



Agentura pro sociální začleňování

## The use of EU Funds for Roma housing and integrated territorial programs

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## Transformation of housing

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### Changes in housing ownership in 1990 and 2000s

- “restitution” - return of around 10% of the housing stock to previous owners
- free-of-charge transfer of state-owned housing to the local authorities.
- privatisation of the municipality owned housing to the tenants
- A gradual deregulation of rents since 1993 to 2012

### New housing policy instruments

- introduction of housing allowance
- introduction of a home savings scheme and mortgage loans.

By 2011, the owner-occupied sector grew to 64.5% of total housing stock, while rental housing shrank to 17.9%, and the housing cooperative sector dropped to 11.1%.



## Impacts on Roma housing

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Roma face discrimination in housing and frequently pay higher price for housing of substandard quality.

Disproportionate number of Roma depend in short- term overpriced accommodation in low quality quarters or hostels. Costs of this accommodation are often covered by housing benefits on the expense of state social system.

Segment of social housing for low income inhabitants is missing in the Czech republic. Municipalities hesitate to use state subsidies for social housing to improve living conditions of Roma households.

Adoption of comprehensive state policy of social housing including definition of housing need was postponed and is still in preparation by the Ministries of Labour and Social Affairs and Regional Development.



## Integrated approach and the Agency for Social Inclusion

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The Agency for Social Inclusion - established to promote the social inclusion of socially isolated people, mostly Roma, at local and regional levels, operates within the Office of the Government of the CR since 2008.

Main partners - municipalities

- Cooperates with schools, NGOs, labour offices, employers and the police, to help to create functioning local partnerships, which will lay the foundations of a long-term sustainable strategy of social inclusion.
- Ensures the transfer of good practices in inclusive policies.
- Provides ministries with feedback from its areas of activity.
- Drafts and comment on legislative and non-legislative proposals in the area of social inclusion

## Principles of operation

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The Agency works on the following principles:

1. to introduce or support inclusive policies in municipalities
2. to promote new measures that will introduce fundamental changes to the socially excluded areas and their surroundings

The Agency helps to develop new measures that are sustainable over the long term for its partners within the local partnership structure, primarily through the EU Structural Funds (ESF and ERDF).

## Methods of operation

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The Agency works in 26 towns, municipalities and microregions in the Czech Republic. Its standard operating period is three years

Course of actions:

1. establishing local partnerships with local institutions and organisations (within 1 month of operation)
2. rapid intervention – support for the development of projects and the introduction of measures to tackle crisis situations (within 3 months of operation)
3. developing situation analyses (within 4 months of operation)
4. developing a local strategic plan for social inclusion (within 6-8 months of operation)
5. implementing the plan (8-36 months from operation)
6. project consulting – assistance in developing ESF and ERDF projects (throughout the entire period)
7. transferring local partnership control mechanisms and introducing local community measures (within 36 months of operation)



## The Agency and implementation of EU funds

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Experience in preparing and implementing projects financed from the ESF and the ERDF

Experience in the facilitation and mediation of conflict situations

Emphasis on the quality of the planning process and links to the needs of local residents

Linking together all areas (education, employment, housing, health, pro-family measures and social services)

Emphasis on local partnerships

Emphasis on the long-term sustainability of measures introduced

Emphasis on encouraging the socially excluded Roma to cooperate

Transfer of best practices between towns

Opportunity to influence the ministries involved through knowledge of the local situation, vertical integration of the public administration

Overview of good, less good and bad projects implemented using EU funds during the period from 2007-13.



## Limits of operation of the Agency

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- The Agency does not form part of the current implementation structures
- The Agency may be invited by the Managing Authority/Intermediary Body to participate in the preparation of Calls or deliberations on the allocation of funds, but this is not mandatory
- At the time the key integrated urban development plans were developed (2008) the Agency was only just being established and it did not participate in their preparation and is not primarily involved in their implementation
- The Agency does not have a sufficiently strong position *vis-a-vis* the partners involved – the Ministries of Labour and Social Affairs, Education, Regional Development, etc.



## The Agency and next programming period

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There is a clear incentive to make the Agency a fixed part of the implementation structure for the 2014+ programming period, ideally as Intermediary Body for the area of comprehensive social inclusion policies and intervention in regions where socially excluded areas are located.

The Agency may also be used to connect Managing Authorities of the operational programmes to deal with issues of social inclusion, combating poverty and regional development.



# Thank you for your attention!

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