



DECADE OF
ROMA
INCLUSION
2005-2015

DECADE OF ROMA INCLUSION SECRETARIAT FOUNDATION

Decade News

The Future of the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 Initiative

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As of this writing, all the participating governments in the Decade from enlargement countries have endorsed the declaration supporting the continuation of the Decade of Roma Inclusion. EU Member State participants continue to ponder what role they might have in a future Decade.

In order to make the Decade more relevant to enlargement countries, there have

been active discussions about moving the Decade Secretariat under the umbrella of the Regional Cooperation Council in Sarajevo.

One of the advantages of such a move would be to reach out beyond the usual Decade interlocutors at the national government level, who are usually well-meaning officials working in ministries addressing human rights or social welfare but with no authority to make and implement real policy changes cutting across different parts of the government.

It is hoped that the RCC, with its focus on development, will be able to convene ministries of finance, labor and other important players that have up to now been absent from active engagement in Roma inclusion. The role of the RCC in promoting Roma inclusion is presently under active

consideration by the RCC Board, with a decision expected in February.

The European Commission is also expected to play a strong role in a new Decade, with DG Enlargement in particular stressing the importance of Roma inclusion in the accession process. Clear progress in addressing the needs of Roma communities in the areas of housing, healthcare, employment, education and discrimination is expected to be an important benchmark for accession.

In addition to providing capacity building to States, a new Roma Decade can help maintain the dialogue between government and Roma civil society, increase government accountability and keep the urgency of Roma inclusion in the eye of the public and of policy makers.

4th Decade Focal Points networking meeting

The 4th networking meeting of the Decade Focal Points held on 20-21 November 2014 in Skopje, Macedonia reaffirmed the commitment and request of the Roma civil society to the governments to continue with the Decade beyond 2015. Representing a wide network of Roma NGOs from the Decade Participating countries, the Focal Points see the Decade as a genuine platform for constructive dialogue between governments and civil society on Roma inclusion at international level. The Decade Initiative has pioneered Roma participation in policy discussions affecting them and the Focal Points believe that this practice should continue in whatever form the Decade continues after 2015.



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The responsibility for Roma inclusion needs to be shifted much more towards the Governments



Prejudice and discrimination against Roma have to be thoroughly addressed.

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Decade Intelligence: no magic wand for Roma Inclusion

The Decade Intelligence project managed to map 314 projects across the Decade countries. Although it is an incomplete list of projects implemented under the Decade, it still provides useful information about what has been done to improve equality between Roma and non-Roma.

Information on projects can be found on: <http://www.romadecade.org/about-the-decade-decade-good-practices>, along with information on partners involved in Roma inclusion work.

To understand better the reasons why some projects are more successful than others, an evaluation has been conducted on 42 of the mapped projects. The analysis of the evaluations resulted in the Decade Intelligence report, which can be read in English, Romanes or one of the official languages of the countries in the Decade:

<http://www.romadecade.org/news/decade-intelligence-report/9765>.

The need to discuss the results of the analysis was evident, as the evaluation showed common mistakes are repeated and learned lessons need better dissemination.

Therefore the Decade Secretariat, assisted by the Decade Focal Points, organized discussions of the report with Decade partners in all the Decade countries in the period November-December (meetings in Spain and Hungary are yet to be held).

Each of the meetings gathered up to 25 participants representing governmental, non-governmental and international organizations involved in Roma inclusion work. All the discussions were fruitful, with many examples shared and discussed, and conclusions from the analysis looked at from the aspect of actual experience of partners.



While there is no magic wand for Roma inclusion, and much depends on the context in which Decade partners work on this issue, there are many recommendations streaming from the Decade Intelligence meetings that proved to be important for sharing, the most important ones being:

- ◇ The responsibility for Roma inclusion needs to be shifted much more towards the Governments;
- ◇ Prejudice and discrimination against Roma have to be thoroughly addressed.



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Cohesion for all? Hearing at the European Parliament

ERGO Network and the Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation organized a hearing in the European Parliament on ***Cohesion for All?*** on the 2nd of December 2014. The event was hosted by Soraya Post, Member of the European Parliament.

The European Union has asserted its strong commitment to contribute to equal opportunities for Roma and their inclusion as equal citizens. The EU structural funds have been a fundamental tool of the EU strategy for Roma inclusion, by striving to improve the conditions of Europe's most discriminated minority. While positive examples of EU funded projects can be found across Europe, the situation of Roma in most EU member states remains worrisome.

What are the reasons behind the stagnation? And what can be done to improve the effectiveness of EU funding for Roma inclusion? On the doorstep of the new programming period 2014–2020, the hearing looked at developments in selected member states and presented experiences with integrated programming for Roma

inclusion based on original research from the grassroots level.

In the framework of the hearing, the main lessons of civil society monitoring from four countries were presented by La Voix des Roms, France; Sozial Fabrik, Germany; Associazione 21 luglio, Italy; National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups, UK.

The Decade Secretariat outlined the rationale and methodology of civil society monitoring, whereas DG Employment of the European Commission discussed the unique contribution of coordinated civil society monitoring reports to the Commission's assessment within the EU Framework and possible steps towards more comprehensive and transparent EU level monitoring.

The civil society monitoring reports are available at www.romadecade.org/civilsocietymonitoring

The hearing looked at developments in selected member states and presented experiences with integrated programming for Roma



Thematic workshops organized by the BiH Decade Presidency



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The Bosnia and Herzegovina Decade Presidency organized two thematic workshops on the issues of **Roma women's health and security** and **Inclusive education without discrimination**. Both workshops served as platforms for exchange of good practices and gathered relevant government officials and NGO representatives to touch upon the issues of Roma inclusion from different perspectives.

The Roma women's health and security workshop was organized by CARE International and the Presidency country on 15-17 October 2014. The purpose of the conference was to evaluate the existing Decade National Action Plans regarding their policies on reproductive health and gender based violence. The presentations and conclusions of the workshop are available at www.romadecade.org/egy-cikk.php?hir_id=9785

The Inclusive education without discrimination workshop was organized by Kalisara and the Presidency on 17-18 November 2014. The objective of the workshop was to discuss the institutional mechanisms and structure for implementation and monitoring of the program for combating discrimination and inclusion of Roma children in education. More information is available at www.romadecade.org/news/inclusive-education-without-discrimination/9788

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

Upcoming events

1. **Integrated programs for housing and employment, March 2015 (dates to be confirmed), Sarajevo, BiH**

This workshop will bring together relevant local institutions and non-governmental organizations with the aim of exchanging experiences on lessons learned that may help to develop sustainable models for better social inclusion of Roma through a combination of housing, employment and other social measures. The workshop will contain four themes:

- Roma integration within social housing;
- Programs that combine housing with employment and other social services;
- Challenges in the evaluation and monitoring of integrated programs;
- Development of models for better involvement of local communities and NGOs.

2. **28th ISC Meeting; September 2015 (dates to be confirmed), Sarajevo, BiH**

The 28th International Steering Committee will mark the official closure of the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 Initiative. This event will be hosted by the government of Bosnia and Herzegovina and will gather the National Coordinators of the Decade Participating countries, the Decade Focal Points as well as many international partners and individuals. The closing event will draw attention to the progress achieved and the lessons learnt in the past Decade.