



REPORT ON THE LIST OF PUBLIC SERVICES FOR ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES FOR ROMA RETURNEES AND PRICE LIST OF SERVICES

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INTRODUCTION

The subject of this research is the reintegration of Roma returnees in North Macedonia, who have stayed in Western European countries as asylum seekers or economic migrants and the list of services they need in the process of reintegration into society. The research focused on six areas of access to personal documentation: identification documents, social protection, healthcare, education, employment and housing. The research was conducted in three Roma communities: Skopje (Shuto Orizari), Shtip and Prilep, aiming to identify the services they need that would be implemented throughout the country.

The objectives of the research were:

- to identify the challenges faced by Roma returnees in accessing social services during the process of reintegration into society
- to compile a list of social services provided, review service providers, and propose recommendations on the prices for services in the preparation of applications for different types of documents and the cost of services for representation of returnees before service providers

The research conducted was a qualitative analysis of the primary and secondary data related to the state of reintegration of Roma returnees into their communities and society as a whole. The following methods for collecting data were applied:

- desk research;
- semi-structured interviews

The fundamental criterion for the selection of documents for collecting data through the desk research was that they provide a description of the institutional response related to the reintegration of Roma returnees and enable the monitoring of progress of the legal framework. Roma returnees are North Macedonian citizens of Roma nationality who have stayed abroad, mainly in EU member states or in the Western European countries at large, as asylum seekers or economic migrants. This term encompasses persons who have voluntarily returned to the country and those who have been forcibly returned by the foreign country in accordance with the relevant readmission agreements with the Republic of North Macedonia. The term Asylum seekers refers to persons - North Macedonian citizens who have officially applied for asylum in a foreign country, most commonly an EU member state. The term Economic migrant is used to denote North Macedonian citizens who travel in EU to obtain informal work engagement (in the so-called grey economy) using the privileges of the visa-free regime, regardless of whether they comply with or violate the conditions for visa-free stay in the foreign country (for example, stay longer than the maximum period allowed).

The main problem returnees are facing with when they come to North Macedonia is the problem with the personal documentation. Although almost all of them left the country legally and with legitimate travel documents, some of them left their documents abroad, especially in cases of deportation when they are under pressure and they have very little time to pack. Possession of personal documentation is the basic prerequisite for obtaining access to services such as social welfare, healthcare, education etc. In the Program for Reintegration of Returnees adopted in 2011, it was planned that the returnees



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would receive a confirmation of their returnee status, which they could use for administrative purposes until their personal documents are issued. The Social Welfare Program confirms the dedication of North Macedonia for conducting the Program for Help and Support for Reintegration of Returnees in North Macedonia in accordance with the readmission agreements, providing for the application of a “set of measures and activities which shall facilitate the access to social rights for these persons”. Nevertheless, in reality, it is not specified which measures and activities are expected to be taken, which does not provide a picture that is clear enough of the Government’s plan, especially having in mind the ambiguity of the timeframe for implementing the measures and activities mentioned in the Program for Reintegration, described in the previous paragraph. However, in practice, returnees do not receive any document confirming their status. As for the rest of the documents (health card, diploma recognition etc.), there is no organized legal assistance system in place which will help them. Another problem is that a large number of returnees, especially those who voluntarily returned to North Macedonia do not report their status to the competent authorities due to fear of possible consequences. After they obtain identification documents, the next step is to realize their rights to social protection in the form of monthly financial support in accordance with the Law on Social Protection. Given that returnees are not recognized as a special category that should be provided with social protection, there are no specific social services that directly target this group of citizens. If they meet the conditions, they can apply for social services available to other categories. There is a specific obstacle in realizing social protection rights for those persons who were beneficiaries of social protection rights before they left for a foreign country and did not report their departure to the competent Social Welfare Centre. Most often, this occurs due to uncertainty among citizens about what will happen in the country they are going to and due to the lack of knowledge about the procedures and possible consequences of not reporting. Thus, shortly after their departure, and most often at the time when their regular monthly registration in the Employment Agency of the Republic of North Macedonia as active job seekers has expired and, subsequently, they get removed from the records, the Social Welfare Centre receives information that the person is no longer in the country and does not meet the conditions for realizing that right and subsequently, the right is terminated and there is a ban on the re-realization for the period of one year.

Another problem returnees are facing is the housing. Before leaving, many people sell all their possessions, so when they return, they are left with no shelter. There is no institutional support for this issue, although the Program for Reintegration provides for the opening of a Reception Centre where returnees without a permanent residence will be temporarily housed for a period of up to 60 days after returning to the country. So, returnees often rely on relatives and friends or they rent accommodation. Given that the majority of returnees are of Roma origin, this happens in an environment where housing is one of the main challenges that the Roma population generally faces. They are often housed in informal settlements, improvised houses and without basic infrastructure. This inadequate housing also causes problems in obtaining personal documentation, especially for the part of registering an official address because these residences are found mostly in informal settlements, outside the urban plan, and since they do not have an official address, they cannot be registered in the personal documents. Here, citizens are faced with additional hassle because neither social welfare centers nor municipalities have a practice of assigning an official address to persons who cannot formally register their residence, so citizens are forced to enter rental agreements with third parties who have a formal residence in order to be able to register an official address.

The next challenge identified relates to employment and the access to the labor market as one of the pillars of any policy for the emancipation of vulnerable groups. The poor economic conditions are one

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of the main reasons for increased irregular migration. Returnees do not receive sufficient institutional support (bearing in mind their needs or due to administrative reasons) that would help them obtain information on employment opportunities. Like other job seekers, returnees have access to measures applied through the Employment Agency. According to the EARNM, the unemployment rate among the Roma population is at least twice as high compared to others. Roma, especially Roma women, face higher unemployment, are paid less for similar work, and are more likely to work in jobs requiring lower qualifications and in informal conditions. Hence, this is another area that needs to be addressed.

Roma returnees also face the challenge of obtaining health insurance and, thus, accessing the public health system. Data show that a significant number of Roma returnees need their health insurance paid for by the country but are dealing with a lack of knowledge about their rights regarding healthcare and insurance, which contributes to the poor health of the Roma population. Some Roma returnees face difficulties related to not having civil register and/or personal documents. This situation, in combination with a lack of understanding of the legal framework in the field of health insurance, prevents Roma returnees from taking advantage of the rights that are available to them, such as the right to free immunization for their children.

The National Strategy on Alleviation of Poverty and Social Exclusion in The Republic of North Macedonia 2010-2020 and the National Strategy for the Roma in North Macedonia 2014-2020 did not include Roma returnees as a separate category of beneficiaries of measures for promoting the inclusion of Roma children in the preschool education system. Primary and secondary education in North Macedonia are compulsory. The educational structure of the Roma community is unfavorable and below the national average. But in the new Strategy for Inclusion of Roma 2022-2030, children-returnees are recognized as a target group at risk of dropping out and not continuing their education (primary and secondary), with measures planned for their inclusion (creating a program for people who have dropped out of education / street children, child returnees from abroad, people over 18 years old, and other measures to prevent dropping out.

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Number of registered pupils in primary education by classes

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX
Roma pupils school year 2016/2017	1497	1332	1099	1115	941	946	840	811	747
Roma pupils school year 2017/2018	1361	1583	1253	1048	1037	964	861	691	696
Roma pupils school year 2018/2019	1441	1399	1420	1147	912	1044	785	758	596
Roma pupils school year 2019/2020	1574	1574	1310	1361	1064	977	819	701	644

Source: State Statistical Office

According to some data, 73 percent of Roma children complete their primary education, as opposed to the average of 96 percent of the rest of the population. The gap is even bigger in secondary education, which only 12 percent of the Roma kids and the youth complete, as opposed the national average of 60 percent.

Number of registered pupils in secondary education

School year 2016/2017	I year	II year	III year	IV year
	409	423	345	232
School year 2017/2018	I year	II year	III year	IV year
	556	357	371	228
School year 2018/2019	I year	II year	III year	IV year
	511	413	295	215
School year 2019/2020	I year	II year	III year	IV year
	500	466	382	171

Source: State Statistical Office

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LIST OF SERVICES

1) *Personal documents*

It is particularly important to emphasize the significance of personal identification documents such as birth and marriage certificates, ID cards, and passports. Without these documents, it is practically impossible to exercise any rights as a citizen of North Macedonia. Therefore, upon returning to the country, the first priority should be to obtain these documents for all members of the family who are returnees. The Civil Registry Office is responsible for issuing birth certificates. In every larger town in North Macedonia, there are local offices for obtaining documents such as:

List of services:

- Services provided by the country of return for the returnee: birth certificate of a child born abroad.
- Application for an ID card
- Application for a birth certificate due to personal documents which have expired
- Application for registration in the Birth Registry Book for children born abroad
- Application for a marriage certificate
- Application for issuing the document birth certificate
- Application for issuing a passport
- Application for a transaction account and debit card from a bank
- Application for citizenship



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Application	Institution /authority the application is submitted to	Time needed to respond to the application	Documents to be attached to the application	Price of the service fee	Recommended price of the service
Application for identity card	MOI	10 working days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed application Payment slip Old ID or valid document passport 	290 denars	300 denars
Application for passport	MOI	15 working days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed application Payment slip Old passport and valid document 	1500 denars for the application 300 denars administrative tax	300 denars
Registration of the child in the Birth Registry Book	Civil Registry Office	10 working days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application for birth certificate Copy of ID or passport of the parents and original submitted, Marriage certificate of the parents Notary act that they are living together Application for birth certificate of a newborn, Payment slip of 100 denars for administrative tax and Payment slip of 50 denars for the Civil Registry Office 	150 denars	600 denars

ПОВТОРНО ДОМА, ЗА ПОДОБРА ИДНИНА



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Application for marriage certificate	Civil Registry Office	10 working days	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Application for marriage certificate• Copy of ID or passport of the persons	150 denars	300 denars
Application for citizenship	MOI	5 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Completed application• Payment slip• Valid document, passport or ID	150 denars	300 denars
Application for registration in the Birth Registry Book for children born abroad	Civil Registry Office	5 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Application for certificate• Copy of ID or passport of the parents and the original submitted,• Marriage certificate of the parents• Notary act that they are living together• Certificate from the hospital abroad registered at the notary• Payment slip of 100 denars for administrative tax and• Payment slip of 50 denars for the Civil Registry Office	150 denars depending on the procedure and documentation they have	300 denars
Application for bank transaction account and debit card	Bank	1 day for making the transaction account 7 days to get a debit card	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Application for transaction account• Personal document	100 – 300 denars	300 denars

ПОВТОРНО ДОМА, ЗА ПОДОБРА ИДНИНА

2) Social protection

In order to realize any right of social protection, personal documentation must be provided beforehand. As returnees are not categorized as a special vulnerable group, they are provided with the same rights as all citizens of the Republic of North Macedonia.

To be eligible for financial social welfare, the person must be an unemployed person who is an active job seeker and a member of “materially deprived household”. The main condition for financial social welfare for the person and their family is that they are facing difficulties when it comes to providing means of subsistence. That does not mean that they should have no income at all, it means that the average total monthly income in the family for the last three months before submitting the application should be lower than the amount of the financial social welfare.

List of services:

- Application for one-time financial assistance
- Birth certificate
- Marriage certificate
- IDs
- Application for renewal of GMA (guaranteed minimum assistance)
- Application from the MLSP
- Medical documents
- Application – appeal for rejected applications for GMA
- Application for parental allowance for the third child

Application	Institution/ authority the application is submitted to	Time needed to decide upon the request	Documents that should be attached to the application	Price of the service fee	Recommende d price of the service
One-time financial assistance	MLSP	15 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birth certificate; • Marriage certificate, if they are in a marital union; • Death certificate for a deceased family member; • Receipt for the received net salary in the last three months before submitting the application; • Certificate for the pension received, for retired persons; • Certificate from the Employment Agency of Republic of North Macedonia for 		600 denars



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			unemployed family members and <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Certificate of reported or earned income from PRO.		
Application for renewal of GMA	MLSP	30 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Birth certificate• Documentation (medical)• Marriage certificate if married or a statement• Identification documents• Transaction account		600 denars
Application – appeal for rejected applications for GMA	MLSP	30 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Completed appeal		600 denars
Application for parental allowance for the third child	MLSP	30 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Birth certificate• Marriage certificate if married or a statement• Identification documents• Transaction account		600 denars
Application for a one-time allowance for a newborn	MLSP	30 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Birth certificate• Identification Documents• Transaction account		600 denars

ПОВТОРНО ДОМА, ЗА ПОДОБРА ИДНИНА

3) Healthcare

In order for a returnee from abroad to use services of public health – GP, dentist, gynecologist, health institution or hospital, they need to have health insurance in the Health Insurance Fund or to be a beneficiary of social welfare. If not, then the expenses for examinations and treatment shall be paid by the person themselves. If the person gets employment, they will have health insurance through the employer. In that case, the health insurance is provided both for their children and spouse.

List of services:

- Application for health insurance
- Registration with a general practitioner, gynecologist, vaccination.

Application	Institution/authority the application is submitted to	Time needed to respond to the application	Documents to be attached to the application	Price of the service fee	Recommended price of the service
Application for health insurance	Health Insurance Fund	1 day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birth certificate • Unemployment certificate from the Employment Agency • Identification documents 	150 – 300 denars	500 denars
Application to the general practitioner	General practitioner	1 day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health insurance card • Identification documents 		300 denars
Dentist	General dentist	1 day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health insurance card • Identification documents 		300 denars
Vaccination	General practitioner	1 day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health insurance card • Identification documents 		300 denars

4) Education

Primary and secondary education in North Macedonia are compulsory and free of charge for every child regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion, or financial status. In preschool education, parents can enroll their children in a kindergarten or a center for early childhood development. Applications for enrollment in kindergarten can be submitted throughout the year and the following documents are usually required: a birth certificate for the child and a copy of the parent(s)' ID card. It should be noted that due to overcrowding, the kindergarten may not be able to accept the child.

List of services:

- Application for enrollment of children in kindergarten
- Enrollment in primary and secondary education within the announced registration deadline
- Application for returning to the educational process in primary school
- Application for returning to the educational process in secondary school
- Application for nostrification of certificates

Application	Institution/Authority the application is submitted to	Time needed to respond to the application	Documents to be attached to the application	Price of service fee	Recommended price of the service
Enrollment of child in kindergarten	Municipality	15 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Records of the child (completed by the general practitioner) • Birth certificate • Identification documents • Employment certificate of the parents (if the enrollment goes through Project for Inclusion of Roma children in public institutions for children, unemployment certificate of the parents is submitted, proof that they are beneficiaries of the social protection rights or proof that they are a foster family) 		900 denars



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			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Certificate for regular immunization and microbiological swabs for the child		
Enrollment of the child in primary or secondary education within the announced registration deadline	Primary and secondary schools		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Birth certificates• Parent's identity card• Certificate for regular immunization, dentist and ophthalmological examination (for enrollment in primary education)• Application for enrollment in secondary education• Certificates from sixth to ninth grade (for enrollment in secondary education)• Diplomas from competitions, if any (for enrollment in secondary education)• Statement of ethnicity – for using the affirmative measure of additional quotas for community members who are not the majority in RNM (for enrollment in secondary education)	/	900 denars

ПОВТОРНО ДОМА, ЗА ПОДОБРА ИДНИНА



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Application for returning to the educational process in primary school	Municipality	7 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Application for returning to the educational process• Birth certificate• Documents (certificates, certificate from abroad that they attended classes)• Fee	70 denars	900 denars
Application for returning to the educational process in secondary school	Ministry of Education	7 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Application for returning to the educational process• Birth certificate• Documents (certificates, certificate from abroad that they attended classes)• Fee		900 denars
Application for nostrification of certificate	Ministry of Education	60 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Application for nostrification of certificate• Birth certificate• Documents with an official translation in North Macedonian (certificates, certificate from abroad that they attended classes)• Documents certified with a notary• Fee	2000 MKD for nostrification + 250 MKD administrative fee (GMA beneficiaries are exempt from payment of nostrification fee)	1500 denars

ПОВТОРНО ДОМА, ЗА ПОДОБРА ИДНИНА

5) Employment

The government agency responsible for implementing active measures and policies to encourage employment is the Employment Agency of the Republic of North Macedonia (EARNM). The main requirement for using active measures to encourage employment is for the individual to be registered in the EARNM as an active job seeker (to report to the EARNM as an unemployed person every month). As part of the vulnerable groups, Roma who are active job seekers can participate in the Program for Conditional Cash Benefit for Subsidized Employment of Persons at Social Risk.

List of services:

- Information about training sessions
- Information about measures and programs of the OP
- Application for registration as an active job seeker at the Employment Agency
- Appeal for rejected application for registration as an active job seeker to the Employment Agency

Application	Institution/Au thority the application is submitted to	Time needed to respond to the application	Documents to be submitted with the application	Price of service fee	Recommen ded price of the services
Information on measures and programs	Employment Agency	Depending on the measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active job seeker • Identification document 	/	According to the UNDP price list for mentors
Information on training sessions	Employment Agency	Depending on the measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active job seeker • Identification document 	/	According to the UNDP price list for mentors
Application for registration as an active job seeker	Employment Agency	1 day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification document 	/	According to the UNDP price list for mentors
Appeal	Employment Agency	30 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completing an appeal • Identification document 	/	600 denars

6) Housing

There are no specific measures in North Macedonia to provide temporary or permanent accommodation for returnees from abroad. Roma returnees can receive certain support from the country to address housing issues, under the same conditions as all other citizens in the country. Therefore, after returning from abroad, individuals return to their place of residence (home) or to the community (family, relatives, friends) where they lived before leaving for abroad. Applications for legalization (i.e. application for determining the legal status of illegally constructed buildings) are submitted to the municipality. Social welfare and financial assistance beneficiaries and individuals with low income are entitled to free elaborates for the legalization of illegal constructions in which they live.

List of services:

- Application for the legalization of an object
- Application for the inheritance procedure
- Application for the property deed
- Application for the address

Application	Institution/Authority the application is submitted to	Time needed to respond to the application	Documents to be submitted with the application	Price of service fee	Recommended price of the service
Application for legalization of property	Municipality	minimum 15 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical documents • Identification documents • Fee 	Depending on the size of the property	2500 denars
Application for the inheritance procedure	Court	The procedure starts within 5 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birth certificate • Death certificate • Documents (property deed) • Fee 	Depending on the size of the property	2500 denars
Application for the property deed	Cadastre	1 day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application for the property deed • Identification documents 	180 denars	600 denars
Application for the address	MOI	7 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application for the address • Identification documents • Fee 		300 denars

Recommendations:

In order to achieve a successful reintegration of Roma returnees in North Macedonia, creating a set of measures and activities is recommended that will contribute to their successful reintegration. The recommendations are drafted in accordance with the opportunities and needs of the target group, as well as on the municipalities. At the same time, foreign organizations and/or donors can also be involved in the implementation of the recommendations, which will contribute to the reintegration of Roma returnees and reduce their numbers.

- 1) Follow the example of Free Legal Aid and allocate an annual budget within the municipality for the needs of Roma returnees (budget for fees, writing and supplementing documents, various applications for the registered and recognized organizations in the municipality that provide such services)
- 2) Establish a focal point in the municipality that provides information to returnees and informs them about all the necessary rights and opportunities related to reintegration
- 3) Allocate financial resources within the municipal budget to finance services necessary for Roma returnees
- 4) Develop criteria for creating a database of non-governmental organizations or civil society organizations in the municipality that offer and provide services to Roma returnees, and are recognized among the target audience (Roma)
- 5) Development of a platform for monitoring the service during its implementation process, with the aim of establishing an interagency body or mechanism for coordination and exchange of data and information related to returnees
- 6) Informing Roma returnees and utilizing services provided by the Free Legal Aid program.
- 7) Representation of the returnee by an authorized representative approved by the municipality, who has previously registered with the municipality and is recognized among the target audience (Roma)
- 8) Focal point or service (job position) in the municipality that will monitor the needs of the returnee and the progress of obtaining a service or set of services
- 9) Development of digital tools to support the horizontal linking of local institutions with the municipality and local NGOs
- 10) Model recommendation for vertical linking of local institutions with national institutions
- 11) Development of promotional materials (in Macedonian and Romani) for the use of services provided by authorized NGOs for the integration of returnees into the system