



# EU FUNDS FOR ROMA HEALTH INTEGRATION BULGARIA

with the financial  
support of

## Political framework

The political framework for improving the access of Roma to quality health care:

- ♦ Health Strategy for Persons Belonging to Vulnerable Ethnic Minorities and its Action Plan;
- ♦ Chapter Health care from the National Roma Integration Strategy;
- ♦ In general, this framework is not reflected in the mainstream documents that regulate the healthcare sector in Bulgaria. Roma integration is not part of the public debate for healthcare reform

## Good practices

- **Health mediators:** institutionalized practice financed by the state budget at relatively low numbers;
- **Health and Social Centers in Roma community:** financed by the National program for HIV, TB and malaria prevention. The end of this program puts them in menace;
- **Roma Health Scholarship Program:** for support of Roma students in medical universities. Financed by REF and OSF for the period 2009 – 2014;
- **Community monitoring of healthcare services** at local level: supported by OSF in 8 municipalities during its pilot stage

## The role of European funds

- converting a model into policy has 3 stages: piloting, extension and sustainability. It requires multi-sector cooperation: NGOs, local authorities, national authorities
- ideally the role of European funds should be **mainly on the extension phase with certain possibilities for piloting**. Providing financial sustainability should be a state budget task;
- ideally European funds are policy **implementing** mean;
- ideally European funds involve a variety of stakeholders: NGOs, local authorities, national authorities, private sector, etc.

## European funds 2007-2013 and Roma health:

- 3 types of funds operated: European Structural and Cohesion Funds (through programs financed by ESF, ERDF and EAFRD), EEA / Norwegian FM and Swiss Contribution. Healthcare topic was included in all of them;
- In general, ESCF invested huge resources for ensuring sustainability of certain models and replaced the state budget in certain fields. Extension and piloting was also supported;
- Regarding Roma integration ESCF invested mainly in piloting. ESF supported Roma integration pilot schemes in higher degree, ERDF in smaller, EAFRD in no degree;
- Multi-funded intervention was financed in 3 + municipalities: social housing, employment, education, social and healthcare services;

## European funds 2007-2013 and Roma health:

- Regarding Roma health: all ESCF missed to support it. Neither the extension or sustainability of successful model for Roma health integration was financed nor piloting new ones
- EEA / Norwegian FM required 10 % Roma participation in certain fields, including Healthcare. The extension of Roma Health Scholarship Program will be supported in this way that is very positive decision;
- Swiss contribution has Roma component with priorities on education and healthcare. The Operator of this component chose to support few integrated municipal projects (that combine early childhood development, education, social and healthcare services). Their implementation have not started yet

## European funds 2014-2020 and Roma integration

- ESCF are planned or their planning is almost ready. EEA / Norwegian grants and Swiss contribution are still not planned: they have different time-frame;
- Among the ESCF Human Resources Development OP (ESF funded program) includes the Roma integration topic in the most structured way. Rural Areas Development Program (still in preparation) misses again the Roma topic. Regions in Development OP provides possibilities for social housing and improving the healthcare infrastructure;
- HRD OP will support Roma integration through integrated projects: Investment priority "Socio-economic integration of marginalized communities such as Roma" will finance projects of municipalities, NGOs and other beneficiaries in 4 sub-priorities. "Improving the access to social and healthcare services" is obligatory sub-priority;
- Roma organizations participate in the Monitoring Committee through 1 member and 3 deputies

## Recommendations

- HRD OP to start announcing calls within Investment priority "Socio-economic integration of marginalized communities such as Roma" since 2015. The extension of good models for improving the access of Roma to healthcare to be included in the call/s;
- HRD OP to announce special call for supporting Healthcare & Social Centers as well as other types of community centers. Community monitoring of service delivery to be included in the call;
- Science and Education for Smart Growth OP to finance the further extension of RHSP as well as the training of health mediators;
- EEA / Norwegian FN to involve Roma organizations in planning its next period. The requirement for 10 % Roma participation to be continued or special Roma integration component to be introduced. Roma health to be included in the next period;
- Swiss Contribution to involve Roma organizations in planning its next period. The Roma integration component to be extended. Roma health to be included in the component