



European  
Commission



## EU SUPPORT TO ROMA INTEGRATION IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

September 2023

#EU4Roma  
#EURoma2030  
#EIP

*“The Western Balkans has most Roma families without a single job for generations. Roma people have been neglected, they are socially excluded. But if we empower them to access real opportunities in the economy and society, there is a huge potential for progress. And this is what we need to work for. I am committed to continue this engagement throughout my mandate, and I count on the region’s leaders to reaffirm their commitment on Roma education and labour market inclusion”.*

Olivér Várhelyi, Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement



In July 2019, at the Poznan Summit, the Western Balkans Prime Ministers adopted the **Declaration on Roma integration in the EU enlargement process**.

All following Berlin Summits (Sofia 2020, Berlin 2021 and 2022) adopted new **Roma Poznan follow-up conclusions**. Some previous commitments were fulfilled and new ones added. The Poznan commitments cover the fields of education, employment, health, housing, civil documentation, fight antigypsism, data collection and inclusion of the Roma dimension in the green and digital agendas

In 2021 and 2022 respectively, all Western Balkan region partners approved new Roma inclusion Strategies/Action Plans for the next 5 to 10 years aiming to align with the “EU framework on Roma inclusion, equality and participation 2020-2030”. On 9 January 2023 the Commission adopted a Communication analysing, for the Members States and the WB partners, the national strategies alignment with the EU Framework and identifying changes needed.

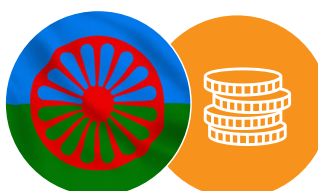
At least  
**1 million**



of Roma living in the  
Western Balkans

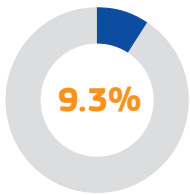
At the 2022 Berlin Summit, the Western Balkan governments further developed the concrete actions to be implemented in the digital field including: investments to facilitate Roma settlements’ access to internet, reinforce Roma entrepreneurs’ connections, development of youth’s digital potential and support access to digital tools in schools with vulnerable children.

The European Union is working with the Western Balkan partners to promote the socio-economic inclusion of Roma people. The EU is supporting the alignment with EU standards through substantial funds under the **Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance 2021-2027**.

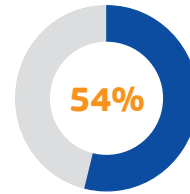


**Over €87 million**  
from EU budget allocated to  
support Roma integration in the  
Western Balkans between 2014  
and 2022

# Key areas of EU support to Roma integration in the Western Balkans 2014-2022



of Roma do not possess an ID Card\*



of Roma can't secure daily food\*

### Equality

- ▶ Fighting discrimination and anti gypsyism
- ▶ Ensuring that more people feel comfortable having Roma neighbours

### Inclusion

- ▶ Reducing poverty gap between Roma people, including children, and the general population

### Participation

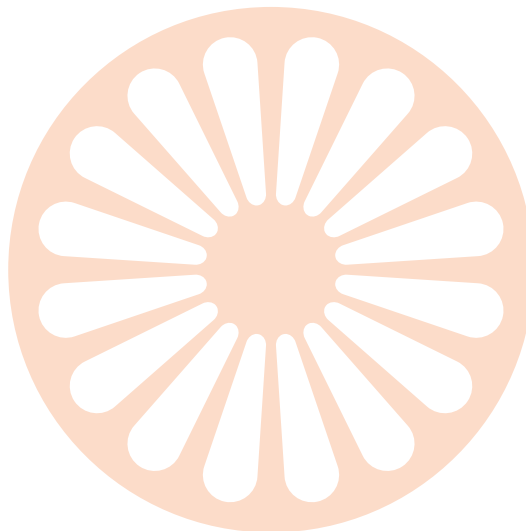
- ▶ Empowering Roma to participate in political life and to report discrimination
- ▶ Increased cooperation with Roma NGOs

### Health

- ▶ Increasing life expectancy by ensuring that Roma men and women live 5 years longer on average by 2030

### Housing

- ▶ Improving access to housing through support to legalisation and access to property documents
- ▶ Reducing overcrowding
- ▶ Stopping current evictions until the legalisation process is over



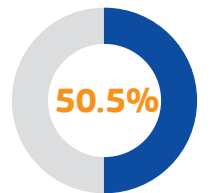
88% of Roma live in severe material deprivation\*

### Education

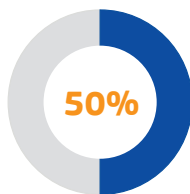
- ▶ Increasing participation on every level of education
- ▶ Reducing the gap in upper secondary completion rate

### Employment

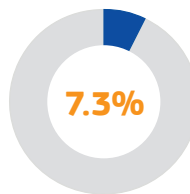
- ▶ Reducing the number of people not in education, employment, or training
- ▶ Increasing support to Roma entrepreneurs and self employed
- ▶ Helping the transition from informal to formal economy



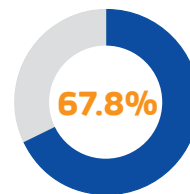
of Roma households connected to the internet



of Roma complete compulsory education\*



of Roma women in the labour market\*



of Roma live in overcrowded dwellings\*

\*Statistics from the 2017 EU-funded regional Roma survey

## Award for Roma Integration in the Western Balkans and Türkiye 2023

This action enabled the fifth edition of the EU Roma Integration Award in the Western Balkans and Türkiye. The focus of the 2023 award was the green economy and digital agenda, which are key areas for the future approaches in improving the position of vulnerable Roma women and men in the region.

€300,000

9/2022  
—  
2/2024

Implemented  
by Roma Active  
Albania

## Roma Integration – phase III

Supports the implementations of governmental policies for Roma inclusion in the enlargement region (Western Balkans and Türkiye) to reduce the socio-economic gap between the Roma and non-Roma population, and increase their integration in key sectors: employment, housing, education, healthcare, civil registration and non-discrimination.

€3  
million

5/2023  
—  
4/2026

Implemented  
by the Council  
of Europe

www



## EU Regional Action for Roma Education: Increased Education Support and Opportunities for Roma Students in the Western Balkans and Türkiye (RARE), phase II

This action will enable the second phase of the Regional Action for Roma Education & Employment in the Western Balkans and Türkiye. The project will support Roma children and youth in accessing better quality and long-term education, reducing dropouts and supporting gender equality. It will also contribute to increasing the potential and opportunities for employability of Roma youth, facilitating the transfer from education to employment.

€4.5  
million

1/2023  
—  
12/2026

Implemented  
by Roma  
Education  
Fund

## Romani women – power of change

The project's aim is to empower Roma women and enhance Roma civil society capacities to increase their participation in local and national policy and decision making processes, through dialogue with the national and local governments to reach changes towards Roma integration and non-discrimination.

€1.1  
million

1/2020  
—  
12/2023

Implemented  
by Roma Active  
Albania

www



## ROMACTED II

The project promotes good governance and Roma empowerment at local level. It aims at building up political will and sustained policy engagement of local authorities to enhance democratic local governance. The project stimulates the empowerment of local Roma communities to contribute to the design, implementation and monitoring of plans and projects concerning them.



€6.5 million

1/2021  
12/2024

Implemented  
by Council of  
Europe

www

## Strengthen national and local systems to support the effective reintegration of Returnees in the Western Balkans

The project aims at promoting holistic solutions to reintegration that provide immediate support to vulnerable returnees, but also address the root causes and negative drivers of migration. The results of the project will lead into a streamlined support of vulnerable returnees through the mainstream social protection policies and social services systems, in partnerships with the CSOs/NGOs. This project will contribute to the broader social inclusion agenda that promotes the socio-economic wellbeing of Roma and vulnerable populations overall.



€6.8 million

10/2020  
6/2024

Implemented  
by UNDP and  
World Bank

## EU Support to REDI: Advancing Roma Entrepreneurs in the Western Balkans

The overall objective of the project is to advance employment and the economic situation of Roma in Serbia and North Macedonia. In order to do this, the project aims at better understanding the barriers faced by Roma female/male entrepreneurs and job seekers in accessing funding, jobs and labour market measures as well as enhancing business capacities of male and female Roma entrepreneurs. The purpose of the project is also to increase the capacities of financial institutions and governments agencies to serve Roma entrepreneurs.



€778,000

7/2021  
7/2024

Implemented  
by Roma  
Entrepreneurship  
Development  
Initiative