

CLIP Case Study on Housing

Zagreb

Prof. Dr. Heinz Fassmann

Peter Görgl

ISR 2007

1 Background Information on the country

1.1 History of migration and composition of migrant populations

In Croatia, which declared its independency in 1991, younger history of migration and population dynamics in general are characterised by the Yugoslavian war and its ethnic conflicts between 1991-1995.

In the first years of war, nearly 280.000 people left Croatia – whereof 120.000 went abroad and about 160.000 (mainly Serbs) fled to other parts of the then re-forming Yugoslavia. Nine years later, 112.000 people returned to Croatia, including 36.000 Croatian Serbs who were repatriated after they came back from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia or the Republic of Srpska. Beyond this 25.000 (out of the 250.000) Croatian-Serbs who were registered in the FR Yugoslavia and in Bosnia at that time, tried to go back to Croatia within the government's Return Programme. In 2000, the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) still cared for 47.000 people in Croatia: 13.000 refugees, 30.000 returnees, 4.000 internally displaced. It is important to mention that the vast majority of those had been Bosniacs from the Republic of Srpska (one of the two political entities that constitute the Federation of Bosnia & Herzegovina). Apart from immigration from outside, the government had to deal (and in parts it still has to) with a great number of internally displaced people who had abandoned or even lost their homes because of the military conflicts¹.

Due to the break-up of Yugoslavia and the war, Croatia (just like Slovakia and Slovenia) has been an emigration country in the early 1990s before it became a main destination for immigration (refugees that went abroad, people displaced by war) the last ten years: Compared to some other nations of former Yugoslavia, the young nation's governmental structure can be seen as constantly stable since the Dayton based peace-agreement in 1995 and its economy is booming. Nevertheless the total population is not growing since immigration equals the negative natural increase (-2.1%) only.

Looking back some years, the total number of new immigrants to Croatia per year is on a constant decline (1997: 52.343, 2000: 29.385, 2003: 18.455, 2005: 14.230). In 2005, 94.0% of the total population were Croatian citizens, and, like the years before, people from Bosnia & Herzegovina formed the biggest group of immigrants (58.7%). In relation to the total population migrants are of a younger age, the majority of immigrants are between 15-49 of age.

As an effect of war and its aftermath, not only total population is on a constant decline but also the number of various national minorities (see also Tab.2). The number of Serbian people for instance reduced drastically from 12.2% in 1991 to 4.5% in 2001 (201.631)², in many areas that had a relatively dense and homogenous population consisting of members of one ethnic minority, the share of national or ethnic minorities rapidly declined to a marginal number. Maybe as a consequence of their now very small number, the Serbian minority can be seen as a relatively distinct community, organized in many regional and national associations, with several own radio stations and a political party, called the 'Serb Democratic Forum' which had

¹ source: <http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Europe/Croatia-MIGRATION.html>

² source of statistical data: <http://dzs.hr/Eng>

been established in 1991 already. In contrast to the Serbian minority, Bosnians as the second largest group aren't such a prominent community.

Concerning the socio-economic status of ethnic minorities it can be said that most of the groups are integrated more or less well although on sometimes lower social level. This is not the case looking at the Romanies living in the country – there is a quite low acceptance level by the rest of the population towards the members of this relatively autochthonous minority (officially counted 9.463 in Croatia in 2001). It is important to mention that the status of the most of Roma people in Croatia is very low, one could say, they are 'at the bottom of society' (official evaluation says that a good part of Roma people are integrated and some don't even declare themselves as Romanies). Living conditions are sometimes slum-like, concerning settlements in and around Zagreb as well as those in rural areas, unemployment and illiteracy are widespread. Until 2003, Roma people in Croatia weren't organized very well.

| Country of citizenship | 2001. | | 2002. | | 2003. | | 2004. | | 2005. | |
|---------------------------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| | Immigrants | Emigrants | Immigrants | Emigrants | Immigrants | Emigrants | Immigrants | Emigrants | Immigrants | Emigrants |
| Total | 24 415 | 7 488 | 20 365 | 11 767 | 18 455 | 6 534 | 18 383 | 6 812 | 14 230 | 6 012 |
| Croatia | 22 256 | 6 670 | 18 368 | 11 120 | 16 355 | 6 114 | 16 857 | 5 871 | 13 374 | 5 509 |
| Europe | 1 991 | 244 | 1 762 | 325 | 2 006 | 186 | 1 442 | 177 | 797 | 171 |
| Austria | 11 | - | 27 | 1 | 21 | - | 19 | 2 | 12 | 2 |
| Belgium | 4 | - | 1 | - | 3 | - | 1 | - | 1 | - |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | 843 | 131 | 678 | 203 | 782 | 95 | 570 | 95 | 294 | 89 |
| France | 8 | - | 12 | - | 15 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 5 | 1 |
| Italy | 38 | 1 | 48 | - | 72 | 1 | 41 | - | 26 | 2 |
| Serbia and Montenegro | 438 | 69 | 341 | 80 | 462 | 53 | 320 | 53 | 159 | 32 |
| Hungary | 10 | - | 7 | - | 9 | 1 | 5 | - | 11 | - |
| Macedonia | 213 | 22 | 224 | 20 | 215 | 10 | 146 | 8 | 87 | 17 |
| Netherlands | 9 | 1 | 13 | 1 | 10 | - | 6 | 1 | 4 | - |
| Germany | 105 | 4 | 100 | 5 | 116 | 5 | 98 | 9 | 63 | 9 |
| Poland | 8 | 2 | 17 | 2 | 21 | - | 18 | - | 7 | - |
| Russian Federation | 57 | 6 | 46 | 1 | 34 | 1 | 19 | 1 | 10 | - |
| Romania | 16 | - | 21 | - | 24 | 2 | 8 | - | 5 | - |
| Slovenia | 99 | 6 | 98 | 8 | 103 | 10 | 98 | 6 | 64 | 13 |
| Sweden | 3 | - | 3 | - | 7 | - | 4 | - | 5 | - |
| Switzerland | 18 | 1 | 18 | - | 15 | 2 | 14 | - | 9 | 1 |
| Ukraine | 34 | 1 | 39 | 3 | 27 | 2 | 21 | - | 9 | 3 |
| Great Britain | 8 | - | 15 | - | 12 | - | 10 | - | 5 | - |
| Other European countries | 69 | - | 54 | 1 | 58 | 3 | 39 | 1 | 21 | 2 |
| Asia | 23 | 1 | 34 | - | 31 | 3 | 37 | 1 | 23 | - |
| Africa | 16 | - | 11 | - | 6 | - | 3 | - | 4 | - |
| North and Central America | 21 | 2 | 19 | 1 | 35 | 4 | 23 | 1 | 17 | - |
| Canada | 6 | - | 7 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 5 | - | 1 | - |
| USA | 11 | 2 | 11 | - | 25 | 3 | 18 | 1 | 14 | - |
| Other countries | 4 | - | 1 | - | 7 | - | - | - | 2 | - |
| South America | 11 | - | 12 | - | 7 | - | 12 | - | 4 | - |
| Oceania | 7 | - | 4 | - | 6 | - | 6 | - | 6 | - |
| Australia | 7 | - | 1 | - | 6 | - | 6 | - | 6 | - |
| Unknown | 90 | 571 | 155 | 321 | 9 | 227 | 3 | 762 | 5 | 332 |

[Tab.1: International Migration of Population, by Country of Citizenship, source: Central Bureau of Statistics; http://www.dzs.hr/Eng/Publication/2006/7-1-2_1e2006.htm]

Besides immigration issues, the Croatian government is still estimating emigration rate as far too high: the total population diminished from 4.57 million in 1997 to 4.44 million in 2005³. Effects of war like declining population growth, a long-term negative migration balance, increased mortality, decreased birth rates, mass emigration et cetera did strongly influence the demographic situation.

³ Monthly Statistical Report 1/2007 of the Croatian Central Bureau of Statistics

Immigrants who came from Ex-Yugoslavia are mostly of Croatian origin and are Croatian citizens – so they might be called people with ‘migration background’, but they aren’t migrants in the proper sense of the word.

1.2 General national integration policy

On their way to EU the Croatian government passed several laws and reforms concerning migration and minorities. So, in theory, the national integration policy is satisfying international democratic standards but on the other hand, some NGO’s related to those themes do criticise the government for the lacking long-term migration vision. In their view Croatia is not prepared to the nation’s new role in South Eastern Europe as a more and more attractive platform for international migration⁴ and there are still many unsolved problems concerning the return of Serb refugees and the loss/restitution of their former tenancy rights⁵. Even some state representatives call the general national migration policy as underdeveloped by pointing out that there are just one constitutional act dealing with alien’s rights and unclear responsibilities between different ministries and departments.

On the other hand, integration policy in the form of supporting ethnic minorities is well developed. Since early 1990’s the Croatian Government is continuously subsidizing publishing, cultural societies, libraries, activities to preserve cultural heritages and minority-related research projects. Therefore some studies conclude that apart from the sometimes difficult economic situation and existing prejudices within the Croatian population minority groups can enjoy a high degree of minority rights and freedom⁶. Especially within the last years some remarkable efforts have been made improving Croatia’s minority policy: Whereas additional efforts in the field of minority rights were urged by the European Commission in 2004, this aspect did appear no longer in the Commission’s updated opinion Croatia’s application for EU membership in 2006⁷. The Constitutional Act on the Rights of National Minorities in the Republic of Croatia has been adopted by the Croatian Parliament at the session on 13th December 2002. An example for meeting EU accession conditions, the Croatian government installed the Office for National Minorities that, for example, implemented a National Programme for the Roma in 2003 in order to integration of Roma and multiculturalism in Croatia in general.

2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE CITY AND ITS INTEGRATION POLICY

2.1 General structural data of the city

Undoubtedly, Zagreb is the most important city in the national geographical context of Croatia. It rapidly changed from a local centre in former Yugoslavia to the capital of a young nation with all the related functions. Within not so many years, Zagreb and its

⁴ <http://www.iom.int/jahia/page703.html>

⁵ <http://www.minorityrights.org>

⁶ Simic, Mila: Areas of Implementation of Ethnic Rights of Members of National Minorities in the Republic of Croatia 1998, <http://www.ceeol.com>

⁷ http://www.ec.europa.eu/enlargement/croatia/eu_croatia_relations_en.htm

urban region shaped up to the country's most important regional cluster in some trendsetting industries like research & development, telecommunication, high technology or global services and business trade. Thus educational level, knowledge and information skills of the regional labour-force are above-average compared to all other regions of the nation. Zagreb's GDP (measured in 2003 by counties in billion of Euros) was 8,26 and so about four times higher than the GDP of Split-Dalmatia county or Primorje-Gorski Kotar county (2,1). A bit more than a fifth of total national workforce is situated in the metropolitan area of Zagreb and the unemployment rate of about 8,5% is only half of the national percentage.

The gap between Zagreb and the second- and third largest cities (Split and Rijeka) is even constantly growing: in economical and cultural regards as well as under demographic aspects. Despite of the general decrease of population that affects the whole nation the city grew rapidly in the last years (779.145 inhabitants in 2001, 973.667 in 2005). Considering the Zagreb-orientated structure of the national traffic infrastructure as well as all the above mentioned regional differences the trend towards a clear monocentric pattern is obvious⁸.

2.2 Inter-City cooperation

Zagreb is an associate member in the EUROCITIES-network with some working groups and forums for culture, environment and mobility. The CLIP-project is the only international project dealing with migration issues at the moment. So there can be said little about positive or negative experiences of cooperations like these.

2.3 Municipal migration and integration – history and policy

Zagreb's younger history of migration is also characterised by the effects of the Yugoslavian war in the 1990's. The city had been one of the main destinations for (Croatian and Bosnian) refugees during the war, but there isn't any reliable statistical information how many of them tried to stay in Zagreb and finally managed to find private accommodation in the city after refugee camps had been closed.

The probably most secure data source is the national census of 2001 that shows the following population composition for Croatia as a whole and Zagreb (Tab.2).

⁸ Njegac, Drazen: Zagreb in the Network of European Cities. Zagreb 2004, S. 12

Ethnic minorities in Croatia and Zagreb 2001

| | Croatia | Zagreb |
|---|-----------|---------------|
| Total | 4.437.460 | 779.145 |
| Croats | 3.977.171 | 716.344 |
| Ethnic minorities - total | 331.383 | 40.066 |
| Albanians | 15.082 | 3.389 |
| Austrians | 247 | 53 |
| Bosniacs | 20.755 | 6.204 |
| Bulgarians | 331 | 110 |
| Montenegrins | 4.926 | 1.313 |
| Czechs | 10.510 | 813 |
| Hungarians | 16.595 | 841 |
| Macedonians | 4.270 | 1.315 |
| Germans | 2.902 | 288 |
| Poles | 567 | 133 |
| Romanies | 9.463 | 1.946 |
| Romanians | 475 | 37 |
| Russians | 906 | 250 |
| Ruthenians | 2.337 | 123 |
| Slovaks | 4.712 | 171 |
| Slovenians | 13.173 | 3.225 |
| Serbs | 201.631 | 18.811 |
| Italians | 19.636 | 277 |
| Turks | 300 | 65 |
| Ukrainians | 1.977 | 333 |
| Vlasi | 12 | 1 |
| Jews | 576 | 368 |
| Other European peoples – total | 20.706 | 4.290 |
| Peoples of Africa | 156 | 50 |
| Peoples of South America | 111 | 30 |
| Peoples of North and Central America | 210 | 86 |
| Peoples of Australia, New Zealand and Oceania | 47 | 16 |
| Peoples of Asia | 571 | 292 |
| Ethnically uncommitted | 89.130 | 15.649 |
| Of that, regionally committed | 9.302 | 39 |
| Unknown | 17.975 | 2.322 |

[Tab.2: Ethnic minorities in Croatia and Zagreb 2001; Peter Görgl; source: National Bureau of Statistics, Zagreb, Census 2001]

Just like at national level Croatians are the broad majority in Zagreb (91%), Serbians are the largest minority (7%), followed by Bosnians and Slovenians. Officially counted about 2.000 Roma people are living in the capital, but their actual number is

estimated much higher (up to 9.000). According to representatives of the municipality no 'problematic' minority groups can be found in Zagreb, except the **Roma** minority. Besides their critical economic and educational situation, these people live in highly segregated areas, which are considered as 'very dangerous' by most of Zagreb's residents. Members of other ethnic minorities seem to be integrated much better in the urban society, their socioeconomic situation is often not very different from average Croatian residents. Concerning immigrants from Asia or Africa no secure statements can be given in order of their small number and lacking academic studies dealing with their probably specific situation.

Another rather ostentatious immigrant group are Chinese people. About 700 Chinese were officially registered in Zagreb. The constant increase of bilateral trade between Croatia and China is one of the main reasons for them to migrate to Croatia and preferably to Zagreb. Those people often don't come directly from China but from other Eastern European countries, especially Hungary. There is not really a phenomenon one could call 'China Town' yet but Chinese try to live in a close neighborhood, so many of them can be found in Kajzerica, a part of the district Novi-Zagreb zapad. During summer of 2006. Chinese people have moved from Kajzerica to other parts of town at their own initiative. There are only few Chinese stores left in that neighborhood nowadays. Since cultural diversity in Zagreb is not very distinct, the Chinese minority is facing various prejudices as well as Roma do.

All in all there seems to be a clear tendency of minorities to integrate eagerly in the urban society of Zagreb, but most of Roma people are socially and economically excluded.

In the year 2003, national minorities in the City of Zagreb had their first elections for their councils and representatives. Roma National Minority Council has 25 members who have been elected in the way and under the conditions determined by the Constitutional Act for participation in public life and administration of local affairs through the Council in the unit of self-government. The Council is actively included in the activities of representative body of the City of Zagreb. The City of Zagreb finances work of Roma National Minority Council and its program activities. It finances and co-finances the programs and projects of Roma associations

The members of Roma National Minority Council, just like any other of nine councils and 6 representatives of national minorities in the City of Zagreb, are being elected directly, in secret vote, for the period of four years. To the procedure of elections and other issues connected to their election provisions of the act by means of which election of members to the representative bodies of the unit of self-government has been regulated. The National Minority Council adopts a program of work, financial plan and final statement of account, and a statute by means of which important issues for the work of council are being regulated. The president of the National Minorities Council represents the Council, calls the sessions of the council and has rights and obligations determined by the statute of the council. The statute, the programme of work, the financial plan and the final statement of account of the council are being passed by a majority vote of all its members and they are being published in the official gazette of the local self-government unit. The National Minorities Councils in the unit of self-government are entitled to propose to the bodies of the units of self-government measures for improvement of situation of the national minority in the City of Zagreb including giving proposal drafts of general legal acts by means of which issues of importance for the national minority are being regulated to the bodies passing them. They nominate candidates for offices in bodies of administration and bodies of the units of self-government. Also, they are informed of

every issue that is to be discussed by the committees of the representative body of the unit of self-government, and considers the situation of the national minority.

Two or more National Minorities Councils established in the same local self-government unit can, with the purpose of coordination or promotion of common interest found a coordination of National Minorities Councils. The National Minorities Councils through Coordination of National Minorities Councils coordinate their opinions on issues from their scope of work.

Also, there is a National Minorities Committee of the City Assembly of the City of Zagreb which is established for participation of national minorities in the public life and mostly for consideration and suggestion of regulation and solution of issues connected to exercising and protection of rights and freedoms of national minorities. This Committee has the right to propose to bodies of the state authority to consider some issues of importance for the national minority and particularly the implementation of the Constitutional act and special acts by means of which minority rights and freedoms have been regulated.

Members of national minorities can found associations, foundations and institution for performing activities of public information, cultural, editorial and scientific activities with the aim of preservation, development, promotion and expression of their national and cultural identity. The City of Zagreb finances publishing of various journals and newspapers of Roma associations.

Furthermore, the City of Zagreb is engaged in measures enforcement of improvement of Roma population such as: education, medical care, employment, social welfare, the protection of family, motherhood and youth, physical planning and preservation of Roma traditional culture. The Employment Office has made a lot of effort in employing Roma population with a Program for measures of employment realisation for Roma people in the City of Zagreb. The result of those measures enforcement is more than 40 employed Romanies (in 2006) which is a good result considering the extremely low qualification structure of Romanies and small demand on labor market. Conducted activities often lack in success because of the everyday migrations of Roma population. Most of Romanies do not have Croatian citizenship or residence permit in the City of Zagreb. The success of the measures of improving life of Roma population in the City of Zagreb would be greater if Roma population would be willing to accept those measures.

Looking at the city's integration policies, one can say that efforts have been made mainly in supporting cultural and social life of minority groups, by organizing special events, funding single cultural events and projects. Projects like these do follow the national programme and visions of a policy of 'multiculturalism' and can be seen as there local implementation. But even cultural policies or strategies haven't been explicitly stated yet and in the **housing sector** however there are no concrete minority-based measures/visions etc. until now.

3 HOUSING SITUATION OF THE CITY

3.1 Housing situation and housing market in general

First of all it should be pointed out that some issues on housing in Croatia can't be described that easy because of **fragmentary data basis** or, even worse, a lack of data in general.

Regarding the issue of property registration for instance it is estimated that in the City of Zagreb only a certain amount of all properties are actually registered, but within the last 2 years, great efforts had been made in that area. Furthermore it is assumed that many of the existing reports are not the precise they ought to be.

Like most cities in South Eastern Europe, Zagreb has a high number of privately owned households, too. According to Census 2001 about 81% of all households are private ownership or co-ownership (222.697 of 275.464 in total numbers) only 12% are rented as free-based or contract-based tenancies, the public housing stock is very small (2,8%). In the medium term, no extension of the public-housing stock is planned. So it isn't rather astonishing that, under market-economical aspects, the local authority doesn't play a very influential role on the housing market. Neither maintenance nor renovation of buildings are completely in its sphere of competence (because of a lacking strong legal framework) and, basically, more often beyond its financial scopes. Little attention has been paid to the maintenance of the, now largely privatized, public housing stock even before 1991, therefore the physical conditions of many of the large housing estates is critical. Another problem is the rising poverty rate among Croatian inhabitants as well as among people with migration background that is often caused by extremely increased costs of living: housing in general (esp. rent-fees, running costs) is now predominantly regulated by market-based mechanism and impends to become unaffordable for many residents just in Zagreb, Croatia's 'Boom-Town'.

3.2 Housing situation of residents with migration background

As in most socialist cities Zagreb's socio-spatial patterns had been relatively homogenous until the fall of the iron curtain. The transition from state-directed economy to free market economy intensified segregation tendencies and socio-spatial polarization within the city. According to younger studies the process of socio-economic segregation is taking more and more effect on urban development: the gap between prosperous inner districts and declining peripheral areas of the city becomes constantly wider, while districts in between are still rather well-balanced in socio-economic terms⁹. In consequence of the relative small quantity of migrants or members of ethnic minorities at all there is often just a marginal share of those people in every single district. So there is no close connection between a district's socio-economic status and the number of ethnical minorities living there.

Even though there aren't any significant concentrations of migrants/minorities on district level, there are several smaller areas where members of a national or ethnic

⁹ Prelogovic, Vedran: Socio-spatial polarization in Zagreb. Zagreb 2004

minority live in a higher density. For example there is a “Little Bosnia” supposed to be in the district of Sesvete, but if it actually exists (no statistical data is available, there are just estimations by the public and by some experts) it seems to be a local ethnical cluster without any specific ethnical or social problems. On the other hand there are some small Roma-settlements (see Pescenica-Zitnjak) where living conditions are critical and certain ghettoization tendencies can hardly be overlooked.

3.2.1 Single-detached houses in Novi Zagreb-zapad, Pescenica-Zitnjak and Donja Dubrava: without building permit, but tolerated. The challenge of legitimizing the informal housing sector.

These neighborhoods represent a quite special variant of “illegal housing” and even if the detached houses may look like ordinary dwellings at first glance, one can learn much about the postwar urban development of Zagreb.

Situated in two outer districts, these settlements grew in the last years of the Yugoslavian civil war. At this time the municipality wasn't really capable of acting, therefore the administrative bodies of the city couldn't exert enough influence on the owners of large real estates when they started to sell single parcels to different groups of people. The two biggest groups are Croatian citizens (or Croatian Bosnians) who had lost their homes and had been displaced because of the warlike conflicts and former Bosnian refugees who didn't return to Bosnia when they came back from abroad at the end of civil war. Zagreb as the safe capital of a young and autonomous nation appeared to be an attractive destination for these groups of people. Originally from rural areas, most of them tried to realize their accustomed lifestyle at the new place of residence again. So they didn't pass up the chance to buy the comparatively cheap lots that were offered – more or less illegally – at that time in the outer districts of the city. In this way housing space for some thousand people had been added without any state regulation and this can also be seen as a special form of an economy's transition from socialist to a free market system.

The settlements aren't problematic cases in a 'classical' sense, i.e. they aren't any trouble hotspots because of their socio-economical or ethnical composition although the residents' average social status is not very high. So they cannot be compared simply with large housing estates or other residential areas where people with migration backgrounds usually live. In fact they have to be seen as an outstanding example because of their specific history of development and their specific social composition. Nevertheless these neighborhoods show the characteristic situation of living of a large number of migrants.

Unfortunately no statistical data was available that would show number or actual composition of the population on settlement levels. According to representatives of the municipality in Novi Zagreb-zapad, Croat and Bosnian households are the majority, while Bosnians or Bosnian Croats predominantly inhabit the two other settlements, that means that in Pescenica-Zitnjak and Donja Dubrava **people with migration background** (migrants from abroad) are in the majority.



Informal housing neighborhood in Novi Zagreb-zapad, dirt roads, lacking infrastructure and zoning plans; Photos: P.Görgl

Built in self-help after the real estates had been sold in underhand dealings, the municipality is facing the great challenge to legalize these neighborhoods ex post. But this is not only a question of the legal status of those settlements: they were built without any master plan or zoning maps, most roads are dirt tracks, often too narrow and thus not conforming with planning laws, some lots don't even have own access roads. In most parts technical infrastructure is insufficient; there is no landline telecommunication and poor sewage and water supply.



Informal housing neighborhood in Novi Zagreb-zapad, unrendered buildings, settlement's silhouette in Novi-Zagreb zapad; Photos: P.Görgl

At present, the municipality is trying to find a socially acceptable way in which minimum standards in matters of building regulations and infrastructure supply can be established in those settlements. In a first step the informal status of the houses shall be changed, a cost sharing between municipality and homeowners is planned. Concerning the difficult economical situation of many households there, a suitable solution cannot be found easily. The large number of unrendered houses and often

sparse furnishing in the buildings document the low income of the owners. Another problem is the lacking integration of these settlements in the existing surrounding area; educational, health or safety infrastructure is sometimes insufficient as well as the number of retail or service institutions.



Informal housing neighborhood in Donja Dubrava, architectural detail, dirt road ; Photos: P.Görgl

According to a study on living conditions of Roma groups in Zagreb that has been carried out in 2004¹⁰ the settlement of Pescenica-Zitnjak is one of the worst. It is located in direct neighborhood to another informal detached housing settlement where about 15.000 Bosnians and Bosnian Croats live. It is a unofficial/illegal area in all respects: Actually marked as an industrial zone in the urban master plan, it is one of the biggest Roma settlements in the city¹¹, there is no technical infrastructure at all, dwellings as well as their inhabitants look very run-down and extreme poor, some low-standard new buildings can also be found. Nevertheless the settlement can be described best by using terms like **'favela'** or **'slum'**.

The social problems of this settlement are widespread: high crime rate, high illiteracy, very low educational level, high unemployment rate characterize this hot spot. Thus this area has a very bad reputation in Zagreb and people avoid going there in every means. Roma living there are making a living from more or less organized begging in the inner districts, a fact impairing their reputation additionally.

¹⁰ Gradski program aktivnosti i mjera za unapredenje stanja prostora i okolisa lokacija naseljenim Romina. Zagreb 2005.

¹¹The district itself is the one with most Roma living there; 751 according to Census 2001



Roma settlement in Pescenica-Zitnjak;
Photos: P. Görgl

3.3 Accessibility of the housing market for migrants

In their majority Romanies are far aside the regular housing market – that can be seen as just another negative effect of the deep cultural gap between Croats and Romanies. Chinese people (in contrast to various prejudices in everyday life) are relatively welcome because they are hold for reliable tenants paying rents in time, living ‘quiet’ and ‘normal’. They also can rely on good inter-ethnic networks, not only concerning housing, so they profit from relative good access to information of the local housing market – in opposite to many other small immigrant groups. It is more the economical standing of people from other (South) Eastern Europe countries than their ethnical provenience that is determining their chances on the housing market. The administration has identified the often limited accessibility to the free and public housing market for some migrant groups as problematic. But there seems to be less public consciousness and not enough political will to improve the migrants’ options on the housing market. Furthermore there aren’t many (scientific) studies dealing seriously with that issue, which could be the basis for some concrete political programs or administrative measures.

Since rental fees in Zagreb are far above the national average, living is sometimes hardly affordable not only for people with migration background. But restricted access to public housing in combination with sometimes worse chances on the labor market

can be problematic mixture. Thus it is not unusual that immigrants (especially those without any networks and few knowledge of the language) have to live under deficient conditions in run down buildings. But in consideration of the relatively small number of persons with migration background concerned by that, there is no broad awareness of such problems.

4 INSTITUTIONAL SETTING AND RELEVANT ACTORS

As the capital of Croatia, Zagreb has a special status that gives the right of self-government to the city. Within the city's governmental structure local self-government is organized in 17 City Districts that are represented by City Districts Councils. This governmental organization allows performing relatively autonomous and thus the city is able to assign priorities fully by itself and in the face of local needs. But nevertheless migration doesn't seem to be an urgent or 'trendy' issue: There aren't clear competences concerning questions about housing and minorities. Different departments deal with housing issues (e.g. Department for Physical Planning & Improvement, Dep. for Business & Economy) and various departments are involved in minority issues (e.g. Department for Sports & Culture, Dep. for Business & Economy), but there is no centralized institution that would coordinate migration issues between all City Departments. Even the Department for Promoting Human Rights, Relations with National Minorities and Religious Communities and Civil Society Development has limited responsibilities only.

Thus the maneuvering room for a single department is very small and always within its own special field. The municipality as a whole is also limited in its scope because of too little financial funding (by the state) concerning migration issues.

5 DISCOURSE, CONCEPTS AND POLICY CONCERNING HOUSING

5.1 Vision, concepts and policy of administration and Local Council on the issue of housing, segregation and integration of migrants

At the moment, there aren't any superordinated strategies or concepts of the administration or the Local Council concerning questions of migration and housing. Zagreb's development towards a more and more culturally diversified metropolis has not been picked out as a central theme yet. The problem in housing of migrants could be solved through the **Model of Home Construction** of the City of Zagreb that recently started developing. This Model will provide a certain amount of flats for people of lower financial situation who are interested in buying flats for lower prices than the ones on the market, convenient credits in biggest Croatian banks without deposits, without credit guarantee and with lowest possible interest rate. Cca 900 social flats will stay in possession of the City and will be given for usage to people of subsistence level income. The rest of the flats will also stay in possession of the City and will be rented for lower prices.

5.2 Public discourse on housing, segregation and integration of migrants

In opposite to the City government there is a broad and often tendentious discourse on integration of immigrants and segregation. Public opinion is, sometimes exaggerated by media, that immigrants have to assimilate in the urban society and that cultural homogeneity of Zagreb has to be preserved. This may explain the sometimes open resentments towards Chinese people (despite of their small number) who are apparently seen not only as ordinary immigrants but rather as people with strange cultural customs. But the majority of Croatians does not fear that Chinese cultural customs could endanger the dominance of Croatian Culture; the public opinion is that Chinese people could integrate if they wanted to, especially because most of them have overcome the language barrier.

6 INTERVENTIONS ON HOUSING AND INTEGRATION: MEASURES AND PROJECTS

6.1 Physical improvement of housing

Since most of the former public housing stock is privatized, the maneuvering room of the city is very limited in this regard. Nevertheless some measures and strategies are planned or projected like the improvement of the infrastructural supply in the mentioned informal housing areas. Improvement measures concerning large housing estates are not reported at this time.

6.2 Neighborhood-based social policy measures and projects

6.3 Anti-segregation measures

A measure that affects neighborhood-based social policy as well as anti-segregation intentions is the reissue of the study on the Roma minority (see page 11) that was realized in 2004/2005.

The results of the new study shall provide the basis of concrete measures enhancing the integration of Roma people in the urban society. In consideration of the fundamental problems the Roma minority has to deal with, conceivable concrete measures would have to follow a comprehensive strategy. Zagreb City government established the Committee for the implementation of City program of activities and measures for improvement of the area and its environment of locations inhabited by Roma population. The Committee needs to coordinate activities for preparation, construction and evaluation of practicability studies, to determine locations for temporarily housing and to create a plan and program for emergency communal arrangement of particular locations according to the City program.

It is important to add that in most problematic locations with Roma inhabitants the City of Zagreb finances garbage dispatch, clear water supply and provides primary sanitary-hygienic requirements. Most of the Roma people in the City of Zagreb are in social welfare system that includes: financial aid, aid for heating, children's allowances, meals in public kitchen, aid in nature (food and hygienic needs), medical care and legal advice services.

7 Highlights and Failures: Learning for CLIP

As a very young independent nation and not so many years after the Croatian War of Independence, Croatia as a whole and Zagreb as its booming capital in particular, the administration of the municipality has set other priorities, as it is comprehensible for a nation and a capital in transition. After having (re-)installed and (re-)established a functioning administrative structure that is meeting democratic standards, the progression towards a modern civil (and urban) society is heavily dependent on its economic and business development. Thus migration and migration policies still seem to be rather 'soft issues' although the city is obviously confronted with some problems concerning migration or the housing situation of people with migration backgrounds in Zagreb. The Republic of Croatia, as opposed to most European countries, does not have a particular body unit that would be competent for all kinds of migrations and the integration of migrants into society. Local self-government is not remarkably involved in the measure enforcement of the integration of migrants to the local community.

Maybe there is too little awareness of those problems because of the still relatively small number of 'readily identifiable' migrants or minorities living in the city on the one hand and the high integration (or assimilation) level of people who came from other parts of former Yugoslavia on the other.

But it seems to be as much necessary to set the course of integration policy and measures as soon as possible as to implement some concrete measures resolving prevailing problems. First of all an important step should be a more effective coordination of migration issues within the municipality administration. Even though

there is a department that officially deals with national minorities its responsibilities are very limited.

As the two examples show the municipality is going to take measures concerning the housing situation of Roma and of people living in the informal detached houses settlements. It is not possible to form an opinion about the planned measures yet because they are in their initial stages still.

Recapitulating the facts one can say that the administration should be eager to solve the problematic housing situations of some minority or migrant groups as soon as possible; because regarding the city as a whole socio-economic or ethnic segregation are not that distinct like in other Eastern European cities (despite the mentioned extremely segregated Roma settlements). Effective measures against ghettoization tendencies that are developed and started *now* could establish a basis for a long-term socially sustainable urban development.