

EU Second Roma Integration Award for the Western Balkans and Turkey



Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey **APPLICATION FORM** (ANNEX 1 OF THE CONTEST RULES)

Did you know?

It is estimated that about 1 million Roma¹ live in the Western Balkans, 2.8 million in Turkey and 6.2 million in the EU. Roma are Europe's largest ethnic minority. They face continued exclusion, segregation and discrimination.

The EU's policy on Roma inclusion, integration and empowerment is placed within an EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020 adopted by the European Commission in 2011. Within that framework, all 28 EU Member States and all 7 candidate countries and potential candidates for EU membership adopted their National Roma Integration Strategies which they now put in practice.

In June 2016, the Commission adopted its annual report on Roma integration that stresses the following as regards the candidate countries and potential candidates:

- Roma integration continues to be a priority in the enlargement process.
- Enough funding must be ensured to carry out integration measures.
- Attention should focus on implementation by local authorities.
- Roma community should be involved in planning, implementation and monitoring.
- Focus on results on the ground to reduce the gap between Roma and non-Roma.

Find out more: http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma/index_en.htm

Watch a film about Roma: <http://romahomeland.org/>

Watch a short video "A Better Future for Roma" in candidate countries and potential candidates: <https://vimeo.com/143848472>

¹As it is most commonly used in EU policy documents and discussions, the term "Roma" refers to a
*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ
Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

without denying the specificities and varieties of lifestyles and situations of these groups.

Before filling out this Application Form, please read carefully the Contest Rules. You also have to fill out, date and sign the Declaration of Honour.

Please fill out this Application Form and send it, together with the Declaration of Honour (Annex 2 of the Contest Rules), by e-mail to

NEAR-ROMA-INTEGRATION-AWARD@ec.europa.eu

by 31 October 2016 23:59:59 of Brussels time (the time of registration in the European Commission's IT system is decisive).

("NEAR" is the abbreviation for the European Commission department responsible for the Second Roma Integration Award: the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations.)

Please make sure that where the Contest Rules require quantified data, e.g. a specific duration or number of staff or beneficiaries, this Application Form contains this data.

Where this Application Form requires a limit on the number of words, any words in excess of that limit will be disregarded in the evaluation. Adjust the size of the table cells where necessary to fit the text.

1. THE PARTICIPANT

Full official name of the participant	Roma Organisation for Multicultural Affirmation S.O.S. (ROMA S.O.S.) - Prilep
Official legal form of the participant. This legal form must be suitable for an NGO.	Civic association

Participant's history, aim and main activities (no more than 300 words). Demonstrate in particular the eligibility criteria under Section 3 points 2. and 3. of the Contest Rules

ROMA S.O.S. is a voluntary, non-governmental citizen's association established in 2005 whose activities, based on the primary principles of solidarity, justice, human dignity, equality of rights and diversity, focus on vulnerable and marginalized groups, in particular on Roma.

THE MAIN AIM OF THE ASSOCIATION is to present a bridge for integration of the Roma community, mainly by promoting and advocating their needs in front of the relevant institutions and government bodies. The realization of the basic human rights of Roma people is essential to the efforts to overcome the problems.

VISION: to create equal opportunities and conditions for achieving social, economic, and cultural interests of Roma with other groups in a multiethnic society by 2020.

MISSION: to inspire and promote active involvement of Roma in social processes through the promotion of health rights, the right to non-discrimination, women's rights, and the opportunity for non-formal education for young Roma.

ROMA S.O.S. count more than 10 actively involved young Roma who together with the actively engaged non-Roma create a model of multicultural development.

The association has developed three key approaches in its work:

- *Access Your Health* - focused on eliminating obstacles Roma patients access to health services by building mutual trust and mediation in their communication;
- *Access Your Care* - focuses on promoting health developments in the community by raising the level of awareness of preventive mandatory programs health services;
- *Access Your human right* - is focused on strengthening the Roma community in the realization of human rights and reduction of discrimination through education about the use of rights, recognition violations and the use of legal safeguards, as well as initiation legal actions before the competent civil and judicial authorities in cases of unequal treatment.

Staff count: approximate number of people, voluntary or paid, full-time or part-time, directly carrying out all the activities of the participant, i.e. not just the project	20
Full official address, notably street/post box, postal code, city, country	32 Pirinska st. 7 500 Prilep, Republic of Macedonia
E-mail address	romasosprilep@yahoo.com
Website	http://romasosprilep.org
Statutory registration number, VAT registration number (whichever available)	SRN 6071325 VAT 4021006148753
CONTACT PERSON:	
Name (Ms, Mr)	Ms Nesime Salioska
Telephone number	00 389 76 278 750
E-mail address	snesime@yahoo.com

2. THE PROJECT

Title of the project	Child marriages in the Roma community (case study and legislative initiative)
Period covered by the project (Section 4 point 3. of the Contest Rules)	From: _____ To: _____ OR Ongoing since: <u>June 2015</u>
Geographical location of the project (Section 4 point 2. of the Contest Rules)	FYR Macedonia, with focus on municipality of Prilep
Source of financing of the project	<u>UNICEF office in Macedonia</u>
<p>Objectives, design, planning and activities of the project (Section 4 point 1., Section 5, criterion 1 of the Contest Rules):</p> <p><i>Please explain in no more than 500 words how the objectives, design, planning and activities (completed by the date of submission of this application) of the project can directly positively affect the Roma children and youth (below 18 years) and/or young adults (18-30 years) in terms of inclusion, integration and/or empowerment, with expected long-term effects on their lives. If the beneficiaries of the project belong to various age groups, please explain and confirm that Roma children and youth and/or young adults are a majority of the beneficiaries.</i></p>	

Child marriage violates basic children's rights regarding health, education and psychological development. In the case of the Roma community, child marriages are still not highlighted as a problem but as part of the traditional behavior of Roma, a fact that only strengthens the stereotype of the Roma. In absence of specific institutional commitments to prevent these cases, the practice shows that the number of early marriages among Roma is dramatically higher in comparison with other communities. According to the data obtained with the Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) in 2011 in the category of *girls aged 15 to 19 who are married or live in a union*, the national rate is 4%, within which 2% Macedonians, 6% Albanians and 22% Roma. In terms of *young women aged 15-19 who gave birth or are currently pregnant*, the national rate was 3%, whereas among Roma this rate was 18%.

- The objective to **generate evidence on the current situation among Roma community in Prilep** was defined on order to be able to analyze and provide solutions for the phenomenon of early marriages among Roma (marriages with/between persons under the age of 18), in the form of official data about the number of early marriages in Prilep and analyzed weaknesses in their registration in relevant institutions.

This objective is aimed to officially confirm and thus act upon the process of constant exclusion of the Roma children, especially girls, from the educational process (mostly secondary education), as a result of engaging in early marriages.

- The objective of **public recognition and better understanding of the issue** as well as the **intersectional relation among the different aspects** was aimed to establishing cooperation among stakeholders and initiate follow-up coordinated activities. Also, the activity of documenting practices and attitudes of the Roma community about the issue was defined as a way to humanize the problem. The realization of this objective, together with the generated official data was planned to be summarised in a case study about child marriages.
- **Creating a positive model and sharing experience** with other associations and communities living in the same or similar context in dealing with the issue, as well as ensuring a bigger support was defined as an objective that will be realized by establishing an informal network and organizing activities to 'spread the word' about the problem and raise the question on national level. The prepared case study was planned to be used as a tool in the realization of this objective.

Both of these objectives were aimed to make institutions and Roma community realize that stopping and preventing the child marriages is a way of promoting the integration of Roma in the society rather than interfering with their tradition.

- **Identifying gaps in existing legal provisions/policies/procedures and their implementation**, was aimed in order to further development of suggestion for legislative changes, which will have a long term effect on empowering the children by protecting their basic human rights and allowing the institutions to act in cases of their violation.

Results achieved of the project (Section 5, criterion 2 of the Contest Rules):

Please explain in no more than 500 words the results (achieved by the date of submission of this application): how the project was able to directly positively affect the Roma children and youth (below 18 years) and/or young adults (18-30 years) in terms of inclusion, integration and/or empowerment, with expected long-term effects on their lives. Explain how you have measured these results and how these findings have been or will be used to adjust the objectives, design, planning or activities of the project.

Legal analysis (desktop research) – the research for the development of legal and political analysis was conducted in **August 2015**, through analysis of international documents and national legislation. It showed that child marriages are common in developing countries, affecting mostly girls. Rooted in cultural tradition and poverty, this practice not only violates human rights but also affect the stability and economic development.

Quantitative analysis (August 2015) – 15 Requests for access to public information were sent to stakeholders relevant to the problem in order to provide statistical evidence of the problem and to see how institutions treat or categorize it.

Qualitative analysis (September 2015)- 12 interviews were conducted in order to obtain detailed information on the procedure of institutions in cases of reported marriage between/to a person under 18 years, while the answers were used to prepare a qualitative analysis of the problem and the way authorities understand it.

- *Two Focus groups with Roma parents and young Roma* were organized in order to obtain information on attitudes, experiences and practices of parents and youngsters who have children or were engaged themselves in child marriage. Three of the parents and two young Roma agreed to share and let us document their story and experience with child marriages.

Expert legal analysis (October-November, 2015) of the current national legislation as well as suggestions for legislative changes was made with the collaboration of external expert Cvetanka Ivanova, former MP and chairman of the Committee on Labour and Social Policy at the Parliament of RM.

Prepared and published a **case study ‘The grey area between tradition and children’s rights’ (November 2015-February, 2016)** which summarizes the results of all the previous activities and illustrates publicly and officially the violation of the children’s rights, their exclusion of educational and integration processes as a result of early engaging in marriage, as well as the legal gap that allows them to do that at the age 16 to 18 and prevents the institutions from reacting.

This conclusions were used in **starting a legislative initiative** for amending Family Law, Criminal Code and Law on Secondary Education with provisions that ensure 18 years as the minimum legal age for a person to live in both formal or informal marriage, and acting contrary to be considered a crime. The amendments will also provide an institutional system

for recording and monitoring of marriages with persons under the age of 18.

In order to support the arguments in representing the legislative initiative, a direct **action research** has been conducted by organizing **five public discussions (September-October, 2016)** in different municipalities in Macedonia, with the presence of the Roma community and institutions, where the Case study and its conclusions were discussed and confirmed. These discussions left a great impact on raising the awareness on the issue and its negative impact on Roma children's inclusion in educational process, society integrations on national level.

Share of Roma staff carrying out (implementing) the project (Section 5, criterion 3 of the Contest Rules):

Please describe, in no more than 300 words, how many people – paid or volunteer, full-time or part-time – are directly carrying out (implementing) the project. What is the share in % of Roma among these people?

Do not confuse the people who carry out (implement) the project and the people who benefit from the project! For example, teachers and social assistants carry out a project while children benefit from it. However, sometimes it may be difficult to distinguish: for example, unemployed people may receive training as beneficiaries of the project and at the same time they can be employed by the project or do volunteer work to carry out the project. Therefore, describe clearly the people who carry out (implement) the project.

In the implementation of the project since its beginning in June 2015, approximately 15 people were involved:

- ✓ 1 project coordinator – coordination of the project team in realization of activities, monitoring of the progress, consultation with relevant parties in identification of possible solutions, public and media promotion.
- ✓ 3 project assistants – collaboration with project team, preparation of materials for realization of activities.
- ✓ 1 project collaborator – participation and logistical support in realization of activities.
- ✓ 2 consultants - expert analysis of the issue and support in preparation of case study.
- ✓ 1 translator – translation of case study and other materials relevant to the project.
- ✓ 1 financial assistant – logistical and financial assistance in realization of project activities.
- ✓ 6 local assistants from different municipalities - providing logistical support in organizing public discussions in their municipalities and document cases of child marriages in the local communities.

9 people out of 15 (60%) are Roma (1 project coordinator, 1 project collaborator, 1 financial assistant, 5 local assistants).

Share of women and men (girls and boys) among beneficiaries of the project (Section 5, criterion 4 of the Contest Rules):

Please state, in no more than 300 words, what the share of women and men (girls and boys) is among the beneficiaries of the project. If there are gender imbalances, please explain them and explain how these findings have been or will be used to adjust the objectives, design, planning or activities of the project. If the project is intended to benefit one gender only, please justify why that is appropriate to achieve the objectives of the project.

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, in its concluding remarks addressed to the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, prepared on the basis of periodic reports submitted by the state and alternative reports submitted by NGOs, noted that "the minimum legal age for marriage is 18 years, but is concerned about the practice of early and forced marriages of girls that belong to certain communities, including traditional marriages that are not registered with the competent authorities, and for the reported cases of sale of children because of marriage and notes that such practices may be affected in times of economic difficulties". Having in mind the abovementioned, the beneficiaries of the project are all Roma children in Macedonia under the age of 18, with a special accent on Roma girls, giving the fact that these group is the one most exposed to early engaging in marriages, and all the negative consequences of it: leaving school, giving birth at very early age, exposure to domestic violence etc.

However, since this project is also aimed to eventually bring legislative changes, and according to the constitutional provision of equality regardless of sex, race, colour, national and social origin, political or religious beliefs, property and social status, it will affect all the children in Macedonia under the age of 18.

3. COOPERATING ENTITIES (fill out only if applicable – Section 3, point 4. of the Contest Rules)

Describe in no more than 300 words the share of implementation of the project by the participant, i.e. without the cooperating entities. This share must be meaningful and substantial.	
List the cooperating entities. For each entity, provide its full official name, its legal form, its official address and its statutory and/or VAT registration number.	

4. SUPPORTING VISUAL MATERIAL

In compliance with the Contest Rules (Section 6), visual material supporting this application (e.g. photos, videos, brochures) is only accepted if it is openly available on the internet in electronic format (a website, YouTube, Vimeo, Facebook etc.). Provide links below and explain the material, in particular how it shows various aspects of the project. The supporting visual material itself may be in any language.

Provide the link and a short (maximum 30 words) explanation for each item of visual material. Do not provide more than 10 items; any items beyond this limit will be disregarded during the evaluation.

1. http://romasosprilep.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Roma-SOS_Sivata-zona_ANG_002.pdf - Case study that uses the human rights based approach to change negative perceptions and attitudes toward the issue of child marriages in Roma communities and the fear of public speaking.
2. <http://24vakti.mk/%D0%B7%D0%B4%D1%80%D1%83%D0%B6%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B5-%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%BC%D0%B0-%D1%81-%D0%BE-%D1%81/> media report on public discussion and presentation of Case study on the issue of child marriages in Municipality of Karposh, (City of Skopje).
3. <http://tera.mk/kako-da-ne-se-mazhat-i-zhenat-dodeka-se-detsa/> media report on public discussion and presentation of Case study on the issue of child marriages in

Municipality of Bitola.

4. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rxXqt9Dp_Nw media report on public discussion and presentation of Case study on the issue of child marriages in Municipality of Shuto Orizari (City of Skopje).
5. <http://iris.mk/index.php/vesti/lokalninvesti/15414-2016-10-12-15-18-18> media report on public discussion and presentation of Case study on the issue of child marriages in Municipality of Shtip.
6. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jvZeOlNXiCk> media report on public discussion and presentation of Case study on the issue of child marriages in Municipality of Kumanovo.