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ROMACTED at a glance: MONTENEGRO

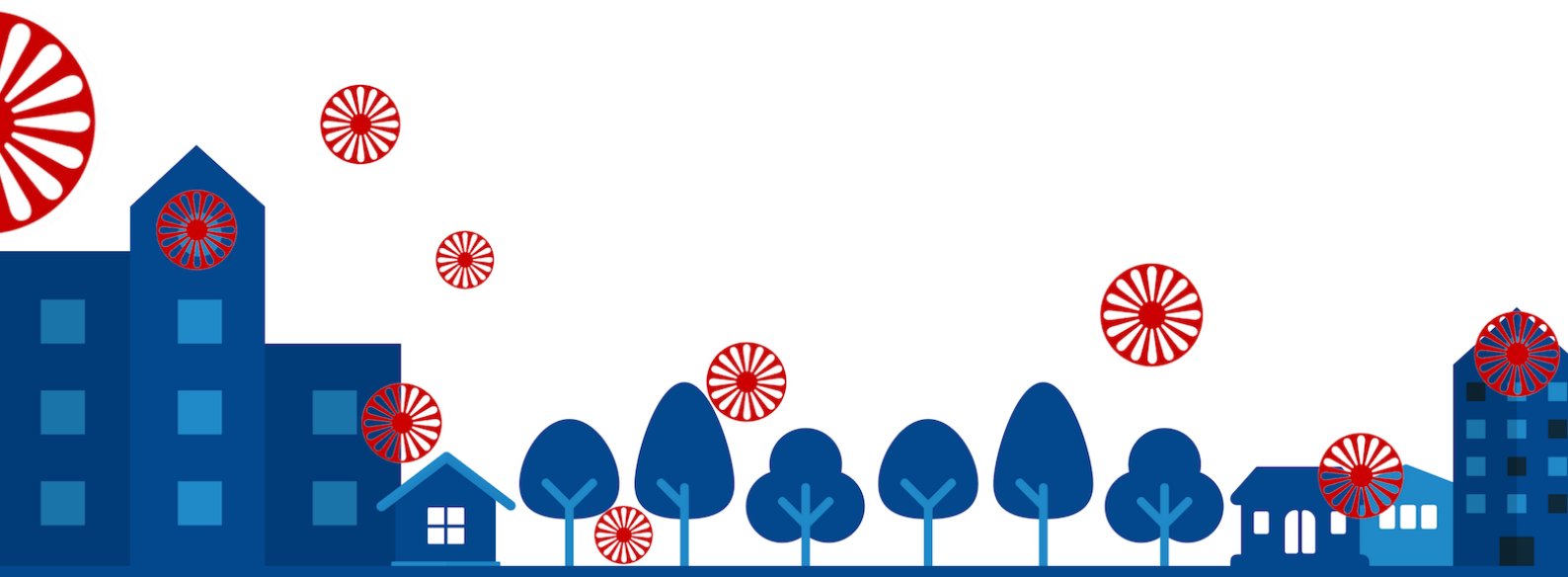
ROMACTED is the first programme of its kind in Montenegro. It is implemented in close co-operation with the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, which is responsible for the national co-ordination of the implementation of the Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma and Egyptians in Montenegro 2016-2020. The beneficiary operational partner for the implementation of ROMACTED is the NGO Young Roma. The action is co-ordinated and monitored by the Council of Europe Programme Office in Podgorica, and local interventions have been carried out by a team of facilitators and experts.

The programme was officially launched on 17 July 2018 in Podgorica, when the Council of Europe (Strasbourg) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). This MoU was a tripartite framework of partnership for the implementation of the programme signed between the Council of Europe, the Ministry for Human and Minority Rights and the following eight municipalities: Bar, Berane, Bijelo Polje, Herceg Novi, Nikšić, Podgorica, Tivat and Ulcinj.

The launching conference was followed by a national workshop on participatory local strategic planning, organised on 18 July 2018 in Podgorica. The training focused on the ROMACTED methodological steps that will be implemented through participatory planning processes in the eight municipalities.

On 16 May 2019, the first Advisory Group Meeting took place to review and discuss the first results of the programme, and to contribute to the national dialogue on social integration of Roma and Egyptians, envisaging the upcoming new National Strategy.

On 11 October 2019, the second Advisory Group Meeting took place in order to review and discuss achievements and results, as well as to plan further concrete activities in targeted municipalities. A team of experts prepared two situation analyses, which encompass both the community level (needs, priorities) and the administration level (existing and non-existing services for social integration of Roma and Egyptians). The final results were presented at the Second Advisory Group meeting.



Step

01

PREPARING THE PROCESS

The Community Action Groups (CAG) have been active since July 2018 in the eight implementing municipalities, with an average number of five members each (1-3 women on average). The dynamic of the CAG varies from locality to locality, which results from the high defragmentation of the communities in Montenegro.

The Institutional Working Groups (IWG) were officially set up in seven municipalities, apart from in Podgorica, where the process is still ongoing. The mayors of the eight participating municipalities delegated municipal contact points for the implementation of the programme.

Step

02

ASSESSING NEEDS AND PRIORITISING

The initial assessment of the situation in the communities and municipalities was carried out during the inception phase, through the collection of data for the baseline survey in five of the target localities (Herceg Novi, Tivat, Niksic, Bijelo Polje and Berane). Three ROMACTED localities (Bar, Podgorica, Ulcinj) were initially not targeted in the inception phase of data collection.

During this period, two qualitative analysis were conducted in all targeted municipalities by the experts contracted by ROMACTED. The community needs assessments were conducted through 16 focus groups (with 120 members of community in eight municipalities), eight interviews with facilitators and eight interviews with local authorities (comprising 25 representatives). The second analysis, conducted by two ROMACTED experts, aimed at understanding which services for social integration were in place and which ones were still missing within the legal framework of Montenegro. This analysis was conducted through interviews with relevant representatives of local authorities. The findings from the analyses will further feed into the planning and implementation of activities by local and central authorities. and they are also a very good tool for the use of central authorities.

Step

03

ADOPTING A JOINT ACTION PLAN

Short and medium-term actions: In Tivat, the CAG and the IWG agreed on the implementation of joint actions (building of local roads leading to Roma settlements), and tenders for the construction of these roads have been announced. In Bijelo Polje, the CAG and the IWG organised a local celebration for International Roma Day. In Herceg Novi, community members and local authorities worked together in resolving an issue by building a supporting wall in one of the Roma settlements. In Bar, members of the community and municipality co-operated in the initiative for engagement of mediators for Roma in education. In Bijelo Polje, the municipality supported two projects submitted by some of the CAG members in relation to employment and education for Roma. In Berane, a positive attitude has been expressed towards supporting the setting up of the Office for Roma Inclusion.

Longer term activities: The programme supported the development of new Local Action Plans (LAP) for Roma Integration in four municipalities: Bar, Berane, Herceg Novi, and Ulcinj. In Bijelo Polje, Nikšić and Tivat, where LAP already existed, the programme provided guidance for the mechanism of monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the LAP. For seven municipalities in which a LAP exists or is in the process of development, training and guidance on developing and monitoring LAPs were organised in March 2019. These training events were attended by members of the Institutional Working Groups and representatives of the Roma communities.

Step

04

FINANCING AND PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

This STEP is still to be implemented in the context of Montenegro, however the programme has hired an expert in order to assist municipalities who are willing to implement LAPs through other funds, such as the EU. The support team organised a workshop on IPA funding and implementation of projects in early December 2019.

The municipalities in Montenegro will apply for the ROMACTED small grants scheme in the second phase of the programme.

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Implemented
by the Council of Europe

Synergies and Cooperation

■ **UNDP ReLOaD:** A representative of the ReLOaD project participated in a panel discussion at the launch event and in the first National Advisory meeting. Three ROMACTED municipalities are involved in the ReLOaD Programme (Strengthening of local democracies): Tivat, Podgorica and Niksic;

■ **German NGO HELP:** The Mayor of Bijelo Polje requested a meeting with the German NGO HELP in order to create links with potential donors for housing of Roma and Egyptians. HELP is one of the main implementers of housing programmes in Montenegro, together with the Regional Housing Programme. The programme also shared experiences and lessons learnt from the earlier implementation of a similar programme implemented by HELP and the local municipality of Herceg Novi, proposing some measures to prevent risks, as well as possible drawbacks, to both parties;

■ **Regional Cooperation Council (RCC):** In August 2018, RCC and ROMACTED agreed to send a common proposal to the Montenegrin Statistical Institute (MONSTAT) regarding the updating of statistics on Roma and Egyptians. A representative of ROMACTED participated in the national consultations organised by RCC in June 2019;

■ In joint efforts between the Municipality of Herceg Novi and Roma communities to solve flooding problems in one of the Roma settlements, cooperation was established with the NGO HELP which co-financed the building of supporting walls in this settlement;

■ The Ministry for Human and Minority Rights of Montenegro organised a training event on “Roma-Responsive Budgeting” for members of the Commission for Monitoring the Implementation of the NRIS 2016-2020;

■ Communication with the Municipality of Kotor, the municipality neighbouring both Herceg Novi and Tivat, was established in order to resolve the problem of water supply for inhabitants of the Roma settlement Lovanja, which is a shared territory between the municipalities of Kotor and Tivat;

■ In three targeted ROMACTED municipalities (Tivat, Niksic and Bijelo Polje), three projects related to Roma are supported through a sub-granting scheme within the regional EU-funded project “Joint Initiative to Empower Roma Civil Society in the Western Balkans and Turkey”. These projects are implemented by three Roma NGOs dealing with education, culture and identity and strengthening capacities of Roma NGOs;

■ Through the regional Roma Education Fund project “Increased education opportunities for Roma students and Roma youth in the Western Balkans and Turkey”, all Roma high school students from ROMACTED municipalities receive mentorship support and internship opportunities. Currently there are 121 students in ROMACTED municipalities, which accounts for 95% of the total number of beneficiaries;

■ The mayors of Nikšić and Bijelo Polje received the “Most Roma-friendly mayor” prize for Roma Integration within the framework of the project “Joint initiative to empower Roma civil society in the Western Balkans and Turkey”, implemented by ERGO Network and Roma Active Albania. The ROMACTED support team was actively involved in encouraging the local actors to apply for the prize.