

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 4 – May 2013

Welcome to the fourth 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

[Roma and health: a best practice learning event](#)

17 January 2013, Leeds, United Kingdom

The Roma SOURCE project organized an event to share lessons learnt from three Roma health pilot initiatives in Bradford, Rotherham and Sheffield, United Kingdom. The discussion covered topics such as sexual health, health needs assessment, cultural awareness and competence.

[The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia hosts WHO/Europe multi-country training on how to achieve greater health equity for Roma](#)

11–14 March 2013, Skopje

Public health decision-makers, experts and Roma association representatives gathered in Skopje on 11–14 March 2013 to participate in a multi-country training on how to reorient strategies, programmes and activities related to Millennium Development Goals (MDG) 4 and 5 towards greater health equity with an explicit but not exclusive focus on the Roma population.

["From pilots to outcomes" conference. Evidence-based lessons on socio-economic inclusion of Roma communities](#)

15 March 2013, Brussels, Belgium, and Moldava nad Bodvou, Slovakia

The European Commission (EC) Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank, organized the closing conference of the joint project on tools and methods for data collection and monitoring of interventions for Roma inclusion. The conference was conducted in two (video-bridged) locations, to enable residents of a Roma settlement in Slovakia to be heard by the decision-makers in Brussels.

[Coalition for Roma Inclusion](#)

16 April 2013, Paris, France

Representatives from the Council of Europe, European Commission, European Free Trade Association, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway, Open Society Foundations, World Bank and UNDP met in Paris on 16 April and decided to join forces in coordinating activities aiming at practical and operational support for Roma inclusion.

[24th International Steering Committee Meeting of the Decade of Roma Inclusion](#)

19–20 June 2013, Zagreb, Croatia

The 24th International Steering Committee Meeting in Zagreb will be the final event of the 2012–2013 Croatian Presidency of the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005–2015. Montenegro is scheduled to assume the Decade Presidency on 1 July 2013.

[Second OHCHR meeting of the Roma Civil Society Group on the Right to Health](#)

25–26 June 2013, Brussels, Belgium

The Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR) convened an inception meeting of the Roma Civil Society Group on the Right to Health in Brussels on 30–31 January 2012. The purpose of this group is to provide a sustained mechanism for civil society input to the activities of the United Nations and its multilateral agencies cooperating on Roma health. It also works to foster intercountry exchange among

civil society on the health components of the national Roma integration strategies, policy measures submitted to the EC and national action plans for the Decade of Roma Inclusion.

The second meeting will take place on 25–26 June 2013 and will focus on networking and follow up to developments in the United Nations, European Union (EU) and beyond since the first meeting. Participants will also examine ways to expand cooperation with the United Nations agencies, Council of Europe and the EC.

[Report from the first meeting](#) - Includes the Civil Society Group's recommendations concerning national Roma integration strategies

[European Union Platform for Roma Inclusion](#)

27 June 2013 (to be confirmed), Brussels, Belgium

The European Platform for Roma Inclusion was created to stimulate exchange and cooperation among EU Member States, international organizations and civil society. The 8th meeting of the Platform, tentatively scheduled to take place on 27 June 2013, will focus on the urgent need to effect change for Roma children and youth.

RESOURCES AND REPORTS

[Findings of the UNDP/WB/EC regional Roma survey](#)

In 2011 the UNDP, World Bank and EC conducted a survey which compared the living standards of Roma and non-Roma communities living in close proximity in 12 central and eastern European countries. This site provides a concise overview of the findings and links to a policy brief and full report on the survey.

More information on the surveys: [Roma inclusion – Moving beyond the research ivory tower](#)

[Dataset of the 2011 UNDP/WB/EC regional Roma survey](#)

The UNDP Bratislava Regional Centre has made the dataset from the recent UNDP/WB/EC regional Roma survey available to the public. This will allow interested researchers and institutions to analyse the situation of marginalized Roma and their non-Roma neighbours in 12 European countries. Full access to the survey data complements various UNDP and World Bank publications based on the survey data.

[UNDP publications](#)

[World Bank publications](#)

[Resolution: Ending discrimination against Roma children](#)

Resolution 1927 (2013) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on ending discrimination against Roma children was adopted on 23 April 2013. The Resolution is accompanied by an [Explanatory memorandum](#) that focuses on integrated interventions in the early ages, including maternal and child health, as well as on measures to improve access to inclusive and quality education.

[Report on the “Conference on childhood immunisation: progress, challenges and priorities for further action”](#)

The “Conference on childhood immunisation: progress, challenges and priorities for further action”, held in Luxembourg on 16–17 October 2012, took stock of recent initiatives on childhood immunization taken by the EU, including follow-up to the Council conclusions on childhood immunization adopted in June 2011. In addition, the conference provided a platform to discuss priority areas for future EU-level action on childhood immunization with a wide range of stakeholders.

[Upcoming Roma health report](#)

The EC’s Executive Agency for Health and Consumers has commissioned a Roma health report to help inform EC actions in reducing the health gap between Roma and the majority populations in European countries. The report will assess the health status and health-related lifestyle attributes of the Roma population, with a particular focus on countries with large Roma populations and on the health status of migrant Roma.

[Inclusion and ethnic monitoring of Gypsies and Travellers in the National Health Service](#)

The Irish Traveller Movement in Britain has conducted research to establish how many primary care trusts in England conduct ethnic monitoring of Gypsies and Travellers and how aware and inclusive they are of Gypsies’ and Travellers’ health needs. This report provides background and key findings of the research.

Beyond first steps: What next for the EU Framework for Roma Integration?

This Open Society policy brief offers a set of recommendations that the EC needs to consider in order to keep the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies on track. It recommends that Member States ensure their strategies contain all necessary measures to eliminate individual and systematic discrimination against Roma in health care and social services, by providing Roma with access to quality services at a similar level and under the same conditions as for the rest of the population.

Twenty mechanisms for addressing torture in health care

This Open Society Foundations (OSF) publication compiles national, regional and international mechanisms to promote government accountability and prevent torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment that could be applied to health facilities.

Reclaiming adolescence: Roma transitions to adulthood

The FBX Center (Center for Health and Human Rights, Harvard School of Public Health) has initiated a participatory action research project with Roma and non-Roma youths aged 15 to 25 in Italy, Romania and Serbia titled "Reclaiming adolescence: Roma transitions to adulthood". The research project is being conducted within a multidimensional framework of social, health and human rights.

Hearty lives: a health and literacy programme to benefit the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities

This health literacy programme was launched in January 2013 in Fenland, United Kingdom. It focuses on making sure people know how to use their heart medication correctly and improving the literacy skills of those who cannot read or write.

PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Open Society Foundations employment, grants, scholarships and fellowships

OSF supports 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.

Roma Health Scholarship Programme

The Roma Health Scholarship Programme (RHSP) offers merit-based open competition scholarships to Roma students who are citizens of Bulgaria, Serbia or the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. It is supported by OSF's Roma Health Programme and implemented by the Roma Education Fund.

Call for applications: European Commission Internship for Young Roma University Graduates

The Roma Initiatives Office is offering 5 five-month internships with the EC in Brussels, Belgium, for young Roma university graduates from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, as well as from Kosovo (in accordance with Security Council resolution 1244 (1999)). The internships begin on 1 October 2013, and the application deadline is 7 June 2013.

Sastipen, tutorship programme

This tutorship programme offers preparatory courses for Roma students in biology, chemistry and/or physics. Roma students also receive mentoring and technical assistance to help them pass admission exams for higher education institutions specializing in medical areas.

Pre-medical course for Roma students in Hungary

This programme provides preparation courses in chemistry, biology and anatomy to students, prior to their admission to a medical university. Upon admission, students are enrolled in a mentorship programme that lasts the duration of their studies and continues after they receive their medical diploma.

ISSUES IN FOCUS/FEATURE

Council of Europe Congress launches the European Alliance of Cities and Regions for Roma Inclusion

The Council of Europe launched the European Alliance of Cities and Regions for Roma Inclusion during the 24th Session of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (19-21 March). Health is one the four working areas.

[ERCP urges the EU to make fundamental changes in its policies](#)

On International Roma Day, 8 April 2013, the European Roma Policy Coalition (ERPC) urged the EU and its Member States to take full leadership on Roma inclusion and to ensure real changes for Roma by fully implementing the national Roma integration strategies and effectively enforcing EU anti-discrimination law, with the aim to improve their living conditions and guarantee their human rights, including full access to health care.

[Film on Roma access to health care: “An episode in the life of an iron picker”](#)

The international jury of the Berlinale 2013 film festival awarded the Silver Bear to a Danis Tanovic film on a Roma family that has no medical insurance. The film is a re-enactment by members of a non-professional cast of an episode in their own lives, which contributes greatly to the film’s sense of authenticity and social realism. At the same time, the film demonstrates one Roma family’s extraordinary courage and will to survive.

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