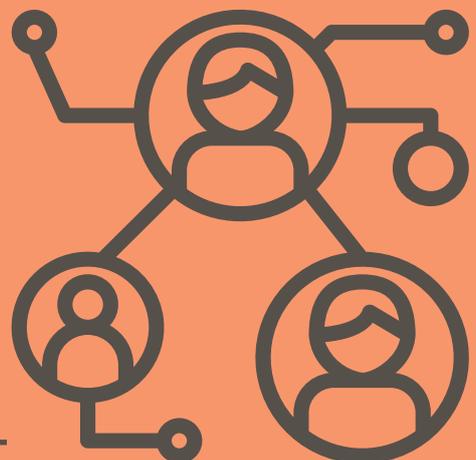


SHADOW REPORT

FROM MONITORING WORK
AND EFFECTS OF
THE SECTOR WORKING
GROUP ON ROMA
INTEGRATION

January – December 2020





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SHADOW REPORT FROM MONITORING WORK AND EFFECTS OF THE SECTOR WORKING GROUP ON ROMA INTEGRATION JANUARY – DECEMBER 2020

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ИЗВЕШТАЈ ВО СЕНКА ОД СЛЕДЕЊЕТО НА РАБОТАТА И ЕФЕКТИТЕ НА СЕКТОРСКАТА РАБОТНА ГРУПА ЗА ИНТЕГРАЦИЈА НА РОМИТЕ ЈАНУАРИ – ДЕКЕМВРИ 2020

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FOREWORD

The project “CSO Dialogue – Platform for Structural Participation in EU Integrations” is committed to ensuring structural participation of the civil society that expresses the views of citizens to impact key sector-wide reforms under the EU accession process. The sector working groups (SWGs)¹ are perceived as exceptionally important mechanism for consultations and civil society participation, and a forum for development of national policies and design of reform processes in the country. Hence, the second edition of 12 shadow reports on performance of sector working groups in 2020 is an attempt to bring this mechanism closer to the citizens and to critically analyse their organizational setup, functionality and efficiency.

For the purpose of the second edition of 12 shadow reports on performance of sector working groups in the period January – December 2020, project researchers monitored 17 from total of 19 meetings held by these working groups. Findings from observing SWG meetings and analysing sector policies were discussed at 11 interviews conducted with IPA coordinators from line ministries responsible for relevant sector groups, and with 34 civil society representatives that participate in SWGs. Moreover, changes noted in 2020 compared to 2019 are supported by responses obtained to 312 freedom of information requests inquiring about SWG performance in the course of 2020.

The general assessment implies certain progress in SWG performance despite the extraordinary year which, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, has raised challenges for the overall society. Progress is primarily noted in respect to transparency in SWG operation, notably by means of

¹ The sector working groups are a formal mechanism for consultations and cooperation among the executive authorities (ministries), civil society organizations, the donor community, and other interested parties. By the cut-off date for this report, 12 sector working groups with competences in different areas are established in the Republic of North Macedonia, in order to ensure the sector-wide approach.



greater access to published information that are of importance for SWGs. Furthermore, 2020 was marked by organization of 19 plenary sessions, compared to only 12 sessions held in 2019. However, despite the mild increase in the number of meetings, SWGs still do not meet pursuant to the frequency anticipated under the rules of procedure, which could guarantee a commitment to sector policies and reform implementation. SWGs demonstrated a satisfactory level of functionality, as stipulated in their respective rules of procedures, but these documents fall short in defining the role and position of civil society organizations within SWGs. Having in mind that the central focus of the project “CSO Dialogue – Platform for Structural Participation in EU Integrations” is put on civil society organizations and their efficient involvement in policy shaping, this report stresses the need for advancing the role played by civil society organizations in sector working groups.

GENERAL INFORMATION

In 2020, SWG Roma Integration did not hold an individual plenary session. Actually, this sector working group joined the plenary session organized by SWG Education, Employment and Social Policy, held online on 16 November 2020, which included reconsideration of relevant strategic responses and thematic priorities from the perspective of the broader sector. According to the meeting's title, it could be inferred that it also covered issues within the domain of SWG Roma Integration, while discussions concerned thematic priorities under which Roma integration is treated as a cross-cutting issue, including relevant indicators in that regard. This meeting was co-chaired by the ministers of labour and social policy and of education.

SWG plenary session was organised in cooperation with the EU Delegation and SEA/NIPAC.

An operational meeting on Roma inclusion and Roma refugee was held on 19 November 2020, organized by MLSP, the EU and SEA, with technical support from the initiative "Roma Integration 2020". This meeting was held as online event due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with participation of representatives from line ministries, international and civil society organizations.

METHODOLOGY APPROACH

For the purpose of this report, the project team combined several research methods:

- free access to public information;
- focus group with civil society representatives that participate in the sector group;
- interviews with the coordinator from the ranks of civil servants from the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy;
- direct monitoring at SWG meetings.

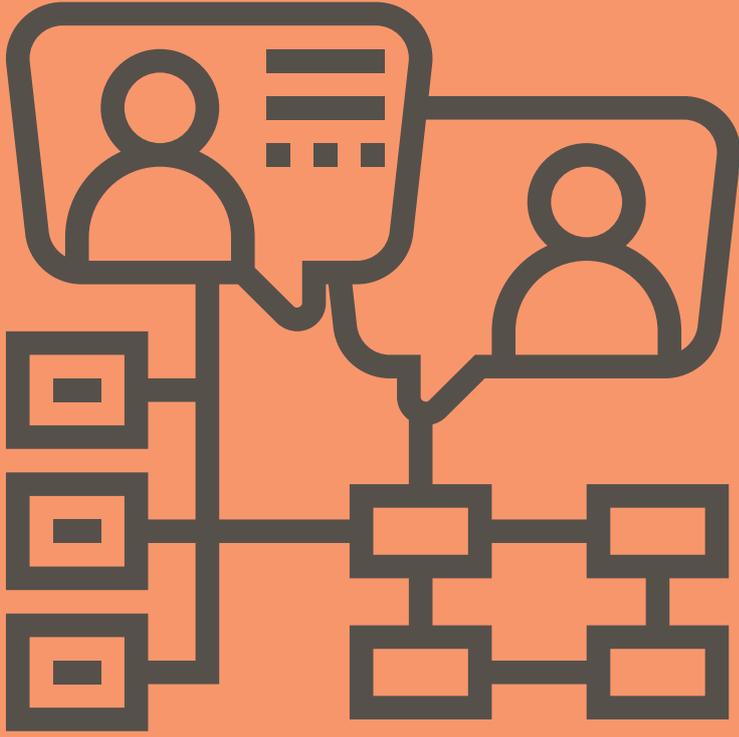
A total of 19 information requests were submitted to the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the Cabinet of the Minister without Portfolio responsible for Roma Matters, among which responses were disclosed within the deadline stipulated under the legislation on free access to public information for only 6 inquiries, while the Government's General Secretariat responded that all inquiries fall within competences of MLSP. As regards focus groups, the project team organized one such focus group² with three civil society representatives, although a total of 15 CSOs were invited to participate. Moreover, the project team interviewed³ the coordinator from the ranks of civil servants, responsible for this sector working group.

According to the monitoring methodology, performance of sector working groups is assessed in respect to five segments

- SWG functionality;
- civil society participation in SWG;
- CSO capacity for contribution and participation in SWG;
- effects from SWG work; and
- IPA.

² Focus group with civil society representatives that participate in SWG Roma Integration was held on 29.04.2021

³ Interview with the coordinator among the ranks of civil servants was conducted on 17.05.2021



PART 1

SECTOR POLICIES

European Commission's 2020 Progress Report for North Macedonia

The EC's 2020 report⁴ notes that **Roma inclusion** is receiving increased attention from national and local authorities, although there is still much that needs to be done. Implementation of the Roma inclusion policies is slow and lacks sufficient capacity for implementation, coordination and monitoring. The government has increased funding for Roma integration policies, but poor absorption of funds remains a problem.



4 European Commission's 2020 Progress Report for North Macedonia, available at: <https://www.sep.gov.mk/post/?id=5657>

TABLE 1 . Key findings from EC's Progress Report for RNM in respect to Roma integration



KEY FINDINGS

1. Roma people have limited economic opportunities and many fail to earn a living. Only 3% of those benefiting from active labour market policies are Roma.

2. The housing situation is dramatic, with high portion of Roma living in illegal settlements and/or substandard and unhygienic environments. The Law on Persons without Regulated Civil Status, which enables access to mainstream services for 750 Roma identified to be without personal identification documents, was adopted but its implementation is hindered.

3. UN Convention on Reduction of Statelessness from 1961 has been ratified, creating proposes for a systemic solution for birth and civil registration of all undocumented people. The Declaration of Western Balkans Partners on Roma Integration within the EU Enlargement Process (the Poznan Declaration) was endorsed by the government, but no steps have been taken to implement it. 2019 Roma Seminar conclusions are yet to be implemented.

4. Despite the existence of legal frameworks protecting human rights, Roma are often victims of racism, discrimination and segregation. Systematic measures to address the issue of street children are lacking, and child beggars – including young mothers and babies – are recorded on the streets.

5. There is no comprehensive approach on Roma asylum seekers and returnees. The Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education continue to support Roma mediators.

6. Effective actions for capacity building helped Roma NGOs to develop a strong core of well-trained activities ready to handle challenges in their communities.

7. The authorities, in cooperation with donors and the civil society, acted during the COVID-19 pandemic to support the most vulnerable, including Roma. Roma community is particularly vulnerable in the context of the COVID-19 crisis and it is essential to guarantee full access to healthcare services in order to control the spread of the virus.

-
8. In general, many Roma continue to live in poverty and face unemployment and substandard living conditions. Their access to education, housing and employment and justice remains a concern, Roma children are especially at risk, as poverty and discrimination act as further barriers to receiving education.
-

The report also provides recommendations for several priority areas in North Macedonia that are of key importance for Roma integration.

TABLE 2 . Recommendations from the EC's Progress Report for RNM in respect to Roma integration

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. In the section on **fundamental rights**, it is noted that the country should improve community services to identify children at risk and to support children victims of violence, Roma children and adults,⁵ including by improving inter-agency cooperation.
-
2. Under **Chapter 19: Social Policy and Employment**, the country is recommended to continue implementation of activation measures for long-term and low-skilled unemployed people, including women, persons with disabilities and Roma.
-

5 According to terminology used by EU institutions, the protective term "Roma" is used by the European Commission in the meaning of encompassing several different groups without negating the specificities of these groups.

STRATEGIC GUIDELINES FOR ROMA INTEGRATION



The basic strategic guidelines in this area are given in the Western Balkans Enlargement Strategy⁶ from 2018. This document underlines the importance of Roma integration, especially in regard to priorities on promotion of fundamental rights. Other documents at EU level include the EU Framework for Roma Integration Strategies (2011–2020),⁷ which mandates the European Commission to provide strategic guidance for IPA objectives and results. Roma integration is also supported through specific benchmarks for mainstreaming, as well as through targeted projects.

The European Commission proposed new headline targets⁸ for 2030 based on progress made under the previous framework. They are:

- | cut the proportion of Roma with discrimination experience by at least half;
- | double the portion of Roma who file reports when they experience discrimination;
- | cut the poverty gap between Roma and the general population by at least half;
- | cut the gap in early childhood education participation by at least half;
- | cut the proportion of Roma children attending segregated primary schools by at least half, in member states with significant Roma population;
- | cut the gap in employment by at least half;
- | cut the life expectancy gap by at least half;
- | reduce the gap in housing deprivation by at least one third;
- | ensure that at least 95% of Roma have access to tap water.

6 https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/communication-credible-enlargement-perspective-western-balkans_en.pdf

7 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A52011DC0173>

8 https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/new-eu-roma-strategic-framework-equality-inclusion-and-participation-full-package_en

At national level and in respect to IPA II, issues related to Roma integration are covered under different sectors from the Country Indicative Strategy Paper⁹:

- democracy and governance (civil society);
- fundamental rights; and
- education, employment and social policy (education policy, social policy and inclusion).

As regards Roma integration, in 2020 financial agreement was signed for the 2019 action document “EU for Inclusion”,¹⁰ in the amount of 7.35 million euros, with implementation deadline by 2026.

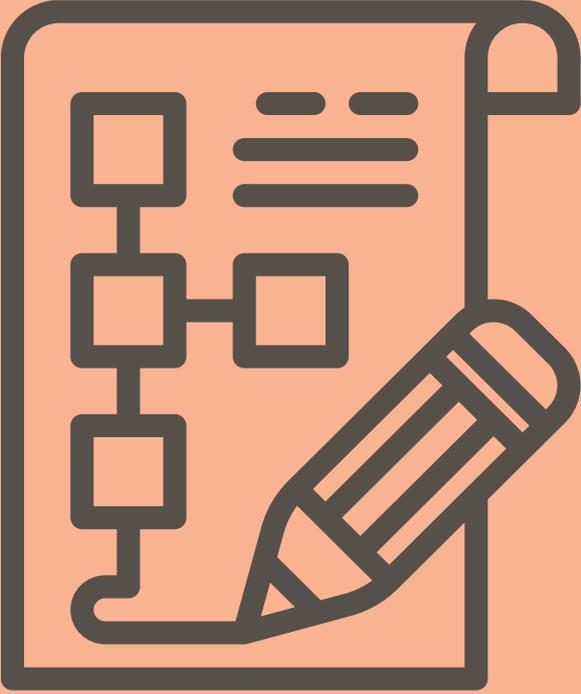
Roma integration is also covered in the strategic response for IPA III, **Window 4: Competitiveness and Inclusive Growth, which is comprised of several thematic priorities:**

- **Thematic priority 1:** Improve employment, quality of jobs and productivity;
- **Thematic priority 2:** Reduce poverty and social exclusion;
- **Thematic priority 3:** Provide comprehensive, inclusive and integrated modern education;
- **Thematic priority 4:** Improve health and wellbeing of the population and improve healthcare by providing a sustainable and quality patient-oriented healthcare system.

Indicators for Roma integration within this strategic response are treated as a cross-cutting issue for all four thematic priorities.

9 <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/default/files/20180817-revised-indicative-strategy-paper-2014-2020-for-the-former-yugoslav-republic-of-macedonia.pdf>

10 <http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/content/pdf/dokumenti/ipa/IPA%202019%20MK%20EU%20for%20Inclusion.pdf>



PART 2

SWG FUNCTIONALITY

2.1 RULES OF PROCEDURE

In 2020, SWG Roma Integration was de facto coordinated by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and it was chaired by the line minister. This sector group was established by means of a decision and has its own rules of procedure. SWG members include representatives from line ministries, donor community and the civil society. A total of seventeen (17) civil society organizations participate in work of this sector group, with the status of members.

SWG Roma Integration was formed by the end of 2019. The Minister without Portfolio responsible for implementation of the National Strategy for Improving Roma Status in the Republic of North Macedonia initially coordinated work of this sector group and chaired SWG meeting, in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.

However, with the formation of the new government in 2020, its composition did not anticipate the position for such Minister without Portfolio. In 2020, SWG Roma Integration did not hold an independent plenary session. Actually, this sector working group joined the plenary session organized by SWG Education, Employment and Social Policy, held online on 16 November 2020, which included reconsideration of



relevant strategic responses and thematic priorities from the perspective of the broader sector. According to the meeting's title, it could be inferred that it also covered issues within the domain of SWG Roma Integration, while discussions concerned thematic priorities under which Roma integration is treated as a cross-cutting issue, including relevant indicators in that regard. This meeting was co-chaired by the ministers of labour and social policy and of education.

In 2020, no changes were noted in terms of the manner in which operation of SWG Roma Integration **is regulated**.

As regards **enforcement of provisions** from the rules of procedure in the practice, remarks concern non-compliance with the stipulated number of SWG meetings.

In respect to **transparency**, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy's website¹¹ includes precise and comprehensive information related to work of SWG Education, Employment and Social Policy (decision on establishment and rules of procedure), as well as press releases, minutes and materials from meetings held. However, there are no such information about SWG Roma Integration.

In the opinion of **civil society representatives**, information about their role in this sector group is not fully precise. Although they are full-fledged members, they do not feel they are making great contribution to SWG work. Hence, the rules of procedure need to be changed in order to precisely define their role and to involve them in all stages for development of documents produced by this sector group.

2.2 ANNUAL WORK PLAN AND ANNUAL WORK REPORT

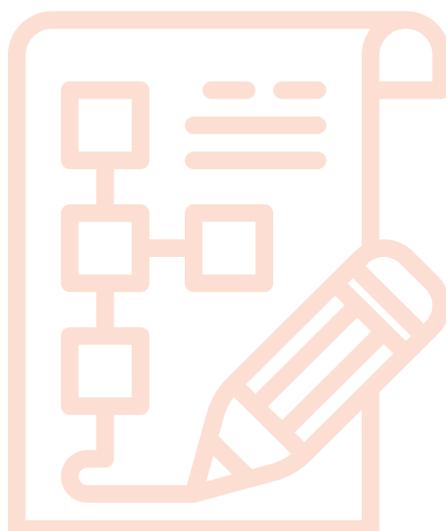
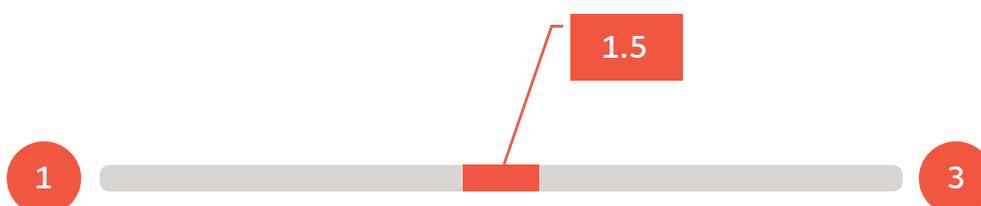
Development of annual plans and annual reports are not anticipated as activities under the rules of procedure for SWG Roma Integration, but if these are created in transparent and inclusive manner, they could serve as significant incentive for more efficient and more organized work of this sector group. In 2020, SWG Roma Integration did not develop annual plans and reports.

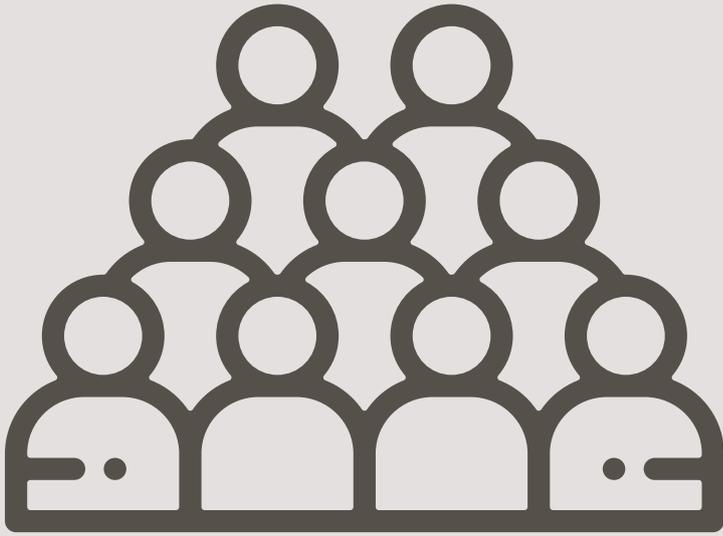
¹¹ Official website of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, available at: <https://mtsp.gov.mk/>

ASSESSMENT ON SWG FUNCTIONALITY

According to the methodology for monitoring work and effects of sector working groups, **SWG functionality** is measured against 14 standards and 8 indicators that focus on creation of relevant work documents by SWGs (rules of procedure, annual plan and annual report) and their enforcement in the practice. All standards and indicators are assigned a numeric value, whereby 1 is the lowest and 3 is the highest score.

Average score for functionality of SWG Roma Integration in this monitoring period is calculated at 1.5.





PART 3

CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION

The list of civil society representatives in SWG Roma Integration is comprised of **seventeen civil society organizations,**¹² **with the status of members.**

For the only plenary session held in 2020, civil society representatives received timely **invitations**, but as part of the broader list of participants in SWG Education, Employment and Social Policy. In that, invitations included all **necessary documents**, i.e. agenda and materials that will be reconsidered at the meeting.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy emphasized that, while no plenary sessions are organized at SWG level, such meetings take place under different processes within this ministry. The National Coordination Body (NCB) comprised of representatives from line ministries and civil society organizations holds regular meetings, i.e. every three months. Topics discussed at these meetings concern activities taken by the ministry in respect to implementation of the Strategy on Roma Integration.

¹² Institute for Policy Research and Analysis – ROMALITIKO, Association for Democratic Development of Roma “Sun”, NGO KHAM, Association Center for Education Support “Dendo Vas”, Habitat Macedonia, Humanitarian and Charitable Roma Association “Moon”, Roma Education Centre – UMBRELLA, Foundation Open Society – Macedonia, Association “Initiatives for Social Changes – InSOC, Roma Resource Center – RRC, Center for Roma Community – DROM, National Roma Centrum – NRC, Association for Roma Community Development SUMNAL, HERA - Health Education and Research Association, NGO Romaversitas, Initiative for Community Development and Inclusion – IRIZ, and European Policy Institute – EPI.

ASSESSMENT ON CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION

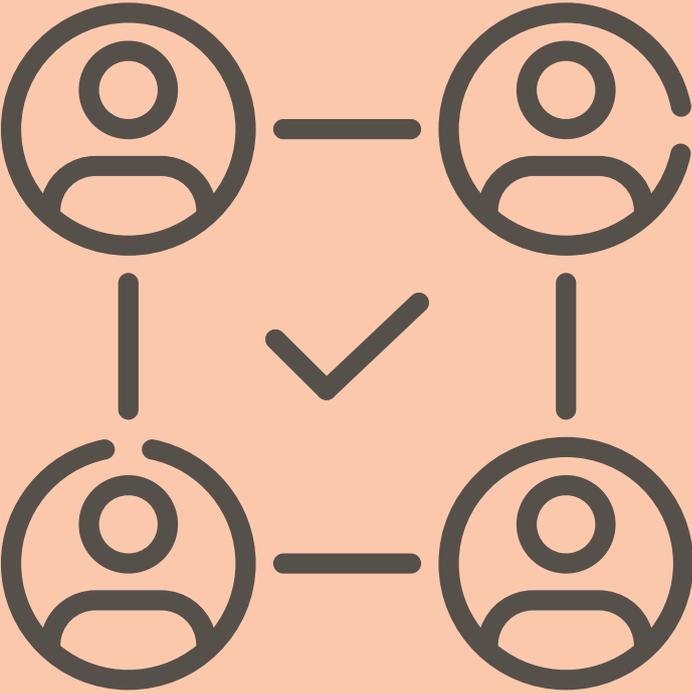


According to the methodology for monitoring work and effects of sector working groups, **civil society participation in SWG** is measured against 9 standards and 3 indicators that focus on the number and the status of CSOs involved in SWG work. Moreover, they cover regular and timely delivery of invitations and necessary materials for SWG meetings, as well as opportunities afforded to CSOs to join discussions before, during and after meetings. All standards and indicators are assigned a numeric value, whereby 1 is the lowest and 3 is the highest score.

Average score for civil society participation in SWG Roma Integration in this monitoring period is calculated at 2.0.







PART 4

CSO CAPACITY

The number of 17 CSOs makes SWG Roma Integration one of sector working groups with relatively good civil society involvement compared to the others. However, during interviews for the purpose of this report, civil society representatives reported that, in their opinion, their role in the sector working group is pro-form, instead of being able to make meaningful contribution to its work.

Civil society representatives based such view on several reasons. First, they indicated that one cannot speak about effective participation in the sector group having in mind the low dynamics of SWG meetings (one plenary session annually) and minimum communication among SWG members beyond these meetings.

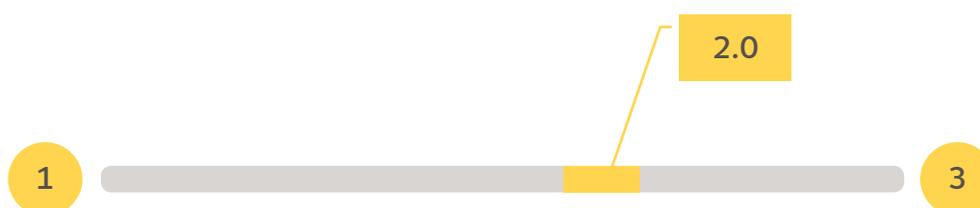


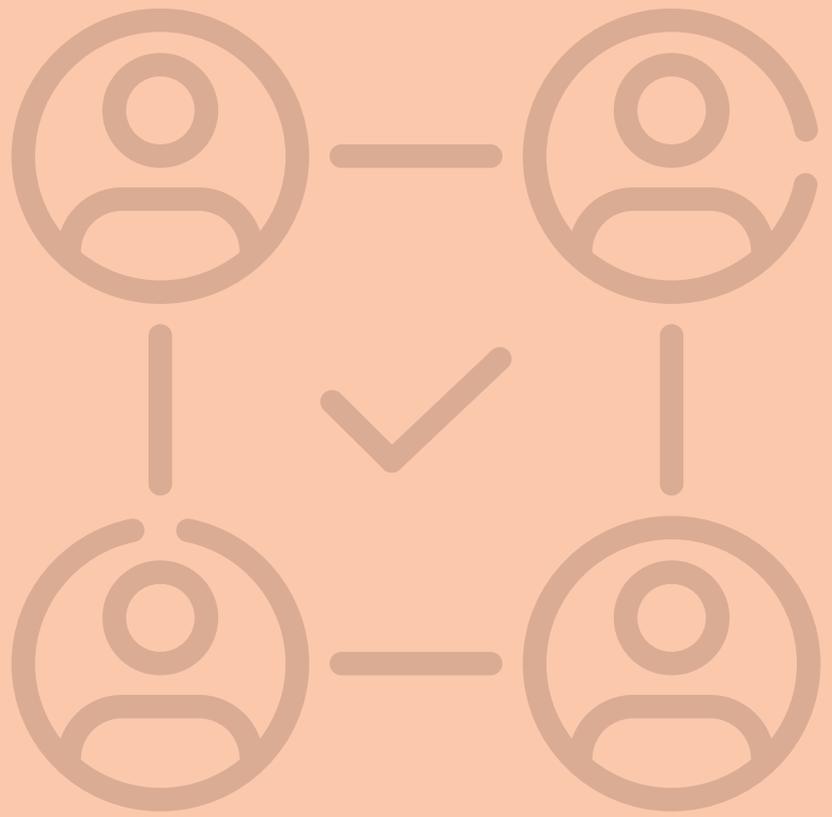
ASSESSMENT ON CSO CAPACITY



According to the methodology for monitoring work and effects of sector working groups, **CSO capacity for contribution and participation in SWG** is measured against 5 standards and 2 indicators that focus on ability, knowledge and skills disposed by CSOs. Moreover, they concern proactivity on the part of CSOs in respect to organization of consultations and information sessions, production of analyses, research papers and policy briefs, as well as engagement in advocacy for important issues falling within SWG scope of work. All standards and indicators are assigned a numeric value, whereby 1 is the lowest and 3 is the highest score.

Average score for CSO capacity for contribution and participation in SWG Roma Integration in this monitoring period is calculated at 2.0.







PART 5

EFFECTS FROM SWG WORK

5.1 PLENARY SESSIONS

In 2020, only one plenary session was organized, thereby failing to comply with the minimum of four meetings annually stipulated under the rules of procedure. Due to the public health crisis, this plenary session was held as online event,¹³ with technical support from the Secretariat for European Affairs (SEA).

The plenary session took place on 16.11.2020 and included verification of strategic responses for IPA III,

- Window 4: Competitiveness and Inclusive Growth.

Representatives from institutions, donor community and civil society organizations were invited and attended the online meeting.

5.2 GENERAL INFORMATION ON IPA III PROGRAMMING (2021-2027)

The Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA III) concerns the programming period 2021-2027. The European Commission introduced this instrument together with the new EU multiannual financial framework. IPA programming took place throughout the entire 2020 and was initi-

¹³ Via the platform WEBEX.



ated with development of PAF indicators,¹⁴ followed by strategic responses and action fiches.

IPA III is introduced with adoption of the Regulation on Establishing the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance and the Regulation on Implementing Rules and Principles for IPA III¹⁵ by the European Union, and is coherent to other funds, programmes and instruments of the Union, primarily the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument. According to its structure, IPA III is organized into 5 windows:

1. Rule of Law, Fundamental Rights and Democracy;
2. Good Governance, Acquis Alignment, Good Neighbourly Relations and Strategic Communication;
3. Green Agenda and Sustainable Connectivity;
4. Competitiveness and Inclusive Growth;
5. Territorial and Cross-Border Cooperation.

Each window is comprised of several thematic priorities, as follows:

TABLE 3:
IPA III windows and thematic priorities

WINDOW 1: RULE OF LAW, FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY	WINDOW 2: GOOD GOVERNANCE, ACQUIS ALIGNMENT, GOOD NEIGHBOURLY RELATIONS AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Judiciary; ◆ Fight against corruption; ◆ Fight against organized crime; ◆ Migration and border management; ◆ Fundamental rights; ◆ Democracy; ◆ Civil society. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Good governance; ◆ Administrative capacity and acquis alignment; ◆ Good neighbourly relations and reconciliation; ◆ Strategic communication, monitoring, evaluation and audit.

¹⁴ Performance Assessment Framework (PAF)

¹⁵ Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA III) COM/2018/465 final.

WINDOW 3: GREEN AGENDA AND SUSTAINABLE CONNECTIVITY

- ◆ Environment and climate change;
- ◆ Transport, digital economy and energy.

WINDOW 4: COMPETITIVENESS AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH

- ◆ Education, employment, social protection and inclusion policies, and health;
- ◆ Private sector development, trade, research and innovation;
- ◆ Agriculture and rural development;
- ◆ Fisheries.

WINDOW 5: TERRITORIAL AND CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

This window is comprised of a separate list of thematic priorities given in Annex 2 to the IPA III Regulation.¹⁶ Modalities for implementation of this component include:

- ◆ cross-border cooperation with IPA countries;
- ◆ participation in micro region strategies.

According to the IPA III Regulation, the European Commission proposes a programming framework for the period 2021-2027 that includes all priority areas eligible for funding. Based on this programming framework, each IPA III country develops its strategic responses, elaborating links between EU priorities and those under national and sector strategies, followed by development of projects in the next phase.

IPA III does not include specific financial allocations per beneficiary country. Actually, countries will have to compete for the total of 14.162 billion euros available on the basis of their capacity and project proposals. However, IPA III introduces the principle of fair share in order to ensure certain balance and proportionality in distribution of IPA III funds among beneficiary countries.

¹⁶ COM/2018/465



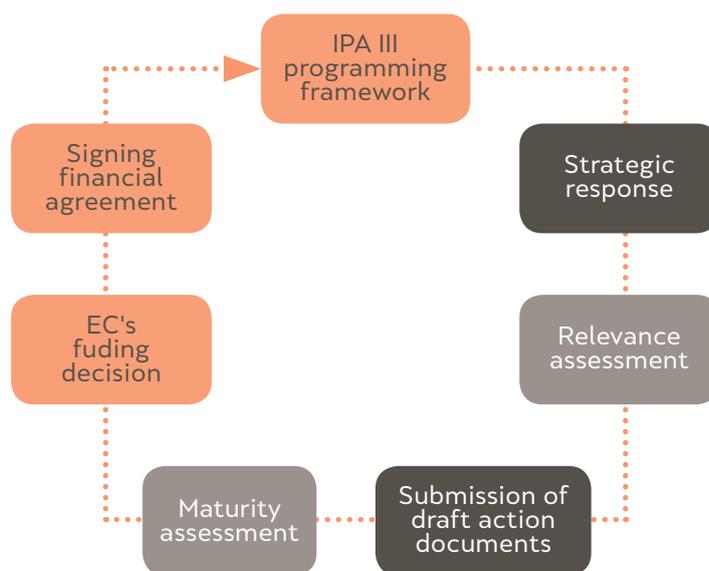
IPA III programming is pursued in two stages.

1. **Relevance assessment.** In this stage, the country develops summary action fishes with elaboration of proposed projects. The European Commission assesses these fishes in terms of their relevance.
2. **Maturity assessment.** This stage implies development of action documents, but only for projects that have passed the relevance assessment, followed by detailed elaboration. The European Commission assesses projects in terms of their maturity. After action documents are approved, the country presents the European Commission with tender documents for projects approved in both stages, followed by signing of financial agreements for individual action documents.

The process for developing strategic and action documents for the years 2021 and 2022, but also for next programming years, is anticipated to take place within the existing sector working groups (SWGs), established under the sector-wide approach from IPA II.

In the second half of 2020, under coordination from the Secretariat for European Affairs, sector working groups developed and presented the European Commission with 22 action fishes, of which 10 for the year 2021¹⁷ and 12 for the year 2022.¹⁸

CHART 1.
IPA III programming cycle



¹⁷ <https://www.sep.gov.mk/data/file/Dokumenti/Akciski%20fisea/2021.zip>

¹⁸ <https://www.sep.gov.mk/data/file/Dokumenti/Akciski%20fisea/2022.zip>

TABLE 4. 2021 and 2022 action fiches for IPA III

ACTION FISHES 2021			
INDICATIVE TITLE OF THE ACTION	INDICATIVE BUDGET	CO-FINANCING RATIO	
		EU	MK
1. EU for Efficient Judiciary and Enhanced Prevention of Corruption	10 million euros	85%	15%
2. Civil Society Facility	3 million euros	/	/
3. EU for Modern Administration	10 million euros	100%	0%
4. EU for Good Governance	9 million euros	89%	11%
5. EU Integration Facility	5 million euros	100%	0%
6. EU for Environmental Standards	12 million euros	83%	17%
7. EU for Clean Air	14 million euros	86%	14%
8. EU for Prespa	23,7 million euros	76%	24%
9. Preparation of European Transport Corridors Projects	9,5 million euros	100%	0%
10. EU for Green Growth	27,5 million euros	73%	27%
ACTION FISHES 2022			
INDICATIVE TITLE OF THE ACTION	INDICATIVE BUDGET	CO-FINANCING RATIO	
		EU	MK
1. Private Sector Development ¹⁹	9,2 million euros	87%	13%
2. EU in Support of the Fight against Organized Crime	5,2 million euros	88%	12%
3. EU for Improved Border Management, Migration and Asylum Policy	7,8 million euros	90%	10%
4. Civil Society Facility	3 million euros	/	/
5. EU Integration Facility	10 million euros	100%	0%
6. Union Programmes	15,4 million euros	50%	50%
7. EU for Modern Waste Water Systems	53 million euros	50%	50%
8. EU for Safe Roads	20 million euros	50%	50%

¹⁹ Sector fiche with remaining funds under Component I from IPA I for the years 2012 and 2013.



9.	EU for Quality Employment and Equal Opportunities	6,6 million euros	91%	9%
10.	EU for Health	5,9 million euros	85%	15%
11.	EU for Trade Facilitation	8,1 million euros	72%	28%
12.	EU for Development of Agriculture	6 million euros	83%	17%

5.2.1 Strategic response for Roma integration

In 2020, SWG Roma Integration was not active in its own capacity, but in coordination with SWG Education, Employment and Social Policy, and was mainly dedicated to development and consultations about sector documents at the only plenary sessions held online this year, jointly for this two sector group. Strategic responses are intended to plan and define access to and use of IPA III funds (2021-2027) and feature adequate action fiches and action documents targeting thematic priorities under IPA III for this sector.

TABLE 5 . Strategic response and action fiche for Roma integration

SWG	STRATEGIC RESPONSE	KEY THEMATIC PRIORITIES	ACTION FICHE	ACTION FICHE OBJECTIVES
ROMA INTEGRATION	<p>- Cross-cutting thematic priority WINDOW 4: COMPETITIVENESS AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH</p> <p>Thematic priority 1: Education, employment, social protection and inclusion policies, and health</p>	<p>(1) Raise the employment level, quality of jobs and productivity</p> <p>(2) Reduce poverty and social exclusion</p> <p>(3) Provide comprehensive, inclusive and integrated modern education</p> <p>(4) Improve health and wellbeing of the population by ensuring sustainable and quality patient-centred healthcare system</p>		

5.3 OPERATIONAL MEETINGS

In 2020, MLSP organized one operational meeting with representatives from the Secretariat for European Affairs and the EU Delegation. At this meeting, held on 19.11.2020, civil society representatives participating in this sector working group were not invited to attend and were not informed about organization of such meeting by the sector group. At the same time, it should be noted that minutes are not compiled from operational meetings in order to be later shared with civil society representatives.

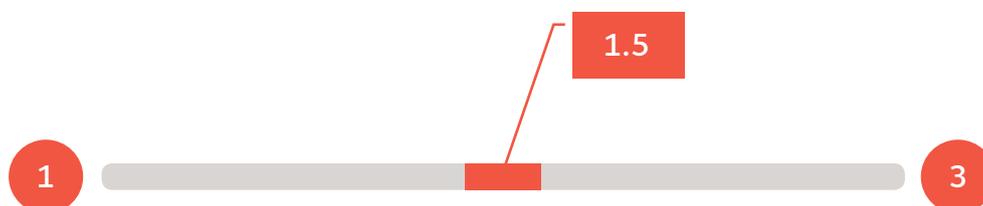
5.4 COVID-19 AND IPA II PROJECTS

The COVID-19 pandemic had led to reallocation of funds from IPA II projects to finance relief measures tackling the health crisis. IPA II funds anticipated for Roma integration were not reallocated for projects related to the COVID-19 pandemic.²⁰

ASSESSMENT ON EFFECTS FROM SWG WORK

According to the methodology for monitoring work and effects of sector working groups, **effects from SWG work** are measured against 3 standards and 8 indicators that focus on changes effectuated by SWG work through planning and monitoring, and methods for foreign aid coordination. All standards and indicators are assigned a numeric value, whereby 1 is the lowest and 3 is the highest score.

Average score for effects from work of SWG Roma Integration in this monitoring period is calculated at 1.5.



²⁰ Analysis of documents disclosed by relevant institutions in response to information requests submitted under the instrument for free access to public information.



PART 6

GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN THE 12 SECTOR WORKING GROUPS

The obligation for gender mainstreaming in work of sector working groups (SWGs) arises from the national legislation, but also from the Country Indicative Strategy Paper for the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance 2014–2020 (IPA II)²¹, the European Union’s Gender Action Plan (GAP II)²² and the broader EU acquis. As elaborated in the previous Shadow Report, GAP II stresses the need for gender mainstreaming in programs and assistance programming,²³ while IPA II treats gender equality as cross-cutting issue and as separate priority area for support.²⁴

This year was hallmarked by the public health crisis, which furthered already existing gender gaps and inequalities. The COVID-19 pandemic had negative impact on women’s

21 European Commission, Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA II), Revised Indicative Strategy Paper for the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (2014-2020). Available at: <https://bit.ly/3hxZE2W>

22 Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through European Union (EU) External Relations 2016-2020 (GAP II). Available at: <https://bit.ly/2Quy3oo>

23 Ibid.

24 European Commission, Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA II), Revised Indicative Strategy Paper for the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (2014-2020). Available at: <https://bit.ly/3hxZE2W>



participation in the labour market in RNM, whose activity rate was already low before the crisis. According to the most recent data available, 62.3% of women²⁵ in the country are economically inactive, compared to 37.7% of men.²⁶ Moreover, 77% of health sector employees in RNM are women,²⁷ which means that women - at the time of crisis - found themselves at the frontline of this struggle. Women are more represented in sectors that have been most affected by the crisis. For example, 80% of textile industry workers are women.²⁸ Therefore, under conditions of pre-existing and deepened inequalities, addressing these issues by gender mainstreaming in work of all bodies and institutions, including SWGs, gains an even greater importance.

6.1 FINDINGS FROM MONITORING SECTOR WORKING GROUPS

6.1.1 SWG meetings

In the course of 2020, SWG meetings rarely included discussion on policy impacts in terms of gender equality as a cross-cutting theme. Information and data collected by the cut-off date for this report²⁹ allow the conclusion that, as noted in the 2019 report, only two sector groups have integrated the gender perspective in their work: SWG Education, Employment and Social Policy and SWG Agriculture and Rural Development. This refers to the conclusion that SWGs have still not recognized their key role in promoting gender equality by means of gender mainstreaming in development and implementation of sector policies.

6.1.2 Training

Recommendations made under the 2019 Shadow Report concerned specially designed training for SWG members on gender mainstream-

25 State Statistical Office (MAKStat Database 2019). Active population according to economic activity, gender and age. Economic inactivity of women. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3yt39Ov>

26 State Statistical Office (MAKStat Database 2019). Active population according to economic activity, gender and age. Economic inactivity of men. Available at: <https://bit.ly/3yt39Ov>

27 ILO (2020). Covid-19 and the World of Work NORTH MACEDONIA Rapid Assessment of the Employment Impacts and Policy Responses, available at: <https://bit.ly/3mGGtV7>

28 Ibid.

29 By the cut-off date for this report, information and data were collected from line ministries responsible for eight sector working groups: SWG Justice, SWG Public Administration Reform, SWG Local and Regional Development, SWG Education, Employment and Social Policy, SWG Home Affairs, SWG Transport, SWF Public Finance Management, and SWG Agriculture and Rural Development.

ing that would be complementary to already existing gender equality training for administrative officers.

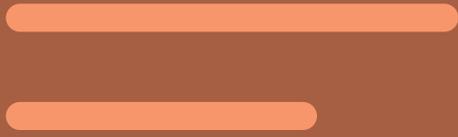
Namely, in 2017 the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP), with the support from the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (UN WOMEN), developed an e-training course on gender equality intended to enhance knowledge of public administration employees. This training course is comprised of two modules, basic and advanced, and is administered by the Ministry of Information Society and Administration (MISA) through the E-learning Management System, which is accessible only to administrative officers.

Defeating is the fact that, in 2020, this basic module of the gender equality training was attended by only three administrative officers and nobody attended the advanced module. For comparison, in 2019 the basic module was attended by 359 and the advanced module was attended by 54 administrative officers. From its introduction to present, the gender equality training was attended by a total of 11,017 administrative officers. However, this figure pales into insignificance against the fact that, by 31.12.2020, public sector institutions employ a total of 131,183 persons.³⁰ Here it should be noted that this training course is available only to administrative officers, but not to other groups of public sector employees.³¹

In October 2020, under the Project for Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) and in cooperation with UN WOMEN, MLSP organized four one-day trainings on strategic planning, which featured gender mainstreaming elements. These trainings were attended by professional and management staff members and those involved in strategic planning and policy/program development at institutions, including coordinators and deputy coordinators for equal opportunities. In total, all four trainings were attended by 32 staff members from 13 line ministries and 1 state institution. In December 2020, a two-day online training was organized on gender mainstreaming in strategic planning and gender responsive budgeting, attended by 33 staff members from 14 line ministries.

³⁰ Ministry of Information Society and Administration. 2020 Report from the Register of Public Sector Employees. Available at: <https://bit.ly/2T3DTxW>

³¹ Pursuant to Article 14 of the Law on Public Sector Employee ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" no. 27/14, 199/14, 27/16, 35/18 and 198/18 and "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" no. 143/19 and 14/20), job positions of employees in public sector institutions are categorized into four groups: administrative officers, officers with public authority, service providers assistance/technical staff.



FINAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The work approach applied by SWG Roma Integration is not characterized by serious dynamics, especially due to the fact that, throughout the entire 2020, issues related to Roma integration were put on the agenda of SWG Education, Employment and Social Policy. A decision needs to be taken about the future operation of this sector group, i.e. whether it will operate independently and would receive necessary and adequate institutional support, or the sector group will be again reintegrated with SWG Education, Employment and Social Policy, from which it was initially separated and formed as stand-alone group in 2019. In any case, the focus on Roma integration should not be lost among other priorities covered by SWG Education, Employment and Social Policy. As regards SWG capacity, it could be concluded that ministerial changes affected intensity in operation of SWG Roma Integration. In 2020, SWG Roma Integration did not dispose with adequate capacity for independent operation.

- 1.** SWG Roma Integration demonstrated poor work dynamics in 2020, by holding one plenary sessions and one operational meeting, both organized by SWG Education, Employment and Social Policy. This work dynamics falls short of what is needed for development of strategic and planning documents and for monitoring results achieved, thereby allowing meaningful involvement of all stakeholders.
- 2.** It is necessary to ensure that this sector working groups engages in development of proposals for sector and cross-sectoral policies, strategies and development programs relevant for cross-cutting issues on Roma integration, for which additional capacity is needed.



3. Relevant preconditions should be created for civil society organizations, through this sector group, to participate in processes for identification, formulation and prioritization of development goals, measures and projects for implementation of national policies and strategies in this sector.

FINAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS IN TERMS OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN THE 12 SECTOR WORKING GROUPS

1. Most SWGs have still not recognized the importance of gender mainstreaming as a cross-cutting theme in their work. Although some line ministries have engaged in gender analysis of particular policies or have performed gender-responsive budgeting for individual programs, oftentimes these documents are not discussed and are not taken into account at SWG meetings. Hence the need for gender mainstreaming in work of all SWGs and use of gender analyses on state-of-affairs in specific sectors as baseline for policy development, implementation and evaluation.

2. It is recommended for e-training on gender equality to become part of the framework of generic competences and annual training programs, thereby underscoring its mandatory implementation and ensuring greater coverage in terms of trained administrative officers. Moreover, it is equally important for training materials to be regularly, timely and continuously updated, in order to avoid the risk of outdated content. While implementation of specially designed training course on gender mainstreaming in strategic planning represents a step forward, it is still early to assess its effects. It is recommended for participants in such trainings and workshops to mandatorily include SWG members. In order to ensure that such training gains an even greater importance, it would be desirable to evaluate knowledge of training participants and to regulate organization of such trainings on regular instead of ad-hoc basis.

3. Given that recommendations from 2019 Shadow Report are not fully taken into consideration, valid is the recommendation for involvement of coordinators and deputy coordinators for equal opportunities in SWGs, including civil society representatives with expertise and experience in the field of gender equality, as support for gender mainstreaming in all SWGs.

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- ◆ Responses obtained to information requests submitted under the instrument for free access to public information
- ◆ Transcript from interviews conducted with representatives from state institutions that participate in SWG Roma Integration
- ◆ Transcript from focus group organized with civil society representatives that participate in SWG Roma Integration
- ◆ Data obtained on the survey questionnaire for civil society organizations and their experience with civil society participation
- ◆ Rules of Procedure for SWG Roma Integration
- ◆ Agenda for the plenary session held by SWG Roma Integration in 2020
- ◆ Performance Assessment Framework (PAF) indicators
- ◆ Strategic responses for IPA III
- ◆ Job systematization at the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

