



EUROPEAN UNION



Committee of the Regions

Cities and regions - joining forces for inclusion of Roma populations

31 May 2011

Committee of the Regions

Key points

Today was the One Day Seminar - *Cities and Regions Joining forces for inclusion of Roma populations* - hosted by the City of Budapest, the lead partner in the ROMA-Net project and the Committee of the Regions.

The Purpose of this One Day Seminar is to bring Cities and Regions together to discuss their role in relation to the EU Framework for national Roma Integration Strategies.

In the morning delegates heard from Cities and organisations about their practical experiences of working with Roma communities at local level. In the afternoon the Policy, and Programme makers had the opportunity to explain the roles they see for public administrations at Regional and Local level in relation to the EU Framework for national Roma Integration Strategies.

A number of key messages emerged from the event:

- Cities and Regions are essential partners and must be involved in the development and the implementation of the EU Framework for national Roma Integration Strategies.
- Long term social transformation requires active and long term commitment from Cities and Regions, it is therefore essential that Cities and Regions are fully consulted and their views taken into in the development of the EU Framework.
- EU and National Strategies do not guarantee to bring about change that is evident at local level in Roma communities, it is therefore essential that the Framework Strategies identify a clear role for Cities and Regions as they are best placed to understand, and to respond to the situation at local level. It is at local and regional

level where Roma inclusion policies can be made most effective and where they can be efficiently implemented for real change.

- Cities that are receiving significant numbers of emigrant Roma find that maintaining their position as '*Open - Socially Inclusive Cities*' places undue pressure on the human and financial resources. The challenges and the strain on social service provision in such Cities are significant. There are no readily available EU resources to counterbalance these substantial costs to the receiving Cities.
- The process of accessing EU funds for Roma Inclusion is not always straightforward and there are a number of real barriers that can limit and constrain access to available funds. Capacity building is an essential at all levels, including in the City and Regional administrations, to ensure there is adequate capability to access and absorb EU funds.

More information about ROMA-NeT can be obtained from the website <http://urbact.eu/en/projects/active-inclusion/roma-net/homepage/>

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