



ROMA AND EGYPTIANS IN ALBANIA

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CoE _____ Council of Europe

CEB _____ Council of Europe Development Bank

CRD _____ Civil Rights Defenders

EASO _____ European Asylum Support Office

EC _____ European Commission

ECMI _____ European Centre for Minority Issues

ECRI _____ European Commission against Racism and Intolerance

ERRC _____ European Roma Rights Center

EU _____ European Union

MUD _____ Ministry of Urban Development

RCC _____ Regional Cooperation Council

UNDP _____ United Nations Development Programme

VET _____ Vocational Education and Training



1. ROMA IN ALBANIA: OVERVIEW

1.1. DEMOGRAPHICS

According to the 2011 population census, 8,301 Roma and 3,668 Egyptians live in Albania.¹ It is estimated that the real number of Roma in Albania ranges between 13,000 and 150,000.²

Roma and Egyptians are diverse groups and can be differentiated according to traditional group affiliations, religion (primarily Islam, including Bektashi, but also Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant), or their (first) language (Romani or Albanian in particular).

For many years, a strong migration tendency prevails, in particular to Greece and Italy, but also to Western European countries.

1.2. ANTI-GYPSYISM AND CUMULATIVE DISCRIMINATION

Anti-Gypsyism, cumulative discrimination and prejudices towards and wrong perceptions of Roma and Egyptians prevail in Albania as in all other countries in Europe. Anti-Gypsyism and cumulative and systematic discrimination constitute the root-causes of their situation. High unemployment rates, low education enrolment and attainment rates and overall deplorable living conditions of the majority of Roma reflect the symptoms of their situation.³

Therefore, in order to achieve a change, it is indispensable on the one hand to admit the existence of and to combat anti-Gypsyism and cumulative and systematic discrimination and to work on changing the attitudes of people. On the other hand, it is indispensable to implement a

1 UNDP, Roma and Egyptians in Albania: a socio-demographic and economic profile based on the 2011 census, April, 2015. Retrieved on March 16, 2017 from <http://www.al.undp.org/content/dam/albania/docs/Census%202011%20Profile%20of%20Roma%20and%20Egyptians%20final.pdf?download>

2 See Council of Europe, "Estimates on Roma population in European countries". Retrieved on February 14, 2017 from: <http://www.coe.int/de/web/portal/roma>

3 Cumulative discrimination "expands the potential impact of racial discrimination to include cumulative effects over time, as well as the interaction between effects of discrimination experienced in one domain and at one point in time and events that occur in other domains and at other points in time". See Blank, Dabady and Citro, 2004, p.223. See also the Summary Report "Wall of Anti-Gypsyism" for a more detailed discussion of anti-Gypsyism in the Western Balkans.

comprehensive and participatory policy addressing the different fields (education, employment, housing, health, etc.) in parallel.

1.3. GENERAL LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

Since October 2017, Roma and Egyptians are recognised as distinct national minorities in Albania.⁴ Until then, Roma were only recognised as a linguistic minority while Egyptians were recognised neither as a linguistic minority nor as a national minority.

The new law also contains paragraphs relating to prohibition of discrimination (Art. 7). The law creates obligations on the Albanian government to enact bylaws that allow for “measures and policies necessary to ensure the participation of national minorities in public, cultural, social and economic life are approved by a decision of the Council of Ministers, upon the proposal of the ministers responsible for the abovementioned areas.”

Numerous national laws, strategies, policy documents

and international obligations determine the policy towards Roma and Egyptians in Albania and their situation. In addition to more general documents such as the Law on the Protection from Discrimination,⁵ the relevant sectoral laws and policies (e.g. in education or employment), Albania has Roma-specific policies, in particular the Government Action Plan for Integration of Roma and Egyptians 2016-2020.

The Action Plan for Integration of Roma and Egyptians 2016-2020 is a part of the overall social protection and social inclusion approach in Albania within the framework of the National Strategy for Development and Integration 2015-2020.

The Action Plan provides for measures in the following fields: (i) civil registration and access to justice, (ii) education and promotion of intercultural dialogue, (iii) employment and vocational education and training (VET), (iv) healthcare, (v) housing and urban integration and (vi) social protection.

2. SECURITY AND FREEDOM FROM TORTURE

2.1. LAW AND POLICY REVIEW

In addition to the Law on Protection from Discrimination, the Albanian Criminal Code constitutes the major legal document. Several articles of the Albanian Criminal Code define ethnic discrimination, racially motivated hate crimes and hate speech, including hate speech on the Internet.⁶

According to the Criminal Code of Albania, discrimination constitutes an aggravating circumstance of any offence relating to language, religion, nationality, political and social beliefs.⁷

2.2. CURRENT SITUATION

There is no comprehensive statistical data collected on racially-motivated crimes by Albanian authorities and the general statistics are not disaggregated by ethnicity, so it is difficult to assess how many Roma are victims of physical violence and violent hate crimes.⁸

The Prosecutor General reported one case regarding Article 265 of the Criminal Code (inciting hatred because of race, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation) in 2015 and two cases in 2016. Another case concerned Art. 84a (threats through computer systems based on racist and xenophobic motives). There is no more detailed information available, neither from the police nor from the Ministry of Justice.⁹

4 Republic of Albania, Assembly of the Republic of Albania, Law No. 97/2017 on the Protection of National Minorities in the Republic of Albania. Retrieved on January 10, 2018 from <https://www.parlament.al/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/ligj-nr-96-dt-13-10-2017-1.pdf>

5 Republic of Albania, Assembly of the Republic of Albania, Law No. 10221. Official Gazette of Albania 15/25 February 2010

6 Criminal Code of Albania. Retrieved on October 15, 2017 from http://www.pp.gov.al/web/kodi_penal_2016_1033.pdf

7 Merita Mece, Accessible Justice System for All: The Case of the Roma Minority in Albania, ECMI Working Papers #84, 2015

8 ECRI Report on Albania (fourth monitoring cycle), 2015, p. 26. See also: Open Society Institute Report, *No Data - No Progress, Data Collection in Countries Participating to the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015*, 2010.

9 Report of the General Prosecutor on the Situation of Criminality 2016*. Retrieved on October 16, 2017 from: http://www.pp.gov.al/web/raporti_pp_2016_07_03_2017_1160.pdf. See also the State Police website at: <https://www.asp.gov.al/index.php/sherbime/buletini-i-dpp> or the Ministry of Justice website on judicial cases adjudicated at <http://www.drejtesia.gov.al/al/dokumente/statistika>

According to an ECRI report from 2015, the Albanian police have recorded only one hate crime incident in 2015.¹⁰ This incident concerns the use of violence by the police against Roma in the town of Fier on 13 December 2013, and the case *Hysenaj v. Albania* is currently pending at the European Court of Human Rights.¹¹

According to the ERRC, the Albanian courts have also never made use of Article 50 of the Criminal Code which provides for increased punishment for racist motivation.

The Albanian Helsinki Committee and the ERRC are investigating a potential case of police harassment. Roma who are collecting recycling material are being harassed by police after the municipality of Tirana concluded a cooperation deal with a waste collection company.¹²

Overall, Roma and Egyptians experience prejudice and discriminatory behaviour from public institutions and the general public. In 2014, the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination reported an increase in the number of cases referred to the institution. In 2014, discrimination based on ethnicity was the major ground for complaint (164). Complaints from Roma and Egyptians referred primarily to the areas of employment, housing, education, and services.¹³

In 2013, the Ombudsman requested the prosecution of 13 police officers on substantial allegations of torture. In comparison to 2012, this meant fewer cases in 2013. Among these cases, two were considered torture by the public prosecutor. Further, there were complaints of disproportionate use of force and violence by police officers and prison guards and allegations of cases of torture and physical and psychological abuse of citizens by police employees.¹⁴

In 2011, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, in its Concluding Observations, expressed concerns that "members of the Roma minority, especially the young, face ethnic profiling and are subjected to ill-treatment and improper use of force by police officers".¹⁵

There have been some incidents of hate speech against Roma and Egyptians by politicians. However, hate speech is mostly found in online media.¹⁶ The Albanian Media Institute reported several cases of cyber hate speech targeting Roma in Albania in 2014.¹⁷

10 ECRI, Report on Albania, 2015.

11 European Roma Rights Centre, Strategic Litigation: *Hysenaj v. Albania*. Retrieved on January 10, 2018 from <http://www.errc.org/article/hysenaj-v-albania-third-party-intervention-pending/4511>.

12 European Roma Rights Centre, Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/EuropeanRomaRightsCentre/videos/1287401564661230/>

13 Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination, Annual Report 2015. Retrieved on October 15, 2017 from: http://kmd.al/skedaret/1487862994-Raport%20Vjetor%202015_KMD.pdf

14 European Asylum Support Office, EASO Country of Origin Information Report, Albania – Country Focus, 2016. Retrieved on September 25, 2017 from: https://coi.easo.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/EASOCOI_Albania_Nov2016.pdf

15 Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination: Concluding observations: Albania, CERD/C/ALB/CO/5-8, 14 September 2011, para.15

16 Civil Rights Defenders, Country Report Albania. Retrieved on June 30, 2017 from: <http://www.civilrightsdefenders.org/country-reports/human-rights-in-albania/>

17 Albanian Media Institute: Hate speech in online media in South East Europe, Tirana, 2014.



3. PERSONAL DOCUMENTS

3.1. LAW AND POLICY REVIEW

The Law on Civil Registry Office (No. 10129, 11 May 2009; amended in 2016) regulates the procedures and requirements for civil registration.

Article 8 of the Law on Albanian Citizenship (Law No. 8389, 6 September 1998) states that “a child born or found within the territory of the Republic of Albania is granted the Albanian citizenship if he is born by unknown parents and as a consequence the child may become stateless”.¹⁸

Amendments to several laws and bylaws facilitated better access to registration and obtaining documents over the last years. However, concerning the relevant legislation and the practice to issue personal documents, the shortcomings, including birth registration of new-born babies, are still present.

The Action Plan for Integration of Roma and Egyptians 2016–2020 refers to the problem of access to personal documents and provides for twelve individual measures that should facilitate better access to documents.

The new Law on Free Legal Aid is of further importance (No. 111/2017), as it could assist individuals in registering and obtaining documents. However, many Roma and Egyptians do not qualify for benefiting from the law, since they do not belong to one of the groups eligible for receiving free legal aid (e.g. receiving social benefits in form of economic assistance).¹⁹

Legal aid will be delivered in both primary and secondary legal aid. The new Law intends to:

- a) Create system for the organisation and delivery of free-of-charge legal aid in an effective and equal manner for all individuals in need in order to enable access to justice to them,
- b) Ensure the proper organisation, proper administration and proper functioning of the state institutions responsible for the administration of legal aid,
- c) Ensure the delivery of professionally competent, high quality, efficient and effective legal aid services.

18 Unofficial translation of the law retrieved on March 20, 2107 from <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b5c10.html>

19 Law No. 111/2017 on Free Legal Aid. Retrieved on January 31, 2017 from <https://www.parlament.al/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/ligj-nr.-111-dt.-14.12.2017.pdf>

3.2. CURRENT SITUATION

According to UNDP survey data, in 2011, 5.7% of Roma and 0.7% of Egyptian children aged 0 to 18, were not registered.²⁰ This makes them “forgotten children” and excludes them from some social services, so the disadvantage arising from the lack of registration is transferred to the next generation, since unregistered parents cannot register their children.

Overall, in the last years the situation improved due to activities of the government, international organisations and civil society activities, including the cost-free provision of ID cards to ca. 5,000 Roma following a government decree in 2008.²¹ Organisations such as UNDP or the Open Society Foundation in Albania provided legal assistance for accessing documents and registration.

According to a representative of the Ministry of Social Affairs, in 2016 the Civil Status Office registered 406 Roma and Egyptians.²²

However, there the barriers preventing the registration still prevail such as administrative obstacles (required address, payment of taxes) and a lack of awareness on the importance of registration.

Children born abroad, in particular in Greece, still have problems. When parents could not afford hospital fees in relation to the birth of their children, they might not have received the respective documents from the hospital necessary for the registration or children were registered without a name and the related documents have not been recognised by the authorities in Albania.²³

People who moved or intend to move within Albania could face different problems, since the transfer of residence can only be registered upon proving property ownership or a lease agreement for a dwelling.²⁴ The impossibility to transfer the residence and to register at a new location could deprive people from social protection programs of employment or housing.²⁵

4. EMPLOYMENT

4.1. LAW AND POLICY REVIEW

In Albania does not have a law promoting the equal participation of minorities in public service employment. The new Law on the Protection of National Minorities, however, obligates the Albanian government to enact bylaws that allow for “measures and policies necessary to ensure the participation of national minorities in public, cultural, social and economic life”.²⁶

However, several policy documents refer to Roma and Egyptians situation. The National Strategy for Employment and Skills 2014-2020 and the respective Action Plan contains specific measures targeting Roma, e.g. participation in training and employment measures and the monitoring of their inclusion.²⁷

The Action Plan for Integration of Roma and Egyptians 2016-2020 sets an ambitious goal with regard to providing equal opportunities for formal employment for Roma and Egyptians: 80% more Roma and Egyptian men and women participating in VET and active employment programs will be integrated in the labour market by the end of the year 2020.

Furthermore, the Action Plan identified three objectives in the policy areas of employment and vocational education and training (VET):

Objective 1: To integrate Roma and Egyptians in the labour market through VET and active employment programs;

20 UNDP/CEES, Needs Assessment Study on Roma and Egyptian communities in Albania. Tirana 2012.

21 The Action Plan for Integration of Roma and Egyptians 2016-2020

22 RCC, Roma Integration 2020, Report on Public Dialogue Forum, Tirana 23 May 2017. Retrieved on October 15, 2017 from: <http://www.rcc.int/romaintegration2020/news/257/2017-public-dialogue-forum-on-roma-integration-in-tirana>

23 Bozo, Raimonda, Vangjel Kosta, and Anisa Metalla. 2015. Ending Childhood Statelessness: A Study on Albania. London: European Network on Statelessness.

24 The Action Plan for Integration of Roma and Egyptians 2016-2020

25 The Action Plan for Integration of Roma and Egyptians 2016-2020

26 Republic of Albania, Assembly of the Republic of Albania, Law No. 97/2017 on the Protection of National Minorities in the Republic of Albania. Retrieved on January 10, 2018 from <https://www.parlament.al/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/ligj-nr-96-dt-13-10-2017-1.pdf>

27 The Action Plan for Integration of Roma and Egyptians 2016-2020

Objective 2: To promote (social) entrepreneurship and self-employment of Roma and Egyptians;

Objective 3: To build capacities and improve the performance of the NES and VET system staff for the integration of Roma and Egyptians into the labour market.

The Law on Social Assistance and Social Care (No. 7710, 18 May 1993) along with the Council of Ministers Decision 787/2005, on the criteria, procedures and the amount of economic assistance governs the eligibility criteria and procedure for accessing social assistance.

The economic assistance provided according to the law (in 2014) was a means-tested monthly cash benefit to approximately 80,000 households. Other available benefits include electricity subsidies and assistance for persons with disabilities and their families.²⁸

However, many Roma and Egyptian families meet the criteria of eligibility for receiving economic assistance (see below for more details). The Action Plan for Integration of Roma and Egyptians 2015-2020, therefore intends to increase access to social protection programs for Roma and Egyptian community members with the following goal: 65% of Roma and Egyptian community members will be included in social protection programs by the end of 2020.

4.2. CURRENT SITUATION

Though there are conflicting data on Roma and Egyptians situation in the labour market, all data demonstrate the vulnerable position of the two communities in the labour market as well as the overall poor economic situation in Albania.

Data concerning participation in the labour market based on the census results show the following picture:

Table 1: Census 2011: Selected data on the employment situation of the Roma and Egyptians²⁹

Albania (R=Roma; E=Egyptians; A=Albanians)	Men			Women			Total		
	R	E	A	R	E	A	R	E	A
Employment rate (15-64)	35.2%	23.8%	44.8%	15.5%	13.4%	25.5%	22.5%	18.8%	35.1%
Unemployment rate (15-64)	44.8%	63.3%	28.2%	58.3%	73.5%	31.4%	49.7%	67.5%	29.4%

In 2011, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conducted a regional research on the Roma

socio-economic situation, comparing their situation with the situation of the majority population in close proximity.

Table 2: UNDP (2011): Selected data on the employment situation of the Roma and Egyptians³⁰

Albania	Men		Women		Total	
	Roma	Non-Roma	Roma	Non-Roma	Roma	Non-Roma
Employment rate (15-64)	59%	60%	25%	31%	42%	46%
Employment rate (15-24)	40%	24%	11%	13%	25%	19%
Unemployment rate (15-64)	16%	15%	34%	23%	23%	18%
Unemployment rate (15-24)	25%	38%	57%	41%	37%	39%
Activity rate (15-64)	70%	70%	38%	40%	54%	56%

The Open Society Foundation Albania conducted a survey in 2014 and found that 75% of the Roma were unemployed.³¹

the difficult position of Romani and Egyptian women in particular.

The data – though not matching – demonstrate the disadvantaged position of Roma in the labour market and

When it comes to the type of employment, the data demonstrates considerable differences between the communities.

28 The Action Plan for Integration of Roma and Egyptians 2016-2020

29 Data taken from UNDP, Roma and Egyptians in Albania: a socio-demographic and economic profile based on the 2011 census, April, 2015

30 See the results of the UNDP survey. Retrieved on March 16, 2017 from: <http://www.eurasia.undp.org/content/rbec/en/home/ourwork/sustainable-development/development-planning-and-inclusive-sustainable-growth/roma-in-central-and-southeast-europe/roma-data/>

31 The Action Plan for Integration of Roma and Egyptians 2016-2020

SELF-EMPLOYMENT

The Roma are mostly involved in second-hand small trade and collection of recyclable waste, while the Egyptians are more frequently involved in the services sector, domestic care and construction.

The majority of Roma are self-employed (62%), compared to 32% of the Egyptians and 35% of the Albanians. The “self-employed” Roma only in exceptional cases have employees and work primarily in low-profile occupations such as scrap metal collection or informally as unskilled workers. Yet, there are no attempts of formalising this work.³²

Making a living by collecting scrap metal and other recyclable waste may become impossible in the view of the potential privatisation of landfills. Following the signing of a contract between the municipality of Tirana and a waste collection company, Roma have been harassed by police when collecting recyclable material in March 2017.³³

Table 3: Type of employment (Census 2011)³⁵

Albania (R=Roma; E=Egyptians; A=Albanians)	Men			Women			Total		
	R	E	A	R	E	A	R	E	A
Employee (15-64)	27%	57%	50%	34%	76%	62%	29%	63%	54%
Self-employed (15-64)	65%	40%	41%	55%	18%	25%	62%	32%	35%
Self-employed with employees	2%	2%	5%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	4%
Family workers	8%	3%	9%	12%	7%	13%	9%	5%	10%

With regard to employment in the public sector, only incomplete data is available. According to the census results, 20% of the Albanians, 7% of the Egyptians and 4% of the Roma worked in “Public administration, defence, education, human health and social work”.³⁶

Several reasons determine the limited participation of Roma and Egyptians in the labour market, such as: discrimination, lack of information on available active labour market measures or training programmes, lack of registration or lack of documents and the low level education of many Roma and Egyptians being the most prominent.

However, Roma’s work in agriculture in rural areas is, as a source of income, threatened by the lack of documents confirming the ownership of the land. According to the 2012 report, 12.5% of the Roma own agricultural land. In this group, 49.4% of those who own land cultivate grain, 19.1% do not grow anything and 20.2% lease their agricultural land.³⁴

EMPLOYMENT

The majority of the Albanians and Egyptians are employed (54% and 63%, respectively), but only 29% of the Roma are employed. Both data selections also demonstrate considerable gender-based differences.

According to UNDP survey, 84% of the Roma jobs do not provide pensions or health care and only 15% have permanent and stable employment. The survey revealed another striking data: 58% of the Roma stated that they have never worked and 24% have worked less than 5 years and 46.1% of the Roma stated that they have experienced discrimination in job seeking and 23.6% at their workplace.

Only few Roma and Egyptians are registered with the employment offices. According to 2012 UNDP survey, this means 20.7% of the Roma and 29.9% of the Egyptians.³⁷ Data from the National Employment Service of September 2014 state that 9,273 Roma were registered as unemployed (in total 141,286 persons were registered; it is worth mentioning that in the census 2011, only 8,301 persons stated they are Roma, including children and people past working age). Data on Egyptians were not available.³⁸

The government implements activities promoting labour market integration or vocational training. However, the

32 The Action Plan for Integration of Roma and Egyptians 2016-2020

33 See ERRC post on 30 March 2017 on its Facebook page. Retrieved on June 30, 2017 from: <https://www.facebook.com/EuropeanRomaRightsCentre/videos/1287401564661230/>

34 UNDP/CEES, Needs Assessment Study on Roma and Egyptian communities in Albania. Tirana 2012. Retrieved on June 30, 2017 from: <http://www.alundp.org/content/dam/albania/docs/Roma%20Needs%20Assessment.pdf>

35 Data taken from UNDP, Roma and Egyptians in Albania: a socio-demographic and economic profile based on the 2011 census, April, 2015

36 UNDP, Roma and Egyptians in Albania: a socio-demographic and economic profile based on the 2011 census, April, 2015

37 UNDP/CEES, Needs Assessment Study on Roma and Egyptian communities in Albania. Tirana 2012.

38 The Action Plan for Integration of Roma and Egyptians 2016-2020

participation of Roma and Egyptians in these programmes is limited, since this would not qualify for earning enough money to make a living.³⁹ According to the Government Action Plan, the Roma and Egyptians who have formal employment are mainly occupied with subsistence agriculture (for resident rural communities) which is characterized by very small plots of land, lack of infrastructure and irrigation and high maintenance costs.⁴⁰

SOCIAL TRANSFER

The UNDP Needs Assessment Survey showed that 95.9 per cent of Roma respondents and 88.7 per cent of Egyptian respondents in employment did not have employment contracts and a similar share of them also did not pay for social contributions, which restricted their access to social protection and other services.⁴¹

Access to the different kind of social transfers is limited and the available “economic assistance” is not sufficient to make a living solely from it, but all transfers (economic assistance, pensions, unemployment benefits, etc.) make up a considerable share of the family income (Roma: 13.1% of the overall budget; Egyptians: 24%). However, according to a study published in 2012, only 24.2% of the Roma and 33.6% of the Egyptians receive “economic assistance”.⁴² According to report published in 2016, in total 1,215 Romani and Egyptian families received economic assistance.⁴³

One of the reasons for the small share of families – in light of the general economic situation of Roma and Egyptians – receiving “economic assistance” is related to the stipulation of the law that potential beneficiaries must have been registered at an address provided since 1993. Due to the large-scale internal migration many Roma and Egyptians therefore do not qualify for “economic assistance”.

39 The Action Plan for Integration of Roma and Egyptians 2016-2020

40 The Action Plan for Integration of Roma and Egyptians 2016-2020

41 UNDP/CEES, Needs Assessment Study on Roma and Egyptian communities in Albania. Tirana 2012.

42 UNDP/CEES, Needs Assessment Study on Roma and Egyptian communities in Albania. Tirana 2012.

43 Republic of Albania, Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth, Roma Integration 2020, Reporting Template on Annual Implementation of Roma Integration Public Policy of the Participating Governments, 2016 Monitoring and Reporting. Retrieved on January 31, 2018 from: <http://www.rcc.int/romaintegration2020/participants/1/albania>



5. EDUCATION

5.1. LAW AND POLICY REVIEW

The major law governing education in Albania is the Law on Pre-university Education System in the Republic of Albania which is complemented by the National Education Strategy 2014-2020.⁴⁴

The Action Plan on Integration of Roma and Egyptians complements these documents with specific measures for these two communities.

Within the policy areas of education and promotion of intercultural dialogue, the Action Plan defines four objectives:

Objective 1: More Roma and Egyptian boys and girls who will complete all levels of education;

Objective 2: To promote intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding through school-based community development;

Objective 3: To strengthen the cooperation of schools with social services, in order to address the cases

of Roma and Egyptian children with socio-economic problems;

Objective 4: To value and promote the recognition of the Roma and Egyptian identities as an integral part of Albanian cultural heritage.

According to the Ombudsman, the education of members of this minority should not only be seen as a constitutional obligation, but rather as the most efficient way for their full integration into society. Low level of education is a serious problem that hinders the integration of this community into society.

For these reasons, the Ombudsman recommended the adoption of a legislative initiative to amend the Law on Pre-University Education in order to provide and guarantee the integration of Roma children in education, from preschool to the other levels of higher education. However, this recommendation has not been addressed yet.

⁴⁴ Republic of Albania, Ministry of Education, Law No. 69/2012 on Pre-university Education System in the Republic of Albania. Retrieved on October 15, 2017 from http://www.arsimi.gov.al/files/userfiles/aktelgjore/Ligji_Parauniversitar.pdf; National Pre-university Education Development Strategy. Retrieved on October 15, 2017 from: http://www.arsimi.gov.al/files/userfiles/apu/2016/FLETORJA-ZYRTARE-STRATEGJIA-APU_2014_2020.pdf

5.2. CURRENT SITUATION

Albania undertook efforts to improve the participation of Romani children in the education system, however, with limited impact so far. Albania introduced several affirmative measures for Romani students or for students from vulnerable groups, e.g. providing free textbooks or introducing quota for Romani and Egyptian students at university. The Ministry of Education recently announced that it will now pay more attention to increase the participation of Romani and Egyptian children in pre-school.⁴⁵

According to the People's Advocate, major issues include the high dropout rate, the irregular attendance, the failure to create a non-biased and accepting environment in the schools and the still prevailing segregation in two schools, one in Korca and one in Morava, Berat.⁴⁶

In 2016, further segregation has been identified within the "Second Chance Programme". In two schools in Elbasan ("Qemal Haxhihasani 2" and "Ptoleme Xhuvani"), segregated and ineffective programme was created only for Romani and Egyptian students.

However, as the data below demonstrate, Roma face problems at all levels of the education system. The reasons for their limited participation in the education system

include discrimination, bullying in schools, insufficient support, the living conditions, some children necessity to work and the limited importance some parents attribute to the education. Only 42% of children 3-6 year old attend pre-school education which also affects the performance in primary school though Romani children are exempted from paying the obligatory fees for pre-school education (ca. EUR 14-35 per month).⁴⁷

According to the Action Plan, the following issues negatively influence their participation in education: (i) school curricula portrays Roma and Egyptians as vulnerable groups rather than distinguished identities, which creates further stigmatisation and discriminatory attitude; (ii) teaching staff and school principals lack understanding of Roma and Egyptian identities and skills for teaching and managing multicultural educational environment and (iii) in general, shortcomings of the school system extra-curricular activities promoting inter-cultural dialogue and understanding.

In 2016, 12,801 Roma and Egyptians attended pre-school and compulsory education (5,681 girls and 7,120 boys; 4,172 Roma and 8,629 Egyptians); 9,878 resided in urban and 2,923 resided in rural areas.⁴⁸

Table 4: Selected data on the situation in education of the Roma and Egyptians in Albania (2011)⁴⁹

Albania	Men		Women		Total	
	Roma	Non-Roma	Roma	Non-Roma	Roma	Non-Roma
Literacy rate (16+)	68%	97%	62%	93%	65%	95%
Literacy rate (16-24)	67%	98%	62%	93%	65%	95%
Pre-school enrolment rate (3-6)	37%	53%	30%	61%	34%	57%
Gross enrolment rate in compulsory education (7-15)	49%	90%	48%	92%	48%	91%
Gross enrolment rate (Upper-Secondary Education 16-19)	17%	65%	10%	55%	13%	60%
Average years of education (25-64)	4,6	9,7	4,2	9,5	4,4	9,6
Average Years of Education (16-24)	4,2	9,9	3,6	10,1	3,9	10,0

45 RCC, Roma Integration 2020, Report on Public Dialogue Forum, Tirana 23 May 2017. Retrieved on October 15, 2017 from: <http://www.rcc.int/romaintegration2020/news/257/2017-public-dialogue-forum-on-roma-integration-in-tirana>

46 Speech of the People's Advocate, Mr. Igli Totozani, on social inclusion and integration of Roma and Egyptian communities in Albania at the Seminar of Albania-EU political dialogue. Retrieved on March 17, 2017 from: <http://www.avokatipopullit.gov.al/en/content/20042016-people%E2%80%99s-advocate-social-inclusion-and-integration-roma-and-egyptian-communities>

47 See The Action Plan for Integration of Roma and Egyptians 2016-2020

48 Republic of Albania, Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth, Roma Integration 2020, Reporting Template on Annual Implementation of Roma Integration Public Policy of the Participating Governments, 2016 Monitoring and Reporting. Retrieved on January 31, 2018 from: <http://www.rcc.int/romaintegration2020/participants/1/albania>

49 See the results of the UNDP survey. Retrieved on March 16, 2017 from: <http://www.eurasia.undp.org/content/rbec/en/home/ourwork/sustainable-development/development-planning-and-inclusive-sustainable-growth/roma-in-central-and-southeast-europe/roma-data/>

Table 5: Education attainments (2011)⁵⁰

Category	Roma Population (8 years and above)	Egyptian Population (8 years and above)	Albania
Illiterate/never been to school (%)	40.3	12.7	2.8
Finished middle school (%)	16.1	41.5	40.9
High school education (%)	2.1	6.4	28.4
University education (%)	0.3	0.9	10.7
Average years of education (males)	5.6	6.8	10
Average years of education (females)	5.3	6.9	10

6. HOUSING

6.1. LAW AND POLICY REVIEW

The Law on Social Housing Programmes (Law no. 9232) governs access to social housing.⁵¹ The law did not specifically include Roma and Egyptians in the selection criteria and the scoring system (Article 5). While Roma are mentioned as one of the priority groups for rent subsidies, Egyptians are not mentioned.⁵²

Amendments to the law by the Albanian Government in May 2012 extended to rural areas and selection criteria for beneficiaries of social housing have been changed. Vulnerable Romani families meeting the selection criteria with regard to housing conditions, family conditions, social conditions and economic status are defined as a priority group in the selection process conducted by the municipal councils.⁵³

In 2017, the Ministry of Urban Development (MUD) drafted a new Law on Social Housing which is still under parliamentary procedure with the Parliamentary Commission on Labour, Social Affairs and Health. It should have also served as a basis for extending housing schemes. The new Strategy on Social Housing (2016-2020) which has been adopted by the Council of Ministers in 2016 is also relevant. It aims, *inter alia*, at offering affordable and qualitative housing solutions for vulnerable families, including Roma and Egyptian Communities.

The Law No. 9482/2006 on Legalisation, Urbanisation and Integration of Illegal Buildings, amended in 2014 and

2015, has adversely affected these people, as they put families living in shacks at risk of eviction without proper compensation or alternative housing. Albanian legislation does not protect citizens from forced evictions.⁵⁴ Within the policy areas of housing and urban integration, the Action Plan for the Integration of Roma and Egyptians defines two objectives:

Objective 1: To improve mechanisms for facilitating legalisation procedures for Roma and Egyptian families;

Objective 2: More Roma and Egyptian families included in the direct and indirect housing programmes.

Some municipalities developed local action plans, addressing the housing situation too, e.g. the municipality of Tirana.

6.2. CURRENT SITUATION

Apart from employment, the Roma in Albania consider housing situation as the most crucial problem in Albania. Homelessness, rehabilitation of houses, legalisation and property title issues, and poor infrastructure are considered as some of the most pressing problems which need to be resolved.⁵⁵ In 2012, the Centre for Economic and Social Studies (CESS) conducted the study "Needs Assessment Study on Roma and Egyptian communities in Albania" (commissioned by UNDP). The study provides an overview

50 UNDP/CEES, Needs Assessment Study on Roma and Egyptian communities in Albania. Tirana 2012.

51 Republic of Albania, Assembly of the Republic of Albania, Law No. 9232 (2004) "On social programs of housing for residents of urban areas" (Primary law on housing), amended in 2012 (Law No.54, dated 10.05.2012)

52 UNDP, Social Housing in Albania: A Situation Analysis, Tirana 2014

53 Decade Progress Report 2014

54 Law No. 9482/2006 on Legalisation, Urbanisation and Integration of Illegal Buildings. Retrieved on January 31, 2018 from: <http://www.qbz.gov.al/botime/Permbledhese%20per%20legalizimet.pdf>

55 Civil Society Monitoring Report on the Implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy and Decade Action Plan in 2012 in Albania. See also UNDP, Social Housing in Albania: A Situation Analysis, Tirana 2014

of the housing situation of Roma and Egyptians in Albania.⁵⁶ A very high percentage of respondents (80.6%) claimed that they own their home, however, according to the study authors this might be based on a misunderstanding, since Roma have lived for many years in the same settlements thus taking it for granted that they own their homes, whereas in reality the state owns the land the houses are built upon. However, the houses' conditions and the overall living conditions are deplorable. Almost 25% of the interviewees live in shacks, tents or other non-brick housing units. Among them, 38.4% declared they live in old houses. The lack of drinking water, toilets and sewage facilities inside the household and the road access to the settlements were mentioned as the major constraints.

The high frequency of internal migration which impacts their dwelling conditions prevails among Roma in Albania. In many new settlements, the Roma live in camps consisting of tents or huts located mainly on the rivers banks. The size of the camp varies according to the area, but in places such as Tirana or Shkodra it usually includes up to 50 tents/huts. In some other settlements, such as Saranda and Milot, the Roma have put up their tents in abandoned warehouses, paying rent to their owners. In the last years, in cooperation with international donors and municipalities, the government of Albania had, however, provided more social housing opportunities for families without income or without access to economic assistance (social benefit scheme).

According to the Ministry of Urban Development, within the Programme for Reconstruction of Roma and Egyptian Communities' Housing, 469 housing units in fifteen municipalities were reconstructed between 2014 and 2016. In the framework of the Social Housing Programme which has been piloted in 2016 and served for the adaptation of social housing units, vulnerable families received a contribution for the rent within the range of 50-100%.⁵⁷

Civil society organisations, however, raised concerns that families who are continuous debtors and have not paid for their social housing because of irregular income cannot profit from these schemes.⁵⁸

In 2016, MUD provided financial resources for paying of the rent for 55 Romani families in Tirana. However, the target for 2016 was 200 Romani and Egyptian families, and 187 Roma and Egyptian families benefited from small grants for improving housing conditions. The works included the construction of new roofs, doors, windows, electrical systems. These funds were distributed to municipalities and used as follows: Kruja (28 apartments), Lushnja (18 apartments), Vlora (33 apartments), Roskovec (29 apartments), Elbasan (11 apartments), Shkodra (9 apartments), Belsh (20 apartments), Rrogozhine (8 apartments), Divjake (18 apartments), and Kelcyre (13 apartments). In the framework of another project, four community upgrading projects have been initiated to improve the living conditions of Roma and Egyptians in Tirana, Durres, Shkodra and Berat.⁵⁹

The Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB) has funded a Rental Social Housing Programme which was implemented in eight municipalities and aimed to accommodate 1,138 families in total. In early 2011, the first families were sheltered in the Municipality of Berat (48 families, among them 12 families belonging to the Egyptian community), and in 2012 the Municipality of Elbasan accommodated 90 families from 96 apartments in total (among them, 10 families belonging to the Roma community). UNDP has also advised the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities for setting-up a National Reception Centre which should provide immediate and transitory shelter to those families (including Roma) who do not yet meet the criteria for standard social housing programmes and/or have applied and are waiting for the response. UNDP also provided assistance to some 100 Roma families in preparing their application/documentation for social housing in Tirana (37 to 40 of these Roma families could be eligible for receiving social housing by the Municipality of Tirana).

EVICCTIONS

Around 20 families in Elbasan and around 60 families in Tirana have been unable to legalise their homes and face the threat of eviction without compensation from their homes due to the lack of protection from forced evictions.⁶⁰

56 UNDP/CEES, Needs Assessment Study on Roma and Egyptian communities in Albania. Tirana 2012. Retrieved on June 30, 2017 from: <http://www.al.undp.org/content/dam/albania/docs/Roma%20Needs%20Assessment.pdf>

57 RCC, Roma Integration 2020, Report on Public Dialogue Forum, Tirana 23 May 2017. Retrieved on October 15, 2017 from: <http://www.rcc.int/romaintegration2020/news/257/2017-public-dialogue-forum-on-roma-integration-in-tirana>

58 RCC, Roma Integration 2020, Report on Public Dialogue Forum, Tirana 23 May 2017. Retrieved on October 15, 2017 from: <http://www.rcc.int/romaintegration2020/news/257/2017-public-dialogue-forum-on-roma-integration-in-tirana>

59 59 Republic of Albania, Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth, Roma Integration 2020, Reporting Template on Annual Implementation of Roma Integration Public Policy of the Participating Governments, 2016 Monitoring and Reporting. Retrieved on January 31, 2018 from: <http://www.rcc.int/romaintegration2020/participants/1/albania>

60 Civil Rights Defenders, Country Report Albania 2014. Retrieved on June 30, 2017 from: <http://www.civilrightsdefenders.org/country-reports/human-rights-in-albania/>



PHOTO: KLAUDIA VEIZAJ, ALBANIA

7. ACCESS TO JUSTICE

7.1. LAW AND POLICY REVIEW

An important law to facilitate better access to justice is the Law on Free Legal Aid (No. 111/2017).⁶¹

Owing to a previous amendment of the law in 2013, the State Legal Aid Commission and free legal aid clinics were already established across the country.

However, according to observers the Legal Aid Commission is inefficient and lacks transparency. Therefore, in reality primarily civil society organisations with donor support provide legal aid.⁶²

Three institutions in Albania can deal with the minorities' situation and their access to justice.

The Institution of People's Advocate whose mandate is to safeguard people's rights, freedoms and lawful interests

against unlawful or abusive actions of public administration or third parties acting on their behalf (Art. 2).

The People's Advocate is responsible for investigating claims on violated rights addressed by individuals or groups and for providing specific recommendations for particular measures to restore them.⁶³

The second institution is the Commissioner for the Protection from Discrimination who should ensure protection from any type of discriminatory behaviour based on the grounds of race, colour, ethnicity, language, gender, sexual orientation.

In addition, the State Committee on Minorities should promote minority groups' participation in public life providing suggestion and recommendations to improve the

61 Law No. 111/2017 on Free Legal Aid. Retrieved on January 31, 2017 from <https://www.parlament.al/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/ligj-nr.-111-dt.-14.12.2017.pdf>

62 Civil Rights Defenders, Country Report Albania 2014. Retrieved on June 30, 2017 from: <http://www.civilrightsdefenders.org/country-reports/human-rights-in-albania/>

63 Republic of Albania, Assembly of the Republic of Albania, Law on the People's Advocate, Nos. 8454/1999, 8600/2000 and 9398/2005

protection of their rights and freedoms as well as to foster their socio-economic and cultural development.⁶⁴

However, observers indicate the weaknesses of these institutions. The State Committee on Minorities is not fully independent while the roles of the other two institutions are not fully clarified in order to be effective.⁶⁵

7.2. CURRENT SITUATION

The Albanian justice system is considered to be systematically corrupt with high-level impunity. In their report of June 2015, the Special Parliamentary Commission for Justice Reform stated that corruption is widespread at all levels. There are cases of judges and prosecutors demanding bribes in exchange for favourable judgements and the police tampering or destroying evidence. There is no will to bring charges of corruption against judges and prosecutors.⁶⁶

Under such general conditions, access to justice is even more difficult for vulnerable and discriminated communities such as Roma and Egyptians. In addition, it is reported that free legal aid in civil cases is denied to many, especially those from marginalised groups such as the Roma and Egyptians.⁶⁷

Therefore, civil society organisations were supporting legal clinics, e.g. with the support of the Open Society Foundation in Albania, more than 500 Roma clients and individuals have benefited from the services of legal clinics.⁶⁸

Despite awareness raising and information activities, many Roma do not trust judiciary and are not informed about the existing laws and legal aid possibilities. A research conducted in 2013 demonstrated that the majority of Roma who went to court did this without legal representation. The reasons given were *inter alia* that those institutions do not treat people equally (21.9%), are bureaucratic and/or corrupt (13.2%), or that this would be a waste of time (11%). In addition, many were not aware that they could make use of free legal aid.⁶⁹

There is also evidence of denying access to justice in the field of housing, e.g. regarding evictions in the Selita region in the periphery of Tirana where the municipality did not adhere to respective laws. After investigating the case, the Ombudsman denounced that the National Inspectorate for the Protection of the Territory “abused the official duty” when demolishing the houses of the Roma families.⁷⁰

The ERRC is litigating a case (*Hysenaj v. Albania*) in which the applicant, a Romani woman whose house was set on fire, was not informed by the authorities about the criminal proceedings against the perpetrators which had deprived her of the possibility of lodging a civil claim against them. European Roma Rights Centre has lodged a third party intervention at the European Court of Human Rights. ERRC argues that anti-Roma discrimination, including institutional racism in the police, prosecutors’ offices and domestic courts contributed to the fact that Roma have little trust in these institutions. The petition is that the Roma are deprived access to justice on grounds of race or ethnicity.⁷¹

64 Council of Ministers, Decision No. 127/2004 on Establishing the State Committee of Minorities. Quoted from Merita Mece, *Accessible Justice System for All: The Case of the Roma Minority in Albania*, ECMI Working Papers #84, 2015

65 Merita Mece, *Accessible Justice System for All: The Case of the Roma Minority in Albania*, ECMI Working Papers #84, 2015

66 Civil Rights Defenders, *Country Report Albania 2014*. Retrieved on June 30, 2017 from: <http://www.civilrightsdefenders.org/country-reports/human-rights-in-albania/>

67 Civil Rights Defenders, *Country Report Albania 2014*. Retrieved on June 30, 2017 from: <http://www.civilrightsdefenders.org/country-reports/human-rights-in-albania/>; Merita Mece, *Accessible Justice System for All: The Case of the Roma Minority in Albania*, ECMI Working Papers #84, 2015

68 Website of the Soros Foundation Albania. Accessed on June 29, 2017. <http://www.soros.al/en/legacy/law.htm>

69 Merita Mece, *Accessible Justice System for All: The Case of the Roma Minority in Albania*, ECMI Working Papers #84, 2015

70 Albanian Helsinki Committee, *Observations regarding the implementation of Specific Recommendations No.3 and No. 12 of the Report of the European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) for Albania (5th Monitoring Cycle) and other issues which are on the focus of this Commission*

71 European Roma Rights Centre, *Strategic Litigation: Hysenaj v. Albania*. Retrieved on January 10, 2018 from <http://www.errc.org/article/hysenaj-v-albania-third-party-intervention-pending/4511>

8. HEALTH

8.1. LAW AND POLICY REVIEW

The most relevant laws are the [Law No.10107/2009 on Health Care](#) and the [Law No. 10383/2011 on Compulsory Health Insurance](#) (amended No. 184/2013).⁷²

Amendments to the Law on Healthcare provide free visits to family doctors for uninsured persons.⁷³ Following the Order of the Minister of Health No. 28 on Referral System and Public Health Service Tariffs, all uninsured persons receive free visits to their family doctor. Roma and Egyptian community members have benefited from the services of mammography and check-up units (aged 35-70 years).

8.2. CURRENT SITUATION

Despite a few positive developments, the overall current health status is still poor and the access to health care still has problems. The initiative of civil society organisations to establish Roma and Egyptian Health Mediators has been supported by the Ministry of Health. Furthermore, in 2016 the Ministry of Health provided 11,045 free health cards for Roma and Egyptians. The Ministry of Health also made use of donor funds to provide free health care for Roma and Egyptians who are not covered by health insurance or are not registered as unemployed jobseekers.⁷⁴

Despite some progress achieved, 68% of Roma do not have the health insurance coverage.⁷⁵ Despite the overly positive health self-perception (88% Roma compared to 91% non-Roma), Roma in Albania seek medical services more frequently than non-Roma. They are more frequently treated through doctor's outpatient visits (ambulance services) and they also visit hospital for inpatient stays more often than non-Roma (17% of Roma older than 16 years compared to 11 % of non-Roma). The proportion of Albanian Roma staying in hospitals is on average when compared with other countries in the region, as well as the gap between Roma and non-Roma.

However, 58% of Roma reported not having access to a doctor when needed and 25% reported no access over the last 12 months. Among them, 38% are not satisfied with provided services. In Albania, significantly larger share of Roma households (57%) than non-Roma (29%) cannot afford to buy prescribed medicine.

There are some positive health indicators among Roma in Albania. Albania demonstrates the highest Romani children vaccination rate in the region, where 89% of Romani children are vaccinated. This cannot be said about vaccination against tuberculosis, and even though the vaccination rate against tuberculosis has increased among Roma in the region, Albania still reports 11% of Roma without the vaccination.

Romani women in Albania attend gynaecological test extremely rarely, only 48% of them confirmed attendance.

Data from another survey make more precise observations of women and children situation.⁷⁶ In general, a lack of comprehensive data on the health status prevails, but survey data point at higher infant and child mortality rates. The survey data indicate that 19.2% of Romani women and 10.9% of the Egyptian women have lost a child after birth. The overwhelming majority of the women gave birth in hospitals, but 70% of the Romani women and 46% of the Egyptian women did not perform the regular checks with their children in clinics.

In 2016, 25,604 Roma and Egyptians were equipped with free and mainstream healthcare cards which went far beyond the original target of 3,700 persons. Among them, 36% were older than 18 years, there were 13,741 female and 11,863 male, 11,384 Roma and 14,220 Egyptians; in this group, 36 percent of Roma and Egyptians were older than 18 years of age.

72 Law on Health Care, retrieved on January 31, 2018 from <http://www.ishp.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2015/ligjet/Per-kujdesin-shendetesor-ne-Republiken-e-Shqiperise.pdf>; Law on Compulsory Health Insurance. Retrieved on February 12, 2018 from: http://www.qbz.gov.al/botime/fletore_zyrtare/2013/PDF-2013/203-2013.pdf

73 European Commission, Commission Staff Working Document – Albania 2016 (Brussels, 9.11.2016 SWD (2016) 364 final). Accompanying the document Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 2016 Communication on EU Enlargement Policy.

74 RCC, Roma Integration 2020, Report on Public Dialogue Forum, Tirana 23 May 2017. Retrieved on October 15, 2017 from: <http://www.rcc.int/romaintegration2020/news/257/2017-public-dialogue-forum-on-roma-integration-in-tirana>

75 All data are taken from: Mihailov, Dotcho. (2012). The health situation of Roma communities

76 UNDP/CEES, Needs Assessment Study on Roma and Egyptian communities in Albania. Tirana 2012. Retrieved on June 30, 2017 from: <http://www.al.undp.org/content/dam/albania/docs/Roma%20Needs%20Assessment.pdf>



9. ASYLUM AND FORCED RETURN

9.1. LAW AND POLICY REVIEW

In 2005, the European Union and Albania signed the Readmission Agreement. In addition, Albania signed readmission agreements with individual Member States.

Albania adopted the National Strategy on Migration which should prevent irregular migration and encourage voluntary return and the Strategy and Action Plan on the Reintegration of Returned Albanian citizens 2010-2015 (Reintegration Strategy).⁷⁷

According to the Reintegration Strategy, the authorities should establish “Migration Counters” within the twelve Regional Directorates and 24 local offices of the National Employment Service. Based on the information received from the returnees, the Migration Counters should assess the needs of returnees and provide information to returnees on available assistance with regard to education, employment and vocational training, social assistance or psychosocial assistance and refer them to the respective

public and private services. However, these Migration Counters are hardly functioning.

The Reintegration Strategy identified Roma as one of the vulnerable groups eligible for “extra services”.⁷⁸

9.2. CURRENT SITUATION

Since 1990, Albania witnessed a considerable decrease in its overall population, primarily due to migration. In comparison to the 1989 census, the census of 2011 revealed that the Roma represent 12.0% of the overall resident population.⁷⁹ Many Roma (and Egyptians) from Albania have migrated (short-term or long-term) to Greece and somewhat fewer of them to Italy without applying for asylum. According to research, between 1996 and 2001 65% of the Roma and between 2002 and 2010 16% of the Roma left the country.⁸⁰

77 Government of Albania, Strategy on the Reintegration of Returned Albanian Citizens 2010-2015. Retrieved on September 25, 2017 from: http://www.esiweb.org/pdf/schengen_whitelist_project_Strategy%20on%20Reintegration%20of%20Returned%20Albanian%20Citizens%202010-2015.pdf (Reintegration Strategy)

78 The Reintegration Strategy mentions only “Roma”, but does not refer to Egyptians.

79 UNDP, Roma and Egyptians in Albania: a socio-demographic and economic profile based on the 2011 census, April, 2015

80 Gedeshi, Ilit, Cela, Eralba, Kamberi, Geron, Romani Migration: Is it a Poverty-Coping Method? In Roma Rights 1/2014, Going Nowhere. Western Balkan Roma and the EU Visa Liberalisation. Retrieved on July 26, 2017 from: <http://www.errc.org/article/roma-rights-1-2014-going-nowhere-western-balkan-roma-and-eu-visa-liberalisation/4325/8>

In 2015, the overall migration from Albania reached its recent peak with nearly 68,000 asylum applications in the European Union. In total, between 2008 and 2016, 144,135 persons from Albania submitted first-time asylum application in the European Union (EUROSTAT 2016).

It is difficult to determine the exact number of Roma (and Egyptians) among the asylum seekers, however, sources such as EASO assess that around 10-11% of the asylum seekers are Roma.⁸¹ Assuming that this assessment is correct, between 14,000-16,000 Roma from Albania

applied for asylum in an EU Member State between 2008 and 2016.

Between 2008 and 2016, 363,455 Albanian citizens whose asylum applications were rejected, were ordered to leave the European Union and 331,645 actually returned. However, there is no information available on how many of the returnees to Albania came back to live sustainably and how many of the returned persons were Roma and Egyptians.

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81 According to an assessment of EASO, in Germany 11% of the asylum applications are from Roma. European Asylum Support Office, Asylum Applicants from the Western Balkans. Brussels 2015. Retrieved on September 25, 2017 from https://www.easo.europa.eu/sites/default/files/public/Asylum-Applicants-from-the-Western-Balkans_Update_r.pdf

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