



DECADE OF
ROMA
INCLUSION
2005-2015

DECADE OF ROMA INCLUSION 2005-2015

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Under the Presidency of Government of Romania

DECADE DECLARATION

***[As signed by the Prime Ministers of the Participating Governments
in Sofia on 2 February 2005]***

Building on the momentum of the 2003 conference, “Roma in an Expanding Europe: Challenges for the Future”, we pledge that our governments will work toward eliminating discrimination and closing the unacceptable gaps between Roma and the rest of society, as identified in our Decade Action Plans.

We declare the years 2005 – 2015 to be the Decade of Roma Inclusion and we commit to support the full participation and involvement of national Roma communities in achieving the Decade’s objectives and to demonstrate progress by measuring outcomes and reviewing experiences in the implementation of the Decade’s Action Plans.

We invite other states to join our effort.

I. BACKGROUND

The Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005 – 2015 (hereinafter “the Decade”) is a political commitment by Governments to combat Roma poverty, exclusion, and discrimination within a regional framework.

The main objectives of the Decade are to:

- accelerate progress toward improving the welfare of Roma by including Roma in the decision-making process, and
- to review such progress in a transparent and quantifiable way.

Due regard shall be given at all times to the close involvement and participation of Roma in the decisions and work of the Decade.

The Decade is an international initiative, which brings together Governments, inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations, as well as Romani civil society to (i) launch initiatives to strengthen Roma inclusion as a high priority on the regional and European political agendas; (ii) learn and exchange experiences; (iii) involve Roma meaningfully in all policy making on matters concerning them; (iv) bring in international experience and expertise to help make progress on challenging issues; and (v) raise public awareness of the situation of Roma through active communications.

The Decade shall draw upon and maintain the joint focus of participating Governments, International Organisations and Roma on achieving progress toward selected outcomes over ten years. The success of the Decade will be demonstrated by measuring the progress made on Roma inclusion with respect to improvements in the living conditions of Roma over the ten-year period.

The Decade’s priority areas shall be: employment, education, health, and housing. While focussing on these priority areas, each participating Government shall in addition take into account the other core issues of poverty, discrimination, and gender mainstreaming.

The Decade shall be guided by the principle of sovereign equality of its Governments. Participating Governments shall fulfil, in good faith, the obligations assumed by them in accordance with these Terms of Reference.

II. PARTICIPATION

- A. The Founding Participating Governments of the Decade shall be the Governments of Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Slovakia.
- B. The founding International Partner Organisation of the Decade shall be the following inter-governmental and international organisations (hereinafter the “International Partner Organisations”): World Bank, Open Society Institute (OSI), United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Council of Europe (CoE), Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB), the Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues (CPRSI) of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the European Roma

Information Office (ERIO), European Roma and Travellers Forum (ERTF), European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) and the Roma Education Fund (REF).

- C. Other Governments and international organisations that undertake to adhere to the terms described in these Terms of Reference are invited to participate in the Decade.
- D. Any Government willing to participate in the Decade shall develop and adopt Decade National Action Plans.
- E. Governments intending to participate in the Decade and international organisations shall have the opportunity – if they are wishing to do so – to participate as Observers at ISC meetings and workshops until their decision to participate in the Decade.
- F. The Romani civil society of each Participating Country shall be appropriately represented in the Decade and at ISC meetings.
- G. Participating Governments and International Partner Organisations may terminate their participation by giving notice of their intention to do so to the ISC. Such notice shall take effect immediately the date of its receipt by the ISC.

III. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Participating Governments

Each Participating Government of the Decade shall:

- a) Ensure on an annual basis and during the whole Decade the financial commitment necessary for the implementation of the national Action Plans.
- b) Ensure the efficient and timely implementation of its National Decade Action Plan.
- c) Hold the Decade Presidency at least once during the ten-year period.
- d) Seek to adopt the National Decade Action Plans and subsequent amendments thereto or to present the National Decade Action Plans and subsequent amendments thereto to the Parliament for adoption.
- e) Ensure an effective participation of the Romani civil society in the National Working Groups, or similar bodies, in order to allow for their participation in the implementation and monitoring of the National Decade Action Plans.
- f) Consider to facilitating and supporting the work of a Roma Consultant or of a Romani consultancy body for the Decade.
- g) Ensure coordination between line ministries and government institutions/offices for Roma in order to maintain coherence and continuity in implementation of the Decade Action Plan.
- h) Ensure transparency and sharing of information regarding the Decade within the government, with civil society, and with the general public.
- i) Establish an effective monitoring mechanism, which includes a way to measure progress at the national level of the National Decade Action Plan.
- j) Make available disaggregated data in accordance with the international standards on data collection and data protection.
- k) Inform at the annual meetings of the ISC on the progress made in the implementation of the National Decade Action Plan.

- l) Develop and implement the national communication plan for the Decade implementation at national level.
- m) Strengthen the capacity of Romani organisations in order to ensure their effective participation in the Decade process.
- n) Contribute financially to the budget of the Decade, as decided by the ISC in accordance with Section V of these Terms of Reference.

B. International Partner Organisations

International Partner Organisations in conformity with their respective missions, rules, procedures and their relevant budget appropriation:

- a) Shall actively participate in the Decade process
- b) Shall seek to establish a mutual supportive mechanism with the Decade and to co-ordinate their activities with the Decade in order to maximize the synergy effects.
- c) Shall support activities to facilitate the participation of Romani civil society in the work of the Decade.
- d) Shall provide needed expertise to the Decade directly or through third parties.
- e) May contribute financially or in-kind to the budget of the Decade, as decided by the ISC in accordance with Section V of these Terms of Reference.
- f) May support the Romani civil society with the establishment of a nation-wide consultation and participation mechanism of the Romani civil society in the Decade.

C. Romani Civil Society

The Romani civil society shall participate in the Decade process as partners at equal footing as follows.

The Romani civil society shall:

- a) Actively participate in the Decade process.
- b) Contribute to the effective implementation of the National Decade Action Plans by initiating dialogue between the local authorities and local Romani communities.
- c) Communicate the goals and objectives of the Decade to the Romani population of the Participating countries.
- d) Actively participate and offer its input and expertise in implementation and monitoring at the national level of the National Decade Action Plans.
- e) Ensure the participation of Roma to the broadest possible extent in the Decade process at national level.

III. GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE OF THE DECADE

The Decade shall be governed by the following organs:

A. International Steering Committee (ISC)

The ISC shall constitute the highest decision-making and co-ordination body of the Decade.

The ISC shall be comprised of all Participating Governments and all International Partner Organisations, and representatives of the national Romani civil societies.

Each Government shall designate a national delegation to represent it at the meetings of the ISC. The national delegations shall be headed by the National Coordinator, appointed by the Prime Minister (or a government representative, appointed by the National Coordinator). The members of the national delegation shall be appointed by the Government. The Romani civil society of each Member shall be represented independently by one (1) delegate at ISC meetings.

The delegates of the national Romani civil societies may formulate joint positions and propose initiatives for consideration by the ISC.

Each International Partner Organisation shall designate one (1) person to represent it at the meetings of the ISC.

All decisions at ISC meeting are taken by consensus of all stakeholders.

Upon invitation of the Government holding the presidency of the Decade, the ISC shall meet at least once a year. The Government holding the Presidency of the Decade shall provide written notice of any ISC meeting at least two (2) months prior to the date set for the meeting.

The ISC shall have broad powers to manage and oversee the work of the Decade, included but not limited to the following:

- a) Based on a proposal by the incoming Presidency review and discuss the yearly Decade Work Plan, describing the priority areas of the Government holding the Presidency.
- b) Discuss and decide the priorities for activities at international level to be paid from the Decade Budget (See Section VI. of these Terms of References).
- c) Review the information on the Decade implementation progress in respective countries submitted by the Governments to the ISC.
- d) Review and adopt the annual Decade report, presented by the Government holding the Presidency at the end of its term in office.
- e) Draw conclusions from the reports and based on the exchange of experiences take relevant decisions.
- f) Discuss and agree upon any amendments to these Terms of Reference or any significant changes in the objectives or policies of the Decade.
- g) Review and approves the annual report on activities and expenses to be incurred on the international level.
- h) Approve the budget for the following financial year of the Decade for expenses to be incurred with the Decade Trust Fund.

- i) Formally approve the admission of new Governments and of International Partner Organisations.

The ISC may issue public statements on behalf of the Decade only if two thirds of the Governments are represented at a meeting and the statement does not address a missing Government.

B. Presidency of the Decade

Each year a Government shall serve the function of the Presidency of the Decade.

The Government holding the Presidency of the Decade shall be responsible for performing the following tasks, among others:

- a) Develop a Work Plan, describing the priority areas for the year of the Presidency, and presenting it for discussion to the ISC, taking into account the priority areas and activities of the previous Presidency.
- b) Guide the work of the Secretariat of the Decade in implementing the Work Plan of the Presidency and the other work relating to the Decade.
- c) Coordinate the exchange of information and the implementation of jointly agreed activities of the Decade at international level.
- d) Propose a budget to the ISC for the activities occurring during the Presidency covered by the Decade Trust Fund.
- e) Convene, organise, conduct and chair the meetings of the ISC.
- f) Convene, organise, conduct and chair any workshops or meetings held on the four (4) priority issues or the three (3) other core issues of the Decade, on data-related issues, or on monitoring of the work of the Decade.
- g) Convene, organise, conduct and chair any other workshops decided by the Presidency on any other Roma-related issue as laid down in its Work Plan (Priority Areas of the Presidency).
- h) Cooperate with the Roma Education Fund any activities related to the Decade.
- i) Act as the relevant contact for receiving any applications from other countries and international organisations wishing to be admitted as a Participant of the Decade.
- j) The presidency shall be entitled to invite other countries to become participants of the Decade.
- k) Act as the main representative of the Decade before the European and international institutions and other major stakeholders in promoting any initiatives aimed at furthering the goals and objectives of the Decade.
- l) Initiate, facilitate, and maintain relations at national and international levels with international organizations and institutions as well as with civil society organisations working with Roma.
- m) Organise meetings with international donors in order to help ensure the most effective use of their efforts in improving the Roma's situation.
- n) Present the annual Decade report to the ISC.
- o) Communicate the Decade goals and objectives as well as its activities and results to the media.

The Presidency of the Decade shall rotate annually among the Governments in the following chronological order:

Romania 1 July 2005 – 30 June 2006

Bulgaria 1 July 2006 - 30 June 2007

Hungary 1 July 2007 - 30 June 2008

Serbia 1 July 2008 - 30 June 2009

Slovakia 1 July 2009 - 30 June 2010

Czech Republic 1 July 2010 - 30 June 2011

Macedonia 1 July 2011 - 30 June 2012

Croatia 1 July 2012 - 30 June 2013

Montenegro 1 July 2013 - 30 June 2014

Should any of the above Governments decide to relinquish the Presidency function, the Presidency will pass on to the Government next on the list.

C. Secretariat of the Decade Presidency

The Secretariat shall rotate among the Participating Governments every year along with the Decade Presidency. The Government holding the Decade Presidency shall ensure that the Secretariat has sufficient personnel and is appropriately equipped for carrying out its assigned activities.

The Secretariat shall play mainly an administrative role in support of the Decade Presidency and in doing so shall perform the following tasks, among others:

- a) Help the Presidency in the implementation of the decisions taken by the ISC.
- b) Organise the annual ISC meeting, as well as other meetings convened by the Presidency.
- c) Prepare all documentation related to the Roma Decade and required by the Presidency.
- d) Distribute any new and relevant information related to the Decade to all Governments and International Partner Organisations, as well as Romani civil society and relevant international institutions.
- e) Cooperate with the Decade Trust Fund with regard to all international communication campaigns and programmes (*i.e.*, web-page, publications, etc).
- f) Produce the annual report of the Presidency.
- g) Liaise with Governments, International Partner Organisations, Romani civil society and other relevant organisations.
- h) Under the guidance of the Decade Presidency, receive and process applications from countries and international organisations intending to be participants or observers of the Decade.
- i) Centralize and communicate to ISC members the calendar of activities related to Roma Decade, for avoiding overlapping.

V. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

A. Decade Trust Fund

A Decade Trust Fund (DTF) shall be established for the purpose of financing international activities of the Decade, according to the provisions as laid down in the agreements on Decade Trust Fund between the relevant Governments and the World Bank. The fund may finance international activities and technical assistance to participating Governments such as cross-country communication and awareness raising, monitoring and evaluation, information, dissemination and knowledge management.

The Fund shall be capitalised from annual contributions of the participating Governments and International Organizations, shall be determined at a minimum of 20.000 Euro for the year 2006. For each subsequent year the ISC decides on the amount of the annual contribution. The international organizations shall contribute in accordance with their missions and rules to the Trust Fund. One international organisation will take the responsibility for executing the DTF.

The managerial structure of the DTF will be determined in separate Terms of Reference as attached to the agreements on Decade Trust Fund between the relevant Governments and the World Bank.

B. FURTHER FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

Further costs of participation in the Decade shall be financed as follows:

- The costs of organising the ISC's meetings and other meetings and workshops relating to the Decade as well as all other costs arising from holding the Presidency shall be borne by the Government holding the Presidency.
- The costs of personnel of the Secretariat shall be borne by the Government holding the Presidency.
- Each Government shall bear all expenses incurred in sending its delegations or representatives to the ISC's meetings and to other meetings and workshops relating to the Decade.
- International Partner Organisations shall bear all expenses incurred in sending their representatives, as well as the representatives of the Romani civil society from the participating countries, to the ISC's meetings and to other meetings and workshops relating to the Decade in accordance with their missions and rules.

VI. COOPERATION WITH THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

The European Commission supports the objectives of the Decade of Roma Inclusion. It will participate in the International Steering Committee and in other relevant meetings linked to the Decade as an observer.

It is intended that the Decade, on the one hand, and EU initiatives designed to promote social inclusion and combat discrimination against Roma, on the other hand, should be complementary and mutually supportive. Participating countries are encouraged to explore

the possibility of using EU funding to support activities which promote Roma inclusion, subject to the eligibility requirements of the relevant financial instruments.

Participating countries' Decade Action Plans should be consistent with related policy documents prepared in the EU context (employment and social inclusion national action plans, joint inclusion memoranda etc). Participating countries should take into account the provisions of EC anti-discrimination legislation and policy, as part of their strategy to tackle discrimination (legal and other relevant measures, including awareness-raising) in the Decade priority areas (employment, housing, health, education) within their Decade Action Plans.

The European Commission is keen to receive regular information from the participating countries on how they intend to use EU funding and policy instruments to help them to meet the objectives set out in their Decade Action Plans.

VII. ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS

These Terms of Reference shall enter into force from November 18, 2005.

The closing conference on the Decade of Roma Inclusion shall take place on 30 June 2015.

Any participant of the Decade may propose amendments to these Terms of Reference.

Romani and English shall be the official languages of the Decade.

All relevant documents of the Decade shall be translated into national official languages.