

National Roma Platforms – key ingredients for successful functioning

February 2015



The European Commission has asked EU member states to establish national Roma Platforms with the aim to ensure full involvement of and coordination with all relevant stakeholders in the implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategies.

ERGO Network wants to provide concrete input to the European Commission – among others during the upcoming EU Roma Platform meeting – on how national Roma Platforms can be a success. We will focus on i) membership ii) structure and organization of the work and iii) modalities for the involvement of Civil Society.

Context and objectives for National Roma Platforms

In our analysis, the performance of the NRISs is generally weak, because:

- Links with both mainstream & thematic policies and EU fund Operational Programs are not well articulated or even absent;
- Civil Society and local authorities are absent.

National Platforms could address this if the following conditions are met:

i) Membership

Membership should include all parts of government that is directly involved in policy execution: Relevant line Ministries, EU Fund Managing Authorities, Executive Agencies and Local governments (in line with national practice)

ii) Structure

Drawing on the EU experience: to be effective national platforms should swiftly establish themselves as policy preparation and development councils. That is: as opposed to a mere talking shop, where participants exchange views or experiences without any clear follow up.

That means, the National Platforms should establish a clear structure, working principles, and mandate. The level of representation of platform members should match that mandate.

To be credible, the National Platforms have to establish a high level of transparency. The European Commission could present a model set-up incorporating the EU Code of Conduct on Partnership.

iii) Involvement of Civil Society

National Platforms should ensure and facilitate involvement of Civil Society. Means may be foreseen to allow Civil Society to prepare its input, including field investigations and consultations. Both Roma civic organisations and (pro) Roma NGOs active in service delivery should be represented.

While some seats may be reserved for established Civil Society organisations, representativeness can only be achieved if (informal) coalitions or Civil Society assemblies can decide their own delegates.

The situation of Civil Society and its relation with governmental institutions differs greatly from country to country, however. It would be unwise to propose a single model to be applied in all countries; but rather build on existing structures or practices where they exist.

ERGO Network proposes to organise an online consultation among its members active in EU member states to see how National Platforms may function and how Civil Society involvement may best be organized in each country. Based on this, ERGO can elaborate a guidance paper that could facilitate the setting up of the National Platforms by the National Contact points to ensure (pro) Roma Civil Society participation in the full process.