



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

Best Practices for Roma Integration

Best Practices for Roma Integration (BPRI) is a regional project for the Western Balkans. Its aim is to contribute to the integration of Roma in the region, reflecting commitments that have been made with a view to possibly joining the EU and as OSCE participating States.

As part of the 2003 OSCE Action Plan on Roma and Sinti, the Decade of Roma Inclusion and national government strategies for Roma integration, governments, non-governmental organizations and Romani civil society in the Western Balkans are working together on promoting social inclusion for Roma and combating the discrimination they face.

The EU's Enlargement Directorate General has held a number of high-level conferences on Roma involving all governments in the region that have generated a series of conclusions and commitments. If Roma are to truly benefit from these, governments will need to increase their efforts and find innovative solutions. Civil society organizations, and especially Roma NGOs, will need to continue advocating for reforms, proposing more inclusive solutions and raising awareness about the status of the Roma.

The BPRI project will support this process by promoting innovative programmes and facilitating co-operation between local and national governments, independent institutions and civil society.

Project Details:

Where:

The Western Balkans

Target jurisdictions:

Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo*, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia

Implemented by:

The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), in co-operation with OSCE field operations

When:

January 2012 – November 2013

Budget:

EUR 3.3 million

Funding provided by:

European Union (90 per cent)
OSCE participating States (10 per cent)

"This project is vital to helping administrations and civil society in the region battle against discrimination and promote equal opportunities for Roma, ensuring that Roma communities, their representatives and civil society have ownership over comprehensive and sustainable programmes to improve their situation."

Ambassador Janez Lenarčič

Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/99 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.





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The BPRI project has five main components:

1. Participation in political and public life and decision-making

The project will identify needs and resources for the implementation of national strategies and action plans, and focus on local Roma participation. The good practices selected will be used to prepare a common protocol to help local self-governments define and implement initiatives encouraging Roma participation. Special attention will be paid to involving Roma women and motivating them to campaign for their interests and rights.

2. Access to legal aid

Best practices will be presented for the civil registration of Roma – especially IDPs, refugees and migrants – and these will be shared with relevant authorities, legislators and experts. The project will highlight policies and practical methods in regional contexts that address administrative and financial obstacles to registration.

Simultaneously, the project will design and carry out campaigns informing Roma about registration procedures and encouraging them to apply for personal documents. This will be done in co-operation with Roma civil society.

3. Legalization of housing and settlements

The project will advocate for the legalization of Roma settlements by disseminating information on applicable standards, administrative and legal regulations, necessary steps and examples of good practice. To achieve this goal, work will be carried out with both local self-governments and Roma communities. Campaigns will be organized to empower Roma to assert their housing rights, and small grants will be provided for innovative and sustainable initiatives for settlements that are or will be legalized.

4. Combating discrimination and promoting visibility for Roma communities

The institutionalization of anti-discrimination practices will be promoted throughout the region, with a focus on improving access for Roma to education, health and social welfare systems.

At the same time, the project will address public discrimination and prejudice against Roma by providing opportunities for public media outlets and journalists to present an unbiased image of Roma people, through documentaries, media reports and journalistic training.

5. Regional co-operation

The project will promote regional co-operation through bilateral and multilateral expert gatherings and through opportunities for government authorities and civil society organizations to exchange views.

Contact us at:

ul. Miodowa 10, 00-251 Warsaw, Poland
Tel: +48 22 520 06 00
Fax: +48 22 520 06 05
bpri@odhr.pl

