

NEWSLETTER NO 1

October 2013

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Javier Saez of Fundación Secretariado Gitano (FSG) reports on how the economic crisis is affecting Spain's Roma communities.

+ An extract of the expert registry

Why have a database?

The database on Roma-related policies and good practices came about as a result of the **Strasbourg Declaration** adopted at the **high-level meeting on Roma** on 20 October 2010.

In this Declaration, Council of Europe member states urged the Council of Europe to further develop co-operation with national, regional and local authorities and international organisations in collecting, analysing, exchanging and disseminating information on policies and good practice on Roma. They also encouraged it to provide advice and support at the request of national, regional and local authorities as well as practical assistance in the implementation of new policy initiatives

The database aims to meet these needs. **It contains demonstrated practices that are transferable at various levels** (local, regional, national) as well as promising prac-

tices and policies that will be considered good practice once validated by the webmasters. These webmasters take into account the views of various Council of Europe monitoring bodies and sectors and other international partners (European Commission, FRA, OSCE, UNICEF, UNDP, Decade of Roma Inclusion, etc.) as well as national or even local studies conducted into the results of the policy or practice in question. **The involvement of the Roma beneficiaries in the project itself and the evaluation process is crucial and the Council of Europe attaches great importance to this.**

Le Conseil de l'Europe a sollicité l'appui, entre autres, du Forum européen des Roms et des Gens du voyage au travers de ses représentants nationaux pour vérifier l

The Council of Europe has enlisted the help of organisations such as the European Roma and Travellers Forum, through its national representatives, in order to verify the information.

Where to find the database

The site operates in the two official languages of the Council of Europe and can be found at the following addresses:

French:
<http://goodpracticeroma.ppa.coe.int>

English:
<http://goodpracticeroma.ppa.coe.int/en>

The site can also be accessed through the Council of Europe Roma portal at:

<http://www.coe.int/roma>

If it is found that a particular practice has not had the anticipated short-, medium- or long-term impact, it may be removed from the website.

How to use the database

Here you will find the latest publications listed on the site. You can download the full entry in Pdf format by clicking on the icon at the bottom of the photo.



To help you find your way around the site, an interactive CD is available on request, free of charge, from the Support Team of the SRSG for Roma Issues.

This column contains a search box, a navigation menu, a map for viewing the different policies across Europe, good practices and experts, a box for subscribing to the Newsletter and, at the very bottom, a tag cloud for finding information on particular topics.

To find specific information use the **SEARCH BOX** or else enter a "keyword". If the results do not match what you are looking for, in the middle section of the homepage there are two advanced search options, one under "good practices" and the other under "policies".



Thanks to an INTERACTIVE MAP and a search engine, you can find out about practices and policies already listed in just a few clicks. The map can also be used to locate experts in particular fields (education, housing, employment, etc.). Double click on the map to zoom in on a particular European country, region or city. Use the “+” button to zoom in and the “-” button to zoom out. You can also use the “center on a country” scroll-down menu to find the country whose policies, good practices and/or experts you wish to view.

SUMMARY OF DATABASE CONTENT AS AT 1 OCTOBER 2013

COUNTRY	NUMBER OF GOOD PRACTICES	TOPICS	POLICIES/ STRATEGIES	COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF GOOD PRACTICES	TOPICS	POLICIES/ STRATEGIES
ALBANIA	3	Inclusion (1), Education (1), Child protection(1)		ROMANIA	5	Education (3), Health (1), Housing (1)	
AUSTRIA	2	Employment(1), Integration (1)	1	SERBIA	2	Education (1), Employment (1)	
BELGIUM	1	Education	1	SLOVAQUIA	3	Education (3)	
BULGARIA	6	Education (3), Employment(1), Health Mediation (2)	1	SLOVENIA	2	Education (1), Employment (1)	
CZECH REPUBLIC	1	Integration	1	SPAIN	4	Employment (1), Education (1), Housing (1), Mediation (1)	
FINLAND	3	Inclusion (1), Education (1), Anti-discrimination (1)	1	SWEDEN	1	Education	
FRANCE	7	Education (4), Housing (2), Employment (1)	1	“FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA”	1	Education	
GREECE	2	Equal opportunities (1), Health (1)	1	UNITED KINGDOM	1	Education	
HUNGARY	2	Education (1), Antigypsyism (1)		KOSOVO*	1	Housing	
IRELAND	1	Health (1)		DENMARK			1
ITALY	1	Housing		CYPRUS			1
LATVIA	1	Education		ESTONIA			1
PORTUGAL	2	Equal opportunities(1), Mediation (1)		GERMANY			1
				TOTAL	51		11

This first issue of the Newsletter of the Good Practices Database for Roma inclusion aims at getting you familiar with this tool launched by the Council of Europe.
The Newsletter of the Good Practices Database will be issued trimestrially: in october, february and may.



ESPACE 16, Strasbourg Establishment of a temporary integration area

Country: France

Region: Alsace

Municipality: Strasbourg

Contact Organisation: Mission Roms de la Ville de Strasbourg, 1 Parc Etoile 67100 Strasbourg, France

Tel: +33 3 88 60 90 90

In a decision adopted on 27 June 2011, the City of Strasbourg decided to set up a temporary living space where some twenty Romanian Roma families can live to help them to integrate mainstream society.

This operation is being managed by the City authorities, which have set up a welfare assistance team made up of members of the Directorate of Solidarities and Health and representatives of partner associations, all taking part in a project for the general benefit of society.

"Espace 16" is situated on municipal land in the heart of the City (close to the railway station) with easy access to public transport, services and other amenities necessary for integrating these families. It comprises 26 caravans and buildings, providing toilets, showers, washing machines and a meeting room.

The cost of the project was entirely covered by the budget of the municipality of Strasbourg. The total investment was of 400.000 euro. Running costs (water, electricity, maintenance) and for welfare assistance are covered in full by the municipality of Strasbourg. The cost for the first year of implementation was of 200.100 euro.

Two social workers from a local NGO are responsible for providing welfare assistance. This team is in charge of the day-to-day management of Espace 16 and helps the families with any administrative problems they may have.

When they moved into the Espace 16, the families signed a contract, setting out the integration objectives and the rules for the functioning of this communal area. There are now 84 people (including 18 children) living in Espace 16, i.e. 22 families

The project takes account of several aspects of the integration of these families. Firstly, day-to-day life is organised by a Conseil de Vie Social (CVS) – a '**community life committee**'. The first task it undertook was to establish, together with the families concerned, the rules governing the use of the communal parts of the site and rules of good conduct governing relations between the families. The purpose of the CVS, which comprises all of the adults living on the site, is to provide information concerning all inhabitants, to deal with the problem of waste management, ensure the conditions for living together and respect for the rules concerning the functioning of the site. The CVS is also responsible for managing conflict and ensuring that inhabitants abide by the rules.

Information was provided on all aspects of health including screen-

ing for tuberculosis, raising awareness with regard to contraception and sexually transmitted diseases, and also dental hygiene and health care. Information on the French health system was also distributed.

NB with regard to the schooling of children, an efficient partnership has been set up with the French national education authorities. All of the children now attend one or other of the schools in the local neighbourhood. A system for monitoring the children's schooling, involving the teachers, the parents and neighbourhood associations has been established. Work with the families mainly concerns regular attendance, the separation of mother and child, educational support, school meals and children's participation in countryside trips

As from March 2012, all those over 16 years of age were registered for French lessons. In addition to learning the French language, the lessons also included information on the basic rules of life in France and help in preparing to integrate French society and find long-term work. Over 50% of the inhabitants understood the importance of these lessons and attended class regularly.

For more information on this good practice, please visit:
<http://goodpracticeroma.ppa.coe.int/en>

IRIS, Madrid - Rehousing Project

Region: Madrid

Municipality: Madrid, Aranjuez, Torrejón, Móstoles, Leganés, Galapagar
And Mejorada Del Campo

Contact Organisation:

Autonomous Community Of Madrid

Regional Ministry of Environment, Housing and Land Use Planning.
Institute for Rehousing and Social Integration

Tel: +34 914056930 / +34 914059631

The project aims to eradicate the shanty-town problem in different settlements of the municipality of Madrid and targets families residing in the "Cañaveral" (Vicálvaro District), "Santa Catalina" (Puente de Vallecas District), "Mimbreras" (Latina District) and "Ventorro" (Villaverde District) settlements in the municipality of Madrid.

This action is part of a Collaboration Agreement signed with the City Council of Madrid in October 2008. The objective is collaboration to jointly intervene in the process of definitively eradicating the shanty-town problem that affects shanty-town families residing in these neighbourhoods.

Moreover, said Agreement outlines the criteria for allocating housing and establishes ongoing social support in the neighbourhood and community integration process.

Objectives Of The Project

To definitively eradicate the shanty-town problem in the neighbourhoods of Cañaveral, Santa Catalina, Mimbreras and Ventorro.

- To allocate dignified housing that is adequate for the needs of families residing in shanty towns.
- To prepare families for living in standardized housing and in residential communities.
- To provide ongoing educational

and employment support for families, standardizing the use of public services: social, education, healthcare and others that are required due to their situation of exclusion.

- To support residential communities receiving the families that are re-housed with a focus on prevention and mediation in conflicts between neighbours.

Integration does not happen simply because a home is provided. The home is the fundamental tool in the integration process; however, family and residential community support is needed so the integration is effective which builds upon the work done during the housing preparation phase.

One key element so this integration happens is working with the neighbours and guaranteeing them the support necessary so as to make possible appropriate coexistence and a rapprochement between neighbours, breaking stereotypes that make coexistence difficult. Another key aspect is empowering the families to assume their responsibilities, improving their skills so as to foster job insertion and prevent institutional financial dependence.

What Are The Keys To Success Of This Action?

This is a project that aims to modify the causes that generate the



social exclusion of the Romani people, respecting the cultural components of the group and fostering the creation of areas of coexistence based on respect for the values of every person regardless of their social group or nationality.

Starting with the premise that there are many factors of exclusion: residential, educational, social, employment..., what is needed is a response that aims to modify or decrease the incidence of these factors and facilitates the social integration of the Romani people. One key idea that will make this process flow naturally is expanding our intervention with the people that welcome each Romani family upon rehousing: the residential community.

For more information on this good practice, please visit:
<http://goodpracticeroma.ppa.coe.int/en>

Recent Developments Concerning The National Strategy For Roma Inclusion Of Portugal

With their number estimated at between 40 000 and 60 000, spread throughout the length of Portugal, many Portuguese Roma still lack access to basic goods and services conducive to their integration.

The Portuguese Government accordingly took responsibility for responding not only to directives from the EU, but to the real needs of the Portuguese Roma population, identified systematically in the National Strategy for the Integration of Roma Communities (ENICC), hereinafter referred to as the National Strategy.

Guided by the Fundamental Principles (Articles 9(d) and 9(h)), by the Fundamental Rights and Duties (Articles 12 and 13) and by the Social Rights and Duties (Articles 64 and 65) contained in the Portuguese Constitution and having regard for the Ten Basic Common Principles and EU Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000, the National Strategy bases its intervention on an intercultural approach to the principles of equality, nondiscrimination and citizenship which, when put into practice in the form of guidelines in the areas of greatest need, are the driving force of change and for the integration of Roma men and women, working for their social advancement and fostering social cohesion.

Recognition of the importance of dimensions such as justice and security, gender equality, social security, citizenship education, mediation and discrimination has given rise to a series of priorities which are important for the overall success of the National Strategy, insofar as they concern dimensions profoundly shaped by the nature of human and social relationships.

Taking into account the Steps forward in implementing National Roma Integration Strategies expressed in the Communication from the Commission to the

European Parliament, The Council, The Economic and Social Committee and The Committee of Regions (COM2013)454 of 26th June 2013 and having in mind that Portugal has accomplished the structural pre-conditions for efficient implementation in what concerns the active involvement of civil society and Roma representatives at local level, the monitoring and enabling policy adjustment as well as raising awareness to fight discrimination, the European Commission has identified in its evaluation the following needs:

- More focus on desegregation and ensuring that mainstream policies also respond to the specific needs of Roma could further improve this part of the strategy
- More attention should be dedicated to recent economic and social transformations and its implications.
- Further work could be considered on monitoring progress in the implementation of the actions proposed and in health outcomes.
- The strategy could be further improved by concrete measures to provide non-discriminatory access to housing.
- Detailing a calendar, targets, indicators, and budget are needed to secure the effective implementation.

On the other hand, it is important to stress the impact that the Programme for Municipal Roma Mediators has had, developed and promoted by ACIDI – High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue.

This programme is addressed to all Portuguese Municipalities, in partnership with local civil society organisations, with significant Roma population, interested in building bridges to a constructive dialogue, and it is based on Roma mediators, residents in the intervention area of the municipality or in adjacent municipalities, that are selected by the local authorities.

The main roles of Roma mediators, who should have the knowledge on local services and equipment as well as a close relationship with local Roma communities, were set up:

- They must facilitate communication between Roma communities and local authorities and civil society organizations;
- They must promote consensus and mediate conflicts;
- They must promote intercultural dialogue as a strategic methodology of work and intervention;
- They must promote and facilitate Roma communities' access to local services and organizations

THE EAPN in Portugal and Roma communities

"Since it was founded in 1991, the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN) Portugal has been developing activities to help the Roma communities.

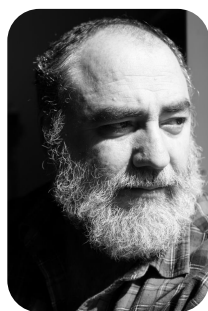
Given that the Roma are one of the social groups most vulnerable to extreme poverty and social exclusion in Portugal and Europe, it is only natural that they should be a primary concern of this organisation dedicated to fighting poverty and social exclusion.

Roma communities have gained public attention as a social group in need of special, urgent action. To this end, and in the light of the European Commission's efforts to promote national Roma integration strategies in the Member States, EAPN Portugal believes it would be expedient to hold a Europe-wide meeting where various officials, institutions and entities with responsibilities in this field could present a range of undertakings and intervention strategies, bearing in mind the different challenges and opportunities in this area."

On 23 April 2013 a seminar entitled "Comunidades Ciganas: Desafios de sempre, Estratégias urgentes" was held in Porto by the Fundação António de Almeida during which the Portuguese strategy was explained.

The impact of crisis and the measures of austerity on the situation of Roma in Spain

Javier Sáez
Fundación Secretariado Gitano
Spain



The European contradiction

In the last decades, Spain has become a model of good practice at European level for the promotion of social inclusion of Roma. The welfare State policies on health, housing and education, and other social and political initiatives (the involvement of Roma NGOs and local and regional authorities, and the key support of the European Social Fund) had a clear impact in the quality of life of Spanish Roma. The "Spanish model" is well known at European level, but this model is at risk in this moment.

Europe is living a political, social and economic contradiction: on the one hand, the need to improve the living conditions of Roma is a key issue of the European political agenda (Recommendations of Council of Europe¹, Strasbourg Declaration of Roma², Decade of Roma Inclusion³, EU Framework for Roma Integration Strategies⁴, General Policy Recommendation n° 13 of ECRI⁵, etc.), thus Member States are asked to make an effort to promote social inclusion of Roma at all levels; but on the other hand, the economic guidelines coming from the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund are asking Member States to reduce dramatically public investments, a policy that in fact means a strong reduction of the budget devoted to social policies. The consequence is that National Roma Integration Strategies do not have a proper funding, and can't be implemented in many cases. Policy makers at European level should be aware of this contradiction; otherwise Europe 2020 strategy' objectives will not be achieved, and social inclusion of Roma will not improve; in fact, it can even worsen.

The last reports about the implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategies are stressing this lack of funding and its consequences. The Commission's 2012⁶ progress report identified as one of the biggest weaknesses the insufficient allocation of financial resources to Roma integration. This year's report finds that although several countries have taken measures to allocate resources in an integrated way or on a territorial basis, overall financing is still inadequate.

The impact of austerity measures in Spain

The so called "Spanish model for Roma inclusion" is directly linked to the welfare State. The austerity measures that are being implemented in Spain are directly affecting a large part of the Roma community, reducing their income levels and quality of life, and intensifying the situations of poverty of many Roma families who already were in precarious situations in various social and labour aspects, and bringing other Roma families who once had a stable situation to the brink of poverty and exclusion.

The consequence of the austerity measures is that many Roma families are caught in a complex circle of interactions between the barriers in the access to healthcare, employment, education and housing, which ultimately produces greater social exclusion and implies serious indications of social decline compared to the situation of the Roma community prior to the crisis.

The measures that have been taken recently, tightening the conditions for payment of the basic income and social assistance, are severely affecting many Roma families; there are cases of people who had achieved autonomy but are now forced to return to the social protection system. The social protection system is not meeting the basic needs of the most vulnerable and excluded in our society. Moreover, reducing aid dependency affects many Roma families who have disabled people in their care, generating situations of poverty and instability in these families as the costs of healthcare and of daily life are increasing and the care of people is incompatible with employment.⁷

The field of housing is one of the most dramatic in this moment. Measures such as evictions have affected many Roma families, depriving them of their homes and leading them to situations of overcrowding and to resort to the help of the extended family, which in turn affects the whole process of social inclusion. The difficulties related to access to and maintaining adequate housing is having a direct impact on the social exclusion of Roma families. There are serious difficulties for many Roma families to pay mortgages or rents as well as the usual housing costs. The situation of Roma from Eastern Europe living in Spain has become even more difficult, leading to extreme poverty in many cases.

1. http://hub.coe.int/web/coe-portal/roma_reference-texts
 2. [https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=CM\(2010\)133&Language=lanFrench&Ver=final&Site=COE&BackColorInternet=DBDCF2&BackColorIntranet=FDC864&BackColorLogged=FDC864](https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=CM(2010)133&Language=lanFrench&Ver=final&Site=COE&BackColorInternet=DBDCF2&BackColorIntranet=FDC864&BackColorLogged=FDC864)
 3. <http://www.romadecade.org/>
 4. http://ec.europa.eu/justice/policies/discrimination/docs/com_2011_173_fr.pdf
 5. [https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=CM\(2011\)99&Language=lanFrench&Ver=add2&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=DBDCF2&BackColorIntranet=FDC864&BackColorLogged=FDC864](https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=CM(2011)99&Language=lanFrench&Ver=add2&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=DBDCF2&BackColorIntranet=FDC864&BackColorLogged=FDC864)
 6. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-12-499_fr.htm
 7. El Impacto de la crisis en la Comunidad Gitana, FSG, 2013. <http://gitanos.org/actualidad/archivo/100855.html>

The accelerated loss of employment, which has proven to be the most important problem in Spain in the last four years, is hitting the Roma particularly hard: many Roma are unemployed and cannot find new jobs.

The progress made by the Roma community in accessing paid employment in recent years has suffered a serious setback. Job insecurity has increased in this period, the level of irregular work is increasing, and many labour rights are violated. The existing prejudices and discrimination against Roma in Spanish society is an added barrier to the recruitment of Roma. An important indicator is that while the unemployment rate for the whole of the population in Spain has tripled in recent years to 27%, the unemployment rate of Roma has increased even faster to 42%.

Education is a key element in the social inclusion of the Roma community, as it will determine access to employment and to financial autonomy in the future.

If this element fails, the entire inclusion system is affected, and the austerity measures being taken leave unattended the most vulnerable Roma students. The long-term effects of this educational situation can be quite severe. The reduction of study bursaries, school meal grants, subsidised school supplies, etc... is affecting the attendance of Roma students in classrooms and educational processes, as well as their academic performance.

The Roma of Eastern Europe have experienced severe restrictions in their right to healthcare, due to the new law on health adopted in 2012: lack of health card, barriers for vaccination, overuse of emergency services, confusion in processing rules, etc...

There is a perceived increase in cases of discrimination against Roma in their access to housing, employment and education, and a resurgence of anti-Roma stereotypes and speeches in public opinion. The competition for scarce social resources produces more

conflicts between Roma and non-Roma at risk of social exclusion. The Roma of Eastern Europe are heavily discriminated against, and are the target of xenophobic and anti-Roma speeches.

As a general conclusion, we can confirm that the model of social inclusion of the Roma community that had worked in the 90s and early 2000 in Spain is being severely damaged, which implies a major social setback for Roma; this fact can have an impact that should be assessed with an open mind, because if a large sector of the Roma community is forced back towards social exclusion and reliance on social assistance, this will have an economic and social cost far greater than the savings provided by adopting urgent measures of austerity from a short-term perspective. Dismantling a social model is easy, but rebuilding it is much more difficult.

EXTRACT OF THE EXPERTS' LIST FROM THE DATABASE		
Dan Pavel DOGHI	HUNGARY	Antigypsyism
Peter JORNA	NETHERLANDS	Roma Issues in general
Nikos ANTONAKIS	GREECE	Antigypsyism
Jean Pierre LIEGEOIS	FRANCE	Roma issues in general
Stephan MÜLLER	AUSTRIA	Antigypsyism
Michaël GUET	FRANCE	Roma issues in general
Jose Manuel FRESNO	SPAIN	Antigypsyism
Monica ROSSI	ITALY	Roma issues in general
Sonja BARBUL	SERBIA	Romani Language
Lila FARKAS	HUNGARY	Education
Pietro VULPIANI	ITALY	Roma issues in general and fundamental rights
Javier SAEZ	SPAIN	Antigypsyism and Roma issues in general