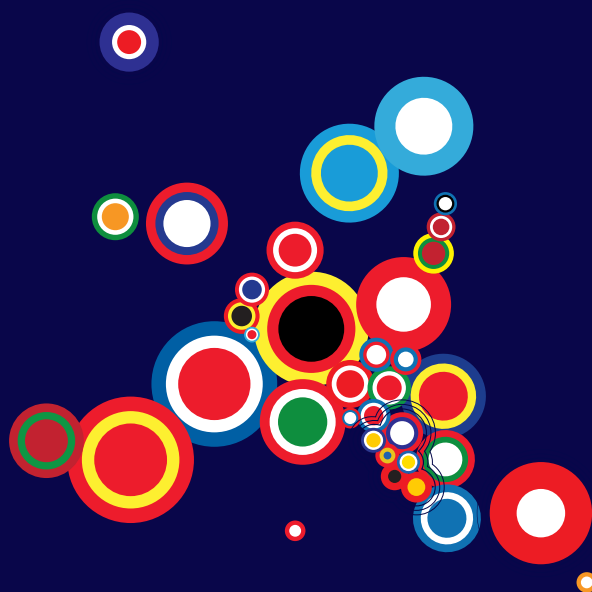




INSTRUMENT FOR PRE-ACCESSION ASSISTANCE (IPA II) 2014-2020

MULTI-COUNTRY

Roma Decade 2020,
Phase 1 (2015-2018)



Action Summary

The aim of the Action, “Roma Decade 2020”, Phase 1, is to advance towards the integration of Roma women, men and children in order to improve the lives of Roma people in the IPA II Beneficiaries aspiring to join the EU. This is to be achieved by extending and expanding the work of a regional advisory mechanism - the Roma Decade Secretariat.

Under the Regional Cooperation Council, the Roma Decade Secretariat will function as a 'one stop shop' on regional cross-sectoral policy support and regional coordination relating to Roma issues. The role of the Roma Decade Secretariat will be to 1) advise governments in the Western Balkans and Turkey on how to implement the existing national Roma Strategies and action plans, 2) facilitate monitoring of their implementation through NGO networks and 3) create a repository of Roma related data with special attention to technical assistance from EU and other donors.

This approach will offer a holistic support to IPA II beneficiaries in effectively translating policy commitments into practice in line with the priorities of the European Commission to accelerate the process of closing the development gap between Roma and non-Roma population.

Action Identification	
Programme Title	IPA II Multi-country action programme 2014
Action Title	Roma Decade 2020, Phase 1
Action Reference	IPA 2014/031-603.10/MC/Roma
Sector Information	
ELARG Sectors	Rule of Law and fundamental rights
DAC Sector	15160 Human Rights
Budget	
Total cost (VAT excluded) ¹	EUR 1.6 million
EU contribution	EUR 0.8 million
Management and Implementation	
Method of implementation	Direct management
<i>Direct management:</i> ELARG unit in charge	ELARG D.3
Location	
Zone benefitting from the action	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey
Specific implementation area(s)	N/A
Timeline	
Deadline for conclusion of the Financing Agreement	N/A
Contracting deadline	31 December 2015
End of operational implementation period	31 December 2018

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

1. RATIONALE

Roma inclusion has become a high priority point on the political agenda of the EU and of the Member States, as reflected by the outcome of the European Roma Summit on 4 April 2014. Since 2011, a framework for National Roma Integration Strategies has been in place at EU level. Based on the Commission's proposals, in 2013 the Council adopted a Council recommendation on effective Roma integration measures in the EU Member States, which is the first EU soft legal instrument in this field. Strong country specific recommendations are increasingly issued related to Roma inclusion to the EU Member States in the context of the Europe 2020 strategy.

The Commission approach towards Roma in the IPA II beneficiaries was set out in the Enlargement Strategy 2013-2014. Taking into account the principles, goals and instruments of the EU Framework on National Roma Integration Strategies, the Commission is pursuing a coherent approach in enlargement countries aimed at closing the gap between the main population and Roma in terms of access to documents, education, employment, social protection, health and housing.

Across the Western Balkans and Turkey, many Roma continue to experience extreme poverty, social exclusion and discrimination. They lag behind non-Roma in all socio-economic indicators. For Romani women, discrimination on the basis of ethnicity is multiplied by gender-based discrimination. The international efforts and technical assistance have resulted so far in limited progress to produce tangible benefits for the majority of Roma. The reasons are myriad and complex, but often represent a lack of political responsibility and financial resources. In addition, structural challenges exist on how to translate existing policies into practice. The Roma inclusion agenda is frequently within the remit of a Ministry of Human Rights and Minority Affairs or in a specialised Roma agency with a limited or only consultative mandate in the system. Such structures do not encourage a cross-sector approach with specialized ministries to develop programs and targets in support of Roma. Most significantly, ministries of finance have been engaged to a very limited extent as governments have generally failed to define the cost of reaching inclusion/integration objectives, subsequently not including these expenses in national budgets.

Moving rapidly forward towards closing the development gap between the Roma and non-Roma population and addressing the problem of discrimination is seen as a matter of priority by the European Commission and within the overall accession process.

Evidence shows that the traditional approach in dealing with the minority issues when it comes to Roma does not deliver on the expected results. Therefore, a new regional approach is needed in support of Roma people. The new approach will be to link existing coordinating structures to political ones. As a follow up to the Roma Decade 2005-2015, the Roma Decade Secretariat will be placed under the Regional Cooperation Council to continue with the Roma Decade 2020. Through this approach it will be ensured that the issue of inclusion of Roma will be streamlined into the targets of the South Eastern Europe 2020 Strategy (SEE 2020). Hereby the integration of Roma will be elevated to an issue related to socioeconomic growth, rather than remaining only a human rights and minority issue.

PROBLEM AND STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

The Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-15 was a landmark initiative seeking to address the marginalized status of Roma communities in Europe. It comprises of 12 countries (6 from EU Member States and 6 from the Western Balkans) and represented at the time of establishment a political commitment by countries with significant Roma populations to address exclusion in the areas of education, housing, employment and health, while also taking steps to address discrimination, gender inequality and poverty. The work of the Roma Decade set the grounds for the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies adopted by the European Commission in 2011. The objectives under the Roma Decade are closely linked to the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations with its set of

measurable targets to be monitored as key indicators for the period 2000-2015. Since 2005 the Roma Decade has raised awareness on the exclusion of Roma, generated some political will to address continuing challenges, helped to mobilize additional resources, and fostered an important dialogue among governments, international organizations and civil society, in particular Roma civil society. Through the Roma Decade all IPA II beneficiaries with the exception of Turkey have adopted National Roma Strategies for which the Roma Decade Secretariat instituted a basic system for countries to report on their progress. A system for coalitions of civil society organizations was established to comment on the reported progress (drawing on the previous experience of the civil society Decade Watch reports sponsored by the Open Society Foundations). Regular Roma Decade meetings have allowed a forum for an exchange of views between governments and civil society on efforts made. For the past two years, the Decade Secretariat has been selecting, through an open, competitive process, Roma NGOs to act as Focal Points for international advocacy on Roma issues. These Focal Points act as catalysts on the needs of Roma, obtaining information on the situation on the ground from grass-root NGOs working in support of Roma and feeding these back into policy making at the national and international level.

RELEVANCE WITH THE IPA II MULTI-COUNTRY STRATEGY PAPER AND OTHER KEY REFERENCES

Recognising the continuously existing economical and societal gap between the majority communities and Roma people in the enlargement countries, the European Commission has made Roma integration one of its key priorities in the area of fundamental rights.

The EU Enlargement Strategy 2013-2014² stresses that 'all countries in the Western Balkans and Turkey need to undertake further reforms to ensure that the protection of the rights of persons belonging to minorities, including Roma are respected in practice.' It elaborates further that 'ethnic minorities, notably Roma, face many difficulties, despite the existence of legal frameworks supporting their rights'.

The Multi-Country Indicative Strategy Paper 2014-2020³ (hereafter referred to as Strategy Paper) makes a particular reference to the challenging situations faced by Roma communities. It notes that 'challenges in the area of democracy and the rule of law include the functioning and independence of institutions guaranteeing democracy, empowerment of civil society as well as safeguarding fundamental rights such as freedom of expression and rights for persons belonging to minorities as well as vulnerable groups, notably Roma'.

The Indicative Strategy Papers 2014-2020⁴ for each of the IPA II beneficiaries equally make specific references to the required work ahead relating to the inclusion of Roma women, men and children.

Efforts in the IPA II beneficiaries are closely linked to the increasing overall support of the Roma population in EU Member States. Since 2011 an EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020 has been introduced. In December 2013, the EU Member States adopted Council Recommendations, as proposed by the European Commission, to step up the economic and social integration of Roma communities. In April 2014, the third EU Roma Summit took place in Brussels.

² http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2013/package/strategy_paper_2013_en.pdf.

³ C(2014) 4293, 30.06.2014

⁴ C(2014) 5770, 18.08.2014-Albania; C(2014) 9495-Bosnia and Herzegovina, 15.12.2014; C(2014) 5861, 19.08.2014-the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; C(2014) 5771, 18.08.2014-Montenegro; C(2014) 5772, 20.08.2014-Kosovo; C(2014) 5872, 19.08.2014-Serbia; and C(2014) 5998, 26.08.2014-Turkey

LESSONS LEARNED AND LINK TO PREVIOUS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

All IPA II beneficiaries face similar challenges in identifying viable solutions to support the integration of Roma people. While numerous efforts have been made by a variety of international actors in the past 20 years - through international organisations, international and national civil society organisations as well as bilateral donors - progress is slow. In the IPA II beneficiaries, some progress has been seen over the past years. The legal invisibility of Roma is being tackled with many Roma being registered by now. Child mortality among Roma is decreasing. Positive results are also noted in Roma students accessing primary education. Access to health care is slowly improving. Big gaps continue however to exist between Roma people and the rest of the population concerning access to education, health, employment, access to adequate housing as well as the involvement of Roma in public life through representation and participation.

The essential challenge in that regard is the limited political will of the IPA II beneficiaries, their limited institutional capacity and lack of financial resources. The work on Roma inclusion is mostly seen as a human rights or minority rights issue and is hence based in the relevant government ministries in charge for the promotion and protection of human rights. This approach has largely overlooked the need for a cross-sector engagement, involving key ministries in charge for education, health, employment, housing and -critically important- financing. While international funds are available to support the integration of Roma, sustainable solutions will only be found through genuine efforts to advance on the implementation of the existing National Roma Strategies.

In the period 2007-2013, around EUR 150 million in pre-accession assistance has been provided to support social inclusion and integration of Roma in the IPA II beneficiaries, including housing. Through the new financing instrument for the period 2014-2020, IPA II, DG Enlargement will continue to support measures facilitating the social and economic inclusion of Roma. Actions directly making an impact on the lives of individual Roma persons will be prioritised, with a particular focus on education and social inclusion. Future IPA II assistance should be closely linked with the implementation of the National Roma Strategy and Action Plans and the fulfilment of their objectives. The Commission aims at better targeting IPA II funding to finance measures agreed in, inter alia, the national seminars and throughout the overall accession process.

In 2014, DG Enlargement is commissioning an evaluation of IPA assistance for the period 2007-2014. Lessons learned and recommendations from the document will guide the overall IPA II assistance and the work of the Roma Decade Secretariat.

2. INTERVENTION LOGIC

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK MATRIX

OVERALL OBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (OVI)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	
To contribute to reducing the socio-economic gap between Roma and non-Roma population in the Western Balkans, and to reduce the impact of discrimination for Roma women, men and children	Poverty rate of Roma in the IPA II Beneficiaries in comparison to non-Roma decreased by 1/3 by 2020	Annual government reports on progress; Independent assessment by civil society organisations and international organisations, such as the Roma Inclusion Index; EU Progress Reports.	
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (OVI)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
Improved level of implementation of National Strategies for Roma Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quality of National Strategies, including budget allocations - Annual reporting on implementation of National Strategies introduced - Number of new policies/initiatives to the benefit of Roma introduced and partially implemented - Quality of CSO monitoring on the implementation of National Strategies. 	Concluding observations from CoE Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the protection of national minorities; Reports from UN treaty bodies. Civil society monitoring reports; EU Progress Reports.	Increased ownership and commitment by beneficiaries.
RESULTS	OBJECTIVELY VERIFIABLE INDICATORS (OVI)	SOURCES OF VERIFICATION	ASSUMPTIONS
Result 1– Support to governments 1.1 Accelerated pace of implementation of National Roma Strategies and adaptations made where needed, including specific targets and	Result 1 1.1 Quality of data in the reports on implementation of National Strategies	National government bodies organograms;	Increased ownership, interest

<p>budget allocations</p> <p>1.2 Improved institutional cross-sector coordination to address challenges for the Roma population in receiving equal access to rights at the national level</p> <p>1.3 Good institutional and thematic examples on implementation and existing challenges are being exchanged between governments and between governments and civil society and applied in practice</p> <p>Result 2 – Support to civil society</p> <p>2.1 Improved capacity of CSOs to monitor the implementation of National Roma Strategies</p> <p>2.2 Roma CSOs engage more effectively with governments and international community to further National Roma Strategy implementation</p> <p>Result 3 – Coordination of technical assistance</p> <p>3.1 Regularly updated information on existing external funding for the benefit of the Roma population in the IPA Beneficiaries available</p>	<p>1.2 Quality of institutional coordination on Roma issues at the national level</p> <p>Result 2</p> <p>2.1 Level of capacity of CSOs to monitor the implementation of National Roma Strategies.</p> <p>2.2 Number of advocacy contributions from NGO Focal Points incorporated into government policies</p> <p>Result 3</p> <p>3.1 Information on donor assistance related to the inclusion of Roma people available.</p>	<p>Government reports on implementation of National Roma Strategies;</p> <p>Mapping report on institutional set-up;</p> <p>Annual report from Roma Decade Secretariat;</p> <p>Media coverage analysis.</p> <p>Civil Society Monitoring Reports;</p> <p>NGO Focal Point reporting to Secretariat.</p> <p>Database of the repository.</p>	<p>and commitment by beneficiaries.</p> <p>Governments and donors are interested to have access to information on existing funding opportunities.</p>
ACTIVITIES	MEANS	OVERALL COST	ASSUMPTIONS
<p>Overall:</p> <p>0. Development of Roma Inclusion Index</p> <p>Activities to achieve result 1:</p> <p>1.1 Country-specific consultations between RCC-Decade staff and governments</p> <p>1.2 Thematic workshops on how to improve implementation of strategies relating to priorities</p> <p>1.3 Advocacy to ensure annual qualitative government reporting on the implementation of National Strategies. Alignments made with reporting of the EU Member States on progress towards inclusion of Roma</p>	<p>Grant</p>	<p>EUR 1.6 million (EU contribution 50% of the overall budget: EUR 0.8 million)</p> <p>36 months</p>	<p>Increased ownership and commitment by beneficiaries.</p>

<p>1.4 Roma Decade staff to advocate for the reinforcement of the role of National Roma Coordinators</p> <p>1.5 Roma Decade staff to guide the mapping and assist in the implementation of recommendations on how to improve institutional set up</p> <p>1.6 Specific workshops on how to improve institutional coordination at national level</p> <p>Activities to achieve result 2:</p> <p>2.1 Roma Decade staff to organize calls for NGO Focal Point designation and training of NGO Focal Points</p> <p>2.2 Capacity building activities on monitoring for civil society</p> <p>2.3 NGO Focal Points to regularly meet with government officials and to participate to international forums on Roma integration</p> <p>Activities to achieve result 3:</p> <p>3.1 Roma Decade staff to develop and regularly update a repository of externally funded projects and programmes available to the benefit of the Roma population at the national and regional level</p>			
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ADDITIONAL DESCRIPTION

Under provision of the RCC, the Roma Decade 2020 will be able to work more closely with the IPA beneficiaries providing a regional holistic approach on Roma issues. The RCC Secretariat will establish an additional administrative structure in order to facilitate their activities. The Roma Decade Secretariat will provide advice and guidance to the IPA Beneficiaries on the cross-sector implementation of the National Roma Strategies and Action Plans as well as by offering assistance to improve national coordination on Roma issues. The Roma Decade 2020 will assist IPA beneficiaries in designing and implementing meaningful strategies and programs to address Roma exclusion. It will do so in close coordination with civil society organisations, international organisations and existing initiatives in support of the integration of Roma. The Action will be implemented by focusing on the following:

Support to IPA II beneficiaries: Working through the RCC and the European Commission, the Roma Decade 2020 will reinforce its role as a platform for exchange and good practices of ELARG countries to effectively address continuing challenges in regard to the full integration of Roma communities. In that regard, the Roma Decade 2020 through its Secretariat will offer assistance to IPA Beneficiaries in improving the Decade Action Plans/National Roma Integration Strategies to make them more result-oriented, with rigorous targets and time lines. In order to assist effective implementation of the National Strategies, the Roma Decade Secretariat will assist the IPA II beneficiaries in strengthening National Roma Coordinators in order to streamline targeted support to Roma communities.

Engagement of civil society: The Roma Decade 2020 will ensure that Roma civil society plays an active role in participating in decision making processes, including policy development relating to Roma communities at a national and international level. Linking the National Roma Coordinators from the government side to the national NGO Focal Points will ensure close coordination and participation. In addition, civil society will continue to play a vital role through ongoing monitoring of the progress made by IPA beneficiaries, towards full inclusion of the Roma population.

Accountability: The Roma Decade 2020 will provide a forum for IPA II beneficiaries to report meaningfully on their policies and programs for Roma inclusion/integration. It will further facilitate civil society monitoring of State progress, and bring States and civil society together to review progress. For this, an alignment with the EU Roma Seminars will be sought. In cooperation with partners, the Roma Decade will seek to develop a Roma Inclusion Index, a set of indicators that can be tracked to assess progress in the areas of housing, education, employment, health care, civil documentation and discrimination. The annual review of the Roma Inclusion Index will contribute to the EU Progress Reports in tracking developments relating to Roma.

Mainstreaming: Working through the RCC and the European Commission, Roma Decade 2020 will seek to make Roma inclusion/integration a part of mainstream government policy, removing it from its Roma silo. Roma Decade 2020 will reach out to ministries responsible for budgeting and funding (finance, EU funds/EU affairs), line ministries responsible for the priority areas of the Decade (education, health, labour, social welfare and justice) as well as prime ministers so as to engage them in collaborative discussions on mainstreaming the inclusion agenda. Roma Decade 2020 will also engage other donors, including bilateral ones, international organizations and private donors in an effort to enhance coordination of funding Roma inclusion/integration efforts. Roma Decade 2020 will use the SEE 2020 mechanisms and encourage ELARG countries to take account of Roma populations in all activities intended to achieve SEE 2020 goals. Through funding from other donors, the Roma Decade 2020 will support some or all of the aforementioned activities and objectives in other countries with significant Roma populations (including present Decade member states and other states that agree to participate).

3. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A tripartite agreement will be signed between the European Commission, the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) and the Open Society Foundation (OSF) outlining the roles and responsibilities of the three involved parties. The RCC will have hereby the primary responsibility for the management of the Roma Decade 2020. It will employ dedicated staff for the Roma Decade 2020 and make additional staff available from their own resources, according to supervision needs. The RCC will report to the European Commission and the Open Society Foundations (OSF) on an annual basis on the progress made. The OSF will assist in developing the capacity of Roma civil society to participate in the Roma Decade 2020, through feeding the Decade work with their "Roma know-how and contacts", training of NGO Focal Points and civil society monitoring coalitions. The OSF staff shall also provide substantive and editorial advice to the monitoring and reporting process (on both the government and civil society side) and create a repository on Roma data. The European Commission's Directorate General for Enlargement will ensure linkages of the Roma Decade 2020 to the EU enlargement process, and will create synergies with the mechanisms under the EU Framework on National Roma Integration Strategies. Methodologies will be aligned. A steering committee consisting of one representative from the RCC, OSF and the European Commission, one each from the seven IPA II beneficiaries and one representing Roma civil society will provide overall guidance and strategic advice to the initiative.

IMPLEMENTATION METHOD AND TYPE OF FINANCING

The Action will be implemented following the award of a direct grant to the Regional Cooperation Council. The financial contributions will be provided in equal parts by the European Commission and the OSF while the RCC will offer in-kind contributions of office space, equipment as well as supervisory staff. Signature of the contract is expected in quarter 2 of 2015. The implementation period of the Action is planned for 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2018. The Decade Secretariat may seek funding from other sources for similar activities in countries other than IPA II beneficiaries.

Synergies will be created with other relevant EU-funded programmes through IPA I, IPA II and EIDHR and as well as links sought with non EU-funded support in the IPA II beneficiaries.

4. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

METHODOLOGY FOR MONITORING (AND EVALUATION)

Monitoring of the quality of implementation will be ensured through a variety of means at different levels:

- Annual review of progress by the Steering Committee
- Reporting on progress to the Contracting Authority. Contract execution will be monitored through regular reports (inception, quarterly updates, annual report, final report), with clearly identified milestones linked to each component of the Action. Regular meetings/teleconferences/video conferences between the task manager and OSF with the RCC/Roma Decade Secretariat staff will further ensure that results are achieved in due time.
- A Result Oriented Assessment may be considered in early 2017.
- An external evaluation may be commissioned individually or as part of an overall review of IPA funding towards the integration of Roma.

INDICATOR MEASUREMENT

Indicator	Description	Baseline 2014	Last (year)	Milestone 2017	Target 2020	Source of information
<i>CSP indicator(s) – if applicable</i>						
<i>Action outcome indicator (Specific objective)</i>	Poverty rate of Roma in the IPA Beneficiaries in comparison to non-Roma decreased by 2017.	Poverty rate of Roma women, men and children is at average of 36% in IPA II beneficiaries in comparison to 11% non-Roma population.		Poverty rate decreased by 10% in 2017 to an average of 33%.	Poverty rate decreased by 20% in 2020 to 28%.	UNDP/World Bank household survey 2011. UNICEF data. Roma Inclusion Index.
<i>Action outcome indicator 1 (result 1)</i>	1.1 Quality of National Strategies, including budget allocations. 1.2 Annual reporting on implementation of National Strategies introduced. 1.3 Number of new policies/initiatives to the benefit of Roma introduced and partially implemented.	National Strategies exist in all IPA Beneficiaries in the Western Balkans but the commitment to implement effectively leaves room from improvement; Reporting exists, but quality is poor.		Annual reporting introduced and aligned with EU MS reporting to the EC.	Same.	
<i>Action outcome indicator 2 (result 2)</i>	2.1 Quality of CSO monitoring on the implementation of National Strategies.	Reporting varies in quality and in frequency of publication.	n/a	Quality of reporting is improved and reports are issued every 2 years.	Same.	
<i>Action outcome indicator 3 (result 3)</i>	3.1 Information on donor assistance relating to the inclusion of Roma available.	Not existing.		Database developed by December 2015.	updated every 6 months.	

Indicator	Description	Baseline 2014	Last (year)	Milestone 2017	Target 2020	Source of information
<i>Action output indicator 1 (result 1)</i>	1.1 Number of references made in RCC meetings/strategic papers to the inclusion of Roma.	Not so far.		Inclusion of Roma is streamlined through RCC's strategic documents and policy work.	n/a	RCC strategic documents, RCC annual reports, RCC conference/meeting reports.
<i>Action output indicator 2 (result 1)</i>	1.2 Advocacy to ensure annual qualitative reporting on the implementation of National Strategies.	Reporting varies in quality and in frequency of publication.		Annual reports available.	Same.	
<i>Action output indicator 3 (result 1)</i>	1.3 Development of a mapping report on institutional coordination at national level.	Not existent.	n/a	Mapping Report on institutional coordination at national level by spring 2016 and recommendations implemented by end 2017.	Recommendations from	Mapping report.
<i>Action output indicator 4 (result 1)</i>	1.4 Appointment of higher ranking officials to serve as National Contact Points (NCPs).	National Contact Points exist, though often without decision and budget authority.		Appointment of new NCPs has led to an improved cross-sector coordination on Roma policy.	same	<i>Government reports on implementation of National Roma Strategies.</i>
Action output indicator 5	2.1 Capacity building activities on	Ongoing, needs to be				

Indicator	Description	Baseline 2014	Last (year)	Milestone 2017	Target 2020	Source of information
(result 2)	analysis and drafting skills for civil society; 2.2 Call for Proposal for CSO consortium to draft report.	reinforced and expanded.				
Action output indicator 6 (result 3)	3.1 Database developed	Not yet existing.		Database developed by December 2015.	Data is being updated every 6 months.	Database, publically accessible.

5. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE (AND IF RELEVANT DISASTER RESILIENCE)

ENGAGEMENT WITH CIVIL SOCIETY (AND IF RELEVANT OTHER NON-STATE STAKEHOLDERS)

Close and collaborative engagement with civil society constitutes a major component of the Action. Various Action indicators will be met through the direct involvement of civil society, namely by civil society coalitions undertaking the monitoring of progress on the implementation of National Strategies. The Action will promote an active dialogue between governments and civil society on all aspects of Roma integration. In addition, NGO Focal Points will be deployed at the national level in order to enable a direct link to grass root NGOs and Roma people, and will engage in international forums on Roma integration.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND GENDER MAINSTREAMING

With regards to gender mainstreaming, the Roma Decade Secretariat will continue encouraging a practice of gender balance, and in certain situations, prioritising Roma women to deliver public speeches, lead initiatives, etc. In the present network there is an equal balance of six women and six men as NGO Focal Point coordinators. Additionally, each civil society monitoring report has focused on specific aspects of inclusion policies which are relevant for achieving greater gender equality. Going forward, special focus will be devoted to analysing the gender aspects of implemented policies.

MINORITIES AND VULNERABLE GROUPS

The Action focuses in offering support to advance the integration of Roma communities as the most marginalized minority group in the Western Balkans and Turkey.

6. SUSTAINABILITY

The Action is designed to produce durable changes in IPA II beneficiaries' approach to Roma integration. The Action will encourage and support the development and implementation of multiannual government Strategies and Action Plans that extend beyond the lifetime of the Action through enhancing regional support and cooperation. Provided a successful implementation of and achievement of the set targets, a continuation of the Action is foreseen until 2020. With modest funding, civil society monitoring coalitions and NGO focal points could continue to function even without the existence of the Decade Secretariat.

7. COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY

A core feature of the Action is raising awareness among the general public and Roma communities about international Roma related policies, and raising awareness of policy makers on the needs and interests of the constituency. This will be done through three main tools.

The first one is the website of the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 Initiative (www.romadecade.org), which will be linked to the website of the RCC. The website will include new and updated sections for governing documents and country specific information and data, as well as reports, news, opinions, and audio and video materials produced during meetings. The second tool is the extensive use of social media, including the existing Facebook page of the Decade of Roma Inclusion, Twitter and the Roma Decade YouTube channel for outreach purposes and sharing information. The third tool is dissemination of information through RCC-Decade staff to all stakeholders, via email, instant messaging services and face-to-face meetings.