

Jozsef Marton / HUNGARY / individual activist / ODIHR invited

Welcome everybody, My name is Jozsef Marton, Roma activist. I'm glad to be here because I can share an important case from Hungary with you where I come from.

There is a town in Hungary called Miskolc where 120 Roma family is forced by the local government to leave their own hometown where they belong.

These people are living in a segregated settlement and to understand the situation better I need to tell you a little background information from the past. Roma people without proper education were working in the heavy industry in the socialist period. After the change of regime with a disappearance of heavy industry these uneducated Roma became useless in the labour market and these small and low comfort flats were offered to them by the state.

The leaders of the town decided to liquidate the "slum" because they have a plan to build a football stadium in that land and of course they have found further reasons for the forced evacuation as well : the neighbourhood is not safe and there are hygienic issues as well. What is outrageous because these people are just simply living in poor condition and to be honest the low level of infrastructure in that part of the town does not help neither on the aesthetic perception. There is no data about that the crimes committed here or crime committed by inhabitants from the "slum" would be higher than other part of the town.

Miskolc action plan was the following: they offered between 1.5 and 2 million Hungarian forint (6 000 euro) for each family in case they purchase a flat out of town. But even if there would not be this precondition in this strongly one-sided agreement – It is impossible to buy an apartment in the town with the budget what a local authority offered to them. The villages nearby Miskolc Town reacted pretty hostile way as well. They passed a law which says: Those who received a money from the state in order to relocate themselves can not buy a property in their villages. These people are facing with risk to be homeless with kids and we do not see any

My recommendations are the following:

.- if your aim is to discontinue the urban ghetto and provide a better housing condition for these people and with this action give a better future for the whole town.

- Instead of blaming them with crimes and reckless housekeeping, you should help to understand the majority part of the town that these poor people have a right for a better housing as well so that is why you take this action.

You need to involve them in the process of re-location and to inform them continuously about the developments.

And finally if you do not want to get rid off them just to create a better city image and liveable local community. Help them to relocate themselves inside the town where they belong and connected with thousand bond. Instead of creating administrative obstacles.

There are still families who are waiting for your change of attitude towards them. Still not late to overcome on the daily politics and solve hundreds of people lives. This is issue is going to influence all lives of the town.