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Education of Roma children in Europe

Roma Cultural Route

Directorate General IV
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CULTURAL ROUTES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

A COUNCIL OF EUROPE GYPSY CULTURAL ROUTE

Study prepared
by Jean-Pierre Liégeois

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Development of the idea

1. **Following the meeting of September 1992** "*Minorities in Europe: the educational and cultural aspects*", I wrote to Mr Weber, Director for Education, Culture and Sport, stressing the importance that the launching of an *Itinéraire culturel européen/European cultural route* could have for gypsies, and also mentioning the possibility of setting up a *Réseau européen de centres culturels/European network of cultural centres*.

2. In the course of other meetings, and in particular the one organised by the CLRAE in October 1992, Gypsies in the locality, the discussions and the participants' priorities and wishes further reinforced this idea. As general rapporteur for the colloquy, I, therefore, made a point of including in the conclusions a proposal for a Cultural Route, for this can crystallise the responses to many needs. The Resolution adopted by the CLRAE in March 1993 embodied this proposal (see below), confirming the value of this line of action and giving it official status.

3. Thus, we come to this report. As described in the commissioning letter, it aims:

"To produce a study of about twenty-five pages, presented in the form of an exploration of the subject, in relation to the idea of a route. More particularly, it will be a matter of highlighting the possibilities for constituting such a route on the basis of networking actions concerned with education, heritage, artistic creation, etc."

The bases of this report

4. This exploratory report, intended to show the usefulness, pertinence and possibility of creating a Gypsy Cultural Route, interweaves institutional factors and field data, thus forming a strong fabric. The first part presents a general framework for reflection, based on an examination of the present situation, a description of the gypsy situation in relation to the idea of a Route. The major priorities and orientations defined by the Council of Europe experts responsible for the overall running of the Cultural Routes programme are enumerated and considered in relation to a project for a Gypsy Route.

5. The second part makes concrete proposals based, on the one hand, on the analysis of cases, projects and certain aspects of reports drafted in other circumstances, notably in the field of education, for the Council of Europe or the European Community; and, on the other hand, on the results of a survey carried out specifically for this report. Almost 500 letters were sent out some of them personalised, asking for a reply to the questions by return because of the very short time available for the drafting of this report. These letters were sent to gypsy associations and organisations; and in some cases to non-gypsies working with gypsies, or people concerned with such matters as: culture, art, press, publishing, photography, radio, cinema, art, university research, museography, etc.

6. The answers, of varying length, were often accompanied by documents of considerable importance and volume. As this report is being drafted, replies are still coming in and the letter requesting information is still being circulated in order to make the file as complete as possible. The great majority of the replies show considerable interest in the idea of a Route, and also demonstrate the great maturity of most of the projects under way or being planned, which could participate directly in the development of a Gypsy Route. The promptness of the replies is further proof of the interest in expectations of and hopes placed in the Council of Europe - this is clearly visible through the correspondence.

7. The serious situation revealed by some of the replies means that we must not forget that certain gypsy communities in all parts of Europe are in very difficult circumstances, including a number of places showing no signs of diminishing. It can also be seen, however, that sometimes these particular places can give rise to some of the most important cultural projects. In other words, this is proof that even in the most desperate situations culture remains a reference point, a synonym of dynamism and a vector for hope. Under these circumstances, and given the generally far from positive attitude of the responsible authorities, it is the vocation and duty of the international organisations, and of the Council of Europe in particular - as we shall see below - to promote the consolidation and development of this vector for hope.

8. This hope, rising above the difficulty of the situation, is logically connected with the idea of a Cultural Route. This can clearly be seen from some of the replies, which include: the possible development of

the opportunities for cultural expression, the promotion of the language, and the stimulation of certain professional craft activities. For the leaders of gypsy organisations who replied, these are synonymous with the general reinforcement of energies and the creation of further reference points for the young people they now feel to be completely disorientated. Joint projects, transfrontier exchanges, attending language courses, and putting on plays, all represent the many positive objectives for young people; and can, in certain cases, act as life-belts for them. This is without a doubt an unexpected aspect as compared with traditional Cultural Routes, and, like many other aspects discussed below, which takes us far away from "cultural tourism", but is an essential and noble one.

9. Lastly, the third part describes the *complementarity of the proposals*; complementarity with the actions presently being pursued, notably on the initiative of the Council of Europe and other European and international institutions.

The Idea of a cultural route: a framework for reflection

10. Considering the present situation of gypsy communities, for example, their transnational character, the need to implement "easily adaptable" solutions supported by a framework both strong and flexible (on this subject, see, in particular, the various documents published by the CDCC concerning gypsy communities), and taking into account the actions which have already been launched on local, national, or international initiative, the formula of the European Cultural Route appears likely to respond appropriately to a substantial number of present concerns and many of the priorities identified.

11. The increase in the number of Council of Europe member states means that the question of gypsies is becoming increasingly present in the discussions of its different organs. Unfortunately, the gypsy question is all too often regarded as synonymous with the "gypsy problem"; however, an effective way of approaching this question in cultural terms would be to adopt a stance which refuses to regard gypsy communities as sordid and problematical, but, instead, gives them due credit for their dynamism and grants them the positive recognition to which they are perfectly entitled. In other words, the creation of a Gypsy Cultural Route is synonymous with combating rejection, intolerance, and racism. For the gypsies themselves, it is

also a vehicle for the recognition and promotion of their culture, while stimulating their pride in this culture, and hence acquires great symbolic value.

12. Speaking of a **Route for** these Gypsies and Travellers (whether the travelling is chosen or imposed) is only logical. The history of these itinerants consists of the routes they have followed rather than the physical traces they have left. What survives from it is the very essence of **culture** through social relations, language and other practices, and through what others see from the outside, such as the music, the dancing, or way of life. Using the term **European** is also clearly justified in the case of communities which have no territory of their own and whose social and cultural links have been forged across frontiers by people, who for centuries, have been citizens of Europe rather than of a particular country.

13. However, by the very fact that the Gypsies are the carriers of an itinerant culture, they have not, like other communities, been the builders of sites, cities or monuments. As providers of services for those around them, they have scarcely left any products permitting a history to be easily traced; and as bearers of an oral tradition right down to our day, they have not even left any written traces of their own. Launching a European Cultural Route is, therefore, in the case of the Gypsies both an obvious idea and something of a challenge because, though their culture is strong, it is impalpable. Such a Route is, in any event, a necessity in the present period. There are many reference points, but it is necessary to highlight them, to make them visible, to ensure that they are recognised, and to enable them to be linked together.

14. It is not without significance to note that, generally speaking, Routes have up to now been proposed by the national authorities of the States most concerned. In **view of the points made above, it may be considered that it is the role and duty of the** Council of Europe to develop a Route for the gypsy community, and it can also be reasonably assumed that while there may be no member State willing to launch such a programme, the majority of them will be prepared to participate, not only at national level, but also at regional or local level through the promotion of projects already under way or in preparation.

15. It should also be pointed out that in the case of this Route, the priorities established and the needs felt, as well as the projects already

under way which could be linked together, predate the proposal for the route. In other words, the creation of a *European Gypsy Cultural Route* is both an appropriate response to an existing need and a proposal capable of structuring and consolidating already existing isolated activities by linking them together and enhancing them. This situation augers well for the launching of such an operation: it is not a case of coming up with an idea then seeking the components of a programme, but rather of arranging a meeting between the already numerous components and the programme capable of joining them together.

16. In the discussion, documents drafted by the Council of Europe in 1992 to appraise Cultural Route activities pointed out that "in order to successfully design and implement a model Route, it is necessary to choose a topic making it possible to meet certain criteria". Using the criteria put forward by the Secretariat in these documents, we give below certain indications in relation to the gypsy context.

17. Broad coverage of the European countries: there is practically no country which is not concerned by the cultural development of Gypsies and Travellers. A quick look reveals that among all the CDCC States there are only a few which do not seem to be really affected; otherwise, the majority of countries, in both East and West, are not only concerned but are becoming increasingly anxious about the difficult situation of these people. Providing them with the tools to achieve cultural recognition, respect and development is, for many reasons we shall not analyse here, to promote the mutual recognition of communities which are all too often at loggerheads, and to play an important part in improving the situation.

18. Possible connection with *other international* institutions: co-ordination with other international institutions is not only possible but also necessary in order to, on the one hand, avoid duplication of effort and parallel actions; and, on the other hand, because the programmes of each institution can back up those of the others. Important activities have been developed; and we shall return to these below in the part dealing with the complementarity of actions.

19. Setting up operations and projects with public or private partners, at local, regional or national level: existing and planned projects, whether involving museums, cultural foundations, exhibitions, performances or a combination of several of these forms, may be on

the initiative of national authorities, local authorities, **gypsy associations, cultural centres**, universities, theatre companies, etc. On their part, there is a desire for partnership, and, in most cases, a need for moral and logistic support rather than financial aid (see following point). We shall return to this in the section devoted to proposals, and, because of their complementarity with local actions, notably those planned on CLRAE initiative.

*20. The particular role of the Council of Europe as compared with its various partners: where non-territorial communities are concerned, the Council of Europe **not only has the vocation**, but also the duty to make proposals capable of providing them and the cultures they embody with the kind of support they cannot obtain from a reference State, notably in fields such as culture. Gypsy communities and their organisations are well aware of this (witness the hearings, seminars and colloquies, and their results), and are turning clearly, resolutely, and with hope to the Council of Europe for attention, and protection or support, depending on the case. However, for many gypsy communities all three aspects are often merged in their present situation. In this respect, support for cultural development is at the same time also virtually direct *de facto* support for protection: the recognition of a culture encourages its respect for it and for those who embody it. The Council of Europe's role here is unique and cannot be fulfilled by any other partner.*

21. This role can be expressed in terms of support, which can take many different forms. The mere fact that the Council of Europe pays attention to them may be a vital moral support for gypsy communities. Partnership, a network of partners in a programme supported by the Council of Europe, means recognition of an existence that has constantly been called into question in the course of history, and constantly threatened, either directly, implicitly, or in veiled fashion, through the use of deprecating stereotypes. Gypsies are all the more vulnerable because they have no geographical frontiers, only psychological frontiers. What makes their strength is also their weakness, and if nobody pays attention on the institutional level, followed by concrete action, the threat can become serious in present-day society. In taking such action, of course, the Council of Europe also permits the emergence on the European scene of a culture that is part of the common heritage, and stimulates exchanges between cultures and countries through strengthening intercultural dialogue on a pan-European scale.

22. This role may also be expressed in a more conventional fashion, as in the case of the other Routes, in terms of enhancement due to coordination directly organised by the Council of Europe, or at least made possible by it. This results in both better visibility for individual projects, each of them now forming part of a whole, and better organisation making it possible to avoid repetition and duplication while still meeting the demands (for example, everywhere and at every meeting, gypsy delegations are calling for a European Gypsy Cultural Centre; without dwelling here on the conditions for creating it, let us simply say that linking the cultural and geographical sites where gypsies have already left their mark, would amount to creating a magnificent cultural "centre" in the most realistic - and pluralistic - form of a European Gypsy Cultural Network, mentioned above as a complementary project, which may be considered after the proposed Route has been in existence for a while).

23. **The flexibility of the proposals and of their** implementations therefore vital in this undertaking, as stressed in other Council of Europe reports and documents on gypsy communities. Flexibility is required because of the diversity of the latter's situations and wishes, notably as regards cultural matters. In this way, cooperation can take place between projects whose coherence and quality are endorsed by receiving a Council of Europe seal of approval granted after careful examination, to actions meeting the criteria to be established for belonging to the European gypsy route network (or networks, for example museums, photographic exhibitions, musical events, etc.). An important side-effect, which clearly emerged in connection with other activities concerning gypsy communities, is that the attention and "endorsement" of an international institution makes it much easier to establish partnerships, notably with local and national authorities, and to request and obtain assistance from these authorities, either financial or in kind (office or store, for example, or a place to present shows and hold exhibitions).

24. *New fields of discovery, research and confrontation:* it is tempting to say that everything is new in this field: a great many initiatives are being taken at present in all sectors: publishing, museography, iconography, musicology, etc., in circumstances made difficult not only by the lack of resources, but, above all, by rejection or at least reticence on the part of others. It is urgent not only to give support, but also to give it through the channels indicated in the preceding points:

ensuring visibility and permitting coordination and the development of partnerships, thanks to which individual actions can take shape under better conditions, and it will be seen that gypsy cultural dynamism can make an important contribution to the European cultural heritage. In regards to discovery, research and confrontation, so little has been possible up to now that really new fields will be opened up. Each of the partners, regardless of their status, speciality or vocation, will have much to gain through the collaboration thus made possible.

25. *A great many possibilities for concrete applications:* here again it is easy to see that the spin-offs are both diverse and real. Examples of this include Human Rights and the affirmation of Democracy, or intercultural education, to mention two thematic axes, and in different types of production: books, information brochures, travelling European exhibitions on various topics, information bulletin, awareness campaigns for young people, etc.

26. The possibility of favouring horizontal actions between the different fields of activity within the Council of Europe itself while various initiatives of diverse natures (Committee of Ministers, Parliamentary Assembly, CLRAE, CDCC, etc.) have been taken or proposed over the past ten years or so in an unconcerted fashion, a convergence of ideas and a desire to propose projects in the different fields of activity of the Council of Europe has appeared during the past few months due to the difficult situation of gypsy communities, the attention paid to them by member States, and the concern of the Secretariat.

27. To conclude this general part, it can be seen that the idea of launching a Gypsy Cultural Route is totally consistent with the general aims and values of the Council of Europe concerning the defence of Human Rights and Democracy, the promotion of cultural pluralism, and, more particularly, with the aims of the Cultural Route programme:

- promoting a better understanding of the rich and varied expressions of our common European cultural heritage;
- encouraging cultural exchanges across political and "national" boundaries;

- furthering co-operation, such as in areas of contemporary creation;
- stepping up inter-cultural dialogue on a European scale".

A set of proposals

28. The proposals contained in the documents sent by different organisations in connection with this report describe, sometimes in considerable detail, the themes that may be included in a European Route. We summarise them here, with guidelines and comments intended to demonstrate their interest, richness, and possibilities of implementation.

29. In line with the conventional concept of Cultural Route, and the model developed for others, the first major gypsy migrations could be signposted from the eastern marches of Europe to western Europe. Old texts exist and gatherings could be organised marking the progression of the Gypsies across Europe, and indicating their long-standing presence and centuries of cohabitation with the neighbouring communities. There is every reason to believe that, considering, on the one hand, the Indian origin of Gypsy communities, and, on the other hand, the migrations which have taken them to the Americas and even as far as Australia, Unesco would be prepared to complete the Route initiated by the Council of Europe.

30. Such a historical Route could be interconnected with other historical highlights or with noteworthy sites associated with Gypsies and Travellers. Here we may consider the famous and less well known pilgrim paths, remembrance sites such as the concentration camps, centres of artistic creation such as parts of Andalusia for flamenco, or Hungary and elsewhere for music and song, at once both similar and different. The recent film by a Gypsy director in fact offers an excellent example of the continuity and diversity of instrumental and vocal styles. This would give gypsy history and presence a palpable reality likely to lead to better understanding, recognition, and respect.

31. It can be seen that focal points for this Route would be easy to find and already exist: documentation centres, museums, cultural associations, theatres, university departments. The examination in the next section of the complementarity of actions shows that there are already transnational groups of experts, notably historians, with **whom**

the Council of Europe is collaborating and who would be able to further develop coordination and expertise (publications on places and events, in-depth research **with a view to mapping out routes more accurately** and bringing them alive, etc.).

32. A network of museums: museums have been set up in several European States. A network would permit the exchange of documents and the circulation of travelling exhibitions, and would no doubt interest non-specialist museums, which would be prepared to accept a temporary exhibition devoted to gypsy communities. The concerted production of catalogues would also be a way to reinforce the work of museums and the diffusion of their treasures. Acquaintance with gypsy arts and crafts would do much to promote recognition of their contribution to European culture. One section of the exhibitions could show the influence gypsy art and culture may have had on other artists (musicians, singers, painters, writers, etc.).

33. A network of performers, either thematic or mixed (theatre, dance, music): there could be working meetings and joint projects leading to festivals and tours in most European countries. It is worth mentioning that among the proposals conducted in response to the survey made for this report, there is a project for a light-weight mobile theatre capable of reaching gypsy communities in the villages, bringing theatre to people who would otherwise never have the opportunity to experience it. This idea combines with another, which has been around for some time, and regards multipurpose gypsy marquee/cultural centre which could move throughout Europe. In addition, there is a proposal to promote puppet theatres in view of their lightness and accessibility to all, especially schoolchildren, by giving them a place in the Cultural Route.

34. In the fields of music, song, literary creation, and the plastic arts, the development of a Route would make it possible to discover little-known artists and promote their works. It is a matter of urgency and of the utmost importance to collect and publish anthologies of gypsy poetry, song and music from all over Europe. The present period of upheaval makes such action a top priority, both as an objective and a product, in the context of the European Cultural Routes.

35. In the fields of theatre, photography and cinema, as well as in other fields, such a Route would make it possible to organise

collaboration between teams now working in isolation, and enable existing groups of experts (on history, language, pedagogy, etc.) to give advice or aid (preparation of screenplays, translations of classic works into gypsy language, and of gypsy works into certain other languages). Certain theatres are already engaged in both intense creation and exchange.

36. Among the proposals there is emphasis on a possible and very useful link between artistic activity and education: general information for pupils, but more specifically direct collaboration at secondary level for schools specialising in the arts and crafts (music, plastic arts, production and repair of musical instruments, traditional and modern crafts: jewellery, wrought iron, copper work, woodwork, etc.).

37. The reference to such crafts comes up again and again in the documents received in response to the survey. It is also pointed out that places of exhibition, whether local, national, or European, fixed or itinerant, are places where provision can **be made for selling or taking** orders for certain of the objects exhibited. **Mention should also be made of the fact** that the gypsy tradition of salvaging materials is very much in line with modern thinking. In a period of crisis and growing awareness of the need for environmental protection, the use of recycled materials is further proof of the inventive capacity of gypsy communities.

38. A network of producers of bulletins and books: there are many publications of a cultural nature which would gain much in all respects by being linked with one another. In this context, recently established periodicals or bulletins produced by gypsies could be given technical and logistical support and the people producing them could receive appropriate training (experiment begun at a summer school; other possible subjects are make-up and desk-top publishing); a "European gypsy bookshop", designed not in a given location but in the form of a network, would make it possible to acquire important, rare and out of print documents which could be reproduced, printed material, films, video documents, music scores, photographs, etc. and possibly produce news publications.

39. A network of university centres: teams have gradually been built up in Europe; and linking them and their work together to bring it directly into the development of a Cultural Route is both a simple and essential matter in many fields (language, language teaching, research

in the fields of history, sociology, etc.). In addition, universities are directly involved in teaching and research findings. Even the work of expert groups already set up (historians, linguists, teachers), or groups being formed and which could be activated, will be of fundamental importance in the context of a Cultural Route and will have an important impact through the scientific backing they can give to the activities organised.

40. Gypsies and folk festivals in Europe: the gypsy presence is substantial in many festivals; making it visible would enable different communities to become more aware of it, allow the gypsies to make themselves better understood and make their culture and creative talents more appreciated through the intercultural nature of the festival. Different artistic dimensions are present in festivals, which are associated with the entire history of Europe.

41. Concerning the form of festivals, it is becoming increasingly common to organise cultural meetings, "heritage weeks", etc. These events contribute greatly to making gypsy communities known and recognised. They often entail a great deal of effort on the part of organisers and those supporting them and result in events and productions of the greatest interest. Facilitating links between these events would permit them to have even greater influence, to complement one another, and the circulation of certain items (exhibitions, lectures, etc.) could be organised.

42. A thematic approach, with the presentation of a concrete project, is sometimes to be found in the documents received in response to the survey: this is the case with the suggested organisation of an exhibition concerning gypsy women in Europe, which would make it possible to bring together the different associations working in this field and would highlight the image and role of the gypsy woman, who often has a very difficult life being doubly marginalised, as a gypsy and as a woman.

43. The idea of the travelling exhibition keeps coming up, as mentioned elsewhere: **it should be noted that in order to encourage** closer ties and mutual understanding between the different communities, such exhibitions should in certain cases be easy to mount, so that they can be widely circulated not only in the towns, but also in the villages, in order to contribute to the reduction of fears and prejudices. It is even suggested that a mobile cultural "centre" should

be installed in a train, with part being museum/exhibition and part devoted to pedagogic action in collaboration with schools. Also, with cultural events being organised for when the train arrives in a given place (this idea could also be adapted to road vehicles).

44. There is a further proposal for an annual pan-European "Gypsy Week" with different cultural events being organised in various parts of Europe, but with the choice of a particular place each year for a specially big festival.

45. It is important to stress not only the production of books and other printed material, but also audiovisual material - photographs, video recordings, sound recordings in order to reach the greatest possible number of gypsies and to ensure that the Route, in the present conditions of limited literacy, is not mainly to serve people other than gypsies. Particular emphasis is placed on photography: as imagery, it is expressive and understood by all, it is readily accessible both technically and financially, it is easy to transport, reproduce, exhibit or publish. On its own, photography could also be a very important medium for work and development, and a useful vector for diffusion (there is a very big demand for pictures by the press). The people with the required skills could very quickly form a network for work and cooperation.

46. The introduction of European prizes sponsored by the Council of Europe to reward a given event or production in the context of the Cultural Route could have a mobilising effect and have an important symbolic value.

47. For all these activities relating to a European Cultural Route and for each aspect or theme of work, it will be of the greatest interest to produce an up-to-date directory of performing groups, museums, available exhibitions, etc. with contact addresses in order for those engaged in developing the Cultural Route (artists and all other partners) to know about one another and so that all those who wish to call upon them for the organisation of an exhibition, for a festival, for a publication, can find out who they are and contact them easily.

48. These few points are still no more than hypothetical proposals; it is obvious that in a second stage, in preparation for implementation, it will be necessary to study the types of activities which can form part of the Route and the corresponding criteria and draw up a timetable so

that everything is not launched at the same time. A publishing plan and an information strategy will be necessary so that the people concerned and also the public at large can benefit from the side benefits. Work should be undertaken to launch various networks on the basis of the directory of what already exists. It would, nevertheless, appear that in regards to form and content, a Gypsy Route could act as a model; and, also, the underlying philosophy, in view of the nonterritoriality of gypsies and their difficulties described above, by virtue of the importance of the pedagogical activity involved, and by the fact that it directly concerns the culture of eight million European citizens for whom the member states have made virtually no special provision.

49. *Establishment of a resource centre with a communication strategy*: this is an objective which often comes up in the discussion documents on Cultural Routes. Such a centre is an essential component and condition for the success of a Cultural Route because it helps to publicise and clarify the actions undertaken, enables records to be kept, provides both specific and general information, facilitates the updating of directories, and, hence, promotes coordination and networking. It should be mentioned that in the field which concerns us here the logistics have already been established at European level through activities developed essentially in the field of education, notably with the support of the Commission of the European Communities. This logistic base can be extended to serve as a tool for developing a Route. These achievements have been mentioned on many occasions, particularly in the latest texts of the Parliamentary Assembly and the CLRAE.

50. The documents on Cultural Routes also stress the need for a real publication policy. This is an essential line of activity, both a tool to aid reflection during the development of a Route and the concrete result of certain projects: catalogues of photographic exhibitions or museum exhibitions, books on important historical events or on important aspects of gypsy culture, etc. In this respect, the dynamic of the Route is entirely complementary to the publishing work organised at European level, as explained more fully below. The productions of the Route can benefit from the outset from a logistical support base which the Council of Europe has, in fact, already used for the circulation of certain background documents. The development of a publications strategy, building on what already exists, as a necessary accompaniment to the Cultural Route, will meet a priority often

expressed in the replies to the survey, which emphasise the benefits of good information in general as a means to help break down prejudice and stereotypes, in particular with shooting. Actions linking these different aspects are proposed, for example, by publishing folk tales, vehicles of artistic quality, steeped in gypsy culture.

51. The profile of the partners is emerging through the actions already initiated here and there, which require only the necessary incentive and coordination to be linked together. The survey has led to positive results on this point. It is important to point **out that a number of the proposals** made have gone beyond the gestation stage. In many cases projects are already being implemented. For these actions, the launching of a Route would be an aid, a support, a vector for exchanges, a recognition **and link, and an interface** making their actions complementary, the keystone enabling them to hold soundly and solidly together.

52. The partners may be the following (at this stage no distinction is made between the partners bringing their institutional support in the form of sponsorship, aid in kind directly linked to their activities, and financial aid. It may be said that these different partners are at present, on the whole, interested and prepared to furnish different types of aid to any serious project which will enable them, in the present period, to help devise a programme):

Public sector

- ministries, notably the Ministries of Culture and Education, but also Social Affairs and, in connection with the development of a network of municipalities (cf. what is said elsewhere concerning the CLRAE), Urban Planning, Housing, etc.;
- in connection with the ministries, the more specialised agencies coming under them, for example, those responsible for museums, training institutes for educational questions, etc.;
- university institutes: a number of them have specialist teacher-researchers and establishing a network here is both logical and straightforward;
- local authorities (see the CLRAE project) and federations of

local authorities (twin towns).

Private sector

- gypsy associations concerned with cultural questions; it should be pointed out that the replies to the survey quite justifiably insist that it should be the gypsies themselves, where necessary through their cultural associations, who should be the promoters and protagonists of such a Route. In other words, that above all, it should be they who indicate the priorities and organise the cultural activities decided upon;
- cultural associations directly concerned by gypsy matters: theatre and dance companies, music groups, museums, film clubs, etc., and entertainment agencies which collaborate with these cultural associations;
- publishers of information bulletins and books on gypsy communities;
- news and information media (newspapers, radio and television stations);
- foundations: in Central and Eastern Europe in particular, a number of foundations are already giving substantial support to local projects, and they have a great interest in being able to benefit from networking in order to avoid the duplication of effort and promote the transfer of knowledge and know-how;
- certain professional organisations: musicians, song-writers, architects, etc.

53. Knowing what is being done at present and knowing the teams which are prepared to offer their skills for the development of a Cultural Route, and using certain points of support proposed by those providing the information together with others capable of participating in the development of a Route, it is possible to form networks joining the different points, after which the mesh may be tightened as the years pass, in accordance with the activity of network members.

54. From the standpoint of establishing the concrete model, it will be necessary in 1994 to go further into the different points raised, stepping up contacts with gypsy associations. A project accompanied by a development plan could then be submitted to the Council of Europe at the end of 1994 and the Cultural Route could be launched in 1995 if the proposal is adopted.

Complementarity of activities

Council of Europe

Council for Cultural Cooperation

55. For over ten year now (since the beginning of 1983) the CDCC has been organising activities in the field of school education, admittedly on an ad hoc basis and depending on its possibilities, but, nevertheless, regularly: there have been four seminars and a resolute policy concerning the publication and dissemination of reports. The complementarity with a Gypsy Cultural Route is self-evident. The CDCC can directly link its activities with this project, incorporating them in a Cultural Route. Under the system of teacher grants, for example, seminars could be organised in connection with a given event or a given place, thus reinforcing the basis and the impact of each of the activities and planning them together. The CDCC could also envisage the publication of documents in the connection with providing training and information for teachers, educational staff and other persons (civil servants, etc.) directly concerned by the development of the Route. The documents may be produced by certain partners associated with the Route, and may serve for circulating information about aspects of the Route to both members of the network(s) as well as the public at large.

56. The Resolution adopted by the CLRAE in March 1993 (see below) stresses the need for the CDCC to intensify its activities. At present, in addition to the study on the idea of developing a Cultural Route, the CDCC has initiated a number of projects concerning gypsies: the publication of a book describing the present situation in Europe, *Rom, gypsies, travellers*, participation in the diffusion in Central and Eastern Europe of information publications and pedagogical works, preparation of several activities for the project on "Democracy, Human Rights and Minorities: educational and **cultural aspects**"

(seminar, action research, colloquy) etc. These activities are entirely compatible with those which may form part of a Cultural Route. They are designed as parts of a whole, each contributing its share in a sequence which enables a capital of knowledge and experience to be built up.

Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe

57. The documents concerning the Cultural Routes point out that their effective development greatly depends on the concrete initiatives taken by the regional and local authorities of each country in liaison with those taken by their counterparts in other European countries. On this point, recent developments in the CLRAE augur well for real complementarity.

58. Over ten years ago, CLRAE Resolution 125 (1981) drew attention to the cultural and social problems of gypsy and nomadic communities. More recently, a hearing was organised in July 1991 by the Committee on Culture, Education and the Media, and the Committee on Social Affairs and Health, which led to realisation that the situation was serious and called for action. Then, a colloquy bringing together representatives of local authorities and of gypsies was organised by the CLRAE in the Slovak Republic in October 1992. In the conclusions to this colloquy, it was considered important and realistic to propose, in the conclusions, two axes or vectors of work - among others - capable of responding to many demands through using possibilities and operational facilities already well-established in the Council of Europe: the launching of a *European Gypsy Cultural Route*, the subject of this note, and the launching by the CLRAE of a *network of municipalities* in Europe directly affected by the presence of gypsy communities. It is obvious that such a municipal network is directly complementary with a Cultural Route, and that the two proposals are mutually reinforcing.

59. Lastly, at the session of 16 to 18 March 1993, the CLRAE adopted Resolution 249 (1993) on Gypsies in Europe: role and responsibilities of local and regional authorities. Through this Resolution, certain passages of which must be cited here in view of their importance and their direct relevance to a Cultural Route, the CLRAE:

"Requests its Committee on Culture, Education and the Media, and its Committee on Social Affairs and Health: to launch a network of

municipalities most concerned by the reception of Gypsy communities, with a view to... exchanging experiences and circulating information... running small-scale projects based on community development... analysing data to develop tools for decision-making and appraisal...

"Requests the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers: to instruct the Council for Cultural Cooperation... to step up the work pursued over the last ten years with publications for the purposes of education and information in the field of schooling and training for Gypsy children and young people... to cooperate in the setting-up and operation of the network of municipalities... to organise training seminars for teachers and other staff within the framework of this network of municipalities... to give closer consideration to the Gypsy question, particularly within the framework of the new project: 'Democracy, Human Rights, Minorities: educational and cultural aspects'... to consider the possibility of launching a European Gypsy Route as part of the European Cultural Routes programme."

60. Discussion is also under way in other areas of the Council - Human Rights, European Committee on Migration - and indeed most of the Council of Europe's fields of activity are concerned in some way with the gypsy question. Given the characteristics of the present situation, it is logical and important that a global project concerning Gypsies and Travellers should also be instituted in the context of the "confidence-building measures" currently being defined by the Secretariat. Recommendation 1203 adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly in February 1993 on Gypsies in Europe strongly supports the initiatives taken in this field.

European Community

61. Up to now, the Council's partner institution which has done the most for gypsies in the cultural field is the European Community, particularly through the implementation of a Resolution on schooling for the children of gypsies and travellers adopted in 1989 by the Council (Ministers of Education). Numerous activities have been organised, including many totally in harmony with and complementary to a Gypsy Cultural Route, in particular working groups of historians, linguists, and gypsy educationists, the production of a series of books and video documents, exchanges between teams, and also activities in the form of pilot projects developed with the

support of the Commission of the European Communities. In addition, member states have also launched activities under this Resolution. Its text, in fact, refers quite explicitly to the need for cooperation with the Council of Europe, and the commentary of the European Parliament when a budget heading was inserted for the implementation of this Resolution also explicitly mentioned this need for cooperation.

62. What the European Community has done has been mainly in the field of education. This makes collaboration all the more coherent and logical: as pointed out in a Council of Europe consolidated discussion paper on Cultural Routes, of all the fields of action identified and adopted as a possible "declination" of a Route topic, and, above all, its putting into practice, the field of education is the one which appears the most interesting to tackle.

63. Requests concerning, for example, support, more often logistical than financial, for exhibitions, entertainments, museums on gypsy themes, etc. are becoming increasingly numerous. Also, it would appear that such support is entirely in line with the approach, criteria, and possibilities of a Cultural Route; and fully complement what is being developed in the field of education: the different programmes are, thus, in a situation of most useful complementarity and could therefore substantially reinforce one another.

64. In this context, the working groups mentioned above (historians, linguists, pedagogues) could very easily be used as expert groups: a simple extension of these groups, at present centred on the Europe of the Community, would permit them to **invite experts from the whole of Europe** to join them. Such an extension is already in **progress on the initiative of** the Council of Europe in the case of the Historians. These multiple links and collaborations permit an "integrated" approach for the different actions, with no risk of duplication of effort and with the highest level of expertise.

Unesco

65. There is no need to go into detail to show that Unesco would be directly concerned - as already, for example, with the Silk Route - by a Gypsy Cultural Route, for the places geographically outside Europe: what has been said in several paragraphs above regarding the interest of European States in gypsy questions is also true for the rest of the world. Unicef, for its part, is also considering launching activities in

favour of gypsy children.

CSCE

66. Even though the CSCE arranges no activities in the cultural field, the recent positions adopted on different occasions by that body (Copenhagen, Geneva, Moscow, Helsinki), drawing the particular attention of participating States to the plight of gypsy communities and the need to assist them, largely endorse the proposals and developments which could be incorporated into a Cultural Route.

A name for the proposed Route

67. Since the idea of a Council of Europe "European Gypsy Route" was launched, amplified at the CLRAE colloquy of October 1992, and made official by appearing in the CLRAE Resolution of March 1993, this idea has been brought up on a number of occasions in meetings, discussions, etc. One example is the document produced by a Romanian NGO for the seminar organised by the CSCE in Warsaw in May 1993 (*Human Dimension Seminar on National Minorities*) summarising the different proposals made recently by different institutions. Recalling the adoption by the CLRAE of a resolution proposing that the possibility of launching a European Gypsy Route should be considered, the document suggests that it should be called *Eurodrom*.

This term could be chosen, insofar as it covers various connotations in gypsy language: it contains the notion of *European*, we find *o drom*, meaning "road" or "path" (a term borrowed from the Greek, but comprehensible for most Gypsy dialects) and the termination *Rom*, a term which designates a large proportion of gypsy communities.

Conclusion

68. One has only to refer to the book *Roma, Gypsies and Travellers*, just **produced by the CDCC, to see just how** important the launching of a Council of Europe Gypsy Cultural Route could be for gypsy communities in the present situation. The final chapter, *Reflection and Action*, shows that the implementation of a Cultural Route corresponds perfectly with all the recommended principles of work:

- flexibility in diversity
- accuracy and clarity
- reliance on inner dynamisms
- consultation
- coordination
- study and reflection
- information and documentation

69. All the conditions are satisfied, and, above all, the will of a great many partners exists for planning a Gypsy Cultural Route, which would meet in exemplary and highly emblematical fashion all the criteria put forward by the Council of Europe in analyses of Routes already launched and highlighted in the proposals for the reorientation of activities. A Council of Europe Gypsy Cultural Route is both eminently historical, having its source in the Europe of over half a millennium ago, and eminently topical, concerning over 8 million people of gypsy origin in the current Council of Europe Member States.

70. By initiating work on this plan before the formal decision to award its seal of approval and its aid, the Council of Europe would, once more, be playing a pioneering role in developing a pilot project entailing cultural support for a community which has been awaiting it for six centuries. The launching by the Council of Europe of such a Route would be fully in line with its fundamental aims in what have always been its priority fields (Human Rights, Democracy, Education, Minorities, etc.), and would contribute practical and positive ideas and actions of and exemplary value to a European situation where questions concerning minorities are all too often regarded only from a negative standpoint.

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CULTURAL ROUTES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

A COUNCIL OF EUROPE GYPSY CULTURAL ROUTE

(Continued)

Study prepared
by Jean-Pierre Liégeois

(June 1997)

Continuation of the exploratory study
distributed by the Council of Europe in 1993 - ICCE (93) 9

The situation so far

71. This document follows on directly from the report ICCE (93) 9 distributed by the Council of Europe in December 1993. In order to show the close link between the two documents, the need to be familiar with the first document, so as not to have to repeat it, and the fact that this one takes up where the previous document left off, I have chosen to number the paragraphs of the present text from 71 onwards, following on from the 70 points of the 1993 study. It cannot be stressed enough how important it is to have read the 1993 document thoroughly.

72. The results of the 1993 exploratory study were presented at the meeting of the Advisory Committee on the Council of Europe Cultural Routes in February 1994. In the minutes of that meeting it is reported that, in regards to Gypsies, "it was felt inappropriate to reduce a theme of such great interest to a Cultural Route. Instead, it should be the subject of a general Council programme. That did not mean that certain activities connected with the theme could not be handled (in) the form of a Route. Indeed, given that Gypsies were a central (policy) concern for the Council of Europe, a project conducted at Council level could be so devised as to include collaboration by the Cultural Routes Project, taking into account the cultural and educational aspects of the subject and the need to involve the Gypsies themselves in any action taken" (meeting report ICCE (94) 13). At its April 1994 meeting, the Culture Committee decided to encourage research work and feasibility studies on a Gypsy Cultural Route as well as identify potential partners.

73. Expressions of interest in setting up a Gypsy Cultural Route have increased, and can be found, in particular, in texts adopted by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE), the conclusions of various hearings, and a variety of reports. A number of Council of Europe projects have highlighted the desirability, even the necessity, of setting up such a Route which could incorporate a whole range of activities along its length. One noteworthy example is the pilot-project "An analysis of the issue of minorities and the potential role of history teaching and history textbooks" carried out as part of the project "Democracy, Human Rights, Minorities: Cultural and Educational Aspects". The local history of the Roma studied via this project has a direct link to a Cultural Route and it is highly illustrative of what a Cultural Route could bring together if based on solid

foundations. Similarly, the current growth of museums of Gypsy culture or theatres, as well as exhibitions on Gypsies, clearly shows that the plan for a route can now be put into practice. Other Council of Europe activities have shown how a Cultural Route could be used to support quality schemes, bringing them out of isolation by identifying potential links with similar projects and giving them publicity. An example of this is the work carried out in the context of the Council for Cultural Co-operation's recent series of case studies on "Romani Culture: The Secondary School of the Arts and Romathan Theatre (Kosice, Slovakia)" (document DECS/SE/DHRM (96) 18). If these two establishments were incorporated into the network created by a Cultural Route, they could provide other establishments with the benefit of their skill and experience, and, conversely, profit from the know-how of others, as well as gain publicity and consolidate their position.

74. In the conclusions of the colloquy *Gypsies in the locality*, an event which led to the adoption of a major Resolution on Gypsies by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, the importance of a Cultural Route was summed up as follows:

"This suggestion could engender a considerable number of opportunities and campaigns, and is in line with the working principles and priorities which the colloquy participants put forward. Its implementation can be flexible in so far as such a route can take in numerous existing activities of the kind mentioned during the colloquy (museums, theatricals, cultural centres, publications, historical research work, conferences etc), and it is wholly desirable and appropriate that our work should be directed along a Gypsy route, which would bring Gypsy culture and history into the limelight, and enable large-scale information campaigns to be brought within reach of the general public. Such a route, which could be developed over several years, would also bear the stamp of the Council of Europe awarded for quality activities and so provide essential support for intensifying international relations and reinforcing the desired networks. It would without doubt facilitate the emergence and consolidation of Gypsy cultural centres in a number of states and regions of Europe.

Also, the fact that Gypsies have no state to give them support only makes it more imperative that the Council of Europe propose that a

European Gypsy route be added to the ten or so cultural routes already launched. This action is in all logic complementary to the launching of a network of towns by the CLRAE; the two lines of activity would strengthen each other" (see *Gypsies in the Locality*, Council of Europe Press, Studies and Texts No. 38, 1994, p.154).

The context in which this document was prepared

75. The general policy for Gypsies advocated in February 1994 by the Advisory Committee on Cultural Routes (see above) is gradually coming into being. Four years after the publication of the results of the exploratory study for a Gypsy Cultural Route, the project has been revived. A short presentation of the project was included on the agenda of the February 1997 meeting of the Specialist Group on Roma/Gypsies (MG-S-ROM), a group of government experts set up by the Committee of Ministers. On this occasion, the Specialist Group asked for the idea to be given further consideration at a meeting of the *European Working Group on Schooling for children of Gypsies and Travellers*, set up in 1991 by the Gypsy Research Centre of the Université René Descartes in Paris with the support of the European Commission and currently under the auspices of the educational component of the Socrates programme. The aim of this group, made up of Gypsies and Travellers involved in matters of schooling, is to provide expert advice on the approach to certain education activities.

76. Accordingly, at its meeting in Italy from 10 to 13 April 1997 hosted by the Gypsy Association *Them Romano*, the *European Working Group on Schooling for children of Gypsies and Travellers* discussed on the question of the Cultural Route on the basis of document ICCE (93) 9. The following is a summary of that discussion. The author of this summary, who was asked by the group to prepare it, has tried to give a faithful account of the conclusions; however, he alone is responsible for the way in which the ideas are presented.

General comments

77. The participants, who had familiarised themselves with document ICCE (93) 9, stressed that it should serve as a frame of reference. The terms employed and the prospects presented were still entirely valid, and an effort should be made not to repeat the same conclusions and

the same priorities; but instead attempt to take them a step further. Therefore, the participants asked the experts who would be called upon to discuss the setting up of a Gypsy Cultural Route to do so on the basis which had already been established, assuming that it had been distributed and read.

78. They stressed the positive aspects which made it possible to set up a Gypsy Cultural Route and referred in this respect to point 11 of the aforementioned document, which was entirely in keeping with the projects currently given priority by the Council of Europe. The Gypsy question is all too often regarded as synonymous with the "Gypsy problem" and one of the great advantages of approaching this question in cultural terms would be to adopt a stance which refuses to regard Gypsy communities as sordid and problematical, giving them due credit for their dynamism and granting them the positive recognition to which they are perfectly entitled. In other words, the creation of a Gypsy Cultural Route is synonymous with combating rejection, intolerance, and racism. For the Gypsies themselves, it is also a vehicle for the recognition and promotion of their culture, while stimulating their pride in this culture, and, hence, acquiring great symbolic value.

This was a change of perspective important both for the Gypsies themselves and for those around them.

79. It was also important to point out that, in contrast to most of the activities carried out "for" Gypsies in the context of social assistance with its negative connotations, the process of setting up a Cultural Route would be based on the interaction of Gypsy communities among themselves. The aim was not to thrust proposals or projects on to these communities, but to underpin activities launched by Gypsies and Travellers themselves.

80. Before going into details, the group members also emphasised what a major challenge setting up such a Cultural Route would be. In this connection, they referred to points 12 and 13 of the document: the history of the Gypsies "consists of the routes they have followed rather than the physical traces they have left, and what survives from it is the very essence of culture through social relations, language and other practices, through what others see from the outside, such as the music, the dancing, a way of life. Using the term European is also

clearly justified in the case of communities which have no territory of their own, and whose social and cultural links have been forged across frontiers by people who have for centuries been citizens of Europe rather than of a particular country.

However, by the very fact that the Gypsies are the carriers of an itinerant culture, they have not, like other communities, been the builders of sites, cities or monuments. As providers of services for those around them, they have scarcely left any products permitting a history to be easily traced; and as bearers of an oral tradition right down to our day, they have not even left any written traces of their own. Launching a European Cultural Route is, therefore, in the case of the Gypsies both an obvious idea and something of a challenge because though their culture is strong, it is impalpable. Such a Route is, in any event, a necessity in the present period. There are many reference points, but it is necessary to highlight them, to make them visible, to ensure that they are recognised, and to enable them to be linked together". Therefore, by linking up the locations where cultural activities have developed, the Gypsies could shape a new context for themselves and for others which would gradually come to form part of the European landscape.

81. The participants emphasised that setting up a Cultural Route would enable Gypsies and Travellers located in one place in Europe to know more about what was happening in other places. It should not be forgotten that Gypsies had no state, no embassies or consulates, no cultural centres to present and represent them, and that even amongst themselves it was important that they got to know the different Gypsy communities scattered throughout Europe. The links forged by a Cultural Route would enable them to exchange historical and cultural knowledge, and would genuinely strengthen their transnational cultural identity. The educational uses to which such a network could be put were immense, and this dynamic interaction would make it possible not only to counteract the stereotypes and prejudices of those who come into contact with Gypsies, but would also help Gypsies to know more about one another when they belong to communities which the vagaries of history have separated from one another.

82. Another essential factor regarding the practical creation of such a route was referred to in point 15 of the previous document, and was worth reiterating: "in the case of this Route, the priorities established

and the needs felt, as well as the projects already under way which could be linked together, predate the proposal for the route. In other words, the creation of a *European Gypsy Cultural Route* is both an appropriate response to an existing need and a proposal capable of structuring and consolidating already existing isolated activities by linking them together and enhancing them. This situation augurs well for the launching of such an operation; it is not a case of coming up with an idea then seeking the components of a programme, but rather of arranging a meeting between the already numerous components and the programme capable of joining them together".

83. Finally, the group members insisted on the fact that the Council of Europe's attention and support in setting up this route would constitute major moral support including a wide range of positive consequences: "Partnership, a network of partners in a programme supported by the Council of Europe means recognition of an existence which has constantly been called into question in the course of history, constantly threatened, either directly or implicitly on in veiled fashion, as through the use of deprecating stereotypes. Gypsies are all the more vulnerable because they have no geographical frontiers, only psychological frontiers; what makes their strength is also their weakness, and if nobody pays them any attention on the institutional level, followed up with concrete action, the threat can become serious in present-day society. In taking such action, of course, the Council of Europe also permits the emergence on the European scene of a culture which is part of the common heritage, and stimulates exchanges between cultures and countries by strengthening intercultural dialogue on a pan-European scale" (point 21).

Proposals

84. The group members went on to discuss specific themes, following on from the questions raised in document ICCE (93) 9. The practical and incomplete nature of the following proposals should not be allowed to obscure the overall framework outlined in the preceding document.

85. With regard to history, and with reference to the local history project launched by the Council of Europe, the group members raised the question of archives. It would be possible to arrange for the question of Roma and their local history to be discussed at a

conference of archivists (firstly at national level, then at international level). This would have the advantage of raising their awareness of this issue, which was often new to them, stimulating their interest and motivating them, and, in some ways, transforming archivists into activists for the Roma cause because they were in a better position to unearth documents which were very difficult to obtain. Showing that the history of Gypsies and Travellers has been part of national and local history for centuries would help improve mutual understanding between communities. Using a selection of documents, it would be easy to set up a mobile exhibition hosted by the archives and libraries of various regions. Each exhibition could include a European section and a local section; and in each different locality, local documentation could be added. The educational worth of this kind of project is obvious, since schools could organise visits to the exhibition. Publication of an accompanying document would facilitate the teachers' classroom work and have an important impact.

86. As regards cinema, a travelling festival could be organised with a selection of the best films. With this as a basis, variations, extensions and specialties could be added, depending on the aim being pursued. For example, the focus could be on films produced by Gypsies or Travellers, particular themes such as women and children, or documentaries helping to promote a better understanding of Gypsies, which could be selected by schools for use in the context of intercultural education. The approval and certification of films or video documentaries resulting from this selection process would make it possible to identify and publicise the best ones.

87. Research should be encouraged in the area of music, to promote musicological documentation and knowledge. Grants could be awarded to students, singers, and musicians to enable them to study and travel. The Cultural Route would also provide a framework to promote exchanges between musical groups at European level. The Route would make it possible to trace musical itineraries from India to Western Europe, and to publish a catalogue of the top productions and musical groups along the Route. It would be a good idea for the musical academies in the various states to devote some time to Gypsy music within the popular music category. Certain academies have already set up a Gypsy music department, and highlighting this music in connection with a Cultural Route would certainly prompt similar initiatives. The group also mentioned the possibility of setting up a

European orchestra, which could play at important events. It also stressed the need to promote the craft of musical instrument-making; the Gypsy craft of instrument-making still survived, but if it were not publicised and recognised there was a risk that it might disappear.

88. Research in the area of documentation was vital. Networks should be set up around the Route to collect and classify cultural, linguistic, and historical documents properly. Libraries, particularly national libraries, could be asked to organise this collection, beginning with the documents already present in their archives.

89. In connection with this, the dissemination of information on the cultural events surrounding a Cultural Route should be stepped up. There were Gypsy radio stations in a number of countries or regions, and exchanges between them would be made easier if they were arranged along a European Route. Both for radio stations and newspapers, these exchanges would mean that their programmes and reports would be opened up to the real-life situation in other countries, and also help them to make financial savings because a programme made in one state could be used in others.

90. There were still very few Gypsy theatres, but enough to consider setting up a network. This would give them a higher profile and European tours might be organised. Whenever this type of venture has been launched, it has been a great success with the Gypsies and the general public. A more comprehensive form of organisation would make it easier to carry out this kind of project, enabling the travelling arrangements of the theatre companies concerned to be planned in advance as well as involving them in educational activities with schools which could benefit from their visits. Such contacts and co-operation deriving from exchanges between companies forming part of a network would also help enrich their repertoire and improve the quality of their work, stimulate creativity and emulation, and reduce duplication and imitation. The group members stressed that for young people, in particular, seeing a theatre group perform was a highly stimulating, rewarding, and culturally motivating experience with an important and lasting impact, particularly in educational terms.

91. Various forms of artistic expression, such as *painting*, *photography*, and *sculpture*, could be more easily organised if linked

to a Cultural Route project. The possibility of staging travelling exhibitions would encourage artists. It would also be appropriate to organise a European exhibition of the well known, and frequently less well-known, works concerning Gypsies stored in museum collections. Some forms of expression such as photography, whose importance was strongly emphasised in document ICCE (93) 9, served various functions; they were not only a form of artistic expression, but also an extremely important and highly accessible source of information and documentation for the general public, with links to the history and other aspects of Gypsy culture and traditions.

92. In the area of *literature*, assistance should be given in organising competitions and prizes, and distributing publications. To achieve maximum participation, people should be encouraged to write and distribute folk tales, popular and literary short stories, and poetry.

93. Museums of popular Gypsy culture or arts and traditions could also be linked in a network facilitating exchanges as well as the production of joint information and publications, which would connect a number of European sites and highlight both the unity and the diversity of Gypsy history and culture. Museums are important places of education serving all types of public, Gypsies and non-Gypsies, children and adults alike. Cultural visits to these museums, made easier to organise by the production of a European catalogue, would be of great interest to schools, as mentioned above in the paragraph on exhibitions of archive documents.

94. A particular effort could be made for young people and children by adapting the potential of a Cultural Route to an educational approach involving teachers and educational authorities, in all the areas referred to in the foregoing paragraphs. Already the report ICCE (93) 9 stressed the important role of stories, both in Gypsy culture and in relation to the general public, as vehicles of artistic quality laden with the full weight of Gypsy culture; reference could also be made to theatre, music, dance, etc. To encourage certain children to be fully involved, it might be possible to award them scholarships to attend schools in states other than their own (see, for example, the proposals made in the Council of Europe case study "Romani Culture: the Secondary School of the Arts and Romathan Theatre"). Another possibility was to organise gatherings or camps through schools or other associations, bringing young people together for two or three

weeks around a powerful cultural theme.

95. Finally, the *European Working Group on Schooling for children of Gypsies and Travellers* drew attention to the fact that, before implementing these projects, it was essential to contact the working groups which had existed for a number of years, dealing with the fields of history and language and the preparation of an encyclopedia. These groups of experts could act swiftly to develop a practical and realistic work programme by, for example, liaising between museums and devising a joint programme of exchanges, tracing out the paths of Gypsy history by preparing a publication such as a European handbook on the subject, compiling and analysing local archives, or staging a travelling exhibition.

96. Aspects relating to the implementation of a Route were raised in document ICCE (93) 9. They included the support of existing groups of experts, the networking of active bodies, the complementarity of activities with those of other institutions, particularly the European Union, the importance of activities in the field of education, etc. Reference should be made to the results of the 1993 study, bearing in mind that the proposals made at that time were based on a wide-ranging survey (500 questionnaires were sent out), which had yielded a great many answers and practical proposals still relevant today because, after several years of administrative appraisal, the Council of Europe Gypsy Cultural Route has still not been launched.

97. Obviously resources are needed to launch this Route. In particular, there is a need for a minimum amount of project co-ordination and follow-up. However, on the one hand, the stamp of approval which such a Route would give to the related activities would make it easier for them to obtain regional, national, and European aid beyond the slender, not to say non-existent funds specifically allocated to the Cultural Routes by the Council of Europe. On the other hand, it should be said that, though funds are available, it is not always easy to find out about them or discover how to gain access to them. In this respect, the networking process involved in setting up a Route would also have the advantage of helping small associations to obtain funding, if only because they would be correctly informed.

98. This would also be rendering an important service to the officials in the regional, national, and international services responsible for

managing and distributing these funds. Quite frequently, owing to a lack of selection criteria and accurate knowledge in a complicated context, they are not in a position to establish which projects qualify for funding. Defining and situating each project in an overall context would enable everyone to benefit from the support and approval of all the teams in the network and would also prevent duplication of similar projects and multiple funding for projects far removed from the priorities and motivations of Gypsies and even from their day-to-day life.

99. The *European Working Group on Schooling for children of Gypsies and Travellers* thanks the Council of Europe for having called on it as an expert group to help in devising the projected European Gypsy Route. It hoped that it would at last be possible to give the project tangible form, focusing, of course, on a given theme for the time being in the knowledge that not everything could be set up quickly.

100. The group remains at the Council of Europe's disposal to continue this cooperation. As soon as the decision to go ahead is taken, it will be relatively easy to decide on the first area of practical project implementation and propose the various European sites which could be linked together in the preparation of a joint project.

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***Museum Directors Meeting on Roma Culture and History
in preparation for the launching of the
Roma Cultural Route***

Report established by Aurora Ailincăi

The Council of Europe Cultural Routes were created to highlight the common cultural heritage of all Europeans. The project was launched in 1987 on the proposal of the Parliamentary Assembly. A number of themes were selected relating to peoples, migrations and the spread of major European currents of civilisation such as to generate a range of proposals and initiatives reflecting the complex nature of the cultures and societies that have formed present-day Europe.

The Gypsy Cultural Route was one of the cultural routes the Council of Europe selected.

The theme of the Roma/Gypsies was proposed to the Secretariat following two meetings on minorities. The first, in September 1992, "Democracy, Human Rights, Minorities: educational and cultural aspects", led the group of experts to conclude that such a route and the creation of a European network of Roma cultural centres were necessary.

In addition, the conclusions of the meeting organised by the Conference of Local and Regional Authorities (CLRAE) in October 1992, *Gypsies in the community: the debates, priorities and participants*, strengthened the idea and led the CLRAE to adopt a resolution in 1993 which recommended "... considering the possibility of setting up a European cultural route on Gypsies within the framework of the cultural routes of the Council of Europe" – Recommendation 1203 (1993).

The theme was submitted to the Orientation Council in April 1994 and endorsed by the Culture Committee in May 1994.

A report on the profile and realisation of a European Gypsy Cultural Route was disseminated: Council of Europe, Council for Cultural Co-operation, *A Council of Europe Gypsy Cultural Route, Exploratory study*, document ICCE (93) 9, Strasbourg, 1993.

The exploratory report showed the usefulness, relevance and possibility of instituting a Gypsy Cultural Route by cross-referencing data from institutions and the field. Practical proposals were put forward based on an analysis of projects and the findings of a special survey. The replies to the survey were accompanied by documents; the letters received showed there was great interest in a Roma route and also the maturity of projects that might participate in its development.

In February 1997, the project was reactivated at a meeting of the

Specialist Group on Roma/Gypsies (MG-S-ROM).

A new document was circulated which was the follow-up to the 1993 document. The report emphasised the possibility and usefulness of linking artistic activities with the education sector. The Roma (Gypsy) Cultural Route is by its very nature a priority in the development of the project to implement Committee of Ministers Recommendation (2000) 4. One of the lines of action of the project *Education of Roma/Gypsy Children in Europe* is intersectoral co-operation, and this collaboration between the Education Directorate with the project and the Culture Directorate with the Route is an example of this.

The scope and spin-off in terms of education are fundamental and such a route will be a line of work fundamental for the development of educational initiatives.

Now, ten years after the dissemination of the study report, the Gypsy Cultural Route was discussed at a meeting at the Museum of Roma Culture in Brno, Czech Republic, from 28 to 30 November 2003.

The meeting was organised on the initiative of the Education Directorate in the framework of the project *Education of Roma/Gypsy Children in Europe*.

Aims and objectives of the meeting

To draw up a plan for implementing the Roma/Gypsy Cultural Route, employing museums of Roma history and culture as vectors for developing activities from an educational perspective.

The idea was to take account of the priorities put forward by the museum officials and consider their impact and spin-offs in educational terms.

- sharing each institution's experience in the field of educational activities;
- studying the existing potential, the activities to be developed and priorities;
- considering how to develop and build on the potential.

Participants

The staff of Brno Museum of Roma Culture, officials from other museums or exhibitions of Roma history and culture in Europe, experts on Roma culture and the head of the Council of Europe's Education of Roma/Gypsy Children in Europe Project.

Outcomes

- guidelines on educational materials and activities in museums;
- proposals on the use of these teaching materials and methods and, where necessary, changes to these materials/methods (the differences between the contexts in which Roma lived in Europe's various countries were underlined several times);
- suggestions on adapting and using these materials for teaching purposes;
- new proposals for implementation of the Roma Cultural Route.

Next steps

- circulate the report of the Brno meeting among as many people concerned as possible with a view to obtaining other ideas and information;
- begin the implementation of the Roma Cultural Route with the co-operation of the museums of Roma culture and history;
- establish a network of these museums to facilitate communication and exchanges (draw up a list of contacts);
- network and pool the various activities within the Roma Cultural Route;
- organise the official launch of the Roma Cultural Route in the second half of 2004.

General comments

The participants' presentations of their experiences and the exchanges and discussions that took place during the two days of the meeting threw up a number of practical pointers for setting up a network of museums and exhibitions of Roma culture and history.

The idea of organising travelling exhibitions was very well received.

There would appear to be shortcomings in terms of educational materials and the resources needed for developing teaching activities in the relevant museums.

Proposals

1. The production of a European map of Roma culture and history. The map would be a guide to symbolic places for the Roma people. Each place marked on the map would be explained by a legend giving details of the relevant events and persons or the history of the location. This could be supplemented by an information sheet on lifestyles in various countries, with detailed tree-structured fact sheets referring to the various elements on the map. It would be necessary to link the symbolic places with the people concerned and the relevant events and dates. The map could be produced in hard copies and on a web site. Reference was made to the possibility of working with groups covering specific regions or countries and the pooling of the information concerned.

2. Establishment of a network of museums. This would give a clear view of the existing museums and also facilitate exchanges of documents and the circulation of travelling exhibitions, thereby fostering the organisation of such exhibitions;

3. The museums would produce visual material for schools. The idea would be to produce information sheets and posters with Roma figures with a view to distributing and exhibiting them not only in Roma museums and institutions but also in non-Roma institutions;

4. Develop educational activities in museums aimed at a very wide range of people (all age groups).

a) In the activities organised by the museums, target *nursery-school children*, given their high level of receptiveness at that age. The children would use games suited to their age groups to find out about the culture, history and language of the Roma;

b) Promote workshops in museums and emphasise interactivity (young people would be in contact with Roma culture/history and would become more aware of and appreciate more fully Roma cultural heritage);

- c) Organise educational activities based on storytelling (transmission of Roma culture and history through stories that could be staged as performances or used in games for very young children);
- d) Involve *young Roma* in the various activities and help them to become links between the museums and Roma communities (for instance, by collecting items and accounts of Roma history, etc, for museums). Vocational training could be provided in museums for people wishing to work as exhibition guides or travelling tourist guides accompanying the travelling exhibitions;
- e) Broaden the themes of the exhibitions (history, art, music) and invite *Roma authors and community elders* to take part in workshops.

5. Take advantage of the possibility of organising exhibitions in “open-air” museums. Such museums already existed in certain countries (for instance, Slovakia and Romania, etc) and provided locations for recreating traditional Roma settlements and organising more extensive practical activities. The workshops could focus on traditional Roma crafts. Exchanges could be held between different schools and the relevant museums. Educational files setting out the various subjects to be covered during visits and workshops were proposed for teachers and accompanying adults;

6. Produce an educational pack for each museum to facilitate the flow of information (if there were difficulties with travel, museum staff could visit schools to present exhibitions or activities);

7. The director of Tarnow Ethnographic Museum (Poland) gave details of his Roma Caravan of Memory project, an idea that met with great interest. It involved a travelling exhibition that took several days to cover a particular region, commemorating the Roma Holocaust and passing on Roma history and culture to children and adults. This initiative by Tarnow Museum could be a model for other regions and countries.

8. The Roma Cultural Route would provide valuable input for the production of a Roma Encyclopaedia through the whole range of products that would be developed from the activities, and also involved a direct contribution to the possible outcomes under the Education of Roma/Gypsy Children in Europe Project: fact sheets or modules concerning famous figures (already mentioned), fact sheets

concerning craft and artistic activities, housing and key periods and events in Roma history, etc.

The meeting showed that there was a high degree of consensus about the shared themes, agreement about the priorities, a desire to liaise through a Cultural Route and a willingness to take part in such a route.

Emphasis should also be placed on the topical relevance of the 1993 and 1997 reports and the proposals contained in them. Their dissemination in the form of a brochure in English, French and Romani would be most useful as a working, discussion and reference tool and as a means of moving beyond the steps already taken.

Key dates:

8 April – International Roma Day (marking the opening of the first International Roma Congress, which was held near London from 8 April 1971)

2 August – Remembrance Day (since 1992, the Roma have celebrated Roma Holocaust Remembrance Day)

10 December – Roma Human Rights Day

The educational documents developed by the museum staff should take account of the children's ages, the social relationships in families and the relevant topic.

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