

# POLICY TRANSFER ON ROMA ACCESS TO HOUSING 9-10 APRIL 2019, TOULOUSE

## Background

Housing and assistance for the homeless is principle 19 of the [EU Pillar of Social Rights](#). However, access to decent housing remains a big challenge for many Roma living in cities. The [EUROCITIES mapping of Roma inclusion in cities in 2017](#) found that the housing situation of Roma is far worse than that of the general population. The common trend across cities is that Roma families are often living in precarious conditions in overcrowded, poor quality housing, be it in private rentals or public social housing. In some cities (predominantly in France and Italy), Roma people mostly live in temporary settlements (mobile homes, camps or caravans). This is all the more problematic given that decent housing is an essential prerequisite to finding employment, getting children to attend school regularly and having access to basic services, which are all key components of social inclusion and integration.

Newly-arrived Roma (EU mobile citizens moving from eastern EU cities to the west), tend to be more vulnerable to poor housing conditions than the domestic Roma who settled for years.

The main reasons why housing is a challenge for many Roma families are:

- Discrimination and anti-gypsyism
- Economic reasons - lack of means due to unemployment
- Housing market - lack of affordable housing in cities
- Language barrier

## Rationale

A recent report by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) entitled '[No One Left Behind](#)' analysed on the ground the situation of Roma living in slums in France. It found 570 slums inhabited by 16,000 people, most of whom are Roma from Romania and Bulgaria. While the report concluded that greater efforts are needed in France to change the practice of forced evictions into sustainable exit from slums, it also identified some good practices, such as the innovative approach in Toulouse.

Toulouse is implementing an integrated plan to eliminate slums through support by social workers and social services to help Roma move from camps into adequate housing, be it social housing or regular, mainstream housing. Moreover, Toulouse has been selected as one of the cities in France to pilot a Housing First approach, including beneficiaries among Roma.

EUROCITIES is organising a study visit to Toulouse to learn in practice from the city's innovative approaches to Roma inclusion. The aim is to build capacity of the city experts in the WG Roma inclusion to learn, transfer and possibly replicate some of the inspiring practices from Toulouse to support Roma to access adequate housing while adapting to the specific local conditions and target groups in their cities. The ultimate goal is to strengthen the capacity of cities to develop and implement urban solutions for Roma inclusion.

This activity is part of EUROCITIES mutual learning programme to support cities implement the EU Pillar of Social Rights with support from the EU programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSi) under the strategic partnership with the European Commission DG EMPL.

## Objectives



Learn from Toulouse's model to support Roma move from camps into adequate housing



Map innovative approaches to housing inclusion of Roma across cities in Europe



Showcase good practices on how to use ESF for Roma inclusion measures at local level



Analyse the strengths, opportunities and challenges of the housing inclusion measures in Toulouse to identify success factors and transferability factors



Identify key elements from the lessons learned that can be transferred to other cities



Develop guidelines for cities on how to develop or improve local policies for housing assistance to Roma moving from camps, in line with principle 19 of the EU Social Pillar

## Format

The study visit is designed to facilitate mutual learning and policy transfer between cities:

- **Toulouse as 'role model' city** presenting good practices on housing inclusion of Roma
- **five 'replicating' cities**, selected upon an open call, to present their work and commit to develop/improve their local policies based on lessons learnt from Toulouse
- up to **20 other active participating cities** and stakeholders

Transferability is at the centre of the mutual learning process. Throughout the study visit, cities are encouraged to **develop and improve their local policies** based on lessons learned. The mutual learning is designed to benefit all cities by developing a set of **guidelines**.

The policy transfer involves three stages:

- **collaborative learning** by examining in depth the processes, results, success factors and challenges Toulouse faced in implementing its policies for housing inclusion of Roma; participating cities will share 'critical friendly feedback' to Toulouse to help the host city continue and further improve its work in the field of housing inclusion of Roma.
- **co-creation of action plans** for the five replicating cities by identifying factors that can support transferability of good practices from Toulouse and how to adapt them to the local conditions in the replicating cities.
- **follow-up and monitoring of progress** - both Toulouse and the replicating cities as well as other active participating cities share plans for follow-up based on the lessons learned; a follow-up and monitoring process is set up at about 6 months after the visit.

## Participants

50 participants will take part in the study visit and policy transfer, including:

- policy-makers and practitioners from cities members of WG Roma inclusion
- representatives from local, regional and national authorities in France
- policy experts from the European Commission (DG EMPL, DG JUST), European Parliament, EU's Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA), OHCHR, Council of Europe, etc.
- representatives of Roma civil society from EU-level umbrella NGOs
- Roma beneficiaries of measures in Toulouse and Roma self-advocates from other cities

City experts of the **EUROCITIES WG Homelessness** will also be invited to join this study visit to contribute with their expertise. This is a unique opportunity to build synergies between the two WGs to address the cross-cutting challenge of homelessness of Roma people.

The study visit will be held back-to-back to the meeting of WG Migration & Integration and some (plenary) sessions will be held in common to encourage sharing of ideas and knowledge.

## Expected results

- A set of policy guidelines on how cities can develop and improve their local policies to support a sustainable exit of Roma from slums/camps into adequate housing
- A case study report on Toulouse's model for housing inclusion of Roma
- Action plans from at least five EUROCITIES members to transfer some of the inspiring aspects from Toulouse's measures to improve their own local policies for Roma inclusion
- Improved know-how among participating city experts of housing solutions for Roma inclusion, boosting cities' capacity to deliver principle 19 of the EU Pillar of Social Rights



*This event has received financial support from the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation "EaSI" (2014-2020). For further information, please consult: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/easi>*