

Study-map on housing and the roma population, 2015

Executive summary
September 2016

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Full study (including annexes 1, 2 and 3, executive summaries in Spanish and English, and interactive maps): <http://www.msrebs.gov.es/ssi/familiasInfancia/PoblacionGitana/informesyEstudios.htm>

Interactive Maps: <https://www.msrebs.gov.es/ssi/familiasInfancia/PoblacionGitana/mapas.htm>

Introduction

Although the Roma population in Spain has made significant social advances in the last 40 years, it has a long way to go to achieve equality in the four key areas for social inclusion: housing, education, healthcare and employment. This is the view taken by the ***National Roma Integration Strategy in Spain 2012-2020***, designed by the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality (hereinafter MSSSI) in adherence to the guidelines set by the European Commission for the implementation of Community policy in the sphere of the social inclusion of this population with special emphasis on the areas mentioned.

In particular, significant strides have been made in the housing of Roma in recent decades: many families have gained access to standard housing and basic housing utilities have also improved considerably. However, some issues such as the need to completely eradicate slums, the overcrowding in some households and the problems of precariousness of services and deterioration, both in terms of the households and urban environments, still persist.

One of the measures proposed to assess compliance with the objectives of the ***National Roma Integration Strategy in Spain 2012-2020*** in the area of housing is precisely the update of the ***Map on housing and the Roma population, 2007***. To accomplish this the MSSSI, through its Directorate-General for Family and Children's Services, issued a tender and awarded a contract to the Fundación Secretariado Gitano (hereinafter FSG). The Foundation collaborated with Daleph to conduct a study consistent with its mission to promote and participate in actions at different levels to facilitate the social inclusion and full citizenship of the Roma population. To this end, the periodic evaluation of the social situation of this group and the advances made with respect to previous periods is incorporated as an essential mechanism in making equal opportunities and treatment a reality for the Roma population and to guarantee its rights.

Thus, under the supervision of the Directorate-General for Family and Children's Services of the MSSSI, the FSG and Daleph conducted this Study, which counted on the support of representatives of the Housing Working Group of the State Council of the Roma People (CEPG), including a representative from the Ministry of Public Works, a representative of Roma associations and a group expert.

Study-map on housing and the Roma population, 2015

A) Methodological design and scope of the study

The *Study-Map on housing and the Roma population, 2015* employed a methodology similar to the one used in the 2007 and 1991 studies in order to make the findings comparable so as to accurately identify the changes that have taken place over time.

The ultimate objective of the work described here is to conduct a survey on housing and the Roma population in all of Spain, including comparable information on the evolution of the situation of the Roma population with regard to housing since the last study done in 2007.

To accomplish this task, the following specific objectives are defined:

- Identify the segregated settlements and pockets of sub-standard housing that still exist today.
- Identify the habitat conditions in places where the Roma population resides.
- Verify the evolution of the situation with reference to the *Map on housing and the Roma population, 2007* comparing the housing conditions of the Roma population with those of the general Spanish population.

Moreover, in the light of the usefulness of the 2007 map as a sampling base for other studies on the status of the Roma population, this study also seeks to update that base to facilitate other sectoral analyses of this population group.

In order to achieve the objectives and describe the reality of the Roma housing situation throughout the whole Spanish territory by addressing the quality of residential conditions, the study focuses on the following 15 dimensions or variables:

FUNDAMENTAL DIMENSIONS REGARDING ROMA HOUSING

1. Identification and location of Roma households.
2. Type of neighbourhood/settlement where Roma live.
3. Number and characteristics of Roma households.
4. Urban facilities and sanitation and hygiene conditions.
5. Roma population.

DIMENSIONS FOR THE ANALYSIS OF THE QUALITY OF THE HOUSEHOLDS WHERE ROMA LIVE

6. Construction type and condition of housing.
7. Household utilities.
8. Variables determining the location of households.
9. Neighbourhood utilities, facilities and services.
10. Assessment of the neighbourhood.
11. Means of access to housing.
12. Public intervention in the area of housing and the Roma population.
13. Demographic trends of the Roma population contextualised in residential stability.
14. Growth and origin trends of the Roma population.

The Study's **scope** follows the same criteria as the 2007 Study, i.e. municipalities (administrative units) rather than population nuclei. All municipalities with over 5,000 inhabitants were included as were other smaller but significant population nuclei/municipalities based on the volume of Roma population residing there or the housing situation.

It is important to point out that this Study is not intended as a Roma population housing census. Its findings are taken exclusively from the examination of the specific neighbourhoods/settlements where Roma reside and which can then be extrapolated at national, regional, provincial and municipal level.

This study commenced in July 2015 and quantitative data were collected from October 2015 through May 2016. The findings were processed and the report drafted during the months following that date and were publicly presented in September 2016.

Both quantitative and qualitative **methodology** was applied. The main methodology, quantitative, was similar to that used in the 2007 study and was based on **observation-questionnaire sheets** filled in by groups of informers by means of observation and/or direct consultation with social organisations, professional networks, Roma associations and community representatives, social workers and teachers, neighbourhood associations, Roma individuals, etc.

The second methodology, qualitative, included different mechanisms whereby to obtain information to supplement the quantitative information. It focused on those aspects which are relevant to the study such as the perspective and opinions of the Roma population residing in diverse situations of residential exclusion, the effects that segregated and sub-standard housing have on everyday life, the characteristics, results and impact of public intervention between 2007 and 2015 and the opinion of experts on the Study's preliminary findings, with a view to analysing these results jointly, arriving at initial interpretations and extracting conclusions.

B) Summary of the findings

B.1) The general context analysed

The results of this *Study-Map on Housing and the Roma population, 2015* refer to a total of 105,289 households located in 2,604 neighbourhoods/settlements in 1,069 municipalities and covering a population of 516,862 people.

B.2) Predominant profile of the Roma population regarding housing

By way of summary and to provide an overview of the data compiled, following is the general profile characterising Roma and the neighbourhoods and households where they live. It is based on the most prevalent characteristics found.

The following profile describes the majority of Roma included in this study:

- Of Spanish origin
- Mostly residing in:

- a. Autonomous Communities of Andalusia, Valencia, Catalonia and Madrid;
- b. in subsidised housing;
- c. located in multi-family buildings;
- d. in outlying districts (first or second phase of urban expansion) or in scattered households;
- e. typically settled and living in old large neighbourhoods where Roma have been living for more than 15 years;
- f. this profile generally resembles that found in 2007, although the relative number of free-market households is lower;
- g. the neighbourhoods where Roma live have a larger proportion of utilities, facilities and services except for social services which have been reduced since 2007;
- h. the buildings where they live are in better condition, streets are better maintained, transportation and security have improved but situations of vulnerability are more prevalent, mostly associated with social problems such as the high level of unemployment, the school dropout, the cohabitation problems...

B.3) Main difficulties encountered related to residential exclusion

The main problems still affecting Spain's Roma population in relation to housing and habitat, similar to those identified in the previous studies but with slight improvements, are still related to residential segregation and deteriorated housing. Findings are as follows:

- a. Residential segregation in 2.78% of neighbourhoods or settlements affecting 2,924 households.
- b. 8.63% of the households evaluated were classified as sub-standard, i.e. 9,045 households.
- c. The slum rate was 2.17%, i.e. 2,273 households.
- d. Overcrowding was found in 8.9% of the cases, the average occupancy rate being 4.74.
- e. Illegally occupied households totalled 4.47% (at most).
- f. Conflict situations related to residential exclusion in 0.22% of the neighbourhoods, where 1.15% of the households were located.

B.4) Main comparative results 1991-2007-2015

- Increase in the number of households, reaching the figure of 105,289 occupied by Roma families (13.49% more than the 92,770 of 2007; the number in 1991 was 59,245).
- This means an estimated increase of 12.60% in the number of people (516,908 in 2015 compared to 459,083 in 2007 and 296,225 in 1991).
- Of these, over 84% are located in outlying areas in phase 1 or 2 expansion neighbourhoods or in households scattered throughout the municipality, up from 80.55% in 2007 and 77.7% in 1991.

- Fewer than 3% (2.78%) of households are found in settlements segregated from urban centres (significant decrease from 9.1% in 1991 and 4.5% in 2007).
- Regarding access to housing: 54.45% are subsidised housing (up from the 2007 figure); 36% are free-market households (down from 2007); and 9.54% fall into the ‘other’ category (illegal occupation, self- construction, shacks, mobile housing...; up from 2007).
- Reduction in the total and relative number of sub-standard housing, which accounted for 31.4% of all households in 1991, 11.45% in 2007 and 8.63% in 2015.
- Downward trend in slum housing which began in 1991 when the rate was 10%, dropping to 3.9% in 2007 and currently standing at 2.2%.
- Profile of the neighbourhoods evaluated: generally settled population, larger proportion of utilities, facilities and services, except for social services (whose presence has declined since 2007), buildings are in a better state of repair, streets are better maintained, better transportation and security but a higher proportional number of situations of social vulnerability.

C) Conclusions

With a view to explicitly addressing the difficulties encountered by certain social groups in accessing housing, Strategies and Action plans have been drawn up and implemented by the administration to try to identify and properly diagnose existing problems and to either eradicate them or palliate their consequences.

The role that housing plays in social inclusion processes is obvious for groups such as Roma whose access to housing has sparked advances in areas such as health, education, training and employment, social benefits, access to other services and resources, exercise of citizenship and the transformation of the environment surrounding them.

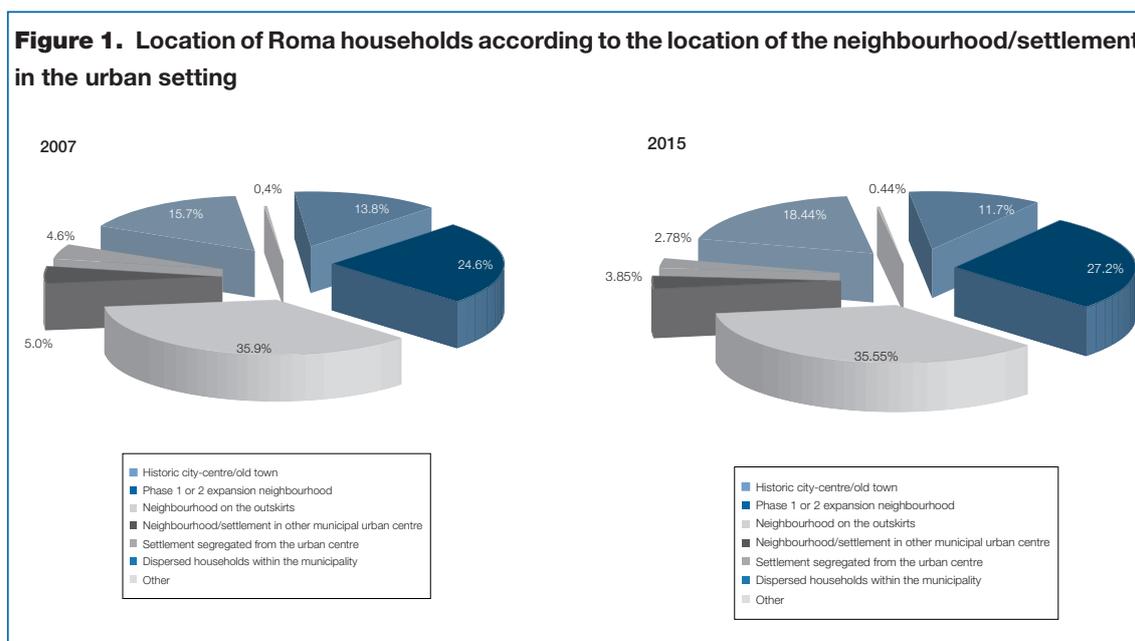
That is the reason for initiatives undertaken within the framework of the *National Roma Integration Strategy in Spain 2012-2020*, whose overarching goal is to achieve equity of the Roma population with the rest of the Spanish population and its full citizenship. This Strategy has been instrumental in helping the government to identify the main objectives and establish public policy, particularly in the areas of housing, education, health and employment and to evaluate the degree of achievement in these areas over the medium and long-term using diagnostic tools such as this Study.

Judging from the data compiled from the *Study-Map on housing and the Roma population, 2015* the quantitative objectives established for the *Strategy* have been generally achieved as shown below. However, the slum rate exceeded the objective by 17 tenths of a point, the number of households without electricity was 1 percentage point over the objective and the percentage of sub-standard housing exceeded the objective by less than 1 percentage point:

General and specific targets*	Total population data	Previous references Roma population	Most recent Roma data	Target 2015	Study 2015	Achieved?
TARGET 1. Eradication of slums and sub-standard housing						
Specific Target 1.1. Reduce the percentage of slums for Roma households.		10% (1991, PASS)	3.9% (2007, FSG)	2%	2.17%	~
Specific Target 1.2. Reduce the percentage of Roma homes considered as sub-standard housing.		21.4% (1991, PASS)	7.8% (2007, FSG)	6%	6.46%	~
TARGET 2. Improve accommodation quality for Roma						
Specific Target 2.1. Reduce the percentage of Roma households lacking any basic services.	< 1%	In 1978 66% had running water, 15% hot water, 50% had a WC, 25% had a shower, 86% had electricity.	8.5% (2007, Spanish Centre for Sociological Research, CIS)	4.2%	4.2% (water) 5.2% (electricity)	~
Specific Target 2.2. Reduce the percentage of Roma households with damp problems.	17.3% (2006, Living Standard Survey-ECV)		45.7% (2007, CIS)	40%	-	-
Specific Target 2.3. Reduce the percentage of Roma households lacking suitable urban facilities.		In 1991 92% had electrical lighting, 95% had rubbish collection, 77% had public transport, 84% had tarmac roads.	19.5% (2007, CIS)	15%	10.34% (mean)	✓
Specific Target 2.4. Reduce the percentage of Roma households with overcrowding.	0.6% (2006, ECV)		29.4% (2007, CIS)	25%	8.9%	✓
*Source: English version of <i>National Roma Integration Strategy in Spain 2012-2020</i> http://www.msssi.gob.es/ssi/familiasInfancia/inclusionSocial/poblacionGitana/estrategiaNacional.htm						

A. Mainstream vs. segregated housing for the Roma population

Figure 1. Location of Roma households according to the location of the neighbourhood/settlement in the urban setting



The data stand in stark contrast with the cliché associating the Roma population with slums and segregated pockets.

92.88% of the Roma population identified reside within the urban network, in neighbourhoods on the outskirts (35.55%), expansion neighbourhoods (27.18%), dispersed households within the municipality (18.44%) or in the historic city centre or old town (11.7%). In contrast, less than 3% (2.78%) reside in segregated settlements.

Over the last eight years there has been an increase in the proportion of households located in expansion neighbourhoods and dispersed households within the municipality (up from 24.56% and 15.73% in 2007 respectively) and there are fewer households in historic old city centres (down from 13.84%), neighbourhoods on the outskirts (down from 35.92%), other urban nuclei within the municipality (down from 4.98%) and segregated settlements (down from 4.6%).

These data indicate urban growth characterised by new neighbourhoods on the outskirts of cities, including housing developments that attract Roma families as well as the rest of the general population. They also denote the **gradual inclusion of the Roma population in the urban network of towns, dispersed among and mixed with the rest of the population**, either of their own free will or as the result of social housing policies which have opted for dispersion as opposed to concentration.

However, the **reduction in the number of segregated settlements should not lead one to believe that no intervention is needed**, basically because there are still households located in these segregated areas which fail to meet even the most minimum standards of habitability as is the case with sub-standard housing. It is important to bear in mind that nearly 3,000 households are located in comparatively disadvantaged neighbourhoods in terms of utilities, facilities and public services and are therefore facing a situation of inequality and greater risk of exclusion than the rest of the population. It is therefore more necessary than ever to persist with measures and actions to eradicate once and for all these enduring situations of residential exclusion thus contributing to the continuity of the social inclusion processes targeting the Roma population and preventing a move backwards in this area.

B. Trend towards concentration in old neighbourhoods

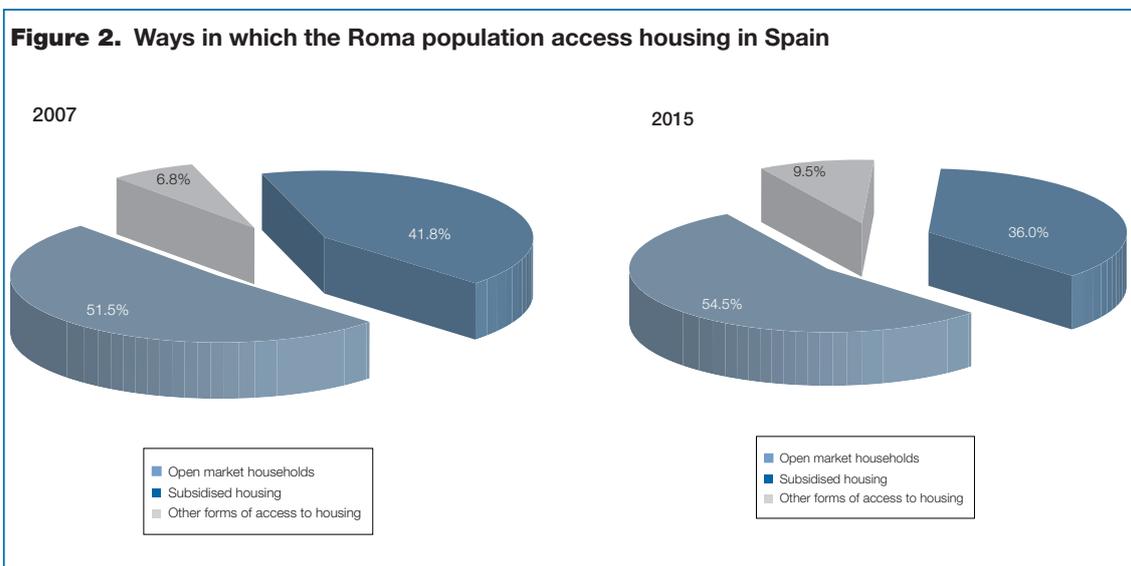
A **tendency for Roma households to concentrate in certain neighbourhoods** was also reflected in the data gathered. 94.4% of Roma households are located in neighbourhoods where the concentration is over 10 households. This percentage is higher than the 2007 figure but falls short of the 94.9% recorded in 1991. This is related to the age of the neighbourhoods where these households are located: close to 90% of the households identified in 2015 are in neighbourhoods built over 15 years ago, 5.7 percentage points higher than the mark recorded in 2007. This trend is in line with that of the general population and considering the period between this and the previous Study.

This is due to several factors but is mostly related with the housing policy and urban development models implemented in recent decades throughout the different regions that have tended to concentrate publicly subsidised housing or social housing developments in the same types of surroundings, attracting a high number of Roma families, according to the data collected in this Study and the previous one. However, social class segregation imposed by the housing market also plays a role in this process of concentrating the population in

certain contexts depending on socio-economic level. Also contributing to this phenomenon is the desire to live close to one's relatives, which is deeply rooted in Roma culture and is also related to the need for family support to face economic difficulties that may arise.

C. Means by which housing is accessed and tenure regime

As for the way housing is accessed, 54.5% of Roma households are subsidised in some form, 36% are purchased on the open market and just under 10% (9.5%) fall into the 'other type of access' category (self-construction of shacks, mobile housing, squatting of uninhabited buildings or houses, etc.). These figures show a rise in subsidised housing and in the other forms of access compared with previous studies. In 1991, subsidised housing accounted for 50% and just under 52% in 2007; other forms of access to housing accounted for 28% in 1991 and only 6.8% in 2007. There has been a significant increase in 'other forms of access' over the last eight years and this could be the result of greater difficulties experienced by the Roma population in gaining normalised access to housing.



As for the **tenure regime**, 49.7% rent their house, 44.25% are homeowners and only 4.26% are awarded houses free of charge. These percentages diverge with those characterising the general population where nearly 80% are homeowners.

In the light of the information obtained from this Study, it is clear that housing and social policies are supporting Roma population inclusion processes as the percentage of households with some sort of subsidy has either remained stable or risen slightly. However, the number of Roma families who purchased a house on the open market (a sign of progress in inclusion processes) and then lost it and had to turn to social benefits or search for other forms of less suitable or less standard forms of housing is also significant and worrying as it marks a dramatic step backwards not only for the family unit in question but also for the rest of the community.

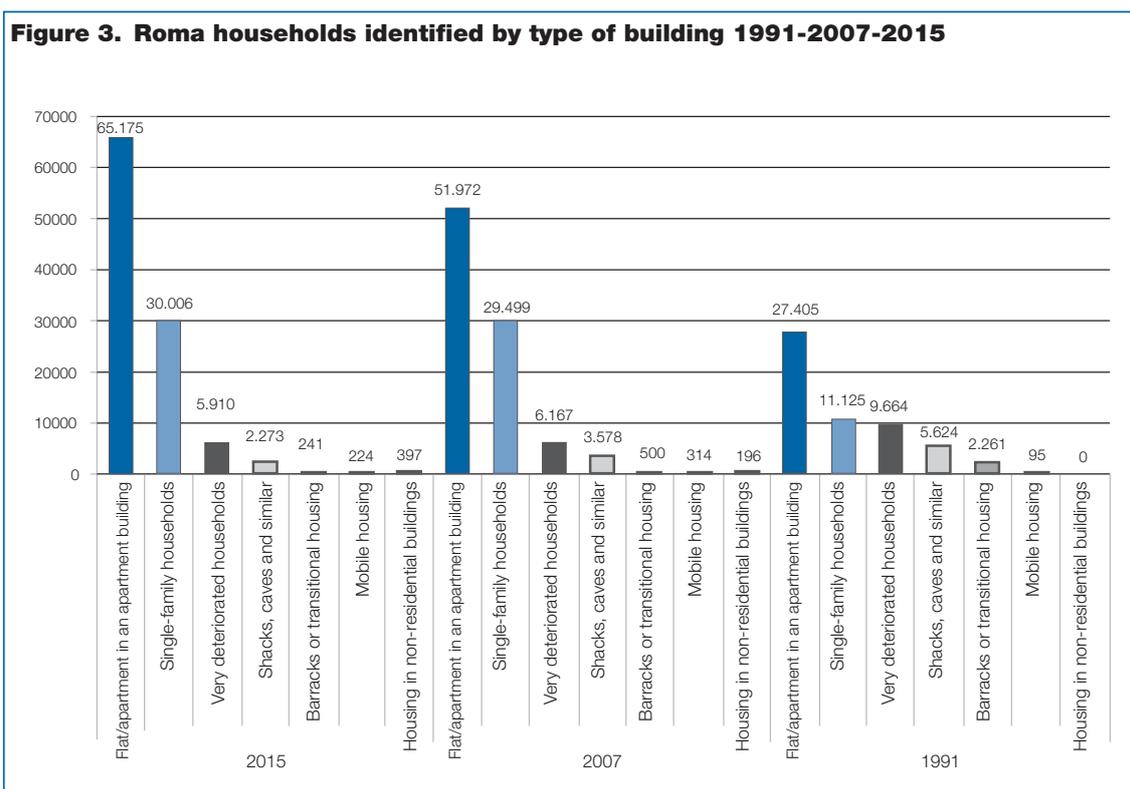
We would note that in the years since the last study we have been immersed in a social, economic and housing crisis, which has lasted longer than anyone expected and which has made it extremely difficult to either buy or rent a property and maintain it in proper

conditions. While this situation has affected the entire population, it has been particularly tough on the Roma population due to increasingly demanding requirements imposed for the purchase or rental of housing, a higher demand for social housing by other groups, lost income due to unemployment, discrimination suffered by the Roma population mostly in accessing the open rental market, etc.

D. Types of households. Sub-standard and slum housing

According to the data collected, just as in 2007, **the majority of the Roma population that participated in this Study reside in apartment buildings** (over 60% of Roma live in multi-family settings and under 29% in single-family households). Moreover:

- There is an **increasingly marked trend towards mainstream inclusion of the Roma population** and therefore single-family houses and flats or apartments accounted for 68.6% of total housing arrangements in 1991, 88.34% in 2007 and 91.37% in 2015.
- There are **fewer situations of substandard housing (in absolute and relative terms)** which affected 31.4% of the Roma population in 1991, 11.66% in 2007 and 8.63% in 2015.
- There has been a **recent rise in the residential use of non-residential buildings** (from 0.2% of the total in 2007 to 0.38% in 2015).



However, we would stress that **8.63% of the households analysed (9,045) do not meet even minimum standards of habitability**: 2.17% are shacks, 0.21% are mobile housing, 0.23% are barracks and transition housing and 0.38% are located in buildings not intended for residential use. These percentages, lower than those recorded in 2007 except for house-

holds located in non-residential buildings, proves that it is not true the cliché that says that most Roma live in settings without the optimal standards of habitability.

As for sub-standard housing in urban settings, **segregated settlements are still the location where the highest proportion of sub-standard housing can be found** (36.63%), higher than in 2007. We would also draw attention to the increased percentage of sub-standard housing in neighbourhoods or settlements located in another urban nucleus of the municipality, up from 1.99% in 2007 to 8.06% in 2015, and the proportion of extremely deteriorated households in old historic city centres accounting for nearly 9% of the total in this setting.

The fact that these are small percentages does not mean that intervention is not necessary, or in some cases urgently needed: the persistence of sub-standard housing only aggravates and perpetuates (even passing from one generation to the next) exclusion in all spheres. Relocation initiatives targeting families living in shacks that are not properly designed and accompanied by a complete social inclusion intervention process just relocate the population but fail to reduce the true degree of inequality faced by the Roma population and do little to achieve their full inclusion with the rest of the population.

E. Other problems associated with residential exclusion: overcrowding, squatting and evictions

Other housing-related problems facing the Roma population observed in the Study include the level of overcrowding of households, the loss of housing by Roma families and the squatting of empty houses.

Regarding the first, while the average number of people living in the households studied was 4.74 people per household, **in 7.39% of the neighbourhoods we detected overcrowding** by making an estimate based of the size of the households and the neighbourhoods in which 8.9% of the households are located and where an estimated 10.7% of the Roma population lives. These are families whose households are too small for the size of the family unit or the number of family units living in them. These circumstances often lead to difficulties in daily life and co-existence and especially affect children and adolescents, depriving the latter of a suitable place to study and do homework.

In other studies, such as that conducted by the Spanish Centre for Sociological Research (CIS) in 2007 and included among the quantitative objectives and expected results in the monitoring of the *National Roma Integration Strategy in Spain 2012-2020*, other criteria were used to measure degree of overcrowding (i.e. number of bedrooms per household) and other information-gathering methods were employed (surveys of households). Therefore, the findings of the 2015 Study cannot be directly compared with those of the CIS Study conducted in 2007 under Specific Target 2.4 'Reduce the percentage of Roma households with overcrowding' and therefore it cannot be confirmed that a reduction has been achieved even though at first glance it would appear that this is the case according to the table appearing on page 6.

A maximum of 4.47% of Roma households are illegal squatters living in uninhabited or temporarily empty settings (a total of 4,710 households). This figure coincides with the information from the 2014 CIS barometer, which revealed that 4.4% of those surveyed felt

that illegal squatting in buildings and houses in their neighbourhoods was a very important problem.

According to our data, less than 25% of families living in the neighbourhoods included in the Study have lost their houses through eviction. It is important to bear in mind that Roma families who are in the process of losing their houses sometimes resort to some alternative before the eviction actually takes place, i.e. staying at a relative's house (parents or grandparents) which can increase the incidence of overcrowding or, in the case of resettlement programmes, return to the original slum.

F. Utilities of households and neighbourhoods, facilities and public services

The overwhelming majority of neighbourhoods studied are equipped with utilities, facilities and basic public services although secondary schools are the scarcest resource (only present in 77.21% of the neighbourhoods). In contrast, running water, electricity and garbage collection are the most prevalent services (close or over 97% of the neighbourhoods in each case).

Basic household utilities such as running water, electricity and heating in Roma households are on a par (although fewer) with those available in all other households despite variations in preceding periods. The 2015 results show a moderate rise in the availability of running water (95.83% up from 95.57% in 2007), a moderate reduction in electricity supply (down to 94.81% from 95.3% recorded in 2007) and a more significant decline in heating systems (27.59% compared to 35.72% in 2007).

The lack of basic utilities and facilities in the households is directly linked with their typology. In general, this **lack is more common in those typologies that are an example of residential exclusion of the Roma population.**

While the difference in the supply of domestic running water and electricity is an indicator of the socio-residential inequality of the Roma population vis-à-vis the Spanish population as a whole, the lower number of heating systems is even more indicative of that inequality. According to the qualitative data obtained, heating is typically one of the first elements that families in need do without.

From a dynamic point of view, utilities, facilities and basic public services have grown over the last eight years but it is the **physical availability of social services that has decreased.** While most neighbourhoods/settlements where Roma live do have the most basic services, there are significant shortcomings in terms of facilities and services such as public transport, healthcare centres, secondary schools, parks and gardens, public sports facilities, civic/cultural centres and, as mentioned above, the physical presence of social services. The latest could be due to factors such as the perception on the part of local entities that they do not need to provide benefits by means of a physical facility located in the neighbourhood, or could also be the result of budget cuts at local level which have led to the rationalisation of public, economic and human resources thus limiting the territorial deployment of services.

G. Environment and condition of neighbourhoods where Roma population live

One of the fundamental housing problems facing the Roma population is the habitability and hygiene conditions in the immediate surroundings of the households and the neighbourhoods and the socio-economic factors that, in turn, hinder their adequate maintenance.

The global status of neighbourhoods is **globally between “Adequate” and “Positive”** but difficulties in gaining access to housing together with situations of deterioration of the environment and of part of the households where Roma live, sometimes quite severe, prove that the **inclusion process initiated has not yet concluded** and that, in some cases, **the process is being handled carelessly or has been abandoned altogether**.

In fact, neighbourhood items receiving the lowest score are: **situations of particular vulnerability** (prevalent at a high or very high rate in 36.5% of neighbourhoods), which are related to unemployment and various types of social problems, the situation declining with respect to 2007; and the **state of repair of buildings** which, while improving overall in comparison to 2007, is still considered a negative or very negative factor in 22.64% of neighbourhoods, with households that are very poorly maintained, mostly due to lack of money to keep them in a proper state of repair; **insecurity** is high or very high in 15.81% of neighbourhoods; **poor maintenance of streets** is high or very high in 15.26% of the neighbourhoods; and **serious transportation difficulties** are considered a major or very major problem in 13.54%.

H. Socio-residential situation based on the origin of the Roma population

Roma living in Spain are mostly Spanish citizens judging from the results of this and other studies. Indeed, 93.82% of the households are inhabited by Spanish Roma, 3.78% (a total of 2,002 households where an estimated 10,160 people live) by **Roma from Eastern Europe** and 2.40% (1,197 households where an estimated 5,903 people live) by **Portuguese Roma**.

However, socio-residential conditions vary depending on the origin of the population. Specifically, **sub-standard housing** is much more prevalent among Portuguese (42.04%) and Eastern European Roma (21.43%), and less prevalent among Spanish Roma. Compared to the 2007 results, the number of sub-standard housing increased among the Portuguese Roma and decreased among Eastern European Roma.

These differences are also visible in terms of the percentages of Roma living in shacks: 21.06% of the Portuguese (higher than the 2007 figure of 14.38%), 8.38% of the Eastern European and approximately 2% of the Spanish (lower than the 2007 figures) Roma population.

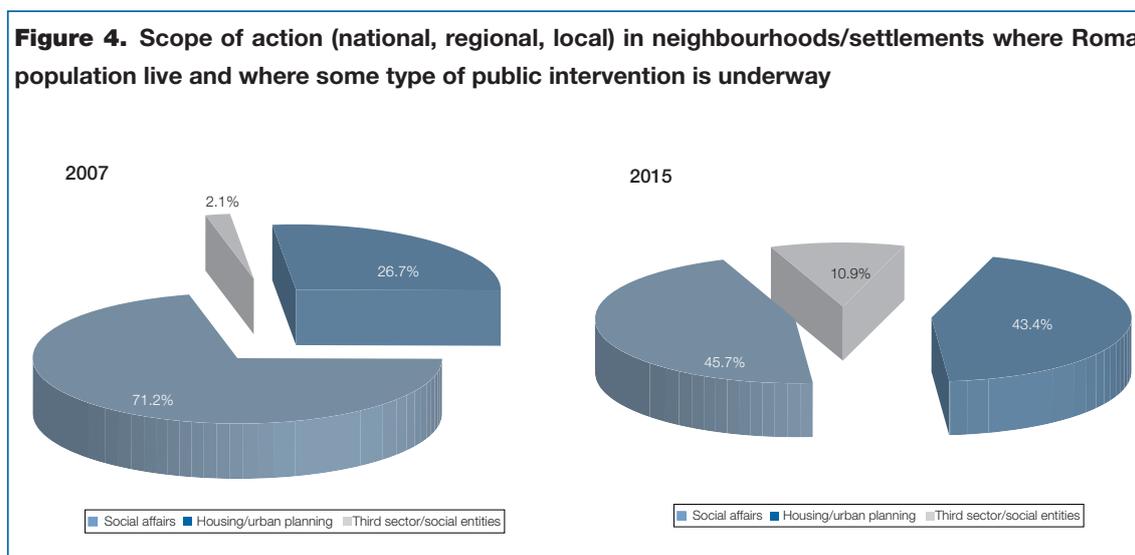
In addition, Portuguese Roma population lives more frequently in segregated settlements than other Roma (17.22% compared to 2.53% of Spanish Roma and 6.58% of Eastern European Roma).

I. Public intervention in favour of socio-residential inclusion

According to the data collected, **22% of the neighbourhoods (where nearly 40% of the households are located) are either currently or soon to be engaged in regional and/or local**

(over 75%) actions to improve living conditions. These initiatives are launched by public administrations responsible for social affairs and/or housing/urban planning in most cases.

Figure 4. Scope of action (national, regional, local) in neighbourhoods/settlements where Roma population live and where some type of public intervention is underway



However, we found that these interventions are not being implemented in the most deteriorated neighbourhoods or buildings or those where the most special cases of vulnerability are found. **Interventions are being made in neighbourhoods that have an intermediate social and urban planning status.** This is probably due to several factors: criteria established under prevailing political or financial frameworks; urban planning strategies that prioritise the combination with other elements such as the development of industry, trade or communications; fewer neighbourhoods with the worst social and urban situation and that require very particular and specific types of intervention; and difficulties encountered by public officials when designing suitable and sustainable intervention strategies in contexts of residential exclusion.

Nevertheless, the above results indicate that interventions implemented over the last eight years have been fruitful and contributed to the improvement of Roma households and surrounding areas and, in turn, have helped to mitigate social inclusion difficulties. There is still work to be done however to reduce the gap between the Roma population and the rest of society and efforts must therefore continue to improve their housing conditions and foster social inclusion.

D) Recommendations

In line with the mandate of the *National Roma Integration Strategy in Spain 2012-2020*, whose overarching goal is to achieve equity of the Roma population with the rest of the Spanish population and its full citizenship within the framework of European Union, public policy and especially social, housing, education, health and employment policies, particular attention must be paid to the priority objectives of these policies over the medium and long term and their achievement must be periodically assessed using suitable diagnostic instruments such as this Study.

Judging from the data collected through the *Study-Map on housing and the Roma population, 2015* the quantitative objectives established by this *Strategy* have generally been achieved. We would note that there has been a gradual improvement in the socio-residential conditions of the Roma population in Spain. This is partly the result of the desire of many Roma families to improve their standard of living, which naturally includes living in dignified housing, and also of public interventions carried out in recent years, which have contributed to improving the households in which Roma people live and the surrounding areas and reducing the difficulties encountered by Roma families and the community in general in social inclusion processes.

There is still work to be done however to reduce the gap between the Roma population and the rest of society and efforts must therefore continue to improve their housing conditions and foster social inclusion.

In order to combat inequality and the vicious circle of inter-generational poverty affecting this and other population groups, we must focus on the physical, social, economic and environmental regeneration of residential areas in line with the framework for smart sustainable and inclusive growth of the *Europe 2020 Strategy* and the *Sustainable Development Goals* that include among their 17 priorities an end to poverty, the reduction in inequality and the fostering of sustainable cities and communities.

Following are the recommended priorities and policy frameworks based on the conclusions of this Study:

- A. Housing and social policies at the different levels (national and regional) should explicitly include the mandate from the *National Roma Integration Strategy in Spain 2012-2020*, its objectives and intervention priorities so as to concentrate efforts on solving the main problems still affecting the Roma population such as the eradication of slums, sub-standard housing and residential segregation, including interventions with specific objectives on especially vulnerable areas.
- B. We need to continue monitoring the equality-inequality situation of the Roma population with respect to the general population in basic areas related with fundamental rights and social inclusion such as the quality of residential environments and the households located in them by means of thorough and reliable information. This will allow to clearly identify the problems they are facing, evaluate objectives over the medium and long-term and design actions that efficiently and effectively address them, in accordance with National and Regional Strategies which should set the priorities.
- C. The reduction observed in sub-standard housing and segregated settlements should not lead to the conclusion that intervention is unnecessary, especially considering that in these segregated contexts there are households that do not meet even the minimum habitability standards (the case of slum housing) and that the persistence of sub-standard housing only exacerbates and perpetuates, even from one generation to the next, exclusion in all spheres. It is more necessary than ever to persist with measures and actions to eradicate once and for all these enduring situations of residential exclusion, mainly slum and sub-standard housing in segregated settings, thus contributing to the continuity of the social inclusion processes targeting the Roma population and avoiding moving backwards in this area.

- D.** A key aspect is the implementation of comprehensive policies. This entails complementing housing access policies with other social, employment and educational policies by means of an integrated and coordinated effort towards the common objective of guaranteeing the social inclusion of the most impoverished and vulnerable sectors of society such as a segment of the Roma population. It is vital to design and implement measures that engage, with an adequate collaboration and joint work, different levels of government, with a particular accent on the local but also regional and national level, different departments and public resources and the third sector devoted to social action, i.e. social organisations.

In this respect, the engagement of local authorities is key as they are the layer of government closest to citizen's needs, especially in the area of socio-residential inclusion and are directly responsible for the implementation of policies. But town halls cannot be expected to shoulder all of the responsibility on their own. Given their complexity and high cost, socio-residential inclusion actions cannot be successfully addressed by town halls and local authorities alone. They need the active involvement of other levels of government and funding from different sources. At this juncture it is important to bear in mind that, in addition to possible funding from regional authorities, national and European funding is also available, such as the European Structural and Investment Funds and their complementary ESF and ERDF Operational Programmes, which envisage measures specifically designed to palliate problems such as the socio-residential exclusion of vulnerable groups, especially the Roma population.

- E.** The socio-residential strategies implemented must be stable and sustainable over time, be sufficiently funded, and must be accompanied by an action plan designed to achieve long-term objectives through actions that include monitoring and accompaniment measures, through social professionals, of beneficiary families and the rest of the neighbours with a view to fostering social co-existence and the upkeep of the shared environment.

- F.** To ensure that residential inclusion action plans are successful over the medium and long-term, they should include actions directly related to housing access and actions related to social accompaniment before, during and after families move into their new environment. These elements are key when working with Roma families coming from situations characterised by serious residential exclusion such as segregated slums and sub-standard housing.

Actions leading up to moving into new housing must be designed and implemented with a comprehensive inclusion plan that is adapted to the characteristics of each beneficiary family, following a criteria of dispersion rather than concentration of relocated families in the same neighbourhoods. These efforts should be maintained over the medium and long-term and include economic, human, material and service resources and support from all of the necessary areas (social, educational, health, training and employment, etc.), because they will need greater and more ongoing and stable support and accompaniment as they are immersed in their socio-residential inclusion processes, if they are to successfully and sustainably achieve the objective of full integration into society.

- G.** Regarding the neighbourhoods in which these households are located, it is important to prioritise reducing social vulnerability characterising the context in which

Roma families live as this is an element that directly affects the socio-residential situation of the entire resident population. This entails: reducing the high rate of unemployment in the neighbourhoods, palliating the economic difficulties facing families, easing social conflict that is sometimes associated with such situations, preventing and responding to squatting and preventing the non-payment of expenses related to housing, such as utilities and other basic payments, by offering social aid mechanisms adapted to the socio-economic level of families.

- H.** It is also vital to improve the state of repair of households and their utilities, especially in the case of public housing, some of which has been categorised as sub-standard owing to serious deterioration, dampness and unhealthy conditions which are the result of variables such as age, lack of maintenance, poor quality construction material, etc.
- I.** Regarding urban rehabilitation and regeneration, prioritise those areas where social-urban problems actually exist. The longer it takes to tackle problems the worse they become and this is an exponential process not only affecting the resident population but the rest of the municipality as well. Based on the Study's findings, interventions are not being implemented in the most deteriorated neighbourhoods or buildings or in those where the most vulnerable cases are found. Interventions are being made in neighbourhoods that have an intermediate social and urban planning status. This is probably due to several factors: criteria established under available political or financial frameworks, priority on strategies to develop industry, trade or communications and difficulties encountered in designing suitable and sustainable intervention strategies in contexts of high residential exclusion.
- J.** With a view to ensuring the success and sustainability of actions over time, it is vital to consider the interests of all stakeholders and to reach agreements on procedures, mechanisms and actions from the design through to the implementation and evaluation of interventions. To this end we must set the stage for coordinated work among the professionals of the different resources and services and also promote the participation of the Roma population itself by engaging beneficiary families, the associative fabric and the different entities with prominent experience in socio-residential inclusion. We also need to consider the neighbourhood where beneficiary families of these interventions are located.
- K.** Given the scant use of European Structural and Investment Funds in previous and the current programming periods, especially ERDF funds, in addressing the main problems of socio-residential exclusion faced by the Roma population, it is both recommendable and necessary not to miss the opportunities offered by the current programming period: Thematic Objective 9 of the ERDF Regulation (1301/2013), includes among its investment priorities (Article 5.9.b.): "promoting social inclusion and combating poverty through support for physical, economic and social regeneration of deprived communities in urban and rural areas."

This is an ideal opportunity to take a significant step forward in improving the socio-residential conditions of the Roma population as envisaged under the *National Roma Integration Strategy in Spain 2012-2020* and other regional strategies. These funds should therefore be considered in national, regional and local housing plans.

Parent, Galicia: *Then, they asked me what I wanted: To get out! I got an apartment for rent and my first job for 6 months (...) I had happiness, dreams, pull forward, I made friends ... We are very pleased, it changed our lives. (...) My friends came for coffees (...) Now, I value every little thing a lot: buy a chair, very simple things, go to a gym and register, pay by bank... it is different.*

Policymaker, City Council: *Reasons for the intervention were to finish with a marginal and deteriorated area and that families had more standardised housing and a decent life.*

Technical Manager, Autonomous Community: *Social profitability of the programme as a whole is undeniable, avoiding further impoverishment of families, resolving situations of marginalisation and residential exclusion as well as contributing to settling and standardisation in a stable environment. One of the elements that facilitate community integration is the settlement through a house in adequate conditions, in a stable environment that allows the development of roots. Certain groups have particular difficulties in accessing housing, a key pillar to work other difficulties such as finding work, schooling of children, etc.*

Although the Roma population in Spain has made significant social advances in the last 40 years, it has a long way to go to achieve equality in the four key areas for social inclusion: housing, education, healthcare and employment. This is the view taken by the National Roma Inclusion Strategy in Spain 2012-2020, designed by the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality in adherence to the guidelines set by the European Commission for the implementation of Community policy in the sphere of the social inclusion of this population with special emphasis on the areas mentioned.

In particular, significant strides have been made in the housing of Roma in recent decades: many families have gained access to standard housing and basic housing utilities have also improved considerably. However, some issues such as the need to completely eradicate slums, the overcrowding in some households and the problems of precariousness of services and deterioration, both in terms of the households and urban environments, still persist.

One of the measures to assess compliance with the objectives of the National Roma Inclusion Strategy in Spain 2012-2020 in the area of housing is the Study-Map on housing and Roma population 2015, which is a main tool to improve knowledge of Roma in relation to housing, favoring the design of more effective public policies in this matter.

