



**SECTOR "EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL POLICY + ROMA
INTEGRATION"**

MEDIUM-TERM PRIORITIES UNTIL 2024

10TH MEETING

PLACE: **ZOOM platform**

TIME: **16 MARCH 2022, Wednesday, 10:00-12:00**



Labour Law

Long-term objective

Promoting more and better jobs for all.

Basic facts and figures

- In 2021, the Law on Labour Relations was amended to remove the possibility of extending the employment contract up to 67 years of age with a unilateral declaration of will of the employee and set forth an age limit of 64 years and 15 years of service for retirement, as cumulative conditions for termination of employment on the basis on the age of the employee.
- Sunday was established as the weekly rest day for all, with exceptions to certain economic activities where, due to the need for continuity of the business and the impossibility to interrupt the technical and technological process, work will take place on Sundays and workers will be paid a salary supplement for work on Sundays.
- In 2022, the tripartite social dialogue at the national level, resulted in adopting amendments to the Law on Minimum Wage in the Republic of North Macedonia, which changed the existing criteria and methodology for payment of the minimum wage, thereby guaranteeing its sustainability and continuous growth, proportionate to the increase in labour productivity.
- Strategy for Promotion and Development of Volunteering was adopted with an Action Plan for its implementation.

Activities in progress

- A new Law on Employment and Insurance in Case of Unemployment is being prepared, which will enable adjusting to the needs of the modern labour market.
- A mechanism for protection of the employment rights of workers whose employer is insolvent is being worked out, which means setting up of an institutional infrastructure and legal framework.
- The process of harmonisation of the proposal of the new Law on Labour Relations with the social partners continues, which will be followed by public debates.

Medium-term priorities and targets until 2024

Adoption of:

- new Law on Labour Relations.
- new Law on Employment and Insurance in Case of Unemployment.

Active donors

- International Labour Organisation (ILO).
- UNDP and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.
- European Union – IPA.

Support needed for

- Trainings on the implementation and enforcement of the new Law on Labour Relations.
- Further implementation of the mechanism for protection of workers in case of insolvency of the employer.



Social Dialogue

Long-term objective

Promoting more and better jobs through democratic governance and sustainable and inclusive development.

Basic facts and figures

- The Economic and Social Council (ESC) operates smoothly by holding sessions, at which a number of regulations, documents and current issues in the economic and social area are considered. At most sessions, the focus was on proposing and adopting policies to overcome the health and economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The bipartite social dialogue, especially in the public sector, resulted in the conclusion of collective agreements that cover activities in the sectors of social protection, child protection, culture and education.
- Activities related to the mechanism for peaceful settlement of labour disputes were implemented; procedures for registration of trade unions and employers' associations in the Registers kept in the MLSP and activities related to normative activity regarding social dialogue.

Activities in progress

- The work of the Economic and Social Council (ESC) takes place continuously, holding regular sessions at which regulations and documents from the economic and social field are reviewed.
- Activities are also continuously implemented to further promote, support and develop the Economic and Social Councils at the local level, strengthen and advance their mutual cooperation through the creation of an appropriate platform for cooperation that will enable the exchange of information and the mutual comparison of experiences and practices, as well as the organisation of regular joint meetings.
- The participation of the LESC in the creation and implementation of local employment policies is strengthened, through their active involvement in the conclusion and monitoring of the implementation of Local Employment Pacts.

Medium-term priorities and targets until 2024

- Further promotion and increase of the capacity and efficiency of the work of the Economic and Social Council and conducting an active dialogue with the social partners regarding policies in the economic and social area, both at national and local level.
- Continuous promotion of the mechanisms for efficient functioning of the social dialogue at all levels.
- The capacity of the social partners will continue to be strengthened through the modernisation of the services of workers' and employers' organisations, which is expected to have an impact also on increasing membership and trade union and employers' organisations density.
- Building effective and functional social dialogue, i.e. encouraging the increase of the number of collective agreements at the branch level, the increase of the number of collective agreements at the employer level, the further increase of the visibility and the improvement of the functioning of the Economic -social council remain as a medium-term challenge.
- Promoting the usage of the established and functional system for amicable settlement of labour disputes.



- The number of recommendations and opinions sent by the ESC to the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia is expected to increase.

Active donors

- European Union – IPA.
- International Labour Organisation (ILO).

Support needed for

- Further support in terms of strengthening the capacities of the social partners (employers' organisations and trade unions), increasing membership and organisation, modernisation of work, impact.
- Further support of the work and functioning of the tripartite structures for consultations and social dialogue, expanding and promoting their work and action.
- Promotion and support of the establishment of Local partnerships for employment, as an important tool to improve the conditions and address the challenges in the labour market at the local level.
- Promoting and reinforcing the bipartite social dialogue between workers and employers, primarily in the private sector.



Occupational Safety and Health (OSH)

Long-term objective

- Better health at work and quality of life of workers.
- Establishment and improvement of OSH systems which will provide safe working conditions.

Basic facts and figures

- Regular functioning of the National Occupational Safety and Health Council, reviewing and discussing relevant and current topics and issues in the OSH area. Active involvement of all stakeholders and entities in awareness raising and capacity building activities for OSH, in this period, with special emphasis on the protection and coping with the consequences from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Gradually enhancing the capacities of the State Labour Inspectorate in relation to OSH, through the employment of new inspectors and improvements in its work.
- A new Strategy for OSH 2021-2025 was adopted with an Action Plan for OSH for the period 2021-2023 (which defines the basic national strategic directions and priorities for the next period in terms of development and promotion of safety and health at work in the Republic of North Macedonia).

Activities in progress

- Implementation of the strategic priorities and activities from the new Strategy and Action Plan for Occupational Safety and Health.
- The process for revision and promotion of the OSH legislative framework (new Law on Occupational Safety and Health) was initiated – wide consultations with all relevant entities in the area.
- Enhanced action in promoting the OSH area (improved visibility through a website, events for marking significant dates for OSH, awards for successful companies in the area, participation in OSH campaigns, intensified cooperation with the European Agency – EU-OSHA...).

Medium-term priorities and targets until 2024

- Implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan for Occupational Safety and Health.
- Finalising the process of improving and advancing the legal framework and the adoption of a new Law on Occupational Safety and Health. This will be followed by the revision and improvement (where necessary) of the by-laws (rulebooks) in the area.
- Promoting, fostering and strengthening the culture of prevention in the workplace and awareness of the role of all entities (especially workers, employers and others) in providing a healthier and safer work environment and its benefits.

Active donors

- European Union – IPA.
- International Labour Organisation (ILO).
- Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES).

Support needed for

- Addressing one of the most pressing challenges in the field of OSH - Improving the information system for OSH in the country (enhancing, streamlining the system for collection of data, statistics and reporting of accidents and injuries at work and occupational diseases in accordance with internationally recognised methodologies



in this section; Strengthening the capacities for analysis and use of OSH-related data and for creating evidence-based OSH policies).

- Further strengthening the capacities of all stakeholders (primarily the SLI, institutions, social partners, but also other entities) for improved and up-to-date action in the field of OSH.
- Support in organising promotional and other activities to increase the awareness and knowledge of the general public and of all relevant entities about the need, effects and benefits of building effective OSH systems in the workplace.
- Support in creating tools and methods for promoting OSH, primarily in small and medium enterprises.



Employment, with a focus on Youth Employment

Long-term objective

Decrease in youth unemployment.

Basic facts and figures

- The Republic of North Macedonia is the first country in the Western Balkans to introduce and implement the Youth Guarantee. Starting from 2019, the Youth Guarantee is implemented on the territory of the entire country with special emphasis on three regions (Northeast, Polog and Southwest in terms of the NEET number).
- In 2021, 19.318 people registered in the Youth Guarantee, of which 6.973 were employed, and 920 people were involved in some of the active employment measures that do not lead to direct employment, but increase their employability. Out of the total number of employed persons, 810 persons were employed through participation in some of the active employment measures, 574 persons were employed through the job mediation. According to these data, the success of the Youth Guarantee in 2020 was 41%.

Activities in progress

- Review of the performance of the Youth Guarantee Plan 2018-2022.
- Development of a new Youth Guarantee Plan for the period 2023-2025, in line with the recommendations of the European Council for "Reinforced Youth Guarantee".

Medium-term priorities and targets until 2024

- Successful implementation of the Youth Guarantee Plan 2023-2025 and greater coverage of young unemployed persons, through increased coverage of persons in active employment programs and measures that are created annually.
- Increasing funding for active employment programmes and measures.
- Greater support for outreach activities¹ as one of the main pillars of the Youth Guarantee Plan.
- Promotion of the services of the Employment Service Agency of the Republic of North Macedonia, including digitization.

Active donors

- International Labour Organisation (ILO).
- European Union – IPA.
- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation with UNDP.
- Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection of Republic of Austria.

Support needed for

- Support in the process of ensuring sustainable integration into the labour market of young people (15-29) in the Republic of North Macedonia, primarily through the advancement, strengthening and improvement of the implementation of the Youth Guarantee. Development, design and implementation of specific labour market measures and programmes (activation, employment) targeted at young people – NEETS.

¹ Outreach activities are conducted by youth civil society organisations. The aim is to engage NEET youth through field youth workers, to motivate them to join the Youth Guarantee or to accompany them to the Employment Centers to apply and be involved in the Youth Guarantee.



- Improving the business processes of the Employment Service Agency and upgrading the information system, especially in the part of registration in the Youth Guarantee, statistical profiling of candidates, monitoring of delivered services, vacancies pre-matching.
- Support in the creation and monitoring of employment policies, especially those aimed at vulnerable categories of the population, such as the long-term unemployed, women, people living in rural areas, members of the Roma and other ethnic communities, socially disadvantaged people - beneficiaries of guaranteed minimum assistance, etc.

(more information in the section of Social protection and inclusion (activation))



Social Protection and Inclusion (Activation)

Long-term objective

- Reducing the share of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion (18 percent by 2027).
- Activation and social inclusion of vulnerable groups in the labour market (women, long-term unemployed, social welfare beneficiaries, persons with disabilities, low-skilled people).

Basic facts and figures

- Increased coverage of beneficiaries in the social protection system reaching 35.858 GMA beneficiaries in December 2021 compared to 25.095 in 2019 (45% increase).
- Increased coverage of children in the child protection system reaching 21.886 beneficiaries in 2021 compared to 3.724 beneficiaries in 2018 (488% increase).
- The right to education allowance is used by 28.749 students from primary and secondary school.
- The "Family Package" of benefits contributed to alleviating poverty among families with children of educational age
- Activation of beneficiaries of guaranteed minimum assistance (GMA):
 - o Developed 3.300 individual plans for activation of GMA beneficiaries.
 - o 1.075 beneficiaries participated in active employment measures since the introduction of the guaranteed minimum assistance.
 - o Established electronic exchange of information between the employment services and social protection services.

Activities in progress

- Preparation of National Programme for Development of Social Protection 2022 – 2032, which will further support:
 - o reinforcing the activation of GMA beneficiaries by intensifying the activities for inclusion in the labour market.
 - o strengthening the mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of the measures for activation of GMA beneficiaries,
 - o Improving the electronic systems for registering beneficiaries of social cash benefits (social register).
- Testing supported employment services (e.g. psycho-social support and motivation, mentorship, etc.).
- Implementing active employment measures targeted at GMA beneficiaries.
- Implementing active measures for trainings and support for (self)employment of unemployed persons for the provision of community care services.
- Carrying out assessment of the impact of social benefits on the activation of GMA beneficiaries.
- Improving the methodology and the approach for profiling and assessing the employability of GMA beneficiaries.

Medium-term priorities and targets by 2024

- Strengthening the capacities of the professionals in the Centers for Social Work and the Employment Service Agency of the Republic of North Macedonia for activation of GMA beneficiaries, as well as for monitoring and evaluation of the activities for



- activation of the minimum guaranteed assistance beneficiaries in the labour market.
- Improving the cooperation between ESARNM and Centers for Social Work for preparation and implementation of individual plans for activation of GMA beneficiaries.
 - Creating a legal framework conducive to delivery of services for supported employment by various service providers.
 - Increasing the coverage of GMA beneficiaries and other vulnerable groups in supported employment services (counselling and mentoring).
 - Strengthening the capacities for providing services for supported employment (counselling and mentoring).
 - Implementation of specific services and employment programmes leading to social inclusion of vulnerable groups in the labour market (youth, women, the long-term unemployed, social assistance beneficiaries, persons with disabilities, low-skilled people).
 - Development of a new model for employment of persons with disabilities that will facilitate the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the labour market.

Active donors

- UNDP.
- European Union – IPA.
- World Bank.
- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.
- Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection of Republic of Austria.

Support needed for

- Establishment of a system for monitoring and evaluation of activation measures.
- Development of capacities for delivery of services for supported employment by different service providers.
- Implementation of specific services and employment programmes contributing to social inclusion of vulnerable groups in the labour market.



Social Entrepreneurship

Long-term objective

Development of social enterprises and creation of resilient and sustainable eco-system for social entrepreneurship.

Basic facts and figures

- About 600 entities perform economic activities in the field of social economy.
- The first National Strategy for Support of Social Enterprises 2021 – 2027 with an Action Plan.
- National Center for Social Enterprises with contact points in the eight statistical regions was opened.
- The first call for grants to support social entrepreneurship was launched.

Activities in progress

- Law on Social Enterprises is under preparation.
- Providing financial and technical support for social enterprises.

Medium-term priorities and targets until 2024

- Facilitating access to finances for social enterprises, especially those focused on improving employment opportunities for the vulnerable population, including persons with disabilities.
- Improving the capacities and coordination of the structures and organisations that provide support to social enterprises.
- Support, learning and capacity building of social enterprises.
- Providing access to and development of markets for social enterprises.

Active donors

- European Union – IPA.
- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.
- UNDP.

Support needed for

- Introduction of financial instruments/products for support of social enterprises.
- Strengthening the capacities of structures and organizations that provide support to social enterprises.
- Capacity building of social enterprises and key stakeholders in the ecosystem.
- Encourage networking between social enterprises and the private sector.



Social Services and Deinstitutionalisation

Long-term objectives

- Inclusion of everyone.
- Improvement of the availability of various high-quality community services adjusted to the characteristics and needs of the beneficiary.

Basic facts and figures

- Comprehensive legal framework for delivery and financing social services is in place.
- 62 licensed social services providers (citizen's associations and private entities) with capacity to provide services to about 2.700 beneficiaries.
- 7 administrative (social) contracts with associations and private providers of social services for the provision of social services (personal assistance, supported living, treatment and rehabilitation of addicts, professional assistance and support).
- Three centers for support of foster families were established; 327 foster families take care for 559 beneficiaries.
- Introduced new model for functional assessment of children and youth up to 26 years, in accordance with the International Classification of Functioning-ICF.
- Implemented measures for support and capacity building of municipalities for the creation and implementation of efficient local policies and provision of quality and efficient social services.
 - o 18 municipalities were supported in the establishment of new social services.
 - o 12 municipalities prepared social protection plans.
 - o Developed Guidelines for planning social services at the regional level and for the functioning of social protection councils.
- Strategic framework on strengthening the systematic approach to prevention and protection of children from violence (2020-2025) is in place along with Action Plan (2020-2022).

Activities in progress

- National Programme for Development of Social Protection for 2022 to 2023 is being prepared, which will support further development of social services and in particular by
 - o Strengthening the supervision, monitoring and evaluation of social services and adopting appropriate mechanisms and instruments,
 - o Developing quality standards for all social services and measures to empower municipalities to provide social services
- Establishment of social protection councils in the statistical regions.
- Transformation of the Institute for Rehabilitation of Children and Youth Skopje (Topansko Pole) into center for early identification and intervention, day-care services for children and persons with disabilities and for professional rehabilitation.
- Establishment of new housing units.
- A three-year action plan is being prepared for the implementation of the National De-institutionalization Strategy (2018-2027) "Timjanik".

Medium-term priorities and targets until 2024

- Further development and promotion of social services and involvement of various entities in their quality and efficient provision.



- Financing of social services provided by municipalities and other providers of social services (associations, natural and legal entities).
- Strengthening the capacities of social services providers.
- Strengthening the system for monitoring, supervision and quality assurance of social services for all types of social services as per the Law on Social Protection.
- Strengthening the capacities of professionals in the social protection system.
- Development and commissioning of new software that integrates cash benefits and social protection services.
- Continuing the transformation of social residential institutions into modern community-based service providers, as well as delivery of services according to the needs of beneficiaries and prevention of institutionalization.
- Strengthening the systematic approach to prevention and protection of children from violence.

Active donors

- UNDP.
- UNICEF.
- European Union – IPA, EaSI.
- World Bank.
- Embassy of People's Republic of China.
- Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection of Republic of Austria.

Support is needed for

- Planning and establishing social services by municipalities and other providers.
- Strengthening the mechanisms for quality assurance of social services (monitoring, evaluation and supervision of social services).
- Strengthening the capacities of social services providers.
- Strengthening the capacities of professionals in the social protection system.



Pension and Disability Insurance

Long-term objective

Quality life for older persons.

Basic facts and figures

- At the end of 2020 there were 571.863 insured persons, while the number of pension beneficiaries was 326.295 (together with the beneficiaries of minimum agricultural and military pension), or in the ratio of 1.75 insured persons per 1 pensioner.
- In the first half of 2021, the pensions were adjusted by 722 denars, while in the second half by 0.6%
- The average pension in December 2020 amounted to 15.483 denars.
- 395 pensioners were residing in 380 retirement home apartments (December 2021).

Activities in progress

- Improving the quality of social insurance administration services, as well as strengthening the regulatory framework for persons with disabilities and dangerous occupations.
 - o Preparations for setting up of the Central Register of Socially Insured Persons (SURS).
 - o Modernisation of the pension administration.
 - o Preparations for the establishment of a Central Disability Certification Coordination Unit (CDCCU).
 - o Reform of the system for employment of persons with disabilities and the establishment of the National Register of Persons with Disabilities.
 - o Revision of the list of hazardous occupations eligible for early retirement with extended service period.

Medium-term priorities and targets by 2024

- Establishing integrated system for socially insured persons.
- Improving and modernising the employment system for persons with disabilities.
- Modernising business processes in the Pension and Disability Insurance Fund of North Macedonia.
- Improving access to housing for the elderly through development and implementation of a new model for management of retirement homes.

Active donors

- World Bank.
- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the UNDP.
- European Union – IPA.

Support needed for

- Measures for exercising the right to social protection of the elderly:
 - o improving the system for management of retirement homes, including supervision and audit.
 - o Bettering the living conditions of the residents in retirement homes through reconstruction and refurbishments.
- Rolling-out the modernised system for employment of persons with disabilities.



Protection of Children

Long-term objective

- Creating conditions for growth and development of every child.
- Equal access to quality preschool care and education (increasing the coverage of preschool children aged 3-6 in preschool care and education by 50%).

Basic facts and figures

From 2017 to March 2022, the supply of childcare increased for 3,850 children; a total of 65 buildings were opened as well as groups in existing facilities. Therefore:

- o The total available capacity for children under the age of six is 32.556.
- o 32.459 children up to the age of six are enrolled in preschool care and education.
- o 27.538 children aged three to six are enrolled in pre-school care and education.
- Special groups for children with disabilities in kindergartens were abolished, promoting thus inclusive care and education for children with disabilities.
- Investments are also made in improving the quality of preschool education and strengthening the capacities of the staff providing care to children.
 - o Standards of qualifications and competencies for pre-school staff have been developed.
 - o Methodology, procedures and instruments have been prepared for professional development, as well as a concept of procedures and acts for accreditation of training programmes and service providers for professional development of all professional profiles employed in kindergartens.
 - o A concept for mentoring trainees in kindergartens has been developed.

Activities in progress

- Amending the Law on Child Protection with respect to digitalization and personal data protection.
- Increasing the capacities of the pre-school institutions in order to cover a greater number of children in early childhood education.
 - o Expanding the capacities for coverage of about 1.900 children in 15 municipalities: Sopište, Vasilevo - village of Angjelci, Chair, Berovo, Veles, Gjorche Petrov, Prilep, Kochani, Strumica, Gjorche Petrov-Volkovo, Kriva Palanka, Valandovo, Karposh 3, Probishtip and Aerodrom (investment of the municipality).
- Raising the quality of early learning and development in preschool institutions.
 - o upgrading the career development model, based on defined standards, for each profile of professionals.
 - o preparation of a legal framework for regulating the professional and career development of employees in kindergartens.
 - o revision of the model for (re-) licensing of preschool professionals.

Medium-term priorities and targets until 2024

- Additional increasing of the coverage of about 1.450 children in 12 municipalities: Sveti Nikole-village of Erdzelija, Rosoman, Bitola, Arachinovo, Lipkovo, Gostivar, Tetovo, Tearce, Mogila, Debar, Gevgelija, Karposh, as well as new projects for



kindergartens which will be approved in the Programmes for construction and maintenance of child protection facilities in the forthcoming years.

- Investing in improvement of the quality of preschool education through training of employees in kindergartens.
- Improving the quality of programmes in kindergartens, as well as facilitating access to quality services for early childhood development, with special attention to children at social risk, children with special needs and Roma children.

Active donors and financial institutions

- European Union – IPA.
- World Bank.
- UNICEF.
- Embassy of the United Kingdom.

Support needed for

- Additional investments for increasing and expanding the capacities in the kindergartens through construction, extension, equipping and maintenance of facilities for child protection.
- Implementation of the Law on Child Protection, with regards to the digitalization of child protection services and benefits in order to provide quality, fast and easily accessible services through continuous technical upgrade, as well as in the part of establishing a system for professional development of preschool staff.
- Continuous strengthening of the capacities of preschool staff in order to improve the quality of preschool services, through new and innovative methods and tools for development of the children.



Gender Equality

Long-term objective

Promotion of women's rights and their participation in the political, economic and public life.

Basic facts and figures

- The Law on Prevention and Protection against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence was adopted by the Parliament of the Republic of North Macedonia in accordance with the Convention on Prevention and Combating of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention).
- Strengthened system for assistance, support and protection of women from violence and victims of domestic violence:
 - o Established 7 counselling centers for psycho-social treatment of perpetrators of domestic violence,
 - o Prepared programme for psycho-social treatment of perpetrators of domestic violence, and
 - o Delivered training of trainers on dealing with women and children victims of violence, perpetrators of domestic violence, as well as on raising the awareness of professionals.
- Adopted Strategy for Gender Equality 2021 - 2026 by the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia in August 2021, which is in parliamentary procedure.
- Opened Resource Center for gender responsive policy making and budgeting of the Republic of North Macedonia.

Activities in progress

- Bylaws are being drafted for the Law on Prevention and Protection from Violence against Women and Domestic Violence.
- Campaign and trainings on gender-based violence against women and domestic violence.
- National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2022-2024 and Operational Plans for 2022 are being prepared.
- A new Law on Gender Equality and assessment of harmonisation with international and European standards is being drafted.
- The second Gender Equality Index for North Macedonia is being calculated.

Medium-term priorities and targets until 2024

- Establishment of a database on gender-based violence against women and domestic violence.
- Development of services for women victims of gender-based violence.
- Adoption of the Law on Gender Equality and preparation of bylaws, as well as implementation of the legal framework.
- Efficient functioning of the Resource Center for gender responsive policy making and budgeting.

Active donors

- UN Women.
- UNFPA.
- Embassy of the Kingdom of Netherlands.



- European Union – IPA.
- Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection of Republic of Austria.
- Kingdom of Sweden/ SIDA.
- Switzerland/ Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

Support needed for

- Implementation of the Law on Gender Equality.
- Trainings for implementation of the new Law on Gender Equality at central and local level.
- Improving the status of women in rural areas.
- Mainstreaming gender principles in the general policies for climate change in different areas (waste disposal, transport, ecology, environment, etc.).
- Creation and establishment of software for a database on gender-based violence against women and domestic violence, as well as its inter-institutional usage.



Non-discrimination

Long-term objective

Exercising the right to equality and creating equal opportunities for all people in all areas of social life.

Basic facts and figures

- A new Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination (LPPD) was adopted in October 2020.
- Established Independent Commission for Protection against Discrimination in January 2021 and significant strengthening of the capacities of the Commission, in terms of professional service and premises.

Activities in progress

- The preparation of the National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination 2022-2026 and Operational Plan 2022-2024 is in the final phase.
- A new Law on Prevention and Protection against Harassment at Work is being prepared, the draft version of which is in the phase of inter-institutional consultation.
- E-modules for training on non-discrimination are being developed.

Medium-term priorities and targets till 2024

- Preparation and adoption of bylaws related to the implementation of the Law on Prevention and Protection against Harassment at Work.
- Implementation of the Operational Plan for Equality and Non-Discrimination 2022-2024.
- Establishment and functioning of the National Coordination Body for Equality and Non-Discrimination.
- Harmonization of the legislation with the LPPD.

Active donors

- OSCE.
- Council of Europe.
- European Union – IPA.

Support needed for

- Preparation of bylaws for the Law on Prevention and Protection from Harassment at Work, as well as their implementation.
- Trainings for implementation of the new Law on Prevention and Protection from Harassment at Work, at national and local level.
- Campaign for raising public awareness for prevention of the various forms of discrimination and legal and institutional instruments for protection.



Integration of Roma

Long-term objective

Promoting the socio-economic, legal, cultural and linguistic rights of Roma by ensuring adequate and equitable access to public goods and services.

Basic facts and figures

- In the school year 2021/2022, 420 Roma children attend kindergartens in 15 municipalities (Berovo, Bitola, Vinica, Prilep, Chair, Delchevo, Kochani, Kumanovo, Veles, Pehchevo, Debar, Centar, Kavadarci, Kriva Palanka and Radovish).
- The eight Roma Information Centers (RIC) (Gostivar, Kichevo, Delchevo, Kochani, Vinica, Negotino, Bitola, Shuto Orizari) provided 2.497 services in 2021, with a focus on social services.
- The Law on Unregistered Persons in the Birth Registry was adopted.
 - o By the end of January 2022, a total of 318 applications for registration in the special birth register were submitted, and 292 persons were registered.
- 15 displaced families (96 persons, 36 adults and 60 children) are accommodated in the temporary residences in Vizbegovo. Eight families use GMA, child and education allowance; four people were employed, while 22 people able to work registered in the ESA as active job seekers. 30 children attend classes.
- The ROMACTED program phase 2 is implemented in 15 municipalities where community action groups have been established.
 - o Raising awareness among the local Roma community for protection of personal and public health from the corona virus.
 - o Trainings of partner municipalities on Roma identity and combatting anti-gypsyism, for strategic planning and civic participation at the local level.
- Adopted programme for transformation of undeclared work among Roma (Promotion of declared work among Roma 2021-2023).
- Piloting effective socio-economic integration of (Roma) returnees in the Western Balkans, at national and local level in three municipalities.
- Adopted Strategy for Roma Integration 2022-2030, for action in the priority areas.
- Adopted National Action Plan for protection, promotion and fulfilment of the human rights of Roma women and girls 2022-2024.

Activities in progress

- Strengthening the capacities of institutions on local level for implementation of the Law on Unregistered Persons in the Birth Registry.
- Creating a special measure for employment of Roma women, in cooperation with a civil society organisation.
- Creating measures during the preparation and further implementation of the national action plans in the priority areas of the Strategy for Roma Integration 2022-2030.
- Supporting the integration of returnees, through tailor-made measures for their activation in the labour market.

Medium-term priorities and targets until 2024

- Addressing the existing obstacles for universal access to civil documentation and registration, as well as for recognition or facilitated acquisition of citizenship.
- Transformation of undeclared work among Roma, through various tailored measures



on the labour market.

- Increasing the number of Roma children in preschool education.
- Improving the conditions and access to housing for Roma.
 - o Revision of the social mapping in the Roma settlements
 - o Providing permanent, decent, affordable and desegregated housing of Roma in informal settlements through improved urban planning and legalization of dwellings.
- Facilitating access to information and social services in the community.
 - o Completion of the process of transformation of Roma Information Centers (RICs) and their integration in the Social Work Centers (SWC).

Active donors

- European Union – IPA.
- Roma Educational Fund (REF).
- UNDP.
- UNHCR.
- Council of Europe (CoE).
- OSCE.
- Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection of Republic of Austria.
- Roma Integration 2020 – Regional Cooperation Council.
- Switzerland/ Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

Support needed for

- Investments in urban-spatial planning of settlements in order to solve the long-term housing problem of Roma.
- Implementation of measures from the National Action Plans in the priority areas of the Strategy for Roma Integration.
- Implementation of measures from the National Action Plan for protection, promotion and fulfilment of human rights of Roma women and girls 2022-2024.