



JOINT EXTREME DESTITUTION AND ROMA INCLUSION NETWORK MEETING 2025

12-13 June, Prague, Czech Republic

INVITATION

THE RURAL-URBAN DIVIDE: AVAILABILITY OF ESSENTIAL SERVICES IN RURAL AND SEGREGATED AREAS



12-13 June 2025



Klimentská 1211/18, 110 00, Praha 1 - Nové Město

Dear members,

We are pleased to extend an invitation to you for the upcoming 2025 Joint Extreme Destitution and Roma Inclusion Network Meeting, organised in cooperation with our member the Diakonie ECCB. The event will take place in Prague, the Czech Republic, from **June 12th to 13th**, 2025 and will focus on **The Rural-Urban Divide: Availability of Essential Services in Rural and Segregated Areas**.

Our Czech Member Diakonie ECCB is recognised as one of the most important providers of social services in the Czech Republic. Operating in more than 130 locations across the country, Diakonie ECCB has a comprehensive knowledge of the challenges faced by vulnerable groups, both in urban and rural areas. With their work, they aim to offer access to essential and social services for everyone, including families, people experiencing poverty, and Roma communities.

Essential services are vital for promoting social inclusion and ensuring a dignified life for everyone. Principle 20 of the European Pillar of Social Rights states *"Everyone has the right to access essential services of good quality, including water, sanitation, energy, transport, financial services, and digital communications. Support for access to such services shall be available to those in need."*



However, barriers to accessing these services persist: Many rural and remote areas lack adequate infrastructure, such as public transport, financial services, and internet connectivity. Additionally, many individuals face challenges in accessing specific services due to a lack of digital skills. As we work to improve the accessibility and availability of essential services in these areas, it is crucial to also address the challenges faced by Roma communities, who often experience systemic barriers reinforced by spatial segregation and social exclusion. Many Roma individuals living in settlements also live in substandard housing with insufficient connections to water, sanitation, and energy systems.

These are significant challenges because essential services are not only the foundation of basic living standards but also crucial enablers of broader social and economic participation. Improving the availability and accessibility of these services is fundamental to reducing inequalities and ensuring that all people in Europe, regardless of their ethnic background or location, can fully participate in society. Social service providers play a crucial role in supporting those currently left behind by implementing innovative ideas aimed at improving access to essential services in rural areas and settlements.

During our Network Meeting, we will explore **1) the accessibility and availability of essential services in rural areas, with a particular focus on the urban-rural divide. In doing so, 2) we will also integrate the dimension of segregated neighborhoods and settlements, addressing the specific obstacles faced by Roma communities and individuals across Europe.** More information about essential services, Eurodiaconia's members' pivotal activities, and policy recommendations can be found in our latest [policy paper](#).

This meeting will serve as a key platform to strengthen connections between our thematic networks working for and alongside communities in vulnerable situations. It will also foster new partnerships, facilitate mutual learning, and enhance coordination between national and European perspectives. By exchanging insights, best practices, and innovative approaches, participants will contribute to a more inclusive, effective, and sustainable response to these pressing issues.

We are looking forward to welcoming you in Prague!

Annika and Andrea

PROGRAMME OUTLINE | THURSDAY, 12 JUNE, 2025



08.45-9.00	Registration
9.00- 9.15	Welcome and opening Welcome by Eurodiaconia Presentation of the agenda Introduction of participants
9.15-10.10	Presentation by host - Diakonie ECCB Q&A
10.10-10.20	Devotion
10.20-10.35	<i>Coffee break</i>
10.35-11.45	Social Europe Academy Setting the scene: What are Essential Services? EU Policy Update: Where are we in Anti-Poverty and Anti-Racism efforts at the EU? <i>Eurodiaconia</i>
11.45-12.45	Sharing experiences from the ground I: The Impact of the Rural-Urban Divide in the Availability of Essential Services Serigo Project, Diakonie de La Tour, Austria (tbc) Member organisation tbc <i>Discussion with participants</i>
12.45-14.00	<i>Lunch break</i>
14.00-15.00	Sharing experiences from the ground II: Access to essential services in segregated areas Participatory Transformation and Desegregation of Substandard Settlements, HEKS/EPER and VoRAE, Kosovo

PROGRAMME OUTLINE | THURSDAY, 12 JUNE, 2025



15.00-15.30	<i>Coffee break</i>
15.30-17.00	Policy Development Workshop and Future Priorities <i>Eurodiaconia</i>
19.30	Dinner <i>(Offered by Eurodiaconia)</i>

AGENDA | FRIDAY, 13 JUNE 2025



9.00-9.10	Welcome and introduction <i>Eurodiaconia</i>
9.10-12.00	Study visit I: Mobile Low-Threshold Club <i>Presentation by lead social worker</i> <i>The mobile club operates in the Czech countryside, focusing on improving the quality of life of participating children and youth by preventing or reducing social and health risks linked to current living conditions. Their activities aim to strengthen young people's understanding of their social environment and provide support in addressing challenges.</i>
	Study visit II: Asylum home for mothers with children in Prague <i>This inclusion based facility offers temporary accommodation and support to mothers and children facing difficult life situations. Services include social counseling, securing permanent housing, employment support and childcare. The home aims to empower mothers towards independent living and social inclusion.</i>
	Study visit III: SOS Center in Prague <i>The SOS Center provides comprehensive support services, including assistance with employment, housing, financial management, parenting and access to essential services. It also runs leisure activities for young people, such as trips and sport courses.</i>
12.00-12.10	Review & closing words
12.10	<i>Light lunch</i>

PRACTICAL INFORMATION



Who can participate?

The meeting is open to anyone working in Diaconia who is part of a network or organization that is a member of Eurodiaconia. Those who are likely to find it most interesting are those who work in the provision of essential services in non-urban areas, as well as organisations interested in developing their work in this area. Our general rule is that a maximum of 2 participants per organisation can join the network meeting.

How to register?

Please register [via this online form as soon as possible, but no later than Monday 26th May](#). The Secretariat will select and confirm participants on a rolling basis and contact you within a few days after your registration.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Eurodiaconia members from Central and Eastern Europe and from minority churches are eligible to apply for financial support via the registration form (ex-post compensation; read carefully the [financial aid guidelines](#)). If you would like to request financial support, we kindly ask you to let us know by registering as soon as possible. Our general rule is that a maximum of 2 participants per organisation can join the network meeting, and due to financial restrictions, only 1 of them can be sponsored if eligible (if you have a particular situation, please contact the Secretariat).

MEETING VENUE

The meeting will take place in the old town district of Prague. The address is the following: Klimentská 1211/18, 110 00, Praha 1 - Nové Město.

ACCOMMODATION

Eurodiaconia will book and pay for the accommodation of participants who ask for and are granted financial support in a hotel within walking distance of the venue (in the old town of Prague). [Please do not book your own accommodation if you request financial support.](#)

Other (not sponsored) participants are asked to pay for their own accommodation, however the Secretariat can make the bookings for you in the same hotel where other participants will stay. Following your registration the Secretariat will confirm your participation and send you information about the hotel nearby and liaise with you on the details of your stay for the booking. You will be able to pay at reception upon check-in.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION



TRAVEL

Participants are asked to book their own travel tickets, following confirmation of their participation.

Those who are requesting financial support are kindly asked to communicate to the Secretariat the cost of the flight tickets. If it exceeds 350 euros, please hold on from the purchase until getting confirmation from the Secretariat.

INCLUSIVE AND RESPECTFUL NETWORK MEETINGS

We are committed to fostering an inclusive and respectful space for dialogue. We recognise that diversity strengthens our work, and we encourage open discussions where diverse perspectives are shared with respect and mutual understanding. We expect all participants to contribute to an environment where everyone feels safe, valued and respected.

We highly recommend reading [Eurodiaconia Guidelines on Tackling Anti-Roma Racism](#) before attending this meeting. As part of our commitment to meaningful inclusion, we actively encourage the participation of Roma speakers and participants from your teams.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions or remarks regarding the content and programme of the network meeting, please reach out to Andrea (andrea.sanchez@eurodiaconia.org) or Annika (Annika.sparrer@eurodiaconia.org). For questions regarding logistics and financial support, please contact Konstantina (konstantina.kinikli@eurodiaconia.org).





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and social justice
through action



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