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Employment Challenges and Assessment of Strategic Documents: Analysis of the 2025-2027 MTBP on employment issues, with a main focus on the Roma and Egyptian Communities

Abbreviations

- AKPA - National Employment and Skills Agency
- EU - European Union
- LGU - Local Self-Government Units MTEF
- - Medium-Term Budget Program
- Plan - National Action Plan for Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma and Egyptians 2021-2025
- RA - Republic of Albania
- MEKI - Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation NE
- – Economic Assistance
- MF - Ministry of Finance
- VTC – Vocational Training Center
- UNDP - United Nations Development Programme VKM
- - Decision of the Council of Ministers

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FoRewoRd

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Employment is a key factor for economic stability and improving living standards, especially for marginalized groups. However, these communities face high unemployment rates and, when they do manage to secure work, they often work in the informal sector with low wages and insecure conditions, without legal protection. The inclusion of these groups in the labor market is essential for achieving social equality and for the country's economic development.

In this context, the Medium-Term Budgetary Program (MTBP) 2025-2027 represents a key mechanism for securing financial resources in support of policies for social inclusion and improving living conditions for the most vulnerable groups, including the Roma and Egyptian communities. The MTBP aims to address their challenges through the allocation of specific funds for programs aimed at vocational training, self-employment and access to the formal labor market.

The National Action Plan for Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma and Egyptians 2021-2025 also establishes mechanisms that will improve access of these communities to the labor market. The goal of including 60% of job seekers from these groups by the end of 2025 is an ambitious objective, and the allocation of funds for the period 2025-2027 within the MTBP is vital for the realization of this goal.

This document analyzes the legal and policy framework supporting the integration of Roma and Egyptians in Albania, the progress of the implementation of the National Action Plan, and the role of the MTBP 2025-2027 in achieving the objectives for sustainable and inclusive development. Concrete recommendations focus on providing financial measures to support the policies and objectives of the socio-economic inclusion of Roma and Egyptians.

2. LEGAL AND STRATEGIC STRUCTURES FOR THE INTEGRATION OF ROMA AND EGYPTIANS IN ALBANIA: LEGAL FRAMEWORK, REGIONAL DECLARATIONS AND NATIONAL ACTION PLAN

2.1 Legal framework

The Roma and Egyptian communities in Albania enjoy significant legal protection, based on the Constitution of the Republic of Albania, which guarantees their fundamental rights and freedoms. The Constitution ensures the preservation of the identity, culture and language of the Roma and Egyptian communities, offering protection against discrimination on the basis of ethnicity. Constitutional provisions supporting the inclusion of these communities in economic and social life emphasize equality before the law and prohibit any form of unequal treatment on the basis of ethnicity.[1]. Furthermore, Article 20 grants the communities the right to freely express their ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic identity, ensuring respect for these rights on equal terms and contributing to the affirmation of their culture and heritage in Albanian society. Although the constitution affirms the principle of equality, it also allows for the application of positive discrimination, when there is reasonable and objective legitimacy.[2]

In particular, regarding the right to employment[3]The Constitution guarantees the right of every individual to work and to freely choose their place of employment. This provision creates a strong legal basis to ensure that both the Roma and Egyptian communities have equal opportunities in the labor market.

However, the effectiveness of the implementation of these provisions for the Roma and Egyptian communities often proves to be limited. Although the Law on Employment Promotion aims to increase the employability of the workforce, through the provision of public services and programs for employment, self-employment and vocational training, including for the Roma and Egyptian communities, these measures have failed to effectively address the obstacles faced by these individuals.

Lack of information, limitations in the skills needed to complete procedures, and bureaucratic barriers are some of the factors that place these communities at a disadvantage and prevent them from properly benefiting from existing programs.

The COVID-19 pandemic also worsened the situation, increasing the number of unemployed and deepening inequalities in the labor market. With the approval of the Council of Ministers No. 608, dated 29.07.2020 "On the procedures, criteria and rules for the implementation of the employment promotion program through the employment of persons made unemployed as a result of Covid-19", which sets out the procedures for the implementation of the employment promotion program for persons made unemployed as a result of the pandemic, many members of these communities were unable to directly benefit from these measures.

[1] Article 18 of the Constitution
[2] Article 18, paragraph 3 of the Constitution
[3] Article 49 of the Constitution

Two decisions of the Council of Ministers, VKM No. 17, dated 15.1.2020 "On the procedures, criteria and rules for the implementation of employment promotion programs through employment, on-the-job training and professional internships" and VKM No. 348, dated 29.4.2020 "On the procedures, criteria and rules for the implementation of the self-employment promotion program", are important for facilitating access of marginalized communities to the labor market and self-employment.

DCM No. 17 establishes the procedures and rules for the implementation of employment promotion programs, including: the employment program, on-the-job training and professional practices, while DCM No. 348 establishes the criteria, procedures and rules for the implementation of the self-employment program, which aims to promote self-employment through the creation of new enterprises of interested unemployed job seekers. However, the real impact of these measures for the Roma and Egyptian communities remains limited due to structural and integration challenges.

2.2 National Action Plan for Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma and Egyptians 2021-2025

The National Action Plan for Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma and Egyptians 2021-2025 is one of the most important public policy documents in Albania, which aims to address the socio-economic challenges faced by these communities. The plan aims to ensure equality for these marginalized groups, by improving access to public services, education, employment, and social protection. This plan is designed to ensure fair and inclusive treatment of these groups in all key areas of public life. A key objective of this plan is to create pragmatic and non-discriminatory policies that facilitate the integration of Roma and Egyptians in the labor market, housing, and healthcare, reducing the gap between them and the majority population.[4]

One of the main goals of this plan is the inclusion of Roma and Egyptians in the labor market, eliminating their dependence on the informal sector. Most Roma engage in informal activities, such as trading in used products and collecting recyclable waste. Meanwhile, Egyptians are more active in the service sector, construction and family care. The plan has set a clear objective that by the end of 2025:*60% of Roma and Egyptians to be included in the formal labor market through employment and vocational training programs.*

Another important aspect of this plan is the support for overcoming poverty through the integration of Roma and Egyptians into the formal labor market. The objective is to*70% of economic assistance beneficiaries from these communities to exit the scheme by the end of 2025 and be integrated into work*This is intended to be achieved through vocational training programs and training for inclusion in sectors with employment opportunities.

But, in the Roma and Egyptian communities, a very important obstacle is encountered, such as the lack of identification documents. Lack of identity cards and registration certificates

[4]UNDP 2022

Civil registration prevents these communities from benefiting from public services and government programs, such as vocational training and economic assistance. The plan aims to address this problem by improving access to civil registration and providing necessary documentation to all individuals.

A positive element of the National Plan is the mediation for Roma and Egyptians, which has proven successful in several municipalities in the country. This mediation process was carried out by UNDP, where mediators from these communities have helped community members access the labor market and public services. The involvement of mediators is seen as a way to facilitate the transition from the informal to the formal market.

According to the European Commission's 2023 Progress Report, Albania has made some progress in the inclusion of Roma and Egyptians, particularly in the areas of education and health. However, major challenges remain in their inclusion in the formal labour market, due to persistent discrimination and segregation. The report highlights that many Roma and Egyptians continue to be involved in the informal sector and have limited access to vocational training programmes and formal employment. The lack of digital skills and access to technology continues to be a barrier to enabling these communities to benefit from public services that are increasingly going online.[5] [6]

2.3 Review of the 2022 annual report of AKPA regarding the employment of Roma and Egyptian communities

The 2022 AKPA annual analysis on the employment of Roma and Egyptians highlights several important trends. In the latest report, published by AKPA, for 2022, it is noted that in the category of registered unemployed job seekers by age, young Roma and Egyptians make up the largest percentage. Given that these communities are characterized by a young age, they represent a significant workforce that can affect not only individually, but also the Albanian economy as a whole. This characteristic also increases the difficulties of integrating this group into the labor market, as they are often not included in vocational training courses.

In 2021, only 6% of job seekers registered with AKPA who were employed belonged to one of the identified special categories (beneficiaries of economic assistance, people with disabilities or job seekers from the Roma and Egyptian minorities), although the latter accounted for 41% of the number of registered unemployed job seekers.

The comparison between 2021 and 2022 shows an increase in the number of employed unemployed job seekers. Despite this, the employment of Roma and Egyptians has marked a slight decline, with a decrease of about 3.12% from 2021 to 2022. During 2022, VKM 822/2019 "On the mechanism of inter-institutional coordination of work for the referral of

[5] European Commission Report on Albania 2022
[6] European Commission Report on Albania 2023

for employment of individuals and working-age members of families benefiting from economic assistance".

This has led to increased participation of the Roma and Egyptian communities in active labor market programs, such as employment incentives and vocational training, contributing to the employment of 1 in 3 people referred for employment or vocational training. However, specific data on how many of them belong to the Roma and Egyptian communities is lacking.

It is worth noting that mediation remains a difficult indicator to achieve in these categories. Regarding the employment promotion program during 2022, only 7% of beneficiaries were from the Roma and Egyptian communities. It is also evident that from the 2022 objective in the Performance Charter, the vocational training indicator for unemployed job seekers has been achieved at a rate of 143%, with 255 people trained, against the objective of 178.

Participation in various programs according to DCMs[7]:

- **VKM 17 (Employment) – 7%**: Inclusion in this program remains low, indicating that only a small portion of Roma have benefited from employment opportunities.
- **VKM 17 (Training through work) – 2%**: This program has a limited impact, with minimal involvement of Roma in work-based training.
- **VKM 17 (Work practices) – 2%**: Involvement in work placements is also very low, indicating a lack of opportunities for developing professional skills.
- **VKM 608 (4-month program) – 1%**: This is one of the programs with the lowest impact, with only 1% Roma inclusion.
- **VKM 608 (8-month program) – 2%**: Involvement is minimal, with only 2% having benefited from this program.
- **VKM 608 (Informality) – 2%**: The Roma participating in this program to combat informality constitute a small percentage.
- **VKM 535 (Community Works) – 81%**: This program has the highest involvement of Roma, reflecting the focus on their involvement in community affairs.
- **VKM 348 (Self-employment) – 3%**: Involvement in self-employment remains low, indicating challenges in creating self-employment opportunities within this community.

2.4 Declaration of the Western Balkans partners on the integration of Roma in the framework of the European Union enlargement process

The Western Balkans Partners' Declaration on Roma Integration, also known as the Poznan Declaration, was signed by the prime ministers of the Western Balkan countries in July 2019 during the Berlin Process Summit. This landmark document sets out the commitment of the region's governments to the social and economic inclusion of the Roma community, with a focus on improving their conditions in key areas such as employment, education, housing, health and non-discrimination. This initiative is an important part of the EU's enlargement process.

[7]Data referring to the 2022 annual analysis of AKPA

European, including specific obligations to address the challenges of the Roma community in line with European standards.

One of the main goals of the Declaration is to improve the employment rate of Roma, with the aim of achieving their fair representation in the public sector, based on their percentage in the general population. The Declaration aims for at least 25% of Roma to be formally employed by 2024. This effort requires an integrated approach to employment policies, the inclusion of Roma in the decision-making process and increased regional cooperation to meet these objectives.

The Poznan Declaration stresses the importance of regional cooperation for the successful implementation of Roma inclusion policies. In this context, the governments of the Western Balkans have a duty to design policies based on accurate data and research, to ensure that employment and education programs are effective and tailored to the needs of the community. *Roma Integration 2020*[8], a project led by the Regional Cooperation Council, plays an important role in monitoring the progress of Western Balkan countries in fulfilling their commitments towards Roma integration.

The declaration also highlights the necessity of including Roma in decision-making processes, to ensure that policies that affect their lives are inclusive and reflect the real needs of the community.

Another issue highlighted by the Declaration is the close link between poverty and informal employment for the Roma community. Due to discrimination and social exclusion, a large proportion of Roma and Egyptians are forced to work in informal sectors, where legal protections and workers' rights are lacking. This situation hinders their inclusion in the formal labour market and limits opportunities for economic improvement.

Following the signing of the Declaration, the Albanian government has taken measures to fulfill its commitments in the context of improving the situation of Roma in the country. One of the main priorities has been the implementation of evidence-based policies, which aim to improve Roma access to formal education, employment and social services. In Albania, poverty and informal employment remain the main challenges that hinder the progress of the Roma community. Because many members of these communities do not complete basic/initial education, they have difficulty entering the formal labor market, and in this way they are more likely to be involved in the informal labor market.

Faced with these challenges, the integration of the Roma community into the economic and social development processes in Albania requires great efforts from national institutions and international cooperation, especially within the framework of the European Union integration process.

[8] https://www.coe.int/sq/web/tirana/roma-integration-phase-iii

3. EMPLOYMENT CHALLENGES OF THE ROMA AND EGYPTIAN COMMUNITY IN ALBANIA

The employment of Roma and Egyptian communities in Albania faces complex challenges caused by historical, social and economic factors. Despite the efforts made by the Albanian government and national and international organizations, these communities remain marginalized and face limitations in their opportunities for formal employment. As a result, their employment opportunities remain significantly limited compared to the rest of the population.

Education plays a key role in shaping employment opportunities. Roma and Egyptian communities often face barriers to education, including economic constraints, cultural factors, and discrimination in schools, with 45.28% of unemployed Roma jobseekers and 13.9% of unemployed Egyptian jobseekers registered with labor offices having not completed primary education.[9]This lack of education limits their skill development and competitiveness for employment.

The Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination has found cases of discrimination over the years regarding registration fees for Roma and Egyptian children in educational institutions such as kindergartens, nurseries and schools.[10]Initiatives aimed at improving access to education for these groups are essential for promoting long-term economic inclusion.

Discrimination in the workplace also manifests itself through unequal working conditions. Roma often work in the informal sector and face difficult working conditions, low wages and a lack of employment contracts, leaving them without social protection and economic security. Involvement in the informal sector helps Roma and Egyptians survive, but does not provide them with access to social services or state benefits, reinforcing the perception that they are separated from the rest of society and only suitable for menial jobs.[11].

Due to the lack of opportunities in the formal market and restrictions on participation in educational programs and vocational training, these individuals fail to develop their potential and improve their social and economic conditions, remaining trapped in poverty. These challenges also influence their internal migrations in search of better opportunities, which directly affects their education, health and economic security.

There is a large gender gap, with only 29% of women participating in the labor market, compared to 51% of men. The low participation of women is mainly related to early marriage and family obligations, including childcare. Unemployment is particularly high among young people compared to the rest of the population.[12]This marked gender gap is particularly noticeable in the type of work performed. Women's presence in the formal sector is minimal, while in the informal market, especially in agriculture and domestic work, they are much more represented.[13]

[9]National-Employment-and-Skills-Strategy-2023-2030
[10]Annual report 2022https://www.kmd.al/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Raporti-KMD-2022_compressed.pdf
[11]EU CommissionALBANIA Economic and Social Empowerment for Roma and Egyptians - a booster for social inclusion" (ESSAY)
[12]"Revitalizing Albania's economic growth through Roma inclusion "S. Pocket"
[13]Vera Messing, "Active Labor Market Policies with an Impact Potential on Roma Employment in Five Countries of the EU ", Newjobs Working Paper No. 19.2

4. ANALYSIS OF THE 2025-2027 MTBP WITH A FOCUS ON THE EMPLOYMENT OF THE ROMA AND EGYPTIAN COMMUNITIES

The Medium-Term Budgetary Program (MTBP) plays an essential role as a planning instrument for the central government and local self-government units (LSGUs), providing an integrated and multi-year approach to revenue forecasting and public financial resource allocation. Its main purpose is to ensure sustainable management of public finances, by linking strategic development goals with clear objectives and concrete decisions for the provision of public services.

The MTBP also helps to align local and central policies with national plans and development strategies, making it an effective tool for medium-term planning and budgeting, including forecasts of demographic needs and available resources. This process aims to translate into improved quality and sustainability of public services, by disciplining spending within a realistic financial framework.

The MTBP for the period 2025-2027 is of particular importance for improving social inclusion policies in Albania, with a special focus on vulnerable communities such as Roma and Egyptians. This program, within the framework of the government's strategy for sustainable and inclusive development, aims to strengthen measures for the employment and professional training of these groups.

4.1 Analysis of the Budget of the Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation for the Period 2025-2027 (Phase I)

The Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation has projected budget expenditures for the period 2024-2027 in order to meet its objectives. The budget table provides important information on financial priorities and trends for the coming years, especially in relation to labor market programs. The data extends from 2024 to 2027 and includes total budget allocations and specific funds for labor market initiatives.

Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation				
(in 000'LEK)	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**	**2027**
		PBA	**PBA**	**PBA**
Total Budget	51116216	52143973	54592884	53760697
Labor Market Program	2904613	2881547	2818547	2828547
Product: Employment Incentive Programs	433995	500000	550000	550000

Table 1 – Total budget forecast by MEKi and forecast for the Employment Program and Incentive Program Output

General Budget Trends

The total budget allocation shows an increasing trend from 2024 to 2026, starting from 51.1 billion lek in 2024 and reaching 54.6 billion lek by 2026. This commitment of

The government's budget shows the importance of investments in economic, cultural and innovation development. However, the forecast for 2027 shows a decrease, from 54.6 billion lek forecast for 2026 to 53.8 billion lek for 2027. This change raises questions about government priorities and resource allocation strategies.

Financing the Labor Market Program

When we examine the specific allocations for the "Labor Market" program, we notice another trend. The funding starts at around 2.9 billion lek in 2024, but then shows a slight decrease reaching around 2.8 billion lek in 2026. This decrease, referred to in the draft document of the Medium-Term Budget Program 2025 – 2027, reflects a reduction in capital expenditures such as the reconstruction of employment offices, VFP, AKPA Central Administration, as well as the purchase of computer/ electronic equipment. Despite the fact that there is a decrease in the total budget for the Labor Market Program, the budget for the Employment Promotion Programs product**there is an increase in the next three years**This budget increase may indicate a somewhat greater focus on labor market initiatives, which could have important consequences for youth employment and the overall effectiveness of programs targeting marginalized groups, including Roma and Egyptians.

During the period 2024-2027, the forecast for the total budget shows a continuous increase, reflecting the government's efforts to support economic and social development in Albania. However, the funds allocated to the labor market remain low compared to the total budget. In 2024, the labor market accounts for 5.68% of the total budget, with a decrease to 5.52% in 2025 and 5.16% in 2026. This trend shows that, despite the overall budget increase, the allocation to the labor market is not increasing in the same proportion, which may mean challenges in addressing unemployment, especially for marginalized groups.

The labor market participation for 2027 shows slight stability, at 5.25%, but is still lower than the initial level in 2024. This suggests the urgent need for increased investment and improved strategies that support employment. Increasing allocations to employment and training programs is essential to address structural labor market challenges and ensure that Albania achieves its economic and social development goals.

4.2 Summary of Key Performance Indicators for the "Labor Market" Program for the period 2025-2027

Some of the priorities for the period 2025-2027 include the Youth Guarantee, which represents a joint commitment by all EU countries to ensure that young people aged 16-29 have access to a quality offer within a 4-month period, whether as unemployed jobseekers or those who have dropped out of formal education. This programme aims to support an average of 735 young people each year. Another important focus is the provision of quality vocational training for young people and adults, which should be in line with labour market requirements, as well as improving opportunities for lifelong learning.

a) The "Labor Market" Program has set ambitious goals for the period 2024-2025, with a special focus on**in the employment of youth aged 16-19**In 2024, the predicted number of young job seekers (16-29 years old) is 9546, while for 2025, this number is expected to

increases to 9680, reflecting a government commitment to address unemployment in this age group. This targeted increase suggests an increased focus on creating job opportunities and supporting initiatives that help young people integrate into the labor market. However, in the face of structural challenges and unemployment, it is important that these objectives are supported by sufficient resources and effective strategies, especially to ensure that marginalized groups, such as Roma and Egyptians, also benefit from these opportunities.

year	**Number of Young Jobseekers (16-29 years old)**
2024	9546
2025	9680

Table 2 Forecast for new job seekers, Phase I forecasts only the years 2024 and 2025

b) The targeted increase in the employment of unemployed jobseekers from groups with disabilities, from 332 to 360 individuals between 2024 and 2025, reflects a continued commitment to improving access to the labour market for this group. This development is important, as groups with disabilities often face significant barriers to finding work, including discrimination and a lack of suitable opportunities. The increase in the number of employments for this category suggests that the strategies undertaken, such as mediation and employment promotion programmes, are yielding positive results.

year	**Number of Employed Unemployed Jobseekers**
2024	332
2025	360

Table 3. Number of Employed Unemployed Jobseekers, Phase I

c) Table of**Performance of Unemployed Women Jobseekers**shows a projected improvement in the job retention rate after the end of the employment stimulus program, from 75% to 77% between 2024 and 2025. This increase demonstrates a significant commitment to supporting women job seekers and suggests that the implemented programs are delivering tangible results in supporting this vulnerable group. Recognizing and addressing the barriers that women face in the labor market are essential to ensure that these increases are sustainable. Increasing the job retention rate is an important indicator, but it must be accompanied by policies and strategies that address structural challenges to ensure that women have equal opportunities to advance in their careers.

year	**% of Retention in Employment After the Program**
2024	75%
2025	77%

Table 4. Unemployed female job seekers % of job retention after the program, Phase I

d) Youth Guarantee Schemeaims to support youth by providing employment opportunities to those who are registered as unemployed job seekers. According to the plan for the years 2025-2027, it is expected that 735 young people will benefit from this scheme each year, which aims to provide a quality offer for young people aged 16-29. This initiative shows the government's commitment to addressing the problems

unemployment among young people and to ensure that they have the opportunity to integrate into the labor market. By providing continuous support, the scheme aims to improve employment opportunities and contribute to the sustainable development of youth communities in Albania. This strategy includes not only creating employment opportunities, but also promoting the professional and personal development of young people, helping them to be better prepared for the challenges of the labor market.

year	**Number of Young People Participating in the Youth Guarantee Scheme**
2025	735
2026	735
2027	735

Table 5. Number of Young People Participating in the Youth Guarantee Scheme, Phase I

e)**Reducing the number of people benefiting from unemployment benefits**from 3475 to 3308 between 2025 and 2026 indicates a positive trend in the labor market. This decrease in the number of beneficiaries suggests that there is an improvement in the employment situation, perhaps as a result of the implementation of employment promotion programs and the Youth Guarantee. However, it should be noted that, although there is a decrease in the number of beneficiaries, it is important to further monitor the measures taken to ensure that this positive trend continues and that sustainable employment opportunities are created for all those who are still unemployed. This will help improve the social and economic situation in the country.

year	**Number of people benefiting from unemployment benefits**
2025	3475
2026	3308

Table 6. Number of people benefiting from unemployment benefits, Phase I

Lack of attention to Roma and Egyptian Communities

It is noteworthy that at this stage, in the "Labor Market" Program, MEKI does not list the Roma and Egyptian communities as specific target groups, which represents a significant shortcoming in its approach. Despite the fact that these groups are included in other benefits, their failure to identify them as specific groups in labor market policies minimizes the need for an in-depth analysis of the specific challenges they face. This lack of attention may lead to an ineffective strategy for support and integration, increasing the risk of continued discrimination and marginalization in the labor market. Recognizing these groups as specific would help in developing more appropriate and effective policies to address their specific needs and ensure that they have equal access to employment opportunities.

4.3 Standard format for preparing budget requests for the MTBP 2025-2027. Performance indicators for the Roma and Egyptian employment objective (2025-2027) PHASE II (under consultation)

Given that in the first phase of the 2025-2027 MTBP, the Roma and Egyptian Community was not identified as a separate group by MEKI, it was requested to make available a draft budget prepared for the second phase, which defines the strategic objectives and the anticipated beneficiary groups of the "Labor Market" Program. For other categories, such as the Number of Young Jobseekers, the Number of Employed Unemployed Jobseekers, % of Retention in Employment After the Program, the Number of Young People Participating in the Youth Guarantee Scheme, and the Number of Persons Benefiting from Unemployment Payment, the projections continue to remain the same, with the exception of the projections for the years 2026 and 2027, which are expected to increase.

This document identifies the category "Employment of unemployed Roma and Egyptian job seekers." These efforts aim to continuously increase the number of employed individuals from these vulnerable communities over a three-year period.

According to forecasts, the number of employed people will increase from 810 individuals in 2024 to 900 by 2027, marking an average annual growth rate of about 3.5%. This increase is expected to contribute to improving economic conditions for these groups, being closely linked to demographic factors and the dynamics of labor demand, especially in the service sectors.

One of the main challenges faced by Roma and Egyptians is discrimination in the labour market, as well as the lack of appropriate skills. Therefore, the MTBP programme aims to provide greater support to vulnerable groups through the implementation of reforms in the field of social protection. An important objective is to increase the number of individuals benefiting from economic assistance, with a view to employing working-age members of beneficiary families. Furthermore, increasing employment in social enterprises aims to contribute to the integration of different categories of disadvantaged groups, by addressing the barriers that hinder their integration into the labour market.

Employment Forecast Table for Roma and Egyptians:[14]

year	Projected Number of R/E Individuals Employed	Annual Growth (%)
2024	810	Baseline
2025	840	3.7%
2026	870	3.6%
2027	900	3.4%

Table 7. Projected Number of R/E Individuals Employed, Phase II

The employment forecast table shows an average growth trend of**3.5%**in the number of employed people from these communities each year. Between 2024 and 2027, the Albanian government plans to increase the number of employed Roma and Egyptians**from 810 to 900**individuals. This goal reflects efforts to combat the barriers faced by these groups, by providing reinforced mediation and vocational training measures.

[14]Referred to the response to the letter no. 10277/1 dated 20.08.2024 of the Ministry of Economy, Culture and Innovation

Mediation is one of the key aspects of the program. By increasing the number of mediators and career counselors, the aim is to assist individuals in the process of integration into the labor market, especially those who need personalized support, such as Roma and Egyptians.

A key element of the program is the adaptation of vocational training courses to meet labor market demands. This effort aims to ensure that unemployed people from vulnerable communities are equipped with the required skills, increasing their chances of sustainable employment.

Given that this program is part of a broader effort for social equality, the sustainable inclusion of Roma and Egyptians in the labor market is of great importance for improving their socio-economic situation. This program not only aims to improve economic indicators, but also contributes to building a more inclusive and less discriminatory labor market.

4.4 New policies included in the draft MTBP 2025-2027 (Phase II)

The new policies of the "Labour Market" Programme include a strong focus on capacity building and providing employment opportunities for all. With a commitment to increasing intermediation and ensuring that unemployed jobseekers are kept in work after completing the programmes, these policies aim to create a more sustainable and integrated labour market. Performance indicators are designed to monitor progress towards these goals, including increasing retention rates and improving the quality of jobs. This comprehensive approach is essential to ensure that individuals have equal opportunities for professional development and to contribute to a stronger and more sustainable economy.

view	Identifying and designing appropriate policies to promote local employment and professional training of the workforce, in order to create quality jobs and opportunities for skills throughout the life cycle.			
Performance indicators at goal level	2024	2025	2026	2027
	bUDGET	PREDICTION	PREDICTION	PREDICTION
".. of intermediation THE reconciled with the employment of declared in the GPT"	70%	72%	73%	74%
“..of unemployed Jobseekers retained in employment after the end of the employment incentive program”	41%	42%	43%	44%
"..of unemployed job seekers retained in employment after the end of the employment incentive program"	62%	63%	64%	65%

"..of unemployed job seekers retained in employment after completing vocational training	71%	72%	73%	74%

Table 8. Forecasts for the New Policies, Phase II

4.5 Comparison of employment projections for Roma and Egyptian communities between the 2022-2024 MTBP and the 2025-2027 MTBP

MTBP 2022-2024: Focus on Integration and Support

Within the framework of the 2022-2024 MTBP, the Albanian government has decided to address the needs of the Roma and Egyptian communities through focused efforts on the integration of these groups into the labor market. One of the main objectives is to increase the participation of job seekers from these communities in employment promotion programs. This period aims to engage more than 50% of the total beneficiaries in these programs, including Roma as a separate group.[15]

The 2022-2024 MTBP emphasizes the importance of providing vocational training that is tailored to the specific needs of these communities. This effort also includes support for economic assistance and unemployment payments for individuals facing social and economic barriers. The government plans to engage Roma and Egyptians through social enterprises, in order to help integrate them into the labor market and create new employment opportunities.

MTBP 2025-2027: Projected Growth and Challenges for the Labor Market

In the 2025-2027 MTBP, the focus on the Roma and Egyptian communities continues, but with a clearer strategy for increasing the number of employees from these groups. The MTBP foresees a continuous increase in employment for Roma and Egyptians, with the objective of increasing the number of employees from 810 individuals in 2024 to 900 by 2027, with an average annual growth of around 3.5%. This demonstrates a continued commitment to helping these groups better integrate into the labor market.

The 2025-2027 MTBP also notes that employment growth for Roma and Egyptians is closely linked to demographic factors and the dynamics of labor demand in key economic sectors, such as services. However, demographic challenges and discrimination in the labor market continue to be significant obstacles for these communities.

comparison

Both MTBPs share a common goal of increasing the inclusion of Roma and Egyptians in the labor market, but the approach and strategies used differ. The MTBP 2022-2024 focuses on assisting and supporting these communities through integration programs and reforms.

[15]MTBP 2022-2024
https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Farkiva.financa.gov.al%2Fwpcontent%2Fuploads%2F2021%2F12%2FPjesa-1_Faza-II-2022-2024-Final.docx

social, while the MTBP 2025-2027 focuses on increasing the number of employees and improving working conditions for Roma and Egyptians.

The 2022-2024 MTBP provides a basis for the integration of Roma and Egyptians, creating opportunities for professional and social development, while the 2025-2027 MTBP presents a more optimistic perspective for increasing employment and improving living conditions for these communities, while also facing ongoing challenges. These programs are important for ensuring a brighter and more equal future for Roma and Egyptians in Albania.

4.6 Is the forecast for gradual growth of 3.5% per year sufficient?

The projected increase in employment of Roma and Egyptians is a result of improved mediation and a focus on targeting vulnerable groups. By 2027, 900 individuals from these communities are projected to be included in the labor market, an effort to address high levels of unemployment and economic exclusion. This figure, while representing progress, remains modest to fully address the challenges faced by these groups, given the scale of unemployment in these communities and their historical marginalization.

Despite a steady increase of 3.5% per year in the number of Roma and Egyptian job seekers expected to be employed through employment mediation and promotion, this increase appears to be insufficient to fully address the real needs of these communities. Roma and Egyptians face numerous structural barriers, such as discrimination, lack of market-required skills, and limited access to education and vocational training. As a result, the number of individuals who manage to integrate into the labor market is relatively low compared to the overall size of the population of these communities and the unemployment rate they face.

The projected increase of 30 individuals per year, while representing progress, remains symbolic compared to the real challenges faced by these groups. An increase of 3.5% per year may not be sufficient to address the large labor market inclusion gap faced by the Roma and Egyptian communities, given the unemployment rate in these communities and their historical marginalization. In order to have a greater impact and significantly reduce the unemployment rate within these groups, efforts need to be intensified.

In this context, the increase in the number of employees must be higher to have a significant effect and to achieve the inclusion of these groups in the labor market at a pace that reflects real needs.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICIES AND SUPPORT MEASURES FOR THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC INCLUSION OF ROMA AND EGYPTIANS

1) The increasing trend of the budget for employment promotion programs should be higher so that the performance indicators for the Roma and Egyptian communities are higher. MEKI and AKPA should take into account the level of registrations as job seekers and the level of employment for Roma and Egyptians in the budget projections.

2) The socio-economic inclusion of Roma and Egyptian communities is an ongoing challenge that requires specific policies and measures to overcome the structural barriers that these groups face. These interventions should address not only the issue of their integration into the labour market, but also other factors, such as education, vocational training and access to public services. It is important to pay particular attention to some of the key policies and measures that tend to support inclusion. Education and vocational training are essential for the integration of Roma and Egyptians into the labour market. Policies aimed at improving access to education for Roma and Egyptian children, as well as for adults who have not completed basic education, are a key component. Trainings with parent groups should be held regularly so that the promotion starts in the family.

3) MEKI and AKPA should facilitate the criteria for members of the Roma and Egyptian communities who lack basic education to register to follow a vocational training course at Vocational Training Centers. Some of the vocational training courses do not require basic education. It is also necessary for vocational training programs/courses to be adapted to market needs to ensure that these groups are equipped with the necessary skills.

4) Review the structure of employment office staff to create the possibility of employing a graduate from the Roma and Egyptian communities in the position of specialist in each employment office. This intervention would facilitate the provision of services to Roma and Egyptian individuals, taking into account the barriers to clear communication and understanding.

5) To address the discrimination and prejudice faced by these groups, it is essential to develop awareness-raising and educational campaigns that aim to change entrenched stereotypes. These campaigns can raise public awareness and promote equality, combating discrimination in institutions and in the labor market.

6) Another critical element is inter-institutional cooperation to improve access to public services for these communities, to ensure that they have**equal access to health, education and social welfare services**. Policies that provide specific and direct support to Roma and Egyptians, addressing their unique needs, are essential to ensure that these groups do not remain marginalized and excluded from basic public services. This comprehensive approach helps to reduce the gap between communities and ensure fair and equal treatment for all citizens.

7) Creating a suitable market for Roma and Egyptians requires a comprehensive approach that takes into account the unique skills and potential of these communities. Roma and Egyptians have demonstrated particular skills in areas such as handicrafts, which have been part of their culture and tradition for decades.[16] However, with the decline in demand for handicrafts and the restructuring of former state-owned enterprises in this sector, many of these traditional skills have remained unexplored. For this reason, an important policy opportunity would be to develop strategic partnerships at local, national and international levels to promote and revitalize handicrafts as a sustainable source of income for these communities.

[16]Roma and Egyptian in Albanian, From Social exclusion to social inclusion https://books.google.al/books?hl=en&lr=&id=eLDiHsezD8EC&oi=fnd&pg=PR3&dq=employment+of+roma+and+ egyptian+in+albania&ots=t6SEdP-_x4&sig=5xdnègerVLVo6M4BbrvK9apKOzo&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=employment%20of%20roma%20and%20egyptian%20in%20albania&f=false

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13. MTBP 2022-2024