

DECLARATION OF WESTERN BALKANS PARTNERS ON ROMA INTEGRATION WITHIN THE EU ENLARGEMENT PROCESS

We, the Prime Ministers of the Western Balkans, reiterate our commitment for integration of Roma in our societies and pledge to step up our efforts as part of the European Union enlargement process and regional cooperation.

Hereby adopt the **Declaration of Western Balkans Partners on Roma Integration within the EU Enlargement Process** by which we **make a commitment to continue and enhance efforts for full equality and integration of Roma**, notably through implementation and follow up to the Joint Conclusions of the Roma Seminars, **as follows**:

1. Pledge to the achievement of the following **objectives**:
 - a. **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 per cent;
 - b. **Housing**: Wherever 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;
 - c. **Education**: Increase the enrolment and completion rate of Roma in primary education to 90 per cent and the enrolment and completion rate of Roma in secondary education to 50 per cent;
 - d. **Health**: Ensure universal health insurance coverage among Roma of at least 95 per cent or to the rate equal to the rest of the population;
 - e. **Civil registration**: ensure all Roma are registered in the civil registries.
 - f. **Non-discrimination**: Strengthen the government structures 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;
2. Undertake to **use the available data** (including the results of the 2017 Western Balkans Regional Roma Survey) to formulate evidence-based policies for integration of Roma, and commit to **establish proper mechanism for monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the Roma policies**, including data relevant to measure the achievements of the objectives set forth in this Declaration, by designating the national statistical offices as key responsible institutions for data collection in accordance with their programs;
3. Ensure to **strengthen and support the National Roma Contact Points** as a comprehensive mechanism for coordination and implementation of the objectives agreed within this Declaration and for ensuring synergies among line ministries responsible for Roma integration;

4. Agree to develop, adopt and implement regional standards on **public budgeting related to Roma integration** for mainstream and targeted policies, use and increase the **public budgeting**, both central and local, reaching Roma communities to achieve the abovementioned objectives, use available **donor funding**, including Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance, to advance the status of Roma;

5. Commit to establish **formal channels and mechanisms for joint involvement of the local governments and the Roma communities** in the formulation of policy, decision making, implementation and monitoring of the efforts undertaken to achieve the objectives of this Declaration.

We call upon the European Union institutions to:

6. **Continue the support** to the efforts of the Western Balkans partners to achieve the objectives for integration of Roma set forth in this Declaration;

7. **Link the agreed Roma integration objectives** set forth in this Declaration with the key performance indicators to assess progress within the enlargement process;

8. **Ensure that the enlargement flagship initiatives will advance the situation of Roma by introducing Roma specific indicators for key measures**, in particular within the Rule of Law Initiative, and the Socio-Economic Development Initiative with a view to prevent adverse effects or leave Roma behind the rest of the society;

9. **Envisage a stronger role of the Western Balkans partners in the European Union's post 2020 policy** on Roma integration by ensuring participation of the Western Balkans partners in the process in an observer status at minimum;

In view of the above:

10. We express our appreciation to the Government of North Macedonia for initiating this process;

11. We welcome the invitation of the Government of Albania to host a follow-up ministerial meeting in 2020 to assess the progress made in achieving the objectives and priorities set out in this Declaration.

Each of the parties will observe this Declaration until the date of becoming a member state of the European Union.