

Contract title: Support to the Implementation of the Roma Strategy

Contract number: 2010/258-484

Subject: Local Action Plans for Roma Assessment Report

KEY POINTS

- The present report focuses on the following issues: (i) an overview of Local Action Plans for Roma in the Republic of Macedonia (LAPs); (ii) an assessment of LAPs policy cycle, including initiation, implementation, effectiveness, budgeting; and (iii) challenges and recommendations for increasing effectiveness of this policy instrument in the future.
- LAPs for Roma have been developed in the Republic of Macedonia since 2005 as a local response to bring the implementation of the Roma Decade to the local level. At present, 14 municipalities of the Republic of Macedonia have adopted LAPs either in one, various, or all the four Decade's thematic areas (i.e. Education, Health, Housing, and Employment). In the last two years, some municipalities have revised their first LAPs adopting new ones, and others have developed them for the first time. Furthermore, in the course of this assessment 12 municipalities declared willingness to start preparation or undertake revision of LAPs for Roma in the upcoming future, as well as interest in receiving expert support to do so.
- The process of LAPs preparation and adoption was boosted in 2009 with the initiative launched by the National Coordinator of the Decade of signing Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with municipalities. Related to these MoU, some municipalities (14) have accessed central government funding for undertaking infrastructure projects in 2010 and 2011 aimed at improving the environment where Roma communities live.
- LAPs have been initiated in most cases by parties different to the local authorities being donor support a common feature of all elaboration processes. The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP) and NGOs have been the initiators of the majority of LAPs.
- LAPs formats vary between different municipalities but they generally show a conventional structure, including a brief situation analysis, goals, specific objectives, programme/activities, responsible/implementers, and cost estimations. LAPs goals and activities appear to be relevant and consistent to the National Action Plans (NAPs) goals, although there is no explicit correspondence between local and national level according to the documents. A notable lack in examined LAPs texts is they do not include provisions about responsible bodies on overall coordination, monitoring

systems, interim and/or final evaluations, reporting, or consistent funding mechanisms.

- LAPs implementation and effectiveness have been generally very modest to date. Some positive achievements are reported in some municipalities, especially in the field of education. Some infrastructure projects have also achieved some results, while employment and health domains have been clearly underdeveloped. Nonetheless, progress reported does not appear to be framed within LAPs systematic implementation, but rather connected to individual efforts and ad hoc individual interventions.
- Most salient shortcomings which have prevented an effective implementation of LAPs in the past are, inter alia, lack of funding, lack of clear leadership and responsibilities, lack of specific mechanisms for implementation and monitoring, insufficient awareness and cooperation, and insufficient local capacities. These barriers are generally recognized by stakeholders having a major stake in the implementation of Roma social inclusion measures.
- There are signals that most recently adopted LAPs may overcome some of the barriers identified. For example, clearer responsibilities over LAP implementation, monitoring mechanisms, and budget allocations are included in some of the most recently adopted LAPs. Nonetheless, these are not yet a consolidated pattern.
- Overall challenges identified for sustainability of Roma social inclusion measures are in summary: (i) upgrading LAPs status as public policy; (ii) demonstrating political will; (iii) understanding Roma social inclusion as a public interest issue; (iv) building robust data on Roma communities; (v) addressing Roma social inclusion with an integrated approach; (v) increasing vertical and horizontal cooperation and building solid partnerships; (vi) securing commensurate funding (vii) building know how and strengthening local capacities.
- Proposed concrete recommendations for future LAPs drafting and implementation are in summary: (i) establish clear leadership responsibilities and implementation, monitoring and evaluation systems (ii) establish clearer responsibilities for individual tasks; (iii) enhance consistency between central and local policies; (iv) seek for synergetic effects between thematic LAPs; (v) consolidate central government funding in a more systematic and transparent way; (vi) commit municipal funding for LAPs implementation and access IPA funding; (vii) provide technical guidance to the local level; (viii) give more visibility to LAPs in the municipalities.



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