



EUROPEAN ROMA INFORMATION OFFICE

ROMA EXPERT GROUP 2017

RECOMMENDATION FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL ROMA INTEGRATION STRATEGIES (NRIS) WITH FOCUS ON EMPLOYMENT AND ROMA ENTREPRENEURSHIP

General recommendations for the implementation of the NRIS.

1. Require stronger commitment by MS in the implementation of the current National Roma Integration Strategies.
2. Require MS to upgrade NRIS with including national specific issues in addition to the four pillars education, employment, housing and health.
3. Improve the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the NRIS with including more stakeholders in this process
4. Introduce multi-dimensional and result oriented approach seeking a long term effect
5. Ensure evidence-based structure and multi-sectorial conditions for implementation of the NRIS as well as conditions for transferability of successful practices.
6. Connect NRIS with detailed action plans based on clear and realistic bench marks and indicators.
7. Improve mechanisms of coordination between relevant ministries and other governmental bodies at different level, national, regional and local.



8. Involve diverse key stakeholders, with specific focus on Roma social inclusion and equal treatment.
9. Introduce Anti-Gypsyism in the centre of the NRIS implementation processes as well as in other Roma integration and equal treatment policies.
10. Include Anti-Gypsyism as the fifth pillar of the NRIS.
11. Strengthening diversity and inclusion and combating segregation in education, housing, health care and employment;
12. Demand from MS ethnically based data collection in order to set up more realistic and measurable goals.
13. Stronger attention to community development and overcoming anti-Roma stereotypes
14. Stronger monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the NRIS and impose sanctions to MS for noncompliance.
15. Ensure adequate funding for the implementation of the NRIS with long term plan and possibly not only from EC funds but also from the national budget.
16. Maintain and expand civil society participation in planning EU funds
17. Strengthen CSO participation in using EU funds for Roma integration through:
18. Remove state aid / de minimis for Roma integration projects

19. Use CSOs as concrete beneficiaries of big national projects, as operators of global grants...: examples of EEA grants and Swiss cooperation
20. Provide targeted financial support to CSOs which are active at local and national level in promoting Roma integration via European and national dedicated funding instruments: for example, as part of a possible European Values Instrument
21. Introduce revolving fund or another financial instrument to facilitate CSO participation
22. Prohibit the use of EU and national funds for projects and practices contrary to Roma rights
23. Establish legally-binding rules and human rights-based selection criteria for funding
24. Mandate the participation of organisations that represent right-holders in the design of projects supported with EU and national funding
25. Attribute explicit roles to national human rights institutions (NHRIs), equality bodies and where relevant to non-governmental anti-discrimination organisations in the preparation, monitoring and assessment of projects and programmes using EU and national funding
26. Create monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for the use of EU and national funds to enhance accountability



Specific Recommendations with focus on employment and Roma entrepreneurship

ERIO's 2017 work plan focuses on promoting Roma entrepreneurship as way to combat Roma unemployment and discrimination in the workplace. Another reason to pay attention to this topic is the decision of the EC to dedicate the 2017 European Roma Platform to transitions from education to employment where the question of discrimination in employment will be the centre of the discussion and promoting Roma entrepreneurship will be a key for the solution of Roma discrimination in employment.

1. Promote measures and action for Roma entrepreneurship to eliminate discrimination against Roma in employment sector.

Persistent discrimination against the Roma in the employment sector can be circumvented through entrepreneurship. A substantial share of Roma reports to have experienced prejudice and discrimination when looking for work. In fact, 38-40% of Roma in Spain, Romania, and Portugal claim to have encountered such discrimination, whereas the share of Roma who experienced such treatment is much larger in Italy, Greece, and the Czech Republic (66-74%). Entrepreneurship, however, could lessen the effects of prejudice and discrimination which undermine Roma employment prospects.

2. Develop strategy for Roma entrepreneurship to decrease the high rates of unemployment and among Roma communities.

Entrepreneurship is a solution to the pressing issue of Roma unemployment. Persistent high rates of unemployment registered among the Roma underscore the need for innovative strategies, such as entrepreneurship, that would mitigate these circumstances. Given the high saturation of the job market and few employment opportunities, entrepreneurship has the potential to lessen unemployment through job creation as an alternative to job search.



3. Introduce innovative Roma entrepreneurship programs to break the vicious circle of poverty in Roma communities.

Roma entrepreneurship can eradicate poverty. Lessening Roma unemployment by means of promoting entrepreneurship helps to lift individuals and communities out of poverty. Entrepreneurship can, therefore, provide the Roma with the means to support themselves and their families financially.

4. Use Roma entrepreneurship to promote their culture. Identity and traditions.

By means of entrepreneurship, Roma have the opportunity to explore different elements of their culture. Potential entrepreneurs need not look very far when considering ideas for their business. It can be very innovative and motivating to develop entrepreneurial skills by exploring different elements of Roma culture. Significantly, this can contribute to the originality and uniqueness of the business.

5. Promote Roma entrepreneurship to break Roma prejudices and stereotypes for more effective integration

Entrepreneurship can also contribute to the change of the Roma image and help them integrate not only into the labour market but into the majority society. The previously mentioned Entrepreneurship of Roma Women project revealed that this endeavour contributed to the enhancement of the Roma image.¹⁵ As Roma people begin to engage in entrepreneurship, they will begin to secure a living for themselves and their families, thus improving their quality of life and social status and gradually moving up the social ladder. By strengthening financial security and promoting equality, Roma entrepreneurship can therefore contribute to greater social cohesion and good community relations.



6. Develop Roma entrepreneurship schemes to support national economy.

Increasing the extremely low employment rates among Roma through entrepreneurship would benefit not only the Roma, but the economy in general and, consequently, society as a whole. According to a report drawing on the results of the UNDP/World Bank/EC regional Roma 2011 survey, improving Roma employment rates is an “economic necessity for the countries in Eastern Europe and a priority for the EC.”¹⁶ The reason behind this necessity is the fact that, unlike majority populations across Central and Eastern Europe, the Roma population is young and growing. Consequently, Roma are 2 to 3 times more likely to supply the European labour market with new workers and if Europe wants to avoid putting its labour market in danger and put an end to the on-going waste of human potential, Roma unemployment must be dealt with. And what better way to deal with Roma unemployment than creating a supportive environment for the establishment of Roma entrepreneurships?

7. Ensure a better and equal access to start-up finances for Roma to establish their own business.

Facilitate easy access to micro-credits for Roma entrepreneurs. Access to microcredit is an important factor for the establishment and the functioning of a Roma entrepreneurship.

8. Develop capacity building programs providing adequate knowledge about laws and administrative procedures relevant to running a business. Successful entrepreneurship demands capacity building efforts among Roma entrepreneurs, particularly concerning financial affairs. In order to ensure the effective functioning of a business, entrepreneurs must have basic financial literacy, which they can obtain via training. Of course, financial literacy must also include knowledge of debt management and savings activities.



9. Create a support framework for both existing and aspiring Roma entrepreneurs.

This can have a positive effect on the success of Roma entrepreneurs. This support framework would ideally consist of a network of business centres operating on the local level, which would offer non-financial business services to entrepreneurs from the Roma community in the form of trainings, mentorships, legal advice, accounting support. However, only if combined with a more comprehensive and integrated strategy for the financial inclusion of Roma, it is unlikely to be effective.

10. Encourage the establishment of a business association involving Roma entrepreneurs.

Success of entrepreneurship largely depends on entrepreneurs gathering and forming business associations. However, Roma entrepreneurs are characterized by a low level of activity in this regard. The creation of such associations is needed as they could play an important role in promoting the following aspects of entrepreneurial endeavours: the general improvement of businesses, development of business skills and concerted efforts of approaching the market.

11. Create awareness raising campaigns about Roma entrepreneurship.

It is important to actively promote entrepreneurship among the Roma and encourage them to consider the benefits that it can bring. This promotion can be done by means of education and advertisement of successful Roma entrepreneurs.
