

Description of the EU pilot project for civil society capacity building and monitoring of the implementation of national Roma integration strategies

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Introduction and objectives

The pilot project ‘Capacity building for Roma civil society and strengthening its involvement in the monitoring of national Roma integration strategies’¹ was initiated by the European Parliament. It is managed by the European Commission, Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers (DG Justice). It is coordinated by the Central European University (CEU), in partnership with the European Roma Grassroots Organisations Network (ERGO), the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC), the Fundación Secretariado Gitano (FSG) and the Roma Education Fund (REF), and will be implemented with the active participation of around 90 diverse NGOs from 27 EU member states.²

The objective of the pilot project is to contribute to strengthening the monitoring mechanisms of the implementation of the national Roma integration strategies through systematic civil society monitoring. The additional value of civil society monitoring comes from the independent status and the field experience of participating NGOs. The pilot project aims to enhance civil society monitoring in two key ways: by developing the policy monitoring capacities of civil society actors, and by supporting the preparation of high-quality, comprehensive annual civil society monitoring reports.

The monitoring shall focus on how the national Roma integration strategies of EU member states are implemented. It shall cover 9 thematic fields and horizontal issues: governance, education, employment, health care, housing, anti-discrimination, addressing antigypsyism, participation of Roma and gender equality.

Background

In 2011 the European Commission and then the Council adopted an EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020, and the member states developed either national Roma integration strategies.

Monitoring of the implementation of NRIS includes the following core elements:

- Since 2012 the Commission reports annually on the implementation of NRIS. In even years (2012, 2014, 2016) the report included both also details by member state.
- Since 2016 also member states report to the Commission annually on the implementation of NRIS. Reports of member states are not public (unless a given member state makes its report public).
- The Fundamental Rights Agency prepares surveys regularly to measure progress on the ground (see 2012, 2016).

In past years also various NGOs and NGO coalitions prepared civil society monitoring reports – or ‘shadow reports’ – with their information and assessment. E.g. comprehensive civil society monitoring was coordinated by the Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat, covering 6 member states in 2013 (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Spain) and another 5 member states in 2014 (Croatia, France, Germany, Italy, United Kingdom).

¹ JUST/2014/RPPI/PR/EQUA/0150.

² In one member state, Malta, there is no Roma community, therefore Malta is not part of the pilot project.

Description of foreseen activities

As a first step around 90 diverse NGOs from 27 EU member states will be involved through an open call.

Selected NGOs will be invited to take part in the following activities:

1. capacity building,
2. forming coalitions of NGOs (in countries where more than one NGO will be selected),
contracting,
3. preparation of monitoring reports,
4. disseminating monitoring reports,
5. networking with other NGOs.

1., Capacity building

Initial activities

By June 2017, the CEU and its partners will prepare a practical guide on preparing monitoring reports.

For Cluster 1 countries, all selected NGOs will be invited for a one day workshop in each country. The aim of each workshop will be to develop a common understanding of the objectives and activities, to develop capacities in data collection, assessment and dissemination, and to prepare forming a coalition from the open group of NGOs and the individual NGOs. Language of the workshops will be English and the national language. Workshops are planned for June or early July 2017. Travel costs of NGOs will be reimbursed.

For Cluster 2-4 countries, at least 1-2 selected NGOs from each country will be invited for a two day workshop in larger regions.³ The aim of each workshop will be to develop a common understanding of the objectives and activities, to develop capacities in data collection, assessment and dissemination. Language of the workshops will be English. Workshops are planned for September 2017. Travel costs of NGOs will be reimbursed.

After the national/regional workshops, in countries where more than one NGO will be selected, all selected NGOs will be asked to gather for a meeting in each country, organised by the coordinating NGO. The aim of each meeting will be to disseminate what was shared in the regional workshop, to tailor these to the specific situation of the country (e.g. identifying specific national sources of data, identifying main issues to be analysed in the monitoring reports, etc.), and to form a coalition. Language of these meetings will be the national language. Meetings are planned for Cluster 1 countries for early July 2017 and for Cluster 2-4 countries for September 2017. Travel costs of NGOs will be reimbursed.

Follow up activities

In 2017, during the preparation of monitoring reports, there will be an online help desk through which questions of coalitions of NGOs will be answered by the CEU and its partners.

In 2018, at least 1-2 NGOs from each country will be invited for a one day workshop in larger regions. The aim of each workshop will be to further improve capacities in data collection, assessment,

³ The 27 member states are planned to be grouped into three larger regions.

dissemination and access to EU funding. Language of the workshops will be English. Workshops are planned for spring 2018.

After the regional workshops, in countries where more than one NGO will be selected, all selected NGOs will be asked to gather for a meeting in each country, organised by the coordinating NGO. The aim of each meeting will be to disseminate what was shared in the regional workshop, and to tailor these to the specific situation of the country. Language of the meetings will be the national language. Meetings are planned for spring 2018.

Further activities with relevance to capacity building

Besides the above activities that are directly addressing capacity building, several other activities will be pursued for capacity building. These include peer learning during preparation of monitoring reports, quality control of draft monitoring reports, and peer learning through networking with other NGOs. See a description of activities these in sections below.

2., Forming coalitions of NGOs (in countries where more than one NGO will be selected), contracting

After the initial capacity building activities, selected NGOs will be expected to form a coalition in each country. This requires agreeing on cooperation principles, communication principles, allocating tasks and deciding on budget allocation. The agreement shall be included in a written coalition agreement.

Division of tasks will be up to the selected NGOs, for example, in many countries each NGO can be responsible for assessment of one or more thematic fields, or in Cluster 1 countries for comprehensive assessment of measures in one or more municipalities.

An NGO with advanced capacities for coordination and endorsed by the other selected NGOs shall coordinate and facilitate the foreseen coalition. This role includes both coordination among the NGOs within the coalition, and coordination and communication between the coalition and the CEU and its partners and between coalitions in different countries.

The CEU will sign a service contract with the coordinating NGO of each coalition, on behalf of the coalition; or in countries where a single NGO will be selected, with the single NGO. The contract shall include the above described coalition agreement. The coordinating NGO shall ensure participation of other selected NGOs within the coalition in line with the coalition agreement. This may take the form of e.g. subcontracting the NGOs, assignment of designated staff members of the NGOs, recovering costs of the NGOs, etc.

The European Commission has chosen to implement this pilot project within a service contract, the CEU implements the project accordingly. This makes it necessary that the selected NGOs also work within service contracts with the CEU, which is different than the usual grant-contract based involvement of civil society. Still, the CEU is committed to have a relationship with the selected NGOs based on true partnership and expects that the civil society coalitions will also enact partnership collaboration within a country.

Preparation of monitoring reports, dissemination of monitoring reports and networking with other NGOs will be done by the coalition; or in countries where a single NGO will be selected, by the single NGO.

3., Preparation of monitoring reports

General approach

The analysis shall describe what measures have been implemented by governments and what policy objectives remained disregarded, what has been the quality and appropriateness of the governmental measures, what has been the outcome of the measures on the ground, what were the reasons of higher or lower outcomes. Discussing outcomes does not imply that the monitoring reports shall provide fully fledged impact assessment of policies.

The analysis shall be comprehensive, covering various thematic fields and horizontal issues.

- Governance, education, employment, health care and housing are seen as thematic fields to be covered in thematic chapters.
- Antidiscrimination and tackling antigypsyism are both thematic fields to be covered in thematic chapters and horizontal issues to be addressed in the analysis of thematic fields.
- Participation of Roma and gender equality are seen primarily as horizontal issues to be addressed in the analysis of thematic fields.

The assessment shall be evidence-based. This shall be ensured through systematic data collection from local Roma communities and grassroots organisations, and through the use of a broad range of data sources (including official data produced by the national statistical offices and by national bodies responsible for thematic databases, data produced by international organisations such as FRA or OECD, data produced by academic surveys, etc.).

The assessment shall be balanced. This shall be ensured by describing both most acute challenges and promising practices.

At least in Cluster 1 and Cluster 2, coalitions of NGOs shall involve also other NGOs working on Roma inclusion, e.g. by inviting them to consult draft monitoring reports.⁴

In order to ensure high quality of the monitoring reports, the CEU and its partners will review and comment draft monitoring reports.

The monitoring reports shall be prepared both in English and the national language.

Overview of types of assessment

There will be four types of assessment:

- Assessment of implementation of the NRIS on the ground – in all countries;
- Assessment of the impact of relevant mainstream policies on Roma – in Cluster 1 and Cluster 2 countries;
- Comprehensive assessment of measures in 3-4 most relevant municipalities, including data collection from local Roma communities – in Cluster 1 countries;
- Ad-hoc analysis of new developments – in Cluster 1 countries.

⁴ If there are such NGOs in the country, consultation shall include also NGOs that submitted proposals, were eligible but not selected.

Assessment of implementation of the NRIS on the ground, in all countries

Assessment shall focus on the implementation of measures planned under the NRIS. Where important areas of the EU framework are not addressed by an NRIS, the assessment shall also point out this gap.

In general, analysis shall focus on the issues detailed below. The specific situation of a given country and its NRIS may justify focusing on additional issues and paying less attention to some of the issues listed below.

In 2017 monitoring reports of all countries shall include assessment of implementation of the NRIS in the following thematic fields: governance, antidiscrimination and addressing antigypsyism.

- Governance:
 - Coordinating institutional structures
 - Targeting key groups, including children, youth and women
 - National and EU funding
 - Monitoring and evaluation
 - Participation of Roma and civil society
- Anti-discrimination:
 - Level and most acute forms of discrimination
 - Changes in state machinery (court, equality body, ombudsman, etc.)
 - Most important legal cases at national level (court, equality body, ombudsman, etc.)
 - Most important legal cases at international level (European Court of Human Rights, infringement proceedings, etc.)
- Addressing antigypsyism:
 - Changes in attitudes in majority population
 - Rhetoric of leading politicians, media
 - Legal, policy and awareness raising efforts to combat hate speech targeting the Roma
 - Participation of Roma in public life (arts, culture, popular culture, sports, youth, civil society and community affairs)

Later monitoring reports shall include assessment of implementation of the NRIS in the following thematic fields: education, employment, health care and housing.

- Education:
 - Access to and quality of early childhood development and pre-school
 - Completion of primary and secondary education, early school leaving, test scores
 - Changing forms of segregation and measures for desegregation
 - Participation in and completion of tertiary education
 - Implementation of relevant country specific recommendations
- Employment:
 - Employment trends, and their impact on Roma
 - Involvement in formal and informal employment
 - Incentives for employment on the labour market
 - Access to and quality of personalised employment services
 - Employment in public sector (public administration, public services)
 - Implementation of relevant country specific recommendations of the EU (not necessarily explicitly mentioning Roma)
- Health care:
 - Health insurance problems
 - Access to basic health care services (e.g. health visitor, general practitioner, paediatrician, vaccination, etc.)
 - Access to family planning, prenatal and postnatal care for mothers and children

- Housing:
 - Housing conditions (including access to basic facilities)
 - Access to secure and affordable housing (including legalisation of informal settlements, social housing, affordable energy)
 - Segregation and measures for desegregation

Assessment of the impact of relevant mainstream policies on Roma, in Cluster 1 and Cluster 2 countries

Mainstream policies – e.g. strengthening early childhood development and pre-school services, incentives for formalising informal employment, improving access to primary health care services, addressing indebtedness of households, etc. – often have disproportionate impact on certain parts of the population, and may have higher impact on Roma than targeted measures (e.g. because the policy does not reach marginalised Roma communities, etc.).

In 2017 monitoring reports of Cluster 1 and Cluster 2 countries shall include assessment of relevant mainstream policies on Roma. The assessment shall focus on most relevant changes implemented since the adoption of the NRIS, most relevant changes planned, and areas where a change is most needed.

Assessment of impact of relevant mainstream policies on Roma shall focus on the key sectors: education, employment, health care and housing. Coalitions of NGOs will suggest which mainstream policies to assess. This will be discussed with the CEU and its partners.

Comprehensive assessment of measures in 1-2 most relevant municipalities each year, in Cluster 1 countries

In each year monitoring reports of Cluster 1 countries shall include comprehensive assessment of measures in 1-2 most relevant municipalities. The assessment shall including systematic data collection from local Roma communities and grassroots organisations.

There should be a diversity of selected municipalities, e.g. in terms of the territorial/regional division of the country, the size of the population, the estimated share of the Roma population, the specific challenges, etc. Either a `typical` or an `atypical` situation of a municipality may justify its selection. The typical situation may justify the selection especially if it gives ground for the assumption that experiences here may be similar to experiences in many other localities. The atypical situation may justify the selection especially if there is an especially large Roma population or there are especially acute challenges regarding Roma inclusion. Coalitions of NGOs will suggest which municipalities to select for the assessment. This will be discussed with and approved by the CEU and its partners.

Ad-hoc analysis of new developments, in Cluster 1 countries

Ad-hoc analysis may be justified for important new developments, e.g. an important change in policy and legislation, an important and major new call for funding, etc. By nature, ad-hoc analysis should react to developments that cannot be fully foreseen. Thus, topics of the ad-hoc analysis cannot be planned in detail. Ad-hoc analysis may be initiated by the coalitions of NGOs, or the CEU and its partners, or the Commission.

Timing

Monitoring reports will be prepared and disseminated in annual cycles.

In the first annual cycle, draft monitoring reports shall be prepared by October 31, 2017 for Cluster 1 countries and December 15, 2017 for all other countries; the CEU and its partners will comment the draft monitoring reports; based on these comments, final monitoring reports shall be prepared by December 20, 2017 for Cluster 1 countries and February 28, 2018 for all other countries.

Timing of the ad-hoc reports can coincide with the annual cycles of the project, however, should other factors such as issues of urgency (e.g. opportunity to influence draft new legislation or call for funding) justify, ad-hoc reports will be produced independently.

4., Dissemination of monitoring reports

The coalitions of NGOs will be asked to prepare and implement an advocacy strategy for actively disseminating monitoring reports and their main findings. After confirming their quality by the CEU and its partners, and the European Commission, the coalitions of NGOs shall make the monitoring reports available on their websites, in English and in the national language. In countries where the National Roma Contact Points organise national Roma platforms, the coalitions of NGOs may be invited to present and discuss main findings of monitoring reports. The coalitions of NGOs shall actively reach out to a broader professional and civil society audience, including further professionals, scholars and students. With the aim to challenge widespread negative attitudes in Europe's majority populations, the coalitions of NGOs may reach out also to the public audience, e.g. by dissemination of main findings of monitoring reports through different media channels. Wider discussions with national and international human rights, social inclusion, and anti-racism advocacy groups are encouraged.

5., Networking with other selected NGOs

With the aim to promote peer learning, coalitions of NGOs will be invited to active participation in the online network of NGOs from 27 member states and over 20 thematic experts. Coalitions of NGOs will have the opportunity to raise relevant topics and to contribute to online discussions in these topics. Language of the online discussions will be English. Active participation of all NGOs will be assisted by the coordinating NGOs.

Glossary

- **Antigypsyism:** the specific racism towards Roma who are stigmatized as 'gypsies' in the public imagination. For details see the reference paper at <http://antigypsyism.eu/>.
- **Cluster 1:** member states with the largest Roma communities and/or most acute challenges, including 5 countries: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia.
- **Cluster 2:** member states with significant Roma communities, including 6 countries: France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Spain and the UK.
- **Cluster 3:** member states with mid-size Roma communities, including 8 countries: Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Ireland, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal and Sweden.
- **Cluster 4:** member states with smaller Roma communities, including 8 countries: Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg and Slovenia.
- **Coalition of NGOs:** group of all selected NGOs in a country that agree on cooperation principles, allocate tasks and decide on budget allocation, and work together accordingly on preparing one annual monitoring report each year collectively. In countries where a single NGO will be selected, the role of the coalition of NGOs will be performed by the single NGO.
- **Coordinating NGO:** the NGO that facilitates and coordinates the work of the coalition of NGOs. The coordinating NGO shall be able to enter into a service contract with the CEU on behalf of the coalition, and ensure participation of other selected NGOs within the coalition. In countries

where a single NGO will be selected, the role of the coordinating NGO will be performed by the single NGO.

- **NGO with significant policy monitoring experience:** NGOs that had an active role in the preparation of comprehensive civil society monitoring reports coordinated by the Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat, or prepared at least one comprehensive, evidence based, and publicly available civil society monitoring report on Roma inclusion, social inclusion, equal opportunities or anti-discrimination.
- **Open group of NGOs:** NGOs submitting a proposal together (in Cluster 1 and Cluster 2 countries). The group is open as the selected group of NGOs and NGOs selected individually are foreseen to form a coalition of NGOs.
- **Roma-led NGO:** Roma leaders have significant but not necessarily exclusive role in the leadership of the organisation, e.g. at least half of the governance body or management pursue public activities associated with their Roma identity or ethnic origin/belonging