



ROMANI  
EARLY YEARS  
NETWORK

## TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR CONSULTANCY ON SHADOW REPORTING ON ROMA INTEGRATION

ISSA seeks to hire a consultant to assist in the production of a Shadow Report on the Mid-term Review of the National Roma Integration Strategies in 8 selected countries (Belgium, Croatia, Hungary, Italy, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine)

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### 1. Background

In 2012, ISSA - International Step by Step Association and the Open Society Foundation's Early Childhood Program established the Romani Early Years Network – REYN to provide support to practitioners working with Romani and Traveller children. Since then, REYN developed into a recognized network of early childhood professionals, Roma and pro-Roma advocates, researchers, representatives of public authorities, civil society experts and many more. In achieving its goals, the international network is supported by national networks independently established by civil society organizations in ten countries within the European Union and beyond.

As part of its development, REYN has fostered its capacities in advocating for rights and interests of young Romani and Traveller children and their families and on a number of occasions presented particular issues of interest to partners at the European Commission or other European institutions. In its approach, REYN combines the specific expert knowledge of early childhood development and Roma inclusion. In its work,

REYN is guided by the strategy developed in cooperation with members, national networks and external partners.<sup>1</sup>

In September 2017, the European Commission published its mid-term review of the implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategies, in which the progress in ECD was highlighted.<sup>2</sup> It raises a number of concerns. While there are indeed policies implemented or planned to increase kindergarten attendance of Roma, we can hardly speak about progress and improvements in ECD across age groups (birth to 8) or in informal and non-formal education and care. While the European Commission encouraged civil society and individuals to comment on the Roma integration efforts through a public consultation, at REYN we believe that a specific and fully developed shadow report with statistical data and country anecdotal evidence will provide for an adequate response.

## 2. From REYN Strategy 2017-2020

Advocacy at the European level is a new area of work for REYN. The need to ensure the accessible provision and reinforce quality from birth to the start of compulsory schooling was repeatedly recognized in some policy documents, commencing with the Council Conclusions on Efficiency and Equity in European Education and Training Systems.<sup>3</sup> Key Data on Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe report claims that higher participation of children from disadvantaged backgrounds is among the EU's top priorities.<sup>4</sup> The *Europe 2020 Strategy*<sup>5</sup> and the *Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training* (ET 2020) highlighted that "Early Childhood Education and Care is an essential foundation for successful lifelong learning, social integration, personal development and later employability; therefore it is important to develop and invest in it."<sup>6</sup> As a result, the Communication from the Commission on Early Childhood Education and Care: Providing all our children with the best start for the world of tomorrow<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> REYN (2017). Strategy 2017-2020. Retrieved from: <<http://www.reyn.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/REYN-strategy-2017-2020.pdf>>

<sup>2</sup> European Commission (2017). Inclusion of Roma: early childhood education is on the rise while access to inclusive schooling, higher education and employment needs improving. Retrieved from: <[http://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/just/item-detail.cfm?item\\_id=127519](http://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/just/item-detail.cfm?item_id=127519)>

<sup>3</sup> European Commission (2006). Efficiency and equity in European education and training systems. Communication from the Commission to the Council and to the European Parliament of 8 September 2006, COM(2006) 481 final. Retrieved from: <<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/LT/TXT/?uri=URISERV:c11095>>

<sup>4</sup> European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice/Eurostat, 2014. Key Data on Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe. 2014 Edition. Eurydice and Eurostat Report. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union Retrieved from:

<[http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/key\\_data\\_series/166EN.pdf](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/key_data_series/166EN.pdf)>. Research reveals that socioeconomic status of children's parents has a big influence for cognitive, social and emotional children's development. The effects already exist between children at the age of 3 and they tend to become even stronger by the age of 5 (European Commission, 2011, EQUALSOC Network, 2011).

<sup>5</sup> European Commission (2010). EUROPE2020. A European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Brussels, March 3, 2010. COM(2010) 2020, Retrieved from:

<<http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/pdf/COMPLET%20EN%20BARROSO%20%20%20007%20-%20Europe%202020%20-%20EN%20version.pdf>>

<sup>6</sup> Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ('ET 2020') (2009/C 119/02). Retrieved from: <<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:119:0002:0010:EN:PDF>>

<sup>7</sup> European Commission (2011). Early Childhood Education and Care: Providing all our children with the best start for the world of tomorrow. Brussels, February 17, 2011. COM(2011) 66 final. Retrieved from: <<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0066:FIN:EN:PDF>>

followed by Council conclusions<sup>8</sup> invites the Member States to invest more in ECEC, as this provides best returns. *The Proposal for Key Principles of a Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care*<sup>9</sup> (ECEC), developed by the Working Group on Early Childhood Education and Care under the auspices of the European Commission in 2014, is the principal document in Europe for the discussions around the quality of ECEC systems.

A key strategic document for state policies towards Roma in many countries, including those where there is a REYN national network, is the *National Roma Integration Strategy* based on the *EU Framework for Roma Integration Strategies*.<sup>10</sup> All EU Member States developed their national Roma integration strategies and many other countries, especially those in the process of EU pre-accession (Serbia, in particular) developed strategies along similar principles. Members of REYN and coordinators of national networks were often directly involved in the preparatory process of national policy (e.g. in Serbia, Kosovo) or its external review (e.g. in Slovakia<sup>11</sup>). In the interviews conducted with national coordinators, it was often mentioned that while the strategy includes good intentions, the underlying deficit is the absent implementation; this is confirmed by the European Commission reports on the implementation of the National Strategies as well.

In 2016, ISSA commissioned a review of the national strategies with a particular focus on Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, UK (especially Wales). The review also made some comparative reference to Council of Europe members which are pre-accession states (Turkey, Ukraine) and Kosovo. The survey strongly suggested that early years and early childhood development services are missing in the National Strategies. Another strong criticism is the lack of dialogue with civil society in the design of the strategies, which are typically based on needs analyses, or assumptions of needs of communities, while priority should be given to rights-based programs.<sup>12</sup>

In its December 2016 conclusions, the Council of European Union recognized that “despite the measures taken by the Member States, only limited progress has been made in advancing Roma integration, in particular at the local level.”<sup>13</sup>

In addressing these issues, REYN can play a significant role at the international level in cooperation with local partners:

- 1) Advocating for more (and multi-sectoral) focus on early childhood development for Romani and Traveller children in EU strategic documents,
- 2) Advocating for more (and more effective) financial allocations to ECD for Roma by the European Union (including pre-accession funds for non-Member States),

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<sup>8</sup> Council of the European Union (2011). Council conclusions on early childhood education and care: providing all our children with the best start for the world of tomorrow. 9424/11, EDUC 85, SOC 368, SAN 83. Retrieved from: <<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/11/st09/st09424.en11.pdf>>

<sup>9</sup> Working Group on Early Childhood Education (2014), *Proposal for key principles of a Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care. Under the auspices of European Commission*

<sup>10</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, *An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020*. Brussels, 5 April 2011, COM(2011) 173 Final. Retrieved from: <<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52011DC0173&from=en>>

<sup>11</sup> Slovak Governance Institute and Wide Open School (2014). *Externé hodnotenie Stratégie SR pre integráciu Rómov do roku 2020*. April 2014, sponsored by the Office of Government's Plenipotentiary for Romani Communities. <[http://www.minv.sk/swift\\_data/source/romovia/galerie/Externe\\_hodnotenie\\_strategia.pdf](http://www.minv.sk/swift_data/source/romovia/galerie/Externe_hodnotenie_strategia.pdf)>

<sup>12</sup> Marsh, A. (2016) *National Roma Integration Strategies: Early Years Content Survey. Manuscript, on file with ISSA/REYN.*

<sup>13</sup> Council of European Union (2016). *Accelerating the Process of Roma Integration – Council Conclusions (8 December 2016)*. 15406/16. <<http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-15406-2016-INIT/en/pdf>>

- 3) Advocating for inclusion of ECD services for Romani and Traveller children in the recent initiative for the Western Balkans and Turkey – Roma Integration 2020,<sup>14</sup> and
- 4) Supporting national networks in their advocacy efforts at a national and local level to include ECD services for Romani children in national and local policy measures.

### 3. Scope of Work

ISSA seeks to hire a consultant to assist in designing of the Shadow Report on the Mid-term Review of the National Roma Integration Strategies in 8 selected countries (Belgium, Croatia, Hungary, Italy, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine).

#### 1. Desk research

The consultant is expected to spend **2 days** to review possible updates in international policies aimed either at Roma inclusion or the early childhood education and care in general.

#### 2. Cooperation with REYN National Networks (BEL, CRO, HUN, ITA, SRB, SVK, SLO, UKR)

ISSA/REYN will sign partnership agreements with national REYN coordinators in the selected countries to provide the consultant with assistance in data collection and country anecdotal evidence. Total expected time to consolidate the data is **4 days**.

**2.1. Data collection:** Where available, quantitative data should be collected to depict progress (or its lack) in Roma inclusion, especially when it comes to young Romani children and their families.

**2.2. Country anecdotal evidence:** Where statistical information is not available – e.g. for services from birth to 3 years – anecdotal evidence should be used to illustrate progress (or its lack) on Roma inclusion.

#### 3. Final report with policy recommendations

The consultant is expected to spend **3 days** in drafting of the final report (approx. 20 pages) with policy recommendations for the European Commission. **One day** is reserved for addressing comments received from ISSA/REYN.

### 4. Conditions

The tasks above will be carried out between November 2017 to Mid-January 2018 from the consultant's location. A total of 10 working days is envisaged in total.

### 5. Ideal profile

For the tasks above, ISSA/REYN seek a consultant who has experience in research and policy reviews, in particular with regards to young children and their families and high proficiency in writing in English.

Romani candidates are strongly encouraged to apply.

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<sup>14</sup> Roma Integration 2020 was launched on 9 June 2016 by the Regional Cooperation Council, Open Society Foundations and the European Commission. <[http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/news\\_corner/news/2016/06/20160609\\_2\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/news_corner/news/2016/06/20160609_2_en.htm)>

## 6. How to apply

Candidates should send their CV and a letter of interest outlining their motivation, qualifications, reflections on the task involved, the planning as well as expected daily fee to the REYN coordinator Stanislav Daniel at [sdaniel@issa.nl](mailto:sdaniel@issa.nl) by **13 November 2017**.

Detailed terms will be negotiated with successful candidates, with regards to expected deliverables, methodology, remuneration, schedule for activities, etc.