

Conference: Housing First for the Roma in the 21st century? Possibilities and Limits

Prague, October 22nd, 2014

Venue: Lichtenstejnsky palace, U Sovových mlynu 506/4, Prague 1

Workshop Outline

A recent report by Czech civic society organisations on the implementation of the country's Roma Integration Strategy identified housing as the area where the developing trends are the most worrying. As a result of the selling off of many cities' municipal housing stock, rent deregulation, and the indebtedness of many Roma households towards both informal and professional moneylenders, a steadily growing number of Roma is forced to find alternatives to regular housing. The new Minister for Human Rights expressed the need to find standard housing for people with housing needs and the government declared the will to finally prepare a Law on Social Housing, which is still lacking in the Czech legislative framework.

The workshop is organized by Centre for Social Issues – SPOT, citizens association in cooperation with Platform for Social Housing, Minister of Human Rights (Czech Rep.), Metropolitan Research Institute and habitat for Humanity International. The workshop has been financially supported by The Council of Europe (European Academic Network on Romani Studies).

Programme

9:00–9:10 Workshop opening: Stepan Ripka, Chair of the Platform for Social Housing

**9:10–9:20 Opening speech: Michaela Marksova, Minister of Labour and Social Affairs:
State of the art of social housing act**

9:20–9:30 Opening speech: Jiri Dienstbier, Minister of Human Rights

9:30–9:40 Opening speech: Petr Smrcek, Deputy Minister of Regional Development

9:40–11:00 1st panel

Chair: Vladimír Spidla (General advisor to Prime minister)

Volker Busch-Geertsema (EOH, FEANTSA, GISS) will present the research findings from the evaluations of Housing First Europe pilot, and assess the evidence of the use of Housing First approach to tackle the homelessness of households who are systematically excluded from the housing market, especially migrants, minorities, families with children. (40 min)

Jan Snopek (Charles University in Prague / Platform for Social Housing) will assess the communist housing policies and practices towards Roma, and their dis/continuities with recent situation, based on extended archival research and

The workshop has the aim to link the Czech debate on potential structural solutions with international debates and expertise. It should provide both inspiration for the ongoing political debate on social housing in the Czech Republic and serve as a point of orientation for the needed scientific projects dealing with the topic.

long-term ethnographic fieldwork about housing policies and the creation of “socially excluded locality” in a small city in Eastern Bohemia. (20 min)

Q&A (20 min)

11:00–11:15 Coffee break

11:15–12:45 2nd panel: International experience and transferability of HF

Opening speech of the 2nd panel: Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Affairs

Chair: Gyorggy Sumeghy (Habitat for Humanity International)

Chiara Mazzoni (University of Milan) will discuss the use of Housing First and Housing ready approaches towards Roma and Sinti in Italian context, and the successful and unsuccessful housing trajectories, based on long-term ethnographic fieldwork for her PhD. (20 min)

Nora Teller (Metropolitan Research Institute) will analyse the CEE context and history of housing interventions for Roma (20 min)

Pedro Navarrete (Instituto de Realojamiento e Integracion Social – IRIS) will present the Spanish IRIS program that has been working on the housing desegregation of Roma with great success (20 min)

Eliška Lindovska (University of Ostrava) will discuss the potential barriers and the general features of the institutional framework relating the adaptability of HF approaches in the Czech Republic (20 min)

Q&A (10 min)

12:45–13:45 Lunch break

13:00 Press conference

13:45–15:10 3rd panel: Settings of the adaptation of a housing led approach within the Czech context

Chair: Nóra Teller (Metropolitan Research Institute)

Martin Lux (Czech Academy of Sciences) and **Alena Vosahlova** (Romodrom, o. s.) will present the proposed guaranteed housing scheme and elaborate on the dilemmas of housing ready – housing first program design (30 min)

Stepan Ripka (Platform for Social Housing) will present the most burning aspects of Roma housing issues, and evaluate current Czech housing policies and their impact on Roma (20 min)

Roman Matousek (Government Agency for Social Inclusion) will discuss the opportunities for making use of the ERDF for housing-led projects for marginalised communities and the relevant programming framework (20 min)

Q&A (15 min)

15:10–15:30 Coffee break

15:30–17:10 4th panel: Conclusions

Chair: Gyorggy Sumeghy (Habitat for Humanity International)

Nora Teller will present the general conclusions based on the discussions (20 min)

Volker Busch-Geertsema: Policy conclusions (20 min)

Stepan Ripka: Feasibility of the conclusions in the Czech Republic (10 min)

Response from the Ministry for Regional Development, Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs and Ministry for Human Rights (20 min)

Closing discussion (30 min)

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