

Poznan Summit: Declaration of Western Balkans Partners on Roma Integration within the EU Enlargement Process



On July 3 until July 5, the Summit of the Western Balkan Countries was held in Poznan, Poland. In this summit were covered topics in different areas of cooperation between the Western Balkan countries. Among other things, also the Regional Cooperation Council - RCC on Roma Integration 2020, organized a panel at this summit and presented the "Declaration of Western Balkans Partners on Roma Integration within the EU Enlargement Process: From Words to Actions". This statement is a new energy and a new commitment to regional co-operation and the EU perspective. In this summit were also as participants the government officials and civil society representatives from each of Western Balkan states, including Kosovo.

The main points of the statement are as follows:

We, the Prime Ministers of the Western Balkans, reiterate our commitment for integration of Roma in our societies and pledge to step up our efforts as part of the European Union enlargement process and regional cooperation.

Hereby adopt the Declaration of Western Balkans Partners on Roma Integration within the EU Enlargement Process by which we make a commitment to continue and enhance efforts for full equality and integration of Roma, notably through implementation and follow up to the Joint Conclusions of the Roma Seminars, as follows:

1. Pledge to the achievement of the following objectives:

- a. Employment: Increase the employment rate of Roma in the public sector to the rate proportional of the participation of Roma in the overall population; Increase the employment rate among Roma to at least 25 per cent;
- b. Housing: Wherever possible, legalize all informal settlements where Roma live; or provide permanent, decent, affordable and desegregated housing for Roma currently living in informal settlements that cannot be legalized for justified reasons;
- c. Education: Increase the enrolment and completion rate of Roma in primary education to 90 per cent and the enrolment and completion rate of Roma in secondary education to 50 per cent;
- d. Health: Ensure universal health insurance coverage among Roma of at least 95 per cent or to the rate equal to the rest of the population;
- e. Civil registration: ensure all Roma are registered in the civil registries.
- f. Non-discrimination: Strengthen the government structures to protect against discrimination and establish a specific sub-division for non-discrimination of Roma within the formal non-discrimination bodies to process complaints by Roma, provide legal support to alleged victims and identify discrimination schemes, including institutional and hidden discrimination;

2. Undertake to use the available data (including the results of the 2017 Western Balkans Regional Roma Survey) to formulate evidence-based policies for integration of Roma, and commit to establish proper mechanism for monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the Roma policies, including data relevant to measure the achievements of the objectives set forth in this Declaration;

3. Ensure to strengthen and support the National Roma Contact Points as a comprehensive mechanism for coordination and implementation of the objectives agreed within this Declaration;

4. Agree to develop, adopt and implement regional standards on public budgeting related to Roma integration for mainstream and targeted policies, use and increase the public budgeting, both central and local, reaching Roma communities to achieve the abovementioned objectives, use available donor funding, including Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance, to advance the status of Roma;

5. Commit to establish formal channels and mechanisms for joint involvement of the local governments and the Roma communities in the formulation of policy, decision making, implementation and monitoring of the efforts undertaken to achieve the objectives of this Declaration.

Each of the parties will observe this Declaration until the date of becoming a member state of the European Union.

The full Declaration is published in the link as follows: <https://www.rcc.int/docs/464/declaration-of-western-balkans-partners-on-roma-integration-within-the-eu-enlargement-process>

20th anniversary of the founding of Balkan Sunflowers

On July 02, it was the 20th anniversary of the founding of Balkan Sunflowers in Kosovo. To celebrate this anniversary, an event was organized with guests who were BSF contributors, donors, institutions, employees and volunteers during these 20 years. BSF achievements were displayed during the event.

Balkan Sunflowers over the past 20 years, has had about hundreds of projects, starting with the film and video program in Peja and Plemetina, where most of the young people who have been part of this program, today have good positions in the industry.

In addition, an important part of the Balkan Sunflowers in Kosova are advocacy campaigns, where through various projects over these years BSFK has been continuously active with advocacy campaigns in the areas of inclusion in social services, employment, early childhood education, learning center programs, spaces public, environmental protection and art.

One of the main BSFK programs is the Learning Centers Network (LCN) which supports children's success at school, in their family and in their community through an integrated education and development program in a caring and safe environment. These learning centers reach the presence of approximately 610 children daily in all 4 municipalities that they are present. During 2007-2019, about 1710 children participated in the BSFK preschool programs at 6 Learning Centers. The BSFK staff helped about 635 young people enroll in high schools. The BSFK served 1.5 million meals to the children attending the LCN activities. Education materials were provided once a month to about 600 children in the Learning Centers.

The Mediators program is also a very successful program, where the Mediators are trained by education experts. While belonging to the communities in the neighborhood where they work, they have easier access to the families for any issue, other than any institutional employees. The main tasks of the mediators are: ensuring that children are enrolled in school, preventing school drop out, identifying problems that the students may face in relation to their schooling and implementing corrective actions, as well as mediating between families, schools and municipal administrations. Approximately 10,000 people have benefited from this program

Balkan Sunflowers Kosovo will continue to work and positively impact the lives of marginalized groups.



The Summer Program of Balkan Sunflowers Kosova

The summer program of Balkan Sunflowers Kosovo is being held in its 12th edition this year. It was attended by hundreds of children on a daily basis in the 5 centers of the learning centers network. As part of each summer camp also during this year's summer program are planned, many tours and visits of institution, objects and monuments of particular importance.

Some of the topics that were being developed during the summer program which started on July 8 and will end on August 2 are Hunting Games, Recycling, Living Things, My Feelings and Art, Sport and Music, and so on.



Last year a record number of children, over 820, benefited from the summer program, and we intend to break that record this year.

Distribution of certificates for volunteer work and closing of the Change-Makers Camp”



During the Change-Makers Camp, the Minister, USAID Kosovo Economic Development Office Director Brian Martalus, Deputy Director of the Kosovo Education Center Program - KEC Luljeta Demjaha and TOKA Executive Director Jehona Gjurgjeala, met the Campers of Camp "Change - Makers "for the ceremony of awarding certificates for the volunteer work they have done during the camp.

Furthermore, the spaces of the schools "Skënderbeu" and "Dëshmorët e Kombit" in Kamenica are equipped with lockers and seating for reading corner and classes, thanks to our campers and we take pride in them.

In the ending of the camp, the campers were thrilled by the unforgettable experience that this camp offered them. They socialized, played, learned, worked as volunteers and contributed to society with their help.

We wish them that they have many more successes in the future!

Camp Change - Makers is funded by the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport and the After School Support for Teens (ASSET), which is funded by USAID Kosovo and implemented by the Kosovo Education Center (KEC) in partnership with FHI 360 and Crimson Capital Corp.

Summer camp 2019 in Prizren



From July 8 to July 12, 2019, in Prizren has been organized the summer camp 2019 for the student. In the summer camp 2019 were involved children from the Municipality of Prizren and that of Suhareka. There were 110 participants in the summer camp 2019.

The camp is organized for different categories of vulnerable children aiming to promote and support their well-being through psychosocial and recreational activities, which are realized through games by partner organizations.

This activity was implemented in the framework of the project "Safe Child Protection Network - Phase III" which is supported by the Terre des hommes Foundation and implemented by the NGO "Durmish Aslano" in partnership with the NGO Nevo Concept. The children from "Drita" schools in Gelance and "Vaso Pasha Shkodrani" schools in Leshan from PROSPECT project were also participants in the Summer Camp of 2019.

The Assembly of Children from Prizren visits the Assembly of Children in Ferizaj



On July 10, 2019 the Municipal Assembly of the Children of Prizren have visited the Municipal Assembly of the Children in Ferizaj.

At this meeting the children shared their experiences of working as assembly members in the respective municipalities, the challenges that they face and the successes that they have achieved in their functioning as a body that works to protect the children's rights.

The assembly members from the Municipality of Prizren also met with the Director of Education of the Municipality of Ferizaj, who showed them the work of this directorate in regards to the protection of children's rights.

Issues that were discussed during this meeting were topics for the research being carried out by AKF-Prizren, on how to address cases of violation of children's rights, identification of problems that their peers are facing and other issues related to children's rights.

'Grow with Love' campaign

The "Grow with Love" campaign is organized by Syri i Vizionit in partnership with Save the Children Office in Kosovo, and in cooperation with the Commission on Human Rights, Gender Equality, Missing Persons and Petitions. For the support of the campaign, the citizens, children, members of civil society and MPs marched from the Kosovo Assembly to Zahir Pajaziti Square demanding the fast adoption of the Law on the Protection of Children's Rights.

The Campaign to Stop the Corporal Punishment of Children and Violence Against Children "Grow with Love" was organized in the framework of the thematic program in the field of child protection and governance of children's rights "Our Obligation for the Future - Child



Protection and the Governance of Child Rights” which is implemented by the organization Syri i Vizionit, in partnership with Save the Children the office in Kosovo.

The purpose of this campaign is to raise awareness of parents and adults about the consequences of corporal punishment and the use of violence and the use of slippers for punishment against children, as a very common phenomenon in family settings.

Informational campaigns in neighborhoods

During the month of July, within the framework of the KFOS funded project Prospect + which is implemented by "Syri i Vizionit" in the neighborhood "7 Shtatori" in Peja and "Vitomiric", information campaigns for vocational training on social welfare and employment were held by going house to house in the neighborhoods of Roma, Egyptian and Ashkali communities.



Summer camp and training for students



From July 19 to July 22, 2019, Roma Versitas Kosova has organized trainings in the areas of Advocacy, Motivation, Student Activism and Volunteering.

The training was held in Durres at Hotel Scampa where 35 students from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities attended training sessions.

During these three days, other activities were held at the summer camp in Albania, such as a debate, and all activities were related to the training topics.

Moreover, students have had the opportunity to get to know each other and establish contacts with students from other centers in other cities of Kosovo, where new opportunities for cooperation between students have been created.

KOMF Press Conference



On July 17, a press conference was held where KOMF called on the institutions responsible for the case of the 11 year old's murder in the municipality of Fushë Kosovë.

A coalition of the NGOs for the Protection of Children, KOMF, a part of which are also several KOSINT 2020 network organizations, organized a press conference at the Sirius Hotel starting at 10:00 am.

The purpose of the conference was to provide information on the recent murder of a minor child in the municipality of Fushë Kosovë, a child belonging to the non majority community living in Kosovo.

KOMF provided information to police that the victim had signs of violence and that the child had been abused before. The case of violence was previously reported to the authorities, but safety measures by the institution have not been sufficient in this case.

KOMF also calls on the Kosovo Police Inspectorate to investigate whether the police have committed negligence and the state prosecution to investigate this case.

Summer Camps 2019 by VoRAE

NGO Vorae Ngo Kosovo also this year has started the summer camps where for two consecutive years it has brought together young people from all communities across Kosovo from the age group of 15-24.

These camps aim is to give these young people the opportunity to get to know each other and share different experiences, and also to socialize and create friendships through different games.

Every year Summer Camps are held in different locations where this year they are being held in Germia Park. In this camp young people will be led by project supervisors and volunteers.

During the two day stay in these camps the topic for "Conflict Resolution" was discussed. Inclusive games and activities were organized from this topic for the purpose of solidarity and avoidance of conflicts starting from the younger generations and onwards.

The beauty of all this activity is because they were getting to know each other's cultures depending on which community they come from.

The first group was from Prizren and Gjakova, the second group was from Peja and Istog, and the third group was from Ferizaj, Lipjan and Fushe Kosova.

This activity is funded by HDI and implemented by NGO - VoRAE



The Ideas Partnership organizon kampin veror 2019

For the second year in a row, The Ideas Partnership has organized a summer camp whose educational and fun activities are offered to about 100 children of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities from

Fushë Kosovë. The aim of the camp is to promote equal rights, develop psychosocial skills, socialize and raise awareness about caring for nature. For five consecutive days, participating children had the opportunity to attend activities planned by our animators, staff and volunteers at various locations in the Prishtina region.

The organization of the summer camp for the second year in a row was made possible thanks to the co-operation and generous funding from the Terre des hommes Kosovo organization.



Elizabeth Gowing and How much work are rewarded for active citizenship

The co-founder of The Ideas Partnership, Elizabeth Gowing, was awarded the Active Citizen Award at the "For the Good" ceremony organized by Mentor Dida in Pristina in July.

Mrs. Gowing is honored for her charity work in Kosovo with a focus on "How much work" social business, employing 10 women from different communities coming from marginalized and rural groups in Kosovo.

The award honors the work and contribution of Ms. Gowing and on "How much work" women in active citizenship in Kosovo.



Two day training for Entrepreneurship



In the beginning of July, two day training for youth of Rahovec Municipality was held in SHL-Kosova.

Kosovo Center for Business Support (KCBS) delivered two day of Entrepreneurship training.

The youth from SHL-Kosovo received important information from this organization for drawing up a business plan and on the second day the youth presented their ideas for business plan.

Creative ideas with the help of KCBS will be transformed into a project and this project will be able to win grants for establishing a new business for the youth of Rahovec Municipality.

Upon completion of this training the youth were also certified.