



NEWSLETTER

*RCC and its RI2020
congratulate the
International Roma Day*

Issue 2, April 2018

Dear Reader,
Welcome to the second issue of the Roma Integration 2020 Newsletter.

At the beginning, we would like to congratulate you the International Roma Day, 8 April. This date is dedicated to the celebration of Romani culture, history and heritage, but it is also used to pursue dialogue and activism towards improving the situation of Roma, closing the unacceptable gaps between Roma and non-Roma, and moving towards equality of Roma in rights and freedoms.

Therefore, we are using this opportunity to draw your attention to the achievements leading to these goals that our project has managed to accomplish during the second year of its implementation. As you will see on the following pages, we have continued our work on proper Roma integration policy formulation, implementation, budgeting and monitoring, through the provision of technical and expert assistance to the governments in the enlargement region.

However, the precarious situation of Roma requires further, long-term commitment and serious investment of all participating economies that shall not only lead to better integration and raising the quality of life among Roma, but will also pay off for the entire enlargement region in getting closer to the EU.

Thus, the Roma Integration 2020 Action Team is committed to continue supporting the governments in the enlargement region on Roma integration in the upcoming period.

We would like to thank all of you who joined us on this mission so far. We hope that your commitment, political will, action and resources will sustain in the years to come.

Orhan Usein
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Past Activities

- **EU Roma Week 2018 in Brussels**

The Regional Cooperation Council (RCC)'s Roma Integration 2020 (RI2020) project supported the participation of the National Roma Contact Points from the enlargement region to join the third EU Roma Week - a series of events providing recommendations on combating anti-Gypsyism and continued structural discrimination - which took place from 8 to 12 April in Brussels.



The EU Roma Week built upon the work done during previous Roma Weeks and the report the European Parliament adopted in October 2017 on „Fundamental rights aspects in Roma integration in the EU: fighting anti-Gypsyism“ which called upon the European Commission and EU Member States to put the fight against anti-Gypsyism at the forefront of efforts for the social and economic inclusion of Roma. The report was another step towards more efficient policies and programmes that can help to create real change by addressing anti-Gypsyism as a specific form of racism in its various and by fighting it at all levels of our societies.

The series of events served as an opportunity for the NRCs to gain valuable insights on current developments, challenges and possible solutions concerning Roma integration in the EU and learn about its links to the enlargement region.

The EU Roma week has been co-organised by the European Commission, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee of the Council of Europe and City of Brussels. [READ MORE](#)

- **Regional Workshop “Addressing Discrimination and Anti-Gypsyism in the Enlargement Region”**

A two-day workshop addressing discrimination and anti-Gypsyism in the enlargement region, organized under the auspices of the RCC's Roma Integration 2020 project was held in Berlin on 13-14 February 2018. The regional conference brought together the National Roma Contact Points from the Western Balkans and Turkey, along with the primary responsible government officials dealing with the priority areas of education, employment, housing, and health, as well as officials dealing with discrimination (Equality Bodies and/or Ombudspersons).



This conference was an inclusive part of RCC's RI2020 project efforts to increase the knowledge and understanding on discrimination among officials dealing with Roma integration from the enlargement region by understanding situations Roma are put through and comprehend the historical background of discrimination and anti-Gypsyism phenomena, so they could contribute to the alignment of good practices at regional level and with the EU, in order to cope with the developments in the field of fight against discrimination and anti-Gypsyism. [READ MORE](#)

Past Activities

- **Regional Conference “Filling in the Budget Gaps in Roma Integration Policies”**

The Regional Conference on Filling in the Budget Gaps in Roma Integration Policies, organized by the RCC’s Roma Integration 2020 Action Team, was held in Tirana on 10 November 2017, gathering over 80 participants from the Western Balkans and Turkey, including representatives of the governments and civil society, as well as active donor organizations in the region, financial institutions and regional initiatives.

In order to provide further support for Roma integration in the areas of employment and housing, the conference aimed at identification of common objectives, measures and activities in these areas, better understanding of governments’ and donors’ priorities in Roma integration planned activities, and initiation of the dialogue on possible cooperation.



During the one day-event the participants agreed on better cooperation and coordination in investment in Roma integration policies. All the governments from the enlargement region expressed commitment to provide funding for employment and housing for Roma, but at the same time called upon the donor community to contribute to these efforts. [READ MORE](#)

- **II Meeting of the RCC’s Roma Integration 2020 Task Force**

The II Meeting of RCC’s RI2020 Task Force was held in Belgrade on 20-21 September 2017 in Belgrade. It gathered all the National Roma Contact Points and two Roma civil society representatives from the enlargement region, representatives of the European Union, Open Society Foundations and the RCC.

During the II Task Force meeting, the first round of reporting cycle experience was discussed, challenges and achievements identified, and the final monitoring and reporting methodology adopted, including deadlines for reporting. The National Roma Contact Points decided to pursue the possibility to adopt the methodology as part of the national Roma integration policies.



To contribute to the consultation process on the future of the EU Framework for National Roma Strategies up to 2020, especially in terms of the engagement of the enlargement region, the Task Force decided to draft a joint declaration supporting the continuous work on Roma integration and closer cooperation to the EU and its Member States.

Finally, the Task Force agreed that the RI2020 Action Team will facilitate the development of regional budgeting standards in order to explore the possibilities to introduce Roma Responsible Budgeting that will further support the budgeting process at national level. [READ MORE](#)

Past Activities

- **National Platform Meetings**

The RCC's Roma Integration 2020 project assists participating economies to organize annual discussions on Roma integration policies - National Platforms, which involve relevant public officials, local level officials, Roma civil society and other relevant stakeholders. These meetings serve to review previous developments, progress and challenges in integration of Roma, applying the regular annual reporting by the governments according to the regionally agreed monitoring and reporting standards, as well as define priorities that should be programmed and budgeted in the yearly budgeting process. Conclusions from National Platform meetings are used as inputs for discussions at the Roma seminars - events organized by the governments in each economy and the European Commission, with an aim to set the operational guidelines for Roma integration in each economy for the period of two upcoming years.



In the last year, with the support of the Roma Integration 2020 and in close cooperation with the National Roma Contact Points, the following meetings were held:

- [Second National Platform on Roma Integration in Albania \(May 2017\)](#)
- [Second National Platform on Roma Integration in Serbia \(June 2017\)](#)
- [Second National Platform on Roma Integration in Montenegro \(July 2017\)](#)
- [First National Platform in Turkey \(September 2017\)](#)
- [Second National Platform in Bosnia and Herzegovina \(September 2017\)](#)
- [Second National Platform in Kosovo* \(October 2017\)](#)

The National Platforms mirror such meetings held in the European Union Member States.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

Upcoming Activities

- First meeting of the Working Group for Developing Regional Standards for Roma Responsible Budgeting (April 2018)
- National Platform Meeting in Serbia (June 2018)
- National Platform Meeting in Montenegro (June 2018)
- National Platform Meeting in Albania (October 2018)
- Regional Conference "Holistic Approach to Housing for Roma in the Enlargement Region" (May 2018)
- Regional Conference on Employment Issues (September 2018)



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