



European Commission



EU SUPPORT TO ROMA INTEGRATION IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

October 2021

#EU4Roma
#EURoma2030

“The Western Balkans has most Roma families without a single job for generations. Roma people have been neglected, they are socially excluded. But if we empower them to access real opportunities in the economy and society, there is a huge potential for progress. And this is what we need to work for. I am committed to continue this engagement throughout my mandate, and I count on the region’s leaders to reaffirm their commitment on Roma education and labour market inclusion”.

Olivér Várhelyi, Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement



In July 2019, at the Poznan Summit, the Western Balkans Prime Ministers adopted the **Declaration on Roma integration in the EU enlargement process**. They committed to improve the situation of Roma people in the region and to achieve concrete results in the fields of education, employment, health, housing, civil documentation and fight against discrimination by the time of their EU accession. On 7 October 2020, the Commission adopted a **new 10-year strategy on Roma inclusion covering both the EU and its external relations**, which was endorsed by Western Balkan partners at the ministerial meeting on 27 October in Albania. On 12 March 2021, the Council unanimously adopted the **Recommendation on Roma equality, inclusion and participation**, thus further committing the EU to address the multiple challenges Roma communities face.

At least
1 million



of Roma living in the Western Balkans

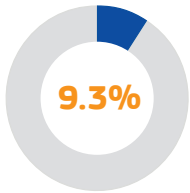
The EU is working with the region to provide tangible results, promoting socio-economic inclusion of Roma people.

The European Union will continue to support reforms and alignment with EU standards through substantial funds under the **Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance 2021-2027**. As mentioned in the **Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans**, improving **labour market participation, especially of young people and women, disadvantaged groups and minorities, in particular Roma**, will be a priority and can strongly contribute to economic growth.



Over €80 million from EU budget (IPA II) allocated to support Roma integration in the Western Balkans since 2014

Key areas of EU support to Roma integration in the Western Balkans

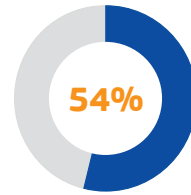


of Roma do not possess an ID Card



Inclusion

- ▶ Reducing poverty gap between Roma people, including children, and the general population



of Roma can't secure daily food



Participation

- ▶ Empowering Roma to participate in political life and to report discrimination
- ▶ Increased cooperation with Roma NGOs



Equality

- ▶ Fighting discrimination
- ▶ Ensuring that more people feel comfortable having Roma neighbours



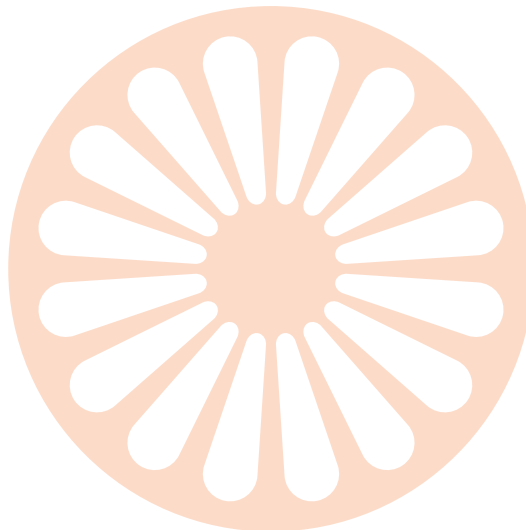
Health

- ▶ Increasing life expectancy by ensuring that Roma men and women live 5 years longer on average by 2030



Housing

- ▶ Improving access to housing
- ▶ Reducing overcrowding
- ▶ Better access to tap water



Education

- ▶ Increasing participation in early childhood education and care
- ▶ Reducing the gap in upper secondary completion rate

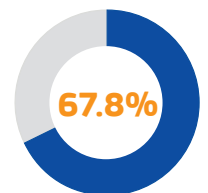


Employment

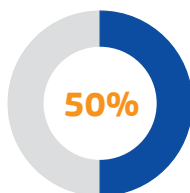
- ▶ Reducing the employment gap especially among women and young people, and reducing the number of people not in education, employment, or training



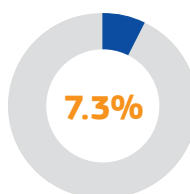
88% of Roma live in severe material deprivation



of Roma live in overcrowded dwellings



of Roma complete compulsory education



of Roma women in the labour market

Regional EU-funded projects for Roma integration in the Western Balkans*

Roma Integration – phase II

Supports the governments in the Western Balkans and Turkey to reduce the socio-economic gap between the Roma and non-Roma population, and increase their integration in key sectors: employment, housing, education, healthcare, civil registration and non-discrimination.



The project is also helping to coordinate and address the needs of vulnerable Roma during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Implemented by the Regional Cooperation Council

€2.8 million

1/2019
12/2021

www



Romani women – power of change

The project's aim is to empower Roma women to increase their participation in local and national policy and decision making processes, through dialogue with the national and local governments to reach changes towards Roma integration and non-discrimination.

Implemented by Roma Active Albania

€1.1 million

1/2020
12/2023

www



ROMACTED II

It promotes good governance and Roma empowerment at local level. The project aims at building up political will and sustained policy engagement of local authorities to enhance democratic local governance and to build up capacity and stimulate the empowerment of local Roma communities to contribute to the design, implementation and monitoring of plans and projects concerning them.



The project is providing special support to COVID-19 activities.

Implemented by Council of Europe

€6.5 million

1/2021
12/2024

www

EU Regional Action for Roma Education and first employment

It promotes durable systemic change and de-segregation within education systems in the Western Balkans and Turkey with the aim to reduce the Roma/non-Roma gap in participation to and completion of quality education as well as to improve Roma transition between education and employment.

Implemented
by the Roma
Education
Fund

€3.8
million

4/2018
—
12/2021

www



Strengthen national and local systems to support the effective reintegration of Returnees in the Western Balkans

The project aims at promoting holistic solutions to reintegration that provide immediate support to vulnerable returnees, but also address the root causes and negative drivers of migration. The project activities use a systemic approach by combining practical reintegration measures with the overall governance of migration. The results of the project will lead into a streamlined support of vulnerable returnees through the mainstream social protection policies and social services systems, in partnerships with the CSOs/NGOs. In this respect, the project will contribute to the broader social inclusion agenda that promotes the socioeconomic wellbeing of Roma and vulnerable populations overall.

Implemented
by UNDP and
World Bank

€6.8
million

10/2020
—
6/2024

EU Support to REDI: Advancing Roma Entrepreneurs in the Western Balkans

The overall objective of the project is to advance employment and the economic situation of Roma in Serbia and North Macedonia. In order to do this, the project aims at better understanding the barriers faced by Roma female/male entrepreneurs and job seekers in accessing funding, jobs and labour market measures as well as enhancing business capacities of male and female Roma entrepreneurs. The purpose of the project is also to increase the capacities of financial institutions and governments agencies to serve Roma entrepreneurs.

Implemented
by Roma
Entrepreneurship
Development
Initiative

€778,000

7/2021
—
7/2024