



Activities of the Council of Europe Development Bank in Favour of Roma

Status as of 15 October 2010

1. CEB: Objectives and priorities

The Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB) is a multilateral development bank with a social vocation. It is a **key instrument of solidarity** in Europe.

Established in 1956, the Bank finances projects in its **40 member states**, including 18 Central and Eastern European countries.

Since its inception, **CEB's statutory priority** has been to **finance projects involving refugees, migrants, minorities, as well as victims of natural or ecological disasters**.

In every European country, **the Roma minority** is one of the most disadvantaged groups of the population, characterised by the highest unemployment rate, poor health, low education level and insalubrious housing conditions.

It is CEB's policy to:

- support the efforts of governments and/or local authorities by means of medium/long-term investment loans on favourable conditions for social integration projects benefiting Roma
- promote the participation of Roma in the design and implementation of projects
- develop comprehensive programmes for Roma including education, housing, health and job creation.

CEB has been involved in activities related to the improvement of living conditions of Roma communities over the last fifteen years.

2. CEB: Operational instruments

- The Bank's principal tools are **medium/long-term loans** at attractive and flexible terms and conditions, which are provided for projects and programmes with social objectives.
- The Bank usually finances up to 50% of the total eligible cost of the proposed investment. This limit may be exceeded in the case of certain priority projects, subject to approval by CEB's Administrative Council.
- Thanks to the Bank's **Selective Trust Account**, fed from CEB's profits, loans can be subsidised for projects with a high social impact. **Loans approved in favour of Roma have benefited from these subsidies.**
- CEB has also extended, in exceptional cases, **grants** to Roma projects.
- Specific **funds for technical assistance** are also available to help for the preparation and implementation of social projects for Roma.
- The Bank's unique social mandate which has attracted the interest of donors, along with the increasing complexity of CEB projects have conducted to the setting up of different **Trust Accounts: the Finnish Trust Account (2001-2005), the Norway Trust Account** (since 2004), the **Human Rights Trust Fund** (since 2008, with the Council of Europe, Norway, Germany and the Netherlands) and the **Spanish Social Cohesion Account** (2009). They are also available to facilitate the preparation and financing of a wide range of pilot projects.

3. Key figures on CEB's involvement in favour of Roma:

- **Loans** € 25,90 million
- **Grants** € 3,66 million
- **Total** € 29,56 million

4. CEB Loan Projects

2000

- A **€ 3.3 million** loan for the Municipality of Sofia, **Bulgaria**, with the guarantee of the Republic of Bulgaria, was approved by CEB's Administrative Council in September 2000.
- **Purpose:** to finance the construction and **rehabilitation of municipal housing and infrastructure for the benefit of 1 600 Roma** living in Slatina, a disadvantaged district of Sofia.
- **First pilot project**, part of a municipal scheme to combat exclusion and foster the integration of the local Roma community in line with the national integration programme.

2001

- A **€ 5.4 million** loan to the Republic of **Bulgaria** through the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works was approved by CEB's Administrative Council in March 2001.
- **Purpose:** to finance the **construction of 284 family homes and basic infrastructure** benefiting some **2 300 Roma residents** in two disadvantaged districts of the city of Plovdiv.

2001

- A **€ 4.2 million** loan to Caja Madrid for the benefit of Fundación Secretariado General Gitano (FSGG), **Spain**, a public foundation with social aims, was approved by CEB's Administrative Council in September 2001.
- **Purpose:** to provide **vocational training** to some **20 000 young Roma** throughout Spain with the objective to find, by 2006, **employment for 4 000** of them.

2005

- **First comprehensive pilot project**, approved within the framework of **the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015**, by CEB's Administrative Council in September 2005.
- A **€ 5 million** loan to the Republic of **Hungary** through the Ministry of Finance which has the overall responsibility for the project. The project is implemented by the Department for Roma Integration at the Ministry of Youth, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (ICSSZEM).
- **Purpose:** the primary focus **is the improvement of housing conditions** for Roma families living in segregated settlements together with the **promotion of social integration** through accompanying measures aiming to the improvement of health and education status of these families.

2010

- A **€ 8 million** loan to Caja Madrid for the benefit of Fundación Secretariado General Gitano (FSGG), **Spain**, a public foundation with social aims, was approved by CEB's Administrative Council in June 2010 as a follow-up to the 2001 project.
- **Purpose:** This new project spans the 2010-2013 period and focuses on three complementary axes:
 - Actions related to the economic crisis and unemployment increase,
 - Actions in education to prevent early school leaving and reinforce initial training,
 - Foster social and labour integration of immigrant Roma.

5. CEB Grants

From the Bank's Selective Trust Account¹

1999

- A **€ 2 million** grant in favour of refugees, coordinated by UNHCR and UNDP, was approved by CEB's Administrative Council in April 1999, of which:
 - A **total of € 880 000** was paid over to UNHCR for the purchase of 10² mobile water treatment systems (Reverse Osmosis Plants) and 6 tanker trucks.
 - **€ 1 120 000** were allocated to a project situated in "the former **Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**", implemented by UNDP and aimed at improving the water distribution network in two villages that had taken in refugees of Roma origin from Kosovo.²

2001

- A **€ 300 000** grant, in favour of refugees in Kosovo, coordinated and implemented by UNHCR was approved by CEB's Administrative Council on 12 September 2001.
- **Purpose:** to finance two sub-projects: **€ 150 000** for a bus service in favour of the Serbian community and **€ 150 000 for the improvement of housing conditions of about 160 Roma families.**

2003

- A **USD 450 000** grant to be coordinated and implemented by the local branch of UNICEF in "**the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**", was approved by CEB's Administrative Council in June 2003.
- **Purpose:** to finance a project aiming to improve access to formal and non-formal education for Roma children, girls and young women.
- The rehabilitation of schools should **benefit 15 000 children in 11 locations**. The provision of **health education** concerns **6 000 families**.

2004

- The Bank extended, on an exceptional basis, a contribution to the Roma Education Fund amounting to **€ 560 000**, **€ 500 000** of this amount came from its Selective Trust Account and **€ 60 000** were drawn from the Finnish Trust Account.

2005

- A **€ 150 000** grant in favour of the Municipality of Nova Zagora (south-eastern plains of **Bulgaria**) to improve access to formal education for Roma children was approved by CEB's Administrative Council in November 2005.
- **Purpose:** to finance renovation works of three kindergartens in Nova Zagora and surrounding villages. The construction works are being accompanied by training of teachers and staff at the kindergartens and other outreach activities within the Roma community in order to increase the enrolment of Roma children.

From the Norway Trust Account³

Since 2004, **three pilot projects for a total amount of € 207 000** were approved in favour of "**the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**":

- One project is aimed at community development in four Roma communities in co-operation with SPOLU International (Dutch foundation).
- The second project concerns the improvement of the employment of Roma women through extension of micro credits in co-operation with the Open Society Institute (OSI).
- The third project concerns the development and testing of a new loan product, i.e. micro credit for Roma housing. It is joint initiative between "Horizonti Foundation" (an experienced micro-credit institution) and "Habitat for Humanity" (Macedonia). Both institutions established a "Housing Fund for Roma and marginalised groups".

¹ Funded from the Bank's annual profits to the extent approved each year by the Administrative Council

² All reference to Kosovo, whether to the territories, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with UN Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo

³ The Norway Trust Account (NTA) was set up with CEB in 2004 on the initiative of the Norwegian Authorities in order to provide for the implementation of various activities in favour of the Western Balkans.

6. The CEB and international co-operation on Roma issues

The Bank cooperates with the **Council of Europe**, as an observer, within the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Roma and Travellers called "MG-S-Rom". Both institutions are complementary: the Council of Europe assists member countries in the drafting of national strategies in favour of Roma; CEB supports governments by co-financing priority projects at national and local levels.

CEB also cooperates with the **World Bank**. It co-financed, through a grant from the Finnish authorities, the conference "Roma in an Expanding Europe", held in Budapest in July 2003 and organised by the World Bank, the Open Society Institute (OSI) and supported by the European Commission. Further to this conference, two initiatives were launched: the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 and the Roma Education Fund.

CEB has actively supported the creation of the **Roma Education Fund**, by co-organising the Donor's Conference held in Paris in December 2004 and by supporting financially the launch of this new institution. The Bank extended, on an exceptional basis, a contribution amounting to € 560 000.

The Bank has established close links with the **European Commission** and is closely following the efforts undertaken by the European Commission to achieve a better link between Structural funds and Roma inclusion initiatives.

The Bank has also developed working links with **Non-Governmental Organisations** active in Roma issues, such as **SPOLU International**, **Rraje** (Roma Rights and Access to Justice in Europe), established in the United Kingdom and active in the Czech Republic, Bulgaria and Romania, and also with **FSGG** (Fundación Secretariado General Gitano), a Spanish foundation with a long experience in the implementation of projects in Spain and Central and Eastern Europe.

The Bank works with **UN agencies** such as UNHCR, UNDP and UNICEF. These institutions act as implementing agencies for the projects approved and financed with CEB grants.

7. Challenges

The "**Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015**" was officially launched in Sofia in February 2005 to provide a forum to the governments and international partners to implement various activities and accelerate the process towards improving the welfare of Roma in the four selected priority sectors: housing, education, health and employment. CEB continues to attend the International Steering Committee's meetings (ISC) which is the decision making organ of the Decade.

The **EU Roma Summits** in Brussels in September 2008, as well as in Cordoba in April 2010 raised awareness on the issue of Roma inclusion.

CEB will continue to support these initiatives in co-operation with all interested parties. CEB stands ready to finance **suitable loan projects** in accordance with its mission, operational tools, and financial possibilities.

8. Contacts

Please visit www.coebank.org.

For any further questions, please contact: info@coebank.org

