, sport, help with schoolwork, artistic activities; lessons about family planning, health, social matters, law, sewing, cooking and physical education; co-operation with employment agencies; editorial work with the "Gendalos" magazine; to work with the MOSTY Foundation; to work with

the “Decade for Human Rights Education” Foundation; co-operation with the Museum of Roma Culture in Brno; organisation of events based on the children’s work on Roma issues; co-operation with Roma music, dance and theatre groups.

4. “Educational project involving children from Romani communities”

CBM (95) 30, June 1995, Coltau, Valenii-Lapusului and Mihail Kogalniceanu, Romania

The project involved setting up intercultural schools suited to Roma children and open to other children, based on an active learning method. The project was confined to places in Romania where there were conflicts between Roma and non-Roma or even pogroms against Roma (Coltau, Valenii-Lapusului and Mihail Kogalniceanu).

Examples of situations detrimental to the education of Roma children:

- in Coltau: school attendance among Roma children has fallen since 1985; the tuition given to Roma children is of poorer quality, and Roma children are in separate classes.
- in Valenii-Lapusului: local farmers are hostile to the children.
- in Mihail Kogalniceanu: there are specific gaps in the schooling of children aged 10 to 16.

Progress achieved:

- in Coltau: purchase of a disused barn, which has been converted into school premises thanks to contributions from Roma.
- in Valenii Lapusului: introduction of extra tuition for Roma pupils. After a serious conflict in August 1991 between Romanian and Roma inhabitants, the nursery and primary school was rebuilt with funds from the Roma Federation,¹² which launched a project to reintegrate Roma. The project was threefold, covering social matters, schooling and health.

More generally, the activities in all the places involved in the project were designed to make the local and regional officials concerned, and especially those responsible for education, aware of their responsibilities.

Provision was made for literacy programmes, an educational mediator and more flexible school rules, and for ensuring that the cultural assets of Roma children were taken into account.

12. A Roma NGO (Romania).

5. Publication, “Education of children in Gypsy communities and in-service training for teachers working in Gypsy communities”

CBM (95) 30, 1998, Timisoara, Romania

The project, co-ordinated by the Timisoara Intercultural Institute (TII), had several objectives designed to improve the poor school attendance rate: organisation of an in-service training scheme for teachers working with Roma; establishment of a method for assessing educational measures; development, application on the ground and evaluation of a system based on the concept of a “school mediator”.

Two seminars were organised:

- the Slatina seminar (25-28 October 1996): the aim was to enable various parties to meet and share beneficial experiences, to provide teachers with training devised by specialists from the Bucharest Institute of Science and Education and to define the role and duties of school mediators.
- the Timisoara seminar (8-11 May 1997): further to the field work carried out during the Slatina seminar, the experts assessed the work of the school mediators. In addition, the following issues were addressed: the need for co-operation between Roma associations and the education authorities; schooling for migrant Roma children; teaching of the Romani language; special classes; and the need to establish co-operation between the school mediator, the Roma association and the school.

As part of this confidence-building measures project, four sites were chosen as pilot sites: Coltau, Caracal, Slobozia and Mangalia.

The Coltau project

This was set up in 1993 by the local Roma association at the instigation of the Roma Federation. The following educational activities were organised: literacy course, Romani language courses; vocational training; religious, ecumenical and out-of-school education; artistic activities; a summer camp.

The Caracal projects (Olt)

- a. Project launched in 1994 by a Roma primary school teacher with the support of the Rom-Rom Foundation, Romani CRISS and the Phoenix Foundation. A primary school teacher of Roma extraction set up a local school with the support of the education authorities.
- b. Project under way, supported by Romani CRISS. The teachers at School No 6, attended by Roma children, provided them with extra back-up and practical tuition.

The Slobozia project (Ialomita)

Project launched in 1997 by the “Bridge between Souls” foundation and supported by the AIDROM¹³ foundation and the local authorities. The children from this community, who are frequently called on to help their parents, were allowed to go to school only three times a week. Extra-curricular activities were organised and arrangements made with the authorities to facilitate the children’s schooling. The project is an example of good practice in terms both of increasing school attendance and of academic success.

The Mangalia project (Constanta)

Project launched in 1997 at the instigation of the Roma Federation with the support of Romani CRISS and the local authorities. The idea was to give the educational project an economic and health facet. Forty children aged 9 to 16 were taught to read and write. Twenty children passed the school assessment test allowing them to enter the second year of primary school.

6. “Training course for intercultural mediators from the Roma minority in fostering cohesion between members of the Romanian majority and the Roma minorities in the county of Lasi in Romania”

CBM(2002)36, March 2002, Lasi, Romania

The project was proposed by the “Help” association in Lasi, Romania.

The context:

10% to 15% of the population of Lasi were Roma. Most of them had no papers, were not entitled to vote, and had no social security, education, trade, job or health care. Their social exclusion prompted many of them to turn to crime, and they were strongly rejected by the majority population.

Solutions proposed:

Train intercultural mediators to serve as intermediaries between the two communities and inform the Roma of their rights and duties.

This training, for which they were to receive a certificate, was organised around several themes: human rights and minorities; education in family life, rights and responsibilities of Romanian citizens; combating intolerance, racism and xenophobia; fighting crime; health, environmental and intercultural education; Roma and Europe.

13. Association of Ecumenical Churches of Romania.

E. Case law of the European Court of Human Rights

On several occasions the European Court of Human Rights has considered applications concerning violations of the rights of people of Roma origin. With specific reference to the right to education of Roma children, it is worth mentioning the following cases:

Sulejmanovic and Others and Sejdovic and Sulejmanovic v. Italy (Application No 57574/00), judgment of 8 November 2002 – friendly settlement:

The case concerned the deportation of the applicants, who were Roma, to Bosnia and Herzegovina in March 2000 (complaints under Articles 3, 8 and 13 of the Convention and Article 4 of Protocol No. 4 to the Convention). Under the friendly settlement that was reached, the respondent government undertook, among other things, to approach the authorities responsible to ensure that the children of school age could be enrolled at school and could catch up on what they had missed through not having been able to go to school since they had been sent back to Bosnia, and to instruct the bodies responsible to ensure that a sick child received the medical care needed under the public health system. According to the latest information provided by Italy (see annotated Agenda of the 885th DH meeting of the Committee of Ministers, public information version, at http://www.coe.int/T/E/Human_Rights/execution), the children of school age are enrolled at school, an association is providing them with remedial tutoring under an agreement with the local authority, and the applicants were in the process, as at 26 March 2004, of being registered with the public health service with the help of the same association.

Chapman (Application No. 27238/95), *Jane Smith* (Application No. 25154/94), *Coster* (Application No. 24876/94), *Beard* (Application No. 24882/94) and *Lee* (Application No. 25289/94) *v. the United Kingdom*, judgments of 18 January 2001 – no violation:

In these cases the applicants, who were Roma families, complained that planning and enforcement measures against their stationing their caravans on plots belonging to them violated several of their rights (under Articles 8, 14, 1 of Protocol No. 1, 6). The Coster family, James Smith and Thomas Lee also pleaded Article 2 of Protocol No. 1, on the grounds that the enforcement measures had deprived their children and grandchildren of the right to education.

The Court took the view, however, that there had been no violation because the applicants had not proved that their children and grandchildren had in fact been deprived of the right to education as a result of the planning measures complained of.

D.H. v. the Czech Republic (Application No. 57325/00)

On 1 March 2005 the Court held a hearing on this case, which concerns the rights of Roma children. The applicants are represented by the European Roma Rights Centre.

The applicants are 18 Czech nationals of Roma origin, born between 1985 and 1991 and living in the region of Ostrava in the Czech Republic.

The facts:

from 1996 to 1999 the children were placed in special schools for mentally handicapped children.

The law:

Placement in special schools is ordered by the head teacher:

- on the basis of the results of an IQ test;
- and recommendations from an educational psychology guidance centre;
- with the consent of the child's legal representative.

Fourteen of the applicants:

- contested the reliability of the tests used;
- considered that their parents were not properly informed of the consequences of such a placement; and therefore
- asked the Ostrava Education Authority to review their situation. Their request was rejected.

Twelve of the applicants:

- considered that the placement of Roma children in special schools was a widespread practice that led to segregation and racial discrimination because of the co-existence of two independent school systems: special schools for Roma and normal primary schools for the majority population;
- applied to the Constitutional Court, which rejected their application on 20 October 1999.

An application was accordingly lodged with the European Court of Human Rights on 18 April 2000 by 12 of the applicants, who are pleading:

- Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights: prohibition of degrading treatment, on the grounds that segregation on the basis of their racial origin constitutes such treatment;
- Article 2 of Protocol No. 1 (Right to education); Article 14 (Prohibition of discrimination): the applicants claim that they were deprived of education because of their Roma background;
- a violation of Article 6 (Right to a fair trial), on the grounds that no reasons were given for the decisions to place them in special schools and procedural safeguards were not complied with.

F. Human Rights (DG II)

1. Equality between women and men

The Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men (CDEG) held a hearing of Roma/Gypsy women from western, central and eastern Europe in Strasbourg on 29 and 30 September 1995 (EG/TSI (95)2).

The hearing was attended by 23 Roma women from 13 Council of Europe member states: Albania, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Moldova, the Netherlands, the Slovak Republic, Spain and the United Kingdom.

The high level of illiteracy concerns more women than men, even though it is the women who usually deal with the authorities. Girls leave school early, usually to get married or help their families.

The participants asked for:

- the education system to take account of the Romani language and Roma culture;
- the school mediator to have a greater role;
- literacy schemes to be set up to facilitate their access to employment and allow them to become mediators within and outside the Roma community.

The participants suggested:

- widely disseminating books, brochures and audio and video material on the Roma culture;
- promoting intercultural educational programmes to foster mutual understanding between Roma and the majority community;
- promoting and supporting the cultural initiatives of Roma communities;

- special training courses catering for the needs of Roma women;
- introducing scholarships for Roma women;
- organising an exhibition at the Council of Europe on Roma culture and its contribution to European culture.

2. European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)

Monitoring reports

ECRI is an independent human rights monitoring body specialising in combating racism and intolerance. Following a country-by-country approach, it examines the situation as regards racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance in each of the Council of Europe member states and prepares reports containing proposals as to how each country can address the problems singled out. ECRI reports regularly contain observations on the situation of Roma communities, particularly as regards education. Excerpts from ECRI reports concerning these issues are therefore reproduced below as by way of illustration. For ECRI's original comprehensive analysis of issues concerning Roma communities, see the country-by-country reports listed in the footnotes.

Austria

Concerning education of Roma, in its second report¹⁴ on Austria adopted on 16 June 2000, ECRI observes that only Roma who have lived for generations in a country, "holding Austrian citizenship, [are] considered to constitute the Roma *Volksgruppe*" and that this recognition "entails special rights, including State financial support for cultural projects, ... the possibility of bilingual schooling and other language rights."

In its third report,¹⁵ adopted on 25 June 2004, ECRI states that autochthonous Roma, who are recognised as a national minority, enjoy certain rights (see above). It adds: "In its second report, ECRI suggested that the Austrian authorities consider including the non-autochthonous Roma among the categories of persons that make up the Roma national minority." Although Austrian authorities specified that in practice also non-autochthonous Roma can enjoy the projects financed by authorities in favour of the Roma national minority. "ECRI notes that initiatives aimed at improving access of Roma youths to education are in place at the local level, although funds available for these initiatives are reportedly extremely limited."

14. CRI (2001) 3: Second report on Austria, ECRI, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 3 April 2001.

15. CRI (2005) 1: Third report on Austria, ECRI, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 15 February 2005.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

In this report on Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted on 25 June 2004, ECRI examines the situation of Roma as regards education and it observes that: "... international observers estimate that less than 15% of Roma children are actually integrated into the school process throughout the country".

There seem to be several reasons for this:

"... poverty, which affects parents' ability to pay for textbooks, clothing and transport";

"... discrimination and harassment, including, in some cases, manifestations of prejudice by teachers, school authorities and the school community *vis-à-vis* Roma children and parents";

the fact that "... the efforts of the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina to enforce the obligation of compulsory schooling for Roma children have been very limited".

"... ECRI welcomes the February 2004 adoption by the Ministries of Education of the Entities and Cantons, under the auspices of the OSCE, of an 'Action Plan on the Educational Needs of Roma and Members of other National Minorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina'."

The goals of the plan are:

"to ensure accommodation of the educational needs of Roma";

"the removal of financial and administrative barriers to school enrolment and completion";

"the preservation of Roma language and culture";

"the gaining of support and participation of Roma parents".

"ECRI strongly urges the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina to thoroughly implement the Action Plan."

Bulgaria

In its second report on Bulgaria,¹⁶ adopted on 18 June 1999, ECRI highlights a practice of the *de facto* segregation of Roma children in education:

"The practice of the *de facto* segregation of Roma children in so-called 'Gypsy schools' or special classes within other schools, [which] does not seem to have been eradicated."

16. CRI (2005) 2: Report on Bosnia and Herzegovina, European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 15 February 2005.

“The practice of sending a high percentage of Roma/Gypsy children to ‘special’ schools for children ... with mental disabilities [and the] disproportionate representation of Roma/Gypsy children in the so-called ‘labour education’ or reform schools”;

Cases of “mistreatment of Roma/Gypsy children” reported in reform schools.

ECRI makes a number of suggestions:

“recruitment of suitably-qualified teachers, including Roma teachers, in order to raise educational levels”;

measures “to combat prejudices and racism in the educational system”;

that action be taken on ECRI’s General Policy Recommendation No. 3, which advocates that governments “vigorously combat all forms of school segregation” of Roma/Gypsy children”.

“ECRI welcomes efforts made by the Ministry of Education to facilitate the provision of mother tongue teaching in schools ... and to work together with non-governmental organisations.”

In its third report on Bulgaria¹⁷ adopted on 27 June 2003, ECRI mentions the recommendations in the second report and considers the extent to which they have been implemented, noting that:

“Non-governmental organisations have set up pilot ‘desegregation’ projects to take Roma children out of schools in Roma districts and enrol them in schools to which they did not previously have access.” However, there are few such successful experiments.

In April 2002 the Ministry of Education and Science set up an “Advisory Council on the Education of Children and Pupils belonging to Minorities”. In September 2002 the Ministry adopted an “Instruction on the integration of children and pupils belonging to minorities”.

“The Education Act was amended to provide for a compulsory preparatory one-year class for children with a poor grasp of Bulgarian.”

“ECRI observes that progress in the field of the education of Roma children is far from sufficient and consists largely of initiatives on the part of non-governmental organisations.”

“ECRI urges the Bulgarian authorities to take steps without delay to give Roma children more equal opportunities in the educational field [and recommends] setting aside sufficient funds and resources to implement it.”

17. CRI (2000) 3: Second report on Bulgaria, European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 21 March 2000.

“ECRI recommends [enabling] children in schools attended solely by Roma children ... to receive an education of the same standard as that given to other children.”

“ECRI reiterates the urgent need to put a stop to the practice of placing Roma children who are not mentally handicapped in special schools intended for children with mental disabilities, and to reintegrate those already placed in such schools in the ordinary school system.”

Croatia

In the second report, adopted on 15 December 2000, ECRI examines the situation of Roma in the field of education:

ECRI considers that the “education of Roma/Gypsy children is a serious problem in Croatia”.

ECRI “emphasises the need to increase the participation of Roma/Gypsy children at all levels of education”.

ECRI recommends “that training be offered to teachers, including information about the particular needs and expectations of Roma/Gypsies and the ability to use this knowledge effectively”.

ECRI stresses the importance “... of preparatory classes, additional training in the Croatian language and increased opportunities to study the Roma language in the early years of schooling, which might assist Roma/Gypsy children in integrating into the education system”.

ECRI takes note of such successful initiatives as:

the programme for including Roma children in the education system in the Republic of Croatia, launched in 1998;

efforts “to develop and implement appropriate measures in co-operation with Roma associations”.

Czech Republic

In its second report on the Czech Republic,¹⁸ adopted on 18 June 1999, ECRI notes that:

“Although estimates [of] the number of Roma/Gypsy children attending [special schools for mentally deficient pupils] vary, it is accepted that they are vastly over-represented”;

“Despite compulsory pre-school attitudinal tests, channelling of Roma/Gypsy children to special schools is reported to be quasi-automatic”;

18. CRI (2000) 4: Second report on the Czech Republic, ECRI, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 21 March 2000.

“Roma/Gypsy parents often favour this solution, partly to avoid abuse from non-Roma/Gypsy children in regular schools”.

It would therefore seem that Roma parents are not sufficiently aware of the importance of having a normal education, particularly for the purposes of finding a job.

ECRI proposes several approaches:

ensuring “that any testing used is fair and that the true abilities of each child are properly evaluated”;

making Roma parents “aware of the need for their children to attend regular education”;

improving “the attendance of Roma/Gypsy children at kindergarten level”.

ECRI notes in the report that the authorities have established, “in districts with a high concentration of Roma/Gypsies ... so-called ‘zero grades’”, year-long programmes to prepare disadvantaged young people for their first year at school. ECRI encourages this initiative and suggests further measures:

“urgent measures ... to increase the participation of Roma/Gypsy children in education at the secondary and higher level”;

teacher training, which should “provide information on the particular needs and expectations of Roma/Gypsies”;

targeted training of Roma/Gypsies for teaching posts and recruitment of teaching staff from the Roma/Gypsy community, which might also play a role in improving the situation;

ECRI notes “the hiring of Roma/Gypsy assistant teachers in primary and special schools and urges the authorities to undertake all possible efforts to strengthen and expand this initiative.”

ECRI furthermore stresses “the role of an effective legislative framework in combating discrimination in education.”

In its third report on the Czech Republic,¹⁹ adopted on 5 December 2003, ECRI refers to the recommendations it made in its previous report (see above) and considers whether they have been implemented. It notes the following developments since the second report:

“the Czech Ministry of Education has developed a standardised test aimed at improving the assessment of a child’s mental level made by the psychological and counselling centres involved in decisions to send children to special schools.

19. CRI (2004) 22: Third report on the Czech Republic, ECRI, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 8 June 2004.

These tests, however, are not mandatory, and they are only one of a battery of tools and methods recommended to the centres”;

“administrative and economic changes have meant that schools compete for students, and so, special schools try to preserve their Roma pupils and attract new pupils in order to fill their classes. Parents of Roma children are therefore encouraged to send their children to such schools”;

“special schools are often presented to parents as an opportunity for their children to receive specialised attention and be with other Roma children”;

“ECRI has also received reports of Roma parents being turned away from regular schools. With the economic competition, some mainstream schools are reportedly fearful that their school will be labelled a ‘Gypsy’ school and non-Roma parents will not send their children there”;

“ECRI has also been informed that it has in fact become easier for mentally healthy children to be accepted into special schools, as a provision in the law now provides for this possibility if the situation calls for it. It is therefore now possible for children to enter these schools directly without having to be assessed by psychological and counselling centres”;

“ECRI has received very positive feedback concerning the success of ‘zero grade courses’ (preparatory classes) at pre-school level in increasing the number of Roma children who attend regular schools”;

“the School Act that entered into force in January 2000 provides the opportunity for graduates of special schools to apply for admission to secondary schools [but] this remains largely a theoretical possibility as special schools do not provide children with the knowledge required in order for them to attend regular schools ... and the headmasters in charge of making admission decisions do not accept them. There are no measures in place to provide additional education [for these pupils]”;

a new trend, whereby the system of segregated education is being maintained in a new form, by means of special classes in mainstream schools, is cause for concern;

it is feared that the new draft act will make it possible to segregate Roma even more “through the introduction of a new category of special programmes for the ‘socially disadvantaged’”, and that “those Roma who now attend regular classes may, subsequent to this act, be labelled as ‘socially disadvantaged’ and thus separated on this basis”;

the number of assistant teachers has risen to 350, “mostly assigned to primary schools, although some are assigned to secondary schools”;

“training programmes for teachers aimed at overcoming negative stereotypes and discrimination” have been set up;

“the primary school curriculum [has been revised] to include: teaching about Roma culture, history and language; other minorities; tolerance and multiculturalism.”

ECRI addresses a number of recommendations to the authorities:

“step up ... efforts to ensure that Roma students who are not mentally disabled are not placed in special schools for the mentally disabled”;

“ensure that the new School Act does not create a new form of [segregated] education for Roma children”;

“ensure that Roma parents receive accurate information concerning the long-term negative consequences of sending their children to special schools”;

“devote resources to fostering communication between Roma parents and mainstream schools”;

“assist [children attending special schools] in achieving a level whereby they can be integrated into the mainstream educational system”;

take steps to make the general public, local head teachers and teachers aware of “the importance of integration”;

extend successful initiatives, such as “preparatory classes and Roma teaching assistants”;

“take positive steps to ensure that Roma children have equal opportunities to continue on to higher levels of education”.

Finland

In its second report on Finland, adopted on 14 December 2001, ECRI examines the situation of Roma in the field of education:

“... the availability of mother-tongue education in the Romani language does not correspond to the need ...”. ECRI recommends that the Finnish authorities ensure that the legislative provisions in this field are actually implemented.

“Drop-out rates among Roma children are higher than among the majority population.”

“It has also been reported that Roma children, who are less likely than their peers to have attended pre-school education, tend at the primary level to be channelled towards ‘special education’ or ‘special groups’.”

“More efforts could be made to prepare Roma children for school through pre-school education in which their needs are taken into account, for example by increasing the recruitment of Roma staff in such establishments.”

“Furthermore, at the secondary and higher levels of education, intensified efforts should be made ... to promote the access of Roma to higher education, especially university education.”

“... positive measures such as reserved university places for qualified Roma candidates” could be envisaged.

“It is ... important to ensure that school curricula contain teaching on the history and culture of the Roma.”

France

In its third report on France,²⁰ adopted on 25 June 2004, ECRI notes that “significant delays in the implementation of the ‘Besson’ laws [requiring the provision of stopping-places for Travellers] place Travellers in a very awkward position in many respects, including in terms of their children’s access to education”.

With regard to access to education, “Circular No 2002-101 of 25 April 2002 specifies the conditions of enrolment of children of Travellers and non-sedentary families in school”.

“[The children of Travellers and those from non-sedentary families] must at least be temporarily accepted in primary schools, even when the documents needed for their enrolment are incomplete”.

ECRI takes note, however, of “the existence of allegations of continued refusals by authorities ... to enrol children who are Travellers”.

ECRI recommends that Circular No 2002-101 of 25 April 2002 be “thoroughly implemented throughout French territory”.

Germany

In its second report on Germany,²¹ adopted on 15 December 2000, ECRI states that “members of Roma and Sinti communities face serious social disadvantage and are confronted with prejudice and discrimination in such fields as employment, housing and education.”

In its third report on Germany,²² adopted on 5 December 2003, ECRI observes that “members of Roma and Sinti communities continue to face serious social disadvantage and to be confronted with prejudice and discrimination, including in some cases blatant direct discrimination, in such fields as employment, housing and education.” It goes on to state: “As noted by ECRI in its second report, Roma and Sinti have been officially recognised as a national minority. In this respect, representatives of some Roma and Sinti organisations stress that progress is still needed in the field of the use of the Romani language, notably to ensure that teaching of this language in schools is possible in all *Länder* ...”

20. CRI (2005) 3: Third report on France, ECRI, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 15 February 2005.

21. CRI (2001) 36: Second report on Germany, ECRI, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 3 July 2001.

22. CRI (2004) 23: Third report on Germany, ECRI, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 8 June 2004.

Greece

In its second report on Greece,²³ adopted on 10 December 1999, ECRI examines the situation of Roma in the field of education.

“Inadequate educational possibilities also contribute to the widespread illiteracy and low level of schooling amongst the Roma/Gypsy population living in camps”.

“In 1996, a comprehensive government action plan was enacted for the first time in Greece aimed at removing the obstacles to the social integration of Roma/Gypsies and to improve the attitude of the general public *vis à vis* the members of this minority group. This plan provides the framework for the adoption of specific programmes”, particularly in the education field.

“Training courses for ... teachers” have been introduced “to increase their sensitivity to the problems of the Roma”.

“The authorities have stated that, as a result of these educational programmes, the number of Roma/Gypsy children attending schools has increased by 30%”.

In its third report on Greece,²⁴ adopted on 5 December 2003, ECRI notes that, “since the adoption of its second report on Greece, the situation of the Roma in Greece has remained fundamentally unchanged and that overall they face the same difficulties – including discrimination – in respect of housing, employment, education and access to public services”.

ECRI adds that, “as concerns housing in particular, there still remain numerous Roma camps removed from all infrastructure in which they live under unacceptable conditions. This is true, for example, of the Aspropyrgos camp near Athens” and the Spata camp. ECRI considers that “this situation poses *inter alia* serious health problems, particularly for the children who live in the camp”.

According to ECRI, the government “has set up an inter-ministerial committee for improving the living conditions of Roma. The committee drew up an integrated action programme for Greek Roma for the period 2003-08, for which substantial funds have already been released with more to follow. This ambitious programme covers the sectors of housing, employment and vocational training, education, health and social assistance, culture and sport”.

23. CRI (2000) 32: Second report on Greece, ECRI, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 27 June 2000.

24. CRI (2004) 24: Third report on Greece, ECRI, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 8 June 2004.

Hungary

In its second report on Hungary,²⁵ adopted on 18 June 1999, ECRI highlights a number of aspects of the situation of Roma as regards education:

It expresses concern about “evidence of widespread discrimination and disadvantage for this minority group in the field of education”;

“Segregated classes for Roma/Gypsy children still exist”; they may also be sent to “remedial schools”;

“Roma/Gypsy children are frequently channelled into special schools or classes for mildly mentally-retarded children”;

These types of institutions “offer no opportunity for further study or employment”;

“A high percentage of children from the Roma/Gypsy minority do not participate in kindergarten education, which the Parliamentary Commissioner for National and Ethnic Minorities cites as one of the main reasons for school failure of Roma/Gypsy pupils”;

“Roma/Gypsy children are often automatically directed to ‘remedial schools’ without a fair examination of the child or consultation with the parents”;

“Beyond the primary school level, the disadvantaged situation of the Roma/Gypsy community is even more acute”.

ECRI makes a number of suggestions:

It urges the Hungarian authorities “to take appropriate measures ... to improve the attendance of Roma/Gypsy children at kindergarten level”;

It recommends that the authorities ensure that “Roma/Gypsy parents are kept fully informed of measures taken and are encouraged to participate in educational decisions affecting their children”;

It considers that “urgent measures are called for to increase the participation of Roma/Gypsy children in education at the secondary and higher level”;

It expresses the view that “recruitment of teaching staff from the Roma/Gypsy community might also play a role in improving the situation”;

It suggests that governments “introduce into the curricula of all schools information on the history and culture of Roma/Gypsies”;

It stresses “the role of an effective legislative framework in combating discrimination in education”.

25. CRI (2000) 5: Second report on Hungary, ECRI, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 21 March 2000.

In its third report on Hungary,²⁶ adopted on 5 December 2003, ECRI mentions the recommendations it made in its second report, in which it:

“... recommended that the Hungarian authorities take steps to combat all forms of school segregation [of] Roma children and to ensure the effective enjoyment of equal access to education”;

“... addressed the issue of channelling Roma children into special schools for the mentally retarded, inviting the authorities to review this system in order to avoid any discrimination”.

ECRI welcomes a number of measures taken:

the appointment of “a Commissioner for the integration of Roma and socially disadvantaged children”, who “has already taken steps to improve the education system in order to combat the segregation of Roma children in schools”;

the establishment of a “programme to combat the over-representation of Roma children in special education for the mentally disabled”;

the incorporation of “provisions prohibiting discrimination in education” into the Education Act;

a decree which has, since 2002, provided for fines for perpetrators of such discrimination;

the establishment of a “National Network for Integrated Education” in January 2003 “to provide assistance to children ... whose families live in very poor conditions [and] financial support to schools participating in the network”.

ECRI is still concerned about:

the fact that “the practice of channelling Roma children into special schools for mentally disabled children, even though they do not suffer from mental disabilities, still exists”;

the fact that “while measures to increase the rights of parents have been taken in theory, their implementation is insufficient due to the lack of information provided to parents in practice”.

Ireland

In its second report on Ireland,²⁷ adopted on 22 June 2001, ECRI examines the situation of Travellers in the education field:

“Traveller children have in the past faced extreme marginalisation as regards access to education in Ireland, often being entirely excluded from the school system, placed in segregated classes, or dropping out of the system early”;

26. CRI (2004) 25: Third report on Hungary, ECRI, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 8 June 2004.

27. CRI (2002) 3: Second report on Ireland, ECRI, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 23 April 2002.

“In recent years, debates and actions have focused on the number of Traveller children participating in schools, with the result that most – although not all – Traveller children now attend primary school. There has also been an increase in the number of Traveller children transferring to secondary school”;

“A system of ‘visiting teachers’ who liaise with families has contributed to raising attendance levels”;

“The system of segregated classes has now been dropped and Traveller children attend mainstream classes, with additional teachers provided to support them”.

ECRI:

“... encourages the Irish authorities” to collaborate with “representatives of the community itself”;

“... stresses the need to ensure that teachers providing education for Traveller children receive appropriate training and guidance”;

“urges the Irish authorities to identify ways of promoting access to the teaching profession for members of the Traveller community and to consider as a short-term solution the possibility of recruiting members of the Traveller community as auxiliary teachers”;

“feels that further efforts should be made to include material on the Traveller community as an integral part of Irish society throughout school textbooks and other teaching aids”.

Italy

In its second report on Italy,²⁸ adopted on 22 June 2001, ECRI highlights a number of steps taken by the Italian authorities to improve access to education for Roma children as “the appointment of cultural mediators” and the adaptation of “the content of education to a multicultural reality”.

ECRI seems, however, to take the view that the results are limited:

particularly because of “the absence of a comprehensive policy at national level aimed at improving the situation of Roma/Gypsy communities in all fields of life in an integrated fashion”;

because, “while Roma/Gypsy children’s attendance in compulsory schooling is increasing”, only some of these children appear to attend school regularly.

ECRI “strongly encourages the authorities to strengthen their efforts to ensure that all Roma/Gypsy children benefit fully from compulsory schooling

28. CRI (2002) 4: Second report on Italy, ECRI, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 23 April 2002.

and to take measures to facilitate the participation of Roma/Gypsy students at further levels of education”.

Latvia

In its second report on Latvia,²⁹ adopted on 14 December 2001, ECRI draws attention to education pilot projects carried out by the Latvian authorities to:

provide “education and vocational training to a number of young persons and adults from the Roma/Gypsy community”;

establish “classes in which education is carried out in the Romani language”;

establish “at the regional level ... information centres servicing the Roma/Gypsy communities”.

Lithuania

ECRI’s second report on Lithuania, adopted on 28 June 2002, notes that:

“the Lithuanian authorities have stated that about two thirds of Roma/Gypsy children of school age attend schools”;

“lack of language skills and pre-school knowledge constitute only a part of the problem and that it is very difficult to ensure regular and successful schooling of Roma/Gypsy children when the families are struggling with severe poverty, joblessness and poor health as well as prejudice from society at large, including school officials and non-Roma parents and children”.

ECRI:

emphasises “that it is important to train teachers in multiculturalism and prepare them to react to manifestations of prejudice or to abuses from other children”;

draws attention to its General Policy Recommendation No. 3, which calls for the inclusion of information on the history and culture of Roma in the curricula of all schools;

encourages the Lithuanian authorities “to adopt measures to facilitate participation of Roma/Gypsies at levels of education beyond the primary level”.

“The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”

In its second report on “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”,³⁰ adopted on 16 June 2000, ECRI notes that “as in many other countries,

29. CRI (2002) 21: Second report on Latvia, ECRI, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, on 23 July 2002.

30. CRI (2001) 5: Second report on “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”, ECRI, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 3 April 2001.

members of the Roma/Gypsy community in 'the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia' face particular disadvantages in the field of education".

To remedy this situation, ECRI considers that:

"special assistance programmes for Roma/Gypsy and other children from extremely poor families" should be considered;

"non-governmental initiatives to offer Macedonia language classes to prepare Roma for entry into the school system are to be welcomed" and "encourages the authorities to support such initiatives";

training should be offered to teachers, "including information about the particular needs and expectations of Roma/Gypsies";

"targeted training of Roma/Gypsies for teaching posts and recruitment of teaching staff from the Roma/Gypsy community might also play a role in improving the situation".

In its second report ECRI recommended special efforts to raise the educational level of members of Roma communities and suggested a number of measures to this end. In its third report on "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia",³¹ adopted on 25 June 2004, it observes that:

"there remains a problem of low attendance and high dropout of Roma children from primary school";

"a very small percentage of those Roma students who complete primary school go on to secondary education".

In its third report, ECRI notes that:

"a higher percentage of those who enter secondary education ... go on to graduate";

"although the number of Roma continuing on to university remains low, there has been a considerable increase in recent years".

ECRI regrets that:

"few measures have been taken to improve levels of Romani education";

"the measures that exist have been largely developed by non-governmental organisations. Some receive support from the authorities, however, to date successful initiatives have not been taken up and reproduced on a wider scale by the Ministry of Education";

31. CRI (2005) 4: Third report on "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", ECRI, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 15 February 2005.

“there seems to be a tendency to readily attribute blame for problems in education to Roma communities themselves, and especially to parents not sending children to school”.

“ECRI believes that it is the responsibility of the authorities to seek to assess the role of discrimination, and the ways in which the education system is inadequately addressing the needs of Roma students.”

ECRI notes, for instance, the importance of other factors, such as:

“... negative prejudices and stereotypes of teachers”;

“... school textbooks that portray Roma in a negative manner and do not reflect Roma culture”;

“... the cost of pre-school education”.

In response to regional disparities and linguistic problems, the authorities have launched “a new project entitled ‘Increasing the Education Coverage of Roma Children’” and are to develop an action plan in this area.

ECRI makes a number of recommendations to the authorities:

“... conduct a thorough analysis of the situation of Roma in the education system, and reasons for low levels of achievement”;

“... involve Roma NGOs in this assessment”.

ECRI recommends that the authorities undertake a range of measures without delay to increase educational standards among Roma:

“... financial provision to assist poorer families in covering costs associated with education”;

“... preparatory and supplemental training in the official language in which instruction is offered”;

“... special training for teachers to raise their sensitivity to discrimination and the needs of Roma children”;

“... ensuring textbooks do not promote negative stereotypes about Roma and instead include information about Romani culture and the positive contribution of Romani communities to society”;

“... recruitment of Roma teachers”.

Moldova

In its second report on Moldova,³² adopted on 28 June 2002, ECRI notes that:

“There is a lack of teachers for the Roma/Gypsies living in [rural] sites and working conditions in schools are very poor, causing children to fall behind in their education and resulting in a high academic failure rate.”

“In February 2001, the Government adopted Decree No. 131 on support measures for Roma/Gypsies in Moldova.” The educational projects under way include:

“research on the living conditions of Roma/Gypsies and on their culture and language”;

“efforts to improve primary and secondary education for Roma/Gypsy children”.

ECRI “urges the Moldovan authorities to ensure that the Decree is properly implemented”.

Norway

In its third report on Norway,³³ adopted on 27 June 2003, ECRI “encourages the Norwegian authorities to intensify their efforts to support the Romani language and to provide children of itinerant families with regular education”.

Romania

In its second report on Romania,³⁴ adopted on 22 June 2001, ECRI notes that:

“the Roma/Gypsy minority ... is particularly disadvantaged as regards education, with high levels of absenteeism and dropping out of the school system”;

head teachers “now apparently have discretionary power to decide whether or not Romani classes will be offered in their school”, whereas in the past classes were obligatory at the request of a group of parents;

discriminatory behaviour on the part of some teachers persists and it has been reported that some teachers are unwilling to teach Roma children “as their own performance is evaluated according to the educational achievements of their pupils”, and they fear “that the average level of this achievement will be put at risk by the often poor results of Roma/Gypsy children”.

32. CRI (2003) 6: Second report on Moldova, ECRI, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 15 April 2003.

33. CRI (2004) 3: Third report on Norway, ECRI, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 27 January 2004.

34. CRI (2002) 5: Second report on Romania, ECRI, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 23 April 2002.

ECRI proposes various measures:

“specialised training for teachers working with Roma/Gypsy children”;

“sanctions and other measures to put an end to such practices where they occur”.

ECRI notes that “further measures are foreseen to improve the situation of the Roma/Gypsy community as regards education”:

“facilities for part-time school attendance”;

“education at home and distance education”;

“reserved places for Roma/Gypsy students at the tertiary level”;

“reserved places for Roma/Gypsy trainees at the police academy”.

Russian Federation

In its second report on the Russian Federation,³⁵ adopted on 16 March 2001, ECRI observes that “school enrolment rates of Roma/Gypsy children ... appear to be decreasing”.

Slovakia

In its second report on Slovakia,³⁶ adopted on 10 December 1999, ECRI expresses the opinion that “the field of education is a crucial area for immediate action, given the need to ensure that Roma/Gypsies can compete in the terms of qualifications and skills with the majority population, and given the importance of empowering the Roma/Gypsy population to play an active role in determining its own future”.

ECRI notes that:

“Roma/Gypsy children [are over-represented] in ‘special schools’ for children with learning or social difficulties”;

“the tests used to determine the aptitudes of children assume a linguistic competence in Slovak that young Roma/Gypsy children may not yet possess”;

“once placed in such schools it is unlikely that Roma/Gypsy children will later be able to integrate into mainstream schooling”;

35. CRI (2001) 41: Second report on the Russian Federation, ECRI, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 13 November 2001.

36. CRI (2000) 35: Second report on Slovakia, ECRI, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 27 June 2000.

“it may also be the case that Roma/Gypsy parents are not fully involved in decisions involving their children”;

“Roma/Gypsy children are often placed in separate classes or even in separate buildings in village schools”.

ECRI considers it necessary:

“to closely examine the channelling of Roma/Gypsy pupils into special schools”;

“to ensure that the testing procedures used for entry into such schools are fair”;

“to raise awareness among Roma/Gypsy parents of the educational possibilities open to their children” and “encourage them to play an active part in their children’s schooling”;

that “increased opportunities to study the Roma language in the early years of schooling might assist Roma/Gypsy children in integrating into the educational system”.

ECRI welcomes the authorities’ plans “to employ Roma/Gypsy assistants in classes” and to provide “preparatory classes”.

ECRI notes that:

“the Roma/Gypsy population is even more disadvantaged in secondary and further education”;

“[Roma/Gypsy children] often leave school without having completed the final academic level of education”.

ECRI draws attention to some welcome measures introduced by the authorities:

a two-year special training course has been organised “for Roma/Gypsy children who have failed to reach their required academic level on leaving school, to enable them to go on to further education”;

“a Department of Roma Culture exists at one university”;

“there is also a secondary school for the arts in which Romani is studied”.

ECRI recommends, for the purpose of promoting secondary and higher education for Roma/Gypsy pupils:

“intensified training and recruitment of Roma/Gypsy teachers”;

“awareness-raising measures to ensure that the contribution of the Roma/Gypsies to Slovak society is reflected in the school curricula and general training programmes for teachers”.

In its third report on Slovakia,³⁷ adopted on 27 June 2003, ECRI refers to the recommendations it made in its second report, in particular that immediate attention be paid to the education of Roma children (see above). It goes on to consider the extent to which its recommendations have been acted on, and notes that a number of harmful practices still persist:

“high proportions of Roma children are still being channelled into special schools: in some areas up to 80% of Roma children attend special schools”;

“Roma parents are not always fully informed concerning the different educational possibilities open to their children”;

“the authorities have acknowledged that the tests and criteria used to determine which children should attend special schools are not satisfactory”;

the fact that Roma children are “educated in segregated classes continues to pose a problem”;

“participation of Roma children in education beyond the basic level remains extremely limited, with extremely few Roma completing the secondary level or entering universities”;

“provision of teaching in the Romani language is also lacking in almost all schools”.

ECRI therefore makes a number of recommendations in its third report:

“immediate steps ... to end the over-representation of Roma children in special schools”;

“the integration of Roma children currently in special schools into the mainstream school system”;

“the preparation and implementation of culturally-fair assessment measures”;

“the provision of other schools in settlements where only special schools exist”;

“specific training for head teachers and teachers, who should then be responsible for countering any hostility or prejudices among majority parents”;

encouragement of “the participation of Roma children in education at secondary and tertiary level”;

“awareness-raising among Roma communities of the importance of education for their children”.

37. CRI (2004) 4: Third report on Slovakia, ECRI, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 27 January 2004.

Slovenia

In its second report on Slovenia,³⁸ adopted on 13 December 2002, ECRI notes that:

“the Hungarian and Italian national minorities benefit from special education provisions, which guarantee them education in their mother tongue from pre-school education to the end of secondary education”;

“there are also initiatives at the level of education and the promotion of the Romani language through radio and TV programmes and through Romani language courses at school”;

a “high number of Roma children [attend] classes for children with ‘special needs’”;

“the Slovenian authorities ... have set up a commission to decide in a non-discriminatory manner whether a child should attend such classes or not”.

Spain

In its second report on Spain,³⁹ adopted on 13 December 2002, ECRI comments on the situation of Roma in the field of education:

“The Spanish authorities have stated that education is one of the fields to which, over the last few decades, they have devoted priority attention and resources.”

“Positive results have been achieved, particularly in increasing school enrolment of Roma/Gypsy children.”

ECRI “is aware of the existence of compensatory programmes designed to promote equality of opportunities for disadvantaged children”.

ECRI does, however, pinpoint a few problems:

“School drop-out rates and absenteeism are still very high among Roma/Gypsy children and concern approximately 70% of children over 14 and 90% of them are girls over 14”;

“Difficulties have also been reported in Roma/Gypsy children’s access to pre-school education”;

“The rate of adult illiteracy is still very high”;

“The number of Roma/Gypsy university students is still extremely limited”;

38. CRI (2003) 39: Second report on Slovenia, ECRI, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 8 July 2003.

39. CRI (2003) 40: Second report on Spain, ECRI, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 8 July 2003.

There is a “high concentration of Roma/Gypsy children in certain schools [despite the] measures taken both at central and at autonomous community level to ensure that pupils with special educational needs stemming from social or cultural disadvantages are evenly distributed throughout the State-funded schools”;

“An Educational Commission composed of representatives of the public administration and of some Roma/Gypsy organisations works to promote equal access to the state education system”;

According to the Spanish authorities’ observations, appended to ECRI report,⁴⁰ “the Roma Development Programme finances programmes to improve education of Roma/Gypsy organisations”;

ECRI “encourages initiatives aimed at increasing the active involvement of Roma/Gypsy families in the educational opportunities available for their children”.

Sweden

In its second report on Sweden,⁴¹ adopted on 28 June 2002, ECRI notes that:

“Roma children are still marginalised [and] tend to be channelled toward special ‘observation’ classes at the primary level”;

there is “high absenteeism”;

“only a small percentage of Roma children complete secondary education and go on to tertiary education”;

“less than half the Roma children entitled to bilingual Romani/Swedish education actually benefit from this entitlement, reportedly because many schools do not inform them of their rights”;

“provision of educational material for the Roma in their own language and also material for the whole population on the Roma population and culture, is insufficient”.

Switzerland

In its second report on Switzerland,⁴² adopted on 18 June 1999, “ECRI encourages the authorities to identify means to ensure that the cantonal system does not lead to discrimination against travelling ‘Jenisch’, particularly in the fields of employment and education”.

40. The observations of the national authorities reproduced in appendices to ECRI reports are not part of ECRI’s analysis and proposals concerning the country concerned.

41. CRI (2003) 7: Second report on Sweden, ECRI, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 15 April 2003.

42. CRI (2000) 6: Second report on Switzerland, ECRI, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 21 March 2000.

In its third report on Switzerland,⁴³ adopted on 27 June 2003, ECRI notes that:

“More schools [allow] children to attend classes during the winter and work by correspondence from March to October. Such arrangements are however made on an individual ‘good-will’ basis, with no obligation on schools to accept the system”;

“There is practically no teaching of the Jenisch, Sinti or Romani languages within the school system”;

“Beyond the compulsory school level, it is reported that young travellers do face difficulties in obtaining apprenticeships due to prejudices on the part of potential employers”.

In this report ECRI expresses the view that “further improvements could be made to ensure that all children from travelling families are guaranteed a high-quality education. For example, the provision of teachers who could visit travelling children to support their education during the summer months might be considered.”

Turkey

In its third report on Turkey,⁴⁴ adopted on 25 June 2004, ECRI notes that “Article 42 of the Constitution, which provides that no language other than Turkish may be taught to Turkish citizens as their mother tongue in educational and training establishments, has not been amended”. However, it observes that “substantial progress has been made towards a more open approach to cultural and linguistic diversity. Since the third package of reforms dated 9 August 2002, it has been possible to open private schools to teach ‘languages and dialects traditionally used by Turkish citizens in their daily lives’”.

ECRI recommends that the Turkish authorities:

“ensure that children of non-Turkish mother tongue have equal opportunities in access to education”.

ECRI also notes that:

Roma “live in difficult conditions in camps”;

“there is inequality of opportunity in terms of access to ... education, in that parents often cannot afford to send their children to school”;

43. CRI (2004) 5: Third report on Switzerland, ECRI, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 27 January 2004.

44. CRI (2005) 5: Third report on Turkey, ECRI, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 15 February 2005.

“the Settlement Act No. 2510 of 1934 deals with the right of foreign nationals to settle in Turkey. [It] forbids settlement in Turkey to ... Roma (‘itinerant Gypsies’)”.

Ukraine

In its second report on Ukraine,⁴⁵ adopted on 14 December 2001, ECRI notes that:

“Roma/Gypsy children do not always attend school regularly”;

“they are extremely under-represented at non-compulsory levels of education”.

ECRI makes a number of suggestions:

work “in close consultation and collaboration with representatives of the communities concerned”;

promote “awareness-raising initiatives among the Roma/Gypsy families of their rights in the field of education”;

encourage “the participation of Roma/Gypsy parents in educational decisions affecting their children”;

appoint “Roma/Gypsy mediators”.

ECRI notes that “... four Roma/Gypsy schools with education carried out in Romani language exist in Transcarpathia”.

“In general, however, ECRI encourages the Ukrainian authorities to favour an approach whereby Roma/Gypsy children mingle with majority children in schools.”

United Kingdom

In its second report on the United Kingdom,⁴⁶ adopted on 16 June 2000, ECRI makes a number of recommendations to the authorities:

“ensure that public funds targeted to improve educational levels of ethnic minorities make adequate provision for Roma/Gypsy and Traveller children”;

“ensure [school] admission and attendance of such children”;

“ensure that Local Education Authorities include Roma/Gypsy and Traveller children in their attainment targets [and] develop specific strategies for raising achievement of Roma/Gypsy and Traveller children”.

45. CRI (2002) 23: Second report on Ukraine, ECRI, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 23 July 2002.

46. CRI (2001) 6: Second report on the United Kingdom, ECRI, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 3 April 2001.

Practical examples of measures to combat racism against Roma

One of ECRI's activities under the second part of its programme, which concerns work on general themes, involves compiling examples of good practice in combating racism and intolerance in various fields, which it publishes. CRI (2001) 28, published in October 2001, presents practical examples of measures to combat racism and intolerance towards Roma. Examples from this publication are given below by way of illustration.

Balkan Foundation for Cross-Cultural Education and Understanding Diversity – Bulgaria

This Sofia-based NGO works to promote bilingualism and multiculturalism.

- Experimental research has been carried out in schools in order to help children from ethnic minorities to learn the Bulgarian language but also improve their mastery of their mother tongue.
- Special courses and seminars are held for teachers.
- There are publications providing teachers with methodological back-up.
- Teachers are offered seminars and publications concerning the Roma culture.
- Publications in Romani are distributed to families and schools for children aged 3 to 10 as part of the project "Children's fiction in the Romani language".
- Roma cultural festivals are organised.
- Training is provided for young Roma leaders.
- Training is offered to those who have dropped out of school.
- There are training schemes to promote literacy among Roma women.
- Media projects are carried out.
- International activities are organised.

Roma assistants in schools – Czech Republic

The Czech Government has taken steps to address the problem of Roma children dropping out of school:

- A "zero grade" pre-school year has been introduced;
- Special training is given to teachers;

- Textbooks are translated into Romani;
- Roma school assistants have been recruited;
- The school assistants have a particularly important role in “zero grade” classes in facilitating the children’s integration at school;
- In 1999 there were 140 such assistants, spread over all school levels.

Education support project, Timisoara – Romania

The “Association of Gypsy Women” in Timisoara, Romania, carries out educational projects catering particularly for children who have dropped out of the school system.

The aim is to provide them with a quality education, while helping to foster the Roma identity.

Main activities, which take place in a room in the project co-ordinator’s house, are:

- assistance for schoolchildren;
- schooling for teenagers who do not go to school;
- Romani language and culture classes;
- civic education classes;
- medical and psychological counselling;
- intercultural activities;
- summer holiday camps.

There are similar examples:

- in Germany, where the NGO Förderverein Roma e V in Frankfurt-am-Main has set up a kindergarten for Roma from eastern Europe;
- in Ukraine, where the Roma Association in Izmail, in the county of Odessa, opened a school operating on Sundays in 1997 to compensate for the fact that the children go to “special schools”. In 1999, a second school operating on Sundays was opened in Oziornoye for secondary school pupils. The association is seeking to expand its educational activities, especially in the field of teaching and the production of teaching aids based on the Romani language and literature.

Promoting the Romani language and Roma culture – Finland

The Finnish Government set up a Romani Education Unit in 1994 to promote the education of Roma. Its main activities are:

- seminars, courses and conferences;
- the introduction of a Diploma in Romani Cultural Instruction and a Romani curriculum;
- training for “contact persons” to work in schools;
- publication of teaching materials (textbooks in Romani, guidance for teachers, a video presenting Roma culture, booklets and tapes with songs and stories about Roma culture) and an information bulletin.

In the Mikkola Comprehensive School in Vantaa, Roma children are integrated into ordinary classes from the start and receive instruction in the Romani language in parallel. The school has three Romani language teachers, who also act as mediators.

Roma schools: Gandhi School, Hungary

The Gandhi School in Pécs was set up in 1994 by a group of Roma intellectuals to provide secondary education for Roma pupils so they could go on to university.

- The pupils follow a standard secondary school curriculum but also receive special tuition in the Romani language and Roma history and culture. The aim is to integrate them both into Hungarian society and into their own community.
- The school allows Roma pupils to complete their schooling without suffering from discrimination.
- Most of the children are boarders during their schooling, but family ties are preserved.
- The school receives funding from the national education budget, the Soros Foundation, the local municipality and the Roma self-governing body.

This experiment has proved very successful.

Similar experiments:

Czech Republic: The Romska Stredni Skola Socialni (Romani Social High School) in Kolin was set up in 1998 to give pupils a second chance, so that they could find jobs.

The Premysl Pitter School in Ostrava is a primary school set up as an alternative to the “special schools”, at the instigation of the Catholic organisation, Caritas.

- It provides educational support (pre-school education, language back-up) to enable children to succeed in the ordinary school system.
- It maintains close links with families and offers the services of a social worker and a Roma assistant.

Hungary: The Martineum College at Manfa, near Pécs, was set up in 1996 as a hostel for Roma secondary school pupils providing tuition in the Roma culture and language.

Latvia: The Cultural Association of Latvian Roma was set up in Riga in 1991. It produces teaching aids and organises cultural events. The government finances classes for the teaching of Roma history and culture in some schools.

Alternative vocational school, Szolnok – Hungary

The “Roma Chance” alternative vocational school in Szolnok, Hungary, was set up in 1996 at the instigation of a group of specialists and the national Roma Federation (a governmental body) for pupils who had ceased to attend school. The school provides vocational training and remedial education for disadvantaged Roma and non-Roma pupils aged 14 to 22. It provides basic instruction and practical vocational training.

Similar examples:

Hungary: The “Kayli Jag” Roma school in Budapest provides a two-year training course, which includes computer skills, for children not enrolled in state secondary schools.

The Netherlands: The Stichting Sinti Werk project based in Best provides a basic education for children and young people who have dropped out of school. It also offers pupils over the age of 16 a second chance to prepare for working life. In addition, it provides musical training.

Slovakia: Vocational training projects have been set up in the Liptovsky Mikulas and Rimavska Sobota districts.

Traveller education services – United Kingdom

Essex County Council’s Traveller Education Service in South-East England has developed a comprehensive approach to ensuring full access to education for Traveller children. A team of teachers, support assistants and welfare officers work in Essex and Southend, providing support services and

undertaking development projects. Priority is given to the needs of children from families that are highly mobile.

The main activities are:

- advice and training for teachers;
- support materials for schools;
- provision of distance learning;
- support for families;
- support for pupils;
- education packs for families and schools;
- regularly updated record cards to enable pupils to move from school to school.

Similar examples:

France: The association ARPOMT,⁴⁷ based in Strasbourg, provides educational support and organises sports activities by means of a special caravan that travels from site to site, and offers back-up to children doing correspondence courses. It also organises literacy classes for adults and children.

Scotland: The Scottish Roma and Traveller Association arranges school transport and educational support for mobile children, paying special attention to children whose families are forced to move on.

Ireland: The Visiting Teacher Service operates throughout Ireland.

Athinganoi Project – Czech Republic

In 1995, the European Youth Centre began running a programme of training courses for young Roma leaders.

Meanwhile, the establishment of a Forum of European Roma Young People (FERYP) has made it possible to establish a European network of young Roma.

Their common goal was to set up projects and NGOs that could provide support for young Roma leaders.

47. Association pour une recherche pédagogique ouverte en milieu tsigane.

The OS Athinganoi association brings together secondary-school and university-educated young Roma who are expected to be future leaders. A “Romani students’ meeting” project was set up in 1999. Four professional seminars took place under the guidance of experienced Roma leaders and other experts. The association has set up an information centre for Roma students in Prague.

Similar experiments:

- Minority Rights Group International (MRG) has set up two programmes, INTRINSIC and PASSPORT, to support training for young Roma leaders in central and eastern Europe. MRG works with Roma NGOs in eastern Europe.
- The PAKIV European Roma Fund is an NGO that helps to facilitate the development of projects run by Roma associations in various European countries. Young Roma have received training so that they can become Roma leaders and manage projects set up by associations. The training has centred on three countries: the United Kingdom, Denmark and Hungary, and is funded by the World Bank and the Ford Foundation.
- The Alliance for Roma Unity has developed a project to enable Roma students to train for careers as public servants.

G. Social Cohesion (DG III)⁴⁸

1. Roma and the Stability Pact

The Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, which the Foreign Ministers of the European Union signed in Cologne on 10 June 1999, is a project designed to bring stability to the Balkans by means of action in three areas: democratisation and human rights (Working Table I), economic reconstruction, development and co-operation (Working Table II) and security issues (Working Table III).

In the context of Working Table I, the Human Rights and National Minorities Task Force considers Roma issues to be a priority.

In September 1999, the Secretariat of the Council of Europe’s Roma, Gypsies and Travellers Division became involved in the activities carried out under the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe. It set up a regional programme concerning Roma in the Balkans.

48. DG III websites on Roma and Travellers:
http://www.coe.int/T/DG3/RomaTravellers/Default_fr.asp in French
http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/romatravellers/default_EN.asp in English

“Pact I”, known as “Roma under the Stability Pact”, took place over an 18-month period between 2000 and 2002. It is based on a partnership involving the Council of Europe, the European Commission and the OSCE/ODIHR.⁴⁹ It is financed jointly by the Council of Europe and the European Commission, and focuses on three elements:

- addressing the most acute crisis situations affecting Roma;
- policy development as regards Roma affairs;
- participation of Roma in civil society.

A new programme, “Pact II”, following on from “Pact I”, was set up for the period 2003-05.

It is designed to ensure continuity with the previous project by providing support for public services and Roma representatives in order to facilitate the implementation of national strategies benefiting Roma and enable Roma, in particular women and young people, to attend training courses and take part in consultations with the authorities, so that they are better able to defend their rights.

“Pact II” focuses on:

- the protection and promotion of Roma rights through the introduction of national strategies concerning Roma;
- training for public officials in the implementation of national strategies concerning Roma; enhancement of their ability to safeguard the rights of Roma;
- help with reforming the judicial system;
- the promotion of intercultural and inter-ethnic dialogue, particularly between public bodies and leaders of Roma NGOs;
- enabling Roma – particularly women and young Roma – to assert their rights through access to the courts, employment, education, etc.;
- the establishment of networks of Roma experts.

Activities concerning the education of Roma carried out under the 1999-2002 Stability Pact (Pact I)

49. Organisation for the Security and Co-operation in Europe/Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

Access of Roma to education and health care services in Tuzla canton, Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. December 2001-January 2002. Report by Alexandra Raykova, Council of Europe consultant.

Table showing the situation of Roma in Bosnia and Herzegovina (in 2001)

	Unemployment	Health insurance	Illiteracy	Vocational qualifications	School attendance
% among Roma	100	10	60	20	20

- The majority of Roma who became invalids after the war have not received compensation because of bureaucratic obstacles.
- There are only two Roma students at the University of Tuzla.
- Many families have no access to water and electricity.
- The social services do virtually nothing to help Roma communities.
- Many children and families engage in begging, which the law considers to be a criminal offence.

Conclusions concerning the access of Roma to education:

- Education is usually neglected in families, whose first concern is to fight to survive.
- Families call on their children to beg and work in the markets.
- Often parents are unable to pay school fees.
- Families have five to six children on average.
- It is mainly the boys who go to school.
- During the war, children did not go to school and now they think they are too old to begin studying; moreover, they cannot find training suited to their situation.
- They lack a role model.
- They lack information about projects organised by NGOs and the authorities.

Recommendations specifically concerning the promotion of access to education for the Roma community

In the long term:

- Consider promoting education in a broader context that takes account of the social situation of families;
- Provide the community with more information in order to demonstrate the importance of education, by means of meetings and role models.

In the short term:

- Support pre-school projects by providing free transport, at least one free meal and school equipment;
- Support secondary education projects;
- Provide clothing, shoes and school items and pay school fees;
- Provide free evening classes, scholarships and school items and equipment for young Roma who want to continue their education;
- Provide scholarships for university students and good secondary school pupils;
- Promote nursery school projects;
- Train Roma social workers and health care professionals;
- Promote schemes enabling Roma to obtain vocational qualifications, alongside literacy classes. Young Roma should be channelled, as a priority, towards jobs that allow them a degree of independence;
- Non-formal education: focus on information concerning civil rights and access to administrative services.

Round Table on "Roma and Education"

Skopje, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", 14-15 May 2002

The Round Table on "Roma and Education" was organised at the instigation of the Council of Europe to strengthen dialogue between the Macedonian authorities and the Roma community.

It was the result of Council of Europe co-operation with the OSCE/ODIHR, the Macedonian Bureau for the Development of Education and the CRFMS.⁵⁰

In “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”, Roma:

- have the status of a national minority;
- represent the largest but also the most disadvantaged minority in economic and social terms;
- are not discriminated against by Macedonian legislation but suffer from hidden discrimination;
- have a low standard of education;
- are represented by a strong, competent Roma NGO movement;
- are represented in public life.

Main problems concerning the education of Roma:

- The situation as regards the education of Roma has deteriorated in recent years.
- The problem has persisted for fifty years.
- The situation is due to both internal and external factors.

Internal factors:

- Education is not a priority in the Roma culture.
- Boys take priority over girls.
- Early marriages prompt pupils to leave school.

External factors:

- The precarious financial situation of the Roma community;
- The fact that they live in ghettos;
- Transport problems;
- The lack of school infrastructure;

50. Centre for Refugees and Forced Migration Studies.

- The fact that the authorities have little interest in and do not co-operate with the Roma community;
- An unwillingness to support schemes other than those financed by international organisations;
- The fact that the law is poorly enforced;
- The mediocre quality of the education given to Roma children;
- Teachers' attitudes;
- The lack of books on Roma history and culture and the Romani language;
- The lack of teaching aids.

Factors that are both internal and external:

- A poor command of the Macedonian language;
- Parents' refusal to speak the language at home;
- A mutual lack of knowledge about Roma culture and the culture of the majority;
- The fact that parents with little education do not encourage their children to study.

Good practice in three east-European countries

Slovakia

- 1999: Strategies to address the problems encountered by the Roma national minority;
- Adaptation of the Slovak school system to the Roma community.

Romania

The Romanian Ministry of Education and Research is pursuing various approaches:

- Promoting respect for Roma culture;
- Increasing the number of Roma teachers;
- Establishing co-operation between the various parties concerned.

The government also adopted a strategy in 2001 for improving the situation of Roma.

Kosovo

- The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology is considering creating posts for assistant teachers for the Roma, Ashkalija and Egyptian communities;
- There are remedial classes.

Pointers for a programme to be adopted to improve the education of Roma in Macedonia:

- The number of Roma NGOs dealing with education has increased, and they are expressly asking to work with the Macedonian authorities.
- The authorities should devise an official programme to improve the education of Roma.
- The programme should take account of the social problems encountered by Roma.
- The government should consider the programme a priority.
- The Macedonian education system must be adapted to the special needs of the Roma community to prevent the persistence of illiteracy in the community.
- Roma do not want to be taught in separate schools.
- They want to learn the Macedonian language at school.

Recommendations to the Macedonian authorities

Appoint a working party comprising representatives of the authorities and NGOs to:

- Analyse the problems so that an accurate picture of the situation and needs as regards the education of Roma can be obtained;
- Draw up a national programme for the education of Roma, with the different ministries working in co-operation;
- Organise official visits to Roma camps and schools with representatives of international organisations;
- Strengthen the legislation on education;

- Enable the local authorities to address the problems facing the Roma community;
- Involve Roma in the production of expert reports concerning them;
- Involve Roma parents and children in the programme to improve education;
- Support NGO projects;
- Encourage co-operation between INGOs and Roma NGOs;
- Work to improve teachers' attitudes;
- Employ Roma in the Ministry of Education and Science;
- Focus on pre-school education;
- Make the pre-school year compulsory for Roma children;
- Translate school textbooks and novels into the Romani language;
- Expand the system of scholarships for Roma secondary school pupils and university students;
- Ensure that the places reserved for Roma at university are actually assigned to them;
- Provide Roma families with financial support;
- Take due account of the specific features of Roma when addressing the problem of Roma refugees;
- Study national and international good practice;
- Implement ECR⁵¹ recommendations.

Recommendations to Roma NGOs in "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"

- Ensure co-ordination of the various Roma NGOs;
- Try to co-ordinate requests submitted to the authorities and the international community.

51. European Commission against Racism and Intolerance.

Conclusions of the Ministry of Education and Science

- The Ministry is paying particular attention to the complex problem of education for Roma;
- It is satisfied with the increase in the standard of education among Roma, even though it is not yet sufficient;
- Its main aim is to integrate the children into the pre-school system;
- It also intends to combat prejudice in the education system and provide teachers with special training in Roma culture;
- Roma children should be integrated into nursery schools;
- The authorities should co-operate with NGOs;
- Three people in the Bureau for the Development of Education are working on Roma;
- Parents should encourage their children to study. The low level of education is still an obstacle to them continuing their education successfully, particularly among girls, who will become mothers and will be the driving force behind their children's education.

Assessment report on the situation regarding education and employment of Roma children in "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", June-September 2002

- The purpose of the visit was to take stock of the education, training and employment situation of Roma in "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", by analysing local programmes and activities.
- Seven places were visited and 17 people interviewed.
- Roma account for 4% of the total population of "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia". They are particularly affected by unemployment and a low standard of education.
- The main reason for the academic failure of Roma youngsters is the fact that the school system cannot deal with the language difficulties and social disadvantages faced by Roma.
- In the Suto-Orizari school the number of children far exceeds the capacity of the school. More Roma pupils want to continue their schooling every year, but often the families cannot fund their education.

- The teachers try to overcome the language difficulties of Roma teaching by teaching Macedonian. They also organise activities based on the language, the most popular being the choir.
- The head teacher believes it is essential to convince parents how important their children's education is, but the state does not finance programmes for this purpose. Moreover, extra-curricular activities can be attended only by children whose parents can afford to pay for them.
- The chances of Roma finding a job after completing their education are slim, as there are no jobs.
- The education programmes run by Roma organisations are isolated events.

In Skopje, a Roma organisation:

- runs preparatory school activities for two groups of 11 children each;
- organises catching-up activities for 60 to 70 children from the first to the eighth year (help with homework; tuition in maths and the Macedonian language);
- acts as a go-between for the parents and the local school;
- receives financial support from the Soros Foundation.

In Tetovo, the Roma organisation:

- organises similar activities;
- tries to compensate for the lack of school equipment and clothing for children and contributes to school fees;
- has its work supplemented by welfare allowances and aid for Roma children.

Training courses are also run by Roma organisations for children who have completed eight years at school but do not want to go on studying, to prevent them from wandering aimlessly on the streets.

The organisation DROM in Kumanovo:

- organises activities for school and pre-school children and for those who have dropped out of school;
- has developed a good relationship with local government representatives, education officers and social institutions.

These organisations in Skopje, Tetovo and Kumanovo:

- try to compensate for the shortcomings of the education system;
- receive the bulk of their financial support from national and international foundations;
- address the obstacles to the academic success of Roma children – mainly the fact that they do not speak the Macedonian language, families lack resources and there is no transport from campsites.

There is an education sub-programme designed to compensate for the deficiencies of the education system, involving:

- scholarships for pupils and teachers;
- support for catching-up projects;
- support for school projects;
- support for extra-curricular activities;
- support for the design and use of alternative education methods;
- support for the educational and cultural activities of the community centres;
- support for training programmes;
- support for adult education.

Education sub-programme proposals

- It is essential to have an intermediary to establish relations between the Roma and non-Roma communities in a spirit of co-operation, for both educational and social purposes;
- A service centre and network can serve this purpose;
- It should seek to lessen linguistic and social disadvantages at all levels of education and training;
- Care should be taken not to create a parallel system, which would lead to diminishing participation by the state.

Needs at the various levels of schooling and of the various professions:

Kindergarten: integration, language, development of skills and abilities, development of social relations, training for Roma nurses.

Primary school: integration, language, development of skills and abilities, catching-up programme, support for learning in small groups.

Secondary school: preparation for successful completion of secondary school, preparation for examinations, training for those who drop out of secondary school.

Higher education: help with finding a job.

Teachers: special training, support for professional events, conferences, publications.

Activities concerning the education of Roma carried out under the 2003-05 Stability Pact (Pact II) will shortly be displayed on the Roma and Travellers Division website:

- A report by the ERRC⁵² and the OSCE/ODIHR entitled “Advocating for desegregation – Creation of institutional tools towards school desegregation”;
- A report by OSI⁵³ Croatia on the development of a school support programme for Roma children as part of the Roma Education Pilot Project, in Beli Manastir, Baranja, November 2004.

2. Group of Specialists on Roma and Travellers (MG-S-ROM)

The Committee of Ministers decided in September 1995 to appoint a Group of Specialists on Roma and Travellers (MG-S-ROM). The group is the first permanently established Council of Europe body to have monitored the situation of Roma and Travellers in Europe. Under its terms of reference, the group advises the Committee of Ministers through the CDMG⁵⁴ on Roma and Traveller issues and acts as a catalyst in other Council of Europe sectors, by encouraging activities under way and prompting new ones when the need arises. It can also carry out specific studies or other activities, as decided by the Committee of Ministers or the CDMG. The group’s main work entails co-ordinating policies benefiting Roma and Travellers throughout Europe by preparing recommendations, and advising the Committee of Ministers on matters connected with Roma and Travellers which require urgent measures.

The MG-S-ROM was, for instance, behind Committee of Ministers Recommendation (2000) 4 on the education of Roma children in Europe. Education is one of the recurrent topics discussed at MG-S-ROM meetings.

52. European Roma Rights Centre.

53. Open Society Institute.

54. European Committee on Migration.

It was specifically addressed at the group's 18th meeting, which took place in Prešov, Slovakia, in November 2004.

The MG-S-ROM made two visits to settlements near Prešov and Kosice [see doc MG-S-ROM (2004) 16]:

A visit to the Chminianske Jakuibovany Roma settlement (Slovak Republic)

The Roma children attend a kindergarten in the municipality and a special school. Only 12 children go to the "normal" school. According to the municipal authorities and the teachers, parents choose freely to send their children to the special school because basic school equipment is provided free of charge and there are Roma assistants. In addition, the curriculum is adapted for them. The most capable children go on to attend vocational schools. The teachers are better qualified than in ordinary schools.

The group expressed great concern about the practice of sending Roma children to special schools, which it considered discriminatory. It recommended that the authorities include Roma children in the normal school system, provide assistance (textbooks, free meals, etc.) and develop pre-school education.

A visit to the Stará Tehelňa Roma housing estate in Prešov, Slovak Republic

The housing estate is isolated from the rest of the city. The nearest school is seven kilometres away and there is no public transport to take the Roma children to school.

The Belgian Government is financing a two-year local development project designed to provide assistance with health, education and social problems. Among other things, the project staff provide nursery school education and assistance with pre-school and primary education, and help Roma who want to continue their studies at secondary school or university.

Most of the Roma living on the housing estate are literate: they can read and sign documents and have a good knowledge of the Slovak language, but not many of them have completed the second year of secondary education. One Roma student is now in his third year at university and at least three other Roma have followed suit and gone to university.

Many young adults do not go to school but stay at home as this means their families receive higher welfare benefits.

The report on the public hearing of the MG-S-ROM on progress with resolving Roma issues in the Slovak Republic mentions various measures taken by the Slovak Ministry of Education.

The Ministry took up the idea of having Roma school assistants and tried out an experimental curriculum for Roma. It introduced the concept of integrated education for Roma children and teenagers, which is based on three approaches: preparation of teachers and assistants, production of textbooks and the provision of the necessary teaching aids. A new system of scholarships has been introduced for gifted children and young people and for those from socially disadvantaged families. The special schools for Roma children are different from the special schools for mentally handicapped children.

The education of Roma children was also addressed in the “Study on the social rights of nomadic populations” commissioned by the MG-S-ROM [see doc MG-S-ROM (2004) 4 of 23 March 2004].

- This statistical study was produced on the basis of questionnaires concerning the social rights of nomadic populations sent out to Council of Europe member states.
- Eighteen of the 45 member states replied.
- The study covers three aspects: education, employment and access to social benefits.
- The fact that the education system is ill-suited to nomadic populations makes it more difficult for them to find jobs, which are becoming more and more skilled.

Access to education for nomadic populations

- The demand for skilled labour makes it essential that children and young adults receive an education.

a. Compulsory schooling in Council of Europe member states

- Schooling is compulsory up to the age of 16 on average.
- Schooling is free up to the school-leaving age.
- In 11 countries, school absenteeism may be punished by a fine or even prison.
- The cultural features of national minorities are taken into account in the education field in 11 countries. In three – Estonia, Lithuania and Bulgaria – it is compulsory to provide special education for them under the Constitution.

b. Organisation of compulsory schooling for nomadic populations

- Only one country, Sweden, has school curricula specially adapted for Travellers: the syllabuses mention the Roma culture.
- Only four countries allow school education in the Travellers' language (as from secondary school or through private tuition).
- 45% of those who lead a nomadic lifestyle use distance learning.
- Only two countries have set up a system of mobile schools.
- 50% of the 18 countries that replied recruit Roma teachers.
- 44% of the 18 countries provide training in Roma culture for teachers.

c. Effects of the lack of resources on the educational level of nomadic populations

It must be noted that:

- States were embarrassed to answer the question concerning the percentage of nomadic children attending school: only four countries replied, indicating an average rate of 80%.
- It is difficult to establish the educational level of nomadic populations.
- The best figures, which concern sedentary Roma, are far from exemplary: they rarely go beyond primary school level.
- Despite this, only 40% of the countries that replied have special programmes to address illiteracy among adult Roma.

Recommendations concerning the education of young Travellers:

- Establish schools in encampment areas and increase the number of mobile schools;
- Ensure suitable admission of Roma children to state schools;
- Encourage distance learning;
- Raise teachers' awareness of Roma culture, and incorporate this culture into school curricula;
- Involve teachers, parents and associations in educational measures;
- Allow teaching in the Romani language;

- Expand the system of scholarships for Roma secondary school pupils and university students;
- Introduce vocational education related to Roma's economic activities;
- Introduce tutoring;
- Inform parents of educational opportunities and of the importance of an education;
- Set progressive literacy objectives for Roma children;
- Involve the local authorities in these measures;
- Release the funds needed for them.

3. Special Roma/Travellers account funded with voluntary contributions

In September 1996, the Committee of Ministers launched a project concerning Roma and Travellers in central and eastern Europe and opened a special account for the purpose. In 1998, the scope of the project was extended to all Council of Europe member states. In recent years, the special account has been funded mainly with voluntary contributions from Finland and Norway. The aims of the project are:

- to promote comprehensive national policies for Roma and Travellers;
- to help Roma and Travellers to become integrated on the basis of equal rights and opportunities, with due respect for their identity;
- to help member states to establish good relations between Roma and Travellers' communities and the majority population and increase Roma/Traveller participation in decision-making;
- to make an international contribution to projects concerning Roma and Travellers that are under way in member states.

Since 1996 the Council of Europe has contributed to a series of bilateral or multilateral projects of this kind in member states.

Finland's financial contributions to the special account have been crucial to the establishment of the European Roma and Travellers' Forum, in that they made it possible to fund all the consultative meetings held before the partnership agreement was signed between the Forum and the Council of Europe on 15 December 2004 (for further information on the Forum, see its website: <http://www.ertf.org>).

H. Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

Further to:

- Resolution 125, adopted in 1981, on the role and responsibility of local and regional authorities in regard to the cultural and social problems of populations of nomadic origin,
- Resolution 249, adopted in 1993, on Gypsies in Europe: the role and responsibility of local and regional authorities;

The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (or, rather, the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, as it was known until 1994) organised several activities benefiting Roma/Travellers, some of which concerned education.

1. “The Gypsy People and Europe: the continuation of the tradition in a changing Europe”

Hearing, 12-13 July 1991, Strasbourg [CPL/Cult (26) 6]

On the occasion of the Gypsy Music Festival organised by APPONA⁵⁵ on 12 and 13 July 1991, the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe brought together representatives of Gypsy communities from 12 European countries.

Ideas expressed:

- Concern was expressed about the growing discrimination against the Gypsy population, particularly since 1989, in central and eastern European countries.
- Concern was also expressed about housing, health, the right to education and vocational training and the right of Gypsies to express themselves in the media in their mother tongue.
- There was a determination to preserve and enhance their cultural identity and ensure that it was respected.
- There was a call for respect for Gypsy traditions, culture and identity.

Solutions proposed:

- Help to promote and disseminate Gypsy culture;

55. Association pour la promotion des Nomades d'Alsace.

- Promote the establishment of a European Gypsy centre providing information and training for teachers and project leaders;
- Train Gypsies at the European Youth Centre;
- Organise courses and seminars on schooling;
- Promote Gypsy art expositions at the Council of Europe.

2. “Gypsies in the Locality”

15-17 October 1992, Liptovsky Mikulas, Czechoslovakia [COLL/Tsi (92)]

The topics addressed included education, vocational training and the promotion of Roma culture.

Emphasis was placed on the need to provide information:

- about the situation of Roma communities in order to do away with stereotypes;
- about the European programmes set up and how to obtain access to them.

Flexibility was called for, given the diversity of situations. This meant encouraging:

- micro-projects, which were appropriate in this context;
- networking of existing bodies.

It was necessary to take advantage of the dynamism inherent in the Roma culture and not to relegate Roma communities to the status of passive recipients of assistance, which created a vicious circle, or to encourage assimilation. The involvement of the Roma themselves was essential for this purpose.

The Congress proposed:

- launching a network of some of the cities most involved in catering for Roma communities, with a view to allowing twinning, sharing experience and information, preparing a good practice guide for mayors, organising effective co-operation among the various parties involved, setting up micro-projects, drawing attention to successful experiments and establishing international co-operation;
- publication by the Congress of a series of case studies carried out by members of the network in order to inform local authorities about the

issues and increase their awareness, for the benefit of Roma and non-Roma alike;

- adapting and giving new impetus to its Resolution 125 (1981) on the role and responsibility of local and regional authorities in regard to the culture and social problems of populations of nomadic origin.

The CDCC⁵⁶ was called on:

- to organise training seminars for teachers and other personnel in direct co-operation with the Congress's prospective network of cities;
- to study the Roma population further as part of the project: "Democracy, human rights, minorities: educational and cultural aspects";
- to consider launching a "European Roma route".

In the area of human rights, it was recommended that more training be provided for staff who had occasion to work with Roma communities.

Co-operation with the European Community would make it possible to take further action.

On 11 July 1994, the first hearing organised by the Network of Cities took place in Strasbourg. It brought together representatives of the cities belonging to the network (who described their problems, achievements and future plans relating to Roma) and representatives of Roma organisations from all over Europe. There was wide-ranging discussion of the legal, political, social and financial problems facing Roma.

A working group on "provision for Roma (Gypsies) in municipalities" was set up in late 1994 "to run the activities of the Network of Cities". It planned to meet regularly to oversee the activities under way, suggest new projects and promote the expansion of the network. The group held its first meeting in Strasbourg on 9 December 1994.

On 8 and 9 December 1995, at the invitation of the city of Kosice, the working group on "provision for Roma (Gypsies) in municipalities" met in Slovakia, and the first of three hearings of members of the Network of Cities and other partners was held on the following theme: "Roma (Gypsies) in municipalities: what provision for education and culture, social problems, training and employment?" [AUD/KOS (2) 18].

The hearing went some way to responding to paragraph 8.iii of Resolution No. 16 – "Towards a tolerant Europe: the contribution of Roma (Gypsies) –

56. Council for Cultural Co-operation: this body no longer exists, having been replaced by the Steering Committee for Education.

adopted by the Congress in 1995. The topics addressed at the hearing were education, training, employment and culture.

In the light of the need to take the global context into account, the following avenues were singled out:

- Developing activities within a given field with due regard for the overall political context;
- Ensuring that politicians were involved on the ground;
- Assessing the effects of discrimination in the areas in question, but also its psychological effects on the community and on individuals;
- The education of Roma children was addressed from an intercultural perspective, with emphasis on education that respected the Roma culture;
- The role of Roma mediators and the importance of training and employing people for this purpose were highlighted;
- Further action in the education field, with support from the Congress through the Network of Cities, was called for;
- On the occasion of the hearing, the participants attended a performance by the Kosice Romathan theatre company, which worked with a Roma performing arts school that was open to Roma and non-Roma alike. The theatre company had been set up to allow talented young Roma who had dropped out of school to find a job matching their specific skills.

The theatre company also provided an opportunity for non-Roma to discover Roma culture and encouraged intercultural education.

The participants in the hearing stressed that the network needed gradually to become able to function independently with funding from the European Union and the Council of Europe, *inter alia*. They welcomed the establishment of a national network of Czech towns, which had held its first meeting in Pardubice, Czech Republic, on 10 October 1995. The network's founding charter had been adopted on that occasion.

The second hearing took place in Ploiesti, Romania, on 28 and 29 November 1996 on the theme "Legal and institutional framework of the national minorities: the situation of Roma/Gypsies in municipalities".

The discussions concerned Roma as a national minority and the importance of using the term they chose to designate themselves (Roma) to acknowledge their identity, and the establishment of a framework and priorities.

Attention was drawn to the existence of international legal provisions designed to protect minorities, which in principle were applicable to Roma. Although international law and international resolutions reflected an awareness of the vulnerability of minorities, including Roma, in practice it was extremely difficult to use international law to challenge policies at local and regional level.

At the second hearing the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities was asked:

- to recommend the use of the self-designation “Roma”, and to launch a series of events designed to disentangle the stereotypes attached to Roma communities and clarify the true scale of the problems facing them;
- to seek the co-operation of multilateral organisations, groups and non-governmental organisations in order to monitor the human rights situation of Roma, inform them of available legal remedies and provide them with legal assistance, and to encourage media coverage of the legal situation of Roma;
- to seek the co-operation of other Council of Europe bodies in order to initiate activities enabling information and experience to be shared among legal specialists and other experts representing Roma in human rights cases and media representatives interested in the situation of Roma;
- to consider, with other Council of Europe institutions, the possibility of setting up a permanent system for examining cases in which Roma’s human rights had been violated;
- to support media projects designed to promote public awareness of the legal and human rights situation of Roma.

The third and last hearing took place in Pardubice, in the Czech Republic, on 23 and 24 October 1997 on the theme, “Provision for Roma in municipalities: housing/sites, health and social affairs”.

On that occasion the working group noted that it was its last meeting, as its terms of reference expired at the end of 1997, and hoped that work on Roma would continue, both through the activities of the Network of Cities and in other Council of Europe bodies.

It decided to transform the Network of Cities into an association that would operate independently of the Council of Europe. The association “European Network of Cities on ‘Provision for Roma/Gypsies in the Municipalities’”, registered in Strasbourg, was designed to improve provision for Roma in cities by developing a network of cities in every Council of Europe member state. The network would serve as a testing ground for good practice and

good relations between local/regional authorities and Roma communities, based on dialogue and the sharing of experience.

The founding document was signed by Budapest, Berlin, Cordoba, Strasbourg, Pardubice, Ankara, Thebes and Varna, on the understanding that any other city could join.

It was decided that the cities would operate in the network as follows:

- one city in each country would be in charge of the network and would maintain contact with the Council of Europe;
- the cities would undertake to embark on a programme covering several years;
- they would serve as priority correspondents, receiving information from the Council of Europe and other sources on matters concerning provision for Roma;
- the cities would encourage initiatives and activities compatible with the underlying philosophy of the Council of Europe's Plan of Action against Racism, Xenophobia, Anti-Semitism and Intolerance.

The network would approach its work from three angles: the social perspective, the cultural perspective and the human rights, citizenship and democracy perspective.

On 15 October 2003, the Congress's Committee on Social Cohesion held an international seminar in Rome entitled "Challenges for co-operation and integration", which was attended by committee members and representatives of Roma and Travellers. Examples of specific projects for the integration of Roma, based on co-operation with the local authorities, were presented.

At the close of the seminar the Committee on Social Cohesion undertook to revive the idea of setting up a network of towns to address the issue of integration of Roma, provided funding was available.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Official texts

Committee of Ministers

Resolution (75) 13 containing recommendations on the social situation of nomads in Europe

Recommendation No. R (83) 1 on stateless nomads and nomads of undetermined nationality

Replies of the Committee of Ministers to Recommendation 1203 (1993), adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly in January 1994 and October 1995

Recommendation No. R (2000) 4, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 3 February 2000, on the education of Roma/Gypsy children in Europe

Recommendation Rec(2001)17, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 27 November 2001, on improving the economic and employment situation of Roma/Gypsies and Travellers in Europe

Recommendation Rec(2004)14 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the movement and encampment of Travellers in Europe

Recommendation Rec(2005)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on improving the housing conditions of Roma and Travellers in Europe

Parliamentary Assembly

Recommendation 563 (1969) on the situation of Gypsies and other travellers in Europe

Recommendation 1203 (1993) on Gypsies in Europe

Resolution 1123 (1997) on the honouring of obligations and commitments by Romania

Recommendation 1338 (1997) on the obligations and commitments of the Czech Republic as a member state

Recommendation 1557 (2002), adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly, on the legal situation of Roma in Europe

Recommendation 1633 (2003) Forced returns of Roma from the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, including Kosovo, to Serbia and Montenegro from Council of Europe member states

Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

Resolution 125 (1981) on the role and responsibility of local and regional authorities in regard to the cultural and social problems of populations of nomadic origin

Resolution 249 (1993) on Gypsies in Europe: role and responsibility of local and regional authorities

Recommendation 11 (1995) "Towards a tolerant Europe: the contribution of Roma (Gypsies)"

Resolution 16 (1995) "Towards a tolerant Europe: the contribution of Roma (Gypsies)"

Resolution 44 (1997) "Towards a tolerant Europe: the contribution of Roma (Gypsies)"

Others

General Policy Recommendation No. 3 of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) on combating racism and intolerance against Roma/Gypsies

The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 10 November 1994, which entered into force on 1 February 1998.

The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, which was opened for signature by the member states on 5 November 1992 and entered into force on 1 March 1998.

Appendix 2

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

(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 3 February 2000 at the 696th 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.

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. Roma 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 education 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.

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It outlines the Council of Europe’s official texts on Roma and Travellers, highlighting references to education. The resulting summary gives an overview of the working context for these texts, their implementation and the activities of the Council of Europe in this area.



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