

▶▶ Youth

The new Roma generation has tremendous potential for change and transformation playing an important role as a positive role model for their community and the majority society. The FSG has taken due note of this fact and in 2008 has continued to earmark part of its resources and efforts to promoting the social participation of Roma youth fostering active citizenship and respect for their cultural identity through the programmes and actions described below.

In 2008, the main actions carried out by the Area of Youth were within the framework of the **Transnational project** entitled **“Roma Youth - European Citizenship”** as a follow-up to the actions dating to December 2006.

This initiative, funded by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency of the European Commission and co-funded by the Youth Institute and numerous Spanish youth administrations at regional and local level, included coordination meetings, training courses on European citizenship, study visits to the EU's two main administrative capitals, the celebration of Europe Day, the publication of a teaching guide and posters for dissemination and a website

EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP COURSE ENTITLED
“EUROPEAN CONSTRUCTION” HELD IN PALENCIA.



featuring all of the project information (http://www.gitanos.org/european_programmes/youth/index.html). The Project partners were: Open Society Foundation, Slovakia; Impreuna Agency for Community Development, Romania; Romani Baht Foundation, Bulgaria; Athinganoi, the Czech Republic and the Fundación Secretariado Gitano, Spain, which led the project.

Project actions were carried out during 2008 in all of the project's partner countries following the same outline in terms of content, objectives and methodology. Following is more detailed information of the actions undertaken in Spain:

- I Celebration of Europe Day. The celebration was divided into two parts: a presentation by the young participants in the European project who read a manifesto drafted by the group itself. The act was held at the FSG headquarters in Valladolid and the media were present along with the Director-General of the Castile-Leon Youth Institute. The second part was an interactive activity involving students from the Galileo High School in the city of Valladolid with the aim of providing students with a deeper understanding of European affairs; it also gave the young Roma participants who led this activity with the school students the chance to use the knowledge they acquired through the project. The activity involved over 50 young Roma.

- III Training Course “the institutions comprising the European Union”. In the



project's third training course the participants learned about the main institutions of the European Union and how they operate. This course took place in April in Navarre and was a combination of theoretical presentations on European citizenship and practical learning; the group of participants was received by the Navarre Youth Institute and the Pamplona Town Hall where the city's mayor met them. Sixteen young people took part in the training course.

I *IV Training Course "European Construction"*. The aim of this course was to give the Roma participants an overview of the current situation and political panorama as regards the Roma community in Europe. Presentations were also made regarding experiences and resources available for youth at European level such as the European Youth Foundation and the European Commission's Youth in Action Programme. The aim of the course was to give the young Roma participants greater knowledge of and get them involved in Roma community affairs in Europe such as the celebration of the European Roma Summit and the implementation of a strategy leading to a Roma policy. The course was held in Palencia in October with 19 Roma participants.

“With the addition of Puertollano and Talavera de la Reina, the Youth Information Services Network known as “Chavós Nebó – Jóvenes de Hoy” now has 26 offices.



PARTICIPANTS AT THE III TRAINING COURSE ENTITLED “THE INSTITUTIONS COMPRISING THE EU”.

I *II Study Visit: Brussels*. The project's study visits were instrumental in giving group participants insights into the EU and its main institutions. While the first study visit was in November 2007 to Strasbourg, the second was in November 2008 to Brussels involving 28 young Roma from the countries participating in the project. A number of interviews and official receptions were organised with those working with ethnic minorities and youth in Brussels such as: The European Parliament, the European Commission and the Directorate-General for Employment and Social Affairs where the group met with Virag Sandor of the Equal Opportunities Unit; Education and Culture where we were received by Hanna Klimek and Manfred Von Hebel; the Youth Policy Unit; and Justice, Freedom and Security where we met with Carl Henrik Hemrin. The group also visited the Brussels headquarters of the Open Society Institute where we were received by the Director, André Wilkens; and the Executive Agency of Education, Audiovisual and Cultural Sector where we met with Fionna Deuss-Frandi and Didier Vandembenden. The group also took part in a public debate where the FSG had the opportunity to present the project. This act was organised by

The European project *Roma Youth - European Citizenship* has helped to bring Europe closer to young people from Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Romania and Spain.

the European People's Party and focused on the perspectives of the Roma community in Europe. At the conclusion of that debate, the group had the opportunity to chat with Livia Jaroka, a Roma MEP, about issues relating to Roma youth in Europe.

› **Information and Participatory Youth Network “Chavós Nebó – Youth Today”. An intercultural forum for young people.**

The programme was launched in the year 2000 and has become a benchmark for Roma youth carrying out actions relating to dissemination, information, training, awareness-raising and youth empowerment through funding granted by the Youth Institute and other subsidies and Collaboration Agreements at regional and/or local level with different administrations with competences in youth matters.

› **Collaboration with other youth organisations, participation in fora and technical assistance.**

Collaboration of the Youth Area with the different youth administrations and/or youth organisations forms part of the institutional action whose aim is to see the interests and concerns of Roma youth included in a cross-



CELEBRATION OF “EUROPE DAY” AT THE GALILEO SCHOOL IN VALLADOLID.

cutting fashion in the implementation of youth policies at different levels: local, regional, national and European.

One of our main lines of action in this field is participation in youth association fairs, seminars, conferences and observatories. The aim of these activities, together with the close collaboration between the Regional youth Councils and the National Youth Council, is to foster the presence of Roma youth in these platforms.

Thanks to the collaboration with the Spanish Youth Council, in 2008 the FSG began to coordinate the Working Group on Citizenship and Social Movement of the Specialised Committee.

› **Transnational cooperation and European projection of the Youth Area.**

In Europe, the FSG's Youth Area has participated as part of the coordination team of the Study Session organised by the FERYP (Forum of European Roma Young People) whose aim is to provide young Roma throughout Europe with the tools they need to involve other young Roma in the development and advancement of the Roma Community. The session took place at the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg bringing together 35 young Roma from different countries throughout Europe.