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PAL

NATIONAL ROMA PLATFORM



“Fighting discrimination and anti-Gypsyism in education and employment in EU” (PAL)

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NATIONAL ROMA PLATFORM

The History and Activities of the European Platform for Roma Inclusion

Key words

Roma	platform	history
meeting	good practice	European Union

Starting questions

1. What is the European Platform for Roma Inclusion?
2. When was the European Platform for Roma Inclusion founded?
3. Why was the European Platform for Roma Inclusion created?
4. How does the European Platform for Roma Inclusion work?
5. Who are the participants of the European Platform for Roma Inclusion?
6. What are the main or most important themes discussed at the Platform meetings?

Definitions of terms:

The European Platform for Roma Inclusion – is a platform based on meetings of national governments, the EU, international organisations and Roma civil society representatives. It aims to stimulate co-operation and exchange of experience among all stakeholders on successful Roma inclusion and integration policies and practices.

Council of the EU – is the voice of the EU member governments, adopting EU laws and coordinating EU policies. Members of Council of the EU are government ministers from each Member States, according to the policy area to be discussed.

Presidency of the Council of the EU – is responsible for the functioning of the Council of the EU. It rotates among the [Member States of the EU](#) every six months.

Poverty – is the state or condition of having little or no money, goods or means of support.

Implementation – is the realization of an application or execution of a plan or policy.

European Commission - is the [executive](#) body of the [European Union](#) responsible for proposing legislation, implementing decisions, upholding the [EU treaties](#) and managing the day-to-day business of the EU.



Chapter content

European Roma Summit, Brussels, September 2008: the idea of a European Roma platform emerged.

General Affairs Council, 8 December 2008: EU countries called on the European Commission to organise »an exchange of good practice and experience between the EU countries in the sphere of inclusion of the Roma, to provide analytical support and stimulate co-operation between all parties concerned by Roma issues, including organisations representing the Roma, in the context of an integrated European Platform«.

First meeting, Prague, 24th April 2009: the meeting was held in the framework of the Czech Presidency of the EU. They identified 10 Common Basic Principles to effectively address the inclusion and integration of Roma.

More on: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma/roma-platform/meetings_en.htm

Second meeting, Brussels, 28th September 2009: focused specifically on the theme of education and examined in particular the root causes of Roma exclusion from quality, mainstream education, as well as examples of possible ways forward. It was co-organized by the European Commission and the Swedish Presidency of Council of the EU.

More on: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/romaplatform2_minutes_en.pdf

Third meeting, Brussels, 17th April 2010: emphasised recent developments in Roma inclusion at European level and discussion of a road map proposed by the Spanish Presidency. The meeting was co-organized by Spanish Presidency of the Council of the EU and the European Commission.

More on: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/romaplatform3_minutes_en.pdf

Fourth meeting, Brussels, 13th December 2010: discussed the importance, accessibility and quality of early childhood services provided for Roma children and their families.

More on: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/fourth_romaplatform_meeting_report_en.pdf

Fifth meeting, Budapest, 7th-8th April 2011: focused on territorial approach of poverty in order to present and discuss the European Parliament Resolution on the EU Roma Strategy of 9th March 2011 and the Communication adopted by the Commission on the 5th April 2011 on an EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020.

More on: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma/roma-platform/meetings_en.htm

Sixth meeting, Brussels, 17th-18th November 2011: focused on »The role of stakeholder in making of the EU Framework a success«. This meeting was an opportunity for discussing the EU



Framework for national Roma integration strategies before Member States were expected to present their policy documents. This meeting was the first one following the reform of the EU Platform for Roma Inclusion announced in the Commission's Communication.

More

on:

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/sixth_romaplatform_meeting_report_en.pdf

Extraordinary meeting of the EU Platform, Brussels, 22th March 2012: was a one day event with three panels: **putting plans in motion** (how to measure that the strategies have an impact in the field, what resources (political, financial and human) will be used to enable the National Contact Point to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the national strategies), **active participation of stakeholders** (how do Member States secure the commitment and involvement of regional and local authorities for the implementation of national strategy, what could make regional and local authorities commit themselves to the implementation of the national strategies or sets of policy measures, what will be the role of civil society in the implementation of the national strategies), **socio-economic aspects of Roma inclusion** (what makes Roma integration even more relevant in the context of the current economic climate and how to make sure that EU funds are used efficiently in the implementation of the strategy).

More on: <http://ec.europa.eu/justice/events/roma-platform-2012-extra/index.html>

Eighth meeting, Brussels, 27th June 2013: explored the urgent need and solutions for advancing the integration of particularly vulnerable Roma children and youth. The meeting comprised four panel discussions focusing on: making a change for Roma children from birth to compulsory school age (focus on health, early childhood education and care and compulsory education), making a change for Roma youth (focus on the transition between school and employment), Roma empowerment (how Roma leaders can push for change), following progress in the field (shaping policies that work).

More on: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/events/roma-platform-2013/index_en.htm

Ninth meeting, Brussels, 16 and 17th March 2015: was organized in two days. The first day involved two thematic participatory workshops (Workshop 1: Fight against discrimination and anti-gypsyism, Workshop 2: Multi-stakeholders cooperation), and on the second day the conclusions and questions arising from these workshops were discussed with ministers, deputy ministers, members of the European Parliament and Roma civil society representatives.

More on http://ec.europa.eu/justice/events/roma-platform-2015/index_en.htm



Questions for discussion

1. How will the Member States effectively implement the policies of the platform in their territories?
2. How will the EU and Member States control effective use of funds given to organizations who provide programmes for Roma inclusion?
3. What are the root causes of Roma exclusion in different aspects of life?
4. How to fight poverty among Roma population?
5. Are the documents, strategies and policies of the platform and other stakeholders enough for an effective inclusion of Roma?
6. What are the developments of Roma inclusion on European level?

Publications and Documents of the European Platform for Roma Inclusion

Key words

annex

principle

inclusion

platform

policy

issue

Starting questions

1. Why did the Council of the European Union accept Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion?
 - a. How many principles are there?
 - b. What is the aim of these principles?
2. What are the key issues recognized in the Integrated European Platform for Roma Inclusion Road Map?
 - a. What are the working methods within the Platform?
3. What is the current situation of Roma people?
4. Which means do the European parliament resolutions recognize for the inclusion of Roma people?



5. Who are the main participants involved in the inclusion of Roma based on the resolution?
6. What are the most important fields of resolution for Roma inclusion?

Definitions of terms:

Equal opportunity - is a stipulation that all people should be treated similarly, unhampered by artificial barriers or prejudices or preferences, except when particular distinctions can be explicitly justified.

Economic development - is the process and policies by which a nation improves the economic, political, and social well-being of its people.

Segregate – to cause people or institutions to be separated on the basis of race, sex, religion or another factor.

Transparent – honest and open.

Incumbency - is the time during which a person holds a particular office or position (for example 6 month presidency of different member State of Council of the EU).

Prominence – is the state of being important, well-known, or noticeable.

Sentiment – is an attitude or opinion.

Chapter content

The Annex to Inclusion of the Roma – Draft Council conclusions, Brussels, 28 May 2009¹:

Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion – as discussed at the 1st meeting of the integrated European Platform for Roma Inclusion on April 2009. The experiences from Member States show that general policy approaches are useful and why they can be recommended to others.

Principle no. 1: Constructive, pragmatic and non-discriminatory policies – this principle is based on policies aiming at the inclusion of Roma people which respect and realise the core values of the European Union (human rights and dignity, non-discrimination and equality of opportunity and economic development). These policies are integrated with mainstream policies in the fields of education, employment, social affairs, housing, health and security. The aim is to provide the Roma with effective access to equal opportunities in Member State societies.

Principle no. 2: Explicit but not exclusive targeting – the principle focuses on Roma people as a target group but not to the exclusion of other people who share similar socio-economic circumstances.

Principle no. 3: Inter-cultural approach – this principle defines a need for an intercultural approach

¹ register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%2010394%202009%20INIT



which involves Roma people together with people from different ethnic backgrounds.

Principle no. 4: Aiming for the mainstream – the aim is to insert the Roma in the mainstream of society (mainstream educational institutions, mainstream jobs, mainstream housing). Roma inclusion policies must aim to overcome partially or entirely segregated education or housing where they still exist.

Principle no. 5: Awareness of the gender dimension – policies need to take into account the needs and circumstances of Roma women, such as multiple discriminations and problems of access to health care and child support, domestic violence and exploitation.

Principle no. 6: Transfer of evidence-based policies – the principle emphasises the necessity of Member States to learn from their own experiences of developing Roma inclusion initiatives and share their experiences with other Member States.

Principle no. 7: Use of Community instruments – it is crucial that in the development and implementation of their policies aiming at Roma inclusion the Member States make full use of Community instruments, including legal instruments, financial instruments and coordination instruments. Member States must ensure that use of financial instruments aligns with this principle and makes use of the expertise within the European Commission when evaluating policies and projects.

Principle no. 8: Involvement of regional and local authorities – it is crucial for Member States to design, develop, implement and evaluate Roma inclusion policy initiatives in close cooperation with regional and local authorities.

Principle no. 9: Involvement of civil society – it is also crucial for Member States to design, develop, implement and evaluate Roma inclusion policy initiatives in close operation with civil society members (non-governmental organisations, social partners and academics/researchers).

Principle no. 10: Active participation of the Roma – the policies must be enhanced with the involvement of Roma people at every stage of the process. Their involvement must be at national and European levels through the input of Roma experts and civil servants and by consultation with a range of Roma stakeholders in the design, implementation and evaluation of policy initiatives. It is vital for inclusion policies to be open, transparent and tackle difficult subjects.

Integrated European Platform for Roma Inclusion Road Map, 30 June 2010²:

This Road Map addresses the following key aspects:

² http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_roadmap_en.pdf



- **the key issues** that will help to frame the Platform meetings: the goal is to identify and make progress on those key issues within each broad theme. The list of broad themes and key issues are listed in the Road Map. Each Presidency in collaboration with other parties will have to identify the key issues that it seeks to address and bring substance to during the semester of its incumbency, in accordance with the Ten Common Basic Principles, the achievement of a substantial impact on the quality of living of Roma communities and consistency with the interests and policies of the EU and Member States.
- **Working methods:**
 - At least one Platform general meeting during each Presidency, focusing on one or two key issues in accordance with the priorities of the Presidency; the issues and the themes should be defined and prepared well in advance.
 - Preparatory work should be undertaken for general meetings of the Platform, it should be achieved through thematic working groups. The work and outputs of the Platform should refer to existing initiatives, results and outputs of national governments, the European Parliament, the European Commission, the Council of Europe, the Decade for Roma Inclusion, international organisations and relevant international NGOs.
- **Outputs of Platforms:** Each Presidency organising the Platform would produce discussion papers in cooperation with the Commission, on the basis of the preparatory meetings of the Working Groups. A written product, in the form of recommendations/proposals/suggestions, should be obtained as a result of general meetings which should add value to existing knowledge and achieve operational applicability.
- **Dissemination and impact:** it is important the outputs are brought to light and the results disseminated in order to raise awareness and sustain the prominence of Roma issues in the political agenda of the EU and Member States. Written products should be widely disseminated to Member States, the Commission and other stakeholders.

European Parliament resolution of 8 September 2015 on the situation of fundamental rights in the European Union (2013-2014) (2014/2254(INI)):³

In this resolution the situation of Roma people in the European Union is documented in points 54, 55, 56 and 57. It decries the increasing anti-Roma sentiment in the European Union and expresses

³ [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/seance_pleniere/textes_adoptes/provisoire/2011/03-09/0092/P7_TA-PROV\(2011\)0092_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/seance_pleniere/textes_adoptes/provisoire/2011/03-09/0092/P7_TA-PROV(2011)0092_EN.pdf)



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its concern at numerous instances of persecution, violence, stigmatisation, discrimination and unlawful expulsions, which are contrary to fundamental rights and European Union laws. It urges the Commission to take action against those Member States that allow institutionalised discrimination and segregation. It calls on the Member States to effectively implement strategies to foster real inclusion, to promote integration, particularly protection of fundamental rights, education, employment, housing and healthcare, and also to combat violence, hate speech and discrimination against Roma. It stresses the importance of proper implementation of national Roma strategies by developing integrated policies involving local authorities, non-governmental bodies and Roma communities in ongoing dialogue. The Commission should provide for monitoring and better coordination of implementation. It also calls the Member States to cooperate with representatives of the Roma population in the management, monitoring and evaluation of projects affecting their communities, using available funds, including EU funds, while strictly monitoring respect for the fundamental rights of Roma people, including freedom of movement. It decries the existing discrimination against Roma people in national educational systems and on the labour market, stresses the multiple and simultaneous violations of fundamental rights of Roma women and children and emphasises the importance of protecting and promoting equal access to all rights for Roma children. It also urges the Member States to adopt necessary legislative changes with regard to sterilisation and to financially compensate the victims of coercive sterilisations performed on Roma women and women with mental disabilities.

Discussion paper on the territorial aspects of extreme poverty drawing up a European extreme poverty map:⁴

It aims to identify problematic areas based on collected data, which will serve as the precondition for effectively targeting marginalized groups, including Roma.

The Extreme Poverty Map of Europe should identify pockets of poverty based on social and economic indicators, measure spatial concentration of poverty and regional inequalities, improve targeting of allocation of funds and influence methods for programming, monitor achievements, and contribute to mutual learning.

Questions for discussion

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/romaplatform_discussion_paper_poverty_2011_en.pdf



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1. Were the Ten Common Basic Principles implemented in the Member States policies?
2. Did the aims of Ten Common Basic Principles yield any results?
3. Did the situation of Roma in different aspects of life improve because of above mentioned documents and how?
4. Which key issues were discussed on the Platform meeting based on the Integrated European Platform for Roma Inclusion Road Map?
5. Are the working methods from the Road Map successful or do they need to be changed?
6. How many of proposals of the European Parliament resolution were put into action?