



DECADE OF
ROMA
INCLUSION
2005-2015

DECADE OF ROMA INCLUSION SECRETARIAT FOUNDATION

Decade News

Roma NGO Decade Focal Points Network

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The 1st Decade Focal Point Network Meeting in Budapest

The core value of the Decade Initiative is full and active participation of Roma in the Decade process. This is ensured and reinforced through the Roma NGO Decade Focal Point Network.

The wide range of consultations with partners on the future of the Decade revealed one firm conclusion: Roma participation is a core value of the Decade and it should be continued and strengthened in the future.

Establishment of the Decade Focal Point Network serves this purpose. Decade Focal Points have been identified through an open call for proposals in each Decade member state. For the list of Decade Focal Points and their principal activities, please click here:

www.romadecade.org/decade-participants-civil-society

The Decade Focal Points are designed to stimulate more active participation of Romani civil society in the Decade and other processes relevant to Roma inclusion, particularly the EU Framework.

The 1st Decade Focal Point Network meeting was held in Budapest on November 7-8 2013. The purpose of the meeting was to map the challenges the Decade Focal Points faced while implementing their activities in the first year and the innovative solutions that they could share with each other.

Another important objective was to make sure that the Decade Focal Points get to

know each other better in person to improve cooperation and group performance.

Association Mesecina, Decade Focal Point of Macedonia, created a web site (www.romadecadefocalpoint.org/index.php/en/) for the use and benefit of the whole network.

Asociación Nacional Presencia Gitana, the Spanish Decade Focal Point, invited the network for a second meeting in Barcelona in early December with the purpose to create an advocacy strategy that would strengthen the model of active Roma participation on the national and international level. The network produced a joint video message to governments calling on them to continue the Decade beyond 2015.



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Civil Society Monitoring: Updates and New Countries

Roma representatives and civil society organizations have had a significant role in monitoring the implementation and progress of the Decade since its beginning.

In 2013, eight new civil society coalitions have been selected from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, France, Germany, Italy, Montenegro, Serbia, and United Kingdom to monitor and produce reports by September 2014.

The Decade Secretariat has been coordinating the civil society monitoring of the implementation of the Decade Action Plans and National Roma Integration Strategies since 2012, in collaboration with the Open Society Foundations, and in consultation with the European Commission.

In these reports, civil society coalitions present alternative information to reports submitted by Decade member states to the International Steering Committee and by EU Member States to the European Commission on the implementation of their National Action Plans and National Roma Integration Strategies.

Such reports are not meant to substitute for quantitative monitoring and evaluation by State authorities but to channel local knowledge into national and European level policy processes and reflect on the real



Kick-off workshop with civil society coalitions in Budapest discussing the monitoring systems within the Decade and the EU Framework.

social impact of government measures.

In the pilot year of 2012, eight countries were monitored: *Albania, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Romania, Slovakia and Spain*. The reports are available at

www.romadecade.org/civilsocietymonitoring

When the European Commission requested further input for assessing the impact of National Roma Integration Strategies in 2012 and 2013, the Decade Secretariat decided to support the civil society coalitions to update their reports. The updated reports are also published on our homepage.

In 2013, eight new civil society coalitions have been selected from *Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, France, Germany, Italy, Montenegro, Serbia, and United Kingdom* to monitor and produce reports by September 2014.

The new coalitions participated at a kick-off workshop in Budapest to discuss with representatives of the Decade Secretariat and the European Commission their research plans, advocacy strategies and a common reporting template.



Signing the New Decade Declaration

The Decade's [24th International Steering Committee meeting](#) confirmed the general direction for the Decade future.

Participating governments, international organizations and Roma civil society agreed by consensus the intention to continue the Decade after 2015 and expressed the wish to further discuss the modalities in which the Decade should advance after 2015 by taking into account the lessons learned and the context created with the EU Framework. This consensus was formulated by the Secretariat into a new Declaration for the Decade.

The Declaration was presented at [the 25th International Steering Committee meeting](#), where the majority of National Coordinators affirmed their support for it and pledged to bring it back to their national governments for review and signature. Bulgaria and Slovakia expressed the need to continue discussion of the Decade future and the Declaration at the national level. The Czech Republic, while expressing commitment to the Declaration by the responsible governmental body, also expressed a need for more time in order to

consult with the new government. Spain, while acknowledging that the Decade should continue, expressed uncertainty about the level of its future involvement. All other government representatives, as well as international partners and Roma civil society, supported the new Declaration and pledged their reinvigorated commitment to the inclusion of Roma through the Decade.

At the same time the discussion on the reform of the Decade after 2015 was continued. Some Decade partners spoke of the need to eliminate duplicative reporting

requirements, overlapping meeting agendas and excess travel. The Secretariat is summarizing ideas obtained from the Decade partners on these issues in a reform proposal paper to inform the upcoming discussions.

By the end of 2013 Albania and Montenegro had signed the Declaration. The Secretariat is trying to hold consultation meetings with all member states to discuss their ideas for a future Decade, and the process will continue in 2014.

The Montenegrin Presidency is committed to further the discussions on the Decade future. It recently accepted the generous offer by the Romanian government to host a meeting on the reform of the Decade in Bucharest, on February 20, 2014. The meeting will bring together Decade partners to discuss and hopefully agree on how the Decade will function internally and how it can be harmonized with the EU Framework after 2015.

For more on the Decade future please visit our website:

www.romadecade.org

Declaration

In 2005, eight governments declared 2005–15 as the Decade of Roma Inclusion, and were soon joined by others committed to eliminating discrimination and closing the unacceptable gaps between Roma and the rest of society. Under the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies, many more states and the EU have voiced the same commitment. While some progress has been made, we recognize that much more needs to be done.

Accordingly, we reaffirm the principles of the Decade and commit to continue efforts—considering various ways of cooperation—to ensure the full inclusion and integration of Roma into our societies, beyond 2015. In particular, we will continue to work closely with Roma and non-Roma civil society, international organizations and other partners to achieve the goals spelled out in our action plans and integration strategies and to comply with our obligations under international law. To that end, we pledge to take efforts to streamline and harmonize the Decade process and the EU framework process, including creating and implementing unified reporting framework.

Our mission:

Eliminate discrimination against Roma and close the unacceptable gap between Roma and the rest of the society in the areas of education, employment, health and housing

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Upcoming events

1. **Thematic Workshop: Discrimination Against Roma—the Challenges of Anti-Gypsyism and Multiple Discrimination; January 30-31 2014, Podgorica , Montenegro**

This thematic workshop is envisaged as a capacity building event which shall gather representatives of equality bodies/Ombudspersons as well as Roma civil society representatives from the Decade countries to improve their knowledge and understanding on the particularities of discrimination against Roma (anti-Gypsyism) as well as issues of multiple discrimination with a specific view on the gender dimension.

2. **The Decade: To Be or not to Be; February 20 2014, Bucharest, Romania**

The purpose of this meeting is to gather National Decade Coordinators, representatives of Roma civil society as well as international partners, including the World Bank, the European Commission and the OSF to discuss the future of the Decade as well as agree on a detailed model of a new Decade initiative.

Follow the work of the Decade on our Facebook pages:



www.facebook.com/DecadeSecretariat

www.facebook.com/RomaDecade



Subscribe to our Youtube channel

www.youtube.com/romadecade

to watch videos of the International Steering Committee Meetings and other events organized under the framework of the Decade of Roma Inclusion.



*Season's Greetings
and Best Wishes for a
Happy New Year
from the Decade
Secretariat Team*