



ROMANIA - BIG LIES, SMALL ACHIEVEMENTS

22 January 2013

In paragraph 38 of Romania's national report submitted under the UPR for the Working Group on the UPR fifteenth session, the state says that the National Council for Combating Discrimination has found discrimination in the case of the wall built by the Baia Mare City Hall which separates the Roma community from the rest, issued a fine and recommended that the wall be pulled down and that measures be taken to improve the housing conditions of the Roma. In paragraph 12 the report states that it is preoccupied with the situation of Roma informal settlements, and mentions the Roma in the Cluj area.

The state report fails to mention that the NCCD decision on Baia Mare was contested in court, and the Cluj Appellate Court found that there was no discrimination there (we do not have information on whether the NCCD sought to reverse the Appellate Court decision to the High Court or not). The wall has not been pulled down, while the Baia-Mare municipality has since evacuated Roma from another community to buildings of a former chemical plant (children had to be taken to the hospital during their first night there), and has demolished further without offering adequate alternatives, if any. "Demolishing the shacks" from four communities – that is, some of the poorest and vulnerable Roma communities, practically living in ghettos and severe poverty - had been on the electoral plan of the Baia Mare mayor Cherecheș. The incumbent mayor entered his second term in June 2012, after a recent relocation of Roma, with the highest local elections score in Romania (86%). Days after election he declared, as quoted in the media, that they would arrange for the Roma a rural area for farming according to the kibbutzim principles.

The Roma in Cluj the state report mentions (the Pata Rat community) live in a ghetto next to the city waste collection site, at the outskirts, as a result of the ingrained and institutional discrimination they face in Romania, or as a result of active policies of the Romanian authorities who forcefully evicted hundreds of Roma from the city centre only two years back, in the middle of winter. The Roma are still there, kilometers away from schools, jobs, transportation, utilities, and, from the looks of it, also light years away from the right to equal opportunities for them and their children.

There are other municipalities in Romania which forcefully evict some of the most vulnerable Roma communities - living in informal settlements (which authorities have tolerated for years) - without respecting the legality of the eviction process and without offering adequate alternatives. Article 247 of the Romanian Criminal Code forbids abuse in office with discriminatory intent, but this article is unheard of in the Romanian system. The preoccupation of the Romanian state with the situation of Roma informal settlements has yet to be translated into something positive for the Roma, and not the exact opposite.

Question

What have Romanian authorities done to dissuasively sanction local authorities which forcefully evict and relocate the most vulnerable Roma to segregated places, infringing on their rights and dignity?

Sources: Tania Purcaru (2012) 'INEDIT: Rromii din Baia Mare vor avea CAP' [UNUSUAL: The Roma from Baia Mare will have CAP], *CityNews.ro*, 15 June 2012, available at: <http://citynews.ro/eveniment-29/inedit-rromii-din-baia-mare-vor-avea-cap-229463> (accessed at: 20.01.2013)
Radu Marinaș (2012) 'Roma relocation scores Romania mayor a major vote win', *Reuters*, 14 June 2012, available at: www.reuters.com/article/2012/06/14/romania-roma-idUSL5E8HE6F020120614 (accessed at: 20.01.2013)
RED, Rights, Equality & Diversity European Network (2011) 'Building a wall to separate a Roma community in Baia Mare city', *Alert*, 30 June 2011, available at: www.red-network.eu/?i=red-network.en.items&id=466 (accessed at: 20.01.2013)
Andrei Trif (2012) 'Intoxicație în masă printre locatarii blocului social amenajat la Cuprom Baia Mare' [Mass intoxication among the inhabitants of the social block arranged at Cuprom Baia Mare] *eMaramureș*, 2 iunie 2012, available at: www.emaramures.ro/Stiri/67195/ULTIMA-ORA-Intoxicatie-in-masa-printre-locatarii-blocului-social-Cuprom-Baia-Mare (accessed at: 20.01.2013)
Amnesty International (2012) 'Romania: Scores of Roma face imminent forced eviction', 6 September 2012, available at: www.amnesty.org/en/news/romania-scores-roma-face-imminent-forced-eviction-2012-09-06 (accessed at: 20.01.2013)
Bogdan Eduard (2012) 'Exclusiv EVZ: Auschwitz-ul de la Baia Mare. 2000 de romi mutați în Uzina Morții de primarul Cherecheș "Chimicul' [Exclusive EVZ: the Auschwitz from baia Mare. 2.000 Roma moved to the Death Factory by mayor Cherecheș the "Chemical"]', *Evenimentul Zilei*, 4 iunie 2012, available at: www.evz.ro/detalii/stiri/exclusiv-evz-auschwitz-ul-de-la-baia-mare-2000-de-romi-mutati-in-uzina-mortii-de-primar-984719.html (accessed at: 20.01.2013)
For a mapping of the situation see: Amnesty International, *Mind the legal gap: Roma and the right to housing in Romania*, June 2011, available at: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/EUR39/004/2011/en/5f9becde-66e9-4262-bb3a-ff1c3681046d/eur390042011en.pdf> (Accessed at: 20.01.2013)