

**For centuries many Roma communities have lived at the economic and social margins. Nowadays, at the European periphery, their position becomes even more precarious due to the consequences of the economic crisis. European Union is intensifying the restrictions against precarious migrant workers and asylum seekers from the war-torn and post war regions and countries. The possibility to reintroduce the visa regime granted to the EU member states is a sanction directed at countries of the periphery, which is justified by a rising number of “illegal migrants” or “false asylum seekers” arriving in EU countries.**

**The increasing number of assaults on Roma is the consequence of a strengthening and consolidation of right-wing forces using the situation of economic crisis for populist promotion of their racist and anti-migrant agenda. Brutal demolition of Roma and migrant settlements and the following deportations from France in 2010 or the terror against local Roma communities in Hungary by ultra-nationalist formations, usually have support of the state institutions. In Serbia and Bulgaria, organised violent actions against Roma by the majority population are frequent. Extreme poverty, social exclusion and segregation present a situation a large number of Roma in Serbia is living in today.**

**Largest wars in recent European history were the wars in the former Yugoslavia. Those wars took more than 100,000 lives.**

**Disctruction of Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia launched a long series of forced migrations 1991-2001.**

**Rough estimates indicate that approximately 3 million people were to leave their homes.**

**Between 700,000 and 1 million people sought refugee status outside of this region.**

**Majority of Roma from Kosovo, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina were refugees, around 200.000 people.**

**Number of Roma from fromer Yugoslavia with the unresolved status (Duldung, etc) in Western Europe exceeds 50,000. If you take into account the categories of „illegal immigrants“, that number can reach even 100,000 Roma.**

# Various types of Roma refugee camps

**Bellevil and Gazela, Belgrade, Serbia**

**Osterode, South Mitrovica, Kosovo**

**Konik, Podgorica, Montenegro**



**The neighborhood of Novi Beograd, a city planned and built in the first postwar years of socialist Yugoslavia has become in the last two decades the financial core of the Serbian capital, being at the same time its most populated municipality with 250.000 inhabitants.**

**Novi Beograd is undergoing urban development which brings about direct social consequences for most of its Roma residents.**

**Delta Holding in cooperation with Hypo-Alpe Adria Bank were building a complex called "Belville" which consists of 1900 apartments and 300 business premises in Novi Beograd. The new complex hosted the participants of the Universiade 2009.**

**Belville borders to one of the Roma settlements with the highest population density, existing there for more than twenty years and hosting around 300 families.**



**Already before the Belville's opening, on 3 April, 2009, the first 45 families – among which were many refugees from Kosovo – were evicted and their homes torn down, without giving them enough time to save their possessions from demolition. In this case, the authorities did not give them any alternative accommodation facilities, mainly arguing that the settlement should be demolished anyways, since it had not been built legally.**



Families who lost their homes at Belville, a few days after the eviction of the settlement ordered by the city authorities, April, 2009, New Belgrade. / Porodice koje su ostale bez krova nad glavom kod Belvila, nekoliko dana nakon rušenja naselja od strane gradskih vlasti, april, 2009, Novi Beograd.



Protest in front of the Belgrade City Hall against the eviction of the Roma settlement at Belville, April 2009, Belgrade. / Protest ispred Skupštine grada Beograda zbog rušenja romskog naselja kod Belvila, april 2009, Beograd.

## Solidarity protest against deportation of Roma from France to Rumania and Bulgaria, Belgrade, 2010.



Protest solidarnosti protiv deportacije Roma iz Francuske u Rumuniju i Bugarsku, Beograd, 2010. / Solidarity protest against deportation of Roma from France to Rumania and Bulgaria, Belgrade, 2010.

The eviction of the remaining 250 families took place in late April 2012.



**A particularly sinister episode of violence occurred on 9 April, 2012, as protesters from the Belgrade suburb of Resnik clashed with policemen ensuring the preparation of a container settlement for Roma evicted from Belgrade. Fourteen policemen were hurt and the Ombudsman for human rights stated that: “Everyone has the right to a decent human life, including a place to live in dignity. Still, the resettlement of inhabitants of present unhygienic dwellings must not do down the quality of life of the neighbourhoods they are resettled to”<sup>23</sup>, thus officially perpetuating the pattern according to which socially vulnerable persons might represent a danger to the rest of the population. The Mayor criticised the violence in Resnik, although the “Coalition against discrimination” openly stressed that he bore a part of the responsibility for what had happened because of his aforementioned statements.**

From the publication: Andreas Guidi, "Roma Asylum Seekers in Europe: A Matter of Disintegration of Social Rights", in publication "From migration to deportation - Contributions to the critical analysis of the policy against Roma migrants in Europe" (ed. Vladan Jeremić), Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung Southeast Europe, November 2012; [http://www.rosalux.rs/userfiles/files/From\\_migration\\_to\\_deportation.pdf](http://www.rosalux.rs/userfiles/files/From_migration_to_deportation.pdf)

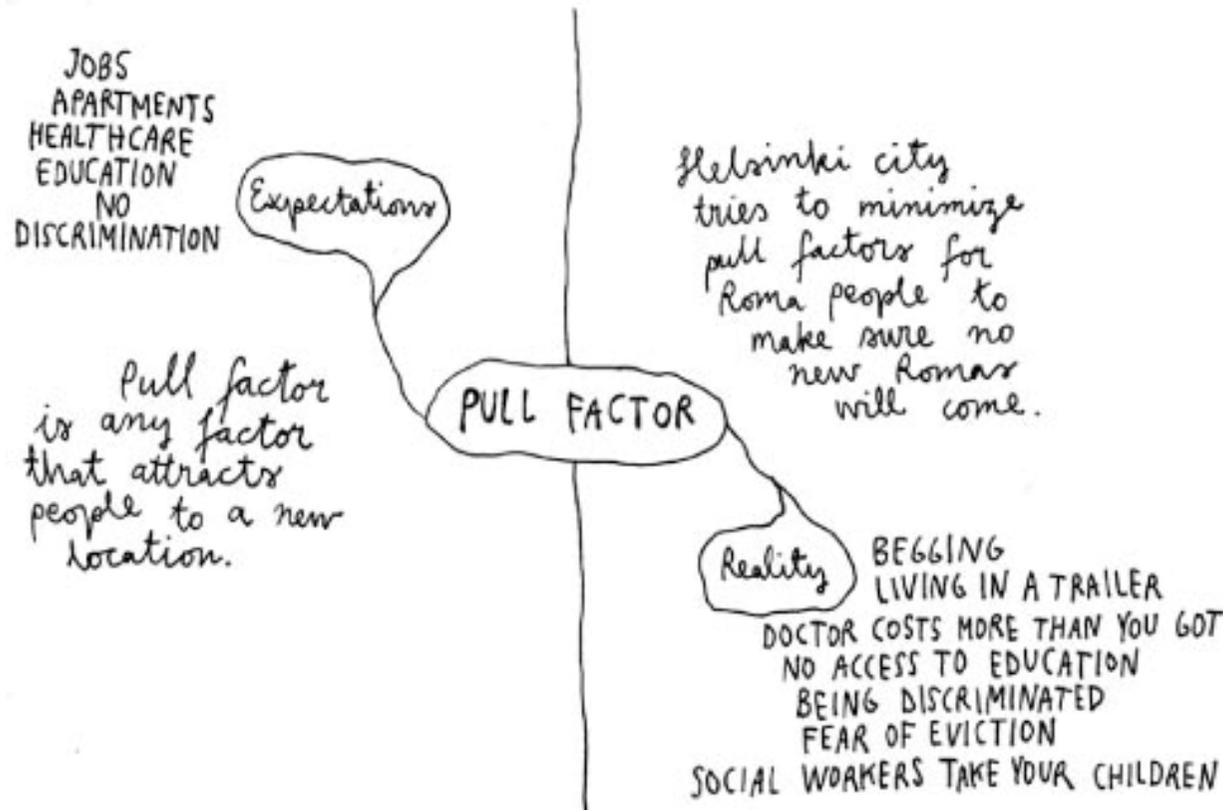
**The containers on the outskirts of Belgrade (Makiš, Boljevci, Barajevo etc.) are usually the only option left to the families asked to sign a document in which they agree to renounce their old property.**



Kontejnersko naselje u Resniku, Srbija, 2012. /  
The container settlement in Resnik, Serbia, 2012.

## The Pull Factor / Under the Bridge – Helsinki

During November 2010, Vladan Jeremić and the X-OP Study Group of artists and activists from Helsinki have done a research about the situation of the Roma precarious migrant workers and the activists at the social center Satama in Helsinki. Identified soon as a “Pull Factor”, the social center was closed down by the authorities. The Roma settlement was in September 2011 destroyed by the city authorities, with the assistance of the police, and with the inhabitants being expelled.



## The Housing Agenda

The staged debate “The Housing Agenda / Under the Bridge – Helsinki” was recorded on September 27/28 2011 at Ateneum Art Museum, Helsinki and organized by Vladan Jeremić and Rena Rädle. Activists, workers, artists, theorists and politicians from Finland, UK, Germany and Serbia participated in debate.



The contributing participants of the staged debate issued and distributed the resulting proposals in the form of “The Helsinki Housing Manifesto”. This manifesto proposes the idea of a trans-urban network of “open houses” or “migrants hotels” in European cities, for use by Roma precarious migrant workers, and outlines a set of common principles for local housing solutions to be developed with the support of the EU. “The Helsinki Housing Manifesto” was presented to a high-level EU conference on in Brussels in November 2011.

**November 2011.**

## **The Helsinki Housing Manifesto**

**A housing project for the precarious migrant Roma workers and other migrant workers**

**People all over Europe need to come together and work out a housing project which makes it clear that Roma are welcome in Europe. This starting point is our most basic and essential proposal. The housing of the Roma precarious migrant workers and other migrant workers on the European level must be seen as a new platform of 'social innovation' and a long term project designed for the next decade.**

**General idea is to build a network of Open Houses or “Migrants Hotels” in many European cities for Roma precarious migrant workers and other migrant workers.**

**We propose a trans-urban concept that is applied in local contexts in various European countries. Based on several common principles it provides different solutions in different localities:**

- 1. Understanding urban space as a space of diversity and the city as a place of equality**
- 2. Combining institutionalized help and self-help**
- 3. New concepts of civil rights: Urban citizenship and European citizenship**
- 4. Precarious workers' rights**
- 5. Access to education, work and health care**