

ROMA INTEGRATION EMERGENCY RESPONSE MEETINGS TO COVID-19

KOSOVO*

Date: 8 May 2020, 2nd informative meeting

Organized by: Regional Cooperation Council-Roma Integration 2020 in collaboration with Office for Good Governance, Human Rights, Equal Opportunities and Anti-Discrimination- Office of the Prime Minister of Kosovo, National Roma Contact Point.

Attendees: Governmental representatives, NRCP, EU Delegation, International organizations, OSF, KFOS, Local and mainstream and Roma-led organizations.

Objective: Hence, the Roma Integration 2020 in collaboration with Office for Good Governance, Human Rights, Equal Opportunities and Anti-Discrimination- Office of the Prime Minister of Kosovo* and National Roma Contact Point, 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. Specifically, to coordinate information and ensure transparency of information regarding the assessed needs from the field, the actions undertaken by various stakeholders, to propose targeted and mainstream measures, and to ensure the needs of Roma remain on the political/decision-making agenda.

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INITIAL ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION OF ROMA IN KOSOVO*

1. Actions of the Government, municipalities and independent state bodies:

- The support with humanitarian packages containing food, hygiene and other necessary materials continued being provided and distributed, including with the EU funded projects.
- Office for Communities in Kosovo Government has allocated 2 million EUR to support SCO's from non majority communities targeting also Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian. OGG /NRCP and office for Communities have coordinated their work in opening the call for proposals for SCO's to be supported with hygienic emergency supplies packages and support for small business.
- OGG /NRCP addressed official open letter to local authorities to share information on the progress that has been achieved.
- Municipalities of Shtime, Rahovec, Prizren have shared their information that will be submitted from OGG/ NRCP in upcoming period. E.g. in Municipality of **Prizren** there are **750 Roma** families supported from municipality and KFOS with emergency supplies in value of 60 EUR per package. Municipality of **Shtime** supported **160 Roma families**; municipality of **Rahovec** supported **160 Roma** families.
- Office of the Prime Minister - Office for Communities, in consultation with municipalities, emergency committees in local level and UNICEF and UDAID has contributed emergency packages with hygienic supplies in amount of 1 million \$
- Ministry of Social Welfare shared information for **2700 Roma families** (covering 13,000 inhabitants) have already received their social assistance support for the month of April 2020 foreseen by the measure, covering double payment in **240 €**.
- Ministry of Health expressed their visibility and good coordination with local medical healthcare centres. In Fushe Kosova municipality was reported 1 case (Roma) resulted positive, after close monitoring and isolation the cases has resulted negative after the second test. In Feizaj municipality suspected cases with virus were reported and resulted negative after testing.

* 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.



EU Delegation:

The EU Delegation provided an update on the information from the first meeting, informing that:

- **11,400,000** million EUR from IPA support allocated for Kosovo in response to social protection from the most effected (in short, medium and long term) is at the developing stage and must be finalized to be with the government.
- The approach of the EU support is to re-programme the re-existing programs through implementing partners and IOM.

2. Overview of the short term needs

- The NRCP is in coordination and follows the measures from the Office of Prime Minister-OGG, Office of Communities, Agency of Employment, and Ministry of Social Welfare, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education.
- The NRCP highlights that Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians are facing difficulties in the economic aspect specifically in maintaining their small business sector.
- Continuation of coordination work among institutions and information sharing within OGG and line ministries, including with the local municipalities.
- The situation regarding home-schooling and access on education in the Roma settlements to be assessed (lack of devices for following the education, need for additional learning support materials, etc.)
- Mutual agreement within presented stakeholders at the meeting, to continue proving information in Roma Integration 2020 database. This will support central /local institution for coordination, information, planning proposals and governing implementation.
- Urgent need to receive social assistance Roma community members that are not yet registered and verified to benefit from the foreseen measure no 15 by Ministry of Social Welfare.
- Concrete information on settlements to be collected, updated, monitored and made available to those implementing actions regarding the response to Covid-19 and consequences

3. Who does what and coordination of various stakeholders

- Ministry of Education is in coordination with National Radio Television media houses for program delivery. Education is continuing in the form of home schooling and classes are maintained via TV and mobile app.
- According to the data's from Agency of Employment, until 29 April, there are total number of registered unemployed Roma are **242**, Ashkali **270** and Egyptian **247 members**.
- Agency of Employment will start soon to deliver vocational training for the interested candidates soon, and communities are eligible to benefit.
- Agency of Employment and VoRAE organization, made and agreement to continue supporting Roma communities in benefiting from active labour measures.
- VoRAE organization had launched online platform to help Roma communities register as unemployed (create their CVs, supportive documents) and collaborate with OGG and Agency of Employment to follow other supportive measures.
- UNDP worked with four mentees (UN Youth Volunteers) designed and implemented English-learning activities for 40 children of different communities at the Daily Center for children in street situation in Prishtinë/Priština and "Vlada Cetkovic" primary school in Mitrovicë Veriore/Severna Mitrovica, in particular to children of Roma, Egyptian and Ashkali communities. As a product of this initiative titled "*Breaking the Cycle of Exclusion through Creative Learning Activities*", the mentees are currently designing a workbook that compiles the most useful language learning practices for the children, which were identified during the learning activities. Some copies of the end product will be given to the centers in Prishtinë/Priština and Mitrovicë Veriore/Severna Mitrovica, where the teachings took place. Except that, educational centers, institutions and organizations, teachers, parents, and legal guardians can use this workbook as a non-formal learning tool, to help with children's language learning.
- UNDP working currently on survey in Socio economic aspect to be involved in "*recovery framework*" with sample of **1300 person** and business to measure the impact of COVID 19 country wise and special focus with vulnerable groups.





- Kosovo Foundation for Open Society - KFOS reported to have finalized their first phases of emergency with several different support packages:
 - **1765** food and hygienic package supplies have been delivered in 8 municipalities covering 40 locations inhabited by Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian.
 - **500** school material packages for children to continue their teleworking,
 - **50** families have been covered with payment of their TV and internet cables,
 - Media and informational program including roma language (TV, media) in corporation with ROMTEGRA organization, to inform the community with protective measures from all levels adapted to the local conditions.

4. Enduring synergies and complementarity

- KFOS had allocated **150,000** EUR to continue their work with local partners (Balkan Sunflowers, RADIC, Bethany Christian Services, Revo Concept) in supporting communities and ensure broad needs assessment, proper short, and medium and long term response especially in education for Roma.
- KFOS will continue their support with school material packages for children to continue their teleworking coming from other uncovered localities.
- KFOS learning caterers will start functioning by respecting the protective measures, facilitators and tutors will be engaged, registration for new school year is foreseen and planned and general campaign in informing the community on the expectations for better results in education of their children.
- KFOS will design tailor made educational programs that address the needs of the target groups such as "Online summer school" and extend the involvement of Roma communities.
- Charitable association "Rahmeti" has supported Roma 160 families in Rahovec municipality with the three basic elements: flour, bag of potato and beans.
- KOSINT currently working on campaign to build community dialogue and interview families from 7 municipalities of Kosovo. This campaign will put emphasis on community dialogue, solidarity and treatment within Covid 19 crises.
- KOSINT addressed vital obstacles reflected from the community such as: neighbourhood safety, lack of protective supplies for the community, lack of capacities for online learning access on to follow their homework, lack of electronic devices, lack of medications, and the higher need to benefit from measure 15 (social assistance).

5. Proposed targeted and mainstream measures

- OGG/NRCP should gather information regarding the situation on the ground, provision of aid, implementation of activities, results and impact from the action and should continue maintaining the table developed by RCC;
- The socio-economic recovery and development of the Roma community should be made part of the future funding;
- Concrete information on settlements to be collected, updated, monitored and made available to those implementing actions regarding the response to Covid-19 and consequences;
- Ministry of Health to provide information on the work of the Roma health situation and provide database information;
- There is a need for concrete statistics from the local level that will be accessible to all stakeholders. Having exact figures will help better planning for the current period (necessities from the field) and the period after the crisis (planning and programming long term measures);

6. Follow up

- Ministry of Social Welfare will present the comprehensive data's on the beneficiaries and plan to address the situation of Roma to the Government, in order to ensure the needs of Roma are incorporated in the mainstream plan and to secure public and EU funding for implementation.
- Planning and preparation and better information to the Roma community for the later stage of repetition of the same virus.





- KFOS suggested based on the data's being collected from RCC questionnaire data tables to develop a guidance on how to work with Roma communities as vulnerable group in addressing their needs for the future.
- The NRCP strongly recommends continuing several types of coordination meetings between institutions, civil society and other respective agencies.
- The Roma Integration 2020 will support the Government to provide technical assistance in coordinating, preparing plans, gathering information, preparing budgets based on the needs for recovery after the crises.

Participants:

1.National Roma Contact Points (and their deputies and staff)	Habit Hajredini and Keriman Sadikay
2. Ministry of Internal Affairs	Jahe Tolaj
4. Ministry of Environment	Merita Dalipi
5.EU Delegation	Stefano Gnocchi and Pleurat Kurti
6.Ministry of Health-Head of the Division for citizens' rights to health care	Sanie Kijmari
7.Open Society Foundations-Roma Initiatives Office	Neda Korunovska
8.Open Society Foundations	Rahela Mustafoska
9.Kosovo Foundation for Open Society-KFOS	Vera Pula
10.Siry I Vizionit	Marta Gazideda Vlora Latifi
11.Balkan Sunflowers	Gentina Jusufi
12.Roma and Ashkali Documentation Center	Dritan Shaipi
13.VoRAE	Violeta Thaci
14.European Commission-Brussels	Isabelle Wertheim
15.European Commission-Brussels	Korneel DE-SCHAMP
16. European Commission DG NEAR	Dorthe FORS
17. European Commission	Detlev Boeing
18.RCC Roma Integration team	Orhan Usein, Shejla Fidani, Aleksandra Bojadjeva, Mimoza Gavrani, Rada Krstanovic Danilo Vukmirovic

