ROMA-NeT:
Our Final Report

ROMA-NET

FAST TRACK NETWORK
Regions for Economic Change
EUROPEAN COMMISSION

URBACT II

European Union
European Regional Development Fund

Connecting cities
Building successes

URB
ACT

FOREWORD

Mr. Miklós Csomós, Deputy Mayor
City of Budapest

A word from the Lead Partner

The ROMA-NeT journey started three years ago. At that point the closing of the project seemed to be far away and yet we arrived there very quickly, too quickly we feel. We have still so many plans to realize, ideas to share. We think that is not at all the end of the journey, but the beginning of it.

The Cities of ROMA-NeT have now started on a new road – and the shared experiences, mutual thinking and common lessons will serve as an excellent starting point. We will of course need further supporters along the road, since the most important lesson we learnt is the importance of partnership; the inclusion of all stakeholders, and the establishing of sound relationships and synergies.

Finally some words to our ROMA-NeT partners, Lead Expert and thematic experts: without you we could not have made it! Thank you all and let's keep on working for the inclusion of our Roma fellow citizens!

Csomós Miklós
Deputy Mayor
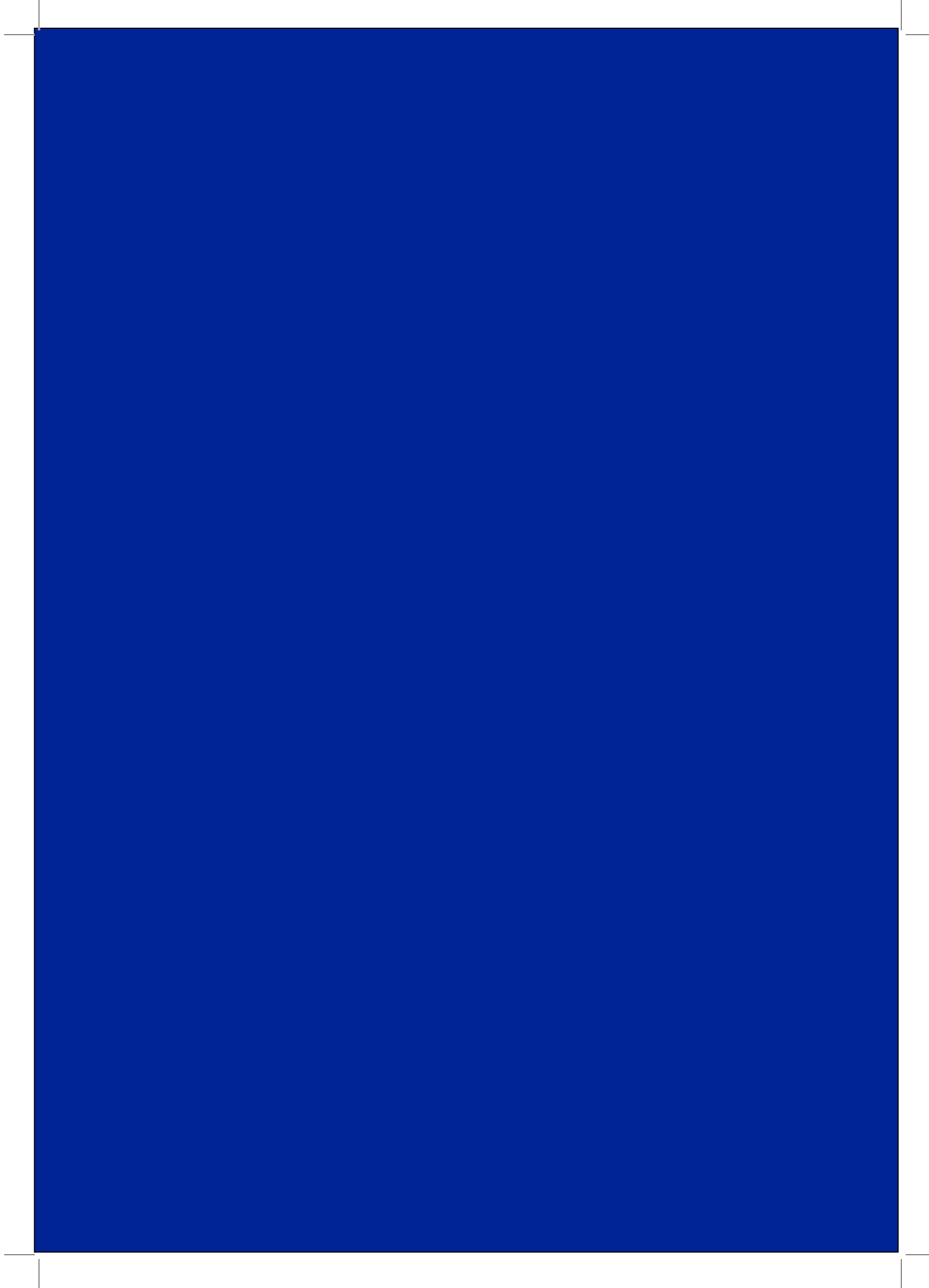
OUR FINAL REPORT

**Connecting cities
Building successes**

This report has been written by Ann Morton Hyde, Lead Expert with contributions from Gizella Mátyási, Lead Partner, all ROMA-NeT partners and the support of The Social Marketing Gateway.

For more information contact Info@roma-net.com

URBACT is a European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable urban development.

It enables cities to work together to develop solutions to major urban challenges, reaffirming the key role they play in facing increasingly complex societal changes.

URBACT helps cities to develop pragmatic solutions that are new and sustainable, and that integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions.

It enables cities to share good practices and lessons learned with professionals involved in urban policy throughout Europe.

URBACT is 300 cities, 29 countries, and 5,000 active participants.

URBACT is jointly financed by ERDF and the Member States.

Projects, grouped in areas of expertise, are the core of the URBACT Programme. They work on nine areas of expertise:

- Active inclusion
- Cultural heritage and city development
- Disadvantaged neighbourhoods
- Human capital and entrepreneurship
- Innovation and creativity
- Low Carbon Urban Environments
- Metropolitan Governance
- Port Cities
- Quality sustainable living
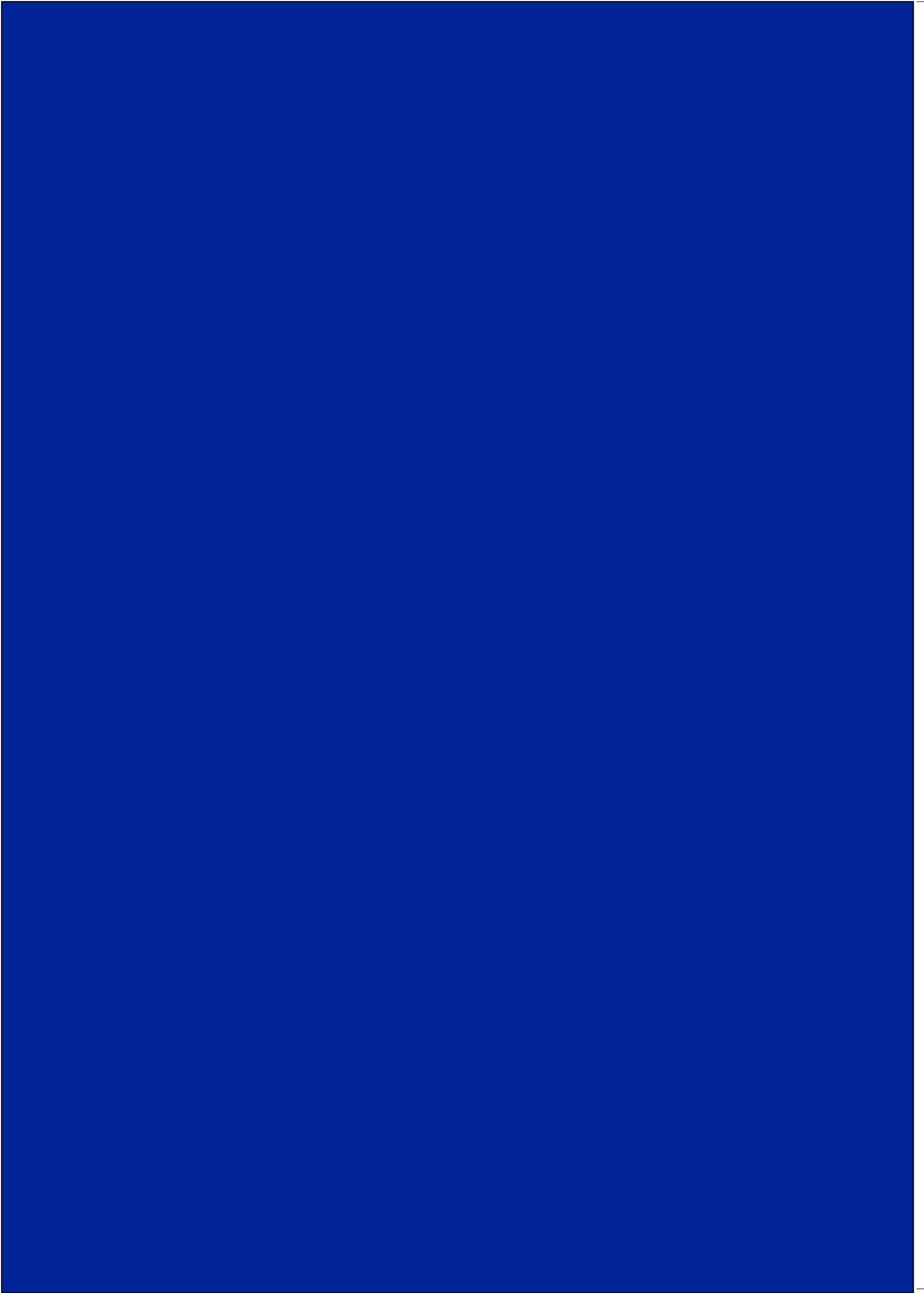- Further information can be found on the URBACT webpage: www.urbact.eu
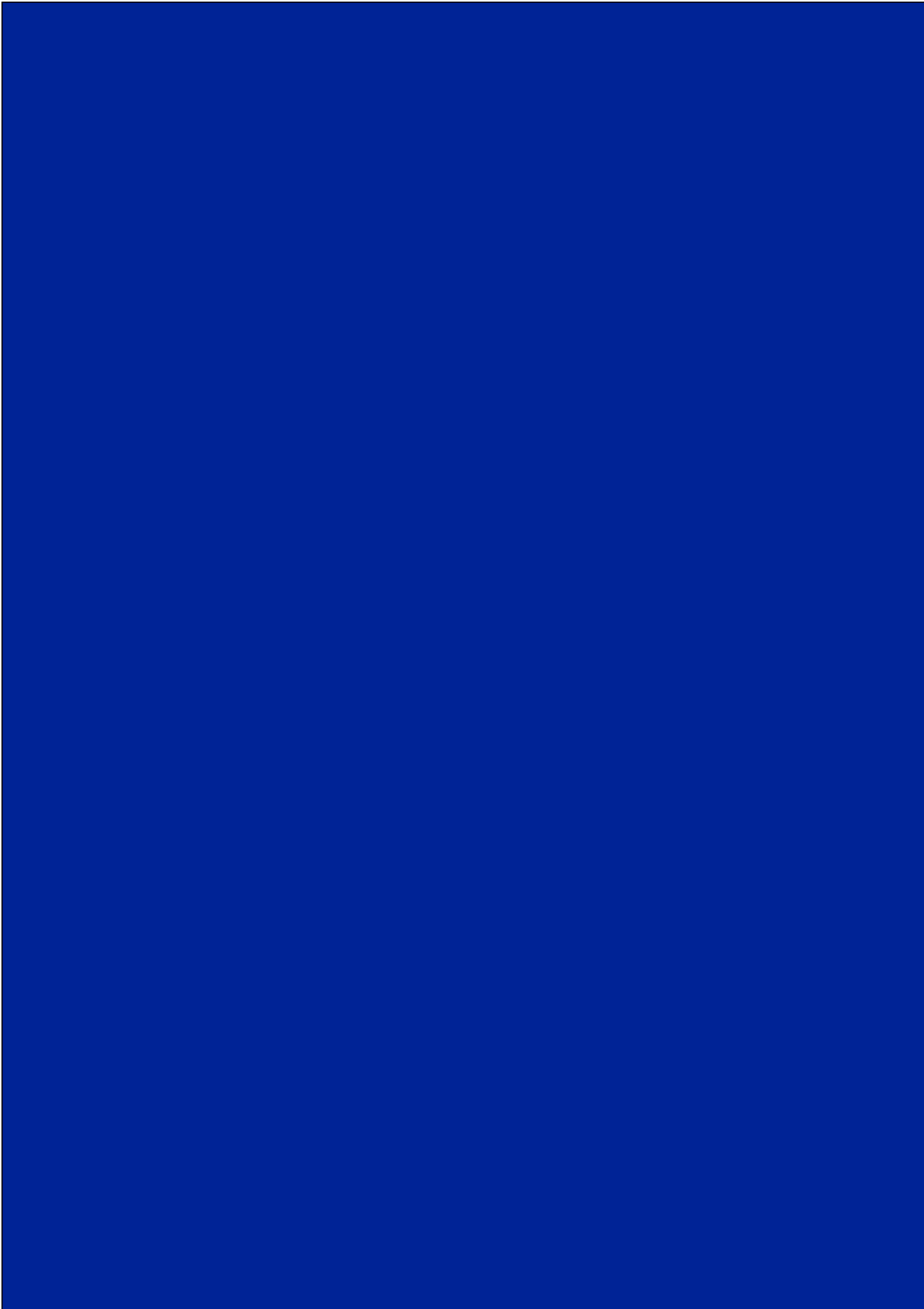
KEY MESSAGES FROM ROMA-NET CITIES TO OTHER EUROPEAN CITIES

- Cities with a Roma community, whether long term residents or new arrivals, facing problems of exclusion, marginalisation and discrimination should listen to the experiences of the ROMA-NeT Cities.

- Roma integration is not a project that only has one element; it is a process that should integrate a number of key elements.

- The integrated, community-led approach is the only way forward for social inclusion of Roma and other vulnerable groups.

- Involving Roma people from the beginning is key! If they seem disinterested, you are not trying hard enough!

- A step-by-step approach is needed. Roma integration takes time and effort. Initiatives forcing too big an "integration leap" (e.g. moving Roma families from ghettos to quality blocks of flats) are doomed to fail. Instead of pushing Roma people to make the leap all at once, a gradual integration process needs to be in place with active, individual support and communication along the way.

- The Sinti in Italy do not want to live in camps anymore, we must work together with the communities to change and improve their living conditions

- Cities not only offer the playing field to develop and deliver innovative practices, they can bring much needed continuing commitment to ensure successful practices are sustained and rolled out over the long term.

- At this stage the operational experience of tackling Roma exclusion in cities is pretty limited, but the foundation and knowledge base is there to build good practice upon.

- What we need is a massive increase in action - a significant growth in new initiatives from many more cities in Europe. Through these actions we can discover what really works; we can create good practices, but most importantly we can start to build a pathway that will improve the living conditions and life circumstances of all Roma populations in Europe.

- We can all play a part – bridges need to be built between Roma and non-Roma in our societies.

- Initiatives like ROMA-NeT are very powerful in generating the conditions and will for positive change, but there is still a huge amount of work to be done.

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1. Introduction

The ROMA-NeT partnership was created in November 2009 with an overarching focus on Roma integration, with a collective purpose to advance the social and economic inclusion of Roma populations living in the partner cities.

This report aims to provide an overview of the activities that have been applied at transnational, national and local levels and the achievements that have already been delivered to the cities and by the cities. To set out what has happened as a consequence of ROMA-NeT, this report outlines actions that most probably would not have occurred without the project and the significant leverage derived from being part of the URBACT II programme and the transnational involvement that it offers.

ROMA-NeT cities still have much to do to make Roma integration a reality in their own city, but because of their participation in ROMA–NeT they are much better prepared for the challenges that lie ahead. The city administrations now have much stronger links with the Roma community and the know-how to ensure that the voice of the Roma community is heard and taken into account. Cities now have a better informed knowledge base to work from and a greater understanding of interventions that can make a real difference. Core Local Support Groups (LSGs) of key stakeholders have been established in each city and operationally these key practitioners are now working together to plan and deliver local interventions. Very importantly the LSGs now have greater involvement and closer connections with the Roma community to ensure that the community is involved in planning and delivering local actions.
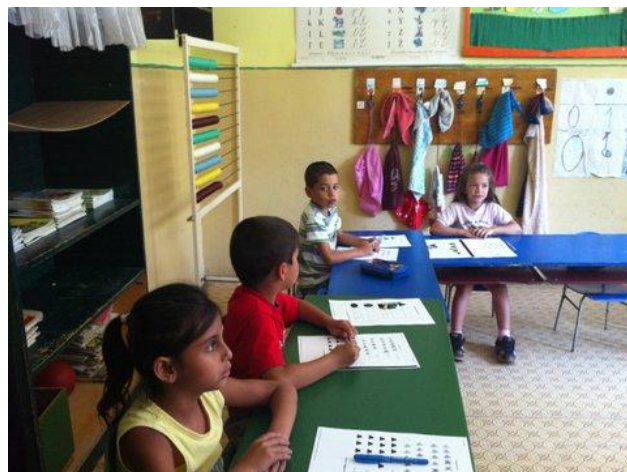
2. Where did we start ?

The ROMA-NeT partnership is now made up of the Cities of:

- Budapest, Hungary – Lead Partner
- Almeria, Spain
- Bologna, Italy
- Glasgow, Scotland, UK
- Karviná, Czech Republic
- Košice, Slovakia
- Nagykálló, Hungary
- Torrent, Spain
- Udine, Italy
- Bobigny, France (associate partner)

The project started with a six month development phase in November 2009, although the list of partners was not the same as today. Glasgow, Košice and Torrent joined the partnership at the end of the development phase in May 2010 to either expand the number of members or replace the two cities that departed from the project. Full implementation started in September 2010 with a first meeting of all members in Heraklion, Greece, but due to administrative and financial constraints Heraklion exited from the partnership in June 2011. This place was quickly occupied by Nagykálló from Hungary. Bobigny from the Ile de France region has participated as an associate partner since March 2011.

The Roma populations in the ROMA-NeT cities vary considerably. Some like Budapest (Hungary) have large resident populations of around 80,000 people and others like Udine (Italy) have a small population

of Roma families. The cities developed a baseline which revealed that although the situation of Roma

is not uniform, there are a number of common characteristics and core problems that most Roma communities have to face. These apply regardless of whether Roma have been in the country for centuries, for decades or if they are relatively new arrivals, as asylum seekers or most recently as economic migrants from other EU countries.

In Roma populations in all ROMA-NeT cities we see poverty, social and economic exclusion, physical marginalisation, segregation and systemic discrimination. These factors are evident in the low levels of education, illiteracy and housing choices as well as the higher unemployment and health problems Roma face when compared with the majority population. The reality of the situation is also that migrating Roma are not in a position to leave behind the shackles and the defects that years of exclusion, discrimination and poverty have had on their lives, but in most cases these burdens travel with them and have a very real influence on the living conditions and life choices they make in the new country.

I was completely unaware at the start of the project of the extent and depth of poverty experienced by Roma across Europe. I admit my knowledge had been shaped by common misconceptions and stereotypes and ROMA-NeT has challenged these views, improved my knowledge and given me the confidence to challenge public perceptions about the Roma community.

Marie McLelland, Glasgow City Council

ROMA-NeT emerged at a time when there was a shift in emphasis in the EU, the Commission[1] and the Parliament[2] both expressed growing expectations that Cities (municipalities) would take on a much more significant role in addressing the issues of Roma exclusion. In the past the experience of creating and implementing interventions with the potential to tackle the complexities of Roma exclusion had largely belonged to the NGO, the not for profit sector. NGOs tried to fill the operational gap between policy and the on-the-ground reality and in many cases they have done an outstanding job, but as is often the case, NGO led activities are hampered by inadequate funding, limited coverage and insufficient investment, which impacts on sustainability and makes longevity difficult and often impossible to achieve. Many good quality Roma-focused initiatives closed because short-term funding ran out, often before they could fully test and prove their real worth.

The growing expectations that cities would take a leading role in Roma inclusion provided ROMA-NeT with much stronger EU recognition and the project was designated as an URBACT, Fast Track Project. This status acknowledged that the subject matter was of significant relevance to one of the seven priority themes of the "Regions for Economic Change".

It was recognised that cities are well placed to build partnerships across stakeholders and service providers, to harness the energy and the actions of the NGOs already working on relevant interventions and crucially importantly to actively pursue and engage the Roma community as partners. On that basis ROMA-NeT moved forward with the development of the local structures to underpin Roma inclusion activities.

ROMA-NeT partners visit Govanhill in Glasgow

Roma children at School in Torrent

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[1] A second meeting of the Platform took place in Brussels in June 2009, when it was clearly stated that the practical delivery of relevant interventions lies firmly at local level and is the responsibility of Regional and Municipalities.http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=518&langId=en&eventsId=206&furtherEvents=yes

[2] Council Conclusions on Inclusion of the Roma 2947th EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL POLICY, HEALTH AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS Council meeting, Luxembourg, 8 June 2009 http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/lsa/108377.pdf

3. What did ROMA-NeT do ?

3.1 Local Support Groups

ROMA-NeT followed the well tested URBACT methodology which requires each partner city to establish a Local Support Group (LSG). The municipalities took the lead to create the LSGs made up of a collection of representatives from a wide range of local stakeholders. LSGs included city stakeholders from across all services such as education, healthcare, employment, housing, policing and political organisations. Most importantly, LSGs also include local Roma organisations.

The LSGs brought together stakeholders that were working with Roma communities and engaged others that had responsibilities to provide services to the Roma community. **In all ROMA-NeT cities the creation of the LSG was the first time that service providers and organisations had come together at the local level to share experiences and to talk about Roma inclusion actions.** Across ROMA-NeT 139 people are members of a LSG, figure 1 shows numbers by city.
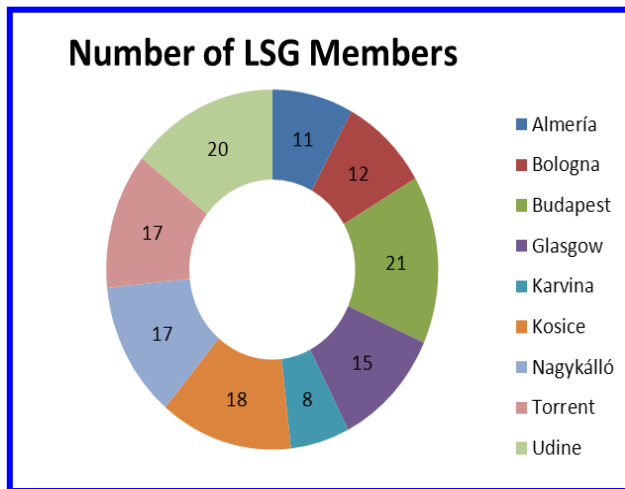

Figure 1

A key factor of the LSG was to make sure that the Roma community had an active voice in the proceedings, either through direct representation in the group or through other local activities to engage and encourage discussion with the local Roma communities.

During the course of implementation, a programme of LSG meetings led by the local authority/ municipality were carried out in in the ROMA-NeT

cities. A total of 120 LSG meetings were held – figure 2 provides a breakdown of these meetings every six months by city from 2010 to 2012/2.
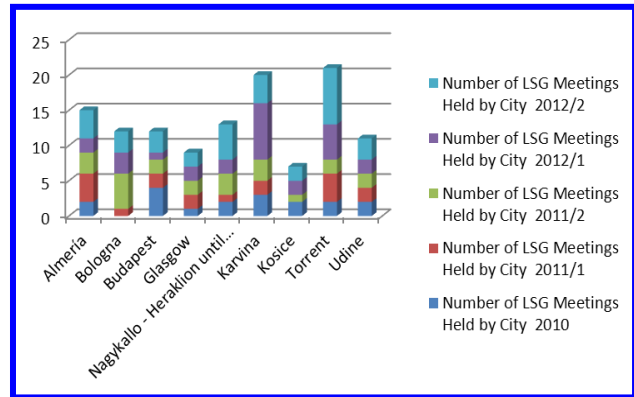

Figure 2

The LSG structure proved to be very relevant for ROMA-NeT cities. Generally the ROMA-NeT cities were working at local level with no connection between service providers and no clear understanding of how or whether local services met the needs of the Roma community. ROMA-NeT motivated the LSGs to think about joining up local services to work more effectively together.

The ROMA-NeT work programme gave special attention to involving LSG members in the transnational learning and exchange activities. The aim was not only to support LSG members with their local work, but to increase the capacity of individual LSG members, to extend the knowledge base of the whole LSG and to enlarge their networks and build a foundation for future co-operation.

Over time the LSGs transformed into productive planning environments to develop ideas and stimulate new thinking. But about half way through the project most LSGs were struggling to move forward from problem identification and discussion into active problem resolution and planning.

This challenge was resolved when the LSGs brought in the support of an independent facilitator to help navigate the LSG discussions and to create relevant planning frameworks to support the development of the Local Action Plan (LAP).

Most ROMA-NeT cities are committed to retain the LSG structure beyond the life of ROMA-NeT as it has provided an effective governance structure to underpin the planning for Roma inclusion interventions and to prepare for opportunities in the next EU operational programming period 2014 - 2020. LSGs also have the potential to perform as local steering groups to oversee implementation of the local action plans and the continued development of Roma inclusion actions.

The Torrent Local Support Group has launched an online training platform to deliver specialised intercultural courses on Roma mediation. So far 35 students have been involved
http://ideattorrent.com

The Nagykálló Local Support Group has identified four key elements of successful Roma integration:
- *housing*
- *employment*
- *family / education*
- *support for integration*

In all four areas, the Local Support Group has already started to launch activities, and in three out of four, there are some initial results. The Local Support Group is in discussion with the Regional Operation Programme Managing Authority in Hungary to launch a pilot project on social urban rehabilitation in Nagykálló. This will be an integrated project, with a social housing element at its centre. The estimated value of the project is approximately EUR 0.7 Million

Budapest uses the URBACT method to tackle social inclusion issues. Budapest received financing from the European Integration Fund to organise the Budapest Roundtable for Migration. In this project the municipality plans to apply URBACT's Local Support Group method to map the migration field and to co-produce an activity plan by local stakeholders for decision makers. During the project there will be specific capacity-building for all the stakeholders.

3.2. Transnational Exchange and Learning

During ROMA-NeT the transnational learning cluster activities provided the cohesion for the network.

The learning clusters followed an interactive and participatory approach to ensure full and active participation and to maximise the learning experience of all participants. It was at these events that partners were provided with the opportunity to learn from the experiences of a range of Thematic Experts. Equally important, this was where partners shared their own experiences and participated in peer-learning activities.

During ROMA-NeT six learning cluster events were organised under three thematic topics, all of which were identified as relevant to provide local support groups with the know-how to tackle issues that existed in the partner cities. These learning clusters also provided the necessary tools to be effective in the development and implementation of their local action plans. The learning clusters were organised around three overarching themes:

- **Learning cluster 1** - active community engagement and local empowerment - including effective participatory activities; anti-discrimination awareness; social marketing;

- **Learning cluster 2** - integrated and area-based approach to tackling exclusion and segregation including the application of an integrated area-based approach to service provision; tackling segregation using housing improvement; and inclusive approaches to area-based regeneration.

- **Learning Cluster 3** - Building a transitional labour market – creating, supporting and using an intermediate labour market; the role of the social economy/ social firms; justification for using social accounting and audit.

A total of 220 people participated in the six learning cluster events.   Figure 3 provides a breakdown of the number of participants at the six learning cluster events.

LSG members were encouraged to attend learning cluster events. Cities were invited to bring at least one LSG member, preferably from outside the municipality to each transnational learning event.

During the learning clusters, LSG members were encouraged to participate in joint learning actions with partners from other cities, then to consider how the new learning could be applied to the situation in their particular city.
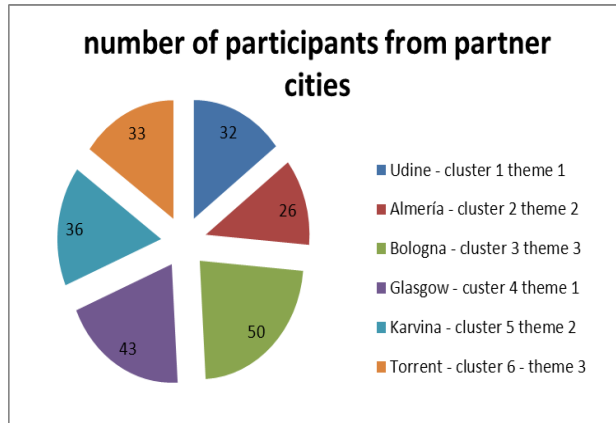
number of participants from partner cities

Udine - cluster 1 theme 1
Almería - cluster 2 theme 2
Bologna - cluster 3 theme 3
Glasgow - custer 4 theme 1
Karvina - cluster 5 theme 2
Torrent - cluster 6 - theme 3

Figure 3

An important factor that made sure that ROMA-NeT learning clusters were open to all LSG members was that language interpretation (usually Spanish, Italian and Czech/ Slovak) was provided at each event. When a partner city hosted the learning cluster event, the whole LSG was involved in the preparation and delivery of the event.

I increased my knowledge of a situation in my own city that I had no understanding of, but moreover I went on a journey with colleagues who became friends. We did our best to help the communities affected in our own cities by using the examples of good working practices that we shared with each other on our journey.

Tracy McDonald
Glasgow City Council
(now Spire Housing Association)

The learning cluster events not only provided a positive and inspirational atmosphere for learning, they also offered opportunities for partners to witness first-hand the situation of Roma living in other European countries. This was a crucial part of the learning cluster activities as it provided the host city with an opportunity to illustrate the local situation and gave visiting cities the chance to compare the situation with their own city. For Glasgow and Bobigny where Roma families are choosing to move from Eastern European cities, this

helped them to understand the bigger picture and gave them an insight into the push and pull factors that influence people to move from Eastern to Western Member States.

The learning clusters also offered opportunities for ROMA-NeT to invite other cities and organisations to provide their examples of good practice. The city of Rotherham in England, UK attended the Glasgow Learning Cluster to talk about their projects for new arrival Roma. A DG Regio representative also attended the Glasgow meeting to talk about Roma Inclusion in the next EU programming period. The Fundacion Secretariado Gitanos attended the Bologna cluster to explain about the ACCEDDER, an employment and training programme focusing on Roma in Spain and Romania, and the Val-de-Marne, Department for Roma Integration attended the Karviná cluster to talk about Roma housing measures being developed in France.

My ROMA-Net learning journey has been personally and professionally enriching.
I appreciate the contributions of each of the partners. I especially appreciate the work of the Lead Expert and Lead Partner, for their good work and enthusiasm joining us together and making us believe in a special and different project. It has benefited not only the Roma population, but also the key personnel who have participated in it.

Maria José Muñoz Pretel
European Programmes, Torrent

As a Fast Track project, the ROMA-NeT partner cities had the potential to engage their European Structural Fund Managing Authorities (MAs). Some cities developed a real working relationship with the MAs, but for others the physical distance from the seat of the MA hindered the establishment of active working relations. Budapest, Udine, Bologna, Nagykálló and Glasgow all established good working relations while Košice, Karviná, Torrent and Almería kept the MAs informed about the project activities through electronic correspondence.

Value Added from MA Participation

The **Budapest** LSG benefited from their active relationship with their MA. The Central-Hungary Regional Operational Programme MA incorporated the projects of NGO members of the Budapest LSG into urban regeneration projects being carried out in different districts of Budapest. The NGOs receive financial support for their activities.

Both **Glasgow** and **Nagykálló** are in discussion with their MA about new projects to be funded

MA participation was originally envisaged and provided for in the ROMA-NeT budget, for the Almería, Glasgow and Torrent meetings. During ROMA-NeT seven MA representatives attended the transnational learning cluster events.   Three attended the Almería event; two came to Glasgow and one to Torrent.   In addition one MA representative attended the Udine and two participated in the Karviná learning cluster event.

Involvement of the MAs in LSG meetings is difficult to achieve; bilateral meetings work better. Although, in the case of Bologna and Glasgow, the MA representative actively participated in their LSG meetings.

MA participation in the project added value, both to the international exchange and to the local work. But to accommodate for their heavy work load, fewer meetings should be planned with MA participation.   Although peer meetings with MA representatives are beneficial, for ROMA-NeT the real value was to involve them in the group work when cities planned their local actions. Joint travel to transnational events offered good opportunities for discussions.

ROMA-NeT provided a knowledge transfer vehicle that was of particular use to the Scottish Government and many local authorities in Scotland. As the partner in the project, Glasgow City Council had its own important reasons for involvement. Around 3000 people of Roma descent began to settle in a small area of the city. Whilst Glasgow has always had a good reputation for welcoming migrant populations, different people need different support. ROMA-NeT developed that support network.

The Scottish Government participated in that local network from the early stages to engage with the issues the authority had to deal with. European Funding support was developed for some small-scale interventions which were worthwhile, particularly to meet the Commission proposal to ensure that future funding includes opportunities for the Roma population.

As ESF Portfolio Manager with responsibility for Glasgow City Council it both helped me to understand local support issues and, where necessary, to get other colleagues in their business areas to take notice and support the Roma project. The transnational cooperation encouraged awareness of issues throughout mainland Europe and provided an insight into the conditions that Roma people live in.

Tony McGale, Scottish Government Managing Authority

3.3. P-t-P Exchange Activities

I am now a lot clearer in my understanding of the conditions from which many Roma have come to Scotland. Roma are treated worse than second class citizens by many in Slovakia and I saw local authorities actively working against their citizens. The basics of life – food, shelter, education, and work - are options not being provided for many Roma, who are denied the opportunities available to others to better themselves and progress.

It was good to see how programmes like ROMA-NeT can support local development. Roma-Net requires cities to form a Local Steering Group and to create a local action plan. This means that cities like Košice need to think afresh about Roma inclusion, to bring together diverse partners and local authority departments. This forces cities into action which would never otherwise have been taken.

David Zabiega, LSG Member, Glasgow about his visit to Košice

ROMA-NeT introduced the concept of P-t-P exchanges, which meant either people-to-people, place-to-place or partner-to partner exchanges. Originally it was envisaged that one or two partners would work together to build their knowledge about a selected relevant topic.   It was envisaged that partners would link together and make joint study visits to a selected location.

Although this is a good idea it was more difficult to operationalise than originally foreseen, largely due to language barriers and the fact that the cities preferred to learn and travel with counterparts from their own city. Originally the idea was that the P-t-P exchanges would include study visits to learn from other cities, outside ROMA-NeT, that have Roma populations and have a message or particular experience to share. In reality, this only happened to a limited extent as partners chose to use the P-t-P

facility to arrange meetings with other ROMA-NeT partners.

A total of 37 people from seven ROMA-NeT cities participated in P-t-P activities.   The two most popular cities for partners to visit were Budapest and Košice. Figures 4 and 5 provide a visual representation of the P-t-P activities.

Visiting cities (calculated based on the number of organised visits)

Legend: Almería, Bologna, Budapest, Glasgow, Karvina, Nagykálló, Torrent

7.7%, 7.7%, 15.4%, 23.1%, 23.1%, 7.7%, 15.4%

Figure 4

Host cities (calculated based on received visits)

Legend: Almería, Bologna, Budapest, Glasgow, Nagykálló, Kosice

12.5%, 12.5%, 25%, 12.5%, 12.5%, 25%
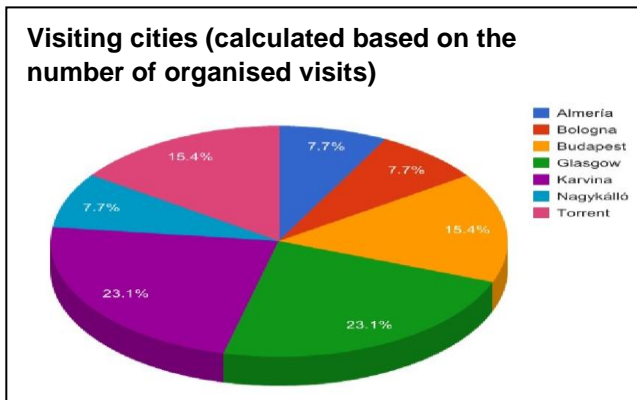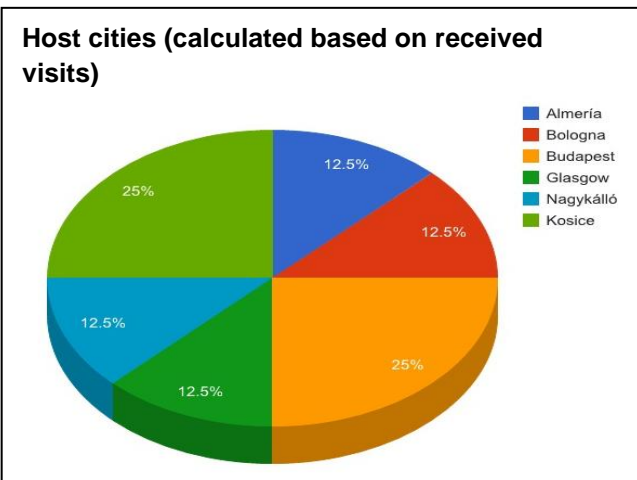
Figure 5

We would never have made our connections with Arad (report on website) and EuroCities without ROMA-NeT. Also connections with Rotherham (I visited there and got some great ideas) came out of ROMA-Net. ROMA-NeT has an extremely powerful influence on agencies and NGOs in Glasgow and has definitely influenced thinking and policy in social work, education, health and housing.

Keith Moore Milne
Social Worker and LSG Member, Glasgow

3.4. Local Action Plans (LAPs) and Dissemination Activities

Local Action Plans (LAPs)

LAPs have been co-produced in each city by the LSGs. In line with ROMA-NeT thinking, they call for an integrated approach to Roma inclusion and a step-by-step methodology to improve the services and the life opportunities of Roma populations living in their city. The LAPs all have a long-term goal of social and economic inclusion of Roma. ROMA-NeT cities know that many small steps can bring about big changes.

The LAPs are very much owned by the LSG, and the members of the LSG will be responsible for implementation of the priority objectives in partnership with their local Roma communities. The LAPs are published documents, and the aims, objectives and the need for financial support has been disseminated at local stakeholder events.

Ordinarily, ROMA-NeT's Fast Track status and the connections between partners and Operational Programme MAs would ensure access to European Regional Development Fund or European Social Fund. However, ROMA-NeT will be concluded at the end of this programming period, and before the new programmes for the 2014 – 2020 are agreed.   But ROMA-NeT partners will maintain their links with their MAs to ensure that adequate provision is made in the new programmes for Roma inclusion. This should ensure access to EU funds for implementation of the LAP priorities.

Dissemination Activities

Dissemination activities to promote the long term aims of the ROMA-NeT cities has taken place throughout implementation.

Lead Expert meets the LSG Members in Torrent

In 2010

May: ROMA-NeT representatives from Budapest LSG presented about Roma inclusion at the RegGov meeting in the Municipality of Köbánya

October: the Lead Expert led a session on Integration of Roma-populations in Duisburg to representatives from the North Rhine-Westphalia region within the project "NRW fit for Europe".

December: the Lead Partner participated in the Roma Platform meeting in Brussels.

In 2011

March: ROMA-NeT was represented at the meeting of the Roma Task Force of Eurocities, Ghent. Gizella Matyasi gave a short presentation and distributed an information leaflet.

May: ROMA-NeT was represented at two events. Gizella Matyasi presented at the Conference on the Danube Strategy organized by Baden-Württemberg; and ROMA-NeT led at the 'Cities and Regions - Joining Forces for Inclusion of Roma Population' seminar organised by Budapest, Eurocities and the Committee of the Regions.   ROMA-Net was high on the agenda. The Lead Expert moderated the morning session, the Mayor of Udine and Deputy-Mayor of Budapest both provided presentations about the aims of ROMA-NeT.   The event attracted 110 participants from EU institutions, regions and cities.

September: at the 'EU High level meeting in Slovakia' the Košice partner presented about ROMA-NeT. A representative from the Glasgow LSG and the Thematic Expert on housing also attended the event.

October: at EU Open Days the lead partner and Košice both made presentations about ROMA-NeT.

November: the Lead Partner attended the Roma Platform. Budapest and Bologna both presented ROMA-Net at the National URBACT II information days in Hungary and Italy respectively.

In 2012

February: Glasgow LSG organised a local dissemination seminar for the Scottish Government and other local authorities in Scotland.

March: the Lead Partner, Lead Expert and a representative from the Glasgow LSG participated in the Extraordinary Platform on Roma Inclusion. The Lead Expert acted as Rapporteur and contributed feedback for the final report.

June: Bologna LSG organised a round table event for local organisations to discuss ROMA-NeT.

September: a Budapest LSG member presented at the 5th Consultation meeting with Cities Regions and other Stakeholders organised by the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and in the framework of the Alliance of Cities and Regions for Roma inclusion.

October: representatives from the Budapest, Glasgow and Karvina LSGs attended the Making the Most of RI conference of Open Society Foundation.

November: ROMA-NeT motivated DG Regional and Urban Policy to host a final dissemination seminar in Brussels for ROMA-NeT. Key EU decision and policy makers attended and several partners presented on behalf of all ROMA-NeT partners the LAP priorities and the needs for the future.

December: the Lead Expert and several partners and LSG attended the URBACT II Annual Conference 'Cities of Tomorrow; Action Today' in Copenhagen.

LSG Members in discussion at a Glasgow event

Partners engage with EU officials at Brussels

Mayor of Udine presents to EU officials

THEMATIC GUIDES - An Introduction to the Challenges of Roma Inclusion

The experience and learning that the ROMA-NeT cities have undertaken during implementation have been captured in a series of eight thematic guides containing case studies. The guides were produced to help cities build their understanding of the issues facing Roma communities and therefore facing cities. By sharing good practice from across the EU, the guides offer some pathways to consider and a range of useful contacts and resources at your fingertips.

The thematic guides cover the following topics:

ROMA-NeT – An Introduction to the Challenges of Roma Inclusion
ROMA-NeT – The Education Challenges of Roma Inclusion
ROMA-NeT – The Health and Social Care Challenges of Roma Inclusion
ROMA-NeT – The Housing Challenges of Roma Inclusion
ROMA-NeT – The Employability Challenges of Roma Inclusion
ROMA-NeT – The Policing Challenges of Roma Inclusion
ROMA-NeT – Roma on the Move in Europe – The Challenges for Inclusion
ROMA-NeT – The Planning and Governance for Roma Inclusion

The guides were published to coincide with the final dissemination event which took place in Brussels in November 2012 when ROMA-NeT partners gathered to present their Local Action Plans, their local priorities and aims for the future, and what they had learned during ROMA-NeT implementation. The seminar was hosted by DG Regional and Urban Policy and it provided an opportunity for partners to hear about financing opportunities in the next programming period. Speakers and participants from the European Parliament, the European Commission, the Committee of the Region and Brussels representations of European regions and cities took part in the event. The main messages from the ROMA-NeT cities are summed up in slides presented by Nagykálló at the Brussels event, as shown below.

One step at a time: Roma integration takes time and effort. Initiatives forcing too big an "integration leap" (e.g. moving Roma families from ghettos to quality block of flats) are doomed to fail. Therefore, instead of pushing Roma people to make the leap all at once, a gradual integration process needs to be in place, with active, individual support and communication along the road.

More than one piece: Roma integration is not a project that only has one element. Instead, it is a process that needs to integrate a number of key elements. Only providing a better housing environment, or just giving a job in itself is far from sufficient.

Involving Roma is key at a very early stage: you cannot improve their situation, you cannot make their life better - only they have the power to change their lives; you can only support this process. Therefore, it is essential to involve them from the start. You have to be prepared, however, to adopt innovative ways of involving Roma people - traditional participative methods will not work!

4. What did we learn during ROMA-NeT?

Learning and building the knowledge base and capacity of the LSG members was a core objective of ROMA-NeT. The learning was focused on the three thematic areas of:

- **Community engagement and local empowerment.**
- **Integrated approach to housing and local service provision.**
- **Roma employability: understanding the barriers to employment.**

The participatory learning methods that were applied during the transnational learning clusters made sure that partners were actively involved, thus creating a more positive learning experience for partners. In Udine and Almería, the cities worked with an 'Ideas Market Place'.

In Bologna, partners discussed challenges in 'Action Learning Sets'. In Glasgow partners planned using the 'Roma Employability Landscape'. In Karviná partners participated in a fishbowl discussion about the Roma situation in the city. And in Torrent partners shared their ideas and provided feedback about the city LAP through a four corners workshop covering education, health, housing, and employment.

> **From ROMA-NeT I have learned to respect differences and to hope for the possibility of the integration of the Roma community respecting their idiosyncrasies.**
>
> Mª Muñoz Cervera
> (economic development area)

Learning points were captured during the transnational learning events. The learning points provided an effective means of reflecting and remembering what had been learned during the sessions and practical exercises. Over 150 learning points were collected during the six learning cluster activities. From this, the following key learning points have been extracted to provide a clear insight into the learning journey undertaken by the participants.

ROMA-NeT cluster workshops

The theme of the learning cluster was community engagement and empowerment and included the three learning components: effective participatory activities; anti-discrimination awareness; and social marketing. The key learning points from these topics were:

- 'Nothing about us without us' – this is a key message for all ROMA-NeT actions.
- To help improve inclusion, we need to look at ourselves and what we do, not just at what the Roma community does.
- It is important to develop closer relationships with the Roma community if we want to bring about change in behaviour. If not, we will not know what their views are. We need to give them a chance to be fully involved.
- The problem is not changing the young Roma individual or community but at a political level: politicians, NGOs, institutions need to change – a big issue needs a big answer/solution.
- Ask Roma people and listen to Roma people.
- We are not going to solve everything at once – we need to proceed with small steps.
- Follow an Integrated approach – this is not just one department's responsibility.
- Changing the way that a service is delivered can better engage the community.

Partners on site visit in Karvina

- Though there are differences in Roma communities in the partner cities, we have similar problems so it was good to learn from each other.
- There are a lot more stakeholders than we first thought. We need to work with all of them in different ways - it will be a challenge.

Partners visit Roma housing in Torrent

- Stakeholders all have different levels of power and influence. You need to choose the stakeholders according to what they can achieve.
- We don't yet have the insight to help us know what we need to do to bring about behaviour change among our target groups.
- Discrimination – there is still a lot of work that has to be done in different sectors such as schools and health. Single public bodies need to do a lot to raise awareness and tackle discrimination.
- Discrimination is everywhere but we all see it differently. It is a hard topic and we do not all feel comfortable talking about it.
- We should publicise positive stories and showcase the Roma population as having positive role models to both counter external prejudice and discrimination and to build optimism within the Roma community itself.
- The Ideas Market Place has been a very useful tool for these events.
- Working in a city-sharing environment was very positive – we liked the cross-city working situation.
- Methods used in learning clusters will be helpful when going back to our LSGs.
- When asked where the discrimination is, we realised that we just do not know. We need to go back to try to find out, but it will not be easy.
- We remember stories – this is a good way to share information.
- The learning is as much about the process as well as the outcome. Good process (methodologies) is not an obstacle to creativity; it is a tool.

4.2. Integrated approach to housing and local service provision – Key Learning Points

The theme of the learning cluster was the 'integrated and area-based approach to tackling exclusion and segregation – and included the three learning components; integrated area-based approach to service provision; tackling segregation using housing improvement; and inclusive approaches to area-based regeneration. The key learning points from these topics were:

- Housing is a good starting point but it is not enough on its own to solve social exclusion issues.
- Good housing design is crucial.
- Community participation needs to be at the core.
- Building an approach from the bottom of the community is a strong good practice example.
- Involving the Roma community in the physical construction of the buildings is successful.
- Community building should be designed with the people – it also affects the feeling of ownership.

> **This project will give us the opportunity to eliminate ghettos and to show that Roma can be integrated with the rest of the population of our city without losing their roots and identity.**
>
> Teresa Castillo Silla, (housing area)

- It takes considerable time to develop and build a regeneration project - especially with community participation.
- People in La Chanca took responsibility and were in a position to achieve change for themselves – a critical component of the success.
- The Almería case studies show that change takes time.
- A multi-disciplinary office within the community was an important part of the process of change.
- Integrated services - education, social, etc. work together - family is in the centre and an important component.
- Family involvement was impressive and a good lesson.

- A holistic integrated approach is needed to improve the quality of life of Roma.
- It is good practice to take the city administration into the segregated area in the shape of institutions, community housing etc.
- Sometimes temporary solutions create more problems i.e. bad housing conditions for the long-term – we can learn from the bad examples across Europe.

> **To me, ROMA-NeT means working to fulfill the rights of children, regardless of ethnicity - such as the right to education. This is one of the reasons why it is so worthwhile to work on social issues.**
>
> Antonia Rodriguez Rambla (family area)

- Enthusiasm of people working in the centre.
- Long-term commitment of the stakeholders is a crucial factor for success.
- Political support is needed – for long-term support and sustainability.
- Different countries have different reactions to Roma; for some countries it is more difficult to build relationships with Roma.
- Slavic countries are more insular and therefore have a greater challenge to co-exist with Roma communities.
- Even in Spain, Roma still have to fight for their integration – there is still discrimination, partly from institutions, public services (education), job market, housing etc.
- "We" – the public sector, NGOs - do a lot in order to integrate Roma, but Roma have to cooperate also and the majority population´s attitude should be changed as well. Passionate people make a difference.
- Positive thinking of the staff team was impressive.
-

4.3. Roma employability barriers to employment – Key Learning Points

The theme of the learning cluster was Roma Employability – creating a transitional labour market, it included the three learning components: Intermediate Labour Market projects; the role of the social economy; and social accounting. The key learning points from these topics were:

- The Fundacion Secretariado Gitano provided a good example of a work and training programme. Cities can learn from their good practice.
- Some issues relating to social welfare cannot be resolved locally and need a higher level of intervention, a policy change.
- The barriers to employment for Roma are complex and many.
- Many Roma that are working are working in informal or illegal jobs.
- The ROMA-NeT employability landscape was created during the learning cluster. Figure 6 displays the Roma Employability Landscape.
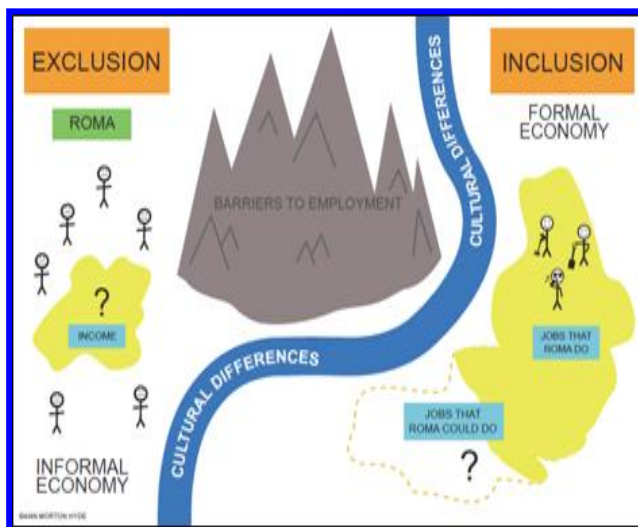

Figure 6

- From the presentations we saw and heard, we learned that there are similar problems, but also that the issues differ from city to city.
- Roma people work illegally in France – we need to look for ways to legalise the Roma community allowing them to work – we found the Bologna law example interesting.
- The Action Learning Sets method of working was interactive and particularly positive. Each person took time to think of the purpose carefully. It helped create respect for each other and how to listen.

Partners working together at a cluster workshop

- The learning method was used – problems were defined in smaller working groups each participant gave their view and discussions took place between everyone. Karviná will apply the method learned on their return.
- Budapest has to be much more open to the method that the LSG members bring and to be more flexible. This was learned throughout the two days of the Cluster.
- If we can't implement examples that were learned when we return to Bobigny we will look again at how we implement policies. This has given us new energy!
- The times we all came together over the Action Learning Sets has been a very dynamic learning environment.
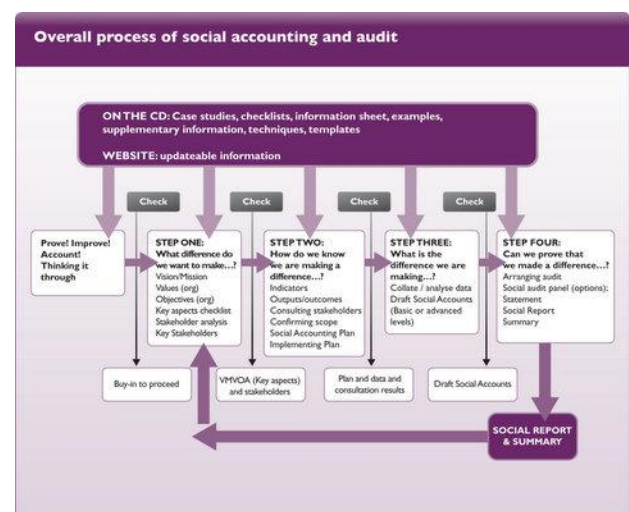
Learning about the social accounting and audit

5. The value added from ROMA-NeT

The value added from ROMA-NeT is extensive at local and transnational levels. The partners were asked to sum up the value of ROMA-NeT for their cities, this is what they said:

Almería

- ROMA-NeT provided visibility to Roma issues at European level.
- ROMA-NeT brought together cities that have the same problems/issues so we can build together the pathway for further improvement of the situation.
- ROMA-NeT taught us about the extent of the Roma situation all over Europe.
- ROMA-NeT gave us useful methodologies for local cooperation: e.g. the Local Support Group.
- The learning process and dialogue are essential inputs to deliver quality results: e.g. the LAP is an outcome of that process.

Bologna

- The LSG will meet regularly even after the end of the project.
- The LAP sets medium to long-term objectives and the Bologna Municipality commits itself in realising short-term plans, issued every year, taking the LAP into account.
- Having a LAP can help the Municipality in applying for other funds.
- Being part of a transnational network helps Cities to be invited into new projects.

Budapest

- ROMA-NET gave Budapest a good method for participative governance with an integrated approach focusing on specific complex issues.
- We learnt what efficiency/effectiveness levels and what kind of legitimacy we can reach with the engagement and involvement of the stakeholders of an issue.
- Look for the grassroots! In the small formal or informal groups of people you can find great resources in every community to develop local communities. Find, develop and sustain these groups, because they are the rough diamonds of society.

Glasgow

- ROMA-NeT has been an extremely powerful influence on agencies and NGOs in Glasgow and has definitely influenced thinking and policy in social work, education, health and housing.
- ROMA-NeT has raised the profile of Roma migration in Glasgow to a whole new political level that I didn't think was achievable at the start of the project.
- Glasgow is now making important commitments to improving the lives of the Roma who come here in physical, social and economic ways.
- There is an incredible wealth of talent and knowledge among the ROMA-NeT partners – many of whom work against considerable tides. Initiatives like ROMA-NeT enable ideas to develop and flourish and for supports to exist which otherwise would not be there.

Partners working on local action plans

Karviná

- ROMA-NeT gave us a new perspective on how to deal with the Roma issue.
- At regular meetings we discussed new information and findings from PtP, we developed a Local Action Plan.
- We should not be discussing about Roma people without having Roma people involved.

- We now realise that we have to meet with the Roma community, communicate with them, to get to know their views.

Kosice
- ROMA-NeT has restarted communication on Roma issues in Košice. It is one of the most complicated and complex issues and no one actor or institution can deal with it alone.
- From ROMA-NeT we now know much better about the strategies of other cities in Europe on Roma inclusion. No city is 100% successful, but the will and positive effort are absolute prerequisites for any progress.

Nagykálló
- ROMA-NeT led us to the realisation that Roma integration is an important issue that has to be dealt with locally.
- ROMA-NeT introduced a thought process with the involvement of key stakeholders to identify solutions to the most important challenges of Roma integration.
- ROMA-NeT made Nagykálló part of a functioning network of cities facing challenges in Roma integration.

Torrent
- The ROMA-NeT LSG has been strengthened and the project has stimulated political interest in participating in future European programmes.
- Before participating in ROMA-NeT we did not give importance to the partnership. We now know that there is strength and it is easier to get funding for future programmes with a partnership.
- In the future our city will address municipal problems from an integrated approach, when we can work in conjunction with other cities.

Flip chart from Cluster 5 workshops, Torrent.

Udine
- Being part of a EU programme provided external credibility which allowed the city to raise the issue of Roma inclusion to a much higher priority.
- Through ROMA-NeT we have developed our understanding that community engagement is an essential element of implementation, we are putting this into practice locally.
- ROMA-NeT forced us to consider the quality of services that were being delivered to our Roma communities. We are now working with them to develop a more integrated approach to local service delivery.

ROMA-NeT has generated a considerable number of spin-off activities in each of the partner cities. Beyond the planned transnational, learning and local outputs that were originally foreseen for

ROMA-NeT are a collection of activities that would not have happened without ROMA-NeT. The following paragraphs provide an insight into some of the spin-off activities that have either started or are planned for the future.

> **I´m sure our participation in ROMA-NeT will translate into more funding opportunities to improve the quality of life in our city. Torrent City cannot function without our Roma population. Losing them would be a significant loss of our identity. We cannot lose this; for us and the next generations.**
>
> Torrent City Mayor, Amparo Folgado Tonda

Bologna
- The LSG will continue to meet regularly beyond the life of ROMA-NeT. Bologna's LAP sets medium to long-term objectives. Bologna Municipality commits itself in realising short-term plans, issued every year, and to take into account the LAP aims and objectives. Having a LAP can help the Municipality to apply for other funds, and belonging to a network help gets us invited into other transnational projects.

Budapest
- The General Assembly plans to retain the LSG structure, this time not coordinated by the NGO Budapest Chance, but the city hall itself. The ongoing tasks of the LSG will be to: connect the NGOs to funds on all levels, from local funding to EU programmes; to find ways to

continue capacity building of the NGOs, focusing on the grassroots organisations and the municipal participants; to generate projects for the local support group and the municipality in partnership with the LSG participants; and to assist NGOs to get involved in the districts' integrated approach to social urban regeneration projects.

- In Hungary, every social urban regeneration project has to spend part of its finance on small 'soft' projects (up to €7000) to strengthen local communities and the local NGO sector. This has been put into practice by the **Budapest** LSG as a part of the Kőbánya Kis-Pongrác project where two ROMA-NeT NGOs won financing to implement community interventions to the Kis-Pongrác housing estate.

- **The "TElep+Én", is a project focusing on the youth** in **Budapest.** It uses photography to build a community that is proud of its residence, knows its history and that is actively participating in the change of the local environment. The activity will strengthen the local and the ethnic identity of the participants, and help to reach a residential community built up on well-balanced persons. It will offer a photography course for 15 local people, led by professionals with many years' experience. Participants have to learn to represent themselves and their residence, problems, and fields of interests through photography (as one of the most fashionable, easy to learn and wide spread artistic devices). The photos they create will show some kind of social mapping of the area through the eyes of local inhabitants.

- **Colorom Association** project is organising training for students to raise awareness about prejudice and discrimination. They apply an integrated and interactive approach of music, dance and sports, and during these activities students learn important lessons about each other's cultures. They expect to develop not only the personal competences of the participants, but also to motivate local community development by building a social network, an integrative micro-community amongst the participants that can find new ways and forms and contact points to be sustained after the end of the project.

Glasgow

- A number of community initiatives have been developed to focus on the Roma community. An employment and training programme, funded by European Social Fund is working to improve the employability, and to help young

Roma people to overcome the barriers to employment.

- An application has been made for a Technical Assistance project to ensure that the MA is prepared to incorporate the Roma inclusion objectives in the Operational Programmes for the 2014 – 2020 programming period. The project will undertake mapping and community engagement practices that will ensure that the MA has accurate information about the growing Roma population in Scotland.

- A larger intermediate labour market project is under development. As application is in progress with the UK National Lottery Fund for an employment and training project to create employment opportunities for Roma Mediators. Roma Mediators work with public sector organisations in areas with Roma populations to improve the community's access to essential public services.

Karviná

- A new **Roma Mentor** position was created. The Mentor regularly visits the Roma community to hear their views, and listen to them. It is not discussing about Roma people, but having new discussions with Roma people.

Košice

- Košice has undertaken the first ever in-depth analysis of municipal Roma integration policies during the last 20 years. This study serves as a unique description of what has been tried, what has been working and what we can build on. The study also raises questions that should be responded to so we can move forward with a process to overcome the unsatisfactory situation of Roma in our city.
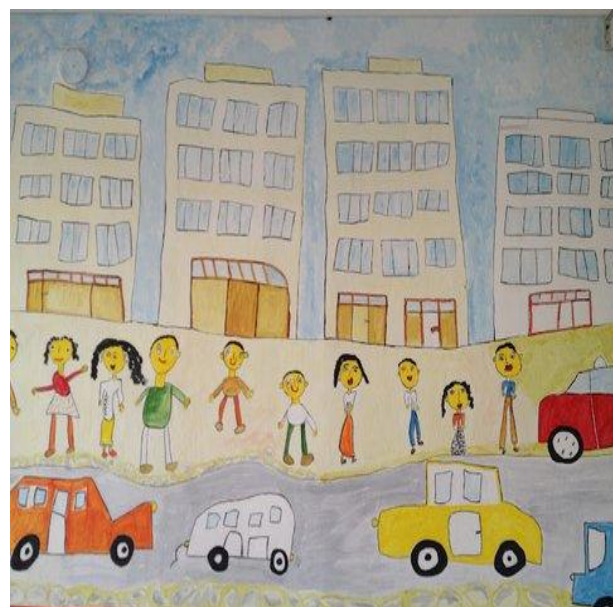
A painting by kindergarten children in Kosice

- Another added value is the fact that Košice will be European Capital of Culture in 2013 and social inclusion is an essential pillar of this project. Several Roma-related projects and events are scheduled for the next year.

Nagykálló

- In the LAP, the LSG has identified four key elements of successful Roma integration: housing; employment; family / education; and support for integration. In all four areas, the Local Support Group has already started to work to launch activities, and in three out of four, there are some initial results.
- **Housing**: as a result of the work of the LSG in the ROMA-NeT partnership, discussions have started with the Regional Operation Programme Managing Authority in Hungary to launch a pilot project on social urban rehabilitation in Nagykálló. This would be an integrated project, with a social housing element at its core. The estimated value of the project is approximately EUR 0.7 Million and the chances of support are good.
- **Family / education**: at one of the LSG meetings an expert from the Teacher Training College presented a case study - a project

  focusing on Roma women and children, teaching Roma mothers to reintroduce tale-reading into family life. The project - in addition to enhancing family ties and improving the reading skills of Roma women - also contributes to strengthening their confidence. The LSG members decided to adopt the project in Nagykálló - and now this project is already running.
- **Employment**: the municipality has launched a social cooperative, and in this cooperative, Roma men are increasingly involved to deliver agricultural work.

Transnational project

A three year project Roma Matrix, funded by the DG Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship "Action Grants" Programme, 1-2012 will include a number of the ROMA-NeT partner cities; Glasgow, Budapest, Bologna, Košice. Roma Matrix will work with 19 European Partners in to introduce a number of interventions including an anti-discrimination campaign to challenge stereotypes and influence behaviour change towards Roma populations. This project is led by Migration Yorkshire, has a value of €3.9 million, commences in April 2013. The connections for this project were made and established during ROMA-NeT.

Young people from ROMA-NeT, Torrent, Spain

Flamenco pupils from ROMA-NeT, Almeria, Spain

From an EU perspective ROMA-NeT has created cities that are better informed, better aware and better prepared to implement Roma inclusion / integration objectives. The joint learning, joint planning and local commitment that was achieved by ROMA-NeT cities is a clear demonstration that intercity working is effective. Intercity working is an efficient and effective way to look at the problems. Rather than cities doing it on their own they have the opportunity and additional support from peers. Intercity working creates a supportive environment for professionals to work together, learn together and problem solve together.

The European Commission (EC) is committed to Roma integration / inclusion and it is a requirement of the EC that Member States create a National Roma Integration Strategy and reflect this as a priority in the new Partnership Contracts and Operational Programmes for the period 2014-2020. ROMA-NeT provided a solid foundation of learning in the partner cities and the LAPs have the potential to be the basis of future EU Structural Fund supported initiatives focusing on Roma inclusion.

At city level, ROMA-NeT has put the issue of Roma inclusion on the table. It has provided cities with European exposure to better understand the extent of the problem. It has provided professional learning to help professionals understand the challenges and opportunities that underpin Roma inclusion interventions. Locally, ROMA-NeT has created a governance structure that can easily be sustained beyond the life of the funding. Cities are now part of a pan-European network with partner cities, and supportive colleagues, all united under a common issue with common goals of Roma inclusion.

For the NGOs working on Roma inclusion at local level, ROMA-NeT has brought them together with other stakeholders, offered greater European exposure to the issue and provided learning to increase their capacity to develop and deliver innovative practices.

For the Roma population, ROMA-NeT offers the means to engage with local authorities and other institutions that provide services at local level. ROMA-NeT offers the Roma community the opportunity to be part of planning and delivery of local actions that will improve their quality of life. ROMA-NeT promotes active community engagement.

> **ROMA-NeT is a short title that is full of hope for the Roma populations. The same as this project has been to us.**
>
> Francisco Carbonell - Roma Mediator Torrent

For the individuals who participated, ROMA-NeT provided a learning experience to increase their personal knowledge and understanding to develop more inclusive policies and more effective Roma inclusion practices. It connected people from different cities and united them together under a common objective of Roma inclusion. ROMA-NeT established positive working relationships and friendships which encouraged people to learn together, to share knowledge, to plan together and to jointly develop ideas and innovative practices.

Pupils in an after school club

> **Cities, all local development actors must trust Roma people to effectively interpret their own reality. They can articulate what is needed to improve their own lives and living conditions for their community.**
>
> Ann Morton Hyde, Lead Expert ROMA-NeT

7. The way forward

Although the financial support from URBACT II to the ROMA-NeT partner cities will end in January 2013 this is not the end, instead it is the beginning of the Roma inclusion/integration pathway for the cities.

> **If I had to sum up the spirit of ROMA-NeT, I would say "going forward together in a Europe of solidarity".**
>
> Alicia Antelo Angel
> LSG Member, Torrent social services

They have the plan - each city has their action plan setting out the priorities and the necessary activities.

They have the people – the cities now have a stakeholder group of individuals who are much better informed about the challenges and opportunities for Roma inclusion.

They have the connections – the cities have better connections and know-how with the Roma community – they have a pan-European network of experts to call upon – and links with their MA for EU funds.

They have access to the resources – the next EU programming period offers opportunities for partners to obtain ESF and ERDF funding to implement their action plans.

8. Recommendations

1. ROMA-NeT partner cities welcome the European Commission's framework for National Roma Integration Strategies and they urge their National Governments to ensure the strategy is evidence-based reflecting the needs of local Roma communities.

2. The ROMA-NeT partners demand appropriate conditions for implementation of the finished Local Action Plans. We welcome thematic objective 9 'Promoting Social Inclusion and Combating Poverty' of European Commissions Common Strategic Framework 2014 to 2020. We urge National Governments and Managing Authorities to ensure that evidence-based Roma Inclusion measures, in the key areas of education, employment, health, housing, community engagement, and anti-discrimination measures, are reflected in their Partnership Contracts and Operational Programmes.

3. The European Commission must control, inspire, lead and ensure relevant and effective implementation from National Governments, cities and all development actors through regular and effective monitoring and ongoing evaluation.

4. **Continued capacity building is necessary for the Local Support Groups in ROMA-NeT cities. Further training and support is needed to help the LSGs to get from their current position to ensure each city prepares a successful funding application for the necessary EU Structural Funds to support implementation of their Local Action Plans (LSGs). ROMA-NeT partners urge the EU's DG Regional and Urban Policy and URBACT programme management to consider an extended pilot phase of the current ROMA-NeT partnership, to cover continued LSG capacity building activities that will prepare cities to develop integrated proposals focusing on the new measures being introduced in the 2014 – 2020 Common Strategic Framework.**

5. ROMA-NeT partners welcome that 5% of ERDF funds in the 2014 – 2020 programming period will be earmarked for sustainable urban development and place-based actions. This offers significant opportunity to European cities to develop area-based integrated Roma inclusion measures. We believe that the Commission's proposal provides an adequate framework both in terms of funds and conditions, but we urge Managing Authorities to ensure that the necessary evidence-based Roma Inclusion measures are reflected in their Operational Programmes.

6. Cities, and all development actors, must trust that the Roma community are in a position to effectively articulate what they need to improve the quality of live and living conditions in their community. Involving and working in partnership with the Roma community at local level throughout policy development, action planning and implementation is the critical factor for successful Roma inclusion measures. To allow funds to be allocated for active Roma community engagement and community participation interventions the Managing Authorities must ensure that such measures are included in the Partnership Contracts and Operational Programmes.

7. Community engagement cities should confront racism and discrimination issues head on and not be afraid to do so. They should use good communications to explain the situation as it actually is and to change behaviour – both in the wider community and within Roma communities. To allow for funds to be allocated for such interventions, Managing Authorities should ensure that relevant anti-discrimination measures are included in the Partnership Contracts and Operational Programmes.

8. Transnational twinning type activities providing institutional and professional partnerships would be a useful Roma inclusion tool to provide expertise and key learning in specific areas. To allow for funds to be allocated for such interventions, Managing Authorities should ensure that relevant measures are included in the Partnership Contracts and Operational Programmes.

9. Civil society organisations are critical actors in the implementation of Roma inclusion measures. Therefore, actions must continue to support, strengthen and build the capacity of local organisations that seriously lack resources. To this end it is necessary that not only large organisations and large projects are funded through the Structural Funds, but that local organisations and the realisation of local ideas become component parts of larger urban development activities.

10. Projects aiming at improving social inclusion do not achieve their potential in two or three years: much longer periods are needed to achieve the desired effects. Moreover, the results tend not to last long, unless continuity is ensured. We recommend longer term programme-based funding over project-based funding.

11. Roma integration is not a project that only has one element; it is a process that should integrate a number of key elements.   The integrated, community-led approach is the only way forward for social inclusion of Roma and other vulnerable groups. Involving Roma people from the beginning is key! If the local Roma seem disinterested: you are not trying hard enough!

12. A step-by-step approach is needed. Roma integration takes time and effort. Initiatives forcing too big an 'integration leap', like moving Roma families from ghettos to quality blocks of flats, are doomed to fail. Instead of pushing Roma people to make the leap all at once, a gradual integration process should be in place with active, individual support and positive and supportive communication along the way.

13. The EU, cities and other public sector organisations should look at ways to cut through the bureaucracy and red tape to make the development and implementation of Roma inclusion measures easier to take from idea to successful interventions.

14. The European Commission's Common Strategic Framework 2014 to 2020 makes provision for 'community-led local development' measures which offers real opportunity for cities to develop integrated local actions. Local authorities, in partnership with Roma populations and key local stakeholders, should follow the example of ROMA-NeT cities to develop evidence-based local action plans which include integrated measures as the basis of a future application for EU Structural Funds in the 2014 – 2020 programming period.

15. What we need across Europe is a massive increase in Roma inclusion actions - a significant growth in new initiatives from many more cities in Europe. Through these actions we can discover what really works. We can create good practices, but most importantly, we can start to build a pathway that will improve the living conditions and life circumstances of all Roma populations in Europe.

ROMA-NeT THEMATIC GUIDES

All of these guides are available from the ROMA-NeT team: info@roma-net.com or you can download them here: http://urbact.eu/en/projects/active-inclusion/roma-net/news/?newsid=923.

ROMA-NeT – An Introduction to the Challenges of Roma Inclusion

ROMA-NeT – The Education Challenges of Roma Inclusion

ROMA-NeT – The Health and Social Care Challenges of Roma Inclusion

ROMA-NeT – The Housing Challenges of Roma Inclusion

ROMA-NeT – The Employability Challenges of Roma Inclusion

ROMA-NeT – The Policing Challenges of Roma Inclusion

ROMA-NeT – Roma on the Move in Europe – the Challenges for Inclusion

ROMA-NeT – The planning and governance for Roma Inclusion

URBACT is a European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable urban development.

It enables cities to work together to develop solutions to major urban challenges, reaffirming the key role they play in facing increasingly complex societal challenges. It helps them to develop pragmatic solutions that are new and sustainable, and that integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions. It enables cities to share good practices and lessons learned with all professionals involved in urban policy throughout Europe. URBACT is 181 cities, 29 countries, and 5,000 active participants

www.urbact.eu/roma-net