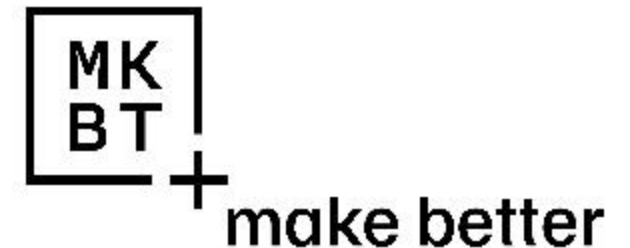


Legislative and operational framework for recognizing and improving living conditions in informal settlements in Romania



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2007– pilot project on the analysis and regulation of informal settlements. Case study: Valea Rece (Târgu Mureș)

2014 – census of informal settlements carried out by MDLPA (63,000 families / approx. 200,000 inhabitants)

2017-2019 No Man's Land: Informal Housing in Roma Communities (MKBT & PACT)
- civic advocacy campaign, legal amendment approved>> Law 151/2019 for the completion of Law no. 350/2001 on territorial planning and urbanism

2020 - Metodological norms issued >> Order MDLPA no. 3,494 of July 27, 2020 for the modification and completion of the Methodological Norms for the application of Law no. 350/2001

2026 - First EU funding line issued - Social Inclusion and Dignity Program 2021 – 2027
Priority: P03 - Protecting the right to social dignity. - relaunched 2025)

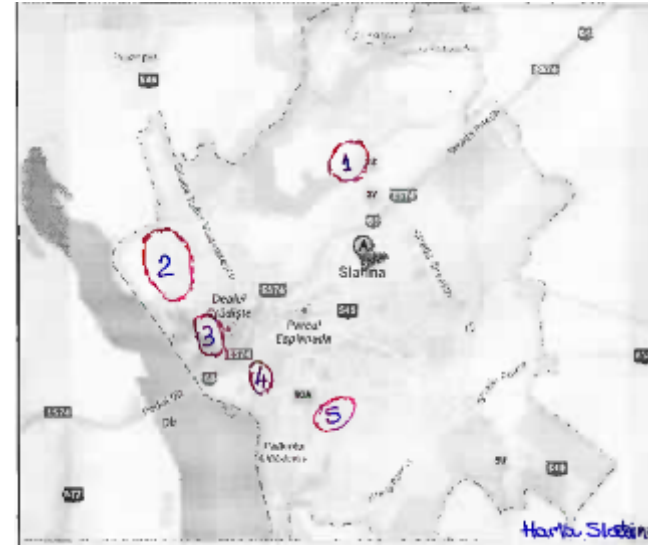


LEGAL RECOGNITION

Informal settlements - group of at least 3 spontaneously developed housing units, occupied by persons or families who are part of vulnerable groups defined according to the Social Assistance Law no. 292/2011, as amended and supplemented, and who have no right to the real estate they occupy.

Informal settlements are usually located on the outskirts of urban or rural localities, include improvised housing, made of recovered materials, and/or housing made of conventional construction materials, and through their location and socio-demographic characteristics generate exclusion, segregation and social marginalization.

By being located in areas of natural risk (landslides, floods), biological (dumps, landfills, contaminated sites and the like) or anthropogenic (safety zones or protection zones of Seveso objectives, of technical-urban infrastructures and the like), some informal settlements endanger the safety and health of their inhabitants."



IDENTIFICATION, QUANTIFICATION AND REGISTERING

Central and local public administration authorities, as well as other public administration bodies, cooperate with the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration, providing the necessary information and implementing measures within their field of competence, so that the identified informal settlements are prioritized within public actions and policies regarding housing, access to infrastructure, public health and the safety of individuals.

The priority measures aim to:

- *inform and involve the inhabitants of the affected communities in the planning and regulation process,*
- *identify the legal and economic regime of the lands and create a general cadastre of informal settlements,*
- *register real estate in informal settlements in the integrated cadastre and land registry system under the terms of the Law on Cadastre and Real Estate Advertising.*

Projects and programs intended for informal settlements will be correlated with social assistance programs that may target either an area affected by unsanitary conditions, lack of services and poverty, or one or more categories of beneficiaries of social assistance measures, largely present within the informal settlement."



THE ROLE OF COMMITTEES ON INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS ORGANIZED AT THE COUNTY COUNCIL LEVEL

The County Council, respectively the General Council of Bucharest Municipality, ensures the organization and functioning of a commission to coordinate the implementation of the necessary measures to improve the living conditions of residents of informal settlements, methodological and operational support for local public administration authorities, as well as monitoring the fulfillment of responsibilities and the implementation of actions established at local level.

The Commission will be composed of: representatives of specialized structures regarding territorial planning and urbanism, control and discipline in construction, social assistance and child protection at the county level, public health, specialized structures regarding Roma issues, at the county level and from the administrative-territorial units on whose territory informal settlements have been identified, representatives of communities from informal settlements on the territory of the county, respectively of the municipality of Bucharest and representatives of civil society.

The nominal composition of the commission is established based on the proposals of the president of the county council and of the entities whose representatives are part of the commission and is approved, together with the organization and functioning regulations, by the county council/General Council of Bucharest Municipality.



ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN AT LOCAL LEVEL (i/ii)

The Mayor/Mayor General of Bucharest, through the specialized structures regarding territorial planning and urbanism, control and discipline in construction, social assistance and public health, respectively the local police, has the following obligations:

- a) identifies the lands within the administrative territory occupied by informal settlements, and transmits the cadastral documentation to the county council and the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration for inclusion in the National Territorial Observatory;
- b) creates and updates the database regarding the number of people living in informal settlements, the buildings occupied by them and the typology of informal settlements;
- c) informs the residents of informal settlements regarding the provisions of this law and initiates a consultation and participatory planning process in order to identify intervention solutions adapted to the specifics of informal settlements and the needs of the community;
- d) initiates and coordinates the necessary steps to identify the legal and economic regime of the lands occupied by informal settlements and to regulate them;



ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN AT LOCAL LEVEL (ii/ii)

e) if the regulation provides for the partial or total dismantling of the respective informal settlements, ensures the relocation of their inhabitants, under the following conditions:

- offering alternative housing solutions, either by providing social housing or by supporting the reconstruction of housing on municipally equipped land, identified and made available by the local public administration authorities, under the terms of the law;*
- informing and consulting in advance the inhabitants in relocation situations regarding possible alternatives and obtaining their agreement;*

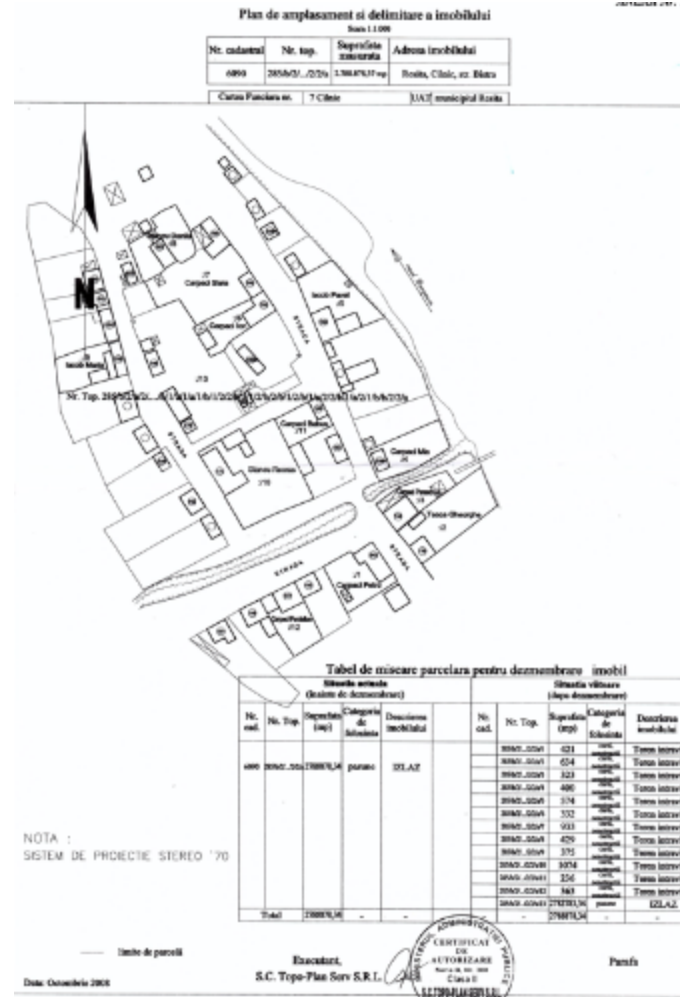
f) initiates and coordinates the necessary actions to limit the expansion of informal settlements, by identifying available land for future housing areas or alternative housing solutions and informing the inhabitants of informal settlements regarding these....“



DEADLINES AND ACTIONS

- The Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration updates the methodological norms for the application of Law No. 350/2001 on territorial planning and urban planning and for the development and updating of urban planning documentation
- within the institution of the chief architect of the county, respectively of the municipality of Bucharest, the committees regulated by this law are established
- the first meetings of the committees are organized for the information and initiation of measures to identify informal settlements on the territory of the county, respectively of the municipality of Bucharest.
- local public administration authorities are obliged to take measures regarding: identifying the lands occupied by informal settlements, creating and updating the database regarding the number of people, informing the inhabitants of informal settlements regarding the provisions of this law and initiating a consultation and participatory planning process
- local public administration authorities are obliged to: initiate and coordinate the necessary steps to identify the legal regime, initiate and coordinate the necessary actions to limit the expansion of informal settlements, initiate and coordinate the necessary actions for the municipal equipment of the areas.





Cadaster situation – 2020 vs 2025



The first successful example of law enforcement:
Câlnic neighborhood (Reșița)

Reflections on challenges of enforcing the informal settlements law

- Local authorities, although aware of the need to carry out interventions to improve the living conditions of the population in poor areas, do not make law enforcement a priority;
- Information about informal settlements (law, norms, financing program) is not known to many local authorities; little technical know how on housing and housing informality;
- Informal settlements are addressed differently from urban planning and systemic cadastre points of view– creating blockages on the long term.
- Lack of enforcement mechanism.



Reflections on challenges of enforcing the informal settlements law

- POIDS funding line reissued given low interest.
Takeaways:
 - Major preparation costs (technical design for new housing)
 - Very complex project design, difficult to tackle by rural/small urban municipalities with limited personnel) – includes (1) technically challenging urban planning documentation + (2) social housing construction + (3) social services, all within limited budgets.
 - The need to have ready-to-build public land, as per urban planning documentation (for the social housing dev component) – major barrier for rural authorities.
- Adequacy for funding instrument design VS the need to be tackled.
- The need for a two-stage approach (1) planning and land titling (in viable location) and (2) incremental home upgrades and/or new homes for those that need relocation.





Thank you!

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