



EU ENLARGEMENT FACTSHEET

<http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement>

ROMA IN SOUTHEAST EUROPE

GENERAL FACTS

- There are 10 to 12 million Roma in Europe, among whom around 1 million live in the Western Balkans and up to 4 million in Turkey, representing the largest ethnic minority in Europe.
- “Roma” here refers to a number of groups of people who describe themselves as Roma, Gypsies, Travellers, Manouches, Ashkali, Egyptians, Sinti, etc.
- Across Europe, Roma are still suffering from poor living conditions, social exclusion and discrimination. Even though some progress has been made in the past years, major efforts still need to be done to better integrate the Roma community, notably in enlargement countries.
- **Housing:** approx. 45% of Roma live in households that lack at least one of the following basic housing amenities: indoor kitchen, indoor toilet, indoor shower or bath, and electricity.
- **Access to civil documentation:** in Southeast Europe many Roma lack basic civil documentation; this prevents them from enjoying basic rights and from accessing benefits in their country.

This situation favours the migration of some Roma seeking **asylum** without success in EU countries. Enlargement countries will have to demonstrate strong political will at national and local level to improve Roma’s social inclusion and effectively fight against their discrimination. They also need to take measures to tackle abuse of the asylum system in the EU.

CHALLENGES IN INTEGRATING THE ROMA AND FIGHTING DISCRIMINATION IN SOUTHEAST EUROPE

- **Discrimination:** Roma still face widespread racism, discrimination and social exclusion.
- **Poverty:** approx. 90% of Roma live in households below national poverty lines. They lack sufficient access to education, employment, healthcare and housing.
- **Education:** only 15% of young Roma adults surveyed have completed upper-secondary general or vocational education.
- **Employment:** less than one third of Roma have paid employment.
- **Health:** approx. 20% of Roma are not covered by medical insurance and they usually encounter health problems limiting their daily activities.

INCLUSION OF ROMA IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE EU ACCESSION PROCESS

- Candidate countries and potential candidates in Southeast Europe (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey) will have to respect and promote European values and standards, and to comply with the EU legal framework:
- Improving Roma integration and fighting against their discrimination is part of the negotiations, especially those regarding the judiciary and fundamental rights.

*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.

Legal acts and measures	Date	Effect
Council Recommendation on effective Roma integration measures in Member States	December 2013	EU Member States need to step up their efforts to better integrate Roma communities and give specific guidance to help strengthen and accelerate their efforts. This recommendation is part of the EU acquis and therefore equally relevant for enlargement countries.
National Roma Integration Strategies	April 2011	All Member States are expected to present a strategy for Roma inclusion or sets of policy measures to the European Commission within their social inclusions policies for improving the situation of Roma people; Member States need to focus on education, employment, healthcare, housing and essential services. Its goals and principles are equally relevant for enlargement countries.
EU Treaty (Lisbon Treaty)	December 2009	Article 2 states that “rights of persons belonging to minorities” is a value on which “the Union is founded”.

HOW THE EU HELPS ENLARGEMENT COUNTRIES TO INCLUDE ROMA IN SOCIETY

- The EU provides financial assistance:
 - Since 2007 the EU has supported Roma integration with more than €100 million through the **Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA)**, supporting social inclusion and integration of Roma in the aspirant countries, including housing
 - There will be a significant increase of up to €170 million under IPA II in funding to support Roma inclusion for the period 2014-2020
 - The **European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)** works to provide support for the promotion of democracy and human rights in non-EU countries. EU contribution since 2007: more than €3.7 million
- The EU works to involve local authorities in order to put in place concrete measures and ensure adequate implementation, follow-up and monitoring of **national Roma strategies** and related action plans as well as the operational conclusions from the Roma seminars organised since 2011 by the Commission with all relevant stakeholders.
- **Measures in enlargement countries are similar to those in Member States** improving access for Roma to: **education, employment, health and housing** (notably public utilities such as water and electricity), and **civil documentation**.
- Several EU initiatives also support local authorities in enlargement countries in implementing strategies for Roma inclusion:
 - Serbia: EU project "**Technical Support for Roma Inclusion**" (worth €4.8 million), coordinated by the OSCE Mission in Serbia
 - **Mayors Making the Most of EU Funds for Roma Inclusion Network (MERI)**
 - **European Alliance of Cities and Regions for Roma Inclusion**
 - **Intercultural Mediation for Roma (ROMED)**

The EU advocates a **change of mind-set** among majority populations, so that Roma do not need to “deny [their] identity” anymore and that it “should not separate [them] from the others but make [everybody] come together,” said Ms **Elmas Arus**, a Turkish film director of Roma origins, who received the Council of Europe’s Raoul Wallenberg Prize in 2013 for her “outstanding contributions to raising awareness about the conditions of the Roma people in Turkey and elsewhere.”

