

*Description for the general public*

**Roma families and their housing.**

**The housing situation of the Roma minority in the context of the Integration Policy for Roma in contemporary Poland**

The organ which coordinates the policy for integrating the Roma minority in Poland - the Polish Ministry for the Interior and Administration (MoIA) – estimates that approximately 70% of the funds which are provided in order to support the integration of Roma communities in Poland is used to meet the housing needs of Roma. According to the MoIA's data, in the last 15 years, approximately 200 new flats have been provided to Roma, and several thousand council-owned properties where Roma lived have been renovated. The actual number of properties which have been provided to Roma families is probably significantly higher, but no statistics are collected in relation to social properties which are local council new-builds and which are then provided to individual Roma families (by contrast, a number of local councils have built with their own funds social housing which is mainly or exclusively intended to be occupied by Roma). In some Roma settlements, where the social situation of the inhabitants is particularly poor, actions have been taken which consist of breaking up Roma settlements, that is, moving individual families to flats and houses which those families do not pay for, but which are some distance from one another. At the same time, no systematic social research is carried out on the problem of housing Roma, neither from the point of view of local authorities and state national policy, nor in relation to the social-cultural consequences of the housing problem for Roma societies.

However, the reactions which have been observed at local level of both Roma and non-Roma communities indicate that the efforts made by both local authorities and central government with the aim of solving the housing problems of Roma have up to now failed to increase the level of integration between both communities, and have in many places increased tension between communities. Confrontations between Roma and non-Roma, analysis of the attitudes of non-Roma in relation to free houses provided to Roma, and the feelings of Roma themselves (their conviction that housing investments are made with “Roma money”) show that current solutions which are part of the housing policy, whilst genuinely raising the standard of living of Roma, do not either make Roma feel part of Polish society, nor do they improve the social status of the Roma community. This research project will make it possible to compare the solutions applied by institutions of the society majority in relation to the poor housing situation of Roma with the processes of adaptation, assimilation and integration which are taking place in Roma communities.