

# Roma Integration 2020

**REPORT FROM 2016 PUBLIC DIALOGUE FORUM ON ROMA INTEGRATION:**

**WORKSHOP ON RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE NATIONAL COORDINATION BODY, THE ROMA  
INFORMATION CENTRES AND THE ROMA HEALTH MEDIATORS**

Skopje | Hotel Holiday Inn | 24-25 November 2016

*Disclaimer: The views expressed in this assessment are solely those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Regional Cooperation Council or of its participants, nor of the European Union and the Open Society Foundations.*

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## SUMMARY

On the 24th and 25th November 2016 at Skopje Holiday Inn the Regional Cooperation Council's (RCC) Roma Integration 2020 Action Team together with the office of the Minister without portfolio, Mr Nezdeta Mustafa, National coordinator and National Roma Contact Point, the Roma Decade Unit of the Ministry for Labour and Social Policy (MLSP), and the European Union Delegation to Skopje, organized a two day event "Rules of Procedure of The National Coordination Body (NCB), The Roma Information Centers (RICs), and The Roma Health Mediators (RHMs)." This was one of a series of Public Dialogue Forums conducted throughout the region in the frame of the Roma Integration 2020 project implemented by the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC). The organization of the Public Dialogue Forum in a form of workshops was content-wise designed by independent experts provided by Association Initiative for Social Change, InSoC (Samet Skenderi, Gordana Nestorovska, Natasha Amdiju and Verica Krzhovska). The Forum brought together the key national and local actors dealing with the issues of Roma in Macedonia such as the representatives of the National Coordination Body, representatives from EU Delegation, OSI/RIO Budapest and Roma and other relevant CSOs, Roma Information Centers, Roma Health Mediators, representatives of the CSOs dealing with Roma issues and other relevant actors. The work at the workshop focused on analysis, review of existing regulations and practices as well as formulation of the rules of procedure of the work of National Coordination Body, Roma Information Centers and Roma Health Mediators, in order to increase efficiency and effectiveness in implementation of the Strategy for Roma in Macedonia. The findings and recommendation for improvement of their work are presented in this report below.

## METHODOLOGY OF WORK

The work conducted by the experts' team was comprised of the following phases, using different methodological approaches:

### **1. PREPARATORY PHASE:**

#### **1.1. Process of consultations with the key national actors dealing with the issues of Roma - National coordinator/ National Roma Contact Point and the Roma Decade Unit of the Ministry for Labour and Social Policy (MLSP)**

This phase entails content-related assistance in preparing the Public Dialogue Forum, through a series of meetings, e-mail and phone consultations with the members of the key national institutions dealing with Roma issues. For that purpose, 3 subsequent meetings were organized at the office of the Minister without portfolio Mr Nezdret Mustafa:

**1<sup>ST</sup> Meeting:** The expert's team comprised of Mr. Samet Skenderi, Ms. Natasha Amdiju, Ms. Gordana Nestorovska and Ms. Verica Krzhovska met with the representative from the office of the Minister without portfolio – Ms. Senada Lamovska, the representatives from the Roma Decade Unit of the Ministry for Labour and Social Policy (MLSP) – Ms. Gjulten Mustafova and Mr. Elvis Memeti, the representative from the EU Delegation in Macedonia, Mr. Nafi Saracini and representative of the RCC Roma Integration 2020 Action Team, Ms. Aleksandra Bojadzieva (via Skype). At the meeting the poor system of communication and coordination between the key national and local institution responsible for Roma issues in Macedonia such as National Contact Point, National Coordinative Body (NCB), Roma Information Centers, Roma Health Mediators and other relevant bodies was discussed. Participants agreed the Public Dialogue Form to be organized in a form of workshops to review the work of these bodies and offer solutions for future improvement and strengthening of their work. The responsible from these institutions agreed to collect and send the experts all relevant documents and regulations related with the work of these institutions and experts to develop and propose methodology and draft agenda. The dates for organization of the Forum was set for 24 and 25 of November. Relevant institutions agreed to prepare the list of potential participants and sent out invitations prepared by the Roma Integration 2020 Action Team.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting:** The second meeting was organized on November 17 at the Minister without portfolio's office, between the experts' team and the representatives from the Minister's office Senada Lamovska and Gjulten Mustafova from the Roma Decade Unit. The experts presented the methodology of work and proposed agenda.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting:** The third meeting was organized on 22 of November for final check of the technical and logistical needs of the workshop.

**1.2. Collection and review of the relevant existing regulations and policies on Roma integration and mainstream policies in the relevant thematic areas**

The process included desk research, collection and review of the relevant regulations of the work of the National Coordinator/ National Roma Contact Point; National Coordinative Body; Roma Health Mediators; and Roma Information Centers as well as mainstream policies in the relevant thematic areas. Based on this background, the expert team prepared supporting and handout materials for the workshops, including presentations on the current composition, functioning and results of the three key structures responsible for the implementation of the Roma targeting policies: National Coordination Body, Roma Information Centers, Roma Health Mediators.

**2. REALISATION:**

**2.1. Facilitation of the Public Dialogue Forum organized jointly by the National Roma Contact Point and the Roma Integration 2020 Action Team**

The Workshop consisted of 2 parts: Introduction and working part.

In the first part the official opening was done by the RCC representatives Mr. Orhan Usein, Roma Integration 2020 Action Team Leader, and the representatives from the National Roma Contact Point/National Coordinator's Office, Ms. Senada Lamoska and the Roma Decade Unit of the Ministry for Labour and Social Policy (MLSP), Ms. Gjulten Mustafafova. The objectives of the workshop, methodology of work and information on the Roma Integration 2020 project were shared with the participants.

In the frame of the Working part, the participants were divided into 3 groups each led by different expert. Firstly, each expert provided a presentations prepared based on the background findings and the existing documents related to the targeted structures (the rules for their functioning, establishment, relations with other, tasks etc.). Bearing in mind that some of the documents weren't into force or there was a lack of their understanding among the members of these bodies, the needs and proposals for their improvement was planned to be detected during the workshop.

The **First group** worked on defining the scope and mandate of work of the National Coordination Body as well as detecting the gaps in internal and external communication with other relevant stakeholders. This group was consisted of the members of National Coordination Body, Roma CSOs, EU delegation and other relevant institutions.

The **Second group** worked on defining the scope and mandate of the work of the Roma Information Centers as well as detecting the gaps in internal and external communication with other relevant stakeholders. This group consisted of Roma Information Centers, officers from Roma CSOs responsible for relations between communities and public servants.

The **Third group** was working on defining the scope and mandate of the work of Roma Health Mediators as well as detecting the gaps in internal and external communication with other relevant stakeholders. This group consisted of Roma Health Mediators and Roma CSOs and other relevant institutions.

### **3. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **3.1. Review, analyses and incorporation of recommendation gathered from the Public Dialogue Forum**

Integral part of this Report are products presented and attached as Annexes.

**Annex 1:** Power Point presentation on National Coordination Body

**Annex 2:** Power Point presentation on Roma Information Centers

**Annex 3:** Power Point presentation on Roma Health Mediators

**Annex 4:** Power Point presentation on the main findings of the group National Coordination Body

**Annex 5:** Power Point presentation on the main findings of the group: Roma Information Centers

**Annex 6:** Power Point presentation on the main findings of the group: Roma Health Mediators

## 4. AGENDA

### 24 November 2016, Thursday

09 <sup>00</sup> – 09 <sup>30</sup>	Registration of participants
09 <sup>30</sup> – 11 <sup>00</sup>	Analysis of existing regulations and practice
11 <sup>00</sup> – 11 <sup>15</sup>	Coffee break
11 <sup>15</sup> – 13 <sup>00</sup>	Parallel workshops on updating regulations
13 <sup>00</sup> – 14 <sup>00</sup>	Lunch break
14 <sup>00</sup> – 15 <sup>30</sup>	Parallel workshops on updating regulations
15 <sup>30</sup> – 15 <sup>45</sup>	Coffee break

### 25 November 2016, Friday

09 <sup>30</sup> – 11 <sup>00</sup>	Parallel workshops on updating regulations
11 <sup>00</sup> – 11 <sup>15</sup>	Coffee break
11 <sup>15</sup> – 13 <sup>00</sup>	Presentation of workshops results
13 <sup>00</sup> – 14 <sup>00</sup>	Lunch break
14 <sup>00</sup> –	Departure of participants



## **WORKING GROUP I: NATIONAL COORDINATING BODY OF THE GOVERNMENT FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTION PLANS ON ROMA STRATEGY 2014-2020**

The group was composed by representatives from the National Roma Contact Point's office, including Ministry of Transport and Connections, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Secretariat for European Affairs, Association of the units of local self-government – ZELS, Agency of employment, State Statistical Office, representatives of Roma CSOs Mesecina and Kham – members of the National Coordination Body, as well as representatives from the EU Delegation, OSI/RIO Budapest, EPTISA. Their work referred to defining the scope and mandate of the work of the National Coordination Body as well as detecting the gaps in internal and external communication with other relevant stakeholders. The group worked on: 1. SWOT (strengths-weaknesses-opportunities-threats) Analysis; 2. Review of the Rules of Procedure of the NCB and 3. Operational Plan for 2017. The group was facilitated by Mr. Samet Skenderi.

### **1. DEFINITION AND SWOT ANALYSIS**

The first group has jointly worked on defining the National Coordination Body. The disputes revolved around the institution under which the NCB is established and the role of the Minister without portfolio in the NCB. The NCB has been initially established under the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, and at the time the Minister of Labour and Social Policy was the National Coordinator in the country responsible for the Roma related policies and issues. When the Minister without portfolio was nominated as the National Coordinator, the National Coordination Body continued to be managed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, but a dilemma appeared as to whether the Minister without portfolio should lead the body as its president. While the body has not been functional because of the inability of the National Coordinator to attend the meetings, another body has been established at a higher level, consisted of several high officials from responsible ministries, led by the Minister without portfolio. The dilemma has been resolved during the workshop. The definition is described and jointly agreed among the participants with the following content:

#### **1.1. DEFINITION:**

The National Coordination Body is an expert multi-disciplinary working group of the Government of Republic of Macedonia, established under the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, responsible for planning, coordination and monitoring of the Roma Strategy of the Republic of Macedonia, composed of members from relevant institutions and civil society organizations representing the interests of the Roma community.

## **1.2. CURRENT SITUATION – SWOT ANALYSES**

For analyzing the current situation working group for the Nacional Coordination Body (NCB) was using SWOT Analyses tool to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the NCB and its opportunities and threats in the Macedonian social environment for improvement of its institutional capacities. The SWOT Analysis jointly agreed among participants and presented bellow should provide the basis for recommendations at the end of this chapter.

### ***I. STRENGTHS***

1) Membership: The National Coordinative body is composed of representatives of the following institutions:

- 1.1. Ministry of Labour and Social Policy
- 1.2. National Employment Agency
- 1.3. Secretariat for European Issues
- 1.4. Ministry of Education, Directorate for Education in the Languages of the Ethnic Communities
- 1.5. Ministry of Transport and Connections
- 1.6. Union of the Local Self-Government Units (ULSGU)
- 1.7. Ministry of Health
- 1.8. Ministry of Culture, Directorate for Affirmation and Development of the Culture of the Communities
- 1.9. Ministry of Local Self-Government
- 1.10. Cabinet of the Minister without portfolio (if relevant)
- 1.11. Representatives of civil society organizations (2, one representing East and one representing West region)

As needed, the NCB may include representatives of the:

- 1.12. Ministry of Internal Affairs
- 1.13. Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- 1.14. Ministry of Finances
- 1.15. State Statistical Agency

2) Function of the National Coordinative Body:

- 2.1. Flow of information and coordination which means that NCB informs within and out of the body about the realization and results of implementation of policies;
- 2.2. Sharing information with the members of NCB on a regular basis;
- 2.3. Involvement and participation of the members in implementation activities;

- 2.4. Participation of the members in planning activities (preparation, review and formulation of the Strategy, Action Plans, budget and other activities) in relation to improvement of the position of Roma in society;

3) NCB uses Technical and Administrative Procedures:

- 3.1. Regular reports, information, conclusions are prepared and distributed among the members and disseminated in their institutions;
- 3.2. Convening and conducting of regular meetings;

## ***II. WEAKNESSES***

The working group also defined the weaknesses of the current framework for the work of NCB that are limiting factors for its further work. Weaknesses are also decided in different levels in:

- 1) The role of the National Coordinative Body - has no clear role/ position:
  - 1.1. Lack of functionality on a higher level; Unclear division of responsibilities between different institutions for implementation of some activities;
  - 1.2. Lack of standards for monitoring;
  - 1.3. The NCB does not perform its Advisory role, which means that they are not consulted for strategic questions;
  - 1.4. Lack of mandate for decision making - they can sent the conclusions to their ministries and to the National contact point but all of the decisions are made by the government with little or no consideration of the conclusions of the NCB;
  - 1.5. Small impact of transferred conclusions to the decision-making institutions;
  - 1.6. No budget for its own operation;
  - 1.7. Lack of system of communication and coordination/ has no clear system of relations with foreign institutions and organizations;
  - 1.8. Thematic groups are not established that will work and provide an input on specific issues;
  - 1.9. Lack of transparency and publicity of the work of NCB;

2) Membership of the National Coordinative Body:

- 2.1. There is a need for regular inclusion the institutions listed as ad-hoc members, as well as of additional institutions such as: Ministry of Justice, Agency for National Minorities less than 20%; Ombudperson; Secretariat for implementation of the OFA (Ohrid framework agreement), Commission against discrimination etc;
- 2.2. The procedures for appointing of its members needs improvement, as operational members should be re-nominated at certain period;
- 2.3. Need for procedures of appointment of deputies (continuity, regularity);
- 2.4. Need for procedures of selection of NGOs;

### ***III. OPPORTUNITIES***

- 3.1. Opportunities for using state resources;
- 3.2. Participation in trainings for projects implementation for the members of the NCB;
- 3.3. Capacity and competence of members of the NCB;
- 3.4. Access to specialized, thematic and comparative analysis;
- 3.5. Workshops for implementation of common projects;
- 3.6. State Budget funds, IPA funds, other domestic and foreign Donors;
- 3.7. Projects, programs and support from international and national organizations;
- 3.8. Local structures for implementation of the Strategy (RIC, health mediators, local coordination bodies, officers);

### ***IV. THREATS***

- 4.1. Political will (especially of the government for adoption of recommendations, conclusions, etc., and other institutions);
- 4.2. Lack of financial support for implementation of the Strategy;
- 4.3. Lack of motivation of the members for participation at the work of the NCB;
- 4.4. No feedback from the institutions authorized to act on recommendations, conclusions, etc.;
- 4.5. Unclear relation between National Coordinator and National Coordination Body
- 4.6. Short Mandate of the appointed members ;
- 4.7. Lack of information on projects and donors;
- 4.8. Adoption of decision contrary to the objectives of the Strategy for Roma by institutions that contradict the mission of the NCB;
- 4.9. Possible isolation of members of the NCB in their own institutions;

## **2. RULES OF PROCEDURES OF THE NATIONAL COORDINATION BODY (NCB)**

According to the overview of the existing regulation and policies made by the expert team it was noted that there is no adopted document that regulates the work of the National Coordinative Body, which so far operated according to the Draft-version of the Rules of Procedures, designed by its members. The working group reviewed the draft and proposed the following amendments and consolidations:

### **I. Legal Basis**

- 1) Strategy for Roma and all regulations deriving from it.
- 2) Article 36, paragraph 6 of the Law on Government (Fig. Gazette no. 59/00, 12/03, 55/05 and 37/06 - to update, the current is from 2006) or the Law on Administration / Administration (the part for formation of working groups under the Ministry).
- 3) The decisions of the government to establish / appoint members.

### **II. Institutional structure**

- 1) The National Coordination Body is an expert multi-disciplinary working group of the Government of Republic of Macedonia, established under the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, responsible for planning, coordination and monitoring of the Roma Strategy of the Republic of Macedonia, composed of members from relevant institutions and civil society organizations representing the interests of the Roma community.
- 2) The NCB is a body of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, administered by the Unit for implementation of the Decade and the Strategy composed by members of relevant institutions. The acts of the NCB are signed by the responsible person from the ministry
- 3) The NCB is in direct relation with the authorities responsible for implementation of the Strategy of Roma through its members, who inform the NCB, discuss open issues, inform regarding other activities of the institution that affect the objectives of the strategy, communicate the conclusions, recommendations and other acts of NCB within their institution and pursue act upon them.
- 4) NCB adopts information on monitoring the implementation of the Strategy of Roma, conclusions and recommendations, prepared within the department in the MLSP, and submitted to the Minister, and, in case the National Coordinator is different than the Minister of Labour and Social Policy, to the National Coordinator, for further procedure by the relevant institutions or the Government.
- 5) NCB and its members through the MLSP and the relevant ministries, use the services of local institutions responsible for the implementation of the Strategy of Roma (RIC, health mediators etc.) For performing its functions at the local level.

### III. Scope of work

- 1) **Planning:** Preparation of documents resulting from the Strategy of Roma, such as Action plans, operational plans (with responsibilities, budget, etc.), recommendations, conclusions, information, etc. (the Strategy in general, measures arising from the Strategy, and any other acts on issues that have or may have an impact on the achievement of the strategic goals and are not directly related to the implementation of the strategy).
- 2) **Coordination:** Coordination within responsible institutions for implementation of the strategy; with other competent institutions through recommendations, conclusions, etc., especially for preparation of recommendations and proposals to the Government (including measures, budgets, responsibilities, laws, etc.).
- 3) **Monitoring:** Information on the implementation of the Strategy by the responsible institutions; information about other works of the responsible institutions related to the aims of the strategy, processed and statistical information about the objectives of the strategy, information on planned and spent budget, etc. (Reporting format at the regional level has been proposed by the Roma Integration 2020 and adopted by the National Roma Contact Points from each beneficiary government).
- 4) Initiates revision and/or preparation of new Strategy for Roma.

### IV. Composition, structure, management and mandate

Members of the NCB include one representative from the following institutions: Ministry of Labour and Social Policy; Employment agency; Ministry of Education (Directorate for Education on the Languages of the Ethnic Communities); Ministry of Transport and Communications; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Culture; Ministry of Local Self Government or Union of Local Self-Government Units; Cabinet of Minister without Portfolio (or any other senior official appointed by the Government as the main responsible institution for Roma issues, if such is appointed and if it is different than those already members); Ministry of Interior; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ministry of Finance; State Statistical Office; Secretariat for European Affairs; Ministry of Justice; Ministry of Information Society and Administration; Agency for implementation the rights of communities under 20%; Ombudsman; Commission Against Discrimination; Three (3) representatives of civil society organizations representing the Roma community. Since the NCB is consisted of operational experts from the relevant institutions, its composition should be consistent over time. However, in order to ensure regular attendance, members of the NCB should be reconfirmed or changed by their original institutions each 5 years.

## **V. Procedure for appointment of members of the institutions**

MLSP submits a request to each institution based on completed mandate or termination of membership, for appointment of a member and deputy-member with commitment to regularly attend meetings and achieving all tasks, with a deadline for nominating. Institution submits an official decision for appointment (Minister or director). MLSP submit received nomination(s) with a draft decision to the Government which then adopts decision for dismissal and / or appointment.

## **VI. Procedure for selection of representatives of civil society organizations**

MLSP maintains a Register of all civil society organizations representing the interests of the Roma community; based on completed term or termination of membership, MLSP sends a request to all registered organizations for submission of proposals for membership at the NCB of the civil sector. The proposed member should have support of at least 7 CSOs; members should be elected among those that have most number of support letters from CSOs (if the conditions are not met, the process is repeated - can be changed depending on the situation, e.g. by reducing the required number of support letters, etc.). MLSP submits information to the Government for selection of members with a draft decision for dismissal and / or appointment.

## **VII. Management and Administration**

The NCB is chaired by 1 member on the principle of rotation (in the list of institutions and organizations that have members in NCB) for each meeting (MLSP Unit manages the rotation system);

Unit of MLSP is completely responsible for all administrative work of the NCB:

- 1) Schedules meetings, provides logistics, ensures presence;
- 2) Prepares documents for each meeting (previous minutes, draft agenda, draft acts and other materials on agenda items, draft minutes of the meeting)
- 3) Prepares acts or draft acts and information to other institutions / bodies, including conclusions, recommendations and other acts of the NCB, and submits those to the relevant institutions.
- 4) Manages the procedures and acts upon regulations of NCB of the relevant authorities.

The NCB has the possibility to form thematic sub-groups. These sub-groups should provide expertise on certain issues of interest of the NCB, meet frequently, prepare expert acts and documents, etc. NCB should meet every 3 months and thematic sub-groups once per month, or with different frequency as defined by the NCB.

### **VIII. Responsibilities of the members and their deputies**

- 1) Commitment to implementing the objectives of the Strategy of Roma;
- 2) Regularly attend meetings;
- 3) Regular reporting to the NCB on the implementation of the Strategy for Roma and other activities that affect the objectives of the Strategy in the responsible institution;
- 4) Participate and contribute to discussions on outstanding issues on the implementation of the Strategy of Roma;
- 5) Representing the interests of the NCB and the Strategy within the responsible institutions and other institutions / organizations where member acts professionally;
- 6) Application of findings, recommendations, etc. adopted by the NCB.

### **IX. Communication channels**

Members of the working group discussed with whom they communicate, how and tools that are used.

- 1) With whom:
  - a) Responsible institutions / organizations of the members and other relevant institutions / organizations at the international, national and local level;
  - b) National Coordinator (if such is appointed and is different from MLSP);
  - c) Department for implementation of the Strategy of Roma;
  - d) International Organizations;
  - e) Local coordination bodies;
- 2) How:
  - a) Minutes of NCB (timely);
  - b) Quarterly information;
  - c) Other acts arising from the work of the NCB, recommendations and draft decisions; etc.
  - d) Press releases;
- 3) Tools:
  - a) Translated in English (among others);
  - b) Announcement of the websites of all institutions in the NCB;
  - c) Base of ideas, information and opinions;
  - d) Base (bank) of data;

### **X. Steps to establish a body for dialogue**

- 1) Consultations with relevant institutions, NGOs, national and international organizations;
- 2) Assessment of the work of NCB;
- 3) Analysis of strategic documents;



### 3. OPERATIONAL PLAN FOR 2017

OPERATIONAL PLAN – 2017							
N.B.	Topic / area / aim	Preparation of activity:	Activity :	Time frame:	Responsible for organizing:	Result:	Should be forwarded to:
1.	Prioritization of annual measures	Unit for implementation of Strategy of Roma - MLSP	Regular Meeting of NCB	By the end of March, 2017	MLSP & National Coordinator for implementation of Action plans of Strategy for Roma	Abstract of AP priorities for the year	Minister of MLSP, & National Coordinator for implementation of Action plans of Strategy for Roma.
2.	Financial and technical support for NCB	Unit for implementation of the Strategy for Roma - MLSP	Meeting of NCB	June 2017	MLSP & National Coordinator for implementation of Action plans of Strategy for Roma	Plan for financial and technical support NCB	Minister of MLSP, & National Coordinator for implementation of Action plans of Strategy for Roma
3.	Database / indicators, statistics - a proposal to the government /	Unit for implementation of Strategy of Roma - MLSP	Meeting of NCB	September 2017	MLSP & National Coordinator for implementation of Action plans of Strategy for Roma	List of indicators for monitoring the implementation of the strategy and the decision of the Government for inclusion into Statistics data	Minister of MLSP, & National Coordinator for implementation of Action plans of Strategy for Roma.
4.	Annual reports on the work of the National Coordinating Body	Unit for implementation of Strategy of Roma - MLSP	Meeting of NCB	December 2017	MLSP & National Coordinator for implementation of Action plans of Strategy for Roma	Report of the NCB	Minister of MLSP, & National Coordinator for implementation of Action plans of Strategy for Roma

## WORKING GROUP II: ROMA INFORMATION CENTRES

The second working group defined the work of the Roma Information Centres (definition presented below) and worked on SWOT analysis by mapped the current situation (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats). This group also detected the gaps in the work, based on the existing working documents and practices, defining as well recommendation of its improvement and activities for the following 2017.

### 1. DEFINITION AND CURRENT SITUATION

#### 1.3. DEFINITION

The working group discussed and agreed on the following definition for the Roma Information Centers: Roma Information Centers (RIC) are an administrative structure of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy at community level that serves as a link between the citizens and the state and local institutions to access public services and facilitate application of the rights of Roma, as well as improve the quality of life of Roma and their communities.

#### 1.2. CURRENT SITUATION – SWOT ANALYSES

The RIC working group agreed on the following strengths and weaknesses of their current work, but also on the opportunities for improvement and threats that are influencing their work:

##### *Strengths*

- 1) Excellent knowledge about the Roma community;
- 2) Recognition of RIC among the Roma communities;
- 3) Trained staff with relevant work experience;
- 4) Good manners and relations with the beneficiaries;
- 5) Established cooperation with certain institutions at local level;
- 6) Tangible results from the work of the RIC in the improved status of the Roma community;

##### *Weaknesses*

- 1) Unsolved employment status (contract-based engagement) of the staff at RICs;
- 2) Inappropriate working conditions;
- 3) Unedified work tasks – dealing with all sorts of needs of individuals on ad-hoc basis;
- 4) Lack of coordination with the employees from the Local Self-Governments;
- 5) Low salaries (honoraria 200 euros monthly, less than regular employees and without some other benefits regular employees receive);

##### *Opportunities*

- 1) Transformation of the employment/engagement status;
- 2) Strengthening the capacities and skills of the current and the new employees;
- 3) Signing new Memoranda for Cooperation with the Local Self-Governments;

- 4) Improving the coordination with local and national institutions;

#### ***Threats***

- 1) Political influence at local and national level on the status of RIC;
- 2) Information distributed to MLSP that have a negative impact on the work of RIC i.e. MLSP receives information from other local institutions under their management and sometimes the information are not the same as those provided by the RIC;

## **2. INSTITUTIONOGRAM - SCOPE OF WORK**

Representatives of the RIC working group defined to whom they are responsible, to whom they are providing services, with which organizations/institutions they cooperate and with which organizations and institutions they need to strengthen or improve cooperation and flow of information. RIC is responsible towards the Ministry of Labour and Social Politics – the Unit for implementation of Roma Decade (Roma Strategy).

#### **RIC provides services to the following Roma groups/individuals:**

- 1) Unemployed persons;
- 2) Persons without personal documentation;
- 3) Persons without health insurance;
- 4) Beneficiaries of Social Welfare;
- 5) Beneficiaries of other social services provided by the Social Work Centres;
- 6) Students;
- 7) Children living on the street;
- 8) Homeless people;
- 9) High School Students;

#### **RIC cooperates with the following institutions:**

- 1) Social Work Centres;
- 2) Fund for health insurance (National and local level);
- 3) Agency for employment of Republic of Macedonia and its local offices;
- 4) Department for management of the birth recording book;
- 5) Local Self-Government;
- 6) Department of Public Taxes;

#### **RIC needs to improve/establish communication with the following stakeholders:**

- 1) Heath Mediators;
- 2) Officers for relations between the communities in the units of the local self-government;
- 3) Ministry of Interior;
- 4) Ministry of interior – department for foreigners;
- 5) Department for management of the birth recording book;

- 6) Civil society of youth Lawyers (for free legal aid);
- 7) Local Coordination Bodies ( that are in the process of establishment according to the new Roma Strategy 2016-2020);

**Proposals for improvement of the work of RIC in 2017 and further:**

- 1) Clearly define scope of work, services, data collection on beneficiaries;
- 2) Informing Roma for Active Employment Measures and ensuring participation of Roma individuals in each active employment measure;
- 3) Assistance in access and enjoyment of social rights;
- 4) Data collection and providing information on the situation on local level as an argument for legislative changes (data and indicators should be clearly defined, procedures established);
- 5) Improvement of the information for Roma community in regard of the implementation of the Strategy of Roma;
- 6) Fulfilment of rights and obligations as defined within the priority areas of the Strategy;
- 7) Establishment of links between the citizens, RIC and the institutions;
- 8) Lobbying and advocacy for Roma community in front of the institutions for fulfilment of their rights;
- 9) Building local partnerships;
- 10) Improvement of the RIC capacities in order to inform/prevent/cooperate for protection against discrimination of Roma community and cooperation with the independent institutions (Commission for protection against discrimination, Ombudsperson);
- 11) Priority given to the needs and problems on local level and their proceeding on national level (bottom-up approach in the process of planning);
- 12) Note: Each RIC has a duty to define proposals for Operational Plan 2017 and to send it to the Unit at MLSP (which is expected to send the proposed format);

## **WORKING GROUP III: ROMA HEALTH MEDIATORS**

The third working group defined the work of the Roma health mediators, presented below and did SWOT analysis by which it mapped the current situation (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats). This group also detected the gaps in their work, based on the existing working documents and their practices, defining as well recommendations of its improvement and activities for the following 2017.

### **1. DEFINITION**

Health mediators present at the workshop agreed on the following definition of the Roma health mediator (RHM): Roma Health Mediator is a person that contributes to facilitate Roma access to quality health services by:

- Information and referral of the beneficiaries for realization of the right to health care, family doctor, immunization, and provision of social protection;
- Mediation and accompaniment for issuing medical documentation, personal documents, social protection rights;
- Education about healthy lifestyles (smoking, alcohol, drugs, nutrition, etc.), lung diseases, family planning, sexually transmitted diseases, contraception;
- Cooperation and communication with the public health centres at the local level, Centres for social care, regional offices of the Ministries, NGOs, and Roma information centres (RICs);

### **2. CURRENT SITUATION – SWOT ANALYSES**

The group discussed Roma Health Mediators' starting positions as an introduction for the SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis of their work:

- 1) They have Specialist education V-Grade, entitled: Roma health mediators;
- 2) Engaged under a contract for temporary work by the Ministry of Health, current framework for the scope of work has been developed in 2011 by NGOs and it is not in accordance with additional services and activities performed by RHM;

The daily record for their work is kept in the 3 tables that contain information on:

- 1) Economic situation of the families that are visited for the first time by the RHM;
- 2) Housing conditions of families that are visited for the first time by the RHM;
- 3) Provided Services during the month;

### **STRENGTHS**

- 1) Degree of education (Specialist education V-Grade, entitled: Roma health mediators);
- 2) 50-55 educated Roma Health mediators in the last 5-6 years;
- 3) Commitment to community;
- 4) Recognition of the RHM among the community and health institutions;
- 5) Contribution to increasing the number of Roma in the health system;
- 6) Database of all families that are using services provided by RHM;
- 7) Sensitization and empathy of the Roma community towards health workers;

## **WEAKNESSES**

- 1) Unresolved status - engaged under a contract and have no employment rights under the Law for employment;
- 2) Collecting personal data of clients – procedures for personal data protection should be put in place;
- 3) Due to the lack of employment status have no protection in the case of accidents at work;
- 4) Small payments or fees (200 euro honoraria);
- 5) Have no compensation for travel expenses during their work (for accompaniment of clients, visits of families, visits to health facilities);
- 6) Irregular payment of fees (delay in payments);
- 7) Lack of motivation and dropout of the mediators;
- 8) No specific working time (clients can call them on their private mobiles at any time of day or night);
- 9) Lack of suitable premises for work with the exception of Kocani, Delcevo, Suto Orizari;
- 10) Lack of technical equipment (office phone, Internet access, printers, computers ...);
- 11) Inadequate working conditions - cold rooms without heating;
- 12) Extensive time consuming reports;
- 13) Too many tasks;
- 14) Not receiving feedback from responsible institutions who receive reports from RHM. Reports are sent to several addresses in 3 different formats (narrative, tabular and individual): to HERA (NGO that supports capacity building of the RHM) and Ministry of Health - to Mr. Senad Memeti (RHM coordinator in the Ministry of health) and the Institute of Public Health (software data) but none of these parties don't provide any feedback to the mediators;
- 15) Inadequate procedures for recording working time of the RHM (they have an obligation to return to the office after field visits and sign);
- 16) Unresolved communication and overlapping of competence with RIC for providing and mediating for obtaining personal documentation for clients;

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

- 1) Defining the status of RHM that will improve their effectiveness and efficiency;
- 2) Resolving the employment status either through temporary employment agencies that will provide for paid social benefits and pension, sick leave and maternity leave or by changing the systematization of jobs in the Ministry of Health that will allow positions of the RHM to enter in the health care system;
- 3) Provision of adequate working conditions: physical and technical conditions;

- 4) Terms of reference of the RHM and procedures for cooperation and coordination with RIC's and other institutions/organizations;
- 5) Intersectional coordination between Ministry of Health and Ministry of Labour and Social ~Policy with nominated persons for coordination;
- 6) Increasing the team in the Ministry of Health to monitor the situation;

## **THREATS**

- 1) Discrimination against the target group and the RHM by the society;
- 2) Lack of cooperation with institutions at local and national level;
- 3) Unresolved status - resignation and lack of motivation of trained staff;
- 4) Risks of diseases or transmissible infectious diseases during fieldwork;

### **3. INSTITUTIONOGRAM - SCOPE OF WORK**

Roma Health mediators discussed and defined to whom they are responsible, type of services that they are providing, with whom they are cooperating and communicating and which linkages of communication needs to be strengthened.

**Roma health mediator are RESPONSIBLE to the**

- 1) Target group whom they serve;
- 2) Ministry of Health (submission of monthly reports);
- 3) Institute for Public Health (submission of monthly reports);
- 4) HERA (provides technical support to RHM and involved in strengthening of their capacities supported by UNICEF);

### **SERVICES provided by Roma health mediator to the target group**

- 1) Advise and discuss all health needs and problems of family;
- 2) Assistance (accompaniment, information, clarification, explanation) in overcoming the problems and make contacts with health and social institutions;
- 3) Accompany client to the relevant institution / organization if necessary;
- 4) Informing clients for available health and social services and assist in filling out the necessary documentation;
- 5) Assist in obtaining an identity card, the first birth certificate, health care and health insurance;
- 6) Informs and explains to the clients their rights and obligations as a patient;
- 7) Establish contact with certain institutions in case of violation of certain rights (rights of the child, social and human rights);
- 8) Advises on issues related to family planning and reproductive health;
- 9) Assisting in vaccination / immunization of children;

- 10) Advise on the principles of hygiene and basic health issues;

**I. Roma health mediator COOPERATES with:**

- 1) Health centres that need to provide office/ room for RHM;
- 2) In the health centres RHM communicate with all the services that exist in the centre (regular and patronage nurses, doctors, immunization department, gynaecologists if any, ambulance, dentists, paediatricians, etc.);
- 3) Clinics and institutes (Paediatric Clinic, Institute for Pulmonary diseases, Gynaecology, etc.);
- 4) Fund for health insurance and regional funds;
- 5) Ministry of Labour and Social Policy;
- 6) Roma Information Centres;
- 7) Centres for social work;
- 8) Schools and kindergartens for preventive and educational workshops, preventive examinations in case of outbreak of certain infectious diseases;
- 9) Non-governmental organizations that help with resources to cover certain costs for obtaining documents (cost of ID card and birth certificate, etc.);

**II. Roma health mediators need to strengthen communication and cooperation with:**

- 1) Ministry of Health for improvement of their status (employment, working conditions, promotion of RHM, involvement of RHM in preparation of the programs for preventive health care, and to provide feedback for conditions and situation on the ground, etc.);
- 2) Local government: Inclusion of RHM especially in the creation of local strategies and action plans in the areas of health, social welfare, housing conditions;
- 3) RIC: Defining the role of RHM and RIC plans, or when a personal documents are needed, who is responsible;
- 4) Centres for social work in order to exchange information and experiences in the area of provision of social care-acting ex officio;
- 5) Birth certificate Service for easing access and an accelerated procedure for obtaining personal documentation (contact person at Register, activities in an official capacity to obtain supporting documentation, etc.);



## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **I. NATIONAL COORDINATION BODY**

Regarding the functioning and the work of the National Coordinative body, there are 3 main recommendations which should be taken into account in order to improve their work and functioning:

- 1) It is important to ensure external evaluation of the past work of the National Coordinative Body as well as to establish continuous monitoring of the work of NCB which currently doesn't exist;
- 2) In order to ensure commitment of the members of NCB (bearing in mind that this is additional work which is not in their job description according to the systematization of their working place) it is desired to ensure budget for the work of NCB for both human resources and some regular activities of the NCB as proposed in the NCB Operational Plan 2017;
- 3) NCB should be a key stakeholder which should be consulted in the process of drafting all policy documents in the governmental institutions, not just those related to Roma, but other documents in order to ensure mainstream of Roma issues into public policies. NCB, if given more power (and budget), might become a starting point regarding the development of different programmes and projects and setting the priorities of the donors, such as the EU etc. Key fundraiser (budgeting to include the responsible institutions, and other necessary resources, and then to make activities for fundraising - consultations and cooperation, projects, programs, meetings with donors, donor conferences, etc.).

### **II. ROMA INFORMATION CENTRES**

Regarding the functioning and the work of the Roma Information Centres, there are 8 main recommendations which should be taken into account in order to improve their work and functioning:

- 1) Taking into consideration contract-based status of the RIC staff, it is important to turn their employment into permanent based one, through systematization of their jobs positions

and clarifying / defining tasks between them and the Referents for relations between the communities;

- 2) RIC should serve as a main source of field data and information about Roma in Macedonia, while this data as official ones, might serve as a base for further development of the National policies and to Mainstream Roma issues into the state/public policies. In this sense, the Department in MLSP should take into consideration RIC informants' opinion while developing their further activities;
- 3) The needs of RIC in different regions are diverse and this should be taken into account when planning the Operational Plan for 2017 and the tasks and the mandate of RICs and the Officers for relations between the communities should be clearly defined;
- 4) It is important to ensure that there is a communication and mutual understanding/familiarization with the mandate of the RIC and Health Mediators. In this sense, defining regular communication between this two parties as a mutual task by both responsible institutions (Ministry of Health and Ministry of Labour and Social Policy) should lead to solving the problem with miscommunication and coordination in some of the regions.
- 5) In municipalities where RIC and Officers for relations between the communities exist it is important to inform both about the differences in their responsibilities and their overlapping. This can be overcome with one table which will present their scope of work and the overlapping in order to stop/prevent the overlapping of the responsibilities of this two parties;
- 6) MLSP recommends the following procedure for communication between RIC and the Officers for relations between the communities: RIC Informants should always address in writing the Officers for relations between the communities. In situation when the Officers are not responding properly or they don't answer, RIC needs to inform MLSP and the MLSP will ask for the appropriate answer the Mayor and the Local Self-Government, based on the signed Memorandum for Cooperation. Furthermore, RIC should contact the Officers for relations between the communities in cases where people need legalization in order to undertake concrete action taking into account that this is, primary, their responsibility;
- 7) For both parties (RIC staff and MLSP) is important to define one unified Reporting template for all RICs and thus will lead to collection of comparable data as well;
- 8) MLSP should prepare Guidelines for undertaking procedure before First and Second Instance Commission and send to RICs/or train them in order to build their capacities to use the existing mechanisms of the institutions;

### **III. ROMA HEALTH MEDIATORS**

Regarding the functioning and the work of the Roma Health Mediators, there are 11 main recommendations which should be taken into account in order to improve their work and functioning:

- 1) In order to improve the work of Roma Health Mediators it is necessary to ensure better Coordination at local level among all parties involved (Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, public health institutions, Institute for Public Health, Centres for social work, NGOs, local government, local coordinative body);
- 2) In order to ensure the impact from the work of Roma Health Mediators it is desirable to improve the coordination at national level in terms of information sharing as a base for policy creation;
- 3) Regarding previous two recommendations, as a simple mechanism to be set is to ensure regular joint meetings at least once per year to improve cooperation between different actors involved in the system of protection and promotion of Roma rights as this one;
- 4) The status of RHM is contract-based and RHM don't enjoy any of the employment rights (right to sick leave, maternity leave, etc.). Their status to be turned into regular employment in order to ensure the access to their basic human rights and to increase their commitment;
- 5) It is necessary to prepare an official description of the tasks and responsibilities of RHM prepared by the Ministry of Health. Namely, the current framework is developed in 2011 by CSOs and it is not in accordance with additional services and activities performed by RHM)
- 6) Preparation of the "Rule of work" book and determination of the exact tasks and responsibilities especially in providing necessary documentation (e.g. who to accompany a person in need and to mediate in obtaining identification documents and other supporting documents);
- 7) Currently there is no a systemic solution for the financial implications of providing health and personal documents. The budget must be ensured by the state. Also, budget must be ensured to cover travel expenses for the field work of RHM;
- 8) RHM and RIC to be located close to each other so that clients have easier access to services or to introduce one-stop-shop system for assistance and support of clients so the person that have a problem will submit their case in only one office and then according to the ToR, tasks to be distributed between RIC and RHM;
- 9) In some areas there is a need of more RHM and their number should be increased according to the number of population in some municipalities and if the population is living in urban or rural areas which require additional travel of the RHM;
- 10) It is recommendable to create a single data base in collaboration with MH, MLSP, RIC and municipal officers (networking);
- 11) Establishment of mechanisms for Monitoring of the implementation of the action plan for Health and the action plan for Roma Women 2016-2020;