

Official Norwegian Reports NOU 2015: 7 Summary

Assimilation and Resistance

Norwegian policies towards Tater/Romani people from 1850 to the present



The Tater/Romani Committee submitted its report, "Assimilation and Resistance" (NOU 2015:7) to Minister of Local Government and Modernisation, Jan Tore Sanner, on 1 June 2015. The Committee also submitted an official annex to the report with 28 studies that have been conducted on the Committee's behalf.

This booklet contains (1) the Tater/Romani Committee's own summary of their main conclusions, presented in the introduction of the Committee's Report (NOU 2015:7), (2) extracts/summaries of main findings of the Report's Chapters 1 to 6 (3) the Committee's final recommendations to the Norwegian authorities, that are presented in the Report's chapter 7.

This booklet is produced by the Norwegian Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation. It is composed of extracts from the Report, selected by the former Head of Secretariat of the Committee, Ingvill Thorson Plesner. The Committee's report and the official annex are available as full electronic versions.¹ A hard-copy version of the report can also be ordered from the Ministry.² For list of sources, see appendix to the original Norwegian version.

¹ <http://www.jus.uio.no/smr/om/tater-romaniutvalget/>

² <https://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/kmd/org/styrer-rad-og-utvalg/utvalg-som-skal-undersoke-gjennomforinge/id747013/>

THE MAIN CONCLUSIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

The following is a translation of the Tater/Romani Committee's summary of its main conclusions, as presented in the preamble of the Report (NOU 2015:7).

Failed and destructive policies

In the 1900s, Tater/Romani people were subject to heavy-handed assimilation policies by Norwegian authorities. These policies were expressed through laws and legislative decrees that had partly discriminatory purposes and a clear discriminatory effect. The policies created negative prejudices towards this minority group, which has led to fear and distrust between the minority and mainstream society. This has had, and still has, major consequences for the Tater/Romani people.

The policies focused on two areas in particular: Transfer of child custody and forced settlement. The Norwegian state mainly handed over implementation of these policies to the private organisation Norwegian Mission among the Homeless (hereafter referred to as the Mission). In practice, the Mission was the most prominent organisation in this field from 1907 to 1986, and state agencies were instructed to cooperate with Mission. Although the Mission was also a driving force in defining the target group and formulating the policies, the Committee concludes that the Mission carried out its work on behalf of the state. The Committee also concludes that there was close cooperation between the Mission and local government authorities as regards transfer of child custody and forced settlement.

Box 1.1 "Assimilation"

Assimilation originates from the Latin word "assimilare", which means "to make equal". In this context, it describes policies conducted by the authorities towards a minority group, with the aim of making them as similar as possible to the mainstream population. This means that individual or groups are accepted in mainstream society on the majority's terms. It is a one-way process, where those who are assimilated must change their fundamental cultural values and lifestyles, while the majority makes no adjustments.

Policies and measures contrary to human rights

Measures against children were a key instrument in the assimilation of the Tater/Romani people. Children were taken away from their parents and placed in orphanages and foster care, and custody was transferred to the Mission. From 1900, in the course of two generations, almost one third of the children born in Tater/Romani families were taken away by the Child Welfare Services. This had dramatic consequences for the minority as a whole.

The usual justification for separating the children from their parents was that the parents' lifestyle was harmful to the children. The Mission also deliberately severed ties between parents and children. The situation for the children who were taken away, varied. Many children suffered neglect, maltreatment and/or abuse. The consequences for many of the children were unstable, unpredictable and insecure childhoods. The Committee concludes that the widespread practice of separating the children from their families was clearly incompatible with the right to privacy, as this is understood today.

The same applies to several aspects of the treatment at Svanviken labour colony up to the 1970s. At Svanviken, restrictive control was exerted on the residents' daily life. This included for instance controlling the residents' correspondence. In the period 1950-1970, 40% of the women who were placed in Svanviken were sterilised while they were there. The Committee is not aware of any other institution in Norway that has such a high degree of sterilisation.

Distrust, prejudice and invisibility

The Committee finds that there is a lack of knowledge about the Tater/Romani people's culture and history in society at large. They also find negative prejudices against this minority. This also applies to certain employees in public institutions, who have contact with Tater/Romani people. There also seems to be a lack of interest in acquiring knowledge-based information about this minority. There is very little dissemination of knowledge about the culture and history of the Tater/Romani people in kindergartens, primary schools and teacher/pre-school teacher training programmes. Therefore they become invisible as a group in society today.

By transferring child custody away from Tater/Romani parents, the aim was to break family ties and eradicate the travelling culture and way of life. This has had negative consequences for the group as a whole as well as for individuals. Broken families, loss of language and culture have also had a negative impact on the children that were taken into care and the family left behind. Interviews conducted for the Committee show that many children who were taken into care and their biological families have found it difficult to resume contact after many years of separation.

An important finding of the Committee was that many Tater/Romani have a deep distrust and, in some cases, fear of the Norwegian authorities. The distrust is related to previous injustices and assimilation policies. The distrust is passed on to new generations, and is also perpetuated through continued discrimination and negative attitudes towards

the minority group today. This means that many young people today feel marginalised, despite not having experienced the assimilation policies themselves. Many Tater/Romani people emphasise that they want the generations growing up today to trust the Norwegian authorities and be recognised as equals.

The Committee's studies of two generations that were subjected to the Mission's assimilation measures show alarmingly high mortality rates. They also have a significantly lower level of education than the population in general. It is obvious from the findings for this group that the policies, and the measures taken, had a negative impact on the group as a whole and on individuals involved. The Tater/Romani people's access to public services has been weakened, due to their distrust of the public authorities, and to the lack of understanding for the special history of the Tater/Romani people and their experiences with the public authorities.

Prejudices and suppression have reinforced the feeling of being an "outsider" among the Tater/Romani people, and many find it difficult to come forward and say that they belong to this minority. Young people experience rejection due to their group identity when applying for apprenticeships. Others experience rejection when applying for a job, housing or when checking-in to campsites, because they are from a Tater/Romani family. The negative perceptions that formed the basis of the assimilation policies in the 1900s have long, historical roots, but were mainly established from the 1850s onwards.

Incomplete reconciliation

The Committee believes that it should have been understood at the time that several aspects of the policies and measures towards the Tater/Romani people were contrary to the fundamental principles of human rights, which Norway had undertaken to respect. The Committee also concludes that several laws and regulations contributed to or did not provide adequate protection against discrimination and arbitrariness, as these regulations are understood today.

Many Tater/Romani people interviewed by the Committee would like the Norwegian state to clearly reconcile and come out against past assimilation policies. Studies conducted by the Committee show that many Tater/Romani people from various communities find existing compensation and redress schemes to be unfair and not contribute to justice and reconciliation.

From the 1990s to the present, several individuals and organisations from Tater/Romani communities have mobilised to ensure that the history is investigated and documented and that the Norwegian state recognises its responsibilities and provides redress for its assimilation policies. The Tater/Romani people have gone from being an outcast group to receiving recognition as a national minority. The next step on the way to reconciliation and justice is that the Norwegian state ensures that all Tater/Romani people become full participants in society, and are allowed to participate in all processes and matters concerning them.

THE MAIN FINDINGS AND WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

This chapter includes abstracts from parts of the chapters 1 – 6 of NOU 2015: 7.

Mandate and organisation

By Royal Decree of 3 January 2011, the Norwegian state appointed a Committee to study and describe the policies and measures towards Tater/ Romani people from the 1800s to the present, with special emphasis on the objectives, implementation and instruments of these policies. The Committee was also requested to consider the findings in light of Norwegian legislation and human rights and whether the findings form the basis for considering new measures that may contribute to justice and reconciliation. The initiative for the investigation came from representatives of the Tater/Romani people themselves, and was supported, among others, by the Norwegian Helsinki Committee. The mandate was updated in 2013, at the same time as the Committee and its Secretariat changed leadership and composition.

In the mandate of the Tater/Romani Committee, the Norwegian state refers to past policies toward the group:

From the end of the 1800s to the mid-1980s, the aim of the policies towards Tater/Romani people was to eradicate "omstreifervesenet" (*vagrancy*). The culture and lifestyle of this ethnic group was to be brought to an end and they were to "learn to be Norwegians". These assimilation policies were implemented through measures that must be characterised as gross injustices, and partly racially motivated.

In short, the Committee has been requested to investigate the policies towards Tater/ Romani people with emphasis on how these policies have worked, the present situation, and what can build trust and good relations between the minority and society at large.

Box 1.2 The Mandate

The purpose and main task of the Committee has been formulated as follows in the mandate:

Purpose: The aim of the study is to document the policies and measures aimed at Tater/Romani people by the Norwegian state and organisations, institutions and businesses in Norway. The objective is that this work will help create a common understanding of what actually happened, and the consequences and impact this has had on individuals and the group - among other things, as regards their lifestyle, culture and language. In its work, the Committee will emphasise gender and child perspectives. The aim is also to build a platform so that the reconciliation process between Tater/Romani people and society at large may continue in a positive direction.

Task: The main task of the Committee is to study and describe the development of the Norwegian authorities, institutions, organisations and other businesses' policies and measures towards Tater/Romani people up to the present, with particular focus on the objectives, implementation and instruments of the policies. Among other things, the Committee will consider the findings in light of the Norwegian legislation and international law obligations by which Norway was and is bound. The Committee should consider to what extent the findings give grounds for assessing future measures to contribute toward reconciliation and justice. Matters related to Roma in Norway, of Norwegian or foreign origin, fall outside the Committee's mandate.

The mandate states that the initiative of representatives of Tater/Romani people formed the background for appointment of the Committee:

For many years, the Tater/Romani organisations have wanted a full review of the Norwegian authorities' treatment of this group, partly through support to organisations, institutions and businesses that implemented measures against Tater/Romani people. The topic gained further relevance in the spring of 2009, when the Norwegian Helsinki Committee presented its report on the "Norwegian Romani/Tater Policies - Past, Present and Future", in which one of the recommendations was to initiate such a review.

Organisation of the Committee's work

The Committee was appointed by the Norwegian state in 2011, with a view to submitting its report by the end of November 2013. In August 2013, the Committee changed leadership and composition and the Secretariat was reorganised. The Committee also received a revised mandate, which included a paragraph about a resource group that would assist the Committee. Knut Vollebæk took over as Chairman of the Committee on 20 August 2013 and Ingvill Thorson Plesner took up appointment as Head of the Secretariat.

From the autumn of 2014, the Secretariat included three advisers, in addition to the Head of the Secretariat and scientific assistants. Several employees were associated with the Secretariat in part-time positions for short periods in 2014 and 2015. A number of external researchers have conducted various sub-studies on behalf of the Committee. A few of the Committee's members have been involved as researchers in specific projects.

In August 2013, the Ministry appointed a resource group, which, according to the Committee's revised mandate, was to provide input to the Committee and assist them with coming in contact with interviewees, etc. The four Tater/Romani organisations who in 2013 received basic support from the Ministry were represented by one or two members each. Among the seven members of the new resource group, five had been observers for the Committee in the initial phase of the work (2011 - 2013). A representative of the Norwegian Helsinki Committee was also appointed as a member of the resource group. Members of the resource group and other resource persons from Tater/Romani communities have provided important contributions to the development of several of the Committee's surveys and studies.

Box 1.3 The Resource Group

The resource group's role was described in the revised mandate from August 2013:

The members of the resource group may propose matters or topics the Committee should investigate further, and point out areas where there may be a need for further research and documentation. The members of the resource group may also assist the Committee with facts and information, e.g., private archives, and be discussion partners for the Committee. The resource group may help the Committee and its Secretariat to come in contact with relevant oral sources. Meetings between the Committee and the resource group must be a forum for mutual exchange of information.

The Committee invited the resource group to one or two meetings every half year since the reorganisation in 2013. At the meetings, the members of the resource group received information on the status of the various projects and provided input to these. The members of the resource group also proposed topics that should be investigated and have thus been originators of several of the Committee's projects. In addition to the meetings with the whole Committee, the Chairman of the Committee and the Head of

the Secretariat have invited the resource group to one extra meeting each half year to inform on the status of the various projects and to receive input to this work. The Chairman of the Committee and the Head of the Secretariat have also had several meetings with the resource persons individually, particularly at the beginning and the end (i.e. the autumn of 2013 and spring of 2015). In the autumn of 2014, the resource group was invited to the Committee Meeting where the committee's researchers presented the main findings of their projects. In the spring of 2015, the members of the resource group were presented with the Committee's main findings from various chapters in the draft NOU, so that they could comment on these. The Chairman of the Committee and the Secretariat held meetings with the executive committees of the Tater / Romani associations in the autumn and winter of 2014. A number of researchers have conducted studies and fact-finding missions on behalf of the Committee. Researchers have also conducted interviews with organised and unorganised Tater/ Romani people. Several of the members of the Committee have conducted surveys and have written short or long reports in connection with the Committee's projects.

From the spring of 2014, the Chairman of the Committee, the Head of the Secretariat and other members of the Secretariat have attended several professional seminars, conferences and other events organised by the various Tater/Romani organisations. One of the aims of these was to disseminate knowledge about the work of the Committee and to receive input to the various projects. It was also an important part of the efforts to contact people who wanted to be interviewed by the Committee's researchers. The Secretariat has used the Committee's website and its own Facebook page to disseminate information about the work of the Committee and to come in contact with Tater/Romani people - both among those who are active in the organisations and those who are not organised. A number of members of this minority have also contacted the Secretariat or the Committee's researchers to tell their stories or to present their views on various topics.

The Chairman of the Committee and the Secretariat have had several open information meetings in various parts of the country in the spring of 2015, including in Elverum, Stavanger and Oslo. Some of the information meetings were organised in cooperation with Tater/Romani organisations.

Who are the Tater/Romani people?

The Tater/Romani people have a long history in Norway. According to researchers, the first Tater/Romani families came to Norway in the 1500s.³ An important part of the lifestyle of Tater/Romani people has traditionally been that the families have travelled from place to place to trade and sell crafts. Today there are still some who travel and work as craftsmen in the spring and summer months.

³ Anne Minken, "Tatere i Norden før 1850: sosio-økonomiske og etniske fortolkningsmodeller", Tromsø 2009 (Ph.D thesis).

In 1999, the Tater/Romani people were given status as a national minority, together with Jews, Kvens/Norwegian Finns (people of Finnish descent in Northern Norway), Roma and Forest Finns, through Norway's ratification of the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. At the time, the Norwegian state pointed out that Tater/ Romani people had "a special historical background, own traditional methods of acquisition, their own language: Romani, and a lifestyle where travelling, unity and family ties are key features".⁴ Through its work, the Committee has been able to ascertain that this is still a group of people with a vibrant culture and language.

Who the Tater/Romani people *are*, has been a topic of some discussion. The question has often been related to assessments of the origin of this ethnic group. Historically, the discussions regarding origin have been related to political assessments of measures against this ethnic minority. Among Tater/Romani people today, emphasis is placed on different self-designations and views on origin.

Regardless of different views on designation and origin, Tater/Romani people consider themselves a separate ethnic group with a common history, language and culture. By giving Tater/Romani people status as a national minority, the Norwegian state has also recognised that they are a separate ethnic group. Researchers today also perceive them as a separate ethnic group.⁵

The language of the Tater/Romani people is often called "*Rotipa*" or "*Romani*" and is derived from the Indian language Sanskrit, but uses Scandinavian grammar. The language has borrowed words from Greek and Armenian, but also many German words, which shows that the Tater/Romani people have spent time in German speaking areas. Few Tater/Romani people speak fluent Romani today, but many still use words and expressions in everyday language among themselves. Many consider travelling to be the basis of their culture. Travelling is linked to trade and crafts. An important part of the culture has been to adapt to supply and demand in mainstream society and provide services society has demanded. Metalwork, music and work associated with horses have been and remain important.⁶

There are no statistics of how many Tater/Romani people there are in Norway today. The reason for this is that, with the exception of the Sami Parliament's electoral register, Norway does not keep any registers based on ethnicity. Proposition no. 15 (200-2001) to the Norwegian Parliament (Storting) estimates the population to be "a few thousand". When the question of compensation was raised in mid-2000, representatives from the Tater/Romani organisations estimated that the figures were much higher.⁷ The figure you end up with depends partly on how you define the group. The latest estimate by the

⁴ Proposition no. 80 , 1997-1998 to the Norwegian Storting

⁵ Minken 2012.

⁶ Bergvist & Vigardt 2014.

⁷ <https://snl.no/romanifolk> (rett URL 20.5.2015); «Taterne krever 300 millioner», NRK 2003.

Council of Europe High Commissioner for Human Rights, Nils Muižnieks, puts the figure at between 4,000 and 10,000.⁸

Throughout history, the Norwegian authorities have described this minority using different terms. In the 1800s, “vagabond” and “tater” were most common, while in the 1900s, “vagrant” (“omstreifer”) was the political-administrative term used by the Norwegian authorities. Today, Tater/Romani people themselves use different names for this ethnic group. While some prefer the term “Romani people” others prefer “tater”. A large number refer to themselves as “traveller(s)”.

According to its mandate, the Committee was to investigate the Norwegian state’s policies towards the Tater/Romani people from 1850 to the present, with special emphasis on the last century and their lifestyle, culture and language. The Committee has considered it important to highlight the Tater/Romani people’s self-perception and active role in the history in order to fulfil the mandate of laying the foundation for a reconciliation process between this minority and mainstream society.

In connection with the ratification of the Framework Convention it was established that it is the individuals themselves who define whether they are members of a national minority. The Committee has used this principle of self-definition in its work. It has been a challenge that the authorities’ definitions of the group dominate in the historical sources that have been examined by the Committee.

In the 1900s, the Tater/Romani people established several non-profit organisations, foundations and committees. For the first time, representatives of this ethnic group set forth requirements for the authorities and other parts of Norwegian society on behalf of the group. However, this was not the first attempt at organisation by members of this group. Individuals and organisations have been and are important driving forces behind criticism of the assimilation policies and have demanded recognition as a group, equal rights and that the authorities dealt with past repressive policies.

A pioneer in the early work for the rights of Tater/Romani people in Norway was Godin Hagvald Nikolaysen (1882-1957). In the 1920s and 1930s, he, together with a few others, established two organisations, the purpose of which was to create a counter-power against the Mission. “*Landeveiens-Hjemløses-Union*” (1929) was a Christian association to help the Tater/Romani people both financially and spiritually, while “*De Forsømtes Misjon*” (1933) was an evangelical association for Tater/Romani people. Ingvald B. Carlsen, The General Secretary of the Mission at the time, warned about the Nikolaysen’s work, and about settling or clustering this ethnic group close together. The Christian form of organisation, with house meetings and a sense of community, provided an important platform for development of self-confidence and for demands against the Mission. Expressed criticism of the Mission’s activities was formulated here, particularly regarding the policies conducted towards children, but also against the forced settlement policy

⁸ Muižnieks 2015.

and the labour colony at Svanviken. Godin Nikolaysen made direct demands towards the Mission and required equal rights for the Tater/ Romani people. He was influenced by his personal experiences from forced assimilation and he used these experiences to formulate collective demands. He helped families deal with the authorities, particularly to avoid that their children were taken. He believed these policies would create bitterness and hate against society.⁹

Godin Nikolaysen's Christian work and form of organisation of this minority influenced future generations and had great significance through two of his grandchildren, Ludvig Karlsen and Leif Bodin Larsen. The efforts of these pioneers put its stamp on modern organisation of the Tater/Romani people, both in the political interest organisation in the 1990s and the Christian revival in the 1970s and 1980s, which was also organised on an ethnic platform.

In 2004, researcher Rune Halvorsen registered 12 different attempts at organisation after 1990. Several organisations have since been established and some have disappeared. Although women have played an important role as carriers of language and culture among the Tater/Romani people, they have held very few top positions in the organisations. At the same time, several women have made important contributions, and deserve credit for being important to the Tater/Romani people's own form of organisation.

Organisations based on a national minority may, if they meet certain criteria, receive basic support from the Norwegian state. They must be member-based, non-governmental organisations, which through their general business and specific activities, safeguard and represent the interests of national minorities. Further, they must promote dialogue and cooperation between national minorities, non-governmental organisations and public authorities. There are currently four Tater/Romani organisations that receive basic support from the Norwegian state and several who do not. Although the organisations only organise a small percentage of the minority, they are important premise providers when dealing with the authorities and mainstream society. The organisations have been key players in achieving political goals, including an apology for the injustices against this ethnic minority by the Norwegian Church and the Norwegian state, status as a national minority and amendments to the regulations on ex gratia payments.

From "vagrants" to national minority:

Policies and measures towards the Tater/Romani people 1850-2000

From the mid-1800s and up to the mid-1980s, the Norwegian authorities conducted policies with the objective of changing the lifestyle of this ethnic group. The aim was to replace a traveller lifestyle with a settled way of life and regular work. The methods used to achieve this goal could be harsh.

⁹ Bergkvist & Vigardt 2015a in NOU 2015:/ Annex report

The period reviewed in this chapter (1850–1900) can mainly be organised into three phases:

Although the initial phase, from 1850 to 1986, was not a uniform period as regards methods or the strength of these, the objectives were always assimilation of “the vagrants”. This was especially evident after the Mission and the Norwegian state entered into an agreement in 1907, which in practice endorsed the activities of the Mission. This agreement, which was the primary method in the state policies toward the group, was in effect up to 1986, but the degree of assimilation was weakened toward the end of 1970 and the beginning of 1980. Amongst other things, this happened due to a general phasing out of special care for various groups as well as changes within the Mission. In this period (1850-1986), it is important to distinguish between assimilation policy and discriminatory objectives, attitudes and practice. As the Committee’s findings show, not all the assimilation policy objectives ended up with a similar practice, and in some cases, the result was assimilation policies, even though these had not been an expressed purpose.

In the second phase, from 1986 - 1998, the local state authorities took over the responsibilities of the Mission. This reorganisation did not include any reconciliation with the past or acknowledgement of misguided policies.

The final phase, from Norway’s ratification of the Council of Europe Framework Convention in 1998 to the present, will be discussed very little in this chapter. The main highlights of this period have been recognition of Tater/Romani people as a national minority and that the authorities and others have to an increasing extent begun to reconcile with past policies toward this ethnic group. During this period, the group has to an increasing extent also been a driving force behind development of Norwegian minority policies and improving the conditions to strengthen its distinctive character and culture.

The title –“From “vagrants” to national minority”, describes a development in the minority policies of the 1900s, from discrimination and assimilation to recognition and respect. The Committee emphasises that development was slow and not in line with the welfare state’s political goals of creating a society with equality and justice for all citizens. It was also not in line with the attention the human rights issue received in Norway from the 1950s onwards. It was not until the 1970s that the policies and measures towards Tater/Romani people were seen in a critical light. Although the measures gradually became less focused on changing the lifestyle of Tater/Romani people as an ethnic group, it was to take many more years until there was a genuine change in minority policies,

These assimilation policies included measures aimed at depriving Tater/Romani people of their travelling lifestyle and making them socially and culturally equal to the Norwegian majority population. The most important method used by the Norwegian authorities was cooperation with the private organisation the Mission. The Committee believes that in different contexts, the Norwegian authorities demonstrated attitudes and made decisions that legitimised a determined assimilation of Tater/Romani people. In several

areas, the Committee concludes that the policies of the Norwegian authorities were directly aimed at impacting their culture and lifestyle.

This applies especially to the government resolution from 1907, which assigned the Mission responsibility for implementing the forced settlement policy and allocating social assistance to settled “vagrants”. The Mission was also assigned responsibility for enforcement of the ban on Tater/Romani people keeping horses under the Animal Protection Act of 1951 and the practice of registering “vagrants”, which lasted for most of the 1900s. In the government resolution from 1907, it was determined that the Mission was to be responsible for forced settlement of “vagrants” and that the costs were to be reimbursed by the Treasury. In practice, this also applied to costs for poor relief, subsequently social assistance, to “vagrants” who were already settled.

The Committee concludes that the assimilation policies remained stable from the beginning of the 1900s to the 1970s. There were two key methods in the whole of this period. One method involved separating children from their parents and placing these children in orphanages or foster care. The other method was forced settlement. Both were sanctioned by laws and agreements between the Mission and government authorities. and funded through annual allocations from the national budget.

Despite formal annulment of the assimilation policies in the 1980s, and Tater/Romani people being recognised as a national minority from 1999, the Committee’s studies of the current situation show that work still remains before it can be said that this ethnic group has actually achieved full recognition and equality in Norwegian society. As late as 1957, the then General Secretary of the Mission, Olav Bjørnstad, formulated the objectives of the policies as follows: “They will no longer be a separate group of people; they will be assimilated into normal everyday life”.¹⁰ This was in line with the social task the Mission had been given through the government resolution in 1907. The Mission’s understanding was either directly or indirectly confirmed by the Norwegian state through directives, grants and public statements by ministers and other government representatives. Through most of this period (1907-1986), the authorities expressed great satisfaction with the Mission’s work.

The term vagrant, which justified the assimilation policies of the 1900s, was defined in various and sometimes vague ways in the whole period. The term encompassed several groups besides Tater/Romani people. Still, the Committee finds that policies and measures against “vagrants” impacted Tater/Romani people in particular. This was mainly because the authorities assigned the practical responsibility for implementation of the policies, especially child welfare and forced settlement work, to the Mission, which used family-based information on individuals and families.

By the time the Norwegian state’s social measures explicitly targeted at “vagrants” were abolished in 1986, at least 1,500 children had been separated from Tater/Romani

¹⁰ RA, PA-0793, letter to Ministry of Culture from O. Bjørnstad, 18/5/1957.

parents and placed in orphanages or foster care. Although the size of this ethnic group in this period is unknown, this number constitutes a large percentage of the population, around one third over at least two generations.

Most of the children were separated from their parents following decisions by “vergeråd” (protection committees), subsequently the Child Welfare Committees. The children were either placed in the Mission’s own orphanages, other child protection institutions, reformatory schools, or with foster parents recruited by the Mission. Under the care of the Mission, children experienced being moved between different foster homes, orphanages and other institutions. With the exception of being put into a reformatory school, these moves were usually made with no new statutory requirements regarding decisions by the protection committees/child welfare committees. While in care, many of these children suffered neglect, physical and mental abuse and /or sexual assault. In most cases, the Mission ensured that the ties between the child and the biological parents were broken. This did not happen to other groups, and the Committee finds that this was a conscious policy by the Mission through most of the 1900s. Furthermore, the Committee finds that the Norwegian authorities condoned this. Although, formally speaking, it was the protection committees/child welfare committees who made the decisions to transfer custody of the children, the Mission played an important role as driving force and expert adviser to the local state authorities, among other things, by initiating and often also formulating the decision. Previous research and the Committee’s own studies show that the Mission’s role was gradually weakened from the end of the 1970s and through the 1980s.

The Child Protection Act and the Child Welfare Act allowed for discretionary decisions and the Committee finds that widespread negative attitudes to “vagrants” in combination with public policies to assimilate this ethnic group, in periods affected the administration’s executive work. This may partly explain why measures against Tater/Romani people seemed arbitrary and led to fear and distrust of the authorities among Tater/Romani people.

The Mission’s requirement of forced settlement of individual families was given various justifications. Assessed against the Mission’s goal, the Committee finds that the forced settlement efforts were largely unsuccessful. Insofar as the result was permanent settlement, this was just as much despite the Mission and the state’s policies as due to them. The Committee’s findings also show that “forced settlement of “vagrants” often faced strong resistance in individual communities.¹¹

Svanviken labour colony (from 1973 Svanviken Family Centre) played an important role in the Mission’s forced settlement work. The colony was established as an interphase between the country road and a permanent residence. The Committee’s studies show that the activities at Svanviken were an undue intervention in the private life of individuals and an unforgivable attempt at forced settlement. Daily inspections in their houses and

¹¹ Møystad 2015b

correspondence, supervision of intimate, personal hygiene, harassments, interference with upbringing of children and threats to take over the custody if they complained or misbehaved were among the methods used until the end of the 1960s. This also resulted in fear and distrust of the authorities among Tater/Romani people.

The Committee finds that through internal reporting and external reports from, among others, the Office of the Auditor General, the state authorities should have been aware of the Mission's activities. In the view of the Committee, the authorities have either directly or tacitly approved the Mission's activities, and thereby have placed themselves in a responsible position.

Reconciling the past?

From the beginning of the 1990s and onwards, Tater/Romani people established non-government organisations, which together with others made breakthroughs in a number of areas. Several individuals and families of Tater/Romani extraction were among those who told their stories in newspaper articles and television programmes. There was increasing pressure on the authorities to identify and deal with past injustices.

In the first half of the 1990s, many people supported the demands for the Mission's archives to be opened and for investigation into the Norwegian state's assimilation policies. One concrete result of this was that in 1995, the Ministry of Social Affairs appropriated funding to a study under the Research Council of Norway's "Welfare and society" programme on the policies towards this ethnic group in the last century and the consequences of these.¹²

The documentation of abuse in the reports from the Resource Council of Norway's study formed the basis for the apologies given by the Norwegian state in 1998 and 2000. The apologies for past injustices against Tater/Romani people, by the Norwegian state and the Norwegian Church in 1998 and 2000, came about after significant pressure from many individuals and organisations.

The Committee points out that the apologies by the Norwegian state have been given in contexts, which mean that not many Tater/Romani people and the population in general are aware of them. The first apology was given in 1998 in a closed meeting between a Minister and a few representatives of the Tater/Romani people. Despite the events being covered by the media and a few representatives from Tater/Romani organisations at the time expressing their satisfaction with the apologies, around fifteen years later, there are very many who do not know that this took place. The apology was repeated by a new government in a report to the Norwegian Parliament (Storting) in 2000. The Committee considers it likely that a more clearly communicated public apology would

¹² Minken 2009, Karen-Sofie Pettersen, *Tatere og Misjonen: "Mangfold, makt og motstand"*, Doctoral dissertation at NTNU, Department of Sociology and Political Science, 2005

help disseminate knowledge about the policies toward this ethnic group and thereby reduce discrimination based on prejudices or ignorance among the population.

On two occasions at the general synod, first in 1998 and then in 2000, the Norwegian Church gave an apology to the Tater/Romani people. The first apology in 1998 was given in such a way that it actually contributed to more conflict and deeper distrust, so that it was necessary for the synod to give another apology two years later. This last apology was given in a speech at the general synod and is not well known in the Tater/Romani communities.

Another area where the Tater/Romani organisations have been involved has been the battle for compensation and redress schemes. The organisations have pointed out that Tater/Romani people who so require should be given assistance to write applications for the afore-mentioned compensation. The findings of the Research Council of Norway's study of Tater/Romani people¹³, provided an important background in the political processing of such redress measures for Tater/Romani people in the year 2000. In 2004, a special arrangement was established for Tater/Romani people under the ex gratia payment scheme. This allowed for compensation to Tater/Romani people who have experienced bullying due to their origins, forced sterilisation or forced settlement at Svanviken Labour Colony/family centre. More than 1,200 people of Tater/Romani extraction have received ex gratia payments on one or more of these grounds in the period 2005-2014. An unknown number of people of Tater/Romani extraction have also receive ex gratia payments for abuse and / or neglect while placed in orphanages, in addition to ordinary ex gratia payments, among other things, for inadequate schooling.

In 2004, the authorities also resolved to set up a fund to provide guidance to those who wanted to apply for compensation for previous injustices. The Romani People's Fund started its operations in 2007.

Language and culture are a third area where the organisations have played a role and where they have gained acceptance for their demands for support from the authorities. Among other things, this has resulted in the Latjo Drom Exhibition at the Glomdal Museum. One of the important aims of the Romani People's Fund was to provide support to projects that could promote and disseminate the language and culture of the ethnic group. In 2002, the Norwegian Association of Romani People took the initiative for the "Taterfolket fra barn til voksen: et skole- og kulturprosjekt" (*Romani people from child to adult: a school and culture project*), which was implemented in 2004–2009 in cooperation with Sør Trøndelag University College and Dronning Mauds Minne.

The Committee's interviews of Tater/Romani people show that there are many opinions about how these measures have been perceived and how the established schemes work. The Committee's own assessments of the apologies given by the authorities, are that these have been communicated in contexts, which have been poorly suited to reaching

¹³ Hvinden et al 2000

the majority of the ethnic group, particularly people who were not active in associations and organisations. Several of the schemes established have helped communicate and develop the cultural heritage of this ethnic group and have resulted in some people receiving compensation for injustices and neglect. Some people consider the individual compensation schemes to be unfair, others say that it is difficult to find out how to use these schemes. Only a minority of the group are aware of the schemes aimed at collective redress. Many Tater/Romani people are aware of the individual redress schemes, but there are certain challenges when disseminating information and advice. The Committee finds that some adjustments to the schemes would make them more suitable as contributions to the reconciliation process at which they aim. Overall, the efforts to date appear to be an initiated, but not completed process to lay the foundation for justice and reconciliation.

The Research Council of Norway's study (1996-2000) focused particularly on child welfare and sterilisation. Representatives of the Tater/Romani people wanted a public investigation committee to highlight the authorities' policies towards the group in several areas, to consider these with respect to human rights and to see them in a larger context and over time. In 2009, the various Tater/Romani organisations attended a seminar arranged by the Falstad Centre, where the participants collectively put forward the demand for a public investigation of the policies towards the group. That year, the Norwegian Helsinki Committee published a report on the policies towards Tater/Romani people in light of Norway's human rights obligations. The report was mainly based on the findings from the Research Council of Norway's study on Tater/Romani people (1995-2000). In a statement from the participants at the seminar, the Norwegian authorities were requested to establish a "truth commission to take stock of Norway's injustices against Tater/Romani people".¹⁴ In order to meet the demands of the Tater/Romani organisations and individuals and also the recommendation in the report from the Norwegian Helsinki Committee, the Norwegian government set up the Tater/Romani committee in 2011.

The present situation

The Committee has completed two projects that examine the living conditions and consequences of the policies for Tater/Romani people today.

1. "The present situation for Tater/Romani people" – a qualitative study mainly based on interviews with a selection of Tater/Romani people.¹⁵
2. "Living condition study of Tater/Romani people" - a register-based study of mortality and level of education based on the Mission's client archive.¹⁶

¹⁴ The Norwegian Helsinki Committee 2009, pages 8 and 70.

¹⁵ Aarset & Nordvik 2015.

¹⁶ Ellingsen og Lilleaas

The study of living conditions among a selection of Tater/Romani people, born between 1941 and 1955, shows alarmingly high mortality rates and a low level of education in a selected cohort of persons registered in the Mission's client archive. It is obvious from the findings for this group that the policies, and the measures taken, had a negative impact on the group as a whole and to the individuals involved. The mortality rates are three times higher for this group than the rest of the population born in the same period. The mortality rate is very high for the youngest group (born 1951-1955), with more than four times the average mortality rate. In addition, only 20 per cent of Tater/Romani people in the selected cohort have completed an upper secondary school or higher education, compared with 70 per cent in the same age group among the total population.

The qualitative study of the present situation shows that the Tater/Romani population are a complex group with different life histories and situations. The Tater/Romani population are in a period of change involving important change processes as regards relations with mainstream society in general, not least regarding education and employment. There is a growing emphasis on school/ education among young people and adults. There are different views among Tater/Romani people on their place as a minority group in society and on relations with the majority population and social institutions. Some have established positions in Norwegian society, while others feel outside or marginalised in the Norwegian community. Some people find this a problem, while others believe this is less important, as long as they belong to a family and to the Tater/Romani communities.

The life situation of many within this ethnic group today seems to be characterised by the negative attitudes they have experienced from the authorities and in the local community. The lives of many also seem to be influenced by the attitudes to which the group has been subjected over the years and by how people have previously been received in the local community, as well as the authorities and the Mission's activities aimed at this ethnic group. A majority of those who were interviewed expressed distrust and even fear of the authorities. The study also shows that this distrust is passed on from generation to generation. This applies to those who have had or have a family which has had negative experiences with the Mission or with public authorities in the past, but also to those who do not have own experiences from such encounters. Former child protection policies in particular, with frequent transfer of custody of children of Tater/Romani extraction through the 1900s, has had a negative impact in the form of fear and distrust of mainstream society that still characterises many families.

Distrust of government agencies and mainstream society has had, and still has, an impact on the everyday life of many of the interviewees. The lack of trust in mainstream society undermines the possibility for many Tater/Romani people to have full participation in society.

Distrust can be limiting in that Romani people avoid using public services, such as contacting the police when experiencing discrimination, or the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Association (NAV) if they require help. Some are also fearful that the school or NAV will contact the Child Welfare Service. Past experiences of the ethnic group and individuals continue to impact the circumstances and quality of life of many today, which

can stand in the way of securing their rights and that they choose not to seek help when this is needed.

Nevertheless, the group's experiences vary greatly, and some now trust the authorities, at the same time as past policies towards the ethnic group have still affected them in different ways. Many are concerned about breaking a spiral of distrust and preventing the growing generation from developing the same distrust in the authorities as they have.

A number of the interviewees have little or no education and minimal knowledge about how to find information on various welfare programmes. This also means that many of them do not have access to public services. Very many of the older generation have little schooling. However, it is important to stress that the study shows that there is great diversity and many of those the researchers and the Committee have been in contact with are well informed about welfare programmes and the social system. The Committee's investigation also includes people who identify as Tater/Romani and who have a higher education and are in regular employment.

The regulations related to post-qualifying and further education programmes, tax and VAT systems are quite complex for those who establish sole proprietorships, debt relief and compensation schemes, and various other welfare programmes. The review shows that in general, there is a need for more guidance and information about these public schemes that reaches this part of the population. The historical experiences Tater/Romani people have had when dealing with public authorities, and the fact that a large number of them lack a basic education, means that many of them are particularly vulnerable when faced with complex regulations in a multitude of government agencies.

Many of the interviewees experience that there is a lack of knowledge about Tater/Romani people in society in general and particularly regarding their status and rights as a national minority. This applies not least in schools, but also in other central government agencies and in mainstream society. Mainstream society's lack of knowledge about Tater/Romani people is due to the fact that there is very little dissemination of knowledge in primary and secondary schools about the ethnic group and its history. There is also very little information about this in teacher training programmes.

The lack of knowledge helps perpetuate negative attitudes to Tater/Romani people and also makes Tater/Romani people invisible as an ethnic group in today's society. Many of the interviewees constantly experience prejudices and negative attitudes to Tater/Romani in everyday life. This means that many of them choose not to disclose their ethnic identity to the local community, or at school or work, for fear of the consequences. Some young people say that they are bullied and harassed at school by other pupils when it is discovered that they are Tater/Romani. Several of them have experienced or heard of unfair discrimination because they are Tater/Romani, among other things, because the local community knows which families have this background. Young people say they have been turned down when applying for apprenticeships, despite having better grades than others who have been given an apprenticeship in the same place. Families

have been turned away from camp-sites and many have experienced that belonging to this ethnic group is used as an argument for not being offered a job or being allowed to rent accommodation.

Within the Tater/Romani people's traditional lifestyle and itinerant trade activities, formal education has not been important. This is because knowledge was passed on verbally from generation to generation, and because formal education was not considered important within a number of the trades Tater/Romani people practised. Some of the older Tater/Romani population have therefore not been so concerned about their children finishing upper secondary school or getting another formal education. Negative attitudes to the ethnic group, bullying and harassment in mainstream society, including schools, could also partly explain this. Many, particularly among the older generation, regard school and formal employment as the arena of the majority population.

Many of the interviewees have also given the impression that they want young people to get an education. The Committee's researchers have been in contact with some individuals who want the children to accompany the family when travelling in the spring and summer months in connection with the fathers' work as itinerant tradesmen. The reason for this is that it is important to continue the culture of this ethnic group. Several of these individuals would like it to be possible so that the children can receive an education while they are travelling outside the normal school holidays. Some say they are reluctant to apply for their children to be excused from school because they fear the Child Welfare Service will then intervene. Other Tater/Romani people do want to take their children out of school, because the children would miss out on important schooling.

Many young people want to get an education and many who want a job in traditional craft industries also want a certificate of competence. A number of adult men, who have worked for many years as craftsmen without a certificate of competence, say they now want formal confirmation of their skills and professional experience. Lack of a basic education means this is difficult for many to achieve and it limits their opportunities to find work, as it has become more essential to have a certificate of competence.

THE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter summarises the Committee's recommendations to the Norwegian authorities.

A large number of Tater/Romani people are heavily involved in the work of providing the growing generations with good, genuine opportunities for education and work, by combating discrimination and prejudices and dissemination of their history, language and musical heritage. The Committee believes it is a public responsibility to support the ethnic group's own resources and initiatives in this work. It is also a public responsibility to ensure that all Tater/Romani people have genuine and equal access to public services.

For many years, also following Norway's last report in 2011, the Council of Europe Advisory Committee (which monitors implementation of the Framework Convention for Protection of National Minorities) has pointed out areas where Norway should take measures to safeguard Tater/Romani people's rights. This applies to the need for dissemination of knowledge about the group, protection against discrimination when in contact with the police and other government agencies, as well as at campsites. The Committee would particularly like to point out the importance of including knowledge about national minorities and their rights in police training. It is also important to take steps to make the Equality and Anti-discrimination Ombud (LDO) better known among the population, not least among minorities, such as Tater/Romani people, so that they can use this service. Through its own investigations, the Committee has concluded that these recommendations are not adequately followed-up.

In light of this, and of the challenges identified through the Committee's work, the Committee concludes that there are a number of areas where the authorities especially should consider implementing measures. As a basis for such assessments, the Committee recommends that the authorities gather information from the experiences and practices of other countries.

A clear reconciliation with the past

It is difficult for many to put history behind them when they have not reconciled properly with the past.

- In light of the studies and assessments conducted, the Committee believes it is important to have a clear and broadly communicated public confirmation of the responsibility for past injustices and neglect by the public authorities, through state and local authorities, from the Norwegian Church and those who are otherwise best placed to take responsibility for the activities of the Mission.
- Knowledge about the history and about the acknowledged responsibility must also be disseminated to Tater/Romani people and the general population, as part of such

reconciliation. The Committee's reports and previous research will provide a good basis here.

- The Committee's investigation shows alarmingly high mortality rates among Tater/Romani people who have been subjected to the Mission's activities and must be seen in context with the policies that have been conducted. Measures here must therefore be regarded as a necessary part of the redress. It is very important to follow up the living conditions and health of Tater/Romani people today. There is a lack of systematic knowledge here. The Committee believes that acquisition of knowledge and developing measures in this area will be important for the reconciliation process.
- Reconciliation with the past must have consequences for practical policies towards Tater/Romani people at all administrative levels. It is important to learn from the past in order not to make the same mistakes in future. This also applies when formulating policies towards other vulnerable groups today.

From distrust to trust

Reconciliation can be seen as mending broken relationships. Trust is a necessary basis for reconciliation.

- The Committee sees it as a public responsibility to consider measures that will help strengthen trust between Tater/Romani people and the authorities. Among other things, this will require good forums for contact and dialogue between representatives of the ethnic group and central and local authorities. Tater/Romani people must be ensured genuine participation in processes that concern them. Among other things, the group's organisations should become consultative bodies in matters that concern them.
- Another measure could be to support initiatives for establishment of networks that can bring together Tater/Romani people independent of the established organisations, such as youth and women's organisations. Some Tater/Romani people have expressed a desire for such networks.

Visibility, equality and respect

It would help build trust if state and municipal agencies have a greater understanding of and insight into the history and distinctive character of the Tater/Romani people, but also of their diversity.

- The Committee's studies show that public employees have little knowledge about Tater/Romani people and their rights as a national minority. The authorities should therefore consider measures to increase the knowledge of public employees in this area.

- The authorities must find arenas where Tater/Romani people and public entities can meet and cooperate to develop a mutual improvement of knowledge and greater understanding.
- This presupposes, among other things, an education and training programme so that public employees (teachers, police, employees in NAV, the Child Welfare Service, etc.) and elected representatives of the institutions this group meet, receive the necessary knowledge about Tater/Romani people and their history in Norway and also their rights as individuals and as members of a national minority. Better dissemination of knowledge of the group's history, culture and rights in kindergartens and schools would also help Tater/Romani people to be met as individuals and not with rigid notions of them as a group.

Equal right to an education

Education is a key factor to ensure future welfare and quality of life. Parents have a fundamental responsibility to care for their children. Allowing for access to basic education is part of this responsibility. However, the Committee would like to point out that the authorities have the responsibility to ensure that children and young people from Tater/Romani backgrounds have equal and genuine access to schools and education. The Committee believes that several factors should be considered here:

- Awareness that there are still negative attitudes to Tater/Romani people should be part of schools' anti-bullying work. There is a need for more knowledge about the social situation in schools of children from national minorities. The Committee believes that more research is required to study whether there is a correlation between the high absenteeism among Tater/Romani children and unhappiness and/or bullying in schools.
- The Committee's studies indicate that today, few Tater/Romani parents request their children to be excused from school due to travelling periods. Practice shows that where there are parents who want this, and who take their children out of school, there is great variation in whether and how schools facilitate distance learning. The Committee believes it is important that schools are in dialogue with the parents who want their children to be excused, as regards finding a solution where the child's right to an education is safeguarded. As long as individual children are taken out of school in connection with travelling, it is important that these children do not miss out on an education during this period. It is a public responsibility to ensure that this is followed-up and a good dialogue between parents and school is essential.
- The Committee would also like to point out that in schools, knowledge about national minorities in general and Tater/Romani people in particular should be improved. It is important that the Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training and The National Centre for Multicultural Education (NAFO) follow-up and ensure that schools and kindergartens acquaint themselves with the Guide on National Minorities. The Committee also stresses that knowledge about national minorities

should be included in teacher training programmes. National authorities have a responsibility to ensure such implementation.

Prevention of and measures against discrimination

In several areas, the Committee sees a need for closer follow-up by the authorities to prevent discrimination against Tater/Romani people and to give this group a genuine opportunity to report and receive guidance on discrimination.

- The role of the police in incidents involving Tater/Romani people and campsite owners is challenging. In general, it seems that the discrimination aspect has been considered to be subordinate. It is important that the police take cases of discrimination seriously and register such complaints, and that the police themselves behave neutrally. The Committee would like to point out how important it is that knowledge about individual rights and the rights related to national minorities, their various traditions and cultural rights, is disseminated in police training and in further education / courses for trained police. This would help to improve understanding, and could prevent discrimination.
- As regards the challenges at campsites in general, the Committee recommends that the dialogue and cooperation which previously existed between NHO (The Confederation of Norwegian Enterprises), LDO (the Ombud for equality and non-discrimination) the police and Tater/Romani organisations, is resumed. It is important here to establish good dialogue forums/ arenas and that this is formalised so that it does not only rely on committed individuals in the various authorities and organisations. In this context, it is vital that all parties follow-up their part of the cooperation.

Facilitation before clarification of legal issues

Tater/Romani people have been subjected to gross injustices that violate the fundamental principles of human rights. Also today, many face challenges that may be in conflict with human rights requirements and protection against discrimination. The assessments the Committee has made in light of obligations under international law show that within the framework of the Committee's work it is difficult to conclude with sufficient probability whether the circumstances were and are also unlawful.

- It is important that there are institutions to which Tater/Romani people can turn in order to effectively clarify their legal position. Sufficiently reliable answers to such questions can only be attained by processing individual's specific circumstances in processes that have the appropriate means of assessing and deciding on factual and legal ambiguities.
- The Committee believes the authorities must facilitate the clarification of whether illegal practice has and still is taking place, including violation of human rights. The Committee has noted that in March 2015, the Norwegian Parliament resolved to

issue the National Institution (NI) for Human Rights with a new mandate and the possibility for new policy instruments. The authorities are specifically requested to consider whether NI or other agencies may be allocated a role as a supplement to existing possibilities to file a complaint with the Equality and Discrimination Ombud and the courts.

Equal opportunities in practice - the need for information and guidance

Equal rights to welfare schemes are a prerequisite for equality and quality of life. It must be facilitated so that Tater/Romani people have the same access to rights and the same opportunities in society and the majority population.

- Public welfare schemes may be complex and generally difficult to access. This concerns post-qualifying and further education programmes, debt relief and procedures for and after establishment of companies for those who want to run their own business (accounting, reporting, etc.). The Committee's studies show that some Tater/Romani people have little knowledge about public schemes and their own rights, or lack the prerequisites to navigate the system in order to make use of these rights. There are already a number of post-qualifying and further education programmes, debt relief schemes, etc. that could be used, but which people have trouble finding.
- It is a public responsibility to ensure that all groups of the population have a genuine opportunity to take advantage of welfare programmes, such as education and training. The Committee's studies of the policies in the 1900s and in recent times show that the authorities have not done enough for this group. Therefore, they have a great responsibility to meet challenges many within this group still face. The authorities must allocate resources - ensure equal access to public services, include Tater/Romani people in development of specific solutions.
- The Committee would particularly like to emphasise that measures should be considered to increase availability of and the possibility for guidance by the Equality and Discrimination Ombud for Tater/Romani people who experience discrimination.
- The Committee believes the authorities should consider measures to ensure that Tater/Romani people seeking their origins and history in the Mission's client archives or other archives receive the necessary assistance, guidance and access within the limits the law puts on disclosure of personal information.

Fair compensation and redress schemes

The Committee believes there is reason to reconsider aspects of the existing compensation/redress schemes so that these are perceived to be fair and function as intended.

- Municipal redress schemes for Tater/Romani children who have experienced being taken into care vary greatly between municipalities. The Norwegian state had the overall responsibility for supervision of public and private institutions where children of Tater/Romani people were placed, including the Mission's orphanage. Like the municipalities, the Norwegian state must examine how to ensure coordination and equal treatment. The Committee believes the Norwegian state also has a special responsibility to ensure that children who were separated from their families without this being the result of an administrative decision, are not dismissed because of this omission by the authorities when they subsequently apply for compensation.
- It is a public responsibility to ensure adequate advice and guidance to Tater/Romani people who want to apply for municipal and/or state compensation schemes.
- The "Latjo Drom" exhibition is important for dissemination of the Tater/Romani people's cultural heritage, but it is not enough. It is a public task to facilitate more dissemination of history and culture in other parts of the country. This applies to the coastal culture of the boat travellers in Southern and Western Norway. The Committee believes the authorities should consider measures to ensure representatives of Tater/Romani people participating in formulation and implementation of such dissemination activities.
- The Committee believes the Tater/Romani People's Cultural Fund (RT Fund) may be an important contribution towards strengthening the culture and language of this minority in Norway. Therefore, it is important that in general, Tater/Romani people have confidence in the management of the fund. The fund is intended to be a collective redress for past injustices. The Committee sees that information about and management of the RT Fund should be strengthened, so that the fund reaches out to as many people in the Tater/Romani communities as possible.
- The authorities have a responsibility for participatory and open minority policies. The authorities must also ensure that exercise of minority policies does not cause disputes and that financial schemes are organised so that they do not contribute to increased tensions between people and groups in the Tater/Romani population.
- Where the authorities have established collective schemes, they have a responsibility to ensure that those who manage public funds on behalf of the community comply with laws and regulations on transparency and access so that this management builds the necessary trust.

Future research and disseminating research findings

The Committee's studies provide new knowledge in a number of areas. However, these studies have also uncovered several factors that should have been investigated, which, due to constraints in time and resources, was not possible. The Committee would therefore propose that funds are allocated to further research on such topics, based on various academic approaches.

- Many Tater/Romani people are interested in finding out how the ethnic group has been discussed and how individuals have been treated in Norwegian psychiatry. A broader study should be implemented on this topic over a longer period than the Tater/Romani Committee has had at its disposal.
- It is important for building trust and reconciliation that research projects are conducted to provide knowledge in this field. The alarming findings on high mortality rates and a low level of education among the Mission' "clients" in the post-war period call for a more comprehensive study of living conditions, based on the activities of the Mission. This could provide new knowledge about the consequences of the assimilation policies over many generations.
- Very interesting findings in the project on policies towards Tater/Romani people during the Second World War also support further research in this field.
- The project regarding the present situation also supports further qualitative research on the living conditions of Tater/Romani people. In particular there is reason to consider a broader survey of the lives of children and young people of Tater/Romani extraction. The Committee would particularly recommend considering allocating funds towards qualitative studies that identify whether young people of Tater/Romani extraction meet specific obstacles when trying to pursue an education. It will be of particular importance to study the opportunities to transfer real expertise to formal qualifications.
- There are already some research projects as regards use and dissemination of language (Romani/Rotipa). However, the Committee believes it is important to have greater focus on this due to the key importance of language for many Tater/Romani people's identity
- The Committee considers it important that Tater/Romani people become aware of the Committee's main findings and recommendations and of the studies that form the basis of the report. It is also important that local authorities, relevant Ministries and other relevant agencies are aware of the main findings and recommendations of the Committee that concern their activities.

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