

Sixth International Roma Women Conference

“Women and Political Representation: The Case of Roma and Traveller¹ Women”

6-7 November 2017
Strasbourg, Palais de l'Europe (Room 9)

PROGRAMME

#romawomencandoit

¹ The term “Roma and Travellers” is used at the Council of Europe to encompass the wide diversity of the groups covered by the work of the Council of Europe in this field: on the one hand a) Roma, Sinti/Manush, Calé, Kaale, Romanichals, Boyash/Rudari; b) Balkan Egyptians (Egyptians and Ashkali); c) Eastern groups (Dom, Lom and Abdal); and, on the other hand, groups such as Travellers, Yenish, and the populations designated under the administrative term “Gens du voyage”, as well as persons who identify themselves as Gypsies. The present is an explanatory footnote, not a definition of Roma and/or Travellers.

Monday, 6 November 2017

08.30-09.30 Registration of participants

Opening session

Moderator: Ms Snežana Samardžić-Marković, Director General of Democracy (DG II)

09.00-10.00 **Mr Thorbjørn Jagland**, Secretary General of the Council of Europe

Ms Rita Izsak-Ndiaye, Expert, former Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues, Member of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD)

Ms Nawel Rafik Elmrini, Deputy to the Mayor of Strasbourg, responsible for European and International Relations, City of Strasbourg, France

Ms Oana Bizgan-Gayral, President of the Commission for Equality between women and men, Romanian Chamber of Deputies

Ms Soraya Post, Member of the European Parliament, Feminist Initiative, Sweden (video message)

10.00-10.30 *Coffee break / Press Conference*

Panel discussion: Gender equality and electoral systems

Moderator: Ms Miranda Vuolasranta, President, European Roma and Travellers Forum (ERTF)

10.30-12.00 **Mr Xavier Cadoret**, Vice-President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, Mayor of Saint-Gérard-le-Puy, France

Ms Gesa Böckermann, Policy Officer, DG Justice and Consumers, Non-discrimination policies and Roma Coordination, European Commission

Mr Cristi Mihalache, Associate Programme Officer on Roma and Sinti Issues, OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)

Mr Charles Ramsden, Vice-Chair of the Council of Europe Gender Equality Commission (GEC)

Ms Milana Rikanovic, Gender Specialist, UN Women Programme Office, Serbia
“Effects of quota in the electoral system to the advancement of gender equality and women's rights”

Questions and answers

Plenary Session 1 - Electoral Quota Systems for Roma/Travellers

Moderator: Mr Robert Rustem, Roma and Travellers Team, Council of Europe

12.00-13.00 **Ms Anastasia Crickley**, Chairperson, UN Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Vice-President International Association for Community Development, Department of Applied Social Studies, Maynooth University, Ireland
“Special Measures to promote and support participation and political representation by Roma/Traveller Women: a global perspective”

Mr François Friederich, Head of the Electoral Assistance Division, Directorate General of Democracy, Council of Europe

“Electoral systems, gender quotas and women’s representation in Parliament. Systematic considerations, and relevance for Roma and Traveller Women”

Mr Tomas Hrustic, Elected Expert from the Slovak Republic on the Advisory Committee for the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities

“Increased voice of Roma women. Do quota systems lead to higher representation of Roma women in elected bodies?”

Discussion

13.00-14.30

Lunch break

Participants are invited to organise informal meetings between representatives of political parties and Roma and Traveller women during the break

Parallel workshops

14.30-16.00

Workshop 1: Running as candidates on political parties’ lists: Sharing experiences and lessons learned (Room 9)

Languages: English-Romani

*Chair: **Ms Alice Pop**, Romania Resident Director, National Democratic Institute (NDI)*

*Rapporteur: **Ms Henna Huttu**, Member of the Ad hoc Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues (CAHROM), Finland*

Open to all participants (registration required)

Panelists

Ms Mara-Daniela Calista, MP, National Liberal Party (PNL), Romania

Mr Robert Cerari, Leader of the Social Political Movement of Roma, Republic of Moldova

Ms Sarita Jasarova, President of LIL NGO, “The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”

Ms Saska Jovanovic, Consultant/Facilitator, CoE/EC Joint Programme on Roma and Traveller Women’s Access to Justice (JUSTROM), President of Association Romni onlus, Vice-president of the ROWNI-Roma Women Network Italy onlus, Italy

Ms Catarina Marcelino, MP, Socialist Party, Portugal

Mr Gheorge Raducanu, former MP and founder of the Party of the Roma, Romania

Ms Miranda Vuolasranta, President, European Roma and Travellers Forum (ERTF)

14.30-16.00

**Workshop 2: Running as candidates on political parties' lists:
Exploring opportunities and identifying challenges (Room 14)**

Languages: English-French

*Chair: **Mr Branko Sočanac**, Chair of the Ad hoc Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues (CAHROM), Croatia*

*Rapporteur: **Mr Michaël Guet**, Head of the I-CARE Unit, Roma and Travellers Team, Council of Europe*

Open to all participants (registration required)

Panelists

Ms Katju Aro, Chair, Feminist Party, Finland

Ms Laura Bosnea, Local Councillor, City of Rîșcani, Republic of Moldova

Mr Gabor Harangozo, MP, Socialist Party, Hungary

Mr Emil Kirjas, Secretary General of Liberal International

Ms Karolina Leaković, Co-ordinator on Human Rights Policies in the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and acting President of SDP Women's Forum, Croatia

Ms Valentina Leskaj, Member of the Chairmanship of the Socialist Party, Albania

Ms Gisèle Wurm, MP, Social Democratic Party (SPÖ), Austria

16.00-16.30

Coffee break

Plenary session: presentations and conclusions of the workshops

16.30-17.30

Oral reports by workshop rapporteurs

Discussion

Pledge by political parties on promoting gender equality and participation of Roma and Traveller Women in politics

17.30-18.00

Official signature ceremony covered by the press

*Moderator: **Mr Thorsten Afflerbach**, Head of the Division for Roma and Travellers Team, Council of Europe*

18.00

Reception

Lobby of the Hemicycle

Tuesday, 7 November 2017

Plenary Session 2: Empowering and mentoring Roma and Traveller Women: role models

Moderator: Ms Sonja Barbul, IRWN-Phenjalipe

9.30-11.30 **Ms Sarita Jasarova**, President, NGO LIL, “The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”

Ms Miranda Vuolasranta, President, European Roma and Travellers Forum (ERTF)

Ms Natasa Tasic, opera singer, Serbia

Ms Ursula Till-Tentschert, Senior Programme Manager - Statistics and Surveys, Freedoms and Justice Department, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)

Ms Maria Joyce, Co-ordinator of the Irish National Traveller Women's Forum

Ms Ágnes Oszolykán, former Member of Parliament, Lehet Mas a Politika Green Party, Hungary

Ms Mirjam Karoly, Expert, former Head of the OSCE/ODIHR Contact Point on Roma and Sinti Issues (CPRSI)

Discussion

11.30 – 12.00 *Coffee break*

10.00 - 11.30 Individual photo shoot with the participating Roma and Traveller women
The photographer will have a mobile studio set up by the conference room, interested participants can sign up at the Secretariat's desk.

Closing session

Moderator: Mr Thorsten Afflerbach, Head of Division for the Roma and Travellers Team, Council of Europe

12.00 – 13.00 **Ms Claudia Luciani, Director of Democratic Governance and Anti-Discrimination**, Directorate General of Democracy, Council of Europe

Ms Manjola Veizi, Executive Director, Roma Women Rights Center, Albania, Vice-President of IRWN – Phenjalipe

Pledge on political representation of Roma and Traveller women

Following the discussions held at the 6th International Conference of Roma Women “Women and Political Representation: The Case of Roma and Traveller Women” held at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, France, on 6-7 November 2017,

and taking into account that:

- in spite of the progress being made in Europe in terms of improving equal opportunities and rights for women and men, the Council of Europe notes a persistently low level of participation by women in decision-making processes and in political life;
- women from ethnic minorities, and Roma and Traveller women in particular, remain severely under-represented in European, national and regional parliaments, regional and municipal councils, governments and posts of responsibility in political parties;
- considering that balanced participation by women and men in decision-making is a precondition for improving the functioning of democracy and society;
- ongoing under-representation of women in political decision-making reflects a basic democratic deficit in both the member States of the Council of Europe and the broader international context;
- national electoral and party systems have an important responsibility for ensuring a balanced representation of women at all levels of government and parliament;
- electoral quotas are often effective means of achieving significant, rapid progress, provided that they are correctly designed and consistently implemented;
- quotas should be adapted to the electoral system in force and set ambitious yet achievable targets and where possible, such quotas and other positive measures should also be introduced for women from minority groups, including Roma and Travellers;
- political parties have a crucial role to play in improving the political representation of women in general and women from minority groups in particular, including Roma and Traveller women, as by selecting and supporting the candidates, they act as gatekeepers of elected positions, and their choices determine to a large extent the final outcome of elections concerning gender-balance and minority representation;

We, members of political parties, pledge to promote gender equality and the participation of women from minority groups, in particular Roma and Traveller women, in decision-making bodies and in political representation at the next European, national, regional and local elections.