

## ▶▶ Institutional activity

In addition to promoting and engaging in direct intervention programmes, the Foundation also gives particular consideration to institutional activity at local, regional, national and European level. This activity takes the form of presence and participation in different institutions based on cooperation and partnership with public and private entities, the promotion of networking and platforms and the fostering of more active policies in the field of social inclusion.

To this end, efforts are made to involve other key institutions and actors such as competent public authorities, parties and parliamentary groups, social organisations, the media and other areas of civil society in order to learn more about and to develop a sense of solidarity with the Spanish Roma community. Secondly, the aim is to contribute, just as any other



THE PRESIDENT OF THE FSG WITH THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION, SOCIAL POLICY AND SPORTS.

member of the civil society and tertiary sector, to fostering the construction of a more fair society and collaborating in and developing joint actions with other entities around shared objectives.

### **PARTICIPATION IN INSTITUTIONAL BODIES AND COUNCILS**

The Foundation is actively present in the main institutional bodies and advisory councils related to its sphere of work thus giving it the opportunity to take part in the decisions affecting the social issues concerning the Roma community.



STEERING COMMITTEE AT THE LAUNCHING OF THE EUROMA NETWORK IN SEVILLE.

It is a member of the State Council of Social Action NGOs, forms part of the State Council of the Roma People and is present in the different participatory bodies of the Roma community set up in a number of Autonomous Communities such as the Council for the Integral Advancement and Social Participation of the Roma People in the Basque Country, the Roma Community Integration Board of the Community of Madrid or the Regional Council for the Roma Community of Extremadura.

It likewise participates in the State Council for the Advancement of Equal Treatment and Non-discrimination which is an especially important discussion forum with other actors and will help promote actions to combat ethnic discrimination, an issue taking a worrisome toll on members of the Roma community.

### **NETWORKING**

The Foundation's institutional activity focuses heavily on collaboration and networking in different fields and with different organisations. The FSG collaborates with Roma and non-Roma entities and with public and private institutions working mostly in fields related to poverty and social exclusion, defence of Roma minority rights, combating discrimination, health promotion, employment, etc.

It forms part of the Social Action NGO Platform and actively participates in the EAPN-ES, the European Anti Poverty



SPEECH MADE BY ISIDRO RODRÍGUEZ, DIRECTOR OF THE FSG, AT THE EUROPEAN ROMA SUMMIT HELD IN BRUSSELS.

Network-Spain where we form part of the executive council as a national organisation. We are likewise involved in the EAPN's different regional networks which are active in most of the Autonomous Communities where it is operating.

Together with other NGOs committed to promoting quality and transparency in the social action sector, the FSG is participating in the constitution of the NGO Quality Institute (Spanish acronym ICONG).

At European level, special mention should be made of the invitations received to engage in European Parliamentary discussions at meetings of the Socialist and Popular groups and especially at one of the most important events which has taken place in recent years: the first European Roma Summit held in September 2008 in Brussels where the Director of the FSG, Isidro Rodríguez, was an invited speaker under the heading "Policies that work". He focused his talk on the Structural Funds as a fundamental instrument for the social inclusion of the Roma population.

With a view to enhancing the effectiveness of the Structural Funds in support of Europe's Roma community through the exchange and transfer of approaches and best practices,

“The FSG was invited to participate in one of the most important events to take place in recent years: the first European Roma Summit held in September 2008 in Brussels

in 2007 the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, through the Administrative Unit of the European Social Fund and in collaboration with the FSG, fostered the creation of EURoma, the *European Network on the Social Inclusion of the Roma Community* within the framework of the Structural Funds. The Administrative Units of the ESF and the departments responsible for Roma policy of a further 11 EU countries joined this initiative which was formally launched in January 2008 in Seville.

Other important involvements at the European level include the FSG's participation in the NGO Platform acting as interlocutor of the European Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) and in the *European Roma Policy Coalition* (ERPC) which links important European social organisations and organisations defending human rights.

Through these and other platforms and alliances, the FSG has been making strong efforts to develop more effective inclusion, anti-discrimination and equal treatment policies. We must not lose sight of the fact that in 2008, especially in the aftermath of the serious events which occurred in Italy in May, the ghost of racism and the institutional persecution of Roma have again appeared in Europe.

## PARTNERSHIPS

Involving different actors in joint projects and objectives is one of the FSG's preferred ways of working and one which has proven most effective over the years to make progress in the implementation of measures for the Roma community and the creation of more stable and lasting commitments. The Foundation has Collaboration Agreements at local, regional and national level with nearly 300 bodies: City Councils, regional governmental departments and other public and private institutions throughout the country.

One of the factors which have contributed to the success of the FSG's employment programme *Acceder* is precisely its ability to establish close collaborative relationships with companies and public administrations. The FSG is the managing



PEDRO PUENTE AND BEATRIZ CORREDOR,  
MINISTER OF HOUSING DURING THE  
PRESENTATION OF THE HOUSING MAP.

organisation of initiatives targeting the Roma population within the framework of the Multi-regional Fight Against Discrimination Operational Programme (through *Acceder*) and is also the intermediate body in the Technical Assistance Operational Programme for Transnational and Interregional Cooperation.

Attention should also be drawn to the collaborative agreements that the FSG has signed with a number of Ministries, which are having an effect over and above the specific actions contained therein by putting the Roma issue on the agenda of these government administrations when traditionally issues having to do with the Roma community were only addressed by social affairs ministries and regional social departments. In any case, in 2008 the Ministry of Education, Social Policy and Sports was our main partner and collaborator in many of the Foundation's initiatives.

Also in 2008, special emphasis was given to actions implemented within the framework of the agreement concluded with the Ministry of Housing, specifically related to the October presentation of the *Housing map and the Roma community in Spain, 2007* by the Minister, Beatriz Corredor.

Mention must also be made of the Collaboration Agreements that the Foundation has been signing with some Town Halls,



THE PRINCESS OF ASTURIAS BEING PRESENTED WITH THE SKETCH OF THE “ROMA WOMAN” AT THE AUDIENCE GIVEN TO THE FSG BOARD OF TRUSTEES.

especially the one dating back to 1999 with the City Council of Madrid which has been instrumental in the development of integrated action in five districts throughout the capital city.

With regards to private entities, we should highlight the importance of collaboration with several different enterprises through our employment programme *Acceder* which has given a great number of Roma access to training and employment. Year after year we have found that private entities are taking a greater interest in our work and this has allowed us to expand our network of relationships primarily with the Social Initiatives of financial entities, for the execution of projects and support of cultural or social awareness-raising activities. In addition to the collaborative relationships established in previous years, the most recent partners include the Caja de Ahorros del Mediterráneo (CAM), the Social Initiatives area of Caja Madrid, La Caixa, the ICO Foundation (Official Credit Institution), the El Monte Foundation, Caixa Galicia, Caja España, etc.

### ACTIVITY UNDERTAKEN BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

At the beginning of December the Princess of Asturias, Letizia Ortiz Rocasolano, received the FSG Board of Trustees at the Zarzuela Palace. For the Foundation, this audience was a sign of the interest that Princess Letizia and the Royal Family have for the Spanish Roma community and it was an honour insofar as it acknowledged the work done over the past several decades by the *Secretariado Gitano*.

The second annual meeting of the Foundation's Board of Trustees was also held in December approving the 2009 Action Plan and Budget. At this meeting, the President informed the rest of the members of Álvaro Gil Robles' verbal acceptance of the post of Honorary President replacing Marcelino Oreja Aguirre who took the decision a few months ago to step down from this honorary post at a time when he is relinquishing a number of public responsibilities. The important posts held by Álvaro Gil-Robles include that of Ombudsman (1988-1993) and Council of Europe's Human Rights Commissioner (1999-2006).

The important posts held by Álvaro Gil-Robles, the new Honorary President of the FSG, include that of Ombudsman (1988-1993) and Council of Europe's Human Rights Commissioner (1999-2006).



PILAR DÁVILA, GENERAL COORDINATOR OF SOCIAL PROTECTION AND EQUALITY IN THE AREA OF FAMILY GOVERNANCE AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS OF THE MADRID CITY COUNCIL, VISITS FSG HEADQUARTERS ON THE DAY OF THE INAUGURATION.