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EUROCITIES CRITICAL FRIEND REVIEW ON 'DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE INTEGRATED CITY PLAN FOR ROMA INCLUSION'

24-26 September 2019, Braga

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

Everywhere in Europe, the Roma community faces difficult situations that are preventing their optimal inclusion in the society. From very high poverty level in the community with housing exclusion and lack of access to basic housing amenities such as tap water and electricity, to important rates of early school leaving and unemployment, their social inclusion is strongly affected by everyday struggles.

Cities are taking innovative actions to break the negative circle and ensure equal opportunities for all their citizens. In line with the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#) and its principles 1 (education, training and life-long learning), 3 (equal opportunities), 4 (employment), 11 (childcare), 19 (housing and assistance for the homeless) and 20 (access to essential services), cities adopt integrated approaches in their projects and city plans to tackle the situation of Roma community.

In the context of EURO CITIES' campaign '[Inclusive Cities For All: Social Rights in my City](#)' cities show their contribution to a more cohesive and inclusive Europe starting from the local level. Mayors and deputy mayors have pledged to act on the principles of European Pillar of Social Rights in line with cities' strategic objectives. Despite no explicit mention of the Roma community in the Pillar, six cities have taken commitments on principle 3 for equal opportunities and 2 cities, Athens and Malmo, have taken concrete commitments towards the inclusion of the Roma community.

To further encourage wider efforts for inclusion of Roma people at local level, as well as exchange of experience among cities, EURO CITIES is organising a mutual learning in Braga on 24-26 September. This meeting will take the form of a critical friend review. City expert will come to Braga to discover the practice, understand the context and conduct interviews with beneficiaries and practitioners. Based on these elements, they will analyse the strengths and elements to improve in Braga's practice and provide critical friend feedbacks. They will also help the host city to formulate concrete actions and scale-up the practices to a different neighbourhood.

Braga's integrated approach to Roma inclusion

In line with its Integrated Plan of Action for Disadvantaged Communities (PAICD), the municipality of Braga has developed a set of actions focussing on three social neighbourhoods: 'Santa Tecla', 'Enguardas' and 'Picoto'. Besides the rehabilitation of buildings, activities focus on the overall improvement of the local population's living conditions.

In the 3-year project '(Re)Write our neighbourhood' Braga promotes social inclusion through

interventions on education, employment, health, mobility, local leadership. Actions are built around pedagogic, social, artistic and cultural elements that will contribute to enhancing a sense of identity and belonging, foster self-esteem and prevent discrimination. Debates, exhibitions, the publication of a book and concerts are organised to present the Roma culture in a positive way and 're-write' the narrative on Roma community.

After three years of implementation, this project is coming to an end. While some activities will be continued outside of the framework, Braga has taken the opportunity of a new URBACT project to ensure continuity. The city is thus interested to gather feedback from EURO CITIES' members on their practice and gain advices on how to scale-up their approach within the new project.

Objectives of the critical friend review

Considering the common challenges that cities face at local level, the objectives of this meeting are to:

1. Offering in-depth understanding of Braga's strategy and practice for Roma inclusion by participating in visit of the neighbourhood, learning from presentations and engaging in discussions with key local stakeholders;
2. Analyse the strengths, opportunities and challenges of Braga's practice to suggest improvements and extract transferable element from and for other cities;
3. Advise the host city on possible follow-up actions based on participants' expertise;
4. Foster networking among city experts on Roma inclusion;
5. Develop a set of guidelines for establishing an integrated city plan for Roma inclusion, in line with the principles 1, 3, 4, 11, 19 and 20 of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

Expected results



- A report on integrated city plans for Roma inclusion.
- A set of suggested actions for the host city to scale up its practice within the framework of a new project.
- A set of guidelines on how to develop Roma inclusion strategy, from design to monitoring and evaluation.

Replication and transferability

The transferability element that has been at the centre of designing the learning process. Through the objectives and the format, cities are contributing to improving the practice of the host city, while also reflecting on the situation in their own city and what elements could inspire them. Five cities selected through an open call will take specific commitments of preparing, actively contributing to the critical friend review and drafting follow-up actions for Braga.



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