

## 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 6 – January 2014

Welcome to the sixth 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

### [Strategies to reduce health inequities with focus on Roma](#)

24 October 2013, Istanbul, Turkey

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and WHO/Europe jointly organized a workshop to support the implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategies and the Decade of Roma Inclusion Action Plans.

### [Roma health programme at the 6th European Public Health Conference](#)

13–16 November 2013, Brussels, Belgium

The Open Society Institute's Roma Health Project (RHP) organized a series of events on Roma health rights as part of the 6th European Public Health Conference, including two round tables titled "Novel ways of improving Roma people's health: collaborative national, regional and European strategies" and "Bridging the gap between policy and practice in Roma health: from common European goals to local achievements". The session also looked at community-level strategies to bring practice in line with policy, including community and civil society monitoring and access to justice approaches, and an oral presentation on "Rapid assessment and response to HIV among especially vulnerable Roma adolescents in Serbia in 2012". Roma experts, activists and students enrolled in medical and nursing studies in central and eastern European countries prepared and presented 10 posters exploring various topics on Roma health and access to health care.

### [Improving Roma health policies](#)

28–29 November 2013, Budapest, Hungary

In the framework of the European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST) Action IS1103 "Adapting European health systems to diversity (ADAPT)", a meeting was held in Budapest, hosted by Semmelweis University's Faculty of Health Sciences. Meeting participants critically reviewed the adoption and implementation of policies tackling the social situation of Roma, with particular emphasis on policies concerning health and health care.

### ["Health in Europe, making it fairer" Conference](#)

18 March 2014, Brussels, Belgium

The Conference, organized by the European Commission, will address the issues of improving fairness and equity in health in Europe, improving access to health and combating discrimination in health. Topics include good practice in promoting equity in health promotion, disease prevention and treatment services for disadvantaged groups and people in vulnerable situations (including Roma). Participants include representatives of European Union (EU) Member States, nongovernmental organizations and other relevant stakeholders, professional groups, academics and EU institutions.

### [EUPHA's 5th European Conference on Migrant and Ethnic Minority Health](#)

10–12 April 2014, Granada, Spain

The theme for the European Public Health Association's (EUPHA) 5th conference is "Migrant and Ethnic Minority Health and Health-care in the context of the current systemic crisis in Europe".

### [Call for papers for 2014 Annual Meeting of the Gypsy Lore Society](#)

11–13 September 2014, Bratislava, Slovakia

The 2014 Annual Meeting of the Gypsy Lore Society and Conference on Gypsy Studies is accepting submissions on any topic related to Gypsy studies. The application deadline for panel proposals is 15 February 2014 and the deadline for papers, poster presentations and abstracts is 15 April 2014.

## RESOURCES AND REPORTS

### [Review of social determinants and the health divide in the WHO European Region](#)

This review, commissioned by WHO/Europe, chaired by Professor Sir Michael Marmot and prepared by University College London's Institute of Health Equity, focuses on Roma health in Chapter 5. According to the review, the poor health status of Roma in general is strongly related to powerful social, economic, political and cultural exclusionary processes, including prejudice and discrimination.

### [Migration of Roma and non-Roma from central and eastern Europe \(CEE\)](#)

The authors of a recently published United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) paper, "[An option of last resort? Migration of Roma and non-Roma from CEE countries](#)", used a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to address myths about Roma migration. The publication is part of UNDP's Roma Inclusion Working Papers series and uses data from the 2011 UNDP/World Bank/European Commission regional Roma survey, the 2011 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) Roma pilot survey and qualitative research conducted among Roma migrants in Belgium.

### [Improving access to health care for Gypsies and travellers, homeless people and sex workers](#)

This evidence-based guide published by the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) indicates that radical changes are needed to meet the health care needs of vulnerable groups – including sex workers, Gypsies and travellers and homeless people. The guide will be presented at the [RCGP Annual Primary Care Conference](#) to be held in Liverpool, United Kingdom (2–4 October 2014).

### [Devon Gypsy & Traveller Project 2012/2013: quitting smoking and improving health and well-being](#)

This final report summarizes the results of an initiative to remove access barriers to mainstream smoking cessation services through community health agents and cultural awareness training addressed to health promotion staff in Devon (United Kingdom). The project is a good example of intersectoral and social participation. The initiative was led by Health Promotion Devon's Inequalities Team Community Development Worker for Gypsies and Travellers (Northern Devon Healthcare Trust) Penny Dane, in conjunction with Plymouth and Devon Racial Equality Council, with input from Health Promotion Devon staff.

### [Hidden health crisis, a report by the European Roma Rights Centre](#)

This new report by the European Roma Rights Centre in Romania shows a 16-year difference in the age at death between Roma and non-Roma. The report advocates for collecting and publishing disaggregated data on Roma to improve their health outcomes and life chances. The report also outlines the legal framework around data collection, including the safeguards that exist to protect individuals, and the good practice of European states which collect and publish such data in order to inform public policy.

### [Roma health mediation in Romania](#)

This case study uses secondary data (research reports, evaluation reports, legislation and data in the Romani CRISS archives) to provide a critical overview of the Roma health mediation programme in Romania. It discusses the social and political context in which the programme was developed, the general characteristics of the mediation and the lessons learnt after 10 years of implementation. WHO/Europe commissioned the report, prepared by the Roma Centre for Social Intervention and Studies (Romani CRISS), Romania.

### [ROMED Programme launches its second phase: ROMED2](#)

ROMED (Mediation for Roma) is the Council of Europe programme that promotes Roma participation in democratic governance through mediation. The second phase, ROMED 2, aims to work at local level, by supporting local partners in 40 municipalities across 10 countries respond to the needs of the Roma community.

### [Implementation of the Action Plan on improving the situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE area](#)

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) published a status report 10 years after the Action Plan's adoption. Chapter 1 covers comprehensive Roma strategies and Chapter 4 addresses health care in Roma communities.

### [Analysis of FRA Roma survey results by gender](#)

This report presents an analysis of data from the 2011 Roma pilot survey disaggregated by gender, and contributes to the European Parliament's report on "[Gender aspects of the European Framework of National Roma Integration Strategies](#)". The survey took place in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, France, Greece, Italy, Hungary, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Spain. The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) in collaboration with the European Commission, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank conducted the survey.

### **Short documentaries on Roma health mediator programme for Bulgaria, Romania and Ukraine**

The Open Society Institute's Roma Health Project (RHP) has been working together with Roma civil society to promote the sustainability of the health mediator model and hold governments accountable to integrate the mediator model into national systems. In 2013, the Open Society Foundations (OSF) supported the production of video materials that complement its 2011 report, "[Roma health mediators: successes and challenges](#)". The videos help challenge the negative stereotypes associated with Roma people while highlighting the crucial role played by Roma health mediators in [Bulgaria](#), [Romania](#) and [Ukraine](#). A [compilation video](#) includes the mediators' work in Serbia and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. They highlight the importance of mediation in ensuring equitable access of Roma people to health care and the specific problems encountered at national level in scaling up the mediator program and making it sustainable.

## PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

### [CEU Summer University offers course on social theory and Romany studies](#)

30 June – 6 July 2014, Budapest, Hungary

Summer University, a postgraduate programme within Central European University (CEU) is offering a course on social theory and Romany studies. The course is directed toward graduate students and junior researchers. This multidisciplinary course covers topics such as anthropological approaches to culture, poverty and identity; demography and migration; and sociological approaches to marginalization. The application deadline is 14 February 2014.

### [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.

## ISSUES IN FOCUS/FEATURE

### [Council recommendation on effective Roma integration measures](#)

The Council of the European Union (EU) adopted unanimously a recommendation on effective Roma integration measures on 9 December 2013. The Council recommends its Member States to "take effective measures to ensure equal treatment of Roma in access to universally available health care services on the basis of general eligibility criteria". The non-binding resolution is the strongest EU instrument for Roma Inclusion.

### [European Parliament resolution on the implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategies](#)

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategies (2013/2924(RSP)) at its plenary session on 12 December 2013. In Paragraph 24, the Parliament "calls on the Commission and the Member States to address the existing health disparities that Roma face and the prevalent discrimination regarding their access to healthcare, to set up specifically targeted programmes and to allocate sufficient financial resources from national and EU funds, with particular emphasis on child and maternal health".

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