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Platform – 2022-2023” Project



MINISTRY OF INTERIOR

Closing Study

Hungarian National Roma Platform



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Table of contents

I.	Introduction.....	3
II.	The framework of the social inclusion policy in Hungary.....	4
II.1.	The Hungarian National Social Inclusion Strategy 2030.....	5
II.2.	Human Resource Development Operational Programme Plus (HRDOP Plus) - Social inclusion development projects priority.....	7
II.3.	The inclusion policy coordination forums currently operating in Hungary.....	9
II.3.1.	National level coordinating mechanisms.....	9
II.3.2.	Regional level coordinating forums.....	11
III.	Hungarian National Roma Platform.....	13
III.1.	Antecedents: 2016-2021.....	13
III.2.	Reinforcement of the Hungarian National Roma Platform – 2022-2023 project.....	14
III.2.1.	The techniques and process of the consultation.....	15
III.2.2.	The invitees.....	16
III.2.3.	Selection of venues.....	17
III.2.4.	Identification of the moderator and the speakers.....	17
III.2.5.	Setting themes and agenda items.....	19
III.2.6.	Dates and venues of events.....	20
III.2.7.	National and international event.....	20
IV.	Opinions and policy recommendations recorded during the greater county events and the implementation of the project.....	21

I. Introduction

The Deputy State Secretariat for Social Inclusion of the Ministry of Interior has – in its capacity as National Roma Contact Point – is implementing a Roma Platform project since 2016, with the help of funding awarded under the direct application scheme operated by the European Commission for the Member States' Roma Contact Points.

The project entitled “*Reinforcement of the Hungarian National Roma Platform – 2022-2023*”, implemented between 1 January 2022 and 30 December 2023 was aimed at extending – in a territorial term, to the greater county levels – the professional coordination systems of Hungary's social inclusion policy and at promoting and generating social inclusion policy dialogue, enabling a further increase in the number of occasions for consultation facilitating territorial cooperation.

Consultation forums are operating continuously at a national and – on the basis of local programmes for equal opportunities – a local level in the social inclusion policy system, which need to be further developed and extended to the district and greater county level. Extensive consultations contribute to the development of cooperation and synergies between organisations and provide us with feedback on experience and lessons drawn from the implementation of the strategy and the functioning of the inclusion services and programmes.

Three Roma platform events were organised in each of five greater counties – *Baranya, Békés, Somogy, Pest, Győr-Moson-Sopron* – in the framework of the project, reaching out to every single district of each county, including their local state, church and civil society organisations. It is our pleasure to report that greater county level organisations – assemblies, greater county Roma minority governments – were represented on each occasion at a high level, indicating that they attach particular importance to the project's objectives, because these organisations play a key role in sustaining the project's achievements and in consolidating and strengthening cooperation and networking.

The topics discussed at the event were aligned to the intervention areas and actions of the Hungarian National Social Inclusion Strategy 2030 and in response to the specifics of the given region's social inclusion policy (e.g. regional and municipality disadvantages, that is, the beneficiary districts, towns and villages, as well as the locations of good practices). The provision of information and consultation regarding topical policy issues played a particularly important role at the events, therefore we discussed the development projects planned to be undertaken in the context of the Human Resources Development Operational Programme Plus scheme and during the 2021-2027 period along with current application possibilities as well as social inclusion policy events and news.

More than 90 professionals delivered presentations or participated in roundtable discussions at the 15 greater county events. Consultations at policy and practical level were conducted concerning early childhood and childhood programmes, out-of-school and holiday programmes, educational and college programmes, higher education and Roma Special College programmes, small village and district programmes, Roma pastoration and Roma identity, cooperation between municipal governments and Roma minority governments, the long-term programme entitled “Emerging Settlements” as well as achievements and challenges involving the specific field of catching-up.

In addition to defining the National Roma Platform’s regional coordination system, this study features a summary of the body of experience accumulated during meetings and conclusions drawn at a regional or local level from development projects aimed at promoting inclusion. Moreover, we outline below the framework of the inclusion policy and its already operating coordination forums, the implementation of the National Roma Platform application scheme, the participants of the Roma Platform project, and discuss the results and the relevant proposals.

II. The framework of the social inclusion policy in Hungary

Social inclusion policy is an inter-branch field comprising child welfare, social, educational, labour market, health, housing, regional development and anti-discriminatory elements. The professionals and specialists, as well as organisations, participating in the National Roma platform events also came from a variety of special areas, each of which is directly or indirectly linked to the social inclusion policy measures. Nonetheless, to lay down a foundation for the dialogue it was necessary to present the national and European strategies of social inclusion policy together with the planning and development processes based on those strategies.

One particularly important objective of the National Roma platform events was to reach out to the widest possible range of people and to review and integrate opinions and proposals in the planning of the development projects in the process of working out the associated strategies and measures, in order to promote thereby the utilisation of the bottom-up initiatives and experiences in the context of social inclusion policy programmes and services and to contribute to the involvement of persons of the target group in planning and in the evaluation of policy processes.

In that context, the Hungarian National Social Inclusion Strategy 2030, completed in 2021, was introduced and its action plan were presented followed up with consultation conducted on the Human Resources Operational Programme Plus (whose planning process partly coincided with the Platform events series) and on the development schemes being planned in connection with it.

II.1. The Hungarian National Social Inclusion Strategy 2030

The implementation of the HNSIS II ended in 2020. The new Hungarian National Social Inclusion Strategy 2030 (hereinafter referred to as “HNSIS”) and its action plan for 2021-2024 was adopted and announced in the summer of 2021.¹

The objectives of the HNSIS have been worked out relying on the results achieved during the past ten years, the established inclusion policy institution system, the adopted system of policy instruments, factoring in social problems entailed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Key objectives include poverty alleviation and reduction of inequalities between the living conditions of the Roma and non-Roma population regarding the most important poverty and social mobility indicators.

The basic principle underlying the social inclusion strategy is that labour market integration, social inclusion and the associated human services and the strengthening of the possibilities of social mobility should benefit and enhance the welfare, of society as a whole, by facilitating the convergence of disadvantaged groups, including the Roma population. Particular emphasis is laid in interventions on the regional and municipal level closest to the problems to be solved, based on direct and intensive presence and participation of helping professionals.

The objectives of the strategy are essentially the same as those laid down in the first inclusion strategy of 2011, in line with the plans concerning the use of the structural funds and the objectives of the associated strategic documents.

The indicator of the number/ratio of those exposed to the risk of poverty or social exclusion is still the key indicator of the strategy, along with component ratios such as

- the ratio of those living in relative income poverty,
- the ratio of those living in households with very low work intensity and
- the proportion of those living in severe social and material deprivation.

The most important indicator of the HNSIS is the ratio of people living in social and material deprivation, and the most comprehensive objective of the strategy is to achieve a 10 percentage point reduction in this ratio among households with children (focusing specifically on Roma families) by 2030.

¹ Government Decision 1605/2021 (VIII. 18.) on the Adoption of the Hungarian National Social Inclusion Strategy 2030

The HNSIS specifies courses of actions in as many as nine intervention areas:

- *B.1. Birth and childhood*
- *B.2. Public education, vocational training and higher education system – from pre-school to university*
- *B.3. Youth matters, decision to have children, starting a family, way of life*
- *B.4. Employment, working, adult training, social economy*
- *B.5. Territorial inequalities, municipal development – housing and energy poverty – environmental awareness, environmental protection*
- *B.6. Bodily and mental health, healthcare*
- *B.7. Roma identity, community building, awareness raising, law enforcement*
- *B.8. The institution system dedicated to the implementation of the Strategy, Hungarian-Carpathian Basin partnership*
- *B.9. Follow-up on, and monitoring of, the Strategy*

Climate change related challenges and matters of mental health, information society and cross-border cooperation programmes appear in the new HNSIS as new themes, and more pronounced areas, in comparison with the intervention areas of the previous document.

A monitoring system has been put in place to keep tracks of the implementation and the social impacts of the strategic goals and the tasks prescribed in the action plan. This involves the system of indicators of the HNSIS, the administrative framework required for monitoring and the system of reporting on the programmes, along with the independent (impact) studies on the implementation of the inclusion actions. The HNSIS system of goals and indicators is related – in terms of the key objectives – to the objectives laid down in the earlier Europe 2020 Strategy and the action plan up to 2025 of the European Pillar of Social Rights. The relevant determined contributions also appear in the most important indicators.

Other main indicators are also used in monitoring the interventions and actions in line with the priorities of the HNSIS and the specifics of the problems. One fundamental prerequisite for the calculation of the indicators is the availability of the input data from research, surveys and administrative databases. A variety of difficulties have to be tackled in this regard stemming from the nature of social problems where carefully designed large scale surveys are required with facilities to adequately respond to special complications in data collection (including the identification of such social groups, their accessibility and traceability) to learn about the major factors relating to the living conditions, income positions and livelihoods of the most disadvantaged social groups.

II.2. Human Resource Development Operational Programme Plus (HRDOP Plus) - Social inclusion development projects priority

One of the objectives of the National Roma platform events implemented in 2022 and 2023 was to provide information on the development projects planned to be carried out during the 2021-2027 period and on the underlying strategic and planning documents. Based on the thematic areas of the National Roma platform the Human Resource Development Operational Programme Plus social inclusion development projects priority was presented to the participants on each of the 15 occasions.

Reducing the poverty of families with children:

- integrated district children's programmes;
- creation of new Biztos Kezdet Gyerekházak (Sure Start Children's Houses) to facilitate early childhood social inclusion;
- improvement of and support for the infrastructure of already operating Sure Start Children's Houses and Tanoda (Study Hall) financed from the national budget.

Enhancing opportunities in education:

- carrying on with preschool opportunity creation programmes facilitating the prevention of disadvantages in education and at starting capability development at the earliest possible age (human development projects);
- establishing new Study Hall (Tanoda) to enhance opportunities (increase chances for) for studies after primary school (human and infrastructure development projects);
- reducing drop-out rates among Roma girls (without acquiring qualifications) by boosting motivation for learning, including by providing scholarship and by improving the chances for continued studies with the involvement of their families (human development projects);
- prevention programmes in college environment (human and infrastructure development projects);
- improvements in the quality of Roma Boarding School services (e.g. by preparing secondary school students for higher education, by extending the universities' international relationships with foreign higher education institutions, by facilitating students of special colleges gathering international experience (human development projects);
- development and improvement of community service spaces for social inclusion, to provide services based on standardised professional criteria (human development projects).

Strengthening the employability of disadvantaged people:

- supporting complex training and lifelong learning;

- enhancing opportunities for public employees for finding jobs in the primary labour market.

Supporting the employment of disadvantaged people:

- training embedded in employment for Roma people: individuals severely disadvantaged from the aspect of employment are employed with subsidy on a temporary basis and are provided with supported training and individual personalised assistance;
- improvement of the chances in the labour market of disadvantaged persons of working age and supporting their employment via pilot programmes implementing complex human and infrastructure development projects;
- strengthening of social reintegration.

Improvement of the situation of people living in segregation, by complex programmes:

- social integration of people living in segregation, improvement of their housing conditions;
- implementation of human and infrastructure interventions in a coordinated and integrated manner.

Cooperation mechanisms and policy development schemes strengthening social inclusion:

- National and regional level coordination, provision of standardised professional and methodology support and ensuring follow-up to enable successful implementation of social inclusion projects;
- supporting gap-filling research projects focusing on disadvantaged groups, extension of domestic and regional partnership.

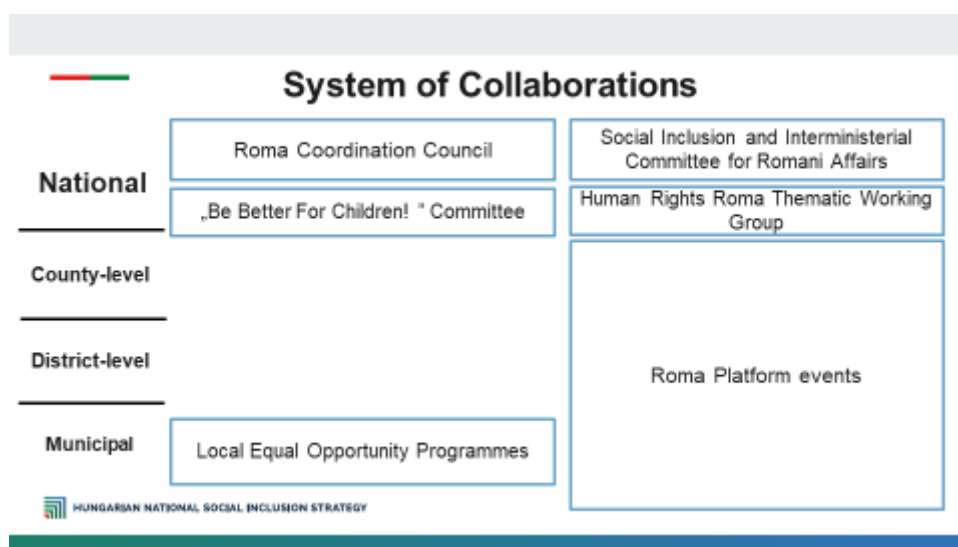
The programme implemented under the **Swiss-Hungarian Cooperation Programme** was presented at the National Roma platform events. The purpose of the programme entitled “Improving digital accessibility and digital literacy for disadvantaged groups” is to improve the digital literacy of disadvantaged groups – including the Roma community – which will help improve the employability of the adult working age population, encourage adult learning aiming at social inclusion and improve access to jobs in technological environments requiring information and communication technologies (ICT).

As a result of the programme those in need, involved in the programme, including Roma people, will be able to make a better use of on-line opportunities and services which will enhance their social inclusion and their roles and improve their relations with the authorities, plus, as an added benefit, the use of on-line services will make their everyday lives easier.

At least 70% of the programme must be implemented in the economically disadvantaged Northern Great Plain, Northern Hungary and Southern Transdanubia regions.

Social inclusion institutions and services, as well as civil society organisations, with strong local embeddedness (Study Hall, Sure Start Children’s House, , “Jó kis hely” (“Good Place to be”), Jelenlét Pont, Csillagpont, Csillagház, Közösségi Ház (Social Inclusion Community Centers), , Roma Boarding School) other civil society organisations with strong local embeddedness) will be able to submit applications.

II.3. The inclusion policy coordination forums currently operating in Hungary



One of the basic principles of the inclusion policy is “nothing about us without us”, therefore the Government implements the social inclusion actions in extensive partnerships, thus emphasising that the cause of inclusion is a national cause. The target groups – including representatives of the Roma community – actively participate in every phase of the elaboration, implementation and supervision of the relevant policies. This is crucial not only because municipalities, national minority governments, civil society organisations, charity and church organisations are indispensable components of democratic processes, but also because they have immense capacities, they can flexibly respond to the needs and requirements of society and can help communities to become capable of autonomous functioning. This is why there is a specific need for strengthening Roma civil society organisations and involving them in decision making, implementation and controlling.

II.3.1. National level coordinating mechanisms

- **Inter-Ministerial Committee for Social Inclusion and Roma Affairs** – on the basis of Government Decision 1199/2010 (IX. 29.) on the Establishment of the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Social Inclusion and Roma Affairs.

To improve the living conditions and social statuses, and to coordinate governmental activities aimed at promoting the social inclusion, of Roma and other permanently deprived people, the Government set up the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Social Inclusion and Roma Affairs (IMCSIRA). The aim is to ensure that the actions and measures taken by the various ministries mutually strengthen one another, the public funds dedicated to helping municipalities emerge are effectively utilised and the HNSIS is as fully integrated in the various policies as possible. The operation of the Committee guarantees that enabling equal opportunities in accessing public services, the improvement of the social situations of people with low levels of qualifications and living in unfit housing conditions in disadvantaged regions and their training, and provision with jobs, are dealt with among the most important governmental issues. The State Secretary for Social Care Policies of the Ministry of Interior is the Committee's President, while its members include representatives of the competent ministries, the HCSO and the Government Commissioner for the Development of Modern Settlements. The IMCSIRA holds its meetings as often as necessary, at least twice a year. A policy and monitoring working group has been set up within the Committee to promote the implementation of the HNSIS and the action plan.

- **Let it be better for Children! Evaluation Committee** – pursuant to Government Decision 1053/2008 (VIII. 4.)

Based on Parliamentary Resolution 47/2007 (V. 31.) OGY on the “Making Things Better for our Children” National Strategy 2007-2032, the Government has set up the “Making Things Better for our Children”. A National Strategy Evaluation Committee comprising specialists delegated by the government, churches, professional and civil society organisations. The Committee is tasked with monitoring the implementation of the strategy, developing the monitoring system further as well as the indicators used in measuring children living in poor families, and analysing the data. The organisation composed of 33 members, meeting twice a year, is joined by permanent invitees in an advisory capacity.

- **Roma Coordination Council** – pursuant to Government Decision 1102/2011 (IV. 15.)

To develop and implement actions aimed at promoting the social inclusion of the Roma population and to enable opinions to be voiced regarding their results the Government has set up the Roma Coordination Council, a body meeting at least twice a year. The 33 members of the Council include representatives of national civil society organisations selected on the basis of applications, districts to be developed through complex programmes, county-level Roma self-governments of greater counties with substantial Roma populations and of churches, and its permanent invitees include, inter alia, the presidents of the Equal Treatment Authority, the Hungarian Central Statistical Office and the Parliament's Cultural and Public Welfare Committees. The tasks of the Council include drawing attention to problems complicating measures aimed at facilitating social inclusion; commenting on proposals for actions as well as domestic and international reports, preparing proposals, participation in the development of

professional networks promoting social inclusion, participation in the evaluation of the impacts of tasks relating to the promotion of the social integration of the Roma community and, consequently, in the monitoring and regular revision, of the implementation of the HNSIS. To broaden the scope of the Council's work thematic policy bodies were set up in 2017 in the areas of employment, education and child welfare, housing, the Roma culture, regional development and Roma pastoring.

- **Human Rights Working Group** – Roma Thematic Working Group – pursuant to Government Decision 1039/2012 (II.22.)

Its main task is to monitor the enforcement of human rights in Hungary and, to this end, conduct consultations with various organisations as well as facilitate professional communication. Its members include state secretaries of ministries in charge of functions of relevance to human rights, while it is chaired by the Parliamentary State Secretary of the Ministry of Justice. The working group is operating a Human Rights Roundtable for consultations with civil society, advocacy, professional and constitutional organisations monitoring and analysing the enforcement of human rights in Hungary as well as to prepare recommendations regarding issues of relevance. Members of the Roundtable include those of the Working Group, the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights, the President of the Equal Treatment Authority, the President of the National Authority for Data Protection and Freedom of Information and delegates of invited constitutional and civil rights organisations. The Thematic Working Group Responsible for Roma Affairs – comprising representatives of civil society and governmental organisations – is chaired by the State Secretary for Social Care Policies.

II.3.2. Regional level coordinating forums

- **Local coordinating forums – Local Equal Opportunities Programme**

The implementation of the inclusion policy at a local level is facilitated by the “local programmes for equal opportunities” (hereinafter referred to as “LPEO”). Under the act on equal treatment and the promotion of equal opportunities² municipal governments are required to adopt, and revise once every two years, local programmes for promoting equal opportunities. Since 1 July 2013 a municipality may be eligible for EU and Hungarian funds only if it has an effective equal opportunities programme in place, as stipulated in the act.

A new system for the preparation of the Local Programmes for Equal Opportunities (hereinafter referred to as “LPEO”) was introduced in 2013 as a local pillar of social inclusion policy. Its aim is to drive improvement in the status and quality of life of social groups living in a town or village, in need of

² Act CXXV of 2003 on Equal Treatment and the Promotion of Equal Opportunity

assistance in regard to equal opportunities, particularly those living in deep poverty, Roma people, children, people with disabilities, women and the elderly.

The LPEOs are functioning as local instruments for the accomplishment of social inclusion policy objectives laid down in the HNSIS, therefore the basic principle “joint proposal, joint decision and joint responsibility” laid down in the HNSIS applies to the LPEOs too. In relation to the local programmes for equal opportunities the LPEO forums practically provide for the satisfaction of the partnership requirements prescribed in Section 31 of Act CXXXV of 2003 and Section 5 of Government Decree 321/2011 (XII.27.). It was in association with the LPEOs, with the professional support of the mentoring network of the General Directorate of Social Inclusion that the LPEO forums were created, as venues of social coordination and partnership consultation, which have come to be generally accepted and operated in recent years, whose members are municipal governments, civil society organisations, churches and economic participants, associated with the LPEO target groups.

- County Forums for Social Inclusion

National inclusion forums have been operating since 2011, while municipal coordination forums associated with the LPEOs (LPEO Forum) have been operating since 2013. To enable the hitherto missing county level consultation a network of County Forums for Social Inclusion has been set up in an arrangement with EU co-financing to enable more efficient integration of the objectives, attitude and basic principles of the social inclusion policy with the municipal governmental tasks associated with the LPEOs across various parts of Hungary. The forums meeting at least twice a year have approx. 15-30 members, including representatives of municipalities and county governments, Roma minority governments, civil society organisations, public service providers, economic operators, school districts and vocational training institutions.

In addition to holding regular consultations, other objectives of the initiative include the creation of county level service route maps aimed at mapping shortcomings in services and County Pacts for Creating Opportunities. Such pacts were prepared in 18 counties under the HRDOP-1.6.3 projects. These are aggregates of cooperation programmes created by the County Forum for Social Inclusion on the basis of the service route maps offering solutions for eliminating shortcomings and deficits at municipality level with the help of the instruments, means, services, institutions available at local participants.

- Hungarian National Roma Platform

To enable cooperation mechanisms to evolve and operate at all levels of administration, including the county level³, suitable platforms need to be put in place and work already under way must be continued, to provide for networking and institutionalisation. A programme reaching out to local, district and greater county participants – local decision makers, public administration bodies, Roma minority governments, civil society organisations and church organisations, Roma and non-Roma stakeholders – in the framework of which consultations can be conducted concerning topical inclusion policy issues on the basis of a variety of themes and measures from birth to employment.

The National Roma platforms connect local/district with national level cooperation mechanisms, including the involvement of local needs, the communication of the governmental social inclusion policy guidelines and sharing other topical issues.

One important consideration taken into account in the choice of the locations is that platforms should be organised in towns and villages of various sizes and different economic situations to ensure direct interest representation and direct dialogue even between residents of small villages and governmental actors.

Promoting the active participation of, and provision of opportunities for, Roma people are essential tasks which must be carried out in making and executing decisions as well as in the monitoring and controlling functions at European, national, regional and local levels. The National Roma Platforms make a massive contribution to enabling local communities' active actors to join and participate in local and county public life and to become able to specify community needs and problems, and facilitating the successful implementation of the inclusion and integration.

III. Hungarian National Roma Platform

III.1. Antecedents: 2016-2021

The Deputy State Secretariat for Social Inclusion has been implementing National Roma platform projects since 2016. Recently we reached an average of more than 300 organisations in each project period – a total of more than 3,000 persons participated in the events so organised. We have been able to build on the experience and achievements of the past years for the 2022-2023 project as well.

³ Since redefining the county boundaries in 1950 the territory of Hungary is made up of 19 counties. The counties are Hungary's major administrative territorial units besides the capital city of Budapest. The counties are divided into districts, the districts are made up of municipalities (towns and villages).

<i>Period</i>	<i>Participating greater counties</i>	<i>Number of participants</i>
<i>1 June 2016 – 31 May 2017</i>	In Baranya county, Szabolcs –Szatmár – Bereg county and Borsod – Abaúj – Zemplén county	More than 1,000 persons registered as participants of the events.
<i>1 August 2017 – 31 July 2018</i>	In Jász – Nagykun – Szolnok county, Heves county, Hajdú-Bihar county and Nógrád county	More than 900 persons participated in the 12 county events and the closing conference.
<i>10 August 2019 and 9 January 2021</i>	Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county Nógrád county, Csongrád county, Békés county	Nearly 1100 persons participated in the 12 county events and the opening and closing conference.
<i>10 January 2021 and 31 December 2021</i>	Heves county, Pest county, Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén county, Baranya county	Nearly 400 persons participated in the 12 county events and the national conference.

III.2. Reinforcement of the Hungarian National Roma Platform – 2022-2023 project

The Deputy State Secretariat for Social Inclusion of the Ministry of Interior – as National Roma Contact Point – implemented the project called *Reinforcement of the Hungarian National Roma Platform – 2022-2023* between 1 January 2022 and 30 December 2023.

The tasks of central coordination of the activities undertaken and performed under the project were performed by the Ministry of Interior: a staff of 3 on the part of the Deputy State Secretariat for Social Inclusion together with 1 project manager and 1 financial manager on the part of the Deputy State Secretariat for the Coordination of EU Developments. The greater county coordinators were members of the staff of the General Directorate of Social Inclusion, a background institution of the Ministry of Interior.

Among the activities carried out under the project:

- 15 greater county events took place with more than 700 participants, 90 persons delivered presentations, at 3 locations in each greater county;
- good practices of different greater counties were presented and the project’s experiences were shared at 1 nationwide event in Budapest attended by more than 100 participants and high level governmental representatives;

- 1 international event took place which was attended by Hungarian and international experts and specialists, focusing on “*regional and local level consultation processes and planning*”;
- a publication on role models and good practices was brought out;
- a short film was produced on the topic of consultation, based on the events and the meetings, featuring the participants and speakers of the events.

The project’s key element was made up of the greater county events; the experiences and outcomes of those events supplied the content of the publication and the short film, along with the foundations for national and international events.

III.2.1. The techniques and process of the consultation

Our experience shows that participation in person, face to face coordination is still the most efficient and effective method for exchanging experience and develop cooperation mechanisms. For this reason we organised three face to face consultations in each greater county for the implementation of the application scheme project where we intended to consult the widest possible range of people about the achievements of the social inclusion policy, topical matters and effective coordination mechanisms.

We planned to organise forums whose dominant elements are dialogue and partnership. We wished to bring together people who are deeply involved in social inclusion policy and whose respective target groups include high proportions of Roma people.

The method of open formal coordination consultation was applied at the events. In other words, the events progressed on the basis of a pre-determined programme plan and time frame. Different forms (techniques) of consultation were applied to promote active participation and enable as many to contribute as possible.

- *Conference*: Welcoming addresses and thematic presentations helped placing each consultation in context, providing them with a professional background.
- *Roundtable discussion*: A more in-depth discussion of the theoretical and practical levels of the activities, involving good practices and local actors.
- *Professional consultation*: After the roundtable discussions each event was closed by a forum with questions and answers. This involved the collection of remarks and observations that can be integrated into the measures and the planning processes.
- *Breaks*: In line with the objective of the project these enabled face-to-face meetings between participants of the events for informal dialogues and networking, along with discussion of the presentations and other contributions.

The implementation and results of the project were accompanied by an impact assessment. The staff of the HÉTFA Research Institute and Center for Economic and Social Analysis participated in the events, carried out questionnaires and interviews, and presented the results at the national and international events and shared them in a final study. The final study with the results of the impact assessment is available on the Social Sector Portal.

III.2.2. The invitees

The single most important element of successful coordination is addressing and involving all relevant actors so that they participate in the consultation as speakers and/or other participants. The more comprehensive dialogue and close cooperation between organisations takes place, the more effective the social inclusion policy measures will be. As the HNSIS intervention areas are also diverse, it is highly important that the participants represent as many different special fields as possible, since most of the applicable social inclusion policy solutions require complex interventions.

The list of state, church and civil society actors is well known; their involvement was facilitated primarily by the greater county governments, the greater county national minority governments and the greater county coordinators working on the project. To deliver the invitations to the widest possible range of entities the addressees were specifically asked in their invitations to forward them to organisations or persons who may be affected by or otherwise involved with the subject of the consultation.

“We invite to the event representatives of state, church and civil society organisations involved or interested in the social inclusion and Roma cause. If you know such organisation or person you are kindly asked to forward this invitation to them too.”

It was particularly important that organisations and professionals or other specialists who work among Roma people or who are of the Roma community themselves, should also be addressed.

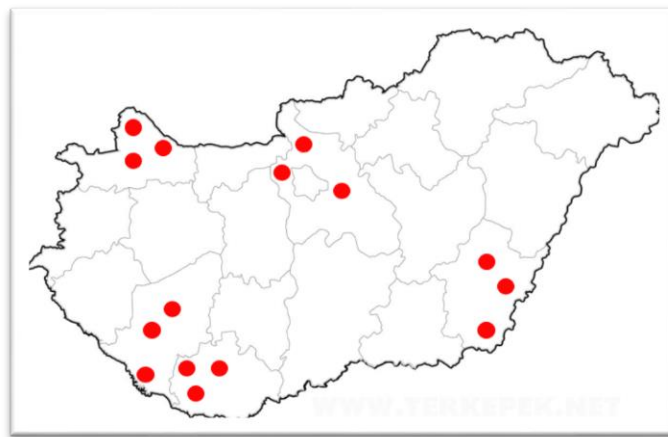
The majority of the participants of the events included representatives of the central, regional and local public administration system (general assembly chairs, majors, Roma minority governments, heads of offices etc.); representatives and staff members of child welfare, social and education institutions; representatives of churches and church-run organisations, non-profit and civil society organisations. The host greater county’s local government always played a key role as they play a substantial role in sustainability and the promotion of networking.

A list of addresses – with names, titles and contact information – was prepared for each county with the help of greater county coordinators.

The Ministry of Interior has its own registration system (www.bmevents.gov.hu) which greatly facilitated the work involved in organising and conducting both the in-person and the on-line events. It was also possible to submit questions and opinions on a preliminary basis during the registration process.

III.2.3. Selection of venues

One of the most important considerations regarding the venues to be selected was that they should be easily accessible for the participants and that the whole area of each greater county be covered. Events were held at greater county seats, district centres, towns and smaller villages alike, to ensure dialogue at diverse levels. Taking both technical and professional considerations into account 3 occasions per greater county ensured the widest possible outreach and the addressing of the largest possible number of regions.



The venues of the National Roma platform in the five greater countries

The venues were provided by municipalities and organisations. The county coordinators, the county governments and the Roma national minority governments also helped us select the venues.

III.2.4. Identification of the moderator and the speakers

To ensure successful consultation we involved competent persons with professional experience who are capable of delivering information effectively and efficiently. This requirement was successfully met, according to the findings of the impact assessment (made by HÉTFA Research Institute and Center for Economic and Social Analysis). The project's professional facilitator carried out the tasks of the moderator at the events, which was highly instrumental in placing the professional event in context while keeping its professional directions.

The greater county assemblies, the greater county Roma minority governments and the municipalities or organisations hosting the event were standard elements of the welcoming addresses. The Ministry of

Interior was always represented by speakers whose presentations covered the strategic level measures and the current application schemes and other possibilities.

As many as 91 persons delivered presentations and/or participated in roundtable discussions during the events. Efforts were made to ensure that presentations are delivered by representatives of the Roma community as well.

The following organisations were represented at the events by speakers or partners:

Almamellék-Somogyhársági Általános Iskola és Kollégium (primary school and college)	Nagybajomi Csokonai Vitéz Mihály Általános Iskola és Kollégium (primary school and college)
Babócsa Municipal Government	Napkerék Egyesület (association)
Hungarian Baptist Aid	Nyugat Dunántúli Regionális Krízis Ambulancia (regional crisis clinic of West-Transdanubia)
Baranya Greater County Roma National Minority Government	Zoltán Orsós, parson
Baranya Greater County Self-Government	Hungarian Interchurch Aid
Battonya Town Self-Government	Lutheran Roma Vocational College of Pécs
Békés Greater County Self-Government	Pest Greater County Self-Government
Békés Greater County Roma National Minority Government	Pest Greater County Roma National Minority Government
Békés Town Self-Government	Piliscsaba Roma Nationality Self-Government
Blessed Ceferino Institute	Pisont István Tehetségkutató, Fejlesztő és Gondozó Alapítvány (Pisont István Talent Scouting, Fostering and Promotion Foundation)
Cigány Értelmiség Érdekvédelmi Egyesülete (interest protection association of Roma intellectuals)	István Pisont footballer of the national team
Czinka Panna Roma Cultural Association	Hungarian Reformed Church Aid
Csobánka Municipal Government	Sarkad Town Self-Government
Csobánka Roma Nationality Self-Government	Sellye Town Self-Government
Dél-Alföldi Társadalmi Esélyteremtési Igazgatóság (Southern Great Plain Directorate of Social Inclusion)	Somogy Greater County Self-Government
Emberöltő Alapítvány (foundation)	Somogy Greater County Roma National Minority Government
Gandhi Gimnázium Közhasznú Nonprofit Kft.	Somogyvár Község Roma Nemzetiségi Önkormányzata (Roma Minority Government of the Town of Somogyvár)
Gyomaendrőd Town Self-Government	SZÁMÍTHATSZ RÁNK! Egyesület (association)
Győr Municipal Government	Szany Municipal Government
Győr-Moson-Sopron Greater County Self-Government	Szany Roman Catholic parish
Győr-Moson-Sopron Greater County Police Headquarters	Szarvas Város Roma Nemzetiségi Önkormányzata (Roma Minority Government of the town of Szarvas)
Győr-Moson-Sopron Greater County Roma National Minority Government	Szent Erzsébet Alapítvány (foundation)
Iskolakultúráért - Esélyteremtésért Egyesület (Association for School Culture – Opportunity Creation)	Szent Imre Katolikus Általános Iskola Siklós (Catholic primary school of the town of Siklós)
Jelen és Jövő Gyermekeiért Alapítvány (foundation for the children of today and the future)	St. Martin's Caritas Foundation
Kadarkút Municipal Government	Szentandrassy István Egyetemi Roma Szakkollégium (Roma Boarding School)
Kaposvár Municipal Government	Szigetvár Municipal Government

Kaposvári Táncsics Mihály Gimnázium (secondary grammar school)	Sztechlo Gábor Integrált Szociális és Gyermekvédelmi Intézmény (Sztelho Gábor Integrated Social and Child Protection Institution)
Katolikus Karitasz - Caritas Hungarica	Tan Kapuja Buddhista Gimnázium (Buddhist secondary grammar school)
Kira Vendéglő – Hungary’s first Roma restaurant	General Directorate of Social Inclusion
Kunágota Municipal Government	Zsámbéki Premontrei Technikum, Szakképző Iskola és Gimnázium (Premonstratensian technical school, vocational school and secondary grammar school of the town of Zsámbék)
Magyar Agrár és Élettudományi Egyetem (Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences)	
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary	
Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta	
Magyar Máltai Szeretetszolgálat Egyesület (Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta)	
Magyar Pünkösdi Egyház (Hungarian Pentecostal Church)	
Magyar Vöröskereszt Győri Igazgatóság (Hungarian Red Cross Győr Directorate)	
Mezőkovácsháza Municipal Government	
Monor Municipal Government	
Mosonmagyaróvár Municipal Government	

III.2.5. Setting themes and agenda items

One important consideration in the implementation of the project was that the consultation should cover a wide variety of topics, ranging from birth to employment, including aspects of the Roma culture and social awareness. Local needs, the specifics of the region concerned and topical policy issues were also taken into account in the programme plan. One objective in the implementation of the programme was that the values and holidays of the Roma culture be taken into account: accordingly, the International Romani Day, the feast day of Blessed Ceferino and the Pharrajimos memorial day were also among the topics covered.

- services to increase opportunities for children, Roma girls and people living in segregation
- early childhood and college programmes at institutional and district levels
- young Roma in higher education and the path leading there – public education college programmes
- out-of-school programmes and Roma minority governments
- civil society organisations running social inclusion programmes, the role of civil society organisations in social inclusion
- successful Roma life paths, the Pentecostal Roma mission
- complex programmes of small villages and the long term programme of Emerging Settlements
- Roma pastoration – the roles played by churches in regard to Roma identity, social inclusion, awareness raising; church organisations as entities running social inclusion programmes

- possibilities of social inclusion of Gypsy/Roma children and young people – Roma Day conference at Apor Vilmos Catholic College
- professional support of social inclusion programmes, public spaces created in towns and villages and in town districts
- out-of-school programmes – possibilities for children and young people
- holiday programmes, camping
- training and employment opportunities of and creation of opportunities for those most severely in need
- conversation with representatives of institutions providing education and training services for the Roma ethnicity, about the appearance of the Roma identity, traditions and culture, the culture of commemoration – Roma holocaust (pharrajimos)
- organisations maintaining social inclusion programmes in small municipalities, Roma people, Roma women in social inclusion

III.2.6. Dates and venues of events

<i>Date</i>	<i>Greater County</i>	<i>Town or village</i>
22.09.2022	Békés	Mezőkovácsháza
28.09.2022	Baranya	Szigetvár
12.10.2022	Somogy	Kaposvár
26.10.2022	Pest	Csobánka
17.11.2022	Győr-Moson-Sopron	Győr
23.11.2022	Békés	Békés
15.02.2023	Baranya	Sellye
01.03.2023	Győr-Moson-Sopron	Szany
23.03.2023	Pest	Vác
05.04.2023	Somogy	Kadarkút
04.05.2023	Békés	Gyomaendrőd
01.06.2023	Győr-Moson-Sopron	Mosonmagyaróvár
06.07.2023	Pest	Monor
03.08.2023	Baranya	Pécs
28.09.2023	Somogy	Babócsa

III.2.7. National and international event

The aim of the **national conference** was to bring together the participants and speakers of the events held in the five greater counties, present one good practice from each greater county and provide feedback on the lessons drawn from the implementation of the project and the findings of the impact assessment.

More than a hundred persons, representing various organisations of the five greater counties concerned, participated in the event held in the Ministry of Interior building. The Ministry ordered buses to help participants from even the most remote and smallest village to come and participate in the event.

The national conference followed the structure of the greater county events and was thus made up of welcoming addresses, presentations and roundtable discussions. Two sections were planned: one focused on matters relating to children and education, the other on measures aimed primarily at adults (e.g. adult training, employment, awareness raising).

The goal of the two-day **international event** was to learn more about social inclusion policy measures and topical matters of other European countries, particularly as regards their Roma communities. The event is also a venue for an exchange of professional experience, a workshop and meetings between participants. At the event we described the Hungarian policy framework, the way the consultation appears and affects planning and the monitoring of the measures. Another important element of the conference was made up of the data, documents and situation analyses underlying the measures providing a foundation for the planning of local or national measures.

Representatives of member countries present: Portugal, Slovakia, Croatia, Poland, Finland, Greece and the representative of the European Commission.

The invited partners were addressed on both days of the international event because their feedback and their experiences of consultations and their good practices in their respective countries were of the essence.

The event facilitated knowledge sharing and networking, to promote professional development and improvement.

We considered it important at the international event that we should offer the visiting Hungarian and foreign participants hospitality and show them around Hungary's capital city. Accordingly, we organised a cultural programme where we could show the sights of Budapest from a boat on the river Danube and the orchestra called Romano Glaszo – made up of Study Hall students – played authentic Hungarian Roma music.

IV. Opinions and policy recommendations recorded during the greater county events and the implementation of the project

Opinions and recommendations could be shared both during registration for participation in the events and during the events themselves, in multiple phases. The questionnaires made available and the

interviews recorded in the framework of the impact assessment and provided further opportunities for gathering local observations.

The following observations, opinions and recommendations were made – the possibility of their integration into the social inclusion policy measures should be assessed. (Some of the observations, opinions and recommendations were already made in earlier years.)

Consultation, cooperation

- There is a need for meetings between professionals and for the provision of feedback on activities, which can be enabled at consultation forums and events. Besides strengthening professionals, such occasions help create synergies and opportunities for cooperation between activities. Increased regional and greater county level cooperation is required with the participation of all relevant actors.
- Greater county governments may play a key role in networking and cooperation between county actors, and in providing professional support. The coordinating and generating role of greater county organisations needs to be strengthened.

Advocacy, involvement at a higher level

- The presence of Gypsy/Roma persons and professionals and the involvement of Roma minority governments in the social inclusion programmes is indispensable. Inclusion and cooperation should be improved.
- Roma national minority municipalities do not have the necessary funds and human resources of their own to become implementers of EU-funded projects. In some cases there is no office that could be used as the place where the activity can be coordinated.
- Programmes aimed at strengthening Roma identity are important. Self identification is, in many cases, not backed up by actual knowledge of origins, culture and its values. Institutions providing Roma ethnic education and training play a key role.
- The opinions recorded show that the participation of Roma people in the labour market is still impeded by prejudice.

Families with children, training, education

- Segregate maps may need to be updated, even new indicators may need to be developed (e.g. the educational attainment of parents is on the increase).
- Primarily in the Study Hall (Tanoda), but also in the Sure Start Children's House (Biztos Kezdet Gyerekházak) institutions, there is a need for family mentors to continuously communicate with parents, visit families and help with administrative formalities.

- Participants voiced that the continuation and continuity of the social inclusion programmes is very important and that project-like operation (intermittent support) does not help maintain and move results even further.
- Strengthening the relationships between institutions and organisations is important so that college programmes can form vertical structure and transit from public education college to higher education college (Roma Boarding School) becomes possible.
- The Roma Minority Governments should be enabled to disburse scholarships from task-based financial support funded from the budget.
- There is a need for the continuation of the Bari Shej – Roma Girl project; such girls’ continued studies at higher levels should be strengthened.
- It should also be possible to employ workforce with low levels of educational attainment – the involvement of individuals with higher qualifications is, in many cases, not relevant, or they are not available.
- The immense need for competitive training programmes in the counties was mentioned at a number of meetings. Training programmes launched should also be reconsidered in the case of vocational training and adult training so that they are more closely adapted to market demand and the needs of the students (e.g. beauty industry).

The relevant comments made, and the relevant experience, are assessed based on the HNSIS 2030, and were, and will be, taken into account in the preparation of programmes to be financed by European Union funds as well. The above opinions and experiences are shared at the meetings of the national coordination forums (see: subsection II.3.1.).