



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  
Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

Ul. Miodowa 10  
00-251 Warsaw, Poland

Tel: +48 22 520 06 00  
Fax: +48 22 520 06 05

E-mail: [bpri@odihr.pl](mailto:bpri@odihr.pl)  
[osce.org/odihr](http://osce.org/odihr)

## **Report on Seminar for development of Local Action Plans for Roma and Egyptians in the municipalities of Berane, Bijelo Polje and Ulcinj Milocer, 6-9 November 2012**

### **About the project**

In 2011, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights was awarded EU funding for a regional project in the Western Balkans to strengthen the capacity of national and local governments for integration of Roma communities. The main objectives of the project “Best Practices for Roma Integration” are to: (i) enhance Roma participation in decision making of policies of their concern, (ii) provide technical support to governments for legalization of Roma settlements/dwellings, (iii) enhance Roma participation in public life, and (iv) foster cross border co-ordination and initiatives improving Roma participation.

In implementing the project, co-operation with municipalities where Roma live is of vital importance. Therefore, it is essential to support the development and implementation of Local Action Plans (LAPs) for Roma Inclusion. The Government of Montenegro adopted the National Strategy for Roma and Egyptians inclusion 2012-2016 which is the basis for development of the LAPs according to the needs of Roma communities in different municipalities. Starting with a mapping of community needs, BPRI supported the development of LAPs in the municipalities of Berane, Bijelo Polje and Ulcinj.

The municipalities established a LAP Working Group consisting of five employees from the fields of healthcare, social welfare, education, administration, urban planning and 2-3 representatives of the Roma community. BPRI provided facilitation for these working groups and helped them to develop the draft Action Plans.

The final stage in this process was the **Local Action Plan Seminar** which BPRI hosted on 6-9 November 2012 in Milocer, Montenegro. The seminar gathered members of municipal working groups who worked on LAP development, members of the Roma communities, but also representatives of other municipalities in Montenegro that already adopted a LAP in this field (namely Niksic, Kotor, Tivat and Herceg Novi). In addition, BPRI welcomed observers from municipalities in Albania and Kosovo\* who are interested in developing LAPs for Roma integration.

The LAPs finalized at the inter-municipal seminar will be presented to the municipal assemblies for adoption.

Best Practices for Roma Integration  
Supported by OSCE participating States



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Implemented by



## Objective of the seminar

The objective of the seminar was to assist municipalities to develop the final version of Local Action Plans for Inclusion Roma and Egyptians and encourage them to adopt and implement these plans.

## Participants

Participants of the seminar included members of the municipal working groups for development of LAPs, representatives of three NGOs that participated in development of LAPs in the municipalities of Niksic, Kotor, Tivat and Herceg Novi, representative of the municipality of Herceg Novi, and other stakeholders from Montenegro.

In addition, BPRI also welcomed guest participants from Albania and Kosovo, namely a representative of the municipality of Lezhe and Deputy Mayor of the municipality of Kline/a. They observed the seminar because their own municipalities are currently preparing for development of Local Action Plans for Roma Integration with BPRI support.

## Summary of presentations

### Development of Local Action Plans

Municipalities of Niksic, Tivat and Herceg Novi adopted LAPs for Roma Integration over the last few years. Representatives who worked on LAP development explained that their goal was to develop concrete activities that are necessary to improve the legal, social, economic and housing position of the Roma and Egyptian population. After adoption, the LAPs enabled local governments to secure grants from domestic and international, which are necessary for the implementation of concrete projects. While all three municipalities covered similar issues in their LAPs, they gave priority to different activities:

- **Niksic** prioritized housing and built housing for 9 families thanks to support from the Strategy Fund. The project on water supply for the Roma settlement “Brlja” is also ongoing.
- **Tivat** prioritized education and started to work with a Roma mediator to increase the number of pupils in school. The municipality also provides clothes, books and transport to school. Since this programme was initiated, the number of students receiving assistance increased from 7 in 2007 to 157 in 2011.
- **Herceg Novi** prioritized co-operation with NGOs by supporting the opening and running of the Roma Centre which helps the community in accessing education, employment, health and other services. The Roma Centre also provides free legal aid, assistance in ad hoc situations and civil registration support.

The experience of these three municipalities helped to lead the municipalities of Berane, Bijelo Polje and Ulcinj to understand the importance of LAPs and get ideas for possible measures and funding strategies. Following these presentations, participants were divided into working groups and worked on finalizing the draft LAPs for their respective municipality.