TOWARDS A NEW POLICY

STRATEGY FOR THE INCLUSION OF ROMA, ASHKALI AND EGYPTIAN COMMUNITIES IN KOSOVO
2016-2020

An EU funded project “Kosovo Education and Employment Network – KEEN” is implemented by a coalition led by Kosova Education Center (KEC) in partnership with Employment and Promotion Agency in Kosovo (APPK), Balkan Sunflowers Kosova (BSFK), Academy for Training and Technical Assistance (ATTA) and Stichting SPARK.

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Pristina, May 2016
DREJT NJË POLITIKE TË RE

STRATEGJIA PËR GJITHPËRFSHIRJEN TË KOMUNITETEVE ROM, ASHKALI DHE EGIPTIAN NË KOSOVË

2016-2020
Towards a new policy
Strategy for the inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Kosovo 2016-2020

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An EU funded project “Kosovo Education and Employment Network – KEEN” is a strategic coalition of four Kosovo-based civil society organizations, whose focuses are in the field of education, employment and social policies. KEEN aims to improve the employability of vulnerable groups in Kosovo and their inclusion in both the education sector and labour market by participating in decision making, policy development and policy monitoring at central and local levels, and by facilitating dialogue between education & training institutions and businesses. KEEN aims to synchronize education and training programs with labour market needs.

KEEN is implemented by a coalition led by Kosova Education Center (KEC) in partnership with Employment and Promotion Agency in Kosovo (APPK), Balkan Sunflowers Kosova (BSFK), Academy for Training and Technical Assistance (ATTA) and Stichting SPARK.

Based on the need for increasing efforts by the Kosovo government in regard to integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, and the failure of responsible institutions and mechanisms to effectively implement the Strategy and Action Plan, and taking in regard the legal framework in Kosovo, relevant international human rights standards, as well as OSCE and EU standards on integration of the three communities, a Platform for joint action of civil society organizations dealing with protection and promotion of rights of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Kosovo was established.

This report is drafted by “Platforma” (an informal network of civil society organizations engaged in promoting rights and advancing the position of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Kosovo) and is published with the support of the EU funded project “Kosovo Education and Employment Network - KEEN”, managed by European Union Office in Kosovo.

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INTRODUCTION

This analytical paper reviews the achievements of the Strategy for Integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities 2009-2015, and provides a series of recommendations of further progress in drafting a new Strategy for the inclusion of these communities in Kosovo. The analysis is divided into seven sections. The first section reviews the objectives and components of the Strategy for the Integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities. The second section reflects a self-assessment conducted by the Good Governance Office on the fulfilment of commitments as made with the strategy. The third section provides some recent statistical data on Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. The fourth section analyses the assessments made by international organizations, such as the OSCE, but also local organizations, on the implementation of such a Strategy. In the fifth part, we have summarized all remarks and recommendations of Progress Reports of the European Commission for the whole period from 2010 to 2015 on the condition of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, and the positions in these reports on the implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan for the integration of the communities. The sixth part reflects the debates on new post-2015 policies for the inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. The seventh part analyses the new Draft Strategy, identifies the issues in this draft, from a viewpoint of civil society organizations, and provides a series of recommendations on addressing such problems.
Under the support of the EU-funded Project, the Kosovo Education and Employment Network - KEEN\(^1\), on 13 and 14 April 2016, the “Platform” (an informal network of civil society organizations engaged in promoting rights and advancing the position of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Kosovo) held a two-day workshop. In the two days of the workshop, the Platform reviewed the context of the new Draft Strategy, thereby offering comments related to the four objectives of the new Draft Strategy. To guide the working methodology for the two-day workshop, the KEEN had supported the Platform by an independent consultant. The outcomes of that two-day workshop are presented in the final part of the present analysis.

\(^1\) An EU funded project “Kosovo Education and Employment Network – KEEN” is a strategic coalition of four Kosovo-based civil society organizations, whose focuses are in the field of education, employment and social policies. KEEN aims to improve the employability of vulnerable groups in Kosovo and their inclusion in both the education sector and labor market by participating in decision making, policy development and policy monitoring at central and local levels, and by facilitating dialogue between education & training institutions and businesses. KEEN aims to synchronize education and training programs with labor market needs.
STRATEGY FOR THE INTEGRATION OF ROMA, ASHKALI AND EGYPTIAN COMMUNITIES 2009-2015

Seven years after the adoption of the Strategy for the Integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in Kosovo, these communities remain marginalized and vulnerable. High rates of illiteracy, school abandonment, structural poverty, high unemployment, inadequate health care treatment, difficult housing conditions, amongst others, affect the human dignity of members of these communities. In its efforts of addressing the problems, the Government of Kosovo adopted in December 2009 a Strategy for the Integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in Kosovo 2009-2015. A year later, in December 2009, an Action Plan for the Strategy Implementation was developed. Both the Strategy and Action Plan did draw and plan for the measures to contribute to the inclusion of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities into the Kosovo society as citizens with equal rights in Kosovo. The Strategy had been built around the four goals:

- Promote and strengthen the protection of the rights of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities and their full integration in Kosovar society;
- Develop proper policies and legislation, and ensure that the legislation is in line with international standards of human rights;
- Actively promote the empowerment of democratic institutions and rule of law, especially through dialogue and institution building for the implementation of the rights of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities;
• Support and encourage the work of NGOs that represent the interests of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, especially cooperation with them, including the Institution of the Ombudsperson; 2

While the position of the Government of Kosovo was that it had pursued an all-inclusive approach in developing the strategy, thereby involving community representatives, the main critique against the Government as raised by political representatives and civil society organizations of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities was that the Strategy drafting process had been more “top-to-bottom” than otherwise. For developing the Strategy, six working groups were established to contribute to the sector chapters of the Strategy, including: a) Housing and informal settlements, registration and documentation, return and reintegration; b) education; c) culture, identity, media and information; d) employment and economic empowerment; d) health and social issues; e) anti-discrimination, security, minority rights and political participation and f) gender issues. The process had involved also experts from the Council of Europe, UNHCR, UNDP, UNICEF, KEC, REF, OSCE etc.

In all its sectors, the Strategy offered an analysis of conditions and problems faced by the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. However, the data the strategy was built upon were not updated, and statistics were not the most recent, neither on the total population numbers, or unemployment rates, health care information, education degrees, etc. For example, the Strategy itself underlined the fact that there is a lack of verified data on the accurate population numbers for the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities.

2 Prime Minister’s Office, Strategy for the Integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in Kosovo, December 2008, p. 5.
communities in Kosovo, and talks about the absence of data on the numbers of refugees and displaced persons of these communities. In the absence of recent and accurate statistics, and to present the general socio-economic condition of these communities at the time of its adoption in 2009, the Strategy referred to the UNDP Reports of 2014, or the 2006 reports of the International Labour Organization. With the population census and more recent studies made by the Kosovo Agency for Statistics, there are now updated data used in developing the new Strategy 2016-2020.

Since in its Constitution, Kosovo has integrated the majority of international instruments for the protection of human rights and minority rights, the legal framework of the Strategy 2009-2015 was based on the following international treaties: (a) Universal Declaration on Human Rights, (b) European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and Protocols to it, (c) International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its protocols, (d) Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, (e) Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination of Women, (f) Convention on the Rights of the Child, and (h) Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. Apart from international standards of human rights, pledging to implement the Ahtisaari Plan, based on which Kosovo was declared sovereign and independent country, Kosovo had taken the commitment to approve the Law against Discrimination, the Law on Protection and Promotion of Community Rights and their Members, the Law on Local Self-Government, the Law on Official Holidays, the Law on Use of Languages, etc. The Strategy aside, only the full enforcement of such laws would directly contribute to the integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in Kosovo. However, neither the laws nor the Strategy
itself were ever implemented fully by local and central institutions in Kosovo. Kosovo has approved its laws and strategies in compliance with international standards, but it has lacked the political will to budget the costs of such documents, while also missing the coordination between municipalities and the Government, and ultimately the monitoring of their implementation.

The Action Plan\(^3\) for the Implementation of the Strategy of the Republic of Kosovo for the Integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities 2009-2015, a rather voluminous document of 117 pages, approved and signed by the former Prime Minister of Kosovo on March 2\(^{nd}\), 2010, provided on the nine sectors (including education, employment and economic empowerment, health care and social issues, housing and informal settlements, return and reintegration, registration, culture and information, participation and representation) and planned for a series of measures and activities to be undertaken for the integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in Kosovo. However, actions and indicators of progress in implementing all the planned activities were rather generic, while timelines for concrete actions were also generalized (e.g. 2009-2014) without showing clearly the duration of concrete measures to be taken, and without determining clearly the financial cost of such actions. For example, budgeting covered all actions, without any specification on actions to be taken. Consequently, with this generic design, it was difficult to monitor successfully the attainment of objectives of the Strategy 2009-2015, and consequently, very difficult to demand concrete accountability of the stakeholders and supporting institutions planned for involvement in its implementation.

Nevertheless, several mechanisms were established for the implementation of the Strategy 2009-2015. The Technical Working Group (Working Group)\(^4\) and an Inter-ministerial Steering Committee\(^5\), were mechanisms mandated to coordinate both governmental and donor investments. Though the group was mandated to draft biannual and annual reports on progress and implementation of the Strategy, by 2016, the Good Governance Office had only issued one report, thereby providing an assessment of the Strategy for the Integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities.

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5 The mechanism includes the Director of the OGG, Director of the Office for Community Affairs, representatives of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, the Ministry of Health, a representative of the Consultative Council for Communities, and representatives of the three communities.
SELF-ASSESSMENT OF THE OFFICE FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLAN AND THE STRATEGY FOR THE INTEGRATION OF ROMA, ASHKALI AND EGYPTIAN COMMUNITIES

In the assessment report for the priority framework for the period of 2014, on the implementation of the Action Plan and the Strategy for the Integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in Kosovo (2014-2015), the Office for Good Governance presented the achievements made in terms of the two documents mentioned. The report claims that the Office for Good Governance, in cooperation with the Office of the EU Special Representative, the OSCE, UN, EC, and KFOS, in February 2014, drafted the Framework of Priorities for the Implementation of the Action Plan for the Integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities for the period 2014-2015. Based on such a framework, the report was aimed at identifying challenges for Kosovo institutions in implementing such an Action Plan. The report assesses the 11 sectors of the Action Plan. The report states that “in due consideration of the fact that the Ministries do not have any specific budget line for the Strategy, the allocation of the budget by ministries for 2015 was made based on the activities as identified in the Framework of Priorities”.

During 2014, MEST had allocated 233,000 Euros, while in 2015, 248,000 Euro, though without specifying the amounts dedicated to

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the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. The Ministry of Health had also allocated 86,000 euros for 2014 and the same in 2015, but without any disaggregated data on the dedicated amounts to the communities. The Ministry of Internal Affairs had also allocated 2,112,670.86 Euros, but the reintegration program may benefit all repatriated citizens, and there is no divided budget specifically for the said communities. A similar situation is present in other line ministries which are mandated with the obligations deriving from the Strategy.

The OGG Report claims progress in increased registration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities’ members into pre-primary education, provision of catch-up courses for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, the implementation of the Roma curriculum in Prizren etc. In terms of unemployment, the report states that the rate of unemployment amidst the communities remains high, especially with the women in such communities. There are reports on the reintegration assistance packs for 2014. The report states that there were no discrimination cases reported by Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian individuals, and there were no cases of abuse by the police in relation to these communities.

On the other hand, civil society organizations have criticized the Framework of Priorities for the Implementation of the Action Plan for its failure to consult the beneficiaries and the civil society. Also, according to them, the data of the 2014 OGG Report are not based on verified references.
SOME RECENT STATISTICS FOR THE ROMA, ASHKALI AND EGYPTIAN COMMUNITIES

The 2011 population census data show that 8824 Roma, or 0.5% of the total population are Roma, 15436 or 0.9% of the population are Ashkali and 11524 or 0.7% are Egyptian. The Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2013 -2014, conducted in October 2014 by the Kosovo Agency of Statistics, found that 60% of the population of these communities live in urban areas, and 40% live in rural areas. According to the same survey, 65% of the population are under the age of 30. According to the survey, “the positive population trends have contributed to the condition in which almost half (45%) of the population are in the age groups between 0-17 years, and two thirds (65%) of the population are under the age of 30. The general ratio of dependency, titled as inactive population rate (ages 0-14 and 65+) against the active population (ages 15-64), expressed in percentage, is 70%, which means that for 100 active persons, 70 persons are inactive. In relation to the specifics of housing, an average of 3.12% of community members use one single room for sleeping, while over 90% of these households have their flooring, roofing and walls completed. Only a small part of community members own agricultural land, namely 19.1%, while 21.1% own cattle.

The UNDP ‘Human Development Report” for 2010 provides that “Members of the minority Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian (RAE) communities are more socially and economically excluded than

others. Employment among these communities, for instance, is much lower than the average; just 75% of male youth aged 15-24 are unemployed. One quarter of RAE children does not attend primary school at all and the picture is worse with regard to secondary school. According to such a study, only 8% of the working age Roma holds leading positions in comparison with 13.9% in the Serb community, and 15.8% for other minorities. The ‘Human Development Report 2010’ calls for the funding of the Strategy for the Integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities to be focussed on education, employment, health care and housing. For this to be achieved there is a need for a clear plan, specific goals, and line ministries reporting on milestones aimed.

In relation to health of infants and mothers in these communities, the situation is not optimistic. The data from the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2013 -2014 of the Kosovo Agency for Statistics show that the majority of new-borns were weighed at birth, and one in ten infants has low birth weight. Also, one in seven children under the age of 5 in these communities reflects average or severe growth retardation (short in height for their age). In terms of vaccination, the survey provides disturbing data. Less than 30% of the children from the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities are immunized in compliance with the immunization calendar of Kosovo. Meanwhile, 16.6% of the children of these communities in the ages 5-17 are engaged in labour. In relation to prenatal health care for the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian women, the survey finds that only ¾ of such women have received antenatal care. In terms of literacy, only ¾ of

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young women in these communities are literate, while more than half of these women complete their primary education only.

According to the Education Statistics 2014-2015 Report of the Kosovo Agency for Statistics, the number of children of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities registered in pre-school education is 5 (4 in Fushe-Kosova and 1 in Prizren). The problem with such statistics is that they are often inconsistent, but beyond that fact, the Kosovo institutions, even when collecting official statistics, at times fail to disaggregate between the communities, for example, to know how many of the people belong to the Roma, Ashkali or Egyptian communities. In terms of the numbers of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian students in primary and lower secondary education, in the same report, statistics are separated for each of the communities. The total number of Roma students involved in primary and lower secondary education was: 3766 Ashkali students, 1785 Roma students, and 642 Egyptian students.\(^\text{10}\)
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

OSCE Monitoring Reports on the implementation of the Strategy have found that Kosovo institutions have stalled in implementing the document. Such reports have found that central and local Kosovo institutions have not honoured their commitments for the integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities. While several adequate measures have been taken by line ministries in regularizing informal settlements and promoting cultural identity of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, political will has been lacking in engaging appropriate resources for the implementation of the document, while also coordination has not been in place between local and central institutions in implementing and monitoring the Strategy.

More recently, in November 2015, the OSCE issued an assessment report on the status of communities in Kosovo, called the “Community Rights Assessment Report”. This report recommends more effective integration of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in economic and social life, but also in the political environment. The report finds that despite the fact that MEST, with international partners, had during the school year 2014-2015 distributed 500 scholarships for secondary students and 33 university scholarships for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian students, the latter are disproportionately affected by non-enrolment, dropouts, high illiteracy and low education achievement.\footnote{OSCE, Community Rights Assessment Report, November 2015, p.22.} Also, in 2015, the Ministry of Local Government Administration and the Ministry of Internal Affairs had issued guidelines for the municipalities, thereby instructing them to allow for free of charge registration for the
members of the communities for a period of one month. While there are improvements in inclusion of these communities, e.g. in the Kosovo Police, where from the total of 7635 police officers in the latter force, 13 are Roma, 17 Ashkali and 9 Egyptian, the deficient implementation of the Civil Service Law is considered to be amongst the key obstacles for the employment of such community members. The Law on the Civil Service in the Republic of Kosovo, amongst others, is guided by the principle of equal opportunities in the civil service for all communities, whereby, Article 11 guarantees that:

• **Communities and their members have a right to a fair presentation and proportional in civil service and bodies of central and local public administration.**

• **Within the civil service in institutions of central level the minimum of 10% of positions should be reserved for persons belonging to communities that are not majority in Kosovo and who fulfil the specific employment criteria. In municipal level for qualified members of the community that are not majority in Municipality, the number of reserved working places shall be in compliance with percentage representation of the communities in the given Municipality.**

A concrete example of underrepresentation of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, aside from many other institutions, is found in Municipal Assemblies. The Roma community is not represented at all in 5 Municipal Assemblies, although their representation is guaranteed by the Constitution of Kosovo. Also, the Ashkali community is not represented in 10 Municipal Assemblies, while the Egyptians are not represented in 12 such assemblies.

In relation to the implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan

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12 Law no. 03/L-149 on the Civil Service of the Republic of Kosovo. Official Gazette of the Republic of Kosovo, Prishtina, Year V/No. 72/25, June 2010, Article 11.
for the Integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in Kosovo, the OSCE Report finds that Kosovo institutions have failed in ensuring a coordinated and systematic implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan. The report reminds that in January 2014, an effort was made by the Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee, then led by the Ministry for European Integration (now led by the Deputy Minister) to supervise and coordinate priority actions. These actions were not proven successful. As the OSCE report finds:

“The Prime Minister’s Office of Good Governance (OGG), in charge of the Technical Working Group responsible for the monitoring and reporting of the implementation of the aforementioned strategy, failed to gather adequate data, provide accurate reports, or to meaningfully include members from the three communities in implementation or reporting. In May 2015, the OGG began moving ahead with developing a new integration strategy for 2016-2020, with limited systematic consultation thus far. Aside from sporadic efforts by some institutions to improve the three communities’ integration, no notable progress has been made. Arguably, most progress was achieved at the local level, as several municipalities drafted and adopted Local Action Plans (LAPs) for the integration of the three communities, including the involvement of relevant civil society”.14

The KFOS Report “Reality or Fireworks: Strategy for the Integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities”, prepared by the Humanitarian Law Fund in Kosovo, assesses the progress on implementation of the Strategy in 8 municipalities (Peja, Ferizaj, Fushë-Kosova, Gjakova, Gjilan, Istog, Prizren, Mitrovica). This report finds that “although central and local institutions have adopted their Action Plan, the same institutions have failed in allocating a

special budget line for the implementation of the Action Plan. In this regard, activities were not completed due to the lack of funds". The report finds that although the Municipality of Peja had approved a Local Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy by the Mayor, the Municipality of Peja so far has not allocated any budget for the implementation of the plan by the relevant departments. The Municipal Assembly of Peja employs 2 Kosovo Egyptians and 1 Kosovo Roma. In relation to the Municipality of Ferizaj, the report finds that the number of Ashkali employees in the public sector is 94, the number of Roma employees is 6, while there are no members of the Egyptian community in the public sector. In 2013, in cooperation with local and international organizations, the Municipality of Ferizaj had initiated the development of the Local Action Plan for the Strategy. In the Municipality of Fushë-Kosova, there are 2 Ashkali, 1 Roma and 1 Egyptian employees. The Municipality of Fushë-Kosova has adopted its Local Action Plan, but no funds were allocated for its implementation. Unemployment and property documents are two of the main problems for the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Fushë-Kosova. The Municipality of Gjakova employs 4 Egyptians in the civil service, while 1 Ashkali and 1 Roma are employees of the MOCR. For a difference from other municipalities, Gjakova has adopted an Action Plan and has allocated a modest budget line to the MOCR, but not only for the implementation of the Action Plan specifically. Although there is willingness to address problems of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in other municipalities, the general social and economic situation of these communities remains poor. This situation is also concluded by local organizations of those communities.16

15 KFOS, Reality or Fireworks: Strategy for the Integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in Kosovo. December 2013, p. 5.

Another earlier report issued by the OSCE in September 2012 reviewed the progress of the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy for the Integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in Kosovo 2009-2015. This Report reviews progress in 9 thematic sectors of the Strategy, and lists specific recommendations for the Government of Kosovo. The report underlines that institutional mechanisms envisaged for the implementation of the Action Plan, namely the Technical Working Group and the Inter-Departmental Steering Committee, have not functioned properly, thereby contributing to the limited progress in implementing the Action Plan. These mechanisms have been rather negligent in holding meetings and in issuing monitoring reports. The OSCE Report emphasizes the areas in which progress was noted in the nine sectors, and lists the weaknesses in such areas. For example, the report finds that there is progress in addressing the obstacles in civil registration, improvements in school attendance by students of these communities, and solutions found for settlements, and progress made in creating conditions for sustainable returns and reintegration. Despite the foregoing, the report finds that in the majority of activities, there was no concentrated coordination. The 2012 OSCE Report provides four recommendations for the Government of Kosovo. the first recommendation was the following:

“Full implementation. The Government of Kosovo should renew its commitment to the full implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan, ensuring that all the necessary and foreseen, human and financial resources are available, including timely and continuing budget allocations and effective co-ordination of resource allocation across
ministries and at municipal level. Ensure effective participation of the Kosovo Roma, Kosovo Ashkali and Kosovo Egyptian communities in decision-making and implementation.”\textsuperscript{17}

In the 2011 report, which analysed the initial progress upon the adoption of the Strategy, the OSCE finds that overall, the Government of Kosovo has fallen short of fulfilling its commitments in implementing the Strategy and Action Plan, and calls for strengthened political commitment, increased human and financial resources to fulfil the government obligations deriving from the two documents.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{17} OSCE, Contribution to the Progress Review of the Action Plan of the Strategy for the Integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in Kosovo, 2009–2015. September 2012, p. 43
KOSOVO AND THE EUROPEAN UNION: PROTECTION AND INCLUSION OF MINORITIES AS A CONDITION TO INTEGRATION

The integration of communities in Kosovo remains one of the key conditions for further steps in integration of Kosovo in the European Union. In November 2015, the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo ratified the Stabilization-Association Agreement, the first contractual agreement between Kosovo and the EU. Also, Kosovo is in the verge of visa liberalization, and one of the conditions – amidst many others – for this process to conclude successfully for Kosovo is also the reintegration of persons returned in Kosovo, with a special emphasis on the persons of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. Although Kosovo remains behind other regional countries in terms of European integration, the pace of such processes shall directly depend on engagement of Kosovo institutions in building a fair, multi-ethnic society of equal opportunities of its citizens before the law.

Kosovo has an affirmative Constitution, which guarantees the dignity, freedoms and rights of people, on the one hand, while on the other, special rights for the minority communities. The Law against Discrimination19, Law on the Use of Languages20, Law on the Civil Service21, Law on the Protection and Promotion of Community

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19 Law no. 05/L-021 on Protection against Discrimination.
20 Law no. 02/L-37 on the Use of Languages.
21 Law no. 03/L-149 on the Civil Service of the Republic of Kosovo.
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Rights\textsuperscript{22} and the Law on Local Self-Government\textsuperscript{23} all guarantee such rights. However, though affirmative, the laws are not fully enforced in practice.

Apart from many other political, economic and social areas, the European Commission has in its Progress Reports reported on progress in protecting and promoting communities in Kosovo, with a special emphasis on the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. Progress Reports are an overview of Kosovo problems, and report on eventual progress on their addressing. Though the Strategy for the Integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities was planned for implementation in the period 2009 to 2015, the following table recaps the remarks and progress as recorded in the European Commission Progress Reports from 2010 to 2015.

For the European Commission Progress Report 2010, the condition of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities is a serious concern. While there are progressive steps of the Government of Kosovo in the field of civil registration for the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, the European Commission demands from the Government of Kosovo a more serious commitment in improving the living conditions of such communities. The report had found a serious problem in the presence of camps in the northern area of Kosovo, where members of these communities had been living in a lead-contaminated area in Cesmin Lug and Osterode. Also, the report concludes on the absent regularization of informal settlements of these communities and the absence of adequate actions by the Government of Kosovo to address the inclusiveness of the Roma

\textsuperscript{22} Law no. 03/L-047 on the Protection and Promotion of Community Rights and their Members in the Republic of Kosovo.
\textsuperscript{23} Law no. 03/L-40 on Local Self-Government.
returnees. The same remarks would then appear constantly in all further reports:

“Overall, the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities continue to face major challenges, especially difficult socio-economic circumstances, lack of education, poor health care and discrimination”, “Adequate actions in addressing social inclusion of specific groups, including the Roma returnees, are still missing”, “In terms of equal access to quality education, students from the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities have lower rates of registration, higher rates of abandonment, and poor levels of academic performance”; “Kosovo also needs to make progress in implementing the Strategy and Action Plan for the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, including allocation of necessary funds”; “Appropriate budget allocation is required for visible progress in implementing the strategy and action plan” etc.24


KOSOVO 2010 PROGRESS REPORT

1. As regard the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, limited progress can be reported. Their situation remains a very serious concern. The Office for Good Governance has set up a mechanism to monitor the implementation of the strategy for integration of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. The government adopted the operational plan for the resettlement of families living in Cesmin Llug/Česmin Lug and Osterode lead-contaminated camps. The Ministry for Communities and Return and Mitrovicë/Mitrovica municipality are constructive to resettlement the families.

2. The government promoted the civil registration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, including by offering to register free of charge. Upon its request, Kosovo participated in the Roma Decade steering committee as an observer allowing it to engage with key actors on regional Roma issues.

3. However, enhanced political willingness is needed. The living conditions of these communities and their access to education, health care and social protections remain very serious concerns. There is still no comprehensive plan to regulate the informal settlements. The weak communication between the municipal and central authorities prevents them from solving the legal
status of informal settlements. The lack of civil status registration is a further obstacle to access to services. Reintegration of forced returnees from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities is of particular concern (see also migration policies). The authorities need to increase their commitment to address urgent issues affecting the lives of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities.

4. The registration of unemployed people was improved, including among women, Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians and persons with disabilities. The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare has mediated in the employment of 524 jobseekers from all minority communities including Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities as a measure to positively impact the labour market.

5. Adequate actions to address social inclusion of specific groups including Roma returnees are still lacking.

6. Kosovo has developed and adopted its first subject curriculum for the Romani language, history and culture for primary schools. A series of public debates have been held to promote and raise awareness about it. Teaching material is in use for the Romani, Bosniac and Turkish subject curricula.

**KOSOVO 2011 PROGRESS REPORT**

1. Kosovo also hosted a high-level conference on the inclusion of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in May.

2. Kosovo opened learning centres in a handful of municipalities to fight against drop-out among the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians. These efforts need to continue.
3. Children are at greater risk of poverty than the general population, in particular among the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities.

4. The work of the Communities Consultative Council has continued. Its members have contributed to the review of government activities and policies affecting communities, especially via its working groups on education and on issues concerning the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities.

5. Regarding the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian (RAE) communities, mixed progress has been achieved. In October 2010, the lead-contaminated camp at Çesmin Lug/Česmin Lug was closed and all the accommodation was demolished. Its residents along with other families from Osterode were resettled in Roma Mahalla in south Mitrovicë/Mitrovica where municipal authorities allocated land for their housing. The government has promoted the civil registration of these communities, including by offering such registration free of charge. A report on the implementation of the Strategy for the Integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities was published. Kosovo participated in the Roma Decade steering committee as an observer, allowing it to engage with key players on regional Roma issues.

6. Osterode camp has not yet been closed because public land for its remaining residents (nine families) has not been allocated. Kosovo still lacks a comprehensive plan to regulate informal RAE settlements. The lack of civil status registration is a further serious obstacle to access to services. Reintegration of repatriated Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians is a concern. The authorities need to increase their commitment to address urgent issues affecting the
lives of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities notably their access to education, healthcare, housing and social protection.

7. The Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian minority communities continue to face the most serious challenges in terms of social inclusion.

8. The provision of health services does not adequately reach minority communities. The availability of data on the health status of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian (RAE) communities is limited. In the framework of the resettlement of lead-affected Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian) communities, the Ministry of Health endorsed a lead screening and treatment protocol. A family medicine centre in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica is responsible for carrying out specific treatments to children diagnosed with high blood lead level. Levels of lead contamination in the Mitrovicë/Mitrovica area remain high. Full vaccination coverage in the RAE communities is lower than in other communities. From January 2011 the institute for public health carried out a vaccination campaign, inoculating more than 800 children from the RAE communities against various diseases.

9. The strategy for integration of RAE in education provides a good framework. Learning centres for Roma pupils were opened. Simplified school registration of Roma pupils, which was guaranteed through an administrative instruction, remains to be enforced by the directors of schools. Pro-active measures to encourage enrolment and retention of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children need to be implemented.
1. With regard to the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians, Kosovo’s application for the Roma Decade membership is a positive initiative. With the support of the international community, Kosovo has been closing the lead contaminated camps.

2. Kosovo also needs to progress on implementing the strategy and action plan for the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians, including through the allocation of the necessary funds. Kosovo needs to increase the overall share of persons belonging to minorities in public administration.

3. Kosovo needs to improve further the implementation of legislation on the use of official languages at an institutional and social level throughout Kosovo. The “Forty Actions” to integrate Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians need to be implemented both at central and municipal levels. These minorities are vulnerable and they suffer both direct and indirect discrimination. Also they have limited access to the Kosovo education system. The access to education, the fight against school drop-out, and qualitative education outputs need to complement the recent Romani curriculum.

4. Kosovo is ready to participate in other regional initiatives. It should also ensure Kosovo’s full participation in the Roma Decade
KOSOVO 2013 PROGRESS REPORT

1. A mid-term review of the action plan of the strategy for the integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities (2009-2015) was completed in July. Three actions were identified for improvement: proper budget allocation, better cooperation between central and municipal authorities, and better cooperation between the government and civil society organisations. The Minister for European Integration formally took up the post of the chair of the inter-ministerial steering committee. The Office on Good Governance remains responsible for these issues at working level. The Osterode camp was officially closed in December.

2. Implementation of the strategy and action plan remains weak and inconsistent. Non-majority communities continue to face major challenges. Children suffering from lead contamination require further care. The closure of the Leposaviq/Leposavić camp still needs to be completed. Education, social service and civil registration of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities need to further improve. Municipalities have committed themselves to funding six pre-school learning centres for children from these communities. Other commitments for improving the education (e.g. support mediators helping these children to integrate into school life), are still to be implemented. The Romani language is being offered in some pilot classes in Prizren. However, the teacher concerned is working pro bono and there are no government-issued textbooks.

3. Limited access to property, blocked or delayed property restitution proceedings, limited access to public services, and a lack of economic opportunities also continue to be major obstacles to...
sustainable return and reintegration. The obstacles to return and integration of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities are of particular concern.

4. Resources and efforts need to be more focused to make progress in implementing the strategy and action plan for the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. Kosovo needs to close the Leposaviq/Leposavić camp. The focus needs to be on education, social service and civil registration of these communities. Kosovo currently relies heavily on support from the international community in this area.

5. The perinatal mortality rate has continued to decline following improvements in maternal and child health services. Those from the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities affected by lead contamination continue to receive medical support. However, insufficient financial resources hamper implementation of the overall health-related legal framework and policies.

6. In the field of communicable diseases, the National Institute of Public Health reports 95% immunisation coverage, except among Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities.

7. Regarding equal access to quality education, students from the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities have lower registration rates, higher drop-out rates, and poor levels of academic performance.

8. Much more emphasis is needed on improving access to and quality of education for marginalised groups, especially for children from the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, and those with disabilities.
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KOSOVO PROGRESS REPORT 2014

1. A conference was held on the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in November. Kosovo now needs to accelerate the implementation of the action plan of the strategy (2009-15), taking into account priorities as identified in the Priorities Framework (2014-15) of April and the conclusions of the November conference. This includes applying a new framework enabling evidence-based monitoring of results achieved and developing new policy commitments for the period beyond 2015.

2. In December 2013, the main building of Leposaviq/Leposavić camp was closed, following the resettlement of 31 families.

3. In general, Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities continue to face major challenges, notably difficult socio-economic circumstances, a lack of education, weak health care and discrimination. Regarding equal access to quality education, students from the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities have lower registration rates, higher dropout rates, and poor levels of academic performance. Statistics on the dropout rates need to become more reliable.

4. Mediators continued to engage with these communities to reduce dropouts, especially in schools with a higher concentration of pupils from these communities. Access to civil registration continues to be a concern and needs to be ensured.

5. Kosovo needs to strengthen coordination and interinstitutional cooperation at central level and between central and local levels.
The authorities need to make better use of the expertise of the relevant civil society groups.

6. Adequate budget allocation is needed to make tangible progress in the implementation of the strategy and action plan. Allocating land in municipalities to returning Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities is crucial for their successful integration.

7. In general, Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities continue to face major challenges, notably difficult socio-economic circumstances, a lack of education, weak health care and discrimination. Regarding equal access to quality education, students from the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities have lower registration rates, higher dropout rates, and poor levels of academic performance. Statistics on the dropout rates need to become more reliable.

8. Realistic policy commitments on Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities beyond 2015 need to be developed.

9. House-to-house vaccination campaigns, treatment for lead contamination and information campaigns are used to address health inequalities for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians.

10. However, children from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities and children with disabilities continue to face limited access to quality education.

11. Overall, progress in the area of education has been slow. More efforts are needed to improve access to quality education for marginalised groups, including for children with disabilities and children from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities.
KOSOVO PROGRESS REPORT 2015

1. The protection of persons with disabilities and persons belonging to minorities, in particular the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, needs to be significantly strengthened.

2. The Technical Working Group for the Framework Convention on National Minorities was established but has only met once in June 2015. The Office of Community Affairs needs to take on a more robust role on minority policy, including on matters dealt with by the technical working group and the post-2015 policy for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians.

3. As regards the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, the 2009-2015 strategy and action plan for the integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities continued to be implemented. The government must demonstrate commitment in practice to continue developing and drafting credible, realistic and measurable post-2015 policy commitments. All relevant stakeholders, including civil society and members of parliament representing the three communities need to be involved and recommendations incorporated.

4. 12 municipalities adopted local action plans on the integration of the three communities. The learning centres have played a positive role in reducing the school drop-out rates. The Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities have the same access to healthcare services as other citizens and the Ministry of Community and Returns sets aside budget for housing. Members of these communities continue to face difficult living conditions, social exclusion and frequent discrimination, while child labour
and early marriages continue to be prevalent. Access to labour market is difficult and informal employment prevails. Active measures to include these communities in the job market need to be pursued.

5. Progress has been made with regard to solving registration problems for children and the government extended its assistance to the registration process to over 600 displaced Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians currently in Montenegro. In the absence of identity documents, Kosovo has yet to produce reliable data on its Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities.

6. The government continued actions to prevent early school leaving, particularly for children from the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. However, implementation of legislation on responding to non-enrolment and early school leaving needs to be further improved.
TOWARDS A NEW POLICY: STRATEGY 2016-2020

In both recent Kosovo Progress Reports (2014 and 2015), the European Commission explicitly calls upon the Government of Kosovo to prepare for measures in developing a new policy for the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. While the Progress Report 2014 demanded from the Kosovo Government that “realistic policies must be developed for the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities after 2015”.

The Kosovo Progress Report 2015 demanded more, and was even more explicit. This report required from the Government to “demonstrate commitment in practice to continue development and drafting of a more reliable, realistic and measurable policy after 2015. All relevant stakeholders, including civil society and Members of Parliament representing the three communities must be involved and their recommendations incorporated” and that “the Office for Community Affairs needs to assume a more powerful role in relation to minority policies, including issues related to the Technical Working Group and the post-2015 policy on the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities”.

On 12 November 2015, the Good Governance Office, in cooperation with the European Commission, held the “Seminar on the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Kosovo and wider – 2015 – Policies and commitments”. The seminar was attended by the Deputy Prime Minister Kujtim Shala and Marta Garcia Fidalgo, Roma Coordinator in the Directorate General for Neighbourhood Policy.
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and Enlargement Negotiations. The meeting was attended by 60 persons. The Seminar had two objectives. The first was to present the results of implementation of the Strategy, and the second was to initiate new engagement and policies that would be pursued upon expiry of the timeline of the prior Strategy. The conclusions of the Seminar stated that new policy engagements for the communities “should be more realistic, reliable and measurable by clear indicators and timelines.”\(^{27}\) Also, another emphasis was placed on the development and implementation of a plan of coordination and cooperation with line ministries and municipalities. The seminar had identified five challenges.

- Challenges in access to primary, secondary and higher education, and segregation at schools for the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities.
- Lack of proper qualification and discrimination as obstacles to the employment of members of these communities.
- Vaccination, early marriages and discrimination by medical staff.
- Informal settlements.
- Civil registration.

The conclusions of the Seminar had presented a table including a pledge for the new Strategy and Action Plan to be developed starting in December 2015, and finalized by April or May, while the publication of the new Strategy would be realized in the period June-September 2016.

DRAFT-STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN
2016-2020 FOR THE INCLUSION OF ROMA, ASHKALI AND EGYPTIAN COMMUNITIES

The Draft-Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2020 for the Inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities (hereinafter: New Strategy) was drafted in December 2015. For a difference from the Strategy 2009-2015, which had 11 sectors, the new Strategy prioritizes only four sectors. These are: a) education; b) employment and social issues; c) health care; and d) housing. The new Strategy draft states that the past Strategy was too ambitious, and consequently, planned activities were only “partially implemented due to insufficient financial and human resources, inappropriate determination of indicators, incomplete monitoring and reporting on activities, poor coordination between line ministries and between central and local institutions”.28

The new Strategy 2016-2020 states that institutional coordination must be strengthened together with supervision, and reporting methodology must be addressed for the municipal level.

According to the new Draft Strategy, the Office of Good Governance has made maximum efforts to consult representatives of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, their NGOs and MPs belonging to the communities. However, representatives of non-governmental organizations have complained that there has not been proper dissemination of information on meetings held at a regional level, and that there was insufficient consultation, especially at local levels. The Strategy development process was planned to occur in three phases. The first phase was planned for consultations with the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, NGOs working

with these communities at local and central levels, consultations
with Members of Parliament from the three communities, and
international organizations. In a second phase, workshops were
planned to elaborate further on the four objectives of the new
Strategy, and to open for public discussion the document, while the
third phase would involve its finalization.

In the OGG Report “Summary of Recommendations from Regional
Information Meetings on the new Strategy for the Roma, Ashkali and
Egyptian communities in Kosovo”, it is stated that in the first phase
of drafting the document, meetings were held in 29 municipalities
and 5 regions, including meetings in the region of Prizren (Prizren,
Suhareka, Rahovec, Malisheva and Mamusha), the region of Peja
(Deçan, Gjakova, Peja, Istog, Klina, Junik), region of Gjilan (Gjilan,
Kamenica, Ferizaj, Viti, Novobërda), region of Mitrovica (Mitrovica,
Podujeva, Vushtrri, Skenderaj, Leposaviq, Zveçan, Zubin Potok)
and the central level in Prishtina (Prishtinë, Lipjan, Fushë-Kosova,
Obiliq, Gracanica, Shtime). Also, during this phase, the OGG had
held meetings with the Members of Parliament representing the
Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities and the deputy ministers
coming from such communities.²⁹

A general comment before analysing the four thematic areas of
the new Strategy is the methodological inconsistency and lack
of clarity between the goals, objectives, activities and actions.
The objectives look like goals, while activities would be more of
a measure. Consequently, objectives are not simple, measurable,
achievable, geared towards a result within a designated timeline.
Also, it is clear that the health care and housing sectors have not

²⁹ OGG, Summary of Recommendations from Regional Information
Meetings on the new Strategy for the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in
been properly elaborated, and there are minimal activities and undetermined budget. For example, the whole housing sector, with its three objectives, is not financially covered. The four goals/sectors of the Strategy do not appropriately address gender issues and discrimination as inter-sectorial problems. Also, the developers of the new Strategy often mingle responsible and supporting institutions that must be involved with the development of the new Strategy. Lastly, but not least in relevance, indicators of timelines for implementation of activities of the Strategy are rather generalized, and are not limited in terms of reporting. For example, in time indicators for the new Strategy activities, there are indicators such as “2016-2018”, “2016-2020”, or “throughout the period”.

As stated above, there are four sectors in the new Strategy: education, employment and social welfare, health care and housing. The Housing sector has 4 objectives and 24 activities. The employment and social welfare has 3 objectives and 28 activities. The health sector has its 3 objectives and 4 activities. The housing sector provides on 3 objectives and 17 activities.
FINDINGS OF THE PLATFORM FROM THE ASSESSMENT OF THE DRAFT-STRATEGY

While the Office for Good Governance had committed itself to monitoring, evaluation and reporting on the outcomes of implementation of the Strategy 2009-2015, seven years after the adoption of the latter, OGG reports are neither conclusive nor periodical. Hence, for a proper process of drafting the new Strategy 2016-2020 to begin and complete, the groundwork would be a realistic, measurable and empirical assessment of what has been done, what are the impediments, what were the main obstacles to implementation of the prior Strategy. Based on “lessons learned” from the past Strategy, and a wider consultation of all stakeholders interested, and also a clear political will of the Government of Kosovo to deal with the problems of these communities, can the new Strategy begin to be drafted.

Despite the huge investment of all local and international stakeholders in producing a serious and acceptable document, the Strategy for the Integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities 2009-2015 was ultimately proven as inapplicable. While the new Draft Strategy states that the past strategy was too ambitious, in fact, the enforcement of internationally recognized standards for the protection and promotion of minority rights, with a special emphasis on the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, should not be viewed as an ambitious process, but as something achievable with the commitment of all stakeholders, and first and foremost the local and central institutions of the Republic of Kosovo responsible for rule of law for all equally.
In the workshop held on 13 and 14 April 2016, the Platform of non-governmental organizations working for the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, but other organizations as well, have addressed some of the main concerns related to the new Draft Strategy.

Below there is a list of 15 challenges identified in the workshop held on 13 and 14 April 2016:

1. Beneficiaries and civil society organizations lack the information on the new Draft Strategy.

2. There is no appropriate institutional communication between the OGG and the representatives of civil society organizations, while the OGG has not demonstrated willingness for transparency and accountability on the efforts made.

3. There has not been sufficient information on meetings held by the Good Governance Office in discussing the new Draft Strategy 2016-2020.

4. NGOs that have attended such meetings have emphasized that their comments and recommendations have not been sufficiently incorporated in the new Draft Strategy.

5. Each of the four Strategy areas has been developed in a rather short period: almost every thematic area was elaborated within two days only.

6. There were no consultations with the beneficiaries and civil society organizations on the budgeting of the activities of the New Strategy.
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7. In the budgeting process for the new Strategy activities, municipalities were not consulted for a proper planning and allocation of sufficient budget lines for the implementation of designated activities.

8. The drafting the new Strategy has not taken into consideration the lessons learned from the past Strategy, while the new document also does not consider the remarks of reports by international and local organizations, like UNICEF, OSCE etc.

9. Objectives and activities are not concrete.

10. There are no budget allocations to each action, for the duration and costs of each activity to be clear. The budget is usually planned as total for all actions, thereby rendering impossible the reporting process on the progress made, but also rendering later reports inefficient.

11. There are activities that already exist beyond the Strategy, such as e.g. Teacher Development Programs, and therefore, such activities do not need to be included in the new Strategy. For example, activity 1.2 of the first objective, in the Education Sector, should be deleted from the draft. Also, activity 1.4 “Provision of Reintegration programs for Diaspora children” in the education Sector must be removed from the draft, due to the fact that the program does exist already, and is foreseen in the repatriation strategy.

12. Before needs assessment for activities in the four Strategy Sectors, a prior needs assessment must be conducted for whole sectors. For example, in the employment sector, before needs
assessment, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare should conduct an information campaign for the registration of all Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian jobseekers, and design a database for registering these community members separately.

13. Objectives, activities and measures in the health sector are more of an informational and awareness raising nature. There should be a provision for the members of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, for the diseases that cannot be treated inside the country, for them to be provided with financial support for treatment abroad. Total budgeting for health care in the new Strategy is not properly calculated. For example, the whole sector, for 5 years, has been covered with an amount of 21 thousand Euros. There is no activity in terms of secondary and tertiary health care.

14. In the housing sector also, there are uncertainties in terms of activities. There are no activities related to the legalization of properties, and if returns are mentioned, no activity is planned for. Furthermore, the whole fourth sector, namely the housing sector, is not budgeted at all.

15. Overall, budgeting of activities is minimalistic and unrealistic.
RECOMMENDATIONS:

GENERAL:

1. Objectives, activities, means of verification and the budget for the implementation of the New Strategy 2016-2020 must be specified. While the new Strategy 2016-2020 clearly demonstrates the commitment and engagements of the Government of Kosovo to institutionally address the aggravated socio-economic conditions of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, in the existing form, the strategy still remains far from an acceptable standard.

2. Despite the fact that six months have already passed in 2016, and a considerable number of activities, actions and measures are planned for completion in 2016, the timeline of the Strategy for Integration of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Kosovo (2016-2020) must be extended for another year, because the Strategic Planning Office will not be able to approve the Strategy budget for 2016. The title and timeline recommended by the civil society representatives of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities would be “Strategy for Inclusion of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Kosovo, 2017-2021”.

3. Line ministries must assume a key role in reviewing and finally developing the four areas in the Action Plan.

4. Since the Draft Strategy for Inclusion of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Kosovo (2016-2020) was drafted in a very short period, and without sufficient and inclusive consultation of all stakeholders and without consulting beneficiaries, the
Government of Kosovo, in cooperation with international organizations, civil society organizations and experts engaged, we must build a plan for communications, inclusion, consultation and expertise in the months of January-December 2016, for the new Strategy to be a legitimate and acceptable document for the beneficiaries, with its goals, objectives, activities, actions and clear and concise budgeting, deriving from a proper and inclusive drafting process.

5. The main responsibility for the coordination of implementation, monitoring and reporting must be taken by the Office for Community Affairs. A concrete plan must be in place for inter-departmental cooperation and coordination between line ministries on one hand, and between central authorities and municipalities, on the other.

6. In a view of constructing a collaborative institutional relationship between the Office for Community Affairs and civil society organizations’ Platform, namely the network of civil society organizations working with the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, both parties would need to sign a Memorandum of Understanding, by which the parties would provide on the pathways of cooperation and coordination in drafting the new Strategy. In the same spirit, the European Commission Progress Report 2015 for Kosovo underlined that “All relevant stakeholders, including civil society and members of parliament representing the three communities need to be involved and recommendations incorporated”. This cooperation line may also enjoy the support of the EU funded Project “Kosovo Education and Employment Network - KEEN”.

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7. The Office for Community Affairs must compel the municipalities to develop their local action plans. Meanwhile, municipalities that have approved their action plans must revise the same for compliance with the new Strategy.

SPECIFIC:

In the further drafting process for the new strategy:

1. Non-discrimination and gender equality should be streamlined into all sectors and areas of the Strategy. There should be further specification of the objectives, activities and expected outcomes, and means of verification of activities must be diversified. The duration of such activities should be specified in strict deadlines. All actions as listed in the four areas of the new Strategy must be separately budgeted for. Each activity should have specified financial costs and precise duration.

2. Activity budgeting must be precisely elaborated, and not in assumptions. This process must be led by line ministries in cooperation with the municipalities, and the latter must allocate specific budget lines for completing activities planned with the new Strategy.

3. Since the new Strategy is a affirmative strategic document, the activities, programs and measures already in existence and completed by responsible institutions must not be included in the new Strategy. This may include e.g. Teacher Training Programs, or provision of reintegration problems for Diaspora children.
4. A monitoring, evaluation and reporting system must be in place between the central and local government authorities. The establishment of an online reporting system would improve the communication.

5. Municipalities of Kosovo must be directly involved in developing the new Strategy, while the Mayors of Municipalities must ensure the implementation of the Strategy at the municipal level.
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An EU funded project “Kosovo Education and Employment Network – KEEN” is implemented by a coalition led by Kosova Education Center (KEC) in partnership with Employment and Promotion Agency in Kosovo (APPK), Balkan Sunflowers Kosova (BSFK), Academy for Training and Technical Assistance (ATTA) and Stichting SPARK.

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DREJT NJË POLITIKE TË RE

STRATEGJIA PËR GJITHPËRFSHIRJEN TË KOMUNITETEVE ROM, ASHKALI DHE EGJIPTIAN NË KOSOVË

2016-2020