



PRIORITY SECTOR  
Social Inclusion, Youth  
Employment and  
Poverty Reduction

## Programme area n°7 Roma Inclusion and Empowerment

### OBJECTIVE

Enhanced inclusion and empowerment of Roma

### AREAS OF SUPPORT

- > Implementation of European national, regional and local strategies relevant for Roma inclusion, and investments for systemic changes
- > Integrated measures at local level in the areas of education, employment, health and housing
- > Innovative approaches to enhancing the inclusiveness of public institutions and policies
- > Empowerment of Roma
- > Combating all forms of discrimination, including stereotyping of Roma
- > Systems for data collection and analysis, monitoring and evaluation
- > Collecting knowledge, and synthesising expertise on different Roma groups, languages, cultures, histories and identities in Europe

### SUGGESTED MEASURES

- > Supporting direct involvement of, and dialogue with, Roma in programme development and implementation
- > Identifying best practice at local or at community level
- > Targeting marginalised settlements through an integrated approach, including small grant scheme(s) to support grassroots initiatives
- > Developing partnerships between the public and private sphere with a focus on job creation
- > Facilitating regional cooperation on issues of Roma inclusion and empowerment
- > Empowering Roma women by supporting the freedom of choice for Roma women and girls, and mainstreaming Roma women's issues in relevant national programmes
- > Supporting specific interventions at community level, such as on legal aid or on social entrepreneurship, including micro-finance
- > Training of young Roma leaders, also aimed at increasing their number in different areas and levels of public administration
- > Campaigns targeting the majority on how to foster the human rights of Roma, combat Roma discrimination and promote Roma in a positive way
- > Synthesising expertise on Roma language, culture, history and identity in Europe
- > Developing educational materials on different Roma groups, languages, cultures, histories and identities in Europe
- > Consolidating efforts on research and training in Romani studies

## RELEVANCE OF SUPPORT

Roma are Europe's largest minority, with an estimated population of 10-12 million people. Socially and economically Roma are also one of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. Improving their socio-economic situation and ensuring the protection of their rights is a priority for the EEA and Norway Grants.

Poverty reduction is one of the seven flagship initiatives of the Europe 2020 strategy aimed at smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. The EU increasingly focuses on the inclusion of Roma as a means to deliver on such targets, notably in its cohesion policy. Beneficiary countries have also made their own such commitments in their national Roma integration strategies, but many are facing important challenges in implementation. It is in this context that the Grants are working closely with the European Commission to assess progress in the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020 and on follow-up at a national level to relevant EU Decisions.

Large-scale surveys show that when compared to non-Roma living in the nearby vicinity, Roma are particularly affected by the risk of poverty and discrimination. This leads to huge gaps in education and job opportunities. To break the cycle of disadvantage, there is a need for measures that involve Roma directly in assessing their needs in designing and implementing appropriate actions. To address the root causes of their exclusion, discrimination of Roma shall be combatted, in line with the provisions of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, as well as with other European standards and norms.

By targeting Roma in an explicit but not exclusive way, the EEA and Norway Grants can help address needs prioritised by the beneficiary countries. Roma inclusion is mainstreamed within and across the relevant priority areas of the Grants. The support is also given in cooperation with such key partners as the EU's Fundamental Rights Agency, the Council of Europe or the Open Society Foundations. Advancing on Roma inclusion entails three main interlinked aspects: empowering Roma, rendering institutions and policies more inclusive, and targeting the majority to positively influence attitudes towards Roma. Partnerships among all stakeholders are essential for implementing integrated measures at local level and for inducing the necessary systemic reforms. Donor coordination and strategic partnerships with international organisations shall also serve this purpose.

## PROGRAMME AREA SPECIFICS

- > All programmes shall address the three aspects of Roma participation: empowerment of Roma; rendering institutions and policies more inclusive; and, targeting the majority, unless otherwise specified in the memorandum of understanding
- > A maximum level of funding available for infrastructure (hard measures) shall be identified in the memorandum of understanding or exceptionally in the programme's concept note