

**FOLLOW-UP ON THE LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE THEMATIC EVALUATION ON IPA SUPPORT TO
ROMA COMMUNITIES (Ref. Contract No 2014/344098)**

Recommendations, Final report	Responses, DG NEAR: (i) accepted or not, ii) actions to be undertaken	Follow up
<p>Recommendation 1: Political commitment</p> <p>a) The European Commission should formally remind accession countries of the obligations of future member states to comply with the EU Framework for Roma integration, and the four measurable goals set out in this framework.</p>	<p>i) Accepted</p> <p>This recommendation is addressed to the European Commission (Commission).</p> <p>DG NEAR accepts this recommendation.</p> <p>The Commission will remind all Western Balkans countries and Turkey of their obligations to comply with the EU Framework for Roma integration with special attention to the five priority areas (education, employment, health, housing, civil documentation) through its reporting, negotiations and bilateral processes.</p>	<p>Follow-up</p> <p>The Commission to include this message in the 2016 Enlargement Strategy Paper.</p> <p>EUDs/EUO, country units and the Roma advisor to continue regular dialogue on Roma integration through annual Progress Report , Roma Seminars, bilateral subcommittee, high level and negotiation meetings.</p>
<p>b) The EC should request accession countries to ensure that they have the monitoring mechanisms in place to assess progress annually against these four goals. If necessary, IPA or other funding should be made available to develop the mechanisms necessary for monitoring these goals.</p>	<p>i) Accepted</p> <p>DG NEAR considers the existence of solid monitoring mechanisms on implementation of the Roma integration policies and the related use of IPA Funds essential. Therefore supports the beneficiaries' use and further development of such processes and mechanisms at national level.</p> <p>At EU level, dialogue and monitoring is carried out through policy dialogue, Chapter 23 (Judiciary and fundamental rights) meetings for negotiating countries, Roma Integration Seminars, relevant subcommittees, bilateral meetings and dialogue about financial programming.</p> <p>DG NEAR assesses the mechanisms put in place by the IPA beneficiaries during the various policy dialogues listed above, and stands ready to support possible further development and implementation thereof.</p>	<p>Follow-up</p> <p>EUDs/EUO, country units and the Roma advisor to increased focus on policy dialogue on monitoring in general and, if relevant, monitoring of IPA funded actions.</p> <p>NEAR A3 is organising training workshops on the use of indicators, monitoring, evaluation and exchange of best practices during 2016. This training is based on the SPD developed by the beneficiaries.</p> <p>Ensure further training and exchange of best monitoring practices in the framework of the implementation of IPA multi-country "Roma integration 2020 project".</p> <p>In 2016, DG NEAR is programming an IPA multi-country project, including as one of its components a survey aiming to identify the gap between the Roma and non-Roma population in the 5 key priority areas. In the future, this data will allow a solid monitoring on progress.</p>

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<p>c) The EC should then assess progress against these goals using the information provided by governments and from other sources, and report in the context of the annual accession Progress Reports.</p>	<p>i) Accepted</p> <p>The Commission reports regularly on developments on Roma integration, subject to the limits of the annual accession Progress Report; as well as in the annual Commission Report on the implementation of the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies.</p>	<p>Follow-up</p> <p>The Commission will continue to report on progress and will also benefit in the future from having a solid baseline on the state of play to monitor progress thanks to the future implementation of the 2016 IPA (see point 1 b) above).</p> <p>DG NEAR will continue to use for preparing the annual report information not only from the governments but also shadow reports from civil society.</p>
<p>d) The Commission should indicate a percentage of IPA II funds that are expected to be allocated for support to Roma inclusion actions.</p>	<p>i) Partially accepted</p> <p>In the 2013 EU Enlargement Strategy, the Commission committed to give more and spend better under IPA II funds for Roma integration compared with IPA I.</p> <p>However, the support for Roma integration depends not only on the availability of financial resources, but also on the political will and good policy design of documents.</p> <p>As support to Roma integration should be mainstreamed in the financial support to the country, figures are not fixed in advance. Also, it is sounder and more sustainable, financially and programming wise, to programme against strategies and mature actions backed by measurable national commitments.</p> <p>It is important that both EU and national policies and legislation addressing equal treatment also open IPA projects for all vulnerable groups.</p>	<p>Follow-up</p> <p>The DG NEAR will regularly monitor the amount of IPA funds allocated on Roma integration projects in the context of the internal coordination meetings, in preparation of annual action programmes in close collaboration with the beneficiary authorities and reported through the various reporting tools (see above).</p>
<p>e) Political commitment could also be strengthened by establishing diplomatic networks of embassies in each country which have an interest in Roma inclusion – ‘a Friends of Roma’ diplomatic initiative, led either by the EU Delegation, or, better, by an interested EU/EEA state.</p>	<p>i) Rejected</p> <p>The Commission welcomes a diplomatic initiative such as this and invites relevant actors to consider it. If an enlargement host country should adopt it, the Commission will support it through the EUD.</p> <p>However, it is also important that each enlargement country takes full ownership and responsibility to ensure implementation of their Roma integration policy, including a strong coordination of donors.</p>	<p>Follow-up</p> <p>No specific additional follow up action is envisaged.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 2: Roma Focal Point</p> <p>Each EU Delegation/Office should have a designated and named Roma Focal Point to be the key link between political and operational aspects of the EU's work to support Roma inclusion, as well as with Roma civil society organisations and government representatives to provide support and alignment with EU acquis and specifically the EU Framework on Roma Integration.</p>	<p>i) Accepted</p> <p>This recommendation is addressed to the Commission. The Commission accepts this recommendation.</p> <p>Following a note from J.-E. Paquet, Director, DG NEAR Directorate D Western Balkans, to Heads of EUDs/EUO of 09/10/2015, existing Roma desk officers in EUDs/EUO have been officially designated as Roma Focal Points. They are responsible for coordinating Roma policies within the EUD/EUO work and been the interlocutor for HQ, the public authorities and civil society on Roma related questions.</p>	<p>Follow-up</p> <p>To ensure visibility each EUD to clearly specify in their public organigram the persons having the Roma Focal Point task.</p> <p>Focal Points to pro-actively engage with public authorities, international organisations and NGOs to support Roma integration, policy coordination and monitor implementation of commitments.</p> <p>Roma Focal points to organise regular meetings with relevant interlocutors and report results to HQ.</p> <p>Roma advisor to inform EUD /EUO focal points on main development of EU Roma integration policy and continue regular meetings of the HQ/EUD Roma Network Working group.</p>
<p>Recommendation 3: Strategy</p> <p>The European Commission, in cooperation with the enlargement countries, should prepare an internal working document for each enlargement country which sets out how the EC will support the countries to achieve their Roma inclusion goals as defined in the national strategies for Roma inclusion.</p>	<p>i) Accepted</p> <p>This recommendation is addressed to the Commission. The Commission accepts this recommendation.</p> <p>An internal "IPA response" working paper has been developed for each country setting out how the Commission could use IPA II funding to assist beneficiaries to reach their stated Roma inclusion goals as defined in their national strategies, action plans and Sector Planning Documents (SPD). As 2016 priorities are already set, the main focus will be on IPA support to be programmed in 2017-2020.</p>	<p>Follow-up</p> <p>The outcome of internal reflexion to be discussed with beneficiary countries and other relevant international players.</p> <p>Conclusions to be reflected in the IPA II mid-term review strategic documents.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 4: Gender</p> <p>a) The European Commission is urged to identify gender focal points in each delegation/office to ensure effective inclusion of gender perspective in all processes and at all levels.</p>	<p>i) Accepted</p> <p>This recommendation is addressed to the Commission. The Commission accepts this recommendation, which has been followed up with DG NEAR gender focal point in the relevant Centre of Thematic Expertise (CoTE).</p> <p>The Commission's "Strategic engagement for gender equality 2016-2019" emphasises the need to integrate gender equality into EU policies and funding programmes. NEAR seeks to implement the Gender Action Plan through continued efforts to integrate a gender mainstreaming perspective into all relevant IPA programmes. DG NEAR agrees that the gender dimension is especially relevant in the area of Roma integration.</p> <p>Each EUD/EUO has gender officials who coordinate their work with IPA beneficiaries, country units and the CoTE, and provide thematic support.</p>	<p>Follow-up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforced training in gender mainstreaming has been organised by the gender focal point for beneficiaries and at EC HQ during 2015 and will continue in 2016. • The recommendation will be followed up in the context of the annual programming by EU delegations, geographic units in close cooperation with DG NEAR gender desk and A4 "Financial assistance strategy".
<p>b) The EU is also recommended to urge enlargement governments to identify gender focal points in the National IPA Committee (NIPAC).</p> <p>The EU Delegation/Office focal point on gender should then work closely with the NIPAC gender focal point in order to ensure improved quality of design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation from a gender perspective throughout the IPA II cycle.</p>	<p>i) Partially accepted</p> <p>Gender equality is at the core of European values and is very relevant for the Roma community (e.g. in the field of education, child marriages, employment...). The gender dimension is a cross cutting priority in the Roma integration process.</p> <p>The DG NEAR approach is not to develop a specific "Roma gender" related policy, but to include it within the general framework of the implementation of the new Gender Action Plan 2016-2020 (GAP). However, it is beyond the Roma integration policy to request NIPACs to have gender focal points.</p>	<p>Follow-up</p> <p>The implementation of the gender dimension on Roma integration policy and related IPA programs to be discussed in the DG NEAR Roma Network (officials working on Roma integration in HQ and in EUD) and good examples on successful projects to be shared.</p> <p>EUD to consider whether Roma could be included as one of the priority areas in their gender plan.</p> <p>The gender dimension to be taken into account when programing IPA Roma related projects.</p> <p>Roma integration survey to be implemented under the IPA 2016 multi-country Roma project, to get data on the priority areas segregated by gender to allow solid data for future policy decisions.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 5: Policy Capacities</p> <p>a) IPA Multi-beneficiary funding should be used to support one (or more) initiatives to strengthen policy capacities in the enlargement region. The action should be longer term, rooted in local experience and with strong mechanisms to feedback policy findings and recommendations to practitioners in government and civil society.</p>	<p>i) Accepted</p> <p>This recommendation is addressed to the Commission. The Commission accepts this recommendation.</p> <p>DG NEAR is aware of the important role to be played by IPA multi-country funds on strengthen policy capacities on Roma integration in the enlargement region. In that context, the Commission adopted the 2014 multi-country program "Roma Integration 2020 initiative" to be implemented by the new Roma team in the Regional Cooperation Council and is co-financed by EC and Open Society Foundation.</p>	<p>Follow-up</p> <p>The multi-country Roma Integration 2020 initiative, starting its implementation in Spring 2016, will serve the purpose of enhancing policy development capacities of the IPA beneficiaries, individually as well as regionally.</p>
<p>b) Roma individuals and civil society organisations should be involved as far as possible and collaborative links made between practitioners in civil society and government and between countries.</p>	<p>i) Accepted</p> <p>The Commission supports the idea of enhancing the civil society role on Roma integration both on the definition and implementation of the Roma integration policies. This principle is implemented through different tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Multi-country projects supporting Role of civil society such as "Roma Integration 2020 initiative" OSF and two Roma representatives sitting in the Roma 2020 "Task force" that will guide implementation of the project. And the "Joint Initiative to Empower Roma Civil Society on the Western Balkans and Turkey through the creation of a regional Roma Network for (pro) Roma civil society to actively participate in local and national policy and decision making processes. - Involving civil Society as one of the key actors of the Roma Seminars. - Using the civil society shadow reporting as one of the contributions to prepare the annual enlargement package. 	<p>Follow-up</p> <p>DG NEAR will continue its close cooperation with CSO implementing existing practices.</p>

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<p>c) Actions should draw from policy lessons learned in Member States, identify gaps and uncertainties in the policy base, and conduct policy experiments and tests to develop new or more effective approaches. Indicative topics for such an initiative include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sustainable models for social housing and links to social security reform. - Conditional cash transfers as measures for supporting educational attainment. - Testing and identification of effective employment measures - Anti-discrimination in practice – how to change attitudes and behaviours. - Moving from Roma mediators to institutional reform – tackling institutional discrimination throughout a system. 	<p>i) Accepted</p> <p>DG NEAR cooperates closely with DG JUST, and other DGs involved in Roma integration in EU Member States (EUMS).</p> <p>DG NEAR is aware of the main evolutions/concerns on Roma integration of the Member State through participation in the EU Roma Contact Points meetings, the CoE CAHROM meetings, and the Commission internal WGs. The relevant information and "lessons learned" are shared in the context of the DG NEAR Roma Network meetings.</p> <p>The transfer of knowledge, policy dialogues and lessons learned form an integral part of NEARs inter-service cooperation approach, and facilitates the policy dialogues NEAR has with the IPA beneficiaries about their sector reforms in preparation for accession.</p> <p>TAIEX events, as well as other programming initiatives and actions, are specifically designed to provide IPA beneficiaries with national and regional fora where such policy lessons, best practices can be shared and policy dialogue in general be further enabled.</p>	<p>Follow-up</p> <p>The recommendation will be followed up in the context of the Roma Network meetings, annual programming, TAIEX events and policy dialogues where relevant.</p>
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<p>Recommendation 6: Quality Assurance and Good Practice</p> <p>a) All draft programmes and action designs need to be reviewed by appropriately experienced and qualified people to ensure compliance with the 10 Common Principles, and to provide input based on relevant evidence from policy and practice. The European Commission should develop procedures to ensure that this happens.</p>	<p>i) Accepted</p> <p>This recommendation is addressed to the Commission. The Commission accepts this recommendation.</p> <p>Structures for assessing programming and action documents are in place. The aim is to ensure that planning and programming documents are consistent with any high level strategic planning/programming documents and the enlargement agenda, as well as to provide recommendations for the work ahead.</p> <p>IPA action documents are based on policy and programming documents adopted by the IPA beneficiaries. Throughout the programming process they undergo consultation with IPA beneficiaries and EUDs/EUO. As part of the Quality Review of Programmes procedure, action documents are also reviewed by the Roma advisor, relevant CoTE, Chapter desk or Quality Review Group. Once considered mature, the actions are submitted to Commission wide inter-service consultation that may result in a further review before adoption.</p>	<p>Follow-up</p> <p>The recommendation will also be followed up in the context of annual programming in close cooperation with the Roma advisor, the relevant CoTE experts during the Quality Review of Programmes.</p>
<p>b) Specialists, such as local policy experts, think tanks, NGOs, etc., should be identified who can take an active role in project/action steering committees, review progress, and provide balanced input to assist in ensuring that actions aimed at Roma inclusion are following the best practice guidance available. They should also play a role in flagging issues that might have unintended negative consequences.</p>	<p>i) Accepted</p> <p>The Commission makes extensive use of programme and project evaluations that feed into future programming, expert groups and expert assessments and is in regular contact with NGOs, civil society and international organisations during the annual programming and reporting periods, including on input to and outcome of actions financed under IPA.</p> <p>The Commission further regularly monitors individual projects and programmes and reports extensively on programming through a number of regular AOSD and ROM reports, as well as internal and external audits and evaluations, throughout each year.</p>	<p>Follow-up</p> <p>The recommendation will be implemented in the context of the preparation of annual action programmes and continuously during the implementation of on-going programmes.</p> <p>EUD/EUO will further involve Roma NGOs in the discussions on Roma integration projects in all relevant phases: programming, implementation and monitoring.</p>

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<p>c) Experts, Roma Focal Points in EU Delegations/Offices and national Roma policy specialists in government and civil society should meet regularly (at least 1 per year) to develop a network of practitioners and share latest research findings. This could be connected to a multi-beneficiary project for policy development (see section 6.11 on recommendations for Multi-beneficiary IPA funding).</p>	<p>i) Accepted:</p> <p>The Roma Integration Seminars allows every two years for the setup of such discussion fora.</p> <p>The implementation of the IPA multi-country Roma Integration 2020 initiative will serve the purpose to create a more frequent meeting venue of experts and Roma government regionally.</p> <p>The multi-country Civil society facility and media programme already serves the purpose of enhancing policy involvement and capacities of IPA beneficiary civil societies through the creation of a regional Roma Network.</p> <p>DG NEAR is reflecting on whether the DG JUST initiative to support national Roma Platforms is relevant at this stage for enlargement countries.</p>	<p>Follow-up</p> <p>The recommendation will be followed up in the context of the Roma seminars every two years and at regular basis by the EUD/EUO (Roma contact Points).</p> <p>The in the framework of the implementation of the IPA multi-country Roma Integration 2020 initiative thematic workshops will be organised involving experts , public authorities and civil society.</p>
<p>Recommendation 7: Civil Society</p> <p>a) The European Commission, for each of the enlargement countries, should set out a strategic approach to developing the capacities of civil society in support of Roma inclusion. The goals of these strategies should emphasise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The role of civil society in advocacy and accountability. - Sustainability of civil society organisations. - The role of civil society in service delivery and project implementation. 	<p>i) Partly accepted</p> <p>This recommendation is addressed to the Commission. The Commission partly accepts this recommendation.</p> <p>The Commission is committed to ensuring participation by civil society to enhance ownership and sustainable results by means of policy dialogues and financial assistance. However it thinks that this process is better served by supporting Roma networks and giving the civil society a role in a Roma integration process instead of imposing a top down, country by country approach.</p>	<p>Follow-up</p> <p>Implementation of the 2014-2015 IPA multi-country Civil society facility aims to set up a facilitating structure for (pro) Roma civil society to actively participate in the local and national policy and decision making process and establish a constructive and systematic dialogue with authorities and Roma NGOs/CSOs to influence policies on Roma integration, social inclusion, non-discrimination, interethnic dialogue, socio-economic development and citizens' rights.</p>

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<p>b) Granting instruments such as the Civil Society Facility, EIDHR and other specifically designed granting actions need to take into account the need for building capacities of newly established grass-roots organisations as well as well-established organisations. This means that varying amounts of funds need to be available to meet the needs of different types of organisations. Grants of less than 10.000 EUR should be available for small grass-roots CSOs to complete specific actions. Medium size grants (10 – 90.000) are needed for larger local or national organisations for 1-2 year actions, and larger funds available for longer term actions and re-granting, possibly at the regional level.</p> <p>Technical assistance to civil society should not just look at how to apply for EU funds.</p>	<p>i) Accepted</p> <p>General civil society organisation facilities fall under the remit of EU Programmes which are governed by their specific implementing rules. They already focus on the development of minority and vulnerable groups NGOs in their programming.</p> <p>The present financial Regulation foresees sub-granting as an option and rules for grants less than 10 000 EUR have been greatly eased. In addition, on country level, targeted calls for proposals specifically addressing specific beneficiaries can be and are organised.</p>	<p>Follow-up</p> <p>The multi-country Civil society facility programme will serve the purpose of enhancing policy involvement and capacities of IPA beneficiary civil societies through the creation of a regional Roma Network.</p> <p>The recommendation will be implemented in the context of the preparation of annual action programmes and continuously during the implementation of on-going programmes.</p> <p>Increased focus on these issues when drafting Terms of References before opening Calls for Proposals, with special emphasis on the use of sub-granting.</p> <p>Increased focus on communicating and explaining grants and funding options and grant application procedures clearly to all potential recipients.</p> <p>Continued reporting through AOSD reports by relevant organisational entities.</p>
<p>c) Strong consideration should be given to re-granting projects combined with provision of technical assistance – ideally over a medium to long term (4-7 years) specifically for CSOs working for Roma inclusion.</p> <p>The European Commission should ensure that these mechanisms and used tools are effectively coordinated.</p>	<p>i) Accepted</p> <p>The Commission is committed to ensuring sustainability of results of EU funding initiatives. It recognises that in many areas, in order to introduce change and have impact, a long term approach is needed. Changes introduced under IPA II facilitate the programming and implementation of programmes with a longer term perspective, in some cases up to seven years.</p> <p>DG NEAR will increase focus on coordination when drafting Action Documents, Terms of References and Calls for Proposals.</p>	<p>Follow-up</p> <p>The recommendation will be implemented in the context of the preparation of annual action programmes and continuously during the implementation of on-going programmes.</p> <p>Increased focus on these issues when drafting Action Documents, Terms of References and Calls for Proposals</p> <p>These points are being raised as part of the broader review under way in DG NEAR on the work done with CSO.</p> <p>EUDs are encouraged to better use the flexibility options given by the IPA II financial regulation.</p>

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<p>Recommendation 8: Local Impact – Area based integrated interventions</p> <p>Programming for IPA II actions should strongly consider medium to long term actions focusing on integrated actions in local areas with relatively high Roma populations.</p> <p>Area-based interventions must also have a visible and positive impact on the wider population.</p> <p>Area-based interventions must also be linked to national/higher level policy initiatives.</p> <p>Area-based projects should have a minimum time-frame of four years, and local authorities should provide some element of match-funding to ensure commitment.</p>	<p>i) Accepted</p> <p>This recommendation is addressed to the Commission. The Commission accepts this recommendation where appropriate.</p> <p>DG NEAR recognises that in many areas, in order to introduce change and have impact, a long term (integrated) approach is needed. Changes introduced under IPA II facilitate the programming and implementation of programmes with a longer term perspective, in some cases up to seven years.</p> <p>Under the new IPA II regulation, integrated actions may well become part of the implementation modality again, should the beneficiaries plan for it in their strategies and action plans which target the focus of IPA funding.</p> <p>For Roma integration programs with local dimension, the IPA funds will be in priority allocated to the higher Roma populated areas.</p> <p>The scope of individual projects would need to be based on needs analyses, allow for evidence-based decisions and inclusion of lessons learned from comparable projects. When relevant, programs should also be open to non-Roma most vulnerable population. Area based actions would also need to be built in the framework of national and regional policies and matched by beneficiary strategies, action plans and funding in these areas.</p>	<p>Follow-up</p> <p>DG NEAR will increase focus on local dimension when drafting Action Documents, Terms of References and Calls for Proposals of annual action programmes.</p> <p>The 2016 IPA multi-country project will have as one of its objectives enhancing the local dimension of Roma integration supporting both local administration and civil society.</p>
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<p>Recommendation 9: Monitoring</p> <p>a) The European Commission should support the Western Balkans countries and Turkey to develop and operationalise appropriate monitoring systems which will adequately capture information to monitor the achievement of each of these goals. The monitoring systems should be incorporated into existing or planned information systems.</p>	<p>i) Accepted</p> <p>The recommendation is addressed to the Commission.. The Commission accepts this recommendation</p> <p>The IPA II legal framework foresees that Sectoral Monitoring Committees will be reinforced to ensure effectiveness, coherence and coordination of the implementation of IPA assistance at sector level under indirect management with beneficiary countries. The legal framework envisages also that sectorial monitoring committees may be set up on an ad hoc basis under other implementation methods, when appropriate.</p> <p>DG NEAR has revised the Results Oriented Monitoring (ROM) methodology to enhance project management based on performance monitoring and results reporting by external experts.</p>	<p>Follow-up</p> <p>From the policy point of view, the Commission will continue to request national authorities to closely monitor the implementation of their Roma integration policy, the conclusions of the Roma Seminar and the Roma integration measures included in the Action Plan for Chapter 23 for the countries that are negotiating. Reporting will be required in the relevant Subcommittees, the Roma Seminars and every six months in the framework of negotiations Chapter 23</p> <p>As regards IPA projects, guidelines will be issued by DG NEAR A3 on monitoring and evaluation, also addressing national authorities.</p> <p>The Commission will continue to encourage IPA beneficiaries to set up or improve existing national systems for monitoring and evaluations of policies and programmes.</p> <p>Continued reporting by relevant organisational entities.</p>
<p>b) The EU should support accession countries to i) review their data systems and identify the most appropriate and cost-effective approaches to collecting the necessary data, disaggregated by gender, age, ethnicity and location; ii) develop or adjust the data collection and analysis tools necessary; iii) find ways of appropriately reporting on the data at regular (ideally annually or with periodic booster samples if necessary) intervals.</p> <p>Support may be needed also at the political level to encourage countries to include the ethnic dimension in their regular monitoring, with reference to considerations of treaties and regulations on human rights and data protection¹.</p>	<p>i) Partially Accepted</p> <p>As regards data, capacity building to improve national statistical services and other data gathering and quality control is foreseen for several IPA countries under different IPA projects (EU Approximation Facility, EU Integration Facility etc.) Funds for evaluations on country level are foreseen under the IPA evaluation budget and/or directly in project budgets.</p> <p>As regards support at the political level, there is neither EU <i>acquis</i> nor a common practice among EUMS on the collection of ethnic data. This is in fact a somewhat controversial topic, and the follow up to this recommendation goes beyond the remits of this evaluation.</p>	<p>Follow-up</p> <p>The outcome of the Roma Survey in the 2016 IPA II multi-country initiative aiming to get country data on the gap between Roma and non-Roma population, from all Western Balkans countries and Turkey in the integration priority areas, will give a clear contribution to set up a clear base line and strong monitoring tools.</p> <p>DG NEAR will consider in the future whether a Roma data dimension should be included in the IPA multi-country project supporting all national statistical offices to ensure the sustainability of the survey data.</p> <p>The recommendation will be followed up in the context of monitoring on-going projects and annual programming where relevant.</p>

¹ See http://www.euromanet.eu/upload/26/36/BRIEF_ON_ETHNIC_DATA_COLLECTION.pdf

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c) Given the similarities of the challenges between the accession countries, there could be benefits to work at a multi-beneficiary level (see recommendation 11).	i) Accepted The Commission is increasing the use of the IPA Multi-country programs on Roma integration. Such programs were adopted in 2014, 2015 and are foreseen in 2016.	Follow-up The recommendation will be followed up in the context of annual programming.
Recommendation 10: Evaluation and Learning a) IPA II interventions for Roma inclusion should be routinely evaluated – both at mid-term and ex-post.	i) Accepted This recommendation is addressed to the Commission. The Commission accepts this recommendation where appropriate. DG NEAR has adequate tools in place to evaluate projects and sector programmes, also in the area of Roma integration.	Follow-up The recommendation will be followed up in the context of the implementation of multi-annual strategic evaluation plan of DG NEAR as well as in the annual operational evaluation plan of EUDs and operational services..
b) Holding the evaluation budget within the EU Delegations/Offices also enables joint evaluations of linked interventions (such as local level and policy level interventions).	i) Accepted Budgets for evaluations are foreseen under IPA II programmes.	Follow-up DG NEAR will continue with existing practice.
c) The European Commission should also consider how it can support the evaluation and learning capacities of the Enlargement Countries' governments and relevant institutions in this thematic area.	i) Accepted Budgets for evaluations are foreseen under IPA II programmes. DG NEAR Guidelines for monitoring and evaluation are being reviewed. Training concerning evaluation and monitoring is foreseen to be organised for beneficiaries both in country and in EC HQ.	Follow-up The DG NEAR Unit A3 "Thematic support, Monitoring and Evaluation" is finalising the evaluation and monitoring guidelines and organising training by the end of 2016.
d) Findings of evaluations should be fed back into the policy and programming cycles for both governments and the European Commission. One forum for this could be the biennial Roma Inclusion Seminars Evaluation and learning could be substantially supported by greater transparency of project/action information by EU Delegations/Offices and Enlargement Country governments.	i) Accepted The Commission already has a number of tools in place to evaluate projects and sector programmes, also in the area of Roma integration. This information and reports is public information that is made available to the outside world. DG NEAR is improving its Intranet page concerning evaluations in order to facilitate exchange of findings of evaluations between services, delegation and countries. Also an IT tool to track all evaluations managed by all DG DEVCO and NEAR services is being developed jointly by DEVCO and NEAR to be launched during 2016 (EVAL-module).	Follow-up DG NEAR is following up on the evaluation recommendations as has been the case in this case triggering policy decision and identifying areas that require IPA support. As regards the transparency, the Evaluation page of the DG NEAR Intranet will be updated in 2016 by NEAR A3. The EVAL-module will be operational in mid-2016.

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<p>Recommendation 11: Multi-beneficiary Funds</p> <p>a) The European Commission should consider the following areas as of particular priority and suitability for multi-beneficiary support:</p>		<p>Follow-up</p> <p>The recommendation will be followed up in the context of annual programming where relevant.</p>
<p>- Regional policy development and research. Multi-country policy research can draw conclusions and recommendations applicable to all Western Balkans countries and Turkey and from the experience in EU Member states and share relevant findings. Results of policy research needs to be followed through to the implementation level, which means practitioners should also be involved closely in the research and dissemination</p> <p>- Support for Roma civil society, networks and partnerships as a means for building awareness, capacities, sharing best practices, and importantly as an advocacy platform, would be a useful contribution to the Roma civil society development efforts. This support should also be given sufficient time for development, learning and follow through.</p> <p>- Support for national statistical and monitoring systems. Support can be given to relatively standardised surveys and survey questions that enable meaningful samples of Roma population to be included (building on the work already done by UNICEF (MICS), UNDP and the World Bank, and the Fundamental Rights Agency).</p>	<p>i) Accepted</p> <p>This recommendation is addressed to the Commission. The Commission accepts this recommendation where appropriate.</p> <p>DG NEAR is already making use of the IPA Multi-country projects to address questions on Roma integration that are relevant for all enlargement countries. In that context we have already ongoing two important programmes: The Roma Integration 2020 initiative and the IPA civil society Roma network project. These two programmes cover regional policy, monitoring and support to civil society</p> <p>Initiatives are being taken to incorporate best possibly conclusions and lessons learned from other initiatives in the programming phases for IPA II (policy and programming discussions, distribution of reports and analyses etc.).</p>	<p>Follow-up</p> <p>Continue implementation of the ongoing Roma integration multi-country programmes.</p> <p>The Commission is currently working on a 2016 IPA II multi-country initiative aiming to get data on the gap between Roma and non Roma population from all Western Balkan countries and Turkey building on the work done in the past by UNDP and the World Bank. This program will cover also the development of Roma integration at local level.</p>

**FOLLOW-UP ON THE LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE THEMATIC EVALUATION ON IPA SUPPORT TO
ROMA COMMUNITIES (Ref. Contract No 2014/344098)**

<p>b) For all of these suggestions, any project should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - be sufficiently long term, focused on achieving particular results on the ground; - demonstrate added value of involving more than one country/territory; - prioritise support to smaller countries/territories that cannot capitalise on economies of scale; - avoid the over-use of international organisations, and instead focus on building regional/local capacities. 	<p>i) Partially Accepted</p> <p>The Commission agrees with the comments on consistency and added-value of projects, local focus and sustainability, and is committed to the building of national and regional capacities. However, in the present context, involving International Organisations (IO) is often the only real option to run the overall program and achieve needed results. Project proposals from regional and local actors are encouraged and accepted when relevant.</p> <p>DG NEAR will increase emphasis in the context of project preparation to ensure that projects implemented by IOs will include involvement of regional, local actors aiming to provide sufficient capacity building to national and regional organisations to ensure progressive transfer of implementation capabilities to these organisations, so that eventually they will be able to apply in their own right to be take responsible of implementing of the overall EU funded project.</p>	<p>Follow-up</p> <p>The recommendation will be followed up in the context of annual programming where relevant.</p>
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