

Roma health newsletter

Published by the WHO Regional Office for Europe in cooperation with the European Commission (DG-SANCO) and the Interuniversity Institute of Social Development and Peace at the University of Alicante, Spain



Roma health newsletter, Issue 2 – September 2012

Welcome to the second 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

[Addressing systemic barriers to Roma access to health care: legal strategies by Roma NGOs](#)

8–10 November 2012, Malta

A parallel session on systemic barriers to Roma access to health care will be organized by the Open Society Foundation's Roma Health Project and Law and Health Initiative (LAHI) at the 5th Annual European Public Health Conference.

[European Union conference on childhood immunization: progress, challenges and priorities for further action](#)

16–17 October 2012, Luxembourg

This conference organized by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Health and Consumers will present an opportunity to take stock of recent European Union (EU) initiatives on childhood immunization and provide a platform to discuss priority areas for future EU-level action in this area. The conference will be devoted in part to increasing access to vaccination for underserved populations.

[Early childhood development conference](#)

15–17 October 2012, Opatija, Croatia

A conference entitled "Co-constructing Professional Learning: Pathways towards Quality, Equity and Respect for Diversity in ECEC" is being organized by the International Step by Step Association (ISSA), Diversity in Early Childhood Education and Training (DECET) and Open Academy Step by Step in Croatia.

A new initiative aiming to empower Roma and non-Roma early childhood development (ECD) professionals and para-professionals working with Romani communities is expected to be launched at the conference. The "Roma Early Childhood Development Professionals' Network" is a joint project of the Open Society Foundation's Roma Kopa_i initiatives in the Early Childhood Programme (ECP) and ISSA in cooperation with its members.

[Inform, protect, immunize: engaging underserved populations](#)

4–6 September 2012, Dublin, Ireland

The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) organized a consultation meeting on progress towards the WHO 2015 measles and rubella elimination target. The consultation focused on finding practical solutions, particularly with respect to measles outbreaks in groups of underserved populations and in light of current economic crisis challenges. The key meeting outcome was a list of interventions that could contribute to increasing vaccination uptake in the EU.

Each of 18 attending EU Member States was invited to send three representatives to the meeting, including a representative (such as a health mediator) from Roma/Travellers' civil society organizations.

[Global health diplomacy course for countries of the South-eastern Europe Health Network](#)

21–25 August 2012, Debrecen, Hungary

Diplomatic and health professionals representing countries of the South-eastern Europe Health Network (SEEHN) participated in a global health diplomacy course to explore their common interests in health as a foreign policy issue. A session on how to address Roma health across borders was organized by the WHO Collaborating Centre on Vulnerability and Health. The course was supported by the WHO Regional Office for Europe and hosted by the Faculty of Public Health, University of Debrecen.

[Colloquium on human-rights-based approach to Roma inclusion and active citizenship](#)

21–22 June 2012, Rome, Italy

This colloquium, organized by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) with the support of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Government of Italy, brought together representatives of United Nations Member States, civil society and United Nations agencies. It was held under the Chatham House Rule, which allowed for unprecedented openness in the exchange between governments and civil society. While not being specifically focused on Roma health, it did address Roma health issues in the context of other policy challenges (such as poor nutrition of children in depressed neighbourhoods and substance abuse).

["A Good Start" project rounds up at final conference](#)

4 June 2012, Brussels, Belgium

"A Good Start" was one of three EU Roma pilot projects launched by the European Parliament and financed by the European Commission. The results and outcome of the project, which ran from June 2010 to June 2012, were disseminated at the project's final conference, where future steps for scaling up the successful modules of the project were also discussed.

RESOURCES AND REPORTS

[The situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States](#)

A new report published jointly by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) shows that the situation of Roma in the areas of employment, education, housing and health is on average worse than that of non-Roma living in the same vicinity. The report of survey data collected in 2011 is intended to provide policy-makers with the necessary evidence to design effective policy responses to address the situation.

[UNDP resources on Roma in central and southeast Europe](#)

UNDP works with national partners to promote inclusion of Roma in economic, political, social and community life. This web site gives access to UNDP reports and the results of household surveys conducted in central and southeast Europe.

[Meeting report: "Communicable disease prevention among Roma"](#)

This report summarizes the main discussion points, conclusions and recommendations of a meeting convened by ECDC on 27–29 November 2011 in Vienna, Austria. It includes a list of suggested actions for ECDC and other organizations and for authorities at the local, national and European levels.

[Highlights of conference: "Good practices on Roma integration in Europe"](#)

On 5 June 2012, the European Roma Information Office hosted a conference in Brussels, Belgium. The purpose of the conference was to discuss successful practices related to Roma integration in Europe and the current status of Roma integration in Belgium, as well as to officially launch the Belgian Roma, Sinti and Travellers Council (RSTC).

[Vulnerability and health: WHO opens new collaborating centre in Hungary](#)

WHO has designated the Department of Preventive Medicine in the Faculty of Public Health at the University of Debrecen, Hungary, as a WHO Collaborating Centre on Vulnerability and Health. The Centre will promote awareness, political commitment and action on the adverse social conditions that make certain groups (such as Roma and other ethnic minorities) vulnerable to ill health.

[Potential criteria for review of the health component of national Roma integration strategies](#)

This WHO working document aims to provide support to and additional background for the European Commission in its process of reviewing the health components of national Roma integration strategies.

[Analysis of references to Structural Funds in national Roma integration strategies](#)

This report analyses the national Roma integration strategies (or sets of policy measures) submitted to the European Commission by 24 EU Member States. It looks specifically at aspects such as the foreseen use of Structural Funds during the current and upcoming programming periods, the mention of integrated actions and combination of EU funds, the use of EU technical assistance and the process for the monitoring and evaluation of interventions. The document is published by "EURoma" (the European Network on Social Inclusion and Roma under the Structural Funds, www.euromanet.eu).

PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

[Open Society Foundations 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.

ISSUES IN FOCUS/FEATURE

[European Commission calls on Member States to implement national plans for Roma integration](#)

In a May 2012 assessment report, National Roma integration strategies: a first step in the implementation of the EU Framework, the European Commission addressed areas in which Member States need to improve implementation of their national strategies (or sets of policy measures) for Roma integration. The [report](#) (reference COM/2012/226) is available in 22 languages.

Report on Roma Early Childhood Inclusion in Croatia under preparation

UNICEF, the Open Society Foundations and the Roma Education Fund, partners in the regional Roma Early Childhood Inclusion (RECI) research and advocacy initiative, are supporting the preparation of a RECI Report on Croatia. For more information on the Croatia RECI report, please contact Adrian Marsh, Open Society Foundations: adrian.marsh@osf-eu.org
A RECI report for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, along with other reports and a variety of advocacy materials, is available at www.romachildren.com. RECI reports for the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Serbia will also soon be available.

[MICS surveys to include sample from Roma settlements](#)

UNICEF is discussing with government authorities and other partners in Montenegro and elsewhere plans to extend Round 5 of its Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) to include an additional sample from Roma settlements, alongside the nationally representative sample. Both surveys are expected to take place in 2013 and cover a range of indicators related to health and well-being. Reports on Round 4 of MICS conducted in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, in both cases with an additional sample from Roma settlements, are expected to be published before the end of 2012.

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