



## *Structural funds: Investing in Roma*

### **Extraordinary Management Committee Meeting Rome, 24<sup>th</sup> February 2010**

#### **Minutes and main agreements**

This extraordinary Management Committee meeting (MCM) was proposed to discuss and agree on the EURoma draft report about “Roma and Structural Funds”.

#### **Background context and process**

Network partners agreed at the MCM in Budapest (May 2009) on the Technical Secretariat (TS) proposal to draft a report on “Roma and Structural Funds” for the year 2010 providing a general overview of the use of the Structural Funds for Roma inclusion.

The idea behind is to take advantage of the coincidence of various components:

- After three years of functioning, the Network is ready to produce a common output, which internally will reinforce networking, provide with an added value to Network partners and help to set priorities for further activities, and externally it will give visibility to Network actions.
- 2010 is in the mid of the current programming period and even if implementation of activities has suffered considerable delays in most countries (mainly due to economic crisis), Network partners should be able to offer main results of what is being done with Structural Funds for the Roma inclusion and of to what extend the planning made in 2007 is working.
- Within the EU Spanish Presidency, the Roma Summit to be held in Córdoba (Spain) on 8-9<sup>th</sup> April 2010 offers a great opportunity to give visibility to the Network and to disseminate Network activities such as the findings of this report. In addition, the Management Committee goes back to Spain where the launching of the Network took place 3 years ago, and will take place the day before the Roma Summit.
- The new Regulations for the programming period 2014-2020 are yet under preparation and this report could help Network partners as well as EU institutions to better understanding the use of the Structural Funds for Roma inclusion in different EU countries, to identify relevant experiences but also main shortcomings and obstacles, to define challenges ahead and to make some proposals in the coming months.

With this framework and the general agreement of Network partners, the TS started preparing main lines of the report together with José Manuel Fresno, TS collaborator and expert on Structural Funds and Roma inclusion.

At the MCM in Stockholm (Sept. 2009), Mr Fresno already presented a proposal of contents for discussion among partners and the TS set the calendar for the report. The contribution of Network partners would be based on a Network tool agreed by all partners at the MCM in Bucharest (May



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2008): the EU-projects information sheet. Some partners had already filled in the sheets and just needed updating; others should complete all them. The deadline was established for 31<sup>st</sup> December 2009.

Since the objective is to present the results and main conclusions of the report at the Roma Summit in Córdoba (8-9<sup>th</sup> April), the TS considered that it would be necessary to discuss and agree previously the main findings among partners, and this is the reason why this extraordinary MCM was proposed.

### **Participants in the Management Committee meeting**

24 persons attended this extraordinary Management Committee meeting hosted by Italian partners. See [List of Participants](#).

### **Welcome addresses**

The meeting took place at ISFOL offices in Rome, one of the Italian partners. Ms Lucia Scarpitti, Head II Division, DG Guidance and Training at the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, opened this working session by welcoming all partners and made a summary of recent decisions and developments in line with the objective of mapping the projects for social inclusion of the Roma within the programming period 2007-2013 using the EURoma EU-projects information sheet.

Afterwards, TS presented the agenda of meeting, which basically focused on the presentation and debate of the EURoma report, whose draft was previously sent to partners by mail (on 19<sup>th</sup> February). The TS thanked all partners for their contribution to the report recognising the efforts made due to the difficulties encountered to collect information on projects.

Before entering into the presentation of the report, TS reminded that this was the first common output of the Network and therefore it should be regarded not as a final objective in itself, but as a part of a process in which Network partners work together to achieve more accurate information on the use of the Structural Funds for the Roma inclusion with the aim of making a more efficient use of them. The elaboration of this report, even if still weak because of the lack of information, is a clear step forward.

### **Presentation of the draft report and discussion**

José Manuel Fresno, expert in charge of the drafting of the report together with the TS, made a presentation of the main contents of the report. He started by emphasizing the difficulties to provide key findings due to the lack of accurate information on the implementation of projects for Roma inclusion supported by Structural Funds during this programming period 2007-2013. In addition, the information received from Network partners is not comparable, even if this is not an objective of the report in itself; the number of Roma population and their social situation, the priorities established at the NRF, the national / regional approach of the OPs, the size of the projects (in terms of budget, beneficiaries...), etc. are different in each country.

Despite these weaknesses, the report tries to give for the first time a general overview of the stage of implementation of the planned activities for Roma inclusion at the beginning of the current programming period.



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The report, as explained by José Manuel Fresno in his [presentation](#), starts by contextualising the creation of the EURoma Network in terms of socio-economic conditions, political context as well as institutional mechanisms established. It continues explaining what EURoma is: the process of constitution and definition of objectives, structure and activities; the added value of this initiative; and the achievements and challenges ahead.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter focus on the use of the Structural Funds: its potential as a main policy and economic instrument for the social inclusion of the Roma, how the Roma inclusion was approached at the beginning of the programming period and to what extend these plans are being translated into practice.

The report concludes with some key lessons and challenges ahead.

After this presentation, Mr Fresno opened the debate and asked partners for feedback and comments on the report.

The report was welcomed and Network partners endorsed it in general terms, but further clarifications and new elements are to be included with info to be sent my members and with some extra text introduced by Technical Secretariat and José Manuel Fresno.

Suggestions made by partners:

- include executive summary
- add a disclaimer
- mention to previous programming period
- country –by – country brief framework
- reinforce the added value of EURoma in terms of potential transferability
- mention to crisis context
- grids replaced by summary of activities and grids go to annexes
- include gender perspective
- add recommendations and proposals at the end of the report

After debate and given the short time ahead for edition of the report, the TS proposed to establish the 3<sup>rd</sup> March as deadline for receiving written comments or corrections. Reviewed version will be sent to partners on 10<sup>th</sup> March. Five days later (15<sup>th</sup> March) TS will start with the process of edition in order to be ready for Roma Summit (8-9<sup>th</sup> April). This publication is funded by Spanish ESF through the Operational Programme for Technical Assistance and Transnational and Interregional Cooperation.

TS asked partners to send some pictures of projects´ activities, beneficiaries or staff.



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### **Round of interventions with updated and relevant information by network members**

- Representatives from the European Commission made a summary of new developments:
  - **European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and housing.** Poor communities could get EU regional funding in all Member States for renovation or replacement of their houses, according to a change in regulation. Until now only urban housing improvements in the 12 countries that joined the EU in 2004 and 2007 were eligible for ERDF money. The approval of the amended regulation, the text of which has already been agreed between Parliament and Council, would entitle all 27 Member States to use the ERDF funds, in addition to other sources, to renovate the existing houses of their marginalised communities or to replace them with new ones, irrespective of where they are located (i.e. whether urban or rural areas).  
[http://www.euromanet.eu/newsroom/archive/marginalised\\_communities\\_could\\_get\\_eu\\_regional\\_funds\\_for\\_housing.html](http://www.euromanet.eu/newsroom/archive/marginalised_communities_could_get_eu_regional_funds_for_housing.html)
  - **Conference Exhibition of the European Commission on "EU Projects in favour of the Roma Community"** (Brussels 10-11 March) .The Directorate-General for Education and Culture is organising this conference to discuss the involvement and impact of EU programmes with the Roma minority. It is based on a selection of best examples of projects related to the Roma people all funded through various European Commission programmes. This initiative is part of efforts to better disseminate and build upon the results of programmes and as such it marks a substantial contribution to the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. Approximately 440 guests are expected to register and participate.  
<http://www.euromanet.eu/agenda/archive/47570.html.en>
  - **Next High Level Visit** will take place in Romania mid-October 2010. European Commission has already started talks with Romanian Government and institutions.
  - The **EC Report on "The ESF and Roma"** is in its last stage and geographical units are revising the contents. Approval is expected in the following weeks and hopefully ready for Roma Summit.
- **Polish partners will kindly host the Management Committee meeting on the second half of 2010.** Mr Ziółkowski, ESF Managing Authority, proposed the dates of 18, 19 ad 20 October; however partners suggested to hold the meeting at the end of the same week. Therefore, the meeting will take place **in Cracow on 21 and 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2010.**



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### **Last comments and information from the Technical Secretariat**

TS informed about the organisation, together with Italian partners, of the **Transnational Seminar “Structural Funds: Investing in Roma Inclusion at the regional and local level”** to be held on 25 and 26<sup>th</sup> February. The main objective of the seminar is to involve local and regional administrations in Roma inclusion projects making use of the Structural Funds. According to registration, there will be 103 participants from 9 EU Member States and the round tables will be composed of representatives of 12 local/regional administrations, which imply a strong involvement of municipalities and regions.

The TS explained the difficulties faced during the process of organisation, which were basically focused on the lack of resources to attend the seminar. There has been a great interest from many administrations and other stakeholders to participate at this seminar; however, since the Network can not cover the expenses of travel and accommodation, many people interested in taking part at the seminar could not attend it.

According to the TS, this is an issue that should be tackled by partners at some point, since the lack of allocated resources for Network membership is a real limitation for participation of partners and other stakeholders in Network meeting and activities.

As already proposed and agreed at the MCM in Stockholm, **next Management Committee Meeting will take place in Córdoba (Spain) just the day before the Roma Summit (7<sup>th</sup> April)**, taking advantage that most of Network partners will be attending the Summit. As previously agreed by partners, the **Working Group on Employment** will meet during the morning to deal with the topic of “Building partnership”. TS will send in the following days the proposal for the programme of this working session.

And concerning the **Management Committee meeting**, which will meet during the afternoon, the TS made the proposal of start working together on key messages in order to agree on EURoma proposals for the next regulations. The idea is to debate and reach agreement and common positions concerning some topics which could contribute, according to Network partners, to make the use of Structural Funds more efficient for Roma inclusion in the next SF programming period (2014-2020). TS will also send in the following days a proposal for this working session.

The session ended thanking the Italian partners for their hospitality and kindness in organising this Management Committee meeting as well as the Transnational Seminar.

### **Main Agreements**

#### **Revision of the Draft Report:**

Technical Secretariat together with José Manuel Fresno will include the general proposals made at the meeting:

- include executive summary
- add a disclaimer



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- mention to previous programming period
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- reinforce the added value of EURoma in terms of potential transferability
- mention to crisis context
- grids replaced by summary of activities and grids go to annexes
- include gender perspective
- add recommendations and proposals at the end of the report

Partners who have comments, further information or corrections to the report should send them on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March.

Partners will send some pictures of projects.

TS will send the reviewed report on the 10<sup>th</sup> March and partners have 5 more days (**15<sup>th</sup> March**) for last comments. Then, TS will start the process of edition to be ready for Roma Summit (8-9<sup>th</sup> April).

#### **Working Group on Employment**

It will meet in Córdoba at a morning working session on 7<sup>th</sup> April. It will be focus on “Building partnership”. TS will send in the following days a proposal for the programme.

#### **Next Management Committee Meeting**

It will take place in Córdoba at an afternoon session on the 7<sup>th</sup> April and it will focus on discussion about EURoma proposals for next SF programming period. TS will send in the following days a proposal for the programme.

#### **Management Committee Meeting on the second half of 2010**

It will take place in Cracow (Poland) on 21-22 October. Further information will be discussed during MCM in Córdoba.