

# ▶ Housing

The actions implemented in the Area of housing in 2008 were along the same strategic lines as in previous years, i.e. to advance in the process of facilitating access of the Roma community 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 accumulative knowledge and whose ultimate goal is to put an end to the situation of residential exclusion still faced by an important percentage of the Roma population.

The following are the main actions carried out in 2008:

1 Presentation of the **Roma community housing map for Spain, 2007**. This initiative, launched a few years ago, forms part of the Collaboration Agreements which the FSG concluded with the Ministry of Housing in 2006 and 2007. It is a very thorough study which, thanks to the work undertaken by a broad network of informers, provides information on many aspects 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. In very broad terms, the main results may be summarised as follows:

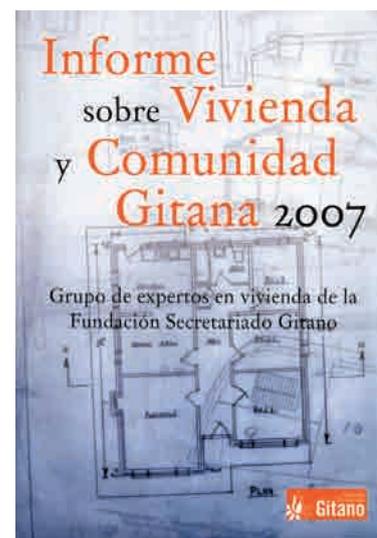
- More than a third of the Roma population resides in Andalusia (37.1% of the total).



THE PRESIDENT AND THE DIRECTOR OF THE FSG ALONGSIDE THE MINISTER OF HOUSING AT THE PRESENTATION OF THE "ROMA COMMUNITY HOUSING MAP FOR SPAIN, 2007".

The other Autonomous Communities which are home to the Roma population in descending order of importance are Valencia (13.5%), Madrid (10.1%) and Catalonia (8.5%).

- Nearly 70% of the neighbourhoods where the Roma population lives are more than 15 years old.
- As from 1991 the housing situation of the Roma population in Spain has improved noticeably, sub-standard housing statistics falling from 31% to close to 12% at present.
- While these data are positive, today there are still over 10,000 homes inhabited by Roma which do not offer suitable living conditions.



COVER OF THE "REPORT ON THE ROMA COMMUNITY AND HOUSING, 2007"; FSG GROUP OF EXPERTS ON HOUSING.

- Four out of five homes are located within the city proper and have satisfactory infrastructure and services.
- However, 5% of the homes are segregated in shanty town settlements.

Publication of the **Report on the Roma community and housing, 2007; FSG Group of Experts on housing**. Also within the framework of the agreements concluded between the Ministry of Housing and the FSG this work, based on discussion and analysis between different experts in the field of public housing management and social work with the Roma population, was concluded and identifies the key elements which need to be addressed to meet the housing needs of the Roma population. It is intended as the starting point to spark action among public officials and social agents. The document addresses topics of special interest such as the residential diversity of the Roma community, the current legal-political context, the housing problems which the Roma community still faces today (lingering shanty towns and sub-standard housing), the different criteria and arguments comprising certain action models based on prior experience and a series of recommendations intended to guide possible actions for future implementation and which can be used as success variables in achieving the ultimate goal which is none other than the full residential incorporation of the Roma community.

**Consultation and counselling services in respect of housing targeting the Roma population.** There are housing services in all 14 of the Autonomous Communities where the FSG has offices and these engage in different actions depending on the needs and opportunities detected in each territory

The sub-standard housing situation has improved as from 1991, falling from 31% to the current level of 12%.

but which generally follow two major lines of action. One 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. The other develops actions to foster pro-active housing policies targeting the Roma population with a special accent on eradicating shanty towns and sub-standard housing once and for all.

We would also draw attention to the important work done over the last several years in some territories where specific programmes have been designed to address concrete problems. These are actions undertaken within the framework of the Social Accompaniment Programmes linked to relocation processes and can be summarised as follows:

**Galicia** has seen an increase in housing-related activity during the last year. 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 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).

In **Navarre**, through the Regional Government's social integration housing programme, the FSG has acquired eight homes to work with the same number of families in a social accompaniment initiative. Assistance was also provided for the purchase of three homes through this programme. Support provided through another social-urban planning intervention programme carried out in Estella allowed four families to move to better city-sponsored housing in the La Merced neighbourhood where the programme is located.

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" has also been 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 2008, 147 visits were paid to newly resettled residents from the dismantled shanty town settlements of Salobral and Cañaveral plus a further 965 visits to families relocated previously. We also took part in mediating 132 disputes between neighbours.

There are still over 10,000 sub-standard homes inhabited by Roma.



NEARLY 4% OF THE HOMES INHABITED BY ROMA ARE IN SHANTY TOWNS.

In **Murcia**, 2008 saw the commencement of a new line of work with the creation of the "Asociación Habito de Murcia", an entity founded alongside other third sector entities working in collaboration with the regional and local governments to jointly address the housing problems endured by people in situations of exclusion. Work continued in the area of social accompaniment of families relocated in housing acquired by the FSG. 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. Eleven families were served in 2008 with a total of 19 adults, 33 minors and 4 children relocated in different municipalities throughout the Region of Murcia.

Work continued in **Asturias** in the form of social accompaniment of families and neighbourly co-existence serving 75 families in 2008. 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. We would likewise stress two training courses, the "Casa de Verdad" - "I kher pa tchatchipen" (a real house) workshop focusing on home organisation, decoration and maintenance given in Corvera and a "Housing workshop" given in Coaña.