



Funded by  
the European Union



Implemented by  
Roma Active  
Albania



2025 EU award for

# ROMA INTEGRATION

in the Western Balkans  
and Türkiye



## Rules of contest and award criteria.

### EU Award for Roma<sup>1</sup> Integration in the Western Balkans and Türkiye, 2025

#### 1. Background

With an estimated 12 million living in Europe, the Roma is one of the largest ethnic minorities in Europe. About 1 million Roma live in the Western Balkans and 2.8 million in Türkiye. They share a rich culture and history that is inextricably linked to Europe, but have also faced a long history of exclusion. Many Roma still face severe forms of racism, discrimination, social exclusion and poverty. Improving their equality, inclusion and participation continues to be a key priority for the European Commission and criteria for progressing on the enlargement path.

The EU is working to improve the social integration of Roma into society and to provide tangible results on the ground. The European Union is also providing substantial funds for social integration measures through the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA).

The IPA beneficiaries have adopted Strategies and related action plans on Roma integration that are being renewed to adapt to the new EU 2020-2030 Roma Strategic Framework. Important work is done through public authorities, national and local CSOs and individuals/activists.

Honouring these efforts, since 2014, the DG NEAR Award on Roma Integration in the Western Balkans and Türkiye has been raising the visibility both of challenges and of the important work in support of Roma integration. The Award offers recognition, publicity and support to positive models showing tangible results in the area of Roma Integration.

This action will enable the **sixth edition of the EU Roma Integration Award** in the Western Balkans and Türkiye.

The focus of the 2025 award will be **positive achievements for Roma inclusion in the sector of education** (pre-school, primary and secondary levels).

There will be indicatively **two awards** per IPA beneficiary, promoting in total 14 valuable experiences. Not-for profit civil society winners will receive a monetary prize; whilst public entities and private enterprises will receive a non-monetary award and a certificate of the recognition by the European Commission.

All awardees will receive international recognition through an **Award ceremony** and will be invited to attend a **study visit** in Brussels, to meet with key actors active in the sector of education and other related fields that present opportunities for supporting Roma inclusion.

The award is funded by the European Union (IPA Funds) and implemented by Roma Active Albania (RAA).

---

<sup>1</sup>As it is most commonly used in EU policy documents and discussions, the term "Roma" refers to a variety of groups of people who describe themselves as Roma, Gypsies, Travellers, Manouches, Ashkali, Egyptian, Sinti and other without denying the specificities of these groups.

## 2. Aim of the award

The award will help draw attention to concrete efforts and positive achievements by various relevant Roma and non-Roma players, such as but not exclusively public institutions, private companies and businesses, employers, teachers, civil society organizations in the sector of education. Gender equality and the empowerment of Roma women will be an important dimension. The award will additionally help to recognise approaches and initiatives that have helped and scored significant progress and changes in the lives of Roma people, through the implementation of positive examples, and that could be replicated in other context and places.

Specifically, the award is intended:

- ) To promote Roma inclusion in Western Balkans and Türkiye and raise awareness on the positive contribution of Roma people to society.
- ) To foster cooperation among the actors involved in the process of Roma inclusion.
- ) To ensure recognition and sustainability of identified actions **in the sector of education** (pre-school, primary and secondary levels) implemented at grassroots level.
- ) To promote successful models of initiatives that have brought **positive achievements for Roma inclusion** in the enlargement region and to encourage good practices exchange.

Gender equality and the empowerment of Roma women will be an important dimension. The award will help to recognise approaches and initiatives that have helped and scored significant progress and changes in the lives of Roma people, through the implementation of positive examples, and that could be replicated in other context and places.

It will support local grassroots initiatives and participation and encourage other actors to join their efforts. Furthermore, it will encourage other stakeholders to pay more attention to relevant initiatives and policies that have a high impact on Roma.

An independent evaluation panel will review the applications and select the winners of the award.

There will be two award winners per IPA beneficiary, promoting in total 14 valuable experiences.

Individuals and Civil Society awardees, may furthermore receive a financial support to continue their initiatives in the field of education for Roma inclusion. These award winners eligible for financial support will receive a monetary award of 8000 Euro the first prize and 5000 Euro the second prize. All awardees will win a study visit in Brussels, Belgium.

Each winner will receive a statue as a symbol of the recognition given by the European Commission DG ENEST<sup>2</sup>.

## 3. Rules of contest

This award will be open to public institutions, private companies and businesses, as well to individuals, including but not limited to: teachers, mentors; and civil society organizations - Roma and non-Roma. Civil Society (organisations and individuals), public and private institutions (including but not limited to Small and Medium Enterprise, social businesses, and other initiatives related to the sector of education);

---

<sup>2</sup> As of 01/02/2025 DG NEAR will be referred to as DG ENEST

established and residing in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, The Republic of North Macedonia, Kosovo<sup>B</sup> and Türkiye.

The award will be opened to application and nominations from third parties.

### ***Applications***

- ) Applications can be directly submitted by interested parties.
- ) Applications must be in the respective form, readable, accessible and printable.
- ) Incomplete applications may be considered inadmissible if essential elements are missing.
- ) An application is considered valid, when is duly filled-in together with the Declaration of Honour.
- ) Applications must be submitted together with the relevant documentation, such as photographs, short video clips (max. 3min), or similar.
- ) Only one application can be submitted. In case of multiple applications, the applicant will be disqualified.

### ***Nominations***

- ) Nominations can be submitted by private individuals, a relevant group of individuals, international organisations, civil society organisations and public authorities, established or active in the enlargement region: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, The Republic of North Macedonia, Kosovo and Türkiye, with the consent of the nominee.
- ) Nominations must be in the respective form, readable, accessible and printable.
- ) Incomplete applications may be considered inadmissible if essential elements are missing.
- ) A nomination is considered valid, when is duly filled-in together with the Declaration of Honour.
- ) Nominations must be submitted together with the relevant documentation, such as photographs, short video clips (max. 3min), or similar.
- ) Only one nomination can be submitted by each private individual/CSO/international organisation/public authority. In the case of international organisations they can only submit one nomination per country. In case of multiple nominations by the person/CSOs/IO/public authorities, they will be disqualified.

### ***Supporting documents***

Applicants and nominators, are invited to provide additional supporting information as available, and encouraged to send documents in electronic version whenever possible. Supporting information may include:

- ) Video clips, photographs;
- ) publications (leaflets, brochures etc. promoting the initiative/project);
- ) links to websites related to the initiative/project (to be mentioned in the application form)
- ) media coverage (if any);
- ) any other material and proof of the impact of the initiative implemented by the applicant/nominee for the prize.

### ***Multiple submissions***

Only one application can be submitted.

Each person/CSO/IO and/or public authorities can nominate only one nominee.

---

<sup>B</sup> This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence

Multiple applications and nominations will result in disqualification.

An individual, who is applying as applicant, cannot be nominated, and as well, a nominee cannot directly apply for the award.

***Consent on use of information for publication.***

Some information provided from the applicants, nominators and nominees, can be used for further publications. Thus a consent form signed by all parties shall be submitted together with the other documents.

***Language***

The language used for both applications and nominations, is English.

The supporting documents can be in different languages, however English versions will be appreciated.

***Deadlines***

Deadline for submitting the applications and nominations, together with other relevant documentations, is **28<sup>th</sup> of February 2025, 23:59 Brussels Time.**

***Submission***

Submission of applications shall be via e-mail in the address: [application\\_eu\\_award\\_2025@raa.al](mailto:application_eu_award_2025@raa.al)

The title of the email must contain the initials of the applicant and the country of origin.

Submission of nominations shall be via email in the address: [application\\_eu\\_award\\_2025@raa.al](mailto:application_eu_award_2025@raa.al)

The title of the email must contain the acronym of the nominator, initials of the nominee and the country of origin.

Applications and nominations, along with the supporting documents, can also be sent by post at the address:

**Roma Active Albania - Rr. “YlberBylykbashi”; P. 25; Shk. 2; Ap. 4; Tirana, Albania**

In this case, only the applications/nominations received by us within the deadline will be considered. Applications reaching by post later than the set deadline shall not be considered for evaluation.

**4. Eligibility criteria**

The award welcomes applications and nominations from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia, The Republic of North Macedonia, and Türkiye.

***a) Candidates***

The award of the winners falls under PRAG rules, 6.9.2. Financial support to third parties by grant beneficiaries.

It is to be considered as activities eligible for support on a basis of a fixed list; unconditional cash transfers to human right defenders to support their work in general.

The awardees will be public administration, institutions, companies, employers, individuals, and CSOs fulfilling the following eligibility criteria:

- ) Individuals and entities: institutions and companies, employers, small businesses and social enterprises, CSOs providing services, established in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, The Republic of North Macedonia, Kosovo and Türkiye.

- ) The entity has been implementing initiatives related to education of Roma men and women, for a minimum of 1 year that for their approach or result constitute an important contribution to Roma education and could be reproduced as model in other areas of the enlargement region.
- ) The entity must prove that the initiative for which the application is made has been carried out for a minimum of 6 months prior to applying for the award, and has already given results.

*b) The types of activities eligible for the award*

The purpose of the financial support is to promote the integration of Roma by drawing attention to the key role of education. The award will recognize and give political support to the efforts of the chain of actors involved in the process of Roma integration. The financial support to Civil Society actors will enable them to continue their work in the field of Roma education, increasing the impact to their communities.

## 5. Award criteria

The winners of the EU Award for Roma Integration will be selected by an independent panel of evaluators, according to the following award criteria whereby transparency of the procedure and equal treatment of the participants will be ensured:

- ) Extent on quantity and quality of Roma access in education.
- ) Extent of addressing of gender dimension in integration of Roma.
- ) Extent of impact of initiative in Roma communities and lives.
- ) Extent of initiative's promotion of equal treatment for Roma.
- ) Extent of sustainability.

### **a) The different types of activities eligible for financial support, on the basis of a fixed list**

The activities to be awarded (whether through a monetary and non-monetary award) should have resulted in, or have good potential to contribute to, inclusion and support measures, that have a **positive achievement for Roma inclusion in the sector of** and may include but not limited:

- ) Activities that provide quality early childhood education to Roma children,
- ) Activities aimed at increasing access to pre-school education for Roma children, addressing barriers such as affordability and transportation,
- ) Activities that provide additional support to Roma children who are at risk of underachievement or dropping out,
- ) Activities that engage Roma families in the education of their children and support parental involvement,
- ) Activities that provide career counselling and vocational training to help Roma students transition successfully from school to work,
- ) Activities that address and combat discrimination in schools and promote inclusivity for Roma students,
- ) Activities that integrate digital skills training and e-learning resources into secondary education for Roma students,
- ) Specific actions favouring young Roma women empowerment through formal and informal education,

- ) Special attention will be given to initiatives targeting, implemented by, or lead by Roma women.

**b) The types of persons or categories of persons which may receive financial support**

The awardees will belong to Civil Society – includes CSOs and individuals-active in the field of Roma education. The Civil Society actors may receive financial support to continue their initiatives in the field of education of Roma.

Each competitor eligible for one application has to fulfil the following eligibility criteria:

- ) Be individual and entities: institutions and companies, employers, education teachers and actors Roma and non-Roma, small businesses and social enterprises, CSOs providing services, established in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, The Republic of North Macedonia, Kosovo and Türkiye who through their work made a significant contribution to the employment of Roma in the Western Balkans and Türkiye.
- ) The entity has been implementing relevant activities for a minimum of 1 year.
- ) The entity must prove that the initiative for which the application is made has been carried out for a minimum of 6 months prior to applying for the award and has already given results.
- ) Only Civil Society actors will be entitled to financial support.

**c) The criteria for selecting these entities and giving the financial support**

The main selection criteria but not limited to, are:

- ) Extent of impact of initiative on quantity and quality of Roma access in education;
- ) Extent of addressing of gender dimension in integration of Roma;
- ) Extent of impact of initiative in Roma communities and lives;
- ) Extent of initiative's promotion of equal treatment for Roma;
- ) Extent of sustainability;
- ) Success in applying a gender equality approach.

**d) The criteria for determining the exact amount of financial support for each third entity**

The amount of the financial award for the entitled entities (CSOs) will be a fixed amount for the first prize and also for the second prize. The above criteria will be evaluated and a scoring system will assess the applications/nominations from each category.

**e) The maximum amount which may be given**

The award winners eligible for financial support will receive a monetary award of 8000 Euro the first prize and 5000 Euro the second prize.

## 6. Use of Data

Submitted data and personal information will be treated confidentially, solely for the purpose of the award.

All personal data contained in the application shall be processed in accordance with regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 (*OJ L 295, 21.11.2018, p. 39–98*) on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data. Such data shall be processed by the Contracting Authority solely in connection with the implementation and follow-up of the application of the winner, without prejudice to a possible transmission to the bodies in charge of a monitoring or inspection task in accordance with European Community and European Union legislation.

Participants may, at any time, lodge a complaint against the processing of their personal data with the European Data Protection Supervisor.

The Commission shall only be authorized to publish, in whatever form and on or by whatever medium, the following information:

- ) The name of the winning applicant or nominee;
- ) The name of the nominator;
- ) The general purpose of the activities of the winning to the award of the prize;
- ) The amount of the prize awarded;
- ) The geographic location of the activities carried out.

The European Commission may produce videos or other promotional material about the winners. Photos and videos taken by the European Commission either in preparation of the award ceremony or during the award ceremony are the sole property of the European Commission.