

Recommendation CM/Rec(2020)2 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the inclusion of the history of Roma and/or Travellers in school curricula and teaching materials

Questions and Answers

The Recommendation aims to promote and improve the teaching of the history of Roma and Travellers¹ in Europe.

1. Why is such a recommendation necessary?

A thematic visit by a group of specialists from the Council of Europe's Ad hoc Committee of Experts on Roma and Traveller Issues (CAHROM) in Kosice, Slovak Republic, in November 2017, and some research² carried out in co-operation with the Roma Education Fund (REF) and the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research (GEI), looking at the representation of Roma in curricula and textbooks at secondary education level in 21 Council of Europe member States³ and in Kosovo*, revealed the following:

1. The representation of Roma mostly falls within a limited number of thematic contexts and can be seen as largely insufficient, often stereotypical and in some cases inaccurate.
2. Roma are represented mostly as a historical topic, or as victims, and frequently as both.
3. The majority of references to Roma present them as a national minority or a separate group within society, while other references present Roma only as a numerical part or a percentage of society.
4. There is almost no representation of Roma as an integral part of the respective national society, and no description of Roma history, culture, or their contribution to society or to the common European cultural or economic heritage.
5. Textbooks rarely describe contemporary Roma communities or present remarkable individuals with names, biographical information or achievements.

The present recommendation aims to remedy that.

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

² The Representation of Roma in European Curricula and Textbooks. Analytical Report, 2020, <https://repository.gei.de/handle/11428/306>

³ Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Spain, United Kingdom.

* All reference to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

It recommends analysing and revising current school curricula, textbooks and other teaching or learning materials with a view to eliminating stereotyping related to Roma and/or Travellers and to promoting diversity, showing the full complexity of history and ensuring a shared history approach. It includes competency-based learning, incorporates interactive pedagogies, and covers formal and non-formal education. The European Association of History Teachers (EUROCLIO) was involved in the drafting of the text.

2. Is there other political support for this initiative?

Yes.

The Council of Europe “**Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2020-2025)**”, approved by the Committee of Ministers on 22 January 2020, also includes actions to promote the teaching of Roma and Travellers’ history and culture. It can be consulted here: https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=0900001680998933

3. Are resources available?

Yes.

The Council of Europe’s “**Factsheets on Roma History**” serve as background material and can be consulted here: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/roma-and-travellers/roma-history-factsheets>

“**Right to Remember. A Handbook for Education with Young People on the Roma Genocide**”, published by the Council of Europe’s Youth Department, can be found here: <https://rm.coe.int/168008b633>