

Funded
by the European Union
and the Council of Europe



EUROPEAN UNION

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Implemented
by the Council of Europe



COUNTRY ASSESSMENT GREECE

ROMMEDI

Médiation pour les Roms Mediation for Roma

ROMED in Greece

by Christina Christou

Disclaimer: The present document was elaborated based on the "Annex 4 - Questions Guide" of the External Evaluation Report of the ROMED Programme. It is neither part, nor a product, of the external evaluation conducted by Blomeyer & Sanz s.a.

1.1 Introduction

According to estimates of the Council of Europe in the absence of officially recorded data, the number of Roma in Greece in 2011 varies between 200 000 and 300 000, out of a total of 11 300 000 inhabitants, reaching approximately 2.7%. There is no Greek legislation officially recognising the Roma population of Greece as a national minority. More specifically, according to the Greek Constitution, the only officially recognised minority is the Muslim minority in Thrace.

Many Roma came along with the rest of the Greek refugees during the Asia Minor War in 1922 and settled in Agia Varvara, Petralona, Amaliada (Ilida, Peloponnese) and other regions of Greece. Others came in 1956 with the exchange of population between Greece and Turkey. Throughout the centuries, many have become indigenous Greeks, whereas after the developments in Eastern Europe in the 1990s and the opening of borders, Greece has been hosting Roma immigrants from Eastern European and Balkan countries such as Romania, Bulgaria and Albania.

Greek Roma are deeply rooted in Hellenic society and history, as their presence has been officially recorded in the Greek territory since the Byzantine Era. Furthermore, they have been equally involved in the struggles of Greece, from 1821 to the Second World War and the National Resistance, from the period of 1940 – 1944 to the current reality.

Roma in Greece, unlike those in other EU countries, neither recognise themselves as a distinct ethnic group from the Greeks, nor as an ethnic minority¹. Many also speak the Romani language in addition to Greek, and maintain specific cultural traits, but more generally they consider themselves primarily as Greek citizens, with equal rights and responsibilities.

In practice, this kind of equality has not yet been achieved, especially in extremely poor and deprived areas where the situation of Roma as equal citizens is debated and their inclusion is still at risk, due to their living conditions. Indicatively, in many regions of Greece, the housing issue remains unresolved for the Roma, thus many still live in huts with basic shortcomings concerning electricity and the water supply. Although a National Roma Integration Strategy was adopted by the Greek government in 2011, the situation of the most vulnerable Roma populations has worsened during the country's turbulent period due to the financial crisis and the political instability subsequently created. Moreover, with the refugee crisis, the issue of Roma inclusion in Greece has become secondary, both at European and at national level.

Recently the Greek Ministry of Labour established a Special Secretariat for Roma Issues (Ειδική Γραμματεία για θέματα Ρομά) acting as focal point for the monitoring of the implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy, bearing responsibilities transferred from the Social Solidarity portfolio.

¹ According to their own testimony, found in the reports of the Trainers of ROMED1 and the National Facilitators of ROMED2, during the interventions of both Programmes.

1.2 ROMED1 key findings

ROMED1 was initiated in Greece in 2011, at a time when Roma mediation and the training of mediators had already been tackled since the mid-90s by the General Secretariat of Lifelong Learning policy² (Γενική Γραμματεία Λαϊκής Επιμόρφωσης), under the authority of the Ministry of Education. The agency organised seminars on specific thematic units, including legal issues. Other non-governmental organisations dealing with the issue of social inclusion of Roma, have both made use of mediation and provided training to a number of Roma mediators, during the implementation of their respective programmes. However, unlike other European countries, at national level there were no large-scale initiatives until the launching of ROMED1.

Compared to previous projects, the new element introduced by ROMED1, besides the fact that it was a pan-European joint programme of the Council of Europe and European Union, was the introduction of a complete, organised methodology and training materials for effective intercultural mediation. An important innovation, which was also used as a tool in the work of the mediators, was the **Mediators' Code of Ethics** which, for the first time, explicitly set out the role, responsibilities and rights of mediators.

ROMED1 came about as a response to the need to train mediators during that period in Greece, not only to help mediation become a solid and effective profession, but also to enable mediators to play a significant part in the social inclusion of Roma. Indeed, the programme came to fill the gap in the training of mediators, as well as to introduce a Code of Ethics for Roma and non-Roma persons that were already working as mediators between the Roma community and local institutions, most of whom had never attended any kind of relevant training on intercultural mediation. Unfortunately, to date, the profession of mediator has still not been recognised.

1.2.2 Implementation of the ROMED1 Programme

The ROMED1 Joint Programme of the Council of Europe and European Union aimed at the training of representatives of the Roma community on intercultural mediation based on human rights was initiated in Greece in 2011, and conducted in three training cycles between 2011 and 2015. During the first phase of implementation of the programme, the necessary contacts were made by the support organisation (Antirropon NGO) with representatives of the civil society and official stakeholders such as the competent "Inter-Ministerial Committee" (Διυπουργική Επιτροπή), composed of the Ministries of Education, Labour, Health and Interior.

In terms of selection of participants for the first training cycles organised between 2011 and 2012, after consultations with stakeholders of the central government, municipalities, regions, universities as well as the Roma community, it was initially decided that trainings would be attended by persons already working as school mediators in the Educational Programmes³ of the Universities of Athens, Thessaly, Aegean University and Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, as well as health and social mediators of the Social Medical Centres in municipalities with Roma communities.

During these two training cycles, a total of 79 mediators from 33 locations were trained, 35 of whom were women. The majority worked as school mediators in educational programmes of the aforementioned universities, whereas others worked as mediators in Social Medical Centres (Ιατρο-Κοινωνικά Κέντρα), within municipality structures in certain areas of Greece.

² <http://www.gsae.edu.gr/en/>

³ "Roma Children's Education" (Πρόγραμμα Εκπαίδευσης Παιδιών Ρομά) Programme under the Ministry of Education and implemented by several universities <http://www.keda.uoa.gr/roma/>

The first training cycle was organised in two sessions in May 2011 and February 2012, during which 24 mediators were trained, of whom four were women; in **the second training cycle** (November 2011 and June 2012), a total of 51 mediators were trained, out of whom 17 were women. In accordance with the ROMED1 curriculum, the training was conducted in two separate sessions with six months of practice in between. While the majority of mediators were Roma, the training also included non-Roma mediators who had extensive experience of work in Roma communities and who enjoyed the same level of trust and skills as their Roma peers. In 2015, following the increased needs arising from the implementation of the ROMED2 Programme, **a third training cycle** was organised with the participation of 33 people - mostly new members of the Community Action Groups from the areas of implementation of the ROMED2 Programme, 20 of whom were women, bringing the total number of trained and certified mediators up to 101 and the areas represented to 35.

According to the mediators' evaluations after the training, while after the first training cycle participants left with the need to enrich their work with more quality features, they often did not feel free to take initiatives. Furthermore, they were required to cope with administrative issues associated with the inclusion of an additional procedure in the application request to welfare structures, or to gather the necessary forms for enrollment of children in schools, which represented additional work often beyond their responsibilities.

According to the trainers' reports, even though the programme did not foresee direct support in the field during the practice period, the need for such support was stressed and requested by most mediators over the telephone. Despite some visits in the field, according to the NFP's reports, mediators felt the need for further support. In addition, all mediators at that time referred to the process of the trainings as necessary and "refreshing", as most had felt disappointed and stressed with their work and the process provided them with the opportunity to share with their colleagues the problems they faced and to realise that, despite the differences, in most of the cases the problems were common.

A highlight of the ROMED1 Programme was the congregation and the decision of 79 mediators at the closing of the second cycle of trainings in Thessaloniki in 2012 to establish the **"Association of Greek Roma Mediators and Partners"** («**Ένωση Ελλήνων Ρομά Διαμεσολαβητών και Συνεργατών**») which had an elected interim administration of 13 persons with representative geographical distribution, and a workers' body with the objective to strengthen their role and enhance their working conditions. Via this body, they would strive for the recognition and institutionalisation of their profession. They also wanted to establish a network for the exchange of ideas, experiences, best practices and peer support through their communication in order to support, in the best possible manner, their local communities, as well as to act equally for the Roma community in Greece.

Finally, notable is the disappointment of most of the mediators resulting from the absence of the Greek team from the European Conference of Mediators held in Brussels in 2013. Despite their eagerness for their voice to be heard at European level and to exchange experiences with their colleagues from the other implementing countries of ROMED1, they eventually decided not to participate, since they were not able to express themselves in any language other than Greek. Unfortunately the organisers were not able to provide interpretation into Greek.

1.2.3 Conclusions

The implementation of the ROMED1 programme led to discussions at national level concerning the promotion of Roma mediation as a necessary process in programmes related to Roma inclusion, and also regarding the official recognition of the profession. This set in place an informal (at the time) rule, which has since been formally accepted, namely that any programme in favour of Roma shall include the Roma community with regard to consultation and implementation, as the community itself is more aware of its needs and how these could be met.

According to the National Support Team and a focus group of mediators, the negative context of the country due to the economic crisis affected on a large scale the situation of mediation in Greece and the Roma community. In certain cases, this general context led to phenomena of xenophobia and racism towards vulnerable social groups, and even violent acts against Roma mediators and Roma communities during the implementation of the programme. Indicative of the situation were the attitudes of rejection from non-Roma parents in areas of Anthili in Lamia and Sofades in Karditsa, when a decision was made by the local authorities to close down ghetto schools in marginalised areas and Roma children were transferred to other mixed schools in various districts. The role of mediation in this case was rendered very difficult by the overall economic and societal context.

Besides the deterioration of their living conditions, like in other ROMED countries, despite the important role they play at local level, mediators' wages remain very low. Their positions are mostly temporary and consequently the mediators are not covered by health insurance. As such, they are obliged to take additional jobs that prevent them from fully dedicating themselves to mediation. Often, they fulfil the role of mediator on a voluntary basis.

According to the mediators' evaluations after the ROMED1 trainings, many felt that their work status and conditions were not impacted by the training. The certificates issued by the Council of Europe were neither recognised by any stakeholder in Greece as a formal educational certification, nor was the profession of mediator, but they declared themselves more empowered by the process and recognise that the training on intercultural mediation was necessary for them.

Firstly, since it was a nationwide initiative which tried to include a considerable number of stakeholders, a wide debate on the subject of Roma mediation opened up. In this manner, the role of mediator was in fact acknowledged, at least at the level of consciousness of the majority of Greek society. Nonetheless, the ambition of the profession to be officially recognised and to set the basis for the regulations concerning working conditions was not met. According to the members of the Mediators' Association, they will continue to work for this through this structure, which since 2015 has been officially established under the legal form of a non-profit organisation.

Secondly, based on the legacy of the European Code of Ethics and the experience gained during the implementation of the programme, the mediators consider that they are not starting from scratch, but rather in the midst of an effort that, with adequate support at European and national level, may very soon achieve the desired outcomes.

Taking into account the elements described above, a set of conclusions can be drawn concerning the future of mediation in Greece:

The continuation of training of mediators is necessary: since the training took place several years ago now and new data has since emerged at national level, as well as on the development of mediation as a whole, both as a profession and as a theory, it is proposed to continue, deepen and expand the training to other involved parties.

Training on intercultural mediation should be organised for stakeholders in direct contact with mediators: according to the NFP's reports, the training of colleagues and associates of the mediators on the basic principles of intercultural mediation (social workers, teachers, psychologists, nurses, doctors, etc.) when they are working in specific institutions or structures for the social inclusion of Roma, is something that would help them better understand the role, obligations and rights of the mediator, and hence would foster better cooperation and results.

The tools developed through the ROMED1 programme could be adapted and used in the work with other categories of vulnerable persons: the theory of social mediation and methodology of intercultural approach are tools that can be used and spread to other groups of population of refugees and to people with disabilities.

Communication and promotion of the results of the programme should be intensified and spread towards a more general public as a basis for improvement of the living conditions of vulnerable groups, with the ultimate aim of social inclusion.

Peer networking should be supported at national and European level: a thematic national conference on the current situation of mediation in Greece could be an excellent opportunity for the dissemination of the programme's results and experiences in Greece. According to some mediators', another initiative could be to support their further education through informal methods, by fostering their participation in trainings, seminars and meetings organised by the European Union or the Council of Europe at national and European level.

Advocacy should be intensified for the recognition of the profession of mediator and for the inclusion of mediation in the Greek NRIS: mediators have expressed that they feel trapped in the Greek reality especially since, to date, the National Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma did not include regulations and solutions. This is despite the fact that Roma, as mentioned above, have put forward their proposals. Nevertheless, they still remain hopeful and invest at national and European level in the improvement of their communities' living conditions.

More practical support is needed for mediators at European level: in addition to moral recognition, which exists largely, mediators need more practical support, either from the European Commission and the Council of Europe or the National Support Team, by continuing consultations and training, depending on the possibilities of course, or from the competent bodies implementing national and local policy. This would be highly beneficial to national and European society if supported, given the great dynamic with these 113 representatives of the Greek Roma community and a large social capital gained after so much effort over the past years.

1.3 ROMED2 key findings

1.3.1 Relevance of the Programme and selection criteria for the intervention areas

Greece was among the first countries to initiate the implementation of the ROMED2 Programme, with a launching event that took place in Athens in October 2013 attended by numerous representatives of the central and local political foreground of the country and representatives of the majority civil society, as well as important representatives of the Roma community.

The representation and participation of Roma communities was a process that had already been experimented in Greece, with decade-long historical precedents of Roma local associations and national federations working to assert their rights. The missing element was the ability to seek and find allies in the process and the method to install a dynamic of trust between the community and local authorities. In most cases indeed, Roma tended to consider the central and local political power as a rival rather than a partner.

The selection criteria of the municipalities involved in the programme included a solid *political will of the local government*, but also the history of social inclusion policies for the Roma at local level, as well as *the size and level of the living conditions of the Roma communities* residing in the geographical limits of these municipalities. During the initial phase of the programme, all municipalities signed a commitment letter for their participation in the programme. The positive element in this regard is that municipalities went a step forward and issued Municipal Decisions for validating their participation in ROMED2. This was the case in Karditsa, Amaliada, Menemeni and Halandri.

Another important priority of the National Support Team was the geographical coverage of the programme, which led to the selection of municipalities in the main areas of Greece: Iraklion (Crete), Ilion (Attica), Ilida (Peloponnese), Komotini (Thrace) and Mesolonghi (West Greece), whilst Karditsa (Thessaly) and Ampelokipi-Menemeni (Thessaloniki) were integrated in the second phase. In the beginning of 2015, in the endeavor to establish the Community Action Groups, the intervention of the programmes was interrupted in the municipalities of Iraklion, Ilion and Komotini due to both the lack of involvement and commitment of local authorities and the high costs related to transporting the (Athens-based) National Support Team to more remote municipalities (Iraklion). In mid-2015, the municipality of Halandri entered the programme with an intensive pace of implementation favoured by its proximity to Athens and thus to the base of the National Support Team.

In early 2015, discussions were initiated on the transition of Karditsa and Thessaloniki to ROMACT. Although the National Support Team and the municipalities worked intensively over six months to ensure a smooth transition in the two locations, in the end the European Commission took the decision not to extend the programme to other countries beyond the six already included. Developments in Greece relevant to the economy after the Referendum of July 2015 were also a factor contributing to this decision.

This understandably had a negative impact both on the CAG and on the local authorities, since expectations had been needlessly created. The cancellation of the transition had, on the one hand, an impact on reducing the trust that the local authorities had towards the National Support Team of the Programme and, on the other, generated frustration inside the communities due to the fact that the discontinuity of interventions coincided not only with the political developments in Greece, but also with developments within the European Union.

1.3.2 Creation and composition of the Community Action Groups

The main result of ROMED2 was the establishment of Community Action Groups, open structures where any citizen who wanted to contribute to defining priorities of the community was welcomed and trained on democratic citizenship. The CAGs also benefitted from the inclusion of representatives of local associations, who brought their extensive experience to the dynamic of the CAGs and provided valuable counselling to the National Support Team in Greece. Their role was also enhanced by their prior training under ROMED1 and their subsequent inclusion in the CAGs during ROMED2. **Examples** in this regard were the Roma Women's Association of Dendropotamos in Thessaloniki, the "Association of Greek Roma St. George" in Amaliada, as well as two local associations in Halandri. It is indicative that, where the leadership of the local Roma association was not cooperative, the participation of the Roma community, and therefore the outcomes of the programme, did not achieve the expected results.

The interventions of the National Support Team in the effort to establish Community Action Groups were not conducted in a homogenous process in all implementation areas of the programme. Instead, a different approach was used every time, as there were differences in the size, living conditions, social characteristics and potential of the Roma communities.

The programme included larger Roma communities, like Dendropotamos with approximately 3 000 Roma residents, but also smaller ones, such as Ilida with approximately 1 400 residents in both its Roma communities, Papakafkas (Παπακαυκάς), Tschleika (Τσιχλείκα) and Mesolonghi with approximately 1 800 Roma residents.

Furthermore, some communities are settled within the residential tissue such as Halandri that lies close to the heart of Athens; communities also reside remotely, far from the decision-making centres such as Karditsa. The differences were clear with regard to the housing issue as well, since in some areas the living conditions could be considered decent, whilst in others people were still living in shacks.

With regard to the educational background and professional activity of CAG members, there were also differences between the areas of intervention, despite the fact that the level remains low and there was the need for more trainings and interventions in some areas in order to assist in the clarification of their priorities. In respect of gender, most of the Community Action Groups are now balanced, except in Ilida in the city of Amaliada, which is exclusively composed of men, and the CAG of Dendropotamos in the municipality of Ampelokipoi–Menemeni, consisting of 11 women and three men.

1.3.3 Implementation of ROMED 2 in the areas of intervention

Despite the turbulent context of the implementation of the programme, the National Support Team worked intensively since the launching for the establishment of four Community Action Groups (Ampelokipi-Menemeni, Karditsa, Mesolonghi and Ilida), while four joint meetings with local authorities were organised (one in every municipality) in order to prepare for the drawing up of four Joint Action Plans.

During the implementation of ROMED2, and in addition to the developments at European level, Greece went through three electoral processes: one at regional and local level in 2014 and two at national level, in January and September 2015 respectively, as well as a national referendum in July 2015. All of these resulted in serious consequences for the programme as well.

Particularly challenging was when the National Support Team had to delay implementation of the programme in the first half of 2014 in order to avoid interference in the political foreground before the local elections in May 2014. The programme's activities were thus postponed and, moreover, in some

cases (Karditsa, Mesolongi, Amalliada) the relationship at local level with the implementing municipalities had to be reset due to changes that resulted from the elections. Finally, due to budgetary cuts and a resulting weaker capacity on the side of municipalities, even where there was political will, the result was that they could not respond to the priorities that had been identified by the Community Action Groups, in order to formulate joint action plans, due to the lack of financial resources. The refugee crisis which strongly affected Greece from 2015 onwards also had an impact on how national authorities addressed Roma issues during the same period.

With regards to the training process, according to the National Facilitators' reports, the training interventions within the Roma community and with the Community Action Groups became schools of active citizenship: over these years, the CAGs learned to work as a team, to create working groups and to take responsibilities. They learned to gather elements and to use them for strengthening their argumentation, to exchange ideas, to set priorities of their communities and to make proposals for addressing their issues.

The CAGs initiated through ROMED2 had an effect on the evolution of some of their members, particularly in the field of education where not only was there an improvement in the school attendance of their own children; in some cases this resulted in the continuation of their own education, through 2nd chance school for adults or evening high schools and lyceums. CAG members in Karditsa (Dendropotamos), Halandri and even Ilion (where ROMED2 withdrew in 2014) reported that the process inspired them to continue their education.

There was also an increased interest in trainings relevant to active participation as citizens, since they consider themselves and their community as an integral part of local and national society. The nature of these topics, however, demands a long-term involvement to become viable as a process and the programmes aiming to achieve that must have a longer timeframe of implementation in order to obtain visible results.

1.3.4 Conclusions

According to the reports of the NFP and the NPOs, since October 2013 until the present, the ROMED2 programme has been at the centre of discussions between representative of the Roma community, the Mediators' Association and state level institutions concerning Roma participation in Greece, due to its methodology and its manner of intervention in local communities which have been acknowledged by all stakeholders. Moreover, taking over the ROMED1 mission at times, ROMED2 has also held a significant role in the discussions at national level for the official recognition of the profession of mediator and tries to support the Association of Greek Roma Mediators in every possible manner.

In addition, the ROMED2 programme has been recognised as a valuable tool in the facilitation and monitoring of the National Roma Integration Strategy (NRIS), thanks to the close connection between the National Support Team and the National Centre of Social Solidarity (Εθνικό Κέντρο Κοινωνικής Αλληλεγγύης) which, at that time, assumed the role of National Focal Point for the monitoring of the implementation of the NRIS. In the meantime, the role of monitoring and focal point for the NRIS was designated to the newly-established Special Secretariat for Roma Issues.

The "Association of Greek Roma Mediators and Associates" is already in cooperation and consultation with the aforementioned Special Secretariat for Roma Issues (Ειδική Γραμματεία για θέματα Ρομά) and the Ministry of Labour, while there are also proposals for the Inter-Ministerial Committee. The Chairman of the Association, Mr Konstantinos Paiteris, along with an additional active member of the Association and Chairman of the Roma Women Association of Dendropotamos, Ms Annoyla Magga, were invited,

among other representatives of the Greek Roma Community, to make proposals to the respective committee in the parliament.

It is worth mentioning here the natural link between the ROMED2 Programme and the intra-municipal network "Rom Network" (Δίκτυο Ρομ), the Director of which, Mr Manolis Rantis, was present during the discussion for the establishment of the Mediators' Association, offering support and valuable guidance. Mr Rantis became one of the two National Project Officers of the ROMED2 Programme, putting his vast experience to the service of municipalities, local administrations' staff and Roma communities.

Among the conclusions concerning the ROMED2 programme in Greece, the following are the most remarkable.

The programme was an effective school for the active citizenship for Roma citizens in Greece: it increased the knowledge among the Roma community with regard to human rights and their responsibilities as active citizens at local level as well, increasing furthermore the consultation capacity of the Community Action Groups with respect to local authorities. They also learned how to prioritize their problems and needs and how to conquer their goals step by step.

The involvement of all competent stakeholders at local level brought an important added value: the long-term vision and implementation has been a key to the success in the formation of the CAGs and the results in the co-operation with local authorities. Through the holistic approach and the "bottom-up" consultation process, identification and prioritisation, this is now a recognised methodology which tends to be used by any organisation implementing programmes for the social inclusion of Roma. In this regard, the ROMED2 Programme played a prominent role, as the perspective of the National Support Team, in their opinion, was almost always long-term. Their main concern was always how the Community Action Groups and the communities they represent would become sustainable and continue their efforts once the programme had ended as well.

The national and local political contexts had a crucial impact on the effectiveness of the implementation: due to the nature of the programme, both the political will and the financial crisis had a crucial part to play concerning its smooth implementation. Unfortunately, the political impact and the economic and social changes at European and national level affected implementation by impeding, many times, the interventions of the National Support Team, both in the communities and the municipalities. For instance, in 2016 a blockade of roads by Greek farmers prevented the team from intervening outside of Athens for a period of time.

Among the recommendations for the continuation of the programme are the following:

Training sessions with the CAG should be conducted by more than one facilitator: according to the National Facilitators themselves, limiting each training session to only one National Facilitator reduces the efficiency and facilitation, especially with large groups. Indeed, there were trainings where a second Facilitator was needed, either because of the number of the participants or the different profile of participants. In their opinion, gender, age, the level of knowledge and experience are factors to be taken into account in the organisation of trainings. For example, there were trainings in which there were more female participants present when the Facilitator was male, or vice versa.

It is of vital necessity to allocate resources to the Community Action Groups and the Association of Mediators to enable them to meet regularly at central level and exchange experiences, good practices and solutions to the problems that their community faces. It is indeed a very good learning experience as the mediators themselves have frequently stated, but they could also constitute an equal participant in the dialogue on policies implemented or to be implemented from now on, for the

social inclusion of the Roma community. Moreover, through the ROMED2 process, they learned a lot about the way dialogue is conducted at political level and the benefits it can have for their community, even if this knowledge was derived at the micro-level of the municipality.

The educational process in previous years with the Community Action Groups and the communities they represent reveals a need for the creation of new groups initially at local level and consequently at national level as well: more and more young people approach the training process as an opportunity of empowerment and to acquire additional knowledge and experience. At times, according to their testimony, they felt the need to be represented at national and European level to enforce their rights, arising not as much from their origin, as from their human status, especially their status as youth. It is a fact that, "in the middle of the crisis in Greece", young people are affected the most. This applies especially to Roma who neither have the same access to the formal education process in order to acquire qualifications due to their living conditions, nor the same access to the labour market which is of even greater need. In their opinion, it is a vital necessity to be supported by National and European Stakeholders.

Social capital created during the years of ROMED implementation should be valorised: despite the fact that Greece is still under economic austerity, initiatives with regard to the Roma community at local and national level have been more targeted. It is crucial that these initiatives include all of this social capital gained during the last years in to further advance the social inclusion of Roma in Greece.

Dissemination of the ROMED2 method should be ensured at national and local levels: the implementation of ROMED2 has resulted in a valuable methodology and material, a National Support Team and trained certified mediators which could all form part of smaller or bigger initiatives of civil society. This effort and its results, if continued, could continue to have in the present, as well as in the future, an effective impact regarding Roma social inclusion in Greece.