



CONCLUSIONS OF THE FIFTH MINISTERIAL MEETING ON ROMA INTEGRATION

18 September 2024

On the fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration of Western Balkans Partners on Roma Integration within the EU Enlargement Process (Poznan Declaration) at the Western Balkans Leaders' Summit in Poznan, Poland on 5 July 2019, the German Federal Foreign Office hosted the fifth Ministerial meeting on 18 September 2024 in Berlin.

This meeting:

- took stock of the assessment of the implementation of the Poznan Declaration conducted by the Council of Europe in the framework of the Roma Integration Phase III European Union – Council of Europe Joint Project,
- discussed the remaining challenges and shortcomings,
- prioritised concrete steps for the upcoming year, ensuring substantial and credible progress in implementing the Declaration's targets and subsequent commitments.

The Ministers of the Western Balkans responsible for Roma inclusion:

Welcoming the significant progress achieved in the implementation of the Poznan Declaration objectives,

Regretting that Roma remain the most socially and economically marginalised minority in the region, which undermines the respect of their human rights, impedes their full participation in society and effective exercise of civic responsibilities, and propagates prejudice,

Acknowledging the significant potential of Roma communities to contribute to the region's economic growth, especially linked to addressing labour shortages, demographics, and rich cultural heritage,

Welcoming the adoption of the new Regulation on the Reform and Growth Facility for the Western Balkan countries, establishing a new financing instrument, and underlying the importance of ensuring new investments reach Roma,

Acting upon the commitments taken in Poznan in 2019 and the following four Ministerial meetings organised in Tirana in 2020, Sarajevo in 2021, Podgorica in 2022, and Skopje in 2023,

Agree to strengthen the ongoing work on Roma integration by ensuring that follow-up actions to the Ministerial meetings are concrete, time bound, and involve all line Ministries with



competences relevant to Roma inclusion and enlargement negotiations of chapter 23, “Judiciary and Fundamental Rights”.

Employment

The Ministers acknowledged the potential of the Roma workforce, especially young Roma, in relation to the labour shortage of the region and pledged to increase the access of Roma to skills training and programmes for the occupations in market demand. Notably, skills training and programmes must be designed to allow Roma to take advantage of the opportunities of the ongoing green and digital transitions, reduce informality, offer equal opportunities, and incentivise the preparedness and resilience of young people and women.

Housing

The Ministers pledged to use the mapping and accompanying Geoportal for Roma Settlements with Substandard Conditions to develop and adopt urban plans and allow for regulation of these mostly informal neighbourhoods. They vowed to identify and use new sources of finance and partnerships to improve access to decent sustainable housing. Priority will be given to improving access to public services (water, electricity, sewage, internet, etc.) and public transport services.

Education

The Ministers emphasised the pivotal importance of education in breaking the cycle of poverty and exclusion and undertake to increase the quality of the educational services in the Roma neighbourhoods, to ensure effective and equal access for Roma children to the mainstream educational system, including pre-school education, and to ensure that all children complete compulsory education.

Healthcare access

The Ministers committed to ensure equal access of all Roma, including those without documents, to the healthcare system by supporting the field work of Roma health mediators and by providing specific training to medical staff and social workers. The Ministers pledged to increase scholarships for Roma in medical professions, both at secondary and tertiary level.

Addressing anti-Gypsyism

The Ministers committed to include a balanced and contextualised teaching of Roma history, reflecting both their national presence and historical context and their common history as a people present in Europe for centuries; call upon the European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture (ERIAC) to develop comprehensive curricula and teaching materials focused on Roma history, arts, and culture and to prepare a road map for implementing the new curricula in co-operation with the Council of Europe, ERIAC academics, teacher training institutes, and professional teachers’ organisations.



The Ministers committed to employ a comprehensive multidisciplinary approach to address anti-Gypsyism, which is an especially persistent, violent, recurrent, and commonplace form of racism, in line with international and European standards, and to encourage the reporting and effective processing of cases of discrimination in order to increase the confidence of Roma in the justice system.

The Ministers commit to strengthen the socio-economic inclusion of Roma communities. Roma have to benefit from the implementation of the major political agendas, notably the Economic and Investment Plan and the Growth Plan for the Western Balkans, with the Reform and Growth Facility. Investments in digitalisation should address the digital divide between Roma and non-Roma communities.

The Ministers confirm their intention to convene for a follow-up Ministerial meeting in 2025 to review the implementation of the above commitments and assess the overall progress towards the targets outlined in the Poznan Declaration and call on the host country of the 2025 Berlin Process Western Balkans Summit to convene the meeting.

The Ministers transmit this for formal adoption at the Berlin Process Western Balkans Summit to be held on 14 October 2024 in Berlin.

Done in Berlin, 18 September 2024