



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2009 - 2014

Committee on Culture and Education

2010/2276(INI)

26.1.2011

OPINION

of the Committee on Culture and Education

for the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs

on the EU strategy on Roma inclusion
(2010/2276(INI))

Rapporteur: Hannu Takkula

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Culture and Education calls on the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

- A. whereas the exclusion of Roma children from the education system has an adverse impact on the other rights of members of the Roma community, in particular the right to work, and whereas this exacerbates their marginalisation,
- B. whereas the communities that wish to maintain their traditional nomadic lifestyle within Europe are those most affected by illiteracy, and whereas there are therefore cultural barriers to the schooling of their children,
- C. whereas the material conditions required for the schooling of Roma children must be provided, and whereas this must include the appointment of school mediators,
 - 1. Stresses that access for the Roma people to high-quality education and vocational training, the sharing and understanding of their culture, values and cultural heritage, their involvement in associations and better representation for their community are essential strands of a holistic approach to the implementation of national and European strategies for their inclusion and involvement in society;
 - 2. Emphasises that quality education and training influence an individual's future personal and professional life, and that it is therefore essential to ensure equal access to effective education and training systems, without discrimination or segregation of any kind;
 - 3. Calls on national education ministries and the Commission to establish innovative and flexible grants for nurturing talent, and to increase support for existing grants and programmes;
 - 4. Calls on the Commission to collect and disseminate information on the experience gained and the action taken in the various Member States, in particular in the educational and cultural spheres;
 - 5. Believes that better prospects for Roma people, in particular with a view to their access to the labour market, can be ensured through increased investment by the Member States in education and training, with a particular focus on new technologies and the internet, incorporating measures endorsed by the international scientific community, foundations and NGOs working in the field of education and social inclusion at regional and local level;
 - 6. Believes that a better future for the Roma people can be ensured through education, and that investing in the education of Roma children and youth is therefore essential; emphasises that schooling is a right, but also a duty, and expresses its support for activities aimed at enhancing the participation of Roma students in schools, including via the active involvement of their families;

7. Believes that promoting knowledge of Romani culture across Europe will facilitate mutual understanding between Roma and non-Roma in Europe, while also boosting European intercultural dialogue;
8. Takes the view that the future strategy for the Roma minority should focus on education as the core instrument for promoting social inclusion;
9. Believes that support mechanisms, such as scholarships and mentoring arrangements, should be established for young Roma in order to inspire them not only to obtain diplomas, but also to enrol in higher education and improve their qualifications;
10. Takes the view that a new type of scholarship programme should be developed to ensure the highest quality instruction for Roma students in order to educate a new generation of Roma leaders;
11. Believes that educational institutions whose underprivileged students win places at higher-level institutions, or whose percentage of students graduating is above average, should be rewarded, and calls on the Commission to develop projects in this area;
12. Stresses that it is crucial that the Member States promote the integration of Roma into the community and cultural life of the places and countries in which they live, and ensure their long-term participation and representation therein, including through measures designed to promote vocational education and training (VET) and lifelong learning programmes aimed at the Roma community, taking into account the cultural heritage and way of life of the various Roma groups in Europe; points out, for instance, that efforts could be made to offer special training for school staff, to promote the hiring of Roma schoolteachers, to foster close cooperation with Roma families and organisations and to provide after-school support and scholarships; notes that this process should actively involve local authorities in the Member States and send a signal to the non-profit sector that its activities should include programmes designed to integrate Roma people into society;
13. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to combat every form of social and educational exclusion of the Roma, and to encourage all programmes that invest in education for Roma people;
14. Believes that local governments must take responsibility for reintegrating students who drop out of the school system before reaching the age at which education ceases to be compulsory; notes that, to this end, educational institutions must provide local governments with information about school-leavers;
15. Calls on the Commission to support further initiatives designed to provide early childhood education opportunities and care for Roma children and youth;
16. Believes that kindergartens and/or alternative forms of pre-school care and education should be established in communities where none exist, and expanded where there is a lack of places;
17. Calls on the Commission to support initiatives which have proved effective in preventing

any form of segregation and prioritise inclusive projects that promote educational success and involve the participation of Roma families;

18. Expresses its concern at the high rate of illiteracy among the Roma people and deems it essential that programmes are designed and developed which ensure quality primary, secondary and tertiary education for Roma girls and women, including strategies to facilitate their transition from primary to secondary school and promote, throughout the whole process, greater understanding of Roma cultural heritage, history and values among Roma and non-Roma people;
19. Emphasises that low school attendance, high absenteeism rates and low educational achievement may indicate that pupils and parents are not always aware of the importance of school; other relevant factors may include insufficient resources, health problems, lack of quality education on site or of accessible transportation to school, substandard housing and clothing that make school attendance impossible, a non-inclusive school climate and segregated schools that fail to provide adequate preparation with a view to competitiveness on the job market; underlines, therefore, the importance of action aimed at promoting school participation by Roma students and of ongoing, regular dialogue on educational matters with those students' families, the Roma community and all stakeholders;
20. Emphasises the vital role that grass-roots and performance sports can play in the process of ensuring the inclusion of the ethnic Roma population;
21. Supports the promotion of teacher training programmes that enhance teachers' ability to engage with children and youth with a Roma background, as well as with their parents and people employed as Roma mediators, particularly in primary schools, as a way to promote regular school attendance by Roma;
22. Suggests that different approaches to educational integration be adapted both to children from Roma families wishing to settle in one place – by monitoring children's regular school attendance, for instance – and to those from families wishing to continue their nomadic way of life – through measures facilitating school attendance inside Roma camps, for example;
23. Stresses the importance of mobility, lifelong learning, vocational training and continuing training programmes with a view to ensuring the inclusion of young people and adults from Roma communities and enhancing their potential to enter the employment market;
24. Believes that the workplace training system must be expanded so as to allow the large-scale acquisition of the necessary skills and abilities;
25. Believes that it is necessary to harmonise the supply of training with labour market demand, and calls, therefore, for medium-term national and regional forecasts of expected labour demand;
26. Calls on the Commission to develop and implement joint monitoring systems involving the EU institutions, the Member States and Roma community leaders, in respect of the

programmes and projects put into practice within the Member States;

27. Views the Roma culture as an integral part of Europe's cultural mosaic; points out that a key means of understanding the Roma people and their way of life is to increase other Europeans' awareness of the heritage, traditions and language of the Roma, and of contemporary Roma culture; strongly supports the promotion and preservation of their creative activities as an essential component of intercultural dialogue;
28. Takes the view that the Roma should make an educational effort to learn about the customs and culture of the peoples with whom they live, thereby facilitating their better integration in the places in which they live;
29. Believes that the promotion of voluntary and sporting activities involving Roma and non-Roma is important in fostering greater social inclusion;
30. Calls on the Commission to promote best practices and positive models and experiences arising from implemented programmes and Roma self-initiatives, with a view to improving the perception and image of Roma within non-Roma communities and boosting active participation by Roma communities and creative collaboration between those communities and the EU, the Member States and local programmes;
31. Calls for better identification and use, at all levels of government, of the existing EU funds available to promote the employment, education and culture of Roma peoples;
32. Recommends that future EU policies for the Roma minority should be based on a differentiated approach, tailored to the specific features of the different Member States and the particular nature of the communities involved;
33. Draws attention to the importance of conducting stricter checks on the use of EU funding for Roma inclusion;
34. Believes that exchanges of experience and good practices between Member States having achieved good results in the area of Roma inclusion and those still faced with this issue would be useful.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	25.1.2011
Result of final vote	+: 30 -: 0 0: 2
Members present for the final vote	Maria Badia i Cutchet, Zoltán Bagó, Malika Benarab-Attou, Lothar Bisky, Piotr Borys, Jean-Marie Cavada, Santiago Fisas Ayxela, Mary Honeyball, Cătălin Sorin Ivan, Petra Kammerevert, Morten Løkkegaard, Emma McClarkin, Marek Henryk Migalski, Doris Pack, Chrysoula Paliadeli, Marie-Thérèse Sanchez-Schmid, Marietje Schaake, Marco Scurria, Joanna Senyszyn, Timo Soini, Emil Stoyanov, Hannu Takkula, László Tőkés, Corneliu Vadim Tudor, Gianni Vattimo, Marie-Christine Vergiat, Sabine Verheyen, Milan Zver
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Ivo Belet, Nadja Hirsch, Seán Kelly, Iosif Matula, Georgios Papanikolaou, Hella Ranner, Mitro Repo, Olga Sehnalová, Rui Tavares