Roma Housing in Serbia

May, 21 2012, Skopje
Roma settlements – general picture

- Approximately more than 600 settlements
- Not classified (slums, settlements that could be legalized, etc.)
- One of the activities in Strategy for the improvement of the position of Roma in Serbia
Acess to other rights for inhabitants of informal settlements

- Permanent/temporary residence
- Health care
- Social protection
- Registration in birth registry books
- Access to energy
- ...

...
Government of the Republic of Serbia activities

- Legalization of informal Roma settlements – slowly ongoing process
- Improvement of living conditions in informal Roma settlements – initiative from NGOs/ some of the local municipalities
- Social housing – not enough for Roma housing needs
- Relocation (eviction) of informal Roma settlements that could not be improved/legalized – affected more than 3000 Roma
Evictions of informal Roma settlements – legal framework (1)

- **Difficulties**
  
  - Domestic legal framework does not stipulate procedures for conducting evictions of informal settlements
  
  - Without safeguards
  
  - Poor direct application of international standards (i.e. ICESCR, UN Guidelines on Development-based Evictions, etc.)
Evictions of informal Roma settlements – legal framework (2)

Possibilities

- Constitution of Republic of Serbia – direct application of human rights standards

- Recommendations from IOs and UN Treaty-bodies (CERD 2011, ECRI 2011, EC 2011)

- ECtHR Case Law (Oneryildiz, Yordanova, etc.)
Forced evictions of informal Roma settlements:

- 17 since 2009 (affected more than 3000 Roma)
- All of them were conducted in Belgrade
- Not in accordance to international standards (ICESCR, ICERD, ECHR)
Eviction of informal Roma settlement Blok 72, Belgrade – example 1

- November 2011 – March 2012
- Affected 33 families (app. 1/2 of them IDP families)
- Without prior plan of the eviction
- Involvement of the Directorate for Human and Minority Rights
- Consultation with families, workgroup – positive steps!
- Without clear criteria for alternative accommodation
Eviction of informal Roma settlement Belvil, Belgrade – example 2

- Affected approximately 250 families (1500 people)
- Non-transparent process
- Action plan for the eviction finished on the day of the eviction
- Conducted 10 days before the election, in the middle of school year and SWC strike
- Without consultations with inhabitants
- Without workgroup before the eviction
Eviction outcomes

- Violations of human rights standards

- Not adequate alternative accommodation – 14.8 m² metal containers (5 persons)

- New segregated settlements – far away from public services, on the outskirts of the city, exclusively for Roma housing

- No clear criteria for adequate accommodation for evicted families
Alternative accommodation – Belvil settlement
Alternative accommodation – Belvil settlement
NGOs responses to forced evictions

- Direct actions during the evictions
- Strategic litigation
- Advocacy
- Platform for the right to adequate housing – more than 60 NGOs
What should be done – NGO perspective

- Strong commitment for stopping all forced evictions
- Introduction of legal framework on evictions of informal settlements
- New budget funds for Roma housing – improvement of housing conditions and legalizations
- Involvement of local Roma communities
- Stronger cooperation with international organizations and domestic NGOs
NGO Praxis
Alekse Nenadovića 7/3, Belgrade, Serbia
www.praxis.org.rs
bgoffice@praxis.org.rs
danilo.curcic@praxis.org.rs