



SOCIAL INCLUSION AND
POVERTY REDUCTION
UNIT

Human Dimension Implementation Meeting – Working session 16: “Tolerance and non-discrimination, including Roma and Sinti issues, including implementation of the OSCE Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti”

Combating racism and discrimination

- Serbia endorsed the Declaration of Western Balkans Partners on Roma Integration within the EU Enlargement Process during the Summit in Poznan. The Declaration specifies that the Western Balkans economies strive to achieve increased employment, housing legalisation wherever possible, increased rate of primary and secondary school completion, health insurance coverage rate, civil registration for all Roma and to continue to fight against discrimination towards Roma.
- The annual report (for 2018) on the implementation of the Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma (2016-2025) have been prepared with expert and technical support of the Roma integration team of the Regional Council for Cooperation. The Action Plan (2019-2020) for the implementation of the Strategy is developed with the leadership of the Ministry for labour, employment, veteran and social affairs and with the participation of wide network of stakeholders (governmental institutions, civil society organizations and Roma community representatives). It has been approved by the relevant ministries and is expected to be adopted by the Serbian government.
- Fifth Seminar on social inclusion for Roma will be organized by the Government of Serbia and the European Commission on October 2019. The Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit of the Government of Serbia will provide technical and expert support in the organization of the above-mentioned event.
- Also, Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit and the Office for Human and Minority Rights assisted the Government of Serbia in monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the Operational Conclusions (2017-2019).
- The Ministry for European Integration, in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice informs the European Commission on the improvement of the position of Roma men and women through regular reporting on implementation of the AP for Chapter 23 on the basis of the contribution of line ministries, Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit and the Office for Human Rights.
- Database on the monitoring of Roma inclusion has been established and is available on the website of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia at <http://www.inkluzijaroma.stat.gov.rs/en>. This database is a significant contribution to coordinated data collection and analysis from 4 key areas for the implementation of the Social Inclusion Strategy for Roma 2015-2025. According to the available data, 89 local self-governments have responded to the call and entered their data on municipal level social inclusion measures in 2018.

- The Parliament adopted the Law on Free Legal Aid (*"Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia", No 87 from 13th of November 2018*). Article 4. Part 3. Of the Law, includes vulnerable groups as ex lege beneficiaries of free legal aid. It is important to mention that members of vulnerable groups can fulfil the right on free legal aid without proving their financial status: "Article 4. Part 3. point 12) person that fulfils the right on determination of time and place of birth according to the adequate Law; and point 13) person that is affected by the procedure of resettlement according to adequate Law."

Mass Media

- The Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit, in cooperation with the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality organized training for journalists on sensitive reporting and affirmative media presentation of vulnerable groups on March 2019. The goal of this training was to present examples of good and bad practices in reporting on women, Roma, persons with disabilities and the LGBTI community and learn to recognize discriminatory and stereotypical reporting and in the future to be empowered to present members of vulnerable groups in an affirmative manner. Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit will continue with this practice according to the Operational Conclusions (2017-2019).

Housing

- The drafting of the National Housing Strategy is in progress. A detailed analysis of the situation was carried out, which included in particular the analysis of the living conditions of the socially most vulnerable persons, especially the Roma, which will be the basis for proposing appropriate goals and measures for solving the problems in the existing social and economic conditions.
- In the area of housing, support is provided within the IPA program (IPA 13, IPA 14 and IPA 16), for the production of technical documentation for a substandard settlements, planning documents, as well as expert support in the legalization process. In addition, 20 new mobile teams are formed and empowered through the mentioned IPA programs.
- IPA programs being implemented: Technical assistance "Improving the living and housing conditions of Roma currently living in informal settlements" (IPA 2013); Implementing durable housing solutions and improvement of physical infrastructure in Roma settlements (IPA 2013); Project for the improvement of the social and economic living conditions of the Roma population (IPA 2014); European Union support for Roma Inclusion - Empowering Local Communities for Roma Inclusion (IPA 2016); Ensuring the improvement of living conditions of internally displaced persons and returnees based on the Readmission Agreement in Serbia and support for sustainable return to Kosovo (IPA 2014);

Unemployment and economic problems

- Support to regional and local employment policies was provided through the allocation of funds and the budget of the Republic of Serbia for co-financing of programmes and measures of active employment policy envisaged by local action plans for employment through funds.

Health care

- The Ministry of Health has increased the number of health mediators by adding ten new municipalities. Therefore, 85 health mediators are engaged in 70 local self-governments.
- The Ministry of Health is considering the modalities of the possible sustainable solution for the activity of health mediators.

Education

- The Rulebook on Conduct of the Institution in the event of suspicion or established discriminatory behavior and violation of reputation, honor or dignity of a person (“*Official Gazette of RS*“ No. 65/2018), has entered into force on September 1, 2018. The Rulebook defines obligations and responsibilities of a child, student, adult, parent, or other legal representative, employee, third person in the institution, of the bodies of the institution and other issues of importance for the protection against discrimination. The new Rulebook on the conduct of the institution has recognized the typical discrimination situations that are the most common in our schools. It is especially important to emphasize that the new Rulebook defines the segregation, preventive activities of the institution to prevent segregation, interventions and desegregation measures and measures applied to individual children and students in the process of desegregation.
- The expansion of the network of pedagogical assistants is executed through the IPA II Program - Sectoral Budget Support. With the aim of expanding the network of pedagogical assistants and engaging new 50 assistants in the school year 2018/19 primary schools were invited sign in to hire a pedagogical assistant based on several criteria (number of students, proximity of substandard settlements, results at the final exam, the number of students dropping out of school). 50 new schools were selected. A total of 261 pedagogical assistants have been hired during the 2018/19 school year in primary schools and preschool institutions.
- The Rulebook on Pedagogical and Andragogical Assistance has been prepared by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development.