



**Norway**  
grants

**PROJECT "Raising awareness of local communities in areas with a significant Roma population on asylum and migration issues"**

**HOME AFFAIRS PROGRAMME**

**International Organization for Migration**



**Norway**

grants

- **Project Objective:**

To raise and improve the awareness and knowledge of the Roma population in the field of asylum and migration legislation, including the risks of abuse and exploitation in Bulgaria, the European Union and the European Economic Area.

- **DURATION: 48 MONTHS**
- **BUDGET: EUR 680 000**



## Project activities:

- Start of the project with a comprehensive analysis/assessment of the situation of the Roma population with regard to migration issues, summarized in a report (April-September 2021);
- Development of a communication strategy and information campaigns in Roma communities - 3 information campaigns on Asylum and Migration (October 2021 - April 2024);
- Organization of information sessions, discussions, seminars in Roma community and other events meant to raise the awareness of legal issues related to migration and asylum in Europe and the European Economic Area. (- April 2024).





## Norway grants

- 22 May 2021 – official launch of the project (online).
- 22 June 2021 – official launch of the project (live).
- More than 60 representatives from various organizations and state institutions in Bulgaria, incl. State Agency for Child Protection, National Commission for Combating Human Trafficking, National Network of Health Mediators, etc. took part in both events.







## Norway grants

# I. Assessment of the situation – knowledge and experiences related to asylum and migration:

In the period July-August 2021 a study on migration experiences in 5 Roma communities (Tran, Breznik, Provadia, Harmanli and Sofia-Philipovtsi) was conducted on the following topics:

- working abroad,
- channels of information,
- knowledge and attitudes in contacts with migrants in Bulgaria, etc.

The results of the survey were officially presented on 30 September 2021 (live and online).





## Norway grants

The study outlined:

- the social profile of the respondents (and respective target groups);
- Shared knowledge of life abroad, and experiences abroad;
- patterns of migration planning, risk assessment;
- understanding of terms and processes such as "trafficking" and "legal (secured) work", etc.

The study is published on the project website in Bulgarian language.





## II. Communication strategy and information campaigns in Roma community:

The information campaigns will:

- Be based on the results of the study (appropriate topics, content, scope, terminology, etc.) and communication strategy.
- Use information channels aligned to the needs of the target group (social media, posters, stickers, video, etc.).
- Actively involve people from the community – resource persons and mediators.
- Develop a network of “Project communicators” to be actively engaged in the upcoming information campaigns.

**Status:** The communication strategy is ready. Communication messages and other elements of the strategy will be tested in January 2022, including engagement of local authorities in field activities and building community trust.





## Norway grants

# Communication strategy – main objective

- One of the main findings of the study: marginalized communities do not trust Bulgarian institutions. The Roma community at (or below) the poverty line, although aware of the fact that life abroad is likely to be fraught with "pitfalls", prefer to take unreasonable risks in respect to migration.
- The main objective of the Communication strategy is to frame an approach and identify specific themes, messages and communication channels to speak on the topic of migration, as well as engage the Roma community in critical reflection and crosschecking of information.
- It is therefore of great importance to encourage the collection and verification of information when taking the decision to move abroad.



## Communication strategy: main topics identified to be addressed during the information sessions

- What means “secure job”?
- What means "good salary“ for you?
- What means "trusted person"?
- What means “good education”?
- What is "human trafficking for the purpose of exploitation"?



**Norway**  
grants

## What means "secure job" for you?

We will communicate:

- the conditions for legal residence, work and specific requirements of main destination countries, identified in the study;
- What are the steps and mandatory elements to get a secure job;
- What are the characteristics of a secure job.

Shared experience:

*"Me, my wife and the people in the neighborhood believed [the promises]... We went to France, but when we were there the reality was different. There was no accommodation, we slept in a hotel. They deducted from the wage; they didn't give us a daily allowance for food. Finally, when they started paying, there was next to nothing left of the money. We had to call our relatives to send me money to go back to Bulgaria."*



**Norway**  
grants

## What means "good salary" for you?

We will communicate:

- What means "good salary" according to the standard of living and regulations in the country of destination concerned;
- What means "good salary" according to what the money earned abroad are good;
- What are the minimum expenses one should consider when living abroad, etc.

Shared experience:

*"My expectations are to work, collect money and return to Bulgaria to finish building my house. It is very difficult to survive abroad, if there is no one to welcome you and you find a job you cannot make it on your own. I went to the Netherlands to work because I had no other choice in Bulgaria. I worked but I couldn't manage earning enough money, nor to set aside for the construction of the house. Very much I hope that one day in Bulgaria there will be a job and a European salary, so that all young people return to their native places."*





**Norway**  
grants

## What means "trusted person" for you?

We will discuss:

- What trust means? When we trust...?
- How to recognize that someone is dishonest with us?
- Who are trusted persons – the family, friends, neighborhood? Can they deceive us?
- To separate reality from the myths of people who have been abroad.

Shared experience:

*"5 years ago I went to Germany with my husband, [...]. I was placed in a room and my husband was taking me from the room to the bar. I had no access to a phone. I couldn't talk to my relatives or my mother. One day they forgot to lock the room door. I got out and went to a nearby shop to ask for the police, that's how I saved myself and he went to jail."*



## What means “good education”?

### Norway grants

One of the pleasant surprises of the field study was the fact that several respondents mentioned education and improved life chances for their children as the reasons to migrate.

Here, the leading point of reference in the information discussions will be:

- the education system in the respective destination country,
- the mechanisms of equivalence and recognition of educational degrees between Bulgaria and the destination country.

### Shared experience:

*“My child was born in Spain. I want him to grow up and study in Spain. That way he will be fulfilled and not like the other illiterate kids in the neighborhood. I hope one day things will be better in Bulgaria, life will be calmer and there will be jobs for everyone with European salaries.”*

*"My brother finished his secondary education in Bulgaria, but I studied for 5 years in Spain. For family reasons I had to live and study there. I came back to Bulgaria again and finished my secondary education, but from my stay in Spain I saw another way of life, another environment, different from the life in the neighborhood..."*



## Norway grants

# What is "human trafficking for the purpose of exploitation"?

The field research showed that respondents did not make distinction between trafficking and “smuggling” – there is ambiguity about these processes.

The communication strategy proposes to include clear and simple explanations for:

- human trafficking for labour and sexual exploitation,
- the difference between trafficking and “smuggling”,
- what bad practices are and the pitfalls along the way.

Shared experience:

*“I went there with the agreement to arranged marriage with several other women from Bulgaria. In the end they locked us in a room. They didn't beat us, but we just sat without being turned to a sex worker. They fed us, gave us cigarettes, and in the end we went home with no money. They had promised us 3000 BGN, but we never got it.*”

*A friend's mother went abroad to sign a civil marriage and in the end she didn't come home, she became a sex worker. She sends gifts to my friend – clothes, bags, make-up, money... My friend is very happy because her mother couldn't buy her these things before.”*



## The locations where the information campaigns will be implemented are:

- District Filipovtsi, Sofia,
- The Roma neighborhood in Breznik,
- Roma neighborhood in Tran,
- The Roma neighborhood in Provadia,
- Roma neighborhoods in Harmanli.



### III. Info-sessions, discussions and awareness raising workshops

- Aimed at raising awareness on the legal aspects to living and working in the EU/EEA, the risk and prevention from exploitation, including the risks of trafficking for the purposes of labour exploitation, the conditions for stay and working, access to social and healthcare services, etc.
- More than 36 information events and other information activities are foreseen, led by IOM, project partner and guest speakers.





## Info-sessions, discussions and awareness raising workshops on the topic of migration

- The project team piloted information sessions in social services working with vulnerable people from the Roma community. These included:



- Temporary Accommodation Centre, Sofia, CONCORDIA Foundation
- Family Centre in the village of Malki Iskar of CONCORDIA Foundation
- The Community Support Centre, Smolyan
- The Centre for Family Support, Plovdiv, etc.
- Family Centre in Fakulteta Roma neighbourhood, Sofia

- The purpose of the meetings is to approbate the communication strategy and communication topics and provide information to the most vulnerable representatives of the community.
- The information sessions will continue in social services and with the support of Roma mediators in Roma communities in Bulgaria.







For the implementation of the activities in Roma community we are working with the Consortium "NNHM-BASP-EMHPF", selected through a subcontracting procedure for a series of activities with a public call under PMS 118/2014:

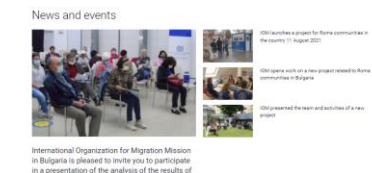
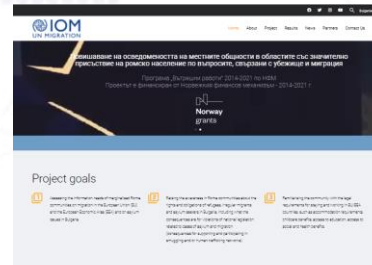
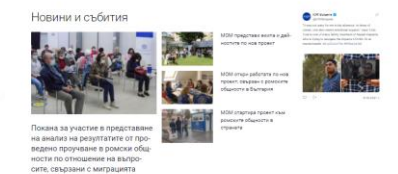
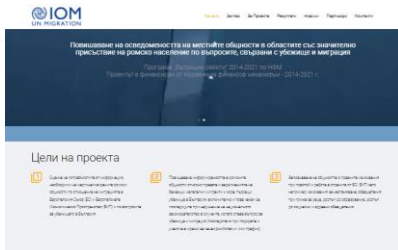
- Carrying out field interviews in Roma communities to provide data and develop a comprehensive analysis-assessment of the situation of the Roma population with regard to migration-related issues;
- Development of a Communication Strategy;
- Support for awareness-raising campaigns in Roma communities, including in addition
- Design and production of information materials;
- Video production.



## For more information related to the project:

- For more information about IOM Bulgaria, please visit our Facebook page;
- Keep an eye out for materials that will be created within the project's information campaigns;
- Visit the public events that will be organized within the project;
- The project has its own website:

<https://romamigration.bg>





**Norway**  
grants

**THANKS FOR  
YOUR  
ATTENTION!**

Адрес: ул. Цар Асен №77, гр. София  
Уеб сайт: [www.iom.bg](http://www.iom.bg)