



Co-funded by
the European Union



Western Balkans
Investment Framework **WBIF**
BUILDING THE EUROPEAN FUTURE TOGETHER



PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, Belgium

27.04.2022

Panel Discussion on Socially Responsible Public Procurement Held During Roma Week

Brussels, 27th April 2023 – A panel discussion was held on the topic of "Can Socially Responsible Initiatives offer new opportunities to vulnerable communities?" during Roma Week 2023 at REDI's premises in Brussels. The panel discussion was organized to discuss the Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF) pilot project, which explored how Socially Responsible Public Procurement can offer new employment opportunities to vulnerable communities, with a particular focus on Roma communities.

The Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF) pilot project was the focal point of the discussion, exploring how socially responsible public procurement can create new employment opportunities for vulnerable communities, with a focus on Roma communities. The panel featured experts from various organizations, including the European Commission, the EBRD, and REDI.

Enrica Chiozza, European Commission, DG NEAR, presented the importance of socially responsible public procurement in infrastructure investments, promoting gender equality, and social inclusion.

Sunita Pitamber, Associated Director at the EBRD, presented the Inclusive Socially Responsible pilot project, aiming to promote economic inclusion of vulnerable communities, including Roma, by building a waste management infrastructure in North Macedonia.

Katerina Kus-Ivanova Filkova, a representative from the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy in North Macedonia, contributed to the panel by presenting opportunities and programs that contribute to the employment of Roma in North Macedonia, as well as pointing out the challenges of the region.





**Co-funded by
the European Union**



Western Balkans
Investment Framework **WBIF**
BUILDING THE EUROPEAN FUTURE TOGETHER



The panel discussion, moderated by Petrica Dulgheru, Director of REDI, included Álvaro Gutiérrez Maestro from Secretariado Gitano in Spain, who shared good practices in Spain and provided examples of how initiatives in Spain could be extended to other countries in the region. The panelists also discussed the challenges of implementing socially responsible public procurement in the region, including the lack of awareness and understanding of the concept. They acknowledged the importance of increasing awareness and education around the concept and discussed potential solutions to address these challenges.

The event aimed to shed light on the potential of socially responsible public procurement to create new opportunities for vulnerable communities, including Roma communities, while promoting gender equality and sustainable infrastructure.

Peter Pollak, Member of the European Parliament, emphasized the significance of financial inclusion for the Roma population as a means of combating discrimination in a video message sent to the audience.

Marta Garcia Fidalgo, Roma Adviser, Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations for Western Balkans in European Commission, concluded the event by emphasizing the importance of socially responsible public procurement in promoting economic inclusion and social cohesion in the Western Balkans region.

The panel discussion was informative and engaging, highlighting the importance of socially responsible public procurement as a tool for promoting economic inclusion and social cohesion in vulnerable communities. The event was a success, and the organizers look forward to continuing the discussion and exploring new opportunities to support vulnerable communities in the future.

The event was held as part of Roma Week in the European Parliament, which is dedicated to discussing the issues and challenges facing Roma communities across Europe.

For more information about the panel discussion and Roma Week, please visit the event website at <https://romaweek.eu/> and <https://redi-ngo.eu/romaweek2023-redi-panel/>

