Ref. CG-PR055(2013)

"High time to translate national strategies into local action": European Alliance of Cities and Regions for Roma Inclusion was launched in Strasbourg

Strasbourg, 21.03.2013 – Yesterday the European Alliance of Cities and Regions for Roma Inclusion was launched in the framework of the 24th Session of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. High level representatives from cities and regions as well as international organisations came together to formally start the active phase of the Alliance after the consultation process and two pilot events in 2012 (on housing in Madrid and on education in Budapest).

"The situation of Roma people in Europe is a shame for this continent and a shame for all of us. […] Therefore it is high time to translate national strategies into local action. Many municipalities are committed to that, and what they need is support, expertise and resources," said the Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni, during the launching ceremony. Rudko Kawczynski, the President of the European Roma and Travellers Forum, agreed in his speech that this initiative is "timely" and stressed that "the majority of European Roma live in the poorest areas", which has to be changed. ERTF estimates that there is a rising figure of some 30,000 Roma slums in Europe and highlighted therefore the need to mobilise and coordinate local and regional action to improve the conditions in which Roma live. Several cities of the Alliance (Heraklion, Madrid, Murska Sobota and Strasbourg) who also spoke at the launch, have expressed their strong commitment to the initiative.

A video message from EU Commissioner for Regional Policy, Johannes Hahn, announced that international organisations (European Commission, the Council of Europe's Congress, the World Bank, the Council of Europe Development Bank and the United Nations Development Programme) will be joining their forces in the form of a coalition for Roma inclusion. The Alliance will be the main pillar of this coalition, responsible for capacity building at local and regional level.

******

ROMACT - The first project of the Alliance

In 2013-2014 the Alliance is planning to implement its first project named ROMACT, which will offer two types of participation for the cities:

Intensive cycle: Active participation in the policy cycle on Roma inclusion, consisting of preparation work, including data collection and analysis, and followed by a set of thematic workshops, study visits, consultative work and final conference. Around 30 cities and regions are planned to be engaged in this intensive cycle of activities.

Extensive cycle: Open for all the participants in the Alliance, which will include exchange of information, opportunities for networking and developing partnerships as well as a possibility to switch to the intensive cycle.

ROMACT, the first project of the Alliance will end in late 2014 with a major evaluation conference of cities and regions as well as local, national and international stakeholders.
Further information about the Alliance (including all the all the speeches from yesterday) is available at www.roma-alliance.org

Press contact:

Congress of Local and Regional Authorities: Nikolai ATEFIE, Project Manager for Communication and Youth of the Alliance: Tel. +33 (0) 39021 – 4258; Mob. +33 (0) 781 27 3990; Nikolai.Atefie@coe.int;

Follow us: