



United for Dignity

Conference on the specific situation of Roma young people affected by multiple discrimination

24 – 26 June 2014, European Youth Centre Strasbourg

Presentation of the conference
Call for participants

Organised in co-operation by the Youth Department, the LGBT Issues Unit and the Support Team of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Roma Issues of the Council of Europe

Background of the conference

The youth sector of the Council of Europe has associated young Roma to its policy and work for intercultural dialogue and human rights education since 1995, when a ground-breaking training course for Roma youth leaders was held at the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg. As a result of the “All Different – All Equal” European youth campaign against racism, antisemitism, xenophobia and intolerance, the Council of Europe supported the development of Roma youth networks across Europe. In addition to denouncing situations of discrimination, Romaphobia and antigypsyism, the youth policy of the Council of Europe supports the involvement of Roma young people in youth policy and all matters that concern them. The participation of young Roma plays an essential role in the transformation of the status and challenges faced by Roma communities across Europe.

Initiated in 2011, the Roma Youth Action Plan¹ is a response of the Council of Europe to the challenges faced by Roma young people in Europe, particularly in relation to their empowerment, participation in policy decision-making processes and structures at European level and multiple realities of discrimination. The action plan includes activities of the Youth Department and of other sectors of the Council of Europe, as well as activities by other partners – intergovernmental and non-governmental – cooperating with the Council of Europe and interested in securing a maximum of impact of their activities by avoiding double work and creating synergies.

In 2010 the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe agreed on a recommendation to member states on measures to combat discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity (CM/Rec(2010)5). The main pillars of the ground breaking recommendation include to monitor and redress any discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity by reviewing legislation and other measures and collecting and analysing data; to ensure respect for human rights of LGBT persons and to promote respect towards them by adopting and effectively implementing measures to combat discrimination; and to ensure that victims and witnesses are aware and have access to effective legal remedies and that discrimination is sanctioned and victims can receive reparation.²

The Recommendation and its appendix offer member states a comprehensive framework for addressing discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity. One of the issues taken up is multiple discrimination. Sexual orientation and gender identity are factors which, in combination with one or more others such as race or gender, will increase the vulnerability of the person concerned. States should therefore be aware of the reality of the phenomena of multiple or intersectional discrimination and be urged to ensure protection against it.³

¹ More about the Roma Youth Action Plan: www.coe.int/youth/roma

² Recommendation CM/Rec (2010)5 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on measures to combat discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity. Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 31 March 2010 at the 1081st meeting of the Ministers' Deputies.

³ Member states are encouraged to ensure that national legislation prohibiting or preventing discrimination also protects against discrimination on multiple grounds, including on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity, and also that national human rights structures have a broad mandate which ables them to tackle issues of

Multiple discrimination and the situation of Roma young people

One of the areas of the Roma Youth Action Plan concerns Roma young people affected by discrimination on multiple grounds, including from within Roma communities and with a special attention to young Roma LGBT, young Roma women, and young Roma migrants. The first step in addressing the specific situation of these groups concerns developing a better understanding of the effects multiple discrimination⁴ has on young people, both in relation to the majority society as well as within the Roma community.

The youth sector in co-operation with the LGBT unit has carried out a study and to elaborate a publication of life stories of young Roma affected by multiple discrimination in 2013 - 2014. The study and publication will focus on representing the specific situations that young Roma face. It will also be a first case study by the Council of Europe on multiple discrimination experienced by LGBT persons. The publication is intended as a resource in educational activities and should support the development of responses to situations of discrimination affecting young people; in this respect, it can be used for advocacy actions at policy level as well.

The publication pertaining to this study will be launched during the conference.

The need for this conference has been expressed in a number of fora:

- during the Roma Youth Conference in 2011, participants have pointed out to the need for a better understanding of the situation of “minorities within the minority”, that is to say certain groups within the Roma community which are affected by episodes of discrimination on grounds such as sexual orientation and gender identity, migrant status etc.
- through the work of the European Roma youth networks, such as FERYP or Phiren Amenca, who have organised or will organise study sessions on these topics in co-operation with the Council of Europe
- through the work of other youth networks, that have as well pointed out to multiple discrimination as an area of concern
- through the work regarding the situation of young Roma women, carried out by the Support Team of the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe
- through the work undertaken by the LGBT Unit for the implementation of the Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)5 on Measures to combat discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity

In brief, the rationale for the conference is based on:

- the need to understand better the situation of young Roma people affected by multiple discrimination
- the need to have a forum of discussion among youth organisations and other partners about including in their work with and for young people facing discrimination a specific concern on multiple discrimination

multiple discrimination. CM/Rec (2010)5, Appendix, paragraph 46. See also paragraph 46 of the Explanatory Memorandum.

⁴ Multiple discrimination is understood as experiences of discrimination on more than one ground, for instance on the grounds of ethnicity and sexual orientation or ethnicity and gender.

- the need to promote the study on multiple discrimination
- the need to have a forum for proposals on future work on this topic, at different levels and by the partners involved.

The Conference “United for dignity”

The conference is intended as a forum to raise awareness of and to explore and formulate responses to situations of multiple discrimination affecting young Roma.

The keywords of the activity are:

- **youth event**, as the activity aims to bring together a diversity of youth organisations, Roma and non-Roma, that have in common their work on issues relating to discrimination, and also other profiles of participants, such as researchers and policy makers;
- **a better understanding**, as the activity aims to raise awareness on the specificities of multiple discrimination and their impact on young Roma people;
- **networking**, as the activity aims to create an opportunity for organisations working with diverse groups of young people (Roma, LGBT, migrants, young women etc.) to find common concerns;
- **interventions**, as the activity aims to bring about proposals for how to address multiple discrimination and what strategies youth organisations and other partners should develop to reflect better in their work the needs of young people affected by multiple discrimination;
- **tools**, as the activity aims to promote the study on life stories of young Roma people affected by multiple discrimination.

The specific objectives of the Conference are:

- To create a better understanding of what multiple discrimination is and how it affects Roma young people;
- To reflect on the role of civil society in tackling multiple discrimination, particularly through making coalitions and addressing the issues of Roma youth in a multi-perspective way;
- To propose ways in which decision makers, communities and law enforcement sectors can address multiple discrimination;
- To raise awareness of and promote the study on life stories of young Roma affected by multiple discrimination;
- To create a space for networking among organisations;
- To make proposals for future actions by the Roma Youth Action Plan and the LGBT unit to address multiple discrimination.

Participants’ profile

The conference will gather some 40 participants, with the following profiles:

- Young people and activists involved in the study on multiple discrimination
- Youth leaders and activists from civil society that work on discrimination issues, particularly with regards to the situation of Roma young people
- Participants involved in human rights law bodies, human rights monitoring bodies, policy making etc.
- Partners of the Roma Youth Action Plan and the LGBT stakeholders
- Researchers.

Candidates should equally:

- Be in a position to use the outcomes of the Conference in their work
- Be resident in one of the countries that have signed the European Cultural Convention
- Be actively involved in combating discrimination, either through direct assistance to the young people facing discrimination, or through education, campaigning, lobby and advocacy at the local, national or European levels
- Be supported by their organisation
- Be available to attend the event for its full duration.

The activity intends to be a youth event primarily and have a direct impact on youth organisations working on anti-discrimination issues.

Expected outcomes

Among the expected outcomes of the conference, we would like to see:

- More awareness in the civil society about the need to work cross-sectorally and look at multiple discrimination and intersectionality in the work they do
- Proposals on ways to tackle multiple discrimination
- Dissemination of the study on multiple discrimination
- Proposals for the Council of Europe and other policy-makers

Working Language

The working languages of the conference will be in English. It is expected that participants are fluent and able to express themselves in one of the conference working languages.

Practical arrangements

The conference will be held from 24 to 26 June at the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg. Selected participants are requested to attend and participate for the entire duration of the conference, please plan your arrival for the 23 June and your departure for the 27 June.

Accommodation and meals for the conference will be provided and paid by the Council of Europe. Travel costs and visa fees for the seminar will be fully reimbursed according to Council of Europe rules.

Practical arrangements

All candidates apply online, completing the application form through this link:

<http://youthapplications.coe.int/>

All candidates must apply online and send their applications forms by **10 April 2014 at Midnight Central European Time.**

Further information and contact

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