

RIGHT TO HOUSING: 100 STRONG SHOULDERS

The organisation RIGHT TO HOUSING from Ghent is looking for a 100 strong shoulders willing to support a group of 54 inhabitants in their search for a stable housing and living situation.

Since the end of June 2013 the organisation RIGHT TO HOUSING has been supporting a group of families of Slovak origin who have been living in the abandoned old cloister compound in the Meulensteedse steenweg 184 (Ghent) . That compound served as shelter for the homeless until recently and is now scheduled for demolition. CAW Visserij who has the leasehold of the compound wants to build a new shelter after the demolition.

The current group of families who reside in the building have been homeless or have been squatting during the last couple of years. These 54 people, including approximately 30 children that go to school in Ghent, dream of and hope for a more stable and dignified existence.

At the end of August, Mayor Termont and Alderman Decruynaere took the initiative to negotiate a temporary legal occupation of the compound between CAW Visserij and the four Ghent-based non-profit organisations that were willing to support the inhabitants of the cloister. The intention is for the city government, together with the four non-profit organisations (Samenlevingsopbouw Gent (Community Development Ghent), Victoria Deluxe, Werkgroep Vluchtelingen Gent (Ghent Working Group on Refugees), and ROCSA), to support the families in their quest for a legal and stable living situation.

The successful mediation resulted in an agreement that the 54 inhabitants can reside in the cloister compound until the end of June 2014. Their residence is considered as a step to social mobility. The four non-profit organisations who want to support the inhabitants through the organisation RIGHT TO HOUSING will need a minimum of 25.000 euro to make the building fire proof and to pay a large portion of the energy bills. Most of the inhabitants are currently without or on a very limited income.

The organisation is searching for **100 civilians** who are willing and able to transfer **10 euro every month for one year** to the organisation RIGHT TO HOUSING to gather half of the required sum.

Those 100 strong shoulders will be involved in the project through personal and guided visits to the old cloister compound.