

FACTSHEET: POLITICAL AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION OF ROMA IN MONTENEGRO

Submission to the Human Rights Council at the 43rd Session of the Universal Periodic Review

Discrimination of Roma on political participation

The legal system of Montenegro has not yet improved measures for the effective participation of Roma in the decision-making process and electoral bodies at the national and local level.

Montenegro is the only country in the Western Balkans that in its history has never had a Roma representative in the Parliament.

→ Electoral legislation on political parties representing national minorities does not promote Roma representation in the legislature.

The Constitution of Montenegro, Article 79 establishes that members of minority nations and other minority national communities are guaranteed the rights and freedoms of authentic representation in the Parliament of Montenegro and assemblies of local self-government units in which they constitute a significant part of the population, in accordance with the principle of affirmative action.

→ According to the last census, there are 6,251 Roma in Montenegro. Although there are only 230 more Roma than Croats who have a privileged census, the Roma are subject to the same census as Bosnians or Albanians, who are up to 8 times more than Roma according to the census.

In 2021, a Roma political party was formed, but due to discriminatory electoral legislation, it is unable to actively participate in the political life of society.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- I. The Law on the Election of Councilors and Members of Parliament does **not guarantee an equal opportunity** for Roma to exercise their right to parliamentary and councilor mandate.
- II. The Law on the Election of Councilors and Members of Parliament **does not allow equal right to Roma on authentic political representation** in accordance with the **principle of affirmative action** provided in the Constitution of Montenegro (Article 73) and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Members of National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities from 1992.