



**OSCE ODIHR
Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 2019
September 26, 2019**

Statement on antigypsyism in housing

by European Roma Grassroots Organisations (ERGO) Network

Excellencies,

The right to quality and affordable housing is not accessible for many Roma. Besides a major manifestation of antigypsyism – forced evictions, there are other challenges, such as irregular settlements (non-legalized) and in relation to that - living at constant risk of evictions; a lack of sites for Travellers; being exposed to environmental hazards; urbanization plans not responding to the needs of people and difficult or no access to quality education, employment and services .

ERGO Network calls upon the OSCE Participating States to recognize housing as a fundamental rights issue in future policies and legislation and

1. To work on increasing political will, especially of local authorities/municipalities;
2. To address the lack of Roma participation at all levels (participation in urban planning and budgeting for example), especially in order to prevent the lack of understanding of the problems and consequently improper responses, including investment;
3. To enable preconditions for evidence-based measures. People themselves, researchers and civil society have to be invested in so they can provide useful and up-to-date information about the conditions and needs;
4. To treat forced evictions, residential segregation and the lack of legislation to forbid forced evictions as forms of systemic antigypsyism. In addition, discrimination at the housing market is also a manifestation of antigypsyism and have to be prevented and sanctioned;
5. To halt forced evictions, demolitions of houses Roma live in, placement of Roma in segregated camps and emergency shelters cut off from basic services and erection of walls around Roma settlements;
6. To take into consideration unequal treatment of housing issues – Considering the diversity of contexts is important to avoid exclusion of certain issues from the political and policy agendas. This means that, for example, if we talk about housing, we must not forget about the lack of access to sites.
7. To avoid harmful initiatives/bad investments – Moving Roma from one bad housing condition to another is as well a result of improper actions of the responsible authorities. It happens that Roma people are placed in a new house, but with no infrastructure and then the municipality does not have further resources to invest. Solutions to the housing issues, as could be concluded



from this case, have to go far beyond 'building a house'. To ensure a comprehensive and integrated approach that avoids a one-size-fits-all understanding of 'the issue'.

8. To secure Roma people's full access to quality and affordable housing, clean water, healthy environment, public transportation and sewage systems.
9. Address the lack of awareness of the 'mainstream' measures – Relevant policies have not been implemented, neither Roma-specific not mainstream policies. One of the needs identified in the context of the EU Member States is raising awareness of the European Pillar of Social Rights and specifically of the Principle 19 (that includes three relevant issues – social housing, forced evictions and homelessness).