

**Contract title:** Support to the Implementation of the Roma Strategy

**Contract number:** 2010/258-484

**Subject:** Roma Information Centres Assessment Report  
**KEY POINTS**

- The present report focuses on the following issues: (i) an overview of Roma Information Centres (RICs) in the Republic of Macedonia; (ii) an assessment of RICs effectiveness in performing their tasks; and (iii) recommendations for future development.
- Roma Information Centres is a project of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP). Centres were opened in eight Macedonian cities in March 2007 with the purpose of liaising public institutions and Roma communities in regards to the implementation of the Roma Decade. They were opened in NGO premises by virtue of a partnership agreement between MLSP and eight local Roma NGOs. Each RIC was staffed with two employees.
- Substantial changes have occurred in 2011. At present there are nine RICs -after opening of a new RIC in the municipality of Kocani-. New RIC staff was selected and the Centres will not continue being hosted by Roma NGOs but by municipalities. MLSP has signed new Memoranda of Understanding with the municipalities to frame this arrangement, and RICs are being relocated gradually in municipality premises during this year.
- RICs usual activities consist primarily of providing information and counselling to Roma clients, helping them to fill in administrative forms and sorting out procedures for exercising their rights. Feedback received generally suggests RICs have played a valuable role in delivering this support. In addition, RICs are meant to perform tasks such as, inter alia, building partnerships with local stakeholders, organising working groups, collecting relevant data to inform central government, participating in policy making process, and monitoring Roma-related policies at the local level. With differences between individual RICs, these other functions do not generally appear to be fulfilled so effectively.
- Bearing in mind the assessment was carried out during a transitional period, findings reveal that RICs are at present under resourced lacking office equipment, part of the staff being new, and some positions not yet covered. Furthermore, RICs staff perceives their contractual situation as uncertain, and the RICs new relations with the hosting municipalities and with other local stakeholders are not fully clarified yet. This situation suggests that all the tasks RICs are called to perform may result

incommensurate to the human and material resources they have at present, and future capacity building efforts should be combined with prioritisation.

- Attempts to systematize RICs work are being made under the coordination of the UISDR, and lately with increased capacity building support by intergovernmental institutions and agencies. However, strengthening management capacities and systematization of working procedures and instruments are areas in which a considerable room for improvement was noted.
- Based on the consultations and assessment findings the report concludes with some proposed recommendations to support RICs development in the future:; (i) revising and prioritising RICs functions and tasks, and clarifying their position in relation to local authorities; (ii) developing new partnership agreements with local stakeholders; (iii) developing a RIC Handbook with clear rules, systematised procedures, performance indicators, tools, templates and guidelines; (iv) continue capacity building efforts on prioritised areas with a special focus on monitoring of Roma-related policies if RICs are tasked to perform this function; (v) reinforcing visibility and public awareness of RICs; (vi) enhancing RICs sustainability.



Support to the implementation of the Roma Strategy  
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