

**RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL AND THE MINISTERS OF EDUCATION
MEETING WITHIN THE COUNCIL**

of 22 May 1989

on school provision for gypsy and traveller children

(89/C 153/02)

THE COUNCIL AND THE MINISTERS FOR
EDUCATION, MEETING WITHIN THE COUNCIL,

Having regard to the resolution of the Council and of the Ministers for Education, meeting within the Council, of 9 February 1976 ⁽¹⁾ comprising an action programme in the field of education,

Considering that on 24 May 1984 the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the situation of gypsies in the Community ⁽²⁾ in which it recommended in particular that the governments of the Member States coordinate their approach and called on the Commission to draw up programmes to be subsidized from Community funds aimed at improving the situation of gypsies without destroying their separate identity,

Considering that gypsies and travellers currently form a population group of over one million persons in the Community and that their culture and language have formed part of the Community's cultural and linguistic heritage for over 500 years,

Considering that the present situation is disturbing in general, and in particular with regard to schooling, that only 30 to 40 % of gypsy or traveller children attend school with any regularity, that half of them have never been to school, that a very small percentage attend secondary school and beyond, that the level of educational skills, especially reading and writing, bears little relationship to the presumed length of schooling, and that the illiteracy rate among adults is frequently over 50 % and in some places 80 % or more,

Considering that over 500 000 children are involved and that this number must constantly be revised upwards on account of the high proportion of young people in gypsy and traveller communities, half of whom are under 16 years of age,

Considering that schooling, in particular by providing the means of adapting to a changing environment and achieving personal and professional autonomy, is a key factor in the cultural, social and economic future of gypsy and traveller communities, that parents are aware of this fact and their desire for schooling for their children is increasing,

Noting the results and recommendations of studies carried out on behalf of the Commission on the schooling of gypsy and traveller children in the 12 Member States of the Community and the guidelines emerging from the summary report, consultations of gypsy and traveller representatives and discussions between experts and representatives of the Ministries of Education,

HEREBY ADOPT THIS RESOLUTION:

The Council and the Ministers for Education, meeting within the Council, will strive to promote a set of measures concerning school provision for gypsy and traveller children aimed, without prejudice to any steps already taken by Member States to cope with specific situations which they face in this area, at developing a global structural approach helping to overcome the major obstacles to the access of gypsy and traveller children to schooling.

These measures will aim at:

- promoting innovatory initiatives,
- proposing and supporting positive and appropriate measures,
- ensuring that achievements are interrelated,
- widely disseminating the lessons learned,
- promoting exchanges of experience.

1. At Member State level

Within their constitutional and financial limits and the limits of their own specific national policies and structures, the Member States will make every effort to promote:

- (a) structures:
- support for educational establishments, providing them with the necessary facilities for catering for gypsy and traveller children,
 - support for teachers, pupils and parents;

⁽¹⁾ OJ No C 38, 19. 2. 1976, p. 1.

⁽²⁾ OJ No C 172, 2. 7. 1984, p. 153.

(b) teaching methods and teaching materials:

- experiments with distance teaching, which is better adapted to the reality of nomadic life,
- the development of forms of educational follow up,
- measures to facilitate transition between schooling and continuing educational training,
- consideration for the history, culture and language of gypsies and travellers,
- use of new electronic and video methods,
- teaching materials for educational establishments involved in the schooling of gypsy and traveller children;

(c) recruitment and initial and continuing training of teachers:

- adequate continuing and additional training for teachers working with gypsy and traveller children,
- the training and employment of teachers of gypsy or traveller origin wherever possible;

(d) information and research:

- increased provision of documentation and information to schools, teachers and parents,
- encouragement of research on the culture, history and language of gypsies and travellers;

(e) consultation and coordination: promotion of social-mindedness among the population:

- appointment of trained staff to carry out coordination tasks,
- the encouragement of liaison groups bringing together parents, teachers, representatives of local authorities and school administrations,

- designation, where necessary, of a State authority or authorities involved in the schooling of gypsy and traveller children in States with a large number of gypsies and travellers to assist in coordination of the necessary measures including, where appropriate, those relating to the training of teachers, documentation and the production of teaching material.

2. At Community level

- 2.1. Community involvement in this field is useful for encouraging national initiatives concerning the exchange of experience and for promoting innovative pilot schemes.
- 2.2. Organization of exchanges of views and experience by means of meetings at Community level of the various partners concerned and more particularly of representatives of gypsies and travellers, young gypsies and teachers.
- 2.3. The Commission will continuously document, promote, coordinate and assess all the measures at Community level with the assistance of an outside body if necessary.
- 2.4. The Commission will ensure that these measures fit in with the other Community measures already planned in the field of education. It will ensure in particular that these activities are compatible with other Community activities such as those of the European Social Fund and with those of other international organizations, especially the Council of Europe.
- 2.5. A report on the implementation of the measures provided for in this resolution will be submitted to the Council, the European Parliament and the Education Committee by the Commission before 31 December 1993.