

„Addressing community cohesion: Good practice in equalities legislation at the local and regional level, with particular emphasis on deprived rundown areas”

First interim report

Béla, Pörös

1. Interpreting the call for tender of the Committee of the Regions (CoR)

- The tasks assigned in the call for tender by the Committee of the Regions “Addressing community cohesion: Good practice in equalities legislation at the local and regional level, with particular emphasis on deprived rundown areas” include first of all the overview of the European Union’s anti-discrimination and anti-exclusion policy and legislation, and on the basis of the overview, expect the presentation of anti-discrimination and anti-exclusion programmes in the various European countries. The tasks also cover formulating proposals and recommendations for various European institutions and organizations, as well as for local and regional authorities to assist them in integrating socially excluded groups and fighting discrimination against them.

Preliminary assumptions

Our research concentrates on the social groups that are affected in several dimensions of discrimination and social exclusion. **The phenomenon of discrimination proliferates primarily in the case of populations much of whom experiences social exclusion and spatial separation from the majority society. At the same time, it is also here where initiatives aimed at fighting discrimination and achieving social integration can be of greatest impact.**

Objectives of the planned research

General objectives

1. Putting into focus and analysing the situation of those social groups that are affected by several aspects of the interconnected problems of discrimination and exclusion (i.e. migrants, Roma, people living in rundown urban districts and rural areas, in villages turning into ghettos).
2. Highlighting best practices and providing professional and methodological support for the establishment of a European network of local and regional authorities, institutions and civil organizations operating in areas most affected by the problem of poverty, to ensure continuous communication among them.

Specific objectives

1. Overview of European anti-discrimination and anti-exclusion policies and European and national networks for anti-discrimination (systems of support and aid)
2. Presentation of the situation of social groups most affected by exclusion and discrimination, with special attention to the Roma, and those living in deprived rundown urban and rural areas
3. Presentation of anti-discrimination activities by local and regional authorities, institutions, civil organizations, highlighting available best practices;
4. Formulating recommendations for various institutions and organizations of the European Union, for national governments, as well as for local and regional authorities;
5. Proposal for the establishment of a European network against poverty and discrimination.

Special target groups of the planned research

People living in rundown rural settlements, segregated and deprived districts of cities, primarily those who are most affected by discrimination due to their social situation.

Special areas of the planned research

- Employment,
- education,
- housing,
- access to cultural goods,
- anti-discrimination and anti-segregation policies of local and regional authorities – in Hungary also the activity of Roma minority local governments

Method for defining the criteria of areas to be studied

- 1. Those residential areas where the rate of unemployment and welfare recipients is high compared to the average,
- 2. Most of the apartments are in very bad infrastructural condition,
- 3. The residential area is poorly supplied with basic infrastructure and services (public utilities, transport etc.),
- 4. Outside opinion on the residential area is generally negativ

In defining these criteria, we set out from the criteria used for determining called “social crisis areas”, generally applied across the European Union.

Criteria for selecting cases for detailed study (6 case studies)

- **Deprived groups in a residential district of a European city .**
Location: Hamburg-Lenzsiedlung housing estate (Germany)
- **An agricultural and mountainous area – once on margins of the EU15.** Location: Burgenland and Steiermark Länder (provinces) (Austria)
- **A typical East Central European small town** Location: Komarno (Slovakia)
- **A typical East Central European middle-sized city and its surroundings**
Location: Pécs (Hungary)
- **Peculiar East-Central European segregated areas populated mainly by the Roma I.**
Location: Gva Vari (Romania)
- **Peculiar East-Central European segregated areas populated mainly by the Roma II.**
Location: City of Sliven, Nadezhda Roma residential area (Bulgaria)

Composition and competences of the Consortium carrying out the research

South Transdanubian Regional Development Agency (Consortium Leader)

The Agency has many years of experience in preparation and implementation of EU programmes, in international cooperation, as well as in researching rundown living areas in the South Transdanubian region. In 2005 the South Transdanubian Region elaborated a proposal for the Committee of the Regions to explore and handle problems connected to rundown living areas. In 2006 the CoR made this topic as priority research topic. The organization has wide scale international relations.

The STRDA provides 1 lead expert (Mr PÖRÖS Béla), 1 external expert (legislation background of anti-discrimination) and 1 technical colleague (management).

Composition and competences of the Consortium carrying out the research

Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Centre for Regional Studies

The institution carries out research in social sciences, participates in theoretical establishment of regionalization processes, forming regional policies, participating in the training of PhD students, elaborating researches in the activities of local – also minority – governments. The Centre – as an academic institution – has wide scale international relations and international research practices.

The institution often deals with policy tools (training, employment, etc.) related to the social integration of disadvantaged groups in the course of its researches on territorial social disparities. It carried out extensive empirical research into the functional workings of the minority local government system. The institution often participates in governmental legislation and planning programmes (development policy, local governmental system, social and employment policy, situation of the Roma).

The HAS CRS provides 1 lead expert (Pálné Dr. KOVÁCS Ilona, professor).

Composition and competences of the Consortium carrying out the research

Corvinus University, Department of Sociology

Educational and research organizational experiences, researches, studies, analysis mainly in the following fields:

- - territorial-social disparities in Budapest,
- - situation of Roma people in 3 Central-East European countries: Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria,
- - territorial-social disparities in a North-Hungarian microregion, Cserehát,
- - social stratification, social structure,
- - segregation in schools,
- - cultural capital.

The institution has wide scale international relations and international research practices.

The University of Corvinus provides 1 lead expert (Prof. Dr LADÁNYI János).

Composition and competences of the Consortium carrying out the research

University of Pécs, Department of Sociology

The department has experience in educational, research organizational activities and empirical investigations in the field of social exclusion in rundown urban and rural areas (eastern part of Pécs, Ormánság), participation in preparation of social urban rehabilitation programmes, participation in designing national development policy tools aimed at strengthening social networks and social capital, educational and research activities in the investigation of social disparities from the point of view of gender and ethnicity.

Participation in the “Cities Against Social Exclusion” project implemented in the framework of the INTERREG IIC programme.

The University of Pécs provides 1 lead expert (Dr. FÜZÉR Katalin, assistant professor). The implementation of the research is carried out by altogether 4 lead experts of the four partners, one external expert in Activity II, one technical person of STRDA and one subcontracted translator.