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Roma Housing in Spotlight as NGOs Meet New Government in Romania

The Minister of Regional Development in Romania acknowledged that the situation of Roma living on and near a rubbish dump in Pata Rât is 'unacceptable', during a meeting with non-governmental organisations (NGO) earlier this week.

The newly-appointed Minister, Liviu Dragnea, met with delegates from Amnesty International (AI) the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC), and Fundația Desire (a founder member of the Working Group of Civil Society Organizations, gLOC) on Wednesday, 13 February. He said that the meeting was a strong signal that there is a desire from within the Ministry to resolve the issue of access of Roma communities to housing.

Around 1500 Romani people live in inadequate conditions in Pata Rât, a segregated area on the outskirts of Cluj-Napoca. Some of the Roma living there were forcibly evicted from their homes in the centre of the town two years ago, with a harmful impact on their health, education and employment. The Pata Rât case is part of a wider pattern of forced evictions and inadequate housing for Romani people in Romania.

The organizations raised their concerns that these conditions amount to breaches of Romania's domestic legislation, EU legislation and policies. They also constitute violations of international human rights law and standards with respect to the right to adequate housing applicable in Romania.

The Minister committed to creating partnerships on technical, financial and conceptual aspects with local authorities to address the issues. The Ministry also signaled it was open to cooperation with NGOs, which is a positive step forward.

AI, the ERRC and gLOC welcome these commitments from the Ministry. The NGOs are calling on the new government to address the issue of forced evictions and access to adequate housing by strengthening the housing framework to ensure that international human rights standards are reflected in the housing legislation and enforced in practice.

The NGOs met with a number of authorities in Romania this week, as part of advocacy efforts to improve the situation for Roma in the country. They prepared a full briefing on housing for Roma in Romania which is available [here](#).

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