

» Housing

The actions carried out by the Area of Housing in 2009 follow the same FSG strategy as in previous years, i.e. provide the Roma community with access to dignified housing. This is an action framework which seeks to gain greater insight into the situation of the Roma community with respect to housing so as to be able to contribute to and influence the implementation of policies and action plans based on the accumulation of knowledge and whose ultimate goal is to solve the problem of residential exclusion still faced by an important percentage of the Roma population.

We should point out that the objectives of the *2009-2012 National Housing and Rehabilitation Plan* are devoted to meeting the needs of a significant portion of Spain's Roma community by lobbying town halls to engage in the building of housing for specific and especially vulnerable groups and to work together with other administrations to eradicate sub-standard housing and shanty towns.

The main actions carried out in 2009 focused on the two areas described above. The first entailed political and institutional effort while the second focused directly on Roma families.

As for the first, special mention of the following initiatives should be made:

» Presentation of the *Roma community housing map for Spain, 2007* in Zaragoza, Murcia, Seville and Oviedo. This awareness-raising and political action work, launched a few years ago, forms part of the Collaboration Agreements which the FSG concluded with the Ministry of Housing in 2006 and 2007. This was a very thorough study which, thanks to the work undertaken by a broad network of informers, provides information on many aspects



PRESENTATION OF THE ROMA COMMUNITY HOUSING MAP IN MURCIA

including an estimate of the number homes occupied by the Roma population in Spain, their location and territorial distribution and data concerning the main characteristics of the different habitats and of the Roma population itself. The information shows that there are 92,700 homes located in 2,955 neighbourhoods in 1,150 Spanish cities and towns.

» Also within the sphere of political action, information and lobbying work was done with different regional Departments responsible for housing issues in the Autonomous Communities encouraging them to take account of the new measures introduced by the new *2009-2012 National Housing and Rehabilitation Plan (PEVR)*.

Along these same lines but at a more local level, information was sent through a letter signed by the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP) and the FSG to all municipalities with over 5,000 inhabitants on the shanty town eradication measures envisioned in the 2009-2012 PEVR.

As for the second sphere of action and included among the services and resources which the FSG offers to the Roma community, we have the **Housing Advisory and Guidance Services**

distributed throughout the 14 Autonomous Communities where the FSG has offices and which undertake a variety of different actions depending on the needs and opportunities detected in each territory but, in general terms, covering two priority lines of action. The first is the implementation of Social Accompaniment Programmes in charge of direct assistance to people seeking housing with a view to providing a comprehensive and tailored response. And the second develops actions to foster pro-active housing policies targeting the Roma population at local and regional level with a special accent on eradicating shanty towns and sub-standard housing once and for all.

We would draw attention to the important work we have been doing over the last several years in some territories where specific programmes have been designed to address concrete problems. These are actions implemented within the framework of the **Social Accompaniment Programmes linked to resettlement processes**. Following is a summary of a few of the most significant programmes.

} Housing activity intensified in **Galicia** in 2009. In addition to technical assistance lent to the Vice-presidency for Equality and Well-being and the Regional Department of Housing in cases of resettlement and access to the list of rental housing, we also participated in the different monitoring committees formed to address the social response to resettlement (Poio, Ponte Caldelas, A Coruña and

The 2009-2012 State Housing and Rehabilitation Plan calls on the engagement of all administrations in the eradication of sub-standard housing and shanty towns in Spain.

Lugo). We also continue to engage in a number of direct interventions, the most important being through a Collaboration Agreement with the City Council of Coruña for the eradication of the Penamoa shanty town, the largest in Galicia and one of the most important in Spain in terms of its size and the problems suffered by its inhabitants. Direct intervention in housing has also been undertaken in Culleredo and Narón (Coruña province) and in Poio and Vigo (Pontevedra province). Action taken has benefited a total of 850 people (158 families).

} In **Navarre**, through the Regional Government's *social integration housing programme* (VIS), the FSG has acquired eight homes to work with the same number of families in a social accompaniment initiative. Accompaniment action for four families in the La Merced neighbourhood is being carried out through the *Social-urban planning Intervention programme* in Estella.

} Work continues in **Madrid** through the "Perla Neighbourhood Community Intervention Project" in the Usera district. This project provides comprehensive care for 39 relocated families. A "*Neighbour mediation programme*" is also being implemented to develop needed methodologies and protocols for comprehensive intervention in cases of Roma population resettlement. This programme is part of the agreement signed between the FSG and Madrid's Municipal Housing and Land Authority through which relocated families are monitored. Specifically in 2009, 152 visits were paid to newly resettled residents from the dismantled shanty town settlements of Salobral and Cañaverál plus a further 900 visits to families relocated previously. We also took part in mediating in over 100 disputes between neighbours.

} In **Murcia**, in collaboration with the regional government, the local administrations and the



SETTLEMENT IN PENAMOA (A CORUÑA)



Habitat Association of Murcia (of which the FSG forms part) have continued carrying out social accompaniment actions with families relocated to standard housing. Intensive and comprehensive accompaniment is undertaken with these families where

emphasis is put on the areas of employment and training, education, health and hygiene, basic habits and home organisation, awareness-raising and mediation. In 2009 we worked with five families totalling 34 people in the municipality of Alcantarilla and 28 people from another five families in the municipality of Murcia.

} Work continued in **Asturias** in the form of social accompaniment of families and neighbourly co-existence serving 75 families in 2009. Work addressing situations of sub-standard housing was undertaken throughout the whole of the Principality and specific action was taken in the settlements of Luanco, Soto del Barco and Castrillón and in the special neighbourhoods of Coaña, Muros de Nalón and Oviedo.

} **Andalusia** has been involved for several years in a support programme to provide access to housing for Roma families from Eastern Europe in the city of Cordoba with the support of the Town Hall. In 2009, seven families benefited from this programme totalling 27 adults and children. Arrangements have also been made to authorise the FSG as a housing rental agency in Andalusia.

} In Castile-Leon we collaborated with the University Institute for Urban Planning at the Universidad de Valladolid in conducting a survey on shanty towns in this Autonomous Community with a view to identifying the main ones, offering criteria upon which to prioritise actions and drawing up strategies and making recommendations to launch resettlement processes of the families who live in these shanty towns.

Nearly 1,000 Roma families have benefited from direct housing actions carried out by the FSG in 2009.

} Also, through an agreement with the Provincial Government of Leon, we implemented an intervention programme to deal with the situation of residential and social exclusion suffered by 34 Roma families residing in the municipalities of La Virgen del Camino and Mansilla de las Mulas. The main action was a guidance and information service for the purchase of a home and intervention with people in need of specific help to address other basic needs such as access to employment, training or education. Regarding actions specifically addressing housing, support was provided for mortgage negotiations, accompaniment and the processing of aid for the acquisition of a home, as well as management of public resources for home improvement and neighbourhood clean-up.

} In Segovia and in close collaboration with that city's town hall, we have been implementing a programme to help Roma shanty town residents of two settlements located within the municipality to gain access to mainstream housing under conditions which provide opportunities for social incorporation and which foster co-existence. Close to 90 people (31 families) have benefited from this programme whose actions focus on accompaniment initiatives prior to resettlement, on commitment on the part of the families and municipal social services, on the fostering of neighbourly co-existence and on community development, all through individual, group and community activities.

} In **Aragon** we launched a social-community intervention service focused on housing in the historical part of Zaragoza which has benefited 110 families. We also implemented a home improvement and labour market integration programme in the district of Valdejalón.