

## NATIONAL PLATFORM ON ROMA INTEGRATION

17 March 2022, Sarajevo, 2022

### POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE FIFTH NATIONAL PLATFORM ON ROMA INTEGRATION IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA 2022

#### INTRODUCTION

The fifth National Platform on Roma Integration in Bosnia and Herzegovina was jointly organized by the Regional Cooperation Council's (RCC) Roma Integration action and the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees (MHRR) and National Roma Contact Point (NRCP) of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The goal of the National Platform is to enable dialogue on the key necessary actions to be taken with the new Action Plan for Roma Integration, with a view to identify and plan the most effective solutions acceptable for all the stakeholders, including the Roma community, central and local governments, the general society, the funding community, and any other interested parties.

At the event, the officially approved Action Plan for social inclusion of Roma 2021-2025 Bosnia and Herzegovina, was presented, followed by a discussion on next priorities for implementation, further actions and funding.

The meeting gathered representatives of the Roma Integration 2020, relevant representatives of central and local governments, civil society, international organizations, as well as the National Roma Contact Point and her team.

The National Platform meeting was opened by Mr Orhan Usein, Team Leader of the Roma Integration of the Regional Cooperation Council and Ms Saliha Djuderija, Assistant Minister for Human Rights and Refugees and the National Roma Contact Point. The conclusions were conducted by Ms Shejla Fidani, Policy Expert, Roma Integration action.

Findings from the National Platform will be incorporated in the Roma Integration technical assistance that will be provided to the Government in the upcoming period.

#### GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The first topic dedicated to **prioritization of activities envisaged with the Action Plan (AP) 2021-2025** was opened by Ms Saliha DJUDERIJA, Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees and National Roma Contact Point, Mr Dervo SEJDIC, Board on Roma of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr Mujo FAFULIC, Board on Roma of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr Aleksandar MASIC, Board on Roma of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Mr Sacmir SEFEROVIC, Board on Roma of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The topic on Monitoring mechanism for 2022 was led by Mr Elmedin MURATBEGOVIĆ, Professor Doctor and RCC Roma Integration consultant who worked on the preparation of the new AP.



Participants expressed their views on planned activities with the AP and gave priority to future work in the following areas:

1. Poverty

Poverty is on the rise. Forced exploitation of children and begging are becoming a very serious matter. Institutional care, actions and measures are required to halt the negative trend and prevent further exploration.

2. Employment

Roma unemployment remains very high, especially in the aftermath of the pandemic.

3. Education

The low economic power of parents and the exploration of the child labour force resulted in school dropouts.

4. Budgeting

A revision of budgeting tailored to local Aps and Roma responsive budgeting should be introduced.

Sustainable government budget planning is needed for the implementation of the 2021-2025 AP.

5. Housing and housing mapping

Field mapping of Roma homes needs to be completed. Financial implications to be anticipated, grants and projects to be prepared and estimates for social housing to be prioritised.

6. Monitoring

Establishing a mechanism for monitoring priority areas and update of the monitoring indicators to be carried out. The RCCC as well as the European Commission will be consulted.

Civil society organizations need to be involved in setting up the monitoring mechanisms and the monitoring process itself. Alternative sector-specific reports are proposed for accountability purposes.

## Discussion

The discussion added a particular concern about the role of the Roma Council, their capabilities but also their participation in the planning and implementation of activities related to Roma integration. The Board has recently undergone changes related to internal regulations, procedures and human capabilities. A follow-up meeting should be scheduled within the framework of the regular meetings of the Board within the Ministry.

Antigypsyism was mentioned as a problem and an area that needs central and local attention from all relevant stakeholders.

Child exploitation, the low quality of education, school dropout, brain drain are serious problems and require coordinated institutional care and approach.

The civil society organizations are requesting from the RCC Roma Integration to assist in developing a methodology for legalization and selections, as well as for direct assistance for legalization (as in the other economies of the region).

RCC Roma Integration and ROMACTED will work towards the introduction of local Roma-responsive budgeting. ROMACTED is working on local COVID-19 recovery initiatives, engaging returnees as





vulnerable groups, the mapping of Roma needs and will support housing projects at the next planning stage.

## CONCLUSIONS

1. Housing mapping should be completed by the end of July 2022.
2. IPA III project and concept note to be developed and applied by the MHRR. The project should have a holistic approach and include actions for housing such as: improving living conditions, providing green, clean and safe areas for the Roma and the settlements and plan social housing for vulnerable groups.
3. Methodology for the legalization of Roma dwellings which will explain step by step the regulations and procedures according to the different systems, including the selection procedures to be developed.
4. AP monitoring methodology in accordance with EU guidelines to be developed.
5. RCC Roma Integration and ROMACTED will work on the introduction of Roma responsive budgeting at the local level starting from the municipality where ROMACED is active.
6. The Board of Roma to have a meeting where priority areas will be discussed with an emphasis on introduction of poverty prevention mechanisms.

