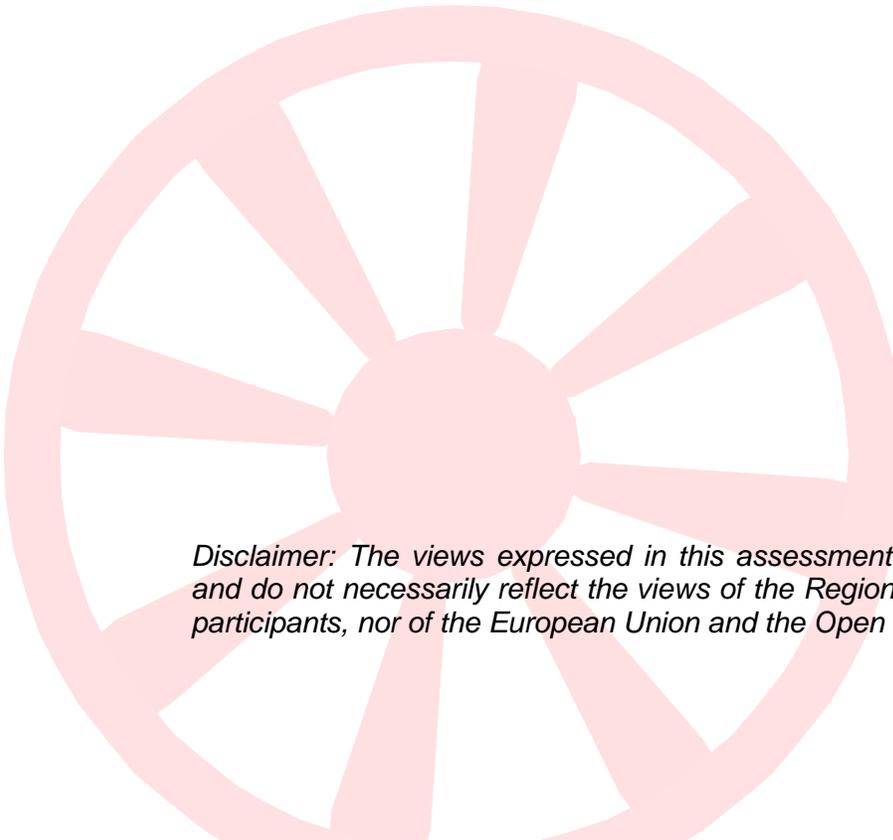


## Roma Integration Public Policy in Albania – Background Paper

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*Disclaimer: The views expressed in this assessment are solely those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Regional Cooperation Council or of its participants, nor of the European Union and the Open Society Foundations.*

## **List of Abbreviations**

AP – Action Plan

EC – European Commission

EU – European Integration

GoA – Government of Albania

MSWY – Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth

MAS – Ministry of Education and Sports

RCC – Regional Cooperation Council

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## **I. Introduction**

Social inclusion of Roma communities has gained considerable policy impetus in Albania similar to other countries in South East Europe and beyond, in line with the broader European Union Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020 (EU Framework). According to the EU Framework each government is expected to adopt and/or update existing National Roma Integration Strategies (NRIS) in line with the EU 2020 objectives. While the current policy framework on Roma social inclusion in Albania marks a significant improvement, in the Government of Albania (GoA) attempts to guarantee human rights and social justice, there are still persistent constraints and multiple challenges to be addressed. The focus of this background paper is to critically examine the policy approach towards Roma inclusion in Albania by focusing in particular on mainstreaming and participation. Roma and Egyptians communities in Albania share to some extent a common history of marginalization, but they represent very diverse and complex social groups. In addition to that, Roma communities are the most marginalized and have a high degree of heterogeneity and thus this paper concentrates primarily on Roma communities.

This paper is the result of a consultancy conducted for the RCC Roma Integration 2020 project, with the overall goal of providing insights on participatory development of annual Roma integration public policy, including mainstreaming and budgeting. The specific focus of the consultancy was to ensure and assist the formulation of the concrete annual plan for Roma integration for 2017 in Albania by the inter-ministerial coordination mechanism in line with the objective of the RCC Roma Integration 2020 project. This project is based on the idea of making policies and public service institutions more inclusive by integrating the needs and concerns of Roma into their regular work. This is crucial as it moves away from the approach of making Roma communities (willing to) integrate by placing all responsibility to them, but it addresses also the role of policies and public service as well as the society at large to enable the necessary and sufficient conditions for inclusion of marginalised communities such as Roma. In this light, the project aims to effectively assist the national governments to integrate measures from the existing national sectorial Roma specific policies (strategies, action plans) into:

- a) mainstream the general socio-economic policies for Roma integration;
- b) the public service delivery control using an effective monitoring system that could measure positive change for Roma people;
- c) the domestic budget and IPA funding planning each year; and
- d) reporting on a set of specific, harmonised indicators that show whether or not policy measures and funding have an impact on Roma people.

Drawing from the deliverables of the consultancy, this paper provides the following:

- a) A thorough examination of the current policy framework with a particular focus on Roma mainstreaming;
- b) A comprehensive analysis of the Action Plan for the Integration of Roma and Egyptians 2015-2020 (AP) by looking at its implementation progress so far (2015-2016) in particular as relevant to budgeting and mainstreaming;

- c) Drawing from the AP, a proposal of concrete measures to be adopted for the 2017 financial year by the inter-ministerial coordination mechanism;
- d) Policy recommendations on ensuring mainstreaming and participatory public policy for Roma mainstreaming.

To achieve the above, desk and field research has been conducted from September to December 2016 in Albania. The findings of this paper have been informed by using a qualitative research methodology. The data have been collected using: document analysis, observation and in-depth interviews. Various documents were consulted, including national policy documents, strategies, action plans, reports as well as academic articles and reports by international and intergovernmental organizations and NGOs.<sup>1</sup> Observation refers to the insights gathered throughout formal meetings organized during the project implementation as well as comments and recommendations received by Roma stakeholders. Data were also collected through in-depth interviews with Roma Focal Points, Roma activists and stakeholders.<sup>2</sup>

This paper is structured as follows: the first part examines the current policy framework with a particular focus on participation and Roma mainstreaming. The second part provides an overview of the Action Plan and its progress in as relevant to the lessons learnt budgeting and mainstreaming. The third part encompasses recommendations for the actions for 2017 on Roma mainstreaming into national policies in Albania to be adopted by the inter-ministerial coordination mechanism.

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<sup>1</sup> See List of References for a full list of sources used.

<sup>2</sup> See Overview of Methods and Resources used in Annex I

## II. Policy framework and Roma mainstreaming

### *2.1 Roma communities in Albania: Dynamic, complex and diverse*

Roma are one of the minority groups living in Albania and are considered as an ethnic-language minority. There are no complete, accurate and undisputed statistics regarding the number of the Roma and Egyptian population in Albania. Most of the Roma reside in urban and suburban areas of the main cities: Tirana, Durrës, Fieri, Elbasan, Korça. The results of the Albanian census of 2011 include figures of 8,301 Roma and 3,368 Egyptians, amounting to 0.3 and 0.1 per cent of the total population, respectively (INSTAT, 2012: 16). Unofficial estimates of the number of Roma in Albania range from 80,000 to 150,000 (i.e., between 2.5 and 4.7 per cent of the total population), while Egyptian NGOs estimate Egyptians' numbers at more than 200,000, 5.2 per cent of the total (REF, 2015; Fresno, 2014). This is not simply a data discrepancy, but the number of Roma people directly relates to the type of policies implemented, budget allocation and overall attention paid by the government and other stakeholders to the marginalization of Roma communities. This paper argues that a thorough study is needed both qualitative and quantitative to map the Roma communities in Albania, their location, demographics, profiles, lifestyles and challenges.

Roma live throughout the country, with the largest concentrations in central and South-eastern Albania. Most of them adopt a sedentary lifestyle, but some are mobile (nomadic) or semi-mobile. To what extent Roma communities in Albania adhere to the code of defilement is hard to be estimated not only due to lack of reliable data, but also due to lack of in-depth and systematic participatory and action research. The general living conditions of the Roma are very similar in all regions where they are living and or are settled. Many areas inhabited by the Roma are informal and do not have essential facilities such as sewage systems, waste removal services, supply with potable water, or proper road infrastructure while most of the dwellings are transitory, unsafe and unable to sustain weather changes (UN Report, 2012). Roma communities are among the poorest; most marginalized and socially excluded groups in Albania. Studies show that the level of poverty among Roma is twice as high as the majority population (UN Report, 2012). Low level of educational attainment, high unemployment rate, low monthly incomes, extreme living conditions and direct and indirect barriers in accessing public services are indicators that prevail in the majority of Roma.

The Census 2011 and studies that followed show that the demographic profile of the Roma communities are in marked contrast to the Albanian population (Simon et.al., 2015; UNDP 2012). The age structure reflects the high fertility and high mortality rate for the Roma communities with the average age is 26 years for Roma compared to 35.5 years for Albanian people. The Roma population is younger than other groups where 34% of the population under the age younger than 15 years versus 20% of Albanians. Roma live mostly in urban areas 76.5% compared with 53.5% of the total

population. Regarding the formation of the families two phenomena like early marriage and early parenting are commonplace. At age 20 years, 60% of Roma women are married (twice more than Albanian women) and 43% of girls aged 18 have given birth to a child. Very early motherhood (between ages 13-17) affects 34% of Roma teenagers (Simon et.al., 2015).

The incomes of Roma families usually come from employment in low-skilled jobs, often in the non-formal sector. The empirical data show that the main drivers even of the internal migration process are unemployment, low income and poverty. According to the UNICEF study, almost half of the surveyed Roma are unemployed and this unemployment is long term. They usually work in the informal sector, where the trade of used clothes, casual jobs, music, collection of cans and begging are the main sources of their incomes. In the last years the income sources of many Roma families from trading used clothes have been reduced or exhausted due to the demand decrease and competition increase. As a consequence there is a shift of informal work sources from the trade of used clothes to the collection of scrap metal and cans currently 42 percent of the Roma work on their collection. The reduction of incomes entails the increase of poverty level for specific groups and strata. Almost 78% of Roma families are categorized in the “very poor” group (Census 2011; Simon et.al., 2015). Meanwhile the increasing number of Roma involved in collecting scrap metal and cans increases competition, and in the conditions of limited sources, it reduces the income of Roma families. In these conditions many Roma choose to migrate to other cities where the competition is lower. The migration is thus deemed to be important coping mechanisms for Roma communities throughout Albania.

Roma population has lived a dramatic change of their social and economic situation in the post-socialist times and the transition to a market economy. They thus moved from a relative integration during communist regime into the mainstream society to a marginalization in extreme poverty. This evolution has been documented in several reports using different surveys, such as the “Roma Mapping” undertaken by CESS for the UNICEF in 2011 (Geddeshi and Jorgoni, 2011), which has then served for the encompassing Needs Assessment Study on Roma and Egyptians Communities in Albania (Geddeshi and Miluka, 2012) or the survey of the Open Society Institute in November 2012. The post-socialist transition had led to a dramatic loss of economic opportunities for Roma and Egyptians. They benefited of public jobs in the socialist economy and have lost them during the transition. They are now struggling to recover the position they had before: low paid jobs, but providing enough income to escape from poverty and securing a status in society. The market economy does not offer the same kind of jobs and Roma and Egyptians are kept at the fringe of the formal economy. When looking at the type of economic activity in which Roma are engaged, the very notion of employment is disputable since most of the employed Roma do not have employment contracts and the type of activity they have consists mainly in buying and selling second-hand clothes and collection of scrap metals and cans (UNDP 2012, p.41).

In addition to the groups of Roma people that are most marginalized and face hardship and multiple exclusion, there are also other communities that have achieved better status and conditions in mainstream society. For example, a new generation of young well-educated Roma activists is emerging, who have created new or strengthened already existing associations and non-governmental organizations and thus work to empower the Roma communities. Being educated have provided them with better access in the labor market and thus better positioning, which then has led to the creating of Roma communities that are well-educated, have good jobs, financial resources and thus came out of marginalization. The empowerment of these communities shall then be seen in the broader human rights framework in order for them to work towards the empowerment of the other Roma generations and communities. The empowerment journey shall not be closed once a Roma young person or family or group is better off, but shall lead to actions to support the rest of the Roma communities.

In public discourse in Albania, Roma are primarily defined in a mixed narrative between their marginalization (the policy framework includes them in the all-encompassing term of vulnerable groups) as well as their peculiarity as an ethnic-linguistic minority community (code of defilement, different ways of life, nomadism or mobility). This is related to the visibility of their marginalisation and shared history of discrimination in Albania. As a result, the Roma have often been portrayed as a “*problem*” that needs to be solved. This paper suggest that it is necessary to conduct a thorough study on patterns of the settlement and nomadism or mobility of Roma communities in order to better understand to what extent Roma are settles, to what extent they are mobile and the factors that influence settlement and nomadism.

Studies have shown that there is a paradox of Roma identifications that varies in a continuum between strong assertions of Roma identity to complete negations. These forms contradictory identifications might account for the Census results in Albania in 2011 regarding self-declaration as Roma. This diversity of Roma identifications challenges the necessity and adequacy of policies targeting Roma as a homogeneous ethnic group as well as that of a homogenous social category. Within the same Roma groups in Albania there is a tendency for differentiated and fragmented self-identifications; while at the state level and international level, there is an opposite tendency that blurs differentiations and emphasized a more homogenous collective identity of the Roma. The findings (Fraser, 1992; Kenrick, 1998; Hanckok, 2002) indicate that Roma identifications are contextual and more often than not they represents means in the struggle for resources available within different structural contexts. These different facets of Roma identity are also instrumental for gaining a better standing in local, state and international arenas. Therefore, we write about Roma communities and not ‘the Roma community’.

While it is not the scope of this paper to elaborate on these issues, it is our understanding that one of the fundamental assumptions for all other measures targeting Roma social inclusion is the recognition of their heterogeneity. In this light, the Action Plan, as it will be examined below, for the first time in policy documents in Albania

claims to draw on the principle of recognition of differences when it states that: “*the Action Plan respects the differences between Roma and Egyptian communities, as well as within these communities. The Action Plan addresses the vulnerable members of these communities, recognizing that some Roma and Egyptians are already integrated into society*” (AP, 2015: 13). The AP thus recognizes the heterogeneity of the Roma in Albania as well as the internal tensions of the Roma rising from the differences in struggles between the ordinary Roma and the “elite Roma” or what the AP refers to as “*already integrated into society*”. When translated into public policy, these elements impact the concrete measures to be adopted regarding participation and mainstreaming of Roma in public policy for social inclusion. As it will be highlighted in recommendation section, the awareness of the heterogeneity of the Roma as well as of the different struggles and needs within the Roma community point to the necessity to combine targeted measures with mainstream in such a way that they are responsive, adaptable and flexible towards the specificity of the Roma communities in Albania.

In conclusion, this paper suggests that as the alleged “*Roma problem*” has constituted an issue of debate for sometime now, the plight of Roma acquires new political, cultural and social dimensions in our contemporary society and in line with the European accession process in Albania. First, a more thorough knowledge on Roma communities is needed in Albania particularly in regards to: (i) number of Roma people, demographics, profiles, lifestyles and heterogeneity; (ii) extent of settlement or mobility and explanatory frame. Second, it is important to deconstruct the common approach of labelling Roma as a homogeneous group to be targeted by social integration policies. In Albania, policies and interventions towards Roma communities shall acknowledge the heterogeneity of Roma communities in order to have targeted and tailored policy actions. Third, a contextual understanding of the complex dynamic Roma collective identity formation both at the local and national level in Albania is needed in order to understand how and why Roma communities identify with the Romani culture.

## *2.2 Trajectory of policy approaches on Roma in Albania*

The salience of the Roma as a critical policy issue in Albania is now evident in lieu of the various international commitments of the GoA towards human rights protection and social inclusion and more so than others, in light of the European Union (EU) accession process. Despite the salience of the Roma in policy and public discourse, the chances for their socioeconomic mobility, cultural and political empowerment continue to be low. Acknowledging the importance of a full Roma integration in the framework of the obligations set out in the Stability and Association Agreement with the EU, the Albanian government drafted the Strategy for the economic and social integration of the Roma community (Government of Albania, 2003). In addition, in 2008 Albania became part of the Decade of Roma Inclusion (2005 – 2015), a 10-year endeavour for their integration into the European mainstream societies. Albania is also a signatory of the main international treaties concerning human and minority rights. However, as stated in the evaluation of the Decade itself, it is clear that Roma

integration has not been completed despite the fact that it has gained a higher level of attention by a number of key policy makers.

Albania does not have a National Roma Integration Strategy per se. However, the Albanian Government undertook several policy measures in favour of Roma Social Inclusion such as the National Strategy for the Improvement of Roma Living Conditions 2003-2013 that was adopted in 2003 followed by the Decade Action Plan 2010-2015. This Strategy addressed several broad fields such as education and training, cultural heritage and family, employment, poverty and social protection, health and housing, as well as public order, justice and civil administration. Nevertheless, its implementation was criticized for being slow, due to insufficient human and financial resources, inadequate institutional coordination at the national and local level, and deficiencies in the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms (Summary Report, 2013; 2014 and 2016).

The National Action Plan for the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2010-2015 (NAP-DRI), is a document of the Albanian Government that was designed with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and represents the framework of activities aimed at the integration of Roma population in Albania (NAP 2010-2015: 4). The plan was developed based on Social Inclusion Strategy (2007-2013), National Strategy “On Improving the Living Conditions of the Roma Minority” (2003), as well as taking into account the different sectorial strategies adopted by the Albanian government. Previous study on the policy approaches of the GoA has shown that the 2003 Strategy was based on normalization approach and thus problematic for meaningful inclusion of Roma communities.

The progress reports 2016 (EC, 2016: 5) for Albania “*living conditions for Roma... need to be improved. Social exclusion and discrimination need to be tackled through better policy implementation and better inter-institutional cooperation. Additional efforts are needed to develop a track record of anti-discrimination cases*”. Moreover the report states that institutional mechanisms to protect the rights of the child and to tackle gender-based and domestic violence remain poor. This is particularly relevant for Roma communities. The legislation on juvenile justice has yet to be brought in line with international standards. Services for victims of domestic violence need to improve in quality, quantity, accessibility and geographical coverage (EC Report, 2016: 21).

**Table 1: Conclusions of Policy Measures Prior 2015**

General Recommendations	Specific Recommendations
1- Public Policies Strengthening 2- Empowering National Structures 3- Empower Regional and Local Capacities on social inclusion and social intervention plans for Roma and Egyptian	1- Civic Registration 2- Social Protection 3- Education 4- Employment and VET 5- Social Housing

4- Clear Monitoring and Evaluation Framework/Strengthened Statistics and Research 5- Budgeting/Funding	6- Health 7- Culture
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The lessons learned from the Strategy on Roma Decade and the new strategy on Social Inclusion and Social Protection served as a basis for developing the new Plan of Action for Roma and Egyptian communities (2016 - 2020). The priority of the National Employment and Skills Strategy 2014 – 2020 is to promote social inclusion and territorial cohesion. The Strategy notes the training and employment of women and men, which belong to marginalized and disadvantaged groups, including Roma and persons with disabilities.

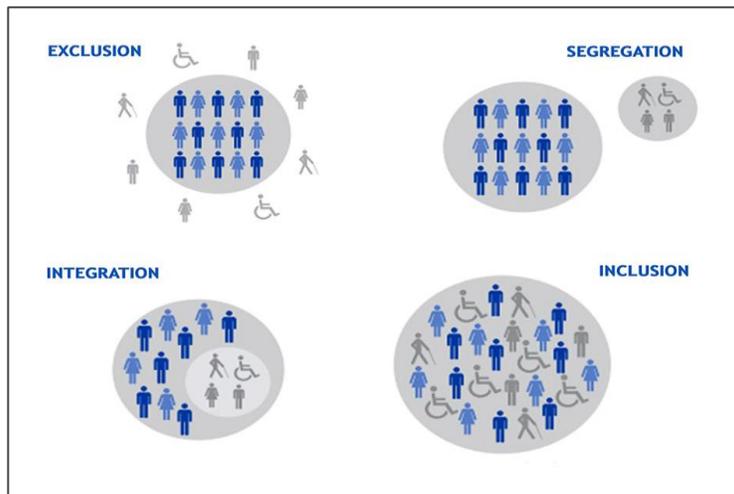
Despite this policy impetus in Albania in recent years and the conditionality of EU accession, real progress in improving the living conditions and opportunities for Roma remains limited and results are mostly poor. Although in terms of policy planning progress is evident, if measured by the frequency and amount of strategies, policy documents and action plans, the situation has not improved for many Roma in practical terms throughout Albania. This is not to say that progress has not been made at all, rather to admit the difficulty of these policy measures and the complexity of the issues they attempt to address. Some reports even argue that that over the last decade, many Roma have been experiencing deepening levels of inequality, a move from relative to absolute poverty and growing hostility by the majority population, which has had aggravated consequences particularly for women and children. The economic crises, recession and other macro-economic and political developments in Albania and in the region might provide an explanation for this. Furthermore, up until now, the new framework for Roma Integration has yet limited impact in terms of producing substantial results or implied substantive changes for the Roma communities. However, it is still in progress of implementation and a comprehensive evaluation cannot be conducted as yet.

### *2.3 From normalisation to social inclusion of Roma communities*

Policies towards Roma in Albania have shifted in a continuum from normalisation approach, to Roma integration and more recently towards social inclusion and human rights based approach. Analysis of concrete policies demonstrates that the first approach has been that of normalization (Fresno, 2014; Bino, 2013). As such policy makers at local and national level conceived Roma policies from the perspective of the so-called “*the Roma problem*”, meaning that Roma were perceived as a problem and therefore Roma policies should aim at solving it (Fresno, 2014: 22). As a consequence of this normalisation approach, the policy measures sought to normalise “*the Roma*” and make them as the rest of the society (Bino, 2013). Recognizing the major pitfalls of such approach that failed to fully acknowledge and respect the Roma as ethnic communities with particular cultural practices, language and lifestyles, the policies shifted towards “*Roma integration*”, meaning primarily that public institutions and

others need to teach the Roma how they should be integrated and how they should act in society (Fresno, 2014; Bino, 2013). Integration policies seek to integrate Roma, without coercion, into the majority society while protecting their individual rights. The Decade of Roma, the Roma Action Plan 2010-2015 in Albania are typical examples of the integration approach.

**Figure 1: Illustration of Policy Approaches**



*Source: International Frameworks on Vulnerable Groups*

The current policy approach is that of social inclusion of Roma and other vulnerable or marginalized communities as presented schematically in Fig. No. 1. Drawing from best practices and lessons learned from previous policies, international and intergovernmental organizations have now set out the 10 Common Basic Principles as shown in Tab. No. 3 below. These principles are intended to provide guidance and orientation to the different actors working on Roma issues in Europe. For the purposes of the analysis in this paper, of particular relevance are: principle no. 2 on explicit but not exclusive targeting; principle no. 4 – aiming for the mainstream; and no. 10 – active participation of Roma. Prior to examining participation and mainstreaming in policy development in Albania, it is necessary to look at the policy issues of redistribution and recognition.

**Table 2: Common Basic Principles**

<b>Principles of policies addressing Roma communities</b>
1. Constructive, pragmatic and non-discriminatory policies
2. Explicit but not exclusive targeting
3. Inter-cultural approach
4. Aiming for the mainstream
5. Awareness of the gender dimension

6. Transfer of evidence-based policies
7. Use of European Union instruments
8. Involvement of regional and local authorities
9. Involvement of civil society
10. Active participation of the Roma

The current policy approach of the GoA does not address the politics of recognition in particular and pursues an ethnicity-blind approach to minority protection more generally. The primary attention, maybe rightly so, is placed onto the socio-economic integration of Roma, particularly in the fields of employment, housing, health and education, which fits with the politics of redistribution approach. These are also the priorities of the AP. The AP does not ignore cultural heritage all together, but is of relatively secondary importance and it is put under the second filed of education. The AP provides for three types of activities related to the promotion the Roma and Egyptians Culture. These activities will be supported by a total budget of ALL 5,662,801 (approx. EUR 41,400), which will be distributed over a five-year period. In the AP is included another activity that aims to notify (i.e. sharing the link via email) Roma and Egyptians organizations about calls for proposals of the Ministry of Culture, or other relevant Ministries, and ensuring that the selected projects include projects implemented by Roma and Egyptian organizations. This activity is budgeted at ALL 3,000,000 (approx. EUR 21,000) allocated for a five-year period. This amounts to half of the budget forecast for the promotion of the Roma and Egyptian cultures, Romani and Egyptian literature translation, etc. However, this ignores the prejudice that Roma endure because of their ethnic identity, culture and lifestyles (code of defilement).

First, even well-intended national social policy measures targeted at addressing issues of vulnerable communities may miss their mark locally, i.e. the Roma communities, if national and local authorities, both governmental, civil society, education sector, media and private sector do not engage and commit to social inclusion. Second, the policy will not succeed if the Roma are still portrayed as “a problem to be solved”, “outsiders”, a “burden on the state welfare”, a “security problem”, or a “problem of social deviance”. What is more, each stakeholder in the process needs to take full responsibility and commitment for social inclusion. As such, if the national mechanisms envisaged in the policy documents and action plan of the GoA are to be catalyst for local social change for the Roma communities, they need to find a delicate balance between human rights implementation and social inclusion strategies, i.e. between politics of recognition and that of redistribution. They will also need to work towards interconnecting national, and local policy structures particularly in light of the new territorial and administrative reform; engagement of relevant stakeholders from the Quadruple Helix: government, private sector, education, civil society and media; improving data collection, and better assessing the impact of measures taken in the field of education, employment, housing, and health.

Furthermore, they will have to find ways to address the Roma communities as a diverse group, very complex and dynamic and account for the differences between

Roma and Egyptian communities; and pursue strategies that can persuade local authorities to become more committed to the socioeconomic integration of all their citizens. In other words, there is a need to find a language and a strategy of social policy and human rights protection that promotes the policy and mechanisms as beneficial for the Roma and non-Roma alike. Mainstreaming measures for Roma communities and embracing a participatory multi-stakeholder approach to policy development are thus paramount.

### III. National Action Plan for Roma Inclusion

#### 3.1 Overview of Action Plan

Five key priorities of the AP resulting from the high-level policy dialogue between the government and the EU include “effective measures to reinforce the protection of human rights, including of Roma, and anti-discrimination policies. Accomplishment of Priority 5, *Measures to strengthen human rights, Roma community and implementation of property rights*, of the Governments’ Roadmap inclines the taking of these measures in many fields of specific policies for Roma/Egyptians, such as: civil registration, access to justice, education, intercultural dialogue, employment and capacity building, healthcare, housing and urban integration, and social protection. The Action Plan sets out six priority sectors:

- Equal access to civil registration and to justice
- Education and promoting intercultural dialogue
- Employment and vocational education and training
- Healthcare
- Housing and urban integration
- Social protection.

**Table 3: Action Plan Detailed Policy Field and Objectives**

<b>Policy field</b>	<b>Objectives</b>
<i>Equal access to civil registration and justice</i>	<p><u>Objective 1:</u> Provision of legal aid to reflect the concrete data in the national civil register of the Roma and Egyptian communities in order to resolve problems that impede their full access to the civil service.</p> <p><u>Objective 2:</u> To strengthen the capacities for identification of Roma and Egyptians at risk of trafficking and refer, protect and re-integrate the trafficked cases.</p>
<i>Education and promoting intercultural dialogue.</i>	<p><u>Objective 1:</u> More Roma and Egyptian boys and girls that complete all levels of education.</p> <p><u>Objective 2:</u> To promote intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding through school-based community development.</p> <p><u>Objective 3:</u> To strengthen the cooperation of schools and social services, in order to address the cases of Roma and Egyptian children with social-economic problems.</p> <p><u>Objective 4:</u> To value and promote the recognition of the Roma and</p>

	Egyptian identities as an integral part of Albanian cultural heritage.
<i>Employment and vocational education and training</i>	<p><u>Objective 1:</u> To integrate Roma and Egyptians in the labour market through VET and active employment programs.</p> <p><u>Objective 2:</u> To promote (social) entrepreneurship and self-employment of Roma and Egyptians.</p> <p><u>Objective 3:</u> To build capacities and improve the performance of the NES and VET system staff for the integration of Roma and Egyptians in the labour market.</p>
<i>Healthcare</i>	<p><u>Objective 1:</u> To increase the number of Roma and Egyptians using the mainstream healthcare services.</p> <p><u>Objective 2:</u> To improve healthcare information and promotion on the available healthcare services for Roma and Egyptians.</p>
<i>Housing and urban integration</i>	<p><u>Objective 1:</u> To improve mechanisms for facilitating legalisation procedures for Roma and Egyptian families.</p> <p><u>Objective 2:</u> More Roma and Egyptian families included in the direct and indirect housing programmes.</p>
<i>Social protection</i>	<p><u>Objective 1:</u> To improve inclusion to social protection programs for Roma and Egyptian community members.</p> <p><u>Objective 2:</u> To promote/prepare reintegration programs focusing on strengthening the family and reintegration at work.</p> <p><u>Objective 3:</u> To reintegrate in society the families that resides at the Emergency Transitory Centre.</p>

Source: Action Plan 2015

The Action Plan includes a budget for the implementation of every activity. Depending on the type of activity, the Action Plan specifies:

- a) *Government funding* for actions explicitly targeting Roma and Egyptians or coming from the mainstream budget and contributing to integration efforts.
- b) *Donor funding* for costs that cannot be covered from the government budget. This funding can be channeled through government bodies or civil society organizations providing services in the given field.
- c) A combination of *government and donor funding*.
- d) *No cost* – when no additional funding is needed to implement the activity or it can be done by using the existing (mainstream) government resources.

**Table 4: Budget for Action Plan: State and Donor's Contribution**

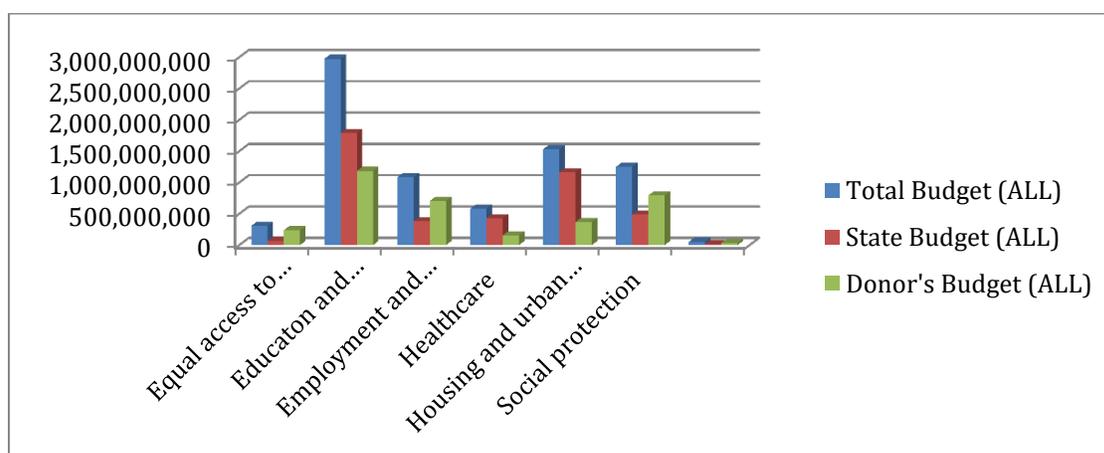
Sector	Budget Total (ALL)	State Budget (ALL)	Donor's Budget (ALL)
Equal access to civil registration and to justice	309,266,460	69,786,460	239,480,000
Education and promoting intercultural dialogue	2,974,769,959	1,790,477,098	1,184,292,861
Employment and vocational education and training	1,086,456,899	380,506,899	705,950,000
Healthcare	584,232,400	428,432,400	155,800,000

Housing and urban integration	1,533,046,979	1,163,946,979	370,100,000
Social protection	1,250,585,551	486,215,551	794,370,000
Policy coordination and monitoring	54,256,920	19,856,920	34,400,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,792,615,168</b>	<b>4,339,222,307</b>	<b>3,484,392,861</b>

Source: Action Plan 2015-2020

As shown in Tab. 4 and Fig. 2 below, the budget for education and intercultural dialogue is the highest, followed by housing and social protection. At the same time, the state budget is higher for education and intercultural dialogue and housing and urban development as well as social protection.

Figure 2: State and Donor's Budget



The major donors on Roma issues in Albania are the European Commission particularly with the IPA funds; the United Nations Development Programme with a long and established programme on Roma and Egyptians in Albania; the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation; the Open Society Foundation; the US Embassy; and other donors such as KAS, FES, etc.

### 3.2 Approaches of Action Plan: Mainstreaming and Participation

The AP is in line with the broader EU policy framework on Roma integration as well as other strategic and policy documents of the GoA such as the Social Inclusion Policy Document and the National Strategy on Social Protection as well as the National Strategy for Development and Integration. The first improvement of this plan, is that it includes specific policies and defines the tangible measures that the responsible institutions shall take in order to reach the objectives among the respective sectors and the public programs which aim to improve the living of Roma and Egyptians in Albania (AP, 2015: 11). The AP represents a new commitment covering the 2016-2020 period, which is targeted to the two respective communities, reflects a scaling up of measures being implemented and also initiates new activities for promoting the integration of Roma and Egyptians, with committed funding from the State budget and funding gaps identified for the 2016-2020 period and finding the financial means

through coordination with international donations. The Action Plan was drafted in close consultation with the responsible line ministries, representatives of Roma and Egyptian Communities and other stakeholders, i.e. including elements of participation. The Action Plan is based on the common principles of social inclusion policy for Roma and represents a targeted approach for Roma and Egyptians in Albania.

However, this targeted policy approach, as in the case of the AP in Albania, is not without its drawbacks. International and intergovernmental organisations (EU, RCC, OSI, CoE) have called for increased mainstream of Roma issues in the framework of broader social inclusion policies. Despite the recognition that the lack of mainstreaming is an impeding factor for the social change intended by these policies, there are still limited efforts towards mainstreaming the Roma issues (RCC Roma Integration 2020 Project Brief) and the Roma are commonly seen as a group *sui generis*, which might enjoy special benefits (Mirga-Kruszelnicka, 2015). This isolative approach may cause tension between local Roma and non-Roma communities as well as within the Roma communities for their struggle for resources and thus further fuel anti-Roma discourses and sentiments. Some scholars even argue that the existence of special policies on Roma (Roma Integration Strategies) leads to *othering* of Roma, emphasising the perceived ethnic and citizen-status difference between Roma and non-Roma. This has led to the stigmatization of the Roma ethnic identity by associating ethnicity with marginalisation, poverty and discrimination. In consequence, Roma are treated, and often inexplicitly defined, as a socio-economically deprived group, identified by its vulnerability, social exclusion and marginalisation rather than as a viable, very diverse and complex ethnic group or multiple sub-groups. In extreme situations, such a discourse leads to the “securitization of the Roma issue” in state policies as they are considered as a danger to society and such evidence of which can be found in different European countries, to mention but a few Italy, France, Hungary and Slovakia (Mirga-Kruszelnicka, 2015). Therefore, mainstreaming is suggested as a complementary tool.

While AP is a targeted approach, the GoA has adopted other policies that highlight the necessity to go beyond policy fragmentation and targeting and thus mainstream issues of vulnerable groups, including Roma, into main public policy such as social inclusion, social protection, education and employment policy measures. As such the National Strategy for Social Protection (2016) does not make reference to particular marginalised communities with the argument that it can lead to fragmented policies. While fragmented policies may not be desirable, the isolation of the issues of Roma from mainstream public policies, budgeting, public service institutions and administration is considered to be one of the explanatory variables of the limited success of the implementation of social inclusion policies (RCC, Roma Integration 2020 – Project Brief).

The lack of explicit targeting can also be observed at the Social Inclusion Policy Document 2016-2020. The overall objective of the SIPD is to develop a sustainable and balanced framework for the measurement, monitoring and reporting of social inclusion in Albania in order to ensure that social inclusion policy relates to other

governmental policies and in line with the EU accession aim. It is thus in line with the National Strategy on Development and Integration 2015-2020 that aims, among other things, to “guarantee equal approach to social and economic opportunities for all groups and individuals in society” (SIPD, 2015: 12). The policy document is adopted in the framework of the EU accession process and forms part of the conditionality mechanisms put by EU to the GoA. The Social Inclusion Policy Document 2016-2020 (SIPD) refers to a broader concept of social inclusion for vulnerable groups in Albania with no particular relevance to the Roma communities in Albania. As can be clearly seen by the stated target areas and groups: inclusive education; quality healthcare for children; inclusive health; extended opportunities for training, education and skills development; assistance provision in job searching and employment; rehabilitation and re-integration of vulnerable groups (persons with disabilities; victims of traffic; individuals suffered family or gender based violence); affordable social housing and social justice. Roma communities are not specifically mentioned in the key areas to be addressed by the policy document. What is more, Roma do not make part of vulnerable groups that need rehabilitation and re-integration as this implies that they have been ‘integrated’ in the past.

**Table 5: Objectives of Policy on Social Inclusion, SIPD 2016-2020**

<b>Pillar A – Sustainable Systems for Social Inclusion</b>	<b>Pillar B: Effective Systems for social inclusion</b>	<b>Pillar C: Improvement of political dialogue</b>
<p><i>Concrete measures/actions:</i></p> <p>Set up of the Group of Indicators and Integrity of Statistics            Development of a thematic dictionary on social inclusion            Annual reports on social inclusion to integrate data on gender, ethnicity and disability            Set up of the Technical Resource Facility for the analysis of social inclusion and poverty</p>	<p><i>Concrete measures/actions:</i></p> <p>Set up of the Thematic Group for Social Inclusion in order to achieve coordination with the National Sectorial Programme for Employment, Competences and Social Policies            Institutional review of the Directory for Social Inclusion and Gender Equality            Communication strategy for central and local government, civil society and business sector</p>	<p><i>Concrete measures/actions:</i></p> <p>Preparation and publication of annual reports            Quality assurance analysis preparation and publication            Annual conference on social inclusion</p>

*Source: SIPD, 2015, pp. 24-29.*

This policy document, nonetheless, addresses policy areas that are paramount to the social inclusion of Roma communities too, and more specifically: access to employment as a precondition of inclusion; education as a second key priority; health care services and other materiality issues such as: housing, real estate, fulfilment of basic necessities for goods and services: running and clean water (SIPD, 2015: 15). In addition, the policy document includes participation and human rights as priority area. However, the issues that fall under this category vary from registration and un-

documentation; legal aid/legal advice and access to justice to cultural and political participation as well as dialogue in civil society (SIPD, 2015: 17). Complex issues related to the marginalization of the Roma communities are included under this category, but with limited elaboration. Even though cultural and political participation as well as dialogue in civil society are included, there is no reference made to an important dimension that facilitates and enables these processes, namely the communication rights and medium of communication for marginalised communities.

When considering the Albanian policy framework on Roma, there is relatively limited adherence to principle no. 2 “explicit, but not exclusive targeting” and principle no. 4 “aiming for mainstream”. The National Social Protection Strategy neither explicitly nor exclusively targets Roma. While this may be seen in favour of not fragmentising policies, it focuses on broad definitions of socio-economic unfavourable circumstances without accounting for the structural and embedded discrimination of Roma and their specific conditions. It is our understanding that policy should address specifically the Roma communities without excluding other groups who might share similar socio-economic conditions. The same applies to the Social Inclusion Policy document, which does not adhere to the principle of being an explicit policy, albeit not exclusive, for Roma. On the other hand, the Action Plan for the Integration of Roma and Egyptians explicitly and exclusively targets Roma and Egyptians. Principle no. 4 implies that all policies and measures targeting Roma communities should aim for the mainstream so as not to segregate Roma from the rest of the society. Promoting the inclusion of the Roma in mainstream society should be the immediate aim of all policies. However, to address the specific disadvantages of Roma communities it is still necessary to have specific or explicit measures.

The mainstream approach has two consequences in practical terms: first, when developing a specific project, it must lead to the inclusion of the Roma instead of to their segregation. This means that specific intermediary services have to be planned, which connect Roma with mainstream services until they have equal access and equal enjoyment of mainstream services (Fresno, 2014); second, mainstream services need to be adjusted to the diversity of the needs of their beneficiaries, including the Roma, which means taking into account their characteristics and putting in place mechanisms that facilitate the access and the enjoyment of mainstream services. This requires accounting for the specificity and heterogeneity of the Roma communities. In practical terms this requires social services at all levels need to be sensitive to the cultural dimension of inclusion, i.e. to adapt and respond in a flexible manner to particular needs of particular groups. Moreover, barriers need to be removed that could impede access to social services to Roma communities considering issues of registration, documents and illiteracy. In this regard, Roma focal points or mediators come to central stage. These barriers may be economic, social, cultural, physical, practical and procedural.

In addition, specific services for Roma communities need to be connected within the mainstream social services in order to avoid parallel systems, but still accounting for the specific needs of these communities. Explicit Roma services developed in parallel

to mainstream services entail the risk for the former of constituting second-class services for Roma people, while general services fail to undertake the necessary changes to adapt to the needs of all citizens. Specific Roma services must be connected with and function complementarily to general services, while aiming to facilitate Roma access to general services. However, the extent to which adapted services will lead to normalisation and the possibilities for them to be complementary to global services will require different approaches, depending on the context, type of situation and group. While mainstream helps to counter segregation, it also risks excluding Roma. Thus, achieving such a balance is still challenging. In summary, it can be stated that effective access to mainstream services require their adaptation to Roma needs and that a lack of adequate adaptation will only further limit the access for Roma to mainstream.

Moreover, recommendations from international and intergovernmental organizations insist on the need to put the Roma at the centre of the process and focus on their capacity to take a decision and to be in the condition to take their future into their own hands (EC, 2015; UN, 2012). The first implication here is mainstreaming of Roma in public policy and the second is that of putting Roma participation in the centre of policies.

Therefore, the Common Basic Principles (CBP) on Roma Inclusion no. 2 and no. 4, *explicit but not exclusive targeting* and *aiming for mainstream*, should go hand in hand, guide all the policies and be appropriately developed in order to understand its practical implications. This approach implies focusing on Roma people without excluding others who live under similar socio-economic conditions and promoting the inclusion of the Roma into mainstream society.

### *3.3 Progress of Action Plan 2015-2016*

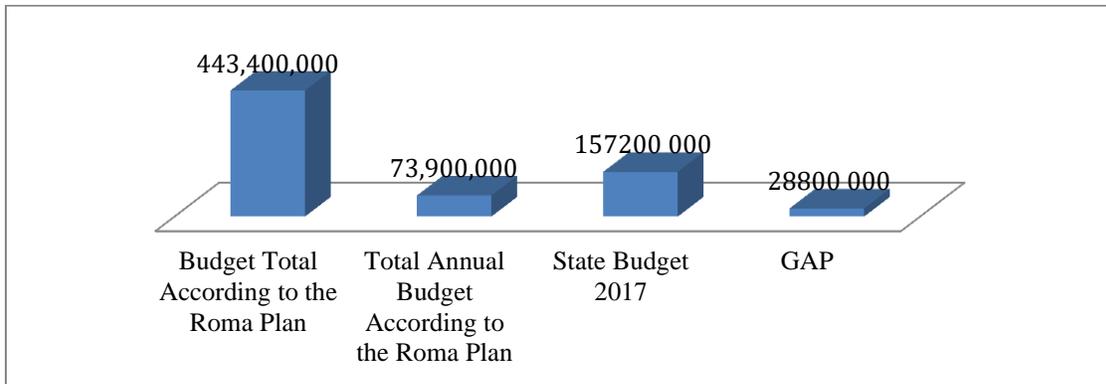
The Political Dialogue Seminar between Albania and European Commission in 2015 produced as outcome recommendations regarding the social inclusion of Roma and Egyptian communities in Albania with a set of activities, indicators and timeframe following the Action Plan matrix. Most of the activities set provided in the recommendations of the Political Dialogue Seminar were supposed to be completed by 2016. For 2017, the seminar suggests the following: first, in the policy field of education, the increase of Roma and Egyptian youth in higher and professional education is recommended through special grants from MAS and agreements with universities and professional colleges. Second, in the policy fields of employment, social care and health, housing and social protection the recommendations were set for the end of 2016, but there is not yet an official report from GoA regarding the progress.

The Political Dialogue Seminar between Albania and EC is organized every two year and thus the next meeting will be held in 2017. The EC will formally remind the accession countries, including Albania, on the Enlargement Paper in 2016 and 2017 on the their obligations to comply with the EU Framework for Roma integration. In this

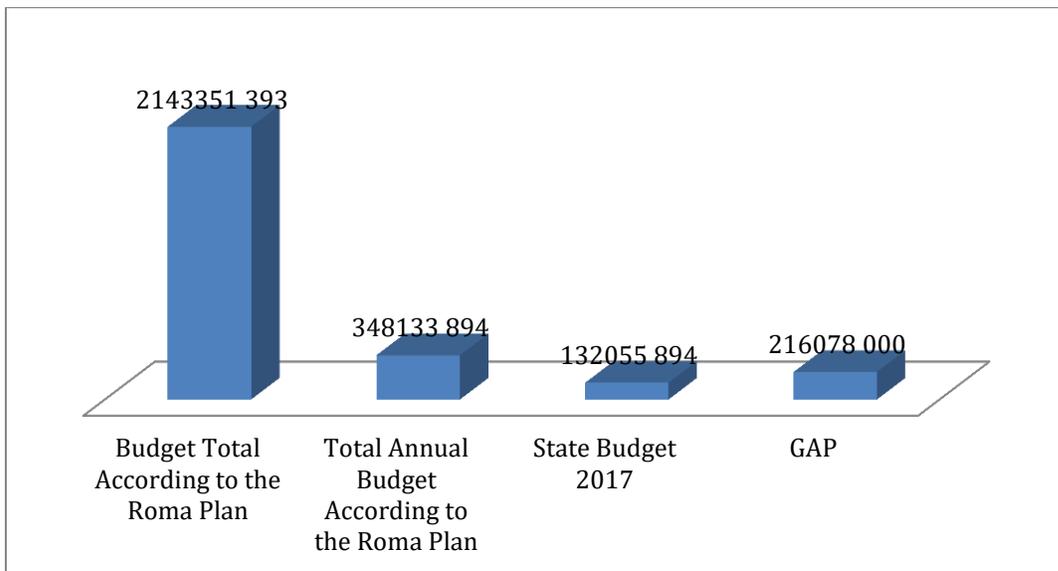
light, the Seminar highly recommended the continuation of the dialogue with Roma communities based on public forums, seminars, stakeholder participation etc. a major importance is also placed on monitoring of progress of the strategy as well as of IPA funding regarding Roma communities, including capacity development for evaluation and monitoring. A Roma Focal Point at the European Union Delegation to Albania should be established to liaise with government, civil society and other stakeholders.

Based on the budget data received from the line ministries responsible for particular policy fields and activities of the Action Plan, the budget realisation for 2015 and 2016 has been analysed and thus the gap has been identified as shown in the policy fields graphs below. The activities not implemented in 2016 of the AP can be found in Annex V.

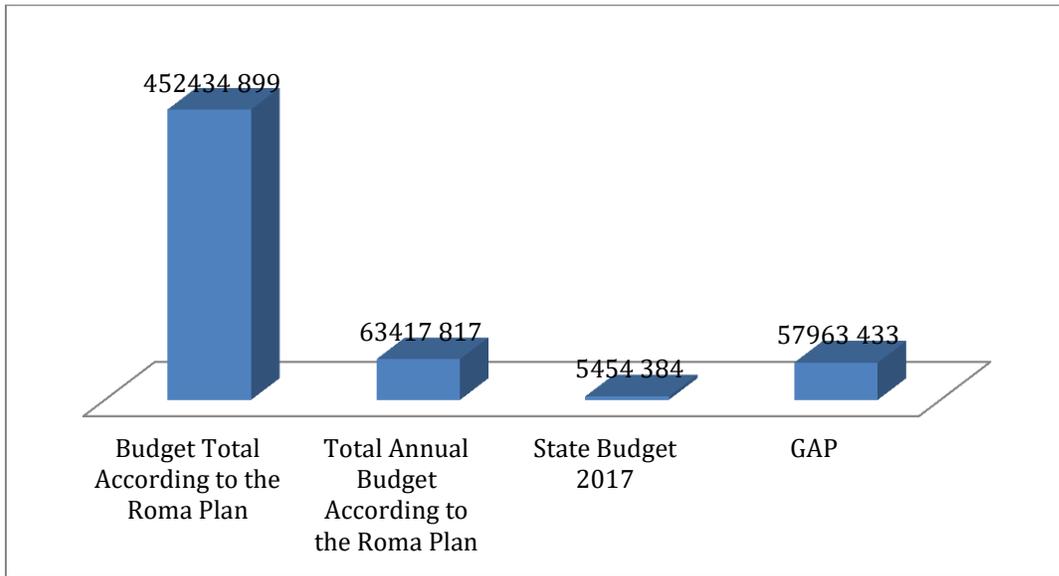
**Figure 3: Healthcare budget gap**



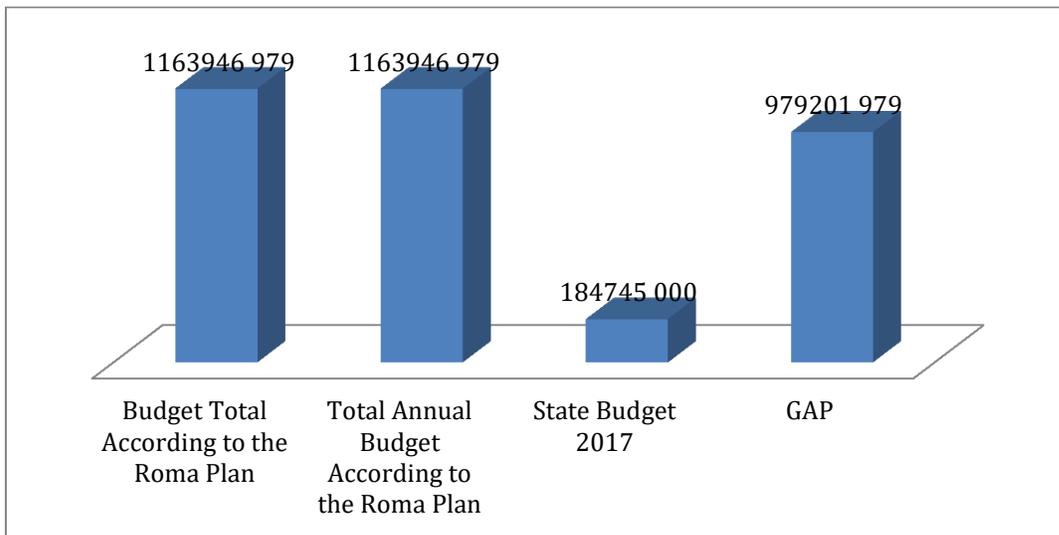
**Figure 4: Education budget gap**



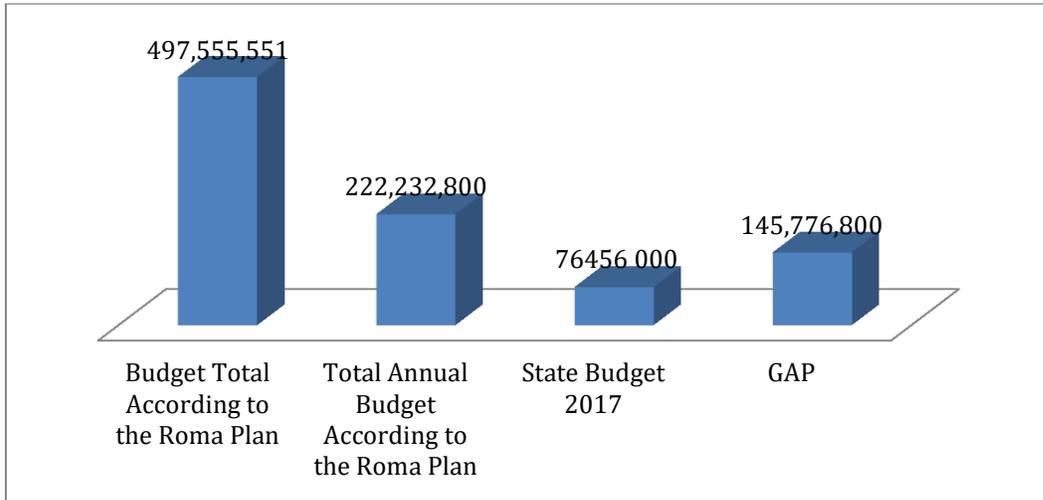
**Figure 5: Employment Budget Gap**



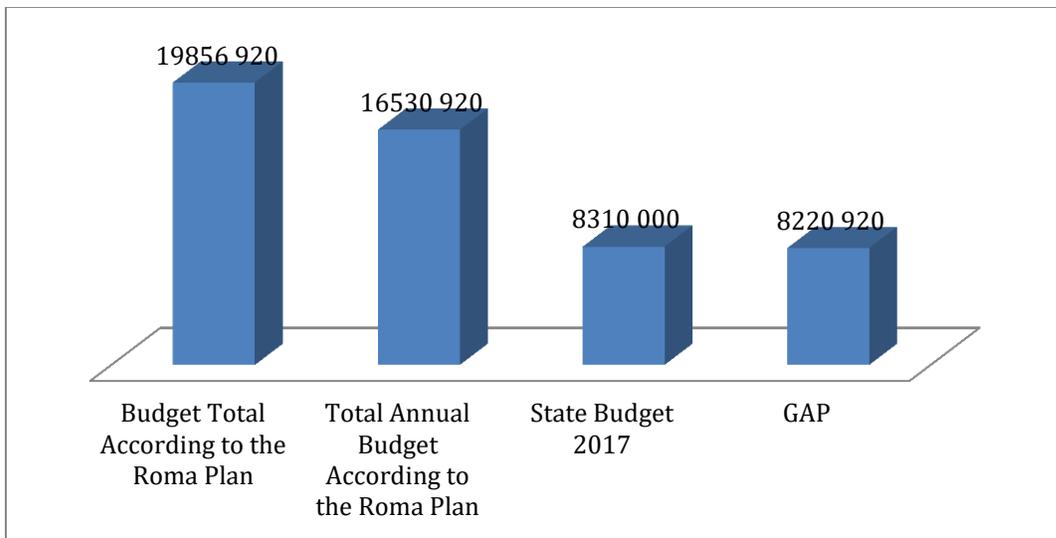
**Figure 6: Housing Budget Gap**



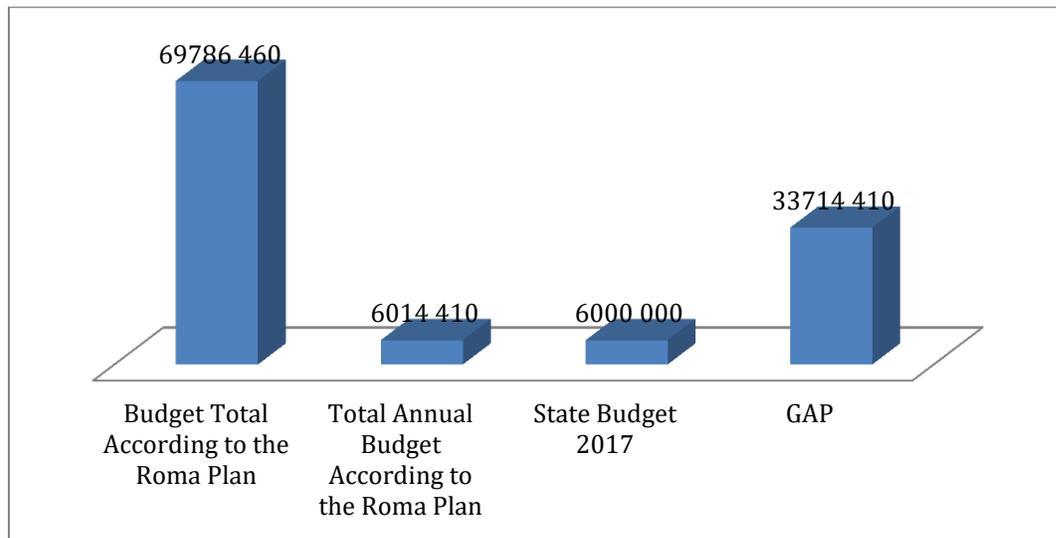
**Figure 7: Social Protection Budget Gap**



**Figure 8: Monitoring Budget Gap**



**Figure 9: Access to Justice Budget Gap**



In the Action Plan for 2017, we have excluded activities with no budget envisaged from the state and activities with no budget envisaged at all. The first page of the file includes an overview of the activities as per the AP, the responsible ministry or other governmental entity, the budget planned, the realisation for 2016, the expectation and plan for 2017. The second sheet includes the full details. The entire AP can be found as a separate document to this paper.

### *3.4 Conclusions*

The analysis of policy trajectory in Albania, policy dilemmas and current Action Plan as well as EU approaches, leads as to the conclusion that targeted and mainstream interventions are two complementary approaches for effective Roma inclusion. The question of how to make mainstream programmes inclusive of Roma; in other words, how interventions under measures and policies related to geographical areas, thematic objectives and investment priorities of relevance for Roma can have an effective impact on their integration even where Roma are not specifically targeted. An anti-discrimination and equal opportunities approach, flexible and sound criteria and a focus on the key fields of intervention for Roma inclusion (education, employment, access to services including health services and housing) are crucial elements to make this happen. The combined use of mainstream and targeted actions appears, therefore, to be the option most likely to succeed when addressing the socio-economic inclusion of Roma. This balance is reached by combining social policies inclusive of the Roma population with targeted measures to compensate for existing inequalities thus enabling a sustained social inclusion process. Roma policies have to be focused on Roma in a clear and specific way and address the needs of Roma with explicit

measures to prevent and compensate for the disadvantages they experience. But Roma policies cannot be separated from other policies; on the contrary, existing policy instruments at the national and local level need to tackle Roma issues according to their objectives and field of action, and for Roma policies to be efficient they need to be mainstreamed into other policy instruments.

First, putting Roma participation in the center of the policies should be the guiding principle of policy making. Despite an increased participation of Roma in policies aiming at their inclusion, creating conditions for an effective participation continues to be a challenge and represents one of the main reasons for policy failure. The effectiveness of policies is enhanced through the involvement of Roma people at every stage of the process. The aim of any Roma inclusion programme should be to put Roma into the position of making choices freely and considering their own future and lives. The discussion of the Action Plan for 2017 should include representatives' organizations, and representatives of the communities.

Second, ensuring access and participation is the first step, guaranteeing continuity of participation is crucial to social inclusion and empowerment. Participation is a permanent process and a way to engage the community. This means that participation must be developed along the entire cycle of any project, programme or policy – in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation phase. Systems, structures and channels of participation must be formalized and cannot depend on personal decisions of the persons responsible for policies and their willingness to open up to participation.

Third, it is necessary to create appropriate conditions, structures mechanisms for participation. The allocation of adequate budgets that facilitate appropriate participation, the formation of alliances and mutual trust is essential in order to integrate different interests and perspectives. As such it requires also the development of capacities both at local and central government on how to create such institutional conditions for Roma participation. The enhancement of institutional capacities both at the central and local level is key to the social inclusion agenda. An institutional partnership platform should be developed to include all stakeholders: central government and public institutions, local government, CSOs, research centres, universities, Vocational and Educational Training centres and schools, activities, Chamber of Commerce, business and communities' members. Roma policymaking should be guided by: a multi stakeholder approach, research based and participatory processes. Both at central and local level a profound understanding of Roma communities' culture, complex identities, lifestyles and challenges are necessary in order to develop participatory practices in policy and decision-making. Evidence based research on key issues such as employment, education, housing, social protection and cultural heritage should be used to inform local and central level policy.

### 3.5 Recommendations

#### a) Equal access to civil registration and justice

- Provision of free legal aid for Roma communities and ensuring access to justice in order for Roma communities to be able to access all basic services such as civil registration, social benefits, health, employment and education. The MSWY, in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice, should advocate for the provision of free primary and secondary legal aid by state institutions, since the Law on Legal Aid is under revision, as is under dispute whether state institutions should provide free primary legal aid.
- One of the activities of the AP provides for the creation of 6 legal clinics. The indicator set to measure this activity measures the number of legal clinics established. More meaningful indicators should be set to measure the effectiveness of legal clinics, such as: (i) of Roma and Egyptians approaching legal clinics, (ii) the number of Roma and Egyptians accessing legal aid via clinics; (iii) number of successful cases.

#### b) Education and promoting intercultural dialogue

- A thorough and meaningful public discourse on Roma issues needs to be conducted starting from mainstreaming Public Dialogue Forum on Roma communities and secondly, putting pressure on media, national and local one, to represent in an accurate manner the Roma issues and provide more media space for Roma issues (particularly the case with the Albanian Public Service Media).
- Developing the capacities of Roma communities to establish their own media and use alternative media as participatory platforms to voice their perspectives and cover positive models by promoting the values of Roma communities, identities and culture.<sup>3</sup>
- Local level government staff should be trained on intercultural dialogue and social inclusion in order to fight the structured and deep-rooted discriminatory practices. A regular public dialogue with the local Roma communities should be established or enhanced, where in place, which could lead to consultation processes for social service provision.

#### c) Employment and vocational education and training

- Provision of grants and scholarship for Roma and Egyptian youth to attend professional and vocational training schools.
- Supporting enterprises and micro SMEs set up by Roma and Egyptian communities and facilitate registration and other relevant processes.

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<sup>3</sup> For more see the author publication on alternative media for social inclusion at [www.uetcentre.org](http://www.uetcentre.org)

d) Healthcare

- Set up of regional and small health centres in the areas with high density of Roma communities.
- Organize targeted awareness raising campaigns on health and family planning.

e) Housing and urban integration

- Roma Social Services Municipal working group should be established with a clear strategy, action plans and which has a space for real dialogue among civil society and representatives of the local government and Roma communities for advocating and stocktaking on progress made in implementing a local Roma social services action plan.

f) Social protection

- Roma Social Services Municipal working group should be established with a clear strategy, action plans and which has a space for real dialogue among civil society and representatives of the local government and Roma communities for advocating and stocktaking on progress made in implementing a local Roma social services action plan.
- Transparency of funding both at the central and local government should be ensured as well as transparency on the part of civil society. Relevant stakeholders need to be taken accountable and regularly report on achievements, challenges and progress.

The monitoring and evaluation framework of the AP provides for the timely collection of relevant and qualitative data, which will be fed into important processes, such as the Integrated Planning System, monitoring reports under the framework of IPMGs, Mid-Term Budget Planning, etc. This M&E framework does not provide for the revision of the action plan, based on M&E reports. To increase the efficiency of the M&E mechanisms, and feed their results into the AP, the plan should be updated following the M&E reports.

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## ANNEXES

### *Annex I – Overview of Methods and Sources for Background and Policy Paper*

<b>Method</b>	<b>Source(s)</b>	<b>Objective</b>
Document Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ National Development and Integration Strategy 2015-2020</li> <li>▪ National Social Protection Strategy 2015-2020</li> <li>▪ Social Inclusion Policy Document 2016-2020</li> <li>▪ Action Plan for the Integration of Roma and Egyptians 2015-2020</li> <li>▪ Roma Decade Report 2013 and 2014 for Albania</li> <li>▪ Roma Decade Report 2015</li> <li>▪ Summary Progress Report on Albania</li> <li>▪ EC Progress Reports 2016 and 2015</li> <li>▪ Other Reports/Studies please specify</li> <li>▪ Academic peer-reviewed articles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To examine the current policy framework on Roma social inclusion in Albania with a particular focus on participation and mainstreaming;</li> <li>▪ To analyse the Action Plan for the Integration of Roma and Egyptians 2015-2020 (AP) by looking at its implementation progress so far (2015-2016);</li> <li>▪ To draft initial AP for 2017</li> </ul>
Observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Public Forum organized by the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth with the Municipality of Durres, 4 November 2016</li> <li>▪ 4 Meetings with representative from Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth: Roma Focal Point and General Director of Social Policies in October and November 2016</li> <li>▪ 1 Meeting with Roma NGOs and activists in October 2016</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To analyse the Action Plan for the Integration of Roma and Egyptians 2015-2020 (AP) by looking at its implementation progress so far (2015-2016);</li> <li>▪ To draft initial AP for 2017;</li> <li>▪ To draft initial policy recommendations for mainstreaming and participation.</li> </ul>
In-depth interviews <i>(Full List in Annex II)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Roma Focal Point at MSWY</li> <li>▪ General Director of Social Policies at MSWY</li> <li>▪ Social Services Municipality of Durres</li> <li>▪ Roma activists</li> <li>▪ Roma NGO</li> <li>▪ Researcher on Roma</li> <li>▪ Contact person Ministry of Finance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To draft initial AP for 2017;</li> <li>▪ To draft initial policy recommendations for mainstreaming and participation.</li> </ul>

*Annex II – List of In-depth and informative interviews*

<b>In-depth and informative interviews</b>			
<b>No.</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Institution</b>	<b>Comments</b>
1.	Edvin Lame	National Roma Focal Point	Three meetings during the consultancy period
2.	Merita Xhafaj	General Director of Social Policy at the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth	Three meetings during the consultancy period
3	Confidential	Directory of Social Policy at the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth	One meeting to obtain documents
4.	Programme Manager for Roma and Social Inclusion	Open Society Foundation Albania	One meeting to discuss insights about Action Plan
5.	Activist	Roma and Egyptian Movement	One meeting to discuss insights about Action Plan
6.	Social Services Specialist	Durres Municipality	One meeting to discuss insights about Action Plan
7.	Researcher	UET Centre	Roma studies
8.	Anila Nepravishta	Director at People's Advocate	One meeting to discuss insights about Action Plan
9.	Oriana Rapi	Council of Minister, Department of Strategy and Donor Coordination	One meeting to discuss insights about Action Plan
10.	Nevila Çomo	Council of Minister	Expert on Public Policy
11.	Confidential	Commissioner for Protection Against Discrimination	One meeting to discuss overall situation of Roma
12.	Specialist	Ministry of Justice	One meeting to obtain documents
13.	Specialist	Ministry of Health	One meeting to obtain documents

*Annex III – List of Roma Focal Points at Government of Albania*

<b>Government of Albania - Roma Focal Points</b>				
<b>Institution</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Designation</b>	<b>Mobile</b>	<b>Email</b>
Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth	Edvin Lame	National Roma Focal Point		
Ministry of Justice	Enida Qoli	Specialist at the Sector for European Integration, Directory for Priorities Implementation, Integration and Projects	00355 69 76 15 75 9	<a href="mailto:Enida.Qoli@drejtesia.gov.al">Enida.Qoli@drejtesia.gov.al</a>
	Ermelinda Durmishi	Specialist at the Sector for Monitoring, Director for Project Management at the Immovable Property Registration Office	00355 68 90 15 792	<a href="mailto:ermelinda.durmishi@zrpp.gov.al">ermelinda.durmishi@zrpp.gov.al</a>
	Mirel Mjekra	Lawyer, State Commission for Legal Aid	00355 69 20 39 990	<a href="mailto:mirel.mjekra@drejtesia.gov.al">mirel.mjekra@drejtesia.gov.al</a>
Ministry of Culture	Ermir Nika	Specialist		<a href="mailto:ermir.nika@kultura.gov.al">ermir.nika@kultura.gov.al</a>
Ministry of Health	Aleksandra Puci	Specialist at the Directory of European Integration and IPA Projects	00355 69 388 75 66	<a href="mailto:aleksandra.puci@shendetesia.gov.al">aleksandra.puci@shendetesia.gov.al</a>
Ministry of Urban Development	Jonida Pone	Specialist at the Directory for Urban Services and Housing	00355 69 83 83 031	<a href="mailto:jonida.pone@zhvillimiurban.gov.al">jonida.pone@zhvillimiurban.gov.al</a>
Ministry of Education and Sports	Besnik Rama			<a href="mailto:besnik.rama@arsimi.gov.al">besnik.rama@arsimi.gov.al</a>
Ministry of European Integration	Xherina Haxhillari		00355 68 40 60 133	<a href="mailto:xherina.haxhillari@integrimi.gov.al">xherina.haxhillari@integrimi.gov.al</a>
Ministry of Home Affairs	Fatjola Lubonja	Director for European Integration and Projects	00355 69 41 355 99	<a href="mailto:fatjola.lubonja@punetebrendshme.gov.al">fatjola.lubonja@punetebrendshme.gov.al</a>

Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Fioralba Laska	Specialist, Sector for Human Rights and Reporting, Directory of International Organizations	04 23 64 090/0035569371882 8	<a href="mailto:fioralba.laska@mfa.gov.al">fioralba.laska@mfa.gov.al</a>
State Minister for Local Affairs	Vasilika Tuni	Inspector at the Sector for Relations with Local Government	00355 69 87 17 313	<a href="mailto:vasilika.tuni@ceshtjetvendore.gov.al">vasilika.tuni@ceshtjetvendore.gov.al</a>
Ministry of Energy and Industry	Eriona Lala	Specialist at the Directory for Electro-energy Policies and Development		<a href="mailto:eriola.lala@energji.gov.al">eriola.lala@energji.gov.al</a>
Minister for Innovation and Public Administration	Erisa Vasili	Coordinator at the Department of Innovation and Good Governance	00355 69 54 35 480	<a href="mailto:erisa.vasili@kryeministria.al">erisa.vasili@kryeministria.al</a>
Ministry of Economic Development, Tourism, Trade and Entrepreneurship	Ravik Mima	Advisor to the Minister	00355 68 30 300 05	<a href="mailto:ravik.mima@ekonomia.gov.al">ravik.mima@ekonomia.gov.al</a>
Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Water Management				
Ministry of Defense				
Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure				
Ministry of Environment				
State Minister for Relations with Parliament				
Ministry of Finances				

#### *Annex IV – Overview of the Public Forum in Durres*

The Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth in cooperation with the Municipality of Durres organized the Public Forum with the Roma and Egyptian communities in Durres, Albania on the 4th November 2016. The aim of the Forum was to provide a platform of dialogue between the Ministry, the Municipality, the Roma and Egyptian communities and civil society. According to the Ministry this is the first Forum and will be followed by others in 2017. The Public Forum received some media attention mainly due to the presence of the Minister and the Mayor of Durresi.

Media coverage of Public Forum

[Ora News](#)

[Shqiptarja.com](#)

*Annex V – Action Plan activities not implemented in 2016*

<b>AP Activities not implemented during 2016</b>					
<b>Equal access to civil registration and to justice</b>	<b>Education and promoting intercultural dialogue</b>	<b>Employment and vocational education and training</b>	<b>Healthcare</b>	<b>Housing and urban integration</b>	<b>Social Protection</b>
1.1 Reviewing procedures and providing assistance for obtaining documents for children born abroad (in the right form and with the right content)	1.1 Enrolling all Roma and Egyptian children in preschool and compulsory education	2.3 Designating and equipping outdoor market spaces that could be used for sale of goods and handicraft products, where Roma and Egyptians have access	1.1 Ensuring regular staffing (doctors and nurses) and services at health clinics/centres, prioritizing those situated near Roma/Egyptian settlements	1.1 Providing free legal aid for Roma and Egyptians in court cases regarding legalization process (i.e. ownership certification, inheritance processing)	1.2 Establishing mobile teams at the LGUs led by the social administrator with the participation of Roma and Egyptians, in order to link eligible legal aid beneficiaries with services.

<p>1.5 Amending the Law on Legal Aid to expand access for people living on/below minimum income and pensioners, ensuring that Roma and Egyptians are included</p>	<p>1.2 Enrolling Roma and Egyptian children in preschool and compulsory education by excluding them from financial guarantees or food allowances</p>	<p>2.5 Inspecting the implementation and reviewing of the existing regulations on waste treatment to ensure that all municipal waste treatment plants are fenced off, so as to prevent hazardous waste collection from such plants, in particular by children</p>	<p>1.2 Constructing new health centres close to Roma and Egyptian settlements lacking access to health facilities, serving the entire population of the area, the Roma, Egyptians and non-Roma.</p>	<p>1.2 Integrating Roma and Egyptian families through pilot projects on urbanization and integration of informal areas with a considerable Roma and Egyptian population</p>	<p>1.14. Establishing community centres for the provision of integrated social care services, especially in the most disadvantaged areas.</p>
<p>1.7 Providing free legal aid for judicial proceedings regarding:  · Certification of birth for children born outside of maternity hospitals and those with inaccurate information recorded in Albania or abroad  · Awarding custody of subsequently registered children and in case of divorce</p>	<p>1.5 Organizing after-school courses where Roma and Egyptian parents with education deficiencies can be invited to join and learn to write with their children</p>	<p>2.7 Advocacy activities with local government representatives to reduce local taxes and fees by 30 per cent for businesses established by Roma and Egyptians.</p>	<p>2.3 Recruiting and training Roma and Egyptians as health outreach mediators</p>	<p>1.3 Providing assistance to local government for mapping out Roma and Egyptian informal settlements which do not conflict with the regulatory plans, including a calculation of costs necessary for urbanization.</p>	<p>2.4 Designing a programme for supporting social enterprises for Roma and Egyptians exiting the social protection programs</p>

<p>2.1 Revising Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for multidisciplinary teams to reflect the Child Protocol and include monitoring standards</p>	<p>1.6 Establishing support classes in higher grades (5-9) for children with learning difficulties, including Roma and Egyptians.</p>	<p>2.8 Alleviation of tax obligations for businesses that have 10% of employees Roma and Egyptians</p>	<p>2.4 Coordinating with the Ministry of Education and Sports to ensure that among university quota and scholarships Roma and Egyptian medical/ nursing students are prioritized</p>	<p>2.6 Preparing guidelines for adequate design of social housing in order to develop new types of accommodation ( i.e. one floor-dwellings) more suitable for larger families engaged in income generation activities (i.e. trades/crafts, collection of second hand goods or materials, raising domestic animals), especially in suburbs and/or rural areas</p>	<p>3.1 Making an individual plan for every family, including necessary services and milestones, with the aim of integration outside the Centre within 2-3 years</p>
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	1.12 Granting scholarships to Roma and Egyptian students attending compulsory, highschool and university education	2.9 Informing Roma and Egyptian farmers regarding grants and providing technical assistance for business plan development in accordance with the Call for Proposals issued by the Agricultural and Rural Development Agency.		2.7 Conducting a pilot project on energy efficiency in remote and underprivileged households, including in Roma and Egyptian settlements.	
	1.15. Enrolling Roma and Egyptian youth in university education of all levels in different fields through university quotas	2.10 Awarding grants for Roma and Egyptian applicants (farmers) among others, for development of agriculture or rural development projects.		2.8 Implementing the programme for the reconstruction of Roma and Egyptian dwellings that cannot be considered an apartment or house (i.e. tent, shack), as well as constructing new dwellings and providing support services necessary for promoting their gradual socioeconomic integration .	

	<p>3.1 Identifying and enrolling all the Roma and Egyptian girls and boys of mandatory school age into school, through multispectral working groups at the local level (including (schools, health care, police, social administrators)</p>	<p>3.3 Employing qualified Roma and Egyptians as career counselors, specialists and instructors at the NES and VET centers.</p>		<p>2.10. Preparing the legislation and guidelines, and amending the law on expropriation for calculating the costs for housing of families that cannot benefit from expropriation because of their status as illegal construction, and including these costs in the draft-budget, and reflecting this process in the legislation.</p>	
	<p>3.2 Creating a database of children of preschool and compulsory school age (including Roma and Egyptians), in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth, civil society and other stakeholders</p>	<p>3.5 Introducing annual targets for employment of Roma and Egyptians in the public service and a Young Professionals Programme for Roma and Egyptians interested in this career path.</p>		<p>2.11. Preparing the legislation and guidelines for the prevention of evictions from dwellings/settlements, to achieve effective protection of human rights.</p>	

	3.4 Organizing periodical meetings with Roma and Egyptian parents in their settlements for issues related to the importance of compulsory education.				
	4.2 Translating and publishing Roma literature in Albanian language and vice versa				
	4.5 Disseminating the call for proposals of the Ministry of Culture and other related sources of funding to Roma and Egyptian organizations (i.e. sharing the link via email) and ensuring that the selected projects include those implemented by Roma and Egyptian organizations				