

*Promoting good governance  
and Roma empowerment  
at local level*

**January 2020**

## ROMACTED at a glance: TURKEY

The Strategy Paper on Roma People and The 1st Phase Action Plan, developed by the Ministry of the Family, Labour and Social Services for the period 2016-2018, is a road map for Roma inclusion at national level which, together with the “Si-Roma” project, provides a context for the implementation of the ROMACTED methodology in Turkey.

The National Roma Inclusion 2nd Phase Action Plan (2019-2021) came into force on 11 December 2019 after the circular was published in the Official Newspaper. The Union of Municipalities of Turkey (UMT), implementing partner of the ROMACTED Programme, is also one of the members of the Monitoring and Evaluation Committee of the Action Plan.

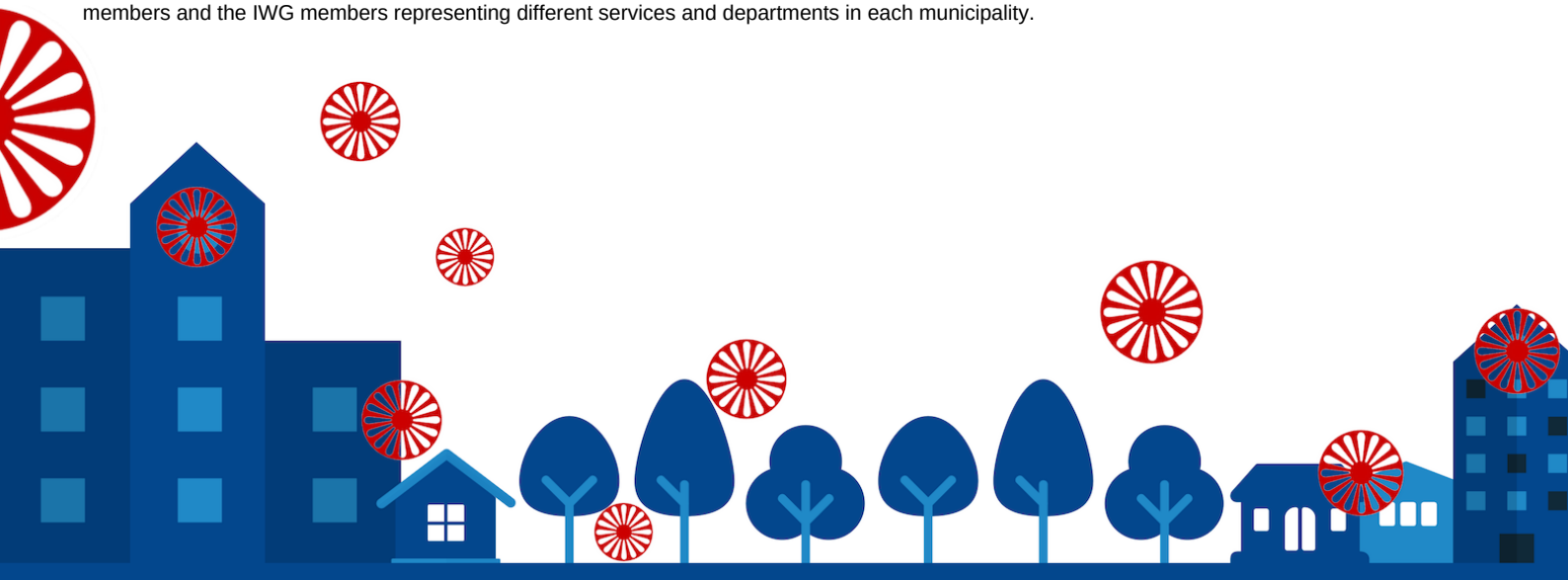
The actions at national level are therefore coordinated and monitored by the UMT. The local actions have been carried out by a team of facilitators and experts under the coordination of the focal point of the programme.

The official launch of the ROMACTED Programme took place on 12 December 2018 in Ankara. A tripartite memorandum of understanding for the implementation of the programme was signed between the Council of Europe (Strasbourg), the Union of Municipalities of Turkey and the representatives of the pilot municipalities: Edirne, Canik, Karadeniz Ereğli, Konak and Sisli.

The launching conference was preceded by a training session with facilitators, representatives of Roma associations and municipality staff (10-11 December 2018). The training focused on the ROMACTED methodological steps and reporting methods and guidelines.

ROMACTED team meetings and training sessions with facilitators and experts were held between 1-2 March and 9-10 July 2019 to discuss how to address the challenges in the field, adjust working methods and plan activities according to the needs at local level.

On 18-19 December 2019, a multi-stakeholder workshop was organised in Kızılcahamam / Ankara with the participation of members of Community Action Groups (CAGs) and Institutional Working Groups (IWGs) from all five municipalities involved in the programme. The issues faced at local level were discussed by the CAG and IWG members alongside relevant solutions, based on the need assessments and the Action Plans envisaged for each municipality. Short-, medium- and long-term actions for the Local Development Strategies were drafted and discussed by community members and the IWG members representing different services and departments in each municipality.



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## Step

# 01

### PREPARING THE PROCESS

The Community Action Groups (CAG) were officially established in all five pilot municipalities. The CAG is composed of members from different age and gender groups. In Edirne and Sisli municipalities, the CAGs also have non-Roma CAG members. The average number of female members participating in the CAG is eight. The CAG meetings are organised in regular intervals by the facilitators in the beneficiary municipalities. At the end of 2018, the mayors of the five municipalities delegated a municipal contact person for the programme's implementation.

Due to the local election process, the Institutional Working Groups (IWGs) were officially established later than planned. The first IWG meetings were organised by UMT with the collaboration of the pilot municipalities and with the participation of all the local public institutions. The first IWG meeting was held in Karadeniz Eregli on 25 April 2019. Following this, on 23 May 2019 the Konak IWG was officially established, followed by the Canik IWG on 29 August, the Sisli IWG on 4 October, and finally the Edirne IWG on 10 October 2019. Presently, IWG meetings are held regularly in each municipality. The activity of facilitators and participation of the CAGs in the local process is ongoing.

## Step

# 02

### ASSESSING NEEDS AND PRIORITISING

The initial assessment of the situation in the communities and the municipalities was carried out during the inception phase through the collection of data for the baseline survey in the five municipalities.

The community needs assessments were carried out and completed in the first four months of 2019. In all pilot municipalities, the community needs assessments have been carried out by the facilitators. In July 2019, the facilitators were working with the CAG to prioritise the local needs and, with the help and support of an expert and the focal point, the needs assessment detailing the priorities was completed.

## Step

# 03

### ADOPTING A JOINT ACTION PLAN

Draft Joint Action Plans have been prepared in each of the pilot municipalities based on the community needs assessments conducted by the facilitators in the field. These plans were discussed by all relevant stakeholders at local level and different details were clarified during the workshop held by UMT in December 2019. Some of the short-term actions of these plans had already been implemented with the collaboration of relevant local stakeholders.

In Edirne municipality, a draft Joint Action Plan was prepared following close collaboration between the facilitators, CAG members and municipal authorities. As a result, the municipality included the topic of Roma inclusion in its mainstream five-year Strategic Plan and officially allocated a budget for the activities. This was the first time that Roma inclusion was expressly mentioned in a local strategic plan in Turkey. Furthermore, different activities addressing the Roma issues started to be implemented. The following examples can be highlighted:

- The opening of the ROMACTED Centre for Children, which is staffed by the municipality and run by members of the CAG. The centre is envisaged to foster activities for mothers and children, including relevant training courses;
- The municipality allocated a building to the ROMACTED team to run a youth centre and, within one of its sports centres, offered the CAG the opportunity to be part of the management of the space;
- Through the collaboration of the municipality with the Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundation, 79 houses in the Karaağaç Roma neighborhood were renovated.

In Şişli Municipality, a Joint Action Plan has also been prepared with the collaboration of the facilitators, CAG members and municipal authorities. Although the municipal authority has not included expressly Roma Inclusion in its five-year Strategic Plan, they signed a "Goodwill Protocol" underlining the activities they will implement for the benefit of the Roma community. As concrete actions already implemented from the Plan, the municipality – in collaboration with the District Governorship – undertook the identification and restoration of 30 houses belonging to Roma families in need.

From the Joint Action Plan of Canik municipality and with the close involvement of the municipal IWG, some of the short-term actions have been put into action, such as training for community members on family communication and parental care, environmental protection, health and nutrition, youth involvement, etc. With the involvement of CAG members, creative activities targeting children were planned and started to be implemented (marbling artwork, dancing, music and painting courses). Moreover, through the collaboration of the municipality with Canik Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundation and the Directorate of Family, Labour and Social Services, a decision has been taken for child-friendly spaces to be constructed in the Roma neighbourhoods.

From the Joint Action Plan of Konak municipality developed under ROMACTED, some concrete activities started to be implemented with the involvement of facilitators and CAG members out of which the following can be highlighted:

- An assessment of the state of the schools with a majority Roma of pupils was carried out and restoration and maintenance works were included in the 2020 municipal budget;
- Other restoration works were conducted by the municipality for a cultural centre in Hilal neighbourhood, envisaged to include Roma cultural and educational activities, as well as 100 houses of Roma in need in the area.

From the Joint Action Plan prepared within the ROMACTED process in Karadeniz Ereğli municipality, the municipal authorities included several articles on Roma inclusion in their five-year Strategic Plan. The strong collaboration between the municipality, other public institutions and the CAG led to the implementation of a series of actions such as the coverage of 37 school children's transportation expenses, health check-ups for 30 people and a health literacy course through the District Health Directorate, and the provision of an ambulance to reach the Roma neighbourhoods which do not have a medical centre, etc.

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ROMACTED municipalities will prepare projects to apply for the ROMACTED small grants scheme in the next phase of the programme.



## FINANCING AND PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

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# Synergies and Cooperation

- A ministerial-level meeting was held in Ankara by UMT on 8 February 2019 to foster the support of central level organisations. The local representatives of ministries required an official letter of support from the capital. Therefore, the UMT wrote an official letter to explain the project, including the approval letters from the ministries;
- Strategic cooperation and coordination with the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policies was established. An important output of this cooperation is that the ROMACTED Programme in Turkey was mentioned in the National Action Plan for Roma Inclusion. The General Director of the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policies, Mustafa Nuri Nuruhan, participated in the multi-stakeholder workshop of December 2019 and directly interacted with the CAG and IWG members from different ROMACTED municipalities. The UTM and the ROMACTED Turkey focal point were invited to participate in the evaluation and monitoring meetings of the Strategy Paper on Roma People (2019-2021);
- Close cooperation was established with the EU Delegation. The UMT in regular contact with the EUD representatives in relation to the planning and disbursement of EU funds;
- Within the framework of the EU Award for Roma Integration implemented by the Joint Initiative for Civil Society, the Mayor of Şişli municipality in Istanbul in 2017 and the Mayor of the Konak Municipality in 2019 were awarded the prize of “Most Roma-friendly mayor” in Turkey. In addition, the ROMACTED focal point for Turkey, received an award as part of the “Women Grassroot Activists / Unknown Heroes” prize.