

## Roma health newsletter

Published by the WHO Regional Office for Europe in cooperation with the European Commission – Directorate-General for Health and Consumers and the Interuniversity Institute of Social Development and Peace at the University of Alicante, Spain (WHO Collaborating Centre on Social Inclusion and Health)



### Issue 3 – January 2013

Welcome to the third issue of the Roma health newsletter. The newsletter is divided into the following sections:

- Events
- Resources and reports
- Professional opportunities
- Issues in focus/feature

## EVENTS

### [European Public Health Conference](#)

8–10 November 2012, Malta

Roma health issues had a high profile at the 5th Annual European Public Health Conference, organized by the European Public Health Association (EUPHA). Under the heading "Healthy Europe, healthy Roma", the Open Society Foundations organized and supported a number of contributions to the conference, including presentations on vaccination programmes, mental health and health status in Roma settlements, posters on health research and a workshop highlighting systemic barriers faced by Roma in access to health care.

Recognizing that Roma health demands more attention and further study, EUPHA's Section on Ethnic Minority and Migrant Health decided to allocate a seat on its steering committee to an academic or researcher working on Roma health issues.

For further details, please see the following article written by Tamsin Rose:

[Roma health a focus at European Public Health Conference](#)

### [Training on ensuring greater equity in health policies](#)

7–8 November 2012, Belgrade, Serbia

A training course on how to reorient strategies, programmes and activities related to Millennium Development Goals 4 and 5 towards greater health equity (with an explicit but not exclusive focus on Roma) was organized by WHO/Europe in collaboration with the WHO Collaborating Centre on Social Inclusion and Health at the University of Alicante and the Spanish Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality.

Participating experts from four pilot countries for implementation of the approach (Bulgaria, Montenegro, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) were trained to act as trainers on health equity and social determinants of health approaches to policy-making.

The course was based on a new guide developed by the Spanish Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality:

[Methodological Guide to Integrate Equity into Health Strategies, Programmes and Activities](#)

### [Consultation meeting on role of the European Alliance of Cities and Regions for Roma Inclusion](#)

25 September 2012, Strasbourg, France

Representatives of European cities and regions, European Union (EU) institutions, international Roma networks and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) gathered on 25 September 2012 at the Council of Europe headquarters in Strasbourg to discuss the future role and activities of the European Alliance of Cities and Regions for Roma Inclusion. The expectations, needs and priorities expressed at the consultation meeting, as well as available resources, will be considered by the Alliance in drawing up its programme of forthcoming activities.

[Background paper for consultation meeting](#)

[First Alliance event: International workshop on inclusive education, 17–18 December 2012](#)

### [UNFPA workshop on best practices in addressing health issues among Roma youth](#)

10–11 September 2012, Istanbul, Turkey

Representatives of ERGO Network and TernYpe, the international Roma youth network, participated in an advocacy workshop on Roma youth health issues hosted by UNFPA's Regional Office for eastern Europe and central Asia (UNFPA EECARO). The meeting aimed to strengthen partnerships among Roma organizations, NGOs and UNFPA, increase understanding of Roma youth health needs and draw attention to ways in which existing systems fail to meet those needs.

Innovative strategies for addressing sexual reproductive health issues amongst Roma youth and strengthening advocacy for health issues were proposed and shared by participants. The outcomes of this workshop will be incorporated in a wider advocacy strategy to be implemented in 2013.

### [European Roma and Travellers Forum \(ERTF\) Plenary Assembly adopts recommendations on Roma in Europe](#)

6–7 September 2012, Strasbourg, France

Recommendations submitted to the Council of Europe (CoE) and the EU Member States and a resolution urging the Committee of Ministers and the European Council to adopt a European Roma Rights Charter were unanimously adopted at the meeting of the Plenary Assembly of the European Roma and Travellers Forum.

## **RESOURCES AND REPORTS**

### [WHO opens new Collaborating Centre on Social Inclusion and Health in Spain](#)

WHO has designated the Interuniversity Institute of Social Development and Peace, University of Alicante, Spain, as a WHO Collaborating Centre on Social Inclusion and Health. This new centre will contribute to the design and implementation of the WHO/Europe training programme on Roma health, including through the co-production of resource packages and co-design of training methodologies.

### [Successful UNDP social development model adopted by Roma communities in Hungary](#)

Resource centres for social development are local development institutions established by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in various locations in Hungary to promote inclusion of people living in deep poverty and segregation. They take an integrated approach based on the four pillars of the Roma inclusion strategy, which includes the involvement of the target group in the development process. The effectiveness of resource centres for social development as a development tool has been demonstrated recently by their spontaneous spreading in Roma communities: in the past six months five Roma communities have asked the Abaúj Resource Centre for Social Development to help them develop their own resource centres based on this model

### [Discrimination in the European Union in 2012: special issue of Eurobarometer](#)

This November 2012 issue of the Eurobarometer reports the results of a survey on discrimination coordinated by the Directorate-General Communication. It reveals large differences between countries, both in terms of social diversity and the acceptance of diversity in the public sphere. Special attention is devoted to the perceived effectiveness of national efforts to integrate the Roma population and on perceptions of the Roma situation in society.

### [Primary care for minority patients: position paper of EFPC Working Group](#)

As an introduction to this subject for its members, and as a basis for further planning of documentation, information exchange, research and other activities, the European Forum for Primary Care (EFPC) prepared a position paper on primary care for minority patients. This paper was used as a guide for discussion during the first workshop of the Working Group on minority patients, which took place on 16 September 2012.

### [Use of EU Structural Funds for Roma health: fact sheets on Bulgaria, Romania and Slovakia](#)

The Roma Health Project of the Open Society Foundations has produced fact sheets on the allocation and implementation of European Union funds in Bulgaria, Romania and Slovakia. Mapping the situation in these countries in 2011, the fact sheets include a list of opportunities and recommendations for increasing the utilization of available EU funds for advancing Roma health.

### **EQUI-HEALTH: new project to foster the equitable provision of health for vulnerable groups**

EQUI-HEALTH is an International Organization for Migration (IOM) project co-funded by the European Commission's health programme (under the work plan for 2012). EQUI-HEALTH aims to improve the access and appropriateness of health care services, health promotion and prevention to meet the needs of migrants,

the Roma and other vulnerable ethnic minority groups, including irregular/illegal migrants. The project will start in February 2013 with a duration of 36 months.

For further information please contact: [ROBrusselsMHUnit@iom.int](mailto:ROBrusselsMHUnit@iom.int).

### **[Blog on delivery of early childhood services](#)**

Through its blog, the recently established Romani Early Years Network (REYN) offers professionals and para-professionals working in services aimed at young Romani children and their families the opportunity to exchange experiences of successful (and not-so-successful) initiatives, learn from each other, and share insights from their work.

### **[Web site of the Roma Health Network](#)**

A RomaHealthNetwork web page has been established to serve as a core internet-based forum for initiating Roma health-related research activities, community-level actions and health-related advocacy. It also aims to inspire other actors to join and expand the network.

## **PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES**

### **[Open Society Foundations employment, grants, scholarships and fellowships](#)**

The Open Society Foundations support a range of projects and programmes around the world, including initiatives to counter xenophobia and other projects to promote the social inclusion of Roma in central and eastern Europe.

### **Call for tender**

The EU's 2013 work plan (2012/C 378/07) for the second programme of Community action in the field of health (2008–2013) was adopted on 28 November 2012. A call for tender will be published in 2013 on training packages for health professionals to improve access to and quality of health services for migrants and ethnic minorities.

For more information please register by sending an e-mail to [EAHC-HP-TENDER@ec.europa.eu](mailto:EAHC-HP-TENDER@ec.europa.eu) and consult the 2013 work plan.

[Adoption of work plan for 2013](#)

[More on the work plan 2013 and applications for co-funding](#)

## **ISSUES IN FOCUS/FEATURE**

### **Roma Health Report to gauge progress in the European Union**

The Executive Agency for Health and Consumers in cooperation with the Directorate-General for Health and Consumers (DG SANCO) has contracted Matrix Insight (United Kingdom) to prepare the Roma Health Report, which is expected to be completed in early 2014. The project's objective is to provide scientific background input for planning of the Commission's actions in reducing the health gap between Roma and the rest of countries' populations. Special features of the report will be an assessment of the health status and health-related lifestyle attributes of Roma populations in various countries and a report on Member States' data collection activities.

### **[UNFPA and WHO/Europe strengthen strategic collaboration](#)**

On 3 December 2012, Werner Haug, Regional Director of UNFPA EECARO, met with Zsuzsanna Jakab, Regional Director of WHO/Europe, to discuss opportunities to strengthen the organizations' ongoing collaboration, which has spanned 25 years and a range of issues, including Roma health. Stepped up information sharing and greater technical, strategic and policy collaboration between the two agencies, as envisioned by the two directors, will enhance their efforts to support public health in the eastern European and central Asian Member States of the WHO European Region.

### **[Human Rights Day 2012: "My voice counts"](#)**

Bernadett Varga is a member of the Roma Civil Society Group on the Right to Health, which provides civil-society input for activities and decisions of the interagency coordination initiative "Scaling up actions towards Millennium Development Goals 4 and 5 in the context of the Decade of Roma Inclusion and in support of national Roma integration strategies". Through participation in this Group, and drawing from her work to advance the health rights of Roma, Bernadette believes she has a say in the improvement of Roma health policies. Read her story published by WHO/Europe on Human Rights Day, 10 December 2012.

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About this newsletter: This newsletter is published by the WHO Regional Office for Europe in cooperation with the European Commission – Directorate-General for Health and Consumers (DG-SANCO) and the Interuniversity Institute of Social Development and Peace at the University of Alicante, Spain (WHO Collaborating Centre on Social Inclusion and Health). It is produced as an output of the Interagency Coordination Initiative on "Scaling up action towards MDGs 4 and 5 in the context of the Decade of Roma Inclusion and in support of national Roma integration strategies", which is facilitated by WHO and also involves United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and International Organization for Migration (IOM). The newsletter is issued quarterly and archived on the [WHO/Europe web site](#).

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