

# THE BRICK (CĂRĂMIDA). MAGAZINE FOR HOUSING JUSTICE

Căși sociale ACUM!/ Social housing NOW!

Fragments from issues # 1-4 (October 2017 – May 2018) <sup>1</sup>

*The Brick is the medium through which we contribute to increase the political movement for housing justice in the city of Cluj, and beyond. Brick-by-brick, we build mutual knowledge; trust in our own forces and solidarity that strengthens us. Brick-by-brick, we are aware of the real causes of the housing crisis, the consequences of which are suffered by the workers, both the poor working class and the precarious middle class. Through The Brick, we can fight for a fair and anti-racist housing policy, as well as against the transformation of the city into a source of profit for developers and large real estate owners. Let's build the movement together!*



<sup>1</sup> The whole issues published originally in Romanian are accessible on the website of Căși sociale ACUM!/ Social housing NOW, [www.casisocialeacum.ro](http://www.casisocialeacum.ro)

**Public housing: response to housing crisis (fragment from the editorial, Enikő Vincze & George Zamfir)**

Housing issues rarely appear on the news, and politicians do not really touch the subject, but the housing crisis affects us all. In Romania, the European state with the largest proportion of private property, and the largest percentage of workers, both men and women, living in poverty, most of us living in insecurity, often two or three generations living together because of low wages, very high rents as well as the rising prices of housing and utilities. Many of us live in poor conditions because we have no money to improve them. Some of us live on the street, being homeless. Others are at risk of eviction. There are people born in Cluj-Napoca who live in improvised houses, with temporary IDs, no toilet, bath, even without running water and electricity in the house.

Students coming to town for college are in a position to squeeze their parents' money to pay for the astronomical rents. Yes, Cluj becomes a European city, but firstly in terms of rent and housing prices. While several Western cities protect their inhabitants by providing a significant number of social housing and by rent control. Cluj is being developed to please the big landowners and real estate speculators. Cluj is a city where, for the time being, too few people are mobilized to fight together for housing justice. It is time to change these things.

The Brick is a quarterly publication that brings to the fore a variety of manifestations of the housing crisis. In the pages of the magazine we publish articles on local, national and international housing policy, as well as on the current practices in various countries related to public and social housing; on the experiences and testimonies of people affected by the housing crisis in various ways (eviction, informal housing, real estate speculators, high rents, etc.); on how the real estate development of Cluj affects us all; or on how we can protect our rights by appealing to justice; as well as on mobilizing initiatives and actions of the active groups in the domain. Housing issues are not individual or personal, but social and political. To raise awareness about this and claim housing and social justice, there is a need for political activism, need for mobilization and the solidarity of all who are suffering from this injustice.

Social housing NOW! is a local movement that started as a campaign of Desire Foundation in March 2016 with the aim to change both the vision of housing and the housing politics. Its members are activists, artists, academics and people directly affected by housing injustice. Our movement is based on the efforts started by Desire Foundation in 2010, to bring to the forefront the injustices suffered by people who were forcedly evicted by the local government, but also the exclusion of people from social housing in parallel with the authorities' support for real estate developers who together with bankers are benefiting from the profit created by the high cost of housing that we all pay. In 2017, Social housing NOW! was among the activist groups that initiated the Block for Housing platform, together with The Common Front for the Right to Housing and E-Romnja from Bucharest, and Right to the City from Timisoara. Together we struggle for a just and anti-racist housing policy in Romania.

We consider the criteria for allocating social housing as being discriminatory to the people pushed into poverty, among them Roma. People who were born, raised, and worked in Cluj, regardless of ethnicity, were found or are still found in the situation of getting evicted. People submit applications for social housing every year, some of them repeating this for over ten years, being declared either ineligible, or receiving low scores, or even with higher scores, they are not allocated housing because the City Hall and the Cluj-Napoca Local Council have very few social housing to distribute and does not consider it important to increase this housing fund. We argue that many of the criteria for the allocation of social housing adopted by the local council are illegal, not respecting the provisions of the Housing Law 114/1996. We claim that each of us has the right to housing in the city.

We support the B308 initiative from 2017 to amend the Housing Law, currently submitted to the Senate and signed by parliamentarians from all parties. This would lead to changes needed for local and central governments to invest in increasing the number of social housing and to use appropriate criteria for their attribution.

We support the campaign of the European Coalition for the Right to Housing and to the City ([housingnotprofit.org](http://housingnotprofit.org)), which draws attention to the financialization of housing by claiming the following from authorities all over Europe: Stop supporting banks and developers through housing policies! Stop the privatization of housing from the public fund! Don't let real estate speculators increase the price of housing and, as a result, take us out from houses and cities! Ban evictions! Impose measures to control private rents!

### **They should consider us humans too! (Alexandru Greta)**

Many people know about us. How we were evicted from Coastei Street in December 2010. And how we were forcedly moved in the modular houses from Pata Rât. Back then, the City Hall and the mayor were not interested in the fact that these modular houses that they gave us were very close to the garbage ramp, but also even closer to the Terapia (Pharmaceutical factory) waste ramp. Several of us, about 30 families, did not get a modular house. Someone from the local police, Mrs. Fritea, she draw a few lots on a sheet of paper. She told them: build some houses up there, above the modular houses, as you built on Coastei Street, illegally.

Many of us had rent contracts and we paid rent to the City Hall on Coastei Street, we even paid rent in the month they evicted us. But yet, authorities have been repeating since then that we have all been there illegally, and that's why they demolished our houses and evicted and got us out of there. In fact, they chased us from there to make a campus of the Faculty of Theology, and a park, and a kindergarten on that ground. The mayor from back then, Apostu, he lived nearby, in his new villa. Maybe he was more disturbed by our closeness. But God also punished him.

Shortly after he got us out of there, he was found guilty of corruption and was sent to prison. Or maybe the County Council was disturbed. Or maybe the County Library. Or those in that tall office building. All of these buildings were built in the Coastei area after 1990. There is much to tell what has happened to us since then, in Pata Rat, how we live in that smell. And I've told it many times. In protests or other occasions. We also remember our first protest in January 2011.

But how can you tell someone, so they figure out how the smell of sulfur from the Terapia waste ramp is like, the smell of rubbish, the smoke from the fires? Which has become increasingly difficult to bear. Especially since 2015, when the old ramp was closed and the City Hall, and who had to authorize this, facilitated the opening of two new ramps, even closer to our homes. What you read today in the magazine about how toxic the old ramp is, which has not been ecologized as it should have been, but also the two new ones that rise like the Carpathian Mountains, everyone should know that we feel that up close and live, day by day, night by night. Now everyone from the city started to be scared that the poison could get close to the people from Cluj. But we are also inhabitants of Cluj. We were born here, we were also in the army, we worked in the factories. But they don't care about us. Aren't we people like them? And if you

come to think about it, that some people even said that we deserve to live in that smell, what else can you say? They don't want to see us close. Or even worse, they want to eliminate us. Now, about 21 families have received housing through the Pata Cluj project. Some in town, some in Florești, others in Apahida, others in Baciou. Thus, 9 rooms were freed up in the modular houses. In the summer, they invited us to a meeting, people from the City Hall came also, and the director from the social assistance department was there, the vicemayor and the project staff was also there. And they asked us, what kind of criteria should they establish to distribute these rooms that were freed up in the modular houses. Many of the people submitted their application. And most of them were refused. They were told that they were refused because they don't have first-degree relatives in the rooms from the modular houses. They have to stay there, in the improvised houses. Recently somebody was evicted because of not paying the rent. A family, with many children, they built a house out of wooden boards. It seems that the City Hall would rather keep those rooms empty than to give them to someone. Maybe they are upset because we sued them in 2011, because they moved us here. Maybe they say, you were not satisfied with these homes, then why do you ask for them now? Stay on the field, if you sue us! But people do not ask for these rooms because they now think that these homes would be adequate housing. Or that it would be good to live in that area. But because they are at least connected to utilities and if you have contracts for the utilities, then you will be given a card ID, instead of a temporary ID "without residence" or "without address". Until people are forced to live at such small distance from the ramps, at least they have water and electricity in the house. That's what people from the Dallas community want. People who have been living there for many decades, about 50-100 meters below the modular homes. They are not allowed to build with papers there. Meaning that the Dutch foundation that built them houses is not authorized. Because the ramps are too close, or so they say. But these ramps were not close when the same City Hall that refuse these people, built us houses back then? Meanwhile there are all kind of rumors going on. You stay one more year and then everyone will leave. I don't understand, if they have plans with us why can't they inform us directly? We asked the City Hall so many times to talk with us. To consider us humans.

## **What is an activist architect? (fragments from the article, Péter Máthé)**

The frequent response from public administration or real estate developers to the demand for building social housing is usually a so-called "realistic" one. It is linked with the logic of the market and states. They say that it is not possible to build housing that are to be rented at prices below market prices because there are no necessary resources and the investment must generate profit in a short period of time.

We often hear that society is in (constant) economic crisis and it cannot afford such investment for the well-being of many. This statement, in addition to demonstrating economic rigidity, is also based on the assumption that it is not possible to build otherwise than it was and is built in Romania: social housing must be of poor quality, and private investors should focus only on higher profits, that is to build exclusively apartments for those who can and want to pay at market prices.

Alternative financing for construction, ownership and architecture is not considered or is suddenly regarded as "unrealistic", too experimental and too risky to be achieved in our society. Our article aims to dismantle these beliefs by presenting such models, as they were thought in other parts of the world and their possible application in our local context.

As a student in architecture, I would not allow myself to enter into an argument about the economic possibilities of the Romanian city halls. However, as far as the rejection of alternative models to solve the problem of housing, I try to bring some provocative arguments. Last year I worked on a (fictional) student project, in which I transformed a block from Mănăştur neighborhood into a larger building with new apartments designed above the roof, thus expanding the existing space. ... I was lucky to work with an architect who has gained a remarkable experience in organizing a bottom-up movement for the right of tenants to keep their homes (against gentrification) in Berlin. I also have a broad knowledge of what social architecture actually means. The main purpose of my project was not to produce an architecture that can be easily sold, but one that, at least in theory, could be made to benefit all the involved actors, including very poor owners. In other words, my project does not understand architecture just or primarily through its aesthetic and construction aspects, but also through its strategy of realization. This approach is not necessarily a new one, yet in the recent years it has become more famous with the prestigious architectural award, the Pritzker Prize, given to architect Alejandro Aravena from Chile for his strategy of expansible houses ....

In architecture schools, the rebirth of social housing as a projection theme is definitely a palpable one, but it is often treated as an immature expression, a teen rebellion. .... The problem is that in the neo-liberal economy, where the market is supposed to self-regulate and produce, social architecture is no longer a product of the prosperity system. Thus, if the architect has social ambitions, he/she can no longer afford to concentrate exclusively on spatial qualities or aspects of the construction itself, but must enter politics (in one way or another).

Thus, the expression "activist architect", which is often used in recent times, covers a self-definition different from that of the "modern architect". The difference lies not in the presence of the principle that architecture must, first and foremost, serve all of us equally - this being the engine of the first modernist block of flats projects - but in recognizing that this goal cannot be achieved without a strategy to find the necessary resources, but also not without organizing a movement that can put the necessary pressure on the authorities. Today is not enough to make an excellent design, because it will be quickly commercialized, and rationalizing the plan and lowering expenses also serve to increase profit and thus commercial interest. Today is not enough to make a beautiful project for the good of many, because the political actors who are interested in its realization practically do not exist. Pressure coming from the people from the huge housing deficit at European level could trigger a process of investing in social housing in the future. But until then, architects dedicated to projects with social sensitivity will need close collaboration with activists, inhabitants, lawyers, journalists and others. In architecture school we were told that a minimal knowledge of the construction statics is necessary so that we can speak the same language with the statics experts and the representatives of the construction companies. But it seems that our generation will need a better knowledge of both politicians and investors, because their understanding is, like the statics of the building, inseparable from the success of the project.

.... Starting from this specific in Romania, as well as because the original purpose of my architectural project was not only to build something more beautiful, but first to solve a social problem specific to this national context, that of housing over-crowdedness, I have concluded that in this case a whole new strategy will be needed to finance this ambitious transformation.

In the case of the type of block for my project, I found two examples that can confirm that a one or two floor extension over the existing building would be possible. ... Such an extension can be achieved in different ways. Perhaps the first idea that comes to our minds would be luxury

apartments, with large terraces on the roof and, of course, extremely expensive, built by private investors. But maybe that should not be the case. Let us think about whether the Owners' Association would make this investment through a bank loan, thus building two floors to produce the necessary profit for the major transformation of the block and the rehabilitation of the whole installation system. By renting these apartments, the block could easily pay for the cost of the transaction even if the apartments - or some of them - remain well below the Cluj market prices. I know that this project is ambitious and that most people's reaction will be to consider me naive. But in theory it is possible, without the involvement of much public money, so what would be the reason not to try to achieve it? What loss could produce such an experiment for the state compared to other investments made? If I risk to be considered naive anyway, I do not stop here and continue my proposal. How would the state recognize its interest in such projects and the city hall to support them, at least politically, but eventually also as an investor. Thus, the city hall may spend its funds for social housing in an efficient way, because in this case it is not necessary to find and buy land, and the construction would cost less because there is no need for complete installation and foundation. And I have not yet mentioned the advantage that most of these blocks are located centrally or at least are well connected to the city center by public transport, that is, they are urban housing in the good sense of the word.

This story is not my invention. All I wish is to propose to think about and to apply in Cluj and in Romania, in the context of the specific local context of the existing housing stock. All I did through my project after hearing about such strategies, over the past one hundred years in Europe and the world, it is a kind of collage of interventions that I have imagined in a project that responds with a possible solution to the problem of housing in Cluj. ... Next, in this column of The Brick, you will find some interesting examples of social housing architecture from the global level, which maintain our belief that another housing system and other social architecture are possible.



## The Brick #2, December 2017

### **December 17<sup>th</sup> – Day Against Eviction (fragment from the editorial, Social Housing NOW!)**

On December 17<sup>th</sup> 2010, the City Hall evicted 350 Roma people from Coastei Street. It was a day marked by people's suffering. With tears, pressure, humiliation, confusion, uncertainty. Authorities, you've stolen 7 years of their life! Give them their life back! They, and everyone who lived for 20 or 40 years on Cantonului Street or in the Dallas community, forced by circumstances. Give them adequate social housing in the city! They work in Cluj and for all of us. They belong to the city. The city is theirs too. In Cluj, December 17<sup>th</sup> 2010 marked the beginning of the battle for the right to housing, for housing justice and against racism. Of the common fight of the people directly affected by evictions, of the people who live in inadequate conditions or without shelter, of workers that don't earn enough to pay rent and activists for housing justice. Unfortunately, the eviction on the 17<sup>th</sup> of December 2010 was neither the first or the last eviction in Cluj or in Romania. In order not to happen to anyone, so that no such trauma can be repeated, so as not to cause the pain from 2010, we declare today in Cluj the 17<sup>th</sup> of December as The Day Against Evictions. We ask you to join the struggle for a just and anti-racist housing policy! [...]

Video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=3&v=5KCHdY1\\_x9k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=3&v=5KCHdY1_x9k)

### **"The Manifesto from Cluj against evictions everywhere"**

Launched on December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017, within a performative and commemorative frame.

The Manifesto is the result of our collective work. It was conceived by the activists of the Social housing NOW! movement, among them sociologists, artists and tenants in the Pata Rat area, within the four workshops carried out for this purpose.

**SOCIAL HOUSING NO EVICTIONS!  
POVERTY KILLS!  
HOUSING NOT HUMILIATION! FAIR AND ANTI-RACIST HOUSING POLICY!**

1. I did not want to leave but they cut off my gas, electricity and water.
2. Being evicted is like a hurricane. To be evicted means to have your dignity taken away! It destroys you as fire; as a punishment.
3. To be evicted it means the streets are blackened by gendarmes; to wake up with bulldozers and excavators at your door; to be lifted up with the crane.
4. To be evicted means the lack of thought of the decision-makers; you become homeless so someone else can come and build a bank.
5. To be evicted means to be banished from society. They demolish your house where you've lived for so many years in front of your eyes. You are left in the street, or they give you four nails and a string to circle the land on which to make a barrack.
6. Or they take you to the garbage ramp. Or they give you a container somewhere in the field. All temporarily. Then years and decades of your life pass.
7. Are you evicted from a social home? Did the city hall evict you?
8. Are you evicted from a retroceded building? Has the owner evicted you?
9. Are you evicted from an improvised dwelling? Did the city hall evict you?
10. Are you evicted from the house you bought by bank credit? Did the bank evict you?
11. Solidarity between all evictees is power! We fight together against evictions of any kind! No eviction without relocation!
12. Being evicted is an abuse! Evictees from everywhere, unite!

#### HOMES FOR EVERYONE NOT JUST FOR MOBSTERS

13. December 17, 2010 – The beginning of the fight with the authorities. The beginning of the fight against injustice!
14. I am a Roma and I want to live in dignity. The Roma driven to the periphery fight for social justice. The Roma in Pata Rat are fighting for social housing for everyone. Solidarize with us! We hope that one day all evictees will unite.
15. Authorities, fix your mistakes towards the evictees from “Coastei”, from the Hangman’s House, from “Sobarilor” street, from “Byron” street, from “Kővári” street, from the “NATO” block, from the “Cipariu” market, from Ion Meşter street!
16. Authorities, fix your mistakes against those evicted from “Eroilor” street, Calea Turzii, Croitorilor Street and other retroceded buildings!
17. Evictees from everywhere, unite! Those at risk of eviction, unite! Mobilize yourself with the people who are on the verge of being evicted!

18. Do not demolish the old public dwellings! Repair them! Give them to the people who need it and not the real estate developers!

**WE WANT JUSTICE!  
A CITY TO LIVE IN, NOT A CITY FOR PROFIT!**

19. Do not spend public money irresponsibly! Citizens want apartments, not missiles!

20. We want the privatization of the public housing fund to be stopped!

21. We are calling for lawful forbidding of forced evictions!

22. We ask for the change of the housing law! To have more social housing.

23. We ask for a change in the law to have criteria to support low-income people to receive social housing. For housing to become a right!

24. We want to get back what was taken from us! We will not be humiliated anymore!

**PATA RAT BELONGS TO EVERYONE  
CLUJ NAPOCA DON'T FORGET, PATA RAT IS YOUR FACE**

**Let's evaporate!?! (L.C.)**

Diana has been living in Barcelona, in a barrack, for 3 years. Her mother has been living here for 5 years, before she lived in Italy. She spent every day in parks or in the barrack. Now her family lives in a camp together with other families from Romania, including Bianca. She's been in Barcelona for 7 years. Her house was on the street, parking lots, in parks, in occupied bank-owned apartments, where she paid an "entry right" to a Moroccan family, the first occupant of the apartment. The occupied apartments belong to the banks, are empty apartments from which the families who could not pay their bank rates were evicted. Bianca's family spent 500 euros to enter the apartment and after three weeks received notification from the Court to evict it. Abandoned houses followed, in the districts from the center and the periphery of Barcelona. Bianca has been in the social services evidence. „I took a bag of papers to social (department)". For the last couple of months, she has been receiving food aid of 100 euros per month, and her niece, who lives in an occupied apartment, was enrolled in school. No solution for housing in two years, no income. She gathers cardboards and iron, and now lives with other families at the entrance of a parking lot, "the police lets me stay here, and the neighbors give us food". For Bianca, access to social assistance is conditional upon obtaining a permanent residence permit in Spain. The rules for obtaining a residence permit by EU citizens have changed since 2012, and

any applicant has to submit a work contract or income that proves that one can provide for him/herself in Spain (over 5,000 euros in the bank account) and a private medical insurance.

However, banks do not open an account on behalf of a person who does not have a residence permit unless they have a savings account where over three thousand euros are deposited for at least three months. Once entered into the bureaucratic labyrinth, either Bianca nor the social services found a solution to obtain a residence *permi* for her.

EU non-resident aliens may reside in Spain but legally they do not exist and cannot have access to public services, except for minimal medical or social services, i.e. emergency and social canteens. This is also the case of Bianca. Although she is in the record of social services, without a formal residence permit she cannot have access to any financial aid to rent a room or to attend a course that would allow her to find a job.

The condition to be eligible for social benefits, the minimum guaranteed income that was implemented in Barcelona in September 2017, is a legal residence permit with a minimum seniority of two years. When we met, she was angry at the social services that "make me walk me on the roads in vain. Not for a month, for years, the police saw us sleeping next to the parking lot and told us to enter where we see an empty space". There are no special programs to provide a home for people sleeping in the street. At some point she tells me that she was offered a pension for a couple of nights, but she rejected the offer.

"What could I have done at that pension? I would have had a pot in one hand and the iron in the other? They don't let me to go in with my family". Places in pensions are individual, not for a family, and people cannot cook or store their trolleys they use for collecting iron.

Now Bianca sleeps in a barrack she made during the summer, in a neighborhood on the outskirts of Barcelona. She also lived in parks or squares in the central areas of Barcelona. "We were several families in the barracks, but after two months the police came to kick us out. We should evaporate, they said".

Civic police from Barcelona prohibit occupying public space. If the police does not intervene often in peripheral neighborhoods, where families eventually end up being pushed from central areas, in districts where many tourists walk, the presence of police to dismantle barracks or improvised tents in parks or abandoned spaces between buildings is visible.

The 2016, statistics indicated that more than three thousand people without papers lived in the barracks in the Barcelona neighborhoods, people coming from Morocco, Senegal or Romania.

The improvised tent camps in the districts from the outskirts of Barcelona are a "more stable home", says Bianca. She refers to the fact that the police let them sleep in abandoned areas if there are not tourists in the area. For years, Bianca's only occupation in Barcelona has been iron and cardboard recycling, "but we do not earn more than 300 euros a month because there are many people collecting iron, also from Morocco and other countries, it's no longer like before the crisis".

Most families have children back in Romania and prefer to send money back to Romania. According to the child's protection laws, Bianca knows that she cannot stay with her children in a barrack because there is a risk that social services announce the department of child protection and she could lose the guardianship of the children because they do not have a home that meets the minimum conditions. "Children stay in Romania or live in the surrounding apartments", she says. But in the summer, she had another trouble: a fine. She took in a dog that was next to her barrack on the abandoned land next to her. People from the animal welfare organization fined her because she had no conditions for keeping the dog "at the barracks" and did not registered the dog with a chip. During the last interview, she asked me if it would be a good idea to go to the social services to help her pay the fine.

### **About rentiers and the need of tenants to organize (Vlad Mureşan)**

"I am currently paying 700 lei + expenses for a studio of 30sqm. The location is good, but there is old linoleum on the floors, grandmother's furniture and ... bugs. I took the studio in October from desperation and fear that I could have no other options. In addition, it is difficult to find pet friendly rents, so I had to make a huge compromise. Living in Cluj is for many... survival. From a salary of 1500 lei, I end up with 300 lei, this sum being strictly used for rent, expenses and food" (Anca - renter from Cluj).

How is the price of a rent fixed? A real estate agent will answer that the price is primarily dictated by the market, and to a lesser extent by the size of the apartment, its location and interior finishes. An explanation that at first glance seems to be common sense. Besides, it is the explanation that we often hear in offline media, television and radio. This understanding of the capitalist market is so entrenched in our collective imagination that even some tenants, who are paying obscene amounts for a rent, no longer acknowledge any responsibility from the part of the owner. Very few understand the market as a relationship between different actors with different

and sometimes conflicting interests. In the common understanding, the market means supply and demand, an objective mechanism that is self-regulating. In this logic, market mechanisms will not allow a landlord to demand a higher rent than a tenant permits, because this is how demand disappears and he will remain with an empty apartment.

The problem with this reasoning is that it only works in the ideal situation when demand is more, or at least equal with the offer. In reality, in a city like Cluj, where demand exceeds the offer considerably, an imbalance is created, the balance being strongly leaning towards the owner.

This leads to situations when, apart from the fact that the rent burden increases from year to year, the quality of apartments tends to worsen, the degree of overcrowding increases and the owner's interest in the welfare of the tenant becomes almost inexistent. But why is the owner guilty that there are too few apartments in Cluj?

Indeed, the lack of adequate housing stock cannot be placed in the hands of the rentier, but we cannot ignore the fact that this middle class acts rationally in its own interests and to the detriment of tenants, speculating the favorable conditions on market.

Even the classical liberal economic theories say that at a certain point a balance is needed between the seller and the buyer, because if you take all the money from someone today, tomorrow he will have nothing to buy and, in the end, you will remain without customers. These lessons seem to be foreign to the owners in Cluj, who prefer to maximize their profit, without any fear of a possible bursting of the real estate bubble. A rather risky approach, given that a large percentage of apartments were purchased through bank loans that are also paid out of rental income.

Thus, we get to another extremely problematic argument that we often hear: "no one has the right to tell anyone what to do with his/her own property! If he is too greedy, he will pay the price in the future". Again, an argument that seems to be of common sense, but which if applied to the rest of the economic sectors would lead to a total collapse of the market. Whatever the ideologies of neoliberalism would say, the free market cannot exist in the reality of the modern state. All economic relations are mediated by the state, sometimes in a direct way through subsidies, sometimes through the development of physical and social infrastructure.

Rentiers from our city are no exception. The emergence of this sub-class was the result of the privatization of the housing stock built before 1989, the state subsidy of mortgage programs and the almost complete withdrawal of the state from the real estate market. The non-regulation of

the rent market creates a conducive environment to speculation subsidized by public money. As Daniel Rus, a real estate agent declared for PressOne:

"If you have 100.000 euros, rather than to keep your money at the bank, where you get an interest rate of about 1%, it is better for you to invest in real estate, where you expect a return of 6-8%. There are many people who have bought apartments in Cluj strictly for investment and rental, and will recover their money in 12-15 years. I have, for example, a customer who has 4 rented buildings or a stable customer in Paris who bought a property in Cluj because he heard that apartments are renting well".

A yield at which few businesses can ever hope. Finally, I would like to propose a different understanding of the rental market, where the value of rent is not an abstract number dictated by the invisible hand of the market, but is the result of a conflict of interest between the landlord and the tenant, where everyone uses all their weapons to maximize their own well-being.

The fundamental contradiction of the real estate market in Romania and not only, is that the tenant is in a conflict not only with the renter but with the state itself, which creates a conducive economic framework to the rapid accumulation of resources for the rentier class at the expense of the tenants. It is also necessary to act at the level of public policy, in order to demand at least the minimum protection the state offers to consumers from other economic sectors, because otherwise there is no obstacle preventing the rentiers from taking the coat off our backs. The only weapon of the tenants is organization.

### **Visit to the Subjective Museum of Housing (fragments from the interview conducted by Lorand Maxim)**

The "Subjective Museum of Housing" performance tells the story of seven women from Rahova-Uranus and Vulturilor 50 from Bucharest and the fight for housing that they have committed to. The Subjective Museum of Housing exhibits six key moments that have changed the lives of the protagonists and the lives of the two neighborhoods in the past 11 years. The show depicts the situations the protagonists have faced over the years, alongside their families, acquaintances, and neighbors, and is thought as a call to solidarity.

On stage, Elena Radu, Nicoleta Vişan, Cornelia Ioniţă, Claudia Moldoveanu, Alexandrina Fieraru, Cristina Eremia, Gabriela Dumitru play their own stories. Andrei Şerban and Gabriela

Teodorescu directed the performance. Some of the artistic team had the courtesy of answering some of our questions:

Lorand Maxim: How did you choose theater to tell these stories?

Cornelia Ioniță [Cami]: We started with children. My little one: "mother I want to be like uncle"!, my brother who went up on the house; Nuti's daughter [Alexandrina Fieraru]: "I want to be Cami!" These little things that they played in the street. As we saw them, Cristina said let's propose a performance! And I said: let's try through these performances to tell our problems. What hurts us the worst. And that's what hurts - eviction!

Nicoleta Vișan: And this is what we tried to show the people!

Cami: And this is what we tried, because many people don't know how it is to be evicted. We tried to show exactly how many stages does an evicted person go through.

Andrei Șerban: What we can do through theater is to say: this is happening. It's an injustice that's going on. You have to know about this! There are voices, there are people who are like us, who have problems. The theater creates the context of saying these stories. It's an alarm signal.

L.M.: The performance is built up of six scenes. Each scene is opened by an image. In fact, in the first phase we see some characters who, like statues, are stone-still in a position. The audience is invited to interpret the image first, then the action begins and shows the context in which the image is taken.

L.M.: How did you reach these six scenes and why this kind of interaction?

N.V.: Everything started from the question: when did we feel powerless? It's her story, it's my story. The stories we play are real.

Cristina Eremia: The directors have asked us as persons, what do we want to transmit to the audience? And we wanted to make them understand what an eviction means and wonder what they would do if they were in our place.

A.Ș.: AS: The play is built from six scenes because two of the actresses have the same story. They witnessed the same eviction. It's important to me that these are stories from the neighborhood, stories of the people who live next to us. It is no longer the theater that represents only a certain social class that thinks in a certain way about problems.

Here are the stories that should be said. That's about the people's theater. In the neighborhood people talk about these things, these things are known. The audience turns its back when the scenes change. After a show an audience member came up to me and said "Man, I now realize



that we are actually always turn our backs to these evictions". You turn your back and, at some point, it surprises you, there's a news story somewhere: "There was another eviction on Sfinților Street"!

L.M.: What can we see in the play?

C.E.: Through this play we tried to show what an eviction means. What is someone going through. Which are the phases. It's not just that they kick you out of a home. They take something from your life, your future, your past, your present. Your life is changing. You start another life. Cami's family struggled. They eventually managed to have a home, but the parents died. They were of an age, they could not bear their suffering. They spent 32 years in that house, had children, raised them. Their children had children, gathered them next to them, and they stayed with them all the time, and at one point they separated them. The parents suffered. It was harder for them to bear the move, and they just died. It's really very serious what's going on.

C.I: When I was evicted, I did not realize in that moment what happened because a lot of people came: television, police, gendarmes, firemen. At one point, everyone disappeared. It was night and everyone vanished. And then I realized that I was with my family out on the street. I sat on a bed, I was with all the furniture in the middle of the street, I sat on a bed and put my hands on my head. When you realize, you just see yourself a nobody. You see yourself a nobody!

N.V.: If you think about it, in Cami's case, her parents have suffered so much that they have died. The eviction literally took these people's life! And this is what people don't understand, that when you say eviction, there is no limit - evicted for one day, for two, for three. There are some people who are evicted forever. That is, how long they live on earth, they are no longer able to receive a home for ages of ages.

L.M.: How does the audience appreciate your show?

A.Ş.: The show also has the role of making us aware of what privileges some of us have: the fact that you have a home or the fact that you have access to a job that allows you to pay rent. You go to the city hall and you're always accused of not doing something right. Why don't you know? Why aren't you educated? Why can't you write a request? Because we did not have access to these resources. Through interaction we invite people to say how they feel, to give solutions. The audience cannot come up with something that these women have not tried. They say: why don't you try to submit documents at the city hall, or why didn't you protest? And if you wait until the end you see they went to the city hall, they also organized protests. And this is how the audience

realizes about the situation. After the performance, we are inviting people to come to the FCDL (Common Front for Right to Housing) webpage and to solidarize. It's a message that invites you to join us in this fight. And for the kids it was a great deal to see their mothers on stage. [...]

### **How did housing become a commodity? (Enikő Vincze)**

The transformation of housing into commodity is due both to the privatization of the old state housing stock (through sales and retrocessions) and to the production of a new stock of private housing by individuals and by real estate developers. I mention here two sets of major factors that have led to this: (1) the movement of capital into areas that produce large and rapid profits, such as real estate development; (2) the state's housing policy, which through the national legislation, transposed into local regulations by decisions of the local council, supports the development of the housing, land, construction and real estate market. Both processes have contributed to the housing market as part of the real estate market and have led to a radical change in the ratio between personal / private property and public / state ownership.

*Data sources: Censuses and city indexes*

	<b>1992</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2011</b>
<b>Public stock</b>	Cluj-N: 35.72 RO: 11.3 (RO-1991: 21.9)	Cluj-N: 9.88 RO: 7.3	Cluj-N: 2.03 RO: 4.8	Cluj-N: 2.49 RO: 2.6	Cluj-N: 1.98 RO: 2.5	Cluj-N: 1.3 RO: 1.4
<b>Private stock</b>	Cluj-N: 64.28 RO: 88.7 (RO-1991: 78.1)	Cluj-N: 90.12 RO: 92.7	Cluj-N: 97.97 RO: 95.2	Cluj-N: 97.51 RO: 97.4	Cluj-N: 98.02 RO: 97.5	Cluj-N: 98.7 RO: 98.6

The housing market is not a free market. Both the privatization of the state housing stock and the production of a new stock of private housing happened with the direct involvement of the state, i.e. on the basis of legal regulations, but also through its material support. The real estate market, notably the price of real estate, is unregulated. The increase of the value of real estate transactions from one year to another is not only reflecting the need for housing but also the fact that the business that exploits the housing stock is attractive because it promises a lot of profit.

Data source: Real estate transactions. Cluj-Napoca, 2016

	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total value of real estate transactions, million of euros	200	284	358	457
Average price of apartments, euro / sq.m	832	836	873	1000
Acquisitions funded by bank loans, % of total purchases	23%	16%	26%	17%

After 1990, the production of the private housing stock in the city of Cluj was achieved through the following paradigms of development:<sup>2</sup>

1. **Extending the city by incorporating lands outside from the city's built perimeter, lands owned by the state, giving them into concession and transforming them into a private housing area** consisting of collective or individual family houses or flats. Compared to 1977, when the city's built perimeter was 3978 hectares, in 2000 it incorporated 6470 hectares. This paradigm materialized in the projects of Bună Ziua, Câmpului, Soporului, Făget, Între Lacuri area, but also in the plans for the construction of housing on the new lands of commercial companies established on the basis of the association of the Local Council of Cluj-Napoca and private companies, namely: Borhanci, Lomb and Tineretului - unrealized projects, the only ones having a provision regarding the allocation to the public fund a number of apartments made by developers.

2. **Including new assemblies of family houses in the pre-socialist workers' neighborhoods** (in the Bulgaria and Iris districts of the northern industrial area of the city), but also in the **free spaces or green spaces of the neighborhoods built between 1960-1989** (Grigorescu, Gheorgheni, Plopilor, Mănăştur, Mărăşti, Zorilor and Calea Turzii). This is how the *Tower Park* project was built in the Mănăştur neighborhood, the *American Village Condominiums* in Grigorescu, the *Belle Ville complex* in the Calea Turzii area, the *Errigal Residence* project in the

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<sup>2</sup> Documentation based on the Decisions of the Local Council of Cluj-Napoca, in a research conducted by Desire Foundation in 2016 with the support of Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung.

Andrei Mureșanu neighborhood, the *Central Park Residence* in Plopilor, *River Tower* in Iris, and the *Grand Park Residence* in Gheorgheni neighborhood, close to Iulius Mall.

**3. Returning to the city center by building flats and/ or mixed-function buildings (apartments, offices, services), usually defined as luxurious and very expensive, which contributes to the re-gentrification of central areas.** This trend began with the liberalization of the Urban Planning Detail (PUD) and Urban Zone Plans (PUZ) in the second half of 2004 through initiatives on Dorobanților Street, 21 Decembrie 1989 Street, Ploiești and Constanța Streets, Traian Street, Calea Moților, Calea Mănăstur, actual constructions being launched later, after 2005, culminating in several projects over the last four or five years. For example, in 2011, the Local Council approved the Urban Planning Details for SC Drusal SA on the land on Dorobanților Street 33, land which was previously owned by ASIT Real Estate SRL owned by Allianz Țiriac Assurance (which had a Local Council Decision since 2007 for the Urban Zone Plans for the area). SC Drusal SA became the owner of the land through a mortgage from Banca Transilvania to build a real estate assembly. In October 2012, the City Council issued a building permit for Calea Dorobanților no. 33-35-37 for a mixed-use real estate group called *Platinia Lounge Residence*. In 2013, SC Florisal, the other firm of the real estate developer Vasile Pușcaș, received a green light from the Local Council for another project at the corner of Ploiești and Constanța Streets called *Platinia Elite Residence*. After the authors of the General Urban Plan (PUG) challenged the initial authorization, it was finally released for three buildings. Two other towers are built in the neighborhood: one by Imoinvest SA (Iosif Pop, former Banca Transilvania director) and the other by Alin Țișe, the President of the County Council.

**4. Demolition of old, totally bankrupted factories or some other factories with partial activity, and the use of these areas for the construction of private housing through real estate investors.** The most recent example of this trend is that of the real estate developer Vasile Pușcaș, the owner of the Drusal and Florisal salubrity companies from Maramureș County. He acquired in 2014 from Ursus Breweries 1 hectare of the former Ursus Beer Factory, after the beer company had already obtained in 2013 an urbanism certificate for the development of a Urban Zone Plan (PUZ) for the construction of a mixed compound of up to 10 floors on the site of the former plant which ceased production in 2010, the old factory building being demolished in 2011.

In December 2014, the City Council approved a waiver from the Urban Planning Detail (PUD) through an Urban Zone Plan (PUZ) for Platina Mall Residence. Another example of this paradigm of building private houses by real estate developers is the *Sports Hall Ensemble*. The developer of the project was S.C. Textile Romat S.A., which in 2007 transformed the former Romania Worker Silk Factory into a residential building.<sup>3</sup> SC Textila Romat SA, owned by two businessmen from Cluj Dorel Goia and Gabriel Cârlig was authorized by Local Council Decision 848/2006 for "functional reconversion, extension and transformation of existing buildings from "ground floor + 3 floors, to ground floor + 10 floors" on Salcâmului street no. 37. Through these businessmen, the real estate development in Cluj is also linked to offshore firms that appear as associates or legal entities of important companies from Cluj.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Following Law 15, through a Government Decision, this factory became SC Textila Romat S.A. in 1990. In 1999, the State Property Fund (SPF) Cluj sold 40 percent of Textila Romat shares, this being the third company privatized by SPF Cluj through the capital market, after Electroceramica and Institut Proiect. The shares were sold via the intermediary placement method, through a syndicate of SC Active International SA and Interdealer Capital Invest Cluj. Two legal entities were present at the auction, and only one winner was established following a competitive bidding auction.

<sup>4</sup> Shareholder of SC Textila Romat and developer of the residential project "Sport Hall Ensemble", Dorin Goia, is a trustee of a Cypriot offshore company, Trebela Limited. Trebela Limited, in turn, appears as a legal entity associate in electricity production companies (Seb Energy SRL, Gurghiu Energy and Hydro Energy Solutions SRL) and real estate development (Parcserv SRL and Grup 2 SRL), while Gurghiu SRL is associated with another businessman, Gabriel Cârlig (co-shareholder with Dorin Goia both at SC Textila Romat and at the Sports Hall Ensemble). Both of them are also shareholders at SC Omnicom. In turn, the Omnicom Commercial Company was formed following the reorganization of a state-owned company with a construction and maintenance profile of the housing stock: GIGCL (Communal and Housing Enterprise Group) as a state-owned commercial company. Omnicom was on the *list of companies included in the privatization offer program for 1998. Classification by field of activity* - from 02.07.1998. By Decision no.59 of the Cluj County Council of May 31, 2002, received certificates of attestation of the ownership of several lands in its patrimony (Bdul 21 Decembrie no.104 as headquarters, Cantonului street fn - production base, Sobarilor Street - workshop, Petrila Street, Cosașilor Street, Aiudului Street - warehouses). In 2004, SC Omnicom initiated the construction of a residential complex consisting of 3 buildings with 55 apartments, located on 21 December 1989 Boulevard. In 2006 Omnicom was the builder and owner of the "Maestro Business Center" building, the first class A office building in Cluj, with a built area of approximately 10,000 square meters. In December 2016, Omnicom was absorbed together with several other companies by SC GEAINV SA, a company that deals with the purchase and sale of its own real estate, being conducted by three Romanian people having as legal associates two offshore companies from Cyprus - Localink LTD and Thelteck LTD. Information retrieved from an article published on April 5, 2016 published on the CluJust website: <https://www.clujjust.ro/clujul-offshore-firme-din-paradisuri-fiscale-implicare-mari-afaceri-clujene/>

**Racism at home (fragments from the editorial, Social Housing NOW!)**

All over the world, racism is a form of power that separates, isolates and exploits, and even more, exterminates inferior people based on allegedly biological or cultural characteristics and / or their economic situation. Biological racism, ethnic / cultural racism and economic racism acts through (re)producing the idea of superiority: the superiority of the white man to man of color, the superiority of the ethnic majority towards an ethnic minority, the superiority of the rich to the poor. All these forms of racism aim to legitimize social inequalities and injustices, and thus they (re)produce the privileges of those with superior traits, as well as the structural disadvantages of inferior people/ethnicities/social classes. In addition, they indoctrinate the majority of all kinds, suggesting that inferior people in this way pose a threat to the civilization, well-being, and life of those considered biologically, culturally or economically superior. [...]

Video: <http://casisocialeacum.ro/video-2/>

**Inhabitants of Cluj living in informal housing: the walls of poverty on Mesterul Manole Street. Stop forced evictions (interview by Lori Vălean)**

Maria Pusztai is 30 years old and lives in the Între Lacuri district, on Meșterul Manole Street, „a Street forgotten by the world”, as she calls it. She lives in an informal house, in a courtyard, together with 11 other families that share her fate. All these families, some of them taking care of children with special needs, live in precarious, unsafe conditions, and when the state passes they only give fines or eviction orders. Fines are gathering up, eviction risks are growing, while impressive blocks of apartments are being built around these impoverished informal dwellings, and the City Hall is planning new parking lots. In this hidden end of Cluj, Maria, together with her two little girls and their grandmother invited me into their humble home, a room and a kitchen. Maria served me with a glass of juice and we started talking about her life and the life of the other families.

Lorena Vălean: Thank you for having me here today. There are four of you living in this house?

Maria Pusztai: Make yourself comfortable, feel at home! No, we are seven people living here; there is also my aunt, her son and my husband. We have a small shack in the yard, there is another family living there. My brother together with his wife and four children, in 12 square meters without kitchen, without anything. At least we have a kitchen here. This is all we have, a kitchen and a room.

L.V.: And the bathroom, I suppose.

M.P.: We don't have a bathroom, either way, we don't have running water, no gas. We have been living like this for years now, because we had running water back in the days, but a woman who raised the money for water from these families, she is not here anymore, took the money from us and did not pay. These people listen to very loud music at night. We don't like this. We won't let our children alone on the street, because the majority of the neighbors, when they see that they are Roma, they no longer make the difference between families and say that all are bad; they shouted at them, or thrown things after them. But we get along with some of our neighbors they saw us that we are not making them any trouble, and that we were good people.

L.V.: So how can you get water?

M.P.: Well, our neighbor gives us water and we pay her every month. This is how we wash our clothes, make bath to the children. But also, with heating, it's not good, we make a fire in the stove/fireplace, the neighbors don't like this either. We understand them that in this century this is not normal and that they are bothered by the smoke.

L.V.: How is it with the neighbors from the street? Do you get along, do they help you out?

M.P.: Many of our neighbors are very bad people, because not every family that lives in this yard are like us; some of them don't work, there are also people doing drugs, they make a lot of noise and problems. They don't like the smell of smoke, the noise, we don't like it either, so you can imagine them. This is why we don't let our children alone on the street, because the majority of the neighbors, when they see that they are Roma, they no longer make the difference between families and say that all are bad; they shouted at them, or thrown things after them. But we get along with some of our neighbors they saw us that we are not making them any trouble, and that we were good people.

L.V.: So, there are people who live here that are trouble makers around here, next to the quiet families, with children.

M.P.: Many people do drugs and steal so they can buy drugs. When they are under the influence of the drugs, you cannot do a thing, they are aggressive, they hit you for no reason, they come into the house without knocking, they listen to loud music, our children cannot even do their homework. Not here, not in the yard, we cannot let them outside alone, because we are afraid. We are happy when it rains, because then everyone is inside and it is not so noisy, it is less dangerous, everyone is calm.

L.V.: If the children cannot play in the yard, neither on the street, where do they play?

M.P.: My daughters and their cousin go to school, sometimes we take them to the park.

Otherwise they stay here, in the room. We cannot get them out of our sight for long, because many things can happen here. Especially my older daughter, I cannot leave her alone, because she is sick and you never know what can happen. She has epilepsy, this is why I cannot leave too much alone, because you never know when she has a crisis. Sometimes she cannot remember some things, and she had to repeat the second grade. Her cousin is better at school, very good, he also went to the mathematics Olympics, and everyone congratulates him. This place is a source of infection, lots of thrown-out garbage, even mice and rats. It's dangerous for kids too, and for us, many people have tuberculosis and other illnesses because of rubbish, microbes.

L.V.: Did you ever tried to apply for social housing at the City Hall?

M.P.: No, because we know that it doesn't make a difference, they don't care about us and they don't want to move us from here. Before the elections a man came to us, he told us to vote for him, because he will get us out from here. He never came back, this is how they do things, they come before the elections, with good thoughts, otherwise they only bring us trouble.

L.V.: Do you have social aid?

M.P.: No. I had social aid a long time ago, but in the mean-time I was hired at a sanitation company, it's better if I work, I get more money than with the social aid, I can buy something for the children.

L.V.: What is your income?

M.P.: I have the minimum wage, my husband works occasionally and besides this the children get allowance and the sickness pension for the epilepsy. My mother is working, but rarely, on the behalf of the community, she doesn't have a fix income. She wanted to get hired, but she couldn't, she has psoriasis and nobody wanted to hire her. Plus, my aunt works as a cleaning woman at a telecommunication company.



L.V.: Is there a risk of eviction around here?

M.P.: Yes, didn't you see that they are building new blocks in the area? They want to make a parking lot, here on the street, next to us. Even the workers told us, that who knows what will happen to us in April-May, they throw us out and they will come with bulldozers after us.

L.V.: They want to evict you and give you no other alternative?

M.P.: What alternative could they give us? They want to get rid of us, as they did with the people from Coastei Street, they took all of them to the hill, next to the garbage dump.

L.V.: How long have you been living here and where did you live before?

M.P.: For about 20 years, something like that. We were living at my grandmother, but after her death, we had to move. Several families have been here for a long time, but I do not think that we have anywhere else to stay, they will evict us soon.

After this conversation Maria showed me other houses in the yard. We saw the 12 sqm room where Maria's brother lives, together with his wife and their four children, and then a few other homes, where people live their family life crowded, in a developing Cluj, leaving these families behind, who have lost their start to provide a safe future for their children.

In all these families, at least one parent works. Beyond their ethnicity, whether they are Roma or Romanians, people in Meșterul Manole Street share a common present: they all live in precarious conditions and hope that someone somehow will offer them a home. I talked to them, I listened to their stories and fears, greeted the children when I was leaving and I understood that they were good people with a huge misfortune and that most of the time this bad luck comes with a darker color of the skin.

### **Fight against environmental racism - through legal action (Enikő Vincze)**

"Most of the landfills from Romania do not comply with environmental regulations. They act as both organic bombs and social bombs. In spite of the adherence to European legislation in this domain, we see in our daily lives the functioning of the old system of collection, storage and processing, that result in toxic waste management solutions. Moreover, in Romania, public authorities and / or waste industry companies have not taken any measures to protect people who work informally on the landfills so that these people continue to ensure waste selection under absolutely precarious conditions that endanger their lives and their health. The case of Pata Rat of Cluj is well-known in this respect. [...] It is time for the Romanian government and local

authorities to implement socio-territorial development programs that not only do not contribute to the formation of disadvantaged housing areas in polluted environments (water treatment plants, landfill sites, chemical and industrial waste stations etc.), but seek to remedy, as soon as possible, the social consequences of the marginalization of the poor in such spaces, eventually eliminating this phenomenon (re)produced not only by economic and political mechanisms but also by ideologies and practices of environmental racism." (*Stop environmental racism*, message of Desire Foundation on the occasion of the World Environment Day, June 5, 2013).

Racism is a form of power that separates, isolates and exploits, on the basis of presumed biological, cultural and/or economic characteristics of people. Environmental racism practices these actions by placing and maintaining impoverished people, often belonging to a historically inferior minority, in polluted environments that endanger their lives.

Environmental racism against Roma is based on the assumption that Roma ethnicity is an inferior ethnicity, poverty is a cultural feature of the poor, and that poor Roma can and deserve to live and work in toxic environments. In turn, the latter are considered to be inferior to other urban areas that enjoy the development resources of the city, so that spatial racism goes hand in hand with the racialization of people who work and/or live near that territory.

In the "Protection of Human Rights and Combating Roma Discrimination in Romania 2006-2010", in the chapter "Illegal evacuations and locations in industrial or toxic areas", Romani Criss collaborators note: "The Roma are subject to a form of environmental racism closely related to the phenomenon of forced evictions, by placing them in inhumane or degrading conditions, in the immediate vicinity of landfills, water treatment plants or industrial sites on the outskirts of the settlements" (p. 17). The document describes cases from Constanța, Piatra Neamț, Dorohoi, Zalău, Miercurea-Ciuc. To which, after 2010, we must at least add the cases from Cluj-Napoca (Pata Rât) and Baia Mare (CUPROM plant).

In April 2010, Desire Foundation and Amare Phrala Association addressed local authorities with the petition "Against Roma Ghettoization in the city of Cluj". In the course of that year, we warned the authorities in various ways that the resettlement plan "of the approximately 1500 Roma living on Cantonului and Coastei Street and in Pata Rat" in the area of the landfill (announced by the vice mayor in March 2010 <http://www.citynews.ro/cluj/din-oras-10/primaria-muta-romii-de-la-pata-rat-cu-o-parcela-mai-incolo-77329/>) contravenes several international and national regulations, such as: The International Declaration of Human and Environmental Rights

adopted in Geneva in 1994, which states, among others, that these also include the right to living in a healthy, unpolluted environment and not degraded by activities that may affect the health and well-being of people; Order of the Ministry of Health no. 536 from June 23<sup>rd</sup> 2007, which states in Article 11 that the minimum sanitary protection recommended between protected areas and a number of units that produce discomfort and health hazards is 1000 meters.

By totally neglecting these appeals, on the basis of Local Council Decision 127/30.03.2010 and Local Council Decision 197/11.05.2010, the City Hall started the preliminary steps to relocate the concerned Roma families next to the ecologically non-compliant landfill. Unfortunately, during this process, no empowered institution has banned the location of a residential area near this polluted site, even if everyone knew that this landfill was a contaminated site.

This is why we can say that the approach that authorities followed was marked by institutionalized racism: this area of Pata Rât could be defined as a presumably habitable area by the Roma through a practice that considers the Roma are inferior or disregards them as full humans, as if their life would not matter as much as the lives of other ethnic groups matter. The fact that no poor families from Cantonului Street or families in the Dallas Colony were moved to the new modular houses built from public money, but the 76 families evicted from Coastei Street were relocated there, has shown us that this institutionalized racism is also used to justify the cleaning of undesirable elements in urban areas whose real estate value increases, racism becoming an instrument of gentrification and (re)production of socio-territorial inequalities. In the years since then, the City Hall of Cluj Napoca, even though it has the strategy of development of the city for the 2014-2020 period with provisions regarding the Pata Rât area and the social housing policies, at best accepted the implementation of housing and relocation interventions, only if they have brought European, Norwegian or other funds into the city. No financial allocation from the local budget for this purpose, no request from the central public budget for this purpose, no change in the local policy on social housing. On the contrary, "the garbage crisis was settled", as Mayor Emil Boc announced in the autumn of 2015, authorizing the new landfills, Salprest and RADP in Pata Rât, placing them even closer to the residential area than the old and closed garbage dump was.

Based on the above, in February 2018, Desire Foundation, together with 51 people residing in the modular houses built in 2010 by the Cluj-Napoca City Hall near the Pata Rât landfills, filed before the court an administrative action against the following institutions: Cluj-Napoca Local

Council, Cluj-Napoca Municipality through its Mayor, Cluj County Council, Autonomous Regime of the Public Domain Cluj-Napoca, and SC Salprest Rampa SA.

Taking into account that the European Roma Rights Center is currently undergoing a lawsuit against the City Hall, through which people from the modular houses request social housing in other parts of the city, by our action we only ask the court to issue a sentence by which:

1. To oblige the defendants to close the temporary landfills in Cluj-Napoca, Platanilor street, Cluj County, the Pata Rât area, under the administration of SC Salprest Rampa SA Cluj-Napoca and the Autonomous Regime of Public Domain Cluj-Napoca.
2. To oblige the defendants, the City Council of Cluj-Napoca and the Cluj County Council to take all necessary steps regarding the old landfill from Pata Rât (currently closed) to clean, cleanse, disinfect and prevent the pollution of the Pata Rât area so as to create a living environment for families living at a distance of less than 800 meters.
3. To oblige the defendants to pay indemnities amounting to 100 RON/day, starting with the date of the promotion of the present action and until all the obligations stated in the petitions no. 1 and no. 2 will be solved in favor of the complainants.

**Labor, capital and housing (fragments from the editorial, Enikő Vincze)**

If you are in search of a house nowadays, it is impossible not to notice real estate developers everywhere in the city, such as: house means lifestyle; beautiful architecture connected to green space; functionality, light and comfort; the refuge always in hand; a place where you always come back with pleasure, no matter how far you travel; we build the community of creative, efficient and friendly people, eager to explore the world. Beyond these people-centered promises and principles that suggest elegance and well-being, it's not a big surprise to find out that for developers, housing is an investment that generates big profits for them. Similarly, housing is a source of capital accumulation for real estate agencies, too. These are no longer just institutions that trade houses between other entities, but they themselves have become major real estate owners and important players on the market, i.e, factors that, by their speculative techniques, cause the continuous rise of the prices, guided by the golden rule of the capital (which moves where the profit is higher). In turn, financial institutions, predominantly banks, or the real estate credit system support both capital accumulation cycles through the construction and trading of houses by investors, as well as the (illicit) ability to buy through indebtedness of those who need housing.

In parallel with this, through legislation, advertisements and other media tools, the idea that all people want to become owners and the house owner is the ideal man, independent of the state continues to be promulgated (his dependence on the bank being hidden behind the rhetoric that the bank is there to help him/her when in need, or to support self-confidence that he/she can become a promising homeowner).

But all of this is not something new. In capitalism, investing in the built environment, in (re)constructing the housing infrastructure of cities, in urban demolitions and regenerations has always been a way to invest surplus capital to increase profits. Industrialization and urbanization, both in its capitalist and socialist versions, also meant the creation of large-scale housing for workers engaged in new industries.

In the context of the decades after the Second World War, in order to sustain both the production and the consumption capacity of the population, the economic policy of the state was a balancing act between the interests of the capitalist class and the working class, or between capital and labor. This was the time when the state invested in public housing. This was a good thing for everyone: for the workers, because they did not have to spend much money from their income on housing, the state rent being reduced; but also for the capitalists, because much of the cost of reproduction of their labor force was taken over by the state, so their profits from the exploitation of labor could have been higher for this reason as well.

The crisis of capitalism in the late 1970s made political decision-makers to abandon this welfare state policy, not just in the domain of housing, but also in supporting education and public health. Among other things, they imposed the privatization of public housing, meaning the state selling the houses to former tenants, or to private companies which promised to take over the costs of social housing from the state, but also to keep rent at a low level (which proved to be a lie). The consumer credit and housing loan system expanded, which wanted to maintain the purchase power of workers in a situation where their wages have not risen at the rhythm of increasing the housing prices.

We in Romania started to learn about these phenomena after 1990. Even if housing in personal property was the dominant type of tenure even during socialism (70%), or even if there were credit systems back then, too - all these were strictly regulated by the state in the sense that they could not become a source of profit for anyone.

Wherever and whenever it happened, the withdrawal of the state from the role of public housing developer meant that the state had given private investors a place to build private housing and became an agent who, through legislation, supported the housing market beneficiaries in their pursuit after profit. In the absence of public housing, the state forces all people to purchase or lease houses on the market while, along with other actors (developers, banks, real estate agents), sells this as an ideal rather than a burden. Meaning that the state has ceased to balance the interests of capitalist class and the interest of workers, preferring to support predominantly the first ones, for example also in the domain of housing.

Thus, housing has become a commodity that has to be bought from the market with (lots of) money, and housing has ceased to be considered a right of everyone guaranteed by the state, or a need that must be satisfied in order to live in health and dignity. Housing as a commodity has

begun to make a difference between people, suggesting that those who cannot afford to buy, do not deserve to have a home in the city where they work, or even more, those who can allow themselves to buy bigger and more houses, are more valuable people than those who get to live in improvised and poor houses. Moreover, housing has become a form of financial capital: meaning that people not only invest money in the housing-commodity to live in it, but they invest in it to make more money through trading it. Housing thus becomes a mean by which money is transformed into capital, meaning that money that brings money due to its circulation on the market.

[...]

At the moment, workers are doubly-exploited: both by their direct employers, who maintain their low incomes to make more profit; as well as by large real estate owners that are surcharging the price of housing in the conditions in which workers find it more difficult to find housing alternatives than buying/renting from the market. They will at one point end up exhausting the compromises they have accepted over the past decades, trying to stay in job-promising cities, such as overcrowding in small homes, sacrifices made to ensure the cost of living, finding forms of informal housing, or others.

When I say workers, I don't think only about those who are employed with an employment contract, and not just those employed in the productive economy that require physical labor. But I also mean people working in the informal economy or those who work for the minimum guaranteed income, as well as those who do work in the household without being paid or any other form of work by which they ensure their living from one day to the next, in the country or abroad. Further on, when I say workers, I think of all people who sell their workforce to employers, this being their only or predominant way of benefiting from self-supporting incomes, including those who consider themselves, because of their social status (school education, occupation, level of income) as being middle class.

Let us use May the 1<sup>st</sup>, the International Labor Day, to remind us: however limited the possibility of self-organization of workers vis-a-vis employers is, we must not give up from challenging these limitations and claim not only adequate incomes and working conditions, but also decent and cost-effective housing. For many workers with modest income, who live in inadequate and insecure housing and have no real estate of any kind, the latter means public housing and housing that ensure their tenant rights vis-a-vis the owner-state.

Housing policy can be changed only by putting pressure on the governors by those who suffered the most from the negative consequences of the policy in this domain over the past thirty years, serving the private interests of the big capital. This fight must be carried out both locally and nationally and at transnational level. For this reason, it is good to draw inspiration from the internationalism of May the 1<sup>st</sup>, a symbol of the struggle for the social-economic and political-civic rights of the working class everywhere in the world.

### **A woman's labor (Elisabeta Farkas)**

I was born in Cluj-Napoca, I am 33 years old. I live on Stephenson Street no. 15, in one of the rooms we built next to the old house, because we had no place to move with my husband and my children. We have no papers on this house. It is an improvised house, as they say. So, we don't have to live on the streets, we had to do something, have a roof over our heads.

I was 16 years old when my first child was born. At that time, the old housing system no longer functioned, the one before 1990, when you were employed somewhere, you were given a house. We did not have enough money to buy or rent a house, nor could we stay with our parents in a room.

Since then, things are getting worse. Housing in Cluj is more and more expensive, the City Hall is building very few social houses, distributes them on the basis of some criteria that disadvantage us. Now we have four children, they are 17, 14, 12 and 10 years old, three of them are at Nicolae Iorga School, the school where I went. It was after 1990 when I started to go to school, but it was difficult for my parents to manage our life, so I have only four classes.

Our house is very small. We're staying seven people in this house, but we only have two beds. So, my husband sleeps on the floor. We have a wardrobe and a stove on wood, with which we warm the house and cook on, and we have a fridge. We don't have a table, because it did not fit in. We bring cold water from outside, we have a water pump in the yard. And we have problems with it. Everyone who is passing by can use it, the yard has no fence, anyone can take water from there, so we pay a lot. We don't have a kitchen, a bathroom, so we do everything in the one room we have. We do not even have our own toilet. In the Summer is a little bit better. The water is not so cold, we can hang our laundry. But we have problems because of this. We received a lot of fines from the local police for this reason. They come quite often to us.



Especially since 2013, they started to come more and more. They took us in sight. They want to demolish.

It is very hard for me. As a mother, as a woman who works at home and has a job, outside the house. Now I work at Hotel Belvedere, I am employed as a maid. Before that, I worked at Auchan for about six years, then at Marty as a cook for five years, at Premium Pizza for seven months, and at a grocery store for seven months. Everywhere I was, the wages were small. At Belvedere I have been working for six months, eight hours a day, and many times also on Saturdays and Sundays. When they call us, we have to go if we don't want to risk to fire us. Because if we say that we won't go, because they don't pay us for working on the weekend, surely they would not like it. And as so many people are looking for job in this city, they can certainly replace us at any time with others. So, I do the work and shut my mouth. I wake up at five in the morning, and I get home at around three o'clock in the afternoon. I have 1500 lei, net worth, and meal vouchers for the days I worked. When I get home, I don't have a moment of silence. I start making food. Wash clothes. And as we are many people here, I have to wash a lot. Children need to go clean to school every day. After dinner, I help the children with their homeworks. I do not have time to sit down to watch TV, if I watch TV, that means it's a big day. There is much to do in the house, even if it is a small home. You have to arrange everything with precision all the time so that all seven of us can move. I go to bed very late only when I see that I've arranged everything. It's very hard to arrange, clean the house all day, day after day, after seven people.

I have never been on vacation. When I have a free day from work, I work more at home. We paint, have a big cleaning. We do not have the money to have a holiday. We cannot afford that. We don't even dream about it either. From what we have, we have to do daily shopping, the most important thing is for all children to have to eat daily and go to school, to sleep properly, to rest as much as they can. No one in the family helps me. I mean, my husband, contributes with his salary. But not with housework, or with the children. Our wages are low. There is nothing left before salary day. The food is expensive, the electricity is expensive, the wood is expensive, and the water is expensive. Even if we both work we cannot even think of renting an apartment. We want to stay in this city. We were born here. We work here. This is where most of our relatives are. Our kids go to school here. We have to live here as well. As God has left us. This is my life.

Editorial Note: To figure out the value of the land in the location referred to in this article, we need to know that opposite Stephenson Street no. 15, Liberty Technology Park, a 25 million-euro investment, built after Libertatea Factory privatization, was inaugurated in December 2013. On the website of the Technology Park we can read: "It is building the Silicon Valley status of Romania thanks to multinational IT & C and R&D companies that have brought their business here" and that "it offers an attractive real estate market". Liberty Technology Park Cluj is a project developed by Friborg Development, the real estate division of the investment fund Friborg Capital, controlled by businessman Ion Sturza.

### **A First Step towards Legality (Social Housing Now!, fragment)**

In substance, the invested courts gave a winning cause to the persons excluded from social housing, by issuing the following decisions:

1. Sentence no. 951 / 28.02.2018 of the Cluj Courthouse (file No. 2446/117/2017) and
2. Sentence no. 86 / 03.04.2018 of the Court of Appeal (file No 911/33/2017).

1. "The system of criteria for granting social housing defined in the Decision no. 434/2015 of the Municipality of Cluj-Napoca leads to the exclusion of marginalized persons from obtaining social housing (against which, according to Law 112/2002 on preventing and combating social marginalization, the Local Council has the obligation to ensure adequate housing); at the same time, it flagrantly violates the provisions of Law no. 114/1996 on Housing" - we synthesized in the administrative litigation initiated in March 2017 by Desire Foundation and 88 people residing on Cantonului and Stephenson Street against the Local Council.

We showed that the Local Council Decision no. 434/2015 introduced unlawful, exclusionary and discriminatory criteria on the following aspects: the types of income that are taken into account in granting eligibility for social housing; living conditions; the situation of those families that wish to benefit from social housing; the applicant's level of education; the health status of the applicant and family members included in the application; the conditions that define the applicants' situation as a case of force majeure.

Although the housing law and its implementing rules allow local authorities to locally regulate the social housing procedure, authorities in Cluj-Napoca have abused this prerogative and have inserted several types of criteria (eligibility, ineligibility, criteria selection), which ultimately lead to the deprivation of marginalized people from the right to access social housing as

guaranteed by the Housing Act. The Cluj Courthouse, the first competent court, ordered the annulment of the Local Council Decision no. 434/2015 through Civil Sentence no. 951/03.28.2018. Also, the subsequent administrative acts were required to be annulled, the Local Council Decision no. 647/28.11.2016 and no. 65/31.01.2017 on the manner of solving the applications for social housing in 2016 and also the formulated objections. By the same decision, the court of law ordered the Local Council to "resume the assessment of the applicants' situation in order to grant social housing with the exclusion of the criteria set out by the annulled Local Council Decision after the final ruling has been resolved". Thus, even if it enjoys the provisions of local autonomy, the local public administration cannot define criteria restricting access of the socially marginalized to housing rights or exclude them from this right, precisely those with low incomes and those who live in inadequate conditions and in housing insecurity.

**2.** In parallel with this case, at the Cluj Court of Appeal the trial initiated by the Cluj-Napoca Municipality and the Mayor against decision no. 531/27.09.2017 issued by the National Council for Combating Discrimination (NCCD) was conducted. The annulment of the decision of the NCCD was solicited by the municipality, which established the discriminatory nature of the criteria for awarding social housing from the Local Council Decision no. 434/2015. Decision no. 531 of the NCCD is the consequence of the petition formulated by Desire Foundation in October 2016, which, along with the NCCD's decision, can be read entirely here: <http://www.desire-ro.eu/?cat=138>. Through sentence no. 86/03.04.2018, the Cluj Court of Appeal, the first competent court, dismissed the action in administrative litigation promoted by the municipality. The NCCD solution regarding the discriminatory nature of the social housing award criteria in Cluj-Napoca has been judged to be correct.

In its argumentation, the local public administration emphasized that the local public administration authorities have the right to elaborate criteria "depending on the specific situations at the local level", adding: in the case of Cluj-Napoca, "aiming at the sustainable development of the Cluj community" according to the Local Development Strategy 2014-2020, it was decided that "starting with the purpose of this form of social protection" will support higher education graduates with income below average because "access to social housing can provide a good start for an adequate standard of living." Like the whole criteria system, this argument has also shown that the municipality discriminates and applies unfair treatment towards people with low school education who are in the same situation of not being able,

according to the definition of the housing law, to buy a home from the housing market or being in need to enjoy an adequate standard of living.

Thus, implicitly, the local public administration in Cluj-Napoca considers that some people and their work are worthless than others, and the allegedly less valuable ones would not belong to the Cluj community or would be less important from the point of view of the development of the city. It is therefore discriminatory and unfair not only in terms of their access to social housing, but also in their general affiliation or right to this city. [...]

The social housing attribution system in Cluj not only introduces among the legally prescribed criteria an unprecedented criteria in the housing law, the one regarding studies or school education, but gives it a privileged status. For example, 45 points for doctoral studies (the highest possible score in this system) and 40 points for university studies are granted, while persons evicted from retroceded buildings or people who have benefited from residential service also receive 40 points, permanently disabled persons receive 10 points, and one child brings the applicant 2 points.

More importantly, the criteria of school education does not meet the purpose of the housing law. Its purpose is exclusively an economical one (supporting low-income people), and not the promotion of school education. According to art. 43 of the law, the local public administration authority has the right to specify a series of criteria on the basis of which to delimit requests, with the condition that these criteria are subordinated to the explicitly stated purpose of the law - to support people with low-income in their access to social housing.

Social housing is not allocated for educational merit, but rather to rebalance the lack of resources and to provide housing stability that allows social inclusion, access to the labor market, etc. The criteria of the level of school education, applied directly, does not meet this condition, because persons with higher education have more opportunities on the labor market than people with a lower level of education, the latter belonging to the disadvantaged categories according to art. 4 of the Government Ordinance no. 137 / 2000. [...]

### **Eviction is the foundation of urban regeneration - Abator Square, Cluj (interview by George Zamfir)**

Magdalena Berki: So, the lady told me when I was at the department of housing, that I received an answer from her, from the mayor. I say, "Dear lady, I did not understand anything." "The

mayor has told us that that it was rejected, everyone rejected it, we will evict you, you will not stay here." He said I had no chance, I got the answer, I got the letter that I also sent you over the internet. So, the City Hall will evict us. But I said, "Lady, I'm not going out, I said I don't ..." I was only once at the courthouse.

Alina Lăcătuș (daughter): I was at the court, but they did not even tell us verbally, you see, you must come at this time because we do not issue you a notice.

Enikő Vincze: And what did they say to you in the end?

A.L: Nothing. We received the paper at home that we are evicted.

M.B: They said they will send us the answer on the internet.

A.L: They have to send you a paper home, not on the internet.

E.V: But did they send that to you, the sentence?

A.L: No. We have not received, nor have we received another quotation, or at least to tell us verbally. Not even that.

E.V: How you been offered the services of a court appointed lawyer?

M.B: No.

A. (Friend): Here are many groups of interests with this eviction, the one's that build here.

M.B: Miss Enikő, you know that it all started with our neighbors, these people from the courtyard, from pour neighbors. My sister came here, with her children, many children come by our house. All the complaints started with them, they were saying that we are "dirty poisonous people". So, the lady from the City Hall came with another man, they photographed our house, and then they went back to the City Hall. They told us that we were toxic. They didn't tell me directly, they told my sister. For or five people came, some inspectors from the City Hall, also that lady came. They told us: „You get out of the house!”, and I said –“Lady, I won't go out!”, „They will make you pay rent” - „I will pay rent, why not? Where I live, I pay, no problem!”, I told her. And then, that man came, that inspector from the City Hall: „What kind of dirt? There is no dirt here?!”. The lady asked me nicely to let here take photos, the mayor told here to do so, to see what kind of misery is here. I let the lady to take photos. They photographed the inside of the house, our clothes in the closet, in the kitchen. It was a little bit messy in the house, if there are children, it can be a little bit messy in the house. But in no way we are not dirty.

E.V: And this was two years ago.

M.B: Two years ago, yes.

E.V: And then, when they came, they told you that they came because someone made a complaint.

M.B: Yes.

E.V: And when they came here, they didn't ask: "don't you want to become a tenant?", "don't you want to ask for a contract, to pay a social rent"?

M.B: We asked for a contract, for this house. We submitted our papers two years ago, all those slips from the registry, all those slips we gave to the courthouse, they took it from us. So the people from the City Hall take all the papers on the basis which you pay, invoices and so on. These documents have to be at the registry. On that document it says that I do not pay rent. But I have all the invoices, 37 RON / month, I paid as they said. But I would even pay more if it is necessary.

George Zamfir: You know how it is, afterwards... I showed the sentence from the court to the lawyer and she told me that this is not considered to be rent.

M.B: What is it then?

G.Z: It is a sort of compensation that you pay to the City Hall, because the City Hall cannot use this space, according to the law.

M.B: But this wasn't a space.

G.Z: This is what the sentence from the court says.

M.B: I understand. But this house did not belong to the City Hall. It belong to the ICRA (The Enterprise for Construction, Repair and Housing Management). Meanwhile the City Hall, in the meanwhile I was going to the City Hall to ask them to make up a contract for the house, miss Ferenczi, the head of the department, asked for this space to become a living space, so it became one. Mister Chirileanu came here, he saw what was happening here, that we are living in this house, and they turned it into a living space. If we take down the polystyrene, do you know what is behind? This was devastated, it wasn't like it is now. It was a basement. We changed all the pipes, there was no electricity here for many years. So we didn't devastate this house, as the City Hall says, because I am disadvantaged Gypsy, because I am a Gypsy, as they say that we all are Gypsies and that we all are a some kind of infection, this is how they were writing the complaints. No.

E.V: Actually, it's the other way around, you improved it. What was the year you first entered this house?

M.B: We have been living here for 22 years. This is where I got ill with asthma. We are happy that we have a place to stay. And... Do you know what the problem is? There is much humidity here. So where we had that small room, where me made that small room, there was a vent there. But whatever you kept there, documents, everything, everything became moldy, and it's is getting moldy. We came into this house... we had the social aid, we asked for social housing, I had social aid, and only me and the children were in the social housing request. But I went so many times, that it didn't interest me after a time.

E.V: And you show somehow that you fight to get something.

M.B: Yes, this is what I asked the mayor. and the people from the department of housing told me to go to the Social Assistance Department in Gheorgheni neiborhood, they told me to go there so they would pay two years rent for me.

E.V: Yes, that is the rent subsidy.

M.B: Yes, that is from the government. I didn't go there to ask for mercy, to ask for money. Because I have been working for ten years, me and my husband, we both have been working for years. I told them, I didn't go there to ask for mercy, I told them to let us stay in this house, because we have nowhere else to go. I told them, I have no parents, my husband doesn't have his parents, I am without parents since I was ten years old, we have non place to go, to move to our friends or family. I have no parents. Where can we go, we are seven people, where can we go?

E.V: Yes, and they told you that this rent subsidy would be the only solution.

M.B: Yes, I will go and ask for more information. One part is paid by the City Hall, the other part should be paid by us. I said that I do not agree with this. I got sick when I was there, I started to get dizzy, so I left.

A.L: And on this paper they sent us last time, it says that no member of the first-degree family, that is, us, the children, we will no longer receive a house.

E.V: Social housing.

A.L: Yes. But we basically were kids, we were born here ... We did not enter abusive, we have no fault! We should be able to get a social house.

M.B: And he told me I could also go to the human rights, and also to Iohannis! I can go, but it won't solve anything.

E.V: Now we looked again into the housing law, and there it says who does not have the right to receive social housing: who owned or who sold after the 1990. But this thing with abusive occupation, it doesn't say anything about this.

M.B: And then, who gave it?

E.V.: Boc. People from here, from the Cluj City Hall, because it is not in the law.

M.B: Well, and do makes this law? And then, so where can we go? To Cantonului? I have a child with a memory delay. I did not say anything about this at the City Hall. I moved my child from the normal school to the assisted school, please believe me, for six months my child was vomiting non-stop. But to see this child there. These are small ones, but this one, this is ... when we get there, if we were to get there, better get us to the wall, and kill us.

A: An attack path exists. Because they abuse. They turned this space into a living space, on the documents. So the lawyer could attack them. That this space is not for living, as they said, that it is abusive, so it is basically a basement. So anywhere, on the cadaster papers, in the City Hall archive, this is a basement.

G.Z: There is another thing. They say that in building, so any real estate can include also a living space, and storage space, and so on. So from this point of view they have protected themselves.

M.B: I do not say that this is normal, this is abusive, as people have said. Yes, I agree, that's what the City Hall is saying.

A.L: Yes, you entered this house without anybody's consent, yes. But you didn't enter a house, cause this is no house.

M.B: A man came here about four or five years ago, moved in in the apartment from upstairs, on the first floor with a little girl. When these people came in here and saw where they were going to move, these people were frightened.

E.V: They refused.

M.B: They saw, they said we did not have a toilet, in the 20th century we don't have a toilet, we're about 20 people for one toilet. We cannot use the sewerage, it clogs very quickly. And when it clogs, because it is the basement, all the things from the sewerage come back into the house. And then we said that it is better to give up and we carry water with the bucket. There's nothing to do, we have no other choice.

E.V: Which one of you is employed?



M.B:Both of us are. I on a sickness leave. I have been working at the Branter salibrity firm for years. This is helpful to put it in your dossier, so they see that I have been working for years, sweeping the streets. I worked for the Rosal firm for nine years, I have been working here only for a year.

E.V: And this ID is temporary, they just put down the address.

A.L: Yes, we all have IDs with this address.

E.V: SO you also have a temporary ID?

A: Do you know what the problem is? The husband of M.B. had a permanent ID with this address, but that expired, and after it expired they didn't renew it. But they would have wanted this.

G.Z: How is your husband doing?

M.B: Very stressed, we are very stressed.

#### Editorial note

In 2017, when the family was summoned by the City Hall of Cluj-Napoca for abusive occupation, in the area of the address where she lives on Anton Pann street no. 22, the City Hall issued several building permits. Among them, in favor of EBS Real Estate Investment (the property of Daniel Metz, CEO of NTT Data) for the BEAUCIEL Residential Complex on Anton Pann Str. 28-30 (<https://www.ebs-rei.com/en/cluj-beauciel.html>); in favor of Marina Properties (<http://www.marinaproperties.ro/>), for a six-storey collective residential building on Anton Pann 34-36, owned by Alexandru Marina, with properties in Între Lacuri, Bună Ziua neighborhood, and in other parts of the city; respectively in favor of Oxygene Mall and Oxygene Residence (owner of SC Mercurial SRL, whose administrator is Stefan Gadola), as well as to the Mărghitaș brothers and SC ROMDESIGN for a block of flats.

The latter are under construction on the territory of the former Abator (Slaughter house) (from Abator Square, one of the streets in its surrounding, being the street side of Anton Pann no. 20-36). Until recently, starting the construction of the Riverfront Ensemble on 2007, a multifunctional commercial center, offices and dwellings spread over 2.6 hectares was announced here (besides, or instead of the Opel Ecomax representative, owned by businessman Árpád Pászvány). Riverfront has remained an unrealized project of DNP Invest (controlled by an off-shore company DNP Invest LLC) and Baucom.

In the vicinity, on Parcul Feroviarilor Street no. 12, also in 2017, the Cluj-Napoca City Hall issued a building permit for the construction of two blocks by SC Tekton Real Estate SRL, among others mentioning in its decision: "The character of the area is predominantly residential of peripheral type, developed on a parcel of modest buildings, located along streets, which, with the development of the city, became attractive for a wide range of activities. Currently, the area is in the process of restructuring." Concerning the Railway Park, beyond Anton Pann street no. 34-36, in 2017, FabHub Creative City announced a "competition for social, cultural and urban innovation projects" entitled "Reactivate Railroad Park" within its project "Urbaniada " carried out with the support of ING Bank. This happened after the Governmental Decision 36/June 2017, the Railroad Park was passed to the public domain of Cluj-Napoca, "for inclusion in the rehabilitation and modernization program". Then, Cluj-Napoca City Hall, through the Center of Innovation and Civic Imagination announced the "Railway Park Rehabilitation Contest." More recently, in April 2018, the Order of Architects in Romania and Cluj-Napoca City Hall announced the intention to "revitalize the park", launching this process through a "project competition for an integrated concept of urban remodeling. "

Cărămida. Ziarul dreptății locative (The Brick. Magazine for Housing Justice)

Initiative of "Căși sociale ACUM!/ Social housing NOW!"

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Cluj, Romania

# MANIFESTUL

DE LA CLUJ ÎMPOTRIVA EVACUĂRIILOR DE PRETUTINDENI

17.12.2017  
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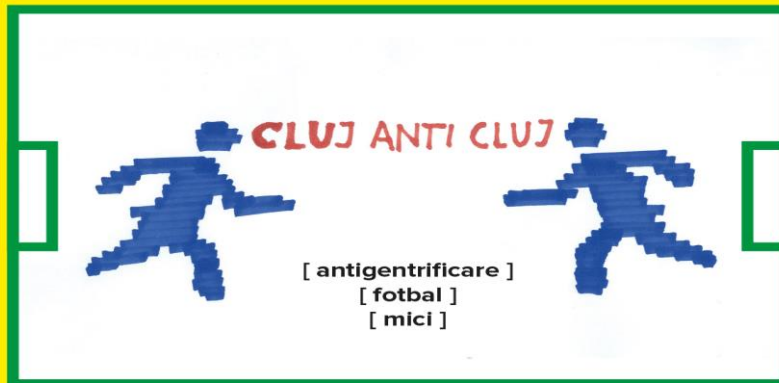


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- Sunteți romi? Stați în ultima bancă!
- Copiii noștri, ai romilor, nu valorează la fel de mult ca și copiii românilor?

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ACȚIUNE ÎN FAȚA PRIMĂRII CLUJ (P. MAIOR/MOTILOR) ORA 16.00



Parcul Feroviarilor  
1 mai 2018  
ora 15:00

