

2019 NATIONAL PLATFORM ON ROMA INTEGRATION

EMPLOYMENT AND HOUSING

11.06.2019, PODGORICA

:: CONCEPT NOTE ::

Rationale:

The Roma Integration National Platform for Montenegro will focus on two priority areas: housing and employment. Instead of the previous practice of presenting the annual report on the implementation of Roma integration policies, participants will be able to have a focused discussion on predefined topics from two areas - the formalization of undeclared work and social housing. The goal of the National Platform is to inform the Roma Integration Project, the Government of Montenegro, as well as other interested parties, on the needs of Roma on the ground and to jointly plan further activities. The Roma Integration Project has adopted a three-year roadmap, which plans technical assistance for the integration of Roma in the areas of employment and housing. The findings from the National Platform will be directly incorporated into the planning of the mentioned technical assistance.

Formalising Undeclared Work:

Information gathered from the field, including those from the [UNDP 2017 Regional Survey](#), as well as annual reports on the implementation of Roma integration policies, indicate employment decline and lack of efficiency of active employment measures that do not necessarily lead to the sustainable employment of Roma. In a situation where the subvention for employers of socially vulnerable groups is suspended, it is necessary to find innovative and efficient models for employment of Roma.

Formalization of undeclared work offers the possibility for a large number of active Roma to move into declared work. Formalization should also regulate the issues of labour taxation, social security and pension insurance contributions and the abolition of social assistance. Regulating the issue of contributions in accordance with the current practice, would not be in the interest of Roma working low-paid jobs, as that would halve their already low income. The Roma Integration Project aims to develop a programme for the formalization of work of secondary raw materials (recyclable waste) collectors. Regarding the aforementioned issue of contributions, it is necessary to consider how to ensure (subsidised) transitional period after formalization in which collectors (as members of socially vulnerable category of population) will benefit from lower taxation and contributions. The subsidies should last until their work and income are stabilized.

Panellists:

- Danilo Smolovic, Policy Expert, Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) Roma Integration project - planned project activities
- Sanja RABRENOVIC, Assistant Director for Employment Sector, Employment Agency of Montenegro - approach in targeting Roma population, additional support needs, future activities
- Samir Jaha, Executive Director, NGO Young Roma - current phase of the standardization of occupation of secondary raw material collectors, obstacles and needs for successful standardization



- Senad Sejdivic, Vice Director, Roma Council - cooperation with Employment Agency of Montenegro to employ Roma

Panel Objective - to identify:

- Possibilities of formalization of undeclared work of Roma and support expected from the Roma Integration project;
- Possibilities to develop programmes for the formalization of undeclared work of secondary raw materials collectors in cooperation with institutions of Montenegro, types of support that the programme should envisage and financial needs;
- Active labour market policy measures relevant for Roma engaged in undeclared work, how to increase their efficiency or to integrate them with the formalization programme, what kind of additional support is needed and which partners can provide it;
- Number of people in need of formalization of undeclared work, reasons for lack of formalization and relevant sources of information for programme development and identification of secondary raw materials collectors;
- Needs for development or changes in legislation.

Housing - Social Housing

In a situation where the deadline for legalization has expired, social housing (including the reconstruction of housing units) remains the only way for the state and municipalities to address the issue of housing of Roma in need. Previous experience points to the inadequate prioritization of Roma in social housing in accordance with the Law on Social Housing, the preparation of incomplete action plans for social housing at the local level, the lack of finances and locations for social housing, as well as the risk of evictions in informal settlements. The Roma Integration Project seeks to provide assistance in identifying and responding to Roma housing needs, as well as addressing emergencies. Support may include the preparation of local action plans for social housing (in cooperation with the ROMACTED project); preparation of social housing projects for donors and support methodologies, and support for proper eviction (in cases where it is inevitable) in accordance with international standards and participatory approach.

Panellists:

- Danilo Smolovic, Policy Expert, Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) Roma Integration project - planned project activities
- Radmila Lainovic, Advisor, Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism - legislation and needs in the field of social housing (TBC)
- Darka Ognjanovic, Secretary for Youth, Sports, and Social Affairs, Municipality of Tivat / Union of Municipalities of Montenegro - local level experiences, needs, models and current activities for resolving Roma housing issues
- Fahrudin Begovic, Manager, Municipality of Bijelo Polje, local level experiences and activities of Bijelo Polje municipality on addressing Roma housing issues

Panel Objective - to identify:

- Opportunities for the development of social housing programmes targeting Roma, support expected from the Roma Integration project and financial needs;
- Roma settlements in need of alternative social housing, reconstruction of existing units, and those in which there are emergency situations and the risk of eviction;
- Municipalities interested in developing and implementing social housing programmes for Roma in cooperation with the Roma Integration project;

- Need for an appropriate methodology for implementing social housing, including participatory and integral (combined with employment) approach;
- Additional needs in social housing (income support, utilities, etc.);
- Needs for developing new or amending existing legislation.

Participants in the National Platform are invited to prepare for a structured discussion in order to share information on the above-mentioned issues (including situation and needs in the field, legislation, experiences, needs for material and other resources) and ideas for future action.