

2019 NATIONAL PLATFORM ON ROMA INTEGRATION

07 June 2019, Tirana

:: CONCEPT NOTE ::

Rationale:

National Platform for Integration of Roma and Egyptians in Albania will focus on the education, employment and housing issues, more specifically on basic education, formalisation of undeclared work, and social housing for Roma. The National Platform participants will have an opportunity to have a focused discussion on the proposed topics. The event's aim is to inform RCC's Roma Integration project, the Government of Albania, and relevant stakeholders about Roma needs in these areas and jointly agree on the upcoming activities and the Roma Integration support. The Roma Integration project and the Government of Albania adopted triannual Roadmap of activities that will guide technical assistance to be provided to the Government. Findings from the National Platform will be directly incorporated in planning and implementation of the technical assistance.

Employment - Formalising undeclared work

The [Report](#) based on 2017 UNDP Regional Roma Survey indicated that around 62% remain involved in undeclared work. Another UNDP Study [Mapping the Skills, Employment Opportunities, and Undertaking by Roma and Egyptian Communities](#) performed in Tirana, Durrës, Berat and Shkodra shows that one of the primary activities of undeclared Roma workers is waste collection (collection of recyclable materials). These Roma individuals are largely excluded from social aid schemes (economic aid, health insurance, retirement pension, etc.). The findings suggest that significant increase in the employment rate of active Roma, together with increase in their socio-economic security, can be brought about through formalisation of their undeclared work.

The Roma Integration project aims to develop a programme for formalisation of work of undeclared workers in waste collection. Such programme should also allow for subsidies for income taxation and social and retirement contributions, so that current income of waste collectors is not drastically cut - which would push them deeper into poverty. The formalisation programme should allow for a (subsidised) transitional period during which waste collectors will benefit from lower taxation and contributions. The subsidies need to last up to the moment when their declared work and income is stabilised and sufficient. The programme also needs to consider standardisation of the profession of waste collectors.

Panellists:

- Danilo Smolovic, Policy Expert in RCC's Roma Integration Project - planned activities
- Ms Dajna Sorensen, Deputy Minister in charge of Employment, Ministry of Finance and Economy (tbc) - most effective employment measures for Roma and potential for additional support packages (in line with new and expected legislation - Law on Employment Promotion, Social Entrepreneurship Law, Social Fund)
- Ministry of Health and Social Protection, Expert on Social Entrepreneurship - opportunities according to the Law on Social Entrepreneurship and secondary legislation requirements
- ECO Tirana project representative - waste management legislation, lessons learned, opportunities and requirements for project upscaling

Panel aim is to identify:

- Possibilities and modalities of formalising undeclared work of Roma (individually or in a social enterprise), together with technical support required from the Roma Integration project;
- Potential to develop a mainstream formalisation programme for waste collectors in cooperation with the Government of Albania, support package that the programme should contain, and funding requirements;
- Active Labour Market Measures relevant for Roma undeclared workers, and potential to integrate them with the formalisation programme;
- Number of people engaged in waste collection, reasons for not formalising work, and relevant data sources for developing the programme and identifying undeclared waste collectors;
- Requirements for adopting and/or amending secondary and primary legislation.

Housing - Social Housing

Albanian Law on Social Housing has affirmative provisions guaranteeing prioritisation of Roma in allocation of social housing in several manners (5% for two years in all programmes according to transitional provision under Article 77, guarantees for specific social housing programmes, and Roma as a priority category under social conditions). The Roma Integration aims to assist the Government to legally prescribe the prioritization methodology, and define the holistic approach in housing. The holistic approach needs to combine housing, employment and other necessary support, according to the defined modes of inter-institutional cooperation. After the necessary procedures are adopted, the Roma Integration will assist the Government to develop a (funding) proposal for social housing.

Panellists:

- Danilo Smolovic, Policy Expert in RCC's Roma Integration Project - planned activities;
- Ms Doris Andoni, Head of the Housing Sector in the Ministry of Finance and Economy (tbc) - social housing legislation and inter-institutional cooperation, methodological, and funding requirements and opportunities (tbc);
- Municipality (constructing social housing) representative - experiences and needs;
- ROMACTED representative - situation in the field and emergency situations.

Panel aim is to identify:

- Issues to be covered by methodology of prioritisation of Roma in social housing, to be adopted at the central level;
- Additional support requirements in social housing (income, utilities, employment, etc.), issues to be covered by the holistic approach and stakeholders to be involved in its implementation, promising implementation modalities;
- Roma housing needs at the local level (social housing, infrastructure, housing reconstruction) and emergency situations;
- Potential to fund social housing projects (central and local level and/or donor contribution)
- Municipalities interested to implement social housing programmes for Roma and their needs for technical assistance.

Education - Basic Education

Increasing enrolment and lowering dropout in basic education remains an important goal for Roma integration in Albania, as it is a necessary precondition to enrol and complete all other education levels. In order to increase enrolment and completion of Roma who struggle to remain in basic education, the economy will need to improve identification of persons in need and provide them with additional support packages, such as financial support and mentorship.

Panellists:

- Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth representative - regulating issue at the central level
- Social Care Centre representative - role of Social Care Centres, including data provision and identification of persons in need
- Municipality representative - experiences with specific support for Roma in basic education

Panel aim is to identify:

- Issues to be covered by methodology of supporting Roma to enrol and remain in basic education;
- Potential for lowering fees for Roma in basic education, including additional funding requirements and how these can be covered through public budget;
- Promising practice for identification of children in need of educational support.

National Platform participants are invited to prepare for structured discussion and share information and suggestions about how to tackle aforementioned topics (including about situation in the field, legislation, practical experiences, observed discrimination, funding and other needs)