

Roma Inclusion Seminar: Way Forward for Bosnia and Herzegovina

4 July 2011

Operational conclusions

I. Cross-cutting issues:

- a) Roma NGOs should be closely involved in the design, implementation and monitoring of Roma Action Plans and Programmes. Good practices related to Roma inclusion need to be shared and replicated. The role of **Roma representatives in the decision making** process should be enhanced. The position of and **needs of Roma women and girls** should be considered.
- b) Efficient **coordination** among authorities at State and Entity level and with lower levels is essential in order to ensure that the Roma Action Plans are implemented in a transparent and efficient manner. Coordination within the Roma NGO sector also needs to improve. Cooperation of BiH authorities with Roma NGOs should be strengthened.
- c) A systematic **data collection** should be ensured by Social Work Centres and other relevant institutions. The data need to be available to all institutions involved in planning programmes and projects aimed at addressing Roma inclusion related issues.
- d) In order to monitor progress in implementing the Roma Action Plan, a **monitoring and reporting** system needs to be established by the government, incorporating standardised instruments and uniform procedures on data collection. Expert monitoring bodies should be set up and include Roma as members. **Evaluation** of pilot projects needs to be ensured.
- e) **Media** will be encouraged to play a more active role in promoting a positive image of the Roma community. Communication campaigns targeting the public at large should be launched to continue reducing prejudices and discrimination of the Roma population. Positive examples and role models will be used to change perceptions and behaviours.
- f) The **BiH Ombudsman** should be more active with regard to protection and promotion of the rights of Roma.

II. Civil registration:

- a) The **civil registration system should be made more efficient** through appropriate measures at entity and municipal levels, including through fee suspension and support of DNA-analysis costs.
- b) **All children must be registered at birth.** Municipalities and Roma associations will raise awareness about the importance of birth registration in order to have access to existing social services and protection.

- c) Responsible institutions in close cooperation with UNHCR should take measures to facilitate the **naturalisation of stateless persons and refugees**, in line with international and European standards.
- d) The FBiH law on civil registration should be adopted and harmonisation between FBiH and RS ensured. A **registration campaign** should be undertaken within Roma communities, including support from mediators and Roma NGOs.

III. Education:

- a) **All Roma children** should be **enrolled in schools**, including undocumented ones. Particular efforts need to be made on pre-school education. The recruitment of Roma pedagogic assistants should be considered. The provision of free textbooks and meals for children in need and of scholarships should be enhanced.
- b) Roma children must **not be segregated** in education. Awareness-raising activities will be carried out with teachers and non-Roma population.
- c) Further efforts need to be made to address the school **drop out issue**, including through actions by NGOs and in close cooperation with Roma parents who also bear responsibility in this respect.
- d) **Education and literacy courses** will be further developed for **Roma adults**.
- e) Programmes to reinforce **linkages between the education sector and the labour market**, and to empower young people, will be intensified.

IV. Vocational training and Employment:

- a) The **Roma Action Plan on Employment** should be revised, following an evaluation of measures, to better address the needs of the Roma and ensure sustainability.
- b) Efforts need to be undertaken to **employ Roma** – both men and women – **in the public sector**, in ministries, educational institutions, employment bureaus and social welfare centres as teacher assistants, Roma educators or Roma mediators.
- c) **Vocational training** adapted to the needs of the Roma population with a clear link with future job opportunities should be organised.
- d) Fiscal incentives and other measures should be taken to facilitate employment of Roma in the **private sector** as well as the launch of new Roma businesses.

V. Social issues and health care (including trafficking and labour exploitation of young Roma girls and children, children's begging and domestic violence):

- a) The **Roma Action Plan on Health Care** needs to be **revised** to better reflect the needs of the Roma population and the measures required to address them.
- b) A **Roma Action Plan on Social Welfare and Protection** should be developed to fill the existing gaps in this sector.

- c) BiH authorities should introduce a **health card** providing health care to all Roma, including undocumented ones. Recruitment of **health mediators** should be considered.
- d) Authorities should ensure that medical examinations before the vaccination of children are free of charge. Further efforts need to be made to increase parenting skills of Roma parents in order to **improve the health status of children** and their development. Efforts need to be reinforced to ensure access of Roma to services for early childhood and development, health and social welfare.
- e) **Early Childhood and Development Strategic Plans should cover Roma inclusion in all integrated services.** Such services will be established in close coordination with Roma communities. Early detection and interventions for children with developmental delays, malnutrition and special needs will be particularly important.
- f) The authorities will intensify their efforts to address **child-begging and street children.** The implementation of the Protocols on the prevention of child begging signed in Sarajevo, Mostar and Banja Luka will be reinforced and replicated. Roma parents have an important role to play in this respect.
- g) The Anti-Human Trafficking Division at the BiH Ministry of Security will strengthen co-operation with other relevant Ministries, institutions and NGOs on the adoption of **measures to tackle trafficking of Roma** girls and boys.
- h) **Education sessions** should be organised for women and men **to combat family violence and gender-based violence.** Institutions (such as police and centres for social work) and partners will collaborate with Roma women's NGOs.

VI. Housing:

- a) The **Roma Action Plan on Housing** should be **revised** in order to better reflect not only the needs of the Roma population, but also the measures needed to address these needs.
- b) The provision of land to **durably establish legal settlements** and/or **legalise** the so-called **informal settlements** should be ensured by municipalities.
- c) Municipalities should intensify their efforts to provide **adequate/social housing** to Roma families who are homeless or do not possess any property. They need to ensure that **newly constructed houses are connected to utilities.**
- d) **The current methodology for selection of housing projects beneficiaries should be revised** to clarify selection criteria, based on lessons learnt from past experience, while keeping needs-oriented approach. Role of commissions for selection of beneficiaries, role of Centers for social welfare and Roma representatives need to be clearly indicated
- e) An independent **monitoring mechanism/body** should be established to oversee the **implementation of housing projects** from the beginning to the end of implementation. Such mechanism should be based on clear guidelines, including as regards selection of Roma and other experts in charge of monitoring.
- f) **A standardised model of contracts stipulating obligations and responsibilities** of housing projects beneficiaries will be offered by the BiH Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees. The MHRR will discuss the issue with Roma Board and suggested to sign unique contracts.