

# IMPROVING Living Conditions and Integration of Roma



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**I**n Ukraine, the number of Roma is estimated to be anything from 120,000-400,000. Their level of education is one of the lowest among 130 national minorities with many not able to read or write. Up to 150,000 Roma could be living in Moldova, although many of them do seasonal work in Ukraine and in the Russian Federation. Official figures for Roma in both countries are much lower, making it difficult to devise, implement and monitor national action plans for them.

An EU project is supporting the Council of Europe to help the governments of Moldova and the Ukraine strengthen domestic policy to improve the living conditions of Roma led to a regional change of experiences, giving the authorities in both countries an opportunity to build on their capacity to combat racial discrimination and negative stereotypes and prejudice against Roma and other minority groups.

There is a strong commitment from the Government of Ukraine to improving the overall situation of Roma and integrate them, especially in the health sector. This 15-month EU project created a pool of potential Roma health mediators: 20 Roma women from various regions of the Ukraine were trained as health mediators by experienced Roma health trainers from Romania.

As well as promoting Roma health mediators in Moldova, the project contributed to promoting the concept of Roma school assistants backed by the involvement of Moldovan teachers, academics and government representatives.

With the overall objective of this project being to help foster a better image of Roma through improving intercultural dialogue and inter-ethnic understanding, the ultimate beneficiaries were Roma women and youth in particular but also national and regional authorities and the population as a whole.