

MEETING INFORMATION
ROMA INTEGRATION EMERGENCY RESPONSE MEETINGS TO COVID-19
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Date: 07 May 2020, 2nd informative meeting

Organized by: Roma Integration 2020 Regional Cooperation Council (RCC RI2020)

Attendees: 1.EU Commission 2.EU Delegation 3.Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees/NRCP 4.Committee on Roma at the Council of Ministers of BiH 5.RCC RI2020 team 6.Open Society Foundations 7.Romacted 8.REF 9.OSCE 10.UNICEF 11.CARITAS 12.World Vision 13.CARE 14.Save the children 15.Kali Sara Roma NGO 16. Euro Rom NGO 17.Portal UDAR

Technical info: The meetings are held via the application for online meetings Zoom, lasting 90 minutes for each economy. The Policy Expert is responsible to coordinate the organisation of the meeting with the National Roma Contact Point (NRCP), from the economy and invite participants, limited to 100.

Objective: The current situation of Covid-19 pandemic urged the governments in the region to undertake a number of overarching measures. Both the pandemic and the measures significantly influence the Roma communities in the region. In such situation the governments, and accordingly the Roma Integration 2020, need to adjust to the circumstance in performing their mandate for the best possible outcome for RE within the given possibilities. Hence, the Roma Integration 2020 action, in consultation with the European Union and the Open Society Foundations, finds it necessary to facilitate a broad societal dialogue regarding the response to the Covid-19 crisis and its consequences to the Roma community in order to ensure broad needs assessment, proper short, medium and long term response, and adequate consideration of Roma in the mainstream measures.

INITIAL ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION OF ROMA IN BiH

1. Overview of existing measures taken at national and EU level for the most vulnerable Roma

Government/NRCP:

- Having in mind all the procurement procedures, the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees (MHRR) is trying to allocate funds from their perspective ministry. The budget will be in favour of all vulnerable groups including Roma. Info on budget approval will follow during the next week.
- MHRR tries to join actions with Municipality of Kalesija, to support 2 Roma families who are in need of basic humanitarian aid.
- In line with different local authorities who should agree on equal approach and coordination, the MHRR will develop programs and plans on returnees. For now returnees are not treated differently than the general population and Roma.
- By drafting the initial plan, the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees called on all relevant institutions, international and domestic organizations to join the support network for vulnerable groups to jointly coordinate activities AND jointly direct the available means of support according to the possibilities and needs and avoid duplication of activities.
- Based on the collected data, the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees has compiled and published on its website a database on the implementation of assistance in order to jointly plan assistance actions.
- Horizontal Facility project of the EU and the Council of Europe provide psycho-social assistance to the LGBT population in the following places: Prijedor, Brčko, Sarajevo, Gradiška, Zvornik and Mostar.
- World Vision BiH donated protective equipment and hygienic-disinfectants to the following institutions: Public Institution Home for the Elderly and Exhausted Goražde, Institute for the Care of Mentally Disabled Children and Youth Pazarić, Public Institution Home for Persons with Disabilities Prijedor, Home for Persons with Disabilities Višegrad, Home for children without parental care Tuzla.
- The Association "Young Volunteers" together with the Public Kitchen Visoko distributes meals to the socially endangered population every day.
- The NRCP prepared and present data collected so far on the realized assistance to Roma communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina by local self-government units, international and domestic organizations, following as ANEX 1 to this document.
- The NRCP is supporting and calling on this way of coordination with all the stakeholders in the near future and for all the future activities and projects.
- The NRCP is calling the Roma NGOs and the international donors to submit their data and inform the ministry on the activities taken thus everything will be managed and collected in one official data base.
- If someone has an information on households without water or electricity to inform the MHRR and proper measures with official complains towards institutions will be initiated.





- There is an opportunity and there will be a try for subvention coverage of utilities and debts, regulated through the social centres, for the most vulnerable. Existing data to be shared with the NRCP and therefore lead initiatives will be taken. A system of info sharing must be established.

EU Delegation (EUD):

- The short term responses are directed to support the purchase of medical equipment.
- The IPA programming of 2019/20 is tackling the most vulnerable groups and issues.
- As an urgent response, requests related to support Roma, are being addressed through Romacted in 10 municipalities as a joint mission of the Council of Europe (CoE) and the EU.
- The Romacted program is ending in April, therefore this issue should be addressed through the Council of Europe to intervene immediately as there is need of constant flow and cooperation.
- Regarding the short term measures support to Roma, **identification of urgent responses is needed.**
- Longer term measures: As the EU 2019/20 programs (IPA) are already tackling vulnerable groups, the vulnerability caused by the situation should be additionally identified.
- From the socio-economy recovery fund, funds will be allocated to stimulate small and medium enterprises. Funds will be doubled for education and employment.
- The Roma vulnerability should be taken in consideration.
- **The Director of the Council of Europe BiH, Ms Bojana Urumova took part at the meeting. Around 300 packages have been already secured with the support of the CoE and additional resources are planned to be allocated for the humanitarian aid purposes. On regional level 250.000 EUR have been allocated.**

2. Overview of short term needs

- Municipalities have to identify the community needs, to summarize and provide short term responses and measures. In municipalities without strong Roma organizations, budget allocation should be requested. **Update: NGO Kali Sara has collected data from different ministries and local authorities on measures taken so far. Some institutions collected and reported accurate data, while some didn't use any data collection method. Kali Sara is working on conducting a report with relevant data that will be shared by the end of May.**
- **The Municipality of Lukavac allocated 7.500 EUR for humanitarian packages for Roma.**
- Protective masks, food, medicines and hygienic products.
- Coordination with 40 municipal representatives and local NGOs to define key aid measures.
- Ensuring access to internet, TV and mob app for children in Roma settlements.
- **NGO Kali Sara has exact numbers of children per location and not all Roma children are covered.**
- **NGO Euro Roma with support from the Roma Education Fund provided tablets for pupils.**
- Water and electricity needs in Roma settlements.

3. Who does what and coordination of various stakeholders

- **NGO Euro Rom distributed 176 humanitarian aid packages in amount of 5.500 EUR. More activities are mentioned under the REF and OSF BiH update.**
- **The Roma NGOs have developed a good network of Roma volunteers prepared to distribute help door to door following the standards for protection.**
- **The Roma volunteers have been distributing packages and vouchers according to lists provided by the Roma NGOs and based on the household needs, especially important for households with vulnerable elder Roma that the NGOs know and have in their data base.**
- **Dalibor Tanic the editor in chief of the online portal Udar presented the initiative supported by the Roma Initiative Office/OSF to identify and establish a dialogue with the Roma communities that should be the main platform for identification of community needs, grassroots people to tell what their needs are on long term too.**
- **Romacted allocated funds and throughout their support organization Romalen from Kakanj, provided food and hygiene vouchers to 315 families when the crisis started.**
- **Romacted is aligning their activities with the municipalities. In many municipalities yet, the needs of the communities are not identified and there is a need of reactions.**
- **Municipality of Kakanj has allocated 5.000 KM (2.500 EUR), NGO Romalen distributed the humanitarian aid to the most vulnerable. Thirty packages with basic products were distributed in Municipality of Tuzla and Gradiska.**





- Municipality of Center Sarajevo has provided 2 laptops for Roma students and Wi-Fi hotspot in Gorici, the Roma settlement.
- UNFPA - United Nations Population Fund secured 50 hygienic packages for Municipality of Visoko.
- World Vision allocated funds for rice, flour, masks and hygienic products for 1000 families, out of which 300 Roma. The distribution was in coordination with the Roma NGOs Kali Sara, Romalen Kakanj, Euro Rom and Better Future in Tuzla, Jurin in Republic of Srpska.
- REF allocated funds for 230 packages and will provide additional support to education and online learning. Final responses will follow soon. **Update: The Roma Education Fund provided tablets for pupils.**
- NGO Kali Sara with the support of OSF is constantly working on mapping the community needs. Kali Sara compiled a table with data on how many people received humanitarian aid by now. Kali Sara has sent requests to institutions and international donors to fill in information on potential crisis responses, including municipalities. These data are available through Kali Sara.
- The Roma women network Better Future has negotiated with their donors to reallocate non spent funds for direct support of the 5 women network NGOs, 500 EUR per organization. With the support from World Vision, Better Future provided packages for 30 families. Another 130 packages from different donors were distributed in Lukavac and Tuzla where many children with disabilities are living without health insurance.
- Caritas is planning to provide aid packages to serve around 2000 vulnerable Roma and non Roma households in 16 municipalities where projects were implemented. The aid is planned for the next 3 months. **Update: Caritas Switzerland has distributed vouchers for 470 Roma families and 1200 non Roma families.**
- OSCE has information on access to water and electricity in different municipalities. Update will be done and aligned with the data base of Kali Sara, and shared with the participants. OSCE stands ready to deliver further support in coordination with the MHRR and the Roma NGOs.
- **OSCE is going to distribute 171 packages in 9 municipalities according to the consulted tables and data where Roma are in need and have not been supported yet. Before the aid is distributed the MHRR will be informed and update will be inserted in the Caritas data base table.**
- **OSCE informs that municipality of Stari Grad and Zenica during the pandemic are reconnecting the Roma settlements to the electricity grid and water supply systems, more information on other municipal initiatives will follow.**
- **NGO Kali Sara is working on data collection regarding identifying Roma needs for a long time. Their data base has been updated recently with information received from municipalities and social centres. There are few challenges when working with data based on nationality: not all institutions are collecting data based on nationality. The other issue is that the social centres are taking into account only registered beneficiaries and can't answer the needs of the wider community who doesn't benefit from the social schemes.**
- **Besides the data collection challenges, a big issue is the state budget adoption and programming of the Roma integration programs. NGO Kali Sara is regularly sending letters and requests to the government and the responsible ministries including the MHRR to allocate budget for this purpose.**
- **The practice shows also that people who can't cover the electricity utilities are left aside and no social measure is taking this into account. Kali Sara is lobbying and proposing solutions on access to electricity grid and bills payment. This is a burning issue same as the problem with the poverty of those involved in undeclared work, thus sustainable proposed projects should to be discussed. A final report with data collected and challenges will be submitted.**
- **The Open Society BiH will provide food and hygienic packages for around 430 families (NGO EURO Rom). Update: With the financial support of around 62.000 EUR from the Open Society BiH, NGO Euro Rom provided assistance to 1200 elderly and bigger families. Each family got a voucher of 50 EUR. 250 vouchers were distributed in Republic of Srpska, 300 in Doboje, 100 in middle Bosnian canton, 50 in Sarajevo canton, 50 in Unsko Sanski canton and 450 in Tuzla canton.**
- **Save the children and CARE also contribute to the existing urgencies. Due to lack of time, info will follow in a next meeting. Update on EDUCATION: Educational activities with buying and distributing 140 tablets for pupils have been supported in the Unsko Sanski canton. In Bjelina, access to internet will be provided for 70 families who have children in primary and secondary school. Additional help is provided for students who need help with the school material. Save the children**





supported the work of the Blue telephone, a counselling line for additional support provided during the crisis.

- For the most vulnerable families, Save the Children ensured around 200 humanitarian aid packages, 100 with baby supplies in 6 municipalities. In meantime through the START fund, new distribution is ongoing for 1100 families.
- CARE International, with the support of the Roma NGO Zuralipe in Vitez and Travnik distributed 24 humanitarian food and hygienic packages and 10 medical packages. In Prnjavora and Vukosavlja with the support of the Roma NGO Romani Chej distributed another 24 humanitarian food and hygienic packages. Additional support is being planned.

4. Enduring synergies and complementarity

- The MHRR is asking the Roma organizations to get involved and initiate urgent responses that may support the vulnerable Roma.
- Romacted will align synergies with the MHRR and the municipalities.
- NGO Kali Sara received information from the Federal Red Cross on lack of capacities and reliable data to deal with Roma urgencies, as the Red Cross uses lists from social work centres and Roma are not often users of those centres.
- Caritas is preparing an assessment table on info sharing, coordination among various stakeholders and mapping further assistance. Organizations can enter data and can contribute to a google drive table for Roma and non Roma (to be shared with us).
- The Committee on Roma at the Council of Ministers of BiH has compiled a table with information on support provided by municipality and gathered info on urgent needs from the field. Data are aligned with the OSCE and NGO Kali Sara. The Committee is urging usage of this excel table.
- First interventions on the field were initiated by World Vision, Romacted, Kali Sara, latter on several international donors and organizations joined initiatives.

5. Proposed targeted and mainstream measures

- The MHRR/NRCP plans to take a lead on data collection of current needs.
- The MHRR/NRCP with Romacted and OSCE will requests from the municipalities to map the needs of the communities and allocate funds.
- The MHRR/NRCP, the RCC RI2020, and the EUD, will discuss the EU funds programing to benefit vulnerable groups and Roma in the post pandemic recovery process.
- The NRCP announced the distribution of humanitarian packages will be through the Red Cross.
- The Roma NGOs want to discuss their existing lists that consist accurate numbers of Roma families, municipalities and settlements, urgent needs, measures etc. with the MHRR and the Red.

6. Follow up actions

Follow up with the EUD

1. With a purpose to ensure Roma are taken into governmental strategic consideration when defining socio-economic post COVID-19 recovery, the NRCP and RCC RI2020 should be in a position to provide short, mid and long term recommendations on financial planning and support of the vulnerable groups, specifically Roma. The identified measures will be discussed with the EU Delegation in order to be programed in the IPA 2019/20 and in the current socio-economic recovery program.

Follow up with local authorities

2. In many municipalities, the needs of the communities are not identified and there is a need of reactions. Identifying urgent community needs, coordination between MHRR, Romacted, OSCE, municipalities and NGOs should be established ASAP. **Update: Romacted - in terms of data collection the numbers provided by municipality officials are not the same with the data provided by the NGOs. There is big discrepancy in the numbers. Romacted is relying on data by the NGOs at the moment. As some families have been returned from abroad, they haven't been counted in any measure so far and we need to communicate these data. The MHRR has initiated a process of data collection, Annex 1.**

Follow up with the Red Cross





3. The NRCP will follow up with the local authorities and municipal representatives and ask them to keep track of the aid delivery to Roma. The NRCP and Romacted will discuss how to ensure Roma volunteers join the Red Cross (for accurate field mapping and delivery in Roma settlements).
4. In order to ensure accurate aid distribution for those who need the most, a final beneficiaries' assessment has to be done. Kali Sara and Romalen react on the planned distribution from Red Cross due to lack of data and this should be discussed with all relevant institutions and organizations. **Update: To make sure that the packages are getting to families in need, this question requires follow up, again the Roma NGOs and activists offered their support for distribution and insist on their common agreed data usage.**

Follow up on data collection and data base usage

5. The MHRR/NRCP will prepare info letter with tasks and responsibilities taken by the ministry and other stakeholders. All organizations are invited to contribute and share information for the sake creating such a data base. **Update: process of data collection is ongoing. The NRCP expressed willingness to continue the initiative of mapping of Roma needs according to the EU Commission and RCC agreed standards and system, very much needed for better governmental planning of the future work.**
6. Caritas is calling all the organizations to use the google drive table that is already in use, for better coordination of activities, contribution and track keeping of the human needs and donor responses. The type of data will be coordinated with the NRCP. Caritas will provide the link to the table. **Update: Caritas shared with the MHRR and all relevant stakeholders the table for data collection. OSCE and World Vision have also contributed in data sharing, incorporated in the table and shared with the MHRR/NRCP.**
7. The Committee on Roma at the Council of Ministers of BiH is urging the usage of the existing data base compiled with Kali Sara and OSCE.

Follow up meetings

8. Meeting with the EUD on identification of short and long term recovery measures that can benefit the vulnerable and Roma;
9. Final agreement on procedures and usage of the existing data base. **RCC Roma Integration 2020 can support the NRCP to establish a data base.**

Follow up meeting on education

10. Kali Sara has data collected from municipalities, relevant educational ministries and schools. As many children didn't had access to online education, a solution for preparing pupils for the final exam should be found, concretely for those are about to graduate.
11. UNICEF is proposing and seconding a separate meeting discussing only educational challenges.

Annex 1 Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees/NRCP data collected so far on the assistance provided to Roma communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina by local self-government units, international and domestic organizations

MUNICIPALITY	SUM OF QUANTITY	DONNOR	QUANTITY	ESTIMATED VALUE	DISTRIBUTION PERFORMED
Bihać	210 packages	Save the Children	60	4.200,00	
		Crveni križ / krst	150	N/A	
Bosanska	491 packages	Općina / CSR/ pomozi.ba	472	1.000,00	





Krupa		Donacija građana B.Krupe	19	N/A	
Gračanica	15 packages	Word Wision /ARS GIGAP II/ FOD	8	N/A	UŽR Bolja budućnost Tuzla
		Roma education fund (REF)	7	958,30	„EURO ROM“
Kalesija	71 packages	Romska dijaspora	10	600,00	
		UR Sa E Roma Tuzla	60	10.000,00	UR Sa E Roma Tuzla
		Roma education fund (REF)	1	136,60	„EURO ROM“
Lukavac	247 packages	Općina	217	14.000,00	
		Merhamet	obroci	20.000,00	
		Udruženje Altruist		20.000,00	
		Word Wision /ARS GIGAP II/ FOD	28	N/A	UŽR Bolja budućnost Tuzla
		Roma education fund (REF)	2	273,80	„EUROM ROM“
Srebrenik	9 packages	UR Euro Rom Tuzla	8	800,00	Dedić Esad
		Roma education fund (REF)	1	136,9	„EURO ROM“
Tuzla	170 packages	Grad	obroci 370	N/A	UŽR Bolja budućnost Tuzla
		Vijeće Europe ROMACTED	30	1.500,00	CZP Romalen Kakanj
		Word Wision /ARS GIGAP II/ FOD	96	N/A	UŽR Bolja budućnost Tuzla
		Roma education fund (REF) i EU	44	6864,60	„EURO ROM“
Kakanj	367 packages	Vijeće Europe ROMACTED	125	6.250,00	CZP Romalen Kakanj
		Word Wision /ARS GIGAP II/ FOD	20	N/A	UŽR Bolja budućnost Tuzla
		CARITAS	160	12.750,00	Romalen i LEDA





		Roma education fund (REF) i EU	62	5617,00	CZP Romalen Kakanj i „EURO ROM“
Visoko	119 packages	Word Wision /ARS GIGAP II/ FOD	25	N/A	UŽR Bolja budućnost Tuzla
		Općina/Mladi Volonteri/C.krst	N/A	N/A	
		Vijeće Europe ROMACTED	40	2.000,00	CZP Romalen Kakanj
		Roma education fund (REF) i EU	54	4942,20	CZP Romalen Kakanj i „EURO ROM“
Zenica	N/A packages	Grad Zenica	2260	150.000,00	
	16	CARITAS	11	825,00	Općina i LEDA
		Roma education fund (REF) i EU	5	559,00	„EURO ROM“
Jajce	N/A	CSR	N/A	N/A	CSR
Travnik	79 packages	Care International	50	N/A	
		Općina	29	2.320,00	
Vitez	354 packages	Ambasador mira Opatije i porodica Hrustić	149	N/A	UR Romano Zuralipe Vitez
		Ibrahim Gušić	29	N/A	UR Romano Zuralipe Vitez
		Josip Biletić	5	N/A	UR Romano Zuralipe Vitez
		Općina	100 (40 jednokratna)	N/A	Općina
		REF	31	6184.5	ZURALIPE
Sarajevo	N/A	Općina Centar	tableti + packagei	N/A	Općina
	32	CARITAS	32	2.400,00	Općina i DUGA
Vogošća	50 packages	Općina /Caritas Švicarske	50	N/A	Općina
Banja Luka	66 packages	Grad	40	N/A	Grad
		Save the Children	26	3.486,00	
Prijedor	75 packages	Grad/ CSR/C.krst/ Hljeb života	75	N/A	
Bijeljina	322 packages	Word Wision /ARS GIGAP II/ FOD	20	N/A	UŽR Bolja budućnost Tuzla
		Grad	40	2.000,00	Grad
		CZP Romalen	50	N/A	
		Save the Children	63	9.050,50	
		Vijeće Europe ROMACTED	50	2.500,00	CZP Romalen Kakanj





		CARITAS	99	7.425,00	OTAHARIN
Modriča	11 packages	Word Wision /ARS GIGAP II/ FOD	5	N/A	UŽR Bolja budućnost Tuzla
		Opština/Vlada RS/ Teurih doo	6		Opština
Teslić	N/A	Opština/ CSR	N/A	N/A	Opština/ CSR
Vukosavlje	50 packages	Vijeće Europe ROMACTED	50	2.500,00	CZP Romalen Kakanj
Prnjavor	30 packages	Vijeće Europe ROMACTED	20	1.000,00	CZP Romalen Kakanj
			10	500,00	
Doboj	5 packages	Word Wision /ARS GIGAP II/ FOD	5	N/A	UŽR Bolja budućnost Tuzla
		Romi iz dijaspore	N/A	4.300,00	UR
Živinice	145 packages	FOD/ EURO ROM	135	13.500,00	UR
		Roma education fund (REF)	10	1369,00	„EURO ROM“
Zavidovići	44 packages	CARITAS	43	3.225,00	Općina i LEDA
		Roma education fund (REF) EU	1	111,80	„EURO ROM“
Višegrad	2 packages	CARITAS	2	150,00	Općina
Pale FBiH	1 packages	CARITAS	1	75,00	Općina
Ilijaš	1 packages	CARITAS	1	75,00	Općina
Hadžići	10 packages	CARITAS	10	750,00	Općina
Ilidža	95 packages	CARITAS	95	7.125,00	Općina i DUGA
Banovići	6 packages	Roma education fund (REF)	6	821,90	„EURO ROM“
Čelić	4 packages	Roma education fund (REF)	4	547,60	„EURO ROM“
Kladanj	2 Packages	Roma education fund (REF)	2	273,80	„EURO ROM“
Teočak	1 package	Roma education fund (REF)	1	136,90	„EURO ROM“
Breza	2 packages	Roma education fund (REF) i EU	2	223,60	„EURO ROM“
TOTAL	3102 packages			357.964,00	

