

The Programme is implemented with the support of the Financial Mechanism of the European Economic Area (EEA FM) 2014-2021, established by Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. Its total budget is **41 764 706 EUR**, with 85% of the funds provided by the EEA FM and the remaining 15% provided by the national budget. The Programme is aimed at supporting social and economic cohesion through the use of innovative projects in the fields of local development, children's and youth social inclusion, as well as the empowerment of Roma.

HIGHLIGHTS 2021

■ The Programme Operator of “Local Development, Poverty Reduction and Enhanced Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups” Programme prepared and published two procedures for selection of project proposals and two procedures for quality evaluation of predefined projects.

“BUILDING
CAPACITY FOR
EDUCATIONAL
AND SOCIAL
INCLUSION”

EARLY CHILDHOOD
EDUCATION AND
CARE

Healthcare for everyone



“INTEGRATED
MEASURES FOR ROMA
INCLUSION AND
EMPOWERMENT”

■ In the first half of the year, Application Guidelines for two predefined projects were published: **“Capacity building for educational and social inclusion”** and **“Healthcare for everyone”**. After the completion of the evaluation process, funds in the amount of **487 628 EUR** were agreed under the project “Building capacity for educational and social inclusion” with the Center for Educational Integration of Children and Students from Ethnic Minorities in partnership with Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” as beneficiary and **1 109 718 EUR** under the project “Healthcare for everyone” with the Ministry of Health as the beneficiary in partnership with the National Network of Health Mediators Association.

■ On June 7, 2021, the call for project proposals **“Early childhood education and care”** was launched. The scheme aims to provide support to children from vulnerable groups (including Roma communities) in early childhood and their families to improve access to education, health and social care, develop parenting skills, improve the family environment, increase the school readiness of children for inclusion in the educational system. The procedure provides support for the establishment of centers and/or the implementation of a set of functionally related services (“hubs”) for early childhood education and care. An information day was held on June 10, 2021, in order to explain to potential applicants the requirements of the procedure. **The total estimated budget is 6 029 412 EUR.** The evaluation process will be completed in January 2022.

■ On 1 July 2021, the Programme Operator announced a call for project proposals **“Integrated measures for Roma inclusion and empowerment”**. The overall goal of the scheme is to create sustainable mechanisms through effective integrated approaches to improve the condition and opportunities of people living in marginalized Roma communities. The procedure envisages promoting the improved inclusion and empowerment of Roma in Bulgaria. The implemented projects should provide additional measures to improve access to education, social services, employment, healthcare. Effective and consistent action against discrimination against Roma will be promoted. On July 23, 2021 we held an information day to explain the specifics and requirements of the scheme to potential applicants. **The total budget of the procedure is 8 000 000 EUR.** The evaluation of the projects will be completed in early 2022.

■ In the period 20-22 July 2021 we held a practical seminar on **“Challenges to the establishment of youth centers”**. The seminar was aimed at project management and implementation teams and addressed various topics that will support quality implementation and successful achievement of the set results.

Find us on social networks: The Programme Operator maintains a successful and active Facebook page and Instagram account, where we publish up-to-date information about the Programme and the activities of the beneficiaries. Information can also be found on the official website of the Programme.



■ From July 2021 we carry out **our own media monitoring**, which gives us daily information about the media coverage of the activities of the Programme and its projects.

■ We took part in a number of events organized by both the beneficiaries and other national and international organizations involved in activities similar to those of the Programme.

ACTIVE PROJECTS

■ The activities **for expanding the scope and activity of the four youth centers**, built with the help of the Financial Mechanism in the previous programming period in the cities of Stara Zagora, Plovdiv, Dobrich and Vratsa, continue. The centers fully meet the standards set by the Council of Europe in the field of quality of youth work. This is proved by the fact that **Bulgaria is the first member state of the Council of Europe where two youth centers were awarded the highest award The Council of Europe Quality Label- International Youth Center Stara Zagora and Youth Center Plovdiv**. What makes these centers so attractive to young people and important to municipalities? First and foremost, **they seek to empower and activate young people** and help them develop their potential through non-formal education and activities based on values, such as democracy, the rule of law, knowledge and respect for fundamental human rights.

The centers continue to develop and upgrade their activities, as well as to be an increasingly preferred place for young people. In 2021, many initiatives proposed by youth were implemented and aimed at developing civic engagement and active participation of people from different communities.

**MORE INFORMATION CAN BE
FOUND AT THE FOLLOWING LINKS:**

**[HTTPS://
YOUTHCENTRE.PLOVDIV.BG/](https://youthcentre.plovdiv.bg/)**

[HTTP://YCD.BG/](http://ycd.bg/)

[HTTPS://IYC.STARAZAGORA.BG/](https://iyc.starazagora.bg/)

**[HTTPS://
YOUTHCENTERVRATZA.COM/](https://youthcentervratza.com/)**

■ **Burgas, Gabrovo, Montana and Pernik** Municipalities have won funding under the Programme and we will soon be able to be proud with **four more new youth centers**.

The new youth centers are in the process of hiring youth workers and educational mediators, holding competitions for the logos of the centers, networking with partners and stakeholders, analyzing the needs of young people in the region through various information campaigns, holding events of various kinds to promote youth work. Experts from the four new municipalities are actively participating in the meetings of the **National Network of Youth Centers**, which aims to unite all centers and support their efforts to achieve the highest European standards, summarized in the requirements of the The Council of Europe Quality Label.

MORE INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND AT THE FOLLOWING LINKS:

[HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/YICBURGAS](https://www.facebook.com/YICBURGAS)

[HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/YOUTHCENTERGABROVO](https://www.facebook.com/YOUTHCENTERGABROVO)

[HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/IYCPERNIK](https://www.facebook.com/IYCPERNIK)

[HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/YOUTHCENTERMONTANA](https://www.facebook.com/YOUTHCENTERMONTANA)

✚ **"Rehabilitation Center for Children with Oncohematological Diseases"** is one of our most interesting and significant projects. The project with a budget of 625 822 EUR is implemented by Kostinbrod Municipality in partnership with the **"Children with Oncohematological Diseases"** Association. **The center is the first and only on the Balkans and eighth in the world.** The service provided is new for Bulgaria and aims to help children and their families overcome the stress of cancer, overcome isolation during long and severe treatment and its consequences, involve children's families and promote their successful social reintegration after the completion of treatment. The aim of the work of the experts in the rehabilitation center is for the children and young people to regain their self-confidence, overcome the long isolation in a safe environment through specially prepared programmes individually and in groups. The services of the center have so far been used by over thirty



families, some of them more than once, and the feedback from all users has been extremely positive.

✚ **“Innovative Community Care Models in Favour of People with Chronic Diseases and Permanent Disabilities”** is implemented by the **Bulgarian Red Cross** in partnership with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the Ministry of Health and the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS). The project has a budget of 3 333 333 EUR. Under the project, three Home Care Centers have been opened in the cities of Vidin, Belogradchik and Montana. The centers provide nurses and home assistants, each of whom provides integrated health and social care at home to elderly people with chronic diseases and permanent disabilities **The innovative element in the project is the creation of a completely new and unique model for remote monitoring of chronic diseases – teleassistance/telecare – using modern information and communication technologies (ICT)** in Vratsa, Vidin and Montana. Thus, the access of vulnerable and lonely people with chronic diseases and permanent disabilities to professional health and social care will be improved and users in remote and small settlements will be covered. 24-hour connection with call center professionals is provided, as well as continuous, automatic and remote monitoring of emergencies in real time.



✚ **“Novel Approaches to generating Data on Hard-to-Reach Populations at Risk of Violation of their Rights”** is being implemented by the **National Statistical Institute in partnership with the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)**. The project has a budget of 994 708,10 EUR. After studying the experience of other countries in the region with similar social and economic development, the project develops **innovative data generation methods needed to formulate solutions appropriate to the public needs by policy makers to address challenges at regional and local level**. The main goal is to test and implement the identified data collection methods that will be used in the planning of adequate social policies, the development of targets for operational programmes, as well as monitoring the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Four thematic reports on the situation of children, people with disabilities, the elderly and the Roma will be prepared, as well as a report with a **special focus on how data is shared and used in policy-making**. The final version of the report “Key Indicators for Social Inclusion and Fundamental Rights in Bulgaria”, the first of a series of thematic reports to be prepared within the project, has already been published.



- ✚ **“Grow through Activating Local Potential – GALOP”** is implemented by **the National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria in partnership with the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS)**. The project has a budget of 1 200 000 EUR. The main goal of the project is to support the socio-economic development of disadvantaged Bulgarian municipalities **by activating unused local resources and potential**. Successful development models are being developed that can be applied in other municipalities as well, cooperation between local authorities is encouraged, aimed at promoting socio-economic progress.



OPEN CALLS FOR PROJECT PROPOSAL

■ Invitation for Application under the **Bilateral Fund**

All potential beneficiaries under the Programme, as well as their potential partners from the Donor States, may apply for funding from the Bilateral Fund of the Programme. This fund finances **the exchange of experience and the creation of new partnerships between potential applicants from the Bulgarian side and appropriate organizations from the donor states.**

For more information about the Invitation:

<https://www.eeagrants.bg/programi/mestno-razvitie/novini-1/vzmozhnost-za-vsichki-potencialni-kandidati-da-polzvat-dvustranniya-fond>

FORTHCOMING CALLS FOR PROJECT PROPOSAL

■ A call for project proposals under a Small grant scheme **to support local development and stimulate job creation** with a total budget of **4 000 000 EUR** is in preparation. The Application Guidelines are under development and are expected to be approved and published soon.

The procedure will support innovative approaches aimed at stimulating economic activity and job creation in the municipalities of **Valchi Dol, Levski, Ivanovo, Dimitrovgrad, Bansko, Brezovo, Belitsa, Elena, Momchilgrad, Lyaskovets**. Resources will be provided to test and promote innovative approaches to local employment development, provide more accessible information on job vacancies, encourage employers to adopt flexible working practices,

organize events that bring together employers and jobseekers, as well as create job opportunities for disadvantaged groups. Support will also be provided for the implementation of measures included in **the local development strategies developed by the 10 municipalities within the GALOP project.**

Programme Operator
Ministry of Education and
Science, "External European
Programmes" Directorate



Programme Partner
Norwegian Association of
Local and Regional
Authorities (KS)



International Partner
Organization
Council of Europe



Programme website:

<https://www.eeagrants.bg/programi/mestno-razvitie>

