

# URGENT ACTION

## ROMA FACE SEGREGATED REHOUSING

**The Serbian authorities are finalizing plans to resettle an evicted Roma community, in housing funded by the European Commission. Some of the proposed sites will result in racial segregation. The final decision is likely to be made before the end of December.**

The Roma communities to be resettled had been forcibly evicted from two informal settlements in the capital, Belgrade. The European Commission provided funding to the city authorities in April 2012 to build housing for the evicted Roma. The city authorities will decide on where to resettle them by the end of December, but many of the proposed locations are isolated, and likely to be racially segregated communities.

The European Commission allocated €3.6 million (US\$4.6 million) for provision of permanent housing in Belgrade for Roma families forcibly evicted from an informal settlement called Belvil. About 140 housing units will be built: up to 100 will be allocated to Roma evicted from Belvil, and the rest to Roma evicted in 2009 from another informal settlement, Gazela Bridge. The authorities intend to complete this resettlement in 2013, but will decide on the locations before the end of 2012.

Most of the proposed locations are far from the centre of Belgrade, in some cases 25-50km away, and isolated from towns and villages, with poor public transport and no access to employment. They do not comply with international standards on adequate housing and some will result in the racial segregation of the Roma. The communities have not been consulted or given an opportunity to propose alternative sites.

### **Please write immediately in English or your own language:**

- Expressing concern that the Roma people evicted from Belvil in April 2012 will be racially segregated if they are resettled in some of the areas now under consideration by the Belgrade City authorities;
- Pointing out that in April 2011 the UN Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination called on Serbia to “develop and implement policies and projects aimed at avoiding segregation of Roma communities in housing.”
- Emphasising that as funders, the EC should require the Belgrade City authorities to identify locations for resettlement, in consultation with the Roma communities, which are nearer to the city, provide them with access to services and employment opportunities and are not segregated from the majority population.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 23 DECEMBER 2012 TO:**

Head of Operations, EU Delegation to  
Serbia

Martin Kern  
EU Delegation to Serbia  
Vladimira Popovica 40  
GTC 19 Avenue building  
11070 New Belgrade, Serbia

Email: [delegation-  
serbia@eeas.europa.eu](mailto:delegation-serbia@eeas.europa.eu)

**Salutation: Dear Mr Kern**

Project coordinator for city of Belgrade

Secretariat for traffic  
Bojan Bovan  
27 Marta 43-45  
11000 Belgrade  
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Fax: +381 11 2754636  
Email: [bojan.bovan@beograd.gov.rs](mailto:bojan.bovan@beograd.gov.rs)

**Salutation: Dear Bojan Bovan**

### **And copies to:**

Director, Agency for Human and Minority  
Rights

Dusan Ignjatovic  
Kancelarija za ljudska i manjinska prava  
Bulevar Mihajla Pupina 2  
11070 Novi Beograd, Serbia

Fax: +381 11 311 3415

Email:  
[svetlana.bogic@ljudskaprava.gov.rs](mailto:svetlana.bogic@ljudskaprava.gov.rs)

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.**

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Amnesty International has been campaigning since 2009 for an end to all forced evictions in Serbia, and for the introduction of a law which will prohibit forced evictions, and ensure that any further evictions are carried out in accordance with international standards.

The Serbian authorities have not yet considered any such law, and the Belgrade authorities have forcibly evicted approximately 2,700 Roma since 2009.

Some of the evicted families were housed in metal containers, ordinarily used as temporary offices on building sites, around Belgrade, which do not meet international standards on adequacy of housing. These “container settlements” are on the outskirts of Belgrade and segregated from the majority of the population. The locations of the settlements, their distance from the city centre and the cost of public transport makes it difficult for the inhabitants to find work and access other services.

The rest of those evicted were also sent to their municipalities of origin, mostly in an already poor region of southern Serbia where they have been unable to find work.

As a direct result of forced eviction these families faced homelessness, the violation of their rights to water and sanitation; and the violation of their rights to freedom of movement and work.

The European Commission, as the funder, needs to ensure that it places clear requirements on the city authorities that its funding be used for permanent housing which complies with international standards, including the prohibition on racial segregation. If the European Commission fails to do so, this could result in its being complicit in human rights violations by the city of Belgrade.