



Nomads against their will.

Research on the application of the Guidelines for Roma, Sinti and Caminanti by Milan Municipality

Abstract

This research is the result of a monitoring activity conducted on the field and through interviews to people concerned: Roma families, Assessorato alla sicurezza of Comune di Milano, managing bodies of the Social Emergency Centres (SEC) for the period March 2013 - September 2014. It aims at verifying the adherence of the authorities in Milan to the *Linee guida Rom, Sinti e Caminanti* adopted by Comune di Milano in 2012 (hereafter "Guidelines"), with a focus on informal camps and SECs. The report analyzes resources and concrete actions put in place, results obtained and it proposes a series of recommendations.

This research highlights the persistence of forced evictions and an almost exclusive economic investment in enforcement actions, at the expense of measures aiming at Roma and Sinti people's inclusion.

Methodology

Sources analyzed:

- § Linee guida Rom, Sinti e Caminanti adopted by Comune di Milano.
- § The Agreement concluded between the Municipality of Milan and the Milan Prefecture on the application of the Guidelines.
- § Sheltering agreements with regard to the SEC in via Lombroso 99 and the one in via Barzaghi 2.
- § Tenders (Capitolati speciali di appalto) for the commitment of the SECs in via Lombroso 99 and via Barzaghi 2.
- § The official documents on the application of the Guidelines submitted by the Municipality of Milan at public meetings.
- § Data provided by the Municipality of Milan.
- § Media (for the period from March to September 2014) with a focus on informal camps and SECs.

In addition to this, a series of interviews has been conducted with Roma people hosted in the two SECs, SECs' managing bodies and Alderman for Security and social cohesion, Marco Granelli, along with two members of his staff (Alessandra De Bernardis and Tiziana Ferrittu) on reception conditions and life in the SECs and on the inclusion projects set up.

As for the evictions, the monitoring activities "on the field" have been conducted from March 2013 to September 2014. The mobile unit of Naga, Medicina di Strada, also collected information during the medical visits done to Roma families living in informal camps.

Roma people in Milano

Roma people in Milan are about 3000.

Many people are not "visible" and therefore the figures are based on estimates and the picture below on housing conditions is not exhaustive. We believe that there are families who live in apartments or other places which have not been detected during our research.

According to our research, the main housing conditions are:

- § 6 authorized camps (up to July 2014 there were 7) managed by the third sector, about 700 people (Roma and Sinti)
- § Informal camps, about 2000 people (Romanian Roma)
- § 2 SECs which accommodate 267 people + second level reception in the Centro di autonomia abitativa in Via Novara and in some apartments (about 140 people)
- § Public housing apartments, some of which are squatted in some areas of Milan (Giambellino, Calvairate, ...).

Comune di Milano's policies regarding Roma people

Linee guida Rom, Sinti e Caminanti have been adopted by Comune di Milano in November 2012.

The general purposes of the Guidelines are:

- § to promote the full inclusion and integration of Roma, Sinti and Caminanti;
- § to foster processes of civil coexistence between Roma and majority society through paths of knowledge, integration and cultural awareness;
- § to counteract and overcome forms of discrimination against the Roma, Sinti and Caminanti;
- § to counteract and overcome forms of degradation, irregularities and illegalities present in Milano;
- § to combat and overcome the spontaneous and irregular settlements, already present and contrast the new settlements.

Allocated funds, funds invested, actions carried out by the Municipality of Milan and impact on Roma and Sinti citizens

According to the Agreement concluded between the Municipality of Milan and the Milan Prefecture on the application of the Guidelines the funds allocated are:

Action	Funds allocated
Quantitative-qualitative data collection on Roma people living in Milan	20.000 €. This measure has not been started yet.
Management of authorised camps	636.000 €
Social Emergency Centres	2.092.000 €
residential integration procedures and assisted returns to country of origin.	1.635.000€ (8.000 € per family)
labour integration	240.000 €
educational integration of minors	20.000€
new rest-camp for those who live a "nomadic way of life"	728.000€
prevention of new camps and irregular or illegal activities	130.000€
coordination of the plan	100.000€
Camps overcoming	90.000€
Total	5.691.000 € (coming from the so called "nomads emergency")

It is clear that you it has been invested and spent mostly in enforcement actions, at the expense of measures aiming at Roma and Sinti people's inclusion.

In particular, much of the available economic resources have been allocated to emergency measures, temporary and insufficient, such as the SECs, at the expense of a necessary investment in work, school and housing solutions for medium and long term.

Evictions

Evictions of settlements inhabited by Roma families are planned by the Municipality in the Guidelines.

The research shows that in recent years there have been "macro" evictions motivated by "urgent" work such as for Expo and "micro" evictions requested by the citizens, often made without complying with the legislation in force and without the knowledge of the authorities.

Data provided by the Municipality of Milan relating to evictions carried out in 2013 and in 2014 (January-September) follow:

Year	N. evictions	N. people evicted	minors	N. of people hosted by SECs	minors
2013	108	2.210	648	505	227
2014 Jan - Sept	191	2.276	-	-	-

According to the data provided by the Municipality, while in 2013 there has been one eviction every 3 days and a half, in the period between January and September 2014 there have been five evictions a week thus showing a considerable increase in evictions compared to the previous year. The monitoring carried out shows that the evicted people are almost always the same.

Social Emergency Centres

SECs host families with children evicted from informal camps. Families are offered a temporary housing solution (maximum 200 days renewable every 40 days) and the opportunity to integration paths.

There are two SECs: one in via Barzaghi 2 (100 people), the other in via Lombroso 99 (167 people).

In each room or living container there are 16 up to 30 people.

SECs are fenced and entrance is controlled 24h by local police / civil protection.

According to data provided by the Municipality, in 19 months (March 2013 - September 2014) in the SECs have been hosted 733 people, 162 of these are then gone to the second reception that the Municipality divided into community facilities (19 people), Centro di autonomia abitativa of Via Novara (129 people) and "bridge" apartments (14 people).

The average stay in the SECs is 195 days. Some families live in SECs for two weeks and other also for 528 days.

Only 20% of inclusion projects, initiated in both SECs and in the Centro di autonomia abitativa, has been successful.

As for the projects for labour integration activated SECs, on 127 persons in working age only 43 people claim to have a job (most have found by themselves). Of these, five have a fixed-term contract, three have a sort of "internship" and two a permanent contract. Therefore the other people work illegally.

The Municipality has provided data on the number of persons removed from the SECs and the reasons for the discharge.

128 people have voluntarily left the SECs (25% of people discharged). More than half of them returned to Romania (56.5%), the third of them come back to informal camps (33.5%) and 10% found independent living solutions.

140 people (27% of people discharged) have been included in other structures (Centro di autonomia abitativa, Community facilities, apartments, second reception facilities for men only).

216 people, that is 42% of people discharged, were expelled, and of these 177 for "*lack of participation in a project*" and 39 "*for non-compliance with general operating rules.*"

The remaining 6% of the people was discharged for other unspecified reasons.

As for the school enrollment of children placed in the SECs, we list below the data provided by the Municipality to 30 September 2014.

SEC	Nursery	Kindergarten	Elementary School	Medie Inferiori	Other	Late entries	Total
Lombroso	0	5	22	8	2	6	43
Barzaghi	0	5	15	1	1		22
Total	0	10	37	9	3	6	65

According to the Municipality, in the school year 2013/2014 the average rate was quite high, with percentages around 70%. But we must consider that this figure refers also to minors in the Centro di autonomia abitativa.

Sheltering agreements

Sheltering agreements are signed by families, Municipality and managing bodies. They are not bilateral agreements, but regulations in which rights, duties, obligations and prohibitions of the families are listed.

Agreements are renewed every 40 days for a maximum period of stay in the SECs of 200 days (sometimes exceeded).

In order to be expelled it is enough that operators running SECs believe that there hasn't been an "active membership" to the cd. *path of accompaniment and guidance*, but what exactly this "active membership" is, it is unknown.

Conclusions

Despite the intentions of the Guidelines, their application demonstrates, once again, the implementation of a security approach.

The survey conducted also showed that very little, in some cases zero, were the resources and energies specifically invested in the first three goals of the Guidelines (inclusion and integration of Roma, Sinti and Caminanti; civil coexistence among Roma, Sinti and Caminanti and local populations through paths of knowledge, relationship, integration and cultural awareness; contrasting forms of discrimination of Roma, Sinti and Caminanti). Not only not investing in these areas is a serious choice, but having focused on enforcement actions has made it increasingly difficult to reach those goals that focus instead on the dignity of the people.

Managing segregation and exclusion is also more expensive than promoting inclusion.

The research also highlights the persistence of forced evictions conducted by the Municipality. Some evictions occur without the knowledge of Assessorato alla sicurezza and therefore housing alternative are not offered to families evicted. In addition to this, evictions cause the dispersion of Roma families in the area and therefore the loss of

relationships they had built and the proliferation of ever smaller and precarious settlements in terms of housing and security of Roma families.

As for the SECs, these structures often violate rights such as privacy, personal freedom and freedom movement of guests. They are the sign of an approach that does not propose new solutions, but which proposes always the same tools: segregation and control.

In addition, the SECs regulations, although considered useful for the purpose of living together, present profiles of illegality and they are seen as discretionary and unfair for various reasons from Roma families housed. Agreements are not adequately shared with all families (also due to language difficulties, as Romanian translations are missing), which thus have a rough knowledge of the regulations. Consequence of this is that the rules in force in the SECs are not "sure". Even worse, the Sheltering agreements give no indication on how family can appeal against expulsion. Some provisions, finally, are definitely detrimental to people's fundamental rights.

It's probably time for a change of perspective on how to invest the already scarce resources. It 's time to actually find the space for actions for the majority of the society that for the most part has a very negative perception of Roma people.

Recommendations

We propose a series of recommendations: to allocate funds to realize **concrete actions to promote social inclusion and integration of Roma and Sinti citizens and the fight against discrimination**; to **involve the Roma recipients actively** in the design, implementation and management of any project; to **immediately suspend any forced eviction**; to **recognize the right to "iscrizione anagrafica" (residence)** to people living in informal settlements and in the centers of the first and second reception in the City of Milan; to **ensure the effective enjoyment of the right to health** for all people hosted in the SECs and to reconstruct SECs in order to **respect the right to privacy**; to **reformulate the sheltering agreements** and to ensure knowledge of the rules (e.g. translation), clarity and no discretion; to **perform different type of housing projects** in the medium - long term taking into account the different needs of people; to **secure in the settlements children's school attendance** and to initiate working and living inclusion projects in informal settlements, until families have access to adequate housing solutions.

We believe that the whole "Roma issue" should be rethought taking action to build **channels of dialogue between worlds that talk a little and especially through stereotypes**, and to try to define which cultural, political and social features still make so difficult a **full enjoyment of human rights** for all people who share the same urban space.