



Structural Funds: Investing in Roma

EURoma meeting

5-6 June 2014, Rome

Draft agenda

Meeting Venue: ISFOL offices (tbc)

Rationale:

We are at a **critical juncture** in this moment of transition between the current (2007-2013) and next (2014-2020) Structural Funds programming period. The decisions taken in 2013 and 2014 regarding the Partnership Agreements (PAs) and Operational Programmes (OPs) will have long-term implications as they will guide the Structural and Investment Funds interventions for the next seven-year period.

The European Union (EU) has witnessed the emergence of a **favourable EU political context for Roma inclusion** with the development of an EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies (NRIS). The Europe 2020 Strategy targets¹ also concern the Roma inclusion and are due to be reflected in the National Reform Programmes (NRPs). In addition, the Country-Specific Recommendations (CSR) addressed by the European Commission to some Member States also refer to the Roma population.

However, today, the challenge is to reduce the gap between this positive policy framework and its implementation on the ground. This would imply framing the NRIS in the Europe 2020 Strategy and the Semester process (Annual Growth Survey, National Reform Programmes and Country-Specific Recommendations). The European Structural and Investment Funds can be a crucial financial tool at the disposal of Member States to implement these policies and to achieve their goals.

¹ Three of the five Europe 2020 targets proposed at the European level (EU Member States have also defined their own national targets under this heading) are directly relevant to the situation of the Roma: employment (75 % of the 20-64 years old to be employed); education (reducing school drop-out rates to below 10 %, and at least 40 % of 30-34 years old completing third level education); poverty/social exclusion (at least 20 million fewer people in or at risk of poverty and social exclusion). http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm



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The European Commission² and the European Council³ have explicitly referred to the European Structural and Investment Funds as a key instrument to be employed by Member States to foster Roma inclusion. In particular, the **recent Council Recommendation on effective Roma integration measures**⁴ recommends that Member States “*take appropriate measures to include Roma integration among the priorities in the Partnership Agreements on the use of the European Structural and Investment Funds for the period 2014-2020.*”

The Cohesion Policy Package and the Regulations for the next programming period⁵ imply substantial progress, opening up a wide range of opportunities for a more efficient use of Structural and Investment Funds for the inclusion of vulnerable groups, including Roma, in the next programming period. The **ESF Regulation**⁶ establishes for the first time one specific Investment Priority focused on “*Integration of marginalised communities such as the Roma*” under the Thematic Objective “Promoting Social Inclusion and Combating Poverty”. The General Regulation⁷ proposes that the Partnership Agreements also set out “*where appropriate, an integrated approach to addressing the specific needs of geographical areas most affected by poverty or of target groups at highest risk of discrimination or social exclusion, with special regard to marginalised communities, persons with disabilities, the long term unemployed and young people not in employment, education and training*” (Art 15, 2 (a) (iii)).

As shown by the previous EUroma report on *Roma and Structural Funds* (2010)⁸, in the 2007 – 2013 programming period there has been an increasing number of programmes and projects targeting Roma, which has allowed to experiment and gain knowledge on the use of Structural Funds for Roma inclusion. In order to take full advantage of the potentialities of Structural and Investment Funds in the upcoming period, the planning process shall build upon the knowledge and lessons learnt during the current programming period and concentrate objectives with a view to achieving a more effective use of these funds for Roma inclusion.

² <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52012DC0226:en:NOT>

³ http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma/national-strategies/index_en.htm
and http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/lisa/122100.pdf

⁴ http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/lisa/139979.pdf

⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/information/legislation/index_en.cfm

⁶ <http://new.eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32013R1304>

⁷ <http://new.eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32013R1303>

⁸ http://www.euromanet.eu/upload/59/60/EUROMA_REPORT_web.pdf



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Thursday, 5th June

9.00 – 9.30	Welcoming words
9.30 - 9.45	Presentation of the Agenda
9.45 – 13.30	<p>EU Framework :recent developments at European level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EC Communication on follow up on the implementation of National Roma Integration Strategies 2014 • Council recommendation on effective Roma integration measures in the member states <p>Follow up on key developments at policy and programming level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of main findings and conclusions of the EURoma+ report carried out in 8 EURoma countries • Round of interventions on Partnership Agreements: review of how the Roma integration needs are included within the PA • Round of interventions on OPs and Roma inclusion 2014-2020: approaches, priorities, etc. <p>Coffee break 20 min</p>
13.30 – 15.00	Lunch
15.00 – 16.30	<p>Follow up on EURoma tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guide for local authorities: using ESIF for Roma inclusion at local level • Translation and dissemination process
16.30 – 18.00	<p>Assessment of EURoma work and discussion about the future of the Network:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaire and process of forethought on the value, improvement proposals and current opportunities for EURoma. • Contributions by each MS <p>Coffee inside the room</p>
20.30	Dinner / cultural activity

Friday, 6th June

9.00 –12.00	Country monograph
12.00 – 13.00	Internal issues of the network:



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	Next EURoma meeting Youth unemployment: Youth guarantee and ESIF Coffee break 20 min
13.00 – 14.30	Lunch
14.30	Departure of participants