

Municipal programme of shanty towns eradication in Avilés (Principality of Asturias)

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Introduction

This paper discusses the Avilés project in relation to Spanish policy and in a wider European context. This comparative perspective considers important similarities between the Spanish experience and that of CEE countries, as well as of other peer review partners.¹ Particular attention is paid to the relevance of previous initiatives and their limitations since similar problems still persist. Some points might be seen as controversial but faced with longstanding, complex situations, solutions can only be found by acknowledging difficulties and confronting them directly. The aim of the paper, as of the review, is to identify positive lessons for adapting the Avilés example of good practice to the comparable yet different situations in partner countries.

The Lisbon Strategy and Social Inclusion

In March 2000 the European Council launched the Lisbon Strategy, declaring that the EU should adopt the strategic goal of becoming by the end of the decade 'the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy ... with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion'. The following December at the Nice summit the social dimension was reaffirmed and clarified with the setting of objectives in the drive to eradicate poverty and social exclusion while in 2001 at Leuven specific indicators to measure social performance were added (EC 2004a, Atkinson *et al.* 2005: 17).

The Council later reaffirmed the crucial significance of a social inclusion policy at its meeting in March 2005 and the need to know 'what actually works' and the operation of the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) through greater emphasis on 'effective monitoring and evaluation provisions'. This required member states and the EC to make effective use of 'targets, benchmarks and indicators, [and] better links with economic and employment policies' (EPSCO 2005). Ways of streamlining the OMC were proposed in December 2005 (EC 2005).

Social inclusion and EU enlargement

The Copenhagen criteria for EU accession

As such, the Lisbon strategy was initiated by and directed at existing member states and had no direct link to the process of EU enlargement eastwards. Indeed candidate countries were required to comply with what were known as the Copenhagen criteria of 1993 and build viable market economies, establish political democracies and adapt their laws and administrations to EU norms (the *acquis*).² However, the emphasis was on 'the preservation of individual human rights and the building of a loosely defined framework for social policy making' and 'the fight against social exclusion did not form an integral part of the Copenhagen criteria reform agendas' (Potůček 2006a: 2).³

After the 2002 Barcelona summit candidates were invited to join Lisbon Strategy discussions but full participation came only with EU accession in May 2004. Therefore, 'social policy moved to the top of the EU political agenda of enlargement as late as one decade after setting up the Copenhagen criteria of accession' (ibid.). Nevertheless, in 2002 the European Commission (EC) had asked candidate countries to identify problems and policies to tackle poverty and social exclusion in Joint Inclusion Memoranda and subsequently Nation Action Plans of Social Inclusion 2004-2006 (NAPSI) were designed and approved in 2004.

In spite of prioritising economic, legal and administrative reforms over social policy, the Copenhagen criteria did require guarantees including 'human rights and respect for minorities' and as the pace of the enlargement process quickened with the publication of the EC's *Agenda 2000* in 1997, attention was increasingly drawn to the unsatisfactory situation of Roma minorities⁴ in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia in both Regular Reports on progress towards accession and Accession Partnerships.⁵

In 2000, following the entry into force of the Amsterdam Treaty, the European Council adopted a Directive, requiring equal, non-discriminatory treatment of persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin.⁶ In the same year an Enlargement Strategy Paper noted that, although in most cases plans had been adopted aimed at ameliorating the situation of Roma communities, 'Roma continue to face widespread discrimination and difficulties in economic and social life'. The paper went on to demand that 'programmes ... [be] implemented in a sustained manner, in close co-operation with Roma representatives, and that appropriate budgetary support is made available in all [candidate] countries' (EC 2002: 5-7).⁷

- **Phare assistance to candidate countries**

To assist applicants' reforms in adapting to EU legislation, targeted financial and technical aid was provided, chiefly through the Phare programme where EU funding was frequently supplemented by co-financing from applicants or other donors. A main Phare priority was institution building to promote economic and social cohesion (EC 1999) and as part of this goal a series of programmes was funded to promote the integration of Roma communities in candidate countries under the supervision of DG Enlargement and local EC Delegations. In comparison with overall Phare expenditure funding for Roma programmes was insignificant and in percentage terms almost invisible.⁸ Meanwhile much fuller information about the extent and depth of Roma social and economic exclusion in applicant states was provided by a number of large-scale, comparative surveys (Ringold 2000, World Bank *et al.* 2002, UNDP 2002, Ringold *et al.* 2003).⁹ These studies reinforced earlier estimates of CEE Roma populations as far larger than indicated in post-1989 censuses and supported the EC-accepted view that Roma in the CEE region represented around three-quarters of Europe's Roma.¹⁰

A review of all Phare programmes between 1999 and late 2003¹¹ found a third of all programmes were rated unsatisfactory and results from Phare support for the Economic and Social Cohesion (ESC) sector were 'the most disappointing' of all. This patchy performance was attributed to 'insufficient support ... provided to develop adequate strategies for economic and social development, and the instruments for delivering them'. As a result 'pilot investments were generally not made on the basis of proper needs assessments but were instead executed more on the basis of *ad hoc* allocations of funding with limited impact' (EMS 2004a: I). The same report found that 'capacity to coordinate and deliver pre-accession assistance ... is not yet

sustainable', emphasising the damaging effects of 'understaffing, low salary levels and institutional instability' (ibid.: II).

In the same year a thematic review of Phare Roma programmes over the same period in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania, emphasised Phare's positive influence for 'more than any other assistance programme, Phare is widely acknowledged as the lever of change' (EMS 2004b: 9). However, the broader impact was limited, partly due to the lack 'of a clear policy framework for social inclusion of Roma, [which meant] that many Phare programmes were considered to fall outside the mainstream functions of government ministries' but also to poor co-ordination at national level (EMS 2004b: II, III). It was noted that although 'in all five countries some form of National Office for Roma Affairs was established, ... their status and capacity, in terms of experience and staff numbers is, in most cases, not adequate to influence effectively the policies of individual ministries' (EMS 2004b: 9). Consequently, in 'complex socio-economic development schemes, ... for various reasons: the short-term nature of Phare; inexperience or lack of preparedness of the sector, the final outcomes of many projects fell short of their high expectation' (ibid.). In contrast to under-achieving, top-down initiatives, those which 'promoted a "bottom-up" and participatory approach' were praised for adopting 'an approach based on good practice', 'although this proved difficult to achieve through Phare' (EMS 2004b: II).

The report criticised, in particular, the unbalanced targeting of Phare funds (totalling €96 million), which failed to correspond to the most pressing needs of Roma communities. It emphasised the less than 10% 'to address long-term unemployment, [identified as the main cause of Roma impoverishment (Ringold *et al.* 2003: 1)] and only 3% on health related initiatives', as opposed to 27% for infrastructure of which almost two-thirds was devoted to a single project in Slovakia (EMS 2004b: 6, 17). The highest proportion of expenditure, a third, was spent in the education sector (ibid: 12, 13). Also highlighted was the variance in funding between countries where, even allowing for its lower Roma population, the Czech Republic had by far the smallest share of Phare Roma funding (8%) in comparison with the countries with the largest shares (Hungary 28% and Slovakia 26%). Therefore in spite of considerable Phare aid, partially continuing beyond accession, well-intentioned initiatives to improve the situation of Roma communities nevertheless remained peripheral to more urgent concerns of CEE governments.

- **The Decade of Roma Inclusion**

Soon after accession of the ten new EU members a new World Bank/Open Society Institute-promoted initiative was launched in February 2005,¹² the Decade of Roma Inclusion (2005-2015) (see Annex 5). This was proclaimed 'an opportunity ... to include the Roma as full citizens in European societies' (World Bank 2005a) and participation was pledged by eight CEE governments,¹³ while support was offered by many institutions including the EC, CoE and UNDP. A comparative UNDP study (2005), published just before the launch, provided an important new database on the situation of CEE Roma populations. As regards Roma, the Decade has important similarities to the Lisbon process and can be regarded as a parallel, complementary programme, often drawing on comparable funding sources but with the important differences that it applies only to Roma and to CEE countries.

- **Conceptual clarity and strategic governance capacity**

Soon after the ten new EU members became full participants of the social inclusion initiative in 2004, doubts were raised by about its realisation. An EC-commissioned report 'characterise[d] as "disappointing" the overall response of Member States to the Barcelona European Council's invitation to set targets' (Atkinson et al. 2005: 156). Although this remark applied equally to older EU members, some CEE policy analysts questioned capacity for strategic governance and institutional deficiencies within the region (Potůček 2006b: 14-15, Kubánová 2005). For example, in spite of being based on 'other valid and prepare policies', the Czech NAPS was said to suffer a 'lack of explicit goals, poorly defined responsibility for the implementation, and missing links to the budget process' (Potůček 2006b: 14).

During the period of accession the terminology used in Phare Roma programmes gradually shifted from 'improvement' through 'integration' to 'inclusion', although the 2004 thematic report found 'a lack of clarity about the term "social inclusion" ... [or] how a social inclusion strategy would guarantee a position of priority for the Roma in the future' (EMS 2004b: III). Meanwhile comparable projects, partly financed from sources such as funding for social cohesion and structural funds and managed by DG Employment, were also being implemented in some existing EU member states with sizeable, disadvantaged Roma populations, most notably in Spain.

The Spanish Policy Context and its Relevance

Similarities and differences: Spanish and CEE experience

The 2003 World Bank report justified the inclusion of a chapter on Roma in Spain on the grounds that their 'situation provides a useful counterpoint to ... [that in CEE] countries ... with both important similarities and differences' (Ringold *et al.* 2003: 112). The main similarities are in terms of Roma population size, early sedentarisation, state intervention and recent urbanisation, while the most fundamental difference is that, unlike in Spain, democratisation and economic developments following regime change did not bring about improvement in the situation of most CEE Roma. Instead they suffered a sharp increase in unemployment, impoverishment and discrimination.

The generally larger numbers of Roma in CEE countries, compared with those in Western Europe, is attributed to the longer duration of a feudal economy, needing the labour power of Roma and encouraging their early settlement, as opposed to the differing conditions in the West where a viable economic niche for many Roma often involved nomadism (Guy 1975a: 204, Okely 1983: 32, Mirga and Gheorghe 1997: 5). Spain, however, not only has the largest Roma population in Western Europe but, like the CEE region, also had political and economic conditions that permitted or required early Roma settlement in some areas (Fraser 1992: 183, Fresno 2006: 12).

The experience of some CEE countries includes periods of state intervention to assimilate Roma during the mid-eighteenth and again in the mid-twentieth century. The earlier policies sought to settle nomadic Roma, dispersing them among the general population and putting them to productive work, while eliminating their distinct identity by prohibiting the use of the term 'gypsy' (Crowe 1994: 73-8). Likewise in Spain, 'with the economic growth ... policies toward Roma shifted from expulsion to forced assimilation', including laws against nomadism and attempts to settle them. In 1783 a royal decree formalised legal equality of Roma with others and forbade the identification of Roma in official documents (Ringold et al. 2003: 113).

After the ending of the Second World War newly installed Communist regimes of the CEE region adopted Roma policies remarkably similar to those of two centuries before. Their industrialising command economies needed large numbers of unskilled workers, drawn mainly from the peasantry and also Roma communities, but while this offered many Roma the opportunity to participate in the mainstream labour force, the price was an official strategy of overt assimilation pursued most vigorously in Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria,¹⁴ as well as certain abuses of human rights.¹⁵ At the same time economic growth, particularly industrial development, led to urbanisation including migration of many Roma families in search of work.

Starting a little later, in the 1960s and 1970s, economic development in Spain led many younger Roma families, and other rural inhabitants, to move from the countryside to towns and cities, sometimes leading to the emergence of shantytowns (Fresno 2006: 6-7). A more pro-active stance towards Roma by government and local authorities around this time was, to a large extent, in response to these changes. Aspects of more recent state policy, though outwardly aimed at integration, have been seen as assimilationist in intent, using ghettos as an intermediate staging post for the socialisation of less adaptable Roma (Gay y Blasco 2003: 208). Once again key social processes affecting Roma in Spain bear a striking resemblance to developments in some CEE countries.

The major difference is the widely divergent experience of Roma since 1989. Democratisation in post-Franco Spain, combined with subsequent EU entry in 1986, led to continued economic growth, providing both a more liberal approach to social inclusion, including programmes targeted specifically at Roma, and the financial means to promote these initiatives. These were major factors in the improving situation of Spanish Roma (Fresno 2006: 9-11).

For the majority of CEE Roma, however, the most significant outcome of regime change after 1989 was a sudden reversal in their limited but nevertheless increasing participation in wider society that had characterised most of the Communist period. The main reason for this was unemployment for, in the restructuring CEE economies, unskilled workers were the first to be made redundant, leading to their impoverishment. Moreover democratisation and freedom of speech meant, perversely, that anti-Roma prejudice could now be openly expressed and pressures intensifying segregation – occupational, residential and social – relentlessly pushed Roma back towards their former enclaves and into new ghettos. Although governments of the region were now prepared to acknowledge Roma as national minorities, they initially appeared to have more pressing priorities and insufficient resources to take effective action to stem this seemingly inevitable decline, although pro-Roma initiatives intensified during EU entry negotiations.

Roma policy developments in Spain since 1978

In Spain, the second period of intensive policy initiatives towards Roma came after the authoritarian Franco era, when Roma suffered open discrimination, and followed the adoption of the 1978 constitution which 'guarantees equality and full citizenship, and prohibits discrimination on grounds of racial origin, religion or gender' but which also made illegal data collection based entirely on ethnicity (Ringold *et al.* 2003: 113). A decade later, in 1988 and almost coinciding with collapse of CEE Communist regimes, the Spanish government began implementing a National Programme for the Development of Roma (NPDR), which aimed to reduce the social exclusion of Roma by promoting more harmonious inter-ethnic relations, equal opportunities and a better quality of life (*ibid.*: 114, Villarreal 2001).

As in many CEE countries, at a later date, a central administrative body was established (the Roma Development Program Service Unit), supported by three co-ordinating commissions, and a substantial governmental budget was provided amounting to roughly US\$4 million annually. This core financing was supplemented by matching funds from regional and local authorities and later by a voluntary income tax levy supporting charitable activities of the Catholic Church and various NGOs. In spite of this centralised organisational structure, there is considerable autonomy at local level for regions initially select projects and, after joint federal and regional approval, bear responsibility for their implementation (Ringold *et al.* 2003: 115). This aspect is of particular relevance to CEE peer group partners currently undergoing devolution of formerly centralised powers since strengths and weaknesses, also found in their own Roma programmes, have been identified in the Spanish model.

The existence of a national plan and co-ordinating body encourages both policy coherence and dissemination of experience, while the active involvement of regional and local authorities, as well as the requirement for them to contribute at least 40% of project funding, help ensure their commitment. Likewise Roma participation, as beneficiaries and through Roma NGOs such as the long-established *Fundación Secretariado General Gitano* (FSGG), assists the relevance and impact of initiatives. In fact, after 1999 the FSGG has provided technical assistance for Roma Phare programmes in the Czech and Slovak Republics and also in Hungary. Meanwhile ghettoisation of schemes to benefit Roma is avoided by simultaneously seeking to improve Roma access to mainstream social services and programmes such as those of the European Social Fund (ESF).

However, familiar weaknesses, mentioned above in relation to CEE countries, include the weak legislative status and consequently powers of the central body, the NPDR, limiting its ability to carry out its tasks, and also inadequate monitoring and evaluation of projects. For example, a reported lack of basic documentation made it impossible to determine levels of project investment by sector – thought-provoking data in the case of Phare funding (*ibid.*: 116-7, 124). Another discouraging parallel with CEE countries is that, despite considerable and sustained investment intended to benefit Roma, a significant gulf remains between Roma citizens and others in terms of key indicators of well-being, although levels of poverty and social exclusion among Roma in Spain are reported to be relatively lower than for many in CEE countries as a result of Spain's higher level of economic development (*ibid.*: 112, Fresno 2006: 9-10).

Roma housing policy developments in Spain

As in CEE countries, Spanish Roma are not evenly distributed but are concentrated in specific areas. Almost three quarters live in four autonomous communities (Andalucía 43%, Madrid 10%, Valencia 9% Catalonia 9%). Contrary to popular opinion, they are mostly permanently settled (San Román 1975: 170, Fresno 1994). A study of one area found 87% of Roma had lived in the same municipalities for fifteen years or more (Gamella 1996). In recent decades, in response to wider economic change including decline of their previous traditional occupations, many Roma have moved from rural to urban surroundings. Unlike other migrants they moved as entire extended families, severing their ties with their former homes (Fresno 2006: 6-7).

Urbanisation led to the growth of shantytowns on the periphery of cities and towns and government policy in the 1970s and 1980s aimed to eliminate these by relocating Roma, frequently to high-rise flats. While suiting some, this approach took no account of the desire of others to live close to relatives or pursue occupations such as scrap collecting, which led in some cases to an early return to the shantytowns. In the 1986 initiative, Roma were often classified according to their level of 'cultural development' and those regarded as inadequate were compulsorily relocated to purpose-

built, low-rise housing developments, often lacking basic infrastructure, on the fringes of towns (Rosenberg 1997, Gay y Blanco 2003: 212). Such 'special settlements' were for Roma alone, where they were 'subjected to intensive social work and compulsory re-education schemes' (Gay y Blanco 2003: 208). In practice, their segregation and isolated locations deterred the involvement of key mainstream services, including police, reinforcing the social exclusion of their Roma residents and encouraging an increase in health problems, drug use and trafficking. Shantytown growth, drugs and AIDS are all associated with a surge of anti-Roma sentiment between 1986 and 1995 (Gamella 2002: 10).

Although the post-1978 Roma policies in Spain were said to aim at 'assisting in the development of the Gypsy people and the recognition of the fact that the Gypsies have their own culture' (Gamella 1996), the 1986 strategy of relocating Roma from shantytowns to sub-standard, isolated settlements with the professed goal of 'integration' has been criticised as 'state-dictated isolation and ghettoisation', while in practice the approach of officials 'went as far as to deny the Gitanos any cultural distinctness at all'; instead they were seen as 'just the poorest and most morally defective of the poor' (Gay y Blanco 2003: 210).

CEE Communist regimes likewise had proclaimed an end to discrimination but generally shared a similar view of Roma, regarding them mostly as a pathological social group, whose culture had been deformed as a result of their harsh treatment by previous social orders and for whom the most humane policy was assimilation (Guy 1975a: 221-3). Roma were also classified, as in Spain, in former Czechoslovakia during the 1960s, when more adaptable Roma were to be dispersed from shantytowns (settlements) and urban concentrations, while the more 'backward' were intended to benefit from social work and 'socialist re-education' before relocation (Guy 1975b). Although large numbers of Roma were rehoused in normal accommodation and dispersed among non-Roma during this period, many Roma continued to live in segregated settlements, often in shacks with minimal amenities.

Such negative official perceptions of Roma sometimes carried over into post-Communist times, for example, as in the conceptual approach to Roma policy adopted by Mečiar governments in Slovakia until 1997 (ERRC 1997). There, too, certain initiatives were analogous to those in Spain, such as the 1997 elimination of the largest Roma shantytown in Slovakia and relocation of many of its former inhabitants to basic (high-rise) accommodation in the Lunik IX suburb of Košice (ERRC 2001).¹⁶ However, post-Communist CEE attempts to rehouse Roma have been on the whole limited and small-scale, whether undertaken in Phare projects or by NGOs.

Later in the 1990s, in recognition of negative aspects of previous initiatives, Roma policy in Spain became more sensitive and abandoned the idea of segregated housing since this often deteriorated into all-Roma slums, failing to promote social inclusion and having the opposite effect of deepening exclusion. Instead, housing policy now focuses on the needs of individual families and seeks to integrate Roma into varied neighbourhoods, mixed schools and mainstream services (Ringold *et al.* 2003: 121-2). Yet, this approach needs to be set in the context of growing housing pressures in Spain since the 1980s, leading to steep price rises and a 'drastic reduction in public housing programmes' (Fresno 2006: 14-17). Partly for these reasons, at present an estimated 8% of Spanish Roma still live in shantytowns or segregated settlements. In poorer neighbourhoods Roma numbers are swelled by natural increase and, in some cases, also by a 'massive influx of immigrants' (*ibid.*: 17).

Other Roma-related policy developments and social change

Most Spanish Roma in employment are part of the informal economy, engaged in casual, part-time or seasonal work, i.e. marginal and low-waged jobs. Typical occupations are 'collection of scrap metal, paper and industrial waste and later ... mobile trading' (ibid: 7). Government and NGO schemes have aimed at improving employment prospects, often with the support of the European Social Fund, e.g. the INTEGRA programme. Another example is the *ACCEDER* programme, using Roma mediators and identifying and providing appropriate job training, which has expanded since its inception since 1998 and appears successful in finding trainees employment (Ringold *et al.* 2003: 120-1, 117). Nevertheless, in spite of such positive initiatives, marginality and discrimination in the labour market and underemployment remain significant problems for Roma in Spain (Fresno 2006: 31).

In CEE countries, the need for Roma labour power in the Communist era resulted in their entry in large numbers into the mainstream economy, usually as manual or service-sector workers, and abandonment of their previous occupations.¹⁷ As in Spain, economic development had made traditional Roma crafts and service work increasingly unviable and had led to employment-driven urbanisation. Likewise, this massive transformation in the situation of CEE Roma resulted in marked social differentiation. While some CEE Roma achieved new levels of integration - even assimilation - through educational achievement and as skilled workers, the majority found labouring work that was relatively well-paid but did little to improve their qualifications or skills. Nevertheless this enabled many families to improve their housing and living conditions, leading to significant cultural adaptation and dynamic shifts in outlook. This substantial segment has been called the Roma 'middle class' (although not equivalent to the strata usually denoted by this term) to differentiate them from poorer, less fortunate Roma families that were unable to attain such stability and often remained living in disadvantaged, segregated surroundings.¹⁸

This so-called Roma 'middle class' has been the hardest hit by the politico-economic developments since 1990, when many were made redundant and now subsist on social benefits. Privatisation of former state housing and rising rents have increased indebtedness among this formerly prosperous group, driving some to emigrate, either as asylum seekers or as migrant workers.

Many issues associated with Roma education in Spain, where 'literacy, enrolment, attendance, and completion rates are all very low', 'remedial education' has been criticised as a tool of segregation and multicultural education is minimal, are all quite familiar in CEE contexts (Ringold *et al.* 2003: 122-3, UNDP 2002: 53-62). The Spanish situation appears to have improved since 1990 when action was taken on legally required school attendance for basic education, resulting in higher literacy levels for younger Roma compared with those over 55 for whom illiteracy rates estimates of around 75% (men) and 90% (women) have been reported (CIDE 1999). Although basic school completion rates were low in CEE countries during the Communist period, after 1990 the closure of many kindergartens and the introduction of charges further undermined the basis for educational achievement among Roma. Later, Phare programmes have emphasised the importance of pre-school education.

Roma in Spain appear to share similar demographic and health profiles with CEE countries, with higher birthrates than average, a younger population, as well as higher morbidity and mortality rates with life expectancy shorter by ten years or more (Gamella 1996, Ringold *et al.* 2003: 118 & 120, UNDP 2002: 63-7). The main determinants of poor Roma health are seen as 'poverty, poor sanitation conditions, and non-existent basic infrastructure in [CEE] Roma communities' but problematic access to health services, including charges, is also an important factor (UNDP 2002: 67). More recently HIV/AIDS and drugs have become a serious concern. Both FSGG initiatives in Spain and, to a limited extent, CEE Phare programmes have attempted to address such health issues.

The Avilés Project and its Background

The Roma inhabitants of Avilés are relatively new arrivals, mainly from surrounding areas,¹⁹ having migrated for work in the 1950s and 1960s. During a period of rapid industrialisation the city grew fourfold from an agricultural and stock-raising town of 21,000 in 1950 to a major iron and steel centre of 82,000 by the 1980s (Agulló *et al.* 2004: 31-7). At a time of unplanned expansion there were no national initiatives concerning Roma and pressure from other in-migrants on limited housing resources forced Roma, as the most marginal group, to make their own shelter in six main shantytowns on urban wastelands. The lack of adequate access and infrastructure led inexorably to employment, educational and health problems (Avilés 2002: 3-4).

Political disquiet about shantytowns in Avilés mounted during the economic crisis of the late 1980s that eventually led to the closure of the city's major employer, the ENSIDESA steelworks. The 1989 Avilés Shantytown Eradication Programme (PECH in its Spanish acronym) arose from these concerns and was linked with the 1988 National Programme for the Development of Roma (NPDR) and at local level with a 1989 Avilés Plan for the Integration of Ethnic Minorities. The overall goal of PECH was to rehouse Roma from shantytowns in normal housing, while providing support to assist their social integration by offering training and improved access to employment, as well as to education, by enrolling all children either in kindergarten or primary school. Health was also targeted by encouraging practices to improve quality of life, while multicultural co-existence was also promoted (Avilés 2002: 4).²⁰

- The **first phase** (1989-1996) concentrated mainly on the largest shantytown but there was no real impetus to resettle shantytown-dwellers until 1993,²¹ when an agreement was signed with the San Martín Charitable Construction firm. However, insufficient human and financial resources led to delays, redefinition of targets and rescheduling of deadlines. Nevertheless, a limited number of Roma families were moved to normal housing between 1989 and 1996 (Fresno 2006: 22).
- The **second phase** of the plan (1996-2000) included construction of a separate model township, with the support of the Principality of Asturias, demolition of the largest shantytown and rehousing 24 families in standardised dwellings (Agulló *et al.* 2004: 66-7). Formally, at least, this township for 36 families resembled the settlements in Madrid criticised above, since it was segregated, intended as temporary and built in an isolated enclave with serious access and infrastructure problems. The justification for the remote location of this all-Roma settlement was that strong local resistance was anticipated from non-Roma residents of the district (Avilés 2002: 4).
- The **third phase** (2000-) aimed at the complete abolition of shantytowns by the end of 2003 but also represented a major policy reversal, once more corresponding to national developments. It had been recognised that, contrary to intentions, the model township did not assist the social integration of rehoused Roma. Accordingly, in the latest phase it was proposed instead to disperse families to normal housing throughout the city. The model township was to be progressively dismantled and its residents and those still living in shantytowns were to be resettled in an orderly and transparent process among the general population. Families were rehoused on a case-by-case basis after a careful assessment of their individual needs and according to their wishes to maximise the likelihood of successful resettlement and to minimise dangers of local opposition (Agulló *et al.* 2004: 7, Avilés 2002: 5).

Another significant policy shift in the third phase was the involvement of all main stakeholders by establishing a Working Group on Ethnic Minorities under the auspices of the Avilés Social Welfare Committee. This body comprised municipal officers and technical experts, members of all political parties, concerned welfare organisations such as Cáritas and the Red Cross, Roma NGOs – both national in scope, like the FSGG, and local groups including Roma women’s organisations, as well as representatives of Roma families as beneficiaries (ibid., Fresno 2006: 23).

Equally importantly, the latest phase was more comprehensive in conception, recognising that successful integration required continuing support in key, interrelated areas in order to improve access to employment, education, and training, as well as to social and health services. This multi-sectoral approach enabled inter-related elements of the Lisbon strategy for social inclusion to be addressed more effectively.

Potential Lessons from the Avilés Project

The executive summary of the 2004 peer review emphasised transversal issues and identified 7 ‘critical success factors for the design of future programmes’ (EC 2004b). These were: *political consensus*, *national framework and local implementation* (combining a top-down and bottom-up approach), *institutional framework* (with partnerships at multiple levels), *integrated services* (addressing multi-dimensionality in social inclusion), *client-centred services* and *issue-oriented co-operation*, *pathway approaches* (based on assessment of the individual capabilities of clients), and professional competences (of all involved). Two other transversal issues were also highlighted – *monitoring and evaluation* and *clear definitions*.²² Key vertical issues to be highlighted were *income and poverty*, *discrimination* and *gender*.

However it is important to review success factors not only in relation to the third phase of the Avilés project but also in the broader contexts of the gradual evolution of this project, Spanish national policy developments and peer review partners’ own past experience of similar initiatives. This is because lessons have not always been fully learnt from earlier difficulties. Indeed, many problems have not yet been resolved satisfactorily and still remain as hazards for any future adaptation and implementation elsewhere of good practice in Avilés, when drawing on European Social Funds, Structural Funds for disadvantaged regions or other sources of finance.

Nevertheless, there is evidence of the potential *transferability* of this project and several municipalities elsewhere in northern Spain have asked for information about Avilés’ experience of eliminating shantytowns. The Principality has established a working committee, including the Municipality of Avilés, to consider the adaptation of this model for other towns in Asturias with similar problems, and the possibility of a national working group to study shantytowns is also being considered, consisting of municipalities and other bodies with experience in this area. Furthermore, this same approach might well be suitable for other groups, such as immigrants (see below), to develop plans for the social inclusion of the most vulnerable communities.

Transversal issues

- **Political consensus**

A key feature of the success of the Avilés project was **municipal leadership** and the active involvement of all political parties represented in the Municipal Council, which ensured the impact and sustainability of this controversial initiative (Fresno 2006: 23). '**Political will** has been a determining factor at the time of dealing with shantytowns' (Agulló *et al.* 2004: 67, my emphasis). Inevitable differences of opinion were not resolved until approval of the third phase in 2000 when joint political will was reflected in agreement on financing rehousing (*ibid.*). Thereafter, a viable consensus was maintained by the establishment of the joint Working Party in which all political parties participated.

Beyond local level, commitment to the project was shared by the Principality of Asturias and central government, both of which co-financed project from its inception in 1989. For the 15-year period 1989-2003, respective shares of the total cost of €6.39 million were: Avilés 46.6% (€2.98 million), Asturias 44.7% (€2.85 million) and Ministry of Social Affairs 8.7% (€0.56 million). The relative contribution of the municipality increased during the period 2000-2003 of the third phase when, of a total expenditure of €2.98 million, the corresponding figures were: Avilés 58.4% (€2.98 million), Asturias 35.6% (€2.86 million) and Ministry of Social Affairs 6.0% (€0.56 million) (*ibid.*: 81).²³

Key points for peer review partners are the **continuing commitment of central government** to overall, long-term goals,²⁴ even though policy may not always be conceptualised identically by new ruling parties or coalitions. Even more important is the necessity of **building all-party consensus at local level** so that previous initiatives and funding are not put at risk by changes in administration following local elections. A further essential factor is the requirement for **local authorities to bear a significant share of the costs**, deepening their involvement and preventing the feeling that schemes are alien and externally imposed initiatives.

- **National framework and local implementation**

The way in which projects in Spain are initially proposed at local level and then considered jointly with federal authorities for approval, with implementation resting once more with local authorities has already been described above. This process has the advantages of increasing the likely relevance of projects by flexibly **combining bottom-up initiatives** of concern to local people **with a top-down national plan**. Such procedures ensure that while a coherent overall policy is pursued, the system is nevertheless sensitive enough to accommodate the particularities of specific situations.

In the case of Avilés, the Roma were relative newcomers, not long-established communities as in Andalucía. Their arrival coincided with industrial growth and associated unplanned immigration, while political concern about their presence and conditions in shantytowns mounted during a subsequent economic crisis when the area was undergoing de-industrialisation. At a local level, therefore, the Avilés project can be seen as part of the process of the municipality coming to terms with its post-industrial future. The shantytown population was comparatively small (555 Roma in 95 shanties in 1989 (*ibid.*: 72), comprising only 0.6% of the total population) and so the problem was perceived as manageable in planned yet humane way with the aid of regional and federal support. Reference has already been made to debates about national

policy at the time the plan was first implemented but this changed over time, as did the approach in Avilés.

The danger of the project becoming isolated from mainstream developments was avoided by incorporating the agreement between Avilés and Asturias into the Principality's broader housing programme for the period 2001-2005. Furthermore, a **joint monitoring commission** for the project was established with members drawn from politicians and technical officers of both administrations.

Peer review partners have experience of setting up networks in relation to Roma issues at national level as in overall consultative bodies such as inter-ministerial councils. The key questions for such high-level bodies is **whether they can link effectively to administrative bodies represented on them** and **whether their roles are adequate**. A possible drawback with inter-ministerial councils and the like is that they may meet irregularly and so can be viewed by participating ministries as *ad hoc* committees, outside of their main work, and thus become sidelined. National advisory councils may also be limited in their effectiveness since, although they might include among their responsibilities the co-ordination of broad plans, their remit may be restricted, preventing them from doing more than commenting on policy fulfilment and perhaps not even that.²⁵

Difficulties in matching viable bottom-up projects under the Phare programme with top-down national plans in some CEE countries are discussed in the thematic review (EMS 2004b) but current devolution of previously centralised powers (subsidiarity) will inevitably result in the balance tipping decisively in favour of local authorities. However 'the need for a well functioning state apparatus does not seem to disappear with active community involvement' but while bottom-up projects have the potential to be more sustainable than top-down ones, it is possible that line ministries may ignore them (Mansuri and Rao 2003: 23, 42). Where specific Roma-only projects are pursued, there is the **danger of parallel structures being established instead of mainstreaming** (ibid: 3), leading to non-involvement of central bodies, as sometimes happened with Phare. But if Roma-targeted initiatives are subsumed under broader programmes, they may be overlooked. In any case, with the **risk of a mismatch of national policy and local initiatives** it will be **important to build national and regional networks and alliances**, since many local authorities will lack requisite human resources and experience for successful implementation of complex projects.

- **Institutional framework**

Participation of a wide range of interested organisations, forming a network of partnerships at multiple levels, is regarded as likely to enhance the success of projects and this is certainly true of the Avilés project. The establishment in 2000 of the Working Group was a landmark development that provided the structural framework for the close co-operation of all main actors, both public and private. Apart from facilitating all-party political consensus, this body included those most closely involved in implementing the scheme – municipal officers, technical experts and the San Martín Charitable Construction firm. Equally important partners were welfare organisations like *Cáritas* and the Red Cross.

The influential economist Amartya Sen shifted the focus of development projects from material well-being to 'capability', requiring the active involvement of beneficiaries enabling them to control the changes affecting their lives, rather than passively accepting them as powerless

recipients (Mansuri and Rao 2003: 7). Accordingly, Roma should have a prominent role in projects aimed at promoting their inclusion and in Avilés they take part by the involvement of a prominent national organisation, the *Fundación Secretariado General Gitano* (FSGG), and through the participation of local Roma NGOs, including women's groups, which had not existed in Avilés at start of the original plan in 1989.

Not least in importance was the substantial financial underpinning of all activities to which the Avilés Municipality, the Principality of Asturias, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and two banks all contributed.

Peer review partners also have experience of setting up networks at a more local level as working groups with the aim of implementing specific projects. With progressive decentralisation of powers these networks assume growing importance. While 'governance is still to a large extent executed at the national level, ... increasing shares go either upward to the supra-national level (especially ... to the European Union – e.g. the rule of law) or downward to the sub-national (especially regional level). ... [Therefore] future governance ... should rely on horizontal links as well as on informal networks'. However, 'collective action [involving such networks] ... is not manageable without a sufficient level of mutual trust among all the relevant social actors' (Potůček 2006c: 2, 5).²⁶ The key questions, therefore, for such lower-level networks are **whether all relevant actors are represented, whether there is genuine co-operation in a spirit of trust and whether the group is able to carry out its tasks effectively** to bring about desired results.

Of particular importance is the involvement of beneficiaries, in this case Roma, in at least the implementation and monitoring of projects but ideally also in the design stage.²⁷ This would mean not just the participation of Roma NGOs, at both national and local level, but also of representatives of ultimate beneficiaries - as in the case of Avilés.²⁸ Mansuri and Rao (2003: 33) emphasise the vital importance of **fieldworkers** in bottom-up community development projects and many peer review partners have considerable experience of employing **Roma mediators** as project workers to improve communication and facilitate access to services and also as **assistant teachers** at various levels in education.

- **Integrated services**

A crucial element of the third phase of the Avilés project is its multi-faceted approach to addressing social inclusion of former shantytown dwellers. The abandonment of the former strategy of relocating Roma to an isolated model township, soon after it had been built, was a courageous and far-sighted step, although this was in tune with a corresponding change at governmental level. It was also an expensive policy shift for construction and labour costs, paid entirely by the Principality of Asturias, amounted to almost €1.3 million (Agulló *et al.* 2004: 81). In justifying the decision it was now frankly acknowledged that segregation was not an intermediary stage to integration, as previously thought, but instead, to continued marginalisation and exclusion.

Nevertheless, the new plan clearly recognised that rehousing, in itself, by no means secured social inclusion and that a raft of further measures was required to achieve this goal. Inclusion also meant a job, children at school and good health. Access to employment was improved in various ways such as individual needs assessments and profiling, counselling, using various local employment plans and initiatives and by other means as through ESF programmes like

EQUAL and also *ACCEDER*. Employability was also enhanced by addressing relevant social and person factors. Training also had a significant role, utilising resources such as training courses, vocational training and work experience in training workshops and factories. Education initiatives included raising awareness of the importance of education, while enrolling all children into kindergartens and standard primary schools alongside non-Roma and to improve health all children were vaccinated and registered with doctors and practices leading to better health were encouraged.

One question already raised above in connection with planning at national level is that of **strategic capacity**, since more complex, integrated schemes proved difficult to co-ordinate in Phare programmes. However, the most significant aspect for peer review partners is probably the question **whether integration should be relatively rapid or more gradual**. This applies to all aspects of the integrated plan but especially to housing and education.

In 2000 the plan switched dramatically from a gradual approach to a more immediate one and with good results. Relocating was not sudden and unconsidered, as had sometimes been the case with CEE Communist regimes, but careful selection of families (see below) helped ensure that when Roma were moved to normal housing among non-Roma, fears of hostility from neighbours were not realised with the exception of three incidents. Also, 'during all the years of operation, only one family had to be evicted for not complying with contract conditions' (Fresno 2006: 25).

Since 1989, however, many CEE countries have preferred a gradual approach since non-Roma opposition was feared. Consequently projects have tended to seek to improve living conditions and infrastructure where Roma currently live, often in segregated communities,²⁹ rather than relocate them amongst the majority population. **It needs to be asked, as did Avilés, whether this approach promotes inclusion.**³⁰

Likewise, **segregated education is a growing threat** for while governments proclaim the goal of integration, it is increasingly difficult to require this when responsibility for schools is being decentralised and non-Roma parental choice is exercised in favour of segregation. CEE examples of good practice, some long-established, show that non-Roma opposition to integrated schools can dissipate if tackled firmly yet sensitively with the support of adequate resources.³¹ The vital importance of **desegregated pre-school education** cannot be overemphasised in both providing the foundation for better Roma educational achievement and employment and leading to more harmonious inter-ethnic relations (Kozce and Tankersley 2004, Guy and Kovats 2006).

Low levels of Phare expenditure on employment initiatives have been noted above, yet **'employment is among the most essential mechanisms for securing social inclusion'** (FOCUS *et al.* 2004: 24). While some ESF projects such as EQUAL are now tackling this,³² **ESF activation programmes have been criticised** for perpetuating dependency on social benefits rather than an active labour market tool.³³ Similarly the **value of public works schemes is dubious** as a means of re-entering the labour force, in spite of being recommended by the UNDP (2002: 38).³⁴ Research³⁵ and related projects to improve Roma health status have been minimal throughout Europe (e.g. see above for Phare funding) but are desperately needed.

- **Client-centred services, issue-oriented co-operation, pathway approaches**

The first two aspects emphasise that plans and delivery should not be remote and decided at higher levels but should involve beneficiaries in determining their real and most pressing needs and concerns. The last, pathway approaches, means adopting individualised assessment methods rather than applying policy measures inflexibly, regardless of the particular characteristics of families or individuals concerned.

In Avilés, the adaptation of service provision to actual needs and issues was achieved by involving Roma NGOs and representatives of beneficiaries in the Working Group in communication with shantytown dwellers. This also required the participation of a range of different service suppliers, applying strategies to address the multiple elements of social inclusion by seeking to improve not only housing conditions but employment prospects - through counselling and training courses, educational enrolment and attendance, as well as health status. Furthermore, effective access to good quality services is also implied and indeed is essential if project aims are to be achieved.

Making a methodical assessment of individual families was an integral component of the 2000 plan to rehouse shantytown dwellers and Roma previously resettled in the model township by dispersing them in normal housing throughout the municipality in non-Roma communities. The assessment was partly to discover their preferences, e.g. desire to live near relatives, etc., but also to evaluate their needs and requirements, especially to determine what kinds and levels of support would best aid their successful integration in their new surroundings. Similar detailed appraisals were made of each individual's skills and experience in relation to potential employment and training needs were assessed. This careful and thorough approach undoubtedly contributed to the success of the resettlement process, where only a few families failed to fulfil contractual requirements and had to be evicted (Fresno 2006: 25).

As regards housing, the general practice among most peer review partners has been to work together with Roma in the locations where they are already resident. While some Roma families live among non-Roma, many still live in partly or wholly segregated communities. Reluctance to adopt spacial integration systematically as a policy aim has already been questioned but where it is planned is to rehouse Roma families among the non-Roma population, **practice in Avilés of detailed assessment of individual families should prove a useful guide**.³⁶

However, similar appraisals to those of Avilés have been made of individuals' suitability for labour market opportunities as part of the few Phare projects that sought to integrate Roma into employment. A notable difference between the current labour market situation in Spain and that of other peer review partners is the buoyant growth of the Spanish economy in recent years, which 'has created more than half of all new jobs in the EU over the past five years' (Tremlett 2006). Rapid expansion has helped turn Spain into 'Europe's largest absorber of migrants for the past six years ... and many have joined the plentiful supply of illegal, underpaid labour' (ibid.). This situation presents mixed prospects for Spanish Roma for while there is an increase in job opportunities, immigrants can be competitors – especially for unskilled jobs – and recent high immigration levels (including Romanian Roma) have been associated with the latest rise in anti-Roma feeling (Gamella 2000: 10).

- **Professional competencies**

Active participation of a capable and influential national Roma NGO, the *Fundación Secretariado General Gitano* (FSGG), was a valuable input to the Avilés project. This organisation was able to draw on its long experience and expertise, not only of Roma culture and problems of co-existence but also of employment initiatives through its involvement in the *ACCEDER* programme. Better access to employment was aided by the introduction and utilisation of specialised information management software. Another close partner throughout was the San Martín Charitable Construction firm, which became a foundation in 2001. This long-term committed partner purchased and refurbished homes or built new accommodation, supplementing skills of project workers from the municipality and other collaborating organisations.

- **Monitoring and evaluation**

The impact and effectiveness of support should be continuously monitored and assessed to measure progress for 'project evaluations should be a central part of the project design *from the start* and not merely a method to judge the effectiveness of a project after they are completed' (Mansuri and Rao 2003: 38). It was by following such procedures of good practice that it was recognised the model township was not fulfilling its goals, in spite of the good intentions which prompted it, and led to an expensive but praiseworthy reversal of policy only three years after its construction. As well as information about the example of Avilés' good practice available on the web (Avilés 2002), there is also a much fuller study (Agulló *et al.* 2004) including a detailed evaluation and empirical study, which is suggested as a 'manual' for the implementation of similar projects. Unfortunately this is only available in Spanish.

Attention has already been drawn above to EC concerns about inadequacies in monitoring and evaluating initiatives to promote social inclusion and in response the Social Protection Committee (SPC) 'adopted a set of common indicators for the social protection and social inclusion process' (EC 2006). This raises, once more, problems about constructing and maintaining adequate databases and measurable indicators to assess whether targets have been reached.

Cross-cutting vertical issues

- **Income and poverty**

It has already been noted that recent economic growth in Spain provides a favourable environment for potentially raised levels of Roma employment, while comparative studies in certain CEE countries have clearly identified loss of former jobs as the main cause of Roma impoverishment. However, the employment situation is problematic in some non-CEE peer review partners as well, while not all CEE counties have equally adverse economic conditions, nor lack of demand for jobs that Roma used to do.

Although many such jobs vanished with restructuring, there remained a strong demand for probably the most important occupation – that of heavy labouring in the construction industry. In some cases, as in the Czech Republic and to a lesser extent in Slovakia, many Roma workers were replaced by cheaper foreign labour from the Ukraine (Wallace *et al.* 1996) but nevertheless

this work remains a mainstay of many Roma still in employment. Yet, it is puzzling that this viable occupation is rarely mentioned in official reports or Phare documents. Perhaps this may be linked to the fact that a negative aspect of such employment is that exploitation can be involved – a practice to which a blind eye is turned.³⁷ In examining reasons for Roma leaving Slovakia as refugees, Vašečka noted that Roma entrepreneurs in the construction industry are rarely offered jobs directly and legally but more commonly illicitly and usually at cut-price rates. He argued that many Roma do much the same work as in Communist times but are far more vulnerable to exploitation, due to insufficiently regulated market forces.³⁸ The extremely **weak bargaining position in the labour market of marginal populations**, particularly immigrants and Roma, is a shared issue for all review partners.

Another problem in common is that of the **poverty trap**. Where families are eligible for social support, to accept low paid employment often means a reduction in income and is therefore economically irrational. How the poverty trap operates in practice naturally depends on levels of social support in particular countries but there are also serious implications in terms of social inclusion.

- **Discrimination**

The widespread prevalence of **condoning segregation**, whether in housing, education or access to public services, has already been questioned as **discriminatory practice**. The Avilés project has taken a firm stand on this issue, notably in housing but also in other areas. At the same time multicultural co-existence was promoted and campaigns undertaken to raise public awareness and understanding of the situation of Roma. However, some Roma, together with immigrants, are now becoming concentrated in deteriorating areas, leading to ‘progressive “ethnification” of neighbourhoods’ (Fresno 2006: 17). Unchecked, such processes can renew *de facto* segregation.

Although the main Avilés strategy is evidently one of building political and public support for the project, it is unclear whether action needed to be taken against **individual acts of discrimination**, for example in preventing access to employment. While lack of qualifications is a common explanation why most Roma fail to find work, disturbing new research has revealed evidence of widespread anti-Roma employment discrimination in some CEE countries, suggesting that **stringent and enforceable antidiscrimination measures are urgently required** (Hyde 2006).³⁹ The fundamental message that ‘anti-discrimination legal norms must be in place and comprehensive, effectively implemented, and sufficient to deal with social exclusion’ is reiterated by the European Roma Information Office (Ivanov 2006).

- **Gender**

In seeking Roma involvement the Avilés project took account of the significance of **Roma women’s organisations**, encouraging both their formation and participation. Similarly, the *Fundación Secretariado General Gitano* promotes the involvement of women in employment and other programmes. Among peer review partners, too, it has been recognised that Roma women have an important part to play, not just in matters relating to health and the family, as is the common assumption, but more broadly. The stereotypical and mistaken view is that Roma women are not interested in jobs but only in having children.⁴⁰ It should not be forgotten that in CEE countries, prior to 1989, Roma women were a significant part of the general labour force.

Conclusions

Many useful lessons can undoubtedly be drawn from the positive practice of Avilés but it would be a mistake for peer review partners simply to pick several which appear more attractive or realisable. A particular strength of the project is that key activities are delivered together, in an **integrated** way, tackling vital areas that need to be addressed to increase the likelihood of effective social inclusion.

The most crucial element is that of **employment**, leading to a **reduction of poverty**. While development of skills, through relevant training and work experience, is invaluable in equipping workers for the requirements of a changing economy, the significance of discrimination should not be underestimated as a factor in excluding Roma men and women from the labour market. Consequently, positive action is essential to enforce **anti-discrimination measures**.

The experience of Avilés indicates that to make improvements in **housing**, while continuing to maintain residential segregation, fails to promote social inclusion. In cases where separation of Roma from majority communities is accepted as a fact of life for the near future, peer review partners should reflect on this when designing housing initiatives to improve Roma living conditions. Following negotiations with Roma families, they should ideally be offered affordable accommodation in integrated surroundings.

If Roma children are to enjoy better prospects than those of their parents, early engagement with the mainstream **education** system is a prerequisite. To lay firm foundations for future success, at least two years of integrated, pre-school preparation with appropriate support is necessary. Similar support may well be required to secure satisfactory retention rates in primary school.

Insanitary housing conditions undermine **health** but poverty also has a direct influence. Registration of families and better access to mainstream services are indispensable but barriers can be raised by health insurance and medical charges. Inoculation campaigns and sensitively-conducted screening can bring immediate benefits and while Roma **women** are usually identified as the principal target group in health issues, particularly as regards reproduction, family health is the concern of all.

Underpinning the success of the whole project is the building of broad-based political support, generating the necessary **political will** and **adequate funding** to ensure sustainability of potentially controversial initiatives. This also means engaging with public opinion to explain the rationale and rewards of **multicultural co-existence**. An indispensable part of establishing consensus and mutual commitment of all concerned is gaining the **active participation of Roma**, both through NGOs and at grass-roots level. Although shantytown dwellers would appear to gain most from such a policy of social inclusion, the ultimate beneficiary is the entire community – Roma and non-Roma alike.

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Annex 2 Problems with Estimating Roma Population Numbers

Census figures for Roma populations are widely accepted as severe undercounts since many people, who would normally regard themselves as Roma and who would be identified by others as such, do not choose to identify themselves as Roma to census takers for a variety of reasons (Marushiakova and Popov 2001: 34-5). Instead, various estimates are usually preferred for social policy purposes, often expressed as a range. The estimates generally used by the European Commission (e.g. EC 2002: 4) (given below) are from a 1995 Minority Rights Group report (Liégeois and Gheorghe 1995: 7), although the legitimacy of these figures has been queried (Barany 2002: 162). Comparisons between countries are not helped by states adopting different approaches in estimating the possible number of their Roma citizens. The most sensitive approach is that of the UNDP in connection with the Decade of Roma Inclusion, for which reliable and measurable indicators are required (UNDP 2005: 6-10). Also see ERRC (2004b) and PER (2000). Three examples from peer group review partners are given below to illustrate alternative methods of estimating Roma.

Slovakia: A count (anonymised but in some ways resembling a *census*) of Roma, known as sociographic mapping and carried out in 2003 on behalf of the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities (Slovak Government 2005), reported a total of around 320,000 Roma or 5.9% of the total population (Slovak Statistical Office 2003), as opposed to the 2001 Census figure of 89,920 (1.7%) (Slovak Statistical Office 2001).

Hungary: A national Roma *survey* carried out by the sociologist Istvan Kemény, most recently in 2003, estimated the Roma population at between 550,000 and 650,000 or 5.4-6.4% of the population (Kemény *et al.* 2004) in comparison with the 2001 census figure of 189,984 (1.9%) (Hungarian Statistical Office 2002).

Czech Republic: The government has not sanctioned any survey on data protection grounds but in 1999 it accepted an *estimate from previous demographic data* of the Roma population at around 200,000 or 2% of the population (Czech Government 1999: 33, endnote 9) as opposed to the 2001 census figure of 11,746 (0.1%) (Czech Statistical Office 2002). Now under review is a sociographic mapping approach, as in Slovakia (Swanson 2005).

Estimated Roma Populations in Peer Group Partner Countries

| <u>Country</u> | <u>Estimated number of Roma</u> |
|----------------|---------------------------------|
| Bulgaria | 700,000 – 800,000 |
| Czech Republic | 250,000 – 300,000 |
| Greece | 160,000 – 200,000 |
| Hungary | 550,000 – 600,000 |
| Portugal | 40,000 – 50,000 |
| Slovakia | 480,000 – 520,000 |
| Slovenia | 6,500 – 10,000 |
| Spain | 650,000 – 800,000 |

(adapted from Liégeois and Gheorghe 1995: 7)

Annex 3

Critical Success Factors for the Design of Future Programmes

(Extract from *Peer Review and Assessment in Social Inclusion: Executive Summary 2004* (EC2004f)
<http://peer-review-social-inclusion.web2.zoplo.com/peer/en/peer-reviews/execsum2004/document_view>

Transversal issues

Several transversal issues can be identified to develop into a list of critical **success factors** for use in the design of future programmes:

- *Political consensus*: political support and strong government commitment have a positive effect;
- *National framework and local implementation*: a combined bottom-up and top-down approach may be seen as a factor contributing to the success of all good practices;
- *Institutional framework*: creation of partnerships at multiple levels and with multiple partners benefited most good practices;
- Co-operation at governmental and service provision levels, leading to *integrated services* which provide adequate solutions to the problem of social inclusion which is multi-dimensional;
- *Client-centred services* and *issue-oriented co-operation* lead to more efficient support for the beneficiaries;
- *Pathway approaches* based on the assessment of the individual capabilities of clients and accommodating to their needs and potential pay attention to the long-term social inclusion process;
- Attention to the development of appropriate *professional competences* of all actors involved is generally needed.

More attention needs to be paid to two other transversal issues: *monitoring and evaluation* and *clear definitions*. Only three good practices in 2004 had developed explicit monitoring and evaluation exercises. Two others had monitoring and evaluation tools in place.

Annex 4 Aims, Achievements and Sustainability of Avilés Project¹

Aims of Avilés project (Avilés 2002: 4)²

The municipal council and associated organisations take as their overall goal the elimination of shantytowns in Avilés by enabling their Roma inhabitants to gain access to normal housing, meanwhile receiving any necessary social and employment support. Multicultural co-existence will also be promoted.

This goal will be realised through the following specific objectives:

- Housing. Providing access to decent housing³ making co-existence and social integration more likely; renewing the environment of urban surroundings where former settlements were located.
- Training and employment. Improving personal and social factors affecting the employability of Roma.
- Education. Making people aware of the importance of education as a right and as an egalitarian means of achieving integration; drawing all young people into the education system.
- Health. Encouraging practices that improve the quality of life

Achievements and sustainability of Avilés project

Housing

- 75 families were rehoused from shantytowns to normal accommodation dispersed throughout the municipality
- The largest and third largest shantytowns were demolished by April 2002
- No rehoused families left their new homes and returned to live in shantytowns
- Rehousing former shantytown dwellers in the city provoked little resentment from others and resulted in only three significant conflict situations
- The site of the largest former shantytown has been turned into a football pitch while a high-quality residential development is planned for the other.

Training and employment

- Support is given to sustain and make normal the means by which Roma might enter the labour market – individualised job-seeking strategies,

Education

Campaigns to raise public awareness and understanding of the situation of Roma.

Health

100% of children have been vaccinated and registered with doctors

¹ Adapted from Avilés 2002: 5-7. The English web-version differs here with no sustainability section.

² Author's translation not the English version available on the website cited in the references.

³ International law and related documents (see Annex 6) refer to 'adequate' housing but the Spanish term is rather stronger.

Annex 5 The Decade of Roma Inclusion (2005 – 2015)

On 2 February 2005, the World Bank and Open Society Institute launched the Decade of Roma Inclusion. This was heralded as ‘a groundbreaking initiative to end the isolation and discrimination against Europe’s Roma population’ (World Bank 2005a). Apart from the ‘catalysts’, the World Bank and the Open Society Institute, the eight participating CEE states (Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro and Slovakia), the European Commission, the United Nations Development Programme, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the Council of Europe and its Development Bank, as well as Romani activists, all offered their support at the launch in Sofia. The urgent need for such action was justified by the President of the World Bank, not only on moral but, significantly, also on security grounds: ‘In the context of a united Europe, ... to have a large and growing minority which is so much worse off than the majority ... is morally unacceptable, but [it] is also politically unthinkable in terms of Europe’s long-term stability and security’ (ibid.).

The Decade’s structural framework has similarities to that of the EU’s drive for social inclusion. Overall guidance is entrusted to an international steering committee, chaired by the Hungarian government and formed by representatives of participating governments, Roma and international organisations. As in the Lisbon process, national action plans were developed with measurable targets and indicators, which are monitored for progress on a regular basis. These tasks are assisted by the database of the status of Roma provided by the UNDP (UNDP 2005). **‘Roma participation is a core value of the Decade’, being ‘involved in every stage’.** ‘However the action plans ‘are intended to **complement and reinforce – and not duplicate – national strategies for Roma** that are in place in nearly all of the [participating] countries’ (Decade 2005a, 2005b emphasis in originals). The four priority areas of education, employment, health and housing are supplemented by three cross-cutting themes - income poverty, discrimination and gender (Decade 2005b). It was emphasised that national plans are the responsibility of individual countries for the Decade ‘is owned by the governments that signed on to it’ (World Bank 2005a) and that the commitment remains in spite of any subsequent electoral reversals, since ‘solutions ... must not depend on the political whims or the longevity of a particular government’ (Wolfensohn and Soros 2005).

Financing is to be provided by ‘a reallocation of existing resources in national budgets’ combined with ‘funding instruments of multinational, international and bilateral donors’ (World Bank 2005a). Apart from a separate but related Roma Education Fund with initial funding of over US\$42 million of which 90 percent was donated by the Open Society Institute (World Bank 2005b), a clear warning was given that whilst the ‘roster of supporters is impressive, it is imperative to dispel any illusion the Decade will deliver a heap of cash!’ (Wolfensohn and Soros 2005).

At the October 2004 meeting of the steering committee it was noted that two models of action plan were emerging. The Czech and Slovak governments exemplified one approach, focusing on ‘a smaller sub-set of actions that could be thought of as the “value-added” for the Decade, over and above their already existing national integration plans’. This type of approach contrasted with that of other governments presenting ‘detailed comprehensive plans, covering all possible programmes and areas. These plans are more diagnostic, with most of the measures prospective ones – rather than already existing in the countries’ own policy measures’ (World Bank 2004).

Annex 6 International laws and documents on the right to adequate housing (Adapted from Zoon 2000)

- The **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** (Article 25, paragraph 1) provides for the right for all to an adequate standard of living, including the right to adequate housing.
- The **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights** (Article 11, paragraph 1) states that everyone has the right to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing and to the continuous improvement of living conditions.
- The **International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination** (Article 5(e)(iii)) prohibits racial discrimination in the enjoyment of the right to housing.
- The **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women** (Article 14(2)(g) & (h) and Article 16(1)(h)) provides for the rights of rural women to adequate housing.
- The **Convention on the Rights of the Child** (Article 27(7 1), (2) and (3)) establishes the positive obligation of States parties to provide material assistance, including housing to children in need.

International laws and other documents pertaining to the right to adequate housing

1. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Article 11(1))

2. International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (Article 5(e)(iii))

3. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (Article 14(2))

4. Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 27(3))

5. Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (Article 21)

6. International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (Article 43(1))

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 25(1))

Declaration of the Rights of the Child (Principle 4)

International Labor Organization (ILO) Recommendation No. 115 on Worker's Housing (Principle 2)

Declaration on Social Progress and Development (Part II, Article 10 (f))

Vancouver Declaration on Human Settlements (Section I (8) and

Chapter II (A.3))
Declaration on the Right to Development (Article 8(1))
UN GA resolution 41/146, "The realization of the right to adequate housing" (1986)
UN GA resolution 42/146, "The realization of the right to adequate housing" (1987)
ECOSOC resolution 1987/62, "The realization of the right to adequate housing" (1987)
Commission on Human Rights resolution 1986/36, "The realization of the right to adequate housing" (1986)
Commission on Human Rights resolution 1987/22, "The realization of the right to adequate housing" (1987)
Commission on Human Rights resolution 1988/24, "The realization of the right to adequate housing" (1988)
Commission on Human Rights resolution 1993/77, "Forced evictions" (1993)
Commission on Human Settlements resolution 14/6, "The human right to adequate housing" (1993)
Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities resolution 1991/12, "Forced evictions" (1991)
Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities resolution 1991/26, entitled "Promoting the realization of the right to adequate housing" (1991)

Endnotes

- 1 In this short paper it is inevitably necessary to generalise and for peer review partners to recognise which aspects discussed resemble their own situation. While the greatest similarities are to be found in the experience of CEE countries like Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia, the situation of Roma in Slovenia is comparable in important ways (see endnote 5), for these countries all experienced Communist rule for forty years or more and became EU members in 2004. Unlike its nearest European neighbours (Turkey excepted), Greece was never part of the Communist bloc and joined the EU in 1981 but it is a Balkan country and its Roma have similarities with those of Bulgaria, Albania and former Yugoslavia. Also recent reports suggest that problematic Roma issues are not so different (Abdikeyeva 2005, Alexandridis 2001). Portugal, like Spain, joined the EU in 1986 and most resembles its close neighbour. Indeed some Roma in Spain are of Portuguese origin. An impact study of measures intended to improve access to social services for Roma in the National Action Plans of Czech Republic, France and Portugal is currently being carried out by the ERRC in partnership with the independent Portuguese research institute Numena (ERRC 2006). Greece and Portugal, like Spain and also CEE countries, included specific measures for social inclusion of Roma in their National Action Plans (NAPSI).
- 2 'The Community *acquis* or *acquis communautaire* is the body of common rights and obligations which bind all the Member States together in the European Union' (EC 2002: 7).
- 3 Another instrument, the Council of Europe's (CoE) 1995 *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities*, offered much stronger proposals for social inclusion for Roma. This was explicit in its demand for states to adopt 'adequate measures in order to promote, in all areas of economic, social, political and cultural life, full and effective equality' for their national minorities (CoE 1995, Art. 4 §2). However, as a CoE convention, this could only be recommended to present and future EU members and although applicants signed and ratified it, this could not be required as a condition of accession, particularly since France and others ignored the convention maintaining that they had no national minorities to protect.
- 4 In this report the term 'Roma' is used to refer to the very diverse communities generally perceived by others as 'Gypsies' and including those identifying themselves as Roma, Gypsies or by other names. The term 'Roma' is used as a singular and collective noun as well as an adjective in accordance with current widespread usage, although some prefer 'Romani' as an adjective.
- 5 Although Slovenia was a candidate country with a Roma minority and a limited number of Phare-funded projects (EC 2002: 30), this aspect did not figure prominently in EC reports, probably because of the relatively small Roma population. However other reports suggest that the situation of Roma in Slovenia, other than refugees from elsewhere in war-torn former Yugoslav federation, was not very dissimilar from elsewhere in Central and Eastern Europe (Kenrick 2001, Perić 2001).
- 6 Existing member states were required to implement this Directive by 19 July 2003, while candidate countries had until the date of EU accession (EC 2002: 7).
- 7 Also in 2000 the UN Millennium Summit adopted eight Millennium Development Goals aimed at improving the situation of poor and marginalised social groups by 2015, reaffirmed at the 2005 Summit. Most, if not all, of these goals are directly relevant to socially excluded Roma communities, particularly those concerning poverty, education, gender inequality and health (UN 2000).
- 8 Nevertheless, as accession approached, spending on Roma followed the same rising trend as general Phare funding and reflected continuing concern about this problematic issue, increasing from €11.7 million in 1999 to €13.65 million in 2000 and €31.35 million in 2001 (EC 2002: 7–8). While most Phare-funded programmes explicitly identified beneficiaries as Roma, some aimed at a broader constituency such as ethnic minorities or socially disadvantaged groups.
- 9 The UNDP, publicising its 2002 Roma Human Development Report, claimed that 'most of the [CEE] region's Roma people endure living conditions closer to those of sub-Saharan Africa than to Europe ... [and] one out of six is "constantly starving"' (UNDP 2003).
- 10 See Annex 2 for EC accepted estimates of Roma populations in peer group review partner countries, taken from Liégeois and Gheorge (1995: 7), and a discussion of problems in estimating Roma numbers.
- 11 Allocated in 1999–2002 and implemented until November 2003.
- 12 The launch had been anticipated at a Budapest conference in June/July 2003 at which the latest and most comprehensive World Bank research study had been presented (Ringold *et al.* 2003).
- 13 Signatories to the Decade were Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro and Slovakia.
- 14 Although the overall thrust of Communist Roma policy can be characterised as assimilatory, this was by no means consistent for all countries of the region at all times (Guy 2002: 53–54). Assimilatory pressures were least in former Yugoslavia, including Slovenia.
- 15 These included cases of sterilisation of Romani women in Czechoslovakia (Helsinki Watch 1992), the placement of Roma children in special schools for the 'mentally disabled' (ERRC 1999) and the refusal by Czech local authorities

- to register Roma as residents (Guy 1975b). Some argue that such abuses did not necessarily cease with regime change (ERRC 2004a, 2004c).
- 16 Leaving aside the problematic conceptual approach, a 1993 Roma rehousing project in the village of Nálepkovo in eastern Slovakia is cited on the Europa website as an example of good practice.
- 17 Some commentators (e.g. Scheffel 2005, PER 1992) blame Communist regimes for de-skilling ('proletarianising') their Roma populations, decreasing their employability, but the view is commonly found among CEE Roma that their situation was far better under Communism (Vašečka 2000).
- 18 See Weinerová for discussion of the term 'Roma middle class' (2004: 107).
- 19 These included some from other regions along the north coast of Spain, stretching from the Basque Country to Galicia and even northern Portugal (Agulló *et al.* 2004: 31, Fresno 2006: 19).
- 20 See Annex 4 for Aims, Achievements and Sustainability of Avilés Plan.
- 21 Avilés (2002: 4) gives this date as December 1993, although in Agulló *et al.* (2004: 66) it is 1992.
- 22 For a fuller extract, see Annex 3 or access the original document at <http://peer-review-social-inclusion.web2.zoplo.com/peer/en/peer-reviews/execsum2004/document_view>
- 23 For 2000-2003 a lower total of €2.14 million is given for the expenditure of Avilés and Asturias in the earlier Good Practices document (Avilés 2002: 5) but is possibly an estimate for the later years.
- 24 Research by the Open Society Institute's EU Accession Monitoring Program (EUMAP) concluded in 2002 that in CEE candidates 'unfortunately, ... policies [to protect Roma and other minority groups] are frequently more visible than effective. All too often, they have floundered due to insufficient political backing, low levels of public support, and even lower levels of funding' (Guglielmo 2002).
- 25 For example, while the Government Council for Roma Community Affairs in the Czech Republic is 'the sole central interdepartmental authority whose aim is to unify activities of individual ministries', it is unable to 'supervise the performance of tasks entrusted to regional authorities and to municipal authorities with extended competencies, or draw any conclusions from their failure to fulfil such tasks' (Czech Government Council 2005: 5).
- 26 'Trust is one coping mechanism by which stakeholders can respond to their perception that they face a growing climate of risk and uncertainty in a context of unequally distributed power ... The building of such trust is now a critical task for public administration' (Bovaird 2005: 224, 226 cited Potůček 2006c: 5).
- 27 Likewise the Decade of Roma Inclusion proclaimed Roma participation at every stage to be a 'core value of the Decade', including 'regular oversight and monitoring of the process over the next ten years' (Decade 2005a).
- 28 Achieving this aim can raise issues of contested representation and the EC noted that a 'frequent problem ... is the identification of the relevant interlocutors for Roma communities' (EC 2002: 8).
- 29 In some locations increasing levels of segregation are partly a consequence of economic pressures (Baršová, 2003, Víšek 2003, Macura and Petrovic 1999).
- 30 World Bank research in Slovakia found, unsurprisingly, that social integration of Roma, including employment rates, increases as the distance between Roma housing and the majority population decreases (cited Ringold *et al.* 2003: 50-2).
- 31 The example of Vidin (Bulgaria) is often cited, where in 2000 Roma children were taken by bus to integrated schools by the OSI NGO (Russinov 2004). More recent research in Slovakia showed non-Roma parental resistance to integrated kindergartens could be overcome (Guy and Kovats 2006).
- 32 For example, the 2006 employment project run by the Czech Roma NGO, IQ Roma Servis, in Brno.
- 33 Research in Slovakia by the Milan Šimečka Foundation found that 'after one year of implementation, only approximately 1% of all participants succeeded in finding jobs' (Oravec and Bošelová 2006: 2).
- 34 'Public work programmes, which are the main active employment tool used throughout Hungary for the long-term unemployed, ... do not usually provide sufficient skills or experience to enable participants to find work in the labour market' (Guy and Kovats: 16). A 2004 study of CEE Roma found that 'in many of the existing Roma-specific employment programmes there is an emphasis on unskilled manual tasks with minimal or no training opportunities' (FOCUS *et al.* 2004: 24-25).
- 35 Hajioff, S. and McKee (2000) reviewed research publications of which the most comprehensive is a study of Hungary (Puporka and Zádori 1998). Also see Kovats (2004).
- 36 Very different was the Communist initiative in 1960s' Czechoslovakia. There, Roma families were classified (as formerly in Spain) into three broad groups prior to dispersal but they were often sent arbitrarily to destinations far from relatives and better-paid jobs and where local authorities were often reluctant to accept them. The inevitable consequence was that many Roma soon moved on and the whole dispersal policy collapsed within three years when voluntary migration by Roma completely overwhelmed officially planned relocation (Guy 1975a: 219-221).
- 37 The World Bank studies did include brief discussions of Roma employment in the informal sector (Ringold 2000: 16, Ringold *et al.* 2003: 36), as did the 2002 UNDP survey. The UNDP estimated that in Romania the informal sector amounted to 70% of all Roma in some form of employment as opposed to less than 25% in the Czech Republic, while for Slovakia, Hungary and Bulgaria the proportion was about 40% (UNDP 2002: 35, graph 13).

- ³⁸ 'There exists a demand for Roma labour; and ... that demand is not irrelevant. The problem is, though, that Roma are being manipulated into the system of black labour, into the cheap labourers, and no efficient measures are being taken to prevent that manipulation' (Vašečka 2000: 181).
- ³⁹ In April 2005 the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (IHF) in partnership with the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) and the European Roma Information Office (ERIO) launched the two-year transnational project 'Roma and Sinti Participation for Effective Policy in Employment and Education' to be implemented in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Romania, and Slovakia. The project, involving Roma advocacy, is part of the EU Community Action Program to Combat Discrimination 'Transnational actions for the development of policy and/or legal responses to the fight against discrimination on grounds of racial or ethnic origin, religion or beliefs, disability, age and sexual orientation' (ERRC 2005).
- ⁴⁰ While these aims are not incompatible, it is worth bearing in mind the wry comment of a health worker about the extremely high UK rates of teenage pregnancy and motherhood - 'Ambition is the best contraceptive' - making the point that, for young women in socially excluded communities with poor access to the job market, motherhood is seen as validating.