

# SHADOW REPORT

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

*January – December 2021*







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by the European Union



REACTOR  
research in action



## SHADOW REPORT FROM MONITORING WORK AND EFFECTS OF THE SECTOR WORKING GROUP ON ROMA INTEGRATION IN THE PERIOD JANUARY – DECEMBER 2021

### ORIGINAL TITLE:

ИЗВЕШТАЈ ВО СЕНКА ОД СЛЕДЕЊЕТО НА РАБОТАТА И ЕФЕКТИТЕ НА СЕКТОРСКАТА РАБОТНА ГРУПА ЗА ИНТЕГРАЦИЈА НА РОМИ ЈАНУАРИ – ДЕКЕМВРИ 2021

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# FOREWORD

## SUMMARY ON PERFORMANCE OF SECTOR WORKING GROUPS IN 2021

Shadow Reports from Monitoring Work and Effects of Sector Working Groups in 2019, 2020 and 2021 were developed under the hypothesis that SWGs are important bodies responsible for sector policy creation and monitoring in the Republic of North Macedonia and serve as forum for coordination of donor support for policy implementation.

The sector-wide approach was indicated as comprehensive approach for IPA II, used to assess and determine the state's qualification level in terms of utilization of IPA assistance for full sector support, and was followed by formation of sector working groups over the period 2015-2020. With the start of IPA III programming for the period 2021-2027, institutions continued the sector-wide approach and operation of sector working groups.

While, in formal terms, sector working groups have potential to be policy makers in relevant sectors, SWG monitoring findings in 2021 indicate to regression in terms of their functionality, civil society participation and effects from their work. Modest improvement is noted in respect to transparency in operation, having in mind that institutions responded to more than 85% of information requests made under the instrument for free access to public information, accounting for an improvement by more than 4% compared to 2020. Openness is also noted in terms of increased communication, especially because in 2021 representatives from all 12 SWGs accepted invitations for interview with the project team that monitors their work and performance.

Based on the analysis of meetings held by SWGs, total of 251 responses made by institutions under the instrument for free access to public information, 12 interviews with

IPA coordinators and discussions with 26 civil society organizations that participate in sector groups, flagship monitoring findings on performance of SWGs in 2021 concern the following:



- In 2021, SWGs held a total of 11 plenary sessions and 8 operational meetings, representing a decrease compared to 2020 findings, when they held a total of 19 plenary sessions and 21 operational meetings.
- None from 12 SWGs has complied with the minimum number of plenary sessions on annual level stipulated in their respective rules of procedure or draft rules of procedure, while 4 sector groups<sup>1</sup> did not hold any plenary session during 2021.
- In the case of 5 from 12 sector groups, civil society organizations have not participated in SWG work during 2021. In the case of 4 SWGs, civil society participation was absent due to the fact that the relevant sector group has not held any meeting, while one sector group has not invited civil society organizations to participate in its work.<sup>2</sup>
- SWGs that have held plenary session and invited civil society organizations to attend these meeting did not fully update data on civil society representatives resulting in invitations being sent to erroneous or non-existing e-mail addresses, which additionally narrows the space for civil society participation.
- Although IPA III Regulation anticipates that civil society organizations should be given space for meaningful participation in IPA programming and sector policy development, in the practice there is no actual space for substantial engagement of civil society organizations during plenary sessions and involvement of civil society representatives in operational meetings organized by SWGs.
- While donor coordination is anticipated as part of activities performed by sector working groups, the monitoring tools did not observe agenda items for SWG meetings held in 2021 that focus on donor coordination matters.

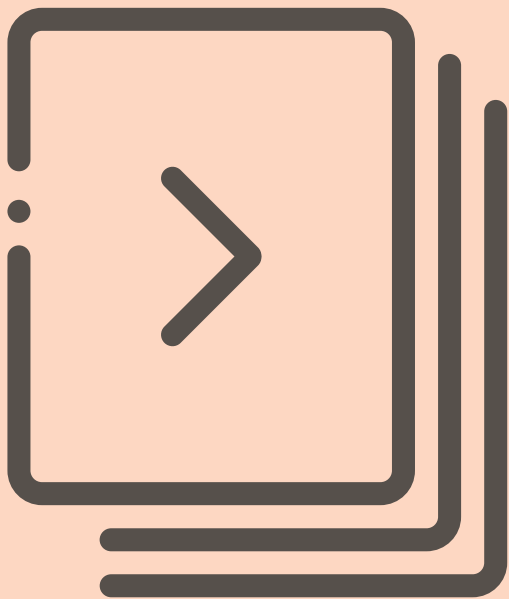
1 SWG Justice, SWG Public Administration Reform, SWF Roma Integration and SWG Home Affairs

2 SWG Competitiveness and Innovation

Based on the established state-of-play, encouraging steps have been made in 2021 towards enhanced structural dialogue. In particular, the Secretariat for European Affairs (SEA) initiated the process for amending the rules of procedures for SWGs in order to improve their overall performance and regulate civil society and donor participation. During interviews with representatives from competent institutions it was underlined that they are open to changing the rules of procedure with a view to regulate participation and role of civil society organizations in greater details. Expectations are that predictability of SWG dynamics and functionality will be improved in 2022, by creating the indicative calendar for meetings of all SWGs and by publishing information on phases for future IPA programming, as well as relevant documents for sector policies. Based on responses obtained from civil society organizations, evident is the request for their participation at the level of technical meetings that would allow them to be involved in all stages of policy development and adoption.

## HOW TO MOVE FORWARD?

SEA must urgently open consultations around the new rules of procedures for SWGs, which should include provisions that improve meaningful participation of civil society organizations, primary by ensuring availability and access to materials and information of operational nature, as well as by organizing inception training for new representatives to ensure thorough understanding of sector policy processes and IPA programming. These trainings should also target civil society representatives from Sector Monitoring Committees. The new rules of procedure should regulate in details the procedure for selection and work of civil society representatives, including the method for consultations with the broader civil society. Adherent actions are needed to implement plans aimed at improving participation, work predictability and transparency of SWGs.



# GENERAL INFORMATION

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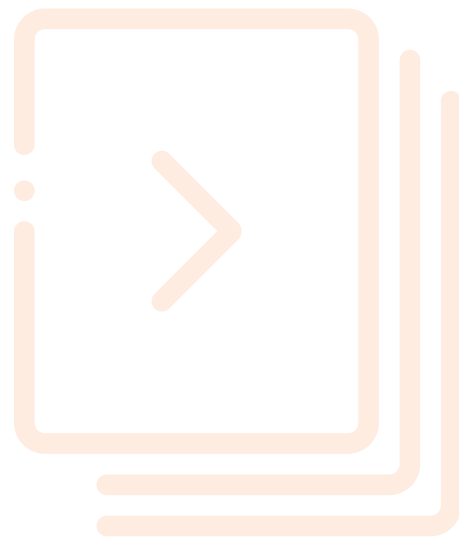
SWG Roma Integration did not hold any plenary sessions in 2021.

## Strategies and Programs:

- | [EU Roma Strategic Framework](#)
- | [Poznan Declaration of Western Balkan Partners on Roma Integration within the EU Accession Process](#)

Development of the new National Roma Strategy 2022-2030 is in advance stage of development.

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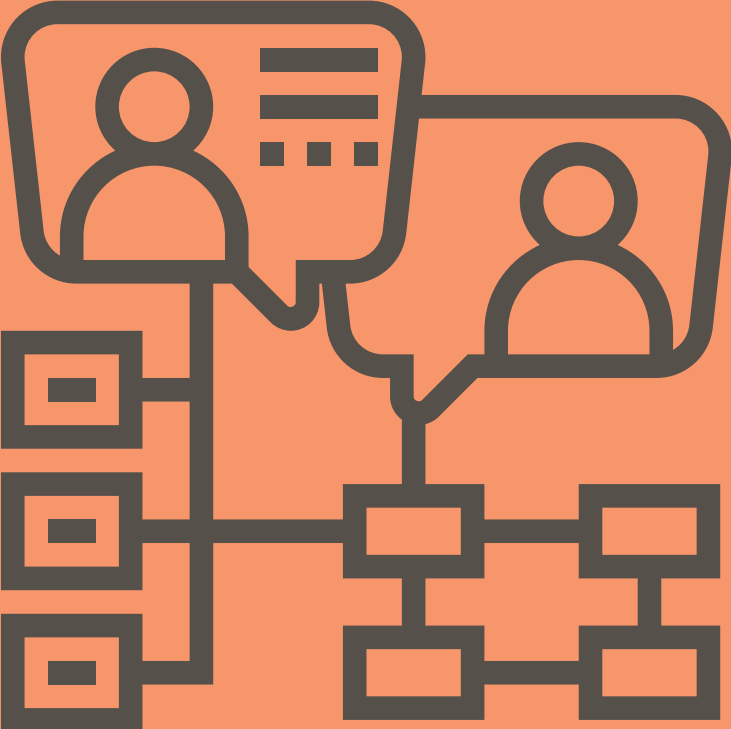


# METHODOLOGY APPROACH

For the purpose of this report, the project team used several research methods, as follows:

- | instrument for free access to public information;
- | focus group with civil society representatives that participate in SWG Roma Integration;
- | interview with the coordinator of civil servants from the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy;
- | direct monitoring at SWG meetings.

A total of 19 freedom of information requests were submitted to the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, i.e. head of the sector for coordination and technical assistance to the minister, which disclosed responses within the law-stipulated deadline, but only for three information inquires. Moreover, the project team organized a focus group with representatives from civil society organizations that work on Roma policies and have attended the founding meeting for this sector working group in November 2019. Furthermore, the project team interviewed the coordinator of civil servants who is responsible for SWG Roma Integration.



# PART 1

## SECTOR POLICIES

### European Commission's 2021 Progress Report for North Macedonia

The European Commission's 2021 report<sup>3</sup> noted limited progress on inclusion of Roma. The Roma Inclusion Strategy (2014-2020) has expired, and the new strategy is under development in 2021. There is no more minister without portfolio responsible for implementation of the Strategy for Improving Status of Roma in the Republic of Macedonia, but rather an advisor to the Prime Minister responsible for Roma, which reduces possibilities for Roma issues to be discussed by the government.



<sup>3</sup> European Commission's 2021 Progress Report for North Macedonia, available at: <https://www.sep.gov.mk/post/?id=5657>

**TABLE 1.****Key findings from the EC's Progress Report for North Macedonia related to Roma integration****KEY FINDINGS**

1. The number of unemployed Roma is continuously increasing, i.e. 13,703 Roma were registered as unemployed in 2020 compared to 9,239 in 2019. The number of Roma benefiting from active employment measures is increasing (431 in 2021 compared to 86 in 2020). However, new measures need to be introduced with a more targeted and affirmative approach for Roma beneficiaries.

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2. Data from the Regional Roma Survey showed that 94% of Roma are covered with health insurance, while 50% of marginalized Roma use preventive and curative health services. In 2020, 43% of those that died before the age of 65 years were Roma. At the moment, there are 21 licensed Roma Mediators, while their number has decreased in the last year, mostly due to the COVID-19 crisis.

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3. Funds for Roma housing were significantly decreased and redirected for response to the COVID-19 crisis. It is unclear whether support for infrastructure projects at local level will continue after departure of its initiator, i.e. minister without portfolio. Underway are initiatives for legalization of Roma settlements in some municipality, but the majority of them are still not covered with urban plans. The new law on social housing is not adopted. Funds from the state budget anticipated for Roma housing were not used in their entirety.

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4. The Law on Registration of Persons without Birth Certificates was adopted, but implementation is slow. From around 700 Roma without personal identification documents, 202 requests were submitted and 92 applicants were issued birth certificates, which is a very small number. Roma girls remain particularly vulnerable, often due to unemployment and early marriages.

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5. There are no systemic measures by state institutions to address the issue of street children.

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6. Priority actions, as identified during Roma seminars in November 2019, are moderately addressed, but it remains unclear who is responsible for monitoring and reporting.

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7. Commitment to implementation of priorities from the Poznan Declaration remains satisfactory.
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At the same time, EC's report puts forward recommendations in several areas in North Macedonia that are of key importance for Roma integration.

## **TABLE 2.**

### **Recommendations from EC's 2021 Progress Report for North Macedonia in relation to Roma integration**

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. In the section on **fundamental rights**, it is indicated that the state should further improve the quality of community services to identify children at risk and to provide adequate support to vulnerable categories of children, especially children victims of violence, Roma children and children with disabilities.
  2. Under **Chapter 19: Social Policy and Employment** it is noted that the state should continue to implement activation measures for long-term and low-skilled unemployed people, including women, persons with disabilities and Roma, and ensure proper monitoring and evaluation of such measures.
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## STRATEGIC GUIDELINES FOR ROMA INTEGRATION



### EU Roma Strategic Framework

The European Commission had adopted new headline targets by 2030,<sup>4</sup> based on progress achieved under the previous framework.<sup>5</sup>

They include:

- | 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 and the gender 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.

4 New EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation, available at: <https://bit.ly/3CIUVKk>

5 EU National Roma Integration Strategies by 2020, available at: <https://bit.ly/3hGLUC1>

## Poznan Declaration of the Western Balkan Partners on Roma Integration

Declaration of the Western Balkan Partners on Roma Integration within the EU Enlargement Process,<sup>6</sup> adopted in Poznan, Poland, includes the following objectives:

- **Employment:** Increase the employment rate of Roma in the public sector to the rate proportional of the participation of Roma in the overall population; increase the employment rate among Roma to at least 25 percent;
- **Housing:** Whenever possible, legalize all informal settlements where Roma live; or provide permanent, decent, affordable and desegregated housing for Roma currently living in informal settlements that cannot be legalized for justified reasons;
- **Education:** Increase the enrolment and completion rate of Roma in primary education to 90 percent and the enrolment and completion rate of Roma in secondary education to 50 percent;
- **Health:** Ensure universal health insurance coverage among Roma of at least 95 percent or to the rate equal to the rest of the population;
- **Civil registration:** Ensure all Roma are registered in the civil registries;
- **Non-discrimination:** Strengthen the government structure to protect against discrimination and establish a specific sub-division for non-discrimination of Roma within the formal non-discrimination bodies to process complaints by Roma, provide legal support to alleged victims and identify discrimination schemes, including institutional and hidden discrimination.

<sup>6</sup> Declaration of Western Balkan Partners for Roma Integration within the EU Enlargement Process (known as the Poznan Declaration), available at: <https://bit.ly/3gVMjjz>



### **Roma Inclusion Strategy 2022-2030**

At national level, adoption of the **Roma Inclusion Strategy 2022–2030** is in the final stage.

The process for development of this strategy document included organization of **consultations**. In particular, development of the new Roma Integration Strategy was led by the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia, through the advisor for Roma issues as the national contact point for Roma, in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, which is the strategy holder, and with technical support from the project **"Roma Integration 2020"**.

In 2021, the Roma Inclusion Strategy 2022-2030 was sent for adoption by the Government. It is anticipated for this document to be presented at the Seminar for Roma and Roma Refugees in February 2022, followed by creation of action plan on strategy implementation within several working groups.

### **TABLE 3.**

#### **Objectives defined under the Roma Inclusion Strategy 2022–2030**

<b>STRATEGY OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>PERFORMANCE INDICATORS</b>
<b><u>SO1: Increase employment of Roma in public and state administration</u></b>	By 2030, at least 2.6% are employed in public and state administration (target concerns additional employees to those already employed at institutions)
<b><u>SO2: Increase coverage with active employment measures and services</u></b>	At least 5% coverage of Roma under annual programs for active employment measures
<b><u>SO3: Create an enabling environment for formalization and stimulation of entrepreneurship among the Roma community</u></b>	By 2030, support at least 1000 entrepreneurs to open new businesses and formalize already existing businesses
<b><u>SO4: Promote digital skills among Roma youth</u></b>	By 2030, 30% of Roma have acquired information and communication technology (ICT) skills

<b>SO5: Reduce the rate of Roma youth not involved in education, employment or training</b>	By 2030, reduce the rate of Roma youth that are not involved in education, employment or training by at least 50%
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As regards IPA II, Roma integration is covered under different sectors within [IPA II Indicative Strategy Paper](#)<sup>7</sup>:

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

In 2021, Roma integration can be addressed under the [2019 action document “EU for Inclusion”](#),<sup>8</sup> in the amount of 7.35 million EUR and implementation deadline by 2026.

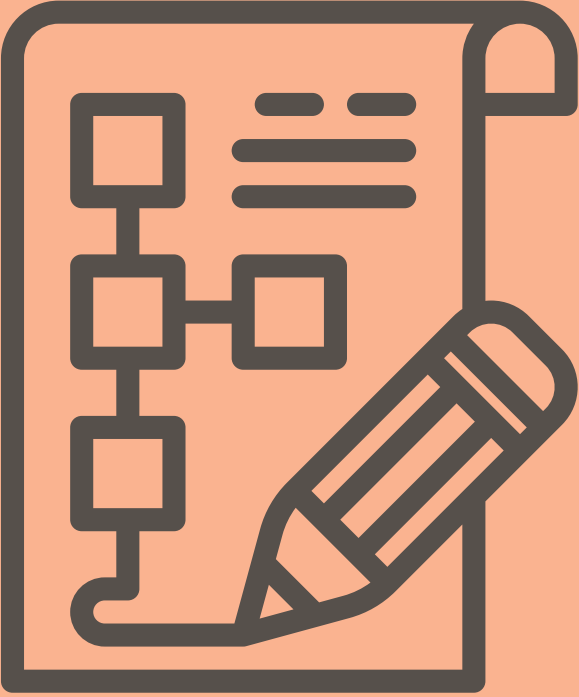
Roma integration is also covered under the strategic response for IPA III **Window 4: Competitiveness and Inclusive Growth, which is comprised of following thematic priorities:**

- | **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:** 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 cross-cutting issue for all four thematic priorities.

<sup>7</sup> Revised Indicative Strategy Paper 2014-2020, available at: <https://bit.ly/3HJ87K2>

<sup>8</sup> 2019 Action Document “EU for Inclusion”, available at: <https://bit.ly/3Cc784b>



# PART 2

## SWG FUNCTIONALITY

### 2.1 RULES OF PROCEDURE

In 2021, SWG Roma Integration was coordinated by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and was chaired by the line minister. This sector group was established by means of 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 are represented in this sector working group based on their work in this field.

SWG Roma Integration was formed by the end of 2019. It was anticipated to be coordinated by the Minister without Portfolio responsible for implementation of the National Strategy for Improving Status of Roma in the Republic of North Macedonia.

However, with the formation of the new government in 2020, its composition did not anticipate the position of such minister without portfolio, whereby SWG Roma Integration did not hold any plenary sessions in the course of 2021 and no changes were made to the **method for regulation of its operation.**

As regards **enforcement of provisions** from SWG rules of procedure, it was observed that this sector group failed to schedule the stipulated number of plenary sessions.



In terms of **transparency**, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy published on its website<sup>9</sup> precise and comprehensive information related to work of SWG Education, Social Policy and Employment, such as founding documents (decision on formation and rules of procedure), including press releases, minutes and materials from SWG meetings. However, there are no information available on SWG Roma Integration, raising the question about the capacity of institutions to organize work of this sector group.

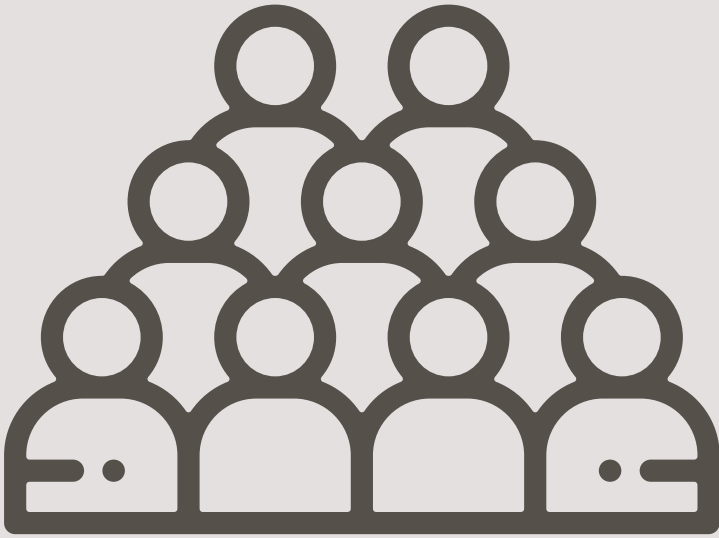
In the opinion of **civil society representatives**, information about their role in the sector working group is not fully clear, especially having in mind that they have attended only the meeting for establishment of SWG Roma Integration in November 2019, and have not been contacted since. This brings under question the sector group's functionality, but also the role and participation of civil society organizations therein. However, the interview with the coordinator responsible for SWG Roma Integration revealed information that, in the recent period, civil society organizations working on Roma issues were involved in creation of the **Roma Integration Strategy 2022–2030**, and that SWG setup will be subject to changes in the next period.

## 2.2 ANNUAL 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 2021, SWG Roma Integration did not annual plans and reports.

<sup>9</sup> Website of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, available at: <https://mtsp.gov.mk/>



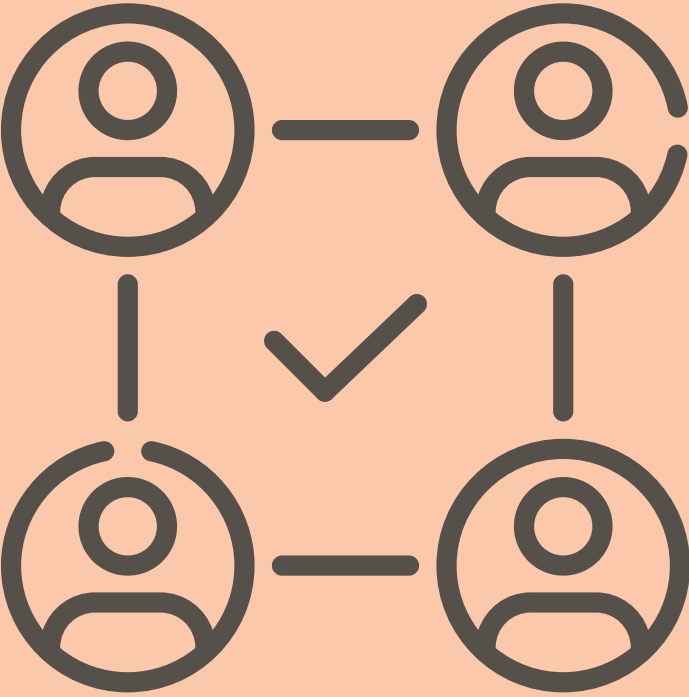


# PART 3

## CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION

The list of civil society representatives in SWG Roma Integration includes **seventeen civil society organizations<sup>10</sup> with the status of members. This sector group did not hold any plenary sessions in 2021.**

<sup>10</sup> This sector working group was formed by the government on the plenary session held on 06.12.2019. Information available at: <https://bit.ly/35p6Lr5>. The session was attended by 17 civil society organizations with interest in this field of operation, as follows: 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 Center – 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.



# PART 4

## CSO CAPACITY

The number of 17 CSOs makes SWG Roma Inclusion one of sector working groups with relatively good civil society participation compared to the others. However, interviews organized with civil society representatives for the purpose of this report revealed that their role in this sector group is unclear, they are not informed of developments and novelties, and they express reservations terms of civil society participation.

Civil society representatives based such views on several reasons. First, they indicated that one cannot speak about effective participation of CSOs in this sector group because the same does not have predefined dynamics of meetings and there is no communication among SWG members beyond meetings.



# PART 5

## EFFECTS FROM SWG WORK

### 5.1 PLENARY SESSIONS AND OPERATIONAL MEETINGS

In 2021, SWG Roma Integration did not hold any plenary sessions or operational meetings.





# PART 6

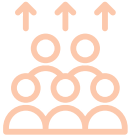
## INSTRUMENT FOR PRE-ACCESSION ASSISTANCE IPA III (2021-2027)

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 III was introduced with adoption of the Regulation on Establishing the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance and the Regulation on Implementing Rules and Principles for IPA III<sup>11</sup> by the European Union, and is coherent with other funds, programmes and instruments of the Union, primarily the Neighbourhood Development and International Cooperation Instrument.

According to its structure, IPA III is organized around five thematic priorities, i.e. 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;**

<sup>11</sup> Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA III) COM/2018/465 final



4. Competitiveness and Inclusive Growth;
5. Territorial and Cross-Border Cooperation.

For more information on IPA III programming (2021-2027) see the report [IPA: Cross-Cutting Issue.](#)

## 6.1 IPA III PROGRAMMING (2021-2027) IN THE SECTOR FOR ROMA INTEGRATION

Roma integration is covered in the strategic response to IPA III **Window 4: Competitiveness and Inclusive Growth, which is comprised of following 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 cross-cutting issues for all four thematic priorities.





# PART 7

## GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN SECTOR WORKING GROUPS

Gender mainstreaming is a process for systematic consideration of implications on women and men from a planned action, including legislation, policy or program, in any area and at all levels.<sup>12</sup> In that, the ultimate goal is to achieved gender equality. Within the national legislation of the Republic of North Macedonia, gender mainstreaming is defined under the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men<sup>13</sup> and represents an obligation for all state bodies and institutions. Failure to incorporate the gender perspective implies adoption of gender-neutral or gender-blind policies that are unable to address existing inequalities and could contribute to deepened gender gaps.

Gender equality is among core values of the European Union.<sup>14</sup> At the same time, EU membership is conditioned with respect

<sup>12</sup> European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), Glossary and Thesaurus, A-Z Index, available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1185?lang=mk>

<sup>13</sup> Article 4, paragraph (1), item 10) of the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, “Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia” no. 6/12, 30/13, 166/14, 150/15 and “Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia” no. 53/21.

<sup>14</sup> Article 2 of the consolidated version of the Treaty on the European Union, available at: <https://bit.ly/3s4gjyR>



and promotion of fundamental European values.<sup>15</sup> The Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance in the period 2021-2027 (IPA III) stipulates that implementation of IPA III should be led by the principles of gender equality and enhanced rights of women and girls,<sup>16</sup> in line with and aimed at attaining the minimum standards established under the EU's new Gender Action Plan 2021-2025 (GAP III) titled "An Ambitious Agenda for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in EU External Action".<sup>17</sup> GAP III is organized into five pillars and the third pillar anticipates activities in six key areas of engagement.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, GAP III reflects goals and objectives defined under the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025.<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, IPA III defines gender equality as specific objective, but also thematic priority eligible for support.<sup>20</sup> In that, it is stressed that gender equality is a cross-cutting issue that should be adequately reflected and integrated in the overall implementation process.<sup>21</sup> Goals of IPA III assistance under the thematic priority on gender equality fully correspond to six areas of engagement from GAP III, which provides an additional indicator for the need for these two documents to be linked. On that account, work within sector groups - that represent forums for interdepartmental cooperation and are competent for creating and implementing national policies and programming, monitoring and evaluating foreign aid - should be guided by and aligned with GAP III. Finally, due consideration should be made of the EU's commitment that, by 2025, at least 85% of all new external actions should include gender equality as important or general goal.<sup>22</sup>

15 Ibid. Article 49, paragraph (1)

16 Regulation (EU) 2021/1529 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 September 2021 establishing the Instrument for Pre-Accession assistance (IPA III), available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R1529&qid=1643627286827&from=en>

17 EU Gender Action Plan (GAP) III – An Ambitious Agenda for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in EU External Action, available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/join\\_2020\\_17\\_en\\_final.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/join_2020_17_en_final.pdf)

18 Ibid. GAP III anticipates activities grouped into six thematic areas: ensuring freedom from all forms of gender-based violence; promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights; strengthening economic and social rights and empowerment of girls and women; advancing equal participation and leadership; implementing the women, peace and security agenda; addressing challenges and harnessing opportunities offered by the green transition and the digital transformation.

19 A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0152>

20 Regulation (EU) 2021/1529 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 September 2021 establishing the Instrument for Pre-Accession assistance (IPA III), available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R1529&qid=1643627286827&from=en>

21 Ibid.

22 EU Gender Action Plan (GAP) III – An Ambitious Agenda for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in EU External Action, available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/join\\_2020\\_17\\_en\\_final.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/join_2020_17_en_final.pdf)

An important element of the sector approach to gender mainstreaming is building and enhancing technical competences of all stakeholders involved in implementation of sector policies.<sup>23</sup> Hence, equal importance is assigned to capacity building on gender mainstreaming among policy makers, but also among people involved in policy implementation.

For more information, see [Shadow Report on Gender Mainstreaming in Sector Working Groups](#).

## 7.1 GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN SWG ROMA INTEGRATION

In 2021, SWG Roma Integration did not develop IPA III action programmes or separate gender analyses. Moreover, this sector group did not hold any plenary sessions. Hence, the project team is unable to assess the segment on gender mainstreaming in SWG operation. The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP) has submitted project-proposals for funding under 2023 and 2024 programming years, which are still working versions and pending response from the EU. Members of SWG Roma Integration participated in review and additions to the draft text of IPA III strategic response for the programming period 2021-2027 and attended the plenary session of SWG Education, Employment and Social Policy held on 30.06.2021. This session included presentation of projects planned under 2022 draft action programme “EU for Better Health and Social Protection, and Gender Equality”. Documents referenced above include the gender perspective, while their development relied on administrative data and available analyses.

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<sup>23</sup> EIGE, Glossary and Thesaurus, A-Z Index, available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1359?lang=mk>



## FINAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The work approach applied by SWG Roma Integration is not characterized by any serious dynamics, especially having in mind that Roma integration issues were not featured on agendas for SWG meetings in 2021. A decision needs to be taken about future operation of this sector group, i.e. whether it will operate independently and receive necessary and adequate institutional support, or it should be re-merged with SWG Education, Employment and Social Policy from which it was separated as stand-alone working group in 2019.

As regards SWG capacity, it could be concluded that ministerial change at government level have led to decrease intensity of operation by SWG Roma Integration. In 2021, this sector group did not dispose with adequate capacity for independent operation.

- 1.** In 2021, SWG Roma Integration demonstrated poor work dynamics, as it did not hold no plenary sessions or operational meetings. This work dynamics is insufficient for development of strategy and planning documents and for monitoring results achieved that would allow meaningful stakeholder participation.
- 2.** It is necessary to ensure that this sector working group engages in development of proposals for sector and inter-sector policies, strategies and developmental programs relevant for cross-cutting Roma integration issues, for which additional capacity is needed.
- 3.** Relevant preconditions need to be created for civil society organizations, through this sector groups, to participate in the processes for identification, formulation and priority-setting of developmental goals, measures and processes for implementation of national policies and strategies in this sector.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY



- ◆ European Commission's 2021 Progress Report for North Macedonia
- ◆ Responses 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 under the survey questionnaire for civil society organizations about their experience with civic engagement
- ◆ Performance Assessment Framework (PAF) Indicators
- ◆ Strategic response for IPA III, available at: <https://bit.ly/3soDELY>
- ◆ EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies by 2020, available at: <https://bit.ly/3trRuO5>
- ◆ New EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation 2021-2030, available at: <https://bit.ly/3HB02qY>
- ◆ Roma Strategy of the Republic of Macedonia 2014 – 2020
- ◆ Roma Integration Strategy of the Republic of North Macedonia 2022 – 2030
- ◆ IPA II Action Document for North Macedonia “EU for Inclusion”
- ◆ Strategic response to IPA III Window 4: Competitiveness and Inclusive Growth
- ◆ Shadow Report from Monitoring Work and Effects of Sector Working Groups, January 2019 – February 2020



