



Managerial abstract

Examining the segregated regions of Selyemrét neighbourhood in Miskolc, and the regregated regions of Bábonyibérc in Miskolc

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Managerial abstract

Tasks, background

Goal of research.

We conducted our research in 2015 after being commissioned by the Hungarian Civil Liberties Union. The aim was to examine two segregated areas of Miskolc (Bábonyiabérc and Selyemrét – Gizella street and surrounding areas) in depth.

The research has shown that Miskolc County Town has been carrying out aggregated inspections, referred to as "joint inspections", in several different segregated areas in town since 2011. These inspections are performed by Miskolc Municipality Police together with other associate authorities under police safeguard. Inspections cover the checking of home address data of people living in segregated conditions, checking payments for waste disposal services, checking the regularity of water and electrical usage, checking the orderly management of inner courtyards of residential properties and the rules and regulations for livestock (especially dogs), plus checking children's school attendance and liabilities and even their nutrition and clothing.

In the course of our research, our task was

- to assess housing stock in the relevant parts of the settlement
- to assess the number of inhabitants
- to monitor joint inspections
- to explore possible future investments
- to reveal practices (if any) violating basic human rights of the inhabitants

Methods

Our intention was to get to each and every member of the population living in both segregated areas through queries. As a result, we could retrieve data on the demographic structure of the inhabitants, the ownership structure of accommodations, the frequency of joint inspections and also, how people experienced these raids.

We were able to gain access to and question all roma families on Gizella street. At the same time, families not of roma origin refused to take part and give answers.

In Bábonyiabérc, we finally succeeded in gathering 43 questionnaires, with the poll itself covering 75 % of the families living there.

Apart from this, we conducted interviews with residents to learn out about the circumstances and causes which led them to live in the segregated area, and we also inquired about their opinions on joint inspections.

We also studied the basic strategic plans and documents of the Town (Integrated Urban Development Strategy, Integrated Settlement Development Strategy, Local Equal Opportunity Program, local housing rulings). Our aim was to reveal future plans of the Town with regard to the two segregated areas.

Unfortunately, it was not possible to clarify all substantial points in detail regarding the above since the basic strategic development plans are inconsistent and insufficient.

What can be stated is that the Town has agreed to eliminate the segregated areas in question. At the same time, we were not able to acquire information on the time frame of this procedure or the details of its implementation, or what further plans the Town has for these areas. The insecurity thus caused has a profound impact on the inhabitants, since they do not know what fate these areas will meet.

Hypothesis

Our hypothesis was that the inhabitants of these segregated areas experience joint inspections as harassment. In Bábonyibérc raids were conducted up to three times a week. Local residents could not even specify the exact number of joint inspections that had taken place. Research has proven that a great majority of people have already acquiesced to the raids with resignation and have accepted them as a necessary evil. In the course of the raids, the dwellers felt rather humiliated, confused and indecisive. Many of them considered the joint official control acts to be an abuse of power. Others felt it to be humiliating in itself that these controls target the Roma community in particular. It is exhibitiv of the vulnerability and dependency of the Miskolc Roma community that they have never once addressed a complaint to any authorities on the matter of joint inspections. Among those who find these raids necessary and reasonable, it was clearly perceptible that they made an endeavour to detach themselves from "the Roma who should be checked and controlled".

Difficulties

During the course of the research, we faced a number of difficulties. In both segregated areas we were received with a lack of trust, owing to the high frequency of joint raids.

We also faced serious difficulty when attempting to conduct interviews at relevant institutions, as they became immediately resistant after hearing the Hungarian Civil Liberties Union was our commissioner, and refused to respond to our requests.

Assessment and recommendation

During our research we found that accessibility to public services is limited in both segregated areas. Furthermore, only a few services reach the inhabitants. We could also see the conspicuous lack of presence of child and family support services, or if so, they mainly exercise public authority regulations rather than performing an assistive role or proactively working for prevention. Thus, we consider the following measure crucial in both segregated areas, in view of the fact that the Town is very likely to eliminate the Roma using the same methods as it did in the Numbered streets vicinity.

- establishing interbranch cooperation involving institutions and organizations related to the target group (schools, nurseries, nurses' network, Local Roma Nationality Government, child and family support services, etc.)
- forceful community development work
- exploring more deeply police abuse and unjust prosecution practices for infringements when evidence for such practices exists
- operating mutual legal assistance services and representation