



June 2010 meeting of the European Platform for Roma Inclusion.

Draft for debate.

1. Framework

The further development of the **Integrated European Platform for Roma Inclusion** – formed by stakeholders representing EU institutions, international organizations, Member State governments and civil society – is overwhelmingly considered as a requirement in order for it to achieve its primary aim: fostering greater coherence and effectiveness in parallel policy processes at the European, national and local levels aiming at Roma inclusion and the reduction of inequalities between Roma and the majority population.

The Council Conclusions on “Advancing Roma Inclusion” takes note of the creation of the Integrated Platform for Roma Inclusion, in accordance with the Council Conclusions of December 2008, which defined the **three central functions of the Platform**.¹

1. Exchange of good practice and experience between Member States in the field of Roma inclusion;
2. Provision of analytical support;
3. Encouragement of cooperation between all interested parties on all Roma-related issues.

The first meeting of the Integrated Platform was held in April 2009, following which the Council took note of the Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion, and invited the Commission and the Member States, in close cooperation, and in accordance with their respective competences, to take into account the Common Basic Principles, where appropriate, when designing and implementing policies to promote the full inclusion of the Roma, as well as when designing and implementing policies to defend fundamental rights, uphold gender equality, combat discrimination, poverty and social exclusion, and

¹ The Council Conclusions called on the Commission “to organise, initially, an exchange of good practice and experience between Member States in the sphere of inclusion of the Roma, provide analytical support and stimulate cooperation between all parties concerned by Roma issues, including the organisations representing the Roma”. Doc. 15976/1/08 REV 1, para. 14.

ensure access to education, housing, health, employment, social services, justice, sports and culture, and also in the EU's relations with third countries².

The Council Conclusions adopted at the Health and Consumer Council (EPSCO) on the 7th of June 2010 on “Advancing Roma Inclusion” invites, in its paragraph 19, the Commission and Member States

“To make progress towards a specific road map for the Platform, in order to provide a mid-term framework of stakeholder actions and expected outputs and to reinforce horizontal cooperation between the Member States and civil society in matters related to Roma by taking such matters into account within the existing Open Method of Coordination; the aims set out in the road map should include coordination and creating synergies between existing parallel policy processes and gathering in-depth information on national policies having an impact on Roma inclusion[...]; it should also prioritize issues within different fields of action and define central points/axes, in accordance with Common Basic Principles 1³ and 4⁴, focusing especially on education, housing, healthcare, and equal access to employment.”

It also specifically invites the Commission, in paragraph 28, to

“support the implementation of the road map referred to in paragraph 19. This support will include the organisation of further meetings of the Platform, including the preparation of background documents, in cooperation with the current Trio of Presidencies in office from 2010 (Spain, Belgium and Hungary).”

This working document is a proposal of the Spanish Presidency of the EU, which seeks to provide substance to paragraph 19 of the Council conclusions and that has been elaborated in close cooperation with the Commission with the support of a preparatory group composed of persons with different backgrounds, including representatives of each Member State of the current Trio of Presidencies (Spain, Belgium, Hungary), experts on Roma issues, members of Roma civil society and representatives of different departments of the European Commission.

This working document addresses the following key aspects:

1. The key issues that will help to frame the Platform meetings.
2. The way issues may be addressed in the Platform in order to produce added value and the most appropriate working methods in order to achieve greater effectiveness for actions aimed at Roma inclusion.

² Doc. 10394/09, para. 11.

³ "Constructive, pragmatic and non-discriminatory policies."

⁴ "Aiming for the mainstream."

3. Given these key issues, the outputs that the Platform should generate in terms of providing an exchange of good practices, providing analytical support, and encouraging cooperation between stakeholders.
4. Ways to disseminate outputs more effectively and ways for the Commission to support this process.

It ought to be emphasised that the Platform is a **dynamic process** that will constantly be subject to improvements in its internal workings and in the ways it coordinates its activities with public authorities and civil society organisations with the aim of mainstreaming Roma issues in general policies and facilitating coordination between different policy levels. The Platform is, however, Presidency-driven and its agenda will therefore be determined by the priorities of the incumbent EU Presidency in close cooperation with the Commission, the Trio and with a view to stimulate the active engagement of key stakeholders.

The present working document offers proposals to generate a **preliminary framework** for habitual Platform activities and functioning. However, its activities and functioning must logically be adapted to changing circumstances.

2. Identifying key issues addressed by the Platform

This section identifies the **key issues** that the Platform meetings ought to focus on. In accordance with the aforementioned Draft Council Conclusions on ‘Advancing Roma Inclusion’, one of the objectives of the Platform meetings is not merely to work on broad themes/axes but to identify and make progress on those key issues within each theme, which are most relevant to and imply a substantial impact on the socio-economic inclusion of Roma.

The following table offers a **list of key issues to be addressed within each general theme**. It is beyond doubt that the Platform will not be able to address all of them but we should have a scenario of the issues that should be addressed as a priority. This table has been produced on the basis of secondary sources, existing debates and reports, as well as the work of the Platform’s preparatory meeting of experts.

This is an indicative set of issues that aims to facilitate the work of the current and future Trios by **translating broad themes into concrete issues and subjects in order for the Platform to improve its actions and to achieve greater impacts**. It is therefore flexible and subject to constant improvements.

Broad themes	Key issues
Education	Early child education and care
	Measures to prevent early school leaving and academic failure
	Desegregation in educational centers in urban areas
	Secondary and Tertiary Education - with a view to securing access to employment
Employment	Transition between education and employment: professional training, individualized support, employability and access to formal labor market
	Micro-credit for entrepreneurship and self-employment
	Partnerships in employment
	Quality of employment
Housing	Infrastructural and environmental improvements in Roma communities
	Integrated actions within the framework of revised Article 7
	Desegregation and urban planning
	Support measures for community involvement
	Basic care infrastructure
Health	Measurement of health inequalities, starting with the Commission Communication on Health inequalities (indicators of social determinants of health inequalities).
	Traditional impediments to health and behavioural changes: preventive healthcare by targeting Roma youth
	Securing access to healthcare - rational use of healthcare infrastructure
Tranversal themes	Anti-discrimination measures and awareness-raising in employment, education, healthcare and housing
	Integrated actions in marginalised rural communities – impossibility to develop desegregation actions; ensuring equal access to resources and services
	Monitoring systems of programmes
	Data collection and improving information systems
	Aligning policies and practices
	Capacity building
	Active citizenship
	Enlargement
	Gender equality
Other issues	Youth
	Culture
	Protection of victims of human rights abuses
	Roma migration

Within these key issues, different research and reports have identified relevant sub-issues that will help to fine tune discussion.

Each Presidency, in agreement with the Trio and in close collaboration with the Commission, 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**, including gender mainstreaming and the involvement of civil society and Roma through an inter-cultural approach.

- the achievement of a **substantial impact on the quality of living of Roma communities**, taking into account present and expected social, economic and political conjunctures.
- **consistence with the interests of the EU and Member States**, and alignment with EU policies in order to achieve greater positive impacts.

The Platform's work should also be coherent with the future European Union policies, in particular with the Europe 2020 Strategy and the Council's Employment Guidelines, which promote social inclusion and the fight against poverty and make explicit reference to minorities and Roma, as well as with other Directives and initiatives when applicable. The Platform's activities will take into account the work of the future 'European platform against poverty', as well as the other flagship initiatives of the Europe 2020 Strategy when applicable.

3. Working methods

Issues ought to be addressed in the Platform with the explicit aim to **produce added value to existing knowledge and support policy implementation**. In this light, this section presents the **working methods** that are considered most appropriate in order to achieve greater effectiveness and impact for the activities of the Platform.

The key issue for the Platform is to achieve continuity and to add significant value to the work of all stakeholders. In order to fulfill this aim, **stable yet flexible working methods** should be employed by all Presidencies; these methods will be characterised by preparatory actions in the form of one or several Working Groups, at least one meeting of the Platform during each Presidency focusing on one or two key issues with practical applications and with a view to **monitoring existing progress**. Given the themes and issues identified and given the functions of Platform, working methods will be subject to change according to circumstances in order to generate useful outputs and to achieve functionality. As a general framework the following methods are suggested:

1. It is suggested that at least one **Platform general meeting** would take place during each Presidency, focusing on one or two key issues in accordance with the priorities of the Presidency in office and in cooperation with the Trio. The **issues and themes addressed by the Platform should be defined and prepared well in advance** by each Presidency in order to develop the preparatory work that will allow to provide clear and substantial working contents the Platform meeting. Furthermore, the participants in meetings of the Platform as well as the issues addressed therein will always take into account the **perspective and situation of adhesion countries** and of the challenges and needs implied by future enlargements.
2. **Preparatory work should be undertaken for general meetings of the Platform**; it could be achieved, among other ways, through **thematic Working**

Groups in accordance with the issues to be discussed and the priorities identified by each Presidency. The preparation of the Platform's agenda in Working Groups should take place under the guidance of the Presidency with the involvement of the Trio, a select number of **experts and key players** with responsibilities in the design of policies and financing in relevant areas, who will discuss contents and questions to be put forward at the general meetings, and who are able to share in-depth knowledge and that have influence on the issue under discussion. **Data gathering and information exchange** on past developments in relation to the key issue under discussion would help to identify advances and shortcomings in order to make **concrete proposals** that can feed into the work of Member States, of the Presidency and of Community and international institutions.

Attendance to each general Platform meetings: invited participants should combine two key criteria:

- be **key players** directly affected by or related to the issues under discussion, with competencies and responsibilities in the addressed field, and who provide added value to the issues under discussion.
- Participants would include **representatives** of EU institutions, international organisations, Member States governments and other relevant institutions, such as the Committee of the Regions, Roma NGOs and organisations representing local interests.

The contributions of the Platform will suppose substantial progress in relation to previous meetings by ensuring the involvement of a select number of middle level decision makers in relevant fields. The political weight of institutions is what makes the difference.

4. Outputs of Platform

Given these key issues, the Platform ought to generate outputs in terms of providing an exchange of good practices, providing analytical support, and encouraging cooperation between stakeholders.

The Presidency organising the Platform would produce discussion papers in cooperation with the Commission, on the basis of the preparatory meetings of Working Groups, to serve as a basis of the framework document.

A written product, in the form of recommendations/proposals/suggestions, should be obtained as a result of general meetings that add value to existing knowledge and that achieve operational applicability. It will have to incorporate and feed into the existing processes and the work of established committees and working groups in relevant fields, paying particular attention to timing in order to maximise its influence. The

participation of experts and key agents, in terms of representation, competencies and responsibilities in the addressed field, would help to facilitate the exchange of good practices, the provision of analytical support and the creation of synergies between relevant actors, which would be consolidated by the production and diffusion of a rigorous and forward-looking written product.

On the basis of the report and with a view to enhancing the accessibility and versatility of the Platform, **the outputs would possibly include different products adapted to different targets**, for example a leaflet with the Platform meetings' key findings and messages, and an executive presentation.

5. Dissemination and impact

It is important for the Platform not merely to produce high-quality, results-oriented outputs that will explicitly feed into the political agenda and actions aimed at Roma inclusion, but also to bring to light and disseminate its results in order to **raise awareness and sustain the prominence of Roma issues on the political agenda of the EU and Member States**.

The outputs of the Platform are to be reflected in the agenda of the successive EU Presidencies and of the Trios and to feed into the contents of the conclusions of relevant thematic Councils, in order to effectively mainstream Roma-specific policies into sectorial policies. EU Presidencies would take stock of the points raised by the reports/orientations/pathways of the Platform and propose Roma-related topics to be addressed in relevant thematic Councils. The Platform, in cooperation with the incumbent Presidency and the Trio, would thereafter integrate the contents of Council Conclusions under previous Presidencies in its work and reflect it in its own outputs, which in turn would inform the issues raised by Presidency and to be addressed by relevant Councils.

The written products (reports/orientations/pathways generated by the Platform general meetings, leaflets and executive presentations) **should be widely disseminated to Member States**, the Commission and other stakeholders. The Commission should actively support the effective dissemination of the Platform's outputs. The aim is to disseminate the products through key channels and in relevant social spaces in order to achieve a multiplier effect. Among others, we suggest the following adequate outlets:

- the website of the European Commission,
- the EURoma network and its partners (Managing Authorities of Structural Funds and specialised agencies responsible for policies aimed at Roma inclusion and development),
- international organisations,

- relevant government Ministries, at the national, regional and local levels,
- the ERPC and other civil society platforms.
- Internal diffusion in key DG of the Commission should also be undertaken.

Strategic dissemination should be undertaken among key national stakeholders, including policymakers working on Roma issues. A multiplier effect would best be achieved by encouraging participants to be pro-active disseminators of information to all stakeholders at the national level.

The dissemination process should ensure the active involvement of DG Communication.