

Roma Women's Access to Justice (JUSTROM3) in brief

The joint EU/CoE project "Roma Women's Access to Justice" (JUSTROM3) aims to address multiple discrimination and improve related access to justice of Roma women in Bulgaria, Greece, Italy and Romania by:

- 1) supporting the empowerment of Roma women through increasing their awareness about discrimination, complaint mechanisms, the justice system and human rights institutions/equality bodies;
- 2) enhancing professional resources used at national level by the judiciary, law enforcement and NGOs/human rights advocates regarding the application of anti-discrimination standards with a focus on multiple discrimination, gender equality and Roma women;
- 3) increasing synergies between the institutional frameworks of the European Union and Council of Europe, including through National Roma Contact Points (NRCP) and "Council of Europe's expert group on Roma", and with national and local authorities on national Roma integration strategies, and civil society regarding access to justice.

In its previous phases from February 2017 to March 2019, JUSTROM provided legal information to 12,700 beneficiaries (60% of which were Roma women), registered about 9,200 consultations (62% of which concerned Roma women). About 4,070 applications were submitted to various judicial, non-judicial and quasi-judicial institutions, through applications to free legal aid when possible. The project also trained almost a thousand legal and other relevant professionals (police, lawyers, staff of ombudsperson's offices, equality bodies, prison staff, judges, local authorities, etc.). By means of its unique outreach component linking communities to existing services (legal aid and municipal services, inter alia), the project has managed to establish trust between existing services and structures and the Roma community, with particular emphasis on Roma women through the intersectional component of the project. This third phase will run until August 2021.

JUSTROM 3 will target the following beneficiaries:

- Roma women from Bulgaria, Greece, Italy and Romania in 9 areas of implementation, some of which will be empowered as Roma women community leaders, able to address relevant institutions;
- legal professionals, some of which are foreseen as future trainers/advisors/resource persons to be used for cascading training processes;
- local level stakeholders (municipality, Roma community and police/prosecutors) and secondary beneficiaries trained in community development;
- implementing partners at various levels, including local, regional and national institutional stakeholders, equality bodies, national human rights institutions, National Roma Contact Points, bar associations, national police inspectorates, judiciary institutions and penitentiary facilities, etc,
- students from law schools, police academy, school of magistracy, penitentiary training facilities and wider public of legal professionals

Activities are organised around three clusters:

- Activities at local level to support the empowerment of Roma women and a dialogue of mutual understanding with the municipalities and offices they could approach to sustain their claims for justice (Awareness raising gatherings, mentoring sessions, regular meetings with relevant municipal services and info days with the larger community). It is expected that small groups of Roma women will soon organize and take part in community outreach events and activities with other women and

girls. It is also foreseen to organize meetings directly with the Equality Bodies and National Human Rights Institutions to develop mutual understanding and establish a two-ways channel of communication.

- Activities to develop a long-lasting training opportunity in various institutions with systematic training on the topics anti-discrimination, gender equality, Roma issues and ECHR standards and case laws, the development of national training pools made of representatives of various legal professions to allow for cascading effects, and the development of syllabi for pre-service and in-service training for training institutes and online platforms. Legal experts foreseen as the core group of trainers/resource people/advisors will continue providing legal information to Roma women so as not to lose the trust of the communities but will also establish links with alternative structures and progressively diminish their direct involvement when alternative support is secured.

- The last set of activities concentrates on offering increased opportunities for exchange of experience and knowledge and cross-fertilization of ideas through multi-stakeholder actions. They include study visits, exchange seminars, visibility events and participation in international events to present the project results. The emphasis will be on enhanced institutional networking and increased partnerships for policy change.

The expected results of the project are:

- Increased awareness of Roma women and girls on discrimination (including multiple discrimination), complaint mechanisms, the justice system and human rights institutions:

More Roma women and girls are aware of discrimination and multiple discrimination, what it is and how it affects them. They are also aware of redress mechanisms they can apply to. Core groups of Roma women in each location are empowered, accompanied through the process of regular meetings with municipalities representatives and receive coaching to seek access to justice, first through dialogue with local administration and the relevant social services, but also in case of discrimination through complaint mechanisms, the justice system and human rights institutions; there will also be a large number of activities to enhance the Roma-non-Roma confidence building and mediation, and actions to change attitudes of the wider context and combat anti-Gypsyism, hate speech and prejudice. Roma facilitators and/or mediators will be contracted under the project as main actors of change to facilitate access to legal services for Roma communities by building stronger links with local municipalities and authorities. Their autonomy at the end of the project will help sustain the action in the future.

- Enhanced capacities of the judiciary, law enforcement and NGOs/human rights advocates regarding the application of anti-discrimination standards with a focus on multiple discrimination, gender equality and Roma women:

The skills of professional resources (legal professionals, law enforcement agents, non-governmental institutions) are enhanced when it comes to the application of anti-discrimination standards with a focus on multiple discrimination, gender equality and Roma women through the provision of cascading training sessions; a pool of trained people is created in each country of implementation, from which institutions can tap into for further training in the future, with examples of syllabi for training developed for in-service and pre-service trainings in various higher education structures, and a revised module on Roma made available online in a revised course on discrimination (CoE Human rights Education for Legal Professionals – HELP). Human resources will be trained, and material and

tools will be developed during the course of the project that will be used and have increasing impact in the future.

- Strengthened involvement and capacities of existing structures in Member States, such as National Roma Contact Points, Equality Bodies and National Human Rights Institutions in dealing with anti-discrimination cases related to Roma and in the development of project activities and deliverables:

Existing structures in implementing Member States, such as Equality Bodies and National Roma Contact Points, National Human Rights Institutions, Bar associations, penitentiary institutions, Universities, local and regional administration are more involved in the development of project activities, project tangible deliverables and in the development of policies targeting measures in favour of Roma women and girls and also involved in dealing with antidiscrimination cases. The project will help direct dialogue to take place between grassroot level and the Equality Bodies and NHRIs. The project will also facilitate the transmission of information from the field so that institutions can use their “ex officio” power if available. It is also proposed that a Project board is constituted to involve the main partners in more regular information sharing and monitoring of activities at national level, included National Roma Contact Points. This will ensure enhanced accountability and real ownership of the project and increase chances for the project to be maintained and further developed in the future.

- Increased synergies between the institutional frameworks of the EU and the Council of Europe, between national and local authorities, and also civil society regarding national Roma integration strategies and access to justice for Roma women:

Relations established between the legal institutions’ representatives and relevant divisions of the Council of Europe will be reinforced through common activities and access to justice for Roma women should be included in their monitoring reports. Civil society organisations are more involved in the implementation and/or monitoring of the national strategies for Roma inclusion, making sure that the gender dimension is effectively taken into account in future projects.