



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
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- Terms of Reference -

**Self-Governance Working Group (SGWG) on Roma Participation
for the project “Best Practices for Roma Integration”**

Background

As mandated by the 2003 OSCE Roma and Sinti Action Plan (Chapter VII), the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) has been addressing the situation of Roma and related groups in crisis and post-crises situations in particular in the Western Balkans region, which has been affected by ethnic tensions and conflicts in 1990s. ODIHR pays particular attention to the situation of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians, including the situation and reintegration of displaced persons from this community.

Many countries in the region have developed Roma integration strategies and action plans, however, their implementation at local level and anticipated impact on the situation on the Roma people in the areas of education, employment, housing and access to services is a long-term process. Western Balkan governments have frequently expressed their willingness to enhance efforts in the implementation of action plans to ensure that Roma are truly benefitting from them. The international community can play a key role in supporting governments, nationally and locally, in this endeavour.

In 2011, ODIHR was awarded EU funding for a regional project in the Western Balkans to strengthen the capacity of national and local governments and mechanisms in dealing with Roma and related groups and enhance the integration of these communities into society. The regional project "Best Practices for Roma Integration" (BPRI) started on 1 January 2012 and will last 23 months. The specific objectives of the project are to:

- enhance Roma participation in decision making of policies of their concern,
- enhance access to civil registration and legal aid services for Roma groups,
- empower Roma to benefit from initiatives aiming to legalise or improve their housing situations,
- enhance Roma participation in public life, and
- foster cross border co-ordination and initiatives improving Roma participation.

The project will be implemented in the following jurisdictions: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo*, Montenegro and Serbia.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/99 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence

Best Practices for Roma Integration
Supported by OSCE participating States



Project funded by the EU

Implemented by



Role and Responsibilities of the Self-Governance Working Group

The purpose of the SGWG is to promote the exchange of initiatives/practices of Roma inclusion in self-government structures and activities, and to offer possibilities for mutual learning and capacity building. Representatives of municipalities responsible for Roma issues will take part in it upon approval by the Regional Project Co-ordination Committee. In addition, associations of local self-governments (where relevant) and Roma NGOs will be represented in the SGWG. Where possible, the regional meeting will be preceded by national-level preparatory meetings.

Participants of the SGWG undertake the following responsibilities:

- Presenting their institution's/organization's experience on the given topic;
- Exchanging contacts with other participants, responding to their inquiries after the event if approached;
- If a need for in-depth co-operation is established, hosting delegations from other countries and organizing meetings with other local stakeholders (these visits can be facilitated by BPRI);
- Sharing any useful materials that can be translated and disseminated throughout the region (reports, action plans, training curricula, Terms of Reference, etc);
- Creating synergies and seeking agreement on similar programmes and projects;
- Identifying emerging good practices and lessons learned which can be highlighted by the BPRI project.

BPRI will prepare a summary report after every SGWG meeting and will distribute it to participants. Where possible, the SGWG meeting will be held alongside other thematic events.

The topic of the first meeting, to be held in September 2012, will be housing, since BPRI is holding the meeting back-to-back with the First Housing Roundtable. At every meeting session, members will have an opportunity to propose the topic of the following meeting, which will be held in early 2013.

Practicalities:

The proposed SGWG will host a max of 30 participants for each meeting. The SGWG will meet every six months, so two more meetings are planned until the end of the project. There will be no fixed individual membership of this SGWG, but membership remains with the municipality selected by the RPCC, so the municipality can identify the best possible candidate for this Working Group. BPRI project will cover costs of travel and accommodation and make all arrangements. Translation will be provided into Albanian, Bosnian/Croatian/Montenegrin/Serbian, English and Macedonian languages.

Contact info: Secretariat for SGWG is in the OSCE/ODIHR office in Warsaw - please contact Mr. Vladimir Rusic, Vladimir.rusic@odhr.pl.