



The Council of Europe Project

«Strengthening the protection of national minorities, including Roma, and minority languages in Ukraine – Phase II»

NEWSLETTER

April
2021

SECTION 1



- ▶ STATEMENT on the occasion of 50th anniversary of the declaration of International Roma Day

SECTION 2

PROJECT DEVELOPMENTS

- ▶ The impact of the decentralisation reform on national minorities in Ukraine assessed in a Council of Europe report
- ▶ The first meeting of the Inter-ministerial Working Group on the Protection of the Rights and Freedoms of the Roma Minority in Ukraine took place
- ▶ Promoting effective governance and cooperation between national minorities, including Roma, and local authorities in Ukraine
- ▶ Two days online training / study visit for the State Service of Ukraine for Ethnopolitics and Freedom of Conscience on “Council of Europe standards and monitoring for combating discrimination”
- ▶ Meeting with the Council of Representatives of Public Associations of Indigenous Peoples, National Minorities of Ukraine at the Ministry of Education and Science
- ▶ The Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights Lyudmila Denisova presented a special report “The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Roma Community in Ukraine”

FIND US HERE:

<https://www.facebook.com/NationalMinoritiesAndRomaCoE/>
<https://www.coe.int/en/web/kyiv/national-minorities>

OUR PROJECT

The Council of Europe (CoE) continues to support its Member States to implement European human rights standards at national level through revision of legislation, capacity development and exchange of best practices. To contribute to this process, the CoE is implementing a project on “Strengthening the protection of national minorities, including Roma, and minority languages in Ukraine – Phase II”. It is a continuation of the Phase I of the project which was implemented in 2018-2020 and it is part of the Council of Europe Action Plan for Ukraine 2018-2022.

OUR GOALS

- ▶ Strengthening the protection of national minorities and minority languages in Ukraine by reinforcing relevant policies, improving consultations with national minorities, strengthening the capacities and competences of public authorities dealing with the protection of national minorities and raising public awareness.
- ▶ Improving the delivery of identity documents for the Roma people without IDs, including internally displaced Roma.
- ▶ Institutionalisation of the profession of health mediator in Ukraine; inclusive health care and services with better access by the Roma communities.

OUR PARTNERS

- ▶ National authorities involved in the protection of national minorities, including Roma, and minority languages: Ministry of Culture - State Service on Ethnic Policy and Freedom of Conscience, Ministry of Education and Science, Office of the Ombudsperson, Ministry of Social Policy, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Information Policy, State Migration Service, Office of the Prosecutor General, National Police and others.
- ▶ Regional State Administrations and district administrations of Ukraine dealing with protection of national minorities.
- ▶ Civil society organisations, including national minorities' organisations.

8 APRIL INTERNATIONAL ROMA DAY

STATEMENT on the occasion of 50th anniversary of the declaration of International Roma Day

SECTION 1



On the occasion of International Roma Day, celebrated worldwide on 8 April, we would like to send our warm wishes to all Roma in Ukraine.

This year, on 8 April, the International Roma Day celebrates its 50th anniversary and it's the day to celebrate Romani culture, history and language, and to raise awareness of the issues Roma people still face.

Moreover, on this day, we would like to support Roma people in combating stereotypes and discrimination and promoting Romani identity, as well as, raise awareness about Romani culture!

In the last decades, Roma civil society and activists have succeeded to achieve progress in the field of education and political participation. There are many Roma intellectuals, politicians and human rights defenders, which are bravely defending the rights and improving the situation of Roma in Ukraine.

Furthermore, we believe that the young generation of Roma, as well as, Roma civil society are the key in contributing to the advancement of the situation of the communities, and therefore, we call on authorities at all levels to provide the space for their public and political participation in decision-making processes.

Roma constitute an important part of the Ukrainian society and country's rich multicultural historic heritage. Regretfully, on a daily basis Roma face stigmatization, hate speech and bias. Particularly Roma women are subject to intersectional discrimination on the basis of ethnicity and gender.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the pre-existing inequalities in the societies around the world. It is an extremely important time to show solidarity and to demonstrate that no one in the Ukrainian society is left behind. This can be done both at the state level, by ensuring equal access to health and social services for Roma, but also by the society at large by showing human solidarity.

We support the work of Roma mediators and civil society that have worked hard and effectively to reach out to the most discriminated Roma communities and in order to ensure that they achieve full equality of rights and opportunities, as well as access to the necessary services for Roma men and women.

At the state level, a coherent and well-resourced Strategy for Roma Inclusion should be adopted in Ukraine without further delay to guide all the state policies and insti-

tutions in safeguarding the rights of Roma. At the same time, the recent administrative reforms in Ukraine and the fact that more powers and budgets were allocated to the local administrations should be seen and used as an opportunity for enhancing the situation of Roma at the local level.

Opre Roma! Bahtalo Internacjonalno Romano dives tumenge!

Signed by:

Steen Nørlov, Head of the Council of Europe Office in Ukraine

Matilda Bogner, Head of UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine

Matti Maasikas, Head of the EU Delegation, EU Ambassador

Lotta Sylwander, UNICEF Representative in Ukraine

Dafina Gercheva, UNDP Ukraine Resident Representative

H.E. **Claude Wild**, Ambassador of Switzerland

H.E. **Erik Svedahl**, Ambassador of Norway

Jaime Nadal, UNFPA Representative to Ukraine

Pablo Mateu, UNHCR Representative in Ukraine

PROJECT DEVELOPMENTS

SECTION 2

The impact of the decentralisation reform on national minorities in Ukraine assessed in a Council of Europe report



Assessment report Impact of the decentralization reform on national minorities in Ukraine in the selected regions: Chernivtsi, Odesa and Zakarpattia oblasts

The Council of Europe published an expert report assessing the impact of the decentralisation reform on national minorities in Ukraine in the selected regions – Chernivtsi, Odesa and Zakarpattia oblasts. The report was presented in December 2020.

The report on the Impact of the decentralisation reform on national minorities in Ukraine in the selected regions: Chernivtsi, Odesa and Zakarpattia oblasts was prepared by the experts of the Department of Democracy and Governance and the Anti-Discrimination Department of Directorate General of Democracy (DG II) of the Council of Europe within the framework of the Programme “Decentralisation and Local Government reform in Ukraine” and project “Protecting national minorities, including Roma, and minority languages in Ukraine”.

The report is based on a variety of sources of empirical material collected and analysed in June – September 2020 such as general information on the progress of decentralisation reform in the country as well as a series of 39 semi-structured individual and group interviews conducted within the project in the three target regions. The research also includes data from the Council of Europe supported annual opinion surveys of the nation-wide random sample of citizens.

Various sources of information were used in preparing the report. Thus, general information on the progress of the “decentralisation of power” reform in Ukraine was analysed. The source of the analysis was also the results of the 2001 census, but as the census data are relatively old and do not fit into the scheme of the new territorial organisation, the Council of Europe organised the collection of additional data in the amalgamated communities of the three regions covered by the research.

The preparation of the report was accompanied by a Council of Europe information campaign **“Diverse Roots – Shared Opportunities”**, which reached more than 73,000 people.

The report contains several recommendations aiming at enabling meaningful civil participation of national minorities in decision-making at local level, namely:

- To monitor the effectiveness and efficiency of the decentralisation reform and promote best practices;
- To ensure clear division of powers and responsibilities between the state and local authorities as well as between different tiers of local government;
- To consider revision of legislation relating to local elections to ensure representation of all communities in local elected assemblies;

- To improve legal framework on sub-municipal units protecting identity and representing interests of small communities;

- To enhance financial and legal instruments to ensure availability and quality of education at schools teaching in minority languages;

- To strengthen legal framework on the protection of national minorities;

- To expand legal framework on participatory democracy, promote use of the existing relevant tools and enhance targeted capacity building and awareness raising interventions;

- To strengthen community involvement in local governance, in particular strengthening the voice of national minorities.

The presentation and discussion of the report was held online in December 2020, the media report is here <https://www.coe.int/en/web/good-governance/photos-impact-of-the-decentralisation-reform-on-national-minorities-in-ukraine>

The full version of the report is available on the Council of Europe Office in Ukraine website <https://rm.coe.int/report-decentralisation-and-minorities-eng/1680a22354>

The leaflet can be found here <https://rm.coe.int/leaflet-eng-minorities/1680a2260d>

PROJECT DEVELOPMENTS

SECTION 2

The first meeting of the Inter-ministerial Working Group on the Protection of the Rights and Freedoms of the Roma Minority in Ukraine took place



On April 8th, 2021, on the International Roma Day, with the support of the Council of Europe project «Protection of National Minorities, including Roma and Minority Languages in Ukraine» (here in after - the Project), the first online meeting of the Inter-ministerial Working Group on Protection of Roma Minority Rights in Ukraine took place.

An Inter-ministerial Working Group was established on the initiative of the Ukrainian Parliament's Commissioner for Human Rights to consolidate efforts to promote the protection of the rights and freedoms of the Roma minority in Ukraine and implement the recommendations provided by the Commissioner in the special report «The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Roma» which was presented by Lyudmila Denisova in December 2020.

During her speech the Commissioner for Human Rights informed that she approved the composition and Regulations of the Inter-ministerial Working Group by the Order. It includes 18 people, among them: the representatives of the State Service of Ukraine for Ethnopolitics and Freedom of Conscience, the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine, the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine, the Ministry of Health of Ukraine, the Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Agriculture of Ukraine, the National Police of Ukraine, the State Migration Service of Ukraine, as well as the Committee on Human Rights,

Deoccupation and Reintegration of the Temporarily Occupied Territories in Donetsk, Luhansk Oblasts and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, the City of Sevastopol, National Minorities and International Relations.

Lyudmyla Denisova also noted that the main activities of the Working Group should be monitoring the effectiveness of the implementation of the Commissioner's recommendations expressed in the annual and special reports on: solving problems that cause violations of the rights and freedoms of the Roma minority; identification of mechanisms, optimal ways and means of solving problems; promoting the introduction of positive experiences on the integration of Roma into society.

Olena Lytvynenko, Deputy Head of the Council of Europe Office in Ukraine, welcomed the efforts of the Commissioner for Human Rights to establish an Inter-ministerial Working Group on the Protection of the Rights and Freedoms of the Roma Minority in Ukraine and stressed the important role of local governments in improving living conditions, including representatives of the Roma community, by creating quality services in the field of education, health care, social security, etc., and ensuring proper access for them to all segments of the population. Therefore, the involvement of regional state administrations and local authorities in the work of the Inter-ministerial Working Group is extremely important. The Council

of Europe will be happy to provide expert support to the members of the newly established group.

The meeting was also attended by: **Valeria Kolomiets**, Deputy Minister of Justice of Ukraine for European Integration; **Olga Revuk**, Deputy Minister of Social Policy of Ukraine for European Integration; **Dmytro Lubinets**, People's Deputy of Ukraine, Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada Committee on Human Rights, Deoccupation and Reintegration of the Temporarily Occupied Territories in Donetsk, Luhansk Oblasts and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, the City of Sevastopol, National Minorities and International Relations; **Olena Bohdan**, Head of the State Service of Ukraine for Ethnopolitics and Freedom of Conscience; Benjamin Moreau, Deputy Head of the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine; **Dan Doghi**, Senior Adviser on Roma and Sinti Bureau for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, OSCE; **Igor Shinkaryuk**, Deputy Head of the Zakarpattia Regional State Administration, as well as representatives of relevant ministries, departments and divisions of 24 regional state administrations and Roma NGOs.

The participants of the meeting outlined the following actions. The Commissioner is convinced that only by combining the efforts of state and local governments, NGOs and Roma communities, as well as learning and implementing the best practices of European countries, it is possible to significantly improve the situation of Roma in Ukraine.

Promoting effective governance and cooperation between national minorities, including Roma, and local authorities in Ukraine

April 9 from 11.00 to 12.30



Local governments play a crucial role in improving the living conditions of communities, including members of national minorities, by creating quality services in the fields of education, health care, social security, etc. and ensuring proper access for them for all segments of the population.

Based on the principles of cooperation over the past three years, the Council of Europe has implemented the project «Protection of National Minorities, including Roma, and Minority Languages in Ukraine», by supporting authorities, NGOs and other stakeholders to strengthen the protection of national communities, including Roma, in Ukraine. The new stage of project implementation focuses on strengthening the democratic participation of national minorities at the local level through the mediation and activities of local action groups according to the methodology of the ROMED-2 program.

On **April 9, 2021**, an online event «**Promoting the democratic participation of national minorities at the local level**» was held, during

which the main tasks and stages of the Local Initiative Groups program were presented, as well as local authorities that joined the program. The event was attended by representatives of central and local executive bodies, representatives of international organizations in Ukraine and organizations for the protection of the rights of national minorities.

The project was joined by: *Melitopol City Council, Nizhyn City Council, Lutsk City Council, Perechyn City Council, Turyi Remety Village Council, Krasnosilska Village Council.*

Such activities, with the active participation of local self-governments (LSGs) include, but are not limited to, the introduction of the following measures, namely:

- assisting in the establishment of a local action group based on the principles of good democratic governance in accordance with Council of Europe standards;
- creation and implementation of an effective mechanism of interaction among local selfgovernment bodies, representatives of non-gov-

ernmental organizations and local communities of national minorities in order to develop and implement a joint action plan, including both shortterm and long-term plans to improve the situation of national minorities;

- participation of local selfgovernment specialists and representatives of public organizations in trainings, working meetings, consultations, round tables, other events planned within the project;

- development of a local self-government project initiative that can be implemented in a selected community with the support of the Council of Europe.

Within the framework of the mentioned project, the Council of Europe will provide expert, methodological support in the development of local action plans for inclusion of national minorities, including Roma communities in accordance with the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the Council of Europe Action Plan for Ukraine 2018-2022.

PROJECT DEVELOPMENTS

SECTION 2

Two days online training / study visit for the State Service of Ukraine for Ethnopolitics and Freedom of Conscience on “Council of Europe standards and monitoring for combating discrimination”



On 12 and 15 March, Council of Europe organised a two-day online study visit for the staff members of the State Service of Ukraine on Ethnic Policy and Freedom of Conscience to present the Council of Europe standards and monitoring work related to national minorities, minority languages and combating discrimination.

The training was opened by Olena Lytvynenko, Deputy Head of the Council of Europe Office in Ukraine, and Olena Bogdan, Head of the State Service of Ukraine on Ethnic Policy and Freedom of Conscience.

The first day of the training / study visit covered such topics as:

- Council of Europe triangle of standards setting, monitoring and cooperation.
- Council of Europe standards setting and monitoring for combatting discrimination: work of ECRI – European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance, ECRI General Policy Recommendations, topics covered by the monitoring,

latest ECRI recommendations for Ukraine.

- Council of Europe standards setting and monitoring for inclusion of Roma: the work of ADI-ROM, Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion 2020-2025, Council of Europe CM Recommendation on Roma and Traveller history teaching, capacity building for Roma civil society, inter-state cooperation.

The second day of online training/study visit covered such topics as:

- Monitoring process for the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.
- Council of Europe standards and monitoring for protection of national minorities:
 1. provisions and rights envisaged in the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities;

2. how to collect information at the national level and which information is useful for the monitoring processes;

3. how to follow up on the monitoring reports of the Advisory Committee of the FCNM.

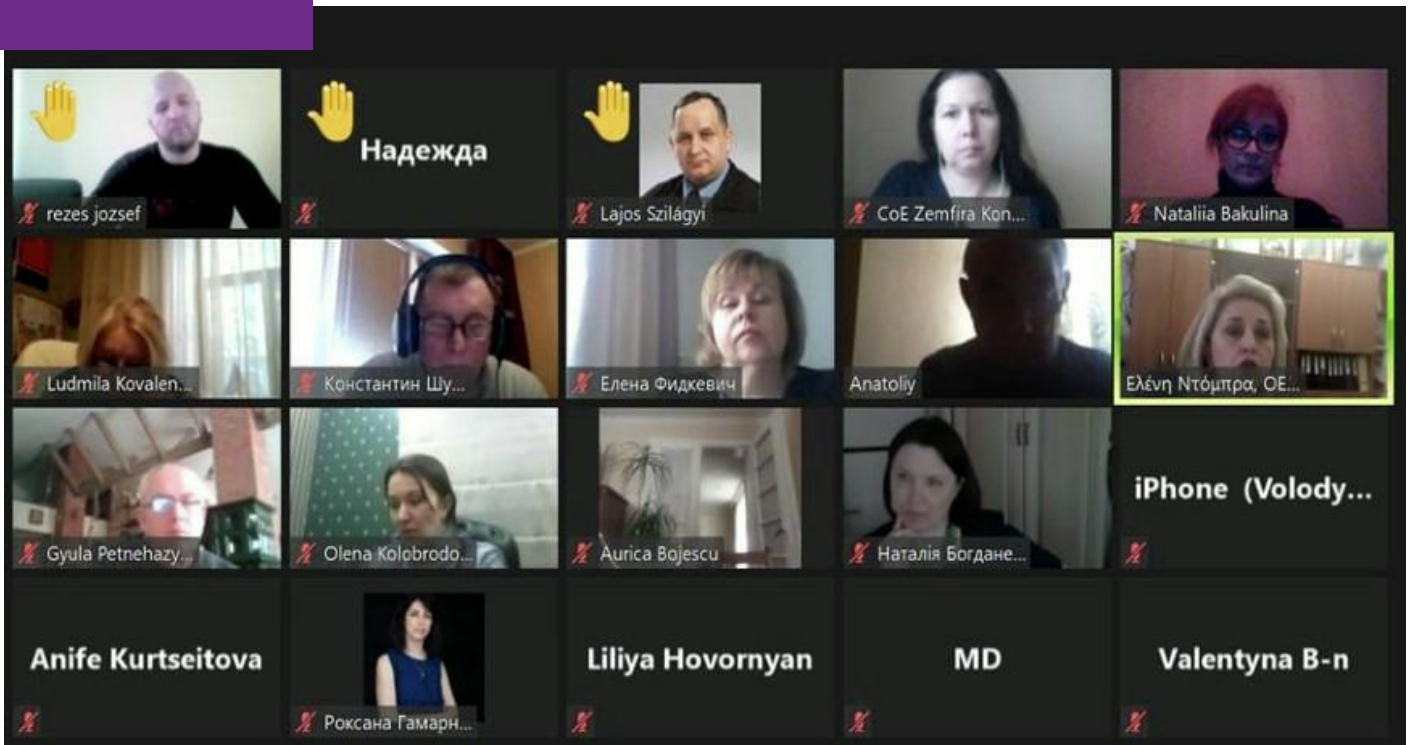
We want to thank our incredible speakers for their very useful and inspiring presentations:

- Jörg Horn, Secretariat of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.
- Agnes Von Maravić, Secretariat of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.
- Elise Cornu, Head of the Division of National Minorities and Minority Languages.
- Stefano Valenti, Head of No Hate Speech and Cooperation Unit.
- Thorsten Afflerbach, Head of Division, Roma and Travellers Team.

PROJECT DEVELOPMENTS

SECTION 2

Meeting with the Council of Representatives of Public Associations of Indigenous Peoples, National Minorities of Ukraine at the Ministry of Education and Science



On February 12, 2021, with the assistance of the project “Strengthening the protection of national minorities, including Roma, and minority languages in Ukraine – Phase II”, the Council of Representatives of Indigenous Associations of National Minorities of Ukraine under the Ministry of Education and Science had an online meeting with representatives of the Verkhovna Rada on human rights, deoccupation and reintegration of the temporarily occupied territories in Donetsk, Luhansk oblasts and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, the city of Sevastopol, national minorities and interethnic relations of the Ukrainian Parliament’s Commissioner for Human Rights Office. The meeting was also attended by representatives of the Institute of Pedagogy of the National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of Ukraine, the Department of Teaching Languages of National Minorities and Foreign Literature.

The main issue for discussion was the realization of the right for education in the native language, the study of the native language, the study of the state language. Issues of consultation and participation in decision-making of national communities. Issues of legislative regulation and implementation of state policy to ensure the rights of national minorities.

Representatives of the Verkhovna Rada Committee on Human Rights and National Minorities and International Relations informed the participants of the meeting about the Committee’s work on the draft Law “On National Minorities in Ukraine”, as well as planned consultations with representatives of national minorities, monitoring visits to various regions of Ukraine.

The participants of the meeting noted that uniting around the issue of ensuring the rights and freedoms of national communities is currently

an extremely important and topical issue. The participants of the event offered to expand the range of issues and participants of the meetings for future cooperation.

The Council of Europe project «Strengthening the protection of national minorities, including Roma, and minority languages in Ukraine – Phase II» is being implemented as part of the realization of the Council of Europe Action Plan for Ukraine for 2018-2022. The meeting was facilitated by the project.

PROJECT DEVELOPMENTS

SECTION 2

The Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights Lyudmila Denisova presented a special report «The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Roma Community in Ukraine»



The online presentation of the special report of the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Parliament of Ukraine, Lyudmila Denisova took place on 23 December 2020 in Kyiv and was supported by the Council of Europe project «Protecting national minorities, including Roma, and minority languages in Ukraine».

Presenting the Special Report «The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Roma community in Ukraine» the Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, Lyudmila Denisova, first of all stressed that the situation of the Roma community has not improved in seven years.

As a result, the problems faced by the Roma community in the areas of access to information, social, educational, medical services, employment, IDs have become even more acute and relevant and have revealed significant gaps in the government's response to emergencies and support for this category of citizens. And with the spread of coronavirus infection, the problems faced by Roma in all spheres of public life have become

even more acute. Their rights are violated. The special Ombudsman's report was prepared based on the results of 20 monitoring visits to places of compact Roma settlements and local self-government bodies, as well as 286 interviews with representatives of the Roma community.

Parliament members, heads of state authorities, Governor of Odessa Regional State Administration, Deputy Head of Transcarpathia regional state administration, representatives of local authorities, Roma non-governmental organizations and international organizations attended the presentation of the report. The Secretariat of the Commissioner also prepared Methodological recommendations for a monitoring visit to a Roma settlement in the framework of the implementation of the Strategic Directions of the Commissioner of the Parliament of Ukraine for Human Rights.

The conclusions and recommendations presented in the special report of the Ukrainian Parliament's Commissioner for Human

Rights «The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Roma Community in Ukraine» should be used as a guide to ensure the rights of Roma in Ukraine.

The Ombudsman suggested intensifying the work on IDs for Roma representatives in order to address the issues raised in the special report. It is important to develop a mechanism for access of members of the Roma national minority to health care services in the absence of identity documents, and to ensure a proper investigation of the hate crimes committed against Roma. Presentation of the report at the link https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_8pxfp-9VE5tL2Ue-MaeMw

Link to the full version of the report: <https://rm.coe.int/special-report-11-01-2021/1680a13217>



OUR CONTACTS:

Aneta Witwicka
Project Coordinator
aneta.witwicka@coe.int

Zemfira Kondur
Project Coordinator
zemfira.kondur@coe.int

Yevheniia Sadovska
Project Assistant
yevheniia.sadovska@coe.int

FIND US HERE:

<https://www.facebook.com/NationalMinoritiesAndRomaCoE/>
<https://www.coe.int/en/web/kyiv/national-minorities>