

RomaIntegration2020

1ST TASK FORCE MEETING

09 November 2016, 0930 - 1400, Belgrade

:: REPORT ::

BACKGROUND

Roma Integration 2020 is a three-year project implemented by the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC). It builds on the achievements of the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 initiative, and is in line with the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies and the EU accession process. While these processes established the basis for public policies, institutional arrangements and dialogue on Roma issues, impact on Roma remains limited.

Roma still face social exclusion and discrimination leading to lack of education, chronic unemployment, limited access to healthcare, rudimentary housing, limited access to essential services and widespread poverty. The reason is found in the isolation of the issues of Roma from mainstream public policies, budgeting and services. Therefore, proper budgeting and mainstreaming of Roma related policies is in the focus of the Roma Integration 2020 project.

The objective of the Roma Integration 2020 is to contribute to reducing the socio-economic gap between the Roma and non-Roma population and to strengthen the institutional obligations of governments to incorporate and deliver specific Roma integration goals in mainstream policies. Roma Integration 2020 assists national governments to integrate Roma specific policy measures into: (1) mainstream socio-economic policies and public service delivery; (2) national budget.

The Roma Integration 2020 project provides technical and expert support to governments through:

- Direct assistance and technical support to governments:
 - Assisting the establishment of effective and efficient institutional structure to coordinate, implement, consult and report on Roma issues;
 - Convening national forums for public dialogue on Roma integration issues with a wide range of relevant stakeholders;
 - Providing on-spot or written policy advice/capacity building on Roma related policy.
 - Organizing regional workshops with all governments participating in the project for specific thematic coordination, capacity building and sharing of experiences.
- Linking the Roma integration public policies with the EU accession process:
 - Ensuring annual reporting and review of reports on Roma integration in line with the EU related reporting;
 - Participation at meetings on EU and international level related to Roma issues;
 - Coordination and follow-up of EU accession related initiatives on Roma issues, including seminars on Roma integration, Chapter 23 action plans, etc.
- Regional coordination and streamlining Roma issues with the core work of the RCC:
 - High level meetings on Roma issues with participating governments;
 - Task Force meetings (steering the implementation of the project);
 - Participation at RCC organized meetings on mainstream topics relevant for Roma;
 - Providing input on Roma issues to other RCC activities;
 - Ensuring visibility of the regional and national efforts for integration of Roma through bulletin, website and monography.



The Roma Integration 2020 participants are the IPA II beneficiaries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey.

The project is co-financed by the European Union and the Open Society Foundations, and implemented by the RCCs Roma Integration 2020 Action Team based in Belgrade.

The Task Force of the Roma Integration 2020 project is a body steering the project implementation within the wider process of EU accession. It is comprised of the designated National Roma Contact Points from each participating government, two Roma civil society representatives and one representative of the Regional Cooperation Council, the European Commission and the Open Society Foundations. The functioning of the Task Force is regulated by its Rules of Procedure (see below).

The first meeting of the Task Force took place on 09 November 2016 in Belgrade from 09³⁰-14⁰⁰. This report is reflecting the content and conclusions of the first Task Force meeting by agenda items:

1. Welcome, Tour de Table
2. Role of the Task Force: Presentation and adoption of Rules of Procedure
3. Template for Progress Reporting: Presentation of the template and discussion
4. Regional Workshop: Adoption of a relevant topic for regional workshop
5. Public Dialogue Forums: Exchange Info - Tour de Table
6. Working Plan of the Roma Integration 2020 Action Team for 2017
7. AOB

1. WELCOME NOTES, TOUR DE TABLE

At the opening of the first Task Force meeting Mr Orhan USEIN, Team Leader of the Regional Cooperation Council's Roma Integration 2020 Action Team, opened the meeting and welcomed the members of the Task Force.

Tour de table followed and participants of the meeting introduced themselves. The list of all the participants at the first Task Force meeting is the following:

National Roma Contact Points

Ms Irena MITRO, Expert, Directorate of Social Inclusion and Gender Equality, Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunity (Replacing Mr Edvin LAME) in respect of Albania.

Ms Saliha DJUDERIJA, Assistant Minister, Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees in respect of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Ms Senada LAMOVSKA, Advisor, Cabinet of the Minister without portfolio (Replacing Mr Nezet MUSTAFA) in respect of The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Mr Leon GJOKAJ, Deputy Minister, Ministry for Minority Rights in respect of Montenegro, accompanied by Ms Mirela RAMCILOVIC, Ministry for Minority Rights.

Mr. Vedat GUL, Counsellor, Embassy of the Republic of Turkey (Replacing Mr Emre Tevfik CAMPINARI) in respect of Turkey.

Mr Nenad IVANISEVIC, State Secretary, Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Policy in respect of Serbia, accompanied by Ms Danijela LAKATOS, Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Policy.

Civil Society Representatives

Mr Samir JAHA

Mr Kushtrim BAJRAMI

European Commission

Ms Marta Garcia FIDALGO, Advisor Coordination of Roma Policy, DG NEAR

¹ 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.





Open Society Foundations

Ms Neda KORUNOVSKA, Team Manager, Roma Initiatives Office

Regional Cooperation Council

Ms Gordana DEMSER, Legal and Political Advisor/Head of Office of the Secretary General

Technical support to the Task Force was provided by the Regional Cooperation Council's Roma Integration 2020 Action Team:

Mr Orhan USEIN, Team Leader

Ms Aleksandra BOJADJIEVA, Policy Expert

Ms Alenka VERBOLE, Policy Expert

Ms Rada KRSTANOVIC, Administrative Assistant

Following the Tour de Table, the agenda of the meeting as presented above by agenda items, was presented to the Task Force and accepted without any amendments.

Ms FIDALGO provided the following additional information to the Task Force members:

- The Task Force steering the Roma Integration 2020 project implemented in the enlargement region, mirrors a similar body comprised of the National Roma Contact Points from the EU Member States steering the implementation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020;
- Following the adoption of the project by the Regional Cooperation Council board and the agreement for funding the project by the European Commission and the Open Society Foundation, the key representatives of these institutions, Mr HAHN, Mr SOROS and Mr SVILANOVIC extended an invitation to the governments participating in the project to the launch event of the project, containing a request for nomination of National Roma Contact Points according to the Terms of Reference proposed within the project, with intention to establish the Task Force to steer the project, but also to ensure coordination of institutions at national level, follow up of regional discussions and agreements, and ensuring wide public dialogue on Roma integration including full and effective participation of Roma in the whole policy process.
- The Roma Integration 2020 project is part of the enlargement process and is funded by the IPA funds, providing strong link to the EU accession, including progress reporting and high priority of the integration of Roma within this process, as well as preparing the governments for their obligations regarding Roma issues undertaken by the EU Member States according to the EU Framework.

2. ROLE OF THE TASK FORCE: PRESENTATION AND ADOPTION OF RULES OF PROCEDURE

The Rules of Procedure of the Task were proposed by the Roma Integration 2020 Action Team. The Task Force discussed the proposed Rules of Procedures and proposed the following amendments:

- Replacement of the National Roma Contact Points at the Task Force meetings, instead of ad-hoc, should be formulated as regular procedure. National Roma Contact Points should officially designate their deputy and the deputy should always replace the National Roma Contact Point at the Task Force meetings in case the former is prevented from attending, in order to ensure continuity.
- In case the participating government replaces the National Roma Contact Point, it should officially inform the Roma Integration 2020 Action Team Leader through the same channel the National Roma Contact Point was designated the first time. In case the National Roma Contact Point replaces the deputy, s/he should officially inform the Roma Integration 2020 Action Team Leader directly.
- Participating governments that have any kind of official consultative bodies on Roma issues may consider designating National Roma Contact Point Deputy from such bodies. This shall not be formulated within the Terms of Procedures, as the individual cases differ, but governments should internally consider such arrangement.
- The procedure for designation of civil society representatives serving as members at the Task Force should be clearly formulated (as is the case of National Roma Contact Points).





Since the civil society coalitions have not been selected yet, it is agreed that the Rules of Procedures should contain similar formulation as for the National Roma Contact Points, referring to an annex describing the selection of the civil society representatives, and such annex should be added to the Rules of Procedures once it is discussed and adopted by the network of selected civil society coalitions by the Open Society Foundations.

- The issue of providing interpretation from English at the Task Force meetings was raised. The Roma Integration 2020 Action Team Leader explained that such provision is not possible because of financial limitations within the project, which was considered within the Terms of Reference for National Roma Contact Points proposed to the governments, where knowledge of English has been enshrined as one of the criteria.
- The issue of possible need for additional time for consideration of a proposed decision/recommendation by any of the Task Force members was raised. In such case additional time of 7 calendar days should be provided for response on the proposal.
- The minutes and decisions/recommendations of the Task Force should be public. As a minimum, the minutes and decisions/recommendations should be published on the project's website and presented at the RCC Coordinative Body.

The proposed amendments by the Task Force have been introduced in the Rules of Procedure. The final Rules of Procedure is attached to this minutes as ANNEX_1.

FOLLOW UP:

- Each National Roma Contact Point should designate a Deputy by submitting the name and position of the designated person to the Roma Integration 2020 Action Team Leader by 23 November 2016. In case an official consultative body on Roma issues exists, the government should consider designating a deputy from the composition of such body.
- The Roma Civil Society coalitions supported by the Open Society Foundations to participate in the Roma Integration 2020 project should jointly agree on the Terms of Reference for selection of two delegates at the Task Force, once identified. Agreed Terms of Reference should be added to the Rules of Procedure as Appendix 2.

3. PROGRESS REPORTING TEMPLATE: PRESENTATION OF THE TEMPLATE AND DISCUSSION

The Roma Integration 2020 Action Team presented the Task Force a monitoring and reporting template to be used by the participating governments for annual reporting on the progress made in the implementation of their Strategies for integration of Roma. The presentation of the proposed template is attached to this minutes as ANNEX_2. The Task Force was also informed that the Roma Integration 2020 Action Team shall customise the monitoring and reporting template for each participating economy in a way to include all the goals, objectives, measures and other details stipulated in the respective Strategies and/or Action Plans and share these customised templates with the respective National Roma Contact Points in order to facilitate the use of the template.

Issues raised:

- Each data used in the report by the participating governments should be identified by its source and year of production. This is already stipulated within the Impact Assessment part of the template. Any other information on source and/or year that governments wish to identify regarding data used in their reports should be included as a footnote.
- The civil society coalitions will also report on progress. They may use the same template or develop their own template. This should be left to their own decision and freedom. The monitoring and reporting template for the Roma Integration 2020 project shall be public and accessible for use by any other interested party. It is obligatory only for the participating governments within the Roma Integration 2020 project.
- The engagement of the local level government should be reflected the same way as the engagement of the other institutions responsible for different parts of the implementation of the Strategies and/or Action Plans. The National Roma Contact Points shall ensure coordination of the Strategy and/or Action Plan in all aspects, including collection of data and coordination of the process of preparing the annual report.
- The National Roma Contact Point at each participating economy may organize consultations on the annual report before its submission with the Roma civil society. However, civil society reporting shall be supported by the European Commission and the Open Society





Foundations, thus the civil society shall have its own reports that shall be discussed jointly with the annual report by the government at the Public Dialogue Forum organized within the Roma Integration 2020 project.

- Governments may, if they wish and consider relevant, provide any additional information not explicitly required by the monitoring and reporting template in appendix to their annual report. For example, any information on the implementation of the relevant parts of the Chapter 23 Action Plan may be provided as appendix.
- The monitoring and reporting template includes sources of funding. While this information is not required per each measure undertaken as part of the implementation of the Strategy and/or Action Plan, it is required as cumulative information in the Budget part of the template.
- Budget spent for the implementation of the Strategy and/or Action Plan is encompassing only those funds provided by the state or regional/local public budget, public or private donors or any other source, that is officially recognized by the relevant government institutions as funding spent for the implementation of the Strategy and/or Action Plan (through contracts, agreements, etc.). Budget spent for mainstream measures may not be presented in total as spent for the implementation of the Strategy and/or Action Plan. Only the part of the budget spent for mainstream measure for the benefit of Roma may be presented as such.
- The part of the template on Impact Assessment was explained in details at the Task Force, presenting the difference of the two proposed methodologies: the one developed by the FRA working group, and the one used for the Roma Inclusion Index. The Task Force agreed that the later should be used with certain amendments including: indicator on civil registration, enrolment and drop-out rate in education.
- The members of the Task Force shared various concerns and observations regarding different indicators used within the Impact Assessment part of the template.
 - o Albania: no data on perception of discrimination; some data only available from Census, which is conducted only each 10 years
 - o Bosnia and Herzegovina: anticipated difficulties in obtaining data on education as many institutions are involved; prioritization of indicators may be needed
 - o Montenegro: health and housing indicators may be challenging, thus the template should be shared with the state statistical office and other relevant institutions for consultation
 - o The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: a number of data may be outdated because of lack of recent census; consultations with institutions needed
 - o Serbia: the gender dimension should be taken into account as a must
 - o Turkey: the information has to be shared with the National Roma Contact Point, as much of the data may be missing
 - o Kosovo*: information on Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian returnees should be included, as well as the number of houses that should be built to satisfy the housing needs of these groups

Additionally, the use of the term Roma was clarified as: the term "Roma" is used - similarly to other political documents of the European Parliament and the European Council - as an umbrella which includes groups of people who have more or less similar cultural characteristics, such as Sinti, Travellers, Kalé, Gens du voyage, etc. whether sedentary or not. In the regional context the term Roma also encompasses Ashkali and Egyptians where relevant. The same principle is applied in the Roma Integration 2020.

The information on the upcoming FRA/UNDP/World Bank survey was shared, and the fact that data collected through the survey may be of great support for the governments in providing the needed data. The fact that the data may assist governments to present better the actual situation of Roma to the EU Member States was notified as important.

The Task Force was also informed that relevant public officials that shall work on preparing the annual report using the monitoring and reporting template shall be equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills at the first Regional Workshop organized by the Roma Integration 2020.

The Task Force endorsed the monitoring and reporting template as proposed, with the Roma Inclusion Index indicators (with the additionally proposed indicators). The first annual report from the National Roma Contact Points, covering 2016, is expected by the end of March 2017. The monitoring and reporting template is attached to this minutes as ANNEX_3.





Before the following item on the Task Force meeting agenda, Mr IVANISEVIC, National Roma Contact Point in respect of Serbia, addressed the meeting providing some information on the progress in Serbia regarding its Strategy, and as part of the hosting government of both the Roma Integration 2020 project and the Task Force welcomed the Task Force members to Serbia.

FOLLOW UP:

- Roma Integration 2020 Action Team to customise the monitoring and reporting template per participating economy and share the resulting template with the respective National Roma Contact Points by the end of November 2016.
- National Roma Contact Points to coordinate and lead preparing of an annual report for 2016 using the monitoring and reporting template, and submit the annual report by 31 March 2017.

4. REGIONAL WORKSHOP: ADOPTION OF A RELEVANT TOPIC FOR REGIONAL WORKSHOP

The Roma Integration 2020 Action Team Leader informed the Task Force on the plans for the first Regional Workshop planned within the project. The concept note for this workshop was presented and is attached here as ANNEX_4. The first workshop will be held on the topic of monitoring and reporting, focusing on preparing the government officials to use the monitoring and reporting template. It will be held in Vienna from 12-13 December 2016. The project Action Team will organize the workshop, invite participants and cover all the costs. Translation at the workshop will be provided to all the relevant languages, including Romanes.

FOLLOW UP:

- Roma Integration 2020 Action Team to customise the monitoring and reporting template per participating economy and share the resulting template with the respective National Roma Contact Points by the end of November 2016.
- National Roma Contact Points to coordinate and lead preparing of an annual report for 2016 using the monitoring and reporting template, and submit the annual report by 31 March 2017.

5. PUBLIC DIALOGUE FORUMS: EXCHANGE INFO - TOUR DE TABLE

The Roma Integration 2020 Action Team conducted two (2) Public Dialogue Forums in the previous period, and organized, jointly with the respective National Roma Contact Points, other four (4). Public Dialogue Forum is not possible to organize during 2016 only in Turkey, but it was stated that the activity will be organized from 2017 onwards as planned.

The respective members of the Task Force informed:

- Serbia: the Public Dialogue Forum was organized as a public hearing at the National Assembly with a wide public participation. Priority measures for 2017-18 were proposed to the government, timely for the ongoing drafting of the Action Plan. A policy recommendation paper was produced as a result from the discussions at the forum and submitted to the relevant government institutions. The project shall further provide technical and expert assistance for drafting Local Action Plans at six (6) municipalities.
- Bosnia and Herzegovina: the Public Dialogue Forum was organized two days before the Task Force meeting in a form of a meeting of the relevant representatives from institutions and Roma civil society to finalize the Action Plan for 2017-20. The Action Team provided technical support for formulation of the plan (content provided by the National Roma Contact Point), and will finalize the formulation. It is expected that the Council of Minister will adopt the Action Plan by December 2016. The project will assist in preparing Local Action Plans in some of the 35 municipalities where this is planned.
- Montenegro: the Public Dialogue Forums is planned for 1 December 2016 for presentation of the prepared Action Plan and its finalization with concrete budget and indicators.
- The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: the Public Dialogue Forum is planned for 23-25 November 2016 in a form of workshop for formulation of Rules of Procedures of the key institutions: National Coordination Body, Roma Information Centres and Roma Health Mediators.





- Kosovo*: the Public Dialogue Forum is planned for 21 November 2016 to discuss and propose priority measures for 2017 from the Strategy and Action Plan (to be adopted and presented at a meeting organized by OSCE before 21 November).
- Albania: the Public Dialogue Forum is proposed for 8 December 2016. The National Roma Contact Point should work with the Action Team to confirm the date and organize the forum. Background document for the budget of the Action Plan have been produced.
- Turkey: because of the late nomination of the National Roma Contact Point, Public Dialogue Forum in 2016 is not possible, but will certainly be organized in 2017.

Ms FIDALGO explained to the Task Force that the Public Dialogue Forums within the Roma Integration 2020 project mirror the so called National Platforms at the EU Member States. It was also discussed that the Public Dialogue Forums were forums to discuss both progress and plans, and should include all the areas covered with the respective Strategy / Action Plan, as well as Operational Conclusions from Roma Seminars and other relevant public policies.

The outputs of the Public Dialogue Forums and the expert assistance to the participating governments are public documents that will be shared with all the members of the Task Force and will be available on the project website.

FOLLOW UP:

- Continue the technical and expert support in all the participating economies and convene the forums as planned.
- Publicise the resulting documents (by email to the Task Force and on the website).

6. WORKING PLAN OF THE ROMA INTEGRATION 2020 ACTION TEAM FOR 2017

The Roma Integration 2020 Action Team presented the Task Force with the planned calendar of activities by the end of 2016 and for 2017. The calendar of upcoming activities is attached as ANNEX_5 to this minutes. The Task Force endorsed the proposed calendar and the National Roma Contact Points agreed to specify the dates for the 2017 Public Dialogue Forums. Additionally, the Task Force was informed that the first two Regional Workshops in 2017 shall be on the topic of budgeting, following the budgetary cycle of the economies, the first for planning, and the second for following up on the planning until adoption of the budget. The third Regional Workshop in 2017 shall be on the topic of discrimination and anti-Gypsyism.

FOLLOW UP:

- National Roma Contact Points shall specify the dates for the 2017 Public Dialogue Forums by the end of 2016 and inform the Action Team.
- The Action Team shall implement the activities for 2017 according to the adopted calendar. All relevant information on each activity shall be shared with the Task Force.

7. OTHE ISSUES RAISED & SHARED AT THE FIRST TASK FORCE MEETING

Ms FIDALGO announced that DG NEAR is organizing a side-meeting at the following Council of Europe's CAHROM meeting and advised the National Roma Contact Points to coordinate with the delegates to this meeting. She also informed about the upcoming 15 November meeting of National IPA Coordinators on the enlargement priorities within the multi-country program, where the commitment shall be made by DG NEAR towards the Roma issues as priority area, but encouraged the National Roma Contact Points to make sure adequate planning is done on national level and advised them to maintain close contact with the National IPA Coordinators.

The Roma Integration 2020 Action Team Leader shall share the concept for the monography planed within the project with the Task Force members as soon as possible.

The Roma Integration 2020 Action Team has distributed the geographical scope of coverage to the different team members. Organigram of the Action Team is attached as ANNEX_6 to the minutes.

The first meeting of the Task Force was concluded at on 9 November at 14:00.

