



ROMA INTEGRATION

ROADMAP 2019-2021

ALBANIA



Roma Integration 2020 is co-funded by

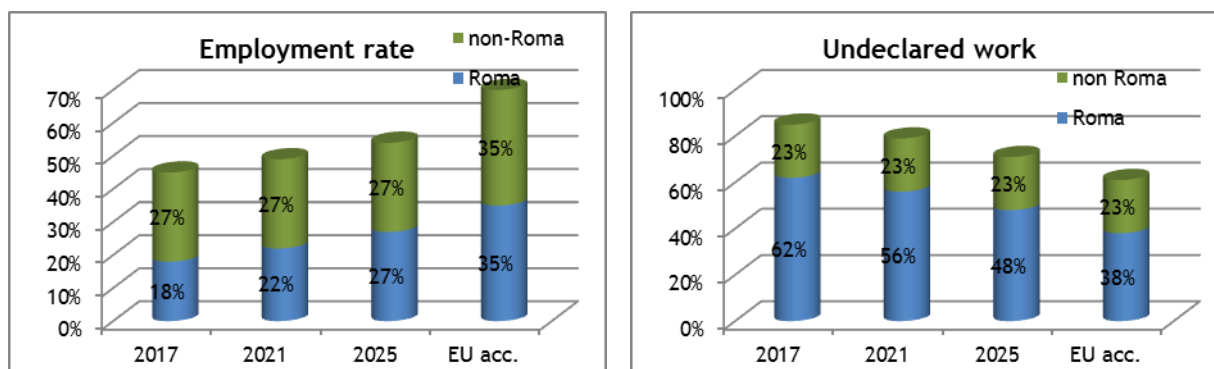


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Employment



According to the 2017 UNDP Regional Roma Survey¹, the employment rate of Roma² in Albania is 18%, compared to the employment rate among their non-Roma neighbours at 27%. The general employment rate in Albania is 56% according to the Survey. The [Report](#) based on the same Survey further shows that 62% of Roma are engaged in informal work, whereas only 23% of non-Roma living in their close proximity engages in such work. Hence, the gap in informal work is 39%. Another UNDP study [Mapping the Skills, Employment Opportunities, and Undertaking by Roma and Egyptian Communities](#) performed in Tirana, Durres, Berat and Shkodra shows that Roma remain primarily engaged in waste collection (collection of recyclable materials), small open-market or street trade, cleaning services (women), construction as unqualified workers, and manufacturing (tailoring, shoes, etc). The same study shows that Roma are largely excluded from social aid schemes (economic aid, health insurance, retirement pension, etc.). This issue is also recognised in the [Economic Reform Programme \(ERP\) 2019-2020](#).

In order to promote social inclusion of Roma in the field of employment, the target may be set to increasing the employment rate of Roma to at least 35% by the time Albania joins the European Union (EU)³. It is assumed that with the increase of the employment rate of Roma, an increase of employment rate among their non-Roma neighbours will follow to at least the same level. According to the information presented above, the most efficient way to promote employment of Roma will be through formalisation of their undeclared work. To reach the desired employment rate, at least 23% of the undeclared work among Roma is to be transformed into declared work by the time of EU Accession. In order to lower the undeclared work rate among Roma to 38%, gradual reduction to 56% in 2021 and 48% in 2025, is required. Assuming that the undeclared work rate among non-Roma remains stable, the undeclared work gap in Albania will effectively be reduced to only 15%. By achieving these targets, Albania will establish a steady trend in reducing the employment gap between Roma and non-Roma.

The [National Roma Integration Strategy](#) (NRIS) stipulates the following measures in support of Roma employment: establishing quotas for Roma in employment promotion programmes; evaluating potential impact of tax exemptions for Roma who are transitioning into the labour market from long-term unemployment, social welfare, begging and informal work; conducting a study on the position of Roma individual collectors of recyclable waste in the context of granting them with concession in dump areas. The [Operational Conclusions](#) stipulate the need to adapt mainstream employment promotion programmes so that additional support is provided to Roma, and to develop a specific package to support individual collectors of recycling materials (waste collectors). Up to date employment promotion programmes quotas and specific support packages were not introduced. Relating to the support to individual waste collectors, a transitional pilot programme was implemented in Tirana municipality, in cooperation with the private company engaged in the recycling business.

In order to facilitate the promotion of Roma employment, specific objectives on Roma integration (corresponding to the general objectives) need to be introduced in mainstream employment strategies, action plans, and other policy documents relating to employment. Introducing quotas for Roma participation in employment promotion programmes, and developing a package of additional support for Roma participating in mainstream employment programmes to address their specific situation will also be considered.

The Roma integration project will work with the Government to develop a comprehensive programme for formalising undeclared work of individual waste collectors. Individual waste collection belongs to the undeclared work without question, as the profession is not standardised.

¹) 2017 Regional Roma Survey of the European Commission, United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank - Country Fact Sheet Albania, available at: http://www.eurasia.undp.org/content/dam/rbec/docs/Factsheet_ALBANIA_Roma.pdf

²) In line with the terminology of the European institutions and international organisations, the term 'Roma' is used here to refer to a number of different groups (e.g. Roma, Sinti, Kale, Gypsies, Romanichel, Boyash, Ashkali, Egyptians, Yenish, Dom, Lom, Rom and Abdal) and includes 'travellers' or 'itinerants', without denying the specificities of these groups.

³) This is in line with the aspirations of Albania in promoting Roma integration as recognised in the Western Balkans Declaration on Roma and EU Enlargement. The Declaration will be signed in the 2019 Western Balkans Summit in Poznan

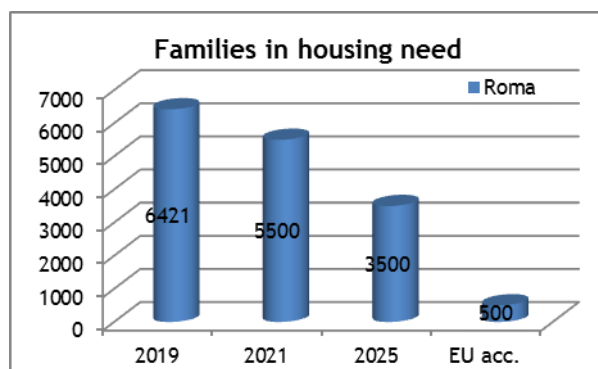
The Roma Integration project will provide support in data collection and evaluating impact of formalising work of individual waste collectors, standardising the profession, preparing the accompanying primary and secondary legislation, and preparing funding proposals for the programme implementation.

The programme will be brought to the local level, in cooperation with municipalities with the largest share of Roma population. Existing experiences from the Tirana pilot programme shall be integrated into the new programme.

Some of the key considerations for developing a comprehensive undeclared formalisation programme relate to: need to ensure that Roma who formalise their work better benefit from existing social aid schemes (allocated through the Social Fund) and receive preferential tax treatment until sustainable exit from poverty is secured; examining best possible modalities of organising formalisation of undeclared work (including the potential to organise work through social enterprises); need to integrate the individual waste collectors in integrated waste management legislation (also at the local level) and potential funding mechanisms for implementing a formalisation programme. The programme should also consider training needs for the standardised profession and the need for specific treatment of this work because of its specific nature (contribution to environmental protection and on-the-job safety requirements).

The Government of Albania strives to develop an inter-disciplinary holistic approach promoting Roma integration that will take into consideration the totality of socio-economic situation of targeted beneficiaries and provide a comprehensive tailor-made social integration packages. The holistic approach will be able to ensure full and sustainable integration of its beneficiaries. **Backbone of the holistic approach is integration of employment and housing support, as two primary inter-connected issues that need resolving.** Without employment and sustainable income a household is unable to provide for itself. This also affects sustainability of housing, as household without income is unable to cover housing maintenance and utility costs. As a starting point towards developing a holistic approach, **the Roma integration project will support the Government of Albania to formulate methodology of an integral approach that will as a minimum connect employment and housing support, but could also include other areas of support. The Roma integration project will provide the necessary expertise to conceptualise the integral approach, adjust the legislation where necessary, and develop an implementation methodology.** An integral approach will consider people benefitting from employment and training while also targeting housing support. Similarly, people benefitting from housing support need to be included in its planning and implementation, thus ensuring that Roma are trained and employed through housing programmes.

Housing



During 2016, the UNDP and the Government of Albania performed mapping of Roma settlements in 18 Albanian municipalities. The prepared reports⁴ describe the housing situation in Roma settlements and identify investment needs for housing reconstruction and the provision of social housing. Information from the reports shows that 7,289 Roma families were in need of housing of adequate standard. Current information provided by the Government of Albania point that 6,421 Roma families remain in need of housing of adequate standard, which indicates that housing problem was being resolved for about 430 households per year. Taking this dynamics into account, **the milestones are to gradually reduce the number of Roma households in need of adequate housing to 5500 in 2021 and 3500 in 2025 respectively. The number of Roma households in need of adequate housing will be reduced to 500 at the time of EU accession.**

⁴) Report "Assessing investment needs in Roma and Egyptian communities' settlements in Tirana, Durres, Kruje, Lezha and Shkodra municipalities", available at: <http://www.al.undp.org/content/albania/en/home/library/poverty/studimi-vleresimi-i-nevojave-per-investime-ne-vendbanimet-e-kom/>; report "Assessing investment needs in Roma and Egyptian communities' settlements in Lushnja, Divjaka, Fier, Berat, Kucova, Vlora, Gjirokastra, and Delvina municipalities", available at: <http://www.al.undp.org/content/albania/en/home/library/poverty/vleresimi-i-nevojave-per-investime-ne-vendbanimet-e-komunitetev0/>; and report "Assessing investment needs in Roma and Egyptian communities' settlements in Elbasan, Pogradec, Maliq, Korça and Devoll municipalities"

Many Roma live in segregated illegal settlements in urban and rural areas, with 52% of households without access to piped water and 37% without access to some form of sewerage (2017 UNDP Regional Roma Survey).

At the same time, the Survey shows that 93% of Roma face severe material deprivation. The explained multiple adverse factors point to the necessity to provide Roma with specific support that will tackle multi-dimensionality of the housing and poverty issue.

Recognising this need, legalisation of Roma housing and Roma informal settlements will be prioritised in the first phase of resolving the housing problems of Roma. In order to address the poverty issue, particular focus will be placed on developing an integral approach that will combine housing with employment support, as already explained.

Albania NRIS envisages the following measures in support of Roma housing and specifically housing legalisation: providing free legal aid to Roma applying for legalisation; integrating Roma families through pilot projects on urbanisation and integration of Roma informal settlements; training local government units on the preparation of narrative and financial proposals for housing projects preventing segregation of Roma. **So far, no activities were performed to support legalisation of Roma owned housing, and no data is available on the number of legalisation applications by Roma and their success ratio.** At the moment, the legalisation deadline has passed. The [Law on Social Housing](#) was adopted in 2018. The Law guarantees that Roma will benefit from 5% of all social housing programmes (transitional provision), and defines Roma as a priority group in several social housing programmes (subsidised rent, improving housing conditions, immediate grant for low-cost housing). **The aforementioned provisions were not operationalised yet, as corresponding secondary legislation still remains to be adopted.** However, facts show that Roma and Egyptians families have received priority treatment by housing programs, even higher than 5%, as set in article 77 of the Law on Social Housing. Some of the articles of the Law on Social Housing could allow for settlement urbanisation and revitalisation programmes if combined with the provisions of the [Law on Legalisation, Urbanisation and Integration of Constructions without permit](#). Appropriate secondary legislation should be developed to allow for housing programmes which will combine housing legalisation and the provision of social housing (when legalisation is not possible), coupled with infrastructure works and the reconfiguration of traditional settlements to comply with the minimum urban planning standards. The key considerations for resolving the housing issue of Roma in Albania are the following: it is less costly to legalise existing housing units and settlements that construct new social housing; it is required to develop integrated programmes combining employment and housing; the legalisation and social housing legislation should be adjusted to allow for settlement urbanisation programmes and reopen the legalisation process so that such programmes (combining legalisation and provision of social housing) can be implemented. This might require specific legal treatment of Roma housing and Roma informal settlements, with focus on defining eligible settlements, new legalisation timeframes, types of housing that can or cannot be legalised, and the appropriate social housing structures and accompanying support.

The Roma Integration project will support the Government of Albania to: develop methodology for prioritisation of Roma according to the provisions of the Law on Social Housing based on available data; develop methodology of integral approach combining employment and housing support; and to develop at least one funding proposal for settlement revitalisation (if legalisation is re-opened) or a social housing programme.

The Roma Integration project will additionally support **development of housing mapping methodology** and housing mapping in at least one informal settlement if additional information will be required to prepare and implement a (social housing or legalisation) programme.

