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# Policy Recommendations

WS1 – O4

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## Table of contents

List of Abbreviations.....	4
Executive Summary .....	4
Project Description .....	5
Introduction.....	6
European Institutional State of Play .....	6
Building the Framework.....	7
European Policy Initiatives in SERCO perspective.....	8
Funding: tool and symbol.....	9
State of Play in Member States .....	10
Member – States: joint or parallel stories.....	10
Pitfalls and Bottlenecks .....	11
Social Entrepreneurship: an indispensable component of integration policies.....	12
Reminding and Recommending .....	13
1. European Commission.....	13
2. Fundamental Rights Agency .....	14
3. Governments of EEA countries and Switzerland.....	14
4. National governments of EU Member states.....	14
5. National Contact Points for the NRISs.....	15
6. Local and regional authorities .....	15
7. A different methodological approach .....	16
Conclusions.....	16
Bibliography.....	17



## List of Abbreviations

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<i>ESF</i>	"European Social Fund"
<i>VLE</i>	"Virtual Learning Environment"
<i>EC</i>	"European Commission"
<i>OP</i>	"Operational Programme"
<i>NRIS</i>	"National Roma Integration Strategies"
<i>ACPSI/PAKIV</i>	"Association Promoting Social Inclusion PAKIV"
<i>TMAF</i>	"Tolerance and Mutual Aid Foundation"
<i>CESIE</i>	"Centro studi e iniziative europeo"
	"European center for studies and initiatives"
<i>EEA</i>	European Economic Area

## Executive Summary

The document "Policy Recommendations" is a deliverable of WS1 – Mapping Social Entrepreneurship in Roma Communities. Its main objective is to present targeted policy recommendations in order to stimulate effective policy actions for Roma inclusion, through social entrepreneurship. These recommendations are considered as a pillar for evidence-based intervention for policy reform generated by the SERCo project.

The document presents the policy state of play in European and member states – level, identifying not only the good practices, but also some of the common pitfalls, which the SERCo project tries to tackle. To this purpose, the policy recommendations are analyzed in two levels: 1) general recommendations, with reference to government policies regarding the protection and integration of Roma, and 2) specific recommendations, in relation with the scope of the project (Entrepreneurship, mediation and networks of the state and other structures, development and financing related tools, etc.).

The conclusions section of this document will highlight the contribution of the SERCo project as an effective tools to trigger policy change in the socio-economic field of Roma communities.

## Project Description

The project promotes social economy as an effective instrument for integrated development of the Roma communities by:

- 1) analyzing the potential of applying social economy practices within Roma communities, from a social, economic and institutional point of view;
- 2) engaging policy-makers and civil servants and training Roma mediators for developing social enterprises; and
- 3) assisting Roma social business initiatives and promoting social economy within Roma communities and to the general public.

The SERCo partners recognize that social entrepreneurship can be a solution to the issues of Roma people, since it:

- helps resolving some of the existing needs of the community;
- facilitates the qualification on the job;
- uses local resources and allows the development of more entrepreneurs;
- supports traditional crafts;
- increases the qualification and education level;
- stimulates solidarity and lead to the improvement of the relationships between the members of the community;
- represents a self-help method;
- allows hiring people in vulnerable situations.

5

The project's core deliverables are:

- guidelines for Roma social entrepreneurship
- Mediators' training programme
- One-to-one mentoring for social enterprise development
- SERCO VLE for mutual learning
- Public roundtables & info days
- Network for Roma Social Economy

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- Fundacio Privada Pere Closa, [www.fundaciopereclosa.org](http://www.fundaciopereclosa.org), Spain

- Tolerance and Mutual Aid Foundation (TMAF), Bulgaria
- Four Elements, [www.4-elements.org](http://www.4-elements.org), Greece
- Association Promoting Social Inclusion PAKIV (ACPSI PAKIV), [www.pakiv.ro](http://www.pakiv.ro), Romania

## Introduction

The aim of this work is to identify recommendations for establishing the necessary preconditions at local, national and EU level for developing social entrepreneurship and social economy in Roma community. The recommendations are based on key strategic documents that pave the process of Roma integration, such as the European Council's Recommendation on effective Roma integration measures in the Member States, the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies, the respective National Roma Integration Strategies in 27 member states and others. They are directed to broad set of relevant stakeholders, such as local authorities, national governments, European Commission, Fundamental Rights Agency, and others. The recommendations propose to these stakeholders certain ways for establishing framework for developing social entrepreneurship and social economy in Roma community, including through making use of the possibilities provided by European Social Fund and other political and financial tools.

6

The structure of this deliverable is organized in order to present in a coherent way the guidelines available from the strategic documents correlated with SERCO's needs analysis outputs. It presents the state of play in the related policy fields and highlights the good practices and common pitfalls both in European and member – states level.

This is followed by a presentation of policy recommendations analyzed in two separate scopes:

- Horizontal policies aiming at the protection and integration of Roma,
- Targeted policies focusing on creating real access to social entrepreneurship (mediation, financing, training, etc.)

The conclusions of this deliverable will reaffirm the value of SERCO and its outputs, as effective tools of applying these recommendations.

## European Institutional State of Play

Protection of human rights and social inclusion of vulnerable groups as well as the equal treatment and equal rights of minorities are among the basic principles of the European



Union<sup>1</sup> and its member countries. Roma are Europe's largest minority yet many Roma in the EU still face deep poverty, social exclusion, discrimination and barriers to exercising their fundamental rights.

## Building the Framework

According to these basic principles, integration of Roma community is one of the main strategic tasks facing Member States and the Union as a whole, constituting a joint responsibility<sup>2</sup>. Council of the European Union approved Ten Basic Principles of Roma Inclusion during its meeting on June 8, 2009<sup>3</sup>. They form the basis of comprehensive Roma integration policy at national and European level since the Council invited the Commission and all Member states “take into account the Common Basic Principles where appropriate when designing and implementing policies to promote the full inclusion of the Roma...”

Acknowledging the living and social conditions of Roma population, the legislative body of European Union European Parliament has adopted several resolutions, such as the Resolution of 9 September 2010 on the situation of Roma<sup>4</sup> and of 9 March 2011 on the EU strategy on Roma inclusion<sup>5</sup> called on the Commission and the Member States to mobilize existing Union strategies and instruments with a view to securing the socio-economic inclusion of Roma.

The responses to these calls have been numerous, acknowledging the issues stated by the European Parliament, and tried to form a coherent plan. In its Communication of 5 April 2011 entitled 'An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020'<sup>6</sup>, the Commission seeks **“to make a tangible difference to Romani people's lives... With this EU Framework, the European Commission encourages Member States, in proportion to the size of the Roma population living in their territories and taking into account their different starting points, to adopt or to develop further a comprehensive approach to Roma integration...”**. The Framework also endorses certain goals in education, employment, healthcare and housing in order to speed up Roma integration;

Following the EU Framework for NRIS (National Roma Integration Strategies) all EU member states (except Malta) approved and presented before European Commission (EC) their National strategies or integrated set of measures. In some member – states like Bulgaria,

7

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<sup>1</sup> Article 3 of the Treaty on European Union as well as Articles 9 and 10 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union

<sup>2</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/Roma/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/Roma/index_en.htm)

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/lsa/108377.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/lsa/108377.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2010-0312+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2011-0092+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>

<sup>6</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/health/sites/health/files/social\\_determinants/docs/com2011\\_173\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/health/sites/health/files/social_determinants/docs/com2011_173_en.pdf)

NRISs were approved by their legislative bodies showing a higher level of commitment and political mandate.

Following the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies, since 2012, the European Commission has been assessing on an annual basis the NRISs and their implementation by the member - states. The assessment reports cover the so-called “structural preconditions” (institutional, financial, political framework), progress in the main areas, progress in the horizontal measures (such as anti-discrimination) and proposes recommendations for improving NRIS implementation. It is accompanied by Commission Staff Working Document with fact-sheet for every county.

As an outcome of these assessments<sup>7</sup> and on the grounds of the current situation, on December 9, 2013 the European Council approved recommendation on effective Roma integration measures in the Member States<sup>8</sup>. The document intends “to provide guidance to Member States in enhancing the effectiveness of their measures to achieve Roma integration and strengthen the implementation of their national Roma integration strategies or integrated sets of policy measures within broader social inclusion policies aimed at improving the situation of Roma and at closing any gaps between Roma and the general population.”<sup>9</sup>

## European Policy Initiatives in SERCO perspective

This documents proceeds in the specification of integration policies and sets the tone for necessary actions of the member – states. The Council recommends that the member states undertake effective Roma integration measures affecting all the aspects of Roma social and economic life. There is a cluster of policies aiming at the strengthening of human capital (education, employment, health care, housing), social cohesion (anti-discrimination, protection of Roma children and women). Emphasis is given in the economic integration of Roma through social investment and empowerment.

In a closer look we can identify specific recommendations that are directly related to the scopes of SERCO. Entrepreneurship is stated as a key goal of recommending policies in Substantive policy issues, Access to employment – “1.4. (b) supporting self-employment and entrepreneurship”. In the same section “(c) alongside services to support individual job-seekers, focusing on personalized guidance and individual action planning...”, describing the role of mediation in assisting business initiatives. Also in the empowerment recommendation section the document emphasizes the need to “promote the training and employment of qualified mediators dedicated to Roma and use mediation as one of the measures to tackle

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<sup>7</sup> Communication of 21 May 2012 entitled 'National Roma Integration Strategies: a first step in the implementation of the EU Framework'  
[http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/com2012\\_226\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/com2012_226_en.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> [https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/lisa/139979.pdf](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/lisa/139979.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1468088863200&uri=CELEX:32013H1224\(01\)](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1468088863200&uri=CELEX:32013H1224(01))



the inequalities Roma face in terms of access to quality education, employment, healthcare and housing”.

## Funding: tool and symbol

In the Council recommendation on effective Roma integration measures in the member states, Council names the European Social Fund (ESF) as the appropriate mechanism for funding these policies. ESF, along with ERDF (and as a complementary the PROGRESS programme – the Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity) are the main funds used as effective tools for launching initiatives for social inclusion. ESF’s strategic documents (Regulation (EU) no 1304/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Social Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006)<sup>10</sup> set the ground for linking entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship with Roma integration. In Substantive policy issues, Funding (1.10) the document states that “The promotion of social inclusion and combating poverty and discrimination, including, inter alia, the socio-economic integration of marginalized communities such as Roma, should be facilitated by the allocation of at least 20% of the total ESF resources in each Member State to investment in people...”

European Social Fund Regulation sets the ESF mission to “promote high levels of employment and job quality, improve access to the labour market, support the geographical and occupational mobility of workers and facilitate their adaptation to industrial change and to changes in production systems needed for sustainable developments, encourage a high level of education and training for all and support the transition between education and employment for young people, combat poverty, enhance social inclusion, and promote gender equality, non-discrimination and equal opportunities, thereby contributing to the priorities of the Union as regards strengthening economic, social and territorial cohesion.”. Fund’s scope of support envisages ESF support for 19 investment priorities. Among them are included:

*“(b) For the thematic objective 'promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination':*

*(ii) Socio-economic integration of marginalized communities such as the Roma;*

*(v) Promoting social entrepreneurship and vocational integration in social enterprises and the social and solidarity economy in order to facilitate access to employment”*

Also:

*“(a) For the thematic objective 'promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility':*

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<sup>10</sup> [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L\\_.2013.347.01.0470.01.ENG](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L_.2013.347.01.0470.01.ENG)

*(iii) Self-employment, entrepreneurship and business creation including innovative micro, small and medium sized enterprises”*

## State of Play in Member States

In the Communication from the commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: “Assessing the implementation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies and the Council Recommendation on effective Roma integration measures in the Member States” (2016)<sup>11</sup> and its accompanying Staff Working Document, there is a detailed country-by-country assessment in the context of the EU Framework.

### Member – States: joint or parallel stories

After setting all the pieces of institutional reform and financial support, member – states design, implement and fund programmes based on the scopes of their NRISs and present their progress to the assessment mechanism. A key factor of success is the implementation of certain operational programs co-funded by ESF included the investment priorities that envisage targeted support for Roma integration, entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship<sup>12</sup> following the ESF regulations.

“Promoting social entrepreneurship” and “Self-employment, entrepreneurship and business creation” are among the mostly selected investment priorities (IP) in most of EU member states. ESF co-funded operational programs in certain member states are possible means of financing social entrepreneurship and self-employment initiatives for raising the employment rates of Roma and fostering Roma integration yet there is a weak linkage between Roma integration and social entrepreneurship in these programs.

Bulgarian Human Resources Development Operational Programme (OP), Greek Human Resources Development, Education and Lifelong Learning OP could be pointed as good practices as they incorporate the social entrepreneurship element:

- The Bulgarian operation “Socio-economic integration of marginalized communities” approved by Monitoring Committee in November 2015 is designed to support integrated municipal projects for implementation of the Municipal Roma Integration Plans. They should contain “Improving the access to health and social services” and “Improving the access to employment” as obligatory components. Measures for social

<sup>11</sup> COM (2016) 424, 27 June 2016. [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/Roma-report-2016\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/Roma-report-2016_en.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> For example, 12 member states selected ‘Socio-economic integration of marginalised communities such as the Roma’: Austria (AT), Belgium (BE), Bulgaria (BG), Czech Republic (CZ), Spain (ES), France (FR), Greece (EL), Hungary (HU), Italia (IT), Poland (PO), Slovakia (SK).

entrepreneurship in Roma community could be supported. In addition, in July 2016 the Managing Authority of HRDOP announced special call for proposals for social entrepreneurship. Projects that support vulnerable groups, including Roma are priority.

- Greek Human Resources Development, Education and Lifelong Learning OP and its priorities 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 of the operational programme "human resources development" (2007-2013) aimed at strengthening social cohesion with equal access for all to the labor market and preventing marginalization and exclusion phenomena. Action 1: assistance for the socio-economic integration of vulnerable groups (c) People with cultural and religious particularities, has included ROMA in the context of the Greek NRIS. It specifically pointed out the importance of entrepreneurship in the integration process. Greece has also submitted the OP "Human resources development, Education and Lifelong Learning" of the programming period 2014-2020 which clearly states the importance of social entrepreneurship in ROMA integration.

Although there are measures to support entrepreneurship and crafts that have been adopted in some countries even supplemented with grants for the promotion of entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship is still not considered as important and indispensable part of a Roma integration policy context. As a result, commonly accepted models for social entrepreneurship in Roma community are not evident: while successful practices exist in certain localities they are not converted into models.

11

## Pitfalls and Bottlenecks

As it has pointed out by the official communications of the Commission and the needs analysis the context of a coherent and sound policy framework at European Level has been set. Legislative, political and financial initiatives have been established and an evaluation mechanism is already producing outputs. According to them, some positive trends have been noticed in several areas like the growing focus on early childhood education. However, a further deterioration of the living conditions of Roma and widespread hostility of majority societies has been identified. This can be explained partially by the economic crisis and the austerity measures which led to further reductions of public expenditure.

Anti-Roma discrimination is still present and cooperation with civil society and private sector engagement in implementation remain insufficient, while it is clear that accounting for the impact of integration efforts on the ground should also be improved.

## Social Entrepreneurship: an indispensable component of integration policies

These setbacks are the issues the **"Social Entrepreneurship for Roma Communities"** (SERCo) project tries to highlight and tackle. The key findings in Greece, Bulgaria, Spain, Italy, Romania and Belgium, along with the status of Roma populations in the member – states, clearly demonstrates the huge gaps in terms of social and economic integration of Roma. The importance of Social Entrepreneurship in vulnerable social groups is highlighted by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) which defines it as "the entrepreneurship that has as main goal to address pressing social challenges and meet social needs in an innovative way while serving the general interest and common good for the benefit of the community. In a nutshell, social entrepreneurship targets to social impact primarily rather than profit maximization in their effort to reach the most vulnerable groups and to contribute to inclusive and sustainable growth."<sup>13</sup>

OECD acknowledges Social Entrepreneurship and its role in addressing social, economic, and environmental challenges while fostering inclusive growth, shared prosperity, and social inclusion. In OECD publication "Policy Brief on Social Entrepreneurship Entrepreneurial Activities in Europe" (2013)<sup>14</sup>, it is also marked as an important milestone for European policy makers and other stakeholders involved in promoting national and sub-national eco-systems for socially oriented business. Of course, this is based on the very definition given by the European Commission of a social enterprise as being "an operator in the social economy whose main objective is to have a social impact rather than make a profit for their owners or shareholders. It operates by providing goods and services for the market in an entrepreneurial and innovative fashion and uses its profits primarily to achieve social objectives. It is managed in an open and responsible manner and, in particular, involves employees, consumers and stakeholders affected by its commercial activities"<sup>15</sup>.

The advantages of social entrepreneurship are described in several strategic documents of EU and its member – states. It is an innovative solution to reducing the risk of poverty and to enhancing entrepreneurship in Roma community. It seems to be a well fit solution to the issues Roma face as it:

- allows hiring people in vulnerable situations;
- helps resolving some of the existing needs of the community;
- facilitates the qualification on the job;

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.oecd.org/cfe/leed/social-entrepreneurship-oecd-ec.htm>

<sup>14</sup>

[https://www.oecd.org/cfe/leed/Social%20entrepreneurship%20policy%20brief%20EN\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.oecd.org/cfe/leed/Social%20entrepreneurship%20policy%20brief%20EN_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> (Communication from the Commission, 2011/682 final)

[http://webapi.eesc.europa.eu/documentsanonymous/ces1292-2012\\_ac\\_en.doc](http://webapi.eesc.europa.eu/documentsanonymous/ces1292-2012_ac_en.doc)

- uses local resources and allows the development of more entrepreneurs;
- supports traditional crafts;
- increases the qualification and education level;
- stimulates solidarity and lead to the improvement of the relationships between the members of the community;
- represents a self-help method;

Thus, it is necessary to streamline Roma social entrepreneurship in the National Roma Integration Strategies as well as in the entire frame of Roma integration policy at local, national, and EU levels.

## Reminding and Recommending

The aim of this project is to suggest the importance of social entrepreneurship in Romani people integration. It also aims to deliver and evaluate the necessary preconditions for the development of this tool in an efficient and acceptable way in Roma communities. Thus, the recommendations following constitute a sound framework compatible with the principles and methodology stated and followed by the international institutions and national and local authorities.

13

Starting from the experience acquired through the SERCo project implementation, the following recommendations have been elaborated and are provided to a large spectrum of stakeholders, such as local authorities, national governments, European Commission, Fundamental Rights Agency.

### 1. European Commission

1.1 Although the mechanism of monitoring the implementation of Council recommendation “1.4. (b) supporting self-employment and entrepreneurship” by the member states, has been set and already produces results, specific attention should be paid on developing social entrepreneurship and social economy in Roma community.

European Commission should report the findings about the implementation of Council recommendation 1.4. in its annual report “Assessment of the implementation of the EU framework for National Roma Integration Strategies and the Council recommendation on effective Roma integration measures by the Member States”, published in June every year incorporating facts and data about social entrepreneurship and social economy in Roma community as a key indicator of integration. For this purpose the Commission needs to require information about social entrepreneurship and social economy in Roma community by the

National Contact Points on annual basis through the reporting template for reporting the NRIS implementation or any other available sources;

1.2. On the basis of the previous recommendation it is strongly proposed to include the topic of social entrepreneurship and social economy in Roma community in the bilateral monitoring visits to Member states organized by European Commission;

1.3. Another important factor in the overall success of integration policies would be the sharing of good practices, which would take place in a special meeting of European Roma Platform on social entrepreneurship and social economy in Roma community;

1.4. Managing authorities of ESF co-funded operational programs at national and regional level should be encouraged to make use of investment priorities 'Socio-economic integration of marginalized communities such as the Roma', "Promoting social entrepreneurship" and "Self-employment, entrepreneurship and business creation" for supporting the development of social entrepreneurship and self-employment initiatives for raising the employment rates of Roma;

## 2. Fundamental Rights Agency

2.1. Developing social entrepreneurship and social economy in Roma community in the system of indicators for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of the NRISs, as they incorporate a considerable amount of information about the extent of integration of Roma.

14

## 3. Governments of EEA countries and Switzerland

3.1. Roma integration program should be included in the European Economic Area (EEA)/Norwegian Financial Mechanism and Swiss Contribution in the new planning periods. It is strongly recommended that these financial mechanisms keep the requirement for 10 % Roma participation in certain key thematic areas and programs (local development, poverty reduction);

3.2. EEA / Norwegian Financial Mechanism and Swiss Contribution should consider funding of social entrepreneurship and self-employment initiatives as means of increasing the employment of Roma within the EEA / Norwegian FM and Swiss Contribution;

## 4. National governments of EU Member states

The implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategies, the Regional and Local/Municipal Roma Integration Plans in their "Access to Employment" parts should

incorporate the possibilities for development of social entrepreneurship and self-employment initiatives.

4.1. It is essential for all member – states to officially acknowledge social enterprise and its differences compared to other types of businesses;

4.2. After the previous step, member – states should provide the necessary financial resources for developing social entrepreneurship and social economy in Roma community co-funded by EU funds (especially ESF), EEA/Norwegian FM, Swiss Cooperation and national budgets. The creation of a common mechanism or protocol for this reason is highly recommended taking into account the differences between the financial framework of member – states:

4.2.1. The Managing Authorities of ESF co-funded programs should use the opportunities of ‘Socio-economic integration of marginalised communities such as the Roma’, ‘Promoting social entrepreneurship’ and ‘Self-employment, entrepreneurship and business creation’ investment priorities to support the development of social entrepreneurship and self-employment initiatives for raising the employment rates of Roma.

‘Socio-economic integration of marginalised communities such as the Roma’ priority should include social economy incentives;

4.2.2. The respective operators of EEA/Norwegian FM and Swiss Cooperation at national level should include incentives for establishing social enterprises and developing social economy in Roma community.

15

## 5. National Contact Points for the NRISs

5.1. National Contact Points play an important role in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of NRISs. In this perspective and as a further boost to the exercise, should develop instructions, methodology and documentation, encouraging local authorities and other stakeholders to consider adopting social enterprises and developing social economy in Roma community as an important part of the Municipal Roma Integration Plans and the National Roma Integration Strategy;

5.2. National Contact Points should monitor the development of social entrepreneurship and social economy in Roma community as part of the M&E of the NRISs and report the main findings at annual basis to European Commission;

## 6. Local and regional authorities

In line with the principles of subsidiarity, proportionality and proximity, as well as the territorial impact of Community legislation, regional and local authorities should play a vital role in the implantation of NRISs. In this perspective, it is recommended:



6.1. To incorporate development of social entrepreneurship and self-employment initiatives for raising the employment rates of Roma in their Regional (or Municipal Roma) Integration Plans;

6.2. To establish a frame of incentives for social entrepreneurship and self-employment initiatives, raising the employment rates of Roma at regional/municipal level.

## 7. A different methodological approach

In Strasbourg, 06 July 2011, the Council of Europe and the European Commission intensified their efforts to improve the place of the Roma minority within European society by agreeing joint action for training Roma Mediators<sup>16</sup>. The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, in 2012<sup>17</sup>, recognized that mediation can be a useful tool for improving Roma inclusion and recommended that the governments of member States, with due regard for their constitutional systems and, where appropriate, to their respective national, regional and local circumstances should develop and maintain an effective system of quality mediation with Roma communities.

It is strongly recommended that member – states should align to the recommendations set by the Council of Europe and follow good practices that have been highlighted by programs like ROMED programme “Intercultural mediation for Roma communities”, implemented from 2011 as a joint action of the Council of Europe and the European Union.

16

## Conclusions

Summarizing the observations and recommendations above, the SERCo consortium draws the following conclusions:

1. Social economy and social entrepreneurship in Roma community form important and innovative trend in the entire spectrum of Roma integration policy. This trend can contribute to the reduction of the risk of poverty and the raise of Romani people employment levels;
2. The political framework for Roma integration at European, national and local levels should incorporate social economy and social entrepreneurship in Roma community as means of integration and reduction of poverty. The extensive use of financial

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<sup>16</sup> [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-11-841\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-11-841_en.htm)

<sup>17</sup> Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)9 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on mediation as an effective tool for promoting respect for human rights and social inclusion of Roma [https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?p=&Ref=CM/Rec\(2012\)9&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=DBDCF2&BackColorIntranet=FDC864&BackColorLogged=FDC864&direct=true](https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?p=&Ref=CM/Rec(2012)9&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=DBDCF2&BackColorIntranet=FDC864&BackColorLogged=FDC864&direct=true)



mechanisms and funds like ESF is already a common practice in funding such initiatives for the general population. There is already a trend to amend those funds' regulations to provide financial possibilities and incentives for developing social economy and social entrepreneurship in Roma community;

3. National administrations (including National Contact Points for NRISs) and the regional and local authorities should further develop and make use of the existing political and financial possibilities. They have the main responsibility for establishing the necessary preconditions for developing social entrepreneurship and social economy in Roma community and for supporting the efforts in this direction of broad set of stakeholders, such as companies, Non-Governmental Organizations and others.
4. SERCo main objective, to streamline Roma social entrepreneurship creation in the national Roma integration strategies is valid and completely aligned with the needs of Romani people and the strategic documents of European Union and other European Institutions. Its aim to address the problem of social and economic inclusion of Roma communities in the partner countries by:
  - applying the concept of social economy as an innovative solution to reducing the risk of poverty and to enhancing entrepreneurship,
  - assisting Roma social business initiatives and promoting social economy within Roma communities and to the public by training people of a certain profile to act as mediators between the Roma and the public institutions. These mediators will have the necessary skills for supporting the planning, establishment and sustainability of social enterprises within Roma communities and
  - addressing the need to strategically tackle the main obstacles towards the economic and social integration of Romani people.

17

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