

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 5 – September 2013

Welcome to the fifth 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 \(EPH\) Conference](#)

13–16 November 2013, Brussels, Belgium

The EPH Conference will include a roundtable on "Novel ways of improving Roma people's health: collaborative national, regional and European strategies" chaired by Maja Saitovic Jovanovic and Eva Maria Foldes. More than 15 papers on Roma health will be presented.

Workshop on strategies to reduce health inequalities with focus on Roma

24–25 October 2013, Istanbul, Turkey

This event is jointly organized by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and WHO/Europe to support implementation of national Roma integration strategies and Decade of Roma Integration action plans. The workshop will follow up on the recommendations of the UNFPA/WHO workshop held in Istanbul in October 2011 and review progress and lessons learnt since then. The event is organized as part of the Interagency Coordination Initiative "Scaling up action towards Millennium Development Goals (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 UNFPA, Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR), United Nations Development Fund (UNDP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and International Organization for Migration (IOM).

[16th European Health Forum: EU Session on improving access and combating discrimination in healthcare with a focus on vulnerable groups](#)

3 October 2013, Gastein, Austria

The session aims to identify issues in relation to discrimination in access to healthcare in the EU; to highlight the European Commission's commitment to the promotion and protection of fundamental rights in access to healthcare; to discuss possible EU actions on improving the access to healthcare in the EU; and to identify gaps and challenges, highlighting evidence and best practices.

[Working group meeting on health mediation and the Roma](#)

20 September 2013, Huelva, Spain

This working group meeting gathered together governmental and nongovernmental experts working in the field of health mediation and Roma from Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Italy, Romania and Spain as well as representatives of international organizations, civil-society organizations and academia. It was organized by IOM at the International Conference on Intercultural Mediation in Health Care (19–20 September 2013) as part of the Equi-Health project, which is co-funded by the European Commission, the EC Directorate-General for Health and Consumers (DG-SANCO), the Health Promotion Unit of the Centre for Migration Studies, University of Huelva, and other project partners.

[Fourth International Conference of Roma Women](#)

16–17 September 2013, Helsinki, Finland

This Conference was organized by the Council of Europe and the Finnish Government. Its aim was to draft a European strategy for Roma women containing recommendations addressed to Roma women themselves as well as Roma organizations, governments and international organizations.

The European Roma and Travellers Forum (ERTF) and the International Roma Women's Network (IRWN) jointly presented the following position paper:

[Acting now for an equal future](#)

[**Balancing the primary care and secondary care provision for more integration and better health outcomes**](#)

9–10 September 2013, Istanbul, Turkey

At this Conference organized by the European Forum for Primary Care, Dr Pim de Graaf presented the following position paper: [Primary care and Roma health](#)

[**Conference on tackling health inequalities in Europe – CHANCE project**](#)

5–7 September 2013, Pécs, Hungary

The University of Pécs, as coordinator of the CHANCE consortium, organized this conference on how the European higher education system is coping with health inequalities related to migration and ethnic groups. In cooperation with the Open Society Foundations Public Health Programme, two Roma-health-related sessions were held at the Conference: "Challenges in health assistance of Roma people" and "Does the higher education system in the European Union (EU) respond to the need of ethnic-minority-sensitive health assistance".

[**Forum for Roma medical students: We are neither impersonal, nor indifferent**](#)

2 August 2013, Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria

Over 80 participants discussed innovative ways to improve access to health care and address problems in the Bulgarian health system. Young professionals also presented their observations and suggestions for solving specific local health care issues discussed during field visits to four settlements the previous day. The forum was organized for the second year by the Center for Interethnic Dialogue and Tolerance "Amalipe".

RESOURCES AND REPORTS

[**Roma health rights in Romania, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: A baseline for legal advocacy**](#)

Report by the Open Society Foundations on the current state of legal advocacy for Roma health rights in Romania, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Main topics are legal empowerment, documentation, media advocacy and strategic litigation.

[**Integration of social determinants of health and equity into health strategies, programmes and activities: health equity training process in Spain**](#)

Case study on a training process to integrate a focus on social determinants of health and equity into health strategies, programmes and activities carried out by the Spanish Ministry of Health. Lessons learnt from this Spanish training process have been incorporated in the design and development of the equity training process focused on "Reorienting strategies, programmes and activities on Millennium Development Goals 4 and 5 towards greater health equity with an explicit but not exclusive focus on the Roma population" that is being carried out by WHO/Europe, in collaboration with the Interuniversity Institute of Social Development and Peace, University of Alicante (WHO Collaborating Centre on Social Inclusion and Health) and the Spanish Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality.

[**Civil society monitoring reports on implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy and Decade Action Plan in 2012**](#)

In 2012, the Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat and the Open Society Foundations supported the creation of civil society monitoring reports on implementation of national Roma integration strategies (NRIS) and the Decade of Roma Inclusion national action plans in eight countries (Albania, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Romania, Slovakia, Spain). In addition, the Decade Secretariat made a template public in order to encourage additional civil society actors to monitor the implementation of NRIS and Decade action plans.

[**National Roma integration strategies: overview and critiques**](#)

This European Parliament library compiled this overview of assessments and studies of national Roma integration strategies in EU countries. While mentioning the national strategies developed by the Member States and the European Commission's position on each of the 27 strategies, it also provides a third perspective (given by an NGO, think-tank or academic researcher) on the situation in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and destination countries France, Germany, Italy, Spain and United Kingdom.

PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

[Marian Madison Gypsy Lore Society Young Scholar's Prize in Romani Studies](#)

The Gypsy Lore Society established the Marian Madison Gypsy Lore Society Young Scholar's Prize in Romani Studies for the best unpublished paper by a young scholar on a topic in Gypsy and Traveller Studies. The deadline for applications is 30 October 2013.

[Open Society Foundations \(OSF\) 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 Program](#)

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.

ISSUES IN FOCUS/FEATURE

Two new European Commission communications:

- [Steps forward in implementing national Roma integration strategies](#)
- [Proposal for a Council Recommendation on effective Roma integration measures in the Member States](#)

The 2013 report of the Commission on progress made regarding the EU Framework for national Roma integration strategies COM(2013)454 focuses on five preconditions identified for effective Roma integration measures: involvement of local authorities in implementation and decision-making; involvement of civil society and the Roma in implementation and decision-making; allocation of funding to match the policy commitments; monitoring of progress; and convincing efforts to fight discrimination. This report is accompanied by a Proposal for a Council recommendation on effective Roma integration measures in the Member States COM(2013)460. The Proposal is currently being discussed in the Council.

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