



No. 04/09

## **IRDK Comments and Attitudes on the Strategy of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities integration to the Republic of Kosova 2009-2015**

### **INTRODUCTION**

New Initiative Democratic of Kosova (IRDK) is a political entity, so far the only one run by Kosovo Egyptians which party is committed to protect interests, promote values and advance the Egyptian's position in Kosovo. IRDK was established in March 2001 and it is one of its fundamental goals protection, promotion and advancing the Egyptians' ethnic identity in Kosova. IRDK and its representatives are the only legitimate representatives of the Egyptian Community in Kosova and the elections held after 2001 Egyptians gained the vote of confidence in the local and central level. Kosovo Egyptian Community is represented at the Kosovo Assembly and in three municipal assemblies of Kosovo (Gjakovë, Pejë, Istog and Fushë Kosovë).

Apart of protection, promotion and the advancing of the ethnic identity of the Kosovo Egyptian Community, IRDK is well known for the position of this community in Kosovo society. IRDK is aware that the Egyptian Community of Kosovo is not in a good position in Kosovo society and we are deeply committed that this community achieve its deserved position in Kosovo Society.

We are very grateful to the local and International Institutions for their shown interest to improve the position of Kosovo Egyptian community and enable this community also live with a dignity and in equality with other Kosovo communities, but we harshly oppose all the efforts of local and international institutions for violation of ethnic identity on behalf of this community's "integration".

The Strategy of the Kosovo Government for the integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in the Republic of Kosova 2009-2015, at the beginning of its drafting, the ethnic identity of Kosovo Egyptian community has been violated and this is the reason why we did not participate at the drafting of this document. Now this strategy has been announced as finalized, but we consider it as empty document which can not be applied and we are fully aware that this document shall serve to Kosovo government only as a justification that we have the strategy for these communities but we lack funds.

The IRDK presidency considered the strategy and decided to oppose it through signing a petition.

# Shortcomings of the Strategy of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities integration in the Republic of Kosova 2009-2015

## I. Violation of Ethnic Identity

Though the document is named Strategy for Integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, this strategy has been drafted only for one community and only symbolically are mentioned other communities which fact resulted with an increase of the document's volume, therefore the document as a whole is dedicated to Roma Community in Kosovo. In the document there is no mention of specifics and distinctions between these communities, on contrary, there are only problems of Roma community mentioned.

All the figures and other references in terms of the situation of these communities are given only as a figure or a percentage of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, but there was given a single figure without clarifying how many of them are Roma, Ashkali or Egyptians (see table on page 8 & 9).

In all references of this document, like referring Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Community, it exists only one figure, one percentage, only one taken measure, one conclusion, one recommendation and nowhere in the document is found anything that is referred to each community. This document explains that:

- Each Roma community member is Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian
- Each Ashkali is Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian
- Each Egyptians is Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian

We are very much aware that Kosovo Egyptians have very same problems like Kosovo Roma or Bosnian or Albanian Communities have. Colour, Education problems, poverty, infrastructure problems and other similar problems can not be said that are not Roma, Ashkali or Egyptian communities' problems, but ethnic, linguistic, cultural and social differences among Roma community in one side and Egyptian and Ashkali communities in the other hand results that these problems are not resolved using the same formula.

## II. Content of the document

The document consists of a declaration which consists of:

- **Incomplete findings of "Communities" real problems**

Reference to the details regarding the position of "communities" are not the original ones, they are coming from international organizations:

- o UNDP,
- o The Institute of Open Society, Programme for Supporting Education, Monitoring Roma Education,
- o Institute of Open Society, Programme of Public Health, List of facts for Public Health: Ignored: Roma and their Access to Health Care in the Eastern Europe and South-East Europe
- o European Council
- o UNHCR
- o OSCE etc.

Findings of Communities' position, basically were taken by UNDP data base and one of the footnotes (page 61) reads the following: "*UNDP, Poverty faces, Faces of Hope. Bratislava 2005. Most of the countries do not recognize Ashkali and Egyptians as particular ethnic group. Therefore, in the most of international editions only Roma community is mentioned having in mind that within this community are also Ashkali and Egyptian communities*".

Most of the findings are based on the reports released by above-mentioned organisations and these are reports for European Roma, Roma of South-east Europe or Roma of the region.

### **- Numerous unreal promises for resolving problems**

There are numerous promises given for solving problems, promises that are similar to those given at the pre-election campaign, it is a collection of copies of the Strategies for Roma Integration at the Central Europe and the South-East Europe, it is a bunch of wishes of the drafters of the document.

The proposed measures at the document for resolving one of the most important problem of the Egyptian community and other communities, the problem of employment, one of the paragraphs reads: “*Ministry of Finances and Economy in cooperation with donators and other relevant financial institutions shall apply measures which will encourage the self-employment of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian families.*”, but nowhere in the document is mentioned what are the concrete measures to be applied for this problem.

This document gives tasks for Kosovo government thinking that within the Government is everything perfectly functioning by forgetting that, Kosovo government took the competences in compliance with the Constitution of the Republic of Kosova at the second half of 2008. You get an impression that Kosovo Government will be concentrated on solving the identified problems and it was not taken into account that the identified problems are not only problems belonging to Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities and the fact that without having a progress in the economy, there are no possible ways to resolve most of the identified problems.

It is foreseen in the document a legislation intervention, creation of local strategies aiming the integration of these communities and creation of mechanisms for implementation of the strategy. It may happen legislation interventions and creation of mechanisms, but these mechanisms will be non-functional as the practice showed that the existing mechanisms like Ministry of returns and Communities, Municipal Communities’ Offices, Communities’ Committees are non functional in spite of the fact that there are several years since they were established since the responsible persons who are there to have these mechanisms operational they are not interested to make them functional and they are still waiting that the same function be exercised through international mechanisms.

### **III. Implementation of the Strategy**

The Strategy for Integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in the Republic of Kosova, 2009-2015 is a document which was not initiated nor drafted by Kosovo Government but it has only been supported. This strategy was initiated, financed and drafted by KFOS, OSCE, UNDP, Council of Europe and the Roma lobby acting in the western countries. The contribution and participation of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities was purely symbolic while legitimate Egyptian community were not involved on the drafting process of this strategy with an exception of the so-called civic society which group does not represent the Egyptian community but there are individuals who run this NGO for their direct personal interests.

- Despite shortcomings of the document, this strategy will not be implemented because :
- The document was not initiated and drafted by Kosovo government, while the same is expected to be implemented by the Ministry for Return and Communities and as it is written by other respective Ministries, agencies and civic society. It is a well-known fact that Ministry of Return and Communities is one of the most chaotic Ministries and it is known for its non-efficiency, abuse and bad-management. This Ministry which exists only symbolically, due to its title, is one of the worst example in terms of Kosovo Government functioning, meaning that it has never dealt with the problems of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities.
  - The Document is a Strategy for integration of Roma community as in it there are problems raised that are related only to the Roma specifics. In practice IRDK shall support the implementation of the strategy as a strategy for Roma integration but not for Egyptians, as IRDK considers that Egyptians can not be integrated by being converted into Roma. IRDK is not against Roma integration and we do support resolution of their problems.

# **IRDK-Attitudes regarding the Strategy for integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in Republic of Kosova 2009-2015**

1. The strategy for integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Communities in the Republic of Kosova 2009-2015 harshly violates the ethnic identity of Kosovo Egyptians.
2. Content of the strategy does not foresee integration of three communities with particular specifics, but it refers the integration of three communities without providing distinctions among them.
3. For resolution of all identified problems of three communities it is planned to have a single formula.
4. The strategy is a model strategy for Roma integration at the European countries (Czech Republic, Slovakia, Rumania etc.) and all this is not in compliance with community's specifics for whom this strategy has been drafted..
5. The strategy will not be implemented due to:
  - o its complex and abstract content
  - o it has not been initiated nor drafted by the institutions who are supposed to implement it
  - o During the next 6 years Kosovo government which has to implement the document, will be faced with building the country issues, therefore communities' integration will not be a priority.
6. IRDK considers this document as a strategy for integration of Roma in the Republic of Kosova 2009-2015
7. IRDK recommends Kosovo government, regarding the integration of Kosovo Egyptian Community, in the next 6 years it has to undertake the following concrete measures:
  - 1) Each year, ensure alleviating measures for pupils and students of Kosovo Egyptian community who apply to enrol at the University and Secondary public schools in Kosovo.
  - 2) Each year grant 50 scholarships for Egyptian distinguished students studying at the public University and 200 scholarships for the best Egyptian students of the secondary public schools.
  - 3) Each year employ 20 Egyptian community members as civil servants with superior and secondary qualification.
  - 4) Each year employ 15 Egyptian community members with superior and secondary qualification at public enterprises: 5 persons in PTK, 5 in KEK, 2 to Prishtina Airport and 3 in Public and local enterprises dealing with provision of drinking water and cleaning services.
  - 5) Employ each year 5 Egyptian community members with superior and secondary qualification in customs service, 5 Egyptian community members with superior and secondary qualification in Kosovo Police.
  - 6) Subsidize every year 5 private companies and enable them to employ 5 Kosovo Egyptian community members in a duration of 24 months for those who have just finished their studies at the Public University in Kosovo or abroad.
  - 7) Each year asphalt 5 km of road in the settlements where Egyptian community is concentrated
  - 8) Each year construct 3 km of sewage in the settlements where Egyptian community is concentrated
  - 9) Each year construct 5 km of in the settlements where Egyptian community is concentrated
  - 10) Each year construct 5 transformers in the settlements where Egyptian community is concentrated
  - 11) Alleviate procedures in terms of legalization of informal settlements where Kosovo Egyptian community is concentrated.
  - 12) Create a found within Kosovo government for construction of houses and necessary infrastructure for those who forcibly return from western countries, the families having ruined houses offer an amount of 100 €assistance per month in a duration of 1 year.
8. IRDK recommends the Government of the Republic of Kosova that for Kosovo Egyptian Community the strategy for integration of communities of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians should not be implemented but instead of it apply described measures under item 7.

**IRDK President,  
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