

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ROMA INTEGRATION IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

31 January 2018, EU Delegation, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

:: TALKING POINTS FOR SEMINAR ON ROMA INCLUSION IN BiH::

- Respected Minister Borovac, Ambassador Wigemark, Mr Fafulic, Ms Fidalgo, ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues and friends;
- On behalf of the Regional Cooperation Council, I would like to extend a **thank you for your invitation** to address the audience in the opening session of the third Roma Seminar in BH; it is a great honour to be here today;
- Allow me to first express my highest appreciation to the **excellent cooperation** we've had with the government officials of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in particular the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees in the past couple of years.
- We commend Bosnia and Herzegovina on **submitting the 2016 Monitoring Report on the progress towards Roma Integration**, and for including the monitoring and reporting standards/adopted template as part of the new Action Plan for Roma integration. It was the first country in the enlargement region to do this, ensuring a **greater inclusion of the State Statistic Agency** in this process as well as **compliance with practices followed by the EU Member States**.
- The **Action Plan on Roma Integration is one of the best examples in the region**, and includes adequate indicators and budget. We are looking forward on cooperating and further assisting the government in improving the budgeting and monitoring process.
- As is our practice throughout the enlargement region, my role here is to provide an **overview of recommendations from the National Platform** that may lay the grounds for the upcoming discussions at this meeting.
- For your information, the National Platforms are **annual meetings** that we co-organize with our government partners to provide space for constructive dialogue between GOV and NGOs in discussing the implementation process of the Action Plans on Roma; setting priorities for the future and ensuring an **all-inclusive approach of stakeholders towards Roma integration**.
- The BH Platform was organized in September 2017, where most of you participated, and the report of the meeting was shared with you recently.



- When it comes to the overall coordination and implementation structures of the Action Plan, one of the main issues to be considered is the role and responsibility of the **Roma Board**.
- I would like to share a practice that has been established throughout the enlargement region on inter-ministerial bodies on Roma Integration, which coordinate the implementation process to ensure **proper ownership and shared responsibility** of all institutions over the implementation of the Action Plan.
- Hence, **based on this regional practice**, the Roma Board should strengthen its mandate and besides being an advisory body to the Council of Ministers, it should also resume the profile of a **coordination mechanism** where various issues of concern, including budgeting and monitoring with all relevant institutions will be discussed. This will ease the overall implementation process of the Action Plan.
- When it comes to the budgeting process, a general remark is that **sufficient public budgeting should be allocated** to achieve the objectives for Roma integration;
- On the other hand, the **grant-making principle of implementation** of allocated funds is appreciated, but it should be further developed to ensure effective use of funding and **conditionality for the implementing institutions to allocate own resources** and to implement measures with sustainable changes on the ground.
- On the monitoring process, a **comprehensive data collection system for both results-oriented monitoring and impact assessment** should be established, populated with baseline and regularly collected data, with the involvement of all the relevant implementing institutions, the **social centres and the statistical offices**.
- On education, in addition to **ensuring state budget is properly programmed**, a robust monitoring system is needed on the expenditure, as the **donor dependency** has created a complex picture of engaged stakeholders in this area.
- In addition to this, stronger coordination of all relevant institutions is needed. Therefore, the recommendation is that the **action plan on education is included as part of the general action plan** for the implementation of the





strategy, and ensure the leadership of the Ministry of Civil Affairs and cantonal ministries on education for this area.

- On employment, the main recommendation is related to mainstream measures which are continuously implemented throughout the country. In fact, such measures are frequently not to the benefit of Roma as their design hinders further the particular situation of this vulnerable group. Hence, when **designing mainstream measures, specific attention should be paid to the actual needs of Roma**, ensuring that the criteria are set to consider the specific situation of Roma.
- When it comes to targeted measures for Roma, all relevant institutions are encouraged to allocate their own resources, besides the grants they receive from the Ministry, as there is **legal basis for such actions**.
- Consider **prolonging the time of support provided for employment and self-employment of Roma and adjust the support to the actual situation of the person to ensure access to services in the most adequate way**.
- **Social entrepreneurship** should be considered as possibility to ensure employment of Roma.
- On housing, there are many success stories in BH from which the region can learn. Nevertheless, to ensure **sustainability of the achieved results**, an **integral approach ensuring a wide range of socio-economic services (especially employment programmes)** must be secured in order for Roma to be able to afford their housing units.
- **Proper involvement of the local level is essential** to ensure that housing units are constructed and reconstructed in high quality and following the technical, administrative and communal procedures. In line with this, the **costs per housing unit should be revised** to reflect the real costs.
- On health, a **stronger institutional commitment** is needed, to ensure better planning and monitoring of expenditure.
- Concrete data on the situation of Roma regarding health need to be collected, including **updated number of Roma with/without health insurance**.
- With this being said, I hope my remarks are going to guide your discussions in the upcoming working groups.





- My team and I stand ready to provide more support to the government, especially on the monitoring and budgeting processes, for which we will continue to **propose minimum regional standards to be followed**.
- I wish you fruitful discussions. Thank you for your attention.

